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An Heroics of Empire: Benjamin West and
Anglophone History Painting 1764-1774

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An Heroics of Empire: Benjamin West and
Anglophone History Painting 1764-1774

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This dissertation interrogates correlations between imperial expansion and the history paintings produced for London audiences by the American-born artist Benjamin West (1738-1820) during his first decade in England (1764-1774). Within that ten-year span, Grand Manner academic history painting shaped and reflected the imperial anxieties that elite Britons experienced as a result of dramatic territorial gains, consolidations and losses in North America and South Asia. To follow the trajectory of history painting's rise, relevance and obsolescence is to track Britons' negotiation of their global status as a "free though conquering people." As England's pre-eminent history painter, West secured for himself a place within the discourses of the imperial self-imaginary by developing two types of iconographic program. First, the selective appropriation of narratives from classical antiquity allowed West and his patrons to inculcate their audiences with visual models for British imperial virtue. Advancing the

cause of imperial self-ratification through classical narrative, West cast the English as the natural heirs to the Roman empire. The resulting images paralleled and buoyed contemporary textual discourses of empire and intersected with antiquarian collecting practices, both of which were based on the notion of modern British proprietorship of classical antiquity. Second, developing and refining a model introduced by Francis Hayman (1708-1776) at Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens in 1761, West contrived a pictorial format which introduced persons living and recently dead into a realm of visual expression formally reserved for characters from biblical and classical textual sources. Invoking some of history painting's most familiar compositional and figural conventions, West recombined history painting, portraiture, landscape and genre to formulate the iconographically hybrid heroics of empire, complete with its own set of pictorial motifs through which West and his followers styled their subjects exemplars of classical imperial virtue. Imperial anxiety afforded history painting its short-lived relevance among English-speaking audiences during the second half of the eighteenth and first quarter of the nineteenth centuries, and imperial self-acceptance rendered that most highly-esteemed of artistic genres obsolete. Through the visual heroics of empire, Benjamin West established history painting as a viable form of Anglophone cultural production during his first decade in London.

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Introduction

The Pennsylvania-born painter Benjamin West (1738-1820) occupies a telling position in the historiography of western art: despite his role as Historical Painter to the King of England, despite his twenty-six years as President of the British Royal Academy of Arts and despite the fact that he influenced three generations of Americans and countless British and European painters, his expansive oeuvre – over one thousand paintings – has yet to be even partially mined for its pictorial contents, cultural contexts and artistic intents. Twentieth- and twenty-first century scholars have touched upon or alluded to each of such categories of investigation, but no one source fully situates West's paintings in the discursive frameworks of artistic production, academic art theory, contemporary reception, genealogies of influence or the commodification of visual culture. Today only two of West's works retain the iconic status they enjoyed during his lifetime: *The Death of General Wolfe* (fig. 1) and *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* (fig. 2), both painted around the year 1770. Engravers produced prints after each, which circulated widely on both sides of the Atlantic and in Europe by the end of the 1770s. Because of the breadth of their distribution and commercial success, these works have received the most attention from scholars. But West produced a number of other works that attracted tens and even hundreds of thousands of paying viewers, including his 1806 representation of *The Death of Lord Nelson* and *Christ Healing the Sick*, the first version

of which appeared in London in 1810 (figs. 3 and 4). Scholars have paid scant attention to these pictures and to others that attracted viewers in numbers unprecedented for works of art displayed in England and North America.

Like their contemporaries in other disciplines, art historians have made admirable strides toward explaining the “sudden,” albeit short-lived, success of grand manner academic history painting produced for English-speaking audiences in the second half of the eighteenth century. But no one source has fully accounted for the appearance – in both senses of the term – of such paintings. Toward a more complete understanding of the origins and functions of eighteenth-century Anglophone history painting, this dissertation interrogates the works that West produced between the time of his arrival in London in August of 1763 and the completion of one of his lesser-known works: *Lord Clive Receiving the Grant of the Duanney* (fig. 5). Commissioned and painted in 1774, exhibited publicly for the first time in 1795 and copied once and possibly twice between 1802 and 1820, *Clive* was West’s most ambitious among the many empire-themed history paintings that he produced before the nineteenth century. A sampling of West’s works from his first decade in London demonstrates to extent to which empire determined the formation of visual cultures in eighteenth-century England and North America.

Across the humanities, scholars have begun to detach empire from its social-historical subordination to commerce, but no one has gone so far as to identify empire as the dominant aesthetic and ideological value that informed history painting as cultural

production among English-speaking artists in the eighteenth century.¹ This study acknowledges that one cannot sever the connections between commerce and empire, while at the same time proposing that the British sense of destiny and entitlement to global territorial dominion both predated and operated outside the establishment, expansion and maintenance of early modern market economies. As it shaped and reflected Anglophone discourses of imperial destiny, history painting neither emerged from nor paralleled the rise of commerce; it did not operate within the confines of academic theory, and cannot be – without egregious distortion and omission – retroactively configured as a proving-ground in the search for an aesthetic that would allow Anglophone painters to distinguish themselves from their continental counterparts as an “English School.”

History painting from the period here addressed engages issues related to territorial acquisition and temporal dominion. Those matters transcended the philosophical concerns of politeness and the public sphere and extended beyond the rise of global commerce. The history paintings that Benjamin West produced between 1764 and 1774 reveal the extent to which he participated in and advanced the Anglophone visual heroics of empire, a hybrid pictorial form that combines history painting, portraiture, landscape and genre toward achieving two objectives: applying the lessons of humanity’s imperial past to contemporary Anglophone life and elevating persons living and recently dead to the status of biblical and classical heroes. The broader study from which I derive this dissertation covers the period from the outbreak of the Seven

Years' War in 1756 through the 1820 settlement of the Anglo-Maratha and Pindari War, which Britons believed to have at least temporarily quelled well-organized indigenous resistance to British rule on the Indian subcontinent. My interrogation of the history paintings that English-speaking artists produced during that six-decade span complements existing cultural and social-historical studies of and amends and extends post-colonial evaluations of pre-Victorian British visual cultures by arguing that empire, as determinant and catalyst in the forging of modern Anglophone identity, afforded history painting an aesthetic and commercial relevancy that would have otherwise never materialized.

Imperialist by Nature

...Is all in Heaps of Water lost,
Beyond the Islands, and the Mid-land Coast?
Or has that God, who gave our World its Birth,
Sever'd those Waters by some other Earth,
Countr ies by future Plow-shares to be torn,
And cities rais'd by Nations yet unborn!
Ere the progressive Course of the restless Age
Performs Three thousand times its Annual Stage;
May not our Pow'r and Learning be supprest;
And Arts and Empire learn to travel West?

Where, by the Strength of this *Idea* charm'd,
Lighten'd with Glory, and with Rapture warm'd,
Ascend my Soul? what sees She White and Great
Amidst subjected Seas? An ISLE, the Seat
For Pow'r and Plenty; Her Imperial Throne,
Virtues Sublime, great Attributes of Heav'n,
From thence to this distinguish'd Nation given:
Yet farther West the Western ISLE extends,
Her happy Fame, her Armed Fleets She sends

To Climates folded yet from human Eye;
And Lands, which We imagine Wave and Sky.
From Pole to Pole She hears her Acts resound,
And rules an Empire by no Ocean bound;
Knows her Ships anchor'd, and her Sails unfurl'd
In other INDIES, and a second World.

Long shall BRITANNIA (That must be her Name)
Be first in Conquest, and preside in Fame:
Long shall her favor'd Monarchy engage
The Teeth of Envy, and the Force of Age:
Rever'd and Happy She shall long remain,
Of human Things least changeable, least vain.
Yet All must with the gen'ral Doom comply;
And this Great Glorious Pow'r, tho' last, must die.²

By the end of the seventeenth century, England's cultural elites shared an “aggressive vision of British cultural superiority” and a “Brutan vision of English suzerainty” that had to one extent or another informed the elite Anglophone worldview since the twelfth century.³ As John Gillingham has demonstrated, the Anglo imperialist notion of self and the imperialist classification of non-Anglo peoples that would reach full, tragic fruition in the nineteenth century appeared in various forms and in isolated instances over the preceding centuries. Those sporadic expressions of the imperialist impulse include the writings of the Benedictine monk William of Malmesbury, who in the twelfth century codified the imperial other by declaring Celts, Irish, Scots and Welsh “barbarians,” clearing a moral pathway for their conquest by English forces.⁴ Malmesbury's successors reiterated the tripartite formula by which Anglos gauged their superiority to barbarous peoples within the Isles and beyond: barbarians – whether in the Scottish highlands, the island of Ireland, the forests of Quebec or forts of Allahabad –

were naturally and intractably indolent, murderously savage and sexually profligate.⁵ These bases of comparison often informed or retroactively justified acts of territorial conquest as triumphs of civilization over barbarism. When their internecine struggles ceased sufficiently for them to turn their attention outward the English by sheer force of their numbers allowed them to overcome Irish, Welsh and native Scot insurgents. Their technological and economic superiority to those peoples materially substantiated Anglo-Saxon claims to superiority. The inhabitants of the British Isles had themselves been reformed by contact with the civilizing forces of the Romans under Caesar and some among the English invoked that episode when pursuing their own paths to conquest. Subjugation in the name of reform rendered the imperial idea morally substantive.⁶

Though the potentially-subject imperial Other always retained the stamp of barbarism, Anglo positioning within the binaries of imperial self and other shifted throughout the centuries that followed Henry II's conquest of Ireland, especially during the period before the English fully embraced competitive commerce and aggressive territorial acquisition. Despite their collective sense of superiority to their neighbors in the Isles and on the continent, the English did not always see themselves as the natural rulers of the earth. As David Armitage has argued, for example, during the Elizabethan era, "backwardness, isolation and anxiety" marked England's sense of its own place in the global imperial calculus.⁷ Prior to their comparatively late entry into the maritime trade and colonization systems that had established Portugal, the Netherlands, Spain and France as formidable global powers, the English imagined their insularity as an index of

moral superiority to their brutal and avaricious contemporaries, much as they had once self-righteously viewed slave-trading among the Scots as a sign of barbarism. During the early years of Elizabeth's reign, the English congratulated themselves "on their indifference to the demeaning scramble for trade and land that the powers of continental Europe constantly pursued."⁸ When global conquest by European powers accelerated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and England entered into the fray in earnest, new discourses of empire and identity emerged, the rhetoric of which reduced England's imperial competitors to allegories of avarice, cruelty, perfidy and tyranny. British victories in the Seven Years' War proved a "tipping point" in the ternary of Self, subject Other and competitor Other. Well before the signing of the Peace of Paris in 1763, Anglo-Britons had begun to invoke the foppish superstition of the French as the ultimate point of contrast to manly English virtue. Anti-Gallican writers expressed their vitriol against the French with a depth of conviction that outshone panegyrics to English Virtue, British Character and Constitutional Liberty, so that in some instances, to simply establish themselves as "not-French" would suffice in the discourses of Anglophone cultural self-identification. Historian Paul Langford notes that in the eighteenth century a way of thinking emerged "that was not so much that the English reasoned that they were superior to...others but that it genuinely did not occur to them that any rational being could suppose they were anything else" *but* universally superior.⁹ Through their victories in the Seven Years' War, Britons put into broad practice the "imperial sentiment" that

reached its most complex realization in the exploits of Robert Lord Clive and his successors in the British East India Company.

For London's group of struggling of artists (especially those who aspired to the academic hierarchy of subject matter, which disparaged portraiture, landscape, genre painting and still life and exalted history painting), the French served both as abstract ideal and as animate art-historical entity to be emulated – but without too much fidelity to the original. Accounts of France's Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture appeared in London in French and in English throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. Reports from Paris served as constant reminders to the Anglophone cognoscenti of England's inferiority in the theory and practice of the fine arts, aggravating some artists' frustrations at the dearth of patronage in the Isles, while fueling the nativist, anti-Gallican sentiments of others.¹⁰ In their calls for an English academy of the fine arts at least endorsed (if not funded) by the crown, advocates had to temper their admiration for the florescence of French culture under Louis XIV, lest they appear to harbor Jacobite sympathies. By the time the heroics of empire debuted in 1761 at Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens with the first of four paintings by Francis Hayman, fifteen years had passed since the last uprising of the supporters of a Catholic Stuart monarchy, who wished to permanently unseat the Protestant Hanoverian succession. Looking to their own history for proper academic models proved equally risky for Britons. The greatest of English royal patrons of the arts, Charles I, proved a prickly exemplar; his reign ended in execution by beheading.¹¹ Anglophone artists longed for a royal academy fashioned after

the French model, absent the ministerial interference that plagued the French institution.¹² Until 1751, artists had invested their hopes in Frederick, Prince of Wales, son of the reigning Hanoverian king George II (who had never bothered to learn English and who purportedly professed to hate both poets and painters).¹³ Frederick had promised to restore royal patronage to the level displayed by Charles I, to reassemble that king's collection (hastily and haphazardly dispersed across Europe following his death) and to fund a royal academy of the arts on the order and scale of that established under Louis XIV. Upon Frederick's untimely death in 1751, artists turned their attentions to his son, George III, whom they hoped would manifest Frederick's devotion to the arts. London audiences first experienced the visual heroics of empire in the early 1760s at Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, where Hayman's four monumental heroics of empire history paintings for the music hall annex served as a living memorial to Prince Frederick and a call to George III to fulfill his father's potential as a true Patriot King.¹⁴ By attaching the idea of royal patronage for the arts to English liberty, imperial virtue and commercial success, artists could avoid associations with the negative aspects of the monarch-centered French academic model. The tactic succeeded: George III issued a diploma to establish the British Royal Academy in 1768 and by 1771 the introduction of the heroics of empire had permanently altered the aesthetic and commercial viability of Anglophone art.

The ‘Birth-Right of Englishmen’ and Moderns versus the Ancients”

What comparison then shall we institute between antient knowledge and modern acquisitions, when the whole sum of the former makes but as it were the basis, on which the latter are built? We can easily make all, that men formerly knew, our own; and then, without being tired with any previous search, with all our vigor fresh about us, can from thence set out on new discoveries; which we are still more likely to attain to, because we can calmly look down from our eminence, and see where they, who went before us, were misled and lost their way; can correct their mistakes, avoid their errors, and mark out, and pursue, with less embarrassment, the direct road, which leads to truth.¹⁵

...[M]ay those noble Principles with which they have been actuated, continue to diffuse themselves in every English Breast – that it may be our Happiness, never to want a Race of Men, who prefer the publick Good before any narrow or selfish Views – who choose ‘Dangers in defence of their Country before an inglorious Safety, -- and an honourable Death before the unmanly Pleasures of a useless and effeminate Life.’ ...The Goodness of God may not only lead us to Amendment and Reformation [at home], but may intend us to be the happy Instruments of spreading the Light of his Gospel in its Purity, to other Nations. Should our Conquests be attended with this blessed Effect, the Conquered will be far from having cause to complain.... The Case of antient Rome providentially happens to be the reverse of ours. They became civilized by those they conquered; but it is now the Birth-right of Englishmen, to carry, not only good Manners, but the purest Light of the Gospel, where Barbarism and Ignorance totally prevailed. And should we, at the same Time we extend our Conquests, enlarge the Dominion of Christ’s Kingdom, ‘by opening the Eyes of the blind; turning them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God;’ the great Things God hath already done, we trust, may be succeeded by greater left in Store for us.¹⁶

The widespread eighteenth-century practice of comparing modern English manners to those of ancient Greeks and Romans generated a context in which paintings of classical historical subjects could be used to comment on contemporary events and

circumstances. By illustrating scenes from classical texts and by invoking scenes and characters from classical texts and compositions from earlier history paintings, Britons could demonstrate their erudition while pondering the similarities between modern London and ancient Rome. In the late seventeenth century, Britons' self-conception shifted away from the Virgilian trope of England as remote and inaccessible toward a celebration of its status as the culmination of the westward course of empire in its dominant colonial presence in North America.¹⁷ As larger portions of the English population began to subscribe to the notion that they, more than any other European nation, were the natural heirs to the Roman imperial impulse, even the most ordinary among them began to consider themselves in terms of classical heroic virtue. The comparative weakness of the crown in England's constitutional monarchy (as contrasted with the French monarchy, for example); the political dangers of a Hanoverian king's associating himself with the iconography of any particular Roman emperor; and the location of wealth, power, taste and literacy in the countryside among the landed gentry all contributed to eighteenth-century discourses of "domesticated heroism."¹⁸ During this period members of the House of Commons often perceived themselves as inhabiting the personae of great Roman orators, military commanders from the middling classes gazed upon their own life-size marble portraits as Roman generals in full military regalia and aristocrats built country houses fashioned after the Roman Pantheon without ever having so much as set foot on Italian soil.

But if the English stood to inherit the Roman “right” to global dominion, they stood heir to the risks associated with conquest as well. Because the lessons of history abounded with evidence that conquest abroad threatened liberty and stability at home, Anglophone artists who painted classical narrative chose their scenes carefully, inflecting their images of moral rectitude and familial piety with nuances of imperial sentiment or set them against the backdrop of imperial conflict, so that the message of virtue superseded – without eclipsing, of course – the motif of conquest.¹⁹ A number of factors catalyzed the intersection of the imperial with the classical as that intersection manifested in the various forms of eighteenth-century Anglophone textual, performative and visual expression that drew upon Greek and Roman texts. First, the English associated their debut on the world stages of commerce and empire with classical learning; the content of ever more widely-available English translations of classical texts virtually summoned their readers to territorial conquest. Early seventeenth-century commentators who were personally and professionally invested in arguing their own importance to the discovery, exploration and exploitation of the globe’s resources proclaimed that Spain’s and Portugal’s access to and understanding of the “most ancient and best Philosophers, Historiographers and Geographers” had given those nations an edge in reaching the New World.²⁰ Only after the “late eruption of captivated learning in the former age” did England begin to manifest the “association between the discovery of ‘new worlds’ in the Indies and the recovery of Greek and Latin classics” by extending its imperial reach beyond to distant climes.²¹

In a second set of intersections between classical texts, imperial conquest and academic history painting, British artists confronted the dialectics of the corrosive power of empire-derived luxury.²² An increased demand for luxury goods promised greater patronage for painting, but such a demand would not broaden without its detractors, who cited the ancients in their identification of a taste for feminizing luxury as one of the consistent and unavoidable warning signs of imperial decline. The status anxieties that informed Britons' long history of governing consumption through anti-luxury sumptuary laws, combined with concurrent developments in commerce (a second and separate wellspring of imported luxury goods) compounded the challenges faced by proponents of imperial expansion. In his extensive *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, William Blackstone (1723-1780) noted

Under the head of public oeconomy may also be properly ranked all sumptuary laws against luxury, and extravagant expenses in dress, diet, and the like; concerning the general utility of which to a state, there is much controversy among the political writers. Baron Montesquieu lays it down, that luxury is necessary to monarchies, as in France; but ruinous to democracies, as in Holland. With regard therefore to England, whose government is compounded of both species, it may still be a dubious question, how far private luxury is a public evil; and, as such, cognizable by public laws.²³

The specific proscriptions changed from one period to the next, but anti-luxury laws remained on the books in the middle of the eighteenth century, though they were seldom enforced with any determination or consistency.

Propitiously for history painters, the churchman, Grand Tour chaperone and tutor-turned-cultural-critic John Brown, in his 1757 *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, crafted a proposal to counteract the deleterious effects of contemporary

emphases on taste and fashion and luxury.²⁴ Brown attributed the dismal performance of the British troops in the early battles of the Seven Years' War to Britons' status as a "mercantile and effeminate People."²⁵ In order to check the *effects* of luxury (without eliminating the *sources* of luxury or the glories of conquest), Britons had to reverse the course of emasculation by distinguishing themselves as properly masculine on the battlefield. The raising of a national militia offered the perfect means through which Britons from all ranks could redeem themselves as heroes of classical distinction.²⁶ Though one could by no stretch of the imagination count Brown among Britain's great thinkers, his ideas did gain widespread popularity among the middling sorts – especially among those who shared his concerns about the current state of British manliness. As poet William Cowper (1731-1800) reflected, Brown's fortunes "rose like a paper kite and charmed the town."²⁷ Shortly after the 1757 edition of Brown's *Estimate* went into its seventh printing in 1759, British military fortunes reversed.

In Cowper's mind, at least, Brown had to a certain degree relished the prospective downfall of effeminate England. The reduction of Quebec and the surrender of Montreal in 1759 a year later "refuted all he said...And a complete recov'ry struck him dumb."²⁸ Not all observers agreed with Cowper, however. Among minds sympathetic to Brown's peculiar brand of political philosophizing, he had single-handedly succeeded in "rouzing the indolent, and animating the careless; in giving manliness to the effeminate; public love to the selfish; and courage to the voluptuary."²⁹ Within three years, the British had conquered vast expanses of North America and South Asia and overtaken substantial

portions of Africa; the events that led to those territorial acquisitions gave history painters the first modern incarnations of the visual and textual heroics of empire: General Jeffrey Amherst, Colonel Robert Clive, General William Johnson and General James Wolfe.³⁰

Classical texts inspired Britons to explore the full potential of their imperial nature; those same texts offered warnings about the exigencies of empire. To address tensions between Britons' global imperial destiny and the universal historical fact of the decline of great empires, history painters mounted a two-track approach, with separate, but often intersecting iconographic programs. Before proceeding with the contents and intents of the visual heroics of empire as a set of artistic practices developed in the second half of the eighteenth century, perhaps a momentary digression to state the obvious is in order: the clearest and most direct connection between British imperialism and eighteenth-century Anglophone history painting emerges in the fact that the most prominent and commercially successful Anglophone history painters came from territorial holdings outside the borders of England proper. Stated another way, without the English conquest of Scotland and colonization of North America, history painting produced for English-speaking audiences in the eighteenth century might have ranged from the negligible to the non-existent, and would have likely followed a completely different iconographic trajectory in the absence of works by the Scot Gavin Hamilton and Americans Benjamin West, John Singleton Copley (1738-1815), John Trumbull (1756-1843) and Mather Brown (1761-1831).³¹ The English had throughout their history preferred non-native-born painters, but this fact offers little in the way of explaining the

ascendancy of colonial painters and imperial subjects in the practice of academic history painting during the period. By surveying the classical and modern heroics of empire history paintings that Benjamin West produced between 1764 and 1774, this dissertation seeks to more fully explain one area in which the colonial and the imperial dominated Anglophone visual cultures of the eighteenth century. Central to that explanation is the fact that West and his colonial contemporaries and successors were “just foreign enough” to satisfy the English penchant for the foreign-born artist.

That empire played a substantial role in West’s oeuvre and in the relevance of academic history painting may seem self-evident, but scholars have only recently begun to acknowledge empire as a constitutive element of Anglophone identity separate from commerce. One can trace back as far as the twelfth century sporadic, localized instances of Anglo-Saxon imperial sentiment expressed in terms through which one might separate the introduction of imperium and/or dominium from practices of establishing and maintaining markets and trade routes and without privileging the exploitation and transportation of resources.³² The military and political application of the imperial impulse sometimes even undermined the profitability of commercial interests by disrupting the conditions under which trade could flourish and occasionally threatened to destabilize the domestic economy. Beginning in the mid -1990s, political and cultural historians especially began to recognize that empire and commerce sometimes fed one another, sometimes conflicted with one another and sometimes ran along parallel courses without intersection.³³ Art historians lagged behind their contemporaries in other

disciplines, especially with regard to interrogating the imperial underpinnings of Benjamin West's paintings and thus the causal connections between Anglophone history painting and empire.

Two additional obstacles contribute to what one must term deficiencies in the art-historical attention afforded to Benjamin West and his works: connoisseurship and literary theory and criticism. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars and collectors generally agreed that "the cold and shallow dulness" of West's paintings and a widely-accepted lack of aesthetic merit made his works bad investments.³⁴ As artists rejected the academy system in which West flourished, critics used West's name to oppose art's most highly regarded periods and practitioners. Writing in 1862, Charles Godfrey Leland characterized West's oeuvre as the absolute nadir in the cycles of art history: "Art sank from Renaissance to Rococo, from Michael Angelo to Bernini, from Raphael to Van der Werff and Watteau and Greuze, until in the last days it touched the last depth of the Abominable in Benjamin West."³⁵ West's name had retained some importance to colonial historians in America, but artists, critics and publics conditioned by Romanticism, altered by the technological wonder of photography and simultaneously thrilled and scandalized at the early stirrings of Modernism joined together in dismissing West's works.

Social historians have performed admirably in their respective and collective readings of some of West's individual paintings, but few among his canvases have attracted the attention of art historians who frame their investigations in terms of post-

structuralist literary theory and criticism. Because of his central position in the rise of the academy – the institution against which modern artists rebelled – scholars have dismissed West and his oeuvre as facile, conventional and straightforward, as a feeble reiteration of the dominant-paradigm approach to the visual arts; thus West and his massive body of work failed to qualify for close analysis from the more philosophically rarified quarters of academia. When compared with scholarship on other, less prolific and less influential artists, late twentieth and early twenty-first century conference programs and peer-reviewed journals have included a small number of papers and articles devoted exclusively to West's paintings. Conversely, such artists as William Hogarth (1697-1764), whose popularity had waned substantially by the time West arrived in London in 1763, appealed to the theoretical sensibilities and better served the professional purposes of twentieth-century scholars who focused on the eighteenth century, resulting in a disproportionate emphasis on the English "comic history painter" to the distortion of the art-historical record for the period.³⁶ And diverted by chauvinistic fantasies of "nascent revolution" in the pictures West and his countrymen produced before 1776, Americanist art historians who focus on the eighteenth century have failed to plumb the depths – or even skirt the shallows – of West's oeuvre.³⁷ Unlike other forms of cultural production whose histories have suffered the distortion and truncation necessary to fit images, objects and structures into discursive frameworks intended for text (or dramatic performance, or human behavior, or commerce, or identity), West's works have simply failed to capture the attention of the most theoretically-inclined among art historians.³⁸

Beyond the vicissitudes of connoisseurship and critical theory, published research on West has been consistently undermined by scholarly reliance upon what art historians now recognize as West's dictated autobiography, published under the name of his amanuensis, John Galt. Art historians familiar with Early Modern textual traditions of artist's lives will recognize in Galt's volumes the painter's attempt to create a "Vasari's Life of West," in which mythopoetics and historical data merge into a narrative that mimics accounts of such Italian luminaries as Giotto di Bondone (c.1270-1337) and Michelangelo Buonarroti (1568-1646).³⁹ Scholars who incorporate material from Galt's biography often concede that the text includes fanciful and sometimes preposterous claims, but then proceed to cite the work as if it were an objective summary of West's life and career. The resulting emphases on such questions as whether West was a Quaker and confusion over his father's occupation have diverted attention from West's paintings.⁴⁰

As many among the scholars who address West's life and works have noted, the young American arrived in England at just the right moment and under a set of political, military and economic circumstances most conducive to his undertaking a career as a history painter. Changing notions of and emphases upon private interest fueled by the rise of commerce had all but disassembled the public-sphere model of gentlemanly disinterestedness.⁴¹ The rise of the merchant class had substantially diminished the elitist model of patronage espoused by Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury: by 1770 both noblemen and their stewards purchased large-scale history paintings.⁴² The crowning of George III held the possibility of long-awaited royal patronage for the fine

arts, a hope that had for decades been confounded by what would be characterized by nineteenth-century commentators as George II's "hatred" for painters.⁴³ The Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce and the Free Society of Artists each mounted shows in 1763, drawing crowds, awarding premiums and prompting purchases, though buyers at auction continued to follow well-established precedent by choosing the works of foreign-born artists rather than commissioning paintings from Britons.⁴⁴ Once West made the decision to remain in England, the exhibitions in which he participated, a history painting commission from the young king and West's direct participation in the founding of the Royal Academy in 1768 all contributed to the unprecedented financial and popular success that he enjoyed in the first three decades of his British career.

None of these factors, however, contributed as much to West's success as his engagements with imperial themes from classical texts and contemporary conquest. Until very recently, scholars have attributed the brief popular esteem for Anglophone Grand Manner academic history painting to the rise of exhibitions, to the foundation of the Royal Academy and/or to shifts within the public sphere generated by the disruptive proliferation of commerce. With the acknowledgement that commerce and empire are inextricably intertwined, this study separates the imperial from the commercial, arguing that empire, more than any other single factor, afforded history painting its short-lived relevance among English-speaking audiences during the second half of the eighteenth century. Without radical territorial expansion and contraction on the part of the British in

North America, the West Indies, Africa and South Asia and without artists who came from the periphery to help negotiate imperial anxiety at the center, Anglophone history painting of the period would have taken on a very different appearance. That appearance would, perhaps, more directly register the rise of exhibition spaces, the foundation of the Royal Academy and the effects of market capital – none of which can account for the practice of modeling common merchants and soldiers after the figures of the triumphant Alexander the Great or the crucified Christ. Undertaking a one-decade sampling, which includes a case-study of the private application of the visual heroics of empire, this dissertation demonstrates that the cultural currencies and moral exigencies of empire determined the rise and relevancy of history paintings produced for English-speaking audiences during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Organization of the Dissertation

In the first chapter of this study I offer a close formal and contextual analysis of Benjamin West's first heroics of empire history painting: *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Officer from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian* (fig. 6). This picture, which West never exhibited, offers clues into the artist's highly personal interpretation of the visual heroics of empire as he first encountered the practice upon arrival in London. In developing that interpretation, West experienced Francis Hayman's heroics of empire history paintings for Vauxhall Pleasure gardens and such works as

Edward Penny's *The Death of General Wolfe* through the aesthetic prism of his recently-completed Grand Tour. West's *General Johnson* reads as a series of experiments through which West began to establish and test his identity as a history painter born in the North American colonies. This chapter explores the ways in which West sought to situate himself in relation to established doctrines and patterns of connoisseurship and patronage, the referents through which he began to build his own pictorial language for heroics of empire history painting and his artistic explorations and expressions of contemporary constructs of race, gender and nation. By modeling the figures in this composition after the most highly esteemed antique statues and superimposing a template of emotional expression onto the figures, West imbued living persons of common birth with the rhetorical force of classical and early modern heroism. Most importantly, *General Johnson* introduced four key elements that would underpin West's practice of the visual heroics of empire as a form of cultural production intended for English-speaking audiences: 1) the motifs of merciful intervention and civilizing paternalism which, along with clemency and continence in conquest and imperial martyrdom, signaled the imperial martial virtue that immunized Britons from imperial declension; 2) the use of an established canon of marble sculpture after which to model the figures in a composition and through which to cultivate a type of visual literacy specific to the visual heroics of empire; 3) the use of minute pictorial detail to lend authenticating force to and otherwise "factualize" events that the artist never witnessed (or which never transpired at all); and

4) the judicious withholding of pictures from exhibition in order to preserve reputation and increase patronage.

West's turn to themes from classical and early modern history and literature comprises the second chapter of the dissertation. In this portion of the study I explore the subjects chosen by West's patrons as well as the paintings he produced without commission as they pertain to the naturalization and domestication of imperial martial virtue. Through images derived from English translation of ancient Greek and Latin and early modern vernacular Italian sources, West afforded his patrons an opportunity to exhort the newly-crowned George III and his subjects to follow paths of imperial virtue. At the same time, West used the subjects – primarily scenes of familial piety and conjugal devotion – to condition audience reception to representations of imperial exemplars and counter-exemplars. West's approach led to his first royal commission, itself a classical heroics of empire history painting, which allowed George III to participate in contemporary discourses of empire by claiming for the crown proprietorship of imperial martial virtue (a bold claim for a king whose feet never touched a battlefield).⁴⁵ In the third chapter I explore the relationship between the American-born painter and the Hanoverian court that facilitated the establishment of the Royal Academy and allowed West to return to modern heroics of empire history painting subjects. The popular success of his works earned him an appointment as Historical Painter to the King of England, a designation which in turn led to his most ambitious

undertaking as a history painter: the modern heroics of empire suite for the Eating Room in Robert Clive's Claremont, his country seat in Surrey.

In chapter four I concentrate on the deployment of the visual heroics of empire in the private realm as that application took the form of West's 1774 *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney*. This chapter begins with a close formal analysis of the painting, the results of which reveal West's and Clive's strategies for credibly and authoritatively representing an event that never transpired. I then consider the painting in expanding realms of contextual analysis, beginning with Clive's choice of landscape architect Lancelot "Capability" Brown to design and oversee construction of the house, its decorative program and the landscape garden upon which it sits. Central to this portion of the investigation is Clive's rejection of royal architect William Chambers, who had designed Clive's house in London's Berkeley Square. As I demonstrate, Clive chose Brown for the same reason that he sought out West: one was the landscape architect to the King of England and the other the History Painter to the King of England.

The decorative program for the Eating Room at Claremont, for which West's painting was intended, occupies the next portion of the analysis, followed by a consideration of Clive's choice to raze the existing house at Claremont and subsequent construction of a new one on a different part of the estate. A discussion of the ground plan of the new house will lead to investigation of the images, objects and structures of Claremont as reflections of the political, social and cultural circumstances that, in Clive's mind, *necessitated* the most audacious architectural and decorative program ever

undertaken by a British commoner. Unfortunately, the conditions that inspired Clive's vision for Claremont also contributed to his death by suicide before the house and its decorative program could be finished. I conclude this chapter with an overview of the lives of *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney*, from the initial preparatory drawing through one and possibly two life-size copies, an 1850 lithographed key to the painting, a 1975 silver medallion intended to commemorate the bicentennial of Clive's death and, finally, a copy, many times removed from West's original, auctioned in Delhi – with no mention of West or the original painting – on 14 August 2002.

Throughout all four chapters runs the central theme of imperial anxiety, which manifested in many forms in London, but which all originated from a single question: what would be the effects of global territorial dominion in the provinces on the moral and material lives of Britons in the metropole?

As these chapters demonstrate, heroics of empire history paintings produced for English-speaking audiences in the 1760s and 1770s reflect the convergence of and tensions within the cultural politics of national identities. One set of tensions emerged between crown and constitution, as each laid claim to imperial martial virtue. By commissioning a suite of pictures for the Warm Room at Buckingham, George III staked a monarchical claim to imperial martial virtue. Rather than using the power of the throne to dictate taste in the fine arts, however, the Hanoverian king reacted to Patriot Opposition claims that Britons were to be the proprietors of and agents enacting imperial martial virtue. This public ownership of imperial heroism manifested most clearly in

Francis Hayman's paintings for the Music Hall annex at Vauxhall pleasure gardens between 1761 and 1764 and in Robert Hay Drummond's commission of *Agrippina Landing at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* in 1767. This contest between crown and commoners over the nature and character of modern British imperial virtue informed the foundation of the Royal Academy at the public level while at the same time inspiring the most audacious decorative program ever undertaken in a private residence in England. Empire, expressed in terms of territorial expansion, maintenance and contraction, catalyzed the making of modern Anglophone identity in the British Isles, North America and South Asia. That catalysis manifested in all forms of creative expression, including heroics of empire history painting. Empire, more than any other single factor, accounts for the rise, relevancy and obsolescence of history painting in the second half of the eighteenth century. Whether classical or modern, the narratives upon which Benjamin West based his history paintings presented viewers with a choice: imperial virtue or imperial vice. Absent England's gains in the Seven Years' War and the dominance of the genre by artists born in the imperial provinces of North America, history paintings produced for English-speaking audiences during the second half of the eighteenth century would have operated under a different set of aesthetic and discursive structures, would have taken on a very different appearance and would have performed a dramatically different set of functions.

Notes

¹ Secondary sources which acknowledge the determinative centrality of empire in the formations of eighteenth-century Anglophone identity include John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (London, Unwin Hayman, 1989); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992); Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture, and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995). As co-editors Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern note in "Introduction: British Identities, Indigenous Peoples, and the Empire," their opening to *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850* (London, University College London Press, 1999) p. 1: "What needs to be stressed, to a greater extent, is the way in which imperialism became a constitutive element in British identities."

² Matthew Prior, "Alma, or the Progress of the Mind," *Poems on Several Occasions*, 3 vols. (Dublin, printed for J. Hyde, R. Gunne R. Owen, and E. Dobson, 1719) pp. 308-309. Britons reacquainted themselves with this poem in a new edition of Prior's collected works in two volumes published under the same title by Glaswegians Robert and Andrew Foulis in 1759. In the 1759 edition, the quoted verses appear in volume the second on pages 129-130. I have preserved original spelling and grammar from all sources quoted in this dissertation, primary and secondary.

³ See David Armitage, "Literature and Empire," *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume I: The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998) pp. 99-123, 114.

⁴ John Gillingham, "The Beginnings of English Imperialism," *The Journal of Historical Sociology* 5:4 (December 1992) pp. 392-409, esp. pp. 398 and 406.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 399-400.

⁶ Scholars disagree on whether the Plantagenet king Henry II acted with legal or hereditary legitimacy in his decision to invade Ireland, but when he sought papal permission to conquer the island, he cited intent to reform its barbarian inhabitants. See Laurence Echard, *The History of England. From the First Entrance of Julius Caesar and the Romans, to the End of the Reign of King James the First* (London, printed for Jacob Tonson, 1718) vol. 1, p. 102: "...[T]he King resolv'd to display his Sovereignty, and more vigorously carry on that great Design of subduing the Kingdom of Ireland, which...had been protected, and sanctify'd by the English Pope Adrian in the Beginning of this Reign. It is very observable at this Time, that not only the Manners of that Nation were extremely corrupted, but the Christian Faith it self was decay'd; Barbarism over-running the one, and more than Superstition the other: So that there were then all the usual Forerunners of great Revolutions and Conquests. King Henry's Pretensions to this Kingdom were ancient Title, as well as the continu'd Injuries the Irish had committed by their Piracies, buying and selling English Captives, and using them like the worst of Slaves. ...[T]he particular Occasion of that Kingdom's Invasion proceeded from those constant Effects of Looseness and Immorality, Factions and Divisions among themselves; which in no long Time ruin'd them, and brought them under the Subjection of other Masters." See also *The History of the Life of King Henry the Second, and of the Age in Which He Lived, in Five Books: To Which is Prefixed, a History of the Revolutions of England from the Death of Edward the Confessor to the Birth of Henry the Second*, 4 volumes (London, printed for W. Sandby and J. Dodsley, 1767-71) vol. 3, p. 43; and Dictionary of National Biography: "Gerald of Wales...best gives perspective to contemporaries' perception of Henry's martial exploits: "[...]he not only brought strong peace with the aid of God's grace to his hereditary dominions, but also triumphed victoriously in remote and foreign lands, a thing of which none of his predecessors since the coming of the Normans, not even the Saxon kings, had proved capable." (English Historical Documents, 2.410) Gerald goes on to list these triumphs, beginning with the subjection of Ireland and the domination of Scotland through the capture of William the Lion, 'contrary to anything that had ever happened before'. Gerald continues his account by noting the king- duke's vast French inheritances of Maine, Anjou, Touraine, Poitou, and Gascony, to which Henry had added the Vexin, the Auvergne, and Berry. The good-natured Louis VII, in Gerald's eyes, was no match for Henry II, who 'even desired to extend into the Roman Empire, taking advantage of Frederick

Barbarossa's troubles' with his Italian subjects. ...Henry's dreams of empire, present perhaps from early childhood, fired the imagination of courtiers like John, count of Eu, who went so far as to date a charter of 1155 'at Winchester in the year in which the conquest of Ireland was discussed' (Flanagan, 305). And indeed, what William II had only boasted he would perform, Henry II achieved, as the first king of England both to visit and to claim authority in Ireland. At Henry's court nothing was beyond discussion for ambitious knights and clerics; with Henry II Plantagenet as their lord, all the world was within reach." Thomas K. Keefe, 'Henry II (1133–1189)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/content.lib.utexas.edu:2048/view/article/12949](http://www.oxforddnb.com/content/lib.utexas.edu:2048/view/article/12949).

⁷ David Armitage, "The Elizabethan Idea of Empire," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004) pp. 269-277, p. 269.

⁸ David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000) 41. For commentary on slavery practices among the native Scots, see Gillingham, "Beginnings of English Imperialism," p. 402, regarding the 1138 Battle of the Standard between England and Scotland.

⁹ See Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified. Manners and Character 1650–1850* (Oxford, Oxford University Press) p. 314, wherein Langford also remarks, "As numerous visitors noted, the highest compliment that could be paid foreigners was to regret that they were not English or even to tell them to their face that they deserved to be English."

¹⁰ One of the most vociferous opponents of the French academic model and of foreign study was William Hogarth who preferred to cultivate native talent through such venues at St. Martin's Lane Academy.

¹¹ See R. Malcom Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987) pp. 121-130.

¹² See Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985).

¹³ Recounting George II's reaction to William Hogarth's *The March to Finchley*, John Ireland attributed this statement to the king: "I hate all *bainting* and *boetry* too! neither the one nor the other every did any good!" John Ireland, *Hogarth Illustrated*, 2 vols. (London, J. and J. Boydell, 1791) vol. I, p. 296.

¹⁴ See "The Patriot King, or George the Third," *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, of the Year 1761* (London, printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1762) p. 218.

¹⁵ John Gordon, Archdeacon of Lincoln, *A New Estimate of Manners and Principles: Being a Comparison between Ancient and Modern Times, in the Three Great Articles of Knowledge, Happiness, and Virtue* (Cambridge, printed by J. Bentham; for W. Thurlbourn and J. Woodyer, London, 1760) 74.

¹⁶ Richard Brewster, *A Sermon, Preached in the Church of St. Nicholas, in Newcastle upon Tyne, on Thursday, the 29th Day of November, Being the Day Appointed by His Majesty for a General Thanksgiving* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, printed by John White, 1759) 27-28.

¹⁷ Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos, *Eclogues*, I:36 – This empire is a world divided from the world. See Armitage, "Elizabethan Idea," p. 274. For general examples of the discourse of the ancients versus the moderns, see, Félix de Juvenal de Carleucas, *The History of the Belles Lettres, and of the Arts and Sciences, from Their Origin, down to This Present Time* (London: printed for John Duncan, 1740) p. 100; John Frederick Lampe, *The Art of Musick* (London, printed for C. Corbett, 1740) pp. 12-13; James Beattie, *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism* (London, printed for Edward and Charles Dilly; A. Kincaid and W. Creech, and J. Bell, Edinburgh, 1772) pp. 446; Jacques Tassie, *Catalogue raisonné d'une collection generale, de pierres gravées antiques et modernes, tant en creux que camées* (Londres, imprimé pour J. Tassie, et se vend chez lui et chez J. Murray. C. Buckton, impremier, 1791) pp. 458. See also George Berkeley's 1726 "On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America": "Westward the course of empire takes its way."

¹⁸ See David Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1992), pp. 206-207.

¹⁹ See Norman Vance, "Imperial Rome and Britain's Language of Empire 1600-1837," *History of European Ideas* vol. 26 (2000) pp. 211-22

²⁰ See the preface to Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 2 vols. (London, printed by George Bishop, Ralph Newberie and Robert Barker, 1599).

²¹ See David Armitage, *Ideological Origins*, p. 69.

²² Sources that cast the threats of luxury and effeminacy in partisan terms based (to one degree or another) in Patriot opposition to Whig corruption include Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, *The Idea of a Patriot King: With Respect to the Constitution of Great Britain* (London, printed for T. C., 1740); John Shebbeare, *A Letter to the People of England, on the Present Situation and Conduct of National Affairs* (London, printed for J. Scott, 1755); Oliver Goldsmith, "Upon Political Frugality," *The Bee* V (3 November 1759), reprinted in *The Bee. Being Essays on the Most Interesting Subjects* (London, printed for J. Wilkie, 1759) pp. 129-144. For modern sources that address the issues see John Sekora, *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought from Eden to Smollett* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); Christopher Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994); John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, Routledge, 2000); and Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, eds., *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

²³ See William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1765-1769) vol. IV, pp. 170-171.

²⁴ John Brown, *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (London, printed for L. Davis and C. Reymers, 1757). This publication ran to seven editions in the first year of its appearance, earning the author the nickname "Estimate" Brown.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

²⁶ For a discussion of the connections between crises in gender identity and the visual cultures of eighteenth-century Britain, see Martin Myrone, *Bodybuilding: Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750-1810* (New Haven: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2005). As a political issue, the raising of a national militia triggered an outpouring of public debate. Printed sources that present one or both sides of the militia issue include Samuel Johnson, "Remarks on the Militia Bill," *The Literary Magazine, or Universal Review* 2 (15 May-15 June 1756) pp. 57-64; *Party Spirit in a Time of Publick Danger, Considered. Wherein, the Effects of the National Debt; the Necessity of Our Connections on the Continent; with the Nature of Our Present Subsidy Forces, and the Antient Mercenaries; Are Fully Discussed* (London, printed for T. Waller, 1756); *A Scheme for Establishing a Constitutional Militia. With a Postscript Relating to the Landed and Moneyed Interest* (Eton, J. Pote, 1747; reprinted London: Thomas Pote, 1756); *Country Gentleman, A Letter to the Duke. Concerning the Standing Force Necessary to Keep this Kingdom in a Good Posture of Defence. By a Country Gentleman* (London, sold by R. Baldwin, 1756); *Some Short Observations on the Late Militia Bill: To Which is Annexed a More Simple and Practical Scheme* (London, printed for J. Robinson, 1756); *The Voice of the People: A Collection of Addresses to His Majesty, and Instructions to Members of Parliament by Their Constituents, upon the Unsuccessful Management of the Present War Both at Land and Sea; and the Establishment of a National Militia. Recommending, in Particular, an Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Great Loss Which This Nation Has Sustained, in the Capture of Minorca, by the French* (London, printed for J. Payne, 1756); Joachim Christian, *A Political Discourse upon the Different Kinds of Militia, Whether National, Mercenary, or Auxiliary*, trans. Thomas Whiston (London, printed for John Whiston, and Benjamin White, 1757); *An Essay on the Expediency of a National Militia. With Proposals for Raising and Supporting a Military Force Sufficient for Our Security at Home* (London, printed for R. Griffiths, 1757); *Further Objections to the Establishment of a Constitutional Militia: Being a Reply to The Monitor, The Review, City and Country Newspapers, and Many Other Formidable Opponents; in Vindication of a Pamphlet, Intituled, A Word in Time to Both Houses of Parliament* (London, printed for C. Henderson, 1757); *Member of Neither House of Parliament, A Word in Time to Both Houses of Parliament*;

Recommended to the Perusal of Each Member, before He Either Speaks, or Votes, for or against a Militia-Bill: And Not Improper to Be Read by All Those Gentlemen in the Country, Who Are Desirous to Form a Just Idea of This Important Affair. By a Member of Neither House (London, printed for R. Griffiths, 1757); Soame Jenyns, *Short But Serious Reasons for a National Militia* (London, printed for J. Wilkie, 1757); *Gentle Reflections upon the Short but Serious Reasons for a National Militia* (London, printed for J. Scott, 1757); *A Letter to the People of England, upon the Militia, Continental Connections, Neutralities, and Secret Expeditions* (London, printed for J. Scott, 1757); Charles Jenkinson, Earl of Liverpool, *A Discourse on the Establishment of a National and Constitutional Force in England* (London, printed for R. Griffiths, 1757); *Proposals for Carrying on the War with Vigour, Raising the Supplies within the Year, and Forming a National Militia. To Which Are Added, Considerations in Respect to Manufacturers and Labourers, and the Taxes Paid by Them; the Inconveniencies of Credit for Small Sums, and the Courts Lately Erected to Cover Them. Intended to Demonstrate, That It Is Not the Dearness of the Labour of the Poor, but the Profits and Expences of the Higher Classes of People, Which Are the Real Clog on the Foreign Trade and Commerce of England* (London, printed for M. Cooper, 1757); and Nicholas Turner, *A Proposal for Raising Timber, and for Effectually Supporting the Poor in Great Britain. To Which Is Added, a Supplement Relating to a National Militia* (London, printed by Edward Owen, 1757).

²⁷ William Cowper, "Table Talk," in *Poems by William Cowper, of the Inner Temple, Esq.* (London, printed for J. Johnson, 1782) pp. 1-40, p. 20.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁹ John Gordon, Archdeacon of Lincoln, *A New Estimate of Manners and Principles: Being a Comparison between Ancient and Modern Times, in the Three Great Articles of Knowledge, Happiness, and Virtue* (Cambridge, printed by J. Bentham; for W. Thurlbourn and J. Woodyer, London, 1760) pp. ix-xi. Hardly an objective or critical voice, Gordon's writings – like so many publications of the day – represented a loud but not necessarily respected voice among Britain's enormous print-capitalism output. Gordon did manage to call his readers' attention to the coincidences of Brown's original publication with a broader and more deeply-rooted unease with the state of British manliness. Most of Gordon's readers would have likely agreed more with Cowper's assessment of Brown's ideas than with Gordon's. For a discussion of the irruption of print capitalism in eighteenth-century Britain, see Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture and Society* (London, University College London Press, 1996) pp. 96-103.

³⁰ Though Wolfe died before Amherst accepted the articles of capitulation from the French at Montreal, Amherst was the first agent of empire to serve as the subject for heroics-of-empire history painting. Early paintings of Wolfe's death, such as that by Edward Penny, did not fully subscribe to the visual mythopoesis of the heroics of empire as practiced by Benjamin West.

³¹ "To the Printer of the Public Advertiser," NAL Press Cuttings 1723-1800 : "On reading your Paper of Yesterday, I took notice of your mention of Mr. Hamilton, the ingenious Painter of two Pieces now so much admired at Rome, as being an Englishman; I presume to inform you, that Mr. Hamilton is a Scotchman, and therefore request of you to undeceive the Public in your next, as you at present are blamed for your Partiality, or Misinformation, in this Affair, by many of your Well-wishers...."

³² See Gillingham, "Origins of English Imperialism," and Armitage, *Ideological Origins*, op cit.

³³ See n1 above.

³⁴ Walter Thornbury best exemplifies this trend. See his article entitled "West, the Monarch of Mediocrity" *The Art-Journal* (1 November 1860) pp. 321-323. See also his *Life of J.M.W. Turner, R.A. Founded on the Letters and Papers Furnished by His Friends and Fellow-Academicians*, 2nd edition (London, Chatto and Windus, 1897) p. 17.

³⁵ Charles Godfrey Leland, "Sun-Shine in Thought: Or, Chapters on the Cheerful and Joyous in Literature and Art," *The Knickerbocker; or New York Monthly Magazine* vol. 60, no. 2 (August 1862) pp. 150-160, p. 157.

³⁶ One recent doctoral dissertation on history painting and empire exemplifies this emphasis on Hogarth. See Douglas Fordham, *Raising Standards: Art and Imperial Politics in London, 1745-1776*, unpublished PhD dissertation (New Haven, Yale University, 2003).

³⁷ Books that address West's life and oeuvre include Grose Evans, *Benjamin West and the Taste of His Times* (Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1959); *The World of Benjamin West* (Allentown, Allentown Art Museum, 1962); John Dillenberger, *Benjamin West: The Context of His Life's Work with Particular Attention to Paintings with Religious Subject Matter* (San Antonio, Trinity University Press, 1977); Robert C. Alberts, *Benjamin West: A Biography* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1978); Dorinda Evans, *Benjamin West and His American Students* (Washington DC, National Portrait Gallery, 1980); Nancy L. Pressly, *Revealed Religion: Benjamin West's Commissions for Windsor Castle and Fonthill Abbey*, exh. cat. (San Antonio, San Antonio Museum Association, 1983); Ann Uhry Abrams, *The Valiant Hero: Benjamin West and Grand-Style History Painting* (Washington DC, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985); Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1986); *Benjamin West: American Painter at the English Court*, exh. cat. (Baltimore, Baltimore Museum of Art, 1989); Derrick R. Cartwright, *Benjamin West: Allegory and Allegiance*, exh. cat. (San Diego, Timken Museum of Art, 2004). Exemplary articles and chapters include Edgar Wind, "The Revolution of History Painting," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 2 (1938) 116-127; Reinhardt Leslie, "British and Indian Identities in a Picture by Benjamin West," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* vol. 31, no. 3 (1998) pp. 283-305; Laura Rigal, "Framing the Fabric: A Luddite Reading of Penn's Treaty with the Indians," *American Literary History* vol. 12, no 3 (Fall 2000) pp. 557-584; David Bindman, "Americans in London: Contemporary History Painting Revisited," in Christiana Payne and William Vaughan, eds., *English Accents: Interactions with British Art c. 1776-1855* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004) pp. 9-27 [Bindman repeats Edgar Wind's erroneous claim that West "was the inventor of the genre of history painting" (10)]; Philippe Bourdes, *Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David* (Paris, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1983) [discusses West's influence on David]; Olivier Meslay, "Benjamin West entre Philadelphie, Londres et Paris," in *L'art américain: Identités d'une nation*, Veerle Thielemans and Matthias Waschek, eds. (Chicago, Terra Foundation for American Art, 2005) pp. 15-41.

³⁸ Notable exceptions include Alexander Nemerov, "Ashes of Germanicus and the Skin of Painting," *Yale Journal of Criticism* vol. 11, no. 1 (1998) pp. 11-25.

³⁹ Giorgio Vasari's 1550 *Vite de più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori*, which included legends of divine portent and dramatic coincidence in the lives of Florentine artists circulated widely in London throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Vasari applied the structural principles of Plutarch's *Lives* to artists' biographies and West mimicked Vasari's model through the Galt biography.

⁴⁰ West is at least partially to blame for this phenomenon. Following the death of fellow history painter James Barry, West became very concerned about what his paintings would say about him following his own death. Rather than risk fading into complete obscurity, he set about to create the Vasarian life, published under John Galt's name, in order to secure himself a place in posterity. The tactic worked. For a discussion of West and the autobiography that offers an alternative perspective, see Susan Rather's "Benjamin West's Professional Endgame and the Historical Conundrum of William Williams," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, vol. 59, no. 4 (October 2002) pp. 821-864; and "Benjamin West, John Galt, and the Biography of 1816," *Art Bulletin* vol. 86, no. 2 (June 2004) pp. 324-345. Perhaps one of the most egregious examples of the diversions created by the poor art-historical scholarship that privileges details of the textual biography over the artist's oeuvre appears in John Dillenberger's misreading of the caption beneath the engraved portrait in the 1905 edition of John Thomas Smith's 1845 *A Book for a Rainy Day, or Recollections of the Events of the Years 1766-1833*, Wilfred Whitten, ed. (London, 1905) p. 91. Had Dillenberger located the first edition of the book, published in 1845, he would have noted that neither the portrait of West nor the caption beneath it appeared anywhere in the work. Moreover, the caption in the 1905 edition actually states, "Sir, I was once a Quaker, and have never left their principles," rather than "Sir, I was once a Quaker, but have since left their principles," the latter of which supports Dillenberger's

claims regarding West's Anglicanism in the consideration of his religious paintings. A simple cross-reference would have brought Dillenberger to Volume VI of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (1882), page 495 of which quotes West as having stated, "I was once a Quaker, and have never left the principle." See John Dillenberger, *Benjamin West: The Context of His Life's Work with Particular Attention to Paintings with Religious Subject Matter* (San Antonio, Trinity University Press, 1977) p. 2.

⁴¹ On civic humanism and the public sphere in the eighteenth century, see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Thomas Berger, trans., with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Polity, 1989/1962) and J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Tradition* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975). See also John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: 'The Body of the Public'* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1986). For a critical assessment of Barrell's deployment of the principles of civic humanism and the public sphere, see Andrew Hemingway's thoughtful review essay, "The Political Theory of Painting without the Politics," *Art History*, vol. 10, no. 3 (September 1987) pp. 381-395. See also Solkin, *Painting for Money*, op cit.

⁴² See Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, *A Notion of the Historical Draught or Tablature of the Judgment of Hercules, According to Prodicus* (London, printed for A. Baldwin, 1713).

⁴³ See William Hole, *The Ornaments of Churches Considered, with a Particular View to the Late Decoration of the Parish Churches of St. Margaret Westminster. To Which is Subjoined, an Appendix, Containing, the History of the Said Church; an Account of the Altar-Piece, and Stained Glass Window erected over it; A State of the Prosecution It Has Occasioned; and Other Papers* (Oxford, printed by W. Jackson, 1761) pp. 142-143.

⁴⁴ The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce was founded in 1754; the first exhibition opened 21 April 1760; the principal artists, dissatisfied with the arrangement of pictures, distribution of premiums and free access to the public (including the "lower sorts"), seceded and produced their own exhibition at Spring-Gardens; in the following year; in 1765 the group received a royal charter as the Society of Artists; in 1768 Joseph Wilton, Edward Penny, Richard Wilson, Benjamin West, William Chambers, George Moser, Paul Sandby and Francis Newton resigned from the Society of Artists and, along with Joshua Reynolds, approached George III with a plan for a Royal academy; those who remained in the Society for the Encouragement exhibited as the Free Society of Artists, those who remained in the Society of Artists continued to exhibit until 1771 and the Royal Academy held its first exhibition in 1769. See Algernon Graves, *The Society of Artists of Great Britain, 1760-1791, the Free Society of Artists, 1761-1783: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work from the Foundation of the Societies to 1791* (London, G. Bell and Sons, 1907) pp. 295-341. See also Matthew Hargraves, *Candidates for Fame: The Society of Artists of Great Britain, 1760-1791* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2005). As a colonial, West retained just enough foreignness to satisfy the long-standing English penchant for non-native painters; as a subject of the English crown he could at the same time benefit from the call for the support of British artists.

⁴⁵ George II was the last English monarch to engage in combat.

Chapter 1 – West’s First Heroics of Empire History Painting

A wound, which now confined me to my tent,
Was scarcely dress’d – e’er DIESKAU they present,
Fainting with loss of blood in the retreat;
With soothing speech his grief I mitigate,
Guarded, while surgeons minister relief,
From *Indians*, vowing to revenge their chief.¹

Shortly after his arrival in London, West produced his first empire-themed history painting: *General William Johnson Saving a Wounded French Officer from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian* (fig. 6). The picture presents the commander of the British forces in New York in the act of preventing a Mohawk warrior from scalping a French soldier, who has fallen to the ground as the result of a wound to his leg. By depicting General Johnson saving an enemy from scalping, West merged a number of different pictorial elements from different painting genres to elevate a modern subject to the exalted realm of history painting, just as Francis Hayman had done in two of the four heroics of empire history paintings that he installed at Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens between 1760 and 1764 (figs. 7 and 8). West’s picture differs from Hayman’s heroics of empire history paintings in one crucial aspect: in *General Johnson* the American artist contrived a moment of decisive action in which classical martial virtue and modern imperial heroism converge. Hayman’s paintings, on the other hand, present their heroes of empire as the passive recipients of surrender and homage. West showed imperial martial heroism in action; Hayman portrayed the consequences of imperial martial virtue.

Three adult males dominate the picture, arranged in a triangular foreground composition. The central figure, who occupies the position closest to the top edge of the picture plane, represents General William Johnson (1715-1774). An Irish-born New York colonist who assumed the superintendence of Indian affairs for George II in 1755, Johnson led a group of British, provincial and Native American soldiers in the battle of Lake George. Despite an injury that kept their commander from the field, Johnson's troops prevailed over the French forces under Jean-Armand Dieskau (1701-1767); Johnson earned a baronetcy for his success.² To the viewer's left appears an adult Native American male with accoutrements and hairstyle most closely associated with a Mohawk warrior. Near the lower edge of the picture plane, a light-skinned adult male reclines on the ground. Scholars identify this figure as Ludwig August and/or Jean-Armand, Baron de Dieskau, commander of the French forces in the Battle of Lake George.³ In the middle ground, behind Johnson in pictorial space, stands a pair of light-skinned adult males dressed in the military uniform of the British regular Light Infantryman. Each holds a rifle with bayonet; one rests the butt of his weapon on the ground, grasping the barrel with both hands just below the blade of the bayonet. The other holds the butt with his left hand with the barrel resting against his left shoulder. The male to the viewer's left wears the garb of the 46th Foot and the other the 60th foot.⁴

Beyond the duo appears a group of three Native Americans, separated by what appears to be several yards from dozens of British soldiers of in formation. Light-colored geometrical forms suggesting large enclosures such as tents or buildings indicate that the

soldiers have established an encampment that occupies the central horizon of the area behind the two light infantrymen. In the distance beyond the camp, a set of hills or low mountains rises from right to left from a barely visible body of water, which viewers would recognize as Lake George. West divided the upper half of the picture plane into a triangle of blue sky, interrupted only by white clouds and gray smoke rising from the camp to the viewer's right, with an opposing triangle composed of dense deciduous forest. A large swath of bark has been stripped from one of the most prominent trees in the wooded landscape. At the base of that tree a wounded or dead British soldier lies in a supine position, the buttons of his coat reflecting the dim light of the forest. Though difficult to ascertain, a patch of color on the canvas matching the color of that soldier's skin indicates that the man may have been scalped.

In structuring *General Johnson* West introduced a visual barrage of authenticating detail into a well-established English military portraiture format: the main figures appear in the foreground; landscape constitutes one side of the background and the encampment dominates the other side. Johnson occupies the central portion of the canvas. His comparative height, his position in pictorial space and his relationship to the other foreground characters identify him as the most important of the three figures in the triangular arrangement and in the composition. But West's approach also transcends the military portraiture tradition in that it offers a carefully-constructed inventory of visual detail. Not only did West not witness Johnson's encounter with his French counterpart at the Battle of Lake George, the event never transpired. West's use of authenticating detail

serves to persuade the viewer that West's picture can function as what twentieth-century viewers would characterize as an eyewitness account. Johnson wears a black tricorn hat, trimmed in gold and festooned with a black and gold cockade. His unpowdered hair protrudes from beneath his hat at just above collar length in back and on the sides, allowing for the lower half of his right ear to come into view. A thin blue or black ribbon, knotted high on his neck, gathers in a loose knot just below his chin, with one end falling down to the middle of his chest. A small strip of his white shirt collar appears from beneath the simple red double-breasted coat, which he wears over a red waistcoat. The coat lacks trim on the lapels and sleeve cuffs. Spherical gold buttons on both coat and waistcoat reflect the light. Johnson's dark breeches meet either leggings or dark boots just below the knee. A gold ribbon encircles each of his lower legs just above the calf. His footwear is obscured from view. The handle of his sword appears on his left side, oriented in such a way as to suggest that his scabbard is either placed behind him, hanging on a diagonal just below the buttocks, or that the paint has faded such that the scabbard has partially disappeared from the surface of the picture. Johnson extends his right arm, forefinger positioned as if pointing toward the forested landscape that occupies the upper portion of the canvas to the viewer's left. Johnson's left arm extends downward, his left hand pressing firmly against the elbow of the Native American male who stands before him in pictorial space. West painted the faces of Johnson and the Native American such that the men appear to look directly into one another's eyes. The

positions of the men's left arms suggest that Johnson has stopped the Native American in mid-action by pressing downward on his extending left arm.

Atop the indigene's shaved head appears a small knot of hair interlaced with red and black feathers and beads. Dark-colored fabric with red trim billows behind him, as if catching a gust of wind. The fabric, which is secured at his waist, drapes across his left shoulder and forearm. Strips of red and dark-colored cloth encircle his left wrist. The man's right shoulder, pectoral and arm are fully exposed, except for strips of red and black cloth around the right wrist. Suspended from a leather strap that runs diagonally across his chest from his left shoulder to waist-level on the right side of his torso hangs a beaded red and black wampum pouch with beaded fringe. A combination of West's poor rendering of anatomy, weakness in coloration fading paint confuse the Indian's pelvic area, which appears to be clad in a loincloth that covers the buttocks and hangs down to just above the knee in the back. The forward right leg obscures the genitals, leaving the viewer to assume that the loincloth covers the area. A comparison of the Native American in the foreground with the Indian beyond indicates that the garment covers the genitals, leaving the buttocks fully exposed. His left leg extends back, his bare feet striking the ground in a stance that suggests a full walking or perhaps running stride. The right foot fully contacts the ground surface; West portrayed the left foot with only the toes and a small portion of the ball of the foot on the ground.

Prominently situated between the Indian's left foot and the viewer appears the stump of a tree, rising several inches from the rich, dark soil. The man's right hand

clenches a tomahawk handle at about its midpoint. The shallow curve of the sharpened blade and the shiny wooden handle catch the light. The Native American's flexes his left wrist, his hand cupped in a "grabbing" gesture. West created the sense that the Native American male was moving from left to right across the picture plane when contact from Johnson's left hand interrupted the motion. A number of pictorial elements heighten the effect of motion: the curvature of the wampum pouch, the position of a feathered medallion that hangs from one of three gold chains encircling the Indian's neck and – most especially – the perforated right earlobe, to which the man has attached three earrings that fasten around a loop of flesh created by a deep cut that separates the lobe from the rest of the ear. The position of the man's head also suggests that he has just looked up to meet Johnson's gaze, which exacerbates the motion of the perforated earlobe.

The third figure in the triangular central composition of *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Soldier*, a light-skinned adult male, occupies the lowest position in West's carefully-constructed pictorial hierarchy. Compared to the other figures whose faces are visible in the scene, the man on the ground appears older by several years or perhaps even one or more decades. This figure, most likely the French commander Jean-Armand de Dieskau, reclines on the ground before the Native American and below and to Johnson's left in pictorial space. He wears a light blue-gray double-breasted coat, lined with dark blue with matching dark blue frogging at the cuffs. The facing color of the dark blue lined waistcoat and breeches matches that of the coat. The left leg of his

breeches rolls up, exposing the knee, part of the shin and the lower part of the thigh. A darkened area on the part of the left thigh that contacts the ground suggests blood from a wound. The back and bottom of the man's coat twist beneath him, leading the viewer's eye to the reflective handle of his sword and the silver-trimmed black tricorne hat which rests on the ground between him and the bottom right corner of the picture plane.

Spherical silver buttons adorn the coat, cuffs and waistcoat. The ruffled front of his shirt appears from beneath the waistcoat the ruffled sleeves protrude from beneath the frogged cuffs of the coat. The shadow cast by the Native American obscures the lower portions of both of the French commander's legs so that the viewer cannot determine what type of shoes or boots he wears. His coiffure suggests powdered hair or wig, worn brushed back from the forehead, curled upwards at the ear and tied with a ribbon at the nape of the neck. Combined, the man's skin tone, the powder in his hair and the color of his clothing create an ashen, sallow form that sharply contrasts the vigorous coloring of Johnson, the British soldiers and the Native Americans.

Dieskau rests his weight on the left side of his body, with the left hip and hand resting directly on the ground. The pale skin of his exposed right knee, which moves toward the viewer as it bends, contrasts dramatically with the dark flesh of the Native American's leg and foot. Dieskau's right leg extends toward the viewer's left, as if occupying a space between Johnson and the Indian. The French commander twists his torso away from the approaching Indian, while pushing against the ground with his feet. His right arm crosses his upper body just below the chin, bending at the elbow so that his

right hand rises to the same level as his head, which he turns as he looks at his would-be attacker. The palm of Dieskau's right hand faces away from the viewer, fingers splayed in a dramatic gesture that suggests a desire to escape the Indian, who reaches for the commander's hair with his left hand in order to scalp him with the tomahawk that he carries in his right.

The Narrative Moment

Dieskau...was found resting on a stump, being wounded through the leg and both hips. General Johnson had received a wound, which was just bound up, when the baron was brought to his tent, being assisted by the ablest surgeons, and protected from the threats of our Indians, who had lost forty of their stoutest warriors, and one of their chiefs, in the first engagement. This was old Hendrick, a sachem, or king, of the Mohawks, and a friend to the general. This valiant Indian, and his followers, fell furiously fighting with their tomahawks, while our men retreated, and are said to have done considerable execution. The old sachem had a son on duty in the camp, and word being brought that his father was killed, he set up a death-cry after their manner, and clapping his hand on his heart, swore *That his father was yet living there, and he would revenge his death.* This threatening he was for executing on Dieskau, and it required no little address to protect the one, without exasperating the other. Revenge is certainly a ruling passion with these savages. Among civilized nations,, it is only harboured in weak minds; but with them it is the result of an early institution, for which they want not examples of courage and generosity.⁵

Based on published reports of the wounding and capture of French soldiers at Lake George, including Dieskau, the action here represented between these particular individuals never transpired. By Johnson's own account, the British "took several prisoners, amongst whom was the Baron de Dieskau, the French general of all the regular

forces lately arrived from Europe, who was brought to my tent about six o'clock, just as a wound I received was dressed."⁶ West combined elements from various versions of the story to improve upon the actualities of the event to craft a pictorial encomium on Johnson's imperial martial virtue. West drew many of the central elements from his Philadelphia mentor William Smith, who offered these details of the capture:

As soon as the artillery began to play, Dieskau and his regulars found themselves totally deserted by the militia and savages, who all skulked into the swamps, took to trees, and maintained a scattered fire upon our flanks, for some time, with variable and intermittent briskness. Having now no command of any part of his army, except his handful of regulars, the baron thought proper to retire; which he did in very great disorder. A party from the camp followed him, fell upon his rear, dispersed the remaining soldiers about him, and being himself wounded in the leg, was found resting on a stump, utterly abandoned and destitute of succour. Feeling for his watch, to surrender it, one of our men suspecting him in search of a pistol, poured a charge thro' his hips; of which wound he is not yet recovered.⁷

In the painting, General Johnson replaces the British soldier who came upon the wounded Dieskau, "supporting himself on the stump of a tree, a little distance from the field of battle."⁸ Contemporary accounts suggest that it was in Johnson's tent that the American commander first encountered Dieskau: "Recognizing his enemy's wounds as the more savage, Johnson refused to allow the surgeon to attend his own until Dieskau had been treated, and protected him from the Indians who thirsted to 'kill, scalp, burn, and even eat him' in revenge from the death of Hendrick, the old Mohawk chief," who had been one of the conflict's early casualties.⁹ West captured the Mohawks' vengeful rage in the tomahawk-bearing Native American and symbolized the intercession that took place in Johnson's tent in the general's act of saving Dieskau from the blade of that weapon.

Johnson's treatment of Dieskau following the events at Lake George quickly took its place within the mythopoetics of British imperial virtue. According to Moffett, Johnson dispatched the French commander, "under carefully chosen escort and attended by Dieskau's own aide-de-camp and another Frenchman, to Albany and to New York, where letters sent in advance assured him courtesy and hospitality until almost eighteen months afterward."¹⁰ Another twentieth-century source expounded upon Johnson's legendary magnanimity: "Dieskau was nursed in Johnson's Albany house by Johnson's sister until the invalid could return to France, where he died in 1767 of the aftereffect of his wounds. 'I cannot,' the marshal had written, 'too much acknowledge Mr. de Johnson's kindness to me.'"¹¹ After he returned to France following an exchange of prisoners, Dieskau often recounted Johnson's kindness.¹²

The Marble Canon

As presented, *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Officer* suffices to convey West's message of imperial martial virtue. As an artist in the early stages of developing his own brand of heroics of empire history painting, West desired to convey his message as forcefully as possible by elevating his modern subject to the realm of antiquity. To position himself as a liberal artist of the highest levels of aesthetic ambition, West followed the well-established eighteenth-century practice of fashioning the characters in this painting after the greatest surviving examples of Greek and Roman

sculpture. Among visitors to West's studio who saw *General Johnson*, those who had traveled to Rome on the Grand Tour would have immediately recognized West's homage to four of the seven most highly esteemed antique marble statues: the *Apollo Belvedere*, the *Borghese Gladiator*, the *Dying Myrmillo* and the *Farnese Hercules*. Along with the *Medici Venus*, the Vatican *Meleager* and the *Laocöon*, these works attracted the most attention from tourists, critics, artists and theorists.¹³ Artists spent time sketching these and other, lesser works while on the Grand Tour and a number of plaster copies circulated in London during the eighteenth century.¹⁴

Though he did so less explicitly in this painting than in portraits, West based his figure of William Johnson on the *Apollo Belvedere* (fig. 9). The close physical interaction necessitated by the central narrative event did not lend itself to a full-length portrait in the *Apollo* stance, so West modified the outstretched arm of the general and echoed the position in one of the three Native Americans grouped in the background (fig. 10). In that group, the Indian whose back faces the viewer quotes the *Farnese Hercules*, especially in West's treatment of the buttocks and legs (fig. 11). The Mohawk warrior in the foreground grouping mimics almost exactly the classical statue known as the *Borghese Gladiator* (fig. 12).¹⁵ To model Dieskau, West chose *Dying Myrmillo*, also called *Dying Gladiator* (fig. 13).¹⁶

Each of the classical models for the figures in West's painting conveys both a general message about modern imperial heroism and messages specific to the narrative that West constructed for the image. The broader idea that West communicated through

his choice of models relates to the heroic ideal of imperial conquest. By modeling Johnson after the eighteenth century's epitome of masculine beauty, West elevates Johnson's act of clemency toward Dieskau to the pinnacle of moral virtue. In the context of modern territorial conquest, masculine beauty derives less from physical appearance and corporeal grace than from the exemplification of British character. West derived the Indian and the Frenchman from among the eighteenth-century's confirmed masterpieces of ancient sculpture to imbue *General Johnson's* entire cast of characters with the aesthetic temperament and the intellectual seriousness of antiquity. The use of the *Borghese Gladiator* for the Native American and the *Dying Myrmillo* for Dieskau connect through an unexpected point of historical fact, however. Though they could purchase manumission, gladiators were, for the most part, slaves. Slaves could act heroically, but they remained slaves nonetheless.

Those viewers who saw this work in his studio over the years would have acknowledged the logic in deriving modern figures in a heroic composition from antique statues of slaves. In eighteenth-century political and cultural discourse, the French suffered from two forms of slavery: enslavement by popish superstition, otherwise known as Roman Catholicism and enslavement by absolute monarchy. In the statue that West's French soldier references, the dying gladiator still wears the cord around his neck that identifies him as a slave either forced into or perhaps sold into gladiatorial combat; West invites the viewer to imagine the same cord beneath the ruffled collar of Dieskau's shirt. To add rhetorical emphasis to the contrast between English constitutional liberty

and French monarchical and ecclesiastical enslavement, West depicts the ribbon that encircles Johnson's neck as so loosely knotted that it appears to unravel (fig. 14). In the minds of the British, the North American Indian was enslaved by his own savagery and the rude state of his cultural development. What distinguishes the indigene from the Frenchman in this image and in the broader discourses of racial and national identities is the former's susceptibility to improvement through civilization, as evidenced by West's portrayal of the Native American in the middle distance in the attitude of the *Apollo Belvedere*.

Expression of the Passions

The artists and patrons who would have recognized West's references to works from classical antiquity would have also recognized his engagements with the seventeenth-century French painter and art theorist Charles Le Brun (1619-1690). As the president of France's reconstituted Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture and *premier peintre du roi*, Le Brun lived the ideal of early modern artistic success to which West and his contemporaries aspired. By the mid-1760s Le Brun's seminal lecture entitled *Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière* circulated in English translation as *The Conference of Monsieur Le Brun*.¹⁷ The lecture and the drawings that Le Brun and his successors produced to illustrate his principles codified the expression of human emotion so that the painted representation of facial muscles – and most especially

the position of the brow – conveyed recognizable state of emotion. Just as the figures of classical sculpture assumed a role in the pictorial vocabularies of the visual heroics of empire, so too did Le Brun's expression of the passions inform the modern imperial history painting. Le Brun had served as first painter to Louis XIV, who personally supervised the artist's work on *Les Reines de Perse aux Pieds d'Alexandre* (fig. 15). Invoking Le Brun's emotive formulae carried a host of associations, including royal patronage for the arts and the establishment of a royal academy. In his efforts to advance those causes, Hayman had gone so far as to cast himself as the English Le Brun by basing the compositional format of *The Surrender of Montreal to General Amherst* on *Les Reines de Perse* and by contributing his own reworking of Le Brun's drawings of various emotional states to the 1763 edition of *The Preceptor* (fig. 16).¹⁸

West's treatment of the figures in *General Johnson* draws the viewer's eye to the British general's purposeful gaze, relaxed brow and firmly set mouth; he appears determined, but without any trace of anger or menace. Though one might characterize a situation such as that presented in the painting as violent and chaotic, Johnson's face registers tranquility (figs. 14 and 17). His eyes, in turn, lead to the face of the Mohawk warrior. The war-paint design that arcs from the center of his right cheek and across his forehead frames his raised eyebrows, open mouth, wide-eyed gaze and the position of his head, which when combined suggest a sudden shift in his emotional state from rage to astonishment at the interruption (figs. 18 and 19). Similarly, the deeply knitted brow,

widely-opened eyes and gaping mouth of the Frenchman indicate a very intense emotional state that includes both terror and astonishment (fig. 20).

The mixture of passions that registers on the indigene's face clarifies the power of imperial intervention: when exposed to the civilizing hand of English virtue, British imperial magnanimity and Anglican Protestantism, the savage transforms from a state of primal, pagan treachery into a god-fearing ally of the heroic agent of territorial conquest. As Gloria Vivenza notes, "The initial configuration of benevolence/beneficence excluded equal relationships: this virtue was the prerogative of those in 'high' positions, with the power to command and responsibility for administrative duties. In theory, it was taken for granted that they acted for the good of all."¹⁹ Assigning to the Native American the same type of facial expression that might convey the passions of a more fully "civilized" European, West demonstrates that a mere touch by a benevolent British hand or word from a beneficent British mouth can instantaneously improve the savage by sheer virtue of physical contact. In this instance, then, the use of Le Brun's iconography serves a purpose similar to that of West's posing a Native American as the *Apollo Belvedere*: from enslaved gladiator to civilized ally – from the most savage, primitive state to the most elevated passions of the human soul. West would deploy this theme, to which I will return in more detail, in the pictures that established him as Britain's most successful history painter ever.

Conjecturing Artistic Intent: Attaching the Indians to British Interest

The soldiers yet an incident relate
Of *Indian* valour, e'er the foes retreat,
Worthy to vie with that of *Rome*, or *Greece*:
A planter in the action burst his piece
Just as their column fought the camp to force,
And native courage seem'd our last resource –
What shall I do without a piece he cries?
Take mine the *Indian* gallantly replies –
Nor hesitates but down the firelock flings
And in an instant o'er the breast-work springs,
A french-man then disarm'd and shot him dead...²⁰

A pictorial variation on the broadly-popular theme of clemency and continence in conquest, West's *General Johnson* introduces to the visual heroics of empire an important sub-motif: the military and moral benefits of attaching Indians to the British interest.²¹ Freed from the corrupting influence of the French, Native Americans could expect the redoubling of Britons' efforts to "gospelize" them, a plan devised well before Johnson's victory at Lake George:

...[I] cannot but just observe here, as a proper ground for gladness and rejoicing to all of us, who have any serious concern for the interests of religion, and the salvation of mens souls, that by the great things which God has lately done, and is still doing for us, he seems, in his providence, to be preparing the way for a much more general and extensive propagation of the gospel among the savage nations of America; for enlarging the kingdom of Christ; and reclaiming from the error of their way to the wisdom of the just, not only those who are altogether heathen, but those who have hitherto been deluded and infatuated by the Romish missionaries.... ...[I]f the honorable and reverend 'Society for propagating the gospel in foreign parts,' should see cause to employ some considerable portion of the charities entrusted to their prudent and pious care, in so noble an enterprize, so good a work, as that of gospelizing the savages in the extensive wildernesses of America...all the world would applaud them.²²

In 1763, the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge published a pamphlet to “give the public some general view, what appearances there are, that the *British* conquests in *North America* may be improven, for diffusing among the Heathen nations there, the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.”²³ Converting Native Americans to Anglican Protestantism could diminish the enmities between Britons and Native Americans, mitigating the frequency and intensity of military conflict. But the ecclesiastical agents of empire also kept other benefits in mind: “if only here and there a Tribe were civilized, christianized, and Husbandry introduced among them, what agreeable Places of Retreat might these be for our Missionaries!”²⁴ Even if the challenge of transforming savage enemies into polite denizens of the empire did not grow less difficult, at least life for the frontier minister could certainly improve.

Anglican ministers had witnessed the greatest returns on their efforts by establishing the Indian Charity School at the Lebanon settlement in colonial Connecticut and in the education and ordination of one Samson Occom (1723-1792), of the Mohegan peoples. Two years after Occom’s ordination by the Long Island presbytery at Easthampton, the Scottish Commissioners of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge voted funding for an Indian youth named David Fowler, who was to

accompany Mr. *Sampson Occom*, going on a Mission to the *Oneidas*, that said *David* be supported on said Mission for a term not exceeding 4 Months; and that he endeavour on his Return to bring with him a Number of *Indian* Boys, not exceeding three.... [H]e set out on *June 10th*, by way of *New-York*; in which Journey he rode above a thousand Miles, and by the Advice, Direction and Assistance of (39) Sir WILLIAM JOHNSON obtained three Boys of the *Mohawk* Nation, who were willing to leave their Friends and Country and come among Strangers of another Language, and quite another Manner of Living, and where,

perhaps, no one of their Nation then living had ever been; and among a People of whom their Nation have been of a long Time inclined to entertain Jealousies.²⁵

In the years that followed Fowler's successful mission, Johnson remained one of the Indian Charity School's most ardent supporters, working diligently to maintain a steady flow of young Mohawk males to Lebanon.²⁶ Even before the signing of the Peace of Paris in 1763, the ideas and ideals of English Protestant Christianity and global territorial dominion had begun to permeated discourses of national and global identity: "it is now the Birth-right of Englishmen, to carry, not only good Manners, but the purest Light of the Gospel, where Barbarism and Ignorance totally prevailed."²⁷ One could read West's *Johnson* as a model of modern imperial martial virtue in whom impulses of the true Christian and the magnanimous conqueror converge.

Despite the mythos that arose around Johnson's treatment of Dieskau, the general's interceding gesture and West's painting relate to contemporary efforts to align Native Americans with Britons' imperial objectives as much as they concern Dieskau's fate. In West's conception, and in the conception of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, Johnson demonstrated imperial martial virtue by protecting the Mohawk warrior from his own "savage and sordid Practices, as [he had] been inured to from [his] Mother's Womb."²⁸ Johnson's gesture on Dieskau's behalf symbolizes the imperial martial virtue and thus the moral superiority of the English over the French, but his firm grip on the forearm of the Mohawk signals Johnson's commitment to advance the cause of empire such that "that the Redeemer may have the Heathen for a heritage, and the uttermost ends of the earth for a possession."²⁹ As the prime "supporter of the

British Indian Interest in general, and great *Patronizer*” of the Indian Charity School, Johnson believed in the value of merging politics with religion in the cause of empire.³⁰ The resoluteness with which West portrays Johnson suggests the Mohawk who intended to scalp Dieskau could one day follow the example of Reverend Samson Occom.

To the twenty-first-century eye, West’s intent to extol the civilizing power of British imperial virtue seems evident. But in order to fully understand the complexity of West’s composition, one must consider two additional elements in the picture: West’s emphasis on the soil from which the Mohawk warrior seems to “spring” and the extra-narrative implications of the tree stump in the foreground. One of the major “scientific” theories that permeated eighteenth-century systems of racial classification derived from the idea that soil and climate determined moral character. The dictates of this “moral *terroir*” reinforced centuries-old constructs of Self and Other, usually to the exaltation of the English and the derogation of the alternative. According to this theoretical model, those blessed with the good fortune of having been born on and reared on English soil were the most “susceptible to polish” of all the world’s inhabitants. In his satirical 1762 *The Citizen of the World*, Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) noted,

I know of no country where the influence of soil and climate is more visible than in England.... The vulgar English therefore may be easily distinguished from all the rest of the world, by superior pride, impatience, and a peculiar hardness of soul. Perhaps no qualities in the world are more susceptible to a fine polish than these; artificial complaisance and easy deference being superinduced over these, generally forms a great character; something at once elegant and majestic, affable yet sincere.³¹

Writing some ten years after West's *General Johnson*, Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782) signaled the extent to which such arguments had penetrated the Anglophone imagination:

The stupidity of the inhabitants of New Holland...is occasioned by the barrenness of their soil, yielding nothing that can be food for man or beast. Day and night they watch the ebb of the tide, in order to dig up small fish out of the sand; and sleep in the intervals, without an hour to spare for any other occupation. People in that condition must for ever remain ignorant and brutish. Were all the earth barren like New Holland, all men would be ignorant and brutish, like the inhabitants of New Holland. ...Some soils, naturally fertile, require little labour: some soils, naturally barren, require the extremity of labour. But the advantages of such a soil are more than sufficient to counterbalance its barrenness: the inhabitants are sober, industrious, vigorous; and consequently courageous, so far as courage depends on bodily strength. The disadvantages of a fertile soil, on the contrary, are more than sufficient to counterbalance its advantages: the inhabitants are rendered indolent, weak, and cowardly. ...Arragon was once the most limited monarchy in Europe, England not excepted: the barrenness of the soil was the cause, which rendered the people hardy and courageous. ...Opposed to Arragon stands Egypt, the fertility of which renders the inhabitants soft and effeminate, and consequently an easy prey to every invader.³²

Natural philosophy dictated the directly proportional relationship between the lushness of Asiatic soils and the effeminacy, indolence and superstition of eastern peoples; this concept connected seamlessly to the notion that English constitutional liberty qualified as the ultimate manifestation of human civilization – capable of polishing its own rude inhabitants at home and correcting the vagaries of the primitive and the savage abroad. The poetical proviso “westward the course of empire takes its way” positioned England and its North American colonies as the geographical realization of human imperial destiny.³³ Those who stood upon English (or English-controlled) soil automatically improved upon contact, just as the Native American in West's painting is “struck polite”

by the placement of Johnson's hand on his forearm. Britain's imperial holdings in South Asia proved especially problematic in this regard, as even those who were born in and returned to die in England could never be fully cleansed of the moral taint of contact with eastern soil. The case was less serious with North American soil, as one could hardly associate the often hardscrabble life of Britons in those colonies with luxury and indolence.³⁴

As noted earlier, the tree stump that appears in the imaginary space between the viewer and the Native American served a central function in the narrative of Dieskau's capture: British soldiers discovered him resting against a stump. The cut on the base of the tree and the position of the bark on the side opposite the viewer suggest that the tree would have fallen "toward" the viewer. The absence of the felled trunk would lead the viewer to assume that the tree had been used as part of the breast-work hastily constructed by Johnson's men as their only protection against the approaching French forces. Like the authentic wampum belt, the British uniforms and the Dieskau's rolled-up breeches, the stump added authenticating force to West's completely inauthentic presentation of an encounter that never occurred.³⁵ Beyond its dual role in the narrative and its value as an authenticating element in the composition, the stump also reinforces the notion of the improbability of the Mohawk and the imperial virtue of the British general.

From the outset of the English imperial project in North America, colonizers justified the seizure of lands and the mistreatment of indigenous peoples on the basis that

Native Americans had failed to properly cultivate the land and by this dereliction had relinquished their rights of ownership. In the same way that General William Johnson had improved his New York farm, converting wilderness into productive farmland, his close alliances with those members of tribal groups willing to cooperate with British forces offered the promise of improvement and cultivation, the fruits of which would benefit Britons living in North America by improving their chances for survival and success. As the “Account of General Johnson,” published in the September 1756 issue of *Gentleman’s Magazine and Monthly Intelligencer* notes,

by pursuing, with indefatigable industry, every prudent measure, that occurred, he has...improved wild, woody lands, into plentiful rich farms; thereby has made the pleasure of living in the neighbourhood of wealthy farmers, and industrious tradesmen, all his own tenants, who were first invited thither by him, and from the lowest circumstances, have arrived to what they are, by the liberality of his purse, and the wisdom of his instructions.³⁶

The tree stump against which the wounded Dieskau rested before Johnson discovered him also symbolizes the clearing of land for improvement. Enacting the responsibility of his imperial destiny as a Briton, Johnson clears the Native American of his savagery, civilizing him by manifesting the same sense of virtuous destiny that inspired Britons to clear and cultivate the lands of the North American colonies. In the power of his civilizing paternalism and his clemency in victory, Johnson emblemizes a British martial virtue born of English constitutional liberty and Anglican Protestantism – a virtue so powerful as to overcome natural viciousness of character in two nations with a single gesture.

By the time that he produced *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Soldier*, West had already visually explored the idea of the improvable indigene, quoting the Apollo Belvedere in *Savage Warrior Taking Leave of His Family* (fig. 21). He continued the theme in a set of illustrations for the 1766 London edition of provost William Smith's *An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians in the Year MDCCLXIV*.³⁷ The caption beneath the Charles Grignion (1721-1810) engraving after West's design identifies the scene as "The Indians giving a Talk to Colonel Bouquet in a Conference at a Council Fire, near his Camp on the Banks of Muskingum in North America, in Octr. 1764." West used the commission as another opportunity to visualize the imperial construct of improvement through contact with the British by presenting the animated Native American speaker as a classically-draped a Roman orator (fig. 22). As the founder and administrator of the Indian Charity School at Lebanon noted in a report to on the progress of that institution, such negotiations with the agents of British imperialism afforded Native Americans an opportunity to demonstrate classical rhetorical and oratorical skills, the development of which helped to wrest them from a natural state of savagery:

But capable the Natives of *yonder distant World* are making *civil, moral, and religious* Improvements, (and those very speedy ones too) is demonstrable, not only from the Instance of the Reverend Mr *Occom*, but also from the Progress which several of the *Indians*, now employed, have actually made in *Greek and Latin*, as well as in *English Oratory*, before they were sent forth to act in a public Character. The Care taken in teaching them to *speak* as well as read, write, and behave well, is mentioned because 'as among other free Nations, so among the *Indians, Orators* are in the highest Esteem. To be able to speak well in public is the shortest and most infallible Road to Honour and Influence among those *uncontrolled Lords of the Desert*."³⁸

In modern English minds, the commitment to oratorical prowess represented a milestone in the processes of civilization. Exposure to and mastery of classical modes of expression informed Johnson's benevolent gesture toward the wounded Dieskau, and helped West to situate the picture, its subject and the viewer within the visually epic and heroic realms of *ut pictura poesis*.³⁹ At the same time, by directly referencing the act of oratorical performance, West indirectly promotes the idea, derived from Leon Battista Alberti, that a painting is an argument. In doing so, West constructs the Indian-as-Roman-orator narrative as a pictorial idiom within the realm of *ut rhetorica pictura*.⁴⁰ As West sought to improve the rhetorical force and complexity of his paintings through ever-more-ambitious compositions, he fused the epic-heroic with the potent visual argument for conquest through the application of imperial virtue. Generally speaking, the argumentative nature of West's heroics of empire history paintings distinguished his works from those of his fellow Society of Artists exhibitors.⁴¹

Though compositionally dissimilar to West's other paintings from early in his career, in its physical dimensions, this canvas compares to another picture that West completed the same year: *The Choice of Hercules*, a close study of the painting of the same scene by Nicolas Poussin (figs. 23 and 24). In addition to their physical similarities, the works' subjects complement one another as well. *Hercules* depicts the moment at which the hero chooses between pleasure and virtue, while *General Johnson* portrays its modern hero as the force of English martial virtue mediating between native savagery and French effeminacy. Upon first encounter, one might not immediately

connect *General Johnson* to Poussin's Franco-Roman classicism, perhaps distracted by the utterly modern subject matter. Close inspection by the visually and textually literate eighteenth-century viewer, however, would reveal that West had imbued his portrayal of the British commander with the same moral gravitas and classicizing refinements that permeate Poussin's works. West saw Poussin's *Hercules* while visiting Stourhead shortly after he arrived in London. The decision to mimic Poussin's composition reflects West's desire to establish himself as an artistic heir to the seventeenth-century French master, a desire manifested with increasing determination over the course of the 1760s. In his *Choice of Hercules* West carefully avoided the stylistic and compositional choices present in another, more familiar treatment of the subject, Paolo de Matteis's painting for Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, engravings after which circulated throughout Britain during the first half of the eighteenth century (fig. 25).⁴² Though his practices as an artist suggest that he would have concurred with many of the principles espoused by Shaftesbury in his 1713 description of the painting, entitled *A Notion of the Historical Draught or Tablature of the Judgment of Hercules, According to Prodicus*, West, even as early as 1764, would have seen himself as an artist far superior to Matteis.⁴³ Artists who undertook the Grand Tour during the eighteenth century aligned themselves with certain aesthetic conventions that they encountered while in Rome. West's *Hercules* announced his intention to aspire to Poussin's particular brand of intellectual-artistic production, which included carefully-constructed compositions drawn

from classical literature and the combination of different components and practices into a single painting.⁴⁴

In the pictorial calculus of West's painting, Johnson does not play the role of Hercules, but instead serves as the allegorical figure of Virtue. The viewer, then, assumes the role of Hercules, watching as the powers of Virtue manifest in an act that combines civilizing intervention with clemency and continence in conquest. Through constructs of visual persuasion, *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Soldier from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian* exhorts the would-be viewer to act heroically by choosing imperial martial virtue.⁴⁵ Anyone fortunate enough to happen upon the painting in West's studio would have assumed that Johnson's slightly parted lips, his direct eye contact with the Native American and the gesture of his right arm meant that he was not only speaking to the warrior, but speaking in the warrior's native language, which he was able to do "with great facility."⁴⁶ This physical, verbal and symbolic contact with Johnson transforms the Native American – before the viewer's eyes – from savage warrior to classical gladiator in an instant. West's message is clear: the imperial martial virtue that distinguished Britons from their French adversaries would liberate Native Americans from the bonds of their own savagery. Unfortunately – and not a little ironically – West chose not to exhibit this work because of the *failure* of English imperial virtue to prevail over the putative savagery of the North American Indian.

Constructing the Imperial Other: Effeminacy and Cruelty

Dieskau's eyes and brow and the position of his mouth suggest that he "squalls" in terror as he tries to evade the enraged Indian's grasp. In the 1760s, "to squall" meant "to scream like a woman affrighted."⁴⁷ Londoners generally believed that the French were foppish and effeminate in their domestic culture and unwontedly cruel and intractably perfidious in their military and political conduct. By the time that West painted *General Johnson*, an overwhelming body of published evidence declaimed French effeminacy and perfidiousness.⁴⁸ As Courtney Noble has proposed, Dieskau's position on the ground, his exposed knee and the twist in his torso call to mind the allegorical female figure of Pleasure in Paolo de Matteis's 1713 *Choice of Hercules*.⁴⁹ Though the idea of Dieskau as allegory for feminine seduction seems out of place in this particular painting, West did intend to identify Dieskau as effeminate, which in the eighteenth century did not necessarily have the same meaning as "feminine." Representing Dieskau cowering on the ground and howling like a woman affrighted resonated beyond gendered formulations of national identity. Britons, including West, would know that Dieskau would not have been the only man screaming in such a situation: the Native American in would have let out a different kind of scream – the same blood-curdling yelp that had paralyzed the unsuspecting British troops who fell in

the brutal and humiliating massacre at the Battle of Monongahela exactly three months prior to Johnson's capture of Dieskau.⁵⁰ An article published in the *London Magazine* clarifies the power of the Native American war cry:

...it has lately been observed, that fear is received by the ear, as well as the eyes, and the *Indian* war-cry is represented as too dreadful to be endured, as a sound that will force the bravest Veteran to drop his weapon, and desert his rank; that will deafen his ear, and chill his breast; that will neither suffer him to hear orders, or to feel shame, or retain any sensibility but the dread of death. That the savage clamours of naked Barbarians should thus terrify troops disciplined to war, and ranged in an array with arms in their hands, is surely strange. ...When our men have been encouraged by frequent victories, nothing will remain but to qualify them for extreme danger, by a sudden concert of terrific vociferation. When they have endured this last trial, let them be led to action, as men who are no longer to be frightened; as men, who can bear at once the grimaces of the *Gauls*, and the howl of the *Americans*.⁵¹

In contriving the narrative moment at which the howl of a Native American and the squall of a Gaul converge, West enhances the almost supernatural power of Johnson's heroism. With a single manly gesture, Johnson silences both men's cries and restores the classically heroic honor and British manliness lost temporarily on the bloody banks of the Monongahela. Single-handedly, Johnson arrests savage cruelty within the Mohawk warrior/*Borghese Gladiator*, but not before the tomahawk-wielding indigene forces Dieskau/the *Dying Myrmillo* to reveal his true effeminate self, the fundamentals of which relegate him to a position beneath the Native American in the moral hierarchy of human character. West's pictorial hierarchy reflects that moral order and the artistic choices that he made in composing the image position him as an erudite liberal artist of the first rank.

