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ABBREVIATIONS

MMA The Metropolitan Museum of Art

MMAB The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Bulletin

MMJ Metropolitan Museum Journal

Height precedes width and then depth in dimensions cited.

Sculpting Reputation: A Terracotta Bust of Senesino by Roubiliac

MALCOLM BAKER

In 1749 the engraver and antiquarian George Vertue wrote in his notebooks that "of all the Arts now practised in England none has shone late years more apparently than that of Sculpture or Statuary workes." It is therefore not surprising that sculpture figures prominently in the recently reopened British Galleries at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Among the works displayed there is an exceptional terracotta bust identified as a portrait of the celebrated castrato singer Francesco Bernardi, known as "Il Senesino" (1686–1758), by Louis François Roubiliac (figs. 1, 2).²

The bust was purchased in 2016 from the art dealer Patricia Wengraf, who acquired it from Maria Avanzati in Florence, to whom it had come by family descent along with its traditional identification as Francesco Bernardi.



fig. 1 Louis François
Roubiliac (British, b. France,
1695/1702–1762). Francesco
Bernardi, known as "II
Senesino" (ca. 1686–1758),
ca. 1735. Terracotta with
later marble base, 24¼ ×
219/16 × 815/16 in. (61.6 ×
54.8 × 22.7 cm) (bust only).
Inscribed behind proper left
shoulder: Fran[?]co. The
Metropolitan Museum of
Art, Purchase, Gift of Irwin
Untermyer by exchange,
2016 (2016.47)

fig. 2 Reverse view of terracotta bust of Senesino
(fig. 1)



An inscription in clay behind the proper left shoulder reads as "Fran[?]co," which might possibly be regarded as part of the sitter's first name but remains puzzling.3 As Elisabetta Avanzati has shown, both the identity of the sitter and the attribution to Roubiliac are confirmed by an entry in a document recording Bernardi's expenses, including one for "My bust done by the famous Roubiliac," costing seven pounds, fifteen shillings.4 This entry appears on the last page of what seems to be a priced inventory written by Senesino of possessions he was shipping from London to his house in Siena via the Italian port of Livorno. On the front page of the manuscript the words "Livorno to Siena" are followed by "Book of payments for necklaces and comforts for the house in Siena made by me Francesco Bernardi and sent in cases." As well as specifying objects to be "sent in cases," it goes on to mention "other small payments for particular commissions made in London in the year 1732."5 If we assume that a bust modeled in clay would have to dry and then be fired, Senesino's terracotta must have been made some time before his departure in June 1736. A date of about 1735 therefore seems likely.

The existence of a bust of Senesino by Roubiliac has for some time been known from a poem by John Lockman in a manuscript volume in the Beinecke Library at Yale University. Titled "To Mr. Roubillac [sic], on seeing a Bust, carv'd by him, of Senesino," it reads:

When Senesino breathes in Vocal Strains, We think Apollo's left th' Aethereal Plains: When we the Warbler view, by thee exprest, He seems as by the Hand of Nature drest.

Thy Art so happily eludes the Eye; His Voice such Sweetness boasts, & swells so high, That which best imitates, 'twill doubtful be, Thou, Senesino, or, Apollo, he.

This was evidently a transcription from Lockman's original and the same verse had appeared in the *London Daily Post and General Advertiser* on June 4, 1736, with Lockman's name below the title. It was one of several verses by Lockman about Roubiliac's sculptures, including one about a terracotta model of the Rape of Lucretia, and it appears that the writer played a significant role in promoting the sculptor's work.⁷

