Patrons of Robert Adam at the Metropolitan Museum

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A RELATIVELY happy course through life could have been predicted for Lord Frederick Campbell (Figure 1) at birth. Among the advantages bestowed upon him then were intelligence, good looks, longevity (his own life span of eighty-seven years was to surpass that of his father, who lived to be seventy-seven, and of his brother who died at the age of eighty-three in 1806, ten years before himself), and an assured position, as the youngest son of a Scottish duke-to-be, in the social hierarchy of the time. Born in 1729, the fourth son of the heir to the dukedom of Argyll, he was educated at Westminster School and at Christ Church, Oxford, receiving permission to practice law in 1753. He chose to enter politics as a Scottish Member of Parliament, and represented Glasgow and Argyllshire from 1761 until 1799.[1] It was therefore possibly in London, early in his political career, that he met a fellow countryman, Robert Adam, who had settled there in 1758.

A strong fellow feeling existed at that time among the Scots who lived in London. Numbers of them were in the habit of foregathering at the British Coffee House in Cockspur Street, a building designed by Robert Adam, to discuss affairs of the nation, *their* nation. However Lord Frederick and Robert Adam happened to meet, it is certain that they were acquainted by 1767, the date written on the sketch for a bookcase, one of the large collection of Adam drawings in Sir John Soane's Museum, London.[2] The architect inscribed this sketch across the top: "Design of a Bookcase for The Right Honourable Lord Frederick Campbell" (Figure 2).

The piece of furniture that was executed from this design is now at the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 3). It is of pine, stained to resemble mahogany, with parts of the carved detail highlighted by gilding. The two doors below open on two cupboards, while the upper section consists of two compartments each enclosed behind a glass-fronted door. The insertion of panes of glass into these doors constitutes the most glaring departure from Adam's design, where the spaces between the upper door frames are occupied by a kind of trelliswork picked out in yellow wash on a light blue ground. Obviously Adam never intended that glass should be used in the doors: the books were to be protected by a metal grid, presumably of polished brass, behind which would hang a blue silk curtain, intended as a sort of dust sheet for the books (the practice of stretching silk artfully across shelves of books persisted well into the following century—as the cabinetmaker George Smith observes of a bookcase design published in 1828:[3] "The central part with the wings, is represented as having the doors filled with silk . . . for nothing can distress the eye more than the

1. Paul, *The Scots Peerage*, I, p. 384.

2. Soane Mus., Adam Drawings, XVII, no. 215.

3. Smith, *Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, p. 208, pl. CXLII.

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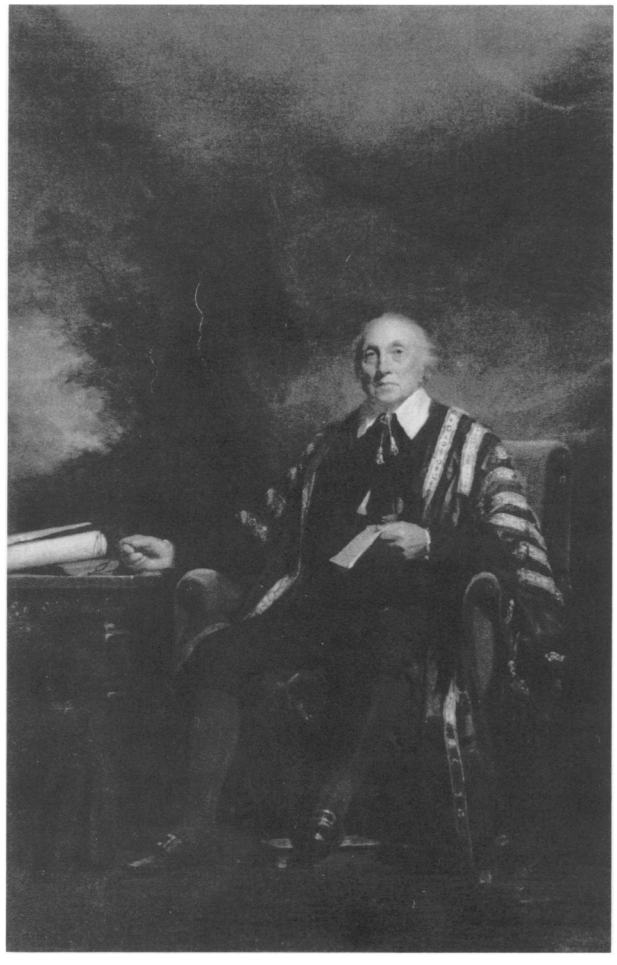


FIGURE 1
Lord Frederick Campbell, by Sir Henry Raeburn, Scottish, about 1810. General Register House, Edinburgh (photo: Francis C. Inglis & Sons Ltd)

sight of a countless number of volumes occupying one entire space."). At an indeterminate date this grid-and-curtain device must have been discarded in favor of the more revealing glass, set into the door frames as they now appear. The keyhole covers, as executed, represent another divergence from the sketch: a gilt-bronze oval rosette has replaced the elongated-husk motif shown in the drawing. Economy might have suggested this change. The London cabinetmaker who was responsible for the bookcase may have hesitated to commission a specially designed mount from a foundry in Birmingham, as was the extravagant practice of the day.[4] Instead he may have chosen keyhole covers for the two sets of doors from his own stock on hand. Whatever the case, apart from these factors, the resemblance of Adam's drawing to the finished product is quite close—the dimensions are even the same: the baseboard of the bookcase measures six feet across, the exact width indicated in the scale on the lower edge of the drawing.

In this drawing, Adam has finished off the top of the bookcase with a pair of vases and a sculptured head of a boy, evocations of classical antiquity which the architect was able to supply from his imagination. Such elements are mute witness of his ability "to seize . . . the beautiful spirit of antiquity, and to transfuse it, with novelty and variety. . . ."[5] Both the drawing and the three-dimensional piece of furniture exhibit other freely interpreted classicizing motifs: guilloche mouldings and flutings, husk festoons, rosettes and paterae, trophies of urns and shields. In executing this decoration, the woodcarver's chisel has not attenuated the strong rectangular lines of the bookcase, which stands as solid evidence of Robert Adam's maturing style.

As was his custom when designing furniture, Adam must have had a specific setting for the bookcase in mind before taking the sketch in hand. Primarily an architect, he largely concerned himself with the façades and floor plans of buildings. Like other architects of the time, however, he annexed the province of what is now the interior decorator, surpassing himself in efforts to design subtly harmonious interiors for his architecture. Thus it seems likely that the bookcase, as well as an unidentified cabinet and mirror with similar decoration, which appear in another drawing, also dated 1767 and inscribed "For Lord Frederick Campbell," were intended as part of a scheme for a room in Lord Frederick's house, Combe Bank, in Kent.[6]

This house, which stands, much altered, a few miles to the west of Sevenoaks, was built for General John Campbell, Lord Frederick's father, by the architect Roger Morris. Upon his succession to the dukedom in 1761, General Campbell relinquished the house, which consisted of a typical Palladian structure with square

4. Boynton, *Furniture History*, II, pp. 25–26.
5. Adam, *Works in Architecture*, I; preface, p. 6.
6. Soane Mus., Adam Drawings, XX, no. 31.