Like Hayman's painting of Amherst at Vauxhall, West's *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Officer from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian* distills

Britons' clemency and magnanimity by implicitly contrasting those virtues with the innate cruelty and perfidy of the French. According to William Smith, Dieskau's intent at Lake George had been to "desolate our northern settlement, lay the towns of Albany and Schenectady in ashes, and cut off all communication with Oswego – Smith "trembled at the thought" of Dieskau's success.⁵² By 1764 French cruelty had assumed a central function in the cultural imaginaries of national and imperial identity. Londoners knew all too well of French depredations against Britons living in North America and South Asia; the degrees to which they had instigated indigene cruelties against subjects of the English crown became the stuff of legend.

A brief sampling of sources published in London between 1757 and 1761 demonstrates the terms in which Britons characterized French cruelty. Letters from English officers, autobiographies and most especially captivity narratives spun terrifying tales of the enslavement of Britons by their French captors. Exemplary among the narratives that emerged during the Seven Years War, "A Letter from an English Officer Taken Prisoner of War at Oswego" offered to its audiences a glimpse of shockingly uncivilized behavior on the part of the enemy, revealing to its London reader the quotidian dangers faced by British colonists in North America, who found themselves forced to endure life

surrounded with many different Nations of *Indians*, who are continually employ'd against our Settlements, as well in Peace as War; to these [the French] give large Rewards for every Prisoner and Scalp they bring into *Quebec*, or *Montreal*. He that bids most Money is the unfortunate Prisoner's Lord and Master; from that Moment he, or she, commence Slave for Life. When they were asked, How they could think of buying and selling *English* Subjects, like Negroes? They reply'd,

It was to keep them from being murder'd by the *Indians*; a very lame Excuse this; for if those *Indians* were not tempted by their Rewards, they never wou'd attempt to go so far from Home.... Further; the *Canadians* pretended to us, that whenever the Captives Friends would repay what they gave the *Indians* for them; they shou'd be free; to which I answer, that they are sure to demand an extravagant Ransom, perhaps ten Times more than the Worth of the poor Slave's Family, and twenty Times more, than they gave the *Indian*; and when the Sum is rais'd, that was first demanded, to redeem their Sons or Daughters, &c. and to the Ruin of the distress'd Family, they are sure to say they have transferred the poor Creatures to other Persons, by which the Sum so far increases, as to render the Prisoners Enlargement unattainable.⁵³

The British considered the French themselves doubly enslaved, subject to an absolute despot at Versailles and to the papacy in Rome. That any freeborn Englishman, under any circumstances, suffered being sold into slavery transcended all reason; that he could be sold *as a slave to a slave* confounded providence altogether. One can sense the officer's exasperation at the plight of his countrymen: "The Number of English Slaves they have at *Canada* in this manner is incredible; and I have been assured by some of [the French], that they could never save their Harvest" without the labor of enslaved Britons.⁵⁴

The same sources note that the Native Americans who regularly captured, tortured, raped, castrated, disemboweled, murdered, roasted and very often ate their victims "were all well supplied by the *French* with arms and ammunition, and greatly encouraged by them in their continual excursions and barbarities."⁵⁵ To incite and sustain Native American violence against the British colonists, the French offered "great presents of all kinds, besides rum, powder, ball, &c.," paid premiums for scalps and, as already mentioned, purchased both soldiers and civilian colonists from the same auction

blocks that sold Africans.⁵⁶ The French and their Native American allies did not limit themselves to torture, murder and enslavement, however. As part of their French Roman Catholic ministry to the inhabitants of the New World, “the devil’s synod” (otherwise known as Jesuit missionaries) convinced Native Americans

That the Son of God came into the world to save all mankind, and destroy all evil spirits that now trouble them; that the *English* have killed him; and that ever since, the evil spirits are permitted to walk on the earth: that if the *English* were, all destroyed, the Son of the Good-man, who is God, would come again, and banish all evil spirits from their lands, and then they would have nothing to fear or disturb them.’ Cajoled by these false but artful insinuations of the *French Jesuits*, the *Indians* from that time, have endeavoured to massacre all the *English*, in order that the Son of God might come again on the earth, and rid them from their slavish fears and terrible apprehensions, by exterminating the objects thereof.⁵⁷

Any Briton who had been subjected to, witnessed, heard of or otherwise learned of such treatment of his countrymen by the French would feel justified in seeking revenge.

Perhaps the Reverend Samuel Davies expressed it best: “Our holy Religion teaches us to bear *personal* Injuries without *private* Revenge: But *national* Insults, and Indignities out to excite the *public* Resentment.”⁵⁸ In West’s formulation of British imperial martial virtue, Johnson’s encounter with the cruel-by-nature French commander excites only clemency and magnanimity.

French cruelty – like Native American savagery – took on a life of its own in the cultural imaginaries of empire in 1760s London. Knowledge of that cruelty made the idea of Johnson’s intervention on Dieskau’s behalf (whether in his tent, in the field or en route to his house in Albany to recuperate) all the more dramatic. But if the British were indeed as clement, continent and magnanimous as Hayman’s painting of Amherst and

West's painting of Johnson and Dieskau would have their intended audiences believe, that fact would have rendered the visual heroics of empire completely unnecessary: such images would have constituted a sort of visual "preaching to the choir" effect. In a similar mode of consideration, if the behavior of the French toward Britons in the provinces of empire confirmed that cruelty and perfidy as inherent to French character, why did West show Dieskau in such a vulnerable position, rather than depicting him in an act of cruelty? Several factors influenced West's construction of the visual narrative in *General Johnson*: negotiating contemporary concerns about native *English* cruelty perhaps among them.

By presenting a British military commander in the act of preventing one known agent of cruelty from perpetrating an act of cruelty against another known agent of cruelty, West's painting entered a decades-old debate over whether the English themselves were cruel by nature. Considered through the discursive prism of native English cruelty, West's choice of a narrative moment in which conquest, benevolence and self-restraint converge qualifies as more prescriptive or corrective than reflective, suggesting how Britons *should* behave if they wish to foster public and private successes comparable to Britain's territorial gains in the Seven Years' War. The definition and application of the "greater object" of the heroics of empire shift somewhat, from clearly-defined, improvable Native American, clearly virtuous agent of British imperial virtue and morally- and culturally-inferior beneficiary of that virtue. Situated in a context that acknowledges the necessity for the reform of national character, West would have

launched *General Johnson* into an ongoing public conversation about England's moral constitution that had included among its most prominent contributors William Hogarth (1697-1764), Henry Fielding (1707-1754) and Horatio [Horace] Walpole (1717-1797). None among the three focused specifically on cruelty associated with imperial territorial conquest, but all three hoped to provoke moral introspection among their countrymen and at best promote serious social and legal reform at home well before Great Britain so radically extended its imperial reach. Taking vastly different approaches and targeting the lowest and the highest ranks of society respectively, each called into question contemporary constructions of English virtue by considering the question of English cruelty.

In his 1751 series of etchings entitled *The Four Stages of Cruelty*, Hogarth viciously satirized the progress of unchecked English barbarity among the lower classes from a neglected child's torment of animals to that same child as the adult Tom Nero suffering a posthumous comeuppance by vivisection (figs. 26-29).⁵⁹ Published concurrently with (but unrelated to) Henry Fielding's *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers, &c. with Some Proposals for Remedying this Growing Evil*, Hogarth's images seemed to confirm a characterization of the English that Fielding yearned to refute: "the natural and inbred Cruelty for which the *English* are so much noted among Foreigners."⁶⁰ As the author of *A Dissertation on Mr. Hogarth's Six Prints Lately Publish'd, viz. Gin Lane, Beer Street, and the Four Stages of Cruelty* notes, Hogarth's prints gave "Foreigners an[other] Occasion to remark, that the Inhabitants of

this Island are naturally savage, and in their Temper and Disposition more inhuman and tyrannical than any other People upon Earth.”⁶¹ To prove that “Cruelty is not the national Character of Britons,” the writer asks

is it not known to all the World, that our Generals and Soldiers have been remarkably kind and generous to a conquered enemy?” before assuring, “Were I to enter deeper into the Subject, and give a full Scope to the Argument, I believe I could make it evidently appear, that there is not a Nation in the World where Acts of Generosity, Charity, Benevolence, Compassion and Mercy, and all the social Virtues, have been so universally practised as in this Kingdom.”⁶²

The author probes no deeper into the subject because he does not need to do so: in the calculus of foreseeing a national imperial character, the practices of English military commanders and soldiers toward a conquered enemy outweighed any individual action, event, condition or set of circumstances that might corroborate foreign claims of English cruelty.

From this discursive perspective, West’s intended audiences could have gleaned an important message from *General Johnson* about themselves and their status in the bifurcations and hierarchies of humanity. Regardless of any evidence to the contrary, the virtue of the English as a people could reside solely in the clemency and continence that their military commanders showed toward vanquished enemies; this point precluded the need for further evidence. Some viewers would then extrapolate to conclude that, rather than having cursed them with a native cruelty, God had favored the English with the victory at Lake George and all subsequent victories in the Seven Years’ War as a way of acknowledge their virtue, rewarding them for never treating “their prostrate Foes cruelly

and inhumanly.”⁶³ One must note this point that the author of the *Dissertation* on Hogarth’s *Stages of Cruelty* series wrote not in 1761, but in 1751, a reminder that the trope of martial humanity had secured its cultural currency long before the territorial conquests in North America, the West Indies, Africa and South Asia necessitated the visual heroics of empire. Alongside Hogarth’s pointed social critique, one must place complaints about English cruelty against the Welsh, Scottish and the Irish, and those connected to the purchase, sale and ownership of Africans.⁶⁴

In 1759, Horace Walpole localized the scope of consideration from a wholly different perspective with *Reflections on the Different Ideas of the French and English, in Regard to Cruelty; with Some Hints for Improving our Humanity in a Particular Branch*.⁶⁵ Written “to do good, not to please or be admired,” Walpole questions the value and usefulness of comparisons between two cultures whose mutual detestation serves as a constitutive element of their respective national identities:

The *French* and we, to whom the world of long time, has been able to furnish nothing worth either our envy or hate, but each other, have as long been bandying backwards and forwards the mutual reproach of want of humanity. Rivals, whose dispositions all the while resemble each other more than either of us care to own, or seem to suspect, we have framed our notions of an opposition in our respective characters of one another...⁶⁶

Suggesting that the English might better serve themselves by setting a truly and consistently positive example for the nemesis across the channel, Walpole calls for the reform of that most cruel and self-contradictory of English institutional practices: imprisonment for debt. Though not directly relevant to the present discussion in its

imperial context, in one of Walpole's most compelling, albeit minor points, he calls to his readers' attention the French practice of paying "penance" or "amends" visits to the inmates of prisons and hospitals. The French Catholic phenomenon contrasts sharply with the English pastime of visiting Bethlehem "Bedlam" Hospital immortalized in Ned Ward's 1699 *London Spy* (copies, reprints and new editions of which circulated widely in London throughout the eighteenth century), and evoked thirty-six years later in Hogarth's *Rake's Progress* series (fig. 30).⁶⁷ A letter published in 1750 recounts a scene comparable to that illustrated in Hogarth's painting:

I was much at a Loss to account for the Behaviour of the Generality of the People, who were looking at these melancholy Objects. Instead of the Concern I think unavoidable at such a Sight, a sort of Mirth appeared on their Countenances; and the distemper'd Fancies of the miserable Patients most unaccountably provoked Mirth, and loud Laughter, in the unthinking Auditors; and the many hideous Roarings, and wild Motions of others, seemed equally entertaining to them. Nay, so shamefully inhuman were some, among whom (I am sorry to say it!) were several of my own Sex, as to endeavour to provoke the Patients into Rage, to make them Sport. I have been told, this dreadful Place is often used for the Resort of lewd Persons to meet and make Assignments; But that I cannot credit; since the Heart must be abandon'd indeed, that could be vicious amidst so many Examples of Misery, and of such Misery, as, being wholly involuntary, may overtake the most secure.⁶⁸

Rather than construct a tally sheet upon which to tabulate the evidence of French cruelties against those common to the English, Walpole rejects conventions that rely on tactics of distance and otherness in the calculation of domestic virtue:

...[L]et us return to ourselves; most of us have scarce ever thought about the matter. We never look at the picture because it always hangs before our eyes. It is abroad that we go to *see*; that faculty is laid aside as soon as we return home. A slave in *Morocco*, who is often so well treated there that he refuses the offer of returning to his own country, or a soldier killed by the *Indians* of *America*, excite

all our compassion. We are struck with the ideas of distance, and of the completion of the slayer. The superior misery in our own walks, (and removable by ourselves if we did not choose to imagine that all beggars want by choice, that loss of liberty is not slavery, that rotting in the inactivity of a dungeon in *England* is preferable to who[le]som[e] labour in the finest climates upon earth, that debt, however innocently incurred, is a greater crime than murder, that a Republic may thrive the better though one half of the people should render the other half not only useless but chargeable to the remainder.) ...[C]ompassion seems to be the reverse of charity, and begins at the very farthest point from home.⁶⁹

During a period in which long-held notions of British humanity and newly-forming conceptions of imperial virtue warranted critical introspection, West's clement and benevolent *Johnson* would have offered viewers in West's studio the chance to *see* themselves in the most positive light (by delighting in the picture which hung before them rather than looking to the suffering of the poor countrymen in their midst). In the Franco-English *querelle de cruauté*, then, humanity in war outweighed and eclipsed the torture of defenseless animals, the murder of one's impregnated mistress, the taking of amusement from the sufferings of the insane and even the imprisonment of one's own countrymen for "choosing" a path "less fortunate" in matters commercial and social. In this regard, West's *Johnson* could have contributed to the discourse of English cruelty without necessarily adjoining the painting to Hogarth, Fielding or Walpole. By adding constructions of morality and identity to existing discourses of Britons' cultural self-imagination, rather than slavishly depicting actualities that transpired on the wooded and bloodied shores of Lake George, West's picture fits squarely and confidently in the tradition of academic history painting. One can only speculate about how large numbers

of Londoners would have received the work had West elected to enter it in the Society of Artists exhibition.

West may not have been personally familiar with Hogarth's prints and the writings of Fielding and Walpole, but as a youth in Pennsylvania, he would have most assuredly heard of or perhaps even witnessed instances of British cruelty. Published narratives from around the time that West arrived in London generated their own body of discourse. Accounts from North America reported with chilling matter-of-factness that English, Scottish, Irish and American men under British military command routinely scalped Native American women after slitting their throats.⁷⁰ In the days following Johnson's victory at Lake George, British forces executed and scalped a Jesuit priest, justifying the action by explaining that the cleric headed a small French Canadian and Indian group that had perpetrated against England's troops "many acts of cruelty."⁷¹ One update, informing its readers on the "Progress of the siege of Louisbourg," reported with characteristic insouciance, "The enemy's loss must be very considerable, but the number is uncertain. The Highlanders and Rangers gave no quarters, scalping wherever they came. There were several Indians among the slain, but how many cannot be ascertained, as it was hard to distinguish an Indian's scalp from a Frenchman's." London viewers familiar with the progress of the war following Dieskau's capture might have experienced difficulty in condoning the practices of the Highlanders and Rangers while at the same time expressing horror and indignation at a French commander's showing British

prisoners of war the scalps of “their near relations, friends and neighbours!” that lined the walls of his camp office.⁷²

Perhaps one of the most extreme examples of Britons’ potential for cruelty appeared in the reports of surgeon David Menzies, whose narrative takes on an authoritative inflection cast in terms of medical precision. Depending upon the reader’s sensibility, one finds in David Menzies an unsympathetic, unsavory, even completely reprehensible character. Soon after his abduction by Cherokee warriors, Menzies discovers that he will serve as a sort of bereavement tribute to the mother of a recently-dead tribal leader:

At which I was overjoyed, as knowing that I thereby stood a chance not only of being secured from death, and exempted from torture, but even of good usage and caresses. I perceived however that I had over-rated much my matter of consolation, as soon as I was introduced in form to this mother of heroes; she sat squat on the ground, with a bear’s cub in her lap, as nauseous a figure as the accumulated infirmities of decrepitude undisguised by art could make her, and (instead of courteously inviting her captive to replace, by adoption, her lost child) fixt first her haggard blood-shot eyes upon me, then, riveting them to the ground, gargled out my rejection and destruction.⁷³

The story that unfolds seems too preposterous for even the most xenophobic and the most gullible of readers to treat with any degree of seriousness. The Cherokee bind Menzies to a stake, and then “experiment on me the culinary operation of larding,” the injection of animal fat into otherwise very lean meat to moisten it during slow roasting.⁷⁴ Perhaps anticipating his readers’ skepticism, Menzies summons the voice of science to lend the force of authenticating detail to his story: “I squalled and roared most abominably (larding being in reality a very painful process to a live creature, the pin not merely going

through the insensible epidermis, or scarf-skin, but lacerating also the pyramidal papillæ of the true skin, which anatomists agree to be the seat of feeling).” Seizing upon the opportunity presented by his captors’ growing “languid and drowsy,” from the rum that has fueled their larding experimentation, Menzies disengages his right arm from the bonds that secure him to the stake “at the expence of the greater part of the belly of the palmaris brevis muscle, and with the dislocation of the eighth bone of my carpus.”⁷⁵

Menzies’s story culminates with an anti-climactic claim that might provoke laughter in the modern reader, but in the eighteenth century, reinforced the narrative’s authenticity: “I have received, I imagine, a momentous benefit; having got rid entirely of a paralytic complaint that I had been afflicted with for years, in that left side,” which the Cherokee had larded and roasted.⁷⁶ Like the larding pins, the horrifying details of Menzies’s story would have penetrated to the very “seat of feeling” in many of his humane English readers.

The terminology that lends credibility to Menzies’s accounts of Indian cruelty imbues his own actions, reactions and observations with an air of legitimacy. Ultimately, this tactic works against Menzies in the minds of his audiences, many of whom would have finished reading or listening to the story convinced that Menzies’s barbarity at best rivaled that of his savage captors: once untied, the British surgeon

dashed precipitously into the woods; having only stayed just long enough to place some of the fire brands in a position that would probably fire the cabin, and not having forgotten to lay a small one in the lap of my inhuman she-tyrant. When I found I was not pursued, I turned back, like Lot’s wife, and saw with great satisfaction, the Indian town in flames; for the constitutions of these cities are

very susceptible of inflammations, as the British red-warriors have since luckily discovered.⁷⁷

The burning coal placed in the lap of the sleeping elderly Native American woman and Menzies's elation in seeing the entire group burned alive would have brought to readers' minds the sufferings of Britons captured by Indians in the service of the French. For example, shortly after a group of twelve Native American males abducted him from his Pennsylvania farmhouse in 1754, Peter Williamson's captors took "burning coals and sticks, flaming with fire at the ends, holding them near my face, head, hands, and feet, with a deal of monstrous pleasure and satisfaction: and at the same time threatening to burn me intirely, if I made the least noise or cried out." Both Williamson's torments and Menzies's monstrous pleasure and diabolical satisfaction would have seemed to "the humane *English* heart" equally shocking.⁷⁸ Another portion of Williamson's narrative confirms the dearth of clemency and magnanimity among Britons in North America. Recounting the liberation of one Miss Long, Williamson details the vengeance with which the rescue party treated her captors:

our men were busily employed in cutting, hacking and scalping the dead *Indians*; and so desirous was every man to have a share in wreaking his revenge on them, that disputes happened among ourselves who should be the instruments of further shewing it on their lifeless trunks there not being enough for every man to have one with which to satiate himself. The captain, observing the animosity between us...ordered that the two divisions should cast lots for this bloody, though agreeable piece of work: which being accordingly done, the party, whose lot it was to be excluded from this business, stood by with half-pleased countenances, looking on the rest; who with the utmost chearfulness and activity pursued their revenge in scalping, and otherwise treating their dead bodies as the most inveterate hatred and detestations could suggest.⁷⁹

By 1764, Williamson's narrative had appeared in multiple editions in multiple cities, including London.

When contemplated in a purely comparative mode of self-definition via counter-example, *General Johnson* risked calling to viewers' minds Britons' own savagery and cruelty, undermining any assertion of moral superiority to the French and their Native American allies. At the time that West produced the painting, circumstances had changed in North America to an extent that would have made such a risk too great to undertake for such a young artist with such great ambition. Between the time that West conceived the painting and the opening of the 1765 Society of Artists Exhibition in London, two changes in the North American political and military landscape emerged that made showing the painting unthinkable. First, the benevolent General Amherst who so magnanimously accepted the surrender of Montreal in Hayman's Vauxhall painting changed his attitude toward the Native Americans who had fought alongside the French. Amherst's personal racism informed a major shift in British policy toward Indian populations. Second, a caravan of peace offerings requisitioned by Johnson for the Indians of the northwestern frontiers had come under attack while en route to its destination. The people who pillaged the contents of the wagons were not Native Americans, but violent bands of *Britons*. In the year that West first crossed the English Channel, Amherst sent a query to Colonel Henry Bouquet, commander of the British forces at Philadelphia, in which he asked "Could it not be contrived to Send the *Small Pox* among those Disaffected Tribes of Indians? We must, on this occasion, Use Every

Stratagem in our power to Reduce them.”⁸⁰ Bouquet replied that he would “try to inoculate the Indians by means of Blankets that may fall in their hands, taking care however not to get the disease myself.”⁸¹ Amherst approved: “You will do well to try to Inoculate the Indians by the means of Blanketts, as well as to try Every other method that can serve to Extirpate this Execrable Race.”⁸² Superimposing unpublished correspondence onto West’s painting adds nothing to our modern understanding of either, but the increasing volatility of Amherst’s attitude towards Native Americans signals a broader shift in Britons’ attitudes toward Native Americans and thus adds a complicating dimension to the reception of clemency and continence as a construct of visual rhetoric.

Even more complicated for the reception of West’s painting were reports coming into London from the province of Pennsylvania. The October 1763 issue of London’s *General Magazine of Arts and Sciences* reported

By several Accounts which arrived in Town on Wednesday from America we hear, that two Regiments of Highlanders, and one of Rangers, together with some other of his Majesty’s forces, on their March to Pittsburgh and Fort Detroit, with a Convoy of Provisions, were attacked by a powerful Body of Indians, and had suffered very much, besides the Loss of the Convoy. We hope, however, these accounts will not be found true.⁸³

To Londoners’ disappointment, and to the detriment of longstanding Anglo-Indian alliances, the accounts proved true. In the fifth volume of his *Continuation of the Complete History of England*, published in 1765, Tobias Smollett offered a detailed account of the story that had circulated in London for almost two years:

Of one hundred of the settlers, and others, who were escorting a large quantity of provisions and goods to Detroit, sixty-seven were massacred. The savages spared all the French that were of the convoy; but finding that the goods belonged to the

English, they seized the whole: nor did the French make any resistance from the beginning. ...In short, the desolation those barbarians spread was frightful; whole families were murdered, their corn and stock of provisions destroyed, the settlements for twenty miles were deserted, and five hundred poor families, with women and children, who had the good fortune to escape, fled to the woods of Virginia, where they could find neither shelter nor subsistence.⁸⁴

Britons everywhere viewed the conduct of the Indians as an outrageous violation of the treaties arranged between William Johnson and the Six Nations. Following the attacks on Fort Detroit, Johnson secured the assistance of some members of those tribes in mitigating increasingly widespread assaults on British colonists. In an agreement with the Seneca, in which the infamous chief Pontiac (Pontiac) participated, Johnson served as the sole representative of the English crown. Soon after the terms were set with the Seneca, English forces under the command of General John Bradstreet (1714-1774) launched an offensive against the tribes between Lake Erie and the Ohio River. To prevent repeat violations by the indigenes the ensuing treaty included a provision by which six tribal leaders were kept hostage by the English as a guarantee that the tribes would observe the articles that at least temporarily postponed further violence.⁸⁵

Contemporaneous with Bradstreet's mission, Colonel Henry Bouquet (1719-1765) commanded an effort against "the most barbarous and perfidious of the Delawares and Shawanese, which had broken the ties which even barbarous nations hold sacred among each other."⁸⁶ Subsequent to the forceful reduction of those Native American warriors, General Johnson "purchased, at Philadelphia, a considerable quantity of English goods, which were, at the ratification of the general peace, to be distributed among the Indians at the expence of the government. ...This great supply was intended not only to

conciliate the friendship and affection of those Indian tribes, but to open again the channels of commerce that had always proved beneficial to the English.”⁸⁷ In a turn of events that would have confused the message of *General Johnson* and thus promised negative audience reception of West’s painting, the general’s “laudable measure was defeated by the English settlers themselves, in a manner that would have dishonoured the most brutal tribe of the savages.”⁸⁸ When Johnson’s peace procession reached Cumberland County, a group of British colonial bandits attacked and plundered the convoy. Shortly after three of the marauders were taken prisoner and held in a military encampment, their fellow Britons rioted, threatening to put every man in the fort “to the sword.”⁸⁹ The ambush on the convoy and the threats made thereafter signify a larger set of issues that heroics of empire history painting meant to address: the decidedly uncivilized behavior of British subjects in England’s territorial outposts – toward indigenes, toward European enemies and toward other Britons.

Hedging the Bet: The Heroics of Empire Portrait of General Robert Monckton

For reasons that remain undocumented, West decided to withhold *General Johnson*, exhibiting instead the portrait of *General Monckton* as “A Gentleman, full length” (fig. 31). Though a portrait rather than a history painting, West included a

number of artistic conceits that elevated the picture above standard likeness. West's first portrait commission in London followed a meeting with Major-General Robert Monckton, who had sustained a serious battle wound while serving as General Wolfe's second-in-command at the siege of Quebec. In a number of respects, Monckton embodied the emergence of empire and its attendant anxieties as they factored into Britons' cultural self-imagination. Before the French could craft their treaty articles following the reduction of Quebec and the surrender of Montreal, Monckton had ordered and overseen the mass deportation of French Acadians of Nova Scotia, who after inhabiting the region for over a century had refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the English crown. Many of the vessels in which the Acadians fled Canada sank in the rough waters off Nova Scotia, resulting in the loss of hundreds and perhaps thousands of lives.⁹⁰ Following a short period of military service in Philadelphia, Monckton served as governor of the province of New York. In 1762 the House of Commons applauded his contributions to the conquest of Martinique (to which he had been dispatched by General Jeffrey Amherst). When brought up on charges of misconduct in that conquest, Monckton emerged from the court martial honorably acquitted.⁹¹

West completed the Monckton portrait – his first attempt at the full-length format – during the winter of 1763.⁹² Apparently, neither West nor Monckton feared the general's conviction in the court martial, the proceedings of which ran from 14 through 18 April: West entered the painting as *A Gentleman* in the Society of Artists exhibition at Spring Gardens, London, which opened on 9 April. West's decision to exhibit a

potentially controversial subject would prove the exception in his career; later, West either abandoned such works before completion or withheld them from exhibition until the reception climate had shifted in favor of the subject.⁹³ In this particular case, however, West likely just hedged his bets based on proximity (and utility) of subject. Johnson lived in and would remain in New York, to which West had traveled as a portraitist prior to his departure for Italy in 1760. Whether or not he had decided to remain in England when he exhibited the Monckton portrait, the general was well-connected in London and could help West to secure additional patronage. One must also consider whether West saw the judicial action against Monckton as generating interest among Londoners who would visit the exhibition just to see the portrait of Monckton while his court martial proceedings were in session. Francis Hayman had not yet installed his fourth heroic of empire painting at Vauxhall by the time the Society of Artists exhibition came down, but West surely knew that he intended to include Monckton as one of the imperial victors who populated *Britannia Distributing Laurels*, in which Monckton appeared in Roman rather than modern garb.⁹⁴

As is the case with *General Johnson*, West presents Monckton in the uniform of a British army commander: silk-lined scarlet broadcloth coat with dark blue frogging and cuffs with gold lace, white stock and wrist ruffles, gold epaulet on the right shoulder and two rows of gold chevron lace on the sleeves above the cuffs, light buff waistcoat and breeches, black tricorne hat with gold trim, white stockings and black shoes with large gold buckles. Monckton extends his left arm as if to direct the viewer's gaze toward a

cannon barrel, which penetrates the pictorial field from the viewer's right. Opposite the cannon, Monckton's lowered right hand holds a scrolled paper, which bears a plan of Martinique. Monckton's form divides the picture plane vertically, with the entrance to his tent providing the background to the top and right edges of the picture plane. In the left middle ground, slightly above the horizontal created by the cannon barrel and the plan of Martinique appear rows of British troops, one of whom carries a standard that appears disproportionately large; a corner of the flag abuts the left edge of the picture plane. As the viewer's eye moves to the left, dusk clouds dominate the left background above the troops, creating a sense of spatial depth and providing a dynamic visual counterpoint to the dark opening of Monckton's tent. The prominence of the tent would have called the viewer's mind to the tent of Amherst in Hayman's painting at Vauxhall, the tent of Darius from Le Brun and John Maylem's poetic tribute to Monckton's action at Halifax:

While MONCKTON, his late Conquest to secure,
O'er all Accadia takes his eager Tour,
Hunts the black Savage from the Covert brake,
Who a last Farewell of their Eden take.

Thus blest by Heav'n in an important Hour,
A spacious Region owns the British Pow'r.
Now a smooth Surface all along is seen,
And the white Tents harmonious intervene.
A fair Encampment open to the view,
With gay Decorum to enhance the Shew.
Like social Heroes Pass the Hours away
Till Tour of Duty urge them for the Day.⁹⁵

A cloud break that illuminates a burning fortress punctuates the left background. Plumes of smoke echo the line of the dark clouds and what appear to be embers rising from a fire behind Monckton's tent swirl into pictorial space toward the top edge of the picture plane. In the foreground West accentuated the rich soil upon which Monckton stands and framed the bottom edge of the picture plane with sparsely-placed but carefully-rendered vegetation. The large wheel of the cannon carriage and the ramrod that leans against the barrel draw the viewer's eye to the lower rightmost corner of the canvas, where the words "General Hon^{ble} Robert Monckton," likely added after Monckton took possession of the portrait, appear in gold leaf.

Spectators at Spring-Gardens would register in Monckton's graceful stance a much clearer expression of the *Apollo Belvedere* than West used in *General Johnson*.⁹⁶ Some among the 1764 exhibition audiences might have assumed that West fashioned his *Monckton* after Joshua Reynolds's 1753 portrait of Admiral Augustus Keppel (fig. 32). But because West had already used the statue as the model *Savage Warrior Taking Leave of His Family*, which he brought with him to London from Rome, he understood the aesthetic force that the Apollo brought to painting prior to any acquaintance with Reynolds's portrait of Keppel. For those beyond West's inner circle, a comparison of Monckton's pose with that of the departing Native American may have produced some confusion. But as was the case with Reynolds's *Keppel* – the sitter for which had successfully negotiated treaties at Tripoli and Tunis – and his *Omai* of 1776, artists and audiences alike came to associate the pose and the model with the idea of empire (fig.

33).⁹⁷ As West's reputation grew, the *Apollo Belvedere* took on additional imperial associations within the artist's personal mythos: upon his first visit to the Cortile de Belvedere at the Vatican, West purportedly compared the celebrated statue to a young Mohawk warrior.⁹⁸ By 1795 that anecdote gained sufficient traction to serve as the subject of a poem entitled "On the President of the Royal Academy's Discovery, That the Belvedere Apollo Resembles an American Savage" by one "Minutius." The poet suggests, "If the President's magical eye / Can a savage transform to APOLLO," British artists could look to their own, living countrymen for models of ideal masculine and feminine beauty rather than traveling to Rome.⁹⁹

West's *Monckton* fit comfortably among the selection of paintings offered at the 1764 Society of Artists exhibition. Along with Penny's *Death of General Wolfe*, in which Monckton also appears in the *Apollo Belvedere* pose, two additional pictures from the 1764 exhibition reflect artists' engagements with themes of conquest (fig. 34). First premium for history painting went to *St. Paul Converting the Ancient Britons* by John Hamilton Mortimer and William Pars's *King Caractacus before the Emperor Claudius* took the third-place premium for history painting (fig. 35 and untraced).¹⁰⁰ Mortimer's *St. Paul* comments on Anglican motivations for conquest by validating English Christianity as pre-papal and thus inherently free from the corrupt and tyrannical practices that the French and Spanish employed in their colonial pursuits in the Americas.¹⁰¹ Pars's *Caractacus* reminded viewers of Britons' heritage of clemency and continence in conquest: Amherst had shown clemency toward the French in Montreal

and Johnson had saved Dieskau's life just as the Roman emperor Claudius had spared the lives of Caractacus and his family.¹⁰² By mimicking the positive exemplars of the world's imperial past and avoiding the mistakes of classical and contemporary counter-exemplars, the British empire could succeed where others failed; heroics of empire portraiture and history painting kept those exemplars and counter-examples fresh in the newly-imperial minds of Britons. And following the example set by the Romans, whose influence wrested the Ancient Britons from their primitive state of rudeness and savagery, Monckton, like Wolfe, Amherst and Johnson would only "conquer their enemies to render them more happy" by replacing the cruelty and perfidy of French and Spanish colonial rule with English constitutional liberty.¹⁰³ No surviving evidence suggests that the Society had proposed empire as a theme for the paintings that would be considered for that year's premiums, so artists who explored imperial themes in their history painting entries for the year were responding broadly to the currency of conquest as an historical idea, as an imperial prospect and as a set of newly-forged military, political and geographical facts. The popular and critical success of the 1764 Society of Artists exhibition reinforced the relationship between history painting and empire and the warm reception that West's *Monckton* enjoyed sealed his future: except for visits to France in 1785 and 1802, he stayed England for the remainder of his life.

Britons' notions of Native American savagery and French cruelty were well-established by the time that West painted *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Soldier from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian*. Londoners needed no grand-

scale visual reminders of their imperial adversaries' character defects. But what had not been established by 1764 – or even by 1774, by which time West's adaptation of the heroics of empire history painting format would come to dominate Anglophone visual cultures – was that the British were any less cruel, savage and perfidious than their enemies on the continent and in the provinces. Even the honorable General Robert Monckton, who emerged unscathed from an attempted court martial, had engaged in imperial conduct that violated constructs of clemency and magnanimity. In fact, news from abroad cast Britons and their indigenous allies in North America and South Asia in anything but a flattering light. But because circumstances in North America had cast a pall on William Johnson and on Britons' relations with a number of the Indian nations, West withheld *General Johnson* from exhibition and debuted his portrait of *General Robert Monckton*. Rather than risk being identified solely as a portraitist, however, West included two history paintings in the 1764 Society of Artists exhibition. These works, which I will introduce in the next chapter, established the subject matter for the heroics of empire history paintings that West produced over the ensuing half decade.

Notes

¹ James Ogden, *The British Lion Rous'd; or Acts of the British Worthies, a Poem in Nine Books* (Manchester, printed by R. Whitworth, 1762) p. 112.

² See James Thomas Flexner, *Mohawk Baronet: Sir William Johnson of New York* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959); Milton W. Hamilton, *Sir William Johnson: Colonial American, 1715-1763* (Port Washington, Kennikat Press, 1976); and Fintan O'Toole, *White Savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America* (New York, Farrar, Straus And Giroux, 2005).

³ In their respective discussions of the Battle of Lake George and/or West's painting, Flexner, Hamilton, Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, and Courtney Noble all identify Dieskau as Baron Ludwig von Dieskau, rather than Jean-Armand de Dieskau. Based on certain pictorial details such as uniform, Brian Leigh Dunnigan rejects the identification of the reclining male as Dieskau altogether. See Flexner, *Mohawk Baronet*, p. 134; Hamilton, *Sir William Johnson*, p. 355 n70; Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1986) pp. 210-211; Courtney Noble, "Rescuing Difference: Ambiguous Heroism in Benjamin West's *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Officer from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian*," *Immediations I* (2004) pp. 61-75. O'Toole identifies Dieskau as Ludwig August and as Jean-Armand. See O'Toole, *White Savage*, p. 30. Some eighteenth-century sources identify the baron as Johannes-Adolphe, spelling the surname Diescau. See, e.g., any of the editions of *Magnæ Britannæ Notitia: Or, the Present State of Great Britain; with Diverse Remarks upon the Ancient State Thereof* published after 1736.

⁴ See Ian M. McCulloch, *British Light Infantryman of the Seven Years' War: North America 1757-1763* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 2004) p. 22.

⁵ *An Impartial History of the Late Glorious War, from It's Commencement to It's Conclusion; Containing an Exact Account of the Battles and Sea Engagements; Together with Other Remarkable Transactions, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America* (Manchester, printed by R. Whitworth, 1764) 15.

⁶ William Johnson, "Major General Johnson's Letter from His Camp at Lake George, after a Sharp Engagement with the Baron de Dieskau the French General. Camp at Lake George, Sept. 9, 1755" in Benjamin Martin, ed., *Miscellaneous Correspondence, Containing a Variety of Subjects, Relative to Natural and Civil History, Geography, Mathematics, Poetry, Memoirs of Monthly Occurrences, Catalogues of New Books, &c.* (London, printed by W. Owen and the author, 1759) vol. I, p. 190.

⁷ William Smith, *A Review of the Military Operations in North-America, from the Commencement of the French Hostilities on the Frontiers of Virginia in 1753. to the Surrender of Oswego, on the 14th of August, 1756. Interspersed with various Observations, Characters, and Anecdotes; Necessary to Give Light into the Conduct of American Transactions in General; and More Especially into the Political Management of Affairs in New York. In a Letter to a Nobleman* (London, printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1757) p. 46. This source appeared in reprint in New England in 1758.

⁸ John Entick, *The General History of the Late War, Containing It's Rise, Progress, and Event, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*, 5 volumes (London, printed for Edward Dilly and John Millan, 1763) I:158.

⁹ See Edna Moffett, "The Diary of a Private on the First Expedition to Crown Point," *The New England Quarterly* vol. 5, no. 3 (July 1932) pp. 602-618, p. 609n.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ See Flexner, *Mohawk Baronet*, p. 153n.

¹² For example, Denis Diderot mentions Dieskau a number of times in his correspondence with Sophie Volland. See Denis Diderot, *Les Lettres de Diderot à Sophie Volland*, Yves Florenne, trans. (Paris, Le Club français du livre, 1965) pp. 210-218.

¹³ See, e.g., *Roma Illustrata: A Description of the Most Beautiful Pieces of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, Antique and Modern, at and near Rome*, 2nd edition (London, printed for W. Mears, 1724) p. 19n.

¹⁴ The British use of plaster casts after great sculptural monuments of antiquity is well documented. The practice was so widespread that by 1728 the first collection of such casts had arrived in the English colonies in North America. In 1759 George Washington ordered plaster casts after marble portraits of Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great and Thomas Jefferson intended to include casts after the *Venus de' Medici*, the *Apollo Belvedere* and the *Farnese Hercules*, though he abandoned the plan. See James McNutt, "Plaster Casts after Antique Sculpture: Their Role in the Elevation of Public Taste and in American Art Instruction," *Studies in Art Education* 31:3 (Spring 1990) pp. 158-167. See also Edward Edwards, *Anecdotes of Painters Who Have Resided or Been Born in England; with Critical Remarks on Their Productions* (London: printed by Luke Hansard and Sons, 1808) pp. xvii-xviii; and Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500-1900* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981). The ways in which Anglophone artistic practice in the eighteenth century confirm the Grand Tour as a mode of imperial practice demand further study. Toward this argument, the following sources offer potential points of departure: Dennison Nash, "Tourism as a Form of Imperialism," in *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, Valene Smith, ed. (Philadelphia, University Of Pennsylvania Press, 1994) pp. 37-54; Dennison Nash, *Anthropology of Tourism* (Tarrytown, N.Y. : Elsevier Science, 1996); and Luis Lavaur, "The Century of the Grand Tour, 1715-93," *Estudios Turisticos* no. 104 (1989) pp. 49-82. Whether whole or in pieces, works of marble sculpture served as metaphorical "seeds carried into Britain by the Romans [to] be replanted in the barren but receptive soil of Britain's colonies, restoring wildernesses to paradises," as Ernest Gilman has suggested in "Madagascar on My Mind: The Earl of Arundel and the Arts of Colonization," in Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse, eds., *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race, and Empire in Renaissance England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) pp. 284-314. Gilman argues that "The Arundel marbles, having been literally been dug out of the ground like dormant seeds and figuratively resuscitated by Arundel's art, will now be disseminated in their civilizing virtue to other climes." I would argue that the principle applies to the introduction of Roman antiquities into modern heroic of empire paintings as well.

¹⁵ Artists held the *Borghese Gladiator* in high esteem. In 1765 Joseph Wright of Derby featured a small cast of the work in one of his experiments with painting light and shadow entitled *Three Persons Viewing the Gladiator by Candlelight*. Wright exhibited the work in the 1765 Society of Artists Exhibition.

¹⁶ Contemporary sources also referred to the statue as "fighting gladiator" and "gladiator repellens." The Hampton Court collection included a brass copy of the statue that once stood at the end of the canal in St. James's Park. George III closed Hampton Court palace because of his memories of conflict between his father and grandfather. The statue that twenty-first-century visitors to Rome's Capitoline Museum would recognize as the *Dying Gaul* did not acquire that name until after the end of the eighteenth century.

¹⁷ See Charles Le Brun, *The Conference of Monsieur Le Brun, Cheif Painter to the French King, Chancellor and Director of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture; upon Expression, General and Particular* (London, printed for John Smith, Edward Cooper and David Mortier, 1701) and Charles Le Brun, *The Passions of the Human Mind, Exhibited in a Representation of Its Various Virtues and Vices* (London, printed for Charles Piccot, Thomas Boydell and Charles Sayer, 1760).

¹⁸ The illustrations first appeared without attribution in the 1749 edition of the work. See *The Preceptor: Containing a General Course of Education. Wherein the First Principles of Polite Learning Are Laid down in a Way Most Suitable for Trying the Genius, and Advancing the Instruction of Youth*, 2 volumes (Dublin, printed by George Faulkner, 1749) vol. I, pp. 372-376. In this edition page 373 is misprinted as 337. In the 1763 edition, the drawings differ slightly from those in the 1749 edition and captions beneath

the images indicate that Hayman designed the plates and Grignion engraved them. See *The Preceptor: Containing a General Course of Education. Wherein the First Principles of Polite Learning Are Laid down in a Way Most Suitable for Trying the Genius, and Advancing the Instruction of Youth*, 2 volumes (London, printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1763) vol. I, pp. 460-464.

¹⁹ Gloria Vivenza, *Adam Smith and the Classics: The Classical Heritage in Adam Smith's Thought* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001) pp. 198-199.

²⁰ James Ogden, *The British Lion Rous'd*, op cit., pp. 111-112.

²¹ For the importance of the idea of attaching Native Americans to the British interest, see, e.g., Charles Chauncy, *Two Letter's to a Friend, on the Present Critical Conjuncture of Affairs in North America; Particularly on the Victory Gained by the New-England Militia under the Command of General Johnston, at Lake-George. Being the Most Genuine Account of This Action Yet Published* (Boston, printed for T. Jefferys; London, reprinted for T. Jefferys, 1755); and James Glen, *A Description of South Carolina, Containing, Many Curious and Interesting Particulars Relating to the Civil, Natural and Commercial History of That Colony...* (London, printed for J. Dodsley, 1761).

²² Jonathan Mayhew, *Two Discourses Delivered October the 25th, 1759, Being the Day Appointed by Authority to Be Observed as a Day of Public Thanksgiving, for the Success of His Majesty's Arms, More Particularly in the Reduction of Quebec* (London : printed for A. Millar, 1760) pp. 46-47.

²³ *An Account of Some Late Attempts by the Correspondents of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, to Christianize the North American Indians* (Edinburgh, 1763) p. 2. See also Thomas Wilson, *The Knowledge and Practice of Christianity Made Easy to the Meanest Capacities: Or, an Essay Towards an Instruction for the Indians* (London, printed for B. Dod, 1764) [first published in 1740].

²⁴ Eleazar Wheelock, *A Continuation of the Narrative of the State, c. of the Indian Charity-School, at Lebanon, in Connecticut; from Nov. 27th, 1762, to Sept. 3d, 1765* (Boston, printed by Richard and Samuel Draper, 1765) pp. 18-19.

²⁵ Eleazar Wheelock, *A Plain and Faithful Narrative of the Original Design, Rise, Progress and Present State of the Indian Charity-School at Lebanon, in Connecticut* (Boston, printed by Richard and Samuel Draper, 1763) pp. 39-40.

²⁶ See Frank Joseph Klingberg, *Anglican Humanitarianism in Colonial New York* (Philadelphia, Church Historical Society, 1940), chapter 3: "Sir William Johnson and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1749-1774)," pp. 87-120.

²⁷ Richard Brewster, *A Sermon, Preached in the Church of St. Nicholas, in Newcastle upon Tyne, on Thursday, the 29th Day of November, Being the Day Appointed by His Majesty for a General Thanksgiving* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: printed by John White, 1759) p. 27.

²⁸ Eleazar Wheelock, *A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, in Lebanon in Connecticut, New England. Founded and Carried on by that Faithful Servant of God the Rev. Mr Eleazar Wheelock* (London, printed by J. and W. Oliver, 1766) p. 25.

²⁹ *An Account of Some Late Attempts by the Correspondents of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, to Christianize the North American Indians* (Edinburgh, 1763) p. 2.

³⁰ *A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, in Lebanon in Connecticut, New England. Founded and Carried on by that Faithful Servant of God the Rev. Mr Eleazar Wheelock* (London, printed by J. and W. Oliver, 1766) p. 6.

³¹ Oliver Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World; or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher, Residing in London, to His Friends in the East*, 2 volumes (London, printed for the author, 1762) vol. II, pp. 111-112. The appearance of a concept in satirical and otherwise humorous expressions demonstrates the extent to which audiences from all ranks would have been familiar with the concept. Another measure of popular familiarity is integration into materials intended for the education of youth. For an example of the idea of climate and character in such a context, see Sarah Trimmer, *Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature, and Reading the Holy Scriptures. Adapted to the Capacities of Children*, 10th edition (London, printed for T. Longman and O. Rees, G. G. and J. Robinson, J. Johnson, and F. and C. Rivington, 1799) p. 117.

³² Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, 4 volumes (Dublin, James Williams, 1775) vol. II, pp. 111-113.

³³ George Berkeley, "On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America," in *A Miscellany, Containing Several Tracts on Various Subjects* (Dublin, printed by George Faulkner, 1752) p. 186. See also Susan Rather, "A Painter's Progress: Matthew Pratt and *The American School*," *Metropolitan Museum Art Journal* vol. 28 (1993) pp. 169-183, esp. p. 179. As Rather notes, Berkeley composed the poem in 1726, but it appeared in published form for the first time in 1752.

³⁴ The "vernacular orientalism" peculiar to the English demands consideration beyond the scope of the present study.

³⁵ For an examination of the principle of authentication or factualization via the introduction of minute textual and pictorial detail, see Jonathan Lamb, "Minute Particulars and the Representation of South Pacific Discovery," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28:3 (1995) pp. 281-294.

³⁶ "Account of General Johnson," *London Magazine, or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer* vol. XXV, no. 9 (September 1756) p. 432.

³⁷ William Smith, *An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians, in the Year MDCCLXXIV, under the Command of Henry Bouquest, Esq. Colonel of Foot, and Now Brigadier General in America* (London, printed for T. Jeffries, 1766).

³⁸ Eleazar Wheelock, *A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School*, op cit., p. 7. Londoners would have had the opportunity to experience first-hand evidence of the improvability of Native Americans during Occum's fundraising tour of London in 1766: "The Indian Chiefs, at present in England, are Mohegans, being of the same tribe as the Rev. Mr. Samson Occum, who is now in England, in order to collect money by preaching, &c. for the support of the Rev. Mr. Wheelock's Indian Charity-school, lately established in Lebanon in Connecticut. They are also Indian Christians, having, been baptized in America, and well acquainted with the said Rev. Mr. Occum. They all speak English, and some of them very well; and also can write in that language. Part of their lands lie very near to New-York; and in that city they were very conversant. They are our firm friends, having, in the last war, fought under General Johnson, against the French, our inveterate enemies." See *The Whitehall Evening-Post; or, London Intelligencer* no. 3178 (18 - 20 September 1766) p. 2.

³⁹ For a thorough discussion of the applications of Horace's axiom, see Rensselaer W. Lee, "Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanist Theory of Painting," *Art Bulletin* 22:4 (December 1940), pp. 217-226 and 235-242.

⁴⁰ See John Spencer, "*Ut rhetorica pictura*: A Study in Quattrocento Theory of Painting," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20 (1957) 26-44. West likely imbibed the principles of Leon Battista Alberti's theoretical model of *ut rhetorica pictura* in history painting while reading (or being read to) in the library of George Jackson in Livorno, where he spent eleven months while on the Grand Tour.

⁴¹ Robert Edge Pine's history painting practice is an exception.

⁴² On Shaftesbury and Matteis, see David Solkin, *Painting for Money*, pp. 5-6. On West's possible exposure to Simon Gribelin's engraving after Matteis's painting, which appeared as the frontispiece to Shaftesbury's essay, see Ann Uhry Abrams, "Benjamin West's Documentation of Colonial History: William Penn's Treaty with the Indians," *Art Bulletin* vol. 64, no. 1 (March 1982) pp. 59-75, p. 64.

⁴³ Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, *A Notion of the Historical Draught or Tablature of the Judgment of Hercules, According to Prodicus* (London, printed for A. Baldwin, 1713)

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Poussin's *Et in Arcadia ego*, a landscape painting in which the artist substitutes idealized figures from classical antiquity for Arcadian shepherds and imbues the scene with the instructive power of history painting by adding the *memento mori* element.

⁴⁵ For a discussion of this painting that proposes an alternative reading, see Courtney Noble, "Rescuing Difference: Ambiguous Heroism in Benjamin West's *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Soldier from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian*," *Immediations* I (2004) pp. 60-75. I contend that the heroism depicted in this painting is emphatically unambiguous.

⁴⁶ See “Account of General Johnson,” *London Magazine, or Gentleman’s Monthly Intelligencer* vol. XXV, no 9 (September 1756) p. 432n.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., Allen Francis, *A Complete English Dictionary: Containing an Explanation of All the Words Made Use of in the Common Occurrences of Life, or in the Several Arts and Sciences: So as to Convey a Precise and Determinate Idea of Their Meaning...* (London, printed for J. Wilson and F. Fell, 1765) n.p. [f. 413].

⁴⁸ See, e.g., Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (Dublin, printed for L. Flin, 1758) pp. 126-127 and Citizen, *Thoughts on the Times, and the Silk Manufacture* (London, printed for J. Wilkie, 1765) 12. For various twentieth- and twenty-first-century perspectives on broad characterizations of the French in terms of effeminacy versus manliness, see Gillian Perry and Michael Rossington, eds., *Femininity and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Art and Culture* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1994); Michèle Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1996); Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1725-1785* (Cambridge, 1995); G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, 1992); Michèle Cohen, “Manliness, Effeminacy and the French: Gender and the Construction of National Character in Eighteenth-Century England,” in Michèle Cohen and Tim Hitchcock, eds., *English Masculinities 1600-1800* (London, 1999) 44-61; Martin Myrone, *Bodybuilding: Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750-1810* (London, Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art, 2005); and Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

⁴⁹ Noble, “Rescuing Difference,” p. 63.

⁵⁰ Current limitations prevent a more detailed discussion of Braddock’s defeat at the Battle of Monongahela.

⁵¹ This characterization of the sound first appeared in *The Idler* no. 8 (3 June 1758) and was reprinted in a slightly modified version in the *London Magazine* vol. 27, no. 6 (June 1758) 288-289 and then again in the collected issues of *The Idler*, 2 volumes (London, printed for J. Newbery, 1761) pp. 46-47.

⁵² William Smith, *A Review of the Military Operations in North-America*, p. 44.

⁵³ *The Military History of Great Britain, for 1756, 1757. Containing a Letter from an English Officer at Canada, Taken Prisoner at Oswego. Exhibiting the Cruelty of the French, and Their Savage Indians, in Times of Peace and War* (London: printed for J. Millan, 1757) p. 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵⁵ Peter Williamson, *French and Indian Cruelty; Exemplified in the Life and Various Vicissitudes of Fortune, of Peter Williamson* (Edinburgh: printed for the author, 1757) p. 37. It is important to note that this publication ran in at least five editions published in four cities between 1757 and 1759.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Peter Williamson, *French and Indian Cruelty: Exemplified in the Life and Various Vicissitudes of Fortune, of Peter Williamson*, 4th edition (London, printed for the author, 1759) p. 49.

⁵⁸ Samuel Davies, *Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier. A Sermon Preached to Captain Overton’s Independant Company of Volunteers, Raised in Hanover County, Virginia, August 17, 1755* (Philadelphia, printed: London; Reprinted for J. Buckland, 1756) p. 7.

⁵⁹ For discussions of the print series, see *A Dissertation on Mr. Hogarth’s Six Prints Lately Publish’d, viz. Gin-Lane, Beer-Street, and the Four Stages of Cruelty* (London, printed for B. Dickinson, 1751) pp. 33-59; John Trusler, *Hogarth Moralized* (London, 1768) p. 134; Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, 4 volumes (Strawberry Hill, printed by Thomas Kirgate, 1771) vol. IV, p. 70; Frederick Antal, “The Moral Purpose of Hogarth’s Art,” *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* vol. 15, no. 3/4 (1952) pp. 169-197; Michael Benton, *Studies in the Spectator Role: Literature, Painting and Pedagogy*; David Bindman, *Hogarth and His Times*; Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth Volume 3 Art and Politics, 1750-64*; Ronald Paulson, *The Life of Henry Fielding*; Diana Donald, “Beastly Sights: The Treatment of Animals as a Moral Theme in Representations of London c. 1820-1850,” in Dana Arnold, ed., *The Metropolis and Its*

Image: Constructing Identities for London, c. 1750-1950 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999) 79-100, which also appeared as *Art History* 22:4. For modern analyses of a completely separate discourse of English inhumanity, characterized by some scholars as “moral monstrosity,” see James A. Steintrager, “Perfectly Inhuman: Moral Monstrosity in Eighteenth-Century Discourse,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 21:2 (May 1997) 114-132; and Roger D. Lund, “Laughing at Cripples: Ridicule, Deformity and the Argument from Design,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39:1 (Fall 2005) 91-114, the latter of which testifies to the sometimes casual nature of English cruelty.

⁶⁰ Henry Fielding, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers, &c. with Some Proposals for Remediating this Growing Evil* (Dublin: printed for G. Faulkner, P. Wilson, R. James, and M. Williamson, 1751) pp. 24-25. Fielding responds to Joseph Shaw, *The Practical Justice of Peace: or, a Treatise Shewing the Power and Authority of that Office*, 2 volumes (London: printed by E. and R. Nutt, and R. Gosling for Thomas Ward, 1728) vol. I, p.113; this is the source from which I derive the “natural and inbred Cruelty” characterization. For a discussion of Fielding’s views on the relationships between luxury, poverty and crime that invokes models of civic humanism and social history, see Stephen Copley, *Literature and the Social Order in England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984) p. 12; and David Solkin, *Painting for Money*, pp. 115-118.

⁶¹ *A Dissertation on Mr. Hogarth’s Six Prints Lately Publish’d, viz. Gin Lane, Beer Street, and the Four Stages of Cruelty* (London: printed for B. Dickinson, 1751) p. 33.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁶⁴ The literatures of imperial atrocities committed against the peoples of Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the voluminous body of anti-slavery literature exceed the limits of this study.

⁶⁵ Horace Walpole, *Reflections on the Different Ideas of the French and English, in Regard to Cruelty; with Some Hints for Improving our Humanity in a Particular Branch* (London: printed for J. and R. Tonson, 1759).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁷ See Edward Ward, *The London-Spy Compleat, in Eighteen-Parts. By the Author of The trip to Jamaica* (London: printed and sold by J. How, 1703) vol. I, pp. 60-64. The Rake’s madness as spectacle compares easily to the murderer’s vivisection as spectacle in *The Fourth Stage of Cruelty*. For a discussion of the function of the hospital as a sympathetic and charitable cause in general, and the connections between London’s Foundling Hospital and the rise of British art in particular, see David Solkin, *Painting for Money*, pp. 159-176.

⁶⁸ See Samuel Richardson, *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends, on the Most Important Occasions. Directing Not Only the Requisite Style and Forms to Be Observed in Writing Familiar Letters; but How to Think and Act Justly and Prudently, in the Common Concerns of Human Life. Containing, One Hundred and Seventy-three Letters* (London: printed for J. Osborn; J. and J. Rivington, 1750) pp. 221-222.

⁶⁹ Walpole, *Reflections on Different Ideas*, pp. 19-20.

⁷⁰ See, for example, Simon Stevens, *A Journal of Lieut. Simon Stevens, from the Time of His Being Taken, near Fort William-Henry, June the 25th 1758. With an Account of His Escape from Quebec, and His Arrival at Louisbourg, on June the 6th 1759* (Boston, printed and sold by Edes and Gill, 1760) pp. 11-12.

⁷¹ See *An Accurate and Authentic Journal of the Siege of Quebec 1759. By a Gentleman in an Eminent Station on the Spot* (London: Printed for J. Robinson, 1759) pp. 27-28.

⁷² “Progress of the Siege of Louisbourg,” *The American Magazine and Monthly Chronicle for the British Colonies* [Philadelphialpha] I:6 (June 1758) 459-461, page 459. Most readers and listeners would have known of the British “light infantry, Highlanders and Rangers, [whom] the French termed the *English Savages*, perhaps in contradistinction to their own native Indians, Canadians, &c. the true French savages. These light infantry were a corps of 550 volunteers chosen as marksmen out of the most active resolute men from all the battalions of regulars, dressed some in blue, some in green jackets, and drawers for the easier brushing through the woods, with ruffs of black bear’s skin round their necks, the beard of their upper lips,

some grown into whiskers, others not so, but all well smutted on that part, with little round hats like several of our seamen. – Their arms were a fusil, cartouch-box full of balls and flints, and a powder horn flung over their shoulders. The Rangers are a body of irregulars, who have a more cut-throat, savage appearance; which carries in it something of natural savages: the appearance of the light infantry has in it more of artificial savages.” See John Entick, *The General History of the Late War: Containing It's Rise, Progress, and Event, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. And Exhibiting the State of the Belligerent Powers at the Commencement of the War*, 5 volumes (London : printed for Edward Dilly; and John Millan, 1763-64) vol. III, p. 227. For the claim that the Marquis de Vaudreuil lined the walls of his camp office with English scalps, see Jonathan Mayhew, *Two Dissertations*, pp. 39n-40n.

⁷³ David Menzies, “A True Relation of the Unheard-of Sufferings of David Menzies,” p. 27.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 28. Note Menzies’s use of the term “squall” to characterize his expression of pain, inadvertently casting doubt on his own manliness.

⁷⁶ In the same year that Menzies’s “Unheard-of Sufferings” appeared in pamphlet form and in periodical reprint, William Hillary, M. D., published *An Inquiry into the Means of Improving Medical Knowledge, by Examining All those Methods Which Have Hindered, or Increased its Improvement in All Past Ages. To Which is Added, an Explanation of the Motion and Action of Fire, in and upon the Human Body, Both in Continuing Life, and in Producing and Curing Diseases* (London: printed for C. Hitch and L. Hawes, 1761). Menzies also mentions that he survived on the “juices of his own body” like an English gentleman in the Black-hole of Calcutta. By citing this infamous event – one of the best-known of the war – Menzies adds another dimension of authenticity to his narrative, inadvertently confirming for his readers his own savagery and cruelty. See chapter 3, n9 in this dissertation.

⁷⁷ Menzies, p. 28.

⁷⁸ Williamson, *French and Indian Cruelty* (1757) pp. 11-13.

⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 38-39.

⁸⁰ Sir Jeffery Amherst, postscript to a letter to Colonel Henry Bouquet 7 July 1763, in *Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, ed. Stevens and Kent, ser. 21634, p. 161.

⁸¹ Bouquet to Amherst, Aug. 11, 1763, *ibid.*, 243; Bouquet to Amherst, July 13, 1763, in Jeffery Amherst, *Official Papers, 1740-1783* (microfilm, 202 reels, World Microfilms Publications, 1979), reel 32, frame 305. The published typescript of this last document deviates in important ways from the original. See Bouquet to Amherst, July 13, 1763, in *Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, ed. Stevens and Kent, ser. 21634, p. 214.

⁸² Amherst to Bouquet, July 16, 1763, in Amherst, *Official Papers*, reel 33, frame 114.

⁸³ “Miscellaneous Correspondence, in Prose and Verse: Extract of a Letter from on Board the Louisa, Admiral Terrel, Sept. 24, 1763,” *The General Magazine of Arts and Sciences, Philosophical, Mathematical, and Mechanical* (October 1763) vol. IV, p. 1117. Note: the volume as printed is XII, but volume IV as collected and published in London by W. Owen in 1764

⁸⁴ Tobias Smollett, *Continuation of the Complete History of England*, 5 volumes (London, printed for Richard Baldwin, 1765) vol. V, p. 267

⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 412-414.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 414.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 414-415.

⁹⁰ For a discussion of the forced removal of the Acadians, see Geoffrey Gilbert Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001) pp. 140-157. See also *Remarks on the French Memorials Concerning the Limits of Acadia* (London, printed for T. Jeffreys, 1756).

⁹¹ Stephen Brumwell, "Monckton, Robert (1726–1782)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004). Biographical information culled from the DNB Online, URL: <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/18944>. For details of the court martial, see *Proceedings of a General Court Martial, Held at the Judge Advocate's Office, in the Horse Guards, On Saturday the 14th, and Continued by Adjournment to Wednesday the 18th April 1764; for the Trial of a Charge Preferred by Colin Campbell, Esq. against the Honourable Major General Robert Monckton* (London, printed for James Robson, 1764).

⁹² See *Public Characters of 1805* (London, printed for Richard Phillips, 1805) p. 532. The text of this account comes from an autobiographical manuscript that West "fed" to a number of different publications between 1793 and his death in 1820. See "Original Autograph Manuscript Autobiography" in the Charles Allen Munn Collection, Fordham University Library; and Susan Rather, "Benjamin West's Professional Endgame and the Historical Conundrum of William Williams," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, vol. LIX, no. 4 (October 2002) pp. 821-864, esp. p. 864 n83.

⁹³ I refer here specifically to *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney and Signing of the Preliminary Treaty of Peace in 1782*. See Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

⁹⁴ The characterization of Monckton as the British Scipio Africanus, "trained up from his youth for conquest," appeared in a newspaper article published 12 June 1764. See "Description of the Fourth Capital Picture by Mr. Hayman, erected in the Gardens of Vauxhall, in the year 1764," Museum of London, Newspaper Cuttings, Warwick Wroth Collection, vol. III, p. 7. A copy of this clipping may be found in NAL Press Cuttings 1723-1800 as well. I wish to reiterate my thanks to Sally Brooks for facilitating my access to the Wroth Collection materials.

⁹⁵ John Maylem, *The Conquest of Louisbourg* (Boston, 1758) lines 351-362.

⁹⁶ Most scholars attribute the popularity of the *Apollo Belvedere* as the eighteenth-century epitome of masculine beauty to Johann Joachim Winckelmann's characterization of the statue as "the highest ideal of art among the works of antiquity that have escaped its destruction." However, a number of published sources that predated Winckelmann's also extolled the statue as an artistic ideal. The celebrated French engraver to Louis XIV, Gérard Audran, used the sculpture as a source for his *Les Proportions du corps humain mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l'antiquité* (Paris, chez Gérard Audran, 1683); See also *Roma Illustrata*, 2nd edition (1724) p. 19. See Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks: With Instructions for the Connoisseur, and an Essay on Grace in Works of Art*, Henry Fuseli, trans. (London, printed for the translator, 1765) See also Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994) p. 118; Thomas Crow, "The Abandoned Hero: The Decline of State Authority in the Direction of French Painting as Seen in the Career of One Exemplary Theme, 1777-89," in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, eds., *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London, Routledge, 1995) pp. 89-102, esp. pp. 100-101 n1; Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*, p. 118. The value of the *Apollo* extends beyond its status as an ideal of masculine beauty. Eighteenth-century artists and antiquarians assumed the statue a Roman copy of a bronze Greek original housed in the Temple of Apollo Patrous in Athens. In some tales, warring generals and rulers sacrificed to the original, known as the *Apollo Pythias* because the sculptor represented the god in the moments after he slew the monstrous python. Others suggest that the statue delivered the oracle at Delphi, and when oracles ceased Augustus had it brought to Rome, where it was copied in marble. Because of the richness of its myriad associations, presenting a British general in the pose of the *Apollo Belvedere* compounded the portrait's discursive participation in the visual heroics of empire. For a detailed discussion of the statue, its original name and the possible sources thereof, see François Catrou, *The Roman History: With Notes Historical, Geographical, and Critical*, 6 volumes (London, printed by J. Bettenham, T. Woodward, and J. Peele, 1728) vol. I, p. 579 n 49.

⁹⁷ See Colley, *Britons*, pp. 178-179 and Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, p. 218; von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 535.

⁹⁸ Whether true or not, the anecdote gained renown on both sides of the Atlantic well before it was published in the Galt biography: "...my respected friend, the president of the British royal academy, well expressed himself, when on leaving America, a youth, and first beholding the Apollo at Rome, he exclaimed, 'What a fine Mohawk warrior!' It was the language of nature, and a true compliment to the artist. Owing to the present habits of civilization being totally different from those of ancient Greece, the human structure seldom attains any perfection: so no wonder the exclamation that the Apollo recalled the remembrance of any existing men, should surprise the generality of hearers." Robert Ker Porter, *Travelling Sketches in Russia and Sweden. During the Years 1805, 1806, 1807, 1808.* (Philadelphia, Hopkins and Earle, 1809) p. 217; See Galt, *Life, Studies, and Works of Benjamin West* (1816) p. 132. Tobias Smollett's comparison of the lead character in *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* to the *Apollo Belvedere* demonstrates that Londoners were widely familiar with the work by 1751. See Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle, in Which Are Included, Memoirs of a Lady of Quality*, 4 volumes (London, printed for the author, 1751) vol. I, p. 168. For a commentary on the centrality of the *Apollo* to the development of taste in England, see James Granger, *A Biographical History of England, from Egbert the Great to the Revolution! Consisting of Characters Disposed in Different Classes, and Adapted to a Methodical Catalogue of Engraved British Heads: Intended as an Essay towards Reducing Our Biography to System, and a Help to the Knowledge of Portraits: Interspersed with Variety of Anecdotes, and Memoirs of a Great Number of Persons, Not to Be Found in Any Other Biographical Work: With a Preface, Shewing the Utility of a Collection of Engraved Portraits to Supply the Defect, and Answer the Various Purposes, of Medals*, 2nd edition, 4 volumes (London, printed for T. Davies, J. Robson, G. Robinson, T. Beckett, T. Cadell, and T. Evans, 1775), p. 115n: "I have seen a country fellow, influenced by mere natural sensibility, as much struck with the sight of a wooden bust in a hatter's shop, as a judge of statuary would be at the sight of the *Belvedere Apollo* or the *Venus of the Medicis*. This sensibility, corrected and matured by judgment and experience, is what constitutes true taste. Such as are void of sentiment, attempt in vain to acquire it. But how comparatively mean is that confined taste, which is limited to the rarities of art only, to that more diffusive one, which has the variety of nature for its object, and can view, with emotion, the wonders of the creation!" The Mohawk-Apollo connection even became the source of public performance in the 1770s. In "Letter LXII. Mr. W. to W. Shenstone, Esq. Feb 13, 1759)," *Select Letters between the Late Duchess of Somerset, Lady Luxborough, Mr. Whistler, Miss Dolman, Mr. R. Dodsley, William Shenstone, Esq. and Others; Including a Sketch of the Manners, Laws, &c. of the Republic of Venice, and Some Poetical Pieces; the Whole Now First Published from Original Copies, by Mr. Hull*, 2 volumes (London, printed for J. Dodsley, 1778) vol. I, pp. 246-247, the correspondent reports: "There has been a successful Method thought of to tax Curiosity these last three Weeks, with the Sight [of] a famous *Mohawk Warrior*, armed with his Scalping Knife, Battle Axe, &c. and painted in the *Indian Manner* for War: his Body is stained Mahogany, but his Face is made most terrific by the Hand of some Sign-Post APELLES; in his Cheeks, the Red is very predominant; his Eye-Brows owe their Breadth and Colour to a thick *Stratum* of Lamp-black, and his Nose is not less remarkable for a large Line of sable. He goes through his Exercise with great Expedition; performs the War Dance and Whoop, which is a Noise unheard in this Part of the World before: al this is very fine, exceeding curious, &c. but will you not laugh when I tell you who this formidable Hero is, *Ecce iterum Crispinus!* Mr. FOOTE, and no less a Man; if 'tis not him *in propria personâ*, it is one of his Agents; 'tis certain it is no *Indian*; if it was, he could not bear Confinement: another Circumstance, Mr. FOOTE is missing, and has not been seen since the Arrival of this *Mohawk*, which gives strong Proof to suspect him; however, be who he will, he is a clever Fellow, and has got a great deal of Money."

⁹⁹ See Minutius, "On the President of the Royal Academy's Discovery, That the *Belvedere Apollo* Resembles an American Savage," *National Art Library Press Cuttings from English Newspapers on Matters of Artistic Interest 1686-1835*, III:754. Artists' heavy reliance upon the *Apollo* is one key to understanding history painting and portraiture from the period, regardless of whether West made the infamous observation while in Rome. Within a year of the 1764 Spring-Gardens exhibition, Englishman

Benjamin Wilson produced another empire-themed painting in which the principal figure assumes the *Apollo* pose: *Mir Jafar and His Son Miran Bringing the Treaty of 1757 to William Watts* [See fig. 103 in this dissertation]. In eighteenth-century Anglophone cultural self-imagination, the intersection of the colonial subject with the icon of Augustan Rome and the savage American indigene enriched the breadth of popular engagement with the *Apollo*, adding a luster of *imperium temporum* to the statue's already well-established role within the history of taste and in the commodification of Greco-Roman antiquity. I use the term "imperium temporum" to distinguish what the English saw as their birthright to global territorial conquest from Britons' sense of entitlement to proprietorship of history and time – and most especially to classical antiquity.

¹⁰⁰ Chevalier Manini had exhibited *Charactacus Brought Prisoner before Claudius* at the Society of Artists exhibition in 1762 (along with *Boadicea Encouraging the People to Make War against the Romans*) and which Hayman had painted for engraving circa 1751.

¹⁰¹ Artists in all forms of creative expression would revisit this theme repeatedly over the ensuing decades, until the majority of English-speaking peoples grew comfortable in their global role as "a free though conquering people." The disruptions created by the American and French Revolutions delayed the reconciliation of constitutional liberty at home with imperial subjugation abroad, but by the end of the eighteenth century, concerns over the contradictions had essentially dissipated. For the origin of the characterization, see *Historical View of Plans, for the Government of British India, and Regulation of Trade to the East Indies. And Outlines of a Plan of Foreign Government, of Commercial Oeconomy, and of Domestic Administration, for the Asiatic Interests of Great Britain* (London, 1793). For commentary on the inherent tensions between liberty and subjugation, see P. J. Marshall, *A Free Though Conquering People: Eighteenth-Century Britain and Its Empire* (Aldershot, Ashgate Variorum, 2003).

¹⁰² On Caractacus, see *Military History of Great Britain*, 2nd edition (London, R. James, 1763) p. 11; and William Mason, *Caractacus, a Dramatic Poem: Written on the Model of the Ancient Greek Tragedy* (Dublin, printed for W. and W. Smith, P. Wilson, and J. Hoey, Jr., 1764).

¹⁰³ William Henry, *The Triumphs and Hope of Great-Britain and Ireland. A Sermon, Preached in the Parish Church of St. Michael, Dublin; on Thursday, November the 29th, 1759. Being the Day of General Thanksgiving for the Success of His Majesty's Arms* (Dublin, printed for Peter Wilson, 1759) p. 14.

Chapter 2 – Selective Appropriation: Classical and Renaissance Predicates for Modern Imperial Martial Virtue

...when we go upon any Business, undertake any Office, or chance upon any Affair whatever, we must set before our Eyes some excellent Person, either alive or dead, and consider with our selves what *Plato* for the purpose would have done in this Affair, what *Epaminondas* would have said, how *Lycurgus* or *Agesilaus* would have behaved themselves, that addressing our selves and adorning our Minds at these Mirrours, we may correct every disagreeing *word* and irregular *Passion*....¹

...tenderness and humanity have sometimes a much greater effect upon the minds of men, than any sort of violence which can possibly be used: and...Cities, and even whole Provinces have often been subdued by one act of Compassion, Continnence or Generosity, when no human force could have conquered them: of which we have many other examples in History. The Romans were never able to drive Pyrrhus out of Italy by dint of arms: and yet Fabricius obliged him to quit it, by giving him notice that one of his domestics had offered to poison him. ...Scipio Africanus did not gain so much reputation in Spain by taking new Carthage, as he did by a noble example of his continence, when he sent back a young and very beautiful Lady (whom he had taken prisoner) untouched, to her husband; the same of which gained him the esteem of all that nation, and made the people his friends, instead of enemies. We see then how greatly such virtues are admired by all men, and how much they are celebrated and recommended by every sort of writers. Xenophon, in particular, takes great pains to shew what honour, and how many victories Cyrus acquired by his humanity, affability, freedom from pride, cruelty, luxury, and all other vices that stain the life of man. ...Hannibal and Scipio both gained great reputation, the one by laudable, the other by detestable means....²

It must therefore be left to every one's own Observation to select the Characters of the *Roman Heroes* most suited to his own Taste and Genius.³

Italy was become, in a manner, our own; and even Greece, Syria, and Asia minor, hitherto unexplored, were made, for our use, to open their hidden treasures of the sublime and graceful *Antique*.⁴

The Imperial Romantic and the Imperial Pastoral: Love, Sex and Transformation as Metaphors for Territorial Conquest and Submission

Rather than risk undermining his reputation as an aspiring history painter by showing *General Johnson* in the 1764 Society of Artist exhibition, West instead chose subjects from classical and early modern literature, each with its own imperial underpinnings. By turning his attention to imperial exemplars and counter exemplars from classical history and literature, West could cultivate patronage from individual collectors while continuing to promote history painting as a relevant and useful undertaking without having to worry about how the imperial misconduct of Britons might affect the reception of his works. By depicting his historical and literary characters at moments in the narratives that signal such themes as connubial devotion and filial piety, West sought to naturalize and domesticate the idea of empire. Based on his experiences with William Smith in Philadelphia, with George Jackson in Livorno and with his fellow Grand Tourists in Italy and France, West knew that the English were widely familiar with certain tales and tropes from Greco-Roman texts. He also knew that his countrymen on both sides of the Atlantic constantly compared themselves to their classical forebears.

There is no method of reproof more in vogue, than the drawing of invidious parallels between the present times and the past. ...[T]he moralists are above all devoted to this practice. These wise gentlemen continuously looking backwards, and condemning what lays immediately before them by retrospect. No comparisons of this sort are so frequently repeated, and so much insisted on, as those drawn between the Ancients and Moderns. ...If a Lady makes an unfortunate slip, she is told again and again of *Lucretia*, and fifty other school-boy tales of honour and chastity. In a word, there is not one fashionable frailty but has some stubborn antiquated virtue set in opposition to it; and our unhappy metropolis is every day threatened with destruction for its degeneracy from the

rigid maxims of *Rome* or *Sparta*. ...[I]t gives me infinite pleasure, that I can with justice take notice of the incontestable superiority of the Moderns in point of Modesty. The incontestable Arrogance of the Ancients was so remarkable, that, in their idea of a perfect character, they included every public and private virtue. They aimed at a strict observance of all the duties of life: and if some old *Romans* had been stiled Gods while living, it would not have been such gross flattery as was afterwards practices, in honouring the Emperors with an *Apotheosis*. Their inflexible honesty was their perpetual boast, and their virtue was their pride. This high idea of a Perfect Character among the Ancients naturally urged them to life themselves to an invidious superiority above the rest of the world: while the modest Moderns, by taking all the vices instead of the virtues into their notion of a Fine Gentleman, endeavour to let themselves down to a level with the lowest of their species, and have laid the surest foundation for humility. Fine Gentlemen are so far from being proud, that they are never guilty of any thing which gives them the least reason to be so: and our Fine Ladies have none of the distinguishing haughtiness of virtue, though indeed they are seldom known to be ashamed.⁵

Of course, West could not determine whether an exhibition attendee associated one of his classical heroics of empire subjects with contemporary political and social events and circumstances, but Londoners' familiarity with and the exalted status of Greco-Roman and early modern texts insulated West from the kinds of criticism that he would have faced if *General Johnson* had appeared among the Society of Artists' history painting offerings in 1764 or 1765.⁶ Most importantly, by showing history paintings derived from narratives of Greek and Roman history and literature – stories with which viewers from across all ranks of society would be familiar – West could exploit his position as a colonial-born history painter to explore a number of different themes during the first decade of Britain's newly-expansive world presence.⁷ Of course West did not address issues of conquest in every painting, but many of his works could be read through the prism of imperial anxiety and imperial identity. In some instances almost undetectably

and in other cases more explicitly, West produced some pictures in which some viewers could selectively appropriate and interpret themes from classical antiquity and Renaissance literature in the service of fashioning a modern Anglophone imperial identity.

As members of the Society of Artists and Free Society of Artists continued their efforts to gain some sort of institutional footing with their images, objects and designs, some presented modern imperial subjects, but did so through essentially unassailable choices, such as Edward Penny's *The Death of General Wolfe*. Several other artists presented works that relate in varying degrees to the theme of empire, but which do not necessarily valorize conquest or extol imperial martial virtue. For example, in 1764 honorary Society of Artists exhibitor Captain Bellew offered an India ink sketch of *A View of the Havanna* and regular member William Pars entered his *Caractacus before the Emperor Claudius*. William Dawes exhibited *The Red Cross Knight in the Cave of Despair* at the Free Society of Artists exhibition of 1764, in which John Hamilton Mortimer's *St. Paul Converting the Ancient Britons* took the premium for history painting. That exhibition also included a group portrait of three members of the Cherokee peoples by John George. Also in 1764 a painter by the name of Hambleton entered *The Death of Hector* in chiaroscuro at the Society of Artists exhibition and Mary Hoare exhibited a drawing depicting the return of Regulus to Carthage. To one degree or another, these works engage with the theme of empire without going to the extreme of imperial rhetoric that West had deployed in *General Johnson*.

To this assortment of pictures and his own portrait of General Monckton, West added *Angelica and Medoro* and its companion piece *Cymon and Iphigenia* (figs. 36 and 37).⁸ Modern viewers unfamiliar with the texts from which West drew these subjects group this pair with works more generally associated with themes of erotic love such as those exemplified by *Venus and Cupid*, rather than with heroics of empire paintings (fig. 38). The compositions certainly justify such a comparison. And taking into consideration that West always needed someone to read from a relevant textual source before he could undertake any painting based on history or literature, it remains entirely in the realm of possibility that West saw the pair as appealing tributes to the power of romantic love. But because West produced the paintings while still in Rome, when he was surrounded by much more learned artists and non-artist bibliophiles, he would have had the opportunity, at least, to overhear discussions of the literary works from which he drew the scenes. In London, some spectators who knew Giovanni Boccaccio's (1313-1375) *Cymon and Iphigenia* by way of John Dryden's (1631-1700) translation and the characters of Angelica and Medoro from Lodovico Ariosto's (1474-1533) *Orlando Furioso*, which appeared in English translation in 1755 and again in 1757, would have brought to their experience of the images a set of rarified inflections that may have eluded the young American painter.

With *Angelica and Medoro*, West included himself in a well-established tradition of early modern artists who had portrayed the moment from the *Orlando Furioso* in

which the newlywed lovers Angelica, princess of Cathay, and Medoro, a Moorish youth, carve their names on every surface into which they could scratch them:

...where-e'er an upright tree
Was seen, a font, or river pure o'ershade,
With knife or bodkin grav'd 'twas suddenly;
So any stone of softer texture made:
Without, in thousand places, wrote you see,
And in the house upon the walls displayd,
Angelic and Medor, in various modes,
Together ty'd in many diff'rent nodes.⁹

The image seems a straightforward celebration of early marital bliss and as such needs no further analysis. William Huggins's (1696-1761) 1757 second edition of *Orlando Furioso* coincided with the first full year of the war against France and Spain and their allies; those familiar with the text would have made some strong connections between the narrative, the time in which Ariosto composed it and the rapidly escalating conflicts across the globe. As Walter S. H. Lim notes,

Like the *Faerie Queene* that is its epic successor, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* is an imperialist text, but with distinctly different emphasis. In Spenser, the desire to create a complete and sustained national epic is denied the pleasures of fulfillment. The dreams of national identity and empire are fractured by the performances of a queen inconsonant with Spenser's own perception of what can be done for England. *Orlando Furioso*, by contrast, exhibits greater confidence in its image of empire. Ariosto's epic poem centers its imperial theme on the greatness of the Spanish empire and its sustained encomium of Charles V...[who] is shown to be the great conqueror of lands in both the East and the West Indies.¹⁰

Rather than the sweetness and softness of newlyweds carving their names on trees, West could have just as easily produced image of imperial bombast to proclaim England's newly-won status as the fulfillment of Spenser's dream and the inheritor of the diadem once worn by "Augustus, Trajan, Marcus, and Sever[us]". Replacing the now humbled

Spanish descendant of Charles V, George III now served as, “A Prince, whose valour
equall’d is by none / ...and virtue...come back with him from banishment.” Exhibition
attendees could look survey the walls of the Great Room at Spring Gardens and be
reminded in the images of Monckton and Penny that “...Providence Supreme near him
decreed / Unconquer’d captains, both by [sea] and land. / ...New cities under Cæsar’s
command.”¹¹ The imperial reading of West’s picture would not have worked in 1757,
while George II remained on the throne and England struggled against France on all
fronts. But in 1764, George III ruled over an empire of greater breadth than the Romans
or the Spanish had ever known.

West offered a scene in which a young man and wife revel in their newly-
consummated love, but in the stanza immediately preceding the lines from which West
took the image, Ariosto compares Angelica and Medoro to Dido and Aeneas, the Trojan
who founded the city of Rome. The Peace of Paris consummated the marriage between
east and west through the conquests of the Seven Years War, with Britain emblazoning
its imprimatur on North America through Africa and into South Asia. Whether or not
West could fully grasp the implications of his choice of narrative moments from
Ariosto’s epic, those viewers who understood that George III had now replaced Spain’s
Charles V in God’s plan to “...under one Monarch place, / Under the wisest Emperor,
and just, / That e’er has been, or will be, since August.”¹² Those same exhibition-goers
would have understood that it was vital for Britons to avoid the tyrannies that had cost
Spain its empire. During a time when little of the news coming from England’s imperial

holdings was good, the representation of empire in such sensitive and appealing terms helped to domesticate and naturalize the idea of a fully Britannic world.

Most eighteenth-century Londoners would recognize the names Cymon and Iphigenia from John Dryden's variation on the fortieth novel from Giovanni Boccaccio's *Il Decamerone*. Again, an apparently straightforward scene of romantic love resonates with potent messages of imperial conquest. One of the early English translations of Boccaccio's text reveals the extent to which the narrative could serve as a metaphor for global territorial conquest in the 1760s:

And as it was her that made him to become a Man, so he persuaded himself, that if he could but get her, he should be immortalized, and resolved to do it, or perish in the attempt. He acquainted some of his friends with his design, and gets a Man of War privately fitted out, and sets out to Sea to wait for *Iphigenia*, whose Ship was attack'd by *Chimon* the next day after she set sail. They on Board made all things ready to defend themselves, but *Chimon* grappelling that Ship, leaps on Board, not tarrying till any body followed him, but with his Sword in Hand made a great Slaughter. The *Rhodians* being daunted at his Courage, threw down their Arms, and submitted. *Chimon* being Conqueror, told them that it was neither Interest, nor ill-Will to them, that made his take up Arms against them, but the Love which he had for *Iphigenia*, and that his only ambition was to be Possessor of that Person for whom he had such an infinite esteem.¹³

Dryden's reworking of the tale of the boorish son of a wealthy gentleman made polite by his love for Iphigenia retains the strongly imperial content. The story's resonances with England's conquests in the Seven Years' War necessitate quoting Dryden's verse at length:

The time is come for Iphigenia to find
The miracle she wrought upon my mind:
Her charms have made me man, her ravish'd love
In rank shall place me with the blest above.
For mine by love, by force, shall be mine,

Or death, if force should faile, shall finish my design.
Resolv'd he said; and rigg'd with speedy care
Vessel strong, and well equipp'd for war.
The secret ship with chosen friends he stor'd;
And bent to die, or conquer, went aboard.
Ambush'd he lay behind the Cyprian shore,
Waiting the sail that all his wishes bore;
Nor long expected, for the following tide
Sent out the hostile ship and beauteous bride.

To Rhodes the rival bark directly steer'd,
When Cymon sudden at her back appear'd,
And stopp'd her flight: then standing on his prow
In haughty terms he thus defy'd the foe;
Or strike your sails at summons, or prepare
To prove the last extremities of war.
Thus warn'd, the Rhodians for the fight provide;
Already were the vessels side by side,
These obstinate to save, and those to seize the bride.
But Cymon soon his crooked grapples cast,
Which with tenacious hold his foes embrac'd,
And, arm'd with sword and shield, amid the press he pass'd.
Fierce was the fight, but hast'ning to his prey,
By force the furious lover freed his way:
Himself alone dispers'd the Rhodian crew,
The weak disdain'd, the valiant overthrew;
Cheap conquest for his following friends remain'd,
He reap'd the field, and they but only glean'd.

His victory confess'd, the foes retreat,
And cast their weapons at the victor's feet.
Whom thus he cheer'd: O Rhodian youth, I fought
For love alone, nor other booty sought:
Your lives are safe; your vessel I resign,
Yours be your own, restoring what is mine:
In Iphigene I claim my rightful due,
Robb'd by my rival, and detain'd by you:
...And like a king by conquest gains his cause:
Where arms take place, all other pleas are vain,
Love taught me force, and force shall love maintain.
...Secure of fate, wile Cymon plows the sea,
And steers to Candy with his conquer'd prey[.]¹⁴

West's painting captures the moment when the brutish Cymon first spies the beautiful Iphigenia asleep in the forest, but London audiences would have well known the full course and outcome of the story.

To fully understand West's program of naturalizing and domesticating empire as a part of Britons' cultural self-imagination at home during a period of imperial instability abroad, one must acknowledge three assumptions that informed both artist and audience. First, West understood that viewers could make the necessary associations with a passage from a textual source without the artist having to include visual markers that pointed to other parts of the narrative in order to clarify the broader meaning of the text. In fact, the demands of contemporary art reception prohibited bringing into a painting any detail not specific to the narrative moment represented in the work. *Letters to a Young Nobleman*, first published in 1762 clarifies what the viewer expects from a history painter:

A picture representing the choice of Hercules can with propriety admit of no circumstance of that hero's life, but that single one of his being addressed by the goddesses of virtue and pleasure, exhorted by the one to pursue the manly road of temperance and virtue, allured by the other to follow the luxurious paths of indolence and vice: every other part of the History of Hercules is foreign to the subject, and if brought into that piece, would bread the unity of the design, divert the attention from the main subject, and render the work irregular and absurd.¹⁵

The responsibility for placing subjects in the broader contexts from which the artist derives a narrative instant resides with the liberally-educated gentleman, who, in order to fully appreciate the "noblest painting, and most exquisite statues that adorn the world" must bring to the experience a competent knowledge of the "history of those fabulous and heroic ages" which serve as the foundation for great works of art.¹⁶

Second – and closely related to the first assumption – West and his fellow artists expected their audiences to make connections between images derived from apparently unrelated texts, so that pairings such as *Angelica and Medoro* and *Cymon and Iphigenia* set up “conversations” beyond superficial themes such as the triumph of romantic love. In the case of the two couples that West presented to exhibition audiences in 1764, one might characterize the set as example and counter-example. Angelica, whose beauty captivates all of medieval Europe, falls in love with a common soldier whose nobility and virtue are rewarded with their marriage and his enthronement: Medoro the lowly soldier returns to Cathay with princess Angelica, who makes him king of her realm. Cymon, who transforms from beast to gentleman at the sight of the sleeping Iphigenia, undertakes abduction and murder to gain what he wants. Iphigenia, the “reluctant female who finally succumbs” to her persistent conqueror offers an outcome that is comparable to the fate of Angelia and Medoro, but Cymon and Iphigenia arrive at their fate through a set of less-than-virtuous events and circumstances.¹⁷ What led West to produce these pictures while in Rome remains open to speculation; but West expected that his audiences would be able to “read” the works as individual gestures of artistic expression and as a pair of pictures whose narrative sources conversed with one another through themes of conquest romantic and imperial.

Finally, audiences at the 1764 Society of Artists exhibition would have made close associations between the pictures on display and the proven power of military conquest to reform contemporary English masculinity. Writing in 1757, the Reverend

John Brown of Newcastle attributed England's many humiliations in the first year of the conflict with France to "a *vain, luxurious, and selfish* EFFEMINACY" that had trickled down to common soldiers from Britons of the higher ranks.¹⁸ Writing three years after Brown issued his scathing repudiation of the state of English masculinity – and a year after Britons experienced a complete reversal of military fortune in the Seven Years' War – John Gordon, Archdeacon of Lincoln, attributed the "amazing alteration" solely to "a certain great author" whose "wonderful influence in rousing the indolent, and in animating the careless; in giving manliness to the effeminate...and courage to the voluptuary; has thus totally changed the whole face of our affairs."¹⁹ In short, Brown's *Estimate* had inspired the effeminate to manliness – only such a dramatic reformation could explain what had caused "a handful of *Englishmen* to baffle the whole power of *France*."²⁰ That newfound martial manliness could not, however, tend to the brutish. An appropriately manly Briton (regardless of rank) expressed his virtue in the same terms as the Roman citizen: spiritual piety, familial piety and fulfillment of his duty to the greater good of the empire. So, just as love had transformed the beastly Cymon into a man, so too did heroic service to the values of Anglican Protestantism, familial devotion and the advancement and preservation of the empire render the weak strong and the effeminate manly. Textually literate viewers who could make connections between images and who recognized the value of imperial conquest to British masculine identity qualified as the ideal audience for heroics of empire history painting. Had all art-going publics met these criteria, however, there would have been no need for the visual heroics of empire, as

West and his fellow artists would have merely “preached to the converted.” West’s works most specifically targeted textually- and visually-literate viewer whose sense of self and nation conflicted with the moral imperatives of territorial conquest.

Society of Artists and Free Society of Artists catalogues from 1765 suggest that artists showed interested in imperial subjects, but many of the works that they produced could connect to domestic rhetorics of Patriotism as easily as to the discourses of territorial conquest. From the early part of the eighteenth century, the idea of the Patriot connected inextricably to the idea of the conqueror, so attempting to separate the one from the other in paintings from later in the century does not serve any substantial art-historical objective. More relevant to twenty-first-century understanding of the artistic impulses of the period between the signing of the Peace of Paris of 1763 and the first royal commission for an heroic of empire history painting is the value of imperial martial virtue to the advancement of the public good. Philanthropy could turn commerce to the betterment of society and imperial martial virtue could turn conquest to the benefit of the Briton at home. Artists sympathetic to their audiences’ concerns about empire (and commerce, for that matter) undertook a variety of classical and modern imperial subjects, but one cannot identify a single, unifying principle that guided London painters in their individual choices and practices.²¹ (Some artists combined themes of military virtue with individual acts of philanthropy.) Among the Society of Artists exhibitors who had contributed works in 1764, Edward Penny continued to explore popular examples of imperial martial virtue with *An Officer Relieving a Sick Soldier* in the following year’s

exhibition (fig. 39). Viewers would have recognized the officer as John Manners, Marquis of Granby (1721-1770), the theme of paternal martial benevolence applied to any number of British commanders, including General James Wolfe.²²

Classical themes of imperial destiny and epic conquest occupied the Scottish artist Gavin Hamilton (1723-1798), who in 1765 produced *Achilles Lamenting the Death of Patroclus*, one of a number of episodes from the painted Homeric cycle sent for exhibition at the Society of Artists from Hamilton's studio in Rome (fig. 40). In that same year, Francis Hayman produced *Aeneas Carrying His Father Anchises*, also from the *Iliad* (untraced). Hamilton's *Iliad* images operated in an aesthetic sphere only tangentially related to the visual heroics of empire and Hayman's *Aeneas* belongs more to the Patriot King model of imperial conquest than to the visual heroics of the Seven Years' War as practiced by West and his countrymen.²³ Hayman did, however, more directly engage the visual heroics of empire with *The Surrender of Pondicherry to Sir Eyre Coote*, which portrays the British seizure of the French fort on the coast of India south of Madras (present-day Chennai) (fig. 41). This painting connects directly to Hayman's Vauxhall pictures of 1761-1764 and bears comparison with West's *Monckton* and Penny's *Death of Wolfe* and *Officer Relieving a Sick Soldier*. Also among the offerings at the 1765 exhibition, George Stubbs's *Portrait of a Hunting Tyger* promoted a British imaginary of India that would prevail well into the nineteenth century, while Alderman John Boydell's print after Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione's (1609-1664) *Exposition of Cyrus* contributed yet another exemplar to the classical imperial pantheon

in the Persian king Cyrus, who conquered ancient Babylon (figs. 42 and 43). As the author of *Letters to a Young Nobleman* observed,

The History of the Roman people is full of the most interesting and surprizing events, that are exhibited to us in the annals of human kind; whether we consider their small and inconsiderable beginnings, or the extensive Empire to which they last attained; whether we consider the internal constitution of their government, or the mighty provinces they subdued, and the manner in which they civilized and incorporated them with the main body of the Empire. No History is more fertile in grand events, or presents us with greater examples of bravery, patriotism, and integrity of manners, or of wisdom in debate, manly eloquence and consummate art in managing the heads, and influencing the hearts of a free people.²⁴

Managing the heads and influencing the hearts of his countrymen increasingly occupied West's attention as he attracted patronage from the most fashionable quarters of English society.

“WEST and GENIUS met me at the Door.”

In the 1766 Society of Artists exhibition, Matthew Pratt's *American School* signaled an important shift in London's art world by prophesying West's dominance of Anglophone history painting (fig. 44).²⁵ In the great room at Spring-Gardens, the conversations between Pratt's canvas and West's image of classical imperial virtue *Contenance of Scipio* implicitly arrogated to Americans the academic practice of history painting at a time before any coherent sense of an English (or British) school had manifested to any estimable degree (fig. 45).²⁶ That both men were colonial subjects submitting works for the approval of London audiences under the auspices of a royal

incorporation quickened the imperial atmosphere of the exhibition. In that year's exhibition, John Singleton Copley's (1738-1815) portrait entitled *Boy with a Squirrel* piqued a completely different kind of imperial interest, one more related to the prospects for colonial genius portrayed in Pratt's *American School* than to conquest valorized in the history painting format.