Apart from the bust's provenance and the documentary record, the identity of the sitter as Senesino is supported by comparison with two prints of the singer. One, dated 1727, is by Elisha Kirkall after Joseph Goupy and the other, dated 1735, is by Alexander van Haecken after a portrait by Thomas Hudson (fig. 3).8 The attribution of the bust to Roubiliac, who was to become by the late 1740s the leading sculptor working in London,



fig. 3 Alexander van Haecken (British, b. Flanders, 1701–1757), after Thomas Hudson (British, 1701–1779). Senesino, 1735. Mezzotint, 13¹⁵/₁₆ × 9½ in. (35.5 × 25.1 cm). British Museum, London (inv. 1922,0612.15)

fig. 4 Louis François Roubiliac. Isaac Newton (1642–1727), mid-1730s. Terracotta, 29 ½ × 19 ½ × 11½ in. (74 × 50 × 29 cm). Royal Greenwich Observatory on loan to the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London (inv. ZBA1640)



rivaled only by John Michael Rysbrack, is supported not only by the entry in Senesino's manuscript account book and Lockman's poem but also by comparison with other terracotta busts by Roubiliac from this period, most notably that of Sir Isaac Newton, probably dating from the mid-1730s (fig. 4). Both busts have open backs, deeply excavated with thin walls of clay. Unlike most of Roubiliac's later busts, apart from the cast multiples, neither has a central supporting strut. Although the drapery conventions employed differ, the way in which the details of the drapery of the Senesino are modeled is likewise wholly consistent with those of Newton. The evidence of its provenance, its relationship to the engraved portraits and Lockman's poem, its comparison to Roubiliac's documented bust of Newton, and, above all, the reference in the account book leave little doubt that The Met terracotta is indeed the lost bust of Senesino by Roubiliac.

SENESINO IN LONDON IN THE 1730S

Born in Siena about 1686, Francesco Bernardi, nicknamed Senesino (from his place of birth), was by 1707 singing in operas in Venice, followed by appearances in Bologna, Genoa, and Naples.⁹ In 1717 he was hired for a large sum to sing in Dresden, where George Frederic Handel heard him and engaged him to sing at his Royal Academy of Music in London. Having arrived there in 1720, he received huge acclaim, prompting the dramatist John Gay to declare, "People have now forgot Homer and Virgil and Caesar, or at least they have lost their ranks. For in London and Westminster, in all polite conversations, Senesino is daily voted to be the greatest man that ever lived."10 During this period no fewer than thirteen operas by Handel included parts written specially for him, most notably the title role in Giulio Cesare. With the closure of the Royal Academy in 1728 he returned to Siena and resumed singing in Venice. Reengaged by Handel and the impresario John James Heidegger, Senesino sang in the composer's operas and oratorios over the next three years and became ever more celebrated. During his time in London he enjoyed the hospitality and friendship of many of the aristocratic elite while at the same time building a substantial art collection, including old master paintings and works by contemporaries such as Jacopo Amigoni and Antonio Bellucci.11 In accord with the British predilection for portraiture—just one aspect of a taste for British styles in the visual and decorative arts that continued throughout his life—he also acquired many portraits of musicians who were his contemporaries, including the singers Francesca Cuzzoni and Carlo Broschi Farinelli and the librettist Paolo Rolli.¹² All these he acquired, like the bust by Roubiliac, to adorn his elegant villa, bought with his London earnings, outside Siena. He was, however, a notoriously difficult person, and his relationship with the imperious Handel was stormy and fraught. A decisive split came in 1733 when on May 24 Charles Delafaye reported to the Earl of Essex:

Here is like to be a Schism in the musical world. Hendel [sic] is become so arbitrary [a] prince, that the Town murmurs, Senesino not being able to subscribe any longer to his Tyranny threatens to revolt and in conjunction with Cuzzona [the soprano] to set up a separate Congregation on Lincolns Inn Fields, which it is thought will be sooner full than that for the Haymarket.¹³

This rival opera company, which was based at a theater in Lincoln's Inn Fields run by John Rich, was supported by powerful aristocratic figures and became known as the Opera of the Nobility. ¹⁴ For works to be staged there Senesino brought in the composer Nicola Porpora and the soprano Cuzzoni. The first production took place on December 30, 1733, when Senesino sang the role of Theseo in Porpora's *Arianna in Naxo*, with Cuzzoni singing the part of Arianna. The adulation of Senesino

fig. 5 George Bickham the Younger (British, ca. 1704–1771). The Ladies' Lamentation for ye Loss of Senesino, 1737–38. Etching and engraving, 12% × 8 in. (32.8 × 20.2 cm). British Museum, London (inv. 2006,U.713)