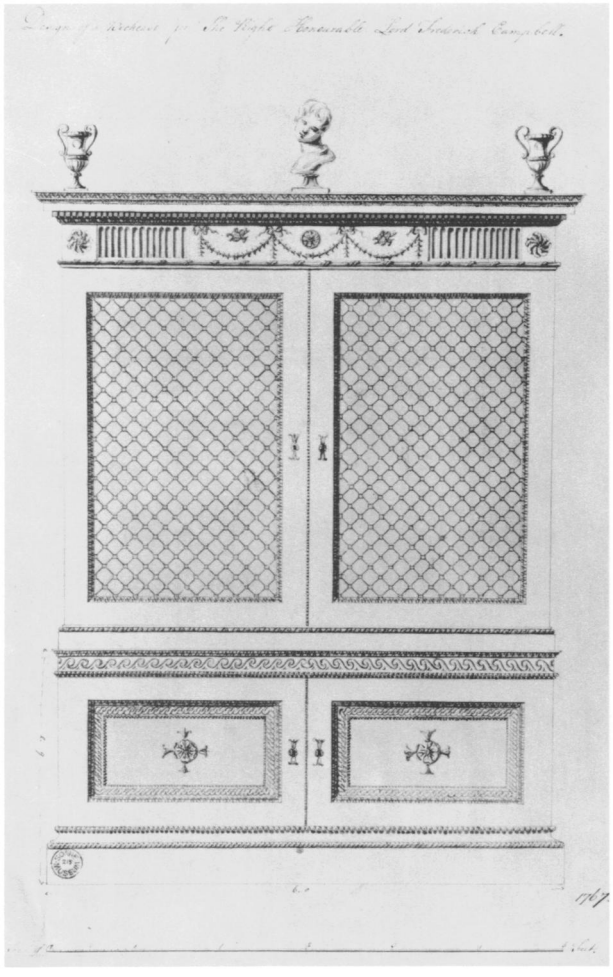


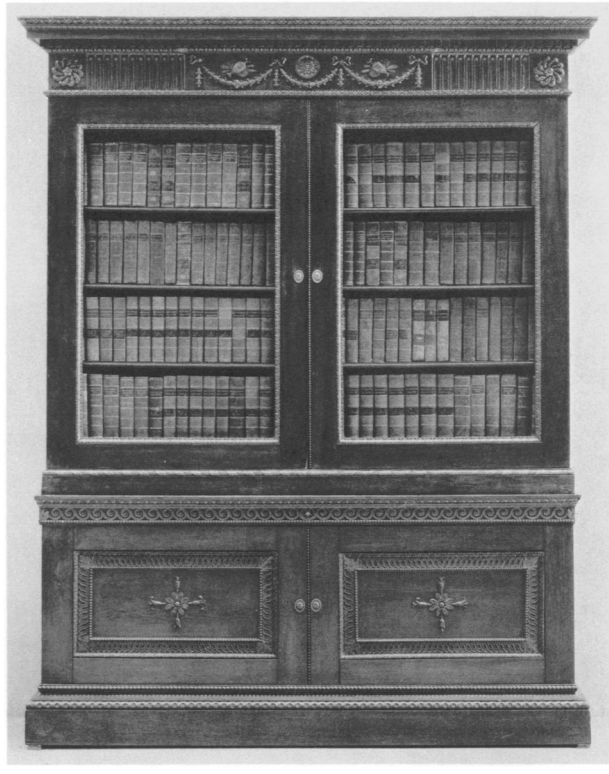
FIGURE 2
Pen and wash drawing of a bookcase, signed by Robert Adam. Scottish, dated 1767. Sir John Soane's Museum, London (photo: R. B. Fleming & Co. Ltd)

corner turrets,[7] to his younger son, who subsequently asked Adam to supply drawings for a remodeling scheme of modest proportions.

The main lines of Lord Frederick's life and character are well known from observations in memoirs and letters of the time. When scarcely more than a boy he made the acquaintance of Horace Walpole, twelve years his senior, whom he was to encounter over a period of fifty years (Walpole named him an executor in the will that he drew up in 1796). A bachelor until the age of forty, it was Walpole who signaled his mar-

7. Woolfe and Gandon, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, IV, p. 9, figs. 75–77.

FIGURE 3
Bookcase. Pine, stained to resemble mahogany. Made for Lord Frederick Campbell's house, Combe Bank, in Kent. English, about 1767. H. 7 ft. 11½ in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cadwalader Fund, 17.111.1



riage in a letter to George Montagu, dated March 26, 1769: "Lord Frederick Campbell is, at last, to be married this evening to the Dowager Countess of Ferrers."[8]

The new Lady Campbell had been married before, but was already separated from her first husband, Laurence, fourth Earl Ferrers, when he shot his steward in a fit of rage, a crime for which he was sentenced to the gallows. Horace Walpole details the carrying out of this sentence in a letter, dated May 7, 1760, written to Horace Mann in Florence,[9] that opens with the rousing query: "What will your Italians say to a peer of England, an earl of one of the best families, tried for murdering his servant, with the utmost dignity and solemnity, and then hanged at the common place of

8. Walpole, *Letters*, VII, p. 264.
9. Walpole, *Letters*, IV, p. 378.

execution for highwaymen, and afterwards anatomized?" The streets of London were thronged with spectators hoping to see the condemned man ride in a carriage procession from the Tower of London to Tyburn, and it was on this occasion that Earl Ferrers is reported to have uttered the famous extenuating words, "But they never saw a lord hanged, and perhaps will never see another."

According to another account, Lord Frederick attended the trial as a lawyer, and caught the first glimpse of his future wife when she appeared on the witness stand to give evidence. Be that as it may, a few years were suffered to elapse before he married her in 1769, and took her off to live at Combe Bank.

In the year before his marriage, Lord Frederick had been named Lord Clerk Register of Scotland, a position that carried with it responsibility for all the Scottish public records. A new building to house these records was badly needed, and in 1769 Robert Adam was commissioned to draw up plans that began to take material shape in June 1774, when Lord Frederick laid the foundation stone of the Register House[10] (Figure 4). This block-like structure, with its front two hundred feet in length, represents Adam's only project for a large public building ever to be brought to completion (it still stands at the corner of Prince's Street, across from the General Post Office in Edinburgh). Its massive scale contrasts with the work of small scope but great delicacy which Robert Adam carried out for Lord Frederick's personal account.

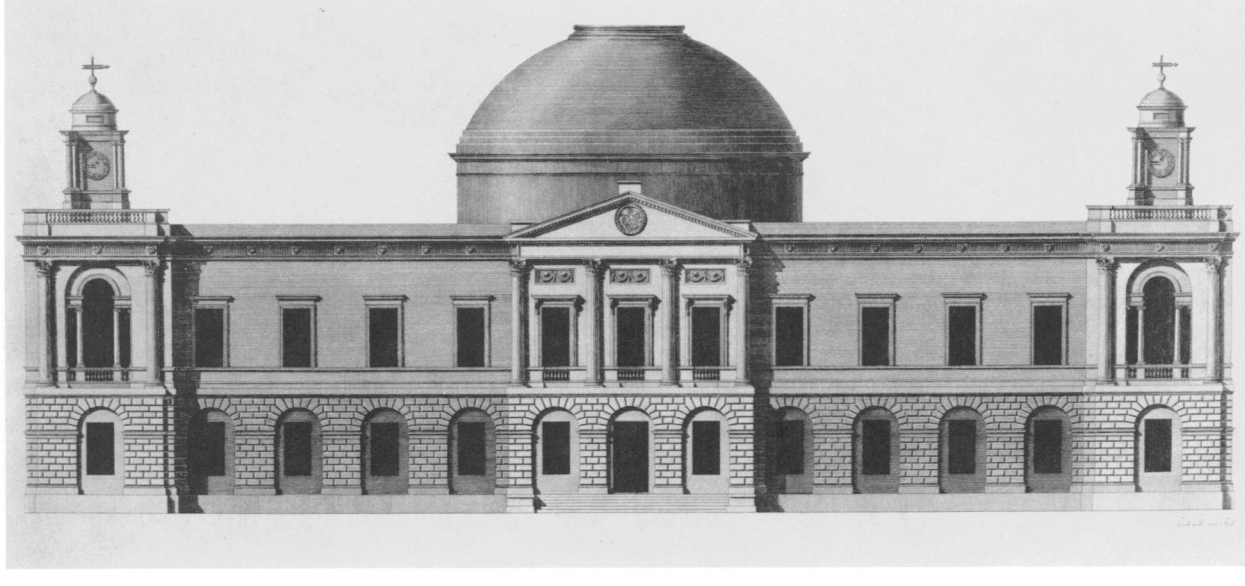
Sir Henry Raeburn painted the best-known portrait of Lord Frederick Campbell, which now hangs in the great rotunda of the Register House (Figure 1). Other portraits were painted by Thomas Gainsborough and Sir Thomas Lawrence, all of which show him seated, and wearing the robes of the Lord Clerk Register. Apparently Lord Frederick's qualities were not eclipsed with the passing of youth. Sir Nathaniel Wraxall described him as "still elegant and distinguished even in decay,"[11] while the English painter and diarist Joseph Farington could write of him in 1811:

Lord Frederick Campbell, brother to the late Duke of Argyll, came at noon and staid till the even'g.—He is 82 years of age, but excepting much deafness seemed to have nothing to complain of but the natural effects of Old age. He resides at Coombe bank near Sevenoaks, and abt. 12 miles from Red Leaf.

10. Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert & James Adam*, II, pp. 221–235.

11. Wraxall, *Posthumous Memoirs*, I, p. 247.

FIGURE 4
Façade of the Register House, Edinburgh. Built from designs by Robert Adam, 1769–1788. Engraving from *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, I (London, 1775)



I remarked that Lord Frederick at table did not forbear from high dishes. He ate soup,—stewed Carp—Roast Pork, rich pye, and at dinner drank three glasses of Madeira. After dinner He ate grapes, and drank abt. 2 glasses of Madeira. . . .

Lord Frederick is reckoned to be a sensible man, He was long in Parliament in which He never spoke but twice, but those speeches raised His credit as they were made with considerable ability.—His understanding and agreeable manners have made Him much in request in Society. He has had many fancies in building, furnishing, &c. which have been expensive, and has always been in consequence of these indulgencies somewhat distressed, at least has had no superfluity.[12]

In 1759 Lord Frederick's older brother, the future fifth Duke of Argyll, had married Elizabeth Gunning, one of the two sisters renowned for their beauty. It cannot be said that Elizabeth Gunning's looks did not receive their due: the daughter of a penniless Irishman, she married into two Scottish ducal families, and was the mother of no fewer than four Scottish dukes. Her equally beautiful sister Maria, though she fell short of this mark, was accounted to have made an excellent match when, in 1752, she took George William, sixth Earl of Coventry (Figure 5), as her husband. Unfortunately "the charming countess," as Walpole called her, survived only eight years of married life. Her death at the age of twenty-seven in 1760 was laid to the overuse of cosmetics containing poisonous white lead pigment.

At the time of his first marriage, Horace Walpole described the Earl of Coventry (1722–1809) as ". . . a grave young lord, of the remains of the Patriot breed."[13] The rare qualities implied by this description seem never to have been realized. Instead Lord Coventry became increasingly pedantic, overbearing, and self-centered as he grew older. These characteristics emerge from the letters which George James "Gilly" Williams wrote to George Selwyn, describing the Earl's new ménage (he married his second wife, Barbara St. John, in 1764), ". . . but as to his lordship, he certainly surpasses all you can conceive of him: his plantations, his house, his wife, his plate, his equipage, his—etc., etc., etc.,—are all topics that call forth his genius continually."[14] "Coventry has given us one dinner in Margaret Street, and has been most excellent in his old way of disputation."[15] "The countess . . . will, about the end of the nine months, do credit to our friend, who goes on just as usual, opposing and disputing with every person, every night at the old club [White's], to the no small surprise of some new members. . . ."[16] "This house is full of tobacco; the yard is full of tenants, and the peer, with an important face, is telling us how much he pays to the land-tax."[17]

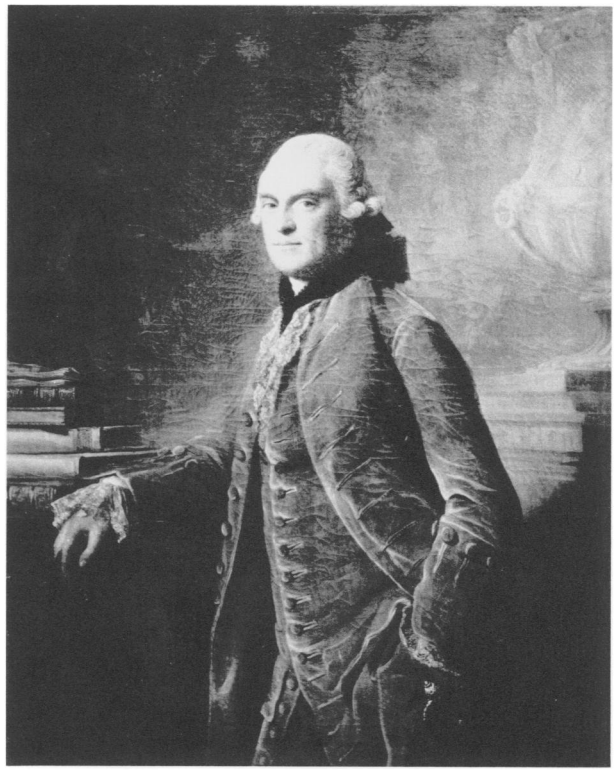


FIGURE 5
George William, sixth Earl of Coventry, by Allan Ramsay. Scottish, 1764. Croome Estate Trust

The "house" referred to in these letters was, of course, Croome Court, the earl's country seat in Worcestershire (Figure 6; the name derives from the ancient British word *crombe*, meaning "the winding stream," applicable to a nearby brook). The exterior architecture and some of the interiors of this house were the

12. *The Farington Diary*, VII, pp. 49–51.
13. Walpole, *Letters*, III, p. 85.
14. Letter of October 8, 1764; Jesse, *Memoirs of George Selwyn*, I, p. 306.
15. Letter of January 4, 1765; Jesse, *Memoirs of George Selwyn*, I, p. 342.
16. Letter of February 22, 1765; Jesse, *Memoirs of George Selwyn*, I, p. 361.
17. Letter of October 21, 1765; Jesse, *Memoirs of George Selwyn*, I, p. 412.