With *The Continnence of Scipio* West reinterpreted an already-familiar exemplar of imperial martial virtue. In a demonstration of clemency and continence in conquest comparable to that personified by Alexander the Great at the tent of Darius and General Amherst at the surrender of Montreal, the Roman General Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (236-184 BCE), "who conquered *Hannibal*, and broke the Power of *Carthage* in the second *Punic* war," practiced extraordinary self-restraint in an incident following the conquest of Spain.²⁷ The behavior of Scipio (a young man known for his libidinal appetites) in the presence of a beautiful young female captive had by 1766 been deemed a "favourite topic of Eloquence of every Age and every Country."²⁸ Alexander had spared the queens of Persia from the sexual violation that women often suffered in imperial captivity and Amherst had restored the French Canadians by offering nourishment and other types of assistance. Scipio not only resisted his "right" of conquest, which in the case of the young woman was complicated by intense sexual desire, but he also lavished upon the fiancé to whom that object was betrothed a substantial dowry, collected as a ransom from the parents of the female captive. In one version of the story, Scipio proclaims to the young woman's future husband:

[‘]Your Mistress was brought to me a Prisoner by my Soldiers. I am informed you have a violent Passion for her, and her fine Form makes me easily believe it. As I am not impenetrable myself to the impressions of Beauty, and should no doubt be very amorous of a fair Lady in an honourable way, if other, and more important Affairs than Love, did not take up my Thoughts, so I am the more inclined to favour your virtuous Passion. Your Mistress’s Honour has been as safe in my Camp, and Custody, as it could have been in the House and Presence of her Parents. I have preserved her spotless, that so you might have a Present, worthy of me to give, and you to take. I ask but one Reward, Be a Friend to Rome.[’]

What shining Instances of Continence are these, in the Heat of Youth, the Licentiousness of a Camp, and the Insolence of Victory! These indeed appear to me to be the Noblest and Brightest Passages from this great Man’s Life. Fleets and Armies, Battels and Sieges, make indeed a pompous Figure in History, and are attended by mighty Revolutions, which glitter splendidly in the Eyes of Men. But most undoubtedly it is a more difficult, and truly glorious Atchievement, thus to conquer a Temptation, and vanquish a Passion, than gain Battels by Sea and Land. Sure I am, such Actions more deserve to be transmitted to Posterity. For Examples of Military Skill, and Valour, are imitable but by few: But such Beautiful Acts of Virtue as these before us, are fitted for general Instruction, and Imitation.²⁹

West’s composition acknowledges Anthony Van Dyck’s (1599-1641) *Continence of Scipio*, particularly in the figure to the viewer’s right in the lower portion of the picture (fig. 46). West borrowed the figure of Scipio from Nicolas Poussin’s (1594-1665) *Continence of Scipio*, which hung at Houghton Hall (fig. 47).³⁰ Britons’ familiarity with the subject in text and image would have made the picture a safe choice for exhibition; the fresh imperial context in which Londoners viewed the work would have altered its impact substantially. This would apply especially for those exhibition-goers who frequented Vauxhall, as they would have made imperial-aesthetic associations by registering connections between Scipio and Alexander and thus between Scipio and Amherst.

During the fourteenth through seventeenth centuries in Italy and northern Europe, Scipio Africanus acquired what one might term a sort of celebrity. As Peter Sutton notes, Scipio's "popularity was stimulated by Petrarch (1304-1374), who not only included Scipio's biography in his *De viris illustribus* but later raised him to a philosophic and poetic ideal in the *Africa*."³¹ Dutch Artist-theorists Karel van Mander (1548-1606) and Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678) extolled Scipio as an historical personage perfectly suited for history painting. Hoogstraten "cited Scipio and his triumphal return from Africa as an exemplary history painting theme of the sort that is the highest form of art."³² While on the Grand Tour, West may have learned indirectly of van Mander's and Hoogstraten's admiration for Scipio, but he more likely knew of Gérard Lairesse's characterization of the subject as "moral ordonnance," through which great deeds edify and instruct and are not bound to temporal restraints in representation or application.³³ Like most characters from classical history, artists and writers could enlist Scipio as an emblem in the service of any number of discursive objectives. Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke cited Scipio as an example of the tensions between public virtue and private appetites; West and his audiences saw the Roman general as an ideal to which modern Britons should aspire in their own imperial conquests.³⁴ West felt sufficiently confident that *Scipio* would meet with public approbation to undertake the work on speculation. Once on exhibition, the painting would invite viewers to incorporate its message of continence in imperial victory to their own visions for a virtuous British empire.

As a companion piece to *The Continnence of Scipio*, West entered *Pylades and Orestes* (fig. 48).³⁵ Whereas *Scipio* reminded its audiences of the importance of clemency and continence in conquest – one of the most important of imperial martial attributes – *Pylades and Orestes* presents a narrative moment in which the unbreakable bonds of personal friendship merge with the power of consanguinity to supersede powers national, imperial and divine.³⁶ The picture derives from Euripides’s *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the circumstances of which necessitate detailed consideration in the context of West’s use of classical texts as one means through which Britons could identify and cultivate modern imperial virtue.³⁷ One of the clearest summaries of the scene comes not from a translation of Euripides or annotations thereto, but from the English version of *Antichità d’Ercolano*, which the Reale Accademia Ercolanese di Archeologia produced in nine volumes between 1757 and 1792. Though published in 1773, the utility of the translation for the purposes of understanding West’s picture justifies quoting at length:

The action of *Euripides*’s tragedy commences from the arrival of *Orestes* and *Pylades* at *Tauris*. As soon as they arrived there, they were discovered by some shepherds, were apprehended, and sent by king *Thoas* to the temple of *Diana*, to be sacrificed, according to the barbarous custom of the country, where all foreigners were doomed to be victims of that goddess. *Iphigenia*, to whom as priestess the two youths were presented, not knowing her brother, and unknown by him, *Orestes* being but an infant at the time she was conducted to *Aulis*, and from thence to *Tauris* [by the goddess *Diana*, who first demanded *Iphigenia*’s sacrifice in revenge for *Iphigenia*’s father, *Agamemnon*, having killed one of *Diana*’s hinds (stags) and then interceded at the last moment and whisked *Iphigenia* to *Tauris*, where she made her a priestess of her own cult,] demanded of her brother of what country he was; and finding he was of *Argos*, she promised him his life, on condition of his carrying a letter to that city. Here arose a generous contention between the friends, to determine which of them should remain for the sacrifice, and which depart. In the mean time *Iphigenia* comes with the letter, and at the request of *Orestes* gives it to *Pylades*; and being in fear

lest it should be lost, she tells him its contents. *Pylades* being surprised, turns to *Orestes*, and addresses him as follows: *Behold! I fulfil what I have promised her: I deliver you the letter which your sister Iphigenia sends you.* This discovery being made, they embrace each other: and afterwards contrive means how to steal the [cult statue], and to fly. And because the women of the chorus, and ministers of the temple were present at the whole of this transaction, they are entreated to keep the secret. In the mean time comes *Thoas*, whom *Iphigenia* informs, that one of the two young men had slain his own other, and that it was necessary to wash the statue and the victims in the sea, to purify them. By means of this device, she conveys on board the *statue*, together with *Orestes* and *Pylades*. *Thoas* being acquainted with it, would have pursued them, but was prevented by *Minerva*; who explained to him, that such was the will of the gods. If the picture [at Herculaneum] be compared with this account, the correspondence between them will appear.³⁸

As this particular episode resulted from *Orestes*'s attempt to still the torments of the Furies that plagued him from the moment that he murdered his own mother, *Clytemnestra*, the story demonstrates the selective process through which painters and poets could invoke classical narrative as they constructed ideals of modern imperial virtue. The clement and continent Alexander the Great murdered his own favorite general while in a drunken rage; the matricidal *Orestes* exemplified true friendship and sibling devotion. Euripides's narrative also reminded viewers, readers and theater-goers that territorial conquest generated conflicts that seemed to necessitate occasional acts of impiousness or viciousness. Eighteenth-century audiences would have seen neither self-contradiction nor hypocrisy in an artist's invocation of such a work: Britons could make the necessary distinctions as they tested and forged modern Anglophone imperial identities. Those spectators who possessed the highest degrees of sensitivity and self-awareness internalized the complexities inherent to great and heroic lives and learned to

identify, parse and mimic the virtues and – to the best of their abilities in any given circumstance – to avoid the vice.

As von Erffa and Staley have determined, West based *Pylades and Orestes* on two works that elevated the picture and the artist: The *Orestes Sarcophagus* from the Villa Ridolfi and Raphael's cartoon depicting *Paul and Barnabas Rejecting the Sacrifice at Lystra* (figs. 49 and 50).³⁹ West made drawings after some of the figures from the sarcophagus and arranged the figures in *Pylades and Orestes* in the compositional format that viewers would have recognized from Raphael's design (fig. 51). The prominence of the sacrificial altar in the foreground, the statue of Diana in near-silhouette close to the top edge of the picture plane and the emphasis on the marble floor (enhanced by West's assignment of a separate perspectival recession) all instantly call to mind Raphael's cartoon, which had been moved in 1766 (along with much of the royal collection) from Hampton Court palace to Buckingham after its purchase for the queen's palace in 1762.⁴⁰ George III had abandoned Hampton Court as a royal residence shortly after his accession because he associated the palace with the anger of his grandfather George II, but West purportedly saw the paintings before the transfer.⁴¹

West may have seen engravings after the cartoons by Simon Gribelin (1661-1733) or Nicolas Dorigny (1658-1746) while on the Grand Tour. Though no evidence survives to confirm such a visit, West could have also called at the Duke of Bedford's home, where he would have seen James Thornhill's (1675-1734) full-size copies of the cartoons. Whatever the circumstances under which he first came into contact with the

cartoons, the experience played a major role in his self-fashioning as an artist. From the outset of his career on the continent and in England, West enjoyed the title of “American Raphael,” and *Pylades and Orestes* qualifies as the first full-scale invocation of his namesake’s cartoons.⁴² Whether laudatory or critical, the Raphael comparison resurfaced intermittently throughout West’s career. For example, a writer in the *General Evening Post* for 27 November 1788 sneered, “Mr. West’s next engagement at Windsor was to repair, recolour, & amend the Cartoons of Raphael! Winckelmann himself does not furnish ideas sufficiently strong to express our horror at such profanation. This is one way to equal so matchless an artist, by bringing him down to one’s own standard.”⁴³ West named his first son Raphael and painted a portrait of the infant with his mother in the guise of Raphael’s *Madonna della Sedia*. In the dictated autobiography of 1820, Galt proclaimed that West’s “name will be classed with those of Michael Angelo and Raphael.”⁴⁴ By integrating antiquity in the form of the Orestes sarcophagus and the early modern cartoons of Raphael into the picture, West specified his desired status as a painter while attempting to appeal to London’s arbiters of taste through a scene at once familial and imperial. Eighteenth-century audiences’ assumption that Raphael had based the *Sacrifice at Lystra* cartoon on one of the spiral reliefs from the *Column of Trajan* compounded the artistic lineage and thus the aesthetic authority of West’s painting.⁴⁵ Like *The Continnence of Scipio*, West painted *Pylades and Orestes* at his own expense, hoping his sophisticated classical imperial treatment of the highly personal themes of family and friendship would appeal to potential patrons.

West's juxtaposition of one heroic of empire history painting from classical history with one from classical literature met with popular acclaim, as evidenced in a poem entitled *The Exhibition: Or, a Candid Display of the Genius and Merits of the Several Masters Whose Works Are Now Offered to the Public at Spring Gardens*. The "impartial hand" who composed the verse had anticipated finding works "Modern, Mean and Poor" but the history paintings by the "Virgilian WEST" confounded those expectations.⁴⁶ The author of this work confirms that in *Pylades and Orestes* West struck just the right balance of the mortal and the heroic with the manly and the elegant. West's presentation captures the entire narrative (with which the viewer would have been sufficiently familiar to obviate lengthy explanation) and does so through a properly conceived and deployed affect. The figure of Iphigenia alone reaffirms West's status as the American Raphael.⁴⁷ The poet's characterization of West's *The Continnence of Scipio* clarifies its value to modern Britons as they assess the options available to them in the conduct of empire:

Immortal SCIPIO two-fold Victor view,
 Who greatly conquer'd CARTHAGE, and himself,
 By both MINERVAS crown'd the Boast of ROME,
 The Boast of Ages, and the Pride of Time;
 The Test of Glory, and the heighth of Fame.⁴⁸

West's performance inspired the poet to hail the artist as "Thou long Expected, wish'd for Stranger" and entreats him to "In Briton's Bosom make thy lov'd Abode." In one spectator's mind, at least, West had answered England's prayer for a great artist; in this pair of paintings he conquered the hearts (if not all the critical minds) of London's art-

going publics.⁴⁹ Despite its apparent popular appeal, neither *Scipio* nor its companion sold. West returned the paintings to his studio following the exhibition.⁵⁰

1767 – Astyanax and Pyrrhus: Imperial Infancies

Among West's five entries in the 1767 Society of Artists exhibition, *The Fright of Astyanax and Pyrrhus When a Child, Brought to Glaucias, King of Illyria, for Protection*, which West exhibited as a pair, resonate most explicitly with the theme of empire (figs. 52 and 53).⁵¹ Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol (1704-1782), paid West to paint *Astyanax* and his fellow clergyman Robert Hay Drummond, Archbishop of York (1711-1776), commissioned *Pyrrhus*.⁵² Both works depict a single infant male child whose fate is bound up in the vicissitudes of imperial conflict. With these pictures, West expanded the scope of his domestication-and-naturalization-of-empire project with an intensified set of gestures targeting the viewer of feeling. Moving beyond imperial virtue expressed in tales of romantic love and violation, West chose one example from history and one from literature through which to consider the potential effects of empire abroad on the fate of the family at home – an issue that had generated concern well before the end of the Seven Years' War. The complexity of Homer's and Plutarch's narratives and their respective currencies among Londoners of the 1760s suggest that West was growing more confident as a history painter and that he had begun to expect more from his audiences. And in the case of *Pyrrhus*, especially, West's treatment of the subject

exposes the tenor of his artistic ambition as he began to fashion his own genealogies of influence – especially as those genealogies linked him to the seventeenth-century French artist Nicolas Poussin. I will return to the pervasive presence of Nicolas Poussin in West’s heroics of empire history paintings momentarily.⁵³

West’s composition, which von Erffa and Staley parenthetically entitle *Hector Taking Leave of Andromache*, portrays Astyanax, infant son of the Trojan hero and martyr Hector and his devoted wife Andromache as the child recoils in terror upon seeing his father in full battle regalia for the first time. The moment comes from Book VI of Homer’s *Iliad*, following a farewell speech in which he predicts his own death and Andromache’s capture by the Greeks:

...th’ illustrious chief of Troy
Strech’d his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy.
The babe clung to his nurse’s breast,
Scar’d at the dazzling helm, and nodding crest.
With secret pleasure each fond parent smil’d,
And Hector hasted to relieve his child,
The glitt’ring terrours from his brows unbound,
And plac’d the beaming helmet on the ground.
Then kiss’d the child, and lifting high in air,
Thus to the Gods preferr’d a father’s pray’r.
O thou! whose glory fills th’ ætherial throne,
And all ye deathless pow’rs! protect my son!⁵⁴

For Newton, Bishop of Bristol, the scene bore special relevance to ideas of heroic divinity. In 1766, the year that he saw West’s *Pylades and Orestes*, Newton published the third edition of his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*.⁵⁵ That collection of writings includes “Jacob’s Prophecies Concerning His Sons, Particularly Judah,” in which Newton identifies the usefulness of Hector and the *Iliad* to concerns and considerations of

Anglican Protestantism: “It is an opinion of great antiquity, that the nearer men approach to their dissolution, their souls grow more divine, and discern more of futurity. We find this opinion as early as Homer, for he represents the dying Patroclus foretelling the fate of Hector, and the dying Hector denouncing no less certainly the death of Achilles.”⁵⁶

Newton chose the picture to illustrate one of the important points from his dissertation: through a moment of familial tenderness, Hector progresses along his trajectory toward divinity. The moment from Homer’s *Iliad* so deeply resonated with Newton that he had West represent the painting, framed, as part of the background on the wall behind Newton’s head in the portrait that West painted of the Bishop in 1767. In the same portrait, West included Newton’s 1766 edition of John Milton’s 1671 *Paradise Regain’d*, which offers that poet’s most potent ruminations on the exigencies of empire:⁵⁷ The marble bust of Milton reinforces the poet’s importance to Newton’s clerical self-fashioning. In *Paradise Regain’d*, Milton distinguishes between false and true glory within the framework of territorial conquest:

They err who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to over-run
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault: what do these worthies,
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and inslave
Peaceable nations, neighb’ring, or remote,
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe’er they rove...⁵⁸

Newton seizes the opportunity presented by Milton’s critique to expound upon his idea of heroism:

True glory (Tully says) is the praise of good men, the echo of virtue: but that ape of glory, the random injudicious applause of the multitude is often bestowed upon the worst of actions. ...From hence to ver. 88. we have a just and complete character of the great conquerors of the world, who instead of being, as they have too often been, the idols of mankind, ought rather to be the principal objects of their utmost aversation”⁵⁹

By choosing a moment from Homer’s *Iliad* to communicate his own ideal of heroic imperial virtue in the willingness to preserve the integrity of one’s own country in the face of attempted conquest by imperial incursion, Newton complements Milton, who distinguishes between false and true glory in the context of territorial conquest “by selecting the particulars here and there, and then adjusting and incorporating them together; as Apelles from the different beauties of several nymphs of Greece drew his portrait of Venus, the Goddess of Beauty.”⁶⁰ Through a collaborative process of selective appropriation, West’s *Astyanax* captured very specific meaning for Newton while appealing more broadly to audiences familiar with Homer’s tale and with the painting’s pictorial antecedents.

The translator of the eighteenth-century’s most widely-read English version of the *Iliad*, Alexander Pope (1688-1744), notes in the annotations to the verse, “There never was a finer piece of painting than this.” Referring to textual imagery rather than oil and canvas, Pope attributes the powerful effect and affect of the narrative moment and – by extrapolation through the principle of *ut pictura poesis* – the eighteenth-century painter’s successful treatment of that moment to “small circumstances, but so artfully chosen, that every reader immediately feels the force of them, and represents the whole in the utmost

liveliness to his imagination.” Pope’s commentary then turns to the theory and criticism of the textual image, allowing the reader to extrapolate those tenets to history painting:

This alone might be a confutation of that false criticism that some have fall into, who affirm that a poet ought only to collect the great and noble particulars in his paintings. But it is in the images of things as in the characters of persons; where a small action, or even a small circumstance of an action, lets us more into the knowledge and comprehension of them, than the material and principal parts themselves. As we find this in a history, so we do in a picture, where sometimes a small motion or turn of a finger will express the character and action of the figure more than all the other parts of the design. ...There is a vast difference betwixt a small circumstance and a trivial one, and the smallest become important if they are well chosen, and not confused.⁶¹

As West’s viewers would have known, Hector’s prayers fail. Hector dies, his corpse dragged behind Achilles’s chariot as revenge for the death of Patroclus. Andromache becomes the prisoner and then the wife of Achilles’s son, also named Pyrrhus. That Pyrrhus, “...the remorseless Conqueror...caused young *Astyanax*...Son of *Hector*, to be taken violently from the Arms of his Governor and Attendants, and carried to the highest Tower of the Palace, from whence, as *Ovid* sings, *He’d seen his Father, by his Mother shown, / Fight for his Kingdom’s Safety, and his own*. Where he was thrown violently down, and dash’d to Pieces.”⁶² Knowledge of *Astyanax*’s fate would have intensified the emotional impact of the painting, especially for viewers who had lost fathers, sons, husbands and brothers during the Seven Years’ War or in the many battles that continued to rage in the newly-acquired territories thereafter. Hector had behaved heroically by giving his life to the cause of preserving the integrity of his homeland; thereafter in the narrative the Greeks serve as counter-exemplars, models of martial cruelty and tyranny.

Homer's deft combination of familial tenderness and personal sacrifice set against the backdrop of the Trojan wars occupied a number of different roles in the psychic topography of eighteenth-century Britons.⁶³ Among the most interesting deployments of the Homeric scene appears in the 1763 sixth edition of William Melmoth's *Letters*, which he attributed to his pseudonymous alter-ego Sir Thomas Osborne, Bart.⁶⁴ In a letter to imaginary correspondent "Philotes," Melmoth demonstrates the degree to which the *Iliad* had penetrated the eighteenth-century cultural imagination in England. Melmoth, writing as Fitzosborne, opens the letter with an explanation for length of time that has passed since receiving Philotes's letter, which he attributes to a six-week expedition to see his friend "Euphronius...to spend some time with him before he embarked with his regiment for Flanders; and as he is not one of those Hudibrastic heroes who choose to run away one day, that they may live to fight another; I was unwilling to trust the opportunity of seeing him, to the precarious contingency of his return."⁶⁵ Like Hector, Euphronius "feels every thing that his family can suffer in their fears for his danger."⁶⁶ Most importantly for the consideration of the visual heroics of empire, the similarities between Euphronius and Hector extend into a realm that combines the ancient with the modern and the textual with the visual. During a visit to the home of Euphronius, Melmoth's character gains a full appreciation of his wife, Euphronia's concerns about her husband's safety:

She called me one day into the gallery to look upon a picture which was just come out of the painter's hands; but the moment she carried me up to it, she burst out into a flood of tears. It was drawn at the request, and after a design of her father's and is a performance which does great honour to the ingenious artist who

executed it. Euphronius is represented under the character of Hector when he parts from Andromache, who is personated in the piece by Euphronia; as her sister, who holds their little boy in her arms, is shadowed out under the figure of the beautiful nurse with the young Astyanax.⁶⁷

Melmoth follows the description with an interesting set of observations about how the relationships between portraiture and history painting might improve:

I wish it were to become a general fashion to have all pictures of the same kind executed in some such manner. If instead of furnishing a room with separate portraits, a whole family were to be thus introduced into a single piece, and represented under some interesting historical subject, suitable to their rank and character; portraits, which are now so generally despised, might become of real value to the public. By this means history-painting would be encouraged among us, and a ridiculous vanity turned to the improvement of one of the most instructive, as well as the most pleasing, of imitative arts.⁶⁸

Such an approach, Melmoth contends, would “afford a glorious scope to genius; and probably supply us...with some productions which might be mentioned with those of the most celebrated schools.”⁶⁹ And though the contents of this particular fictitious letter first appeared in London in 1749 the events of the ensuing decades, the introduction of the visual heroics of empire at Vauxhall and the arrival of Benjamin West had brought London’s visual cultures a little closer to Melmoth’s vision. The passage concludes with a mention of Philotes’s patronage of an artist “now forming his hand by the noblest models in Rome,” with the hope of one day proving “a rival to those great masters whose works he is studying.”⁷⁰ Whether or not West read or heard of Melmoth’s popular *Letters*, the American painter would have seen himself as the artist most likely to rival the great masters whose works he had studied from 1760-1763.

As a discrete artistic gesture West's *Fright of Astyanax* met with some praise, but some exhibition attendees recognized that the picture held portent of greater things to come from West's pencil. Writing for the *Public Advertiser* in May of 1767, one viewer opined:

Upon the whole, Mr. West promises to make a great Painter, the first in his Walk our Country has produced. Nature and the Antique, which are indeed nearly synonymous Terms, and Expression, which is the Soul of History-Painting, shine through his Pictures. I hope that...he, unaffected with the Vanity of excelling his Countrymen, will cultivate his Talents to the utmost in that great Stile of Painting which he has chosen, and to which he seems equal, and will find all the Encouragement he may deserve.⁷¹

West's picture captures the spectator's attention through the endearing image of the startled toddler. Once the viewer has registered the sweetness of the child, the implications of the scene overtake the faculties, bringing the full narrative into consideration. West's successes and failures in handling anatomy (whether prepared through life drawing or sketching after models from antiquity), the energy and force of the composition, the chiaroscuro, the coloring, the expression and such intangibles as grace, harmony and invention dominated the attention of the connoisseurs at exhibitions, but for those familiar with the story of Hector and Achilles, the narrative moment would have determined the experience. The portrayal of a moment from Homer's epic offered commentary on the historical inevitability of imperial threats from outside forces and the sacrifices necessary to preserving one's home and the wages of war exacted from those left behind. The broader narrative reminded that Britons should refrain from the tyranny of the Greeks as they encountered newly subject peoples in places such as Pondicherry

and Quebec. West conveyed those messages through a scene of “domestic life” rather than “war and fury,” demonstrating his sensitivity to Britons’ belief that Homer’s “tender circumstance of the child Astyanax starting back from his father’s helmet and clinging to the bosom of his nurse” required the same effort of imagination as a “dreadful picture of Achilles fighting with the rivers, or dragging the carcass of Hector at his chariot-wheels.”⁷² Excepting scenes of naval battles, heroics of empire history paintings exhibited during the first half of the 1760s portrayed the aftermath of a victory or acts of heroic sacrifice rather than the confusion of armed conflict or clashes between warriors.⁷³

In commissioning *Astyanax*, the Bishop of Bristol situated himself as a member of the clergy with specific classical and early modern literary interests. Additionally, the commission, as an act of personal expression, communicated Newton’s advocacy of certain values as central to British identity – values that would enable Britons to resist and transcend any of the threats to English constitutional liberty that might be posed by the influence of imperial expansion and the influx of luxury associated therewith. As text and as image, *The Fright of Astyanax* encapsulates those ideals. Writing in 1737, the Reverend Edward Manwaring (d. 1746) characterized the narrative moment later chosen by West painting in the clearest terms of its applicability to modern English life; the circumstances of the Seven Years’ War only brought the central themes into sharper focus:

Nothing can be more moving than this episode. In *Andromache* the Poet has exquisitely described the tender Affections of a loving Wife, under the dismal Apprehensions of losing her Husband, who was all the Comfort she had in life. In *Hector* we have the Character of a generous Hero, who thought not of his own

Concerns, till he had served the Public; and, though he was persuaded all his Efforts would at last prove ineffectual in the Defence of *Troy*, yet he was resolved to die for his Country. In *Astyanax* we have the natural Picture of an Infant, who is described by the Poet as making an Outcry, falling back into the Nurse's Bosom, terrified with the Nodding of *Hector's* Plume, and the glittering of his Helmet. This made the Father and Mother smile. He takes of his Helmet, embraces his Child, dances him in his Arms, prays to the Gods for Blessings, then delivers him into his Mother's Hands, who receives him with Smiles and Tears: With Smiles, for her Love to *Astyanax*: With Tears, for the Grief of parting with her Husband. What more natural? What more affecting?⁷⁴

In the painting of Hector and Andromache with Astyanax and his nurse, then, West collaborated with Newton in underscoring the virtues of service to the public good and the willingness to die for one's country rendered ever more heroic by the tenderness of a parent and child relationship.

Newton's decision to have West include *The Fright of Astyanax* as part of his portrait confirms the patron's satisfaction with the artist's performance. Because the painting survives only in West's portrait of Newton and the Richard Earlom engraving after that portrait, a full formal analysis is not possible. From the engraving, however, one can determine that West included in *Astyanax* a pair of Trojan soldiers toward the viewer's right. West based both of those figures on the *Apollo Belvedere*. Their positions and placement echo that of the trio of Native Americans in the middle ground of *General Johnson* (fig. 13). West introduced the soldiers to distinguish the military precinct from the domestic in order to emphasize Hector's heroism in both realms.

If Newton's history painting commission promoted certain types of English Protestant values of home, family and preservation of nation, then Robert Hay Drummond's choice of *Pyrrhus, When a Child, Brought to Glaucias, King of Illyria, for*

Protection employs an infant of the same age as Astyanax in a cautionary tale that urges audiences to weigh the benefits of imperial conquest against its potential moral costs at home and abroad – and especially to avoid the pitfalls of conquest for conquest’s sake. Arch-nemesis of republican Rome, Pyrrhus figured prominently in London popular literature throughout the first half of the eighteenth century and by the mid-1760s had become a stock subject in texts intended to “improve young minds” by promoting the consideration of virtue as part of “polite conversation.”⁷⁵ With *The Fright of Astyanax* experimented with framing empire in terms of feeling, sentiment and/or sympathy.⁷⁶ One inspiration for West’s composition may have been the kneeling child with outstretched arms in Hayman’s *Surrender of Montreal to General Amherst* in which the paternalistic Amherst accepts the surrender of the French, liberating them from the tyranny and neglect that they had suffered as subjects of the Bourbon monarchy. West’s image conveyed a message that differed from Hayman’s *Amherst*, however. West portrays his subject before he has undertaken the path of tyranny that would later make him one of the most feared enemies of ancient Rome. In this regard, West’s painting connects thematically to John Boydell’s engraving after Castiglione’s *The Exposition of Cyrus*, another affecting scene of imperial infancy.

West based *Pyrrhus* on the text from an English translation of “The Life of Pyrrhus” from Plutarch’s (c. 50 BCE – c. 120 CE) *Lives*, the source from which he drew a number of subjects for classical heroics of empire paintings.⁷⁷ Because the narrative of Pyrrhus’s life abounds with examples of imperial martial virtue and vice formulated in

terms of moral calculus and the commerce of virtue and vice, I will here summarize the text at length. The painting captures the moment at which Androclidas and Angelus deliver the infant Pyrrhus, son of the deposed Molossian king Aeacides, to the Illyrian ruler Glaucias:

When they were thus got on the other side of the river, and out of the reach of their enemies, they continued their journey till they arrived at the court of Glaucias King of Illyria. They found this prince sitting in his palace with the queen his consort, and laid the child down at his feet, imploring his protection. The king, who stood in fear of Cassander, the mortal enemy [who deposed] Æacides, remained a long time silent, considering what part he should act. At last the child crawling towards him, and with his hands seizing on his robe, raised himself on his feet, and stood at the king's knees. This action at first provoked the king to laughter, but soon after touched him with compassion for the infant, who seemed to resemble a suppliant imploring his protection with tears.⁷⁸

His compassion for the child superseding his fear of Cassander, Glaucias orders that Pyrrhus “be brought up with his own children.” Cassander sends an embassy to demand Pyrrhus’s return, but “Glaucias refused it,” despite the offer of a sizable ransom. When Pyrrhus reaches the age of twelve, Glaucias “conducted him to Epire at the head of an army,” and enthrones him as king of Epire.⁷⁹ Over the ensuing years, Pyrrhus proves himself able to master any and all of the military and courtly skills necessary to any great conquering ruler. Once firmly set on the course of conquest that would make him the scourge of Rome, Pyrrhus begins to inspire admiration even among his enemies.

Following a victory over the Macedonian general Pantauchus and the subsequent routing of his troops, Plutarch notes

This fight did not so much exasperate the Macedonians with anger for their loss, or with hatred to Pyrrhus, as it caused an esteem and admiration of his valour, which furnished a new subject of discourse among those who had seen the action.

They thought that his countenance, swiftness, and motion, expressed those of Alexander the Great, and that in him they beheld a strong resemblance of Alexander's impetuosity and strength in fight.⁸⁰

After having lost and then regained his own kingdom of Epirus, Pyrrhus "had a fair occasion given him by fortune, of enjoying himself in quiet, and peaceable governing his own subjects." At this point in Plutarch's tale, Pyrrhus's true character emerges: "he thought life insupportably tedious unless he was doing mischief to others, or receiving some from them..."⁸¹ From this moment forward in the story, Pyrrhus's life admonishes the reader of the vicissitudes of power, which include revenge and wanton slaughter. In Pyrrhus's tale, empire serves as an excuse for generating military conflict rather than an end through which to expand territorial governance. The most direct relevancy of Pyrrhus's imperial career to 1767 Britain derives from a conversation between Pyrrhus, who has by this time in the story made known his intent to conquer Rome, and his most trusted and successful diplomat, the faithful servant Cineas. This passage, one of the most frequently excerpted from Plutarch's *Lives*, demands quoting in full:

The Romans, said he, have the reputation of being excellent soldiers, and have many warlike nations under them. If we have the good fortune to conquer them, what benefit shall we reap from our victory? Cineas, replied the king, thy question answers itself. When once we have overcome the Romans, there will be no town, whether Greek or Barbarian, in all the country able to oppose us. We shall at once be masters of all Italy, whose riches, strength, and power, are better known to thee than any man. Cineas, after a little pause, continued, And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next? Pyrrhus not yet discovering what he aimed at, replied; Sicily next holds our her arms to receive us, a rich and populous island, and easy to be gained; for ever since the death of Agathocles, faction and anarchy prevail in all their towns, and every thing is at the discretion of their turbulent orators. You speak, says Cineas, what is highly probable; but shall the possession of Sicily put an end to the war? Far from it, answered Pyrrhus; for if fortune favours us with victory there, that shall serve only as the forerunner of

greater undertakings. When Sicily is reduced, who can forbear Libya and Carthage, then within reach? ...Now, when we have added Africa to our conquests, can it be supposed that one of those enemies who now disturb us, will dare to make any further resistance? No certainly, replied Cineas; for it is evident, that when we are at the head of such a mighty power, we shall soon recover Macedon, and govern in Greece without control. But when we have conquered all, what is the next thing we are to do? Why then, my friend, replied Pyrrhus laughing, we will live at our ease, and drink and be merry. Cineas, when he had brought him thus far, replied; And what hinders us now from living at our ease, and taking our pleasure? We have already at hand, without any care or trouble, what we are going in quest of, at the expense of so much blood, labour, and danger; at the expense of so many calamities, which we shall suffer ourselves, and inflict upon others.⁸²

Shortly after this conversation, Pyrrhus advances against the Romans, encounters and overcomes some difficulties and then sends Cineas to the Roman Senate to broker a peace agreement. The Romans refuse and send their representative, Fabricius, to negotiate an exchange of prisoners.⁸³

Fabricius's arrival in Pyrrhus's camp affords Plutarch the opportunity to clarify the distinctions between Roman martial virtue and the voraciousness of Pyrrhus's imperial impulses. Upon learning of Fabricius, who lives in "extreme poverty" but commands great respect among his fellow Romans, "Pyrrhus received him with great kindness, and offered him some gold, not to engage him in any thing dishonourable, but as a pledge of friendship and hospitality." Fabricius refuses the offer and Pyrrhus decides to "discompose" the Roman ambassador by showing him a fully-armed elephant – a species known to disconcert even the hardiest of Roman soldiers. "Upon a sign given...the elephant raising his trunk over the head of Fabricius, made an horrid and frightful noise." The virtuous Fabricius declares, "Neither could your money yesterday,

nor can this beast today make any impression upon me.”⁸⁴ After offering Fabricius the command of all his generals, which Fabricius again refuses, Pyrrhus sends him back to Rome, charged with the transport of prisoners whom he released on the condition that they return to Epirus if the Roman senate refused to sign a treaty ending the war.⁸⁵ The Romans refuse the peace and the prisoners return to imprisonment under Pyrrhus, honoring the oath made before their departure. Following an episode in which Fabricius exposes an assassination plot fashioned by Pyrrhus’s physician, the Epirotes prevail over the Romans, but their losses are such that the victory gives rise to the modern phrase “pyrrhic victory.”⁸⁶

Pyrrhus learns no lesson from his losses against the Romans, however, and invades Sicily. Next, impressing some of his newly-subject peoples into naval service, he prepares for Africa. Succumbing to paranoia, Pyrrhus orders the execution of one of the most esteemed leaders of Syracuse, an act that sends all of Sicily into revolt.⁸⁷ The ensuing reversal of fortune prompts Plutarch to comment,

though unsuccessful...he preserved his courage unconquerable amidst all these misfortunes, and was held for military skill and personal valour, much the greatest of all the princes of his time. But what he got by great actions, he lost again by vain hopes; for his eager desire and pursuit of what he had not, hindered him from keeping what he had.⁸⁸

Pyrrhus’s brilliant military career ends with another of his over-reaching pursuits: the king of Epirus rides the battlefield in Argos without his crown only to die at the hand of a woman who hurls a tile from the roof where she stands. The tale ends with Plutarch’s

musings on the “domestic instances of the instability of fortune,” which brings the reader – and thus the viewer – back to the domestic scene in Glaucias’s royal seat.⁸⁹

For Society of Artists exhibition viewers who knew the tale of Pyrrhus, the marked contrasts between the crawling infant who pulls at Glaucias’s robes and the man who temporarily conquered the Romans carried important lessons. In the prosecution of imperial conquest, virtue must determine the course of action. Regardless of military prowess, personal valor or possible benefit to national reputation, one must not pursue territorial acquisition for the sheer sport of military conflict. No matter how great the temptation of riches and luxury, one should always fervently resist the chance to commoditize virtue. A victory earned at all costs is no victory at all. The vagaries of suspicion promise dangerous consequences. A life of infamy conducted with great bravery and skill can end in the most dishonorable of circumstances. Tales of Pyrrhus’s voracious appetite for conquest and the contrast of his conduct with the temperance and disinterestedness of such Romans as Fabricius cast the latter into sharp, heroic relief: Pyrrhus assumes the role of imperial counter-exemplar while Fabricius personifies the values that Britons inherited from their Roman conquerors.⁹⁰ As a 1767 translation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Dissertation on the Effects of Cultivating the Arts and Sciences* reminds, “It was...peculiar to the Romans to subdue other nations as much by the veneration due to their morals, as by the efforts of their arms.” It was through moral arts of conquest rather than military arts of conquest that the Romans drove “Pyrrhus, the conqueror...out of Italy.”⁹¹ Like romantic conquest exemplified and counter-exemplified

in the stories of young lovers that West showed at the 1764 Society of Art exhibition, *Pyrrhus* and *Astyanax* proscribe and prescribe the developmental guidelines for Britain's four-year-old imperial infancy. And as exhibition audiences would have known, Britain was not without its own modern-day Pyrrhus.

Printed responses to West's submissions to the 1767 Society of Artists exhibition centered mostly on the promise shown by the young American artist:

Upon the whole Mr. West promises to make a great Painter, the first in his walk our Country has produced. Nature and the Antique, which are indeed nearly synonymous Terms, and Expression, which is the Soul of History-Painting, shine through his Pictures. [Hopefully he] will cultivate his Talents to the utmost in the great Stile of Painting which he has chosen, and to which he seems equal...⁹²

Otherwise, the issues common to eighteenth-century criticism predominated. The nurse in *The Fright of Astyanax* attracted compliments for "very great Merit" and force of expression, suggesting that West successfully applied Le Brun's formula. The grouping of the figures and West's management of chiaroscuro in *Pyrrhus* also drew accolades, but apparently more than one exhibition attendee compared "little Pyrrhus's Head of Hair" to a mop.⁹³ Of the two, *Pyrrhus* seems to have excelled at striking just the right emotional chord with its viewers: "Who can that babe without emotion see, / Climb smiling up the melting monarch's knee?" Most encouragingly for West, audiences recognized that his talents should not be squandered on portraiture and even more importantly that his talent justified patronage of history painting from among Britain's nobility:

How long shall *West*, o'er single Portraits stay,
And throw the morning of his life away?
Ye British Lords your ready hands lend here,

And lift him nobly to his native sphere;
To Europe's eyes his worth make largely known,
And richly rear a Raphael of your own.⁹⁴

West did not select the scenes that Newton and Drummond requested for these paintings, but his inclusion of the *Apollo Belvedere* in *Astyanax* and the *Belvedere Torso* and the *Borghese Gladiator* in *Pyrrhus* signals his astute selective appropriation of Greco-Roman antiquity. In subsequent exhibitions, West would expand this particular approach beyond sculpture to include architectural and relief forms.

1768: Agrippina, Chelonis and the Imperial Feminine

The following year at Spring-Gardens, West exhibited a second work produced for Archbishop Drummond, a powerful and ambitious rumination on the exigencies of empire entitled *Agrippina Returning to Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* (fig. 54). Drummond wished to use the painting to reinforce the message that he delivered on the occasion of the coronation of George III and Queen Charlotte. In that sermon, Drummond exhorted George III “to do judgment and justice,” noting his divine right to ascend the throne while remaining conspicuously silent on the issue of hereditary claim.⁹⁵ West, on the other hand, seized the opportunity to validate himself as an artist and to legitimize the history painting genre in a culture that had only limited experience with and use for the practice. Both men recognized the theme of imperial virtue as one of the best means through which to achieve their respective goals.

When West undertook an image based on classical narrative, the patron would read aloud from the text so that the poorly educated painter could grasp the meaning that the patron wished to convey.⁹⁶ For this second commission, Drummond selected a passage from the *Annals* of Cornelius Tacitus (56 BCE-113 CE), which sets the conjugal devotion and imperial heroism of Agrippina (14 BCE-33 CE) and her husband Germanicus (15 BCE – 19 CE) against a backdrop of metropolitan treachery and tyranny under Germanicus’s uncle and adoptive father the Roman emperor Tiberius (42 BCE-37 CE).⁹⁷ As Tacitus recounts, from the moment of his father Augustus’s death, Tiberius

usurped all the prerogatives of the imperial State, gave the word to the Pretorian Cohorts, had soldiers about the palace, guards about his person, went guarded in the Street, guarded to the Senate, and bore all the marks of Majesty. Nay, he writ Letters to the several Armies in the undisguised style of one already their Prince; nor did he ever hesitate or speak with ambiguity about it, but when he spoke to the Senate. The chief cause of his reserve and obscurity there proceeded from his fear of Germanicus. He dreaded that he, who was master of so many Legions of numberless Auxiliaries, and of all the Allies of Rome; he, who was the darling of the people, might wish rather to possess the Empire, than to wait for it.⁹⁸

As Germanicus’s popularity spread among the troops and in the imperial provinces, Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, the governor of Syria who resented Germanicus’s burgeoning power, poisoned the virtuous agent of Roman imperialism – an act of incomprehensible animosity and ingratitude, as Germanicus had rescued Piso from a shipwreck at Rhodes.⁹⁹ When news of Germanicus’s death reached Rome, most presumed that it had occurred at Tiberius’s behest, because he feared the affable and tender Germanicus as a potential rival for the imperial throne.¹⁰⁰ Under Germanicus’s command, the Roman troops had made Germany “ready for the yoke.”¹⁰¹ *Agrippina* calls upon its audiences to

mimic Germanicus in preparing subject peoples for Britain's presence, so that – in the words of royal panegyrist Giovanni Bottarelli (c. 1740 – c. 1780) – “From arid Borysthenes to golden Ganges...the nations whom [George III's] powerful arms subdue, feel not his yoke,” because “it sits so easily on them.”¹⁰² Following the paths of filial and martial virtue forged by Roman exemplars, West's painting argued, Britons could enjoy the benefits of shaking “proud kingdoms” and subduing “vast empires” without suffering the fate that befell the descendants of the fratricidal Romulus.

Germanicus's wife Agrippina, whose “known chastity, and love for her husband, always gave her mind, however vehement, a virtuous turn,” swore vengeance for the murder of her husband and traveled to Antioch to collect his ashes.¹⁰³ The scene that West painted for this picture comes from this passage in the *Annals*, which Drummond likely read aloud to West:

As soon as the fleet appeared in the deep, instantly were filled, not the port alone and adjacent shores, but the walls and roofs, as far as the eye would go, filled with the sorrowing multitude. They were consulting one from one, how they should receive her, landing, ‘whether with universal silence, or with some note of acclamation.’ Nor was it manifest which they would do, when the fleet sailed slowly in, not, as usual, with joyful sailors and chearful oars, but all things impressed with the face of sadness. After she descended from the ship, accompanied by her two infants, carrying in her bosom the melancholy Urn, with her eyes cast steddily down; equal and universal were the groans of the beholders: nor could you distinguish relations from strangers, nor the wailings of men from those of women, unless that the new-comers, who were recent in their sallies of grief, exceeded Agrippina's attendants, wearied out with long lamentations.¹⁰⁴

Tacitus laments, had Germanicus, who “lived destitute of arrogance, and untouched by envy...been sole arbiter of things, had he acted with the Sovereignty and title of Royalty,” he would have easily overtaken Tiberius “in the glory of conquests, as he

surpassed him in clemency, in moderation, and in other virtues.”¹⁰⁵ In the Herculean calculus of territorial conquest, Germanicus and Agrippina stood for imperial virtuousness and Tiberius and Piso for imperial viciousness. Some exhibition viewers might have recognized themselves in the heroism of Germanicus and the filial devotion of Agrippina as they came to terms with their own modern British imperial identities.

The Ara Pacis and the Palace of Diocletian

As scholars such as Allen Staley have noted, West combined in *Agrippina* two potent markers of Rome’s imperial artistic heritage: the sacrificial procession from the *Ara Pacis Augustæ*, fragments of which he sketched while at Florence’s Uffizi Gallery, and Diocletian’s (237-316) palace at Spalatro (modern-day Split) on the Dalmatian Coast, as represented by the noted architect Robert Adam (1728-1792) (figs. 55 and 56).¹⁰⁶ The *Ara Pacis* provoked an entire range of positive associations through modern Anglophone perceptions of the *Pax romana* under the Roman emperor Augustus (63 BCE-19CE) and through the martial and familial pietas glorified by that ruler. Diocletian’s palace, constructed centuries after Germanicus’s death, symbolized Diocletian’s “Munificence and Example, [which] revived the Study of Architecture, and excited the Masters of that Art to emulate in their Works the Elegance and Purity of a better Age.”¹⁰⁷ The *Ara Pacis* procession and the presence of Diocletian’s palace serve double duty as pictorial conventions. On the one hand, the *Ara Pacis* references an important Roman imperial

architectural monument most closely associated with peace; on the other, the procession from the *Ara Pacis* helped West to develop what would become one of his trademark compositional elements: the theatrically-lit, frieze-like arrangement of figures. And though the Palace of Diocletian more than serves its purpose as a discrete reference to an emperor who patronized the arts, the structure appears as part of an architectural *capriccio*, in which numerous structures from different times and locations are assembled in a single picture to create a sense of modern “ownership” of antiquity and to reinforce the “universality” of the messages contained within the pictorial narrative.

Before addressing the implications of the architectural *capriccio* in *Agrippina Returning to Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus*, I will briefly discuss the theatrical arrangement of figures in the picture. As Ann Uhry Abrams has suggested, West brought the “structure of [London’s] theaters into *Agrippina* and subsequent epic canvases by duplicating the tripartite scheme” of the proscenium, the stage proper and the painted scenery or backdrop.¹⁰⁸ Those theater-goers who attended the 1768 Society of Artists exhibition may have connected *Agrippina* to their experiences at the Hay-Market, Covent Garden or Sadler’s Wells theaters, just as Hayman’s audiences would have associated *The Surrender of Montreal* with the life-size figures of Alexander and the queens of Persia at Mrs. Salmon’s waxworks.¹⁰⁹ But West’s audiences would have also included men (and women) who were familiar with more exalted pictorial and textual antecedents for the painting. Specifically, West’s picture would have read as an artistic descendant of Poussin’s *Death of Germanicus*, which West saw at Palazzo Barberini

during his time in Rome (fig. 57). As many scholars have noted, eighteenth-century artists looked to Poussin as they developed what nineteenth-century critics would pejoratively term the “neo-classical.” Because that term conveys neither artistic intent nor artistic practice among eighteenth-century Anglophone artists, I will avoid its use in this study.¹¹⁰ In the minds of Londoners in 1768, *The Death of Germanicus* was “the richest jewel belonging to the Barberine family,” a picture with which Poussin, the great master of expression, had refined himself as an artist.¹¹¹ Contemporary viewers familiar with the works of Poussin would have recognized West’s *Agrippina* as an episode in a pictorial sequence in which Poussin had also participated and thus associated West as an artist with the seventeenth-century master of classical imperial narrative imagery. Those viewers at the 1768 Society of Artists exhibition who had also attended the 1766 and 1767 shows would have recognized *Agrippina* as West’s third invocation of Poussin, who had painted a *Continence of Scipio* and *The Rescue of Pyrrhus*.¹¹² By seizing Poussin’s narrative painting mantle, West declared himself part of an artistic dynasty of influence and practice, an artist of Poussin’s caliber, Poussin’s natural heir.¹¹³

West staked this claim in a number of ways, including the color and light effects in *Agrippina*. By twenty-first-century standards, West’s composition indeed seems to approximate what modern viewers would recognize as theatrical lighting. But despite the innovations in the sources and distribution of lights cited in Abrams’s *The Valiant Hero*, to modern eyes the scene appears lit more by electric spotlights than by “groups of candles and perpendicular oil lamps that hung over the front edge of the stage,” which

replaced the “hooped chandeliers” of earlier years.¹¹⁴ To explain the effects of light and shadow and the somber coloring that West used in formulating *Agrippina*, one must look to painting rather than to the theater: the subtle contrasts and limited color range of West’s painting closely approximate that of Poussin’s *Death of Germanicus* as West would have experienced the work while in Rome, centuries before the cleaning and restoration that have transformed the canvas into its current state of brilliant color and lighting. Writing in 1722 about Poussin’s “Death-bed of *Germanicus*,” English art theorist and connoisseur Jonathan Richardson (1665-1745) complained that “The Colours are gone very Black, so that the Arm of the *Agrippina* is almost united with its Ground.”¹¹⁵ Modern science may be able to one day approximate the lighting conditions under which West viewed Poussin’s *Germanicus* at the Palazzo Barberini and the lighting conditions under which he painted *Agrippina*, but the current state of the former impedes analysis of the latter in terms of its various formal relationships to Poussin’s painting.

Had West shared Richardson’s belief that Poussin’s choice of narrative moment, “being so subject to be Mistaken, [imparts] a Low, Common Thought, and Debases the Picture,” he would not have connected himself to the work with such an important commission as *Agrippina*.¹¹⁶ West’s contemporaries more likely agreed with Joseph Wilcocks when he asked, “where shall we find, in the history of the whole world, a more pleasing scene of virtue, attended by public love, than the life and *death* of *Germanicus*?”¹¹⁷ West carefully chose his composition, palette and chiaroscuro for *Agrippina* as means through which to position himself clearly and emphatically as *the*

British artist best qualified to paint didactic musings on eighteenth-century heroic imperial virtue and public love. In this regard, then, West sought to add “American Poussin” to the “American Raphael” epithet; or perhaps a better way to characterize the situation would be to say that West wished to add the former to dull one edge of the double-edged sword that came with the latter. Roger de Piles’s *The Art of Painting* contains an anecdote that remained current throughout the eighteenth century:

’Tis the famous *Monsieur Poussin* of whom I am speaking. *Raphael*, said he, *is an Angel compar’d with other Painters; but in comparison of the Ancients he’s an Ass.* The Phrase is a little too strong, and I think ’tis enough to say *Raphael* is as much below the Ancients, as the Moderns are below him.¹¹⁸

West, of course, wished to attain with equality with, if not surpass, both.

Ultimately, *Agrippina* reads as both funerary procession and triumphal procession. Rather than the emperor Tiberius marching through Rome in victory, however, Agrippina marches into Brundisium as an allegory for the triumph of imperial virtue, her treasure contained in the trophy that she holds close to her breast. As Alex Nemerov notes,

This body, last, is in some sense an Imperial one. West made his painting at the height of the British Empire, in the years immediately after the British had scored huge military victories at Quebec, Minden, and Plassey (all in the late 1750s), victories that culminated in winning the Seven Years' War in 1763. ...Germanicus himself thus appears as something of a contemporary hero. Mourned by his country, dying in a foreign country, transported by ship back to his homeland, he evokes victim-victors such as General James Wolfe, hero of Quebec, whom of course West would explicitly commemorate only two years later in his most famous painting.¹¹⁹

West fuses the funerary and triumphal modes by introducing the figures of the lictors who lead the solemn march across the pictorial field with their heads bowed and their

fascēs resting upon their shoulders. Britons knew that lictors marched at the head of triumphal processions in imperial Rome (figs. 58 and 59). In West's rendering the bundled birch rods lack the axe heads that normally attach to them while outside the pomerium, or walls of the city of Rome. Londoners exposed to Roman biographies and illustrated histories would have recognized these men as the officers charged with meting out any punishment ordered by the magistrate, the most severe beginning with lashes from a birch rod and terminating in beheading with the axe blade. Perhaps more importantly to Drummond's commission, however, the fascēs in this instance lack the axe head, the removal of which occurred when a magistrate passed through one of the gates of the city. "Although outside the city of Rome a magistrate's *imperium* was regarded as absolute, within the city limits...it was limited by the principle that supreme authority belonged to the Roman people and their legislative bodies."¹²⁰ The lictor tradition began with Romulus, the first Roman ruler, who appointed twelve lictors to guard him and carry out his bidding. By showing the lictors' fascēs without the axe heads, West's painting announces that Agrippina and Germanicus recognized the supremacy of the Roman people; Tiberius consistently rejected that notion. Additionally, as fascēs had come to symbolize Romans' violent oppression of early Christians, the removal of the axe heads in the painting would have defused the image to some extent.¹²¹ Finally, the lictors also point to the dangers of imperial tyranny even on the upbringing of children. Perhaps because of her exposures as a child, when Agrippina the Younger (depicted behind and to the viewer's right of Agrippina) grew up, she emblemizes the treachery that imperial

power could impose upon a family. As the “great grand daughter of Augustus...daughter to Germanicus, wife to Claudius, sister to Caligula and mother of Nero,” the young Roman woman played a central role in some of Rome’s most infamous narratives.¹²²

Just as Drummond sought to convey the importance of regnal virtue at home imperial martial virtue abroad in securing and preserving the English birthright to global territorial dominion, West undertook the *Agrippina* commission with the hopes of establishing a relevancy for history painting among Anglophone audiences; doing so would secure his fame and thus his future as a history painter. Simply painting straightforward scenes of imperial martial virtue from familiar classical sources would not suffice to realize this objective. To improve his chances for success, West used pictorial conventions and visual vocabularies to help maneuver himself into a position that none of his predecessors had been able to fully inhabit: part of a lineage of the most highly regarded among continental history painters. The architectural capriccio in general and the specific monuments within the fantasy advanced this particular cause. In *Agrippina*, West appends to Diocletian’s Palace a roughly-imagined reconstruction of the Mausoleum of Augustus, where Germanicus’s remains were placed after Agrippina’s arrival in Rome, and possibly the Theatre of Marcellus, so named for another emperor whose ashes were also placed in the Mausoleum of Augustus. (The rectilinear structure at the viewer’s right may also be West’s interpretation of the Roman Curia.) West added a podium upon which a number of Romans stand; this structure resembles a Roman podium from which an emperor or general would deliver *adlocutio*. To punctuate the

detail of the harbor scene, West added a boar's head rostrum with a hippocampus to the Roman galley, a detail which Grand Tourists and readers of Joseph Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* would recognize as one of the ships' beaks from Rome's *columna rostrata* built in the Forum as a tribute to Caius Duilius to hail his victory over the Carthaginian fleet (fig. 60).¹²³ The most sophisticated among West's viewers might have noted the etymological relationships between the ship's rostrum and the rostrum from which Roman emperors and generals delivered *adlocutio*, the relevance of which I will address shortly. The rostrum also serves as a starting point for the triumphal procession, as Duilius's defeat of the Carthaginians signaled the momentary supremacy of the Roman fleet; viewers would have spent little time divining the connection between Rome's (momentary) domination of the seas and British naval supremacy in the 1760s.

Readers on both sides of the Atlantic knew of the mausoleum of Augustus; the ruin had inspired the verse entitled "Elegy on the Mausoleum of Augustus," which appeared in the *American Magazine* for October 1757.¹²⁴ Descriptions of the tomb also appeared frequently in travel writing and as Joseph Wilcocks noted in the "Advertisement to the Reader" in his 1763 *Roman Conversations*, the mausoleum of Augustus qualified as one of a few monuments from ancient Rome that could be identified with assurance.¹²⁵ West included the Baths of Diocletian atop the hill in the distant background of the painting and other monuments of indeterminate origin beyond the façade of the Palace of Diocletian. The portico of Rome's Pantheon frames the scene to the viewer's left. West's time in Rome coincided with the peak of popularity for the architectural capriccio,

which artists such as Giovanni Paolo Panini (1691-1765), Giovanni Antonio Canaletto (1697-1768), Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778), Bernardo Bellotto (1721-1780) produced for Grand Tourists. Piranesi drew special attention to the practice of the capriccio with the frontispiece to his 1756 *Antichità romane*, in which myriad Roman funerary forms appear together in a single fanciful image of Rome's Appian Way (fig. 61).¹²⁶ But West's careful artistic choices in constructing the setting for *Agrippina* reflect no attempt to pander to tourists. Placing Agrippina's arrival at Brundisium in the foreground of an architectural "whimsey," West wagered that his more visually literate and well-traveled viewers would associate this work with Poussin.¹²⁷

West had first claimed this lineage through his *Choice of Hercules*, which celebrates through mimicry Poussin's composition. As I have demonstrated, both of West's paintings for the 1767 Society of Artists exhibition evoke Poussin, as did his *Continence of Scipio* from 1766. The academically austere architectural capriccio connects West to Poussin through one of the most widely-noted of Poussin's works then on display in Paris: *The Sacrament of Ordination*, from one of two Seven Sacraments series that Poussin produced during the seventeenth century (fig. 62). West may have seen or learned of Poussin's painting of the ordination sacrament, which Philip, Duke of Orleans displayed at the Palais Royal, while passing through Paris en route to London in 1763.¹²⁸ Poussin's *Sacraments* series had achieved notoriety in London, both for their aesthetic merit and for their position in the history of artistic patronage in France.¹²⁹ As the author of *Letters to a Young Nobleman* noted,

Any one who has been at Paris may remember what fine collections of pictures are open to the public inspection.... The Duke of Orleans's collection at the *Palais-Royal*, one of the best on this side of the Alps, is not sullenly shut up from public view, or open only to those who give high bribes to his servants; but at particular hours any one, who has a taste for enjoying the beauties of the painter's art, may have an opportunity of viewing capital pieces of the most famous hands of the different schools, and of such as are of the most opposite styles.¹³⁰

As was the case with many of Poussin's most admired works, engravers – including Jean Pesne (Penna) and Gérard Audran – produced large scale engravings after the *Seven Sacraments*.¹³¹

One cannot ascertain the degree to which West and his various audiences knew other uses of architectural capriccio in Early Modern European art, but as a number of West's paintings include such capricci, one wonders whether and to what extent West referenced such works as Raphael's *Constantine Haranguing His Soldiers*, from the fresco cycle in the Vatican's Hall of Constantine (fig. 63) – one of the most popular stops on the Grand Tour. Eighteenth-century viewers and readers knew that Raphael had died before completing the Constantine cycle for the Vatican, leaving Giulio Romano (1499-1546), Perino del Vaga (1501-1547) and Giovanni Francesco Penni (1488-1528) to finish the work.¹³² As Joseph Spence noted in the second edition of *Polymetis*, published in 1755,

Raphael...introduces his allegorical or supernatural personages with the greatest moderation; and generally, not without some foundation in history.... This might be proved from his works in general; and particularly from those fine ones in the apartments of the Vatican, which from them commonly go by the name of Raphael's chambers: where you have scarce any thing of this kind, in the historical pieces; except the little angels holding up a cross in the air, while Constantine harangues his soldiers....¹³³

When compared with Piranesi, the architectural capricci of Poussin's *Sacrament of Ordination* and Raphael's *Constantine Haranguing His Soldiers* carry more poetic, more historical and – in the case of the Raphael picture – much more *imperial* gravitas. But no documentary evidence suggests a link between the setting of Agrippina and that of Constantine's *adlocutio* and the appearance of the cross. West likely visited the Sala di Costantino during his time in Rome and he was aware of the architectural capriccio as practiced by Raphael, Poussin and other artists important to eighteenth century painters. One might feel tempted to see connections between Constantine's *adlocutio* from the rostrum in the Raphael painting and the rostrum in *Agrippina*. The cross borne by angels in the *Haranguing* scene and the appearance of Saints Peter and Paul at the meeting of Leo X with Attila the Hun in another panel of the Sala di Costantino cycle connect to eighteenth-century ideas about Britain's divine imperial purpose, but West's *Agrippina* lacks references to cross or saints. The only similarities between the Raphael/Romano fresco and West's oil painting appear in their shared Roman themes and in the fanciful architectural settings in which the respective artists' set their narratives. On that point, then, West's *Agrippina* participates in a tradition in which Poussin and Raphael shared and West wished to have his name associated with the works of both artists.

When consulting with Drummond on the *Agrippina* commission, West brought to the discussion more than just a desire to emulate his artistic forebears. He shared his patron's intent for the painting to convey messages that resonated in the daily lives of modern viewers. Both men knew that the painting would need to rise above the

cacophony of critics and champions of imperial expansion who used text, music, performance and oratory to express their ideas and concerns about Britain's new status as global imperator. Images from the classical imperial past, legitimized by pictorial homage to Raphael and Poussin, offered a suitable combination of painting, poetry and oratory through which to advance Drummond's concerns about George III's intentions as a ruler and to promote West as the leading practitioner of painting's most important genre in the traditions of its most revered practitioners. Writers who fashioned their works for the middling classes who could not read the classic texts in Latin and Greek and upon whom the importance of the texts might otherwise be lost explained

Lively images appear with still greater lustre in history, than the thoughts; they are frequently recurring, and occupy the chief place in a discourse. By these are facts painted, as the combat of the Horatii and Curiatii, the plague of Rome, the arrival of Agrippina with the ashes of Germanicus, or Germanicus himself stretched on his death-bed. They likewise describe the lineaments of the person, the character of the mind or the manners....¹³⁴

Like all personages from histories and fictions of imperial conquest Germanicus – whether embodied or cremated – could perform a number of different roles as exemplar and counter-exemplar in the application of Roman history to contemporary circumstances. For example, at the end of the Seven Years' War, members of some political circles invoked the seventeenth-century republican Protestant Algernon Sidney by republishing his *Discourses Concerning Government*, in which the author sees Germanicus's refusal to wrest control of the Roman empire from the weak and conniving Tiberius as the real reason for his untimely death – a reading that completely strips Germanicus of imperial martial virtue.¹³⁵

Sidney's critique of Germanicus struck a chord among eighteenth-century readers that differed from the meaning that readers in Sidney's own time would have gleaned from the work. For example, one might read Germanicus as the man who crushed the German resistance to the Roman empire or as the man whose "advantages... were at least thought equal to the greatest victories that had been gained by any Roman captain, because these nations fought not for riches, or any instruments of luxury and pleasure, which they despised, but for liberty."¹³⁶ Depending upon one's party affinities in a period of political vexation, Germanicus and his wife Agrippina could read as victims of the tyrannical conduct of an inferior ruler whose maniacal applications of power had scourged capital and provinces alike.¹³⁷ Thus they served as tragic reminders of the dangers of placing too much power in a single man – be it Roman Emperor or Hanoverian King. In order to avoid the consequences of declension suffered by the Romans at home because of their imperial exploits abroad, Britons had to act the virtuous Germanicus and his chaste wife Agrippina, rejecting the paranoia of Tiberius.¹³⁸ By the same token, the painting warned George III against engaging in ministerial conspiracies that might be compared to those purportedly conducted between Tiberius and Sejanus or Tiberius and Piso.¹³⁹ Roman pietas and modern virtue would serve the demands of the British constitution (government and populace). Tyranny and favoritism – whether at home or abroad – would only diminish the king's stance in the eyes of his people.

In order to secure Britons' the divine birthright to global territorial dominion propounded from Britain's pulpits, the monarchy, the parliament, British colonists and

the military had to pursue courses of action and implement policies that laid the groundwork for the slow, methodical conversion of the vanquished to true Anglican Protestantism. In a 1764 treatise entitled “Thoughts upon the Ecclesiastical Establishment in Canada,” Drummond proposed an informal plan for minimizing the distress of Canadian Roman Catholics who suddenly found themselves under British Protestant rule. The plan provided for the gradual replacement of Catholicism with Anglicanism throughout the formerly French provinces. Rather than completely prohibiting the principles and practices of Catholicism, Drummond acknowledged that limited freedom of worship, missions and free schools established by the Anglican Church would ease the transition from the Church of Rome to the Church of England.¹⁴⁰ In 1767 Drummond revised the plan to conform to ministerial expectations, such that the document and its implementation represented both ecclesiastical and parliamentary policy. The scheme formed one of the bases for the 1774 Quebec Act.¹⁴¹ For Drummond the *Agrippina* commission communicated the principles of imperial martial virtue that he wished to see deployed in Britain’s North American, West Indian, African and South Asian territorial acquisitions by England’s military, political, commercial and ecclesiastical representatives.

After having conferred with a number of his friends among London’s cognoscenti regarding the merits of West’s performance, Drummond arranged a royal audience for the young American painter. He dispatched West to Buckingham House with the painting of *Agrippina* in hand, hoping that the young king would recognize the artist’s

talent. Drummond was an enthusiastic patron of the arts who may have perceived royal support for the arts in England as a show of good faith on the part of the Hanoverian king. One might assume that he also wished for the king to study the painting in order to apprehend its intended message. The painting that he commissioned from West reiterated a potent political message grounded in an idea clearly expressed in Francis Hayman's *Triumph of Britannia* at Vauxhall: Britannia, representing the people of Britain, sits in a triumphal car conventionally occupied by Neptune or by a triumphant monarch; she carries a portrait of the king formally distinguished from the portraits of victorious naval commanders by its profile treatment of the king's image, an artistic choice that conveys the notion that – like the military commanders who serve him – it is the king who is “buoyed” by the people, serving only at the pleasure of his imperially heroic subjects (fig. 64).¹⁴² The mourning *Agrippina* may have served to remind George III that royal imperial power would be tolerated only so long as the palaces at Windsor and Buckingham remained free from tyranny and intrigue. Also designed for viewing by future generations of British imperial heroes, *Agrippina* announced to audiences that they should always favor the virtuous imperial Roman/Briton and protest all faction and favoritism from the court of Tiberius/Hanover.

In arranging for West to personally transport the painting to Buckingham House for presentation to the monarch, Drummond performed the role of patron-orator, whose overture to the monarch suggested that patronage of the arts might undo some of the psychic damage wrought by two generations of Hanoverians who had cared more about

events and circumstances in their home provinces in Germany than about any aspect of culture or identity in the British Isles. Drummond also wished to reiterate the expectations of the Patriot Opposition, who had fervently supported George III's father, Frederick, in his "shadow court" at Cliveden.

Drummond's action as patron-orator in turn facilitated West's function as a painter-orator, whose *Agrippina* proclaimed a tripartite message. First, by calling to mind Poussin's *Death of Germanicus*, West insinuated himself into the art-historical genealogy of great painters from Timanthes of ancient Greece through the early modern heroes of French and Italian painting. Second, by positing his subject as an argument rather than a gesture of pictorial poetry, West established for London audiences the validity and relevancy of grand-scale academic history painting in the tradition of Alberti and Le Brun. Finally, West called for the royal patronage of history painting by demonstrating the value of the form to Britons' negotiations of modern imperial identity. West achieved all three objectives by framing classical subject matter within the discursive contexts of virtuous Roman imperial patronage of the arts and Britons' own imperial martial virtue in their victories over France in the Seven Years' War. Emphatically rooted in classical textual sources and early modern theory and practice West's refinement of the visual heroics of empire confirmed for the first time in English history the public and private viability of history paintings on canvas.

In his ongoing early efforts to naturalize and domesticate the idea of empire for Anglophone audiences, West chose classical subjects that would reinforce the

connections between filial piety, and conjugal devotion and imperial martial virtue. In *Agrippina*, West constructed a pictorial rhetoric that intertwined marital fidelity with heroic sacrifice in the performance of imperial duty. Combined, these values offered an easy alternative to tyranny and treachery in the halls of imperial power and thus an emollient to imperial anxiety in the minds and hearts of ordinary Britons. Such scenes reminded those same ordinary Britons that, in the provinces of North America and South Asia, empire had catapulted men like James Wolfe, Jeffrey Amherst and Robert Clive into that heroic realm occupied by Alexander the Great. At home, empire could offer Britons a new setting in which to demonstrate heroic personal virtue on the scale of that extolled in ancient history and in epic poetry.

As was the case with most of West's paintings, *Agrippina Returning to Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* met with widespread popular approval but only tepid critical acclaim. In the 1768 edition of *Mémoires littéraires de la Grande Bretagne pour l'an 1768*, Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) and his Swiss-born collaborator Jacques-Georges Deyverdun (c. 1734-1789) observed

Mr. West y a placé un grand Tableau, représentant Agripine abordant à Brindes avec les cendres de Germanicus. Ce tableau attire les applaudissements de la multitude par son éclat et l'approbation des Gens du métier par sa composition. Je ne doute effectivement qu'il ne soit savant et plein de beautés mécaniques. Mais dans les genres élevés, la vraie science est d'intéresser, ce n'est pas assez que le Peintre d'Histoire fasse admirer son pinceau, et please aux yeux, il doit parler à l'esprit et affecter le coeur. Je n'ai vu chez tous les personnages de ce Tableau qu'une douleur profonde, mais monotone, point de variété dans les caractères de cette douleur, point de traits fortement marqués. L'Agripine du Peintre est accablée de douleur; mais ce n'est pas l'Agripine de Tacite. On y voit une veuve qui pleure son époux, et non la femme de Germanicus, dont le coeur

est rempli de désespoir, et qui demande vengeance au Peuple Romain. Il peut enfin y avoir beaucoup d'Art dans ce morceau, mais il n'y a pas de Genie.¹⁴³

Gibbon's tempered praise of West's history paintings typified that which came London's most erudite quarters. But among Britons of lesser critical and aesthetic sensitivity (including the archbishop and the king), West's painting achieved its objectives.

In the same year that he completed *Agrippina with the Ashes of Germanicus* for Drummond, West depicted *Leonidas Ordering Cleombrutus into Banishment with His Wife and Children* (fig. 65). The painting captures a moment in which the Lacedaemonian king Leonidas has just returned to power after a coup in which his son-in-law Cleombrutus assumed the throne.

Leonidas being most incensed against his son-in-law, meddled not with Agis, but went with his soldiers to Cleombrotus, and with great passion reproached him for conspiring with his enemies, usurping his throne, and forcing him from his country, notwithstanding the affinity between them. Cleombrotus having little to say for himself, stood silent. His wife Chelonis, the daughter of Leonidas, had been a partner with her father during his sufferings; for when Cleombrotus usurped the kingdom, she forsook him, and wholly applied herself to comfort her father in his affliction: whilst he was in sanctuary, she staid with him, and when he fled, she attended him, bewailing his misfortune, and extremely displeas'd with Cleombrotus. But now, upon this turn of fortune, she was as zealous and assiduous in expressions of love and duty to her husband, with whom she constantly remained, and was now sitting by him, holding him in her arms, while her children sat at her feet, one on each side of her. All present were so affected by this uncommon instance of conjugal tenderness, that they could not refrain from tears, while she pointing to her mourning habit, and her dishevelled hair, spoke thus to Leonidas. *This habit, these dejected looks, and all these tokens of sorrow, are not worn for the sake of Cleombrotus, they are only the remains of that settled grief which has possessed me since your misfortunes and banishment. And now you are restored to your country, and to your kingdom, must I still remain in affliction? Or would you have me attired in my festival ornaments, to see the husband, to whom I was married when a virgin, put to death by you? Either Cleombrotus must appease you by mine and my childrens tears, or he must suffer for his fault, a punishment great than even you desire; for he shall infallibly*

see me die before him, me whom he so tenderly loves. To what end should I live, or how shall I appear among the Spartan women, when I have not been able to move compassion either in my husband or in my father? I was born, it seems, to share, both as a wife and daughter, in the misfortune and disgrace of those who are nearest to me in blood and affection. As for Cleombrotus, I sufficiently disowned his cause, when I forsook him to follow you; but now you yourself will justify his proceedings, by showing to the world, that for the sake of a kingdom it is just to kill a son-in-law, and be regardless of a daughter. Chelonis having ended this lamentation, rested her cheek on her husband's head, and turned her eyes, dim and languid through grief, upon the spectators.

Chelonis's plea for her husband's life succeeds. Leonidas "condemned Cleombrotus to perpetual banishment," expecting that Chelonis would remain in Sparta with the "father, who loved her so much, and who had granted at her intercession the life of her husband."¹⁴⁴ Chelonis refuses her father's entreaty, arising with her children to accompany Cleombrotus into exile.

In the West catalogue raisonné, von Erffa and Staley read *Leonidas Ordering Cleombrotus into Banishment* as a commentary on the beleaguered and dutiful wife and daughter Chelonis. Though the interpretation certainly has basis in Plutarch's text, von Erffa and Staley based their interpretation on a misquoted passage from the 1921 Bernadotte Perrin translation of the text for the Loeb Classical Library.¹⁴⁵ The twentieth-century translation more strongly emphasizes gender roles than the 1763 translation upon which West would have relied. A comparison of the passage quoted above with Perrin's version clarifies the distinctions:

...both as wife and as daughter I was born to share only the misfortune and dishonour of the men nearest and dearest to me. As for my husband, even if he had some plausible excuse for his course, I robbed him of it at that time by taking

thy part and testifying to what he had done; but thou makest his crime an easy one to defend by showing men that royal power is a thing so great and so worth fighting for that for its sake it is right to slay as son-in-law and ignore a child.¹⁴⁶

The story of Chelonis featured in a number of eighteenth-century sources concerned with women's roles in classical and modern societies, but for West and his predominantly male audiences, imperial martial virtue and vice and their respective effects and affects on conjugal love and familial piety subordinated the theme of gender-based oppression.¹⁴⁷ The contemporary interpretation of Plutarch's text that resonates most closely and clearly with West's painting appears in the 1764 edition of William Guthrie's *General History of the World*: "...Cleombrotus was happier in being banished with such a wife, than he could be in the possession of a kingdom without her."¹⁴⁸ Virtue in the face of imperial vice – demonstrated by men and by women – punished in life yet prevailing in posterity, drives the story of Agis, in which Plutarch included the narrative of Leonidas and Cleombrotas. Had West painted the picture in the 1790s, as a response to the debate over Mary Wollstonecraft's (1759-1797) *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, one might more easily read the painting as a meditation on gender bias.¹⁴⁹ However, as he produced the work as part of a broader oeuvre devoted to selectively-appropriated classical examples and counter-examples of imperial martial virtue, one must consider the painting in the more specific 1768 context of naturalizing and domesticating empire.

As is the case with many of West's paintings, the provenance of *Leonidas Ordering Cleombrotas into Banishment* remains confusing. Von Erffa and Staley note,

“West completed [the picture] by 30 September 1768, when it was included in a private two-day exhibition at the Society of Artists held on the occasion of a visit to England by the King of Denmark.”¹⁵⁰ West added *Agrippina Returning to Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* to that special exhibition for the Danish king, who “staid a considerable time, and expressed his satisfaction in the most obliging manner,” without having singled out West’s (or any other) canvas, so far as sources indicate.¹⁵¹ Some scholars suggest that William Lock of Norbury Park, Surrey, commissioned *Leonidas*, or perhaps purchased it after the initial private exhibition.¹⁵² West would later resubmit the work for exhibition to the fully public 1770 Royal Academy show, where at least one critic designated the painting evidence of a new kind of English mastery of the history painting genre. In the preface to the 1770 English translation of Lodovico Dolce’s *Aretin: Or, A Dialogue on Painting*, the translator reports

several English artists have in our last and other late exhibitions, made it evident, that some of the principal merits of historical painting (in particular design and composition) may be comprized in the space of a cabinet picture. ...I cannot help producing as instances, the Regulus, Jacob blessing Joseph’s children, Cleombrotus, &c. of Mr. West; an artist whose works would have done honour to Rome, even in the time of Raphael and Titian. The appeal might safely be lain with any person of taste and judgment, whether these works do not fully prove this assertion.¹⁵³

Another critic, Horace Walpole, pronounced the painting “solemn and good, tho’ hard and heavy,” a glowing review compared to his descriptions of some of West’s other works as poor, wretched, ill drawn and “bricky” in color.¹⁵⁴

Neither the audiences present for the 1768 special exhibition or for the 1770 Royal Academy show would have focused on the theoretical aspects of the aesthetic

merit of *Leonidas*. Most would have considered the painting in terms of the lessons to be gleaned from its textual source and the emotional impact of the narrative moment. The variety and complexity of such responses would depend upon the viewer's degree of text-specific literacy on the one hand and the impact of Chelonis's gesture of conjugal affection on the other. Toward reconstructing certain aspects of eighteenth-century viewer reception, I here contrast imaginative association, which affectively allies the viewer with Chelonis, with extrapolative or contextual association, which allows the viewer to situate the narrative moment within the full content of Plutarch's *Life of Agis*. The absence of textual literacy would obviate the viewer's ability to grasp a discursively ordered world in which the lessons of classical antiquity registered and imbued contemporary crises with immediacy and urgency.¹⁵⁵ Scholars have sufficiently addressed eighteenth-century notions of sentiment, sympathy and feeling as they relate to text and image; I will here focus on the ways in which textual literacies would have informed audience reception of West's *Leonidas*.¹⁵⁶ This analysis will serve as one model through which I interrogate the paintings that West produced subsequent to the opening of the Royal Academy.

In the particular instance of *Leonidas Ordering Cleombrotus into Banishment with His Wife and Children*, the best-qualified viewer for the painting would have imbibed, if not memorized, Plutarch's *Life of Agis*. Such mastery of the text would allow for full comprehension of the narrative as it applied to Spartan history *and* for a full grasp of the story's lessons as they pertained to the lives of subjects of the modern British

empire in the British Isles and in the provinces. Writing in the year before West exhibited *Leonidas* at the Society of Artists' special exhibition for the Danish king, William Duff (1732-1815) elucidated the conditions necessary for a viewer to fully appreciate such a work:

...in order to form a proper notion of a piece of HISTORY PAINTING, it is necessary we should not only be well acquainted with those historical transactions which the ingenious artist intends, by the most striking representation, to recal to our remembrance; but we must likewise keep in mind the precise instant of time when they are supposed to have happened; because by not knowing, or not attending to this circumstance, the beauty and emphasis of the execution is intirely lost to us.¹⁵⁷

Duff concludes that "ORIGINAL GENIUS is displayed in the highest degree and in the noblest sphere in HISTORY-PAINTING," but the effect of such genius could be lost on a viewer who fails to fulfill his responsibility to acquaint himself with both historical context and narrative content.¹⁵⁸ The eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) had earlier characterized the process of what one might term "extrapolative" association as the product of one or more of three experiential and intellectual processes that could be applied to the reception of heroics of empire history painting: resemblance, contiguity and causation.¹⁵⁹ For a viewer committed to Hume's model, the first criterion by which one would judge a painting such as *Leonidas* assessed the degree to which the artist presented a compelling likeness of a figure long dead.¹⁶⁰

Extrapolative association attaches the image as a visually stimulating object to the memorized or otherwise mastered text from which it derives and then to the contemporary circumstances of a viewer's life. This process, which requires the viewer

to synthesize the immediate sensory, the philosophical and the more broadly experiential, differs from the eighteenth-century notion of the “power of association.” The extrapolative connects the subject as viewer to the source from which the narrative derives and then expands the meaning to include any number of the concepts and correlations addressed in and attributed to the source. Though not the “opposite” of extrapolative association, what eighteenth-century philosophers termed the “power of association” concerns itself with sympathetic responses to the representation of emotional states or to physiological responses to sensory stimuli. One might feel tempted to characterize the power of association as more interpolative, but contemporary viewers would have subscribed to theories of aesthetic and emotional responses that were rooted in philosophies of universal passions and universal truths. So the process may qualify as interpolative, but through the affective response to Chelonis’s predicament, the viewer’s experienced would have linked to the universal sympathetic rather than the individual empathetic.

Though not all scholars would agree that Hume’s theories can apply to both the extrapolative and the affective, I contend that the image of Leonidas banishing Cleombrotas would call to mind any number of associations, which I address in succeeding paragraphs. Considered in Duff’s terms as informed by Hume’s earlier model, West’s *Leonidas* presents the unifying affect triggered by the visual representation of human emotional distress. At the same time, the image demonstrates the extraordinary versatility of the visual heroics of empire in terms of an individual viewer’s ability to

expand her gaze beyond the painting as object. This expansion facilitates the discursive processes through which an artist establishes a painting's relevance to contemporary political and cultural events and circumstances. More specific to the painting and to the situation of the day, within the counter-exemplary narrative of Leonidas's usurpation of power from the patriotically virtuous Agis, Chelonis is forced to choose between her husband and her father. No such choice would be necessary in a Sparta ruled by the values of Agis.

In addition to the visceral registration of sympathy, an eighteenth-century viewer familiar with the story upon which West based this painting would be moved to ruminate upon and to discuss any number of salient issues and ideas that the image called to mind. Despite the explicitly imperial setting of the narrative, such conversations would address events and circumstances both connected to and completely isolated from individual and collective imperial anxiety. Adhering to the limitations set by this study, I will here but briefly cite aspects of Plutarch's *Life of Agis* that most clearly and urgently apply to Britain's status as a global imperial power in 1768.¹⁶¹ The clearest connection between West's painting and the contemporary discourses of imperial anxiety emerge in Plutarch's account of the circumstances under which Leonidas came to rule Sparta in the first place:

The Lacedæmonians might date the beginning of their corruption from their conquest of Athens, from which time they began to abound in gold and silver. When the love of gold and silver had once crept into Sparta, and was followed by avarice, fraud, and rapine in the acquisition of riches, and by luxury, effeminacy, and prodigality in the enjoyment of them, the commonwealth lost its former dignity and greatness, and was unworthily reduced to a mean and despicable state.

So that now the men in power got possession of great numbers of estates, to the exclusion of right heirs; and all the wealth soon coming into the hands of a few, the generality were poor and miserable; liberal arts and sciences were neglected, and the city filled with a mean sort of mechanics.¹⁶²

Another conversation conducted before West's canvas might address the dangers of "going native," a theme that recurred with ever-increasing force as larger numbers of Britons in North America adopted Native American dress and customs and Britons in South Asia married and fathered children by women from local families, as had Leonidas in "having children by a wife taken out of a Persian court."¹⁶³ Ancient Spartans, like modern Britons, could attribute Leonidas's abandonment of Spartan austerity for the reckless extravagance of the Persians to his "having lived a long time among the great men of Persia, and been a follower of King Seleucus[;] he unadvisedly imitated the pride and luxury of those courts."¹⁶⁴ Like the modern Britons who could not escape the moral taint of contact with foreign soil, Leonidas suffered permanent damage from his time among the Persians. Eighteenth-century sources expounded upon the importance of this theme to Spartan history when relating the earlier story of Cleombrotus's I's defeat by the virtuous Epaminondas: "It was the fate of Spartans who escaped from the field, not of those who perished with Cleombrotus at Leuctra, that filled the cottages of Lacedemon with mourning and serious reflection: it was the fear of having their citizens corrupted abroad, by intercourse with servile and mercenary men..." that inspired the parents of the slain to rejoice and caused the parents of the spared to grieve.¹⁶⁵

Whatever the lessons taken from and conversations prompted by West's *Leonidas Ordering Cleombrotus into Banishment*, the central point remains: classical history

abounds with guiding principles useful to an empire wrestling with the exigencies of recent territorial conquest. Britons who read newspapers, pamphlets and books published in during and after the Seven Years' War recognized the warning signs at home and from abroad. Some Britons' would have seen in Edward Wortley Montagu's (1678-1761) description of Sparta their own British empire:

In their wars abroad, indolent dispirited dastards: at home ever ripe for sedition and insurrections, and greedily catching at every opportunity of embroiling affairs in hopes of such a change as might enable them to retrieve their fortunes. Evils, which the extremes of wealth and indigence are ever productive of in free countries.¹⁶⁶

Others, however, might have read Montagu's ominous words as an attack on France, the state against which Britons wished to most sharply contrast themselves. For West and his audiences, the story of Leonidas clarified the choices between virtue and vice in forging a new kind of empire. If Britons of all ranks would mimic selectively-identified exemplars of classical virtue, but remain mindful of the English social, political and ecclesiastical structures that made them "better than the ancients," such a combination of the classical with the modern would immunize the British empire against declension.

The Departure of Regulus: The First Royal Commission

As I have demonstrated, the textual and visual literacies of eighteenth-century Anglophone viewers created the potential for a number of different types of extrapolative and interpolative associations with regard to the reception of heroics of empire history paintings. West's first royal commission purportedly arose from just such an association. According to Galt's *Life*, George III ordered *The Departure of Regulus from Rome* after having seen *Agrippina Returning from Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus*: “‘There is another noble Roman subject which corresponds to this one, and I believe it...has never been well painted; I mean the final departure of Regulus from Rome. Don't you think it would make a fine picture?’ The Artist replied, that it was undoubtedly a magnificent subject. ‘Then,’ said His Majesty, ‘you shall paint it for me[.]’”¹⁶⁷ Accounts of West's initial meeting with George III and Queen Charlotte range from the improbable to the fantastic, but all can be traced back to the information that West supplied to Galt for the biography. Establishing the veracity of West's memory of his first meeting with the king transcends the scope of this study. Instead, I here focus on the task of understanding and perhaps even explaining the king's request for a painting of the Roman consul Marcus Atilius Regulus (c. 294 – 250 BCE) in the act of making his final departure from Rome (fig. 66).

Galt's biography suggests that West learned the details of Regulus's departure from the relevant passage in Livy's (59 BCE-17 CE) *History of Rome*, but the full text of

Livy's version of the story did not survive into the eighteenth century.¹⁶⁸ The specific text from which West learned the details of the scene bears no relevance to contemporary viewers' understanding of the painting. As Basil Kennett noted in *Romæ antiquæ notitia*, which ran to fourteen editions between 1700 and 1769, a "tedious Account" of the story of Roman consul Marcus Atilius Regulus "would be needless even to a School-Boy, who is seldom unfurnished with a Stock of such Histories."¹⁶⁹ Anyone within hearing range of a young Briton earnestly memorizing translated excerpts from classical texts would know of Regulus and his dramatic personal sacrifice for the greater good of Rome against its most threatening competitors at Carthage. The content of such an academic recitation might have resembled the argument that precedes the script for the play *Attilius Regulus*, printed in English translation in 1755:

Among the most glorious names of which the Roman Republick was proud, by the consent of all antiquity, the name of Attilius Regulus has always occupied an eminent rank; because he not only sacrificed to his country's welfare *his* blood, *his* labours, and his cares; but knew how to turn to her advantage even his own misfortunes. Burthened already with years and merit, he found himself unhappily prisoner in Carthage, when that city, frightened by the *good* fortune of her rival Rome, saw herself in the necessity to procure by means of *her* ambassadors a peace from the other, or at least an exchange of prisoners. The liberty which would have resulted to Attilius Regulus by the execution of this proposal, made the Carthaginians believe him a fit instrument to procure it. So along with *their* African ambassador, *they* sent him to Rome, having first obliged him to solemnly swear he would come back to his chains if he should obtain nothing. At Regulus's unexpected arrival the Romans fell out into as many transports of tender joy, as *they* had run into sadness and desolation five years before, at the dismal news of his captivity. And for the liberty of such a hero the severest conditions would certainly have seem'd to them very easy. But Regulus instead of availing himself to his private advantage of the credit he had among his fellow-citizens, employed it all to dissuade them from accepting their enemy's insidious proposals, and joyful to have persuaded them, amidst the tears of his children, the intreaties of his relations, and importunity of his friends, of the senate, and of the

people, that all crowding about him laboured to keep him, he religiously went back to *that* certain death which awaited him in Africa; leaving to posterity an example, thus prodigious, of faith and resolution.¹⁷⁰

West's visualization of Regulus's final departure from Rome, en route to torture and death in Carthage, includes Regulus's wife, Marcia, fainting. Depending upon the source, Marcia loses consciousness from seeing her husband in Carthaginian dress or from his having refused her embrace. Though the presence of Regulus's wife in the composition qualifies the painting as part of West's effort to naturalize and domesticate the idea of (in this case republican) martial virtue, the important distinction in terms of exhibition-goers' reception of the 1755 play and the 1768 painting does not relate to the explanation for Marcia's collapse. The cultural climate in which the painting made its public debut conditioned viewers' responses. The image of a general who voluntarily submits to torture and death in order to preserve the integrity of republican Rome against Carthaginian aggressors took on a pointed urgency as Britons encountered increasingly damning evidence regarding the less-than-virtuous conduct of their own "consuls" across Britain's expanded realms. *The Departure of Regulus* extolled the republican virtue that had made Rome glorious before empire began to erode its glory, but Britain's agents were showing signs of cruelty and tyranny that contradicted those republican values.

A painting of the scene produced five years after the Peace of Paris held a set of meanings that differed from those that viewers would have derived from a theatrical production mounted before the outbreak of the Seven Years' War. But West's painting focused on the latter to address the king's perspective on the consequences of the Peace

of Paris for Britons at home and abroad. The picture captures the moment in which Metastasio's Regulus has just delivered this parting speech to his family and countrymen:

Romans, farewell. Be your last parting kindness worthy of ourselves. Thanks to the Gods, I leave you, and I leave you Romans. Ah! Preserve the great name unstained; and you shall be the arbiters of the earth; and the whole world shall become Roman. *Ye* Gods, *the* guardians of this glorious land, *ye* Goddesses, the protectresses of Eneas's progeny, I trust to you this nation of heroes. This ground, these roofs, these walls be your care. Do *so* that fortitude, faith, glory, justices, valour, may always abide within them. And if ever any malignant planet threatens the capitol with *any* bad influence, -- behold Regulus, *ye* Gods. Be Regulus alone your victim. On my head all the wrath of Heaven be consumed: But Rome untouched – Ah, here are tears – Farewell!¹⁷¹

Neither West (who wished to position himself as gentleman and as liberal artist) nor George III (who felt some desire to distinguish himself from his philistine grandfather) would have likely professed a preference for a stage play over the original Latin text. But it is just as likely that the king associated the stories of Agrippina and Regulus with theatrical performances such as those produced for the monarch by the aforementioned librettist Bottarelli as with the writings of Livy, Polybius, Horace, Cicero and Tiberius Catius Silius Italicus.¹⁷² In Bottarelli's *La Gran Bretagna emula dell'antica Roma* of 1760, the poet compares modern English women to Agrippina and sees in their male counterparts classical imperial heroism: "Here, frequent, 'mong the softer sex, are found / Matrons, as those of antient Rome, renown'd / for justice, wisdom, temperance, and spirit" and "Gazing on Britons, pleas'd, we call to mind / ...Bold Regulus, for strength of soul renown'd."¹⁷³ The most literate among Britons who saw West's painting at the inaugural exhibition of the Royal Academy might have sensed in *Regulus* a retort to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's observations on the Roman consul:

Regulus maintained he was a Carthaginian, as being become the property of his masters. In his quality of a [foreigner], he refused to seat himself in the senate of Rome. He was full of indignation that they were desirous of saving his life. He overcame, and returned triumphant to die amidst the most exquisite torments. This, in my opinion, has no great connection with mankind now a-days.¹⁷⁴

Britons without hesitation would have agreed that one could find no connection between Regulus's virtuous martial constancy and the modern, perfidious, effeminate French,

Among the numerous textual references that appeared in the mid-eighteenth century, perhaps Thomas Blackwell's (1701-1757) *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus* most succinctly captures the value of the Roman general's example to modern art-going publics. In the third edition of the *Memoirs*, which appeared in London in 1764, Blackwell reflects, "*M. Atilius Regulus*, immortal through Contempt of Life, first carried the Roman army into Africa."¹⁷⁵ The context in which Blackwell eulogized Regulus supplies an analog for the concerns and assumptions that would have informed viewers' reception of West's canvas:

...the glorious Republic of Rome...which its civil and military Order raised to be '*the Pride of Earth, the Centre of Nations, where every Virtue, heightened by Emulation, and a noble Thirst of Fame, beamed forth for the benefit of Mankind:*' For this generous People were no brutal bloody Conquerors. ...[T]hey became at once the Wonder and Dread of all the Nations that heard the Name of Rome.¹⁷⁶

West followed Blackwell's example by including Regulus among other notable imperial heroes, such as Scipio, whose continence West had celebrated in 1766. George III likely commissioned the work as a rejoinder to Drummond's rather presumptuous commission of *Agrippina Returning to Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanics*. Unlike eighteenth-century France, where the monarch and courtiers determined the course of taste in the

visual arts, Britons looked to the English country house and to the fashionable London townhouses of their countrymen for shifts in aesthetic sensibilities and the latest in fashion.¹⁷⁷ As historian Jeremy Black observes, “the English elite were not guided by crown and court.”¹⁷⁸ Black’s comment reflects eighteenth-century views that “peculiar to the English nation...Encouragement and Improvement in every Branch of Science and the Arts should originate in the Patronage of the *People*,” rather than in the tastes of the monarch and his court.¹⁷⁹

Had West arrived at Buckingham House with a picture of a subject unrelated to imperial martial virtue, the course of West’s career might have followed a very different trajectory. *Agrippina* comments clearly and directly on imperial virtue in the provinces and imperial vice in the palace, to which George III replied, through *Regulus*, that definitions of imperial virtue would emanate not from ecclesiastical elites such as Drummond, but from the throne. With the commission for *The Departure of Regulus* and the paintings that followed over the next five years, the Hanoverian king claimed proprietorship of imperial martial virtue, conveying his expectation that Britons follow the example set by Regulus, et al. But just as Britannia, the allegory of the British constitution who occupied the seat of the triumphal car and who held, quite literally, George III’s head in her hands in Hayman’s painting at Vauxhall, it was the British people who would ultimately determine the deployment of the visual heroics of empire. Only after Drummond asked West to paint *Agrippina* did George III request *Regulus* and its companion paintings for the Warm Room at Buckingham House. The same principle

of crown following country would apply to West's *Death of General Wolfe*, a copy of which the king ordered only after one of his subjects purchased the original.

For George III, the choice of subject for the first painting that he commissioned from West reflected sensitivities inside and outside the palace. For example, in a treatise entitled *Regulus; or a View of the Present State of Public Affairs: with Certain Proposals, Addressed to the Independent Electors of Great-Britain* printed in 1768, the author complains that "Venality and corruption never were so barefaced; nor was ever public spirit at so low an ebb. People, in high stations, are not now ashamed to be thought totally indifferent about the public interest. Patriotism is openly ridiculed; and to be the notorious plunderers of our country, is no longer a matter of disgrace, though our country would never before so ill afford to be robbed."¹⁸⁰ Ruing the debt necessary to sustain the empire in its current state and the burgeoning influence of the French in peacetime British politics, the writer asks, "How long is that state likely to subsist, which has in *itself* no foundation established on public *virtue*, and a crafty *foreign* enemy undermining it?"

Let it not be said, 'the British empire has gained immensely by the late war. The sun never sets on our dominions. There never were such riches in the possession of subjects.' What is the British empire to the Roman world, at the very time when the ambitious Julius seized its liberties, and turned it into the most horrible scene of tyranny, the sun ever saw? On the contrary, many a mighty kingdom has sunk with its own weight. Overgrown *individuals* are dangerous to the *community*. The *security* of a powerful state consists, chiefly in the equal *balance* of the different *parts* of its constitution, and the *wisdom* and *fidelity* of its *governors*. Whether we can justly boast of our possessing, at present, either of these advantages, is greatly to be questioned; say rather, is clear in the negative.¹⁸¹

By commissioning *The Departure of Regulus*, George III, in effect, proclaimed that “martial virtue lives at Buckingham House,” wresting from his enemies one of the many classical narratives that had been used by anti-Hanoverian factions as an invective through which to assail both George II and his grandson. The young king had come to maturity in a domestic environment plagued by conflict between his father and grandfather. He also developed a keen awareness of and sensitivity to the attacks leveled by the Patriot Opposition against George II and his first minister Robert Walpole. The expansion of the British empire into greater reaches of North America, the West Indies, Africa and South Asia added new points of attack, launched from a number of different political quarters. By ordering a painting of Regulus, George III claimed for himself some of the language of his enemies (and potential enemies), announcing that he understood the need for imperial martial virtue in the conduct of Britons toward newly-subject peoples. The contemporary political climate in London strongly emphasized that England’s constitution included a limited monarchy, under which the king served at the pleasure of his subjects. In an oblique riposte to that political mindset, *The Departure of Regulus* carried a potent message: it is the virtues and values of Republican Rome that this king expects from his subjects and which he intends to uphold as sovereign.