continued and in February 1736 Henry Coventry wrote that he "was always a good Favourite of mine; besides the pleasure he gives me in Singing, I can never help looking on him with some Esteem, as imagining him to be a Man of excellent Sense." 15 Shortly afterward they were joined by the younger castrato Farinelli who, while being on good terms with Senesino, was to achieve equal if not more fame.¹⁶ To counter this, the Haymarket company brought in new singers from Italy and introduced rival works such as Handel's Arianna in Creta. However, by 1736 the rivalry between the two companies proved difficult to maintain and, having sung the part of Apollo in Porpora's La festa d'Imeneo, Senesino left in June of that year for Italy, prompting a song entitled "The Ladies' Lamentation for ye Loss of Senesino," which proved popular in London for several seasons (fig. 5).17



ROUBILIAC IN LONDON IN THE 1730S

While Senesino was already a celebrated figure when he arrived in London, Roubiliac's standing in the mid-1730s is less clear. To what extent was he still establishing himself or had he already built a reputation? Born in Lyon in 1702, Louis François Roubiliac was the son of a silk merchant who by 1710 had moved with his family to Frankfurt, where he worked as a language teacher, and then on to Berlin, where in 1723 he was recorded as a bookseller.18 Nineteenth-century sources state that he worked in Dresden for Balthasar Permoser, the artist responsible for the rich sculptural decoration of the Zwinger.¹⁹ By the late 1720s he was in Paris at the Académie Royale, where he won second prize for sculpture in 1730.20 Then for an unknown reason he moved to London, where he is recorded in 1730 as a member of the White Bear Masonic Lodge. According to the account given by Joseph Nollekens's biographer, John T. Smith, Roubiliac's early years in England were spent in the workshop of Henry Cheere, while other sources suggest that he also worked for Thomas Carter.21 His role in what appear to have been collaborative projects, and which works he helped to make for Cheere, is unclear.²² Certainly by 1738, when his acclaimed statue of Handel was erected in Vauxhall Gardens, he had achieved both independence and considerable fame (fig. 6). After this date his career as a sculptor of busts, statues, and monuments may be tracked in considerable detail. Between his arrival in England in 1730 and 1738, however, his activity is more difficult to determine. The reappearance of the bust of Senesino therefore prompts a reassessment of these early works and of Roubiliac's reputation before the erection of the Handel statue in 1738, an event usually seen as the key turning point in Roubiliac's career as a sculptor.

After his early, albeit ill-defined, activity within Henry Cheere's workshop, Roubiliac evidently began taking on commissions as an independent sculptor beginning in 1733. His earliest documented works are busts of the prince de Condé and the vicomte de Turenne, made for the Duke of Argyll's gallery at Adderbury in Oxfordshire, England. Other modern busts in this interior were by Rysbrack but those of Turenne and Condé were recorded as the work of Roubiliac in the French periodical Le Pour et contre in 1733. This French article was translated from an English article about the work of Rysbrack but adds the following significant footnote: "The Duke of Argyll is having two busts made in marble, the one of the Great Condé, the other of Marshall Turenne. He is not employing Rysbrack, but connoisseurs value no less the hand he is

fig. 6 Louis François
Roubiliac. George Frederic
Handel, 1738, with 19thcentury plinth. Marble,
H. 53¼ in. (135.3 cm) (statue
and plinth). Victoria and
Albert Museum, London
(inv. A.3&A-1965)



using. It is that of Roubillac [sic], the young Frenchman, pupil and worthy imitator of the celebrated Coustou."23 It is telling that already at this date Roubiliac is being seen as the equal of the well-established and celebrated Rysbrack. The Condé bust has yet to be identified but that of Turenne, already known from a drawing made of a plaster version in about 1762 (fig. 7), has recently come to light. Interestingly, Roubiliac's portrait differs considerably in its details of dress from the familiar painted and engraved images of Turenne, notably the painted portrait by Hyacinthe Rigaud and the engraved portrait by Robert Nanteuil, both of which show the sitter wearing a large lace collar above his armor. Roubiliac's bust, by contrast, shows the gorget of his armor without a collar above it. These differences hint at a certain independence on the part of the sculptor, although an earlier bust by Antoine Coysevox, which may have been known to Roubiliac, likewise lacks the collar.24