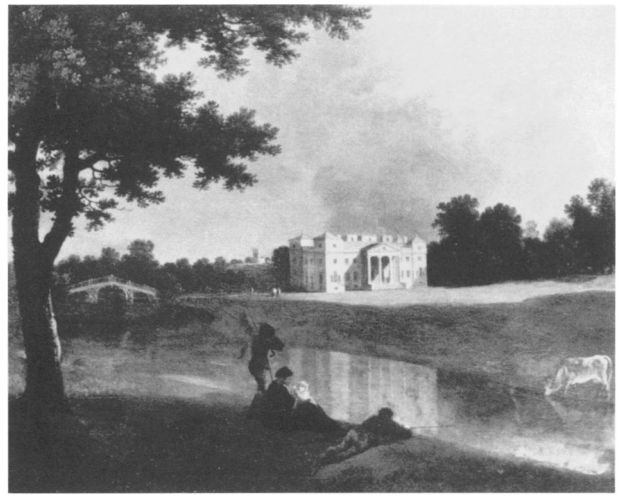


FIGURE 6
Detail of Croome Court, Worcestershire, by Richard Wilson. Welsh, 1758. Croome Estate Trust

work of Lancelot "Capability" Brown, better known for his landscaping schemes. In 1760, however, Brown was replaced by Robert Adam, who was asked to supply plans for the remaining rooms, and to put the finishing touches to the decoration of the house.[18] The Metropolitan Museum is fortunate in owning a complete room from this house, the Tapestry Room, the architecture of which is largely due to Adam (this room, its Gobelins tapestries, and its furniture, all the gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation in 1958, are described in *Decorative Art from the Samuel H. Kress Collection at the Metropolitan Museum*, by Carl Christian Dauterman, James Parker, and Edith Appleton Standen [London, 1964] pp. 2–57).

Since that time the Museum has been able to acquire two more pieces of furniture from Croome Court, a table and mirror of carved and painted pine (Figure 7), one of a pair that was formerly placed against the piers of the window wall in the Gallery at Croome. This room occupied the space behind the east front, on the main floor of the side of the house facing the bridge in Wilson's painting (Figure 6).

In 1760–1761, Adam supplied a preliminary design "for finishing the Gallery at Croome in the Manner of a Library."[19] This plan was abandoned, and in June 1763, he charged Lord Coventry £16 16s for a design "To a New Section of the Gallery finished in the Antique Taste with Statues Bas Reliefs &c." This

18. Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert & James Adam*, I, pp. 178–191.

19. Extract from Adam's bills at Croome Estate Office, Worcestershire.

FIGURE 7
Table and mirror. Painted pine. Made for the Gallery at Croome Court. English, 1765. H. of table 2 ft. 11½ in. H. of mirror 11 ft. 8 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 65.127, 60.31.2

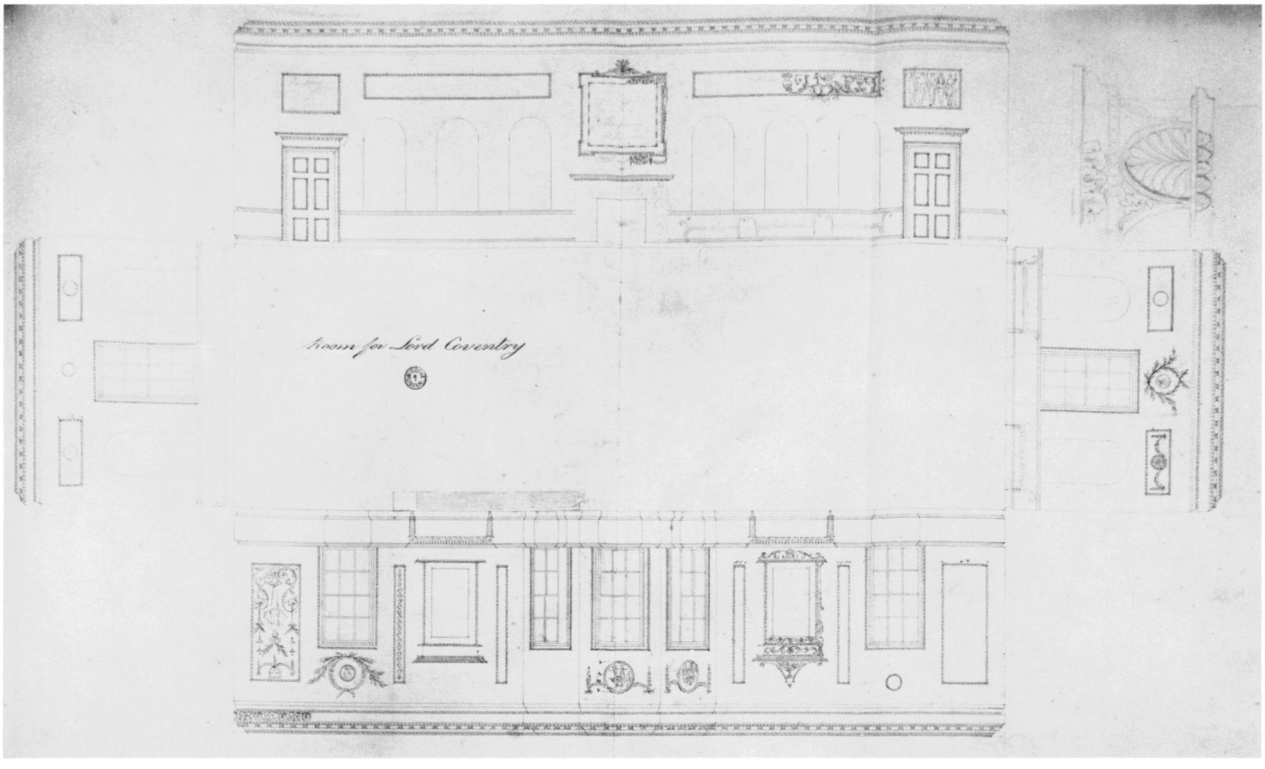


FIGURE 8
Pen and wash plan and elevation of the Gallery at Croome Court, by Robert Adam, 1763. Sir John Soane's Museum, London (photo: R. B. Fleming & Co. Ltd)

drawing, inscribed "Room for Lord Coventry," is also in Sir John Soane's Museum[20] (Figure 8). It shows most of the features of the room as it was carried out, and includes a sketchy indication of the chimneypiece commissioned from the sculptor Joseph Wilton, as well as ten niches for figures of standing classical subjects, which were to be modeled in stucco by John Cheere (two of these figures have recently been acquired by the Los Angeles County Museum[21]). This drawing, furthermore, clearly depicts a pair of tables and mirrors against the window wall.

The Museum's mirror derives quite closely from one of the mirrors shown in this sketch. The design for the tables shown under the mirrors was, however, not used; a separate drawing in the same collection, dated 1765 and inscribed "Table frame for the Drawing Room at Sion"[22] (Figure 9), seems to have provided the main outlines for the execution of these tables. The Earl of Northumberland, who was carrying out alterations on Syon House at this time, might have rejected this drawing, whereupon the architect may have submitted the same design to Lord Coventry. Whatever the procedure followed, Adam certainly prepared a sketch and his office furnished a large-scale working drawing of both pieces of furniture. His bills, which are among the many building and furnishing accounts kept by Lord Coventry (now the property of the Croome Estate Trust), contain the following entries, under the date July 1765:

Design of a Glass frame for the Gallery at Croome £5 5s.

Drawings at full size of the parts of ditto for the execution £2 2s.

Design of a Table frame for the Gallery at Croome £3 3s.

Drawing of ditto at large £1 1s.

These highly pertinent drawings seem unfortunately to have disappeared, and may have been destroyed.