The struggles between crown and country, between center and periphery and between ideals of martial virtue and realities of martial and administrative vice all reflected aspects of the “imperial sentiment” that played a determinative role in constructions of eighteenth-century Anglophone identity. These conflicts centered on

simple questions: who should control the proper identification, expression and dissemination of imperial martial virtue? what aspects of modern British society distinguished its members from imperial Romans? who could most fully manifest Britons' potential for aesthetic genius in the expression of imperial ideals? who was best suited to administer the largest land empire in the history of the world? The fundamentals of English constitutional liberty could address some aspects of these questions, but the ideal of civic humanism that had flourished during the first half of the century could not abide the combined effects of empire and commerce. Commerce could be marshaled, through charitable giving, to the public good – but what of empire? According to all historical indicators, empire signaled an influx of luxury and a taste for luxury could stimulate interest in and patronage of painting, sculpture, architecture and decorative arts. Well before England and France and their respective confederates signed the Peace of Paris, British philosopher David Hume observed

What has chiefly induced severe moralists to declaim against refinement in the arts, is the example of ancient Rome, which, joining to its poverty and rusticity, virtue and public spirit, rose to such a surprizing height of grandeur and liberty; but having learned from its conquered provinces ASIATIC luxury, fell into every kind of corruption; when arose sedition and civil wars, attended at last with the total loss of liberty. All the LATIN classics, whom we peruse in our infancy, are full of these sentiments, and universally ascribe the ruin of their state to the arts and riches imported from the East...¹⁸²

Following the unprecedented territorial gains secured through the imperial heroism of Wolfe, Amherst, Clive, et al., Londoners worried they might not discover themselves the political and cultural descendants

of republican Rome with its virtues and vital energies but of Imperial Rome with its self-indulgent decadence. The gain of an Indian-based Oriental empire encouraged comparison with imperial Rome because, unlike Britain's North American empire, but like that of imperial Rome, the new empire in India had no ethnic underpinning and was clearly imperial. Writers in the tradition of civic humanism...searched for points of reference around which to discuss their anxieties about the effects of empire upon metropolitan culture; and imperial Rome was the obvious parallel.¹⁸³

Artists needed to find a way to advance the idea of empire without blatantly promoting any of the confirmed causes of imperial declension. Heroics of empire history paintings answered the needs of artists, audiences and agents of empire.

By most accounts, West's *Departure of Regulus* met with critical and popular approbation. One 1770 source exemplifies the restrained praise inspired by the painting: "His Picture of *Regulus* departing from *Rome*, exhibited last Year, is admirable for the Animatedness of the Composition, and the Force and Justness of the Expressions, and, though faulty in some Particulars, is a Performance not unworthy of any of the greatest Painters that have been."¹⁸⁴ If one trusts the accuracy of fencing master Henry Angelo's (1756-1835) recollection in writing his 1828 *Reminiscences*, West scored a major victory with the painting: not only did he successfully invoke Poussin in the artistic execution of *The Departure of Regulus*, he exceeded that most esteemed among seventeenth-century French artists.¹⁸⁵ And in a letter to the publisher of London's *Public Advertiser*, one exhibition-goer affirmed West's progress in making history painting relevant for Anglophone audiences:

It cannot but yield a noble Satisfaction to every Man of Taste to see the Art of Painting carried to such sublime Heights as it unquestionably is by the Artists of the present Age. This year's Exhibitions are perhaps the grandest that England

ever produced. The Spirit of antient Italy is at length revived, and Raphael, Angelo and Titian seem to live over again in some of our illustrious Countrymen. I do not mean to depreciate any Painter, because I extol the Works of another. But what can exceed our charming History Painter, Mr. West, in the Correctness of his Composition, the Harmony of his Stile, or the Delicacy of his Colouring? Let it be remembered likewise that he has ventured to walk in a Path unmarked by the Traces of any British Painter. Portrait-Painting has had it's Day, and the Name of Sir Joshua Reynolds must be handed down with Honour to Posterity, for the great Share he took in reducing Painting to a Science at the same Time that he abolished by his Example that false Taste which Sir Godfrey Kneller's Pieces had every where authorised. But the superiority of History-Painting, is now universally acknowledged. West's *Regulus* is a striking Instance of the Powers of the Pencil in this Way. You cannot glance your Eye upon the Canvas without being insensibly led to examine the Story, and you derive the same Pleasure from a View of the whole Performance as you do from a well-wrought Tragedy, where all the Passions are excited and kept alive by a fine Climax. But the Town has given the Painter that Applause to which his modest Merit entitles him. His Majesty is to have the Picture, and Mr. West is no Doubt happy in such a mark of Approbation from the best of Monarchs. St. James's Square, Monday Night."¹⁸⁶

As the *Public Advertiser* correspondent would have it, West's *Departure of Regulus* achieved a number of extraordinary objectives, many of them perhaps unintended. With a single empire-themed history painting, West merged a widely-familiar heroic subject from Roman antiquity with the artistic techniques of Europe's early modern masters to comment on present-day events and circumstances in the British empire.

The painting's theme of personal sacrifice for the imperial good connected the work to Hayman's paintings for Vauxhall, which in turn connoted the Patriot Opposition vision of English imperial destiny. Hayman excepted, West's predecessors produced history paintings for the walls of palaces and hospitals and for the stairways of grand country houses. As the first widely-acclaimed British history painter working on canvas, West eclipsed those forebears on all accounts; that success created a new sense of

momentum in the fine arts. The success of *Regulus* portended royal patronage on a scale unknown in England since the reign of Charles I (1600-1649). Whether or not it was Drummond's intent, his "artistic embassy" to Buckingham House facilitated the renewal of a long-dormant Hanoverian vow to establish a royal academy of painting for artists working in England. That promise, articulated to Hayman and his coterie in the 1740s, was thwarted by the unexpected death of Frederick, Prince of Wales in 1751. In addition to his scheme to establish a royal academy of painting and sculpture, Frederick had intended to reconstitute the vast art collection of Charles I, which was rapidly dispersed following the regicide that ended his life. From an early age George III had shown an interest in the arts and the *Regulus* commission suggested to the art cognoscenti the economic viability of that predilection. Francis Hayman, a favorite of Frederick's, would join West on the list of the Royal Academy's founding members, insuring the trajectory of the heroics of empire history painting formula that Hayman originated in the Vauxhall Music Hall annex. Once hung in the palace, West's *Regulus* also signaled the king's expectation that his subjects would conduct their imperial exploits with republican honesty, honor and self-sacrifice – values that diametrically opposed the cruelty, tyranny and perfidy of the French, who played Carthaginians to England's Romans during the contest for North America, the West Indies, Africa and South Asia.

Notes

¹ Plutarch, “Of a Man’s Progress in Virtue,” from *Plutarch’s Morals: Translated from the Greek by Several Hands*, 4th ed., 5 vols. (London, printed by Thomas Braddyll, 1704) vol. II, p.455.

² *The Works of Nicholas Machiavel, Secretary of State to the Republic of Florence*, Ellis Farnsworth, trans., 2 vols. (London, printed for Thomas Davies, Thomas Waller, R. and J. Dodsley, James Fletcher, Mess. Balfour and Hamilton, and Mr. James Hoey, Jr., 1762) vol. II, 00. 323-326.

³ Blackwell, *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus*, vol. I, p. 111.

⁴ James Stuart, *Critical Observations on the Buildings and Improvements in London* (London, printed for J. Dodsley, 1771) p. 36.

⁵ George Colman, *The Connoisseur. By Mr. Town, Critic and Censor-General*, No. 74 (June 26, 1755) (London: printed for R. Baldwin, 1755-1756) II:440-441. Colman intends to provoke laughter in his reader, indicating that the “Roman standard” of comparative virtue had achieved sufficient cultural currency by 1755 to merit/warrant satire.

⁶ One must wonder, however, how audiences would have received *General Johnson* if West had hung *The Choice of Hercules* as its companion piece. Unfortunately, such speculation exceeds the limits of this study.

⁷ In addition to their appearances in the various versions of Plutarch’s *Lives* published throughout the century, Regulus, Germanicus and Epaminondas appeared in educational primers published under such titles as *The Preceptor: Containing a General Course of Education. Wherein the First Principles of Polite Learning Are Laid Down in a Way Most Suitable for Trying the Genius and Advancing the Instruction of Youth*, which appeared in two-volume editions in London in 1749, 1754, 1758, 1763, 1765, 1769 and 1775 in London and in 1769 in Dublin. The history sections of these publications provided a young man with the basic narrative necessary to comprehending West’s classical heroics of empire history paintings.

⁸ The location of the *Cymon and Iphigenia* that West produced as a companion piece to *Angelica and Medoro* is currently unknown, so I have included the 1766 version of the scene that West painted and exhibited at the 1766 Society of Artists exhibition.

⁹ Lodovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, William Huggins, trans., 2 vols. (London, 1757) vol. I, p. 306, canto 19, stanza 36. For the list of painters, including West, who chose this verse as the subject for a picture, see Rensselaer Lee, *Names on Trees: Ariosto in Art* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977) pp. 65-70.

¹⁰ Walter S. H. Lim, *The Arts of Empire: The Poetics of Colonialism from Raleigh to Milton* (London, Associated University Presses, 1998) p. 159.

¹¹ Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, vol. I, p. 217, canto 15, stanzas 25, 26 and 27.

¹² *Ibid*, stanza 24.

¹³ *Il Decamerone. One Hundred Ingenious Novels: Written by John Boccacio, the First Refiner of the Italian Language. Now Done into English, and Accommodated to the Gust of the Present Age* (London, printed for John Nicholson, James Knapton, and Benjamin Tooke, 1702) p. 214.

¹⁴ John Dryden, “Cymon and Iphigenia,” from *Miscellaneous Works of John Dryden, Esq; Containing All His Original Poems, Tales, and Translations*, 4 vols. (London, printed for J. and R. Tonson, 1760) vol. III, pp. 307-310.

¹⁵ *Letters to a Young Nobleman* (London, printed for A. Millar, 1762) pp. 54-55.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 23.

¹⁷ See Maria Ruvolt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration: Metaphors of Sex, Sleep and Dreams* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 99.

¹⁸ John Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (London, printed for L. Davis and C. Reymers, 1757) pp. 66-67 and 78-82. For insightful discussions of Brown’s impact, see Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture, and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995) p. 187; and Martin Myrone, *Bodybuilding: Reforming Masculinities in*

British Art 1750-1810 (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2005) p. 10. Both of these works are indispensable to understanding the centrality of empire to the cultures of eighteenth-century Britain.

¹⁹ John Gordon, *A New Estimate of Manners and Principles: Being a Comparison between Ancient and Modern Times, in the Three Great Articles of Knowledge, Happiness, and Virtue; Both with Respect to Mankind at Large, and to this Kingdom in Particular* (Cambridge, printed by J. Bentham for W.

Thurlbourn and J. Woodyear, 1760) pp. ix-x.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. x.

²¹ In 1764 Samuel Wale exhibited *The Head of Pompey Shown to Caesar*, in 1766 a sketch of *Seleucus Giving his Wife Stratonice to His Son Antiochus* and in 1767 stained drawings of *William the Conqueror Receiving the Allegiance of Some of the Bishops and Citizens of London* and *Isaac, Emperor of Cyprus, Taken Prisoner by King Richard I on his Voyage to the Holy Land*. In 1765, Simon Ravenet debuted his engraving after Hayman's *Triumph of Britannia*. The following year, Mary Hoare, as an honorary exhibitor listed in the Society of Artists exhibition catalogue as "painter," entered a drawing of *Tigranis, Taken Prisoner by Cyrus, Imploring the Lives of His Father and Family*. In the same year that West offered *Pyrrhus* and its companion *Astyanax* to the Society of Artists at Spring-Gardens, the Free Society of Artists exhibition in the Strand included a James "Athenian" Stuart (1713-1788) design for a medal commemorating Sir Edward Hawke's (1705-1781) victory over the French in Quiberon Bay on 20 November 1759 and Robert Wilkins's (c. 1740-c. 1790) *A Representation of the Storm at the Siege of Pondicherry, with a View of that Town, Taken on the Spot*. Also in 1767 Richard Earlom exhibited a drawing after West's *Pyrrhus Brought before Glaucias* and a Mrs. Grace (formerly Miss Hodgkins) entered *Antigonous, Seleucus, and Stratonice*. In 1769 John Hall exhibited an engraving after West's *Pyrrhus* at the Society of Artists, keeping that particular theme current in the minds of London's art-going publics well beyond the time of its introduction in West's 1767 painting.

²² "Generous, almost to profusion: [Wolfe] contemned every little art for the acquisition of wealth, whilst he searched for objects of his charity and beneficence: the deserving soldier never went unrewarded, and even the needy inferior officer frequently tasted of his bounty." John Entick, *The General History of the Late War: Containing It's Rise, Progress, and Event, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*, 5 vols. (London, printed for Edward Dilly and John Millan, 1763) vol. IV, p. 117.

²³ Though similar in content and compositional fundamentals, the visual cultures inspired by the Bolingbrokean model of conquest as practiced by Francis Hayman, et al., differ from the heroics of empire as developed and refined by Benjamin West (who arrived in London after the death of George II and for whom the party conflicts of the first half of the eighteenth century would have seemed irrelevant when compared to the more pressing issues of Britons' conduct in North America and South Asia).

²⁴ *Letters to a Young Nobleman*, p. 29.

²⁵ For a close reading of Pratt's painting, see Susan Rather, "A Painter's Progress: Matthew Pratt and *The American School*," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 28 (1993) 169-183, esp. 179.

²⁶ A printmaker by the name of J. Miller entered an engraving after Van Dyck's *Continence of Scipio* in the 1766 Society of Artists exhibition. Throughout the eighteenth century, writers expressed the desire for an English school of painting with its own distinctive set of practices and characteristics on an order comparable to the early modern Florentine, Roman, Bolognese and French schools. See, e. g., "Essay towards an English School of Painters," included with the 1706 translation of De Piles's *Art of Painting*.

²⁷ See Thomas Blackwell, *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus*, John Mills, ed., 3 vols. (London, printed for A. Millar, 1763) vol. III, p. 231. Scipio Africanus was the maternal grandfather of the emperor Tiberius. Following the death of his grandson, Scipio expressed disapproval of the way that Tiberius ruled. See Plutarch, "Life of Tiberius Gracchus," in *Plutarch's Lives*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh, printed by A. Donaldson and J. Reid for Alexander Donaldson, 1763) vol. V, p. 223. The connection between Scipio's imperial virtue and Tiberius's imperial vice indicates one of the many points of intertextuality that permeated the practice of heroics of empire history painting during the period.

²⁸ George Lyttleton, "Titus Vespasianus [and] Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus," in *Dialogues of the Dead* (Dublin, printed by Oliver Nelson, 1760) pp. 82-102, p. 83.

²⁹ John Smith, *The Life of Scipio Africanus the Elder* (London, printed for Robert Knaplock, 1713) pp. 9-10. Later in the tale, Scipio stands accused of financial corruption; his exemplary behavior in conquest superseded the charges against him in the characterizations of his virtue. This would have particular resonance as public and parliamentary concerns about the conduct of Clive and the other East India Company servants gained momentum in 1767. See also Jonas Hanway's account of Scipio's speech to the captive woman's fiancé: "'It is not the manner of the Romans to use all the power they justly may: we fight not to ravage countries, or break through the ties of humanity: I am acquainted with your worth, and your interest in this lady: fortune has made me your master, but I desire to be your friend. This is your wife, take her, and may the gods bless you with her. Far be it from Scipio to purchase a loose and momentary pleasure at the rate of making an honest man unhappy.'" Jonas Hanway, *Reflections, Essays and Meditations on Life and Religion, with a Collection of Proverbs in Alphabetical Order, and Twenty-Eight Letters Written on Several Subjects*, 2 vols. (London, printed for J. Rivington and R. and J. Dodsley, 1761) vol. II, p. 304.

³⁰ West's reference to Poussin is important in the context of his self-fashioning as an artist. As contemporary commentators noted, "Scarce an Author who has mentioned the Reduction of *Spain* or Conquest of *Carthage*, has but celebrated the Self-command of this youthful Victor; and the admirable Representations of that glorious Action by...Poussin have contributed to keep alive the Fame of it in modern Times." Blackwell, *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus* (1763) p. 38. Poussin's treatment of the Scipio narrative also warranted this comment by Horace Walpole: "The Continnence of *Scipio* shines with all its Lustre, when told by the Hand of a *Poussin*; while all the imagination of the Poet, or Eloquence of the Historian, can cast no Beauty on the virtuous Act in the Eye of an illiterate Reader." Horace Walpole, "A Sermon on Painting," in *Ædes Walpolianæ: Or, a Description of the Collection of Pictures at Houghton-Hall in Norfolk, the Seat of the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole, Earl of Orford*, 2nd edition (London, printed for the author, 1752) pp. 99-114, p. 106.

³¹ See Peter C. Sutton, "The Continnence of *Scipio* by Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout (1621-1674)," Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin vol. 78, no. 336 (Autumn 1892) pp. 2-15, p. 5. See also Aldo S. Bernardo, *Petrarch, Scipio and the 'Africa': The Birth of Humanism's Dream* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962).

³² Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst* (Rotterdam, 1678) p. 83 quoted in translation in Sutton, "The Continnence of *Scipio* by Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout," p. 5.

³³ See Gérard de Lairesse, *The Art of Painting, in All Its Branches, Methodically Demonstrated by Discourses and Plates and Exemplified by Remarks on the Paintings of the Best Masters; and Their Perfections and Oversights Laid Open*, John Frederick Fritsch, trans. (London, printed for the author, 1738) pp. 89-90; and Sutton, p. 5.

³⁴ Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism: On the Idea of a Patriot King: And on the State of Parties at the Accession of King George the First* (London, printed for A. Millar, 1752) pp. 226-227.

³⁵ For reasons that transcend the scope of this study, West withheld *Paetus and Arria* from the 1766 exhibition.

³⁶ For a reading of this painting that equates the narrative moment with the crisis caused by the Stamp Act, see Maurie D. McInnis, "Cultural Politics, Colonial Crisis, and Ancient Metaphor in John Singleton Copley's *Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Izard*," *Winterthur Portfolio* vol. 34, nos. 2/3 (Summer 1999) pp. 85-108, p. 96. One problem with this interpretation comes from McInnis's contention that West based *Iphigenia* on contemporary representations of Britannia. If this is the case, then all of West's paintings in which one of the females resembles Iphigenia must represent Britannia. If one were to pursue the direct application of the painting to modern political and military circumstances, whether one might interpret Clytemnestra as the

Austro-Hungarian ruler Maria-Theresa, who abandoned and betrayed England in the Seven Years' War, invites further consideration.

³⁷ See *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Gilbert West, trans., included as part of *Odes of Pindar, with Several other Pieces in Prose and Verse, Translated from the Greek. To Which Is Added a Dissertation on the Olympick Games*, 2 vols. (London, printed for R. Dodsley, 1753) vol. I, pp. 145-236. Gilbert West's translation appeared in a number of editions between 1749 and 1766.

³⁸ *The Antiquities of Herculanum*, Thomas Martyn and John Lettice, trans. (London, printed by W. Bowyer and J. Nichols for the translators, 1773) p. 48.

³⁹ Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, pp. 42-43. See also Prown, *Art as Evidence*, op cit. pp. 265-266.

⁴⁰ See "A Description of Buckingham House, Just Purchased by the King for Her Majesty's Palace," *The Beauties of All the Magazines Selected*, 3 vols. (London, printed for T. Waller, 1762) vol. I, pp. 227-229 [reprinted from *Gentleman's Magazine*]. See also, *The Beauties of England and Wales; or, Delineations Topographical, Historical and Descriptive*, 2 vols. (London, Vernor and Hood, 1801) vol. I, p. 209, which claims that West encouraged George III to move the cartoons from Buckingham to Windsor "where the purity of the air will probably preserve them for centuries longer than if they had continued exposed to the smoky atmosphere of the Metropolis." The 1801 *Beauties of England* claim that the cartoons were transported to Buckingham House in 1766 contradicts Benjamin Ralph's 1764 report that they were "very lately removed to her Majesty's Palace in the Park." See Benjamin Ralph, *A Description of the Cartons of Raphael Urbin, in the Queen's Palace*, 2nd edition (London, printed for J. Boydell, 1764) p. 4.

⁴¹ As legend would have it, the young king's removal from Hampton Court seems to have come as the result of trauma associated with a single incident: "With his grandson, afterwards George III., his anger sometimes became quite uncontrollable; and once, in the State Apartments of Hampton Court Palace, his sacred Majesty so far forgot his kingly dignity as to box the ears of the youthful heir of the throne. This insult, it is said, so disgusted George III. with the place, that, according to his son the Duke of Sussex, he could never after be induced to think of it as a residence. ... [This from a story] told to Mr. J. Heneage Jesse, by the person to whom the Duke of Sussex related it, while passing through the State Apartments." Ernest Law, *The History of Hampton Court Palace* vols. (London, George Bell and Sons, 1891) vol. III. p. 284, from an account published in Jesse, *Life of George III* vol. I, p. 10. On West's characterization of his visit to Hampton Court, see Galt, *Life of West* (1820) p. 5.

⁴² West earned the moniker "American Raphael" while on the Grand Tour and the name quickly became a point of contention with London critics after his arrival in England: "...until Mr. West exhibits some more striking performances that those he has already done surely the glorious title of the American Raphael can never be, without irony, bestowed upon him." See "Note on Spring Gardens," *Public Advertiser* (2 May 1764). William T. Whitley notes, "Good or bad, West's pictures caused something of a sensation in London in 1764, and when a correspondent of the *Public Advertiser* sent to that journal some verses in French eulogizing the painter, and the editor invited translations from readers, numbers of versions were submitted, including one in Latin, from 'A Westminster Scholar.' Two or three were printed and it was promised that others should appear, but everything collapsed when another correspondent of the *Public Advertiser* pointed out that the French verses addressed to 'Mr. West, a celebrated painter in Castle Street, Leicester Fields, known in Italy by the name of the American Raphael,' were not original, but had been dedicated to Fontenelle fifty years earlier by the poet De La Motte." See William T. Whitley. *Artists and Their Friends in England, 1700-1799*, 2 vols. (London and Boston: The Medici Society, 1928) vol. I, p. 197. In a letter currently held in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania dated Rome, 31 August 1765 from the Abbé Grant to John Morgan of Philadelphia, Grant refers to West as "your young American Raphael." For the context in which Grant made the reference, see Arthur S. Marks, "Angelica Kauffmann and Some Americans on the Grand Tour," *American Art Journal* vol. 12, no. 2 (Spring 1980) pp. 4-24, p. 23.

⁴³ This rumor likely circulated during the time that West was advising George III on the preservation of the cartoons prior to their return to Hampton Court palace.

⁴⁴ See John Galt, *The Life, Studies, and Works of Benjamin West, Esq. President of the Royal Academy of London, Composed from Materials Furnished by Himself* (London, printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1820) p. 203. In at least one instance, Galt's prophecy about West's name being included among the greatest masters (though not Raphael and Michelangelo specifically) proved accurate. In a children's book by Sarah Lloyd entitled *A Week at Glenville* published in 1848, the author includes, in a series of anecdotes, the artist's earliest demonstrations of artistic proclivity. The stories are presented as a collection – a diary of sorts – of tales told and read by a Mrs. E---, the hostess at Glenville. Three entries in the small book relate to painters: the life of Giotto di Bondone, titled “The Italian Painter,” “Leonardo da Vinci,” and, of course, Benjamin West. See Sarah Lloyd, *A Week at Glenville* (Philadelphia, J. W. Moore, 1848) pp. 118-143.

⁴⁵ See Benjamin Ralph, *A Description of the Cartons of Raphael Urbin, in the Queen's Palace*, 2nd edition (London, printed for J. Boydell, 1764) p. 34: “The Manner in which *Raphael* has described this Ceremony, is perfectly fine and agreeable to the Custom of the *Romans*; and is intirely taken from the Bas-relief of the *Trajan* Column, the Priests and Boys employed in the intended Sacrifice being almost exactly copied from thence, particularly the Priest of *Jupiter*, who is in all Respects the same, except in the Drapery, the Figure in the Column being without any.” Ralph most likely refers to spiral 13 of the column, on which Trajan pours libations as part of a sacrifice set in a harbor town.

⁴⁶ *The Exhibition: Or, a Candid Display of the Genius and Merits of the Several Masters Whose Works Are Now Offered to the Public at Spring Gardens* (London, 1766) p. 5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵⁰ The Galt biography includes the claim that Alexander Geddes, the steward of a nobleman (not to be confused with Alexander Geddes the philologist and Roman Catholic priest), purchased *Pylades and Orestes* for 100 guineas, expressing his “honest indignation against his superiors in rank and fortune.” See *The New Monthly Magazine* vol. 13 (1820) p. 690. See also James Northcote, *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 2nd edition, 2 vols. (London, printed for Henry Colburn, 1819) vol. I, pp. 142-143. Though not related specifically to empire, the connection between a sacrifice prevented by the recognition of a sister by her brother and a sacrifice prevented by the apostles Paul and Barnabas would have resonated with Anglican clerics, two of whom commissioned works from West after seeing *Pylades and Orestes* in West's studio in 1766. This response from Protestant ministers was perhaps unexpected on West's part, but welcome nonetheless, especially as it would ultimately lead to his first royal commission.

⁵¹ For an alternative analysis of this pair of works, see Abrams, *The Valiant Hero*, pp. 133-134. That Poussin had also painted an episode in the Pyrrhus narrative. *Young Pyrrhus Saved* (1634, Louvre) may have influenced West's approach to the subject.

⁵² Prown, *Art as Evidence*, p. 139.

⁵³ For a discussion of the popularity of the scene in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European art, see Dora Wiebenson, “Subjects from Homer's *Iliad* in Neoclassical Art,” *Art Bulletin* vol. 46, no. 1 (March 1964) pp. 23-37, esp. pp. 27-28.

⁵⁴ Homer, *The Iliad of Homer*, Alexander Pope, trans., 4 vols. (London, printed for T. Osborne, H. Woodfall, J. Whiston and B. White, J. Rivington, R. Baldwin, L. Hawes, W. Clarke and R. Collins, W. Johnston, J. Richardson, T. Caslon, S. Crowder, T. Longman, B. Law, T. Field, C. Rivington, R. Withy, T. Pote, S. Baker, and T. Payne, 1763) book VI, lines 594-605, vol. II, pp. 39-40. In eighteenth-century English translations of Homer's *Iliad* [800 BCE], Virgil's *Aeneid* [19 BCE], Seneca's *Troades* [c. 54 CE] and Ovid's *Amores* [18 BCE], Astyanax emblemizes Trojan familial affection and – as an innocent tot martyred to the Trojan cause by “Grecian Rage” – imperial sacrifice. In an “heroick epistle” published in 1761, English poet Edward Jerningham (1737–1812) explored the themes of marital virtue, internal conflict

and sacrifice generated at home by imperial conquest abroad that would have resonated widely in time during which the idea of sacrificing one's life in the name of territorial acquisition had not yet gained wide acceptance among London's publics. In *The Valiant Hero*, Abrams reads the painting as a reference to the oft-performed *The Distrest Mother*, Ambrose Philips's play based on Racine's seventeenth-century *Andromaque*. A musical version of the story premiered in London in 1755 as *Andromaca* and in 1761 the poet Edward Jerningham published "Andromache to Pyrrhus, an Heroic Epistle."

⁵⁵ Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies, Which Have Remarkably Been Fulfilled, and At This Time Are Fulfilling in the World*, 3rd edition, 3 vols. (London, printed for J. and R. Tonson, 1766).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85, summarizing Homer, *Iliad* book XVI, line 852 and book XXII, line 358.

⁵⁷ See John Milton, *Paradise Regain'd. A Poem in Four Books. To Which Is Added Samson Agonistes: and Poems upon Several Occasions*, Thomas Newton, ed. (London, printed for J. and R. Tonson, T. Caslon, T. Longman, W. Johnston, R. Ware, C. Corbet, T. Lownds, W. Nicholl, and M. Richardson, 1766). For a discussion of *Paradise Regained* as vehemently anti-imperialist, see Karen O'Brien, "Poetry against Empire: Milton to Shelley," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 117 (2002) pp. 269-296.

⁵⁸ Milton, *Paradise Regain'd* (1766) pp. 110-111, lines 71-79.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 110n.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 111n.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40 n x. Pope's translation, including the annotations, appeared in numerous editions produced between 1715 and 1796.

⁶² *The New History of the Trojan Wars and Troy's Destruction* (London, printed for Sarah Bates and James Hodges, 1735) p. 120. In the context of Britons' burgeoning sense of their nation as an empire on the scale of ancient Rome, it is important to note that the fourth book of this retelling of the Trojan Wars is entitled "The Arrival of Brute in Britain, and How He Conquered Albion and his Giants and Built Troynovant, now London." This narrative places the English on a narrative continuum occupied by the Trojans, Aeneas, and the founding of Rome separate and apart from the invasion of Rome by Julius Caesar, which also figured prominently in contemporary discourses of British imperialism.

⁶³ The list of texts that draw upon the story of Hector and Andromache is too lengthy to include here. For a sampling of the different treatments of the story, see, e.g., Knightly Chetwood, "The Parting of Hector with His Princess Andromache, and Only Son Astyanax, When He Went upon His Last Expedition, in Which He Was Slain by Achilles," in *A Collection of Poems* (London, printed for Daniel Brown and Benjamin Tooke, 1701); William Melmoth, *Letters on Several Subjects. By the Late Sir Thomas Fitzosborne, Bart.* (London, printed for R. Dodsley, 1749) pp. 147-148 (this publication appeared in six editions between 1749 and 1763); Daniel Webb, *An Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting; and into the Merits of the Most Celebrated Painters, Ancient and Modern* (London, printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1760) p. 33; "Some Particulars of the Life of the Celebrated Christina, Queen of Sweden; from a Work Lately Published in French by M. Lacombe," *The Annual Register, or A View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, for the Year 1763*, 2nd edition (London, printed by J. Dodsley, 1765) pp. 33-41, p. 34; John Drummond, *The Death of Hector, and the Redemption of His Body. Extracted from Pope's Translation of Homer's Iliad*, appended to *A Collection of Poems for Reading and Repetition. Selected from the Most Celebrated British Poets, and Arranged in Alphabetical Order* (Edinburgh, printed for the author, 1762) pp. 195-230, pp. 198-199; and John Dryden, "The Last Parting of Hector and Andromache. From the Sixth Book of the Iliad," in *The Miscellaneous Works of John Dryden, Esq; Containing All His Original Poems, Tales, and Translations*, 4 vols. (London, printed for J. and R. Tonson, 1767) vol. IV, pp. 374-379, p. 375.

⁶⁴ See William Melmoth, "Letter II. To Philotes," in *Letters on Several Subjects. By the Late Sir Thomas Fitzosborne, Bart.*, 6th edition (London, printed for R. Dodsley, 1763) pp. 4-10.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5. "Hudibrastic heroes" refers to Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*, a seventeenth-century satire written in the time of the Protectorate. Melmoth takes the name Euphronius from the tutor of Anthony and Cleopatra's children who served as messenger between the couple and Octavian (Augustus). Readers would have recognized the name Philotus as that of a king from the story of Hercules.

⁶⁶ Melmoth, *Letters*, 4th edition, p. 5.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁹ Though Melmoth thought his proposal potentially beneficial to artists and audiences, similar themes were later satirized. See, e.g., Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, 2 vols. (Dublin, printed for W. and W. Smith, A. Leathley, J. Hoey, Sr., P. Wilson, J. Exshaw, E. Watts, H. Saunders, J. Hoey, Jr., J. Potts and J. Williams, 1766) vol. I, pp. 146-148. A 1781 stipple engraving by William Dickinson after a design by Henry William Bunbury portrays a painter (who very closely resembles Joshua Reynolds) as he idealizes a couple and their young son in “a family piece,” but the emphasis in this work is less on historical elevation than on correcting the garish appearances of the middling sorts. See John C. Riely, “Horace Walpole and ‘the Second Hogarth,’” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* vol. 9, no. 1 (Autumn 1975) pp. 28-44; and Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004) pp. 37-38. I wish to thank Susan Rather for calling these sources to my attention.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8. Though Melmoth does not identify the artist to whom he refers in this passage, it may apply to James “Athenian” Stuart was the most celebrated Briton in Rome at the time.

⁷¹ “To the Printer of the Public Advertiser [May 1767 handwritten],” NAL Press Cuttings 1723-1800 PP.G.17, f. 75.

⁷² *The Adventurer* 80 (11 August 1753), reprinted in *The Adventurer*, 4 vols., 5th edition (London, printed for A. Millar, W. Strahan, J. Rivington, R. Baldwin, Hawes, Clarke, and Collins, T. Lowndes, J. Dodsley, J. Coote, and M. Richardson, 1766) vol. 3. p. 94.

⁷³ For example, the 1761 Society of Artists exhibition included Nathaniel Dance’s *Death of Virginia by the Hand of Her Father, to Prevent Her Falling Prey to the Lust of Appius*. In 1762 Gavin Hamilton sent *Andromache Weeping over the Body of Hector* from his studio in Rome and Gaetano Manini (a Milanese artist working in London) submitted *Boadicea Encouraging the People to Make War against the Romans and Caractacus Brought Prisoner before Claudius*. The following year Samuel Wale entered *Thebe, Wife of Alexander the Tyrant of Pherea, Visiting Pelopidas in Prison*, and *Richard the First, in the Island of Cyprus, with the Emperor and His Daughter Prisoner*. In 1765 Francis Hayman exhibited his version of *Aeneas Carrying his Father Anchises*, Gavin Hamilton sent *Achilles Lamenting the Death of Patroclus* and Edward Penny showed *An Officer Relieving a Sick Soldier*. At the Free Society exhibition of 1767, Thomas Banks presented *The Ransoming of the Body of Hector* and John Collett entered *A Recruiting Serjeant Persuading a Countryman to Enlist*.

⁷⁴ Edward Manwaring, *An Historical and Critical Account of the Most Eminent Classical Authors in Poetry and History* (London, printed for W. Innys and R. Manby, 1737) pp. 43-44.

⁷⁵ See, e.g., “Conversation upon Heroic Virtue,” from Jean-Baptiste Morvan de Bellegarde, *Models of Conversation for Persons of Polite Education* (London, printed for A. Millar, 1765) pp. 125-292, esp. 149-151; and W. Gordon, “History of the Four Great Monarchies,” in *Every Young Man’s Companion* (London, printed for J. Rivington, H. Woodfall, J. Newbery, R. Baldwin, S. Crowder, T. Caslon, B. Law, M. Richardson; and Salisbury, printed for B. Collins, 1765) pp. 265-267.

⁷⁶ See Solkin, *Painting for Money*, pp. 157-213. For a thorough discussion of the sentimental in contemporary literature, see Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

⁷⁷ The text appeared in two English translations shortly before West arrived in London. See Plutarch, “The Life of Pyrrhus,” in *Plutarch’s Lives, Abridged from the Original Greek, Illustrated with Notes and Reflections, and Embellished with Copper-Plate Prints*, 5 vols. (London, printed for J. Newbery, 1762) vol. III, pp. 176-216 and Plutarch, “The Life of Pyrrhus,” in *Plutarch’s Lives. Translated from the Greek with Explanatory and Critical Notes, from Dacier and Others*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh, printed by A. Donaldson and J. Reid, 1763) vol. III, pp. 61-113. Whether or not West personally owned a copy of the *Lives*, he drew many of his classical history painting images from those volumes. The Galt biography clarifies the extent to which West claimed to have been influenced by Plutarch: “Plutarch...that celebrated biographer, who

may indeed be regarded, almost without hyperbole, as the recorder of ancient worth, and the tutor of modern genius. In this peculiar class, Plutarch still stands alone, at least no other author in any of the living languages appears to be yet sensible of the secret cause by which his sketches give that direct impulse to the elements of genius, by which the vague and wandering feelings of unappropriated strength are converted into an uniform energy, endowed with productive action. Plutarch, like the sculptors of antiquity, has selected only the great and elegant traits of character; and hence his Ives, like those statues which are the models of art, possess, with all that is graceful and noble in human nature, the particular features of individuals.” John Galt, *Life and Studies of Benjamin West* (Philadelphia, Moses Thomas, 1816) pp. 108-109.

⁷⁸ Plutarch, “Life of Pyrrhus” (1763) vol. III. pp. 63-64.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 64.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 70.

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 77.

⁸² Ibid, pp. 79-80.

⁸³ Ibid, pp. 87-88.

⁸⁴ Ibid, pp. 88-89.

⁸⁵ The story resembles that of Regulus.

⁸⁶ Plutarch, “Life of Pyrrhus” (1763) vol. III, pp. 90-92.

⁸⁷ Ibid, pp. 92-98.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 99.

⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 112-113.

⁹⁰ Von Erffa characterizes the pair as “historical subjects in the broadest sense.” In some eighteenth-century minds, Pyrrhus took on a sort of aphoristic value in the discourses of the day. See, e.g., J. Gautier, *The Life and Military Exploits of Pyrrhus, King of Epire*, Thomas Mortimer, trans. (London, printed by C. Say for the author, 1751).

⁹¹ See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “A Dissertation on the Effects of Cultivating the Arts and Sciences,” *The Miscellaneous Works of Mr. J. J. Rousseau*, 5 vols. (London, printed for T. Becket and P. A. De Hondt, 1767) vol. I, p. 102. For commentary on the temperance and frugality of the Romans, see also vol. I, p. 119 and especially 119n: “Those who love riches are born to be slaves, and those who despise them to be their masters. It is not the power of gold that binds the poor to the rich, but the desire of becoming rich in their turn; for otherwise the poor would necessarily have the power over the wealthy.”

⁹² “To the Printer of the Public Advertiser,” [May 1767 handwritten] NAL Press Cuttings 1723-1800 PP.G. 17, f. 75.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ *Le pour et le contre. Being a Poetical Display of the Merit and Demerit of the Capital Paintings Exhibited at Spring Gardens* (London, printed for the author, 1767) pp. 19-22.

⁹⁵ Robert Drummond, *A Sermon Preached at the Coronation of King George III. and Queen Charlotte, in the Abbey Church of Westminster, September 22, 1761*, (London, printed by John Hart, for Charles Bathurst, 1761) p. 5.

⁹⁶ See Galt, *Life of West* (1820) pp. 12 and 26. In a letter to Benjamin West from an unidentified recipient dated 26 December 1809, the writer diplomatically suggested “This is confounded long sentence, and, if you are troubled with the Asthma, get some person to read it for you.” See “Benjamin West Letters and Correspondence,” Simon Gratz Collection

Case 7 Box 40 HSP.

⁹⁷ Cornelius Tacitus, *The Works of Tacitus. With Political Discourses upon that Author*, Thomas Gordon, trans., 5 vols., 3rd edition (London, printed for T. and T. Longman, C. Hitch and L. Hawes, A. Millar, R. Dodsley, J. and J. Rivington, and M. Cooper, 1753). This particular edition was dedicated to the memory of Robert Walpole, the major target of the Patriot Opposition, who would have invited comparisons with Tiberius and Nero rather than Germanicus and Agrippina.

⁹⁸ Tacitus, *Annals* (1753) vol. I, p. 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-129. Included among the many factors that complicate modern readings of Drummond's commission are his Jacobite upbringing and the fact that Germanicus had conquered Germany, home to the Hanoverian electorate.

¹⁰¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, vol. I, p. 129.

¹⁰² See Giovanni Gualberto Bottarelli, *Le Promesse del cielo, ovvero il tempio dell'eternità, Serenata. Da eseguirsi sopra il Teatro Reale di Hay-Market, il 22 di Settembre, 1761. All'faustissima occasione della solenne pompa delle Nozze e della Coronazione delle Maestà di Giordano Terzo, e di Charlotta, &c. &c. &c. Monarchi augustissimi della Gran Bretagna, &c. &c. &c.* (London, printed by G. Woodfall, 1761) p. 53.

¹⁰³ Tacitus, *Annals*, vol. I, p. 34 and p. 30.

¹⁰⁴ Tacitus, *Works*, vol. I, pp. 141-142.

¹⁰⁵ Tacitus, *Annals*, vol. I, p. 129.

¹⁰⁶ For West's encounter with the *Ara Pacis* relief fragments, see Theodore E. Stebbins, *The Lure of Italy: American Artists and the Italian Experience, 1760-1914* (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1992) p. 152.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Adam, *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia* (London, 1764) p. iii.

¹⁰⁸ Ann Uhry Abrams, *The Valiant Hero: Benjamin West and Grand-Style History Painting* (Washington DC, Smithsonian Institution, 1985) 136-137.

¹⁰⁹ Regarding the theatrical impulse in eighteenth-century British life, Edward Hundert, "Performing the Passions in Commercial Society: Bernard Mandeville and the Theatricality of Eighteenth-Century Thought," in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N Zwickler, eds., *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998) pp. 141-172.

¹¹⁰ On neoclassicism, see, e.g., "Anachronisms of Artists," from *Chambers' Journal*, reprinted in *Littell's Living Age* (15 October 1870) p. 179.

¹¹¹ See Algarotti, *Essay on Painting*, p. 88 and p. 131. See also John Northall, *Travels through Italy. Containing New and Curious Observations on that Country; Particularly the Grand Duchy of Tuscany* (London, printed for S. Hooper, H. Webley, W. Nicol, and S. Bladon, 1766) 319-320. "...the death of Germanicus, painted by Poussin, and esteemed among (319) the greatest of compositions; Agrippina, the wife of Germanicus, is represented in a dejected, melancholy attitude, and holding her hand before her face, like the Agamemnon of Thimantes who had cast a veil over that prince's face at the sacrifice of his daughter, for the artist despaired of expressing the father's anguish on such an occasion." (320). Thomson's *Liberty* identifies Poussin thusly: "From Rome, a while, how Painting, courted long, / With Poussin came; Ancient Design, that lifts / A fairer front, and looks another soul." James Thomson, "Liberty," in *The Poetical Works of James Thomson, Esq; with His Last Corrections and Additions*, 2 vols. (London, printed for J. Thomson, 1768) p. 360, lines 500-502.

¹¹² The importance of Poussin's *Pyrrhus* is delineated in André Félibien, *Seven Conferences Held in the King of France's Cabinet of Paintings* (London, printed for T. Cooper, 1740) p. lvi.

¹¹³ See Allen Staley, "The Landing of Agrippina at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus," *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin* 61:287/288 (Autumn 1965-Winter 1966) 10-19, page 13.

¹¹⁴ Abrams, *Valiant Hero*, p. 137; see also Allardyce Nicoll, *The Garrick Stage: Theatres and Audiences in the Eighteenth-Century* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1980) pp. 102-141; Kalman A. Burnim, *David Garrick, Director* (Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1961) pp. 80-81; and Colin Visser, "Scenery and Technical Design," in *The London Theatre World, 1660-1800*, Robert D. Hume, ed. (Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1980) pp. 66-118.

¹¹⁵ Jonathan Richardson, *Account of Some of the Statues, Bas-Reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy, &c.* (London, publisher, 1722) p. 159. The comparison of Richardson's characterization of Poussin's

Germanicus with its current appearance should remind the reader of the “Venetian secret” scandal in the Royal Academy, in which a number of academicians paid a huge sum to learn of the formula with which Titian created his color and light effects. This formula supposedly allowed artists to replicate the “smoked” quality of 16th and 17th-century European paintings. See William Hogarth’s 1761 engraving entitled *Time Smoaking a Picture*.

¹¹⁶ Most biographical sources on West claim that William Williams shared with West a copy of de Piles and of Richardson. Richardson’s view of literacy, though practical for the time in which he wrote and published, did not reflect viewers’ familiarity with classical texts in the 1760s. See Susan Rather, Benjamin West’s Professional Endgame and the Historical Conundrum of William Williams,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, vol. LIX, no. 4 (October 2002) pp. 821-864.

¹¹⁷ Joseph Wilcocks, *Roman Conversations; or, Historical Exercises: Being Some of the Principal Characters in the Roman History, (The Subject of Six Weeks Conversation at or near Rome) Compiled for the Use of Places of Education, Particularly Westminster-School*, 2 vols. (London, sold by W. Sandby and B. Barker, 1763) vol. II, p. 72.

¹¹⁸ Roger de Piles, *The Art of Painting, and the Lives of the Painters*, John Dryden, trans. (London, printed for J. Nutt, 1706) p. 17. At some point during the century, “moderns” replaced “painters” in Poussin’s likely apocryphal assessment. See Webb, *Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting*, p. 65. Johann Joachim Winckelmann was to accuse Webb of having plagiarized Anton Raphael Mengs’s writings on art, which first appeared in English translation in 1782.

¹¹⁹ Alex Nemerov, “The Ashes of Germanicus and the Skin of Painting: Sublimation and Money in Benjamin West’s *Agrippina*,” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* vol. 11, no. 1 (1998) pp. 11-27, pp. 24-25.

¹²⁰ “Under the *lex Valeria* of 509 BC, the lictors had to remove the axe from the *fasces* while the consuls remained in the city and, when they appeared in the assemblies, they had to lower the *fasces* as an acknowledgement of the supremacy of the Roman people.” George Mousourakis, *The Historical and Institutional Context of Roman Law* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003) p. 80 and 80 n44. See Cicero, *De re publica*

¹²¹ Various Latin sources suggest that the twelve-lictor tradition began with Romulus. See, e.g., Nathaniel Hooke, *The Roman History, from the Building of Rome to the Ruin of the Commonwealth*, 4th edition, 6 vols. (London, printed for J. and R. Tonson, G. Hawkins, and T. Longman, 1766) vol. I, p. 51.

¹²² See Jacques Roergas de Serviez, *The Roman Empresses: Or, the History of the Lives and Secret Intrigues of the Wives of the Twelve Caesars*, Byssie Molesworth, trans., 3 vols. (London, printed for R. Dodsley, 1752) pp. 189-238, p. 190n.

¹²³ “A Man would expect, in so very ancient a Town of *Italy*, to find some considerable Antiquities; but all they have to show of this nature in an old *Rostrum* of a *Roman Ship*, that stands over the Door of their Arsenal. It is not above a Foot long, and perhaps would never have been through the Beak of a Ship, had it not been found in so probable a place as the Haven. It is all of Iron, fashioned at the End like a Boar’s Head; as I have seen it represented on Medals, and on the *Columna Rostrata* in *Rome*.” Joseph Addison, *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy, &c. in the Years, 1701, 1702, 1703* (London, printed for J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper, 1753) p. 20. This work first appeared in 1705, published by Jacob Tonson and the description of the rostrum appeared in eight instances between 1705 and 1767. In the preparatory sketch for the painting, West’s treatment of the galley is much more simple, suggesting that West either incorporated the suggestion of another artist or his patron, or he remembered having seen the rostrum while in Rome or while visiting Genoa en route to France – see Galt, *Life of West* (1816) p. 182. Another source offers insight into the column’s esteem among Grand Tourists: “Upon the wall facing the stairs [of the palazzo dei Conservatori] is the Columna Rostrata, an ancient monument, erected as a trophy for Caius Duilius, after his naval victory over the Carthaginians. The inscription is supposed antique; but the pillar, and beaks of ships, were done by Michael Angelo*. *Those who admire antiquity will think all the other columns inferior to the Columna Rostrata, set up to the honor of C. Duilius, when he gained so famous a victory over the Carthaginian and Sicilian fleets, a. u. c. 493, and adorned with the beaks of the vessels

taken in the engagement. This is still to be seen in Rome, and never fails of a visit from any curious stranger. The inscription on the basis is a noble example of the old way of writing, in early times of the commonwealth.” The latter passage is taken from John Northall, *Travels through Italy. Containing New and Curious Observations on That Country* (London, printed for S. Hooper, H. Webley, W. Nicol, and S. Bladon, 1766) p. 147 and 147n. In the note, Northall summarizes Basil Kennett, *Romæ Antiquæ Notitia: Or, the Antiquities of Rome*, 3rd edition (Oxford, printed for Timothy Child and Robert Knaplock, 1703) pp. 54-55. I wish to thank Vanessa Paumen for calling my attention to the ship’s bow in *Agrippina*.

¹²⁴ William Whitehead, “Elegy on the Mausoleum of Augustus,” *The American Magazine and Monthly Chronicle* vol. I (October 1757) p. 43. This elegy, which Whitehead wrote to his student, George Bussy Villiers (1725-1805), and published in the *London Magazine* for March 1757, urged Villiers to pursue a life modeled on that of Marcus Claudius Marcellus, the conquering Roman general also known for his eloquence. Whitehead had chaperoned Villiers on the Grand Tour.

¹²⁵ See Joseph Wilcocks, *Roman Conversations; or, Historical Exercises: Being Some of the Principal Characters in the Roman History, (The Subjects of Six Weeks Conversation at or Near Rome) Compiled for the Use of Places of Education, Particularly Westminster-School*, 2 vols. (London, 1763) vol. I, n.p.

¹²⁶ See Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Antichità romane* (Roma: Nella stamperia di Angelo Rotilj, 1756).

¹²⁷ See William Rider, *A New Universal English Dictionary: or, A Compleat Treasure of the English Language* (London, printed by W. Griffin, for I. Pottinger, 1759) p. 217.

¹²⁸ West did make a visit to the Palais Royal, much later, during his 1785 trip to Paris. The Poussin *Sacraments* series was acquired by the Duke of Orleans from Chantelou in 1694 and then purchased by Bridgewater upon the Duke’s death in 1798, so that both sets of Poussin’s *Sacraments* ended up in England.

¹²⁹ See, e.g., Annibale Antonini, *A View of Paris: Describing All the Churches, Palaces, Publick Buildings, Libraries, Manufactures, and fine Paintings; Necessary for the Observation of Strangers*, 2 vols. (London, printed for John Brindley, 1749) vol. I, p. 155: “I may say here to the praise of the Duke of Orleans, that he bought seven Pictures, which are the seven Sacraments of Poussin, that cost him forty thousand crowns to a Dutchman. Poussin painted these seven Sacraments twice; the first time for the Commander del Pozzo; the second for Monsieur de Chantelou, which is the set in the Royal Palace. ...[T]hese seven Pictures are all of great merit...”

¹³⁰ “Letter V. Of Taste; and of Some Distinguishing Circumstances of London and Paris,” *Letters to a Young Nobleman* (Dublin, printed for G. and A. Ewing and J. Exshaw, 1763) pp. 75-95, p. 91.

¹³¹ See Thomas Osborne, *Catalogus bibliothecæ Harleianæ*, 2 vols. (London, printed by Thomas Osborne, 1743) vol. II, p. 26; Bernard Picart, *Impostures Innocentes; or a Collection of Prints from the Most Celebrated Painters, viz. Rafael, Guido, Carlo Maratti, Poussin, Rembrandt, &c.* (London, printed for J. Boydell, 1756) p. 3; T. Osborne and J. Shipton, *A Catalogue of the Capital Collection of Prints, Drawings and Books of Prints, of the Late Right Honourable Henry, Lord Viscount Colerane* (London, T. Osborne and J. Shipton, 1756) p. 2; and Joseph Strutt, *A Biographical Dictionary Containing an Historical Account of All the Engravers, from the Earliest Period of the Art of Engraving to the Present Time*, 2 vols. (London, printed by J. Davis for Robert Faulder, 1786) vol. II, pp. 221-222.

¹³² Accounts of the fresco are too numerous to list here. For examples, see *A New and General Biographical Dictionary; Containing an Historical and Critical Account of the Lives and Writings of the Most Eminent Persons in Every Nation, Particularly the British and Irish; from the Earliest Accounts of Time to the Present Period*, 11 vols., (London, printed for T. Osborne, J. Whiston and B. White, W. Strahan, T. Payne, W. Owen, W. Johnston, S. Crowder, B. Law, T. Field, T. Durham, J. Robson, R. Goadby, and E. Baker, 1761-1762) vol. IX, p. 252; and John Northall, *Travels through Italy. Containing New and Curious Observations on That Country* (London, printed for S. Hooper, H. Webley, W. Nicol, and S. Bladon, 1766) p. 153.

¹³³ Joseph Spence, *Polymetis; or an Inquiry Concerning the Agreement between the Works of the Roman Poets, and the Remains of the Ancient Artists. Being an Attempt to Illustrate Them Mutually from One Another* (London, printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1755) p. 299.

¹³⁴ See Charles Batteaux, *A Course of the Belles Lettres: Or The Principles of Literature*, Mr. Miller, trans., 4 vols. (London, printed for T. Caslon, J. Coote, B. Law and Co., G. Kearsly, S. Hooper, and A. Morley, 1761) vol. IV, p. 237.

¹³⁵ See Algernon Sidney, *Discourses Concerning Government by Algernon Sidney with His Letters Trial Apology and Some Memoirs of His Life* (London, printed for A. Millar, 1763) p. 327.

¹³⁶ Sidney, *Discourses* (1763) p. 381.

¹³⁷ Perhaps conspicuously absent from this study is the consideration of the period's extraordinarily convoluted party politics. Rather than attempt to position my arguments within and against the concerns and consideration of Old Whig v. New Whig v. Country Tory v. Patriot Tory, etc., I have chosen to limit the investigation to West, his patrons and their audiences within the contexts of the newly-expanded empire and its implications for the forging of modern Anglophone identities. I justify this decision based upon the fact that empire – in its exigencies beneficial and detrimental – crossed all party lines. The paintings considered in this dissertation demand further study in the context of British party politics. I hope to undertake such a study at a future date. Among the scores of sources that address the topic of party politics in eighteenth-century Britain, I find two especially useful in disentangling the personalities and their respective issues: J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure, and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985); *The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764*, volume I of J. G. A. Pocock's *Barbarism and Religion*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989) esp. vol. I, pp. 116-120.

¹³⁸ William Guthrie's *A General History of the World, from the Creation to the Present Time*, includes the story of Germanicus's trip to Egypt following the reduction of Cappadocia and Armenia. En route from Commagene, Germanicus "renewed the ancient alliance between the *Romans* and *Parthians*; and having thus put an end to the disturbances of the east, he took a journey into *Egypt*, to view the curiosities and antiquities of that famous country. His journey proved very beneficial to the inhabitants, whom he relieved from a great famine, by causing the grainaries to be every where opened, and the price of corn to be abated." See William Guthrie, *A General History of the World, from the Creation to the Present Time. Including All the Empires, Kingdoms, and States; Their Revolutions, Forms of Government, Laws, Religions, Customs and Manners; the Progress of Their Learning, Arts, Sciences, Commerce and Trade; Together with Their Chronology, Antiquities, Public Buildings, and Curiosities of Nature and Art*, 12 vols. (London, printed for J. Newbery, R. Baldwin, S. Crowder, J. Coote, R. Withy, J. Wilkie, J. Wilson and J. Fell, W. Nicoll, B. Collins, and R. Raikes, 1764-1767) vol. IV, p. 341. The idea of a provincial general acting on his own in a distant land relieving the inhabitants of that land from the ravages of famine would resonate very deeply with the critics of Robert Clive two years later.

¹³⁹ This applied most obviously to the influence of Lord Bute on the young king, the details of which exceed the limits of the present inquiry.

¹⁴⁰ See Richard Sharp, "Robert Hay Drummond," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/8081>

¹⁴¹ See Peter M. Doll, *Revolution, Religion and National Identity: Imperial Anglicanism in British North America, 1745-1795* (London, Associated University Presses, 2000) pp. 109-117 and Andrew Porter, *Religion Versus Empire?: British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004). See also B. W. Young, "Religious History and the Eighteenth Century Historian," *The Historical Journal* vol. 43, no. 3 (2000) pp. 849-868 on the historiographical issues related to the consideration of religion and its role in eighteenth-century Britain.

¹⁴² The king's position in the composition is higher than that of the other portraits, indicating his supremacy to the victorious naval commanders. His position is lower than the head of Britannia, however, indicating his own position relative to the people over whom he ruled.

¹⁴³ Article VIII. Beaux Arts, &c.,” *Memoires Litteraires de la Grande Bretagne, pour l’An 1768* (Londres, chez C. Heydinger, 1769) pp. 220-249, pp. 220-221.

¹⁴⁴ Plutarch, “Life of Agis,” in *Plutarch’s Lives*, 5 vols. (Edinburgh, printed by A. Donaldson and J. Reid, 1763) vol. V, pp. 150-152. The italics indicate speech in the printed text.

¹⁴⁵ von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 169.

¹⁴⁶ Plutarch, “Agis and Cleomenes,” from *Plutarch’s Lives*, Bernadotte Perrin, trans., 11 vols. (London, William Heinemann and New York, G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1921) vol. X, pp. 2-41, volume X p. 39. Perrin died before completing this and the last of the eleven volumes, so the American editors of the work made the final choices regarding translation. One must not dismiss the possibility that the passage of the 19th amendment to the US Constitution may have informed the translation to some degree.

¹⁴⁷ For a discussion of female viewers in the eighteenth century, see K. Dian Kriz, “Stare Cases: Engendering the Public’s Two Bodies at the Royal Academy of Arts,” in David Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836*, exh. cat. (New Haven and London, Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Courtauld Institute Gallery, 2001) pp. 55-63.

¹⁴⁸ William Guthrie and John Gray, *A General History of the World, from the Creation to the Present Time. Including All the Empires, Kingdoms, and States; Their Revolutions, Forms of Government, Laws, Religions, Customs and Manners; the Progress of Their Learning, Arts, Sciences, Commerce and Trade; Together with Their Chronology, Antiquities, Public Buildings, and Curiosities of Nature and Art*, 12 vols. (London, printed for J. Newbery, R. Baldwin, S. Crowder, J. Coote, R. Withy, J. Wilkie, J. Wilson and J. Fell, W. Nicoll, B. Collins, and R. Raikes, 1764-1767) vol. II, p. 426.

¹⁴⁹ See Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (London, printed for J. Johnson, 1792).

¹⁵⁰ Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 169. The King of Denmark, Christian VII, was married to George III’s sister Caroline Mathilda, whom he treated abominably. Not only did he leave his English-Hanoverian wife in Denmark when he traveled to England in 1768, he arrived in and toured London openly with his male lover Conrad Holcke. The special exhibition of 1768 demands further investigation.

¹⁵¹ Edmund Burke, *The Annual Register. Or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature for the Year 1768* (London, printed for J. Dodsley, 1768) p. 174.

¹⁵² von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 169.

¹⁵³ Lodovico Dolce, *Aretin: Or, A Dialogue on Painting* (London, printed for P. Elmsley, 1770) pp. xi-xii.

¹⁵⁴ The comment comes from Horace Walpole’s annotated 1771 Royal Academy exhibition catalogue. Algernon Graves included the comments in *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work from Its Foundation in 1769 to 1904*, 7 vols. (London, Henry Graves and Co., Ltd and George Bell and Sons, 1906) vol. VII, p. 212.

¹⁵⁵ For eighteenth-century notions of the power of association, see David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*, 3 vols. (London, printed for John Noon, 1739) vol. I, pp. 26-31; David Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations*, 2 vols. (London, printed by S. Richardson, 1749); Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste* (London, printed for A. Millar, 1759) 24; William Duff, *An Essay on Original Genius; and Its Various Modes of Exertion in Philosophy and the Fine Arts, Particularly in Poetry* (London, printed for Edward and Charles Dilly, 1767) esp. 196n; Joseph Priestley, *Hartley’s Theory of the Human Mind, on the Principle of the Association of Ideas; with Essays Relating to the Subject of It* (London, printed for J. Johnson, 1775); John Donaldson, *Principles of Taste, or The Elements of Beauty. Also Reflections on the Harmony of Sensibility and Reason*, 2nd edition (Edinburgh, printed for the author, 1786) 33-48; 157]

¹⁵⁶ See n76, this chapter.

¹⁵⁷ William Duff, *An Essay on Original Genius; and Its Various Modes of Exertion in Philosophy and the Fine Arts, Particularly in Poetry* (London, printed for Edward and Charles Dilly, 1867) p. 196n.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 202.

¹⁵⁹ David Hume, *An Abstract of a Book Lately Published; Entitled, a Treatise of Human Nature, &c. Wherein the Chief Argument of that Book Is Farther Illuminated and Explained* (London, printed for C. Borbet, 1740) p. 32.

¹⁶⁰ The functions of contiguity and causation are also important to the various types of association that viewers would make between characters, between narratives and between images.

¹⁶¹ Other possibilities, the consideration of which lies outside the scope of the present inquiry, include but are not necessarily limited to 1) enclosure, primogeniture and the East India Company Nabob practice of acquiring estates from titled landholders; 2) Agis as Patriot dedicated to restoring England to its proper values of constitutional liberty and/or as seditious leveler; 3) Agis as John Wilkes, who fled to France to avoid prosecution for his politics and for debt; 4) the tyranny of England's wealthy against the poor, especially in the maintenance of debtor's prisons; 4) Leonidas and his cadre of wealthy tyrants as Lord Bute and his influence on George III's early reign; 5) Chelonis as Britannia, with Leonidas and Cleombrotas as symbols of the faction undermining the English constitution; 6) the role of mercenary soldiers in the death of Agis as a reminder of the issues that informed the raising of a national militia; 7) Agis and his family as Catholic successors to the English crown; and 8) George III's emphasis on the importance of marriage and family following the scandal surrounding a mistress prior to his marriage to Charlotte. For the use of the Agis narrative as a meditation on marital devotion, filial piety and conjugal affection, see L. M. Stretch, *The Beauties of History; or, Pictures of Virtue and Vice, Drawn from Real Life; Designed for the Instruction and Entertainment of Youth*, 2 vols. (London, printed for the author, 1770) vol. I, pp. 2-4; and *Biographium femineum*, 1766, 128-130.

¹⁶² Plutarch, "Life of Agis" (1763) vol. V, p. 140 and p. 138.

¹⁶³ Ibid, vol. V, p. 145.

¹⁶⁴ Plutarch, "Life of Agis (1763) vol. V, p. 139; see also Montagu's *Rise and Fall of Antient Republicks* (1759) p. 39. For another example of this model of degradation by contact, see Niocles, *Phocion's Conversations: Or, the Relation between Morality and Politics*, translated from the French of Gabriel Bonnot de Mably by William Macbean (London, printed for the author, 1769). pp. 73-74: "'Sesotris, not satisfied with reigning over Egypt...undertakes the conquest of Asia; and at first the hardy temperate and courageous Egyptians, whom he had levied to satisfy his unjust ambition, carry all before them. But his victorious soldiers soon gave in to the vices and customs of the conquered nations; and, softened by sensuality and wealth, imported into their country the spoils of the East. The people, gazing at a fatal spectacle which cherished in them the seeds of ambition and avarice, conceit themselves at the height of glory and prosperity; whilst virtue, now declining in their debauched hearts, is about quitting their country; and the punishment of Egypt begins amidst acclamations and rejoicings. ...Sesotris's successors, infatuated by their excessive greatness, became voluptuous tyrants.... They were afraid of subjects, whom luxury and pride, poverty and riches, had rendered both cowardly and insolent: and their defenceless kingdom, disturbed rather by tumults than revolts, will certainly become an easy prey to the first conqueror who would make himself master of it. History furnishes us with a thousand similar examples.'

¹⁶⁵ Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Edinburgh, printed for A. Kincaid and J. Bell; London, printed for A. Millar & T. Cadell, 1767) p. 225.

¹⁶⁶ Montagu, *Of the Rise and Fall of Antient Republicks* (1759) pp. 39-40.

¹⁶⁷ Galt, *Life of West* (1820) pp. 25-26.

¹⁶⁸ Book 18 of the text was lost, but a brief summary survived through Livy's *Perochiae*.

¹⁶⁹ See Basil Kennett, *Romæ Antiquæ Notitia: Or, the Antiquities of Rome*, 14th edition (London, printed for C. Bathurst and eighteen others, 1769) pp. 62. The "tedium" to which Kennett refers suggests that anyone with access to or anyone within earshot of someone pursuing an education would have known the tales of Regulus and of the other Republican Roman, Imperial Roman and Early Modern Italian subjects that West addressed in history paintings. The majority of the crowds who thronged the society of Artists, the Royal Academy and West's Newman Street studio to see such paintings would have been familiar with

the abridged versions of the narratives common to popular history publications intended for the improvement of the middling and lower sorts.

¹⁷⁰ Pietro Metastasio, *Attilio Regolo*, Giuseppe Baretta, trans., from Baretta's *An Introduction to the Italian Language. Containing Specimens Both of Prose and Verse* (London, printed for A. Millar, 1755) 275. Even before his election to Secretary of Foreign Correspondence for the Royal Academy, Baretta was closely associated with London's artist community and he was a member of Sir Joshua Reynolds's "Streatham Worthies."

¹⁷¹ Pietro Metastasio, *Attilius Regulus a Drama*, Giuseppe Marco Antonio Baretta, trans. (London, printed for A. Millar, 1755). This translation appears along with the original text of Metastasio's *Attilio Regolo* as an appendix to Baretta's *An Introduction to the Italian Language. Containing Specimens Both of Prose and Verse* (London, printed for A. Millar, 1755) p. 357.

¹⁷² In addition to his reputation as an icon of personal sacrifice for the greater good who turned his own misfortune to the benefit of the republic, Regulus also figured prominently in contemporary publications concerned with public responsibility for preserving agricultural institutions following enclosure and in the discourses associated with the raising of a national militia.

¹⁷³ See Giovanni Gualberto Bottarelli, *La Gran Bretagna emula dell-antica Roma* (London, printed by G. Woodfall, 1760) p. 4. Bottarelli boldly replaces "Roman" with "Briton" in the epigram for this work, which comes from the famous passage in Virgil's *Aeneid*, book VI, verse 851 in which Jupiter sets forth the divine plan for Rome's global conquest: "Tu regere imperio populos, BRITANNE, memento: /Hae tibi erunt artes; pacifique imponere morem, / Parcere subjectis, & debellare superbos." The poem that formed the basis for *Alfred, A Masque* for which James Thomson composed the lyrics to "Rule, Britannia," promotes Frederick, Prince of Wales as the new Aeneas who will guide Britons in their destiny to rule the earth. See Richard Blackmore, *Alfred. An Epick Poem. In Twelve Books. Dedicated to the Illustrious Prince Frederick of Hanover* (London: printed by W. Botham, for James Knapton, 1723). For discussions of this work, its origins, its intent and its place in literature, see Simon Keynes, "The Cult of Alfred the Great," *Anglo-Saxon England* 28 (1999) 225-356; Louis Wardlaw Miles, *King Alfred in Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1902) 52-57; and C. A. Simmons, "The Historical Sources of Sir Richard Blackmore's *Alfred*," *ELN* 26 (1988) 18-23. See also Bottarelli's *Le speranze della terra, ovvero il Tempio del destino, serenata* (London, printed by G. Woodfall, 1761; and William Havard, *Regulus. A Tragedy* (Dublin, printed by J. Edsall for W. Smith, 1745).

¹⁷⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Thoughts on Different Subjects*, 2 vols. (London, printed for S. Crowder, J. Coote, W. Griffin, and J. Knox, 1768), vol. I, pp. 104-105.

¹⁷⁵ Thomas Blackwell, *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (London, printed for A. Millar, 1764) vol. I, p. 100.

¹⁷⁶ Blackwell, *Memoirs of Augustus*, vol. I pp. 99-100.

¹⁷⁷ See Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985).

¹⁷⁸ Jeremy Black, *A Subject for Taste: Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 2005) p. 36.

¹⁷⁹ "The Arts [21 April 1790 handwritten]," V & A Press Cuttings from English Newspapers on Matters of Artistic Interest 1686-1835, vol. II, p. 592.

¹⁸⁰ "Regulus; or a View of the Present State of Public Affairs: with Certain Proposals, Addressed to the Independent Electors of Great-Britain," *The Political Register; and Impartial Review of New Books* vol. 2, nos. 9-15 (January 1768 - June 1768) (London, printed for J. Almon, 1768) pp. 217-243, p. 219. For a discussion of this treatise and its implications for understanding the development of nineteenth-century English radicalism, see Simon MacCoby, *English Radicalism, 1762-1785* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1955) pp. 84-87.

¹⁸¹ "Regulus," *Political Register*, p. 220.

¹⁸² David Hume, "Of Luxury," in *Political Discourses* (Edinburgh, printed by R. Fleming for A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, 1752) pp. 23-40. This essay was reprinted at least six times between 1752 and 1768]

¹⁸³ Jeremy Black, *A Subject for Taste*, p. 230.

¹⁸⁴ Robert Baker, *Remarks on the English Language, in the Nature of Vaugelas's Remarks on the French* (London, printed for J. Bell, 1770) xxxv.

¹⁸⁵ See Henry Angelo, *Reminiscences of Henry Angelo, with Memoirs of His Late Father and Friends, Including Numerous Original Anecdotes and Curious Traits of the Most Celebrated Characters That Have Flourished during the Last Eighty Years* (London, Henry Colburn, 1828) pp. 360-361, quoted in von Erffa and Staley, p. 168.

¹⁸⁶ "To the Printer of the Public Advertiser" Press Cuttings, 1723-1800 [25 May 1769 handwritten] PP.G.17, f. 88.

Chapter 3 – Royal Patronage, Royal Academy, Modern Subjects

Modern assignations based on classical enmities were not limited to the Anglo-French conflict, however. The Mughals of South Asia, too, could assume the role of the Carthaginians – or perhaps more accurately the role of ancient Persians contrasted with England’s Sparta. A series of widely-publicized events that transpired in India between the time of Robert Clive’s “receiving the homage” of Mir Jafar in 1757 (which Hayman had memorialized at Vauxhall in 1763) and the time of West’s first royal commission in 1768 seemed to justify just such a comparison.¹ During the time that West and George III had convened at Buckingham House to review their plans for *The Departure of Regulus*, imperial politician George Johnstone (1732-1770) publicly invoked the name of Regulus in a stinging indictment of Robert Clive and his fellow administrators in India. Standing before the General Court of the Proprietors of East India Stock, Johnstone began his dramatic pronouncements on the circumstances that British subjects faced in British-controlled Bengal by quoting East India Company agent Luke Scrafton (1732-1770): “As the brute creation...retain no longer their *affectations* for their parents than while they need their help to nourish them: So [Mughal ruler] Meer Jaffier now feeling his own strength, forgot the authors of his greatness, and his first thoughts were, how to evade the execution of the treaty, and awe the English into relinquishing the money due to them’.”² The “Meer Jaffier” of whom Johnstone and Scrafton complain is the same

“Nabob” that Clive personally installed as local ruler in 1760. The Company returned him to power in 1763, after Mir Jafar’s son, Mir Qasim, proved too independent for Clive and his fellow Company servants. In the speech, Johnstone went on to characterize the circumstances that led to the betrayal of the Company and its servants by the Mughal leaders who collected revenues on trade conducted by foreign entities. As a result of Mughal displeasure with British financial and military maneuvers, Mughal agents had murdered Messrs. Amyatt, Ellis, Lushington, Chalmers and Hay of the Company.³

Johnstone’s purposes before the General Council on this occasion including advocating for the families of the men killed in the attacks by the Mughals on Company servants and their sepoy confederates.⁴ The Company had refused to order Mir Jafar to pay restitution money to the survivors of these attacks, and Johnstone wished to rectify the injustice.

Toward that end, Johnstone claimed that “the real purpose of stopping the restitution-money” was “to throw illegal power into the hands of Lord Clive in India, and to create an illegal dependence on the court of directors at home.” In a telling turn of phrase that suggests the frequency with which Roman imperial models informed the conduct of modern British imperial exploits, Johnstone asks whether Clive, “this mock Pompey, who reaps the glory of conquests made by others, has this just and upright man, on whom the directors placed their whole reliance (together with his secret and select committee),” abolished the trade that the Court of Directors cited in their ruling against the payment of restitution.⁵ Johnstone then assumes the stance of Roman orator:

Justice, humanity, and a regard for our own characters, call aloud for a generous exertion on this occasion. ...The eyes of the nation are turned upon the

determinations of this day. For in what part of the kingdom has not some parent lost his son, or some son his parent, in your service? Can you behold the brother of Mr Ellis, the brother of Mr Hay, the brother of Mr Lushington, the widow of Mr Amyat, and the father of Mr Chalmers, all now before you begging for justice? Shall it be said in distant parts, 'The majority of this company are men whom neither justice nor mercy can affect?' ...The relations of these unfortunate men, Mr Chairman, are the principal petitioners for our interposition on this day, to recover the scattered fortunes of the deceased, which were left under the protection of this company, as far as honour, public faith, and conscious feeling can bind degenerate spirits. ...This is not the fabulous relation concerning a Regulus...but the certain and unadorned conduct of Britons, acting from principle and conscience in what they believed right; yet these are the men whom the malicious part of this company would vilify and stigmatize by every act of meanness. Happy their fame is established among the virtuous! Mr Ellis too has been blamed[.] What could he do more? He has rendered up his life in your service.⁶

Rather than the court intrigue that permeated the reign of Tiberius and the noble self-sacrifice for the greater good demonstrated by Regulus, Johnstone saw the members of the British East India Company having sacrificed and then vilified their own countrymen. As evidence of Britons' lack of imperial (or republican) virtue mounted, one could with increasing ease assume that the treatment of indigenous peoples now subject to the English would be far worse: the imperial hero Germanicus had opened the grain stores to feed the Egyptians who were suffering a terrible famine; the imperially vicious British East India Company's practices exacerbated a famine on the subcontinent in which millions of Bengalis died from starvation.⁷ Britons could claim inheritance of Roman virtue, but the casualties (British and otherwise) of their imperial exploits blatantly contradicted that assertion.

A Different Sort of Oath: The Young Hannibal Swearing against the Romans

In 1771, West's paintings for Buckingham House prompted criticism of royal taste as a "mortifying display" of the king's "attachment to dullness and ignorance." Rooted primarily in George III's support for the Royal Academy of Arts, which the Society of Artists of Great Britain members perceived as the king's abandonment of their organization, the attacks appeared primarily in the *Middlesex Journal*, under the nom de plume "Fresnoy." The author of those critiques (whom most scholars agree was the Society of Artists chaplain, Reverend James Wills) viciously derided the king's preference for works produced by "the lowest modern artists" such as the poorly educated West and the other founding members of the Royal Academy.⁸ Among the modern paintings on the walls of the royal apartments that had prompted Fresnoy "to bid adieu to the fulgent rise of Leo's glory" hung another classical heroic of empire history painting: *Hannibal Brought, When But Nine Years Old, by His Father, Hamilchar, to the Altar of Jupiter, Where He Swears Eternal Enmity to the Romans* (fig. 67)⁹ West produced the picture as a companion piece to *The Departure of Regulus*, displaying it along with *The Death of General Wolfe* (to which I shall return shortly) and *The Fright of Astyanax* at the Royal Academy's 1771 exhibition. As was the case with the subjects of

Agrippina Landing at Brundisium and *Leonidas Ordering Cleombrotus into Banishment* (which West exhibited at the Royal Academy in the previous year), London audiences were widely familiar with the Carthaginian general Hamilcar Barca and his son Hannibal.¹⁰ As a discrete denomination within the cultural currencies of classical imperial martial virtue and vice, Hannibal lacked a single, permanently-set value: he scourged the Romans he had sworn to hate, but he also demonstrated extraordinary courage in battle and ingenuity in his invasion of Italy. Like modern Britons, Hannibal readily expressed his respect for Roman generals who exemplified martial virtue, despite his overriding hatred for the people who produced them. Perhaps more than any of West's other classical heroics of empire images, *The Oath of Hannibal* integrates a number of perspectives, some apparently contradictory, within a single composition.

Twentieth-century scholars identify as possible sources for West's painting Book XXI of Livy's *Patavini Historiarum ab Urbe condita* and the Roman historian Silius Italicus's *Caji Sillii Italici Punica*, both of which appeared in English translation in the seventeenth century.¹¹ Eighteenth-century authors combined accounts of the passage from different Latin sources and presented them in English to increase the number of readers who purchased their works. West most likely drew his version of the swearing of the oath from such a source, one example of which closely compares to the painting:

Hamilcar...having gained, by his Services, such an Ascendant in his Republick, as to be almost Sovereign there, turns all his Thoughts to the humbling of [Carthage's] imperious Rival. To this End, he forms two Schemes, both worthy of a great Genius. The first is to extend the *Carthaginian* Dominions in *Spain*, that so his Republick may always be able to raise, within her own Territories, a sufficient Number of Forces to make Head against those Multitudes of Soldiers

with which *Italy* furnished the *Romans*. The second is, to form young *Hannibal* his Son as that he shall inherit his Valour, his Experience, and his Hatred to the *Romans*, and shall steadily pursue his Designs. *Hannibal* is now but nine Years old. Nevertheless, *Hamilcar* being upon the Point of embarking to pass the Streights, and having ordered a Sacrifice to be first ordered to *Jupiter*, takes his Son by the Hand, and just as the Victim is going to be slain, leads him to the Altar, and there asks him whether he is willing to attend him in his *Spanish* Expedition. The courageous Boy not only consents to go, but adjures his Father to form him to Victory, by his Example, and to teach him the Art of Conquering. *That I will joyfully do*, replies *Hamilcar*, *and with all the Care of a Father, who loves you, if you will swear upon the Altar, to be an eternal Enemy to the Romans*. This Child most readily complies with the Motion; and the Solemnity of the Ceremony, and the Sacredness of the Oath, makes such an Impression upon his Mind, as nothing afterwards could ever efface. He now imbibes that Hatred to the *Romans*, which never ended, but with his Life.¹²

Hamilcar's paternal tenderness might qualify the scene as part of West's naturalization of empire, but the presence of a nine-year-old boy standing at the altar in the temple of Jupiter swearing an oath of hatred seems to place the image more firmly in the realm of counter-example. One, the other, neither or both could be the case. Hannibal never wavered from his oath, he commanded every battle against the Romans with intensely heroic ferocity and he demonstrated from a very young age the principle of devoting one's life to the preservation of one's own nation through the conquest of others. However, his heroics on the battlefield did not extend to the important martial virtues of clemency, continence and magnanimity. Scipio – the virtuous Roman who defeated Hannibal – always ranked higher on the vertical scale of imperial martial virtue because of those attributes.

In this particular case, the issue of patronage supersedes the intended message of the painting, as George III commissioned the work as a companion to *The Departure of*

Regulus, adding another image to the rhetorical arsenal of his reign. As Jeremy Black notes, *The Oath of Hannibal* shared with other paintings that West produced for the king “the theme of republican virtue.”¹³ This reading seems logical enough, if one assumes that George III wished to promote republican values (as in the *res publica*) and one considers of the attractiveness of a father swearing his preadolescent son to enmity against an entire people (such as Bourbon France). But in the presence of *Agrippina* and *Regulus*, both of which extol the virtuous Romans against whom Hamilcar extracted his son’s oath, such an interpretation seems problematic. George III understood the idea of the imperial martial counter-exemplar and he comprehended classical constructions of imperial vice. Rather than filling the Warm Room with images that constituted what today would qualify as “propaganda,” the king wished to emphasize one type of virtue: dedication to one’s nation above all else. In Republican Rome, Regulus had embodied this principle. And despite his enmity to Rome, Hannibal’s unwavering commitment to his Carthage rendered him admirable in the eyes of the Hanoverian king. More simply, when one entered the Warm Room at Buckingham, the decorative program made a number of statements: “I am aware of the complexities of imperial history; I deny anyone’s comparison of Hanoverians to Tiberius; and I call upon all of my subjects to mimic Regulus’s and Hannibal’s firm commitment to their countries.” The transcendent value – more important than republicanism and more important than imperial conquest – is dedication to the preservation of one’s country at all costs.

Artists, patrons and audiences all understood and to one degree or another participated in the selective appropriation of classical antiquity. Modern Britons of the royal, noble, middling and even lower sorts ratified their respective and collective imperial selves by producing, connecting themselves to, exposing their countrymen to and consuming images and narratives derived from Greek and Roman history and literature. In composing *Hannibal*, West relied on proven approaches in arranging figures, in representing light and shadow and in selecting models from which he derived both human and sculptural elements. In this composition, West increased sense of the curvilinear in the frieze-like placement of figures while maintaining the Poussinesque, theatrically-lit processional energy and spectatorial format of such works as the more emphatically linear *Agrippina* and the spatially ebbing groupings of *Regulus*. West's painting connects to Poussin on an additional point through the central character in the picture: Hannibal swears enmity to the Romans and makes good on his oath by crossing the Alps into Italy with a number of elephants as part of his cavalry. Poussin portrayed Hannibal atop a very clumsily executed pachyderm as he set out on his campaign to conquer the peoples of Italia; the elephant assumed the status of a trope in the narrative of the Punic Wars and played an important part of the visual cultures of empire throughout the eighteenth century (fig. 68).¹⁴ Compared to earlier representations of the sacrificial oath, West departed sharply in the organization of pictorial space and the placement of the figures within that space. For London audiences, the most widely-available visual representations of the narrative included the mystical, architectonic and

(perhaps necessarily) spatially shallow frontispiece for Thomas Ross's 1661 translation of Silius Italicus's *Second Punic War* or Hubert Gravelot's more accessible illustration for Charles Rollin's *The Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Macedonians, and Grecians* of 1738 (figs. 69 and 70).¹⁵

As von Erffa and Staley note, West fashioned the statues of Carthaginian worthies that occupy the temple niches after Roman copies of Greek marble sculpture. From the viewer's left to right, the distinguishable models include Roman copies of Praxiteles's *Marble Faun* (currently titled *Resting Satyr*), *Aphrodite of Cnidos*, and the *Farnese Hercules* (figs. 71, 72 and 11). The horned statue of Jupiter that looms over the altar seems at least partially based on the *Belvedere Torso* (fig. 73).¹⁶ In a choice uncommon during the period, West drew upon the *Apollo Belvedere* for the *female* who appears as the second figure in the composition from the viewer's left. One might account for this application by assuming a certain "mindlessness" on West's part, but a more likely explanation is that West originally intended the figure to be male or that he was experimenting with the idea of the pose itself as heroic. If the latter is true, he must have been dissatisfied with the result, as none of his later paintings include female characters derived from *Apollo*. The helmeted, bare-chested adult male to the viewer's right also refers to the *Apollo*. The seated male youth in the foreground to the viewer's right resembles the *Dying Myrmillo*. By 1771 these classical models had assumed a central role in the compositional formulae that dominated West's history paintings.

West's painting reflects the complexity of contemporary political, military, economic and ecclesiastical concerns of the various individuals who might have attended the 1771 Royal Academy exhibition. Depending upon the priorities of a given exhibition attendee, she might see Hannibal's oath against the Romans as a model after which Christians should "swear to maintain a perpetual opposition against every lust and every sin."¹⁷ A Boston soldier who had traveled to London after fighting in the Seven Years' War might remember Hannibal as an inspiration when transatlantic support from the English crown and commanders had lagged and only the soldier's loathing for the French and their Native American allies had sustained him: "*Hannibal* indeed performed Wonders, under all his Discouragements from home; but this, was perhaps as much owing to the invincible Hatred which from his Infancy he had conceived to the *Romans*, as an Affection for *Carthage*, that had so ill rewarded his Bravery and Merit."¹⁸ In his characterization of the colonial governor General William Shirley (1694-1771), West's mentor William Smith inventoried the "important military virtues"; the list included "a frugal and laborious manner of living; with the art of conciliating the affections – a talent which Hannibal admired in Pyrrhus [king of Epire], above all the rest of his martial accomplishments" and character attributes.¹⁹

A formidable enemy to the Romans, the adult Hannibal could also serve as an imperial counter-exemplar through which politicians might inspire modern Britons to cherish their constitutional liberty. In a comparison of the Roman and British models of empire, one 1769 source noted that the power of liberty in Rome's early imperial period

“produced such a vital energy” that it withstood “the impetuous assaults of such dreadful foes as *Hannibal* and *Pyrrhus*, firm and unshaken.”²⁰ For modern Britons facing challenges on the various continents under England’s sway, Hannibal called to mind yet another example of the transcendent force of imperial martial virtue: Scipio Africanus, he of the exemplary clemency and continence in conquest, defeated Hannibal at the Battle of Zama in 202 BCE. Following Hannibal’s defeat, peace “was granted by the Conquerors, but on most rigorous Conditions...and the Power and Grandeur of the *Roman* People were greatly encreased by this signal Conquest over their Rival for Empire.”²¹ Perennial comparisons between England as Rome and France as Carthage would have resonated with viewer at the 1771 Royal Academy exhibition – even with some viewers for whom the conquests of the Seven Years’ War seemed a terrible mistake. Those Britons who stood against the expansion of England’s overseas dominions would have retained the early eighteenth-century assessment of Hannibal as “a scandalous Monument of a General, whom one Winter’s Luxury perfectly melted down into Effeminacy, and made that great Man, who Conquer’d all before him, and was invincible by Arms, a Captive and Conquest to his own Vices.”²² Had Hannibal perpetuated the model of martial rigor upheld by his father, perhaps the imperial martial virtue of Scipio Africanus would not have sufficed to vanquish him at Zama. Conversely, some among West’s viewers might have subscribed to the idea “if Hannibal had been properly seconded, Rome, in all Probability, had seen its latter day.”²³ This message could retrospectively apply to the loss of Minorca, which many attributed to the

lack of support offered to the British naval forces charged with its defense. The defeat at Minorca resulted in the court martial and capital punishment of Admiral Byng during the reign of George III's grandfather.²⁴

For the king who commissioned *Hannibal*, the painting offered an opportunity to stabilize the meaning of an imperial narrative from classical antiquity in the service of emptying (or at least seizing the contents of) the rhetorical arsenal used by critics of the crown. (At one point the figure of Hannibal had served as a classical imperial symbol of Patriot Opposition and Tory complaints of Hanoverian favoritism and ministerial corruption that poisoned England during the first half of the eighteenth century). To refresh Britons' minds of the challenges they faced because of a pair of Hanoverian Georges and their ministerial favorites, a new edition of the works of Charles Davenant (1656-1714) appeared in 1771.²⁵ The works were collected and edited by the perhaps more commerce- than conquest-oriented Charles Whitworth (1721-1778), but the messages applied to trade and to dominion. Davenant's 1701 *The True Picture of a Modern Whig Set Forth in a Dialogue between Mr Whiglove and Mr Double* summarized what he saw as burgeoning corruption among England's Whigs. Enemies of the Hanoverian succession relentlessly accused George II and his first minister Robert Walpole of the type of corruption satirized in Davenant's *True Picture*. Battles ensued between pro-Hanoverian Whigs and Patriot Opposition and Traditional Tory groups who opposed what they characterized as a diminution of interest in England to the benefit of the Protestant king's Germanic dominions. Like his successors in the second half of the

eighteenth century, Davenant invoked classical imperial narratives to comment on contemporary circumstances:

Never any war had a more prosperous beginning that that which Hannibal maintained against the Romans.... But while he was so victorious abroad, civil discord prevailed in Carthage, so as to defeat all that he could do, either by his courage, or his conduct. Has his citizens been unanimous in carrying on the war, in all probability he might have reduced the power of Rome, and had gained that sovereign empire for which these great opposites contended. Or had they been unanimous to promote peace, at least he had saved his own country from destruction. But the senate was then divided into two powerful factions; the Barcine family, and Hannibal's adherents, were for pushing on the war; Hanno headed those who inclined to peace; but these parties could not agree among one another, to promote what was truly for the publick good. There were two councils, either of which, if they could have agreed in, might have saved the state of Carthage.²⁶

Davenant had also foreseen what would emerge during the last two decades of the eighteenth century as a conundrum of dominion and liberty in the colonial-imperial periphery. Some among the audiences at the 1771 Royal Academy exhibition would have connected Hannibal's struggles in the provinces to the Carthaginian/Hanoverian faction that had undermined England's position as a global imperial power between the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and the reduction of Canada in 1760. But when those viewers realized that the Hanoverian king had commissioned the work, the viewing experience would have gained a counter-subversive dimension. By ordering for the palace walls an image that could be used to criticize the monarchy, George III relieved Hannibal of his rhetorical usefulness to the Patriot Opposition. Though tactically sensible, the approach had its potential drawbacks: the few Britons who had access to the Warm Room at Buckingham House could have just as easily seen Hannibal as a

commentary on England's refusal to more forcefully punctuate imperial victories over France and to take decisive pre-emptive military action against the Spanish. In this context, Hannibal might have read as William Pitt (1708-1778), who had resigned his post as first minister in protest of those refusals. The juxtaposition of *The Oath of Hannibal* with *The Departure of Regulus* grows even more complicated when one considers that some among the supporters of radical MP John Wilkes (1725-1797), the painting would have read as a condemnation of George III as Hamilcar and Wilkes as *Regulus*, an inadvertent acknowledgement that, like Regulus, Wilkes had risked all to return from exile in France, neither or both.²⁷

Detecting Heroic Intertextuality and Intericonality in West's History Paintings²⁸

Some knowledge of history is expected of every one, who pretends to a character above that of the meanest vulgar. Of those indeed whom fortune has 'Doom'd to scythes and spades, / And all those hard labourious trades'; And whose situation in life affords them no opportunities of instruction, a knowledge of any thing beyond the bounds of their own narrow circle is not expected. But they, to whom fortune has been more liberal, whose spirits are not oppressed by corporeal labour, and who have leisure to open the fair book of knowledge, hardly deserve the name of men, if, satisfied with every trifling incident that occurs to them in their own little sphere of action, their curiosity never prompts them to enquire what has been done in ages different from their own, or to review those great events which have happened to this terrestrial globe in its various periods. ...[T]he best method of enabling us to make just reflections, and to draw true conclusions from what happens to ourselves, or falls within our observation, is to become acquainted with what has happened to others, and with what their conduct has been in circumstances similar to ours.²⁹

Following the Royal Academy exhibition of 1771, George III installed *The Oath of Hannibal* in the Warm Room at Buckingham House. The hanging juxtaposed *Regulus*, whose return to Rome gave his countrymen the information they needed to prevail over the Carthaginians in the First Punic War, with *Hannibal*, whose defeat by the clement and continent Scipio Africanus ended the Second Punic War. Hamilcar serves as the connecting thread between the pictures. Read as diachronic models of virtuous behavior, classical heroics of empire subjects possessed multiple meanings and resonated with patron, artist and audience on a number of levels. This applies to eighteenth-century England, especially, as Britons living during the period tended to privilege text over image, so that the most literate among exhibition viewers would have encountered visual expressions of the heroics of empire having in a state of reception conditioned by textual expressions. Those viewers who had studied classical literature in its original Greek and Latin would have easily identified the narrative moment within a particular passage from a specific author or source to the exclusion of other sources that address the same events and personages. To state the obvious in terms that did not appear in eighteenth-century English, one might characterize the terms “heroic” and “empire” as multivalent and polysemic. When one or more heroics of empire history paintings appeared in a single exhibition or occupied the walls of an interior public or domestic space, the conversations between the images multiplied already complex meanings. As modern scholars, we may advance compelling suggestions as to why a patron chose a particular subject when commissioning a history painting. Similarly, we may propose explanations for an artist’s

choices in taking a particular approach toward fulfilling a patron's demands. But when assessing audience reception, the sheer number of permutations prevents one from identifying *the* most common response among contemporary viewers. Empire was on Britons' minds during the first decade of West's presence in London, so to one degree or another themes related to imperial conquest informed spectators' reception of West's paintings.

Regarding reception, one must also acknowledge that some eighteenth-century viewers pursued a much higher degree of classical textual literacy than that demonstrated by twentieth and twenty-first century scholars outside such academic realms as Classics, Archaeology, Literature and the History of Ancient Art. Our comparative lack of familiarity with the stories of such literary and historical characters as Scipio Africanus, Germanicus and Agrippina, Regulus and Hannibal has impeded understanding of the contents and intents of heroics of empire history paintings as they would have been experienced by audiences at the Society of Artists and Royal Academy exhibitions between 1764 and 1774. More complicated still are the possible relationships between the heroics of empire history paintings – classical and modern – that West produced on speculation, without any patron having commissioned the works. One must consider whether an artistic theme or themes would emerge within a grouping of the paintings that West painted at his own expense and the degree to which such an inquiry might complicate and enrich our understanding of the visual heroics of empire. That investigation, however, extends beyond the limits of this project.

Like Hannibal and Regulus or Agrippina and Chelonis, the associations between the story of Cleombrotus and Epaminondas (whose death I shall address forthwith) illustrate another important aspect of association between classical text, modern image and the lives of eighteenth-century Britons. For the purposes of this dissertation, I characterize that aspect of association as a highly simplified pictorial equivalent of intertextuality, or what one might more appropriately term “intericonality.”³⁰ In nineteenth- and twentieth-century applications of intertextuality and intericonality, the allusive relationships between texts, between images and between texts and images stem from subconscious interventions of one text or image by another. The visual heroics of empire, as pieced together from classical texts, images and forms, emerged through a conscious and purposeful effort on the part of artists, patrons and audiences to actively cross-reference various texts, images, objects, structures and events. The complexity of such efforts increased in direct proportion to the textual and visual literacies of the artist/patron/viewer so that ever-more-rarified references and allusions appeared as artists such as West and his contemporaries and successors developed and refined the visual vocabularies of the genre.

For example, the narrative moment captured in *Leonidas* challenged audiences to consider the modern reality of empire and its potentially disruptive impact on conjugal and filial piety, but expressed this potential in dissimilar circumstances and with historical, political and cultural variables that differ from those that informed the story of Agrippina and Germanicus. If men were to willingly sacrifice their lives for the sake of

empire, then their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters had to make important decisions – especially if a martyred hero provided the female’s only source of financial support. How could a modern British woman reconcile the gendered conventions of English politeness with the loss of a son, spouse, brother or father to the acquisitions, expansions, maintenance and contractions of empire? Agrippina and Chelonis offered just two examples from which modern women could choose if placed in such a position. As a man of feeling, West expected that the male members of his audiences, themselves men of feeling, would experience sympathetic sensations at the sight of Agrippina or Chelonis.³¹ He also expected that male exhibition-goers would view the work with historical and art-historical objectives in mind. In this regard, the discursive impact of works such as *Agrippina* lay as much in what West did not picture as in what he did portray. Through a series of inter- and intratextual and intericonographic relationships, West’s *Agrippina* invokes Poussin’s *The Death of Germanicus*, in which Agrippina hides her face “judiciously leaving the spectator to guess at sorrow inexpressible.”³² Viewers would recognize this tactic as a reference to the veiled face in Timanthes’s painting of Agamemnon grieving his daughter Iphigenia. By enjoining the viewer to interpret the character’s passion in the imaginative extremes of an agony that “mocked the power of the pencil,” West rises to the status of Timanthes and Poussin.³³ Similarly, whether or not they recognized as Drummond’s choice the selection of the subject and narrative moment for West’s *Agrippina*, the most visually literate among the spectators at the 1768 Society of Artists exhibition would acknowledge in West’s painting the artist’s desire to

situate himself as an heir to the Poussin tradition through that painter's 1648 *The Ashes of Phocion Collected by his Widow* (fig. 74).³⁴

The allusions and associations that drove artists' choices, patrons' commissions and audiences' reception emanated from and contributed to the construction of complex discursive networks of textual (including art-historical) and visual (including performative) expression, all informed by and catalyzed by the central theme of global territorial conquest and its implications (positive and negative) for Britons in London. The deliberate intertextuality and intericonality that West and his patrons deployed in classical heroics of empire history paintings produced three different types of cultural genealogy. I have already addressed the ways in which West insinuated himself into the lineage of Timanthes and Poussin. As a parallel or subsidiary construct, one might argue that Drummond wished to see himself as a modern Gaius Maecenas, while George III – in principle, at least – aspired to reinvigorate England's Augustan age by patronizing the arts on a scale associated with Roman emperors such as Augustus, Trajan and Diocletian.³⁵ Those postures portended as much outrage as accolade, however. An Anglican archbishop of Jacobite rearing donning the robe of a wealthy pagan and the ruler of a monarchy limited by constitutional liberty pretending to the title of imperator would seem to strain the limits of ecclesiastical and royal presumption. Comparisons to the pope and to the Bourbon kings, respectively, would make such pretensions even riskier – even in a nation that viewed itself as naturally inclined and divinely sanctioned to rule the globe.