Roubiliac's two busts for Adderbury formed part of a project in which the leading sculptor was Rysbrack. Another collaborative project of about 1735 in which both sculptors were involved was Charles Clay's musical clock in the Royal Collection, which is surmounted by a bronze group of Hercules and Atlas modeled by Roubiliac along with the bronze flanking figures of the Four Monarchies (Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome).²⁵ The faces of the clock combine silver reliefs cast from models by Rysbrack with painted scenes by Amigoni.²⁶

Roubiliac's contributions, which form the major sculptural component, draw, as Tessa Murdoch has demonstrated, on the French tradition of sculptors who supplied models for the bronze figures on clocks (such as Nicolas Coustou).²⁷ They also seem to be akin to those small-scale models, including one of the Rape of Lucretia, executed about this time and praised by John Lockman in a poem published on May 18, 1738.²⁸

The majority of Roubiliac's work during the 1730s, however, consists of portrait sculptures. Some of these were executed late in the decade, including a bust of Handel made in 1739 and a series of busts of Alexander Pope, made from 1738 onward. Others, however, were evidently produced earlier. Among these was a now lost bust of Farinelli that must have been executed between September 26, 1734, when the singer arrived in London, and 1737, when he returned to Italy; it is possible, though unlikely, that this had been made as early as June 1735, as discussed below. Still more significant, not least because he continued to use it as a model for marbles, was Roubiliac's bust of Sir Isaac Newton. The terracotta model (the facture of which has been compared with that of the Senesino terracotta above) had been bequeathed to the Royal Society in 1785 by the physician John Belchier, who stated, "This Bust in Terra Cotta was made under the Eyes of Mr Conduit [sic] and several of Sir Isaac Newton's particular friends by Roubiliac, from many Pictures and other Busts."29 This must therefore have been made at least before



fig. 7 Joseph Nollekens
(British, 1737–1823) after
Louis François Roubiliac.
Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne,
vicomte de Turenne,
ca. 1762. Pencil on paper
mounted on card, 8 % ×
6 % in. (20.5 × 16.3 cm).
Harris Museum, Art
Gallery & Library, Preston,
England (inv. PRSMG.P503)

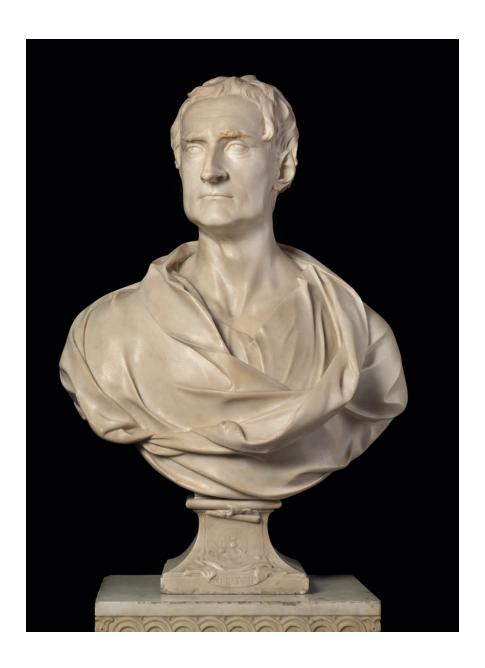


fig. 8 Louis François Roubiliac. Isaac Newton, ca. 1732–35. Marble, 22 × 19 ½ × 8 ½ in. (55.9 × 48.5 × 22 cm) (bust); 4 ½ × 7 ½ × 7 ½ in. (12.5 × 19.3 × 19.2 cm) (socle). Royal Society, London (inv. S/0018) John Conduitt's death in May 1737. Some reference to it, however, seems already to have been made between 1732 and 1735 by William Hogarth, who appears to have drawn on it in combination with features of Rysbrack's Newton in his conversation piece showing Conduitt and his family, along with other distinguished guests. The marble version of this bust (fig. 8), purchased after Conduitt's death, was presented by William Freman (or Freeman) of Hamels in April 1738 to the Royal Society, which then commissioned from Roubiliac a new socle decorated with a diagram representing the movement of the planets. Various other versions, such as that at Trinity College, Cambridge, continued to be executed by Roubiliac in later years.