20. Soane Mus., Adam Drawings, L, no. 9.

21. Norman-Wilcox, *Los Angeles County Museum of Art Bulletin* 17, no. 3 (1965) pp. 14–31.

22. Soane Mus., Adam Drawings, XVII, no. 4.

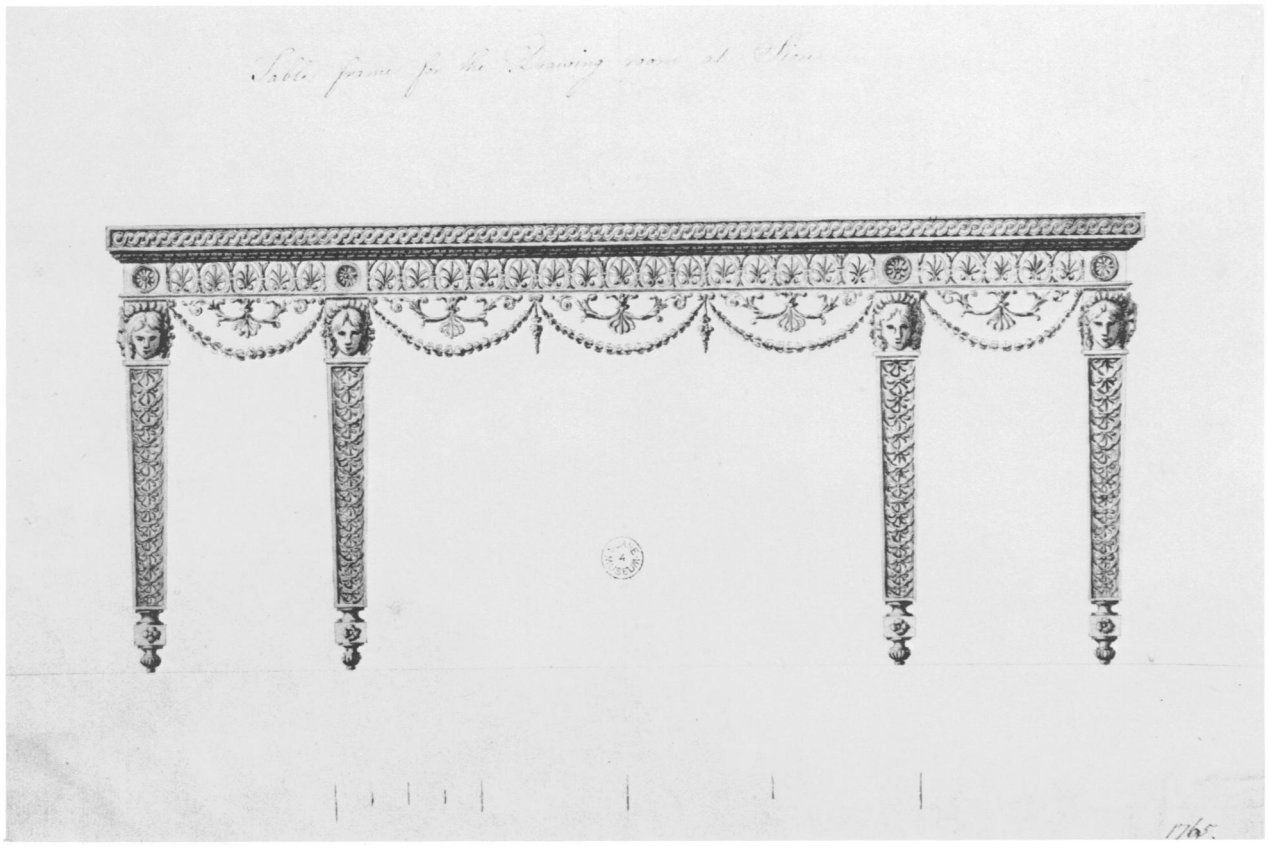


FIGURE 9
Pen and wash drawing of a table, probably the original sketch for the pair of tables in the Gallery, Croome Court, by Robert Adam, 1765. Sir John Soane's Museum, London (photo: R. B. Fleming & Co. Ltd)

Adam's bill was closely followed by one from the woodcarver Sefferin Alken for the execution of the tables and mirrors.[23] This bill is dated August 1765, and reads:

Carvers Work done for the Right Honble. the Earl of Coventry pr. Seffn. Alken, *to long Gallery at Croome* two Table frames to Slabs 7 ft. long by 2 ft. 10 wide, the legs panneld a Ornamt. in Do. [ditto] a Womans head over it & flower top & bottom &c. the Mouldings to Raile Enrichd, and a rich fret between,—Oramts. under the Raile—between the legs festoons of husks in swags & Drops with foilage &c. [these motifs between the legs are missing, though traces of them can be seen under the apron of the table— the drawing dated 1765, Figure 9, conveys an impression of these lost elements] Each at £25 13s . . . *two glass frames over Do. Tables* to Plates 7 ft. long by 4 ft. wide.—A Archite. [architrave] round 3 members Carvd, and Rich ornament to facica [fascia] between—at top a Ornament with 2 Carvd Scroles foilage & floroons &c. a rich vase between scroles—a Cove Cornice richly carvd—under Do. a frize with foilage & Ornamts. at ends—the bottom Ornamt. Carvd rich foilage & flowers A honey suckel & floron between, a large Oge [ogee moulding, i.e., an S-curve] over Do. with raffeld Lfe. [raffle = acanthus leaf] and water Lfes.—the side pieces Carvd a Womans head, large scrole with foilage & husks, a festoon of Leaves droping on profile, part &c. Extent of Work 11 ft. 6 In. high by 5 ft. 10 In. wide. Each at £33 16s.

From the wording of this bill it is evident that the marble "Slabs" for the two tables and the glass "Plates" for the pair of mirrors were on hand before the furniture itself materialized.

The two table tops of green brecciated marble, cut in sheets and veneered on a cement core, may have been acquired by Lord Coventry from James Adam,

23. Extract from bills at Croome Estate Office.

Robert's younger brother. Between 1760 and 1763, James Adam lived in Italy where he carried on a genteel trade in art works and executed a number of commissions for Englishmen. During that time he is known to have supplied just such marble slabs for Croome Court.[24]

The mirror glass, on the other hand, was probably ordered in France. Large plates of glass, suitable for mirrors, were then prohibitively expensive—they might cost five or six times as much as their frames—and were often imported from Paris. This was because French craftsmen at this time had mastered, to a far greater degree than the English, the technique of casting such plates. Lord Coventry visited Paris in 1763 and 1764, and he may have ordered the mirror glass for the Museum's frame at that time. "Gilly" Williams even makes known his intention to this effect in a letter dated July 18, 1763[25]: "Cov. is returned to town: he stays to relieve the distresses of half a dozen half-starved vestals, and then talks of setting out for France. . . . His errand is to buy furniture, to talk of tapestry and glasses, and to pay for importing a worse thing than an English courier could have helped him to."

In addition to carving the table and mirror frames, Sefferin Alken also carried out a great deal of other work at Croome. He was, in fact, responsible for the fine woodcarving on the paneling of the Tapestry Room. His name is, however, familiar from another context, for by his second marriage he became the father of the well-known line of sporting painters that included Samuel and Henry Thomas Alken.[26]

The bills that Lord Coventry collected also disclose the name of the painter who gave the pair of tables and mirrors four coats of paint. Charles Aylmer's undated bill, paid on March 8, 1768,[27] specifies: "No 2 large Glass frames Very rich Carv'd done 4 times Dead Stone Colour in Great Room £2 0s. . . . No 2 Frames to Sideboards in Do. Richly Carv'd, 4 times done £1 16s." Though the painted surface of the Museum's mirror and table has been renewed, its warm grey tone still closely approximates this "Dead Stone Colour."

24. Fleming, *Robert Adam and his Circle*, p. 376.
25. Jesse, *Memoirs of George Selwyn*, I, pp. 254–255.
26. Sparrow, *A Book of Sporting Painters*, pp. 128–129.
27. Extract from bills at Croome Estate Office.