As a form of cultural production heroics of empire history painting generated a third set of genealogical links, located in the discursive spaces between the paintings as objects and their expressive connections to textual and visual literacies.³⁶ This difficult and unwieldy topic demands more attention than the bounds of this project will allow, so I will limit my discussion of these explicitly associative systems of intertextuality to a brief, superficial sampling. I have already noted the homonymic characters in the texts from which West derived his *Pyrrhus* and *Asytanax*, but one might reasonably argue that this relationship qualifies as little more than a textual coincidence that allows for a sort of in-joke for the most well-read among West's audiences.³⁷ Included with other, perhaps less coincidental instances of intertextuality, however, Pyrrhus the King of Epirus and Pyrrhus the enemy of the Trojans seem more deliberately connected; eighteenth-century viewers would have faced little difficulty in parsing these various interconnections. For example, eighteenth-century audiences would connect *Pyrrhus* to *The Oath of Hannibal* through the simple fact that Pyrrhus and Hannibal qualify as the two greatest enemies of the Roman empire. During the First Punic War, Romans took Regulus's advice and finally defeated the Carthaginians after nine years of fighting. Hamilcar, the father of Hannibal who swore him to enmity against the Romans, had been imprisoned in a Roman dungeon until after news of Regulus's death reached the capital. Having returned to Carthage following his release, Hamilcar assumed command of the Carthaginian fleet after a crushing defeat at the Ægates; he brokered the peace treaty with the Romans in 242 BCE.³⁸

Twenty-three years after the end of the First Punic War, Hannibal made good on his oath to Hamilcar, crossing the Alps with a cavalry that included thirty-seven elephants and overrunning most of northern Italy. Hannibal later met unexpected defeat against Roman forces commanded by Scipio Africanus, who had demonstrated exemplary clemency and continence in the scene painted by West in 1766. Similarly, Cleombrotus emerged from exile to fight against the Thebans at the Battle of Leuctra, in which he lost to Epaminondas, the death of whom at the Battle of Mantinea would serve as the subject for one of two pendant pieces that West produced for George III's a copy of *The Death of General Wolfe*. These textual and iconographic cross-references reinforced the discursive power of the visual heroics of empire and afforded academic history painting a value and relevance that had not existed prior to West's efforts.

For the most literate among art-going publics, extrapolative association could work in other, sometimes unexpected ways. For example, just as the infant Pyrrhus at the feet of Glaucias would have reminded viewers of Andromache's plight at the hands of another Pyrrhus, audiences who saw West's *Leonidas* would have associated the image with another Spartan so named: the king who sacrificed his life leading the three hundred against thousands of Persian soldiers under king Xerxes at Thermopylae.³⁹ Though he did indeed paint the subject, West never exhibited his portrayal of *Leonidas Taking Leave of His Family on His Going to Thermopylae* and he need not have done so in order for viewers to make the association between the Leonidas who banished his son-in-law and the Leonidas who fought so valiantly against the son of Darius. Presenting a series of

works with interconnected themes suggested a level of erudition that allowed painters to fashion themselves as learned gentleman artists. For West at least, the tutelage of his classically-educated patrons made possible rich and complex literary associations that may have transcended his own intellectual limitations.⁴⁰ The inevitability of association applied not only to characters from literature and history who share a name but to stories that contrast one another in terms of classical virtue and vice. At the same time, the discursive versatility of narratives and characters meant that any number of groups or individuals could claim themselves the rightful modern legatees of any given classical exemplar.

Nominal associations could confuse rather than enrich audiences' experience of a painting as well. In the case of *Leonidas Ordering Cleombrotus into Banishment*, a viewer familiar with Plato but unexposed to Plutarch would have been hard pressed to understand the subject of the picture. Numerous sources published in the eighteenth century include the story of Cleombrotus of Ambracia, a contemporary of Socrates who, having read Plato's *Phaedo*, responded quite dramatically to the "efficacy of that Dialogue which treats of the Immortality of the Soul.... [A]s soon as he had read it [Cleombrotus] was so disaffected to Life, that he threw himself from a high Wall into the Sea...."⁴¹ Viewers familiar with both stories would know that Cleombrotus of Ambracia committed suicide in the late fifth century BCE while the Lacedæmonian king Cleombrotus died in a 371 BCE battle against the Thebans commanded by Epaminondas, whose death West would depict in a later painting for Buckingham House. Cleombrotus

II ruled Sparta for two years beginning in 243 BCE while Leonidas was in exile. These sorts of connections seem confusing to twenty-first-century minds not trained in the classical tradition of western literature, but Britons in the eighteenth century would not have struggled to sort one Cleombrotus from the others.⁴²

The construct of imperial martial virtue that emerged in West's classical heroics of empire oeuvre generated a series of conversations between his pictures, which in turn prompted viewers to consider and reconsider the messages and issues codified in those conversations. By maintaining the centrality of empire as an organizational milieu into which he introduced classical exemplars of imperial martial virtue, West conditioned modern Britons to expect such subjects from his pencil. Once inculcated with the thematic and iconographic programming of classical heroics of empire painting, London audiences could adjust their individual and collective tastes to accommodate West's particular brand of modern heroics of empire history painting. In the 1760s tens of thousands of Londoners had encountered modern heroics of empire history paintings from the hand of Francis Hayman at Vauxhall and in works by Edward Penny and others. It was Benjamin West, however, whose deft combinations of the universal and the particular; the classical, the biblical and the modern; portraiture, landscape and genre proved the hybridized pictorial form most suitable to the aesthetic and ideological needs of art-going publics from 1770 through the end of the century.

West's classical heroics of empire history paintings encouraged Britons to reflect on the circumstances that led to and the events that followed the narrative moment

portrayed in each picture and to apply the relevant lessons to the daily conduct of modern life. This tactic allowed West (and other artists exploring heroics of empire themes in their works) to contrast the transcendent value of imperial virtue with the intractable dangers of imperial tyranny by entrusting each work's greatest affective and effective impact to the viewer's reception. In the minds of West, his patrons and his audiences, a grieving widow carrying the ashes of her heroic husband delivered much more affective power than would have a representation of Tiberius conspiring with the Syrian governor Piso to poison Germanicus. The same principle applies to the infant Pyrrhus pulling at the robes of a puzzled Illyrian king, an honorable Roman consul returning to certain torture and death and a beleaguered daughter and wife resting her head against that of her soon-to-be-banished husband. Whether the narrative transpired in Troy, Persia, Rome, Spain, Carthage, Gaul or Sparta, the lessons of virtue and vice remained the same and could thus be applied to Quebec, Senegal, Martinique, Pondicherry and London. West exploited these classical subjects' ubiquity, their interconnectedness and their applicability to eighteenth-century British life to condition his audiences to associate certain compositional formats and figures derived from classical forms with modern imperial identity.

The visual heroics of empire promoted modern Britain as the logical, rightful fruition of its classical imperial forebears, with an emphasis on the modern descendant as "better than the ancients." Though West would not have had access to the text, Francesco Petrarca's *De viris illustribus* clarifies the union of classical and the early

modern as West deployed them: "...this is the profitable goal for the historian: to point up to the readers those things that are to be followed and those to be avoided, with plenty of distinguished examples provided on either side."⁴³ By painting models of imperial virtue and imperial vice, West substituted viewer history painting for reader of history in the production and consumption of the heroics of empire. He closed the temporal and conceptual distances between Londoners of the middling ranks and the subjects of his pictorial rhetoric by domesticating and naturalizing heroic self-sacrifice, magnanimity, clemency, continence, and global conquest through such personalizing cultural tropes as conjugal affection, filial piety and marital constancy. Combined with modern British virtue, English constitutional liberty and true Anglican Protestantism, West's classical exemplars enabled his audiences to integrate the cultural imaginary of global dominion into the forging of modern Anglophone identity. Once convinced that audiences had imbibed the pictorial conventions of the heroics of empire through exhibition attendance and through the circulation of prints and engravings after his works, West seized upon the opportunity to return heroics of empire history painting to the modern subjects with which it originated.

The Modern Heroics of Empire at the Royal Academy of Arts

As news spread of the establishment of a Royal Academy of Arts, critics and other cultural commentators resurrected a call sounded at George III's accession: "when future ages shall contemplate the epochas of Pericles, of Augustus, of Leo, and of Louis, they will add, as worthy of equal honor, that of GEORGE THE THIRD."⁴⁴ This expression follows very closely the sentiments expressed by the minister William Hole in a pamphlet printed in 1761:

But the time we hope approaches, when every Thing shall conspire to improve the fine Arts: We have sometimes been relieved from the Calamities of War, only to feel the Misfortunes which attend on Faction; happily at present the Name of Party scarcely remains, and we wait but till the Temple of *Janus* shall be shut, to find ourselves perfectly at Peace. In the mean Time, the Muses look with Pleasure toward the Throne, and recollecting their much-loved *Frederick* with its present Guardian, may resemble him [in] all things but the short Duration of his life. From a prince who has already given Proofs of his Affection for the fine Arts, they hope for the warmest Patronage in Times of Tranquility and Ease. They expect it, indeed, from all who are Lovers of their Country and who wish that the Age of George the Third may be ranked by admiring Posterity with those of Leo, Lewis, and Augustus.⁴⁵

Painters working in London had endured a series of disappointments during the first half of the eighteenth century. With the death of Anne, the last of the Stuart line and the enthronement of the Elector of Hanover, George I, prospects for royal patronage of the arts dimmed. George I seemed to harbor little interest in the arts and George II resisted the idea of royal supports for literature and the visual arts outright. One might argue that Frederick's arts patronage plans grew as much out of spite for his philistine father, George II, as from a genuine passion for collecting. But as Kimberly Rorschach has shown, Frederick educated himself as a connoisseur under the prescribed terms and conditions that drove collecting in the first half of the eighteenth century.⁴⁶ The amount

of time and energy that Frederick expended in the realm of the visual arts suggests that he may have undertaken collecting whether or not his father had done so.

One might just as easily interrogate the history painting patronage impulse in George III, who may have commissioned works out of a sense of duty to his father and rebellion against his grandfather's negative view of the arts. Early on in his reign, less sanguine observers lamented that George III seemed to lack an understanding of the arts' national importance, complaining that he never even summoned Joshua Reynolds to Buckingham House for an interview.⁴⁷ Without resorting to the type of close oversight that Britons associated with the reign of Louis XIV, George III could offer support from the privy purse to underwrite any budget shortfalls at the Royal Academy. This gesture allowed the young king to fulfill the promises made by his father while at the same time offering London's art-going publics an additional venue in which to inspect the works of their countrymen. From 1771 on, rather than trekking to Hampton Court to see Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* and tapestries after Le Brun's *Life of Alexander the Great*, Londoners could view the imperial triumphs of modern Britons at the Royal Academy exhibitions in Pall-Mall and later at Somerset House. Perhaps the titular ruler of the British empire viewed the establishment of the Royal Academy in the same light that Roman emperors understood great public projects such as baths and amphitheatres. The erection of a large-scale imperial crown atop the Royal Academy during its grand opening celebration verifies its role as an imperial institution as much as an incubator for

a national school of the arts.⁴⁸ And the poetic presence of one of the most esteemed subjects of the empire, Benjamin Franklin, lent to that celebration a potent validation:

With rapture the prophetic muse
Her country's opening glory views,
Already sees, with wond'ring eyes,
Our Titians and our Guidos rise,
See new Palladios grace th' historic page,
And British Raphaels charm a future age.⁴⁹

West must have felt great satisfaction at his fellow Pennsylvanian (and future godfather of second son Benjamin) having supplied the dedicatory verse that opened the Royal Academy.

Scholars have sufficiently addressed the subterfuge and intrigue that surrounded the formation of the Royal Academy; no repetition of that set of events and circumstances is necessary here.⁵⁰ Two facets of the Royal Academy's foundation do, however, demand further elucidation in the context of imperial identity: competition for and "conquest" of the king's attention and patronage and the role of heroics of empire history painting in determining the administrative course of the Royal Academy. Just as West made his debut at the Hanoverian court in 1768, George III's childhood tutor Joshua Kirby (1716-1774) had assumed the presidency of the Society of Artists of Great Britain, which had received royal incorporation in 1765. Though likely to some extent apocryphal in West's favor, the account that West offered to Galt reveals what amounts to an "ambush" by the young American artist:

Kirby, having free access to the royal presence, and never hearing from His Majesty any thing respecting the academy, was so satisfied in his own mind that

the rumours, respecting such an institution being intended, were untrue, that, in his inaugural address from the chair, he assured the incorporated artists there was not the slightest intention entertained of establishing a Royal Academy of Art. When the Departure of Regulus was finished, the King appointed a time for Mr. West to bring the picture to Buckingham-House. ... While they were conversing on the subject, one of the pages announced Mr. Kirby.... (38) When Kirby looked at the picture he expressed himself with great warmth in its praise; upon which the King introduced Mr. West to him. [Kirby said,] 'Your Majesty never mentioned any of this work to me.' ...[H]e turned round to Mr. West, and in a tone which greatly lessened the compliment the words would otherwise have conveyed, said, 'I hope you intend to exhibit this picture.' The Artist answered, that it was painted for His Majesty, the exhibition must depend on his pleasure.... The King immediately said, 'Assuredly I shall be very happy to let the work be shown to the public.' – 'Then, Mr. West,' added Kirby, 'you will send it to my exhibition,' (meaning to the exhibition of the Incorporated Artists). 'No,' interposed the King, firmly, 'it must go to my exhibition, – to the Royal Academy.'⁵¹

The passage concludes with West's memory that "Poor Kirby was thunderstruck," indicating the degree of surprise that attended the meeting.⁵²

West and the other members of the Society of Artists who had withdrawn their memberships because of dissatisfaction with the rules for electing officers and determining exhibition practices had staged an offensive against the incorporated body not unlike that of Wolfe's command to climb the cliff face to the Plains of Abraham in Quebec. Just as the British had caught their French adversaries completely unaware, so too had the founding members of the Royal Academy launched a secretive, unanticipated raid on the king's attentions.⁵³ Whether disingenuously or not, George III claimed equal affection for the royally incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain and the Royal Academy, the latter of which he had instituted via royal diploma.⁵⁴ Afforded the benefit of the doubt, one might assume that the king intended to visit both institutions'

exhibitions and to continue to provide monies from the royal purse as specified by the articles of incorporation and the diploma, respectively.⁵⁵

Ironically for the members of the Society of Artists, a history painting on a subject derived from the constitutional history of England proved the turning point in the king's patronage. Following the devastating announcement that the king had condescended to support the Royal Academy, Robert Edge Pine (c. 1725-1788) submitted for exhibition at the Society of Artists of Great Britain a stinging condemnation of what he and his fellow SAGB members saw as a royal betrayal: *Earl Warren, Making Reply to the Writ Commonly Called 'Quo Warranto' in the Reign of Edward I* (fig. 75). Apparently, Pine felt an extreme urgency about exhibiting the work in 1771, as the catalogue lists the painting as "Mr. PINE, *St. Martin's Lane*. 121 Earl Warren, making reply to the writ commonly called *Quo Warranto*, in the Reign of Edward I. (*not finished.*) Vide Rapin's Hist. of Eng."⁵⁶ The source from which Pine derived his picture explains *Quo Warranto* as a parliamentary act passed in 1280 with the intention of remedying unjust land seizures that had taken place during the reigns of John and Henry III, Edward I's immediate predecessors. As Rapin notes:

...the *Quo Warranto* , is properly a Right to demand of any Person, by what *Warrant* or Title he holds [any] Estate in dispute. This Regulation was just and necessary: But the King, misled by ill Advice, and a Desire of heaping up Money, made use of it, contrary to the Design of the Parliament, to oppress his Subjects. As he was sensible, that among the great Number of People who held their Lands of the Crown, it could not be but that many of them had lost their Titles, he was resolved to take Advantage of their Misfortune, under Colour of putting the Statute of *Quo Warranto* in Execution. To that End he published a Proclamation enjoining all Persons that held Lands of the Crown, to lay their Titles before the Judges of the Realm. This Proclamation was looked upon as the

Source of a very great Grievance. And indeed, those that were attacked the first, and could not produce their Original Titles, though they proved a Possession of a long standing, saw themselves constrained to pay large Sums to the King, to have their Estates continued to them.⁵⁷

Pine's painting depicts the encounter between John Plantagenet, 7th Earl of Warren and the judges before whom he has been summoned to produce proof of title to his landholdings. Responding to the demand for such proof, the earl draws "an old rusty Sword out of the Scabbard" and thunders, "This is the Instrument by which by Ancestors gained their Estate, and by this I will keep it as long as I live!" Based on the earl's act of resistance to the king's misapplication of the writ, Edward revokes the proclamation. The king's moderation in having discontinued his corrupt practices "turned more to his Advantage than his Injustice had done to his Injury."⁵⁸ By bowing to pressure from the landed nobility of the realm, Edward I gained favor among his subjects that elevated him to an esteem above that in which they held him before he began to seize their lands. George III could replicate Edward's success by rescinding the diploma with which he had established the Royal Academy and honoring the articles of incorporation through which he had established royal favor for the Society of Artists.

Pine had already demonstrated artistic insurgency with *Canute Reproving His Flattering Courtiers* for the 1763 Society of Artists exhibition at Spring-Gardens (fig. 76). In that year, the original recommendation of George Romney's *The Death of General Wolfe* for the second premium (with Pine receiving the first premium) was overridden by the premiums committee, the members of which determined that John Hamilton Mortimer's *Edward the Confessor Stripping His Mother of Her Effects* should

receive second premium. Pine's *Canute* boldly criticized the Hanoverian monarchy for its traditions of ministerial corruption, faction and favoritism, and the message would not have been lost on the newly-crowned George III. In 1763 George III would have understood and even sympathized with Britons' weariness "with our old king" and would have felt encouraged to know that they were "much pleased with this successor; of whom we are so much inclined to hope great things, that most of us begin already to believe them."⁵⁹ But in 1771, Pine leveled his criticism directly at George III with the same force and certitude with which he conceived and exhibited *Canute*. Though the king never visited the exhibition, which opened on 26 April 1771, he would have at least tacitly acknowledged the audacity of Pine's gesture once word of the painting reached the palace.⁶⁰

When the Royal Academy exhibition opened three days later, West's exceptionally well executed *The Death of General Wolfe* must have offered George III some relief from the stinging criticism of Pine's *Quo Warranto*.⁶¹ By all surviving accounts (and the multiple retellings thereof), the king did not fancy West's treatment of the subject because of its presentation of the figures in modern dress. Assuming that the king had seen Penny's and Romney's versions of the same subject – in modern dress – early in his reign, he could not have reasonably expected any other type of presentation.⁶² A more likely explanation comes from West's having attuned the king's aesthetic sensibilities to classical drapery through such works as *Agrippina*, *Regulus*, *Hannibal* and the early modern literary subjects. In executing *The Death of General Wolfe*, West

retained many of the compositional elements that distinguished his classical heroics of empire canvases, such as the frieze-like arrangement of figures, faces modeled on Le Brun's passions and references to the *Belvedere Torso*, the *Borghese Gladiator* and the *Apollo Belvedere*. So that the painting offered the same affective intensity as his classical heroics of empire pictures, West added minute pictorial detail to an event that transpired in an area of North America to which West never traveled and through a set of circumstances that differed significantly from the scene portrayed. This approach gave the uniforms, weapons and likenesses of the soldiers the same authenticating force as the victors' fasces and the boar's head rostrum in *Agrippina*. In addition to its material detail, West also introduced a potently religious energy to the scene by fashioning the dying general after the figure of the crucified Christ in a lamentation scene painted by Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641) in 1634 (fig. 77). By placing Wolfe in a pose that viewers would recognize from any number of paintings and prints, West combined the elements of heroic imperial martyrdom with what many in the Anglican church viewed as divinely sanctioned territorial conquest.

West's composition also invoked the marble relief monument to Colonel Roger Townshend (1741-1759) in Westminster Abbey (fig. 78). Designed by Robert Adam and executed by Thomas and/or Benjamin Carter and John Eckstein, the monument followed the practice of presenting modern heroes in classical dress in order to avoid the mean particularity of any given moment in time.⁶³ To its audiences at Westminster, Townshend's death, like Wolfe's, symbolized greater truths than the accurate

representation of wounds or the artistic rendering a dying breath could convey. Adam's monument to Townshend rejects the limitations of chronological time in order to present the hero's death as universal and thus not bound by temporal parameters. West's composition takes a different approach, applying the principles of synoptic narrative: a number of events that transpired over a period of several hours appear in the same scene. West's choice to combine discrete episodes in a seamless composition on a single canvas commands the viewer's attention, while also encouraging an artificially narrative experience of the composition. He compounded the effect by assembling as a single group a number of individuals who did not all gather at any single moment during the course of the battle. In his classical heroics of empire paintings West expected the viewer to situate the picture as the culmination of a series of events and as a predecessor to subsequent actions and consequences in the narrative. *The Death of General Wolfe* presents an accretion of heroisms that allowed West to exclude certain elements and personages that might diminish the impact of the work.⁶⁴

Two minor components of West's picture justify further consideration as they relate the modern heroics of empire: the powder horn worn by the light-skinned male who stands behind the seated Native American and the Native American who West has included in the foreground of the painting. Canadian military historian C. P. Stacey first noted that the surface of the powder horn includes a crude map and the inscriptions "MOHAWK RIVER" and "Sr. Wm. Johnson (fig. 79)."⁶⁵ The proximity of the powder horn to the Indian and West's doubling of the *Borghese Gladiator* form in the two figures

who gesture toward the viewer's left identify the scene as an episode in the ongoing attachment of Native Americans to the British Interest. Only a few details distinguish the Indian in the 1764 painting from the one in the 1770 work (fig. 80). Those details include the extent of piercing in the earlobe and ear adornment, neck and wrist accessories and tattoos. Most importantly for situating the work in the context of the modern heroics of empire, however, are the tomahawk and gun, which rest on the ground beneath the Native American's legs and across his thighs, respectively.

When compared to the "state" of the menacing Mohawk in West's monument to Johnson's civilizing paternalism, as a figure representing the object of Britons' "attachment" process, the Native American in *Wolfe* showed some signs of progress. He has lowered his tomahawk, trading the savage practice of scalping for the more cultivated practice of killing with firearms. But he has lowered his weapons to assume the position of the allegorical figure in Albrecht Dürer's *Melencolia*, cited as the engraver's best work in the 1744 edition of Roger de Piles's *The Art of Painting* (fig. 81).⁶⁶ In some eighteenth-century English minds, this widely-circulated, image of an enigmatically-winged female connected to and to a certain extent had been engaged and clarified by John Milton's *Il Penseroso*.⁶⁷ West heroized the contemplative in the Native American figure by referencing the *Belvedere Torso*. As he looks upon the dying British general, the Mohawk is overcome with Le Brun's expression of compassion for Wolfe's suffering and with the hope that he survives his injuries (fig. 82). That he feels melancholy and that he experiences hope and compassion indicate the degrees of improvement that he has

undergone, due to the peaceful and paternalistic cultural intervention of men such as Johnson and, of course, through the efforts of Anglican missionaries.

The figure of the adult male who wears both European clothing and Native North American buckskin leggings (and whose accoutrements include the inscribed powder horn) enriches West's conception of conversion and improvement as the best means through which to advance the cause of civilizing paternalism. The man's long, dark hair and West's treatment of his facial features suggest two possibilities: that he is an Englishman who has recognized the value of learning Native American languages and customs so that he may better contribute to the processes of civilization or that he is a Native American (not of the Mohawk peoples, necessarily) in the process of becoming ever more like Samson Occom, the Mohegan ordained by the Long Island Presbytery who delivered sermons in London churches in the late 1760s. In this instance, the key to identifying the long-haired male in West's painting is the powder horn inscribed with Johnson's name. Some scholars argue that the man to whom the object belongs is William Howe, who had established himself as both a soldier and a diplomat during the Seven Years' War and under whose leadership Wolfe's troops had successfully scaled the face of the cliff, surprising the French troops and taking Quebec.⁶⁸ Between the time of Britain's victory on the heights of Abraham and the execution of West's painting, Howe's reputation as a soldier and a commander as deft at negotiation as at armed assault on land and sea was widespread in England and in America.⁶⁹ Howe's presence in the composition punctuates the rippling power of the heroics of empire to render the Briton

heroically willing to gain Native Americans' trust through peaceful means and to render the savage (and thus the empire) ever more heroically polite.

Conquest as Providence, Subjection as Salvation

In the year that West exhibited *The Death of General Wolfe* at the Royal Academy, he received a commission for another modern heroics of empire history painting: *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians* (fig. 2). The request came from Thomas Penn (1702-1775), second son of William Penn (1644-1718), the famous Quaker who founded of the Pennsylvania colony in North America. The picture contrives a moment in 1682, when Native Americans who inhabited the lands over which Penn gained control via royal charter gathered with their prospective lords near an old elm tree at Shackamaxon, so named after a local tribe.⁷⁰ “It was at this time, (1682) when [Penn] first entered personally into that lasting relationship with the *Indians*, which ever afterwards continued between them; and for the space of more than seventy years was never interrupted....”⁷¹ Twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholars have interrogated this painting from a number of different perspectives. Those arguments include but are not limited to characterizations of the painting as 1) emphatically anti-Baroque; 2) along with *The Death of General Wolfe*, revolutionary for its introduction of modern costume into history painting; 3) popular in London for its representation of early American life; 4) Thomas Penn's wife's attempt to silence her husband's critics; 5) a celebration of

relative calm in the Pennsylvania colony following years of conflict; 6) a compendium of material goods as markers of cultural exchange; 7) a prophetic gesture towards the Luddite reaction against encroaching technologies of industry; and 8) a propagandistic mask to conceal the unscrupulous imperial conduct of Thomas Penn.⁷² Though all of these assessments may ring true to one degree or another, West intended for *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* to call on modern Britons to mimic the imperial virtue of William Penn when undertaking territorial conquest.

Like *General Johnson* and *The Death of General Wolfe*, West's painting of the peaceful transfer of land from Native Americans to Penn and his fellow Quakers contrives an event that never transpired, infused with minute pictorial detail intended to add authenticating force to the image. To situate the work as a modern heroics of empire canvas, West even included an architectural capriccio: the assembly of colonial structures in the background serves the same function as Domitian's palace in *Agrippina*. Though rendered with some degree of accuracy, some of the buildings pictured would have appeared decades after William Penn's death. Viewers would have recognized West's use of the *Belvedere* Torso in the seated Native American and Scottish Highlander and the *Apollo Belvedere* in the adult Native American male who gestures toward the bolt of cloth. West's homage to Poussin in this work include the frieze-like placement of figures, theatrical lighting and the young Arcadian shepherd who stands behind the nursing female to the viewer's right. As an alternative to the Poussin reading, one might feel tempted to accept Alfred Neumeier's 1938 suggestion that West based the

groupings on Masaccio's *Tribute Money* fresco in the Brancacci Chapel of Florence's Santa Maria del Carmine (fig. 83). Such a reference permits one to cast William Penn as the Caesar to whom Christ instructs Peter to render the coin pulled from the fish's mouth, intensifying the heroics of empire associations. However, I must instead concur with Edgar Wind, writing in the same year, in his rejection of the Masaccio connection – though I do so for reasons that differ from Wind's.⁷³ West's composition and the gestures of the figures resemble less an English conversation piece than they register the frieze-like format that West borrowed from Poussin and that he had by 1772 refined into a style that was his own. For this composition, West enhances the Poussin reference through the young Arcadian figure who stands behind the nursing female and who calls to mind the shepherds in Poussin's most important and influential picture, *Et in arcadia ego* (fig. 84). The gestures and facial expressions of the Native Americans, Highlanders and Quakers acknowledge Le Brun's *Expression of the Passions* and Alberti's principles of *ut rhetorica pictura*, but rather than Masaccio's *Tribute Money*, the central grouping more closely approximates the arrangement of figures and the focal energy of nativity, adoration and presentation scenes from the early life of Christ. West cleverly relocated the virgin and child figures to the viewer's right so that he could draw the viewer's attention to the bolt of cloth offered up to the group of Native Americans as a token of the agreement and as a symbol of conquest as salvation. Those Native Americans who wear bolts of cloth draped across their bodies signal their elevation through Christian salvation.

Clothing “our Indians” figured prominently among the many functions undertaken by the Pennsylvania assembly during the seventeenth century.⁷⁴ The discursive value of cloth as a form of currency and as a political symbol permeated the cultural imaginary of empire in eighteenth-century England. Those Native Americans

who have commerce with the colonies from Europe, wear duffils and blanketing of about two yards square, which the Romans called a toga; their segamores or sachems wear blankets, with a border of a different colour, and may be called prætextati. The Toga seems to be the most ancient, natural and simple wear used by mankind; the Scots highlanders have wore it further back than our records reach, striped and chequered variously according to the humours of different ages; but of late years it seeming to be used as a badge of disaffection to the present happy established government in Great-Britain, the parliament in their great wisdom have abolished it.⁷⁵

West’s inclusion of the kilted highlanders presents the viewer with a double message: the Scots as a conquered people represent a level of improvement to which Native Americans could also be raised, but English treatment of their Caledonian subjects qualified as the type of tyranny that could threaten the social fabric of the conquerors at home. (This message also resonated in the presence of Lieutenant Colonel Simon Fraser, the Highlander who stands behind Colonel William Howe in West’s *Death of General Wolfe*.)

As part of their ongoing attempts to attach Native Americans to their respective interests, the French and the English had vied to clothe the peoples of North America.⁷⁶ By 1765 the town of Whitney, sixty-three miles from London, produced “a considerable manufacture of duffils, which...are exported in great quantities to Virginia and New England, for cloathing the American Indians.”⁷⁷ In the minds of the English, the shift

from exposure to concealment qualified – like the development of Greco-Roman oratorical skills – as one of the landmark stages on the trajectory of civilization.⁷⁸ By offering the cloth to the inhabitants of the lands that he wished to call his own, William Penn exemplified the peaceful means through which the British could sustain its imperial conquests. In a letter dated 2 February 1805 to William Darton, Jr., West reflected on the painting, an empire-themed picture that he produced in the same year that *Wolfe* first drew crowds to his Newman Street studio in London:

The great object I had in forming that composition was to express savages brought into harmony and peace by justice and benevolence, by not withholding from them what was their right, and giving to them what they were in want of, as well as a wish to give by that art a conquest made over native people with sword or Dagger.⁷⁹

West understood that clemency and benevolence, rather than violence and tyranny, would immunize the British empire from the fate of its predecessors. So long as empire flourished, so too would the demand for history painting endure. *Penn's Treaty with the Indians*, then, serves up the idea of conquest as salvation and salvation as the means through conquest. *The Death of General Wolfe* and *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* went to different patrons, but their circulation as engravings by William Woollett and John Hall, respectively, allowed Britons of the upper and middling ranks to own them as a pair. Together, the images conveyed a powerful message: in assuming global territorial dominion, modern British virtue must include a willingness to martyr oneself for the cause of empire in the event that peaceful means of conquest should fail. Successful deployment of peaceful means diminishes the need for personal martyrdom.

The Heroics of Empire History Painting Suite for Buckingham House

As Matthew Hargraves notes, “George III had reason to be grateful to his favourite artist, Benjamin West, for drawing attention away” from Robert Edge Pine’s critical history piece *Quo Warranto* with ...*Death of General Wolfe*....”⁸⁰ The king had not attended a SAGB exhibition since the founding of the Royal Academy in 1769, but word of Pine’s *Quo Warranto* almost certainly reached the palace. Reports of the success of West’s *Wolfe* spread quickly; crowds massed at the Royal Academy to see the work. But popular success was not enough to convince George III of the painting’s achievements. Only after Richard, Lord Grosvenor (1731-1802) purchased *The Death of Wolfe* did the king order a version of his own. To ease the monarch’s purported discomfort with the presentation of an heroic subject in modern dress, West proposed *The Death of Epaminondas* and *The Death of Chevalier Bayard* to help balance out the hanging scheme in the Warm Room at Buckingham House with a mixture of ancient Greek, ancient Roman and early modern heroics of empire subjects (figs. 85 and 86).⁸¹

Like *The Departure of Regulus*, the subject of West’s *Death of Epaminondas* appeared as one of the six original choices for history painting premium submissions in the minutes of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce for 28 February 1759 – a proposal that indicates the character’s appeal for eighteenth-century artists and audiences alike.⁸² The painting portrays the Theban general at the

moment just before his death following the battle of Mantinea, his body pierced by the javelin of a Greek soldier. The story valorizes Epaminondas while elevating the death of General Wolfe:

Epaminondas was carried alive into his tent, where, as soon as he recovered his speech, he asked his friends about him, whether the enemy had taken his shield from him? They told him it was safe; and being brought to him, he kissed it; he asked which side had the victory, and being told the Thebans, All then, said he, is well; and soon after drawing the head of the javelin out of his body, he fell as it were in the arms of victory, congratulating the good fortune of his country. This great man feared nothing but the loss of reputation by the neglect of his own defence, though it was through the zeal of serving his country, and obtaining victory.⁸³

The narrative appeared frequently in eighteenth-century Anglophone publications and writers selectively appropriated tales of his heroic character on and off the field of conquest to comment on modern British life. Jonathan Swift, writing in the voice of Lemuel Gulliver, noted “A happy occurrence of circumstances has often given fame to others; but Epaminondas was indebted for his superior character only to himself.”⁸⁴ The Theban owed at least part of his fame to his notorious hatred of luxury and his murderous intolerance of idleness – themes that recurred throughout the eighteenth century in England and in the imperial provinces.⁸⁵ “Estimate” Brown cited Epaminondas as an exemplar of the learned man who also excels at combat – the epitome of imperial martial virtue and the model for reforming British masculinity.⁸⁶ Plutarch’s account of the battle in which the general slew Cleombrotus I added a luster of filial piety, making the painting even more complementary to the other paintings in the Warm Room at Buckingham House: “*Epaminondas*...is said to have professed that he reckoned it the greatest victory

of his whole life, that his father and mother still survived to behold his conduct and victory at *Leuctra*. He had the satisfaction indeed to see both his parents partake with him, and enjoy the pleasure of his good fortune....”⁸⁷ In a time when disinterestedness had all but ceased to drive the virtuous life, Epaminondas stood as a monument to wealth and education applied zealously toward the public good.⁸⁸ And for the modern Briton whose feeling, sympathy and sentiment could at least partially excuse his lack of disinterestedness, standing in the room with *The Death of Epaminondas* and *The Death of General Wolfe* would confirm his personal virtue:

I can hear the swell of an Italian warbler, without being dissolved: but tell me of a gallant soul, who nobly sustains the shock of adversity, or steadily braves the terrors of death; who can forgive his enemy, or weep with his friend...and every nerve is in agitation. Let me hear...the heroic speech of the British Epaminondas, ‘Thank heaven, I die contented.’ Or...tell me of a prince who fights only for his people’s safety, and reigns only for their happiness, and every string vibrates within me.⁸⁹

Viewers who saw the painting at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1773, those who purchased a copy of the 1774 Valentine Green mezzotint after the work and those fortunate enough to see the painting at Buckingham house would have also registered in the painting an admonition.

The death of Epaminondas, which seemed to promise [the Greeks] the greatest advantage, gave the final stroke to their ruin and destruction. ‘Their courage,’ says Justin, ‘did not survive that illustrious Theban. Free from a rival, who kept their emulation alive, they sunk into a lethargick sloth and effeminacy. The funds for armaments by land and sea were soon lavished upon games and feasts. The seaman’s and soldier’s pay was distributed to the idle citizens, enervated in soft luxurious habits of life. The representations of the theatre were preferred to the exercises of the camp. Valour and military knowledge were entirely disregarded. Great captains were in no estimation; whilst good poets and excellent comedians engrossed the universal applause’.⁹⁰

Britons had to remain vigilant in their martial discipline and personal restraint lest they return to the softness that had been the source of so much discouragement in the first three years of the late war against France. Whatever the primary function of Epaminondas in individual viewers' mind, the vanquished French – once themselves the most likely candidates for universal monarchy – best characterized Britons' attraction to Epaminondas as an exemplar of virtue by tracing that appeal to its origin: "In a word, the designs and enterprizes of Epaminondas flowed from one source, *supreme dominion*, the principle and end of all his actions."⁹¹ For Hanoverian patron and American painter *The Death of Epaminondas* elevated modern Britons and their king to the realms of Greco-Roman imperial heroism and bathed his favorite artist in the light of early modern Italian artistic efflorescence.⁹²

To smooth the chronological, aesthetic and discursive transitions between the Warm Room's classical heroics of empire paintings and *The Death of General Wolfe*, West suggested the popular tale of Pierre Terrail, the Chevalier Bayard (1473-1524), known in England as "The Knight without fear, and without reproach."⁹³ Excerpts from the narrative of Bayard's life appeared in various English-language sources during the first half of the eighteenth century, with a full-length French biography in 1760.⁹⁴ The stories established Bayard as an exemplar of martial virtue in resistance to the papal forces that threatened to overtake all of France. Many Londoners would have known of Bayard's loyal service to the Duke of Savoy, his strategic maneuvers against the imperial machinations of the holy Roman emperor Charles V, the disinterestedness with which he

conducted his military campaigns, his legendary insolence toward the Duke of Bourbon and the circumstances of his noble death.

Just as West made his first foray into modern heroics of empire history painting with General Johnson, the *Weekly Amusement* for 7 July 1764 offered its readers this account of Bayard:

The Action of the Great *Scipio* in *Spain*, when he added to the Portion of a young Captive Princess the Ransom her Parents had brought to redeem her, gained him no less Honour than the most famous of his Conquests. A like action of the Chevalier *Bayard* merits no less Praise. When *Bresse* was taken by Storm from the *Venetians*, he saved a House from Plunder, whither he had retired in the Siege, and secured the Mistress of the Family, and her two Daughters, who were hid in it. At his Departure the Lady, as a Mark of her Gratitude, offered him a Cabinet containing two thousand five hundred Ducats, which he obstinately refused. But observing that his Refusal was very displeasing to her, and not caring to leave her dissatisfied, he consented to accept of her Present, and calling to him the two young Ladies to take his Leave of them, he presented each of them with a thousand Ducats to be added to their Portion, and left the remaining five hundred to be distributed among the Inhabitants that had been plundered.⁹⁵

A painting depicting Bayard's death suited George III's palace for a number of reasons. First, the work justified the inclusion of the *Death of Wolfe*: if a Frenchman could rate comparison to the greatest heroes of imperial antiquity, then Wolfe would certainly qualify. Additionally, because the chevalier (though Catholic by faith) had died defending France's liberty against the imperial troops of Charles V, the scene fit into the martial genealogies of Anglo-French relations: male ancestors of the heroic chevalier had died at the battle of Crécy (August 1346), in which Edward the Black Prince established himself as "worthy of empire," and the battle of Poitiers (September 1356), after which the same English prince demonstrated the "humanity and moderation" that

comprise “truly admirable heroism.”⁹⁶ In those battles against the French, the English had defeated their enemies despite huge troop deficits favoring the French, as Bayard had done with against the imperial forces at Mézieres.⁹⁷ Paintings of these subjects occupied West as part of the heroics of empire oeuvre that he produced in the late 1780s. As George Lyttleton noted in 1769, Bayard not only embodied the purest kind of heroics military virtue, his career and character proved an important point about the soils from which such virtue could naturally grow:

... whoever reads the ancient chronicles of England and France will find, that not only a general passion for military glory, and a most active courage, but some as fair and noble fruits of heroics virtue were raised, but this northern method of culture, as ever grew in the rich soils of ancient Greece and Rome. The *Black Prince*, who was entirely formed on the lessons of chivalry, is alone sufficient proof of this assertion. I will add that the two last, who appear to have fashioned themselves upon the same model, and to have possessed in perfection all the virtues of their order, were, in France, the *Chevalier Bayard*, and in England, Sir *Philip Sidney*.⁹⁸

West would wait until 1799 to paint *The Death of Sir Philip Sidney*, but Lyttleton’s points were well-taken and already fully expressed in the suite of heroics of empire history paintings in the Warm Room at Buckingham.⁹⁹

Like Epaminondas and Wolfe, Bayard’s death as much as his life offered eighteenth-century Anglophone audiences a model of imperial martial virtue. The story of Bayard’s passing appeared in a number of different textual sources during the course of the century; William Robertson’s 1770 account closely approximates West’s composition:

[Bayard] received a wound which he immediately perceived to be mortal, and being unable to continue any longer on horseback, he ordered one of his attendants to place him under a tree, with his face towards the enemy; then fixing his eyes on the guard of his sword, which he held up instead of a cross, he addressed his prayers to God, and in this posture, which became his character both as a soldier and as a Christian, he calmly waited the approach of death. Bourbon, who led the foremost of the enemies troops, found him in this situation, and expressed regret and pity at the sight. 'Pity not me,' cried the high-spirited chevalier, 'I die as a many of honour ought, in the discharge of my duty: They are indeed objects of pity, who fight against their King, their country, and their oath.' The marquis de Pescara, passing soon after, manifested his admiration of Bayard's virtues, and his sorrow for his fall, with the generosity of a gallant enemy; and finding that he could not be removed with safety from that spot, ordered a tent to be pitched there, and appointed proper persons to attend him. He died, notwithstanding their care, as his ancestors for several generations had done, in the field of battle. Pescara ordered his body to be embalmed, and sent to his relations; and such was the respect paid to military merit in that age, that the duke of Savoy commanded it to be received with royal honours in all the cities of his dominions; in Dauphinè, Bayard's native country, the people of all ranks came out in a solemn procession to meet it." ¹⁰⁰

Also similar to Epaminondas, Bayard demonstrated martial virtue in imperial defeat that matched the virtue that he modeled during his life. His loyalty to Francis I in the face of so many challenges must have appealed to a young king plagued by fears of anti-monarchical sentiment. With *The Death of General Wolfe* hanging at Lord Grosvenor's Eaton Hall, engravings after *Angelica and Medoro*, *Pylades and Orestes*, *Pyrrhus* and *Astyanax* circulating in London and beyond and *Epaminondas*, *Regulus*, *Hannibal*, *Wolfe* and *The Death of Chevalier Bayard* gracing the walls at Buckingham House, Benjamin West had established empire as the theme that made history painting relevant to Anglophone audiences from across all ranks. To complete the program for the room, the king commissioned from West two additional canvases, the subjects of which return to the theme imperial martial virtue combined with familial devotion: *Cyrus Receiving the*

King of Armenia and Family Prisoners of 1772 and Segestis and His Daughter before Germanicus of the same year (figs. 87 and 88).¹⁰¹ By the time that West completed the final paintings for the heroics of empire suite in the Warm Room at Buckingham House, he had assumed the title of Historical Painter to the King (a ceremonial title not held since the death of Historical-Painter-in-Ordinary James Thornhill in 1734) with an annual stipend of £1000.¹⁰²

Whatever their personal investments in and perspectives on England's sudden rise to global dominion, Britons knew that history supplied no exceptions to this rule: the subjugation of conquered peoples in the imperial provinces threatened liberty in the imperial capital. The subjects and narratives which populated West's heroics of empire history paintings figured prominently in contemporary musings on the state of English constitutional liberty. In eighteenth-century intersections of text, image and performance, the theme of empire linked Germanicus, Pyrrhus, Regulus, Hannibal and Scipio, but none among these classical figures embodied or symbolized a single, static value or meaning across all forms of discourse. These heroes were multi-purpose, serving the Boston minister, the military commander in South Asia, the pro-slavery fanatic in Philadelphia and the radical patriot in Edinburgh. George III and his subjects each claimed ownership of classical history; court and country each saw themselves as the repositories of and rightful proprietors of the languages – visual, textual and performative – of imperial martial virtue. By adding a series of heroics of empire history paintings from West to the room in which he displayed *The Departure of Regulus*, George III claimed imperial

sovereignty over the classical past and over the contemporary deployment of the implicit and explicit virtues and tyrannies embodied in the subjects of these paintings. By possessing these images, the king hoped to limit their usefulness in the hands of his detractors. In sum, the paintings that followed *Regulus* qualified as much an act of discursive and aesthetic conquest as an act of artistic patronage.

The paintings that West exhibited at the Royal Academy in its early years offered audiences from all ranks of British society a wide array of imperial exemplars after whom to fashion their own private and public Anglo-Augustan identities. East India Company servants, colonial governors in North America, slave traders off the coast of Guinea, members of the national militia and the thirty-year-old English king could select for themselves the most suitable classical models of imperial martial heroism – to be invoked at will – when conditions in the periphery necessitated a national rhetoric of classical virtue in the center. Benjamin West, the engravers who copied his paintings and the printsellers who sold their engravings supplied Britons with the images they needed to compose themselves and to maintain their composure as they faced the moral exigencies endemic to any “free though conquering people.”¹⁰³ Through these images, the visual heroics of empire emerged as a discrete form of cultural production through which Britons’ could distinguish themselves for their natural virtue, their true Protestant Christianity and their constitutional liberty.

West, his patrons and London’s exhibiting institutions conditioned audiences’ reception by assimilating them to paintings of subjects with which they were familiar

from print and stage. The currency of empire made the paintings of classical imperial virtue relevant to 1760s audiences; West's refinement of the pictorial vocabularies of classical statuary and his frequent invocation of Poussin afforded him relevancy as a history painter – especially among those viewers who had made the Grand Tour. Once audiences had grown accustomed to seeing images from classical antiquity and applying their messages and lessons to the collective imagination and formation of modern imperial identity, West was finally able to return to the artistic impulse that had generated *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Soldier from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian*. The works that resulted from this resumption secured West's fame as a history painter and (in many Britons' minds, at least) justified his role as Historical Painter to the King of England, a position which he assumed in 1772. West's fame and his official function at court attracted the attention of Robert Clive, who enlisted West's help in amassing a collection of Old Master paintings and in conceiving the most audacious decorative program for the house of an English commoner in the history of Great Britain.¹⁰⁴

Notes

¹ English-language sources often used “Mogul” and “Persian” interchangeably and invoked both when deriding the luxury and effeminacy of the French.

² George Johnstone, *Speech of Mr. George Johnstone, in the General Court of Proprietors of East-India Stock, upon the Subject of the Restitution for Private Losses, in the War against Cossim Ali Cawn* (Edinburgh, printed by Balfour, Auld, and Smellie, 1768) pp. 10-11.

³ See John Henry Grose, *A Voyage to the East-Indies; Began in 1750; with Observations Continued till 1764*, 2 vols. (London, printed for the author, 1766) vol. II, pp. 449-478.

⁴ Sepoys were the indigenous South Asian troops trained in European combat by the British East India Company. See Chapter Four of this dissertation.

⁵ Johnstone, *Speech to the Proprietors*, p. 31.

⁶ Johnston, *Speech to the Proprietors*, pp. 38 and 40.

⁷ See n1 in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

⁸ Fresnoy [Reverend James Wills], “To the K[ing],” *Middlesex Journal* 171 (5 May 1770), reprinted in *The Repository: or Treasury of Politics and Literature for MDCCLXX*, 2 vols. (London, printed for J. Murray, J. Bell, S. Bladon, and C. Etherington, 1771) vol. I, pp. 461-464. See also Robert Strange, *An Inquiry into the Rise and Establishment of the Royal Academy of Arts, to Which is Prefixed, a Letter to the Earl of Bute* (London, printed for E. and D. Dilly, J. Robson and J. Walter, 1775) p. 110.

⁹ Fresnoy, “To the K[ing],” p. 462.

¹⁰ See, e.g., *The Preceptor: Containing a General Course of Education. Wherein the First Principles of Polite Learning Are Laid down In a Way Most Suitable for Trying the Genius, and Advancing the Instruction of Youth*, 4th ed., 2 vols. (Dublin, printed by George Faulkner, 1765) vol. I, pp. 377-381; Sarah Maese, *The School: Being a Series of Letters, between a Young Lady and Her Mother*, 3 vols. (London, printed for W. Flexney, 1772) vol. III, pp. 276-279.

¹¹ See, e.g., Tiberius Catus Silius Italicus, *The Second Punic War between Hannibal and the Romanes: The Whole Seventeen Books, Englished from the Latine of Silius Italicus: With a Continuation from the Triumph of Scipio, to the Death of Hannibal*, Thomas Ross, trans. (London, printed by Thomas Roycroft, 1661) and Titus Livius, *The Roman History Written in Latine by Titus Livius. With the Supplements of the Learned John Freinshemius, and John Dujatius. From the Foundation of Rome to the Middle of the Reign of Augustus. Faithfully Done into English* (London, printed for Awnsham Churchill, 1686).

¹² François Catrou, *The Roman History: With Notes Historical, Geographical, and Critical; and Illustrated with Copper Plates, Maps, and a Great Number of Authentick Medals*, 6 vols. (London, printed by J. Bettenham, for T. Woodward and J. Peele, 1729) vol. 3, p. 2. See also André Dacier, *The Life of Hannibal* (London, printed for John Gray, 1737) pp. 4-5.

¹³ Jeremy Black, *George III: America's Last King* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006) p. 167.

¹⁴ The circumstances under which Poussin produced this work remain sketchy. Scholars assume that he produced the painting for the secretary to Cardinal Barberini, Cassiano dal Pozzo, who collected images of elephants. The painting remains part of the dal Pozzo collection, but is on indefinite loan to the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University. See Konrad Oberhuber, *Poussin: The Early Years in Rome – The Origins of French Classicism*, exh. cat. (New York, Hudson Hills Press in Association with the Kimbell Art Museum, 1988) p. 128.

¹⁵ I acknowledge the tenuousness of making a comparison between West's painting and engraved book illustrations, but few oil paintings of the subject appear in eighteenth-century sources. Though I have yet to fully explore the evidence, I submit that neither Italian nor French painters (nor their patrons) would have found the swearing of an oath against Romans an appealing topic for an oil painting. Johann Heinrich Schönberg, who worked in Rome during the first half of the seventeenth century painted a grand-scale version of Hannibal at the altar, but only after returning to Augsburg, where he spent the remainder of his career. Those Britons who included the Germanic states on their Grand Tour itineraries may have seen Schönberg's strongly Poussinesque painting, but West, of course, was not among them. See Silius Italicus,

op cit. and Charles Rollin's *The Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Macedonians, and Grecians*, 2nd edition, 10 vols. (London, printed for John and Paul Knapton, 1738) vol. I, btw. pp. 104 and 105. In the context of book illustration, two of West's earliest modern heroic of empire subjects were produced for publication as plates in William Smith's account of the military actions in and around Ohio circa 1755 and many of the subjects that West chose for his canvases had appeared as plates in illustrated versions of Plutarch's *Lives*.

¹⁶ von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 171. Americanists will recognize the *Resting Satyr* as the inspiration for Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* of 1860.

¹⁷ Abraham Booth, *The Reign of Grace, from Its Rise to Its Consummation*, 2nd edition (London, sold by E. and C. Dilly, W. Harris, J. Gurney, J. Robinson, and B. Tomkins, 1771) p. 317.

¹⁸ Samuel Cooper, *A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company, in Boston, New England, June 3. 1751. Being the Anniversary of Their Election of Officers* (Boston, printed by J. Draper for J. Edwards and D. Goodwin, 1751) p. 24.

¹⁹ William Smith, *A Review of the Military Operations in North America, from the Commencement of the French Hostilities on the Frontiers of Virginia in 1753. to the Surrender of Oswego, on the 14th of August, 1756* (London, printed by R. and J. Dodsley, 1758) p. 7. This publication was re-issued in New York in 1770 by Alexander and James Robertson. Though Smith lauded Shirley for his conduct in the years leading up to full engagement between the British and French forces in North America, Shirley's indecision at the Battle of Oswego resulted in England's loss of that important strategic settlement to the French.

²⁰ *The Farmer's and Monitor's Letters, to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies* (Williamsburg, printed by William Rind, 1769) p. 65.

²¹ *Historia antiquae: or, Antient History, to Be Rendered into Latin*, 3rd edition (Eton, printed by J. Pote, 1770) p. 190. Like many of the textual sources that informed eighteenth-century viewers' experiences of West's paintings, Pote's *Historia antiquae* is a text intended to guide school children in their Latin exercises.

²² See Pierre Charron, *Of Wisdom: The Second and Third Books. Written Originally in French, by the Sieur de Charron*, George Stanhope, trans., 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London, printed for R. Bonwicke, J. Tonson, W. Freeman, Timothy Goodwin, J. Walthoe, M. Wotton, S. Manship, J. Nicholson, B. Tooke, R. Parker, and R. Smith, 1707) vol. II, p. 96.

²³ See John Andrews, *A Review of the Characters of the Principal Nations in Europe*, 2 vols. (Dublin, printed for P. and W. Wilson, J. Potts, J. Williams, W. Colles, and T. Walker, 1770) vol. I, p. 192. This passage comments on the imperial declension of Spain in a series of analyses intended to emphasize British national virtue.

²⁴ See Brian Tunstall, *Admiral Byng and the Loss of Minorca* (London, Philip Allan, 1928).

²⁵ Charles Davenant, *The Political and Commercial Works of that Celebrated Writer Charles D'Avenant, LL.D. Relating to the Trade and Revenue of England, the Plantation Trade, the East-India Trade, and African Trade*, Charles Whitworth, ed., 5 vols. (London, printed for R. Horsfield, T. Becket and P.A. De Hondt, and T. Cadell, 1771).

²⁶ *Ibid*, vol. IV, pp. 327-328.

²⁷ See Abrams, *Valiant Hero*, pp. 150-153.

²⁸ I owe the structure of this section title to Richard E. Goodkin, "Killing Order(s): Iphigenia and the Detection of Tragic Intertextuality," *Yale French Studies* 76 *Autour de Racine: Studies in Intertextuality* (1989) pp. 81-107.

²⁹ *Letters to a Young Nobleman* (1762) pp. 7-9.

³⁰ On intertextuality, see Julia Kristeva, "Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman," *Critique* 23:239 (1967) pp. 438-465. On a much later deployment of intericonality in a context unrelated but not necessarily irrelevant to the present study, see Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Der tod des Tizian* (1892), discussed in Jacques Le Rider, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Historismus und Moderne in der Literatur der Jahrhundertwende* (Wien, Böhlau, 1997). For another method of approaching such associations between

image and text and between images based on text, see James A. W. Heffernan, *Cultivating Picturacy: Visual Art and Verbal Interventions* (Waco, Baylor University Press, 2006).

³¹ The characterization “man of feeling” derives from Henry Mackenzie’s (1745-1831) anonymously published 1771 *The Man of Feeling*, which was Britain’s most popular novel of the decade. The novel’s protagonist personifies a new ideal of sensibility, combining genuine empathy, deep sympathy and an innocence that contrasts with worldly irony and cynicism. See Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (London, printed for T. Cadell, 1771).

³² See *The Adventurer* 63 (12 June 1753) (London, printed for J. Payne, 1753) p. 378; reprinted as *The Adventurer*, 5th ed., 4 vols. (London, printed for A. Millar; W. Strahan; J. Rivington; R. Baldwin; Hawes, Clarke, and Collins; S. Crowder; T. Lowndes; J. Dodsley; J. Coote; and M. Richardson, 1766) vol. II, p. 235.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ See Plutarch, “Life of Phocion,” in *Plutarch’s Lives* (1763) vol. V, pp. 3-43.

³⁵ In eighteenth-century England, Gaius Mæcenas personified patronage of the arts by the wealthy citizens of the Rome as the state transitioned from republican to imperial structures of governance. See Ralph Schomberg, *The Life of Mæcenas: With Critical, Historical, and Geographical Notes*, 2nd ed. (London, printed for A. Millar, 1766).

³⁶ See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1993) pp. 47-48. See also Raymond Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,” in *Culture and Materialism: Selected Essays* (London, Verso, 1980) pp. 40-42.

³⁷ Pyrrhus of Epirus was sufficiently notable to warrant a 479-page English translation of Jean Gautier’s *The Life and Military Exploits of Pyrrhus, King of Epirus* in 1751. The episode that West represented in the painting for Drummond receives very little attention in this work.

³⁸ The success of the Romans against the superior Carthaginian fleet read to modern Britons like a typological precursor for the defeat of the Spanish Armada, which established the global supremacy of England’s naval forces.

³⁹ See Herodotus, *The History of Herodotus*, Isaac Littlebury, trans., 3rd ed., 2 vols. (London, printed for D. Midwinter, A. Bettersworth and C. Hitch, J. and J. Pemberton, R. Warr, C. Rivington, J. Batley and J. Wood, F. Clay, A. Ward, J. and P. Knapp, T. Longman, and R. Hett, 1737) vol. II, pp. 262-275.

⁴⁰ Cite Susan Rather on Copley and the Tailor anecdote and Ruthann McNamara on the learned painter.

⁴¹ See Stanley Thomas, *The History of Philosophy: Containing the Lives, Opinions, Actions and Discourses of the Philosophers of Every Sect. Illustrated with the Effigies of Divers of Them*, 3rd edition (London, printed for W. Battersby, Hugh Newman, Thomas Cockerill, Herbert Walwyn, and A. and J. Churchil, 1701) p. 177; and Plato, *Phaedon; or, A Dialogue of the Immortality of the Soul* (London, printed for D. Williams, 1763) p. 82.

⁴² One might consider whether the depiction of narratives with characters of the same name demanded attention and explanation that contributed to the success of West’s reception-conditioning process.

⁴³ This translation of a portion of the passage “Hic enim, nisi fallor, fructuosus historici finis est illa prosequi, que vel sectanda legentibus vel fugienda sunt, ut in utramque partem copia suppetat illustrium exemplorum” comes from Bernard G. Kohl, “Petrarch’s Prefaces to de Viris Illustribus,” *History and Theory* vol. 13, no. 2 (May 1974) pp. 132-144, p. 141. Kohl notes the similarities between Petrarch’s characterization of the historian’s objective and that espoused by Livy in *Ab urbe condita*: “What chiefly makes the study of history wholesome and profitable is this, that you behold the lesson of every kind of example set forth as a conspicuous monument. From those you may choose for yourself and for your own state what to imitate, from these make for the avoidance of what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result.” West may have encountered Petrarch during the eleven months that he spent at the home of Robert Rutherford and George Jackson, English factors in Livorno.

⁴⁴ Dedication to Lodovico Dolce, *Aretin: A Dialogue on Painting* (London, printed for P. Elmsley, 1770) pp. xv-xvii, p. xvi.

⁴⁵ William Hole, *The Ornaments of Churches Considered, with a Particular View to the Late Decoration of the Parish Church of St. Margaret Westminster. To Which Is Subjoined, an Appendix, Containing, the History of Said Church; an Account of the Altar-Piece, and the Stained Glass Window Erected over It; a State of the Prosecution It Has Occasioned; and Other Papers* (Oxford, printed by W. Jackson, 1761) pp. 142-143. In the 1762 Exhibition of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, Giorgio Casali exhibited a portrait entitled *His Majesty in the Character of Augustus, with Macænas and Agrippa*.

⁴⁶ See Kimerly Rorschach, "Frederick, Prince of Wales (1701-1751) as a Patron of the Visual Arts: Princely Patriotism and Political Propaganda," unpublished PhD diss. (Yale University) 1985 and "Frederick, Prince of Wales (1707-51), as Collector and Patron," *Walpole Society* vol. LV (1989-1990) pp. 1-76.

⁴⁷ See John Pye, *Patronage of British Art* (London, Longman, Brown, Green and Longman) p. 140. See also Nick Prior, *Museums and Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture* (Oxford, Berg, 2002) p. 69 and Jeremy Black, *A Subject for Taste*, pp. 31-33.

⁴⁸ *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature, for the Year 1769* (London, printed for J. Dodsley, 1770), pp. 106-107. See also Anthony D. Smith, "National Identity and Myths of Ethnic Descent," in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Nationalism: Critical Concepts* (London, Routledge, 2000) 1394-1429, p. 1408: "Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the American and French wars stimulated a powerful revival of national sentiment, particularly under the leadership of the younger Pitt; it was heralded and accompanied by the rise of such new national institutions as the British Museum and [the] Royal Academy, and the neo-classical school of patriotic art, especially 'history painting', led by Benjamin West, Füssli, Hamilton, Blake and Flaxman; the Roman and medieval motifs chosen by these artists antedated the analogous movement in France."

⁴⁹ Benjamin Franklin, "The Triumph of the Arts," printed in *The Annual Register* (1770) pp. 214-215.

⁵⁰ Recent publications that incorporate earlier scholarship include Holger Hoock, *The King's Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture 1760-1840* (Oxford, Clarendon, 2004); and Matthew Hargraves, *Candidates for Fame: The Society of Artists of Great Britain 1760-1791* (London, Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2004). Eighteenth-century sources that offer some insight into the controversies surrounding the foundation of the Royal Academy include Fresnoy [Reverend James Wills], "To the K[ing]," *Middlesex Journal* 171 (5 May 1770), reprinted in *The Repository: or Treasury of Politics and Literature for MDCCLXX*, 2 vols. (London, printed for J. Murray, J. Bell, S. Bladon, and C. Etherington, 1771) vol. I, pp. 461-464; William Thompson, *The Conduct of the Royal Academicians, while Members of the Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain, viz. from the Year 1760, to Their Expulsion in 1769. With Some of the Transactions Since* (London, printed for J. Dixwell, 1771); and Robert Strange, *An Inquiry into the Rise and Establishment of the Royal Academy of Arts. To Which Is Prefixed, a Letter to the Earl of Bute* (London, printed for E. and C. Dilly, 1775).

⁵¹ Galt, *Life of West* (1820) pp. 37-40.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 40.

⁵³ See Holger Hoock, *The King's Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture 1760-1840* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003) pp. 41-44.

⁵⁴ The charter of incorporation established the Society of Artists as a charitable organization founded on the principle of providing for aging artists and their widows and children. The diploma established the Royal Academy as an educational institution.

⁵⁵ See Robert Strange, *An Inquiry into the Rise and Establishment of the Royal Academy of Arts* (London, 1775) p. 123.

⁵⁶ Society of Artists of Great Britain, *A Catalogue of the Pictures, Sculptures, Models, Designs in Architecture, Drawings, Prints, &c. Exhibited at the Great Room, in Spring-Gardens, Charing-Cross, April the Twenty-Sixth, 1771, by the Royal Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain: The Twelfth Year Exhibiting* (London, printed for the Society, 1771) p. 11.

⁵⁷ See Paul Rapin de Thoyras, *The History of England*, N. Tindal, trans., 15 vols. (London, printed for James and John Knapton, 1727), vol. IV, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵⁹ Samuel Johnson to Joseph Baretti, 10 June 1761 [first printed in *The European Magazine* (June 1787)], *Works of Samuel Johnson*, 14 vols. (London, printed for John Stockdale and G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1788). The quoted passage appears on the second of two pages numbered 512 in volume 14.

⁶⁰ See Hargraves, *Candidates for Fame*, pp. 112-115.

⁶¹ The scholarship on this painting is extensive, and does not need to be reviewed in its entirety here. I will limit my discussion of the painting to the elements that relate directly or closely to the visual heroics of empire that first appeared in West's oeuvre with *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Soldier* and that he refined through the classical heroics of empire paintings that he produced between 1764 and the Clive commission.

⁶² Though very successful, West's use of modern dress did not convert all critics. Writing in 1776, James Beattie worried about the legacy of such a choice: "An historical picture, like West's *Death of Wolfe*, in which the faces are all portraits of individual heroes, and the dresses according to the present mode, may be more interesting now, than if these had been more picturesque, and those expressive of different modifications of heroism. But in a future age, when the dresses are become unfashionable, and the faces no longer known as portraits, is there not reason to fear, that this excellent piece will lose of its effect?" James Beattie, *Essays. On Poetry and Music, As They Affect the Mind. On Laughter, and Ludicrous Composition. On the Utility of Classical Learning* (Edinburgh, printed for William Creech; and London, printed for E. & C. Dilly, 1776) p. 117n.

⁶³ In 1762, Eckstein submitted a bas-relief in clay of *The Death of Epaminondas*, which may have contributed to the appearance of the Townshend relief. See Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, *A Catalogue of the Paintings Sculptures Models Drawings Etc. Now Exhibiting at the Great Room of the Society Instituted for the Encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce* (London, 1762) p. 7.

⁶⁴ I always try to resist comparisons and illustrations rooted in anachronism, but one might compare West's *Wolfe* to the synoptic narrative of Masaccio's *Tribute Money* or to time-lapse film techniques in which people come and go from and central focal point. The additional heroisms that West captured in the painting include that of Monckton, who sustained a wound in the battle and of course the men of the first detachment who scaled the face of the land mass upon which the British defeated Montcalm's troops. See "Anecdote of the Death of General Wolfe," *The New London Magazine; Being an Universal and Complete Monthly Repository of Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment* 4:10 (October 1788) p. 520: "It is a circumstance not generally known, but believed by the army which served under General Wolfe, that his death-wound was not received by the common chance of war, but given by a deserter from his own regiment. The circumstances are thus related :-The General perceived one of the Serjeants of his regiment strike a man under arms (an act against which he had given particular orders), and knowing the man to be a good soldier, reprehended the aggressor with much warmth, and threatened to reduce him to the ranks. This so far incensed the Serjeant, that he took the first opportunity of deserting to the enemy, where he meditated the means of destroying the General, which he effected by being placed in the enemy's left wing, which was directly opposed to the right of the British line, where Wolfe commanded in person, and where he was marked out by the miscreant, who was provided with a rifle-piece, and, unfortunately for this country, effected his purpose. After the defeat of the French army, the deserters were all removed to Crown Point; which being afterwards suddenly invested and taken by the British army, the whole of the garrison fell into the hands of the Captors; when the Serjeant, of whom we have been speaking, was hanged for desertion, but before the execution of his sentence, he confessed the facts above recited. The writer of this had it from a Gentleman who heard the confession."

⁶⁵ See C. P. Stacey, "Benjamin West and 'The Death of Wolfe'," *The National Gallery of Canada Bulletin* vol. IV, no. 1 (1966) pp. 1-5.

⁶⁶ See Roger de Piles, *The Art of Painting, with the Lives and Characters of above 300 of the Most Eminent Painters: Containing a Complete Treatise of Painting, Designing, and the Use of Prints*, 2nd edition (London, printed for Charles Marsh, 1744) p. 220.

⁶⁷ Reflecting on earlier critics' evaluations of Milton's *Il Penseroso*, Thomas Warton noted in 1785, "'Milton...has here some traces of Albert Durer's MELANCHOLIA. Particularly in the BLACK VISAGE, the LOOKS COMMERCING WITH THE SKIES, and the STOLE DRAWN over her DECENT SHOULDERS. The painter...gave her wings, which the poet has transferred to CONTEMPLATION [in line 52]. I think it is highly probable, that Milton had this personification in his eye: and by making two figures out of one, and by giving Melancholy a kindred companion, to whom wings may be properly attributed, and who is distantly implied in Durer's idea, he has removed the violence, and cleared the obscurity, of the allegory, preserving at the same time the whole of the original conception.'" See John Milton, "Il Penseroso," in *Poems upon Several Occasions, English, Italian, and Latin, with Translations*, by John Milton, Thomas Warton, ed. (London, printed for G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1785) p. 64n.

⁶⁸ The Marquess of Sligo first advanced this identification, which has since been challenged by military historians who see the figure's uniform as that of an American Ranger and not of Native American origin. See Marquess of Sligo, "Some Notes on the Death of Wolfe," *Canadian Historical Review* vol. 3 (September, 1922) pp. 275-278. See also Stacey, "Benjamin West and 'The Death of Wolfe'," p. 1.

⁶⁹ Ira D. Gruber, "William Howe, William, fifth Viscount Howe (1729-1814)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008; <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/13966>, accessed 26 April 2008]

⁷⁰ See Samuel Smith, *The History of the Colony of Nova-Casaria, or New-Jersey: Containing an Account of Its First Settlement, Progressive Improvements, the Original and Present Constitution, and Other Events, to the Year 1721. With Some Particulars Since; and a Short View of Its Present State* (Burlington, New Jersey, printed and sold by James Parker, 1765) p. 136.

⁷¹ See Robert Proud, *The History of Pennsylvania, in North America, from the Original Institution and Settlement of that Province, under the First Proprietor and Governor William Penn, in 1681, till after the Year 1742*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, printed and sold by Zachariah Poulson, Jr., 1797) pp. 160-161 and 212.

⁷² 1) Emphatically anti-Baroque: Alfred Neumeyer, "The Early Historical Paintings of Benjamin West," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* vol. 73, no. 427 (October 1938) pp. 162-165; 2) along with *The Death of General Wolfe*, revolutionary for its use of modern costume in history painting: Edgar Wind, "The Revolution of History Painting," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* vol. 2, no. 2 (October 1938) pp. 116-127; 3) early American scene: Ellen Starr Brinton. "Benjamin West's Painting of Penn's Treaty with the Indians" in *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Association*, vol., 30 no. 2 (Autumn 1941) pp. 99-189.; 4) Penn's wife as patron with political motives: Charles Coleman Sellers *Symbols of Peace: William Penn's Treaty with the Indians*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1976) ; 5) a celebration of relative calm in the Pennsylvania colony following years of conflict: Ann Uhry Abrams, "Benjamin West's Documentation of Colonial History: Penn's Treaty with the Indians," *Art Bulletin* vol. 64, no. 1 (March 1982) pp. 59-75; 6) a compendium of material goods as markers of cultural exchange: Anne Cannon Palumbo, "'Present Commotions': History as Politics in Penn's Treaty," *American Art* vol. 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1995) pp. 28-55; 7) a prophetic gesture towards the Luddite reaction against encroaching technologies of industry: Laura Rigal, "Framing the Fabric: A Luddite Reading of Penn's Treaty with the Indians," *American Literary History* vol. 12, no. 3 (Fall 2000) pp. 557-584; and 8) a propagandistic mask to conceal the unscrupulous imperial conduct of Thomas Penn (the same argument propounded by Sellers): Beth Fowkes Tobin, "Native Land and Foreign Desires: *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians*," in *Picturing Imperial Power Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-Century British Painting* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999) pp. 56-79.

⁷³ "The gestures in 'Penn's Treaty' by Benjamin West (Pl. 20a) are typical of the English Conversation Piece. It is dangerous, therefore, to quote them (As Alfred Neumeyer, *loc. cit.*, has done) in support of the

thesis that the pattern of this picture derives from Masaccio.” Edgar Wind, “The Revolution of History Painting,” *Journal of the Warburg Institute* vol. 2, no. 2 (October 1938) pp. 116-127, p. 121 n1.

⁷⁴ See, e.g., Pennsylvania General Assembly, *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania. Beginning the Fourth Day of December, 1682*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, printed and sold by B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1752) vol. I., p. 98.

⁷⁵ William Douglass, *A Summary, Historical and Political, of the First Planting, Progressive Improvements, and Present State of the British Settlements in North-America*, 2 vols. (London, printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1760) vol. I, pp. 160-161 and 160n. The sartorial habits of Native Americans figured prominently in eighteenth-century Anglophone characterizations: “They wear no cloaths, but a little Skirt about their Waist; but most of ’em have Pieces of Brass in the Form of a Three-quarter Moon in their Nose and Ears. I gave one of these *Indians* a pair of Breeches, and he made an Essay to put ’em on in this Manner. He first put his two Arms into the Thighs of the Breeches, and desired one of his companions to Button the Waistband about his Neck; but when we showed him the right way, and he had put ’em on, he walked as if he had formerly worn Irons, and was so uneasy with ’em that he pulled ’em off, and made Signs to have some Linnen in exchange: In return I gave him a long Cravat, and tied it properly about his Neck: But to see how the Fellow strutted, one would have taken him for one of the Trained Bands ready to march.” William Rufus Chetwood, *The Voyages, Adventures, and Imminent Escapes of Capt. Richard Falconer*, 5th edition (London, printed for G. Keith, 1764) p. 196.

⁷⁶ Clothing the savage and the needy enemy served as an important marker of British imperial martial virtue, particularly as the practice pertained to and coincided with Francis Hayman’s *The Surrender of Montreal to General Amherst*.

⁷⁷ *England Illustrated, or, a Compendium of the Natural History, Geography, Topography, and Antiquities Ecclesiastical and Civil, of England and Wales*, 2 vols. (London, printed for R. and J. Dodsley) vol. 2, p. 169.

⁷⁸ The act of civilization through clothing would also create new markets for British textiles, creating a convergence of imperial, ecclesiastical and commercial prospects.

⁷⁹ Benjamin West to William Darton, Jr. 2 February 1805, quoted in von Erffa and Staley, p. 207. For some reason, most sources list West’s correspondent as “Darnton.”

⁸⁰ Matthew Hargraves, ‘Candidates for Fame’: The Society of Artists of Great Britain 1760-1791 (new Haven and London, Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2005) p. 117.

⁸¹ A number of sources, including Alberts and von Erffa and Staley, repeat the Galt account of the king’s distaste for modern costume.

⁸² Society of Arts Minutes, quoted in John Sunderland, Mortimer, Pine and Some Political Aspects of English History Painting,” *The Burlington Magazine* 116:855 (June 1974) pp. 317-318 and 320-326, p. 325.

⁸³ Thomas More Molyneux, *The Target: Or, a Treatise upon a Branch of Art Military. By a Gentleman Who Has Resided Some Time in England* (London, printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1756).

⁸⁴ Jonathan Swift, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and Then a Captain of Several Ships* (Glasgow, printed by James Knox, 1759) p. 189n. See also *An Historical Miscellany* (London, printed for T. Cadell, 1771) pp. 249-250.

⁸⁵ Patriot Whig (and brother-in-law to William Pitt) Richard Grenville-Temple, Viscount Cobham included Epaminondas in his Temple of Antient Virtue at Stowe, Buckinghamshire, one of England’s most important landscape gardens. See William Gilpin, *A Dialogue upon the Gardens of the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Cobham, at Stow in Buckinghamshire* (London, printed for B. Seeley, 1748) pp. 19-20.

⁸⁶ See Brown, *Estimate*, op cit.

⁸⁷ Plutarch, “Life of Caius Marcius Coriolanus,” in *Plutarch’s Lives*, 6 vols. (London, printed for J. and R. Tonson, 1758) vol. II, p. 147

- ⁸⁸ L. M. Stretch, *The Beauties of History; or, Pictures of Virtue and Vice, Drawn from Real Life, Designed for the Instruction and Entertainment of Youth*, 2 vols. (London, printed for the author, 1770) vol. I, pp. 175-176
- ⁸⁹ Society of Gentleman, "Life: By the Observer," reprinted in *The Library: Or, Moral and Critical Magazine, for the Year MDCCLXI*, 2 vols. vol. I, pp. 243-247, p. 245. [The reprint appeared in the August 1761 issue of the publication.]
- ⁹⁰ See Charles Rollin, *The Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Macedonians, and Grecians*, 5th ed., 7 vols. (London, printed for J. Rivington, R. Baldwin, Hawes, Clarke and Collins, R. Horsfield, W. Johnston, W. Owen, T. Caslon, S. Crowder, B. Law, Z. Stuart, Robinson and Roberts, and Newbery and Carnan, 1758) vol. I, p. cxxviii, summarizing Marcus Junianus Justinus, *The History of the World, Translated from the Latin of Justin: With Some Necessary Remarks by Way of Notes; and a Prefatory Discourse, Concerning the Advantages That Ought Chiefly to Be Had in View, in Reading This or Any Ancient Historian*, C. Turnbull, trans., 2nd edition, (London, printed for S. Birt and B. Dod, 1746) p. 72 [book VI, chapter viii]
- ⁹¹ D. Y., "Of the Theban Glory under the Auspices of Epaminondas," in *Translations from the French* (Lynn, printed for the author by W. Whittingham, 1770) p. 72.
- ⁹² This painting bears a slight resemblance to those in the Sala dei Giganti in the Palazzo del Té in Mantua. See "The Virtuous Never Die," in *Historical and Entertaining Anecdotes...* second edition (London, W. Lane, 1775) 67-68 on Epaminondas's death: "'Do not regard this day as the end of my life, but as the completion of my glory, and the beginning of my fame'."
- ⁹³ William Robertson, *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, 3 vols. (Dublin, printed for William Watson, Thomas Ewing and Samuel Watson, 1769) vol. 2, p. 135.
- ⁹⁴ See Guyard de Berville, *Histoire de Pierre Terrail, dit le chevalier Bayard, sans peur, et sans reproches* (Paris, Laurence Giffart, 1760). The biography appeared again under the imprint of Claude de Hansy in 1765 and again in 1768. For a discussion that contextualizes West's *Bayard* within the broader eighteenth-century taste for the medieval and the chivalric, see Alice P. Kinney and Leslie J. Workman, "Ruins, Romance, and Reality: Medievalism in Anglo-American Imagination and Taste, 1750-1840," *Winterthur Portfolio* vol. 10 (1975) pp. 131-163.
- ⁹⁵ The issues for December 1763 through December 1764 appeared in a bound collection as *The Weekly Amusement from Saturday December 24th 1763 to Saturday December 29th 1764 or An Useful and Agreeable Miscellany of Literary Entertainment. Consisting of Such Choice Pieces Both Prose and Poetry as Are Worthy of Notice Either for Usefulness or Entertainment*, 2 vols. (London, printed for R. Goadby, 1765). The anecdote of Bayard appears in the 7 July 1764 issue on page 462.
- ⁹⁶ See David Hume, *The History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the Revolution in 1688*, 8 vols. (London, printed for A. Millar, 1763) vol. II, p. 449 and 473.
- ⁹⁷ Because Bayard was able to repulse the imperialists, he saved the French army from decimation by the Holy Roman Emperor's troops.
- ⁹⁸ George Lyttleton, *The History of the Life of King Henry the Second*, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (London, 1767-1771) vol. II, p. 246.
- ⁹⁹ For a problematical sample of Bayard's immediate cultural currency, cast in terms of Sir Philip Sidney's exploits of empire under Elizabeth I, see *The Annual register, or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature, for the Year 1767*, 2nd edition (London, printed for J. Dodsley, 1772) pp. 22-23.
- ¹⁰⁰ William Robertson, *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, 3 vols. (Dublin, printed for W. and W. Smith, A. Leathley, G. Faulkner, S. Powell, P. and W. Wilson, J. Exshaw, H. Saunders, W. Whitestone, W. Sleater, L. Flin, B. Grierson, E. Lynch, D. Chamberlaine, J. Potts, J. Hoey, Jr., J. Williams, J. Mitchell, W. Colles, J. Milliken, C. Ingham, and J. Porter, 1770) vol. II, pp. 203-204.
- ¹⁰¹ These narratives essentially duplicate themes presented in other works here considered.
- ¹⁰² James Thornhill had provided the large-scale decorative works for Greenwich Hospital during the reign of Queen Anne, followed by short-lived favor in the court of George I before being eclipsed by William

Kent in the eyes of the Hanoverian King. After lengthy deliberation and innumerable delays, Thornhill's status as native born and his membership in the Anglican Church won him the commission to decorate St. Paul's Cathedral. London's *Weekly Packet* for 25 June 1715 reported the St. Paul's selection committee thusly: "We hear the commissioners, &c. have agreed, at last, with Mr. THORNHILL, to paint the dome of the cupola of St. Paul's; and it is not to be doubted, but that when it is finished, the skill of our celebrated countryman, whose memory must live as long as *Hampton Court* or *Greenwich Hospital* are in being, will put to silence all the loud applauses hitherto given to foreign artists." As history painter to the king, Thornhill should have received the royal commission to provide the decorative paintings for Kensington Palace, but George I chose William Kent instead, based on the latter's more reasonable rates for the job. See Tabitha Barber, "Sir James Thornhill (1675/6–1734)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/27350>.

¹⁰³ For a retrospective assessment of West's contributions to formulations of modern Anglophone identity, see John Adams, *The Flowers of Modern History* (Dublin, 1789) pp. 305-306: "As the most excellent of [English painters] are now living, I shall not enter into a particular estimate, of their merit; but observer in general, that if they have not attained all the force of colouring, truth of drawing, and strength of expression, to be found in the greatest Italian masters, they have made ample amends by the judicious choice of their subjects. Instead of crucifixions, flagellations, last suppers, and holy families, they have given second life to heroes and legislators. They have made public virtue visible in some of its most meritorious acts. ... West's *Departure of Regulus*, his *Pennsylvania Charter*, and his *Death of Wolfe*... fill the mind with nobler ideas than were ever communicated by the pencil of any [French Catholic] slave that kneeled at the altar of superstition. Fortunately for the lovers of embellishment, engraving, of which painting may be said to be the prototype, has not made less progress in England during the present century than the present art. Historical pictures can only become the property of the rich and great. Besides, they are very liable to be injured by time or accident. Hence the utility of engraving in plates of copper. It multiplies copies at a moderate price; and its representations, if less perfect than those of the pencil, are more compact and durable."

¹⁰⁴ Individual houses may have outranked Claremont in audacity, but the conscription of the visual arts (painting, decorative arts, architecture, landscape gardening and sculpture) in the service of the imperial self-fashioning of a common-born Briton had never been undertaken on the scale that Clive intended for Claremont. The estate combined elements from Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, wall painting from Herculaneum, Westminster and St. Paul's, Hampton Court Palace and Versailles – all intended to alleviate the anxiety that Clive felt at his exclusion from polite British society despite his having "handed" India to his countrymen through the diwani.

Chapter 4 – The Visual Heroics of Empire in the Private Realm

The East Indies are going to be another spot of contention. Such a scene of tyranny and plunder has been opened as makes one shudder! The *heaven-born hero*, Lord Clive, seems to be Plutus, the dæmon who does not give, but engrosses riches. There is a letter from one of his associates to their Great Mogul, in which *our Christian* expresses himself with singular tenderness for the interests of the Mahometan religion! We are Spaniards in our lust for gold, and Dutch in our delicacy of obtaining it. We have another scene coming to light, of a black dye indeed. The groans of India have mounted to heaven, where *the heaven-born* General Lord Clive will certainly be disavowed. Oh! my dear sir, we have outdone the Spaniards in Peru! They were at least butchers on a religious principle, however diabolical their zeal. We have murdered, deposed, plundered, usurped—nay, what think you of the famine in Bengal, in which three millions perished, being caused by a monopoly of the provisions by the servants of the East India Company? All this is come out, is coming out—unless the gold that inspired these horrors can quash them. The House of Commons is going to tap the affairs of India, an endless labyrinth! We shall lose the East before we know half its history. It was easier to conquer it than to know what to do with it. If you or the Pope can tell, pray give us your opinion.¹

During the second half of the 1760s, while Benjamin West saturated the eyes and minds of London's art-going publics with images of classical, early modern and modern heroics of empire history paintings, the fortunes of one man, Robert Clive, focused England's attention on its own imperial purpose. Clive's rise to wealth, power and infamy as the commander of East India Company's military forces in Bengal demonstrated the power of empire to catapult men of modest means to the most rarified

realms of material and political success. As early as 1760, Clive's questionable methods as an agent of empire and the means through which he amassed extraordinary personal wealth had earned him the derisive title "Nabob" – an English corruption of the term "Nawab," which in Mughal Persian meant, roughly, an administrator or viceroy of a province or district who served as a semi-independent subordinate to the Muslim emperor.² Writing to Horace Mann in March of 1761, Horace Walpole complained that "West Indians, conquerors, nabobs, and admirals attack every borough" in the ensuing parliamentary elections.³ As East India Company control of South Asian political, economic and military systems became a fact of British life, Britons understood what "our Nabob" meant when reading accounts of Company activities on the subcontinent: a Mughal deputy ruler installed and/or otherwise supported by East India Company firepower.⁴ An English Nabob, on the other hand, left for India a man of modest means and returned with great treasure acquired through plunder.⁵

Upon his first return from India in 1753, Clive's newly-acquired £40,000 (approximately \$10,146,968 in current value) allowed him to retire family debts, settle allowances on relatives and prepare for a political career as a member of the House of Commons.⁶ Clive won the first election for which he stood, as MP for the Cornwall borough of Mitchell, but a successful challenge to the results unseated him before he served.⁷ Clive returned to India in 1755, and spent his time over the next five years "bullying" and otherwise subjugating "the Black Fellows" of Bengal.⁸ In January of 1757, troops under Clive's command regained control of Calcutta from Siraj ud-Daula (c.

1733-1757), nawab of Bengal, most infamously associated with the Black Hole of Calcutta in which dozens of Britons suffocated to death in a tiny prison cell.⁹ When the East India Company learned of a Mughal conspiracy to unseat Siraj ud-Daula and threw their support behind the leading conspirator Mir Jafar Ali Khan (c. 1691-1765). In a move that became emblematic of the intrigue and tyranny against which the visual heroics of empire declaimed, Clive enlisted the help of the Bengali merchant Amir Chand (d. 1758) by drawing up a fake treaty that included a clause providing for a five percent bounty payable to Amir Chand on any deposed nawab's treasure. Once Mir Jafar and his associates had overthrown and murdered Siraj ud-Daula, Clive personally installed Mir Jafar in his place. When confronted by his "ally" in the coup, Clive produced the "real" treaty, which had never included the Amir Chand commission clause. The tactic so disgusted Admiral Charles Watson (1714-1757), the commander of the British naval forces in India, that he refused to sign the decoy treaty; Clive responded to the refusal by ordering a subordinate to forge Watson's name on the document.¹⁰

Britons named the battle in which Siraj ud-Daula fell the 'Battle of Plassey,' after the city of Palashi; the Anglicization of the name served as Clive's title, Baron Plassey of the Kingdom of Ireland – a style that did not signal elevation to the House of Lords, which he strongly desired. In addition to prompting George III to elevate Clive to a baronetcy and radically increasing his personal wealth, the victory at Plassey proved (in the minds of Britons at home) a turning point in East India Company affairs:

Before the memorable and ever-glorious battle of Plassey, the company's concerns in Bengal were entirely of a commercial nature. They had factories in the different provinces of that kingdom, and they carried on a pretty extensive trade there under the protection of the Subahs or princes of the country; but they were never permitted to interfere in any political affairs. Ever since [Plassey] the English have been under the necessity of concerning themselves more or less in the deliberations and resolutions of the Durbar, (or administration) and sometimes to interpose their authority, or their influence....¹¹

This shift caused consternation in London, as most Britons agreed that the East India Company was a trade entity not qualified to govern twenty million people. And Clive's elevation to Omrah, or Lord of the Empire by the Mughal emperor in 1758 and the associated jagir, or annual stipend of £27,000 (\$7,293,090 adjusted for inflation and then estimated via 2007 exchange rates) attached to that title caused much more discomfort among Londoners than did the Company's shift from capital to imperial function.¹² By 1770 Clive had risen from scion of a Shropshire squire of modest means to wealthiest commoner in England. His return from India in 1760 with a personal fortune estimated between £270,000 and £300,000 (\$72,930,916 and \$81,034,350) added insult to the injury already suffered by the many English aristocrats who remained title- and land-rich but cash poor.¹³ In a letter to Lord Grenville dated 13 December 1763, Clive reported that the "ingratitude of the Court of Directors" regarding his annuity had more adversely affected him than had "their injustice in withholding my fortune."¹⁴ During his third trip to India, Clive commanded the Company troops in the Battle of Buxar in 1764. The settlement of terms following that victory secured for the British East India Company the diwani, or the collection and administration of all tax revenues for the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

To his critics in London and in India, Clive seemed to embody all the viciousness of empire; he did little to quell concerns about his active involvement in provincial intrigue:

...the East India Company have acquired all their possessions by force of arms; by supporting one Nabob against another in the Carnatic, by deposing two Nabobs and setting up a third in Bengal, without the knowledge or consent of the Mogul [emperor]. ...It gives me great pain, Sir, to put the Mogul in so ridiculous a light, but justice to myself obliges me to do it.¹⁵

Contrary to the examples set by the Chevalier Bayard, Fabricius and Epaminondas, Clive readily accepted large gifts from Mughal rulers and bankers and extorted cooperation whenever expedient. Rather than facing any foe with heroic willingness to die for his country like Wolfe and Regulus, Clive arranged through bribes and political maneuvering to quell the fire of troops that might have come to the defense of an “enemy” Nawab so that the Company could install a leader more amenable to British interests. Never attempting to attach South Asians to that interest via peaceful means like Penn and Johnson, Clive installed and then removed leaders by violence as he saw fit, showing neither the clemency of an Amherst toward the French Canadians nor the magnanimity of a Cyrus receiving the king of Armenia.¹⁶ And despite later attempts to reform some of the more egregiously tyrannical practices of the Company, Clive set an example for his successors that would roil the subcontinent for a full century. Instead of relieving the famine-stricken poor in India in the tradition of Germanicus in Egypt, Clive’s legatees in the Company responded with profit- and power-hardened hearts to the suffering and death of some three million indigenes. And finally, though contemporary and

posthumous accounts of his sexual proclivities surely exaggerate, Clive demonstrated anything but the continence of an Alexander at the tent of Darius or a Scipio Africanus in Spain.¹⁷ In short, Clive seemed to more closely resemble Pyrrhus, Leonidas and Tiberius than the classical, early modern and modern imperial models of imperial virtue that comprised West's visual heroics of empire cast of characters.

As Clive rose to prominence and infamy in Calcutta and in London, Britons' anxieties of empire burgeoned in relative proportion, albeit not in direct relation. The nature and character of those anxieties depended upon the individual and his or her location within Anglophone cultures. For Clive's competitors and enemies in the Company, the anxiety emanated primarily from their desire to accumulate wealth on a scale comparable to Clive's.¹⁸ As Edmund Burke noted in the *Annual Register* for 1767, "Immense spoil, as it has often appeared too great for the minds of the conquerors...has sometimes sunk them into a worse condition than that in which they had left the vanquished. The amazing successes of the company, and the vast profits arising from them, first kindled dissension among their servants in the East, and then produced contentions of equal violence in the company itself."¹⁹ For Clive's cronies and investors in East India Stock, guaranteeing returns and avoiding another South Sea Bubble created constant concern.²⁰ For Britons at large, the lessons of the history of empires loomed dark and foreboding: radical territorial expansion of the empire abroad threatened to undermine constitutional liberty at home. The attendant "free though conquering" conundrum would not resolve itself until well into the 1790s. For the men whose lives

formed a sort of lingering residue of disinterestedness connected to the public sphere, empire imperiled masculine virtue by infecting the populace with eastern luxury and effeminacy. Horace Walpole, one of Clive's most prolific and articulate critics, expressed that particular concern thus: "Conquest, usurpation, wealth, luxury, famine – one knows how little farther the genealogy has to go! If you like it better in Scripture-phrase, here it is: Lord Chatham begot the East India Company, the East India Company begot Lord Clive, and Lord Clive begot the Maccaronis [the fashionably effete among London's male population]; and they begot poverty; and all the race are still living...."²¹ Whether or not Clive conducted his London affairs with reckless ostentation, his critics cast his good fortune in terms of decorum based on the moderation appropriate to an English gentleman:

...Robert Lord Clive, having, as one of the principal servants of the Company, received after the battle of Plassey the sum of two hundred and thirty-four thousand pounds, to his own private emolument, and thereby exceeded the bounds of moderation, and shewn a bad example to other servants belonging to the Company, who had little or no merit.' The Solicitor General...defended Lord Clive in a very liberal and elaborate manner...and shewed the impropriety, ingratitude, and madness of a democratical spirit actuating the House to level the greatest talents, the severest services, and the most justly-enjoyed fame, with a set of men guilty of everything laid to the noble Lord's charge, but without the least of his great services to plead in their excuse.²²

Members of Parliament and the ministers at court agonized over whether they were effectively managing the Company's shift from commercial factor to "sovereign power" of India, and whether they had any constitutional basis upon which to claim the Company's conquests for crown and country.²³ For artists whose works *qualified* as luxuries funded by conquest and featuring imperial subjects, the anxiety came not from

empire itself, but from the question of how best to engage the themes of empire in order to make themselves and their works relevant and saleable. For some, this meant sailing to India to make pictures “on the spot”; others preferred to stay in London and fabricate their scenes of the periphery.²⁴ For the Hanoverian monarch who claimed to “glory in the name of Briton,” the financial exigencies of territorial conquest and maintenance proved worrisome, as did the long and deeply entangled relationships between England’s expanding global dominion and anti-Hanoverian sentiment.²⁵

In 1767, a group of Englishmen concerned about the inhabitants of the subcontinent joined forces with Clive’s enemies to promote a parliamentary inquiry into the East India Company’s dealings following the transfer of the diwani.²⁶ As members of the House of Commons – many of them holders of East India Stock – considered the state of affairs in India, more Britons became aware of the Company’s questionable conduct as a governmental entity. Though the Select Committee that investigated charges against the Company ultimately voted to allow Clive to retain his annual stipend and exonerated him of personal wrongdoing, Londoners viewed the crimes of Clive’s successors as his legacy and his reputation never recovered. In 1775 biographer Charles Caraccioli recalled the immediate consequences of Clive’s maneuvering in India, which had led to the 1767 parliamentary summons:

Since lord Clive assumed the dewannee, the projects of conquests seem to have so engrossed the attention of the company’s servants, that they seem to have been regardless of the true commercial interests of this kingdom, as they have shewn themselves inattentive to the welfare and prosperity of the natives: for notwithstanding this great increase of there dominion, there has been scarce any in the sales of the British woollens in Bengal. ...The necessity of separating the

territorial and commercial powers in Bengal, as much for the security of the company as for the advantage of the state, has been demonstrated to government....²⁷

Critics of Britons' conduct on the subcontinent characterized the "artificial government" instituted by the East India Company as

absolute, despotic, and arbitrary in the execution of its foreign trust," with "no other support than the pretence of holding an office under the Mogul... who is dependent upon them for his very subsistence and is forced to perpetrate the most unwarrantable actions, when directed to serve the iniquitous purposes of the company's servants."²⁸

Toward preventing future abuses, parliament instituted the 1773 Regulating Act, which provided a number of safeguards primarily intended to secure vital revenue streams from the subcontinent into London coffers.²⁹

As he faced the realities of public perception, Clive suffered anxieties peculiar to his unprecedented and (if he were to have his way) unparalleled situation; except for some legitimate physical and mental health problems those anxieties arose almost entirely from unrequited expectations. Feeling that he had essentially hand-delivered the Indian subcontinent to his countrymen, Clive expected (as expressions of gratitude for his service) an English peerage that would secure him a place in the House of Lords, a warm welcome from England's elite, and a memorial in Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's. The Irish baronetcy kept him in the House of Commons, though his elevation to the Order of the Bath did place him in exalted company. Clive and his wife Margaret were summarily shut out of London's social circles. The ostracism reached an extent such that he instructed Margaret to cease all attempts to mix with London's most fashionable ladies.

And though he ultimately won a seat in Parliament, Clive spent most of his public time and energy defending his character against attacks and preserving his financial gains against the machinations of his enemies in the Company. Plagued by fits of anxiety and depression during the years between his final return from India and his death by suicide, Clive sought solace in the acquisition of property and in the restorative power of illusion. Beginning in 1762, Clive restored his family's crumbling Styche Hall in Shropshire; purchased a gray Palladian London town house at 45 Berkeley Square and acquired a second property in Shropshire, called Walcot. He then bought the lease on William Pitt's Bath mansion and added country seats in Surrey (Claremont) and Ludlow (Oakly Park). If he could not conquer England's aristocracy as he had vanquished India, he would establish for himself and his legacy a separate realm of imperial martial heroism. Drawing upon all the resources of the visual arts ancient, modern, European and "Asiatick," Clive envisioned a triumphal psychic topography free from discrete markers of empire-bred status anxiety – a private demesne in which he could rule as the supreme arbiter of and primary audience for his own imperial self-imaginary.