One way of thinking about Roubiliac's work during the mid-1730s is in terms of the sculptor's developing reputation and his suitability as the recipient of major commissions. One such commission was the statue of Handel executed for Jonathan Tyers and installed in Vauxhall Gardens in 1738, long seen as a key work of British sculpture.³³ While the flood of poems and other "puffs" in the contemporary press was no doubt part of Tyers's astute marketing of the renovated and reformed gardens, some of these verses made overt claims for the statue's aesthetic qualities and for Roubiliac's abilities as an artist. In the *London Magazine* for June 1738 one such poem (not by Lockman but by the unidentified "I. W.") celebrates "the finish'd beauties of the sculptor's hand" and, addressing the patron, claims that:

When times remote dwell on Roubiliac's name, They'll still be just to thee who gave him fame.³⁴

While the reception of the Handel statue in such a public setting, as well as its originality as a statue, certainly gave Roubiliac and his sculpture new visibility, not enough attention has been given to why the young sculptor received either this prestigious commission or that for a now lost figure of Venus for Sir Andrew Fountaine.35 As John T. Smith's comments suggest, Henry Cheere, in whose workshop Roubiliac had worked and who was to design the lighting for Vauxhall, no doubt played a part in recommending him to Tyers.³⁶ But the design and making of a statue on this scale, involving an expensive block of marble, seem likely to have been entrusted only to a sculptor whose abilities were already known. What was the basis for Roubiliac's reputation when he received this commission from Tyers? The reappearance of the bust of Senesino offers the opportunity to reconsider the sculptor's work during the 1730s and the role that the making of busts played in the establishment of his reputation.

THE PLACE OF THE BUST OF SENESINO WITHIN ROUBILIAC'S EARLY WORK

With Roubiliac's activity as a sculptor in the 1730s in mind, we therefore need to return to Senesino's own description of the bust as "My bust done by the famous Roubiliac," apparently written in 1735. That prompted him to describe Roubiliac as "famoso" and what could he have been famous for at this date? The evidence for Senesino's keen and well-informed interest in art suggests that the singer would have been well aware of what was happening in the London art world and may well have known what Roubiliac was making. At this

particular point the images of Handel and Pope had yet to be envisaged and the busts of Condé and Turenne seem unlikely to have been familiar or celebrated enough to secure such fame for the young sculptor, the remarks in *Le Pour et contre* notwithstanding. It is possible, though unlikely, that the lost terracotta bust of Farinelli had already been made by 1735, in which case it would certainly have been familiar to Senesino. But whichever terracotta was executed first, the two singers were familiar, we may assume, with the other's bust. The busts might have been visually related in some way, just as the engravings produced by Van Haecken in 1735 presented their respective portraits by Thomas Hudson and Charles Lucy in paired and complementary frames (figs. 3, 9).³⁹

The most widely known of Roubiliac's portrait busts from about this date, however, was the bust of Newton (fig. 8). As an image of the greatest Englishman of his age and a figure who was already being celebrated with Locke, Shakespeare, and Milton as a national "worthy," Roubiliac's bust was commissioned by Conduitt, the husband of Newton's niece, as part of a sustained effort to preserve Newton's fame and to secure his international reputation. 40 Along with the bust of Newton by Rysbrack and, not least, the same



fig. 9 Alexander van Haecken, after Charles Lucy (British, 1692–ca. 1736). Carlo Broschi Farinelli, 1735. Mezzotint, 13¹⁵/₁₆ × 10 in. (35.5 × 25.3 cm). British Museum, London (inv. 1902,1011.6030)

sculptor's monument to the mathematician in Westminster Abbey, Roubiliac's bust was to play a key role in this initiative. 41 But if a sculptural image articulated the subject's fame, so being recognized as the author of such an image could bring fame to the sculptor himself. The execution of such a bust, especially if it could be replicated and more widely distributed among an elite audience, could contribute to the development of a sculptural career, even if the monetary rewards were not necessarily great. As Roubiliac was to suggest in a letter of 1741 to James Harris (to whom he was offering busts of Newton, Handel, and Pope), busts were not a source of much profit and rather were "works by which there is little to be got but Reputation."42 The implication of this statement is, of course, that busts could enhance not only a sitter's reputation, but a sculptor's as well.