In 1959 the Museum was able to buy the pair of mirrors, which until then had hung on the walls of the Gallery at Croome. They were shown in a room of late eighteenth-century English furniture until 1965, when an exchange was effected with the Philadelphia Museum, the purchaser, twenty years before, of the two tables designed to stand under them. That trade of a mirror for a table has made it possible for each museum to exhibit one group of this very fine documented furniture.[28]

The last of Adam's clients is William Petty Fitzmaurice (1739–1805), second Earl of Shelburne, created first Marquis of Lansdowne in 1784 (Figure 10). Of the three patrons treated in this article, he was undeniably the richest (Joseph Farington allowed £5000 a year to Lord Frederick Campbell; the Earl of Coventry confessed to benefiting from annual rents of £10,000; Lord Lansdowne, however, was reputed to

28. The mirror and table at the Philadelphia Museum are illustrated in *Antiques* 91 (1967) no. 2, p. 200.

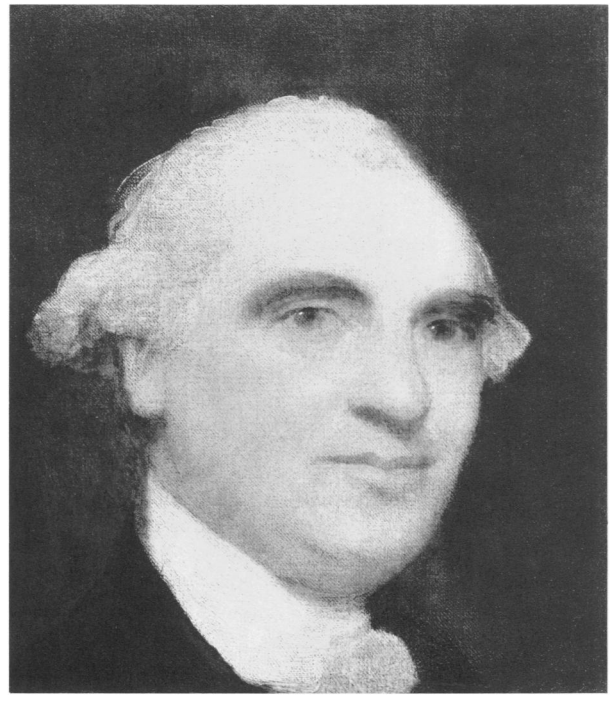


FIGURE 10
William, first Marquis of Lansdowne, by Sir Joshua Reynolds. English, about 1786. Courtesy of the Marquis of Lansdowne, Bowood, Wiltshire

enjoy a revenue of more than £30,000 a year, a huge sum for the time[29]), and his residence on Berkeley Square (Figure 11), the dining room from which is now at the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 12), was quite often described as a "palace" in his own lifetime.

Unlike Lord Coventry, who aimed no higher than the post of Lord of the Bedchamber, and was content to wield power in local Worcestershire elections, Lord Lansdowne scorned the lesser political roles, and aspired to a position of prominence on the national scene. His ambition was rewarded by a succession of appointments, which he held for short intervals over a period of twenty years. He was President of the Board of Trade for less than a year in 1763, and was subsequently named Secretary of State for the Southern Department by his preceptor, the Earl of Chatham, an appointment that he held in 1766 and 1767. During the twelve-year Tory ministry of Lord North, Lord Shelburne, as he was then called, languished in the relative obscurity of the opposition, but in July 1782 he was called to form his own ministry, which he headed as First Lord of the Treasury until February 1783. Although favorable to liberal solutions, and a partisan of free speech, free trade, a large degree of autonomy for the American colonies, and abolition of discrimination on grounds of religion, he never acquired the aura of a popular politician. His term as Prime Minister, in fact, generated a shower of brilliant invective:

29. *The Farington Diary*, I, p. 33.

FIGURE 11
Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square, 1763–1768, in a photograph taken about 1922 (photo: Country Life)

FIGURE 12 (OPPOSITE)
The dining room from Lansdowne House, 1766–1768. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 32.12 (photo: Taylor & Dull)

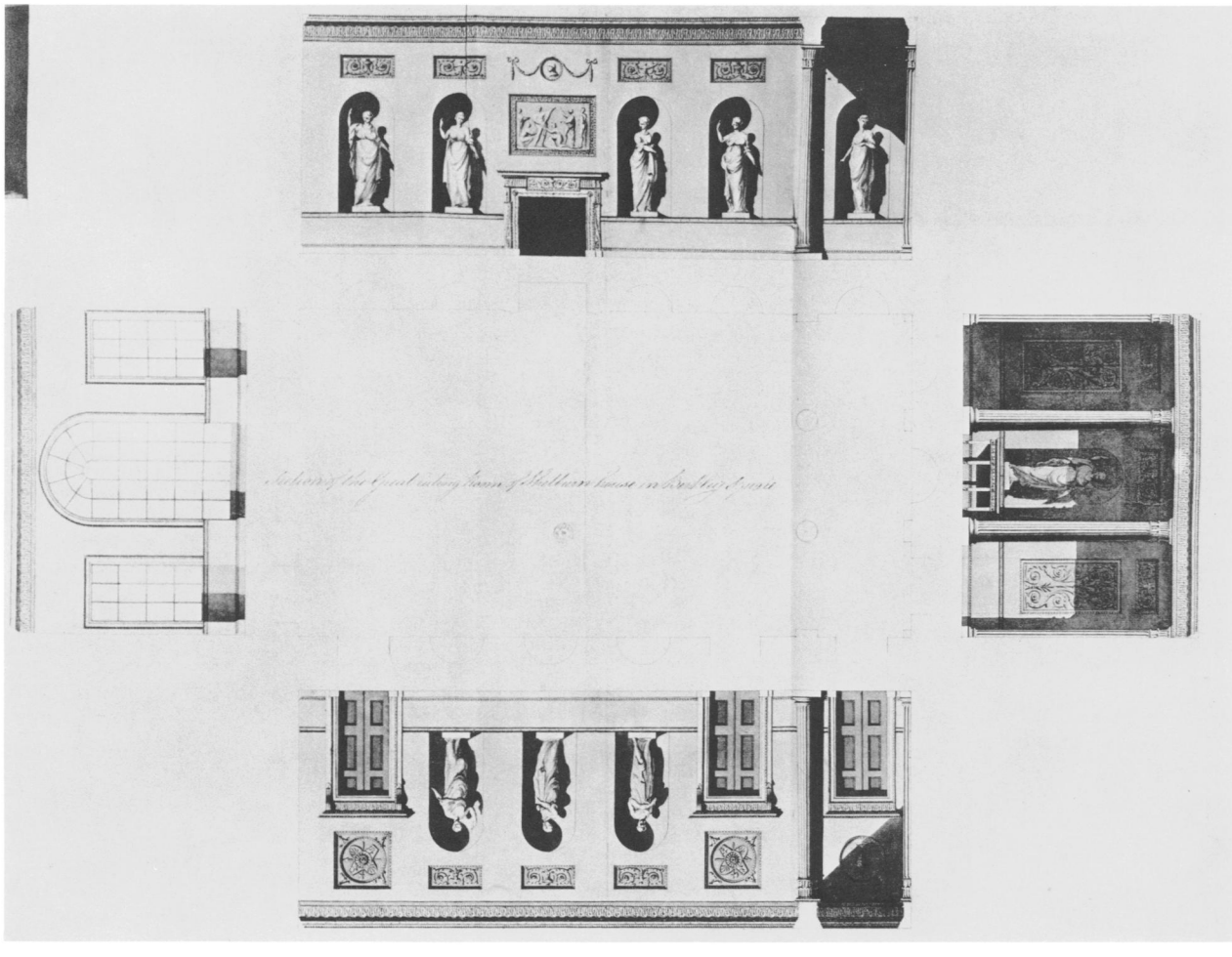
George III called him "the jesuit of Berkeley Square," while Horace Walpole could write of him, "his falsehood was so constant and notorious that it was rather his profession than his instrument. . . .," and Edmund Burke could declare before Parliament, "If Lord Shelburne was not a Cataline or a Borgia in morals, it must not be ascribed to anything but his understanding."[30] Many of his attitudes were advanced for the time and were widely misrepresented, while his actions were uniformly decried as autocratic. A suspicious and constrained public manner further alienated public opinion, and his resignation in 1783, brought about by the peace treaty signed with the United States, effectively put an end to his career.