So that he could best engage visual culture toward this project of imperial self-fabrication, Clive embarked on a late-life Grand Tour, conducted in two stages. For the first segment of his continental itinerary, Clive and retinue departed his lavish Berkeley Square town house on 19 January 1768 and arrived in Paris twelve days later. While in France, Clive visited Versailles, the Palais Royal and the Gobelins tapestry factory.³⁰ Though he certainly knew of the importance of the fine arts to projecting an image of

wealth and power prior to his departure, Clive's trip to France amplified his sense of the status-affording effects and affects of painting, especially. But by his own admission, Clive's exposure to great works of French art, architecture and design did little toward alleviating his ignorance in matters of connoisseurship. When pressed for a personal meeting with one of the agents enlisted to find works for his planned collection of Old Master paintings, Clive "very fairly confess'd that I was no Judge of the Value or Excellence of Pictures & that I left the Choice & Price of Pictures to others who understand them & that I must be directed by their Opinion."³¹ As Maya Jasanoff notes, "Robert Clive knew nothing about paintings, but he knew that they were things he ought to own," so he set about amassing a collection.³²

By 1771 Clive had learned of the young American painter who radically altered England's aesthetic prospects and whom one can easily compare with Clive: West was a painter who did not know history, but knew he should paint it. Clive enlisted West's help in forming a list of paintings to acquire for the collection that he intended to hang at Claremont. West referred Clive to William Patoun (d. 1783), the Scottish painter, scholar and connoisseur who had accompanied West on a portion of his Grand Tour in 1763.³³ Clive assembled a collection "team" that included West, Patoun, John Symonds (1728-1807) and Sir James Wright (1717-1804). Clive charged the group with locating, authenticating, negotiating, purchasing and transporting the finest examples of European painting on the then very active art market and they in turn charged him, often exorbitantly, for their products and services.³⁴ West and Patoun authenticated and

assessed the condition of paintings located by Wright and Symonds, who served as purchasing agents once Clive had approved an acquisition.³⁵ Clive bought at least thirty paintings within a four-month period in 1771. As Jasanoff observes, Clive's "art collection simply captured in miniature his systematic collection of everything else that a British aristocrat should have, from status symbols to raw power. Call it a collection, call it an empire: it was effectively both, amassed in his search for a place among Britain's ruling elite."³⁶ As a demonstration of "pure, pricey conspicuous consumption, Clive's art collection delivered the strongest evidence yet," of the ambitiousness of his plans to fashion an imperial realm of his own, whether or not that elite extended its collective hand.³⁷

Claremont

In 1769 Clive set his sights on Claremont, the country seat of the recently-deceased Thomas Pelham-Holles, whose titles included Viscount Houghton, Marquess of Clare and Duke of Newcastle upon Tyne (1693-1768).³⁸ The duchess, Henrietta, proposed an initial price of £45,000 in hopes of retiring a substantial portion of the £300,000 debt attached to the estate. Clive, one of Newcastle's major creditors, convinced the widow to reduce the price by £20,000.³⁹ Clive chose Claremont for a number of reasons, most of which related to status anxiety. The main house on what became Newcastle's Claremont was built around the nucleus of Chargate, the estate of

playwright and architect John Vanbrugh (1664-1726), who created the building “in a whimsical style of architecture.”⁴⁰ In 1720 Vanbrugh completed the transformation of the seat from whimsical to sprawling by increasing the number of rooms and “replacing battlements by attic parapets and adding a central pediment and a coat of plaster.”⁴¹ Soon after Pelham-Holles took occupancy of the estate in 1714, the physician Samuel Garth invoked Claremont to emblemize Newcastle’s (and his own) support for the Hanoverian succession:

...*Britannia* smiles, nor fears a foreign Lord;
 Her safety to secure, Two Powers accord,
 Her *Neptune*’s Trident, and her *Monarch*’s Sword.
 Like him, shall his *Augustus* shine in Arms,
 Tho’ Captive in his *Carolina*’s Charms.
 Ages with future Heroes She shall bless;
 And *Venus* once more found an *Alban* Race.

Then shall a *Clare* in Honour’s Cause engage:
 Example must reclaim a graceless Age.
 Where Guides themselves for Guilty Views mis-lead;
 And Laws ev’n by the Legislators bleed[.]
 His brave Contempt of State shall teach the Proud,
 None by the Virtuous are of Noble Blood.
 For *Tyrants* are but *Princes* in Disguise,
 Tho’ sprung by long Descents from *Ptolomies*.
 Right he shall Vindicate, good Laws defend;
 The firmest Patriot, and the warmest Friend.
 Great *Edward*’s Order early He shall wear;
 New Light restoring to the sully’d *Star*.
 Oft will his Leisure this *Retirement* chuse,
 Still finding future Subjects for the Muse,
 And to record the *Sylvan*’s fatal Flame.
 The *Place* shall live in Song; and *Claremont* be the Name.⁴²

In addition to the associations that Clive made between Claremont and Pelham-Holles’s having been rewarded for his fidelity by elevation to an earldom (which Clive so

feverishly desired), the landscape garden of Claremont had assumed a renown that separated it completely from Vanbrugh's house and from Newcastle's politics.

One source of the garden's fame, William Kent (1686-1748), overtook a revolution-in-progress in landscape design by permanently replacing the formal English garden of the seventeenth century with a painterly, pictorial design that emphasized carefully-calculated, Arcadian informality. In his essay *On Modern Gardening*, Horace Walpole – known more for the effusive nature of his criticism than for the lavishness of his praise – extolled Kent as having arrived on the garden design scene at precisely the right time:

At that moment appeared Kent, painter enough to taste the charms of landscape, bold and opinionative enough to dare and to dictate, and born with a genius to strike out a great system from the twilight of [his predecessors' and contemporaries'] imperfect essays. He leaped the fence, and saw that all nature was a garden. He felt the delicious contrast of hill and valley changing imperceptibly into each other, tasted the beauty of the gentle swell, or concave scoop, and remarked how loose groves crowned an easy eminence with happy ornament, and while they called in the distant view between their graceful stems, removed and extended the perspective by delusive comparison. Thus the pencil of his imagination bestowed all the arts of landscape on the scenes he handled. ...[S]ometimes allowing the rudest waste to add its soil to the richest theatre, he realized the compositions of the greatest masters in painting.⁴³

Walpole admired Kent's ability to "serpentinize" the "gentle stream" and lauded the freedom that "chastened or polished" the "living landscape" without the appearance of having so artificially transformed the site in the tradition of the "absurd magnificence of Italian and French" landscape gardens.⁴⁴ Kent's successors added the finishing master touch by introducing plants and trees imported from the imperial peripheries. The "natural" integration of imported species into the soil of the country-seat served as a

potent metaphor for the siting of imperial power throughout the second half of the eighteenth century.⁴⁵ In published descriptions of Claremont that appeared prior to Clive's acquisition of the estate, the landscape garden invariably warranted as much or more attention than the houses.⁴⁶ Claremont, along with Esher Place, the adjoining property of the Duke's brother, Henry Pelham (1694-1754) exemplified the designs by which Kent "made his *hand* known." Kent's signature elements included "a small lake edged by a winding bank with scattered trees that led to a seat at the head of [a] pond" – evidence of his absolute mastery of water effects.⁴⁷

Clive's acquisition of the property conveyed one set of status objectives and the changes that he made to the estate achieved another. Though not necessarily the most widely admired of England's many country houses, the parties hosted at Claremont by the Duke of Newcastle included the most fashionable of England's nobility and foreign dignitaries; George II and his children had visited on a number of occasions as well. Rather than appropriate the storied past of the house and incorporate it into his personal mythos, Clive ordered the house razed to the ground, completely relocating the residential quarters to another part of the property in all new construction.⁴⁸ Clive justified the demolition and relocation on the basis of the house's dampness, which exacerbated his already melancholic temperament. Writing to his private secretary Henry Strachey (1736-1810), Clive reminded, "You know my Sentiments about the Dampness of Claremont. I never enjoy'd one Hour's comfort" while staying there. Clive continued, "...surely if there must be a dry Spot in the County of Surry the Place where the new

Building is erecting must be so, if the Foundations of dry Sand its Situation and Mr. Brown's skills cannot exempt it from the Damp the Jagheer itself cannot make it habitable."⁴⁹ Clive's enthusiasm for the potential to remake Claremont "in a taste superior to any in England" seemed to help him forget that the "Effects of the damp Climat" of the whole of England – not just Surrey – had "ever disagreed with me when I have had Occasion to try it" during the periods in which he returned from India.⁵⁰

Even if Clive had been willing to withstand the dampness for the time that he planned to spend at Claremont, one might reasonably suppose that he would have proceeded with pulling down the structure, as its defects had garnered a certain degree of attention. In *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, which appeared in a number of printings between 1740 and 1769, Daniel Defoe noted, "The House is situated so near the Hill, that the Moisture issuing from thence, occasions it to be very damp; and the Winds, being reverberated back from the Woods on the House cause most of the Chimneys to smoke, so that this is a bad Habitation in Winter...."⁵¹ In addition to the damp, Clive had at least one other reason to have the house demolished: John Vanbrugh, "the most singular architect that perhaps ever appeared in any age or country... a romantick castle builder" whose designs invited universal condemnation had conceived its design.⁵²

The "Mr. Brown" to whose skills Clive entrusted Claremont's improvement was landscape designer Lancelot Brown (1716-1783). Nicknamed "Capability," not because of his personal professional capacities but "for his habit of referring to the capabilities of

the places” to which he applied his talents, in 1764 Brown assumed the role of master gardener for the palaces at Hampton Court and Richmond and gardener at St. James’s.⁵³ But for Clive’s purposes, any reference to Brown as “Gardener to the King” or “Gardener to His Majesty” sufficed.⁵⁴ A disciple of William Kent, Brown took the Arcadian vista and the classical style to new levels of austerity, eliminating topographical ornamentation in the wooded vistas of the landscape garden and designing for Claremont a house that more resembled the Roman Curia than a private residence. Brown had proven his genius at landscape garden design; his architectural talent had seen fewer tests. Prior to the Claremont commission, he had designed a country house for Croome Court and provided the plans for remodeling in Warwickshire at Newnham Paddox and at Burghley House, Northamptonshire.⁵⁵ Some critics ridiculed Brown for turning his architectural talents from the garden to the country house, but as one observer noted, “he did it from a kind of necessity, having found the great difficulty...in forming a picturesque whole, where the previous building had been ill placed, or of improper dimensions.”⁵⁶ Clive’s distaste for Vanbrugh’s original construction site dovetailed perfectly with Brown’s architectural impulse.

Clive chose Brown over William Chambers (1722-1796), who had provided the design work for the renovations at Clive’s Berkeley Square town house, Styche Hall, and Walcot. “Styche Hall was a conventional brick house of seven bays and two and a half stories, a commonplace type for unambitious country houses in the middle years of the eighteenth century.”⁵⁷ For Walcot, Shropshire, Chambers produced a “large red-brick

house in splendid grounds with a large lake in front.” The house had “two storeys; eleven bays by eight bays. Centre with a one-storeyed portico of four Tuscan columns. Top balustrade.”⁵⁸ Chambers served as charter architect to the king of England, so it would seem that the combination of the “Gardener to His Majesty,” “Architect to the King” and “Historical Painter to the King” could best serve Clive’s objective of creating his own kingdom at Claremont. Clive had even asked Chambers to submit designs for the house and landscape garden. That Britons closely associated Chambers with flourishes of Asiatic architecture and Chinese landscape gardening may have influenced Clive’s final decision. If that were the case, then Chambers did not fit into the program of appearances and associations necessary for the rhetorical success of Clive’s estate.⁵⁹

Clive wanted complete control over the viewer’s experience of and the associations made with his personal imperial headquarters. Any connection between the house and the grounds at Claremont and such works as Chambers’s Chinese Pagoda at Kew Gardens would undermine Clive’s plan to manipulate the architectural and topographical discourses that connected him to the East. Chambers had undertaken the Asiatic structures for Kew under the patronage of Frederick, Prince of Wales, whose Patriot King vision included global territorial dominion. Had Frederick survived to reign over Great Britain and its imperial provinces, he would have equated the architectural features of Kew with the exotic wildlife park that Clive later installed at Claremont. As Kimerly Rorschach notes, Frederick’s

House of Confucius, which commemorated the achievements of the legendary Chinese philosopher and the transmission of his ideas to the West, may be been

conceived as a 'Temple of Virtue', analogous to the Temple of Ancient Virtue at Stowe. This was a classical temple adorned with statues of Homer [author of the *Aeneid*], Lycurgus [lawgiver of Sparta and establisher of the Senate and commonwealth models of government], Socrates and Epaminondas. The introduction of different architectural styles through the construction of exotic garden buildings was carried out by William Chambers, but the impulse was Frederick's.⁶⁰

The decorative program for the Eating Room at Claremont, to which I will return shortly, proves that Clive wished to choose and, to the extent possible, limit viewers' associations between his person, his villa at Claremont, his wealth and the Asiatic underpinnings of all three.

Though from a family that "had been seated at Styche since the twelfth century, Clive knew that his social superiors considered him a parvenu."⁶¹ Well aware of the general sense of derision with which Britain's nobility viewed upstart men of trade and empire, Clive set about to furnish the Palladian villa that Brown designed for Claremont in such a manner as to silence the prophetic sneers and reflective depredations of such men as Horace Walpole and James Boswell (1740-1795), who, respectively, lamented the appearance of snug "*middling houses*," "boxes" along the roads that "should all be rented by poets, for it would require a great deal of imagination to suppose them country houses."⁶² Quoting "a statement of work to be done in 1772," Jasanoff details the nature and extent of Clive's £37,000 investment:

Principal Floor...with very neat Mahogany Sashes, Best Plate Glass, Silk Lines, inside Shutters double hung, the mouldings of which...to be richly Carved, the Architraves, Base and Surbase mouldings also to be enrich'd with Carving...the Doors to be made of fine vaner'd Mahogany with the mouldings to the Pannels enriched, Best Mortice Locks with ornamental furniture with rich Frizes and Cornices over each, the Chimney Peices to be made of rich Marbles finely

Carved, Statuary Slabs, Black Marble Covings, and back Slips, and bright steel hearths.⁶³

The sumptuous furnishings and decorative flourishes intended for Claremont would provide an atmosphere suitable to Clive's recently acquired paintings by Claude-Joseph Vernet (1714-1789), Salvator Rosa (1615-1673), Claude Lorrain (1604-1682), Nicholas Poussin (1594-1665), Paolo Veronese (1528-1588) and Jacopo Tintoretto (1519-1594).⁶⁴

Clive planned to hang Italian, French and Dutch paintings (acquired after two trips to Paris, one to Brussels and one to Rome and numerous visits to Christie's auction house in London) on the walls of Claremont's Great Room. In a manner similar to that employed by Benjamin West with Roman antiquities and compositional elements from paintings by Poussin, Clive's decorative scheme would condition his guests' reception through a number of stages. After turning onto the road that led to the property, Clive's invitees would experience that most Brownian of English landscape gardens, with its sweeping lawns, clumps and serpentine bodies of water. Those guests who knew the history of the estate would also associate the vistas with William Kent and – perhaps to a lesser extent – with Vanbrugh and with possibly even Charles Bridgeman (1690-1738), whose turf amphitheatre (c. 1724) remained from the early eighteenth century.⁶⁵

Through those names, viewers would connect Claremont's vistas to some of the most important country seats in England: Blenheim, Chiswick and Cliveden, as well as Kensington and Hampton Court Palaces. Once the house came into view, the Palladian influence of Chiswick would dominate the association process. The monumental Corinthian portico of the grand entrance, which Brown topped with a large pediment and

flanked with a rather Spartan exterior would have read as tasteful restraint on the part of Clive and his architect.

Clive's program changed genealogical courses from eighteenth-century English landscape design and architectural Palladianism on the outside to ancient Rome in the grand entrance. The inlaid-marble floor, bas-reliefs, pedimented doorways, scagliola columns and marble sculpture in large arched niches would summon to mind the greatest villas of Rome.⁶⁶ The rectangular space of the entry, enclosing an oval ceiling and floor, promised to impress even the most jaded among England's architectural cognoscenti.⁶⁷ Above all, the grand entrance announced Clive's personal motto: "[aut] Caesar aut nullus."⁶⁸ From the entrance, the plan directed Clive's guests past the top-lit central staircase into the Great Room, the exhibition space for his painting collection (fig. 89). Clive intended that the works create an impression of a lifetime of devotion to the acquisition of fine European art, completely belying the reality that the collection had been amassed in less than five years. Jasanoff observes

Clive's Old Master paintings put the finishing touches on the aristocratic profile he had worked so hard to cultivate. As a collector of art, he acted out the role he had defined for himself by 'collecting' parliamentary power, estates, and houses. Buying up intangible commodities such as these may not usually be characterized as 'collecting' in the way that buying up paintings is. (Typically, accumulating power and property gets called empire-building instead.) But the motives – and the money—behind Clive's various kinds of acquisitions were identical. His art collection simply captured in miniature his systematic collection of everything else that a British aristocrat should have, from status symbols to raw power. Call it a collection, call it an empire: it was effectively both, amassed in his search for a place among Britain's ruling elite.⁶⁹

And just as West had conditioned his audiences' reception with carefully-calculated invocations of Poussin, Clive intended that the paintings in his Great Room prepare visitors for the space into which they would move for formal dining.

In that that space, the Large Eating Room, Clive worked with West, Brown and Brown's assistant and future partner and son-in-law, Henry Holland (1745-1806), to combine a number of starkly disparate elements and influences into a single "harmonious disposition."⁷⁰ The triumphal decorative program for the Eating Room included four modern heroics of empire history paintings to feature highlights from Clive's military and political career in India (fig. 90). The north and south walls of the room would have each displayed one gilt-framed painting of 9 ½ x 15 feet with two smaller, works of vertical compositional orientation flanking the fireplace on the room's west wall (figs. 91, 92 and 93). Christopher Rowell argues that Nathaniel Dance's full-length portrait of Clive may have been commissioned for the overmantel (fig. 94).⁷¹ Brown's designs for the room included above each door on the north and south walls one large roundel depicting another scene from Clive's India exploits. "Ornamental stuccowork in the form of pendants incorporating sconces" would have risen from a few inches above the wainscoting, terminating just beneath garlanded crown moulding.⁷²

Had Clive outlived the completion of Claremont, the totality of the decorative program would have exposed his guests to a number of expressive forms. Recently-published engravings after the wall paintings at Herculaneum informed the decorative accents in the Eating Room, where one might also see the Arch of Constantine in the

decorative roundels. The four large modern heroics of empire history paintings could have called to some guests' minds the Music Hall Rotunda at Vauxhall (with the rotunda form itself echoed in the entryway). Other guests might have connected the large-scale paintings with themes of imperial triumph seen in Andrea Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* series at Hampton Court and in the staircase paintings at Marlborough House. The decorative history paintings at Greenwich Hospital might have also come to some viewer's minds as they passed through the Great Room into the Eating Room. Elsewhere in the house, Clive wished to have a series of tapestries installed, but he died before the commission from France's (Le Brun's) Gobelins tapestry workshop could be finalized.⁷³

Painting as Prophecy: The Institution of the British Raj (?)⁷⁴

After having traversed the length of the Great Room, guests would have passed through a door on the south wall to enter the Eating Room. With Veronese, Rosa and Poussin still fresh in their minds, viewers would have come upon the only painting that West was able to complete for the commission before Clive's suicide on 22 November 1774. The painting envisions the moment that some twentieth-century scholars have identified as the founding of the British Raj in India: the transfer of the *diwani* – the economic administration of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa – to the control of the British East India Company (fig. 5).⁷⁵ The dimensions of the canvas (approximately 9 ½ x 15 feet), the number of figures represented (more than sixty) and the exotic setting (a Mughal

architectural interior) qualify the work as the most ambitious that West had undertaken in his by then decade-long career of empire-themed history painting, which had begun in earnest with *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Soldier from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian*.

West's trademark Poussinesque, frieze-like organization of figures and choice of lighting effects encourage the viewer's eye to come to rest on the rolled paper located on the central vertical axis of the canvas (fig. 95). The scroll represents a text codifying the transfer of the *diwani* (the right of economic administration) of the Indian provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II to the British East India Company. Issued as one of the conditions of the Treaty of Allahabad, dated 16 August 1765, the document stipulated that the Company would collect the revenues generated by rents in the three provinces and Shah Alam II would be allowed to retain his position as the Mughal emperor, though only in his Allahabad palace and not from the true throne of all India, in Delhi. Under supplementary terms of the agreement, Robert Clive would receive a lump sum in silver and jewels and an annual pension.

Like the presentation of the bolt of cloth in *Penn's Treaty with the Indians*, Benjamin West's *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney* invents a ceremony during which Shah Alam II, the titular ruler of Muslim India from 1759-1806, passes a rolled document to Robert Clive, commander of the British East India Company military forces on the subcontinent who also served as the British governor of the Indian province of Bengal. In the composition, Clive stands before the emperor, who

leans forward from a seated position on his gilt throne to deliver the scrolled papers into Clive's open right hand. Dressed in full British major-general's uniform with the ribbon of the Bath draped on the diagonal across his torso, Clive assumes a rigid, officious stance in three-quarter profile. He looks directly at the emperor, who wears a jama and turban of gold silk brocade, lavishly accessorized with bracelets, necklaces and ornaments composed of pearls, emeralds, rubies and sapphires. The Shah averts his gaze, as if to look at the paper while at the same time belying his titular superiority to Clive by showing deference.

In the years between the painting's completion in 1774 and West's death in 1820, artists, some among the students and patrons who visited West's studio, attendees of the 1795 Royal Academy exhibition and, later, visitors to Powis Castle may have as easily recognized Clive as much by his dress as by his facial features; he wears the same uniform in which he appears in an Edward Penny painting produced for exhibition from around the time that West produced the painting for Claremont (fig. 96). Clive's intimates might have also connected West's portrayal with that produced by Nathaniel Dance. West's picture emphasizes the restrained, masculine aspects of Clive's dress and conduct at least in part to contradict visually any claim that his time in India had left him tainted by eastern ostentation. Londoners who followed East India Company news would have remembered well the conduct of Clive's French counterpart, Joseph-François Dupleix (1697-1763):

The supposed messenger from Dely was received with all the honour and ceremony usually paid to an ambassador from the Mogul; and that nothing being wanting to complete the farce, Mr. Dupleix himself, in the country manner, with musick and dancing-girls before him, mounted on an elephant, received with due reverence from the hands of the pretended ambassador, his commission from the Mogul, and in consequence of his appointment, gave out all order from that time as such; he even kept his Durbar or court, sat on a sofa, and received presents from his council as well as the natives, like a Prince of the country; and thus endeavoured to support the character of the Subah of the Deckan.⁷⁶

Clive (via West) contrived his moment in the presence of the emperor as one in which the ceremonial decorum of the Englishmen contrasted such French buffoonery in the same way that West distinguished the manly restraint of British military finery from the opulence of Mughal dress.

The spatial and kinesic relationships suggested between Clive and the Shah illustrate West's subtle negotiations of hierarchy within the composition. The emperor's body language (averted gaze, slightly bowed head, relaxed left arm with palm facing upward and the deferential effort of rising slightly from his throne, leaning forward and extending his right arm) and his higher placement in pictorial space acknowledge the imagined importance of ceremony that permeated English orientalism. The pictorial tension created by the Shah's deference from a superior position reiterates the poignant inevitability of the decline of Mughal power, a trope of faded magnificence manufactured by the Anglophone imperial imagination.⁷⁷ This process began, in English minds at least, during the reign of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (1618-1707). By 1765, Britons who traveled to India registered a theme common in travel writing: "a kind of reverence and pity for ruined grandeur, even in things inanimate. ...But they had this consolation,

that when conquered, they fell into the hands of a merciful enemy; the English, ever merciful as brave....”⁷⁸ This imaginary diminution of glory helped Britons at home and on the subcontinent to justify the British East India Company’s transformation from corporate trade body to the sovereign ruler of millions of subjects. Just as Mughal invaders had overtaken the “Hindoos,” the crumbled glory of “oriental despotism” would give way to the “benevolent despotism” of the British.⁷⁹ The Shah’s apparent eagerness reinforces and magnifies the fiction of Clive’s decorous passivity in receiving, rather than demanding, extracting or extorting the diwani.⁸⁰ In West’s contrivance, the Mughal emperor insists that Clive accept the diwani, the lump sum and the jagir.

The ruse of inevitability that informed the British presence in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa following the Treaty of Allahabad had in the 1750s prefigured Company “acceptance” of the diwani from the Mughal emperor in 1765. Reflecting on the circumstances that led to the Company’s shift from trade entity to sovereign power, Willem Bolts (1739-1808) – a staunch critic of the Company’s system of government in Bengal – noted,

This Dewannee, which was assumed by the said Right Honourable Lord Clive and his Select Committee...had been long before repeatedly offered to the Company...but was always rejected. ...The reasons for not taking it were then alleged to be, that it would be the source of continual disputes with the Nabôb, by occasioning too great a diminution of his power, be a continual cause of jealousy and contention with the country powers, and the European nations who had settlements in Bengal; might subject the affairs of the Company to the interference of the British legislature, or in the end might be attended with other consequences highly prejudicial to the interests of the Company.⁸¹

Widening resistance from Muslim merchants and political leaders convinced Clive and cohort that the seizure of the diwani would secure and stabilize British power in the provinces. Direct access to provincial tax revenues also solved another problem: no longer would Britons have to ship tons of specie in order to engage in trade on the subcontinent. The revenue streams would all come from India and then be sent back to England, obviating the need for cumbersome (and risky) importation of silver. To facilitate institution of the new system, the Company retained the incumbent Mughal revenue collectors, masking its new role as sovereign ruler from both Europeans and indigenes.⁸²

The Authenticating Force of Minute Pictorial Detail

In contriving a narrative moment in which Shah Alam presents the diwani to Robert Clive, West superimposed multiple layers of fiction onto an event that never transpired, attended by individuals who were not present, set in a land to which West had never traveled. Though they undoubtedly presented a number of artistic challenges, these conditions actually render the event perfectly suited to academic history painting, a tradition rooted in history and literature the subjects of which were by definition always outside the spatial and temporal realms of the artist's personal experience. Like his fellow Royal Academicians, West's training as an artist included a number of practices through which he could lend an air of truth to an wholly fictional occasion: life drawing;

modeling human, allegorical and divine figures after great works of sculpture; copying figures and groupings from paintings and prints; rehearsing the representation of the passions; refining racial types and costume; and a myriad of other formulaic conceits and material applications. Modern heroics of empire history painting drew heavily upon those practices, but the subgenre also introduced likenesses of persons living and recently dead, along with modern sartorial, architectural and topographical elements and eighteenth-century manufactures, all intended to augment the work's rhetorical force.

In West's works, especially, one finds authenticating detail in direct proportion to the degree of contrivance that the painter employed in creating the image. Thus, in a work such as *The Death of General Wolfe*, accurate representation of military uniforms and weapons, recognizable elements from the North American landscape and the portrait of General Monckton all worked to erase from the viewer's mind the realities of the event, which included the rancor with which Wolfe's subordinates and fellow commander viewed him and the likelihood that a British deserter had fired the shot that took Wolfe's life.⁸³ The success of West's *Death of Wolfe* determined the course of both classical and modern heroics of empire history painting thereafter. West's *Lord Clive* sought to equate the magnanimity of its subject with Wolfe's imperial martyrdom.

Lord Clive abounds with highly particularizing detail, a practice that contradicted West's own advice to fellow American-born painter John Singleton Copley of Boston, who would later compete against West in the practice of history painting and challenge West's Royal Academy presidency. Specificity in the rendering of architectural features,

Mughal costumes and the processional trappings of the camels and elephants imbue the scene with an authority that twenty-first-century viewers might characterize as that of an “eyewitness account,” as if West had personally observed the event “on the spot,” recorded his observations and then translated the drawings into the monumental image intended for Claremont. The force of this authenticating detail is important for a number of reasons. First, the event depicted never transpired. Textual accounts published in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries report an impatient Clive arriving at Allahabad, summoning Shah Alam to his tent and demanding the document. Dissatisfied with the prospect of just accepting the firman from the emperor and returning to Calcutta, Clive ordered an impromptu ceremony. The Company servants in attendance, perhaps with the assistance of the Mughal courtiers, fashioned a makeshift throne by pulling together two dining tables and covering them with embroidered cloth. They then placed a chair atop the tables and draped it with fabric. Clive then instructed the Shah to surmount the table and take a seat in the chair. As one purported witness wrote, the “transaction was done and finished in less time than would have been taken up in the sale of a jackass.”⁸⁴ The somber mood of West’s painting helps to compensate for the rather comical thought of Clive’s having orchestrated such a charade.

Two questions arise at this point. First, can one trust the nineteenth-century sources, the strong tendency of which to embellish historical fact renders them suspect? And second, why did West create a painting that differed so dramatically from the events as they purportedly occurred? The answer to the first may be found in the eighteenth-

century Anglophone imagination. Like many aspects of Muslim life on the subcontinent, Mughal court rituals figured very prominently in Londoners' constructions of India. The answer to the second question resides in a pair of drawings by West currently housed among the collections at the British Museum Prints and Drawings Room. One of the works, a loosely-sketched, black and white chalk drawing portrays a scene set inside an enormous tent (fig. 97). Inside the tent space appear a male dressed in a turban and jama, who stands to the right of a man dressed in European dress with a ribbon placed diagonally across his torso. Then men are flanked by a number of other figures, some identifiably Mughal or European. Just outside the tent opening appears an elephant surmounted by a howdah. Beyond the elephant faint lines suggest Mughal architecture. The second drawing, dated 1774, more closely resembles the painting, indicating that Clive could not abide West's initially too-literal representation of the scene as it actually happened (fig. 98).

The detail with which West portrayed the figures and their setting helped to close both the geographical and the imaginative distances that might have otherwise taken the painting too deeply into the realm of fancy. To accurately capture the costumes, weapons and accoutrements of the courtiers, West could have drawn from a number of sources. Those models likely included Mughal portrait miniatures, at least two collections of which Clive owned in album form, with other collections circulating widely in London throughout the 1770s (figs. 99 through 102). West may have known Benjamin Wilson's 1758 portrayal of *Mir Jafar and his son Miran delivering the Treaty of 1757 to William*

Watts (fig. 103). Other possible sources included the engravings after miniatures that appeared in periodical publications and as frontispieces to English translations of Mughal Persian texts and portraits of Mughal rulers such as (or similar to) George Willison's *Portrait of Muhammad 'Ali Khan, Nabob of the Carnatic* (figs. 104 and 105).⁸⁵ West could have visited Vauxhall to inspect Francis Hayman's *Lord Clive Receiving the Homage of the Nabob* (fig. 11). Clive's portrait by his cousin Charles Clive, which features a profile portrait roundel of Mir Jafar on the wall behind the sitter, may have also guided West in diversifying and articulating the Mughal figures that crowd the canvas (figs. 106 and 107).

The close detail with which West represented Mughal material culture in the painting allowed Clive to showcase his personal collections of jewelry, weaponry and other objects collected during his travels and transactions while on the subcontinent. Readily visible examples from Clive's collection include the *katar* (double-handle dagger) secured in the *patka* of the Mughal courtier in the right foreground of the composition and the sword held by the sepoy whose back faces the viewer in the left foreground (figs. 108 and 109). Presumably, Clive would have produced and displayed such items as part of the spectacular context of presentation intended for the painting, pulling the weapons and other objects from a trunk or case to compare them to the painted representation.⁸⁶ Those among Clive's dinner guests who had traveled to India and who had themselves returned with such objects would recognize the fidelity with

which West replicated them on the canvas, compounding the picture's already astonishing effect and affect.⁸⁷ As Jasanoff notes,

a visit to any armory in the world will rapidly confirm, displaying an enemy's weapons involves no small amount of triumphalism. But Europeans collecting Indian weapons were not moved to do so only out of imperial arrogance. They were *beautiful*, these things, elegantly and richly decorated. They were also technically sophisticated, and appealing because of fascinating workmanship and unusual design. And they were exotic[:]. . . a scimitar . . . with its cruel, enchanted blade inscribed with verses from the Koran. There were steel daggers curving out of shining hard-stone hilts. There were matchlocks with barrels a yard long, inlaid with silver. There were battle-axes and spears of a kind long gone from European battlefields in this age of cannon and musket.⁸⁸

Clive's triumphalism may compare to other examples extant today, but in the early 1770s, no common-born Englishman had ever undertaken such a display.

Regardless of their feelings about the means by which their countrymen acquired luxury objects from the imperial provinces, Britons devoted much time and attention to their opulence. And as jewelry, weapons and other objects flooded into England, concerns about the potentially corrosive effects of eastern luxury on British virtue gave way to intense fascination with the materiality of that luxury, as this undated cutting from *St. James's Chronicle*, which I quote here at length, attests:

The dagger, to wear in the girdle, is in the Asiatick taste, made from an Indian one in the possession of the Right Hon. Lord Clive. Its is of gold curiously enameled, and embellished with large diamonds, rubies and emeralds formed into trophies of war, and other rich ornaments, to correspond with the scymeter [described in an earlier article in this publication]. The scabbard, which is of crimson velvet, is embellished in like manner with great elegance and taste. The blade, made after a Damascus pattern, is of a peculiar form highly polished, beyond the power of art to exceed it. The jewels, to adorn the neck and breast, are equally sumptuous with the other ornaments, and contrived to fix with straps of gold, behind crescents of diamonds, to each shoulder from when it hangs down to the belt or girdle, terminating with an emerald drop two inches long, and large in proportion, of the

shape of a pear, weighing two hundred and fifty carats, supposed to be the largest in Europe. It is ornamented with a crown of diamonds, rubies, and pearls, by which it hangs to a beautiful large rose diamond, perfectly clean, of an oval shape, full an inch and a quarter long, set round with fourteen very fine diamonds, forming together a magnificent flower. The gems and pearls, on each side, composing this magnificent esclavage, consist of six pair of emerald drops, separated by large square and oval emeralds, weighing together upwards of eight hundred carats, which for shape, magnitude and beautiful colour, exceed description: Besides which, upwards of thirty large pearls (in pairs) from forty to an hundred grains, each fine in shape, and beautiful in colour, are properly introduced, hanging by loops of diamonds to branches of emeralds, flowers of diamonds and rubies, with leaves of emeralds, uniting the whole together. To compleat, with the utmost splendour, that most conspicuous part of the ornaments, a middle fall is made, equally rich with the circular one. It is suspended from the neck down upon the breast, so as properly to fill up the vacancies of the esclavage. At the top is a large rock ruby of fifty grains, and fine colour: below it are large and beautiful pearls, in six divisions, gradually widening to the bottom, which terminates with a large emerald drop, set transparent in a frame of diamonds and rubies, and embraced by flowers of diamonds, to which hang two matchless fine pearls in the shape of a pear. In the centers of the several divisions are large and fine emeralds, separated by drops of pearls suspended between them; at the sides also pairs of pearl also remarkably fine and perfect, weighing from fifty to an hundred grains each. The space between the large emeralds and pearls are flowers, leaves and branches of diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, forming the most pleasing contrast, produced by the assemblage of such a variety of fine gems arranged and disposed in a taste the does honour to the Artist who conducted the execution thereof. The Bracelet is an ornament constantly worn by the Princes of Asia upon the arm above the elbow. That now made consists of three splendid ornaments looped together, and properly incurvated; chains of rubies linked with brilliants between rows of large pearls fastened to springs of gold, lock into the bracelets, contrived with great ingenuity, to be extended or contracted to the size of the arm. The threefold ornaments are nearly alike in richness, elegance and size. The center one is a most capital emerald, weighing upwards of ninety carats, perfectly fine and of the first and finest colour set transparent, with a double border of jewels in the Indian taste. The inner circle is brilliants and rubies extremely fine, of near two carats each, the outer border is of pearls and brilliants alternately placed between leaves of the finest emeralds in colts of gold; the rest of the jewels also bottomed with gold. The borders of the two other oval ornaments, that form the locket part of the magnificent Bracelet, are set exactly the same as the center one, surrounding two of the finest pearls in Europe, which for size, shape, and beautiful orient colour, are not to be equaled; they are suspended by a gold loop in a frame of brilliants, united to the other

borders, and hang transparent. The pearls introduced round the borders are also perfectly fine, were brought unbored from Persia, and never used but on the present occasion. There is behind the lockets provision made, that when separated from the chains of rubies and pearls, it may be used as a Seerpeach for the Turban or other purposes. The parts that compose the Belt, as well as those for the neck and breast, are also calculated to be used as separate ornaments, or united together in various other forms, loops, bands, and charniers being fixed behind for that purpose. It has been [a] matter of wonder and admiration to many judicious and intelligent enquirers, in what time and from whence so great a quantity of almost inestimable jewels could have been collected. We have authority to declare, that not only several years have been taken up in effecting it, but that Merchants in several distant countries have been employed in the purchasing of them. It has likewise been asserted, that some of the most capital stones and pearls therein employed, are part of the plunder of Delhi by *Nadir Shaw, carried by him into Persia, and from thence by the hands of commerce conveyed into Europe. *Kouli Chan.⁸⁹

The availability and accessibility of extraordinarily sumptuous objects and the virtuoso workmanship with which Mughal artists made those objects captured the attention of London's publics. In the first half of the 1770s, British jewelers and decorative artists began to produce luxury good fashioned after Mughal models, some of them intended for use in India.⁹⁰ At the same time, James Cox organized a London exhibition of imperial material culture at Spring-Gardens, drawing large crowds from all ranks of society. Cox's spectacle, billed as "Asiatic pomp" improved by British genius, included elephants "richly caparisoned" and a "magnificent Asiatic Temple," ten feet in height and "ornamented with gold, jewellery, palm trees, and other rich embellishments, out of the dome of which rises a Pagoda to the music of its chimes."⁹¹ Compared to such excesses, West's understated integration of fine jewelry and other objects into the Clive painting reflect the moderation that both artist and patron wished to convey.

Editors and printers of London's serial publications knew that their readers would be interested in learning that Clive had presented George III "a fine sword set with diamonds, and a fine pearl necklace for her majesty, both of very considerable value."⁹² In English history, at least, the presentation of diamond-encrusted swords usually moved from crown to subject rather than vice-versa. Whether George III saw the gesture as presumptuous or otherwise inappropriate remains a topic for speculation, but published reports of Clive's grandiosity could have easily exacerbated his reputation for *immoderation*. Clive had engaged in similar breaches of gifting protocol in the years leading up to his purchase of Claremont, including accepting a live elephant – a gift normally passed from a member or members of one ruling family to another or from subject to king. Rather than keep the pachyderm in his wild game park, Clive offered the animal to the Duke of Cumberland. In the same vein, Clive may have hoped that the carat-weight of the large diamond brought "as a present from the Nabob to his majesty, of immense value" would prompt the monarch to overlook any impolitic actions.⁹³ Some among the viewers of West's painting might have compared the necklaces and swords in the picture with those that entered the royal collections as gifts from Clive. Other viewers may have acknowledged Clive's gifts to the monarch and his family when viewing the objects of material culture that West incorporated into *Lord Clive Receiving the Grant of the Duanney*. The *St. James's Chronicle* account and the James Cox catalogue suggest that London's publics paid very close attention to the material culture of imperial conquest. Some Londoners furnished their homes with goods imported from

the periphery and others commissioned decorative objects produced in the Mughal style. Depending upon one's predilections, West's inclusion of Clive's political and military treasure could read as either a rejection of the corrosive power of eastern luxury or proof positive of its demoralizing effects.

In addition to including Clive's personal treasure for purposes of spectacle and authentication, West's painting placed its subject in the discursive realm of classical exemplars of clemency and continence in victory. And as was the case with *Wolfe*, *Penn's Treaty* and the never-exhibited *General Johnson*, West added to *Lord Clive Receiving the Grant of the Duanney* elements of the modern imperial particular in order to render the subject more appropriate for the "greater object" of universal truth. Elevation through corroborating detail contradicted eighteenth-century prescriptions for representing the general rather than "mean particularities," but had West slavishly adhered to academic formulae and to scriptural and classical subjects, history painting would have never reached any level of legitimacy, much less profitability, for Anglophone artists. In some applications, West rendered authenticating detail with just enough ambiguity to compound its discursive value. Such is the case with the *salaam*, or deep bow of obeisance demonstrated by the figure in the lower left corner of the viewer's field of vision (fig. 110).⁹⁴ The position of the man's body suggests that he bows to the Mughal emperor; the act in and of itself ratifies the benefits that British rule will bring to the subcontinent, as Britons never bowed with such demonstrative deference to anyone under any circumstances, including George III, who served at his subjects' pleasure. But

one finds in the composition another possibility: if the man bows to Clive, then the matter assumes another set of meanings altogether. In such a case, one can almost hear the conversation that would have taken place in the Eating Room: “Why, Lord Clive, it appears that this Mussulman is bowing down to you!” To which another of Clive’s guests, or perhaps even Clive himself might have responded, “And so he should!” In that case, then, the salaam may (at least symbolically) be the man’s last such bow. West’s specific purpose for depicting the salaam remains a matter for conjecture, but the proximity of the gesture of obeisance to the Indians attached to the British interest reinforces the contrast of the former with the latter (fig. 111).

To augment the visual iterations of English liberty versus oriental despotism, West added the pair of sepoy and the figure performing the salaam in foreground to the viewer’s left. Most prominent among the figures in the left foremost portion of the composition stand two dark-skinned adult males. Of the two, the male to the viewer’s left stands with his back to the viewer, with no portion of his face visible; the male to the right faces the viewer, with his head turned toward the viewer’s right in near full profile. Each man wears the distinctive red military uniform of the Indian sepoy, which includes flattened “sundial” turban with decorative red-and-white-striped cord leading to a pompon atop its center, red coat, red short breeches with black and gold trim that expose the leg below the knee and black shoes.⁹⁵ To insure that the viewer registers the sepoy’s bare legs, West has positioned the right figure with his left foot resting on the step of a platform, with his hip turned out so that his left foot points directly to the viewer’s right.

To emphasize the posture, West has placed the sepoy's left hand on his thigh, which is raised to a position almost parallel with the bottom edge of the picture plane.

The sepoy whose back faces the viewer holds a sword by its gold-embellished black hilt, casually resting the tip of the blade against the floor close to his right foot. In shape and ornament, the hilt closely resembles that of a sword in the Clive collection at Powis Castle, Welshpool. That sword has a "blued steel hilt inlaid with two colours of gold; braid carrying strap with gilt red and green silk thread [hidden in deep shadow to the viewer's right of the hilt], button and tassel."⁹⁶ Though visible only upon very close inspection, this weapon has a flat disc-pommel that identifies it as a *tulwar*, a Mughal variation of the Persian *shamshir* and the Turkish *kilic*. West proportioned the sepoy figures just smaller than life size to convey spatial proximity to the viewer. Their position with regard to the other figures in the left foreground of the scene suggests an additional purpose: the sepoy on the viewer's right bears an expression of intense concentration, indicating his interest in the central narrative focus of the work and offering one of many directional cues to guide the viewer's reading of the work. And though West has treated this man's face with sufficient attention to suggest a portrait, he has treated both men's anatomy – especially the length of their arms – carelessly. The attention to detail with which West has rendered the uniforms and weapons subordinate the subjects' humanity to the rhetorical force of their Anglo-Indian regimentals, while at the same time reinforcing the "on the spot" authority that permeates the image. The sepoys serve as a visual analog to the Mohawk warrior in *General Johnson* and to the

Native Americans in *Death of Wolfe* and *Penn's Treaty*: Indians attached to the British interest validated the benevolent, civilizing paternalism of the imperial project in South Asia as in North America. West's detailed representation of the sepoy uniforms helps the viewer to easily identify the *indigenæ* whose service to the British has "freed" them from the luxuriously effeminate garb of their countrymen. The sepoys' coats resemble those worn by Clive and Carnac, but their short breeches confirm their low status in the English imperial military caste system.

East India Company lieutenant George Hadley (c. 1774-1798) overtook command of the sepoy troops without ever having learned a word of the language that they spoke. In a 1764 reflection on the raising and maintenance of the indigenous troops Hadley explained:

The seapoys are excellent soldiers under proper indulgence and strict discipline. They are all predestinarians (an excellent doctrine for a soldier). Three things must be observed to render them serviceable: to pay them regularly, never infringe on their religious superstitions, nor interfere with their women. Their have been instances of their returning to us after desertion good for nothing; leaving us, and returning a second time as bad. In 1764 a foolish officer (one of the Company's hard bargains as they are emphatically called) would touch the pots in which they were cooking. The consequence was that, though they had marched a day and night without halting, they threw away their victuals, and turned out loaded, and with tears in their eyes threatened to leave us in the woods; nor would any thing but the immediate confinement of the offender appease them; yet in a quarter of an hour petitioned for his release.⁹⁷

The marked distinctions between Britons' perceived potential for "improvement" of Native Americans versus that of East Indians signify an important point along the trajectories of empire. Whereas the best-case scenario for the former involved conversion to Christianity, education in the classics and recruiting members of one's own

tribe and of other tribes to the improvement scheme, for the latter the Company had to make a number of substantial concessions in order to achieve and sustain the attachment of the sepoys to the British interest.⁹⁸

Through the figure performing the deep bow of obeisance and his proximity to the sepoys, West and Clive composed what one might term a “pictorial phrase” in the overall argument for Clive’s imperial heroism. The sepoys occupy a position in pictorial space (and thus in discursive space) between the enslaved and enslaving Mughals, represented by the salaam, and the improving and liberating English massed to the viewer’s left of the Mughal emperor. Because the sepoy would always occupy the lowest place in the Company military chain of command and because no sepoy could be expected to convert to Christianity and fully assimilate into English culture (cum Samson Occom), West placed the pair as a coordinate in the triangulation of conquest: the Mughals had conquered the subcontinent, instituted the policies and practices of oriental despotism and then collapsed under the corrosive weight of their own luxury and effeminacy; the manly British replaced the Mughals as conquerors and would rule with the justice and benevolence of a temperate and free *imperator*. The sepoy, who had retained his beliefs and customs under the Mughals would continue to do so under the English (much as the French Canadians would under the policies suggested by Archbishop Drummond). The sepoys’ position in the hierarchy of the pictorial phrase clarifies their position: forever beneath the English and still below the Mughal nobleman who stands to the viewer’s

right of the sepoys, but now above the bowing figure because of their attachment to the British interest.

Other types of detail elevate the modern subject of West's *Lord Clive* to an order of magnitude that invokes and thus transcends classical definitions and expressions of imperial martial virtue. The elephants in the scene illustrate this principle: whereas some of the most fearless among Rome's soldiers fled in terror upon the sight of an elephant, Clive stands calmly ignoring their presence.⁹⁹ Londoners fluent in the textual and pictorial languages of classical imperial heroism might have detected in the elephants a reference to Alexander the Great, who (by western European accounts) first used the animals as instruments of conquest. Both Pyrrhus and Hannibal terrified the Romans into retreat by employing elephants and the animals figure prominently in Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* series at Hampton Court and in Poussin's *Hannibal Crossing the Alps*. One may surmise the breadth of Britons' interest in Hannibal's elephants from their appearance in manifestations as diverse as a red chalk drawing by Pietro da Cortona in the Blue Satin Dressing Room at Holkham House and poet Thomas Gray's imaginary gallery, for which he proposed a *Hannibal Passing the Alps* by Salvator Rosa.¹⁰⁰ At a simpler level, West's elephants help to set the scene in India, while also allowing for the inclusion of another object from Clive's personal collection: a steel elephant goad, called an *ankus*, which appears in the hand of the attendant atop the elephant that stands closer to the viewer in pictorial space (figs. 112 and 113).

The placement of figures, the architectural setting, and the variety of gestures and facial expressions and conversational interactions suggest *darbar*, the official court setting in which the emperor would receive foreign dignitaries, hear petitions from his subjects and issue pronouncements. If one extrapolates from a silver betel casket, part of the “*darbar set*” that Clive brought from India intended for Claremont, the ceremonial fiction presented in the painting would have echoed the rituals performed by Clive and his dinner guests (fig. 114). The immediacy of likeness in the faces and dress of the East India Company servants who stand beside and behind Clive, the detailed spectacle of humans as objectified examples of eastern luxury, the Shah’s throne, the elephants’ howdahs and the architectural interior of the space in which the transaction takes place typify West’s pictorial approach to compensating for not having witnessed the transactions that he presented in all paintings of recent historical events. The Mughal courtiers’ dress, especially, renders the picture both authoritative and authoritarian in its representation of a set of circumstances that bore little resemblance to the austere and formal occasion that dominates the picture. West’s attention to sartorial specificity ratifies the legitimacy of the Mughal emperor while gendering the painting by contrasting the manliness of the English with the lack thereof among the Mughals. All figures present are male and with the exception of the two smaller figures in the right foreground, adult. The eighteenth-century viewer not familiar with Mughal costume would have “at first sight...believed them all to be women, from the effeminacy both of their persons and dress, the long white jammers and turbands, appear so truly feminine to strangers.”¹⁰¹

Only the presence of facial hair would have prompted viewers to reconsider first impressions; even that delayed recognition would do little to diminish the contrast in the minds of viewers.

Through imaginative use of likeness and painstaking rendering of costume, weapons and setting in *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney*, West simultaneously claimed and rejected visual reportage, imbuing the image with a tension that one can today recognize as a hallmark of the practice of heroics of empire history painting. As I have stated before, the formal ceremony that transferred the diwani to the British East India Company never happened. To avoid making the picture too fanciful, West populated the scene with witnesses: the groups of Englishmen standing and on horseback served that purpose. Additionally, some of the men pictured might have been among Clive's frequent dinner guests. To the viewer's left of Clive West has portrayed Clive's second in command in India, General John Carnac. Clive and Carnac stand inside the ceremonial precinct created by the four gilt poles that suspend the red velvet canopy above the emperor's throne. The canopy is embroidered with a large sunburst pattern, one of the symbols of the reign of Shah Alam II. Behind Carnac and to the viewer's left stand a number of British East India Company representatives. Combined with the pairs of seated horsemen and standing soldiers barely visible in the left central portion of the composition, West included at least sixteen Britons – some represented only by a forehead or the bridge of a nose – to oversee the transaction undertaken by Clive and Carnac. This group includes Captain Archibald Swinton (1730-

1804); Major Thomas Pearson (1740-1782); Henry Strachey (1736-1810), who assumed the role of Clive's personal secretary in 1764; Anselm Beaumont (d. 1776) and Thomas Kelsall (1736-1796), cousin to Clive's wife Margaret. Among the unidentified Englishmen, a contemporary viewer might have recognized Edmund Maskelyne (1724-1817), Margaret's brother, for whom Clive had written a letter recommending him to East India Company Service in 1755, and Company servant George Vansittart (1745-1825), younger brother of Henry, one of Clive's many enemies in Parliament. Both Maskelyne and Vansittart signed the Treaty of Allahabad.

To emphasize the importance of the British witnesses to the scene, West illuminated the group by suggesting sunlight coming from the beyond the frame on the viewer's left. The sunlight shines on the high foreheads of some of the Company representatives, while reflecting off the gold buttons and powdered wigs of others. Two of the East India Company servants pictured in the composition, Thomas Kelsall and Anselm Beaumont, did not accompany Clive to Allahabad to witness the chair-draping mockery, but anyone who knew the men would have recognized them upon entering the Eating Room.¹⁰² One wonders why an artist would make such a choice, but in this situation, the answer is simple: Kelsall and Beaumont had accompanied Clive on part of his Grand Tour and they would have been frequent guests at Claremont, had the scheme come to fruition. West included these men at Clive's request so that they might see themselves (and other guests see them) on canvas when they joined Clive and his wife for dinner at Claremont.

Opposite Clive on the Mughal ruler's left stand a number of Mughal courtiers and attendants; two bearded and turbaned males occupy a space beneath the canopy diagonally opposite Clive and Carnac, balancing the central grouping of the composition. Surrounding the central assemblage on the left and right and occupying both background and foreground appear Mughal courtiers. Among those pictured, West likely imagined the countenances of "Mirza Cossim Khan, Rajah Seetabroy, [and] Meer Musshala," whose signatures also appear on the Treaty of Allahabad. One of the signatories is likely represented by the turbaned male with a gray beard, gold turban and red garment who stands to Shah Alam's left and slightly behind him, holding a third scrolled paper. The position of this man's arms suggests that he waits to hand the document to the emperor, who will then pass the paper to Clive while making an official pronouncement about the treaty, transfer or firman memorialized in the text. The documents pass from the darkness of the viewer's right (east) into the light of the viewer's left (west), visually reinforcing the poetics of progress in the eighteenth century.

Imag(in)ing Narrative Space

West frames the visual argument of *Lord Clive* within the structural enclosure in which West situated his characters. I contend that one may find this architectural space and its urban setting only in the 1774 painting and subsequent copies. West substituted for Clive's tent fluted columns that rise into arches and baluster columns that frame the

composition on either side of the picture, suggesting the hypostyle audience hall form common to Mughal palaces (which in turn served as the built form of the Mughal tent). The fluted columns support ornately carved red-and-gold-colored capitals beneath imposts that open into gold and red enrailed arches. The arches create a three port loggia, which separates the Englishmen and Mughals from an exterior courtyard or wide street flanked by buildings distinguished by varying architectural features. The arches that form the loggia resemble those which appear in the tomb attributed to Fatehpuri Begam in the Taj Mahal complex at Agra and in the pavilion at Fatehpur Sikri (figs. 115 and 116). A high wall runs between the loggia and the courtyard or street beyond, preventing the viewer from discerning the exact setting for the structure in which West has situated his subject. Within the visual framework created by the leftmost of the three arches appears from the viewer's left a rectilinear structure with two large windows and small, curving, buttress-like forms that support a roof that appears to curve under, similar to the built awnings or *chhajja* common to some Mughal buildings constructed after the reign of Shah Jahan (1592-1666; r. 1628-1658). This structure, though rendered in darkness and with little attention to detail, dominates the upper leftmost portion of the canvas. Next West introduced a small domed kiosk-like structure (*chhatri*), the treatment of which suggests its relative distance among the other, more prominently-articulated structures in the background skyline. To the viewer's right of the *chhatri* rises a large domed structure surrounded by a number of much smaller, columned structures.

No documentary evidence survives to positively identify the sources upon which West based his rendering of the palace and surrounding buildings. I propose that painted miniatures, sketches, written accounts and oral descriptions of the Mughal palace at Allahabad all contributed to what qualifies as West's capriccio on Mughal architecture in the Claremont painting. Though a number of descriptions of the palace at Allahabad survive, for the purposes of this study I rely on Jemima Kindersley, writing in October of 1767:

The fort, or city, of Allahabád is a very large fort; it contains a royal palace, agreeably situated, in a fine country.... In the middle of the palace is a small square, walled round, in the center of which is a square building, supported by pillars; by a very narrow stair-case you arrive at a small room in the centre, which has four doors, leading into four little *Varandas*; by ascending another narrow stair-case you come to a small marble room, which forms a sort of cupola to the building; this is the highest in the palace, and overlooks all the rest. The palace is entirely built of stone hewn out of the rocks on the banks of a distant part of The Ganges, and brought here at vast expence; it is something like what we call in England Portland-stone, but of coarser grain, and much more porous. Besides, they have not the method of giving it a polish; so that it is extremely rough and unpleasant to the eye, particularly in the insides of the rooms. Every part of the palace is built with this stone; not only the walls of the houses, but the roofs, the stair-cases, pillars, and supports, of whatever kind, are all cut out of stone: all the squares, passages, &c. &c. are paved with the same; so that, in short, till the English have resided here, there perhaps was not a bit of wood, brick, glass, iron, or any material but stone, to be found throughout the building. You will easily suppose, from this account, that the palace is not, by any means, light and elegant; the walls, in the lightest part, are about four or five feet in thickness; and as many of the rooms are a sort of octagon, and covered at the top, they are in some parts much thicker; most of the large ones have a great number of niches in the walls, intended to hold lamps for illuminations at their *notches* and *tamashes*.¹⁰³

When cross-referenced with one of the few surviving images of the Allahabad palace as it appeared in the eighteenth century, one can begin to see how West's architectural composite compares to the palace to which Shah Alam retired following the grant of the

diwani. That image, Thomas Daniell's 1795 *The Chalees Satoon in the Fort of Allahabad on the River Jumna*, offers some clue as to the structures that West would have seen in sketches and drawing and that Clive would have described while discussing the painting with West (fig. 117). The title of Daniell's colored aquatint refers to the Mughal Persian term *Chihil Sutūn*, a shortened form of *bārgāh-i chihil sutūn* (audience tent or audience hall of forty columns or many columns), an architectural form dating to and invoking the presence and grandeur of the fifth Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (1592-1666, r. 1628-1658). As Ebba Koch explains

under the predecessors of Shah Jahan most of those who took part in the audience had to stand unprotected from sun and rain in the front of the emperor's viewing window or *jharōka*, in the open courtyard...where the audience was held. The emperor...ordered the construction of the halls out of concern for his nobles. In addition, the halls made it easier to maintain the proper hierarchy and etiquette of an audience, aspect of special interest to Shah Jahan.¹⁰⁴

But in the description of the aquatint published to accompany the image, Daniell identified the "Chaless Satoon, or the *Forty Pillars*" as "a pavilion attached to the palace of Allahabad...erected by the great Emperor Akbar."¹⁰⁵ Britons knew Shah Jahan's reign as the most opulent; Akbar's qualified as the greatest in terms of the efficiency of its governance. If Akbar, whose reign (1556-1605) preceded that of Shah Jahan had ordered the construction of the *Chihil Sutūn*, then one must question the dating of the form to the latter emperor. I would argue that Koch has correctly dated the origins of the form and that eighteenth-century sources confused its origins, partly as a result of the difficult process of translating Mughal Persian into English and partly as a result of the impulse to attribute everything important to the "greatest emperor." Whatever the correct dating,

viewers that would have seen the painting in situ would have understood the connections between the palace at Allahabad and Akbar's installation of the forty pillars as a subtle but intriguing commentary: Akbar had instituted the diwani during his reign, taxing all Muslim members of the society equally (including the nobility); for Clive to assume control of the diwani in a space Britons would have associated with Akbar (whether correctly or not) deepens the rhetorical potency of the picture.¹⁰⁶ West's interior architectural setting and exterior background architecture recombine elements of Mughal buildings and styles into a testament to imperial acquisitive power.¹⁰⁷

During the nineteenth century, the British fortified the palace at Allahabad "in the European manner," transforming it into a "grand military depôt for the upper provinces" of India.¹⁰⁸ The structural alterations and additions to the palace complex produced an appearance that only the most architecturally-inclined of eighteenth-century viewers who traveled to Allahabad would recognize. Writing in 1891, James Fergusson indicated the degree of change: "its plan can be made out; a square hall supported by eight rows of columns, eight in each row, thus making in all sixty-four, surrounded by a deep verandah of double columns, with groups of four at the angles, all surmounted by bracket capitals of the most elegant and richest design, and altogether as fine in style and as rich in ornament as anything in India."¹⁰⁹ The changes made to the palace may help to explain why eighteenth-century critics and twenty-first-century scholars have overlooked the site as the likely setting for West's *Lord Clive*.

At this juncture I should address recent claims regarding the architectural setting for West's *Clive*. Those claims incorporate some of the eighteenth-century criticism of the painting, which includes this archly clever passage from the 6 May 1795 issue of the *London Morning Chronicle*: "As the scene is Asiatic, we think the buildings in the *background* are not sufficiently in *costume*, for the main structure bears too strong a resemblance to our venerable dome of *St. Paul*."¹¹⁰ In *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India*, Hermione de Almeida and George H. Gilpin expound upon the *Morning Chronicle* comment:

West was criticized in the press at the time of the painting's [1795] exhibition for its background of monumental Western-style architecture.... But that, of course, is precisely the point of West's allegorical representation of the importance of the treaty, especially when it is viewed with the retrospection of imperial purpose: Western facility will join with Eastern spectacle in the British possession of India. In fact, the venerable dome at issue in the painting appears to have been adapted from a 1786 painting (and aquatint) of *The Mausoleum of Sher Shah at Sasaram* by William Hodges...a subject chosen by that Romantic artist specifically to illustrate his controversial theory of how Indian architecture preceded, and even influenced, Greek and Roman design, an idea that West himself had endorsed in his first discourse as President of the Royal Academy. West's setting suggests the full imposition of British designs on India by offering a remarkable capriccio of cultural styles that anticipates the future empire.¹¹¹

The suggestion that West may have based the domed structure that appears beyond the leftmost arch (from the viewer's perspective) on William Hodges's (1744-1797) *Mausoleum of the Emperor Shere Shah at Sasseram* seems reasonable enough as the dome of the mausoleum and the dome in West's painting bear a striking resemblance to one another (fig. 118). The painting remained in West's studio throughout the entire decade of the 1780s, so he could have easily reworked the background to accommodate

Hodges's "on the spot" rendering of Mughal architecture.¹¹² Almeida and Gilpin

continue:

A capriccio with political overtones like West's was not unique among late eighteenth-century London art works. William Marlow's painting *Capriccio: St. Paul Venetian Canal* (c. 1795), combined the dome of St Paul's in the background with a Venetian waterway scene in the foreground, and the artist's purpose was to suggest that London had achieved the prosperity and elegance of the legendary Venice represented in Caneletto's [sic] popular Italian scenes.¹¹³

West's dome does not resemble St. Paul's any more than it resembles any other hemispherical dome (figs. 119 and 120). Even if the eighteenth-century critic who likened the dome in West's painting to the Anglican church in London had done so more out of pure ignorance of Mughal architecture than with satirical intent, the reading neither adds to nor detracts from the imperial rhetorical structures of the painting.

The claimed Hodges connection proves equally problematic, as West had already included the dome in the 1774 preparatory sketch for the work. I find it unlikely that the 1786 Hodges *Mausoleum of the Emperor Shere Shah* factored into West's composition to any determinative degree, even as part of the later touching up that is evident on the canvas today. In the final analysis, West's architectural setting qualifies as a composite based on a number of different, primarily textual and oral sources and remembered visual experiences. Clive's order that West set the action in the palace at Allahabad also meant that the Mughal emperor would remain forever in Allahabad rather than returning to his main palace in Delhi. The Shah had requested the right to occupy the central throne of the empire, but Clive had ordered that he remain in Allahabad as part of the treaty negotiations.¹¹⁴ The painting also functioned as a sort of contradiction in perpetuity of

the Shah's fate in the years following the transfer of the diwani, effectively freeing Clive's legacy at Claremont from the brutal realities of Britain's imperial presence on the subcontinent. Had West installed the painting and the companion pieces that would have completed the decorative program for the Eating Room, Clive and his guests could always see the emperor on his throne in the palace. When faced with published accounts of the Shah's circumstances, such as that published in the last year of Clive's life by the British commander of the emperor's forces, the English Omrah could have taken respite in Claremont's Eating Room for a little reassurance:

...I had been introduced to his Majesty at *Allahabad*...but what was my astonishment to find a prince, born to one of the greatest empires in the world, a prince of amiable manners, of tried fortitude, courage, and ability, sitting in a hut covered with straw, hardly large enough to hold above twelve people; yet this hut was called the *Durbar* or Court of the *Great Mogul*; and this while protected by the *English East India Company*. On enquiring into the reason of this treatment, which appeared to me to border on barbarism, I was informed, that his Majesty had princely accommodations within the fort, but as they did not choose to admit his attendants and guards, he rather inclined to put up the little inconvenient place in which I saw him. ...[T]his circumstance...made so strong an impression on my mind, that...I framed the rough draft of a plan, for raising at my own expence a body of men sufficient for restoring *Shah Allum* to the throne of his ancestors.¹¹⁵

Scholars disagree on whether Clive ever experienced even a moment's remorse (regarding either his own conduct in India or the consequences of his legacy), but such reports from the provinces could only strengthen the resolve of Clive's opponents in the capital.

Forgeries, Formations and Imperial Identities

Having been forced to grant the diwani to the East India Company through military threat and mean political extortion, Shah Alam II would have had difficulty justifying ceremony or spectacle in his compliance with Clive's demands. But Clive subscribed to an orientalist belief common to Englishmen: "so strict is the attachment of the Eastern People to their ancient customs...they never change their modes of life or fashions: And therefore whoever reads a description of them in any distant time will have a striking representation of their present manners."¹¹⁶ In order to ratify his own sense of importance, Clive invented one ceremony and then asked West to falsify another on canvas. Based in what he imagined to be Mughal custom, Clive ordered a subordinate to place a chair on the dining tables in his tent and then had the chair draped with fabric. After instructing Shah Alam to climb onto the table and seat himself on the makeshift throne, Clive handed him the firman confirming the transfer of the diwani. The likely puzzled and somewhat beleaguered emperor then simply passed it back into Clive's hands, an act likely witnessed by only a small number of Englishmen and even fewer Mughal courtiers and attendants – numbers closer to those represented in the original black and white preparatory drawing than the five dozen in the final painting.¹¹⁷

As noted, the scrolled paper, which both documents and symbolizes the transfer of the diwani, serves as the focal point for the composition. In addition to its references to the "fake treaty maneuver" with which Clive enlisted the support of Amir Chand, the

document alludes to a tradition shared by the very different governments of the Mughals and the Company. That tradition, termed in Mughal Persian *kaghazi raj* (rule by paper), facilitated the elaboration and refinement of British rule in India.¹¹⁸ From the days of Akbar, the Muslim rulers of India to one extreme or another pursued a governmental policy of bureaucratic “red-tapism,” codifying and issuing *firman*s (royal patents, mandates or grants), *muchulcas* (bonds of obligation), *perwannahs* (letters, orders, grants or commands), *sunnu*ds (grants or commissions from the emperor or his subordinates) and *tunkahs* (land assignments and/or rents).¹¹⁹ When the entry-level British East India Company servants known as “writers” arrived in India, their function in recording commercial transactions integrated smoothly into the existing systems of documentation. The transfer of the document from Shah Alam II to Robert Clive, then, reflects one of the fundamental mechanisms of conquest and serves to remind the twenty-first-century viewer of the potent subtleties of an eighteenth-century Anglophone culture that privileged the printed word above all other forms of communication.

As I have demonstrated, the pronounced disparities between the actual sequence of events on 12 August 1765 and the scene presented on West’s canvas attest to the magnitude of the “greater object” as the focus of eighteenth-century Anglophone history painting. In the representation of *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney*, West layered the canvas with fictions as if applying oil paint and varnish. This principle of carefully-articulated mendacity not only applies to all modern heroics of empire history paintings, it *defines* them as a form of cultural production. But to what

extent may one rely on a heroics of empire history painting as a marker of imperial anxiety when that image, produced for an abandoned decorative program, remained essentially hidden in West's studio? As a discrete gesture of artistic expression and as part of a greater body of cultural production, *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney* offers a number of clues as to a private individual's ability to marshal all the visual arts toward generating an imperial self-imaginary. But those clues reveal more about Clive than about Britons. In order to mine the image for evidence about the forging of a national imperial identity at the center, one must broaden the inquiry to the "lives" of the image. I will now turn my attention to the lives of West's painting for Claremont, tracing its manifestations from the original preparatory drawing to the present day, in order to suggest that the picture, as a cultural entity, reveals much about the trajectories of empire as constitutive of modern Anglophone identity.

The Lives of the Image and Trajectories of Imperial Anxiety

As an image, *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney* began as a sketch in black and white chalk. In the drawing, West situates Shah Alam and Robert Clive just inside Clive's spacious tent and organizes the figures so that the Mughal emperor and his courtiers and attendants stand to the viewer's left, with Clive, Carnac and the additional representatives of the Company to the viewer's right. At this stage of West's conception of the event, the emperor appears in full-length portrait. In

the likeness West emphasizes frontality in the representation of the emperor's body from the shoulder to just below the knee. The emperor's head appears in profile or near-profile with his right arm bent at the elbow and right hand raised to shoulder level. He extends his left arm, with elbow only slightly bent, with his left hand just below waist level.¹²⁰ West rendered the emperor's feet in a non-naturalistic, parallel placement common to full-length Mughal miniature portraits of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries (fig. 121). Clive appears in full-length likeness as well, the Ribbon of the Bath clearly delineated over his otherwise roughly executed uniform. He stands in the position of the *Apollo Belvedere*.

A diagonal line that intersects Clive's right hand and the space between his right and the Shah's left hands indicate that Clive has full possession of the document that the emperor has submitted. A light-colored rectangular form behind Clive suggests a table of approximately two and one-half feet in height. Clive's left hand either gestures toward or rests upon the top of a second desk or table, which also appears to be covered in fabric of some sort. A set of curving lines connected by a single line that runs parallel to the bottom edge of the picture plane, combined with light and shadow effects, suggest that a large document of some kind has been unrolled atop the surface of the table. A portion of the document appears to hang over the edge of the table, with the edge of the part that remains on the table secured by Clive's left hand or by a figure who appears to sit at the table on the side opposite Clive. I must here acknowledge the possibility that what I identify as the curling paper of the document draping over the edge of the table could be

the back of a chair draped with fabric, similar to the upholstered chair in Joshua Reynolds's portrait of *George Clive and His Family* (fig. 122).

West populated the chalk sketch with sixteen figures inside the tent. Other than the emperor and Clive, only Carnac is rendered with sufficient detail to identify him – and this based solely on the resemblance between his uniform and Clive's. Outside the tent opening stands an elephant, most of its body obscured by the tent wall. The elephant, surmounted by a howdah and an attendant, faces to the viewer's left. For the drawing, West negotiated spatial depth by placing the opening of the tent on the diagonal, so that the viewer sees the action from an oblique perspective, allowing West to situate the elephant as if in the distance beyond the opening of the tent. If West had presented the scene as fully framed by the tent opening, he could not have included the howdah elephant without confusing the elements of the composition. Within the tent, other elements of note include the scalloped treatment of the opening, a strong emphasis on classicizing drapery and a pair of cylindrical forms, one horizontal and one vertical, and some vertically-oriented rectangular forms, possibly intended to represent provisions or furnishings of some kind, in the foreground to the viewer's right. A series of squiggling marks in the lower foreground suggest that West tested or honed the tip of his bit of black chalk on that part of the paper. In general, West seems to have used the Poussinesque frieze approach to organizing the figures in composition.

Though no letters or journal entries survive to confirm or discount such a claim, based on the absence of a painted version of the chalk drawing, one assumes that Clive

rejected the first conception. West responded with the sepia wash sketch signed “B. West” and dated 1774. The similarities between this sketch and West’s painting suggest that this drawing met with Clive’s approval and that West proceeded, with a number of minor alterations, from this sketch when completing the Claremont painting. In a comparison of the sepia sketch with the finished painting, one notes a number of major distinctions, each of which signals West’s visual characterization and reinforcement of different facets of Clive’s imperial martial virtue. Depending upon one’s visual sensitivities, the most pronounced changes from sketch to painting include 1) replacement of the domed mosque and minaret in the background with a single large dome topped with a chhatri (small kiosk-like structures topped with domes supported by columns) and several additional structures that terminate in chhatri; 2) the addition of the chhajja (curving awning) to the large rectilinear building in the background; 3) the addition of the figure performing the salaam; 4) the addition of the sepoy; 5) the addition of the full-length profile Mughal courtier holding the staff to the viewer’s left; 6) the addition of the full-length Mughal courtier with the sword to the viewer’s right; 7) the transformation of standard columnar forms into baluster columns; 8) diminution of emphasis on the circular or octagonal orientation of the interior space; 9) cusping of the arches; 10) embellishment of the capitals; 11) addition of the horsemen; 12) addition of the camels and attendants; 13) addition and detailed articulation of weapons and jewelry; and 14) increase in the size and prominence of the scrolled paper in the emperor’s right hand. Though we cannot know the exact circumstances that led West to abandon the

composition from the original sketch, it must have displeased Clive at some level, most likely by its taking a too-literal approach to the events as they transpired within Clive's tent. To qualify the scene as a subject appropriate for the visual heroics of empire, West made a number of dramatic changes. The process through which artist and patron collaborated on making the subject appropriate are registered in the changes from the chalk drawing through the sepia wash sketch into the final oil painting.

I have already noted the presence of the large dome in the 1774 sepia wash preparatory sketch regarding its relevance to Hodges's 1786 *Mausoleum of Sher Shah*. As part of his effort to imbue the painting with the authenticating force of pictorial detail, West replaced the domed mosque and minaret with a structure that more closely resembles that of the Allahabad palace complex prior to its transformation into a military depot in the nineteenth century. The alteration of the roof line of the large rectilinear building just outside the arch to the viewer's left from flat and rectangular to the curved awning of the chhajja serves the same purpose. Because British East India Company troops took control of the palace following the battle of Buxar, images of the palace and surrounding structures intended for use as military intelligence likely circulated in London throughout the 1760s and into the 1770s. In the painting, West's architectural setting qualifies as both composite and capriccio to fabricate an exterior setting that conveys the idea of architectural spolia in the same way that the weapons, jewels and ankus qualify as spolia. West combined a number of different sources to compose each individual structure within the setting and he placed several structures in the viewer's

field of vision that one could not view all at the same time from within the Chihil Sutūn – a more time- and space-specific grouping than he used for *Agrippina*. One must not dismiss the possibility that the large dome to the viewer’s left represents that of the Chihil Sutūn, the interior of which houses the central narrative. As a form of cultural production and as a process of cultural self-imagination, the visual heroics of empire requires the subordination of historical “fact” to the expression of spatial and temporal dominion. West’s choice to set the fiction of the diwani narrative inside the audience hall while also including the exterior dome of that audience hall as part of the background, would demonstrate the extent of that subordination in Clive’s exercise of private interest as *imperium privatum*.

The figure originally intended as Shah Alam II in the preparatory black and white chalk drawing reappears as a Mughal nobleman to the viewer’s right of the sepoy. His raised right hand, which served as a dramatic gesture in the preparatory drawing now holds the end of a long, golden staff. His extended left arm and curled fingers give the impression that the nobleman shadows Clive’s position and mirrors the transfer of the document from the emperor to Clive. The repetition of gesture and the direction of the nobleman’s gaze call the viewer’s attention to the focal point of the composition; the degree of detail with which West executed the nobleman emphasizes, once again, the process of authentication. In his portrayal of the nobleman, West activated the two-dimensional Mughal miniature, bringing into full corporeal expression the pronounced two-dimensionality of the Mughal portrait. Rather than ascribing personal identity to the

nobleman as he did with the Englishmen in the picture, however, West subordinated the identity of the figure to the fabric of his jama, the luster of his jewelry and the materiality of his golden staff.

Opposite the nobleman in pictorial space stands another full-length Mughal miniature figure, in the foreground just to the viewer's right of the emperor's throne. Like the nobleman who stands proximate to the sepoy and the man performing the salaam, this courtier serves as a display mechanism through which West could demonstrate the virtuosity of his artistic technique in the rendering of fabric, jewels and in this particular case weapons. Guests at Claremont would have experienced one type of aesthetic response to seeing the sword and the katar knife lying atop a table or resting on a display stand; but to see the sword hanging from the scabbard strap and the knife tucked conspicuously in the cummerbund of a near life-size figure would elicit another type of response altogether. Presumably, Clive would have offered the opportunity to experience both, perhaps allowing a guest to hold the katar knife in hand while comparing it to West's rendering. The same would apply to the elephants in the painting and to the steel goad held by the attendant astride the elephant with the howdah. The haptic experience of the object would have intensified the sensory registration of West's faithful representation in oil on canvas, and vice-versa, ratifying the force of the picture and thus the magnitude of Clive's achievement.¹²¹ By objectifying the Mughal subject as part of Clive's "collection," West subordinated history to the vicissitudes of Clive's demands as a patron. The materiality of the painting serves to validate the painting's action as real or

authentic while also making the event portrayed “closer” in space and time.¹²² It is important to remember that this would have been one of four such paintings intended to envision Clive’s imperial apotheosis.

From sepia wash to oil painting, West made two major changes to the architectural space in which he represented the transfer of the diwani. First, he diminished the emphasis on the circular or octagonal shape of the interior setting in order to increase the number of cast members in the composition. He did so by two means: concealing the left- and rightmost portion of the steps that lead to the emperor’s throne and darkening portions of the picture plane so as to diminish the prominence of the exterior architectural setting between each of the baluster columns and the edge of the picture plane. In the sepia wash sketch, one can easily detect the circular form of the platform upon which the emperor’s throne is set. In the Claremont painting, one must scrutinize the painting very closely to comprehend the shape of the enclosure – one could have easily undertaken such scrutiny had the painting appeared in the intended location. Though purely conjectural, I contend that West altered the interior space in the final product so that it more closely adhered to the Poussinesque frieze-like figural arrangement and chiaroscuro for which he had gained so much acclaim.

The second major change to the interior space appears in the transformation of the standard cylindrical pillars that flank the emperor’s throne into baluster columns. From an artistic standpoint, this change allowed West to pursue yet another avenue of expression for authenticating detail, as men and women who had traveled to India would

have known the baluster column form and its presence and prominence in Mughal architecture. For Clive, the baluster column identified the interior space in which the emperor's attendants had erected his throne for the imaginary durbar, distinguishing that space from a simple round temple form of indeterminate origin, or perhaps more importantly, from a *choultry*, a building "intended for the reception of travellers, covered and inclosed on three sides with walls, but open in front, where instead of a wall, the roof is supported by pillars."¹²³ As I mentioned in a previous section of this chapter, the baluster column would have helped viewers to recognize the interior space as that of a hypostyle hall; the changes that West made to that end connected the setting to such images as *Shah Jahan in Durbar* (fig. 123) and *The Royal Chamber in the Public Audience Hall in the Middle of Yazdah Darreh* (fig. 99). Though West and his intended audiences at Claremont may have had no access to these specific images, they typify pictures that circulated in London during the second half of the eighteenth century. Images comparable to *The Royal Chamber*, especially, would have justified West's introduction of the baluster column form. West supplemented his reconfiguration of the rotunda form of the space and the prominent display of the baluster columns by adding cusps to the arches and articulating the capitals of the columns. In addition to distinguishing the space as one of Mughal origin and function, the arches and capitals harmonized the architectural interior of the setting with the clothing, jewelry, throne, fly whisks, weapons and other pictorial details.

From the original chalk conception to the sepia wash drawing and then again to the finished oil painting, West dramatically increased the number of Mughal and English figures in the scene. Based upon the classical and modern heroics of empire paintings that West produced prior to the Claremont commission, one might reasonably associate the larger number of figures with an opportunity to demonstrate that he could express on canvas the full range of Le Brun's passions. A quick visual survey of the faces in the picture reveals just the opposite. West seems to have purposefully avoided any expression that one might identify as coming from Le Brun's pattern book of human emotion. The Company servants suggest that West concerned himself more with likeness than with assigning each Briton a specific emotional state; a comparison between West's portrayals and portraits by other artists suggest that West succeeded at achieving some degree of resemblance. Like many of the eighteenth-century artists who produced the most popular and influential images of India, West never visited the subcontinent. He did, however, have access to a number of different representations of Mughal rulers, courtiers and attendants. Beyond skin tone and facial hair, the Mughals appear mostly as display mechanisms, structural foundations over which to drape sumptuous fabrics – manikin objects for display – rather than individuated human characters. When compared to West's other empire-themed history paintings, the Mughal seem completely bereft of reference to Le Brun's passion, which in turn seems a glaring omission. One wonders why West chose to exclude the expressions from this particular work. The answer may lie in the degree of disparity between the chair-on-the-tables actuality of the

event versus the throne-in-the-palace officiousness and pageantry of the painting. Unlike General Johnson's benevolent gesture, which civilized the savage and spared the Frenchman, Clive's "magnanimous" acceptance of the diwani neither civilized nor spared the inhabitants of the subcontinent. The Mughals remained the same indolent, effeminate Asiatics and Clive (in the painting, at least) remained his manly, restrained British self. In this private application of the heroics of empire, the sepoys' uniforms replace the expression of the passions. These Indians would learn neither Greek nor Latin, undertake no study of elocution; nor would they travel to London to deliver sermons in one of its Protestant churches. They would wear the clothing of the sepoy and attach themselves to the English interest.

West's addition of the English horsemen to contrast the camels with their attendants combines functions already expressed in the painting by other figures and elements. The men on horseback and the men astride camels all serve as additional witnesses to the transfer of the diwani. The degree of fidelity with which West represented them adds yet another facet to the authenticating force of pictorial detail. They also clarify the distinctions between liberty and despotism. Englishmen on horseback served at various levels of military function and command and in those functions could demonstrate – as had Clive – imperial heroism on the scale of the greatest conquerors of classical antiquity. The Mughals who drove the camels, conversely, served as mere servants, driving the beasts that carried their superiors or hauled provisions. In the inclusion of these two groups of figures to the viewer's left of the central narrative

focus, West once again played with the viewer's expectations of hierarchy as expressed in visual terms. The men who sit on the backs of the camels (and the elephants, for that matter) occupy a higher position in pictorial space than that occupied by the English horsemen. But the nature of the Englishmen as free subjects of a limited monarchy versus the camel drivers as enslaved subjects of an oriental despot inverts conventional hierarchical formulae in which the most important figures appear and the most prominent and otherwise most "highly placed" in the composition. The tension created by this inversion reinforces that of the deferential Mughal emperor who sits above Clive in pictorial space to grant the Company commander his every demand in order to retain his position on the Allahabad throne.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, in the transition from preparatory sketches to final product, West substantially increased the size and prominence of the scrolled paper that passes from the Shah's hand into Clive's. This tactic confirms the validity of the transfer of the diwani in terms that viewers from both cultures would comprehend. Whether manifested in the *Magna Charta* or the *Writ of Quo Warranto*, the word on paper held an almost mystical authority for the English, superseding all other forms of political expression. And for the Mughals, the written edict served as the focal point for a highly ritualistic culture of notation, collection and verification. In the 1757 edition of his *A Voyage to the East Indies* (which appeared in a new edition in 1766), John Henry Grose includes the following instructive tale:

The governor of Surat keeps his seat of administration at what is called the Durbar, where he is generally present himself, and gives his orders. It is here that

all actions criminal and civil are brought before him, and summarily dispatched in the Eastern manner. One piece of state too he observes, that I have no where before mentioned, and that is, that he never on any thing material speaks to his attendants, but writes, in the Persian language, his orders on little slips of paper, that lie by him ready for that purpose, and when written... must be obeyed without reply. These are afterwards brought him, like a return of a judicial process, and being strung, serve as a kind of record of his acts of the day.¹²⁴

Londoners who had read one or more of the many translated firmans, treaties and other documents from India would have seen in West's emphasis on the document an acknowledgement of this highly ritualized process. One must note, however, that upon seeing the scrolled paper, even Clive's closest associates would recall the false treaty that Clive ordered forged in order to trick Amir Chand into a political and military alliance with the Company. In that regard, the prominence of the diwani as an object and as a symbol almost dares the viewer to characterize Clive's deception as evidence that contact with eastern soil had transformed him into an oriental despot.

With *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney* Clive fabricated the most important of his political, military and financial triumphs in India by rationalizing territorial conquest as a gesture of his personal largesse. Presumably, the additional canvas paintings and the decorative roundels would have rejected some of the complaints already articulated by Clive's many critics while at the same time anticipating others. Once fully complete, the Eating Room would allow patron, artist and viewer to fully explore the iconographic terms and conditions through which Clive wished to characterize his success. In its attempt to name and claim imperial martial virtue, Clive's *Claremont* at least partially mimics the impulse behind George III's commissions for the

Warm Room at Buckingham House. But like its location, the underlying theme of the Eating Room connects more to the country than to the court: the impulse behind *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney* connects the image more to the paintings and tapestries that hang at Blenheim Palace in celebration of the Duke of Marlborough's (1650-1722) victory over the French in 1704 than to *Regulus*, *Hannibal* and *Bayard* at Buckingham House.

Unlike Blenheim, however, Claremont's visual program was never fully realized. Robert Clive committed suicide before West could begin a second painting for the Eating Room. The timing of Clive's death in November of 1774 meant that West could not publicly display the painting until the following May at the Royal Academy. Had Clive received the national gratitude and achieved the global fame that he so desired, West could have shown the work and then ordered one of London's printmakers to produce an engraving, as he was later to do for Admiral Horatio Nelson (1758-1805), who died at the Battle of Trafalgar.¹²⁵ But then one might reasonably argue that a hypothetical in which Clive's king and countrymen acknowledged their debt to him may have diminished his suicidal despondency. In that case, Clive might have lived to see Claremont completed. Though parliament had absolved him in corruption charges proceedings, nothing about Clive's final days inspired panegyric, and few among his closest family and associates could have been completely surprised by his death.

The Climate in London Following Clive's Death

West, riding high on the success of *The Death of General Wolfe* and *Penn's Treaty with the Indians*, the additional commissions for the Warm Room at Buckingham House and his appointment as Historical Painter to the King, did not want to risk undercutting his success by showing a painting that depicted a highly unpopular Briton engaged in a questionable transaction. West sensed that viewers might feel outrage at seeing Lord Clive – in some minds a common criminal and a recent suicide, no less – engaged in the highly controversial act of “receiving” (exactng) the diwani from the Mughal emperor just as he had “received” the homage of Mir Jafar in Francis Hayman’s painting for Vauxhall a decade earlier. West had demonstrated such caution before, in withholding *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Soldier from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian* from exhibition at the Society of Artists in 1765. In 1771, West abandoned his purported plan to portray another scene of the Anglo-French conflict in North America: Major Peter Halket’s discovery of the remains of his father and brother, both of whom died in the humiliating defeat of Braddock’s troops at the Battle of Monongahela in 1755.

West recounted to Galt, “When lord Grosvenor bought the picture of the death of Wolfe,” he “mentioned to him the finding of the bones of Braddock’s army as a pictorial subject capable of being managed with great effect.”¹²⁶ Galt recorded West’s efforts to earn a commission from Grosvenor, using terms very similar to those that one finds in catalogue descriptions of West’s paintings:

The gloom of the vast forest, the naked and simple Indians supporting the skeletons, the grief of the son on recognising the relics of his father, the subdued melancholy of the spectators, and the picturesque garb of the Pennsylvania sharpshooters, undoubtedly furnished topics capable of every effect which the pencil could bestow, or the imagination require in the treatment of so sublime a scene.¹²⁷

West asked Galt to include Grosvenor's admission "that in possessing so affecting an incident as the discovery of the bones of the Halkets, [the tale] was superior even to that of the search for the remains of the army of Varus."¹²⁸ Grosvenor rejected West's overtures, however, because "the incident being little known, and not recorded by any historian," meant that London's art-going publics would find little of interest in such a picture. In the coded conversation of English politeness, Grosvenor's reference to the army of Varus, the members of which had been slain in a manner that wholly contradicted modern formulations of heroic imperial martial virtue, politely signaled to West that he should abandon his plans for such a painting. West's self-preservation impulse manifested again in 1783, when he stopped work on *The Signing of the Preliminary Treaty of Peace in 1782* after learning that London audiences might reject as improper scenes relating to the American Rebellion (fig. 124).¹²⁹

Several discrete factors (and any combination thereof) could have influenced West's choice to keep the painting from public view. In 1764 Pontiac's Rebellion had a chilling effect on West's plans for *General Johnson* in 1764; ten years later reports of the East India Company's conduct against the Rohilla peoples would have cast *Lord Clive* in a similarly negative light.¹³⁰ In London, another factor may have dissuaded West from showing the picture. Within months of Clive's death, the first volume of Charles

Caraccioli's (c. 1722-c. 1785) biography of Clive appeared, the title of which here deserves relating in its entirety: *The Life of Robert Lord Clive, Baron Plassey. Wherein Are Impartially Delineated his Military Talents in the Field; His Maxims of Government in the Cabinet, during the Last Two Wars in the East Indies, Which Made Him Arbiter of Empire, and the Richest Subject in Europe. With Anecdotes of His Private Life, and the Particular Circumstances of His Death. Also a Narrative of all the Last Transactions in India.*¹³¹ Two years later, three additional volumes appeared, all comprised of transcribed extracts from letters, pamphlets and public documents intended to indict and convict Clive on a number of counts of vices and corruption. Each volume contained approximately five hundred seventy-five pages and included such articles as "The Following Ludicrous Apology of the Noble Lord's Conduct Having Been Published after His Return from India, Deserves Here a Place."¹³² Intended as an inquiry into "the first causes of his elevation to a military command, which put him on a level with the princes of the east" and "to consider whether his successful exploits, and his valuable acquisitions, were productive of national disgrace or honour," Caraccioli's biography kept Clive's name and the controversies surrounding him in circulation. Despite negative reviews that dismissed the biography as "a slovenly jumble" and "ill-digested, worse connected, and similarly printed," the *Life of Clive* sold reasonably well and went into a second edition in 1786.¹³³

Absent Caraccioli's biography, West might have still withheld *Lord Clive* from exhibition, if for no other reason than the steady stream of corruption reports coming to

London from the subcontinent. Within a year of Clive's death accounts of the Company's treatment of Nandakumar (1705-1775), who had served as *diwan* under Mir Jafar at his restoration by the Company in 1763, added to the growing consternation in London regarding Britons' conduct in India. Once Nandakumar had assumed too much power and independence for the Company's comfort, Warren Hastings (1732-1818), one of Clive's successors and the first governor-general of British India, arranged to have Nandakumar tried on forgery charges. Hastings's close friend and political ally Elijah Impey, the judge who oversaw the trial, issued a guilty verdict on what at that time in England qualified as a capital offence. Impey denied Nandakumar's request for appeal, on the basis that allowing an indigene to appeal to the court in Britain would undermine the court's authority. Nandakumar was hanged on 5 August 1775 in what many believed an act of "judicial murder" conducted at Warren Hastings's behest.¹³⁴ As one pamphleteer expressed it,

We understand the gaining over, or buying off an enemy, indifferently well in this country – promotion, bribery, retirement, and many other dexterous devices, are familiar to us. But the best among us are botches in the art. Set our boldest efforts beside Hastings, and what a contemptible figure they make! A grievous charge lay against him at a particular time, and in the whole world there was but one man [Nandakumar] who could injure him – It was no season for indecision, and his expedient was at least equal to the peril. He indicted the man for a conspiracy, and, failing in that, he accused him of a new crime, and the man was *hanged* directly. The most captivating theory in Machiavel is mere milkeness to this method of silencing an enemy. In that hour, and in that act, perished *all* the accusers of Mr. Hastings in the *East*.¹³⁵

An exhibition of the painting at the time of Nandakumar's very public execution for the exact offence that had enabled Clive to secure the British conquest of Bengal would have

prompted outrage. (Edmund Burke's decision to print a new edition of the 1771 *Annual Register*, which included a detailed account of the famine in Bengal, only exacerbated anti-Company vitriol.)¹³⁶ West sought accolade rather than opprobrium, so the painting of Hastings's predecessor remained in his Newman Street studio for two decades.

Though he did not act on it, West may have considered exhibiting the painting once sufficient time had passed for Clive's family and close associates to mourn his sudden death. One might reasonably assume that the war against the colonies would have diverted the attention of Clive's critics and enemies so as to spare West any loss of patronage or standing because of lingering negative associations with the subjects of the painting. But by 1777, the idea of an American presenting a grand-scale painting of a "Nabob" might have seemed a bit subversive for West, who wished to preserve his position at the Royal Academy, among London audiences and at court. Over the next ten years, West turned his attention to scriptural subjects, royal portraits and the occasional history painting taken from classical and early English history or early modern literary sources.¹³⁷ Though time-consuming, his designs for St. George's Chapel and the Queen's Lodge at Windsor would not have precluded him from showing the Clive painting. Most likely, concerns about the reaction of Royal Academy audiences and the impact of those responses on patronage prompted West to keep the painting stored away in his studio, perhaps visible to some of his students, but not prominently displayed.¹³⁸

The fortunes of *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney* took a long-delayed turn in the spring of 1795, at the end of England's great "national

exorcism” of its imperial demons.¹³⁹ Assuming the role of Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE), Rome’s greatest orator, in the 70 BCE prosecution of the corrupt Roman governor of Sicily, Caius Verres (c. 120-32 BCE), Edmund Burke charged Warren Hastings with “high crimes and misdemeanors” in his conduct as Governor-General of Bengal.¹⁴⁰ In an act of political theater that consumed the public’s attention for almost nine years, Burke cast out the demons of imperial excess, trying Clive’s crimes in the conquest of India and England’s crimes in the bloody loss of the colonies through the prosecution of Hastings (fig. 125). Burke punctuated his performance with a closing speech that lasted for nine days, but the British parliament found Hastings innocent on all counts and England imperially virtuous on all counts, after all.¹⁴¹ The charges against Hastings, situated against the loss of the American colonies and complicated by the revolution in France, called into question all of the classical exemplars of imperial martial virtue that West had advanced during the “reception conditioning” period of the late 1760s. The circumstances that led to the trial and the evidence presented therein suggested that Britons followed the paths of Tiberius, Pyrrhus, Hannibal and Cleombrotus rather than Germanicus, Scipio, Epaminondas and Agis. But the verdict in Hastings’s trial, delivered on 23 April 1795 ultimately contradicted that conclusion: Hastings was acquitted and the nation heaved a collective sigh of relief.

Six days after London newspapers carried the news of Hastings’s acquittal, Joseph Farington (1747-1821) recorded in his diary that he saw West “touching on His pictures” in preparation for the Royal Academy exhibition, which opened on 4 May

1795.¹⁴² After storing *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney* in his studio for two decades, West had ten days to prepare the canvas for exhibition.

Between 1774 and 1795, the world had changed substantially and Britons had changed even more. As historian P. J. Marshall notes,

Only a generation or so before the 1790s the conquest of large territories in Asia by Britain seemed inconceivable; the idea that conquest might confer benefits on Asian peoples was incomprehensible; and, perhaps most important, it was generally expected that a nation which indulged in conquest in Asia would be most unlikely to remain free itself. The intellectual transformation that enabled upper-class Englishmen to accept or even to enthuse over an imperial role in Asia seems to have had two sides to it: both Britain's perception of Asia and Britain's perception of herself changed during the eighteenth century.¹⁴³

Much had changed since Clive's suicide. Britain had lost the American colonies. The French had executed their king and completely rejected all of the institutional bases of their civilization. Benjamin West occupied the president's chair of the Royal Academy. Edward Gibbon had published *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* had codified the evolutionary model of civilization and commerce.¹⁴⁴ And Britons had settled comfortably and almost complacently into their global role as "a free though conquering people," reconciled to liberty at home while subjugating indigenous peoples abroad.¹⁴⁵

By the time that *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney* debuted at the new, purpose-built exhibition space in the Royal Academy's Somerset House location, empire permeated Anglophone visual culture. For evidence of the extent of the centrality of empire, one only need look to the description of Mather Brown's

(1761-1831) *Lord Cornwallis Receiving as Hostages the Sons of Tippoo Sahib*, appeared just below the masthead in the 3 April 1793 edition of London's *The Oracle* newspaper (figs. 126 and 127):

This PICTURE represents the BRITISH ARMY drawn up in two Columns, forming a Street of Soldiers, through which the ELEPHANTS that brought the ROYAL CHILDREN have Advanced, and at the Head of which are distinguishable the remaining part of the PROCESSION, formed by the STATE PALANKEENS, DROMEDARIES, CAVALRY, and SPEARMEN, In their Characteristic Dresses, with a number of Green Flags fixed at the End of Rockets.