Unlike Roubiliac's bust of Newton, neither that of Senesino nor that of Farinelli was to be replicated or made available as a multiple by the sculptor. Nonetheless, he is likely to have seen the commission for a bust of such a celebrated singer, secured just after the execution of the Newton bust, as a significant achievement. But how well known might the bust of Senesino have been? As it is unlikely to have been made more than a year or so before the singer left for Italy, it would not have been displayed in his London house for very long. However, the publication of Lockman's verse, albeit after both bust and sitter had departed, suggests that the work made some impression. At the very least, those promoting the sculptor wished to indicate that some notice had been taken of it. There is no record of it having been seen in any interior or having been reproduced in print. The same, however, might be said of almost all of the early busts by Roubiliac as well as Rysbrack, and the comments made by George Vertue in his notebooks—notably lists of models he saw in Roubiliac's workshop in 1738 and 1741—constitute the only documentation for their contemporary reception.⁴³ While the gift of the bust of Newton to the Royal Society is recorded in the late 1730s, we do not know where the work had been displayed by its first owner.44 Similarly, although we know about the purchases of multiples of busts of Handel and Pope during the 1730s, we know nothing of the early locations of the various marble versions. The fact that we have no evidence about where the Senesino terracotta might have been seen in London in 1735 does not in itself mean that it was not known to at least some of those in the circles of both Senesino and Roubiliac. Indeed, given Senesino's sociability at his house on Great Marlborough Street,



fig. 10 Interior of the Basilica dell'Osservanza, near Siena, Italy, before restoration in 1922

we may assume that it was familiar to at least some of his many elite acquaintances.

The entry in the account book suggests that the bust's eventual location, along with the rest of Senesino's collection, was to be in Siena, where his villa was decorated very much according to British taste. According to Avanzati, the portrait bust was bequeathed by the singer (presumably in a cited document of 1743) to the Basilica dell'Osservanza with a view to it forming part of a monument in the church, where his grave slab remains.⁴⁵ There, in a prestigious and important location, it would have been viewed near Renaissance sculptures such as the roundels of the Evangelists and Church Fathers, the Annunciation figures, and the Coronation of the Virgin, all by Andrea della Robbia, and Giacomo Cozzarelli's terracotta Lamentation (fig. 10).46 Alongside these were more recent seventeenth- and eighteenth-century works that are no longer there. 47 Perhaps the terracotta bust was to have been copied in marble to accord with these, though a marble version was unlikely to have been made in England.⁴⁸ To have been commemorated in a setting of such sculptural splendor would certainly have been commensurate with Senesino's sense of style and grandeur, and this possibility raises the intriguing question as to how a portrait bust by (or after) a young Londonbased sculptor would have registered in such a setting. However, we should not take the proposed bequest of the bust as evidence that the portrait was originally intended for a monument nor that this was Senesino's purpose in commissioning the work from Roubiliac.

It seems far more likely that the existing bust (or a marble version of it) was only later—at the time of the making of the will—considered as part of a future monument. This was often the case with busts that were recontexualized after a sitter's death. ⁴⁹ In any event, the bust was never set up in the Osservanza; as Senesino's relationship with his heirs grew steadily worse, the singer decided that the contents of his villa should be auctioned after his death while his heirs, in the end, denied his wish for a monument incorporating the bust. ⁵⁰