The building to be known as Lansdowne House owed its inception to another Prime Minister, the Earl of Bute, who had bought a wedge-shaped plot of land along the southern side of Berkeley Square, extending seventy-five yards to the west. Lord Bute's choice seems naturally to have fallen on Robert Adam, a fellow Scotsman, as architect for the house that must actually have been begun during Bute's ministry, which lasted from November 1761 until April 1763.

It had a favorable situation, set well back in its own grounds, and was described in 1838 as "one of the few [houses] in London, which, being situated in a garden

30. *Dictionary of National Biography*, XV, p. 1011.

FIGURE 13
Pen and wash drawing for the walls of the dining room at Lansdowne House, 1766, by Robert Adam. Sir John Soane's Museum, London (photo: R. B. Fleming & Co. Ltd)



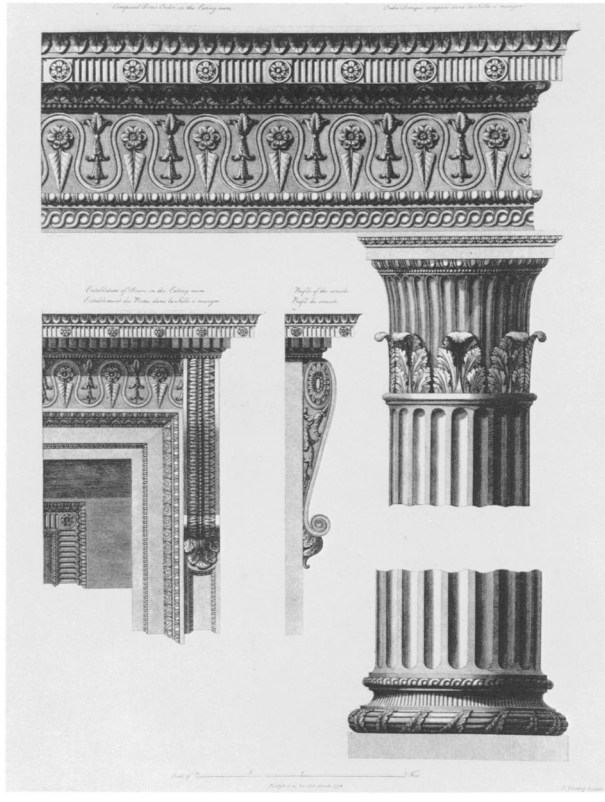


FIGURE 14
Detail of the ornament in the dining room. Engraving from *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, II (London, 1779)

surrounded with walls, unites the advantages of the most fashionable neighborhood with a certain retirement, and in the midst of pleasing natural scenery."[31] In September 1765, Lord Bute sold the partially built structure to his fellow peer, Lord Shelburne, then at the outset of his political career. At this time, the future Marquis of Lansdowne had almost three years to wait before he and his family could move in. Under the date of August 10, 1768, Lady Shelburne's diary contains the following notation: "On the ground floor we have the Hall, Antichamber, & Dining Room, which are quite finished, except for the glasses, the window curtains & chairs, which makes it very doubtful if we can ask the King of Denmark to dinner."[32]

The dining room, an interior of imposing dimensions which measures 47 feet 2 inches long, 24 feet 6 inches wide, and 18 feet high, was originally on the ground floor in the south wing of the house. It lay behind the round-topped window on the left in the photograph, Figure 11 (the two end walls have since had to be interchanged in order to fit the room into the space assigned to it at the Museum).

In August 1766, Robert Adam charged Lord Shelburne £12 12s. "To a design of a section of four sides for the dining room"[33] (Figure 13). This drawing, also at the Soane Museum,[34] shows the room fitted with nine niches for classical sculpture, very much as it was later carried out. Several engraved plates of Lansdowne House furthermore appear in volume two of *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, published in London in 1779. The sixth plate of this series is devoted to details of the "Eating-room" (Figure 14), and shows the woodcarving on the top of a doorcase and on the base and capital of one of the two columns in the room. This and the other fine woodcarving in the room is due to the sculptor John Gilbert (according to his bills, he also provided carved wood examples of "6 Fig leaves to figures to ye niches . . . at 5s. each"[35]). Adam's design of a ribbon weaving around alternating motifs of husks and pendant leaves attached to rosettes (Figure 15), which Gilbert carved on the lintel of the doorcase, also occurs on the entablature of the marble chimneypiece, attributed to the sculptor Thomas Carter,[36] as well as on the plaster frieze, where the rosettes and leaves were cast upside down (compare Figures 14 and 15).

This anomaly must have resulted from an oversight on the part of Joseph Rose, who is known to have carried out the plasterwork of the room. For the completed job, Rose charged the sum of £298 15s 9½d, the largest item in his plastering account.[37] The sum seems justified by the effect produced, for the feathery arabesques of griffins and putti, vases and trophies of arms, marvelous leaf garlands, sprays, rosettes, Vitruvian

31. Waagen, *Works of Art and Artists in England*, II, pp. 257–258.
32. Quoted in Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert & James Adam*, II, p. 8, pp. 312–314.
33. Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, II, p. 340.
34. Soane Mus., Adam Drawings, XXXIX, no. 56.
35. Quoted in Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert & James Adam*, II, p. 344.
36. Carter's account for other chimneypieces which he carved for Lansdowne House is given in Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, II, p. 344.
37. Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert & James Adam*, II, pp. 342–344.

FIGURE 15
The chimneypiece, overmantel, and frieze of the dining room. The grisaille scene in the plaster frame is the overmantel painting from the Gallery, Croome Court. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 60.50a

scrolls and fan-shaped motifs, cast in plaster, constitute one of the glories of this room. They stand out in relief, heightened by white paint, against the slate-colored walls (a color scheme that matches quite closely the vestiges of original paint that were uncovered when areas of the wall surface were analyzed before the room was opened at the Museum). A drawing for this ceiling has recently been identified[38] (Figure 16) that shows motifs very close to those that were subsequently carried out in plaster. No color was employed in this drawing; the areas of flat plaster are indicated by grey-wash brushwork, as they are on the drawing for the "section of four sides" (Figure 13).

Irrefutable evidence that this plaster ornament was originally cast, rather than modeled by hand, is supplied by the surviving boxwood moulds for some of the plaster motifs to be seen in the room. These reverse moulds were carved by a man named George Jackson,[39] and delivered to the team of plasterworkers headed by Joseph Rose. The moulds must have reverted to the original carver, for some of them are now owned by his descendants, incorporated under the name of George Jackson & Sons, and listed in the London telephone directory as "Jackson G. & Sons Ltd. Archtr Relief Dectrs, Rathbone wks, Rainville rd W6."