The LEFT GROUP is formed by the AMBASSADORS of the SULTAUN, and particularly GULLUM ALLI (the HEAD VAKEEL), who is just alighted from the Elephant, and brought in the Arms of his Domestics, is a richly ornamented Machine – an Historical Fact of much importance to the Composition, as that Minister had formerly lost the use of his Limbs upon an Embassy at Constantinople. The Attendant Asiatics appear making the Ceremonial of the SALAMN, or Eastern Bow.

The CENTRE GROUP is formed by the MARQUIS CORNWALLIS leading in the Children, in which the Fact is strictly attended to, of the YOUNGEST being on the Right Hand, a token of Respect, as that Prince is Heir Apparent to the Crown.

The RIGHT GROUP is enriched with the PORTRAITS of many of the BRITISH OFFICERS (present on that occasion, so glorious to the English Arms); particularly Colonel HARRIS, Colonel MALCOLM, Major DIROM, and Major MADAN, Aid-du-Camp to his Lordship, who brought over the Dispatches to Government, and furnished Mr. BROWN with all the Particulars relating to this great event, by the express desire of the Right Honourable HENRY DUNDAS, one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.

In the Distance is seen General ABERCROMBY's CAMP, and one of the BASTIONS of SERINGAPATAM, with several Pieces of Ordnance, Nineteen of which were fired as a Salute upon the Occasion, and were answered the ensuing day by the Sultaan.

The MUZHNEED, or State Carpet, which accompanies this Picture, was made use of by the Sultaan at Durbar, and was taken from that Tyrant at the Capture of Bangalore. The STANDARDS were taken in Action from Tippoo by Colonel

FLOYD, and were lent the Artists by the Right Honourable the Earl of Pembroke.¹⁴⁶

The same Lord Cornwallis who had suffered a humiliating defeat against the American rebels at Yorktown had redeemed himself with his triumphs against Tipu Sultan (1750-1799), the Tiger of Mysore. Mather Brown had provided the iconography of Cornwallis's apotheosis.

After a three-year Grand Tour, Brown arrived in London in 1781 to study with West; he entered the Royal Academy as a student in 1782 and became Historical and Portrait Painter to the Duke of York in 1788. While in West's studio the Boston-born Brown encountered and imbibed heroics of empire history painting as the dominant form of the genre. The description of the painting printed in *The Oracle*, as much as – or perhaps even more than – the painting itself, demonstrates the degree to which West had refined the heroics of empire history painting formula by the time that he finally exhibited *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney*.

Brown did not feel the need to wait for Hastings's acquittal to exhibit *Lord Cornwallis* for at least three reasons. First, Britons saw Cornwallis as the product and agent of genuine East India Company reform, a man with extraordinary military talents (despite his loss at Yorktown) who showed no susceptibility to the corruptions that plagued Clive and landed Hastings before the parliament. Second, the subject of his painting, the young sons of Tipu Sultan, had achieved celebrity status in London. Cornwallis took the young boys hostage in order that Tipu observe the terms of a treaty, a tactic familiar to Londoners going back to Pisistratus in Greece and the reign of the

Roman emperor Pompey.¹⁴⁷ Third, and most importantly, Cornwallis stood as the fatherly antithesis of Tipu's treachery, ready to offer the children of the tyrant a "proper" English upbringing. Images of Cornwallis "receiving" the youths as hostages emblemized the benevolent, civilizing paternalism that the free though conquering Britons generously bestowed upon the inhabitants of South Asia.

A broadside published on 2 August 1792, calling for subscribers to a William Sharp engraving after a painting of the scene by Robert Smirke (one of many London-based artists who painted the scene during the 1790s), appealed directly to the imperial paternal sentiment by recounting the speech made by the "Sultaun's Vakeel" upon surrendering the boys to Cornwallis: "These children were this morning the sons of the Sultaun, my master: their situation is changed, and they must now look up to your Lordship as their father, their protector, and their friend" (fig. 128).¹⁴⁸ To ensure that potential subscribers fully grasped the artistic aspirations of the artist and the potential value of the engraving, the advertisement promised that "The Size of the Print will be considerably larger than that of 'The Death of General Wolfe'," the painting and the print of which served as the standard to which all other expressions of the visual heroics of empire aspired.¹⁴⁹ In 1793, West's status (and status anxiety) meant that he had much more to lose by offending large numbers of Britons; Brown's situation necessitated that he paint any subject that might bring him additional patronage. Ultimately, the success of the student's *Lord Cornwallis* helped to smooth the way for the teacher's *Lord Clive*.

As one of nine paintings that West submitted for the 1795 Royal Academy exhibition, *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney* attracted only faint praise. Critics mostly agreed that the picture qualifies as “well painted,” that West executed the work “as discriminative as the subject would permit” and that “the figures are well grouped and the colouring is in the artist’s best style.”¹⁵⁰ The same critic who complained about the buildings not being “sufficiently in *costume*” thought West’s “*small whole-lengths*” the best figure size for his talent and that he had employed “well-managed *recession*” in depicting a “rather stately than interesting” event that nonetheless “engages the attention.”¹⁵¹ As the only work mentioned in the *Morning Post and Fashionable World* exhibition review published 7 May 1795, West’s *Lord Clive* garnered a somewhat perplexing combination of faint praise and oblique advocacy.¹⁵² The reviewer characterizes West’s as a genius of conception that exceeds the limits of his artistic ability, adding that one must look to the prints after his pictures to fully appreciate the scope of his talent as a painter – an unusual (albeit valid) assessment, considering that the Royal Academy excluded printmakers from its membership. After noting West’s conspicuous prominence *despite* his imperfections, the review concludes, “The present Work is amongst his best productions; possesses considerable executive ability, and gives a splendid and picturesque idea of Indian Architecture and Eastern Magnificence.”¹⁵³ In 1774 *Lord Clive* qualified as the most ambitious heroics of empire history painting that West had ever undertaken. In 1795 the picture that had remained hidden for twenty years was, except for some touching up, the same. But the free though conquering Britons who

viewed the painting *had* changed, from a people who flatly rejected the pursuit “of schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India” as “measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this nation,” to a people who only showed “the sweets of parental feelings towards a subdued enemy,” whether on the subcontinent or in any of the other provinces of the rapidly expanding empire.¹⁵⁴

In 1799, the year that East India Company forces finally succeeded in killing Tipu Sultan at the Battle of Seringapatam, Robert Clive’s son Edward wrote to Henry Strachey from his post as governor of Madras:

He [Richard Wellesley, Lord Mornington] is building a magnificent Government House at Calcutta. I have promised West’s picture of the Duanny, or a copy of it as one of its decoration and I request Lord Powis [Edward’s brother-in-law] and you to decide which it shall be. I have no room belonging to me proper to place it in, but if Lord Powis has any situation which he thinks will suit it at Powis Castle, and it is agreeable to his Lordship that it should take up its abode in the Principality, you may give West the commission to paint a copy of it upon the terms he mentioned to you £500 without delay. If it cannot be placed to Ld P’s satisfaction at the Castle, I would then wish the original to be sent out to India without troubling West to copy it.¹⁵⁵

Following the 1795 Royal Academy exhibition, West had returned the original painting to his studio, where it lay dormant until October 1802, when another of West’s American-born students, John Blake White (1782-1859) purportedly “commenced copying a very large picture for Mr. West. The subject, Lord Clive’s Embassy to the Court of the Mogul,” intended for Government House Calcutta.¹⁵⁶ Inventories indicate that West made (or oversaw the making of) two copies of the Claremont *Lord Clive*. Von Erffa and Staley argue that West never undertook the version intended for India and that only the works currently hanging at Oakly Park (the Claremont painting) and Powis

Castle (a version commissioned for London's East India house in 1818) were painted.¹⁵⁷ However, because West personally compiled the inventories that appear in the sources that von Erffa and Staley cite, I contend that West did in fact supervise White's copy of the Claremont painting, which was then sent to Government House, Calcutta via Madras, where it would have remained until the construction at Calcutta was completed.¹⁵⁸

Edward Clive's administrative participation in the attack on Seringapatam, a victory that substantially increased Britain's imperial sway in the southern regions of the subcontinent, may have inspired him to commission a copy of West's painting as a way of reminding Governor-General Richard Wellesley (1760-1842) that a Clive had laid the groundwork upon which subsequent Governors-General made their Indian careers. If that were the case, a painting intended for private viewing in a private imperial realm at Claremont enjoyed new life as an institutional political statement. Neither Richard Wellesley nor his brother Arthur (1769-1852) ever shied from criticizing Edward Clive, who may have invoked the image of his father as a personal rejoinder to the Wellesley brothers' shared disdain.¹⁵⁹ In a letter composed after his first meeting with Edward, Richard Wellesley characterized him as "neither of talents, knowledge, habits of business, or firmness equal to his present situation. How the devil did he get here?"¹⁶⁰ In the peculiar form of *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney*, the visual heroics of empire assumed a rhetorical life of its own outside the immediate concerns of allaying public and private anxieties of empire in England. As was (and remains) the case with *The Death of General Wolfe*, West's painting of Shah Alam

transferring the diwani to Robert Clive served as an iconeme, a discrete unit of pictorial meaning to be deployed in political, genealogical and/or political discourses of empire. As part of the decorative program for Wellesley's new Government House, Calcutta, the painting would have "looked over the shoulders" of the men who succeeded Robert Clive on the subcontinent. Based upon the Wellesleys' view of Clive, one could reasonably expect the rejection of such a gift, were it offered.

As West's inventory indicates, the painting went to Madras rather than Calcutta. For an explanation of this change of destination, one need only look to the younger Clive's "commissioning the grand and showy Triplicane Banqueting Hall and extensions to Government House," Madras in 1800. Shanti Jayewardene-Pillai describes the modifications that Clive made to the structures in these terms:

The Hall took the form of a pagan temple on a high podium, approached by a giant stairway guarded by sphinxes. The order was a huge two-storey Tuscan-Doric pilaster which rested on a terrace on three sides, built over a lower-level rustic arcade. Spoils of war decorated the metopes and pediments. The names Seringapatam, 1799, and Plassey were inscribed on the pediments. The portraits of famous military men, hung inside the Banqueting Hall, unequivocally celebrated war. It was a '*Heroum*, a neo-classical temple for hero worship'.¹⁶¹

What better image to adorn the walls of such a structure than with a copy of the first-ever private modern heroics of empire history painting? And just as his father had intended that Claremont outshine all other country houses in the ambitiousness of its decorative program, Edward Clive ordered the construction of the Banqueting Hall specifically to overshadow the nearby Chepauk Palace of the Nawab of Arcot.¹⁶² Following the transition to Indian self-rule in 1947, the newly-installed indigenous governor relocated

his administration to the present-day Raj Bhavan (the British Guindy Lodge). Neither Government House nor West's painting survived the ensuing decades, but a copy of the picture, several times removed from the Madras copy, suggests that West did indeed send a painting, either from his own hand or that of John Blake White's, to Madras following the completion of the Government House and Banqueting Hall construction in 1802.

In addition to memorializing the transfer of the economic, political and judicial administration of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from the Mughal emperor to the British East India Company, West's original *Lord Clive* commemorated Clive's military victories at Plassey and Buxar. Perhaps because he saw no military action in the defeat of Tipu Sultan at the battle of Seringapatam, Edward Clive chose to commission copies of the modern heroic of empire history painting that celebrated his father's martial triumphs, which laid the groundwork for the killing of Tipu and for putative victory over the Marathas decades later to commemorate the event (fig. 129).¹⁶³ The second copy, however, would remain in England, on the walls of the British East India Company's offices in Leadenhall Street, London. The East India Company Court of Directors' Minutes for 25 October 1820 record the deliberations on the offer made by Edward Clive, who was by that time Earl of Powis, following the death of his heirless brother-in-law:

The Chairman (George Abercrombie Robinson, Esq.) then acquainting the Court, that Earl Powis had been pleased to authorise him to intimate a wish, on the part of his Lordship, to present to the Court a Copy by Mr. West of his original Painting representing his father (the late Lord Clive) receiving the grant of the *Dewanee* from the Mogul: Resolved that the Chairman be requested to convey to Lord Powis the Court's acknowledgements for his obliging offer, and to assure his Lordship that the Court will have great pleasure in accepting a picture, which

represents one of the most important events in the administration of his distinguished ancestor, and in the history of the East India Company.¹⁶⁴

The Court of Directors voted to accept Powis's gift, which thereafter served as "the chief ornament in the principal Committee Room in the East-India House."¹⁶⁵ Powis's coincided with the Anglo-Maratha and Pindari War (also known as the Third Anglo-Maratha War) of 1817-1819, in which the final defeat of the Maratha warriors brought to a close the long transitional chapter in British control of the Indian subcontinent that began with the event portrayed in West's 1774 painting. A representation of Robert Clive's triumph in negotiating the Treaty of Allahabad seems a fitting monument to the temporary exertion of British hegemony in India, as Clive had trained alongside Maratha troops allied with East India Company forces in the 1750s.¹⁶⁶ Most fittingly, it was the transfer of the diwani through which the Company authorized the deployment of large numbers of British troops and the training of indigenous troops to serve the Company's (and later the crown's) interests.

Benjamin West did not live to see the copy of *Lord Clive* hung in the East India Company offices. His death on 11 March 1820 preceded the installation by several months. By the time of his passing, the original picture had gone to its present location, Oakly Park, the Shropshire estate that Clive acquired shortly after he purchased Claremont. The first copy commissioned by Edward Clive remained in Government House, Madras and today remains untraced. The second copy adorned the East India Company Committee Room through the period in which the Company's archival holdings and collections of images and objects transferred to the crown (1858) until the

dissolution of the office in 1947. The 1818 oil copy was transferred to the India Office Library and Records location on Blackfriar's Road, London, in 1967 before traveling to Powis Castle, Welshpool, where it remains on long-term loan to the British National Trust.¹⁶⁷

Shortly after the copy of *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney* arrived at East India House, artist, antiquarian and copyright activist Thomas Fisher (1772-1836) personally commissioned (or otherwise arranged for) D. J. Redman (fl. 1813-1820), owner of London's first independent press devoted to lithography, to produce a key to the West painting (fig. 130).¹⁶⁸ The lithographic key, "Drawn on Stone by J. Baker" and printed by Redman in 1820, appeared as part of a three-page guide to the painting entitled *Description and Illustration of a Picture in East India House Showing the Great Mogul Presenting the Grant of the Dewannee to Lord Clive*.¹⁶⁹ The pamphlet includes the lithographic key, a description and translations of the treaty provisions and firmans related to the diwani and to Clive's jagir. A copy of this text is stapled to one of the photocopies of the lithographic key presently held in the British Library India Office Select Material Prints and Drawings Collection. This text also appeared in *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* in 1822, without the lithographic key.¹⁷⁰

The key offers a number of insights into the critical and popular fortunes of West's *Lord Clive* as they parallel the trajectories of empire in the British cultural self-imaginary. At the most fundamental level, the key reveals important information about

the conservation history of the painting. The 1818 copy which now hangs at Powis Castle excludes a number of figures from the left and right sides of the painting. Because the lithographic key includes all of the major figures that West presented in the original, the 1818 copy must have been cut down at some point after its arrival and installation at East India House. One wonders whether the painting may have been cut down before its installation at Powis Castle. Further research may uncover the circumstances leading to the resizing. As the first lithographic print produced from one of West's heroic of empire history paintings, the key demonstrates the utility and versatility of the lithograph as a mode of production.¹⁷¹ The Woollett engraving after West's *The Death of General Wolfe* took almost five years to complete. The idea of empire and the psychic negotiations of the exigencies of territorial conquest were still on the ascendant in the Anglophone mind in 1776, when the Woollett engraving appeared. By 1820, Britons had reached tacit consensus on global dominion as national destiny, so interest would not have justified the time and labor necessary to produce an engraving after the East India House copy of West's picture. The technical advantages of lithography dramatically reduced time and labor and obviated the need to call for subscriptions to fund the publication. The *Description and Illustration* pamphlet suggests that individuals could purchase a copy of the key while visiting the East India House library and art collections. Because the subject that critics in 1795 called "stately rather than interesting" had by 1820 become a dim artifact of imperial history, most Londoners who visited Clive's

descendants at Oakly Park would have likely needed such a guide when viewing the original painting.

As a tertiary manifestation of West's 1774 picture, the lithographic key complicates and enriches the composition by superimposing numerical and textual elements. Intended to educate viewers who entered the principal Committee Room at the Company headquarters in Leadenhall Street, the key also instructs the twenty-first-century viewer in the nuanced hierarchies of emphasis and exclusion endemic to the visual rhetorics of empire in 1820 London. According to the title of the print, Robert Lord Clive now no longer passively receives the grant of the diwani; rather, the key shows the "Great Mogul presenting the Grant of the Dewannee to Lord Clive." The differences between "Clive receiving" and the "Great Mogul presenting" may seem negligible, but the latter makes the Shah the agent of transfer, removing Clive, the Company and England one additional degree from causation and thus culpability. Clive forced the emperor to cede the diwani to the Company under threat; West painted Clive as if he had come to the Shah to receive the diwani at the emperor's invitation, or even insistence. The key suggests that the emperor and retinue traveled to Clive with the express purpose of presenting to him the diwani as a gifting gesture of the sort common to diplomatic exchanges between rulers on the subcontinent in the 1760s. This subtle shift in characterization supports the nineteenth-century idea of the English as the natural, preordained rulers of India.¹⁷² The Mughals, in their fading glory, willingly and even eagerly pass the imperial scepter to the British. The indigenes welcome the change from

rule by oriental despot to rule by benevolent despot. The British graciously assume the role of magnanimous imperator.

Another of the important aspects of the key emerges in the relationships between image, numbers and text within the print as those relationships structure discursive interactions between the figures in the print and between print and viewer.

Corresponding to his titular centrality to the scene, “Shah Alum” appears as number one in the legend, with Clive as number two, followed in numerical order by General Carnac, Captain Archibald Swinton and Major Pearson. The figure who has already taken from Clive the first of the three scrolled documents pictured is Henry Strachey, Clive’s private secretary, who appears as number six. Seven, whom I have argued elsewhere as Edmund, the brother of Clive’s wife Margaret Maskelyne appears as number seven. In an interesting change from the painting to the print, Baker transformed the large, ruffled shirt sleeve of number eight, Anselm Beaumont, into another scrolled paper resembling that held by Strachey – perhaps Beaumont’s apparent age and dignified, officious appearance in the original and the oil copy prompted Baker to assume that he, too, should bear an official document of some kind. Among the remaining Englishmen, Baker designates as “not ascertained” the men numbered nine and ten and thirteen through fifteen.

Baker characterizes the adult male holding the long staff, number eleven, as “an officer of the court called a Chubdar.” The lithographer’s choice to identify this figure by his Mughal Persian title suggests that the Chubdar’s currency from the trial of Warren

Hastings lingered well into the nineteenth century. In the printed transcripts from Hastings's impeachment, the Chubdar appeared as "a person of the meanest station...best answering to our common Beadle [messenger] or Tipstaff [constable]."173 Thomas Kelsall, who, along with Beaumont, did not travel to Allahabad with Clive, appears as number twelve. The key identifies the sepoy, numbers sixteen and seventeen, and Baker redirects the attention of the "Indian civil officer," number eighteen, away from the central narrative focus to the sepoy whose back faces the viewer. Baker reinterprets the sepoy who faces the viewer with such force as to call attention to his facial features, which in the original painting and the oil copy West had subordinated to skin color. In Baker's lithograph, the sepoy's face seems more caricature of a nineteenth-century Englishman than likeness of an eighteenth-century Bengali.

Baker describes the figure numbered nineteen as "an Indian nobleman." This particular convergence of image, number and text points to a set of assertions relevant to Anglophone imperial identity in 1820. The 1793 *Oracle* banner describing Mather Brown's *Lord Cornwallis Receiving as Hostages the Sons of Tippoo Sultaun* informs the reader (and the potential subscriber to the engraving after Brown's painting) that the "Attendant Asiatics appear making the Ceremonial of the SALAMN, or Eastern Bow."174 By 1820, the gesture would have been so inextricably intertwined with Londoners' imaginaries of Mughal India as to render such an explanation redundant. The label "nobleman" generates two kinds of tension within the picture. First, to see a nobleman performing such an exaggerated act of obeisance in the presence of Englishmen points to

the liberty of the latter via the enslavement of the former – a condition to which I have called attention elsewhere in this study. Second, the proximity of the sumptuously dressed “person of the meanest station” to the equally sumptuously dressed bowing nobleman creates an additional visual tension between lithograph and painting, while reinforcing another distinction between the English and their “Asiatic” counterparts: the luxury to which they were already prone by soil and climate had enfeebled the Muslims of India by rendering them indolent and effeminate. This principle applied across all ranks social and political. The dress of the two men and their respective ranks as noted by the legend draws the figures and their culture into sharp contrast with the manly, restrained and industrious Englishmen in the painting (and thus in the lithograph). Rich silks and sparkling jewels signal effeminacy and enslavement, whether they adorn a lowly constable or a respected noble.

Baker labels the last two groups of enumerated figures with what may appear simple, general descriptions. But upon closer consideration, one discerns a more potently rhetorical than informational impulse. The key denotes figures twenty through thirty as “Civil and Military attendants of the Court,” which seems reasonable enough, given the lack of information available to Baker at the time that he produced the image. But the artist’s enumeration and description of the final group clarifies the argumentative valuation system of the lithograph: all four of the “Servants bearing whisks of Peacock feathers to chase away the Flies” appear as number thirty-one. The assignment of a single number to servants seems logical, as the servants to the Mughal emperor by 1820

would have been considered servants to servants of the English, and thus devoid of any individual identity. Compared with the men who outrank them, however, the description of the servants seems exaggerated in its specificity.

In its inventory of unidentified figures, Baker's lithographic key constructs hierarchies that reflect Britons' worldview in 1820. Rather than "Officers and Servants of the East India Company," a designation that would accurately characterize the unidentified Englishmen in the picture, Baker assigns the label "not ascertained" to clarify that these men are indeed all Britons with individual identities beyond their functions within the Company. The unidentified civil and military attendants of the Mughal court, however, remain just that: functionaries who warrant no consideration in terms of individual identity. And though the whisk-bearing servants are so unimportant as to even qualify for sequential enumeration – meaning that they are essentially indistinguishable from one another and thus interchangeable – they merit detailed description because they continued to serve the important function of chasing away flies from the presence of the Britons who replaced their emperor as rulers of India. In this sense, the whisk-bearers are legitimized by their servitude in the eyes of the English because they retained their function under the Raj. Thus the enumeration and denotation systems of the lithograph tell a story about the entrenchment of imperial hierarchies in the transition from Mughal to British rule. The idea that one could be born to the station of a fly-whisker, devoted to protecting one's superiors from the annoyances of flying insects held special appeal for Britons, as the gesticulations necessary to shooing flies from one's

presence had a long and comical history dating back to the development and refinement of oratorical practice in ancient Rome.¹⁷⁵ The restraint inherent to proper decorum proscribed such gestures as shooing flies; polite Englishmen simply did not move in such a way, and certainly not on state occasions such as the durbar. On a more serious note, however, Baker's lithographic key to West's oil copy of *Lord Clive* assured its viewers of an important fact: whether under the oriental despotism of the Mughal or the benevolent despotism of the Briton, both Muslim nobleman and fly-whisk bearer were enslaved while their conquerors enjoyed the fruits of constitutional liberty. But under the British, the enslavement was in the Indian's best interest.

In 1820, the attitudes and self-contradictions that informed the iconographic hierarchies in Baker's lithographic key corresponded closely to the tenets institutionalized in James Mill's (1773-1836) *The History of British India*, begun in 1817. In the preface to his six-volume history, Mill codified in text what painters and their publics had practiced since Francis Hayman's *Lord Clive Receiving the Homage of the Nabob*: "...a man who is duly qualified may obtain more knowledge of India in one year in his closet in England, than he could obtain during the course of the longest life, by the use of his eyes and his ears in India."¹⁷⁶ After the turn of the century, visual and textual representations of the subcontinent produced by painters and writers who had never traveled to India held greater authoritative sway with Anglophone publics than representations produced by artists and writers who had been to India. Thus Benjamin West's and Mather Brown's images defined the Indian of the British imagination while

artists such as William Hodges (1744-1797), who compiled his 1786 *Select Views in India* “on the spot,” never connected with Londoners sufficiently to produce the magnitude of success that Brown’s *Cornwallis* pictures enjoyed.¹⁷⁷ Hayman, West, Brown and others who had no first-hand knowledge of India forged the India of the Anglophone imagination, in much the same way that men who knew little and cared even less about indigenous traditions, customs, practices and belief systems dictated economic, political and judicial policy on the subcontinent.

During the decades that followed the installation of *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney*, Britain’s fortunes on the subcontinent changed dramatically, but little evidence survives regarding the various copies of West’s original painting, which hangs today at Oakly Park, Shropshire. Posterity’s view of Robert Clive changed during the nineteenth century, as John Malcolm produced a biography derived from the Powis family papers in 1836, followed by a critique of that book published in the January 1840 *Edinburgh Review* written by Thomas Babington Macaulay. Despite Malcolm’s reliance on primary source documents, Macaulay’s review dismissed the biography as a tribute to his “idol.”¹⁷⁸ In the fusion of the classical and modern heroics of empire, Macaulay’s review offers one of the most succinct assessments of Clive and the British project for global dominion:

Such an extent of cultivated territory, such an amount of revenue, such a multitude of subjects, was never added to the dominion of Rome by the most successful pro-consul. Nor were such wealthy spoils ever borne under the arches of triumph, down the Sacred Way, and through the crowded Forum, to the threshold of the Tarpeian Jove. The fame of those who subdued Antiochus and Tigranes grows dim when compared with the splendour of the exploits which the

young English adventurer achieved at the head of an army not equal in numbers to one half a Roman legion.¹⁷⁹

Macaulay's review attempted to balance objective criticism of Clive's conduct and ambition by asserting that in the end his faults were "nobly repaired."¹⁸⁰ One may only speculate as to whether the writings of Malcolm in 1836 and Macaulay 1841 and the events of the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 altered viewers' experiences of the original at Oakly Park and the copies at Government House, Madras and the East India Company offices in Leadenhall Street.¹⁸¹

Two additional manifestations of West's composition that evidence the continuing relevance of his visual account of Clive's receipt of the diwani here warrant brief mention. First, the reverse of a silver medal struck in 1975 shows Clive, Shah Alam and the scrolled document in a well-rendered detail from West's painting (figs. 131 and 132).¹⁸² Second, the same detail, though resembling West's painting less closely, appears in an oil painting, attributed to a "Cook Smythe," auctioned by Osian Galleries in Delhi, in 2002 (fig. 133).¹⁸³ The degrees of difference that distinguish the figures in the Osian-auctioned oil painting from those in West's original suggest that the former is a copy several times removed from the John Blake White version that West sent to Edward Clive for installation at Government House, Madras. However, because the Madras copy remains untraced (or, as some scholars would have it, never existed in the first place), I am currently unable to determine the degree of fidelity with which first White and subsequently "Cook Smythe" reproduced West's image.¹⁸⁴

As one of Benjamin West's most ambitious albeit least-known academic history paintings, *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the Grant of the Duanney* evidences the extent to which empire determined the course and content of Anglophone visual cultures during the second half of the eighteenth century. In translating the heroics of empire history painting format from the public to the private realms of production and consumption, West faced two artistic challenges: negotiating the aesthetic demands of a decorative program unprecedented in scale and audacity and contriving an image of sufficient force to transform its subject's assortment of imperial anxieties into an authentic (and authenticating) portrayal of imperial triumph. Clive's suicide, West's desire to preserve his own artistic status and Britons' struggles to reconcile themselves to their new identity as global imperators make it impossible for the modern viewer to determine whether West succeeded at meeting those challenges.

Notes

¹ Horace Walpole to Horace Mann on Feb. 12, 1772; 5 March 1772; and 27 March 1772 in *Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, to Sir Horace Mann, His Britannic Majesty's Resident at the Court of Florence, from 1760 to 1785. Now First Published from the Original MSS.* 4 volumes (London, Richard Bentley, 1843) vol. II, p. 197. In a footnote Walpole identifies the sobriquet "heaven-born hero" as William Pitt's characterization of Clive. Plutus, the Greek god of riches, decided when a youth to "distribute wealth to none but virtuous and just men; upon which Jupiter considering the consequences of such a resolution, took his sight away from him, and left him to strol[e] about in the world in [a] blind condition...." See *The Beauties of English Prose: Being a Select Collection of Moral, Critica, and Entertaining Passages, Disposed in the Manner of Essays*, 4 volumes (London, printed for Hawes Clarke and Collins, S. Crowder, B. Law, and G. Robinson, 1772) vol. I, p. 120. Plutarch refers to Plutus in his *Life of Lycurgus*, the Spartan ruler who originated the laws to which Agis wished to return Spartan society in the story upon which West based *Leonidas Ordering Cleombrotus into Banishment*. See Plutarch, "Life of Lycurgus," *Plutarch's Lives* (1763) vol. I, p. 179. See also "Horace Walpole to the Countess of Ailesbury, 27 September 1761," *The Works of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford*, 5 volumes (London, printed for G. G. and J. Robinson and J. Edwards, 1798) vol. V, p. 557: "The generality are not much struck with any thing under a complete victory. If you have a mind to be well with the mob of England, you must be knocked on the head like Wolfe, or bring home as many diamonds as Clive. We live in a country where so many follies or novelties start forth every day, that we have not time to try a general's capacity by the rules of Polybius."

² The term was in wide use on both sides of the Atlantic by 1750. See, e.g., "A Relation of a Visit Paid by a Great Prince to Our Governour in the East Indies. By an English Lady. Lately Received by a Relation of the Author's in Philadelphia," *The American Magazine and Historical Chronicle* (September 1743) p. 17; and "Letter from Harwich, April 20," *Boston Post-Boy* no. 657 (22 June 1747) p. 2.

³ Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 3 March 1761, in *Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, to Sir Horace Mann, His Britannic Majesty's Resident at the Court of Florence, from 1760 to 1785. Now First Published from the Original MSS.*, 2 volumes (Philadelphia, Lea & Blanchard, 1844) vol. I, p. 18.

⁴ See, e.g., Impartial Hand, *A System of Camp Discipline, Military Honours, Garrison-Duty, and Other Regulations for the Land Forces*, 2nd edition (London, printed for J. Millan, 1757) p. 140; Merchant of London, *An Essay on the Pernicious Practice of Impressing Seamen into the King's Service* (London, printed and sold by J. Townsend, 1760) p. 2n; and "Tuesday July 1. Extract of a letter from Calcutta in the East Indies, January 20, 1760," *The British Magazine. Or Monthly Repository for Gentlemen & Ladies* vol. I (June 1760) p. 445.

⁵ One of the earliest references to Clive as a Nabob appeared in a poem entitled *George's Coffee House*, in which the author notes that Clive's fortune had by 1761 generated only a small stir among Londoners. See *George's Coffee House. A Poem* (London, printed for the author, 1761) p. 5. See also "Extraordinary Ship-News," *The Whitehall Evening Post; Or, London Intelligencer* no. 3187 (9 October – 11 October 1766) p. 2: "DOWNES, Aug. 14. ...Last night, blowing hard, the *Anti Sejanus*, Lieut. Scot. parted her cables, and struck on the *Perils of Poetry*, on the shoals of *Sandwich*: Nothing was saved but the *Boltsprit*, which was the largest ever put in so crank a vessel. The same evening anchored, last from St. Helena, the *Nabob*, Capt. Clive, with a cargo of Rupees, Little Horses, and *Rajas* Sons for education." I will parse the relevance of these various references in the context of the heroics of empire in the full-length version of this study. As Tillman Nechtman notes in his 2005 PhD dissertation, *Town and Country Magazine* clarified the use of the term in a piece entitled "The Memoirs of a Nabob": "a nabob, according to the

modern acceptance of the word, is a person who in the East-India Company's service has by art, fraud, cruelty, and imposition obtained the favour of an Asiatic prince and returned to England to display his folly and vanity and ambition." See *The Town and Country Magazine; or, Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment* (London, 1771) p. 28, quoted in Tillman Nechtman, "Nabobs: Defining the Indian Empire and the British Nation in the Late Eighteenth Century," unpublished PhD dissertation (Los Angeles, University of Southern California, 2005) pp. 5-6

⁶ H. V. Bowen, "Robert Clive, first Baron Clive of Plassey (1725–1774)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2007. For conversion rates from Pounds Sterling in the eighteenth century to US Dollars in the twenty-first, see measuringworth.com.

⁷ Bowen, "Robert Clive," *Oxford DNB* online.

⁸ Clive to Sir George Pocock, 25 Aug 1759, BL OIOC, MS Eur. G 37, box 3.

⁹ See, e.g., "An Extract from a Letter, Received by the India Ships Arrived in Ireland, Containing a Particular Account of the Unfortunate Affair at Bengal," *London Magazine, or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*, vol. 26, no. 6 (June 1757) p. 296.

¹⁰ Bowen, "Robert Clive," *Oxford DNB* online.

¹¹ *An Address to the Proprietors of East-India Company Stock, upon the Important Points to Be Discussed among Them at the Next Meeting of the General Court, to Be Held on Monday the 12th Inst. at the South-Sea House* (London, printed for C. Henderson, 1764) p. 6.

¹² See Robert Clive, *A Letter to the Proprietors of the East-India Stock, from Lord Clive* (London, printed for J. Nourse, 1764). The additional titles bestowed upon Clive include Saif Jang (The Sword in War); Sabit Jang (The Firm in War); Amir ul Mamalik (The Grandee of the Empire); Muin-ud-daulah (The Eminent in the State); and Zubdat ul Mulk (The Select of the Kingdom). See Abdel Majed Khan, *The Transition in Bengal, 1756-1775: A Study of Saiyid Muhammad Reza Khan* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969) p. xii.

¹³ For a clear and thoughtful summary of Clive's position in London, see Bruce Lenman and Philip Lawson, "Robert Clive, the 'Black Jagir', and British Politics," *The Historical Journal* vol. 26, no. 4 (December 1983) pp. 801-829.

¹⁴ Robert Clive to [Lord Grenville] 13 December 1763, *The Grenville Papers: Being the Correspondence of Richard Grenville Earl Temple, K.G., and the Right Hon: George Grenville, Their Friends and Contemporaries. Now First Published from the Original MSS., Formerly Preserved at Stowe*, William James Smith, ed. 4 volumes (London, John Murray, 1852) vol. II, pp. 180-181.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 181.

¹⁶ Clive did show clemency toward two subordinates who challenged his authority in India, both of whom were eligible for capital punishment for their offences against Clive and the Company. See Robert Harvey, *Clive: The Life and Death of a British Emperor* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1998) pp. 315-316.

¹⁷ For claims regarding Clive's sexual proclivities, see Allen Edwardes, *The Rape of India: A Biography of Robert Clive and a Sexual History of the Conquest of Hindostan* (New York, Julian Press, 1966) p. 300 : [As a member of the "Mad Monks of Medmenham Abbey,"] "Clive, representing 'Mahomet,' is said to have been ceremoniously fellated by Thomas Potter (representing the Holy Roman Emperor Heraclius)..."; See also Nigel Everett, *The Tory View of Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1994) p. 67.

¹⁸ See Lawson, "Robert Clive, the 'Black Jagir and British Politics,'" p. 824.

¹⁹ *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, for the Year 1767* (London, printed for J. Dodsley, 1768) p. 41. It is important to note that Burke owned East India Company stock.

²⁰ In January 1720 the scheme to fund the national debt by legislating the South Sea Company's monopoly on South American trade triggered a sort of national hysteria of investment that ultimately resulted in the financial devastation of Britons from all ranks and the arrest and seizure of estates and other assets of the officers of the Company.

²¹ Horace Walpole to Horace Mann 9 April 1772, in *Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, to Sir Horace Mann, His Britannic Majesty's Resident at the Court of Florence, from 1760 to 1785. Now First Published from the Original MSS.*, 4 volumes (London, Richard Bentley, 1843) vol. II, p. 206. For discussions of the Macaroni and his place in eighteenth-century England, see Miles Ogborn, "Locating the Macaroni: Luxury, Sexuality and Vision in Vauxhall Gardens," *Textual Practice* 11: 3 (1997) pp. 445-461.

²² *The York Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser* no. XXIV (28 May 1773) p. 1. The passage in quotation marks comes from a resolution read by Colonel Burgoyne. William Meredith followed Burgoyne's resolution by summarizing the imperial anxiety peculiar to the parliamentarians who felt concerned that a lack of leadership in London contributed to corruption in the provinces: "Sir William Meredith spoke next, and agreed in every tittle with general Burgoyne; he concluded by saying, 'That he had hitherto and should continue to second and support, against any power under Heaven, any mode of preceeding or purport of resolution which he could justify in his conscience, as having national Justice for its aim, and which his honour would applaud as proceeding from principles of rectitude.'"

²³ London gossip quickly shifted the locus of concern from parliament to court: "I am told, that this parliamentary Enquiry into the Proceedings of the East India Company did not originally proceed from the Ministry, but from the King himself, who was shockd with the Accounts he receivd of the Oppressions exercisd over the poor Natives, and demanded a Remedy." David Hume to William Strahan 22 February 1772, in G. Birbeck Hill, ed., *Letters of David Hume to William Strahan* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1888), p. 236.

²⁴ Claims of 'upon the spot' reportage abound in eighteenth-century literature; one of the most instructive derives from reports of Ras Sem, a fully populated petrified city in the province of Darba near modern-day Tripoli. Numerous eighteenth-century accounts of Ras Sem circulated around Britain, many of them corroborated by men "of great veracity, who had been on the spot." See, e.g., Thomas Shaw, *Travels, or Observations Relating to Several Parts of Barbary and the Levant*. 2nd ed. (London, printed for A. Millar, and W. Sandby, 1757) p. 156. Shaw's work debunks the story, which had appeared in such publications as *Gentleman's Magazine* just a decade earlier as a legitimate description of the phenomenon, included among other 'scientific' reports taken "on the spot." For additional analysis of the "on the spot" trope, see Victoria Dickenson, *Drawn from the Life: Science and Art in the Portrayal of the New World* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1998) pp. 105-139; and John E. Crowley, "'Taken on the Spot': The Visual Appropriation of New France for the Global British Landscape," *The Canadian Historical Review* vol. 86, no. 1 (March 2005) pp. 1-28.

²⁵ In 1738, Henry St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke, learned of a group opposed to the ministerial and monarchical venality of Robert Walpole and George II. The group had organized around George II's son, Frederick, whom they saw as the antidote to the suffocating system of Whig patronage and corruption that marked the day. As a sort of opposition manifesto and guidebook for the Prince of Wales and his cadre, Bolingbroke wrote and published *The Idea of a Patriot King: With respect to the Constitution of Great Britain* (London, printed for T.C., 1740). Upon the death of George II, the Tory opposition channeled its energies toward seeing patriotic subversion of the status quo that Frederick had embraced to fruition in the reign of his son. For Frederick's politics and his relationship with his father, see Michael De-la-Noy, *The King Who Never Was: The Story of Frederick, Prince of Wales* (London, Peter Owen, 1996). Neither George I or George II learned to speak English with demonstrable fluency, a fact that substantially magnified the rhetorical impact of George III's first speech to Parliament on 18 November 1760: "Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton; and the peculiar happiness of my life will ever consist in the welfare of a people, whose loyalty and warm affection to me, I consider as the greatest and most permanent security of my throne...." See "His Majesty's Most Gracious Speech to Both Houses of Parliament, on Tuesday, the Eighteenth Day of November, 1760," [broadside] (London: Thomas Baskett, 1760); and *The Annual Register, or View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, of the Year 1760* (London: printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1761) pp. 248-250. Modern scholars disagree on whether the king

said “Briton” or “Britain” in the speech, but as no correction appeared in the broadside by order of the crown, I choose to preserve the tradition of the day by opting for “Briton”.

²⁶ See Bruce Lenman and Philip Lawson, “Robert Clive, the ‘Black Jagir’, and British Politics,” *The Historical Journal*, vol. 26, no. 4 (December 1983) pp. 801-829.

²⁷ Charles Caraccioli, *The Life of Robert Lord Clive, Baron Plassey. Wherein Are Impartially Delineated His Military Talents in the Field; His Maxims of Government in the Cabinet, during the Last Two Wars in the East Indies, Which Made Him an Arbitrer of Empire, and the Richest Subject in Europe. With Anecdotes of His Private Life, and the Particular Circumstances of His Death. Also a Narrative of All the Last Transactions in India*, 4 volumes (London, printed by T. Bell, 1775-1777) vol. I, pp. 555-556.

²⁸ See *The True Alarm* (London, printed for J. Almon, 1770) pp. 28-33. This tract appeared without attribution, but was reprinted in William Bolts 1772 *Considerations on India Affairs* and in Carracioli’s biography of Clive in 1775.

²⁹ See “An Act for Establishing Certain Regulations for the Better Management of Affairs of the East India Company, as Well in India as in Europe,” in *The Statutes at Large, from the Tenth Year of the Reign of King George the Third to the Thirteenth Year of the Reign of King George the Third, Inclusive. To Which Is Prefixed, a Table of the Titles of All the Publick and Private Statutes during that Time*, 11 volumes (London, printed for Charles Evry and William Strahan, 1774) vol. XI, pp. 814-823.

³⁰ See Jane Latham, *Journal of Lord Clive's Tour in France* (January-June 1768) BL OIOC MSS Eur F128/224, p. 5 and pp. 35-36. In addition to the monumental history paintings depicting his triumphs in India, Clive had planned to hang a series of tapestries at Claremont, bringing to his viewers’ minds the great palaces of France and England. Clive died before the tapestry commission from Gobelins was confirmed.

³¹ Robert Clive to Henry Strachey 15th May 1771, BL MSS Eur F 128 93.

³² Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East 1750-1850* (London, Fourth Estate, 2005) p. 36. One might feel tempted to compare Clive with West, who could easily be characterized as a painter who did not know history, but knew he should paint it.

³³ William Patoun deserves a full biographical study, which to my knowledge has yet to appear.

³⁴ Robert Clive to Henry Strachey Bath 9 May 1771; Robert Clive to Henry Strachey Bath 15 May 1771; Robert Clive to Henry Strachey Bath 17 May 1771; Robert Clive to Henry Strachey Bath 24 May 1771; Robert Clive to Henry Strachey Bath 26 May 1771, Letters exchanged by Strachey with Robert, 1st Baron Clive, and his wife, Margaret, chiefly concerning Clive’s health, interest in paintings, administration of his estates in Montgomery, Radnor and Ireland, his stay (accompanied by his wife) in the south of France and travels in France and Belgium (1768), his financial affairs and the election of Directors of the EIC and challenges to their authority (1774). (Bound volume). 1768-1774, BL MSS Eur F 128 93.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, p. 37.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Newcastle reached the peak of his political influence as George II’s first minister from 1754-1756 and as finance minister in the Pitt administration from 1757-1762, during which he oversaw funding for the land and sea victories that ended the Seven Years’ War. As Pitt maneuvered to crush France and Spain, Newcastle rejected the costs of further military and naval operations. The addition of George III’s adviser Lord Bute into the fray catalyzed the circumstances under which Pitt submitted his resignation in 1761. After Bute forced Newcastle from office in 1762, he regained royal favour by forming a new government, known as the Rockingham Whigs. As “lord privy seal, with special responsibility for ecclesiastical affairs” under Rockingham, Newcastle encouraged a conciliatory response to the American colonies’ rejection of the Stamp Act. See Reed Browning, “Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle upon Tyne and First Duke of Newcastle under Lyme (1693–1768),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/21801>].

³⁹ See Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, p. 35; and Browning, “Thomas Pelham-Holles.” Some sources indicate that the final price was not the produce of bargaining, but represented the £40,000 asking price minus the £15,000 mortgage that Clive held on the estate.

⁴⁰ “Claremont,” in *The Ambulator; or, the Stranger’s Companion in a Tour Round London; within the Circuit of Twenty-five Miles: Describing Whatever Is Remarkable, Either for Grandeur, Elegancy, Use, or Curiosity; and Comprehending Catalogues of the Pictures by Eminent Artists* (London, printed for J. Bew, 1774) p. 36. See also Kerry Downes, “Sir John Vanbrugh (1664–1726),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2005: <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/28059>. Later sources refer to Vanbrugh’s design for Claremont as “Crincum-Crancum,” a term most used in the eighteenth century to indicate the absence of straight lines, zigzag, whimsy, etc. See *The Castle of Infamy. A Poetical Vision* (London, printed for J. Bew, 1780) p.57n.

⁴¹ Downes, “Sir John Vanbrugh.”

⁴² Samuel Garth, *Claremont. Address’d to the Right Honourable the Earl of Clare* (London, printed for J. Tonson, 1715) pp 19-20, lines 307-324. In the annotated edition that appeared very shortly after the first issue, Garth makes it a point to alert his reader to Edward, the Black Prince’s victory at Cressy in his comment on the Order of the Garter. See Samuel Garth, *Claremont. Address’d to the Right Honourable Earl of Clare. With Remarks and Annotations Variorum* (London, printed for J. Roberts, 1715) pp. 62-63.

⁴³ Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England; with Some Account of the Principal Artists; and Incidental Notes on Other Arts; Collected by the Late Mr. George Vertue; and Now Digested and Published from His Original MSS. by Mr. Horace Walpole. To Which Is Added the History of the Modern Taste in Gardening*, 4 volumes (Strawberry-Hill, printed by Thomas Kirgate, 1771) vol. IV, pp. 137-138.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. IV, pp. 138-139. See also Richard Hurd, Letter VIII, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (London, printed for A. Millar and W. Thurlbourn and J. Woodyer, 1762) pp. 67-68: [The taste in gardening] “which *Kent and Nature* have brought us...where the supreme art of the Designer consists in disposing his ground and objects into an *entire landskip*; and grouping them...in so easy a manner, that the careless observer, tho’ he be taken with the symmetry of the whole, discovers no art in the combination...” Hurd continues his commentary on Kent’s genius by invoking (in Italian) the sixteenth canto of Torquato Tasso’s *Gerusalemme Liberata*, offered here in a 1763 translation by John Hoole: “The garden then unfolds a beauteous scene, / With flow’rs adorn’d and ever-living green. / There glassy lakes reflect the beaming day; / Here crystal streams in gurgling fountains play: / Cool vales descend, and sunny hills arise, / And groves, and caves, and grottoes strike the eyes! / Art shew’d her utmost pow’r; but art conceal’d, / With greater charms the pleas’d attention held.” See Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered; an Heroick Poem*, 2 volumes (London, printed for the author, 1763) vol. II, pp. 148-149, lines 63-70. I will explore the importance of Tasso’s poem as interpreted in Handel’s oratorio based thereupon in the section on Vauxhall and the Patriot Opposition in the full-length version of this project.

⁴⁵ As I will argue in the full-length version of this study, the country seat and its landscape garden could serve as metaphors through which cultural critics leveled all kinds of political complaint. See, e.g. Adam Fitz-Adam [Edward Moore], *The World* no. 118 (3 April, 1755), republished as Adam Fitz-Adam, *The World. By Adam Fitz-Adam*, 4 volumes (London, printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1763) vol. III, p. 89: “If the noble duke who cloathed the sands of Claremont with such exquisite verdure, had made the same glorious experiment in Spain, he would have brought no less riches, and much more happiness to the nation, than the conquests of Philip, or the discoveries of Columbus.”

⁴⁶ Because of the importance of the country seat to Britons’ self-fashioning and to the conduct of public and private business and because of the landscape garden’s importance to the impression created by estate, even the grandest of houses could assume a subordinate role in the country seat as a rhetorical gesture and as a form of cultural production. See, e.g., *A Description of the Gardens and Buildings at Kew, in Surrey; with the Engravings Belonging thereto in Perspective. To Which Is Added, a Short Account of the Principal*

Seats and Gardens in and about Richmond and Kew (Brentford, printed by P. Norbury and George Bickham, 1763) pp. 13-14.

⁴⁷ Ibid, vol. IV, p. 142. Walpole also criticized certain aspects of Kent's designs and took him to task for overstepping the bounds of taste in some of his efforts, but the encomia far outweighed the complaint in Walpole's estimation of Kent's genius.

⁴⁸ Clive did order the reuse of some of the materials from the Vanbrugh construction, including "chimney pieces, slates, bricks, paving stones, locks, and so on." See Christopher Rowell, "'That Delightful and Magnificent Villa': Clive of India's Claremont and Its Collections," *Apollo* vol. 153, no. 470 [National Trust Historic Houses and Collection Annual] (2001) pp. 14-22, p. 14. Rowell cites NLW/Powis Castle MSS, Clive 1233-1260, which indicates that Brown applied most of the salvaged material to the upper floors of the new house.

⁴⁹ Robert Clive to Henry Strachey, 5 July 1771, BL MSS Eur F 128 93.

⁵⁰ William Patoun to Margaret Clive, 5 December 1773, Powis Castle MSS, National Library of Wales; and Robert Clive to Henry Strachey, 22 April 1768, BL MSS Eur F 128 93.

⁵¹ Daniel Defoe, *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain. Divided into Circuits or Journeys. Giving a Particular Account of Whatever Is Curious, and Worth Observation*, 3rd edition, 4 volumes (London, printed for J. Osborn, S. Birt, D. Browne, J. Hodges, A. Millar, J. Whiston, and J. Robinson, 1742) vol. I, pp. 227-228. Defoe disagreed with Walpole on the landscape garden at Claremont: "...as several Persons have had the Contrivance of [Newcastle's] Gardens and Buildings, there is not any uniform Taste to be found in either, which is greatly to be regretted, since the noble Owner has been so much intent on having it worthy of himself." (vol. I, p. 228).

⁵² John Gwynn, *London and Westminster Improved, Illustrated by Plans. To Which Is Prefixed, a Discourse on Publick Magnificence; with Observations on the State of Arts and Artists in This Kingdom, wherein the Study of the Polite Arts Is Recommended as Necessary to a Liberal Education* (London, printed for the author, 1766) pp. 43-45.

⁵³ John Phibbs, "Lancelot Brown (1716-1783)," John Phibbs, 'Brown, Lancelot [Capability Brown] (bap. 1716, d. 1783)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/3635>

⁵⁴ See, e.g., subscribers lists for John Woolfe, *Vitruvius Britannicus, or the British Architect; Containing Plans, Elevations, and Sections; of the Regular Buildings Both Public and Private in Great Britain*, 4 volumes (London, printed for the author and Gandon Architects, 1767) vol. IV, p. 11; and (posthumously for Clive) George Richardson, *A Book of Ceilings, Composed in the Style of the Antique Grotesque* (London, printed for the author, 1776) p. i.

⁵⁵ Phibbs, "Lancelot Brown."

⁵⁶ William Mason to Humphry Repton, 24 April 1792, quoted in Humphry Repton, *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening. Collected from Designs and Observations Now in the Possession of the Different Noblemen and Gentlemen for Whose Use They Were Originally Made. The Whole Tending to Establish Fixed Principles in the Art of Laying Out Ground* (London, printed by W. Bulmer and Co., 1794) p. 14n.

⁵⁷ Giles Worsley, "The Villa and the Classical Country Houses," in John Harris and Michael Snodin, eds., *Sir William Chambers: Architect to George III*, exh. cat. (London, Courtauld Gallery, 1996) pp. 77-85, p. 77.

⁵⁸ Nicholas Pevsner, *The Buildings of England* (London, Penguin, 1958) p. 307.

⁵⁹ Chambers and Brown had engaged in an ongoing professional feud, but the loss of the Claremont commission seems to have sent Chambers over the edge. As Claremont began to take shape, Chambers published "his famous *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (1772), in which he tried to prove the superiority of this style of gardening over that practiced in England. He only succeeded in arousing a great of ridicule from his contemporaries. Horace Walpole commented to William Mason: 'I have read Chambers' book. It is more extravagant than the worst Chinese paper, and is written in wild revenge against Brown; the only surprising consequence is, that it is laughed at, and it is not likely to be adopted,...'

while William Mason himself replied to Chambers with his well-known *Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers*. The motive imputed to Chambers for his attacks on Brown was jealousy over the fact that Brown's design for a villa at Claremont for Lord Clive had been preferred to his own." See H. F. Clark, "Eighteenth Century Elysiums: The Rôle of 'Association' in the Landscape Movement," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* vol. VI (1943) pp. 165-189, p. 188, quoting Horace Walpole to William Mason 25 May 1772. In a comment that typifies twentieth-century academic chauvinism, Clark notes that professional jealousy "is often mentioned by his contemporaries but is hardly credible when Chambers' position and his large practice are remembered." See Horace Walpole, *The Correspondence of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, and the Rev. William Mason. Now First Published from the Original MSS.*, J. Mitford, ed., 2 volumes (London, Richard Bentley, 1851) vol. I, pp. 27-28; William Chambers, *A Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (London, printed for G. Griffin, T. Davies, J. Dodsley, Wilson & Nicol, P. Elmsley and J. Walter, 1772); and William Mason, *An Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers, Knight, Comptroller General of His Majesty's Works, and Author of a Late Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (London, printed for J. Almon, 1773).

⁶⁰ Kimerly Rorschach, "Frederick, Prince of Wales (1707-51), as Collector and Patron," *Walpole Society* LV (1989-1990) pp. 1-76, p. 29. See also *Additions to the Universal History* (London: printed for T. Osborne; A. Millar; and J. Osborn, 1750) p. 92, for characterizations of the men celebrated at the Temple of Ancient Virtue, Stowe. For a full description of the temples at Stowe, including inscriptions and translations, see Gentlemen of Oxford, "The Gardens at Stow, the Seat of the Right Hon. The Earl Temple," *The Oxford Guide: Or, Companion through the University* (Oxford, printed for J. Fletcher, S. Parker, James Rivington and James Fletcher, 1759) pp. 101-120.

⁶¹ Christopher Rowell, "'That Delightful and Magnificent Villa': Clive of India's Claremont and Its Collections," *Apollo* vol. 153, no. 470 [National Trust Historic Houses and Collection Annual] (2001) pp. 14-22, p. 15.

⁶² See Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 13 September 1741, in *Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, to Sir Horace Mann, British Envoy at the Court of Tuscany. Now First Published from the Originals in the Possession of the Earl of Waldegrave*, 2 volumes, (New York, George Dearborn, 1833) vol. I, p. 42; and Joseph W. Reed and Frederick Pottle, eds., *Boswell: Laird of Auchinleck 1778-1782* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993) p. 314. Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawther Stone quote these sources in *An Open Elite?: England 1540-1880* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1984) p. 404, but substitute "smug" for "snug," completely altering Walpole's meaning.

⁶³ Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East 1750-1850* (London, Fourth Estate, 2005) p. 35.

⁶⁴ See Mark Bence-Jones, "A Nabob's Choice of Art: Clive of India as Builder and Collector," *Country Life* vol. CL, no. 3885 (November 1971) pp. 1446-1448.

⁶⁵ Bridgeman supervised the gardens at Kensington Palace, may have worked at Blenheim and created the turf amphitheatre at Claremont while Vanbrugh occupied the house and designed the serpentine at London's Hyde Park. Bridgeman also contributed to the landscape design at Stowe, Chiswick and Cliveden. See Peter Willis, *Charles Bridgeman and the English Landscape Garden* (London, A. Zwemmer, 1977). On Bridgeman at Blenheim, see Frances Harris, "Charles Bridgeman at Blenheim?" *Garden History* vol. 13, no. 1 (Spring 1985) pp. 1-3.

⁶⁶ Those Britons familiar with the excavations at Hadrian's Villa near Tivoli would have recognized in Claremont's underground passageways yet another nod to Clive as Roman emperor.

⁶⁷ Rowell, "'That Delightful and Magnificent Villa'," p. 17.

⁶⁸ Robert Clive to Henry Strachey, 13 March 1773, BL MSS Eur F128 93. The motto conveys Clive's intent either to be a Caesar or to be nothing.

⁶⁹ Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, p. 37.

⁷⁰ Rowell, "'That Delightful and Magnificent Villa'," p. 18. In this article, Rowell discusses at length Clive's recruitment of French artists and artisans in the execution of his plan for Claremont. Though the

importation of French artistic labor could certainly be read as a political statement on Clive's part, the details regarding the work of those artists and artisans transcend the scope of this dissertation. I will address the French angle in the full-length version of this study.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ See BL MSS Eur F128/224, p. 5.

⁷⁴ Quote von Erffa and Staley.

⁷⁵ For a detailed description of this painting, see Appendix.

⁷⁶ Richard Owen Cambridge, *An Account of the War in India, between the English and French, on the Coast of Coromandel, from the Year 1750 to the Year 1760. Together with a Relation of the Remarkable Events on the Malabar Coast, and the Expeditions to Golconda and Surat; with the Operations of the Fleet. Illustrated with Maps, Plans, &c. The Whole Compiled from Original Papers* (London, printed for T. Jefferys, 1761) p. 31

⁷⁷ Among the many sources that confront this fiction of fading grandeur, see Kaushik Roy, "Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare, and Indian Society, c. 1740-1849," *The Journal of Military History* 69 (July 2005) pp. 651-690. See also J. C. Heesterman, "Was There an Indian Reaction? Western Expansion in Indian Perspective," in H. L. Wesseling, ed., *Expansion and Reaction: Essays on European Expansion and Reactions in Asia and Africa* (Leiden, Leiden University Press, 1978) pp. 31-58.

⁷⁸ Jemima Kindersley, "Letter XVIII. Pondicherry, June 1765," in *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (London, printed for J. Nourse, 1777) pp. 72-76, p. 75. For a discussion of Kindersley's viewpoints in terms of gender and colonialism, see Joyce Grossman, "Ayahs, Dhayes, and Bearers: Mary Sherwood's Indian Experience and 'Constructions of Subordinated Others'," *South Atlantic Review* vol. 66, no. 2 [Being Global: From the Enlightenment to the Age of Information] (Spring, 2001) pp. 14-44.

⁷⁹ Though not related specifically to the rule of India by the British East India Company, this 1789 summary of the term both defines and prophesies the mistaken notions that informed the rise of the Raj: "Under the gentle tyranny of a benevolent despot, the occupations of the subject might be secure, his property unfringed, and his person inviolate. But in the gift of these humble enjoyments, the Sovereign would believe that he had secured the happiness of the people; and would impute that happiness to his own protecting care, and to the prudent firmness of his own character. He would not easily admit, that there was something which was still denied them; that they were condemned to a dull repetition of animal gratification, and sensual indulgence; that the activity of the spirit was restrained, and the incitements to exertion withheld; that, deprived of the hope of distinction, and the reward of ability, they slumbered through their days, and departed from the world...with the same indifference that they existed in it." *Observations on Mr. Paley's Theory of the Origin of Civil Government, and the Duty of Submission* (London, printed for T. Thornton, 1789) pp. 21-22.

⁸⁰ [decide whether to include Dupleix anecdote here]

⁸¹ William Bolts, *Considerations on India Affairs; Particularly Respecting the Present State of Bengal and Its Dependencies. To Which Is Prefixed, a Map of Those Countries, Chiefly from Actual Surveys*, 2nd edition (London, printed for J. Almon, 1772) p. 34.

⁸² See Huw V. Bowen, "Investment and Empire in the Later Eighteenth Century: East India Stockholding, 1756-1791," *The Economic History Review*, New Series, vol. 42, no. 2 (May 1989) pp. 186-206.

⁸³ In the case of West's *Wolfe*, of course, time also contributed to the collective amnesia that cast Wolfe as virtuous martyr to the cause of empire.

⁸⁴ The published characterization of the occasion first appeared in William Wilson Hunter's 1867 *The Annals of Rural Bengal*. The report was repeated and embellished in a review of Hunter's work by the *Edinburgh Review* in 1869 (vol. 129) and then again in the entry entitled "Lord Clive," in *The Encyclopædia Britannica. A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information*, 11th edition, p. 535. Mark Bence-Jones includes the description in his biography of Clive, but without attribution.

⁸⁵ See, e.g., Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Astarabadi Firishtah, *The History of Hindostan*, Alexander Dow, trans., 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London, printed for T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt, 1770).

⁸⁶ For an itemized list of the India Curiosities that Clive left to Edward, see NLW: Clive Papers, T4/1, inventoried 17 March 1775.

⁸⁷ For discussions of Clive's artifacts, see Mildred Archer, Christopher Rowell and Robert Skelton, *Treasures from India: The Clive Collection at Powis Castle* (London: The Herbert Press; New York: Meredith Press, 1987); Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, pp. 41-42; and Nechtman, "Nabobs," pp. 266-275.

⁸⁸ Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, p. 42.

⁸⁹ See "A Description of a Most Rich and Curious Scymeter and Belt, Lately Sent to Bengal, on Board the Duke of Grafton East-Indiaman; by the Ingenious Artist Mr. Cox, in Shoe-Lane" and "Description of a Rich Dagger, Chain for the Neck, and Bracelet for the Arm of an Indian Monarch..." Press Cuttings of Political, Social, Literary or Military Interest, Mainly from the St. James's Chronicle 1727-1804 PP.17.G, f. 14.

⁹⁰ On the mutually-informing influences of Anglophone and Indian material cultures, see Natasha Eaton, "Nostalgia for the Exotic: Creating an Imperial Art in London, 1750-1793," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* vol. 39, no. 2 (1006) pp. 227-250.

⁹¹ See James Cox, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Several Superb and Magnificent Pieces of Mechanism and Jewelry, Exhibited in the Museum, at Spring-Gardens, Charing-Cross* (London, printed for the author, 1772) pp. 20-22. London artisans' mimicry of Mughal jewelry-making and weapon-decoration techniques demonstrates one degree to which the soft transculturation and the "contact zone" are elaborated and codified in Fernando Ortiz, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar (advertencia de sus contrastes agrarios, económicos, históricos y sociales, su etnografía y su transculturación)* (La Habana, J. Montero, 1940); and Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, Routledge, 1992).

⁹² See, e.g. *The Annual Register, or A View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, for the Year 1767* (London, printed for J. Dodsley, 1767) p. 110.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ See John Fergusson, *A Dictionary of the Hindostan Language* (London, printed for the author, 1773).

⁹⁵ "At Plassey in 1757 there was a single Indian battalion trained in the European manner and raised in Calcutta called the Lal Paltan, or Red Battalion [Lāl Paltan – red battalion, so called because of their red British coats..] Influenced perhaps by Scottish and Irish Models, the Company decided in the aftermath of Plassey to build up an army of high caste peasant soldiers in preference to the previous practice of enlisting members of the Mughal military classes. Such peasant soldiers could be taught to regard the Company as their sole protector and employer could be duly rewarded with grants of land and other privileges following a relatively lucrative service. The decision was made to give them a suitably modified European uniform rather than to continue with Mughal-style dress..." See C.A. Bayly, *The Raj: India and the British 1600-1947* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 1990) p. 103. See also Ratan Dasgupta, "Mercenaries and the Political Economy of Bengal 1727-1763," *Social Scientist* 13:4 (April 1985) pp. 17-30; F. G. Cardan, *Bengal Native Army* (New Delhi, 1971) p. 5; and A. Barat, *The Bengal Native Infantry* (Calcutta, 1962) p. 7. See also Charles James, *The Military Costume of India, in an Exemplification of the Manual & Platoon Exercises for the Use of the Native Troops and the British Army in General* (London, Printed and published by T. Goddard, military library, 1813); and Hew Strachan, *British Military Uniforms 1768-1796: The Dress of the British Army from Official Sources* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1975).

⁹⁶ Mildred Archer, Christopher Rowell and Robert Skelton, *Treasures from India: The Clive Collection at Powis Castle* (London: The Herbert Press; New York: Meredith Press, 1987) p. 49.

⁹⁷ George Hadley, *A Compendious Grammar of the Current Corrupt Dialect of the Jargon of Hindostan (Commonly Called Moors); with a Vocabulary, English and Moors, Moors and English. With References between Words Resembling Each Other in Sound, and Different in Signification; and Literal Translations*

of the Compounded Words and Circumlocutory Expressions for Attaining the Idiom of the Language. To Which Are Added Familiar Phrases and Dialogues, &c., &c., with Notes Descriptive of the Customs and Manners of Bengal. For the Use of the Bengal and Bombay Establishments, 4th edition (London, printed for J. Sewell, 1796) p. 185.

⁹⁸ A full analytical comparison of the eighteenth-century methods of General William Johnson with those of Lieutenant George Hadley might prove instructive toward informing the development of nineteenth-century policies toward Native Americans and the indigenous peoples of India by the American and British governments.

⁹⁹ Hayman had first represented Clive standing calmly in the presence of an elephant in his painting for Vauxhall. In addition to the role of the elephant in classical tales of imperial heroism and the presence of the animal in paintings by Le Brun and Mantegna, West's inclusion also references Clive's ownership of an elephant, which he had received as a gift from a Mughal ruler. Under normal circumstances, only a foreign sovereign – in this case George III – would be the intended recipient of such an honor. But because many in India considered Clive to be the ruler, he received the gift, which he wisely gave to the English king upon his return from India.

¹⁰⁰ See Matthew Brettingham, *The Plans, Elevations and Section of Holkham in Norfolk, the Seat of the Late Earl of Leicester. To Which Are Added, the Cielings and Chimney-Pieces; and Also a Descriptive Account of the Statues, Pictures, and Drawings; Not in the Former Edition* (London, printed by T. Spilsbury, 1773) p. 17 and Thomas Gray, *The Poems of Mr. Gray. To Which Are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings*, William Mason, ed. (York, printed by A. Ward, 1775) p. 307n.

¹⁰¹ Jemima Kindersley, "Letter SVIII. Pondicherry, June 1765," in *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (London, printed for J. Nourse, 1777) pp. 72-73.

¹⁰² See Mark Bence-Jones, *Clive of India* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974) 218-219, 297.

¹⁰³ Jemima Kindersley, "Letter LIX. Allahabád, Oct. 1767," in *Letters*, pp. 251-257.

¹⁰⁴ Ebba Koch, "Diwan-i 'Amm and Chihil Sutūn: The Audiences Halls of Shah Jahan," *Muqarnas*, vol. 11 (1994) pp. 143-165, p. 143. See also Koch, *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1991) p. 62. In the eighteenth century, Britons understood "chalees satoon" to mean "forty pillars." See, e.g. Thomas Pennant, *The View of Hindostan*, 4 volumes (London, printed by Henry Hughs, 1798-1800) vol. II, p. 203.

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Daniell, *Oriental Scenery. Twenty-Four Views in Hindoostan, Taken in the Years 1789 and 1790; Drawn and Engraved by Thomas Daniell, and, with Permission, Respectfully Dedicated to the Honourable Court of Directors of the East India Company* (London, printed for the author, 1795) p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ For a biographical assessment of Akbar, see Muhammad Qasim Hindu Saha Astarabadi Firishtah, *The History of Hindostan; Translated from the Persian*, Alexander Dow, trans., 2nd edition, two volumes (London, printed for T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt, 1770) vol. II, pp. 215-301. See also Abu Al-fazl ibn Mubarak, *The Ayin Akbary, or the Institutes of the Emperor Akbar*, Francis Gladwin, trans. (London, printed by William Richardson, 1777).

¹⁰⁷ For further clarification, see the conclusion of this dissertation, n6.

¹⁰⁸ See Hugh Murray, *The Encyclopædia of Geography: Comprising a Complete Description of the Earth, Physical, Statistical, Civil, and Political*, 3 volumes (Philadelphia, Blanchard and Lea, 1855) vol. II, p. 350.

¹⁰⁹ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (London, John Murray, 1891) p. 583.

¹¹⁰ See "Royal Academy," in NAL Press Cuttings from English Newspapers on Matters of Artistic Interest 1686-1835 III:720. Mildred Archer quotes this review in *India and British Portraiture 1770-1825* (London, Sotheby Park Bernet, 1979) pp. 417-418.

¹¹¹ Hermione de Almeida and George H. Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) p. 143.

¹¹² William Hodges's works and his career are emblematic of the "paradox of geographical proximity," which I plan to address more fully in a subsequent study.

¹¹³ De Almeida and Gilpin, p. 313 n90.

¹¹⁴ Shah Alam departed Allahabad to return to Delhi in 1771, defying the terms of the treaty, but by that time Clive had ceased to wield any influence in the quotidian operations of the Company on the subcontinent. See Alexander Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory*, 2 volumes (London, printed by George Biggs, 1793) p. 295.

¹¹⁵ John Morrison, *The Advantages of an Alliance with the Great Mogul*, 2nd edition (London, printed for T. Cadell, J. Millan and Richardson and Urquhart, 1774) pp. 14-15. According to the title page of the publication, Morrison served as “General and Commander in Chief of the Great Mogul’s Forces” and “Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to his Majesty King George III. of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, &c.”

¹¹⁶ Asiaticus, “To the Editor of the Cambridge Magazine,” [introduction to reprinted letter from Sir Thomas Roe to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 29 January 1605] *The Cambridge Magazine: or, Universal Repository of Arts, Sciences, and the Belles Lettres* (London: printed for Thomas Evans, 1769) 320.

¹¹⁷ Bence-Jones, *Clive of India*, p. 219.

¹¹⁸ See See Martin Moir, “Kaghazi Raj: Notes on the Documentary Basis of Company Rule, 1773-1858,” *Indo-British Review* 21 (1993) pp. 185-193; S. Chand, *History of Medieval India* (New Delhi, S. Chand and Company, 1991) p. 59; Shiri Ram Bakshi, *Advanced History of Medieval India*, 3 volumes (New Delhi, Anmol Publications, 1995) vol. II, p. 200; and Huw V. Bowen, *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 151.

¹¹⁹ See the glossary of terms in John Henry Grose, *A Voyage to the East Indies*, 2nd edition, 2 volumes (London, printed for the author, 1766) pp. ix-xiv. Both Chand and Bakshi (n. 115) characterize kaghazi raj as “red-tapism.”

¹²⁰ The stance and position of the emperor’s limbs match almost exactly a 1767 John Hall book illustration entitled “Habit of an Ethiopian in 1581.” I do not contend that West based the sketch on Hall’s engraving. Rather, Hall’s engraving and West’s chalk sketch most likely share a common pictorial source, the pose of which had become a sort of representational trope by the 1760s. For the illustration, see *A New Collection of Voyages and Travels*, 7 volumes (London, printed for J. Knox, 1767) vol. VI, btw. pp. 224 and 225.

¹²¹ For an example of such a display and its effects on the viewer, one need only to visit the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where the curator has displayed John Singer Sargent’s portrait of Edward Darley Boit’s daughters with the monumental Chinese vases depicted in the work.

¹²² I owe this analysis to Michael Charlesworth.

¹²³ See Robert Orme, *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan, from the Year MDCCXLV. To Which Is Prefixed a Dissertation on the Establishments Made by Mahomedan Conquerors in Indostan* (London, printed for John Nourse, 1763) p. 191.

¹²⁴ John Henry Grose, *A Voyage to the East-Indies, with Observations on Various Parts There* (London, printed for S. Hooper and A. Morely, 1757) p. 172. In the 1766 edition, the account appears in the first of two volumes on p. 107.

¹²⁵ In the full-length version of this study I devote an entire chapter to West’s two versions of *The Death of Lord Nelson*.

¹²⁶ Galt, *Life of West* (1816) p. 86. West claims to have personally witnessed the discovery while serving as a captain in the provincial forces during the Seven Years’ War. And while one cannot take Galt’s text as a factual account, West did wish to include this anecdote, an impulse which suggests his understanding of the “too-particular.”

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ West’s claims that he could not complete the painting because he had no image upon which to base one of the sitters is disingenuous at best, considering his *Penn’s Treaty with the Indians*.

¹³⁰ See John S. Galbraith, “The ‘Turbulent Frontier’ as a Factor in British Expansion,” *Comparative Studies in History and Society* vol. 2, no. 2 (January 1960) pp. 150-168, p. 153

¹³¹ *The Life of Robert Lord Clive, Baron Plassey. Wherein Are Impartially Delineated his Military Talents in the Field; His Maxims of Government in the Cabinet, during the Last Two Wars in the East Indies, Which Made Him Arbitrator of Empire, and the Richest Subject in Europe. With Anecdotes of His Private Life, and the Particular Circumstances of His Death. Also a Narrative of all the Last Transactions in India*, 4 volumes (London, printed by T. Bell, 1775-1777). Caraccioli appears to have been born of a Neapolitan family living in Le Mans. As a young man he traveled to the French East India Company outpost at Pondicherry (later surrendered to Eyre Coote) and then to London in the 1750s. See Christopher Whittick, "Charles Caraccioli, (b. 1722)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/4600>.

¹³² *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 559.

¹³³ See *Monthly Review; or Literary Journal* no. 53 (1775) p. 80; and no. 55 (1776) p. 480, quoted in Whittick, "Charles Caraccioli."

¹³⁴ P. J. Marshall, "Maharajah Nandakumar (1705?-1775)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, at <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/69061>.

¹³⁵ Thomas Lewis O'Beirne, *A Gleam of Comfort to This Distracted Empire, in Despite of Faction, Violence, and Cunning, Demonstrating the Fairness and Reasonableness of National Confidence in the Present Ministry* (London, printed for the author, 1785) pp. 40-41. See also Edmund Burke on East India affairs in *The Beauties of the British Senate: Taken from the Debates of the Lords and Commons, from the Beginnings of the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, to the End of the Second Session of the Administration of the Right Hon. William Pitt*, 2 volumes (London, printed for John Stockdale, 1786) vol. II, pp. 42-96, esp. p. 94.

¹³⁶ See Edmund Burke, *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature, for the Year 1771*, 2nd edition (London, printed for J. Dodsley, 1775) pp. 205-208. The note that Burke added to introduce the account in 1772 took on even greater weight in the 1775 edition: "The following deplorable Account of the late dreadful Famine in India, which was published a considerable Time ago in the Gentleman's Magazine, we are sorry (for the Honour of our Country and the Interests of Humanity) to observe, has not yet been contradicted."

¹³⁷ The history paintings that West offered to the Royal Academy exhibition during this period and the first half of the subsequent decade include *Mark Antony Shewing the Robe and Will of Julius Cæsar to the People of Rome* (1775); *William de Albanac Presents His Three Daughters to Alfred, the Third King of Mercia* (1778); *The Battle of the Boyne and The Destruction of the French Fleet at La Hogue, 1692* (1780); *Pætus and Arria* (1781); *Oliver Cromwell Ordering the Mace to Be Taken Away When He Expelled the Long Parliament and General Monk Receiving King Charles II on the Beach at Dover* (1783); *Alexander III of Scotland Saved from the Fury of a Stag by Colin Fitzgerald* (1784); and *The Original Institution of the Most Noble Order of the Garter by Edward III* (a finished sketch).

¹³⁸ West's American students John Singleton Copley, John Trumbull and Mather Brown all produced heroics of empire history paintings that drew upon the models and motifs that West established.

¹³⁹ See Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2006) p. 162. See also Wilfrid Priest, *Albion Ascendant: English History 1660-1815* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998) p. 222: "The trial of Hastings, and by implication not only the Company through whose ranks he had risen, but Britain's entire imperial presence in Asia, initially attracted enormous attention. This soon slackened as hearings dragged on over nine tedious years, and it became apparent that the charges of corruption and misrule would not stick. Indeed, whatever the rights or wrongs of Hastings's actions, unease about the uglier aspects of British colonialism was increasingly overtaken by national pride in the perceived benevolence and moderation of Britain's presence East of Suez."

¹⁴⁰ See the text of Burke's charges against Hastings, published as *Articles of Charge of High Crimes and Misdemeanors, against Warren Hastings, Esquire, Late Governor General of Bengal; Presented to the House of Commons upon the Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Eighth Days of April, 1786* (London, printed for

John Stockdale, 1786); J. W. von Archenholtz, ed., "Verres and Hasting," in *The English Lyceum, or Choice of Pieces in Prose and in Verse, Selected from the Best Periodical Papers, Magazines, Pamphlets and Other British Publications*, 3 volumes (Hamburg, printed for the editor, 1787) vol. I, pp. 214-217; H.V. Canter, "The Impeachments of Verres and Hastings: Cicero and Burke," *Classical Journal* 9 (1914) 199-211; Sara Suleri, "Reading the Trial of Warren Hastings," in *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993) pp. 49-74; Fakrul Alam, "Nabobism on Trial: The Impeachment of Hastings as Moral Theater," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh: Humanities* (Dhaka) vol. 36, no. 2 (December 1991) pp. 1-12; Elizabeth D. Samet, "A Prosecutor and a Gentleman: Edmund Burke's Idiom of Impeachment," *ELH* no. 68 (2001) pp. 397-418; Philip Ayres, *Classical Culture and the Idea of Rome in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 42; and Siraj Ahmed, "The Theater of the Civilized Self: Edmund Burke and the East India Trials," *Representations*, no. 78 (Spring 2002), pp. 28-55.

¹⁴¹ As P. J. Marshall observes, "In the new climate of opinion of a more assertive nationalism in reaction to the French Revolution, empire came increasingly to be seen as part of Britain's greatness rather than as a cause of shame." Hastings had claimed during the trial "to have been the saviour of empire"; those claims were after the French Revolution "viewed increasingly sympathetically." See P. J. Marshall, "Warren Hastings, Warren (1732-1818)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2006 at <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/12587>.

¹⁴² Joseph Farington, 29 April 1795.

¹⁴³ P. J. Marshall, *'A Free though Conquering People': Eighteenth-Century Britain and Its Empire* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1981) p. 3.

¹⁴⁴ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, printed for W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776); Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 3 volumes (Dublin, printed for Messrs. Whitestone, Chamberlaine, W. Watson, Potts, S. Watson, Williams, W. Colles, Wilson, Armitage, Walker, Moncrieffe, Jenkin, Gilbert, Cross, Mills, Hallhead, Faulkner, Hillary, and J. Colles, 1776).

¹⁴⁵ See John Bruce, *Historical View of Plans, for the Government of British India, and Regulation of Trade to the East Indies. And Outlines of a Plan of Foreign Government, of Commercial Oeconomy, and of Domestic Administration, for the Asiatic Interests of Great Britain* (London, printed for the author, 1793) p. 38-39.

¹⁴⁶ *The Oracle* no. 1203 (3 April 1793).

¹⁴⁷ See Charles Rollin, *The Roman History from the Foundation of Rome to the Battle of Actium: That Is, to the End of the Commonwealth*, 2nd edition, 16 volumes (London, 1754) vol. 11, pp. 204-205. Other characters from classical, biblical, European and early English history and literature undertook the same strategy. See, e.g., Temple Stanyan, *The Grecian History. From the Original of Greece, to the Death of Philip of Macedon*, 2 volumes (Dublin, printed for A. Leathley and J. Exhsaw, 1759) vol. I, p. 138. British forces had also used the tactic in dealing with Native Americans. See Chapter One of this dissertation.

¹⁴⁸ William Sharp and Robert Smirke, *Proposals for Publishing a Print*, broadside (London, 1792). One may trace the heroics of empire motif of British conqueror as protective parent to 1760, when such storioies began to emerge as part of the imperial mythopoesis: "It may be mentioned as a circumstance to the honor of the victors [when Admiral Watson] had an interview with the mother, the wife, and children of [Tullugee] *Angria*, the old lady complained, that the people no longer had any king, she no son, her daughter no husband, and the children no father; the admiral replied '*I will be a friend and father to you all.*' Upon which, one of the children, a little boy of six years old, took hold of the admiral's hand and said, '*then you shall be my father!*' This so affected the humane disposition of admiral *Watson*, that it was with difficulty that he refrained from shedding tears. The family of *Angria*, dreading the Maharratas, under whose dominion the country would now fall, the admiral ordered these women and children to be removed to *Bombay*, and taken care of." See Jonas Hanway, *An Account of the Society for the Encouragement of the British Troops, in Germany and North America* (London: printed for the author, 1760) pp. 78-79.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. The pictorial genealogies within the practice of heroics of empire history painting were widely familiar throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, as is evidenced by this comment from an account of India published at century's end: "...to the view of this capital...is added the pleasing procession of the two sons of *Tippoo*, going as hostages to *Madras* for the performance of the treaty made by their father. This magnificent *spectacle* gives the fullest proof of *British* conduct and courage in attainment of victory, as of moderation, and of the sweets of parental feelings towards a subdued enemy. The sight of *Darius*'s tent could not affect us more." Thomas Pennant, *The View of Hindoostan*, 4 volumes, (London, printed by Henry Hughs, 1798) vol. II, p. 85.

¹⁵⁰ "Royal Academy [2d May 1795 handwritten next to title]," Press Cuttings from English Newspapers on Matters of Artistic Interest 1686-1835, III:744; "Royal Academy. Review of Paintings, &c.," Press Cuttings from English Newspapers on Matters of Artistic Interest 1686-1835, III:716.

¹⁵¹ "Royal Academy," Press Cuttings from English Newspapers on Matters of Artistic Interest 1686-1835, III:720

¹⁵² *Morning Post and Fashionable World* no. 7259 (7 May 1795) page 2, fourth column. This relatively short review contains a number of important clues relevant to criticism as a form of cultural production in the late eighteenth century. I will more fully parse and analyze this passage in the long version of this study.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ See "24 Geo. III. C. 25. Sec 34," in *A Review of the Proceedings of the Parliament of 1784* (London, R. Edwards, 1785) p. 11n: "And whereas to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India, are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this nation, be it therefore further enacted by the authority foresaid, that it shall not be lawful for the Governor General and Council of Fort William aforesaid, without the express command and authority of the said Court of Directors, or of the secret Committee of the said Court of Directors (*except where hostilities have actually been commenced, or preparations actually made for the commencement of hostilities against the British nation in India, or against some of the Princes or states dependent thereon, or whose territories the said united Company shall be at such time engaged by any subsisting treaty to defend or guarantee*) either to declare war or commence hostilities, or enter into any treaty for making war against any of the country Princes or states in India, or any treaty for guaranteeing the possessions of any country Princes or states; *and that in such case is shall not be lawful for the said Governor General and Council to declare war or commence hostilities, or enter into treaty for making war against any other Prince or State than such as shall be actually committing hostilities, or making preparations as aforesaid, or to make such treaty for guaranteeing the possessions of any Prince or state, but upon the consideration of such Prince or State actually engaging to assist the Company against such hostilities commenced, or preparations as aforesaid;* and in all cases where hostilities shall be commenced, or treaty made, the said Governor General and Council shall, by the most expeditious means they can devise, communicate the same unto the said Court of Directors, together with a full state of the information and intelligence upon which they shall have commenced such hostilities, or made such treaties, and their motives or reasons for the same at large." Though this section of William Pitt's India Act of 1784 originally responded to Hastings's actions on the subcontinent, it later served as the justification for the Company's war against Tipu Sultan. I address the visual cultures of that war in the full-length version of this study. The passage from which I take the second characterization demonstrates that the pictorial genealogies within the practice of heroics of empire history painting were widely familiar in all regions of the British empire throughout the second half of the eighteenth century: "...to the view of this capital...is added the pleasing procession of the two sons of *Tippoo*, going as hostages to *Madras* for the performance of the treaty made by their father. This magnificent *spectacle* gives the fullest proof of *British* conduct and courage in attainment of victory, as of moderation, and of the sweets of parental feelings towards a subdued enemy. The sight of *Darius*'s tent could not affect us more." Thomas Pennant, *The View of Hindoostan*, 4 volumes, (London, printed by Henry Hughs, 1798) vol. II, p. 85.

¹⁵⁵ Edward Clive to Henry Strachey, 11 August 1799 BL MSS Eur F 128 93.

¹⁵⁶ Paul R. Weidner, ed., “The Journal of John Blake White,” published in serial form in *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* XLII:2 (April 1941) 55-71; XLII:3 (July 1941) 99-117; XLII:4 (October 1941) 169-186; the reference to October 1802 appears in vol. XLII, no. 3, p. 99.

¹⁵⁷ I attribute much of the confusion regarding the second copy to a Joseph Farington diary entry for 24 February 1818, quoted by von Erffa and Staley: “Before dinner Mr. West took me into His great Painting room & shewed me a large picture, abt. 18 feet wide of Lord Clive, accompanied by Genl. Carnack &c., receiving a paper of agreement from a Nabob. This Picture, He sd. is for the *India House*. The original picture of this subject He sd. is to be completed and sent to Powis Castle near Welsh pool, & He is to paint another for *Lord Clive*, to be placed in his house in Shropshire. See Joseph Farington, 24 February 1818.

¹⁵⁸ See von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 215. The relevant sources to which West “fed” inventories of his works (as well as the autobiographical sketch now at in the Munn Collection at Fordham University) include “A Correct Catalogue of the Works of Mr. West,” *Public Characters of 1805* (London, printed for Richard Phillips, 1805) p. 563; “A Correct List of the Works of Mr. West,” *Universal Magazine* vol. 3, no. 19 (June 1805) p. 529; and “A Correct Catalogue of the Works of Benjamin West, Esq.,” *La Belle Assemblée, or Bell’s Court and Fashionable Magazine* 4, supp. (February 1808) p. 16.

¹⁵⁹ See Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online entries for Edward Clive, Richard Wellesley and Arthur Wellesley: D. L. Prior, “Edward Clive, First Earl of Powis (1754–1839),” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 at <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/5696>; C. A. Bayly, “Richard Wellesley, Marquess Wellesley (1760–1842),” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 at <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/29008>; and Norman Gash, “Arthur Wellesley, First Duke of Wellington (1769–1852),” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2007 at <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/29001>.

¹⁶⁰ Quoted in Penderel Moon, *The British Conquest and Dominion of India* (London, Duckworth, 1989) p. 277.

¹⁶¹ Shanti Jayewardene-Pillai, *Imperial Conversations: Indo-Britons and the Architecture of South India* (New Delhi, Yoda Press, 2007) p. 68 quoting Sten Nilsson, *European Architecture*, pp. 108-109.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, quoting Nilsson, p. 109.

¹⁶³ See Randolph G.S. Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India: The Struggle for Control of the South Asian Military Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁶⁴ Minutes of the East India Company Court of Directors, 25 October 1820, reprinted in *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and Its Dependencies* vol. XIII (January to June 1822) p. 476.

¹⁶⁵ *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* XIII, p. 476.

¹⁶⁶ Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India: The Struggle for Control of the South Asian Military Economy* (2003) p. 62.

¹⁶⁷ On the India Office Library, see Allen Kent, *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* (New York, Marcel Decker, 1985) p. 226.

¹⁶⁸ See Bernard Nurse, Thomas Fisher (1772–1836),” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 at <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/9510>. I wish to thank Helen George for her generous assistance with this image.

¹⁶⁹ *Description and Illustration of a Picture in East India House Showing the Great Mogul Presenting the Grant of the Dewannee to Lord Clive* (London, printed by Cox, 1820).

¹⁷⁰ See n 166. The British Library India Office Select Material Prints and Drawings collection holds at least one of the prints and a number of photocopies of the lithographic key. The BL catalogue and classification identifiers suggest a date of c. 1850 for the print, which would put the publication of the image well after the deaths of Redman and Fisher. The evidence for Fisher’s involvement at this stage remains purely circumstantial. I will pursue this particular connection in a separate project on the print cultures of the visual heroics of empire during the period from Hayman’s paintings for Vauxhall (1761)

through David Wilkie's *General Sir David Baird Discovering the Body of Sultan Tippoo Sahib after having captured Seringapatam on the 4th May 1799* (1839). See the online exhibition "The Tiger and the Thistle: Tipu Sultan and the Scots in India" at <http://www.tigerandthistle.net>.

¹⁷¹ West was one of the first artists in London to undertake lithography. See von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 63.

¹⁷² This belief survived well into the twentieth century. George Nathaniel Curzon (1896-1966), Viceroy of India, wondered how his countrymen, "contrasting India as it is with what it was or might have been, can fail to see that we came here in obedience to what I call a decree of Providence, for the lasting benefit of millions of the human race." See Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1994) p. 219.

¹⁷³ See Edmund Burke, *Articles of Charge of High Crimes and Misdemeanors, against Warren Hastings, Esquire, Late Governor General of Bengal; Presented to the House of Commons upon the Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Eighth Days of April, 1786* (London, printed for John Stockdale, 1786) p. 37. The charges against Hastings appeared in the collected works of Edmund Burke, which saw numerous printings in the nineteenth century. See, e.g., *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, 12 volumes (London, printed for F. C. and J. Rivington, 1808-1813) vol. XI, p. 443. It is interesting to note that eighteenth-century Latin dictionaries translated both "beadle" and "bailiff" as "licitor." In West's *Agrippina*, the lictors perform an esteemed role in the triumphal/funerary procession. Despite the sumptuousness of his dress and the attention with which West treated him, the chubdar does not occupy a similarly exalted position in the narrative. This contrast exemplified what I term the "vernacular orientalism" that Britons displayed toward the inhabitants of South Asia – vernacular because it was peculiar to the English and vernacular because its imaginary traits only applied in India.

¹⁷⁴ *The Oracle* (London) 3 May 1793.

¹⁷⁵ See, e.g., Michel Le Faucheur, *An Essay upon Pronunciation and Gesture, Founded upon the Best Rules and Authorities of the Ancients, Ecclesiastical and Civil, and Adorned with the Finest Rules of Elocution* (London, printed for C. Hitch, 1750) p. 162: "As for other *Actions*, which you can represent with Decency and good Manners, your *Gesture* ought to be very moderate and modest: not bold, vast and extensive, nor indeed too frequent neither; which would make such a violent Agitation of the *Arms* and the *Hands*, as would not become an *Orator*, and as if he were *chasing away flies*."

¹⁷⁶ James Mill, *The History of British India*, 6 volumes (London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1817) I:xii.

¹⁷⁷ See William Hodges, *Select Views in India*,

¹⁷⁸ Macaulay's article first appeared as "Lord Clive," *Edinburgh Review* vol. LXX, no. no. clxii (January 1840), but attracted much wider readership in subsequent publications as a discrete work. Macaulay's biographies of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings were among his best-selling titles. When news of the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 reached London, sales of the Clive biography tripled. See G. M. Trevelyan, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (London, 1908) pp. 263-264.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Lord Clive* (London, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1851) p. 94. In 1853, Karl Marx contributed the following assessment to history's assessment of Clive: "The profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilization lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked. Did they not, in India, to borrow an expression of that great robber, Lord Clive himself, resort to atrocious extortion, when simple corruption could not keep pace with their rapacity? While they prated in Europe about the inviolable sanctity of the national debt, did they not confiscate in India the dividends of the rajahs, who had invested their private savings in the Company's own funds? While they combated the French revolution under the pretext of defending "our holy religion," did they not forbid, at the same time, Christianity to be propagated in India, and did they not, in order to make money out of the pilgrims streaming to the temples of Orissa and Bengal, take up the trade in the murder and prostitution perpetrated in the temple of the Juggernaut? These are the men of "Property, Order, Family, and Religion." Karl Marx, *The New-York Daily Tribune* (22

July 1853). Whether Marx's critique of Clive and the Raj had any effect on viewer reception of West's painting of Clive remains a matter for further speculation.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 95.

¹⁸¹ In 1857 Muslim and Hindu soldiers in the employ of the East India Company and the English Crown revolted against their British commanders. The reasons behind the insurgency, which was ultimately crushed by the British after sepoys massacred hundreds of Britons, remain unclear. The most frequently cited trigger for the violence is the use of pig's fat and beef tallow to grease ammunition cartridges that had to be bitten before manual loading. Muslims cannot by religious law consume any part of or produce derived from a pig and Hindus avoid consuming the flesh of and products from cattle. For various treatments of the circumstances leading to, the atrocities committed during and the aftereffects of the rebellion, see Henry Mead, *The Sepoy Revolt: Its Causes and Its Consequences* (London, John Murray, 1757); Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India, 1770-1830* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998); Mia Carter and Barbara Harlow, eds., *Archives of Empire: From the East India Company to the Suez Canal* (Raleigh, Duke University Press, 2003) and Gregory Fremont-Barnes, *The Indian Mutiny 1857-1858* (London, Osprey, 2007).

¹⁸² The medallion, struck to commemorate the bicentennial of Clive's death, was commissioned by the Britannia Commemorative Society and manufactured by the Franklin Mint.

¹⁸³ See Neville Tuli, *A Historical Epic: India in the Making 1757-1950, from Surrender to Revolt, Swaraj to Responsibility*, curated auction catalogue (Mumbai, Osian's, 2000).

¹⁸⁴ Post-doctoral research in India will allow me to uncover the fate of the Madras copy and to the pictorial genealogy of the Cook Smythe painting. Within that particular phase of my inquiry, I will also undertake analysis that compares Britons' reception of the composition in England and in India with the reception of Indians who worked in or visited Government House, Madras. The function of West's image in the political and cultural self-perceptions and self-fashioning of the subjugated peoples of South Asia also holds much promise as the subject of a separate study.

Conclusion

Though Clive's death prevented West from realizing his portion of the imperial-triumphal decorative program at Claremont, the event have had no discernible impact on his artistic output. For the Royal Academy exhibition of 1775 West contributed seven large-scale pictures. With two of those paintings, *Mark Anthony Shewing the Robe and the Will of Julius Caesar to the People of Rome* and *Erasistratus, the Physician, Discovers the Love of Antiochus for Stratonice*, West continued to explore historical admonitions from ancient Rome and familial tribulations of ancient empires.¹ Over the ensuing decades, West imparted the principles of heroics of empire history painting to a number of American-born artists, including John Singleton Copley, John Trumbull, Mather Brown and John Blake White, each of whom added his own artistic imprimatur to the portrayal of modern imperial subject matter. Copley's *Watson and the Shark* (1778) and *The Death of Major Peirson* (1783), especially, demonstrate that artist's mastery of the visual heroics of empire. Like West, Copley remained in London, but Trumbull, Brown and White returned to North America to pursue artistic careers. Of the three, Trumbull enjoyed the most success, producing four monumental scenes from the Revolutionary War for the new U. S. Capitol Rotunda.

In 1776 John Boydell published William Woollett's engraving after *The Death of General Wolfe*, the success of which secured West's fame as the most prominent history painter working in Europe.² In that year other London artists explored the potential of

empire as a theme for history painting and for portraiture. The Irish painter James Barry entered his modern-costume portrayal of the death of Wolfe at the Royal Academy exhibition and Joshua Reynolds offered his portrait of the visiting Tahitian ruler Omai (c. 1753-c.1780) whom he posed as the *Apollo Belvedere*.³ Over the next two decades, West applied the compositional format of his empire-themed works to subjects such as *The Battle of the Boyne* (1778), *The Battle of La Hogue* (1780), *Alexander III of Scotland Saved from a Stag by Colin Fitzgerald* (1786), *The Burghers of Calais* (1788) and *The Citizens of London Offering the Crown to William the Conqueror* (1792-1797). West scrapped plans for a series on the American Revolution, which would have included a completed *Signing of the Preliminary Treaty of Peace in 1782*, in addition to pictures for which he had requested “drawings and small paintings of the dresses of the American Army” from another American artist who studied with him, Charles Willson Peale.⁴ As the turn of the century neared, greater numbers of artists pursued imperial themes in their paintings, expanding their subjects beyond the pictorial tropes of the visual heroics of empire.

Like West, James Northcote (1746-1831), Edward Bird (1772-1819), George Carter (1737-1794), Robert Smirke (1753-1845) and Henry Singleton (1766-1839) all produced, exhibited and sold images of India without ever having made a trip to the subcontinent. Some London-based artists did travel to the periphery to seek patronage in what they hoped would prove less-competitive British markets abroad. Among those painters, Robert Home’s (1752-1834) career took the most interesting turns. After

producing paintings such as *The Death of Colonel Moorhouse at Bangalore* (1794), the composition of which very closely resembles West's *The Death of General Wolfe*, Home assumed the role of official historical and portrait painter to the court at Awadh [Oudh] at Lucknow. There he also oversaw the design and production of the court's decorative interiors, painted coaches, etc.

Other painters undertook lengthy tours of the Company's holdings in India and then returned to London to exhibit and sell their works. That strategy worked well for the Swiss-born Johann Zoffany (1733-1810), but poorly for the native-born Ozias Humphry (1742-1810) and John Alefounder (1757-1794) as well as for the Flemish printmaker François Balthazar Solvyns (1760-1824).⁵ Londoner Arthur William Devis (1762–1822) enjoyed some success while in Calcutta, as did the Dublin-born Thomas Hickey (1741-1824). Less fortunate was William Hodges (1744-1797), who accompanied British military commanders and explorers for the purpose of visually documenting the architecture, landscapes and peoples of the South Pacific and India. But unlike his contemporary Thomas Daniell (1749–1840) who with his nephew William Daniel (1769-1837) produced appropriately picturesque interpretations of India, Hodges failed to sufficiently distance himself aesthetically from his “exotic” subjects.⁶ At least partially a result of his attempt to elevate the visual cultures of India with those of ancient Greece and Rome, Hodges's artistic fortunes in London waned; he ultimately abandoned painting and died penniless.⁷ The Daniells, on the other hand, prospered.

At the turn of the century, images produced by these and other artists were integrated into Britons' hegemonic imagination through a process that transformed the peoples, the cities, the lands and the architectural expressions of subject cultures into objects or abstractions. And like the well-established body of travel writing that they complemented, paintings and engravings of scenes from the periphery (whether taken by artists "on the spot" or fabricated in the rooms of the Royal Academy) inculcated audiences with justifications and rationales that extinguished all but the most vigorous opposition to British imperium. Notions of Mughal decline, constructions of British magnanimity and Protestant charity, the benevolent substitution of English for Oriental despotism, and civilizing paternalism all informed underpinned and advanced Britons' divine birthright to global territorial dominion. In colony and metropole, in the city and in the country, Britons exhibited the symptoms of "anticipatory selective perception," acknowledging that which fulfilled their expectations and corroborated their attitudes of subject peoples, while ignoring images, objects, texts and tales that contradicted those figments.⁸

In 1806 Benjamin West produced *The Death of Lord Nelson*, the last of his major heroics of empire history paintings. Though West would later claim that he had painted the picture to fulfill a promise made to Admiral Horatio Nelson, he had in fact undertaken the work on speculation at the urging of engraver James Heath (1757–1834).⁹ In a conversation recorded by fellow academician Joseph Farington, West confirmed that he had represented Nelson's death at the Battle of Trafalgar in "a picture of what might have

been, not of the circumstances as they happened.”¹⁰ In a set of observations that seem as much justification as explanation, West offered Farington a retrospective summary of heroics of empire history painting:

there was no other way of representing the death of a Hero but by an Epic representation of it. It must exhibit the event in a way to excite awe & veneration & that which may be required to give superior interest to the representation must be introduced, all that can shew the importance of the Hero. Wolfe must not die like a common soldier under a Bush, neither should Nelson be represented dying in the gloomy hold of a ship, like a sick man in a Prison Hole. To move the mind there should be a spectacle presented to raise & warm the mind, & all shd. be proportioned to the highest idea conceived of the Hero. No Boy, sd. West, wd. be animated by a representation of Nelson dying like an ordinary man, His feelings must be roused & His mind inflamed by a scene great & extraordinary. A mere matter of fact will never produce this effect.¹¹

In Philadelphia, the *Port-Folio* announced the completion and impending engraving of West’s *Nelson* to its readers, explaining that West “departed so far from the reality as to make [Nelson’s] last scene on the quarter-deck, instead of the cock-pit, because he could not otherways have combined the other great features of the action.”¹² West exhibited *Nelson* at his Newman Street studio in London from 11 to 21 May 1806 to critical and popular acclaim.¹³

Yet within a year of completing *The Death of Nelson*, West disavowed the formula that had secured his fame and fortune by producing a second version of the scene in which the hero succumbs to his wounds below deck – the actual site of his death. West’s *Death of Lord Nelson in the Cockpit of the Ship Victory* appeared in 1808 (fig. 134). West painted the second version of the scene to fulfill a commission by James Stanier Clarke and John M’Arthur as an illustration for their 1809 *Life of Admiral Lord*

Nelson, KB.¹⁴ But rather than employ the heroics of empire format of the 1806 *Death of Lord Nelson*, West responded directly to Arthur William Devis's 1807 treatment of the subject (fig. 135). Devis's *The Death of Nelson, 25 October 1805* had won the prize of "500 guineas for the best 'Death of Nelson' painting, for engraving" announced by Josiah Boydell in a London newspaper on 22 November 1805.¹⁵ According to William Bromley, in the caption to an 1812 issue of the engraving, Devis had "adopted the plan of making TRUTH alone the object of his delineation." It was the Boydell advertisement that had prompted James Heath to approach West in the first place and it was in reaction to Devis's winning entry that West declared the impropriety of a hero's dying "like a sick man in a Prison Hole" in his conversation with Joseph Farington.¹⁶

Despite his personal disdain for Devis's *Nelson*, West was sufficiently sensitive to note that circumstances for painting and its audiences were changing, as evidenced by the public's positive response to Devis's literal presentation of the event. But he did not completely abandon the visual heroics of empire with the second *Death of Nelson*. For the frontispiece of Clarke and M'Arthur's biography of the hero of Trafalgar, West painted *The Immortality of Nelson*, which he offered for exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1807 (fig. 136). Whether or not West's painting met with the approbation of RA exhibition-going audiences, the engraved frontispiece to Clarke and M'Arthur's *Life of Lord Admiral Nelson* provoked some of the most withering criticism of West's career. Writing in the *Quarterly Review* for February 1810, the poet and reviewer Robert Southey (1774-1843) issued what amounted to a manifesto for the impending shift to

Realism that came to dominate nineteenth-century art. In direct response to West's frontispiece, Southey declared that "there will come a time, we trust, when such gross allegories will be deemed as repugnant to true taste, as the anthropomorphism of Catholic church-picture, is to true religion. The invisible world is not within the artist's province."¹⁷ Despite Southey's mockery, West's composition served as the basis for Joseph Panzetta's (fl. 1789-1830) Coade stone pediment sculpture for Greenwich Hospital, but for West's history painting oeuvre, the poet's pronouncements seem to have been prophetic, as West (perhaps defiantly) thereafter turned his attention almost exclusively to large-scale religious works.

In his choice in 1809 to revisit Nelson's death through a history painting bereft of synoptic narrative, classical models and religious references, West acknowledged the obsolescence of the visual heroics of empire. Devis's painting eclipsed both of West's *Death of Nelson* compositions to become the definitive image of Nelson's passing.¹⁸ The extraordinarily negative critical response to West's *Immortality* clarified the extent to which critical expectations of academic painting had changed. History and history painting faced new circumstances and audiences' expectations had begun to change. As Southey noted in his review of Clarke and M'Arthur's biography, "The best eulogium of Nelson is the history of his actions; the best history that which shall relate them most perspicuously."¹⁹ With the exception of the *Lord Clive* copies, West did not paint another heroics of empire picture – classical, modern or otherwise.

Long before West's death in 1820, Britain's political and military position as global emperor obviated the need for the visual heroics of empire. The last indigenous resistance to the British presence in India had been terminated and Britons had resigned themselves to their role as God's chosen rulers of the globe. West's critical fortunes waned in the years following his death, but understanding of his contributions to history painting lived on. For example, Britons continued to acknowledge the rhetorical impulses behind the visual heroics of empire, as evidenced by a catalogue describing a posthumous exhibition of works from West's personal collection:

The Room of Drawings included *The Death of General Wolfe*, *The Departure of Regulus from Rome*, *The Landing of Agrippina*, *Penn's Treaty with the Indians*, *The Battle at La Hogue*, *Battle of the Boyne*, *The Ghost of Cæsar*, *Alexander and His Physician*, *Hannibal Swearing Enmity to the Romans*. ...In the Inner Room appeared *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Soldier from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian*; *The Death of Sir Philip Sydney*, *Epaminondas*, and *Chevalier Bayard in one frame*...[and the] *Death of Admiral Lord Nelson*.²⁰

These particular groupings of paintings and drawings validated the pictorial conversations between exemplars of classical, early modern and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century imperial heroism upon which West had founded his fame.

West's formulaic approach to history painting survived in the works of some successors, but in substantially altered form. The most recognizable compositional element from West's oeuvre – the central arrangement of figures introduced in *The Death of General Wolfe* – appeared in paintings produced as late as 1839. In that year, David Wilkie incorporated the Christological lamentation model into his portrayal of *General Sir David Baird Discovering the Body of Sultan Tippoo Sahib after Having Captured*

Seringapatam on the 4th May 1799 (fig. 137). But with the passage of time, West's pictorial trope of martyrdom had become so widespread in its use and so familiar to artists and audiences that its original ideological associations with martial sacrifice in imperial conquest had faded into obscurity. In *Sir David Baird*, Wilkie painted the enemy of the British, Tipu Sultan of Mysore, as if just deposed from a cross.²¹

Within the broad category of eighteenth-century visual culture, one can trace the rise and relevancy of Anglophone history painting along a series of paralleling, diverging, intersecting and colliding trajectories. To one extent or another, those trajectories registered and reflected dramatic changes in Britons' cultural self-imagination. Commercial capitalism subordinated public disinterestedness to private interest. As England's cultural arbiters called for a national school of painting, some elites worried that a too-strong emphasis on luxury and taste threatened to feminize the nation, rendering Britons more like their arch-nemeses, the French. The ever-present Jacobite threat cast a shadow on the establishment of a royal academy modeled after the French. Most importantly for history painting, over the span of the Seven Years' War Britons transformed from a "polite and commercial people" to "a free though conquering people," expanding its "empire of the Main" to include territorial holdings that surpassed those of ancient Rome at its Trajanic zenith.

History paintings produced for English-speaking audiences in the 1760s and 1770s reflect the convergence of and tensions within the cultural politics of national identities. One set of tensions emerged between crown and constitution, as each laid

claim to imperial martial virtue. By commissioning the imperial suite of pictures for the Warm Room at Buckingham, George III staked a monarchical claim to imperial martial virtue. Rather than using the power of the throne to dictate taste in the fine arts, however, the Hanoverian king reacted to Patriot Opposition claims that Britons were to be the proprietors of and agents enacting imperial martial virtue. This public ownership of imperial heroism manifested most clearly in Francis Hayman's paintings for the Music Hall annex at Vauxhall pleasure gardens between 1761 and 1764 and in Robert Hay Drummond's commission of *Agrippina Landing at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* in 1767. This contest between crown and commoners over the nature and character of modern British imperial virtue informed the foundation of the Royal Academy at the public level while at the same time inspiring the most audacious decorative program ever undertaken in a private residence in England. Empire, expressed in terms of territorial expansion, maintenance and contraction, catalyzed the making of modern Anglophone identity in the British Isles, North America and South Asia. That catalysis manifested in all forms of creative expression, including heroics of empire history painting. Empire, more than any other single factor, accounts for the rise, relevancy and obsolescence of history painting in the second half of the eighteenth century. Absent England's gains in the Seven Years' War, history paintings produced for English-speaking audiences of the period would have taken on a very different appearance and a very different set of functions.

As I have demonstrated, for London artists and their audiences in the 1760s and beyond, the stakes were high. To secure the fame extolled by Renaissance theorists, painters had to convince audiences and patrons that painting had relevance beyond mere portraiture. Britons already uneasy about the corrosive effects of luxury before the war confronted the additional concerns associated with the effects of imperial conquest on liberty at home. The exigencies of sudden territorial acquisition fostered a number of binaries peculiar to Britons' imperial acculturation. Those binaries included perhaps artificial but at the time all-too-urgent tensions between imagination and authority, between the universal and the particular, between liberty and subjection, between charity and exploitation, between moderation and acquisition, and between benevolence and absolutism. These polarities played out fully in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the periods upon which scholars (orientalist, positivist, subaltern and post-colonial) have focused their greatest efforts and attentions. Until we acknowledge and more fully address the eighteenth-century foundations of those oppositions, the history of empire and its constitutive role in the formation of modern Anglophone identities shall remain only partially excavated. Until modern Anglophone cultures fully address the "childhood traumas" of their own imperious behaviors, they remain condemned to repeat the same behaviors expecting different outcomes.

As much as (if not more than) any other form of creative expression in the period, eighteenth-century history painting shaped and reflected the ways in which Britons integrated the cultural imaginary of empire into the broader processes of forging the

English nation. Because empire, more than any other single factor, determined the appearance, the relevancy and the obsolescence of history painting in the eighteenth-century, that artistic genre offers modern scholars an entry point through which to pose new questions about the formation of, the trajectories of and the current state of modern Anglophone identity. This dissertation confronts the decade during which one artist, the American-born Benjamin West, developed and refined heroics of empire history painting as a discrete form of cultural production.

Notes

¹ West offered two additional history paintings, *The Prophet Elijah Restoring to Life the Widow's Son and Nathan and David: 'Thou Art the Man'*, plus *Cupid Stung by a Bee* and two double portraits. A version of the Erasistratus scene had appeared as the frontispiece to volume six of the 1774 sixth edition of Rollin's *Ancient History*. See Charles Rollin, *The Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Medes and Persians, Macedonians, and Grecians*, 6th ed., 8 vols. (London, printed for J. and F. Rivington, R. Baldwin, Hawes, Clarke and Collins, R. Horsfeld, W. Johnston, W. Owen, T. Caslon, S. Crowder, C. Rivington, B. Law, G. Robinson, Carnan and Newbery, and J. Knox, 1774) pp. 1 and 39-40.

² As an artistic riposte to West's *Death of Wolfe*, Louis Watteau of Lille produced a *Death of General Montcalm*, the French commander at Quebec who also lost his life as the result of wounds sustained in that battle. In the decades following the publication of Woollett's engraving, West's composition appeared on everything from stoneware to wallpaper. See McNairn, *Behold the Hero*, op cit. The trope of Wolfe as an imperial martyr of the caliber of an the greatest ancient Romans spread beyond England and France. Writing about Samuel Grieg, the commander of the Russian navy, Andrew Swinton, noted "Like Wolfe, like Epaminondas, he died a Conqueror." See Andrew Swinton, *Travels into Norway, Denmark, and Russia*. In the Years 1788, 1789, 1790, and 1791 (Dublin, printed by W. Corbet, 1792) p. 135.

³ See Harriet Guest, "Curiously Marked: Tattooing, Masculinity, and Nationality in Eighteenth-Century British Perceptions of the South Pacific." *Painting and the Politics of Culture: New Essays on British Art 1700-1850*, John Barrell, ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992) pp. 101-134.

⁴ Letter from Benjamin West to Charles Willson Peale 12 June 1783, Archives of American Art.

⁵ See Robert L. Hardgrave, *A Portrait of the Hindus: Balthazar Solvyns & the European Image of India, 1760-1824* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁶ Perhaps the most potent example of the Daniell's approach to Indian scenes is Thomas's 1799 *Capriccio on Indian Architecture*, in which the painter creates an imperial likeness of British India by the sheer force of his ability as an English artist to relocate monuments separated by hundreds of miles into a single picture. The idea of the architectural capriccio naturally emerges from the urban topographies of the imperial center, in which one often finds incongruous structural and decorative elements all mixed together in a pastiche of imperial trophies. This portrait of India reiterates the idea of Mughal decline through the visual hierarchies generated by the Hindu gopura that dominates the foreground of the painting, subordinating the much smaller, more distant and otherwise diminished Taj Mahal. See *Oriental Scenery: Immagini dell'India nelle incisioni dei secoli XVII-XIX*, exh. cat., Lucia Chimirri, curator (Firenze, Centro Di, 2000); Jagmohan Mahajan, *Picturesque India: Sketches and Travels of Thomas and William Daniell* (New Delhi, Lustre Press under arrangement with Rupa & Co., 1983); and Mildred Archer, *Early Views of India: The Picturesque Journeys of Thomas and William Daniell, 1786-1794: The Complete Aquatints* (New York, Thames and Hudson, 1980).

⁷ Hodges exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Society of Artists in the 1770s and 1780s. His *Choix de vues de l'Inde, dessinées sur les lieux, pendant les années 1780, 1781, 1782, et 1783* appeared in London between 1785 and 1788. In 1793 Hodges published a textual account of his experiences in India, which included a 1787 tract entitled "Dissertation on the Prototypes of Architecture, Hindoo, Moorish and Gothic" that accompanied engravings of his *Views of the Gate Leading to the Tomb of Abar at Secundii and The Mausoleum of the Emperor Shere Shah at Sasseram*. See William Hodges, *Travels in India, during the Years 1780, 1781, 1782, & 1783* (London, printed for the author, 1793) pp. 62-77. See also Geoff Quilley, ed., *William Hodges 1744-1797: The Art of Exploration*, exh. cat. (New Haven ; London : Yale University Press for the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, 2004) and Giles Tillotson, *The Artificial Empire: The Indian Landscapes of William Hodges* (London, Curzon, 2000).

⁸ See Hunt, Margaret. "Racism, Imperialism, and the Traveler's Gaze in Eighteenth-Century England," *The Journal of British Studies* vol. 32, no. 4 (1993) pp. 333-357. Not all Britons subscribed to the model of divine imperial birthright. Artist and poet William Blake, for example, challenged, resisted and rejected the

ideas propounded by the visual heroics of empire. For an insightful discussion of Blake's genius as applied to the idea of empire, see Saree Makdisi, *William Blake and the Impossible History of the 1790s* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2003). The chapter entitled "Blake and Romantic Imperialism" is especially useful in its inquiry into Blake's critiques of conquest and subjection.

⁹ According to the memoirs of George Ticknor, who visited West in his studio on 23 June 1815: "Just before [Nelson] went out to sea for the last time, West sat next to him at a large entertainment given to him here, and in the course of the dinner Nelson expressed to Sir William Hamilton his regret, that in his youth he had not acquired some taste for art and the power of discrimination. 'But,' said he, turning to West, 'there is one picture whose power I do feel. I never pass a paint-shop where [a print after] your "Death of Wolfe" is in the window, without being stopped by it.' West, of course, made his acknowledgements, and Nelson went on to ask why he had painted no more like it. 'Because, my lord, there are no more subjects.' 'D—n it,' said the sailor, 'I didn't think of that,' and asked him to take a glass of champagne. 'But, my lord, I fear your intrepidity will yet furnish me such another scene; and, if it should, I shall certainly avail myself of it.' 'Will you?' said Nelson, pouring out bumpers, and touching his glass violently against West's, — 'will you, Mr. West? then I hope I that I shall die in the next battle.' He sailed a few days after, and the result was on the canvas before us." The account appears in "Pot-Pourri," *Potter's American Monthly* 17:115 (July 1881) 9, redacted and reprinted from George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals*, George S. Hilliard, ed., 3 vols. (Boston, J.R. Osgood, 1876) vol. I, p. 63.

¹⁰ Joseph Farington, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, vol. VIII, p. 2806 (8 July 1806)

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3064 (10 June 1807)

¹² "The Fine Arts," *The Port-Folio* (27 September 1806) p. 186.

¹³ London's *Morning Chronicle* for 12 May 1806 enthused that West had "upon no former occasion...so highly distinguished himself." In his diary entry for 2 July 1806 Farington reported West's claim that some 30,000 people had come to Newman Street to see the painting. West, having temporarily stepped down from the Royal Academy presidency in September 1805 as the result of a dispute with other academicians, did not exhibit at the RA in 1806 — the only exhibition in which he did not participate between 1769 and 1820.

¹⁴ James Stanier Clarke and John M' Arthur, *The Life of Admiral Lord Nelson, K.B. from His Lordship's Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (London, printed for Cadell and Davies, 1809) vol. II, p. 461. West also produced *The Apotheosis of Nelson* for this book. The engraving after that work appears as the frontispiece to volume 1 on page 2.

¹⁵ The Death of Nelson, 21 October 1805 (BHC2894) <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/collections/nelson/viewObject.cfm?ID=BHC2894>. See also Charles Mitchell, "Benjamin West's Death of Nelson," in Douglas Fraser, Howard Hibbard and Milton J. Lewine, eds., *Essays in the History of Art Presented to Rudolf Wittkower* (London, Phaidon, 1967) pp. 265-273.

¹⁶ See von Erffa and Staley, p. 222.

¹⁷ Robert Southey, "Article 18. Lives of Nelson," *Quarterly Review*, vol. 3, no. 5 (February 1810) pp. 218-262, p. 224. This article was reprinted (without attribution) in Philadelphia in *Select Reviews and Spirit of the Foreign Magazines* vol. IV (1810) pp. 73-107.

¹⁸ Devis's painting featured in London's October 2005 bicentennial celebrations of Nelson's victory at Trafalgar.

¹⁹ Southey, "Lives of Nelson," p. 224.

²⁰ See *West's Gallery, Newman Street, Oxford Street. Catalogue of Pictures and Drawings by the Late Benjamin West, Esq. President of the Royal Academy: Including a Description of the Great Pictures, Christ Rejected, and Death on the Pale Horse: Now Exhibiting at No. 14, Newman Street.* (London, printed by C.H. Reynell, 1827).

²¹ For a discussion of the circumstances under which Wilkie produced it, see the exhibition website for The Tiger and the Thistle - Tipu Sultan and the Scots in India at <http://www.tigerandthistle.net/scots413.htm>.

See also Anne Buddle, Pauline Rohatgi and Iain Gordon Brown, eds., *The Tiger and the Thistle: Tipu Sultan and the Scots in India, 1760-1800*, exh. cat. (Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, 1999).

Illustrations



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.



Figure 8.



Figure 9.



Figure 10



Figure 11.



Figure 12.



Figure 13.



Figure 14.



Figure 15.

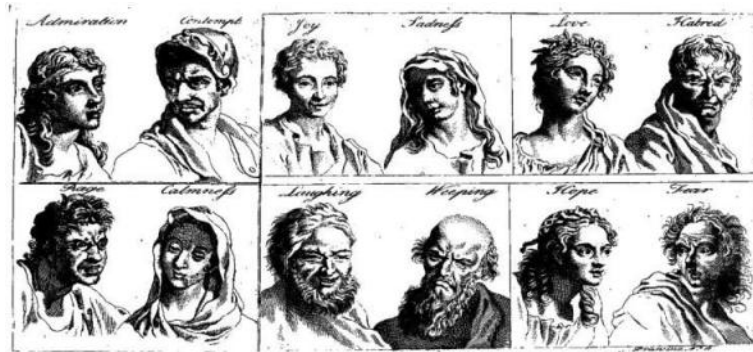


Figure 16.

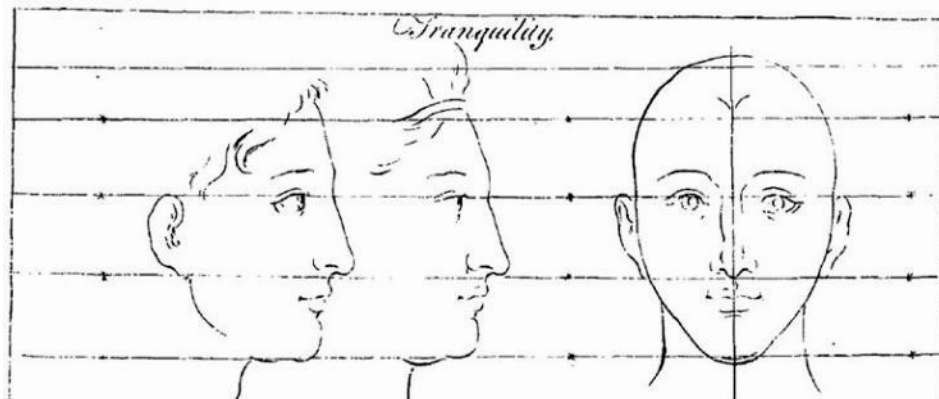
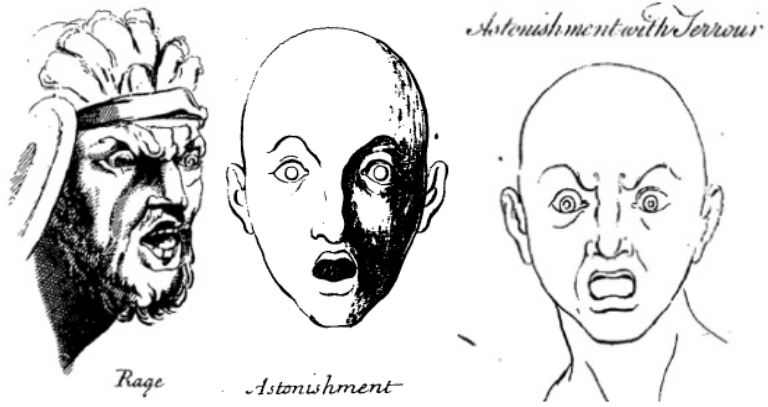


Figure 17.



Figures 18, 19 and 20.

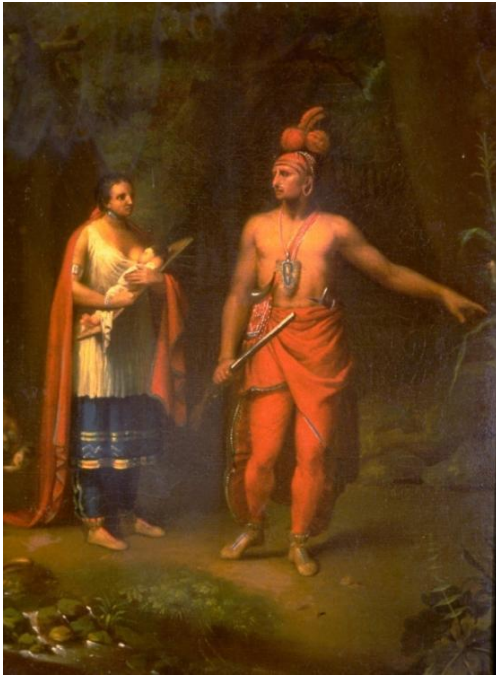


Figure 21.

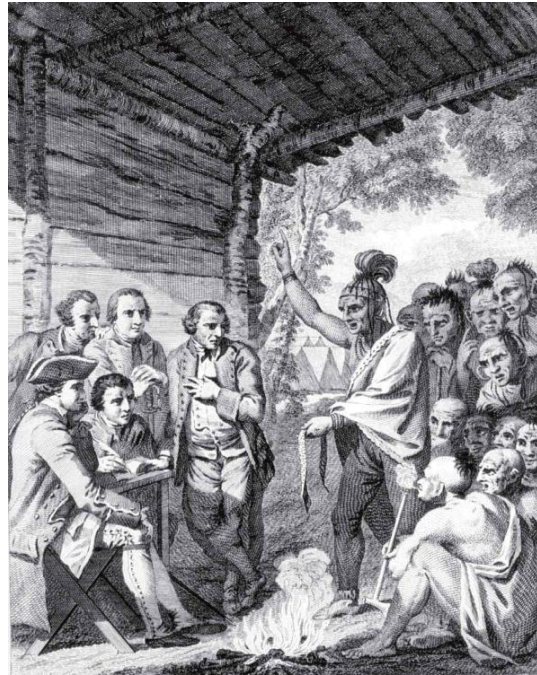


Figure 22.



Figure 23.



Figure 24.



Figure 25.

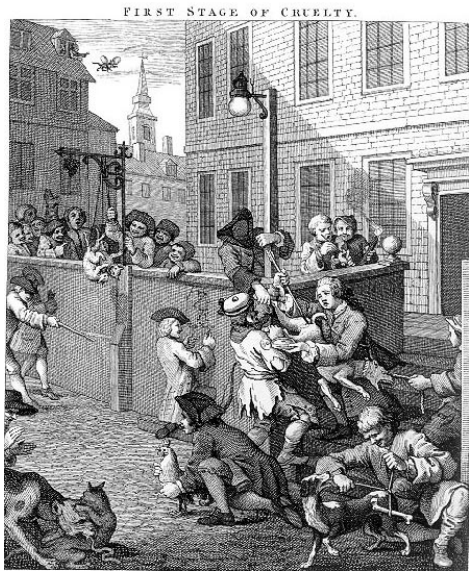


Figure 26.



Figure 27.

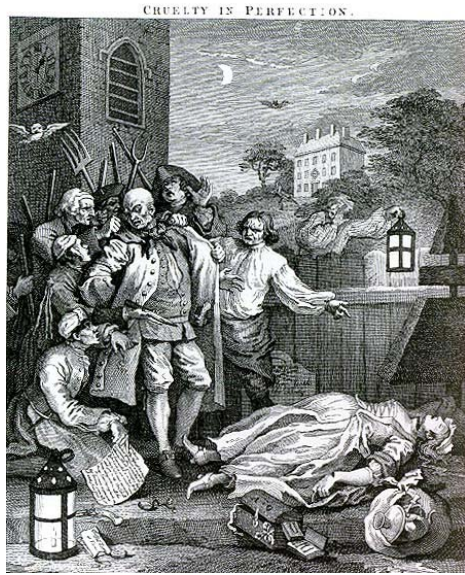


Figure 28.



Figure 29.



Figure 30.



Figure 31.



Figure 32.



Figure 33.



Figure 34.



Figure 35.



Figure 36.



Figure 37.



Figure 38.



Figure 39.



Figure 40.



Figure 41



Figure 42.



Figure 43.



Figure 44.



Figure 45.



Figure 46.



Figure 47.



Figure 48.



Figure 49.



Figure 50.



Figure 51.



Figure 52.



Figure 53.



Figure 54.



Figure 55.

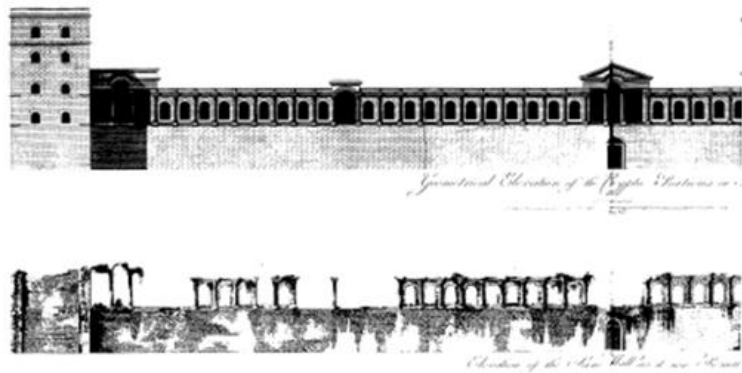


Figure 56.



Figure 57.

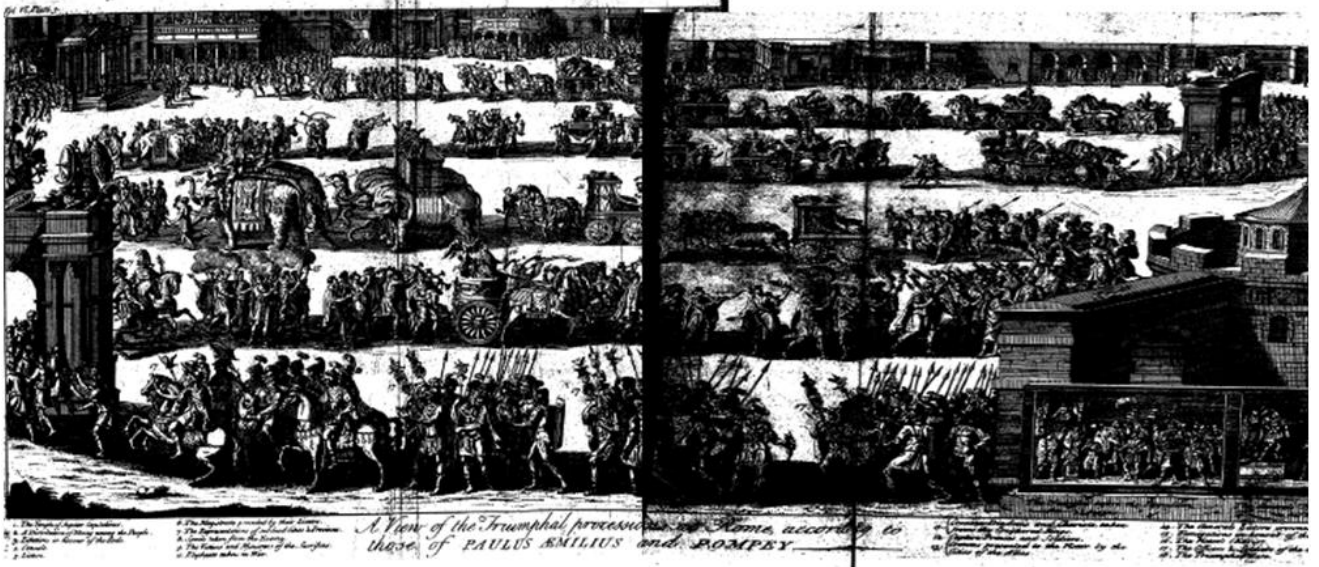


Figure 58.



Figure 59.

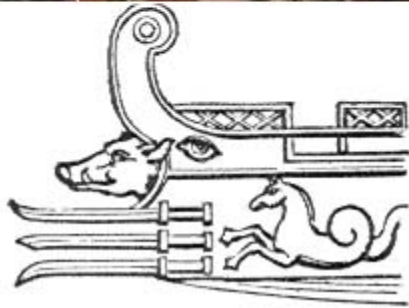


Figure 60.

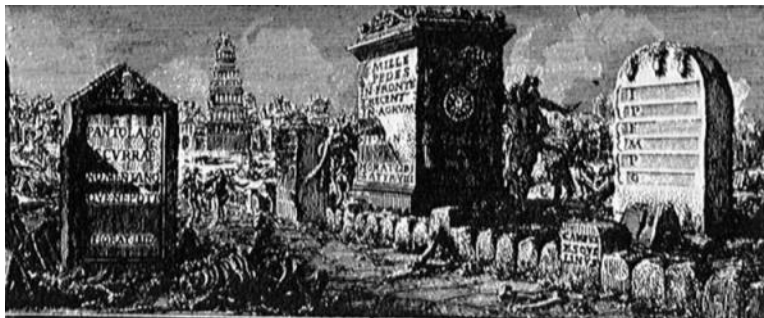


Figure 61.



Figure 62.



Figure 63.



Figure 64.



Figure 65.



Figure 66.



Figure 67.

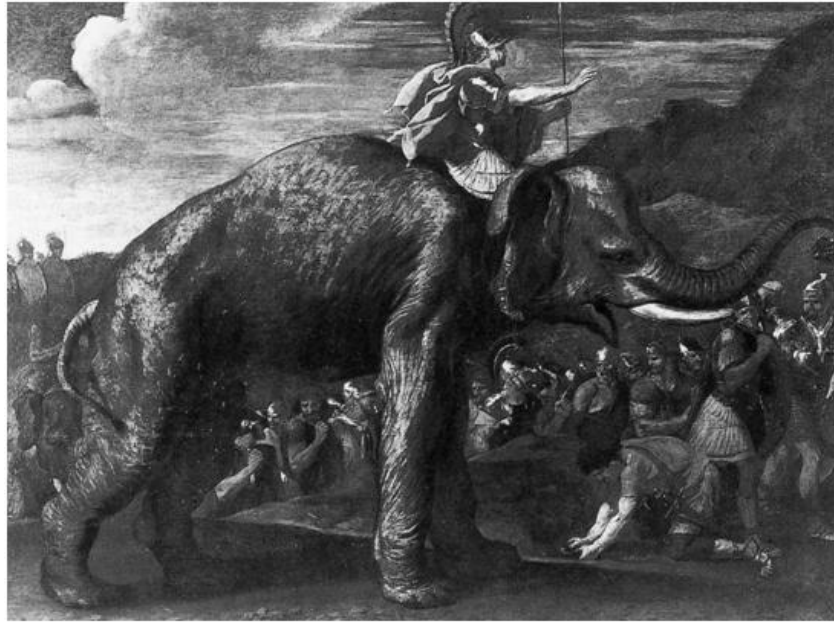


Figure 68.



Figure 69.



Figure 70.



Figure 71.



Figure 72.



Figure. 73. Belvedere Torso



Figure 74.



Figure 75.



Figure 76.



Figure 77.



Figure 78.



Figure 79.



Figure 80.



Figure 81.



Figure 82.



Figure 83.



Figure 84.



Figure 85.



Figure 86.



Figure 87.



Figure 88.

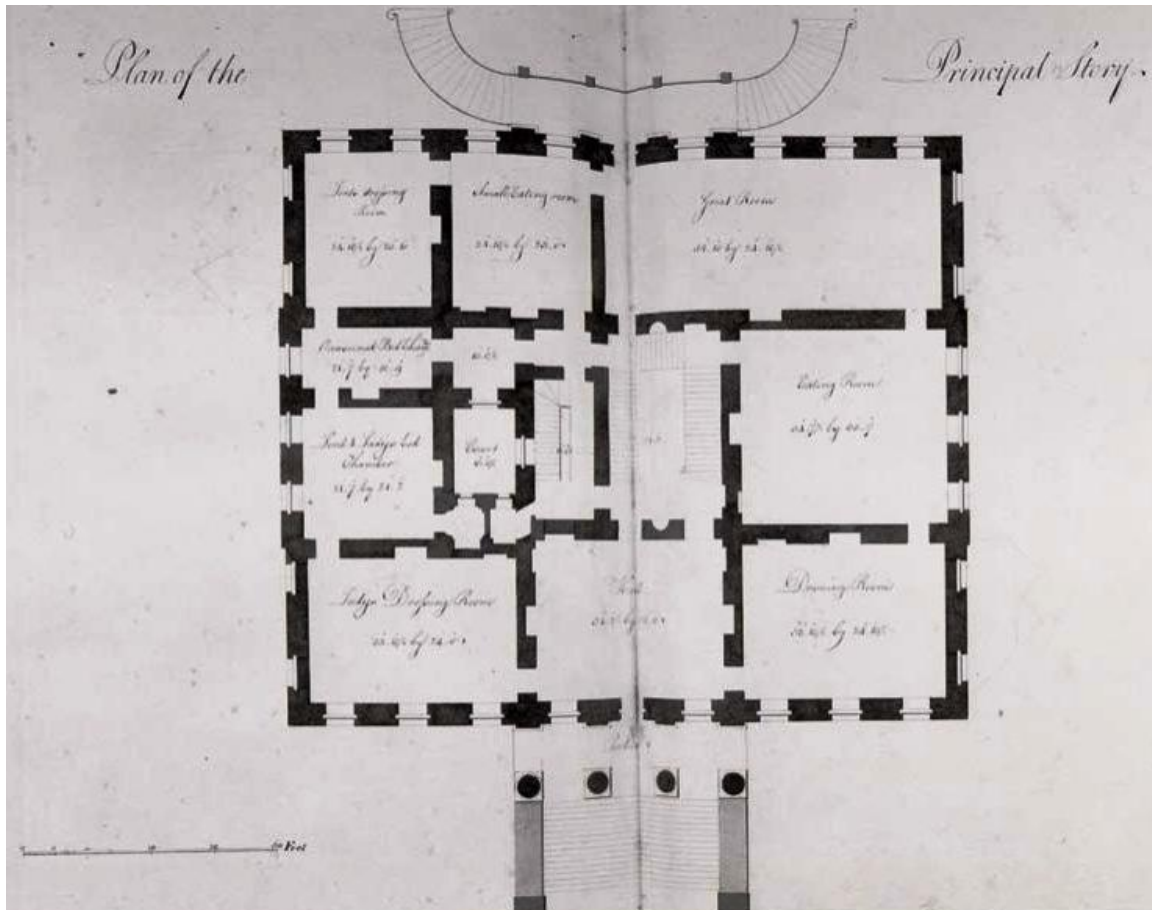


Figure 89.

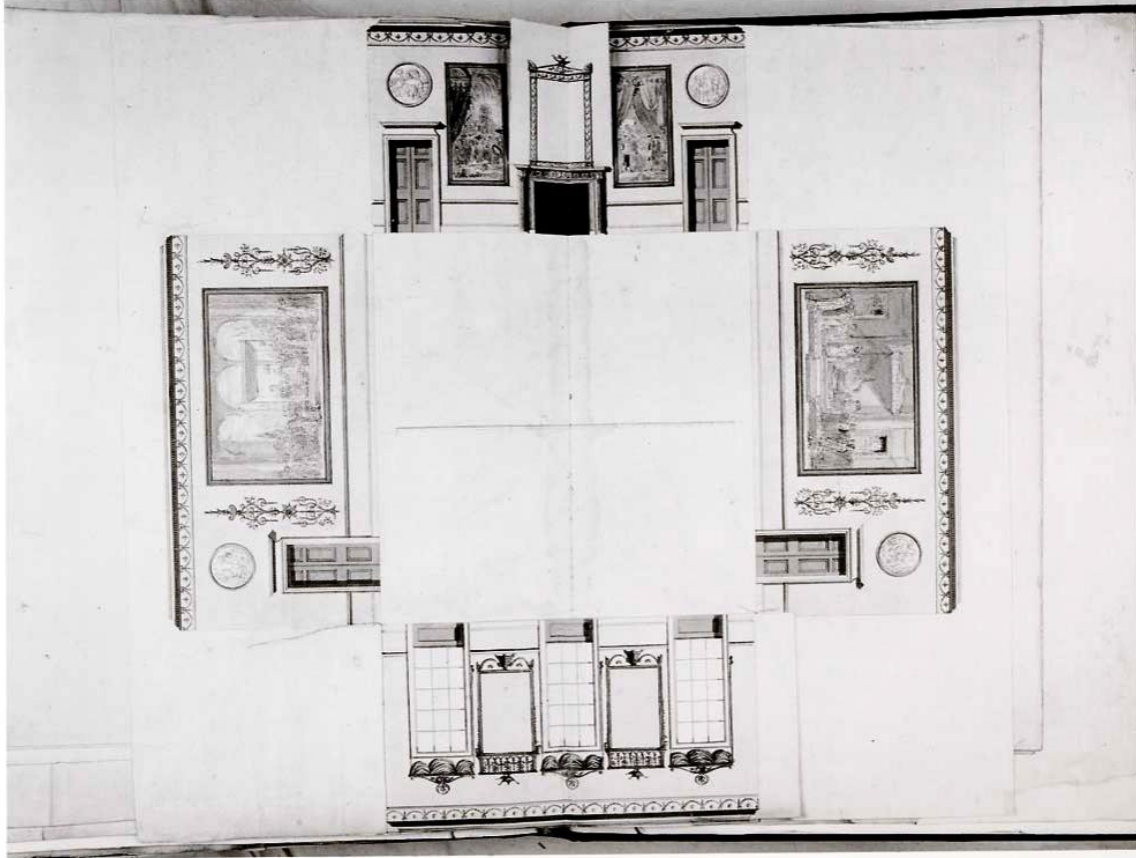


Figure 90.

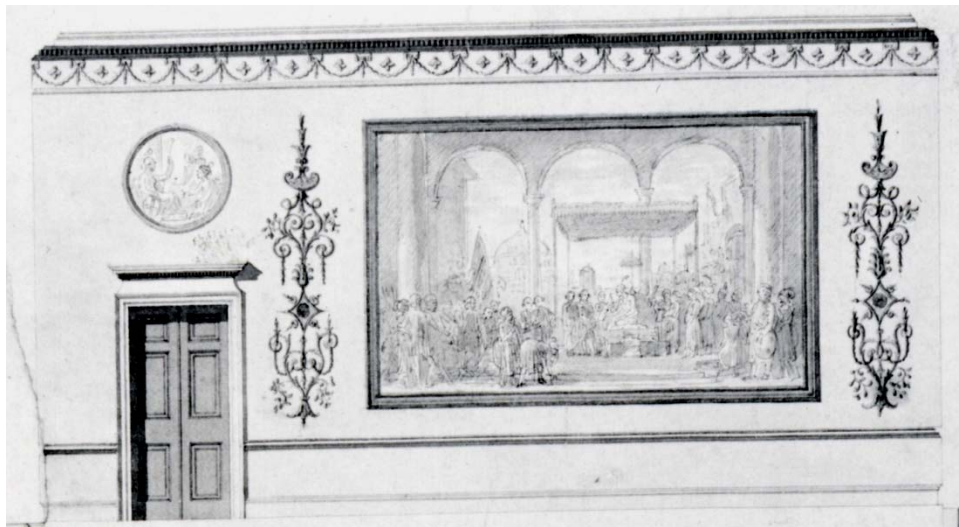


Figure 91.

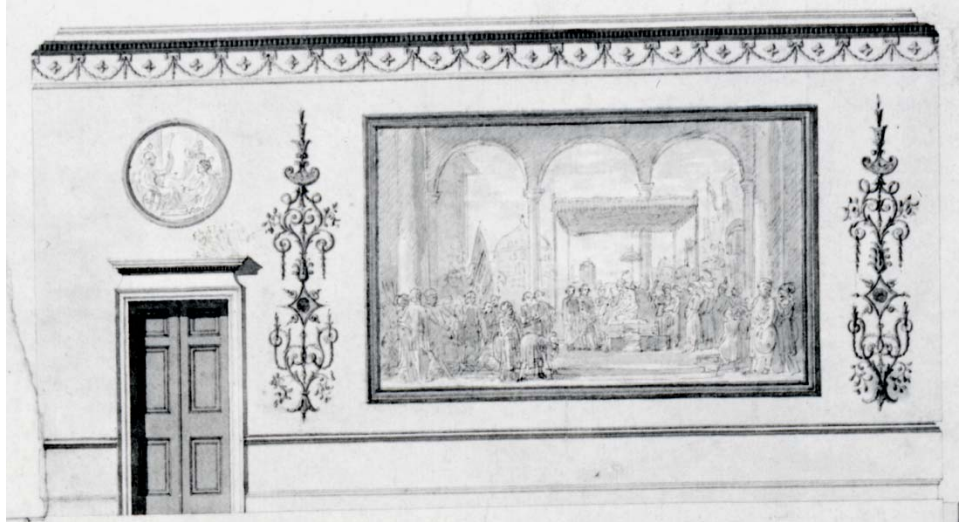


Figure 92.

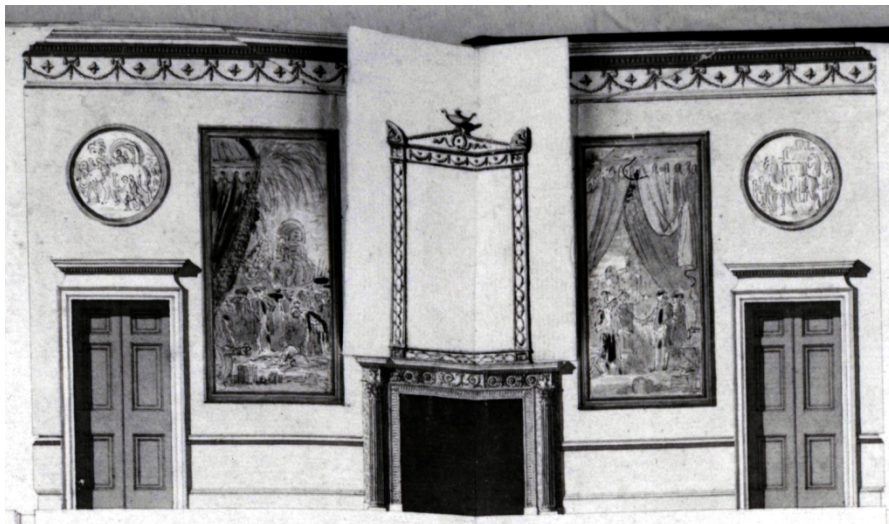


Figure 93.



Figure 94.



Figure 95.



Figure 96.



Figure 97.

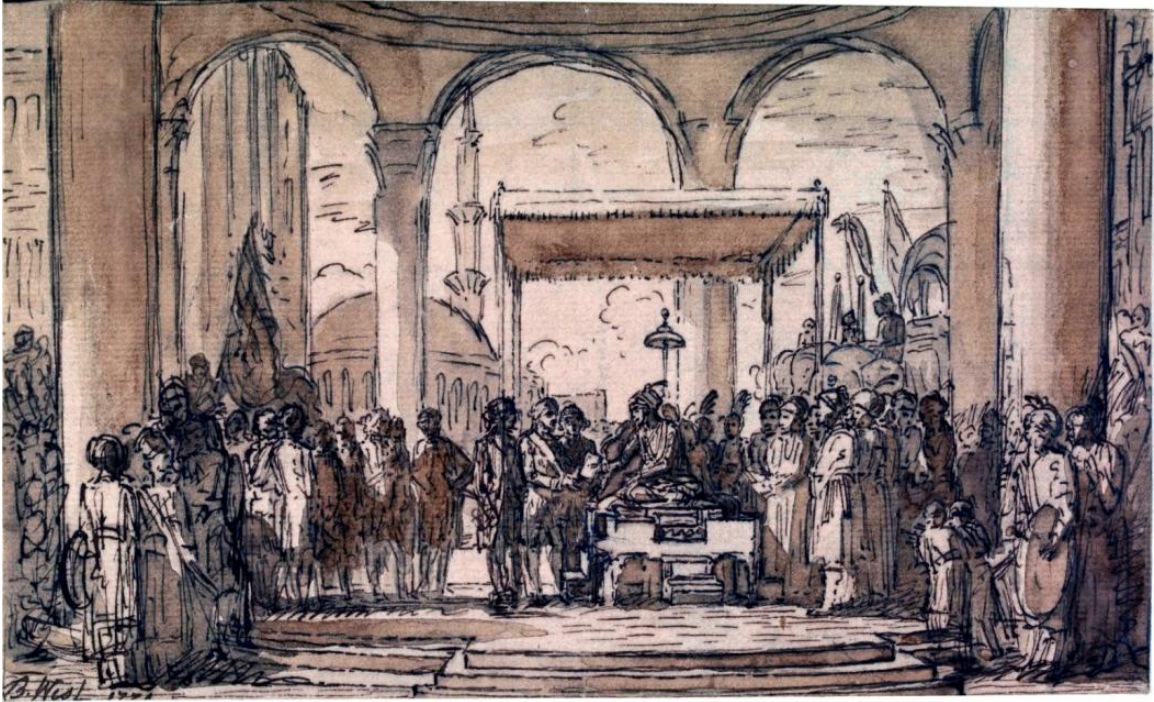


Figure 98.



Figure 99.

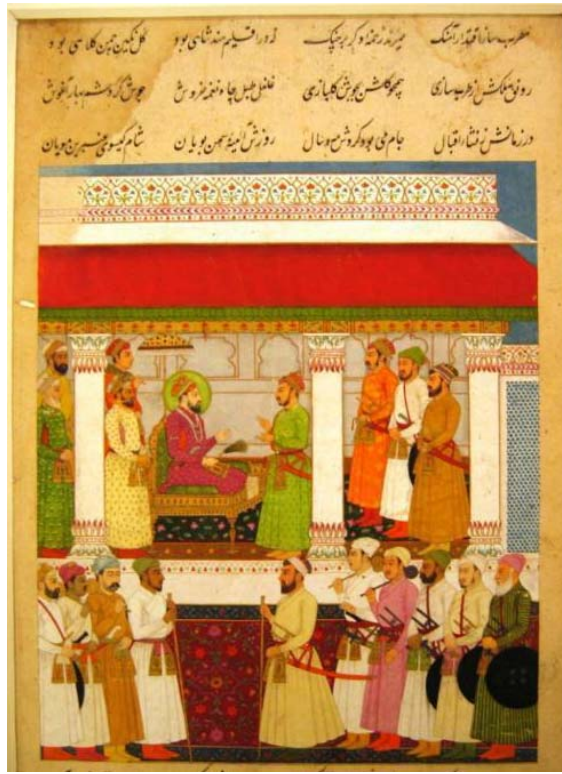


Figure 100.



Figures 101 and 102.



Figure 103.



Fig. 104.



Fig. 105.



Figure 106.



Figure 107



Figure 108.



Figure 109.



Figure 110.



Figure 111.

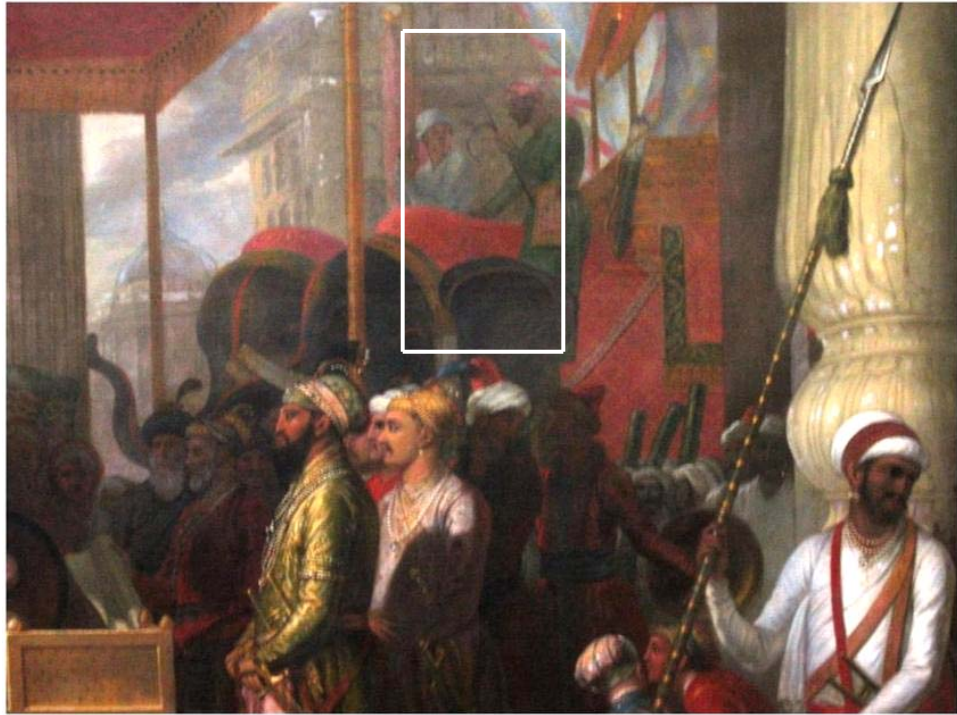


Figure 112.



Figure 113.



Figure 114.

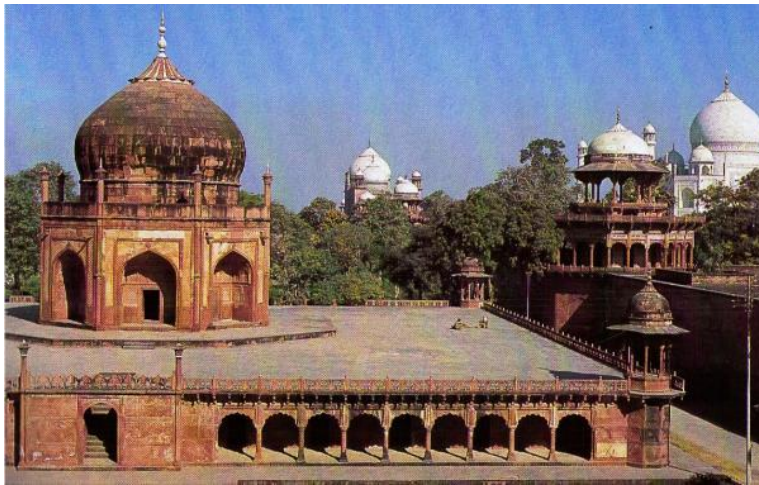


Figure 115.



Figure 116.



Figure 117.

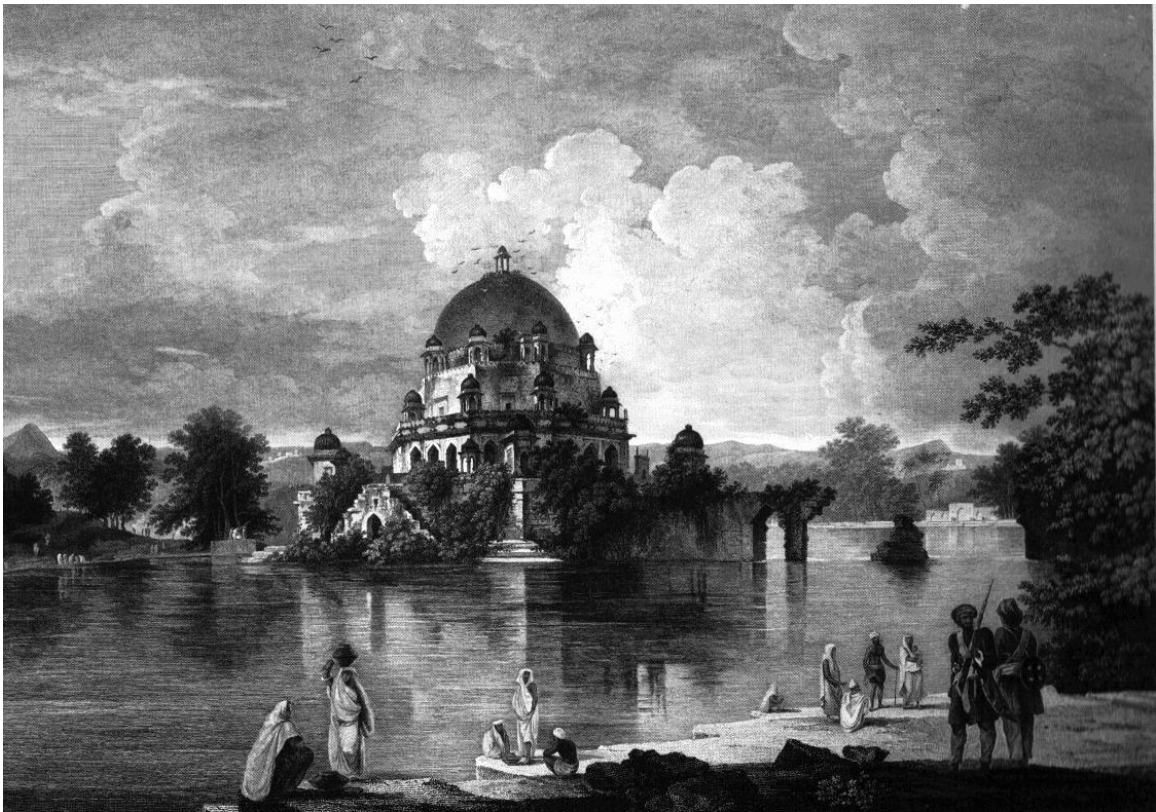


Figure 118.



Figure 119.



Figure 120.

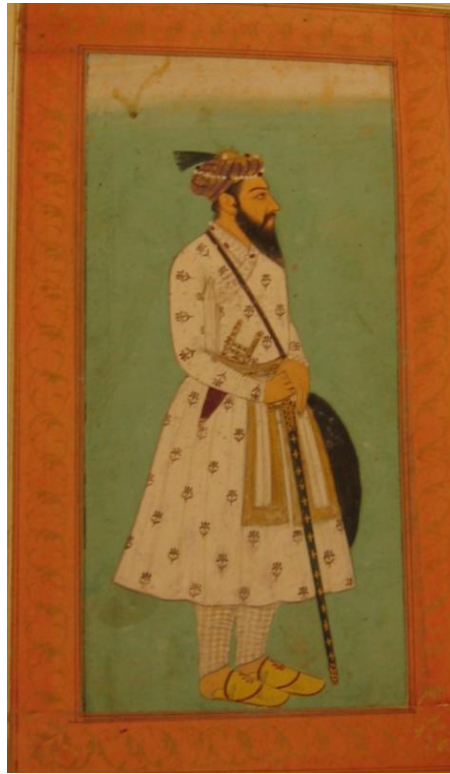


Figure 121.



Figure 122.



Figure 123.



Figure 124.

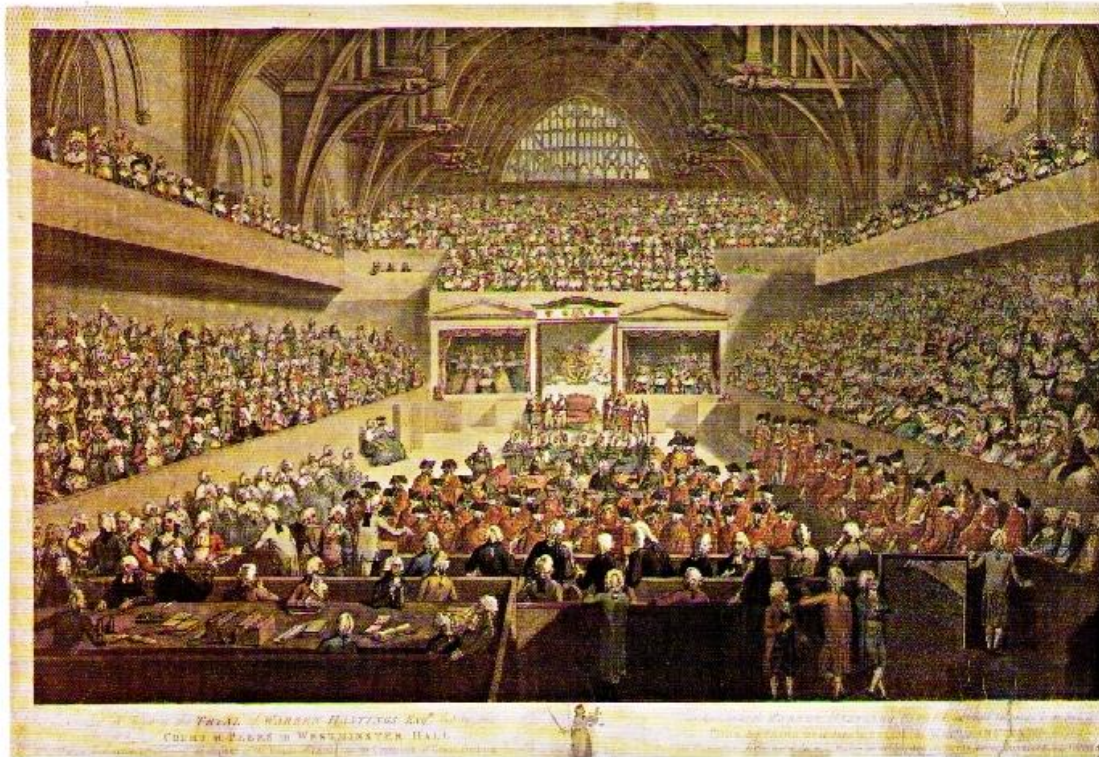


Figure 125.

THE ORACLE.

NUMBER 1203] WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 1793. [PRICE FOUR PENCE.

LORD CORNWALLIS:
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
GREAT PICTURE,

Which was shown to their MAJESTIES, at the QUEEN'S HOUSE, on SATURDAY, MARCH 16: the ENGRAVING from which the KING has graciously condescend'd to permit to be dedicated to HIS MAJESTY.

Which PICTURE is now PUBLICLY EXHIBITING at the
MORLAND GALLERY, OLD BOND STREET.

THE PICTURE represents the BRITISH ARMY drawn up in two Columns, forming a Street of Soldiers, through which the ELEPHANTS that brought the ROYAL CHILDREN most advanced, and at the Head of which an indistinguishable remainder part of the PROCESSION, formed by the STATE PALANQUINS, DRUMMERS, CAVALRY, and SPERMEN, in their Characteristic Dresses, with a number of Great Guns.

THE LEFT GROUP is formed by the AMBASSADORS of the SULTAN, and particularly GULLUM ALLI (the Head Viceroy, who is just aligned from the Elephant, and brought in the Arms of his Dominions, in a noble and elegant Manner) in Historical Posture of much importance in the Campaign, as that Minister had formerly lost the use of his Limbs upon an Embassy at Constantinople. The Ambassadors represent the Centennial of the SALAMN, or Eastern Bow.

THE CENTRE GROUP is formed by the MARQUIS CORNWALLIS leading in the Children, in which the Felt is justly attended to, of the veterans being on the Right Hand, a token of respect, as that Prince is the Aged in the Camp.

THE RIGHT GROUP is enriched with the PORTRAITS of many of the BRITISH OFFICERS (present on that occasion, so glorious to the English Arms); particularly Colonel HARRIS, Colonel MALCOLM, Major DUNDON, and Major MADAM, all the same to his Excellency, who is seated over the Dispatches to Government, and furnished Mr. BROWN with all the Particulars relating to this great event, by the express desire of the King. Honourable HENRY DUNDAS, one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, in the Distance is seen General ABERCROMBY'S CAMP, and one of the BASTIONS of SERINGAPATAM, with several Pieces of Ordnance, Numbers of which were fired as a Salute upon the occasion, and were answered by the Sultan.

THE MUSEUM, or State Carriage, which accompanies this Picture, was made use of by the Sultan at Dardar, and was taken from that Tyrant in the Capture of Bangalore.

THE STANDARDS were taken in a Glen from Tippoo by Colonel FLOYD, and were lent the Artist by the Right Honourable the Earl of PEMBROKE.

<p>PLAYS of THIS DAY.</p> <p><i>REV. MAKEPE.</i> A Comedy (never represented), called FALSE COLOURS.</p> <p>with THE PRISONER <small>As the Master of the Palace, &c. &c. &c. will be Theater-Royal, with the Press.</small></p>	<p>READINGS. <small>Little-Sirey, Lecturer-Fields.</small></p> <p>THIS EVENING, WEDNESDAY, April 3, will be repeated the same Reading which gave last Week so much satisfaction to the Hearers, LES GENTILS-DE-CAMPAGNE, LES PERCIQUES-INDIGLES, And, to depict L'ANGLAIS A PARIS <small>On Friday next, the 8th instant, will be repeated, for the recommendation of our many Approbators, who were disappointed on Saturday last for want of places, the new Play, the chief's master of M. DE BRANCAVILLA, called.</small></p>	<p>NEW MUSICAL FUND, <small>Under the PATRONAGE of their Royal High- nesses the PRINCE of WALES and DUKE of YORK.</small></p> <p>AT the CONCERT ROOMS, HANGOVER SQUARE, on FRIDAY, the 21st April, 1793, will be performed a Grand Miscellaneous CONCERT OF VOCAL and INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC, For the Benefit of the NEW MUSICAL FUND, <small>Established for the Relief of diseas'd Musicians, their</small></p>	<p>QUALITY THEATRE, <small>New Water-Course Square.</small></p> <p>THIS PRESENT EVENING, APRIL 3, at Seven o'Clock, TRIGURANION; Or, LARGE HAMPART OBERRY. <small>On this occasion will be performed Histories, which is set in Quaternary, has been acted and has obtained the Third day, has been acted, and has been acted, performed, passed on under the Patronage of the Honorable the Trustees of the of WALKER, Job.</small></p> <p>Will deliver his ASTRONOMICAL LECTURE <small>THIS EVENING, at seven o'Clock.</small></p>
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Figure 126.



Figure 127.

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF,
AND DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION, TO,
THE HONOURABLE THE COURT OF DIRECTORS
OF
THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

LORD CORNWALLIS
RECEIVING AS HOSTAGES THE TWO SONS OF TIPPOO SULTAN.

PROPOSALS
FOR PUBLISHING BY SUBSCRIPTION,
A PRINT,
TAKEN FROM THE ABOVE INTERESTING AND SPLENDID EVENT,

TO BE ENGRAVED BY
MR. W. SHARP,
FROM A PICTURE BY
MR. R. SMIRKE.

THE Size of the PRINT will be considerably larger than that of "The Death of General Wolfe."—
The Price to Subscribers will be Two GUINEAS; Half to be paid at the time of subscribing, and the
Remainder on the delivery of the Print, which shall certainly take place in the course of the next
year.

As soon as Five Hundred Impressions are subscribed for, the Subscription will be raised to THREE
GUINEAS; and after One Thousand, it will be closed. And, in order to remove every possibility of
doubt respecting the equitable and fair delivery of the Prints, a proper engagement will be given upon the
Receipts for that purpose.

THE Proprietors of this Undertaking feel a peculiar pleasure in assuring the Public, that they are in
possession of a PORTRAIT of Lord CORNWALLIS, for which his Lordship has fit, within these few months,
to Mr. SMARY in India: and that Artist has likewise transmitted to one of the Proprietors such Materials res-
pecting the Dresses and general Costume of the Picture, as must establish the Historical Authenticity of it;
and, though the subject must be generally known, it may not be unnecessary to intimate, that its more
immediate reference is to that part of the dispatches transmitted to the Court of Directors of the East
India Company, containing the following Speech of the Sultan's Vakeel, upon his delivering the
Princes to Lord CORNWALLIS:

"These children were this morning the sons of the Sultan, my master: their situation is
changed, and they must now look up to your Lordship as their father, their protector,
and their friend."

The Proprietors presume it must be acceptable to the Patrons of this Undertaking to be informed, that
the Artists engaged in it, being Proprietors of the Work, will have every motive to stimulate their best
exertions in the execution of it.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are received, and PROPOSALS may be had, at Mr. BOWYER'S, No. 68, Berner's
Street, who is a joint Proprietor with the above Artists. Also of Mr. SKELTON, Haymarket: Mr.
EDWARDS, Pall Mall; Mr. MURRAY, Fleet Street: and Mr. DILLY, Poultry.

Berner's Street, Aug. 2, 1794.

Figure 128.



Figure 129.

THE GREAT MOGUL Presenting the GRANT of the DEWANEE to LORD CLIVE.



Painted by B. West. F.R.S. Drawn on Stone by J. Baker. Printed by W. Redman.

1. The Emperor Shah Alum, commonly called the Great Mogul. 2. Lord Clive. 3. Gen' Carnac. 4. Captain Archibald Sinton. 5. Major—Pearson. 6. Sir Henry Strachey. 7. not ascertained. 8. Mr Beaumont. 9, 10. not ascertained. 11. an Officer of the court called a *Chubdan*. 12. Mr Kelsall. 13, 14, 15. not ascertained. 16, 17. two *Seppoy*. 18. an Indian civil Officer. 19. an Indian Nobleman. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30. Civil and Military attendants of the Court. 31, 31, 31, 31. Servants bearing whisks of Peacocks feathers to chase away the Flies.

Figure 130.



Figures 131 and 132.



Figure 133.



Figure 134.



Figure 135.



Figure 136.



Figure 137.

Appendix

The composition is organized around a fully-lit white object that occupies a point on the central vertical axis of the canvas. The contemporary viewer might recognize the object as one or more sheets of paper rolled into a cylindrical form. The thumb that bisects the scrolled papers leads the eye to a wrist which bears a close-fitting bracelet comprised of two strands of pearls, then to a forearm covered with shining golden fabric. The eye then travels up the biceps and shoulder to the face of dark-skinned adult male who holds the rolled paper in his right hand. The figure represents Shah Alam II, ruler of the Mughal regions of the subcontinent. West turned the man's head so that he appears closer to full profile than to three-quarter view, an important choice to which I shall return momentarily. The silk brocade of the man's garment and turban reflects the light. The man wears two necklaces. The first, composed of a single strand of pearls from which hangs a large green stone (presumably an emerald) surrounded by pearls, terminates in a large teardrop-shaped pearl. As the man leans slightly forward at the waist, the green stone and its connected teardrop-shaped pearl move away from his sternum, allowing the light source to cast a shadow on the man's torso. In addition to the single strand of pearls, a second necklace comprised of two strands, secured by large red stones (presumably rubies) drapes from the man's neck to about waist level. The red stones secure the strands in intervals. The bottommost pair of strands comprises two sets of eighteen pearls, each set of which flanks another large teardrop-shaped pearl connected to a large red stone. As the viewer's eye moves up the necklace toward the

man's neck, the conceit repeats, with two large red stones separating the bottommost thirty-six from two sets of fourteen pearls, which drape across the man's chest on either side of the green stone and teardrop-shaped pearl attached to the aforementioned single strand of pearls. The arrangement continues in the double-strand necklace with two large red stones separating the two sets of sixteen pearls from two sets of seven pearls, followed by two large red stones and second pair of fourteen-pearl sets and yet another set of two large red stones. The double-strand set of pearls drapes across the man's clavicle on either side of the single-strand set of pearls in two sets of ten. Another pair of large red stones separates those sets from two more sets of ten pearls. The necklaces terminate at the base of the man's neck, so that the viewer is unable to determine the means by which the single and double strands fasten.

The representation of the man's long-sleeve, robe-like garment (*jama*) suggests that upon dressing its wearer slides his right arm and shoulder into the right sleeve, and then across the left part of his chest and down toward the left side of his waist. He then slides the left arm and shoulder into the left sleeve and wraps the fabric over the right side of his chest and down toward the right side of his waist, covering the fabric of the right side of the garment. The garment appears to be secured by a tie knotted at approximately the middle of the right pectoral, indicating, in the sartorial codes of Akbari India, that the wearer is Muslim; non-Muslims tied their garments on the left. This tie is made from the same fabric as the garment the outer portion and appears to be sewn to the vertical hem of the garment. A shimmering white cummerbund (*patka*) secures the

garment at the waist. The representation of the man's lower body suggests that he sits cross-legged atop a cushion of some kind that situates his buttocks slightly higher than the floor of the throne, allowing him to place each foot beneath the opposite knee. This position makes it impossible for the viewer to determine the construction of the lower portion of the garment, which appears to be only a long robe, but which may, in fact, include breeches that fit closely to the legs from the waist to the ankles. The man's shoes are also hidden from view.

The darkness of the man's skin and facial hair and the comparative inattention with which West rendered his facial features diverts the viewer's eye to the man's sumptuously adorned turban, which is composed of the same fabric as the garment. Two strands of pearls encircle his head just above the lower edge of the turban. Resting on a section of gold cloth that covers his forehead to just above the eyebrows appears an ornament composed of a large green stone (most likely an emerald) from which dangles a single large teardrop-shaped pearl, which touches the man's forehead as he leans forward. To the viewer's right of the green stone appears a red stone (most likely a ruby), which the viewer presumes would be replicated on the right side of the green stone, but which is not visible.

Aligned with the green stone that serves as central element in the ornamental band which secures the turban and centrally placed atop the turban appears a second ornament, composed of or resembling the topmost portion of a peacock feather. Four reflective stones and four teardrop-shaped pearls extend from the top and underside of the feather

form respectively, the latter of which curves downward, echoing the line created by the topmost portion of the turban. An aigrette, in this case a metallic fixture of indeterminate form appears to secure the feather form to the turban. Once the viewer has fully explored the details of the silk, pearls, emeralds, rubies and feathers that adorn the man, her gaze returns to his face. Though he appears to divert his glance in what one might read as an expression of deference, the direction of the man's focus guides the viewer's attention to the light-skinned adult male who faces the man holding the paper scroll. The extension of the turbaned male's right elbow, the kinesic display of his left palm and the inclination of his torso suggest that he leans forward to hand the rolled paper to the light-skinned male, whose open right hand and upright posture reinforce his role as recipient. The relationships between the two men's bodies suggest that the turbaned male makes an effort to reach forward toward the light-skinned male in order to bestow upon him the scroll, rather than the light skinned male aggressively seizing the document from the hand of the turbaned male.

The light-skinned adult male wears a powdered wig, red coat with gold and black trim, white cravat, white long-sleeve shirt with ruffled sleeves, tan-colored waistcoat and knee breeches with white stockings and black leather shoes with large metal buckles. A gold and white embroidered crest is emblazoned on the left breast of the coat. He holds a black tricorne hat beneath his left arm. A red sash runs on the diagonal from his right shoulder to the left side of his waist, partially obscuring his hat and left hand. This portrait represents Robert Clive. To the viewer's left of Clive appears a second light-

skinned adult male. With the exception of the red sash and star of the Bath, which he does not wear, the second male is dressed identically to the first. In this figure West portrayed Clive's second in command in India, General John Carnac. Clive and Carnac stand inside the ceremonial precinct created by the four gilt poles that suspend the red velvet canopy above the emperor's throne. The canopy is embroidered with a large sunburst pattern, one of the symbols of the reign of Shah Alam II. Behind Carnac and to the viewer's left stand a number of British East India Company representatives. Combined with the pairs of seated horsemen and standing soldiers barely visible in the left central portion of the composition, West included at least sixteen Britons – some represented only by a forehead or the bridge of a nose – to witness the transaction undertaken by Clive and Carnac.

Opposite Clive on the Mughal ruler's left stand a number of Mughal courtiers and attendants; two bearded and turbaned males occupy a space beneath the canopy diagonally opposite Clive and Carnac, balancing the central grouping of the composition. Surrounding the central assemblage on the left and right and occupying both background and foreground appear Mughal courtiers. A turbaned male with a gray beard, gold turban and red garment stands to the seated man's left and slightly behind him. He holds a scrolled paper, one of three in the image. The position of this man's arms suggests that he waits to hand the document to the emperor, who will then pass the paper to Clive while making an official pronouncement about the treaty, transfer or firman memorialized in the text.

Two camels appear to the viewer's left in the pictorial field and West struck a counterpoise in the arrangement of figures and elements by including a pair elephants to the viewer's right of the central narrative action. The architectural interior in which West set the event includes large baluster columns, suggesting the hypostyle audience hall form common to Mughal palaces. A loggia comprised of ornately carved, red and gold painted arches set atop fluted columns separates the interior space from a street or courtyard beyond a high wall perforated with arched openings, observable just above the document that passes from Shah Alam to Clive. Groupings of domed and flat-roofed structures appear beyond the loggia, arranged as if lining either side of a large street or enclosing a broad courtyard and diminishing in size so as to suggest distance.

Dual, undulating groupings of figures dominate the lower half of the picture, with those closest to the bottom edge of the picture plane slightly smaller than life-size and those furthest from the bottom edge of the picture plane diminished in size to convey distance from the viewer. Reading the figures from smallest to largest and from left and to right (from the viewer's perspective), one first identifies two red-coated light-skinned adult males wearing black tricorne hats. West positioned these figures so as to suggest that they appear to sit astride horses: their heads and upper torsos rise above the heads of two horses, one roan colored with head upright in three-quarter view and the other, a light gray or white color with head bowed in profile. Like many eighteenth-century painters, West customarily anthropomorphized horses in his paintings; these horses seem to have facial expressions that convey some sort of emotional state – especially the lighter

colored horse, which seems to smile or perhaps even laugh. This effect is amplified by the reflection of light on what appears to be a gold bit at the right edge of the horse's mouth. Immediately above the heads of the two Englishmen, one can see a golden chair, possibly a throne, atop a golden base. The chair and base attach to a structure or surface of some kind that is colored with the same red that West used for the drapery that covers the elephants in the picture, indicating that the chair rests on the back of an elephant, the greatest portion of which is obscured by a large white baluster ("cypress-bodied) column that tapers into a bulb shape at its base.

Above the horsemen's heads appears darkened interior space with no discernible architectural features. A white flag of some sort, likely the standards of the British East India Company, enters the picture plane from outside the left frame, appearing to flutter above the heads of the horsemen. More proximate still to the viewer and beneath and to the viewer's right of the white flag appears a small portion of the face of a dark-skinned adult male wearing a blue turban secured by a light-colored fillet and a light green shirt-like garment with a skirt of slightly darker green; a decorative, possibly embroidered, band encircles the lower garment mid-thigh. A gold cuff worn on the anterior-most portion of the helix of his right ear reflects the light. With his back to the viewer, the position of the man's head indicates that he bends forward at the waist, head turned so that he faces to his (and the viewer's) right.

Occupying space between the blue-turbaned male and a rectilinear architectural form (possibly the base of the large baluster column that rises over his left shoulder),

stands a dark-skinned male, presented in three-quarter view. The first fully realized figure in the left portion of the composition's frieze-like arrangement, this male's right shoulder partially eclipses the face and right shoulder of the male in the green garment and blue turban, who stands behind him and to the right side (in pictorial space) of the rectilinear architectural form. Dressed in orange turban with gold fillet, the man also wears a large pearl earring in his right earlobe. A light blue sash around his waist secures his white, ankle-length garment, the fabric of which shades his red, slipper-like shoes. Based on comparisons to other figures in the painting and to eighteenth-century images of Mughal courtiers, servants and attendants, the man's costume suggests that he is a servant of some kind. The direction of the man's gaze indicates that he directs his attention to the events transpiring in the center of the composition, but his distance from that central action and the positioning of the figures make it difficult for the viewer to identify the object of the man's visual focus.

Most prominent among the figures in the left foremost portion of the composition stand two dark-skinned adult males. Of the two, the male to the viewer's left stands with his back to the viewer, with no portion of his face visible; the male to the right faces the viewer, with his head turned toward the viewer's right in near full profile. Each man wears the distinctive red military uniform of the Indian sepoy, which includes flattened "sundial" turban with decorative red-and-white-striped cord leading to a pompon atop its center, red coat, red short breeches with black and gold trim that expose the leg below the knee and black shoes. A string of large pearls encircles each man's neck with the

leftmost of the pair having added at least one strand of alternating red and blue beads, smaller in size than the pearls. The rightmost of the two men wears three strands of such beads, one strand slightly greater in length than the circumference of the man's neck, with the other two strands resting just below his suprasternal notch at their lowest point. The longest of the red-and-blue-bead necklaces bears a gold medallion, oval in shape, the bottom edge of which rests near the vertical midpoint of the man's sternum. Both men wear collarless white shirts, possibly of linen. Only the uppermost portion of the back of the shirt is visible on the left figure; West positioned the right figure so that his coat opens to reveal the white shirt beneath. A small portion of white fabric covers each man's wrists below the sleeves of their red coats, confirming the length of the shirt sleeves. The red coats include black and gold trim along the torso and around the cuffs of the sleeves, with gold-trimmed blue and red patches on the face of each shoulder with the seams of the sleeves and shoulders trimmed in the same gold. At the hem, the coats fall just below the buttocks, with a single vent in the center of the back flanked by two sets of pleats, each gathered with a single gold button. To insure that the viewer registers the sepoys' bare legs, West posed the right figure with his left foot resting on the step of a platform, with his hip turned out so that his left foot points directly to the viewer's right. To emphasize the posture, West placed the sepoy's left hand on his thigh, which is raised to a position almost parallel with the bottom edge of the picture plane.

The sepoy whose back faces the viewer holds a sword by its gold-embellished black hilt, casually resting the tip of the blade against the floor close to his right foot,

which is lifted slightly, indicating that his left foot bears the weight of his body; his bent right knee reinforces this effect. Though visible only upon very close inspection, this weapon has a flat disc-pommel that identifies it as a *tulwar*, a Mughal variation of the Persian *shamshir* and the Turkish *kilic*. This figure's right arm rests across his dark-colored shield, which is secured by a brown leather strap that runs across his back on the diagonal to hang from the left shoulder.

The second figure wears a similar strap across his left shoulder, running on the diagonal across his chest down toward his waist. The top of the second sepoy's shield comes into view just over his left shoulder, as if he has shifted the brown leather strap that attaches to it so as to move the shield from beneath his arm to his back, where the strap appears to be secured near the left shoulder blade. From behind this figure appears the tip of a sword, positioned on a diagonal roughly parallel to that of his shield strap, but the sword's location does not reconcile with the angle and situation of the red, gold and white scabbard strap that runs beneath the shield strap on the diagonal from his right shoulder to the left side of his waist. And though the servant in the white garment and orange turban may hold the sword, a more likely explanation is that West failed in his attempt to render a convincing relationship between sword, scabbard and strap.

West proportioned the sepoy figures just smaller than life size to convey spatial proximity to the viewer. The sepoy on the viewer's right bears an expression of intense concentration, indicating his interest in the central narrative focus of the work and offering one of many directional cues to guide the viewer's reading of the work. And

though West treated this man's face with sufficient attention to suggest a portrait, he has treated the men's anatomy – especially the length of their arms – carelessly.

Barely visible over the right sepoy's left shoulder and slightly beyond the large white column appears the head of a light-skinned male in a black tricorn hat. Only the topmost portion of the collar of his red coat and light-colored shirt are visible; the remainder of his body obscured by the right sepoy's shield. West painted this man so that he appears to focus his gaze on the sepoys that stand between him and the viewer. Immediately to the viewer's right of the light-skinned man stands another light-skinned adult male, wearing a black hat that differs in style from the tricorn. Only the man's hat, part of his right eye, his right ear and a small portion of the dark blue trim of his coat collar appear. A larger figure in the foreground blocks the viewer's access to any further details about the second male in the black hat.

Immediately behind and slightly above the two men in black hats appears a dark-skinned, bearded adult male in a dark blue garment with a white turban secured by a red and blue scarf. Visible only from the chest up, this man holds in his right hand a long, thin cylindrical object made of gold. The object flutes at the end so that it resembles a staff that terminates in a cone shape, similar to a heraldic trumpet. The man's mouth is open and he turns and tilts his head as if to look at the fluted end of the object, which extends upward in pictorial space so that it appears closely proximate to the closed right eye of a camel, the head of which appears in full profile and the anatomical treatment of which borders on caricature. The camel's neck extends upward directly behind the head

of the man with the fluted object. The camel wears on its head a scarlet cloth trimmed in gold with gold fringe, which drapes over the camel's forehead, extending just to the edge of the camel's eye. A dark link across the camel's snout suggests a bridle.

Immediately behind the man in the blue garment appears a dark-skinned adult male in an identical white turban and blue garment. This man, who wears a mustache but no beard, appears to stand between the large white column and the right foreleg of the camel. Above the man's head appears the fluted end of a golden staff-like object similar to that held by the man with upturned head and open mouth. The proximity of these blue-clad men to the camel suggests their role as camelherds or in the very rough translations of eighteenth-century Indo-Persian parlance, *serriwan-shutur* or *shuturban*.

As the viewer's gaze shifts to the right of the camel's head, she encounters a dark-skinned adult male who seems to hover in pictorial space. The mustachioed man wears a white robe-like garment trimmed with gold in some places and red in others. A white scarf secures his white turban and the reflective metal handle of a dagger protrudes from beneath the gold sash encircling his waist. The man turns his head to look back over his right shoulder, but the object of his focus is not apparent from West's representation. The camel's head obscures the lower half of the man's right arm and in his left he holds a gold-colored, symmetrically curvilinear object that resembles an unstrung bow. The bottom portion of the object appears to hold or lift a dark, crescent-shape which, upon closer inspection, appears to be the trunk of an elephant. The man obscures the elephant's right and a portion of its head, which is completely covered in vibrantly-

colored red fabric. The portion of the elephant's trunk closest to the man appears to be decorated with gold embellishment of some sort. The strongest evidence for identifying the dark crescent as a trunk comes in the form of a second man, who wears the same white turban and robe-like garment as the man with the dagger in his sash (though the second man lacks a dagger).

The second man straddles a large, curving red mass, leaning forward toward the right edge of the picture plane by supporting the weight of his upper body on his left forearm, which rests atop the red mass while brandishing a metallic object in his right hand. The long, thin object includes a hook-shaped protuberance, which curves away from the object's central shaft. The eighteenth-century viewer would have identified this instrument as an *ankus* (or *ankush*) the primary tool with which the elephant handler guided and controlled his animal, today termed an "elephant goad." The presence of the elephant and the use of the *ankus* identify the men clad in white as *mahouts*, the Indo-Mughal term for elephant-driver. Immediately behind the leftmost mahout in pictorial space appears the remainder of the aforementioned gold throne, the construction of which seems to include some sort of railing or low enclosure that separates the seat from the mahout. The sumptuous red covering on the elephant and the gold seat behind the mahout suggest that this animal may have served as the means of transport for one of the two men engaged in the central transaction of the composition.

Behind the foremost portion of the golden throne-like construction appears the right half of a fluted column, the remainder of which is obscured by the large baluster

column. The fluted column supports an ornately carved red-and-gold-colored capital, beneath an impost which opens toward the right side of the picture plane into a gold and red engrailed arch. The arch repeats twice, creating a three-port loggia that opens onto an exterior courtyard or wide street flanked by buildings distinguished by varying architectural features. A high wall runs between the loggia and the courtyard or street beyond, preventing the viewer from discerning the exact setting for the structure in which West situated his subject. Within the visual framework created by the leftmost of the three arches appears from the viewer's left a rectilinear structure with two large windows and small, curving, buttress-like forms that support a roof that appears to curve under, similar to the built awnings or *chhajja* common to some Mughal buildings constructed after the reign of Shah Jahan (1592-1666; r. 1628-1658). This structure, though rendered in darkness and with little attention to detail, dominates the upper leftmost portion of the canvas.

Next West introduced a small domed kiosk-like structure (*chhatri*), the treatment of which suggests its relative distance among the other, more prominently-articulated structures in the background skyline. To the viewer's right of the *chhatri* rises a large domed structure surrounded by a number of much smaller, columned structures. Visual access to the *chhatri* and the great dome is partially obstructed by a large flag comprised of what modern viewers would recognize as the civil ensign of the United Kingdom: a vertical red cross on a rectangular white field superimposed on a diagonal white cross on a blue field set into the upper hoist canton of a red field. The folds in the

ensign suggest that an unseen figure has gathered the fly of the flag in order to keep it from blowing onto the heads of the men who assemble nearby. To the viewer's right of the ensign appears a second camel's head, depicted in profile, facing the right edge of the picture plane. Clad in full processional trappings, the camel's right ear protrudes from its gold-fringed, red velvet head-covering. A single gold and black tassel dangles from beneath the head covering, aligned with the visible ear. The gold in the camel's bridle reflects the light. Above and to the camel's left appear the standards of the British East India Company's military regiments: a cross of St. George with a coat-of-arms centered in the hoist canton. The coat-of-arms includes an oval quarterly gules and azure crested by a crown of the kings of Great Britain, with the chief dexter and base sinister cantons azure three mullets or and the chief sinister and base dexter three annulets or. Immediately below the camel's snout and partially obscuring the camel's mouth rises what appears to be a large swath of pinkish-white cloth covered in gold stars (mulletts or cinquefoils). This piece of cloth billows into a spherical shape that occupies pictorial space between the gathered fly of the British civil ensign and the second column of the background loggia. The nature and function of the gold-starred cloth is obscured from view by one of the groups of light-skinned adult males.

Immediately to the viewer's right of the billowing gold-starred cloth or flag appear two dark-skinned adult males wearing red turbans secured with white fillets. The man closest to the billowing cloth stands in profile, facing the right edge of the picture plane. The second man seems substantially shorter in stature and faces toward the

viewer. Behind these two men appears a group of men in white turbans. The arrangement of the figures represented as closer to the viewer in pictorial space renders only their turbans visible. These men bear arms of some kind, as indicated by the appearance of at least five cylindrical objects jutting diagonally above the heads of the men, suggesting that each of the men in this group rest the objects (possibly guns of some kind) across one shoulder. Between this group of men and the high wall that runs between the arches and the buildings beyond appear at least six tall spear-like objects with sharp arrow-like tips above a gold-colored tassel or ribbon. The vertical lines of these objects echo those of the column to the viewer's left and the poles that support the canopy over the emperor's throne as well as the domed structures beyond the wall. As the viewer's eye moves from left to right across the canvas, she notes that similarly clad men – some in white turbans and some in red – appear throughout the background space, behind the central figures. To the viewer's left of the emperor's throne appears one white-turbaned man's clearly visible face, with two men in red turbans to the viewer's right of the throne (standing in front of the third column of the loggia) and one barely visible red-turbaned adult male immediately to the right of the third column in the loggia.

Within the pictorial space framed by the second of the three arches appear a number of domed, columned and flat-roofed buildings that diminish in size toward the center of the composition along one of the many lines of perspective that West used to create the scene. Light and dark clouds intersperse with small patches of blue sky, filling the canvas above the buildings and on to the horizon. The canopy of the emperor's tent

obscures a substantial portion of the sky that would otherwise be visible through the central arch, as does the umbrella over his throne. The color and shape of the clouds indicate a dominant light source emanating from well beyond the left edge of the picture plane. West's treatment of the central figures and elements in the painting reinforce this light effect. A large patch of opaque white paint above the central-most distant domed building indicates significant retouching. A horizontal band of light gray paint that runs parallel to the bottom edge of the picture plane from the patch of opaque white across the framed space created by the second arch and into the space created by the third arch suggests damage of some kind. This evidence of damage and retouching does not appear in some black-and-white photographs of the painting taken in the mid-1980s.

Within the framework created by the third, rightmost arch in the loggia appears a flat-topped building, the size and treatment of which indicate that it rises near the middle of the distance represented beyond the walled enclosure of the pictorial space. The roofline of this building parallels the right side of the canopy over the emperor's throne and the small, square windows resemble those most closely associated with fort and/or mosque construction. Just visible inside the viewer's right of the third arch appears a small portion of a multi-storey building which appears to rise in close proximity to the structure in which West set the action of his painting. The roofline of this building parallels the orthogonal that defines the more distant structure and the more proximate canopy. Various areas of opaque white paint that contrast the darker gray-brown color of the structure suggest that West touched up this portion of the canvas. Through

diminution and reduced detail West suggests a domed building standing a greater distance from the viewer than the first. The dome on this building differs slightly from those on the large building and chhatri on the viewer's left of the picture plane, with West seemingly having devoted less attention to its delineation.

Against the backdrop of the building, but rising higher than its roof in the visual field appears a single thin metal pole with a zoomorphic ornament at its top; a red pennant hangs from beneath the ornament. The viewer's eye follows the pole downward to find it secured in the hands of a dark-skinned adult male in white turban and white garment. The position of the pole, which the man holds with both hands at face level, suggests that it rests on the back of the elephant upon which the male is seated. A second such ornamented pole with pennant appears immediately to the viewer's left of the first. The white-turbaned male faces to his left, toward a second, darker-skinned adult male whose position in pictorial space is closer to the viewer than the first male. The second male wears a red turban and a dark green garment gathered at the waist with a gold-colored, embroidered cummerbund. He either sits astride or stands on a support mechanism attached to a second elephant. The man rests his right hand on top of the elephant's head and holds in his left hand an ankus.

The elephants face the viewer's left of the picture plane and both are fully adorned with processional trappings that include red velvet head and torso covering with gold fringe bordering the cranium and a single strip of red paint down each trunk. The trimmed and gold-tipped tusks of the second elephant flank its lowered trunk while the

first elephant curves its trunk down and then upward so that it appears to come into contact with the second pillar in the loggia. Behind the man in the white turban fly two white flags with gold and red markings. Atop the elephant, behind the man in the green garment appears a howdah with a convex red canopy fringed in gold with gold vertical supports and a gold seating enclosure. Beneath the howdah, a red, oriental-style rug with a dark, floral-motif border covers the elephant. Beneath the rug appears a larger covering of red velvet brocade. A thick woven cord runs on the diagonal from beneath the howdah to the elephant's right ear. The rightmost column in the loggia partially obscures the howdah; the flags and the canopy pole for the emperor's throne obscures the howdah elephant's left eye, indicating that the elephants and their handlers stand outside the space demarcated by the arches.

In the pictorial space immediately to the howdah elephant's left, West continued the assemblage of red- and white-turbaned adult males wearing white garments. In this grouping near the right edge of the picture plane appear at least six white turbans. From among these white turbans rise three thick brown cylindrical objects. These objects reflect the light in such a way as to suggest that they are made from metal or from polished wood. The faces of these six men are obscured behind two dark-skinned adult males in white turbans. Of this pair, the male to the viewer's left faces toward the viewer. This male wears both a beard and a mustache. To the viewer's right of this male, a slightly taller male with a beard but no mustache faces toward the left edge of the picture plane, as if listening to or waiting for the first man to speak. To the viewer's left

of this pair, and slightly closer to the viewer in pictorial space, appears another pair of dark-skinned adult males in white turbans and white garments. The male to the viewer's left stands behind the male to the right, the former looking toward the center of the composition while the latter faces the viewer.

A second baluster column rises to obscure the second man's left shoulder. The group of men in white turbans and garments concludes behind the column at the right edge of the picture plane, with at least two dark-skinned adult males standing just to the left of the howdah elephant's left flank, indicated by a section of red carpet with dark floral border and a second thick woven cord running from the top of the left flank around behind and below the elephant's tail. Above the elephants' haunches in pictorial space rise two long spears, a white, red and gold flag. At the rightmost edge of the picture plane appears a large red and black construction of indeterminate nature and function. This construction resembles the elephants' trappings and the howdah to some extent, but its height, shape and position in the pictorial field defy legibility.

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