Upon the death of the first Lord Lansdowne in 1805, his son was obliged to sell the greater part of the collection of paintings, manuscripts (acquired by the British Museum), books, and furniture brought together by his father. The sales of paintings took place in 1806, and included works by Rubens, Claude Lorrain, and Nicolas Poussin.[40] At the same time, between March 21 and April 2, 1806, a sale of household effects was held on the premises of Lansdowne House. The catalogue of this sale[41] contains brief but informative descriptions of the furnishings of the dining room, which probably at that time largely consisted of the original contents bought for it by the first marquis. According to the list, the dining room was furnished with eighteen "mahogany chairs, stuffed seats and backs, covered with Morocco [leather], brass-nailed . . .," several tables including "A set of mahogany dining tables, 7 feet 9 by 4 feet 8," a mahogany sideboard flanked by a pair of urns and pedestals (possibly executed from designs which Robert Adam itemized in his bill dated August 1766: "To a Design of a Table frame for the Dining Room, Shelburne House £3 3s. To a Pedestal and Vase for ditto £2 2s."[42]), as well as "A mahogany wine cooler, brass-hooped, on a stand." It seems likely that the "Two [Derbyshire] spar vases, and a pyramid" mentioned in this catalogue were intended for the chimneypiece mantel, while the floor was covered with "An excellent Turkey carpet . . . cut to fire place," and the windows hung with "Three crimson silk damask drapery window curtains, laths,

38. Stillman, *Decorative Work of Robert Adam*, p. 70.

39. Jourdain, *English Decoration and Furniture of the Later XVIII Century*, p. 130, fig. 202.

40. Sutton, *Country Life* 106 (December 2, 1854) pp. 1958–1963.

41. A copy of this catalogue is in the Victoria and Albert Museum Library, press no. 23n.

42. Quoted in Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert & James Adam*, II, p. 340.

lines, cornices, &c." The lighting seems to have been effected with the aid of a set of six candelabra, described as "3-light cut-glass lustres, ornamented with drops," and a pair of chandeliers, each of which was "A 6-light cut-glass lustre, ornamented with drops, brass chain &c."

In the first volume of *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, published in 1773, the authors give their measured opinion on the decoration proper for a dining room: "The eating rooms are considered as the apartments of conversation, in which we are to pass a great part of our time. This renders it desireable to have them fitted up with elegance and splendor, but in a style different from that of other apartments. Instead of being hung with damask, tapestry, &c. they are always finished with stucco, and adorned with statues and paintings, that they may not retain the smell of the victuals."[43] The first patron of Lansdowne House must have been imbued with the same sentiments, for he seems to have decided at an early stage to show examples from his own collection of antique sculpture in the dining room. Thus nine standing figures were placed in the nine niches of the room, and two classical busts stood against the piers of the window wall. These sculptures, together with the others in the house, were offered for sale in 1810, but were bought in by the third marquis, and remained in place until 1930, when they were sold at Christie's [44] (eight of the niches have been filled with plaster casts in the room as reconstituted at the Museum; the ninth is occupied by a figure of Tyche, goddess of fortune, Figure 17, a Roman statue largely copied from a Greek original, which the Museum bought in 1961, and which stood in a niche on the fireplace wall before 1930[45]).

In 1929, the year before this sale, the house and property passed out of the possession of the Lansdowne family. In 1931, the Metropolitan acquired the dining room, the elements of which remained crated until space became available, when the room was installed over a period of months, and opened at the Museum in November 1954. The original furniture had long been

43. Adam, *Works in Architecture*, I, p. 11.

44. Christie's, London, March 5, 1930.

45. Christie's, London, March 5, 1930, no. 106.

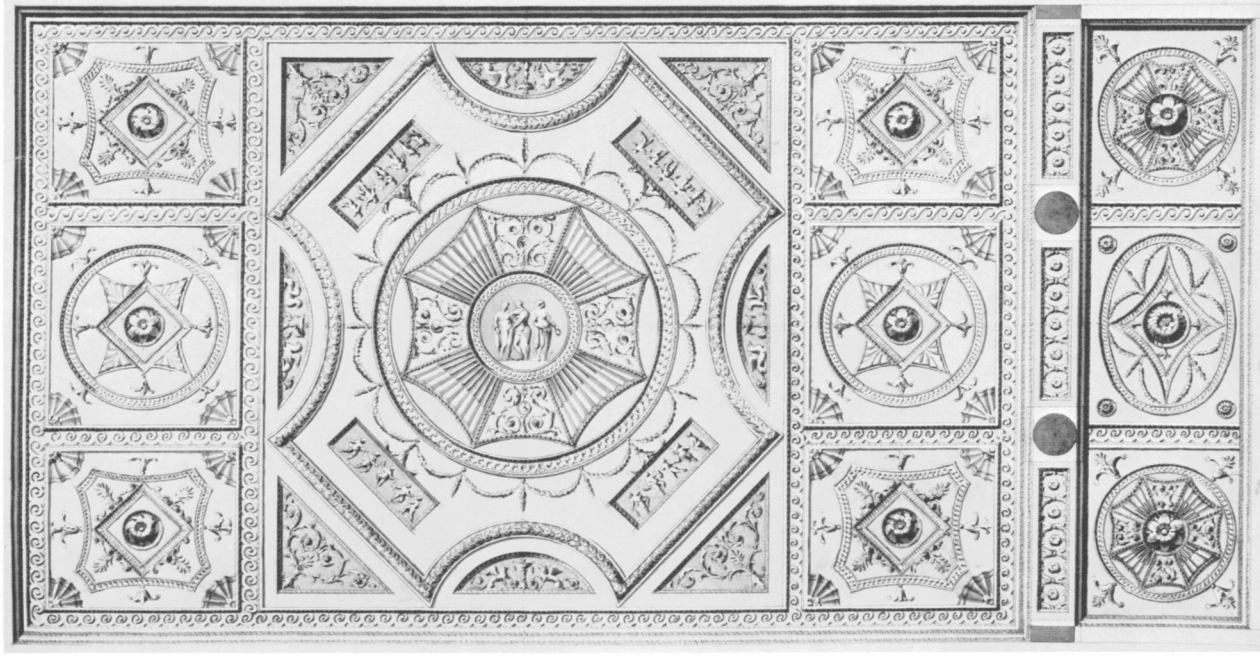


FIGURE 16
Pen and wash drawing for the ceiling of the Lansdowne House dining room, by Robert Adam, undated. Sir John Soane's Museum, London (photo: R. B. Fleming & Co. Ltd)

FIGURE 17
Statue of Tyche, Roman copy of a Greek original (a Roman head of about the II century A.D. has been added). Marble. H. 6 ft. 3 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 61.82

dispersed, but other pieces of the period were found to complement the architecture. The tables in the room now serve to display fine examples of English silver from the Widener collection, installed in 1958 (see Figure 12).

In 1930, the Philadelphia Museum had bought the First Drawing Room, which at that time still adjoined the dining room on the northwest. This room, with its beautiful ceiling vignettes painted by Giovanni Battista Cipriani and Antonio Zucchi, opened at the Philadelphia Museum in 1943,[46] where it completes the series of English period rooms.

In 1933, the Westminster City Council decided that the remaining elements of Lansdowne House should be displaced forty feet to the west in order to make way for a new street (Fitzmaurice Place). This move entailed alterations to the existing façade as well as to the interior apartments of the house, which were largely remodeled and expanded to accommodate what is now the Lansdowne Club.[47]

Such were the vicissitudes that made it possible to recreate in America some of the perfection of interior design that was achieved for Lord Shelburne's "palace" on Berkeley Square.

46. Kimball, *Philadelphia Museum Bulletin* 39, no. 199 (November 1943).

47. *Country Life* 77 (May 11, 1935) pp. 490–495, and Graves, *Leather Armchairs*, pp. 168–169.

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