At the time when the bust was made Senesino was at the height of his fame and promoting the Opera of the Nobility as his new venture in rivalry with Handel's house. While a familiarity with the Newton bust might have prompted Senesino to choose Roubiliac for his own bust, other factors may have played a role, especially the sculptor's links to networks associated with the London operatic world. Most obviously John Lockman connected the two, not only writing "puffs" for Roubiliac's sculpture but also being actively involved in the writing of texts about opera and even libretti for operatic works.51 Roubiliac also seems to have been a friend of John Rich, in whose theater at Lincoln's Inn Fields the Opera of the Nobility was launched and whose daughter's ear was later cast by the sculptor.⁵² Apart from that, two figures who played roles in the history of the bust of Newton also had operatic connections: John Belchier, who owned the terracotta of Newton, was a friend of Handel's and had served as a go-between when Pope wished to have his Cecilia Ode set by the composer; and William Freman, who purchased and donated the marble to the Royal Society and was a subscriber to many of Handel's scores.53 Perhaps these connections overlapped, too, with the Huguenot and Masonic networks that played a continuing role in Roubiliac's commissions on account of the sculptor's connections with both communities.⁵⁴

If this is the wider context in which the bust of Senesino fits, the terracotta also differs strikingly from the other works by Roubiliac mentioned so far in ways that suggest that this particular bust, as much as that of Newton, contributed significantly to Roubiliac's growing reputation (a point to which Lockman's verse attests and enhances further). Unlike the busts of Turenne and Condé, or indeed that of Newton, the person represented here was neither an historical figure nor a recently deceased "great man," the customary subjects of portrait sculpture. Instead, Roubiliac was producing a portrait of a living figure, epitomizing a vibrant contemporary culture. Not based on any painted or graphic image, the portrait appears to have been modeled

ad vivum. It is thus the first of Roubiliac's animated images of contemporary celebrities that were to form such a striking aspect of his achievement as a portrait sculptor, exemplified by images of figures such as Handel and David Garrick, as well as Martin Folkes and the Earl of Chesterfield.55 What is just as significant is how exceptional this terracotta is as a portrait bust of a singer. (The other portraits of singers owned by Senesino all seem to have been painted.) While later in the century busts were made of actors such as Garrick (again by Roubiliac) and Larive (by Jean Antoine Houdon) and of musicians and singers such as Christoph Willibald Gluck and Sophie Arnould (both by Houdon), the busts of Senesino and Farinelli are rarities at this date.⁵⁶ There was a long tradition of representing writers, both ancient and modern, in this way. In 1728 Rysbrack executed a bust of Edmund Waller, though Waller had died in 1687 and so was seen in the same light as Shakespeare, Milton, and Fletcher.⁵⁷ Beginning with Coysevox's 1714 bust of writer and diplomat Matthew Prior and followed by Roubiliac's series of busts of Pope from 1738 onward, sculptural images of contemporary authors became steadily more common, articulating shifts in the notion of authorship.58 Busts of architects and artists were likewise familiar in the early eighteenth century, again reflecting their rising status.⁵⁹ But it is difficult to find examples of busts of singers or performers as early as the 1730s.60 The bust of Senesino, like the lost bust of Farinelli, would seem to stand as an innovatory use of the genre and in this way established the use of sculpture to represent those in the performing arts, something that was yet to be done on a larger scale, and in a still more public setting, until the statue of Handel in 1738.

But the bust of Senesino is also distinctive in other ways. The conventions of dress employed here are not easily classified. Roubiliac often used classicizing conventions in a way that was idiosyncratic when compared to their use by his rival sculptors, John Michael Rysbrack and Peter Scheemakers.⁶¹ The bust of Newton, for example, adopts vaguely classical dress without replicating any Roman bust, but the bust of Senesino is different. The way in which the drapery is pulled down so as to expose the chest or, on the sitter's proper right side, arranged into a wide lapel-like fold does not invoke any classical model. Instead, the arrangement of the drapery functions as a dramatic gesture articulating the overt performativity of the sitter. Unlike contemporary painted or printed portraits, this is not an image with the sitter shown in rich and fashionable contemporary dress (as in van Haecken's engraving). The same might be said of the highly distinctive hair.

The absence of any specific attributes makes it unlikely that he is being shown in one of his roles—Theseo from Porpora's *Arianna in Naxo*, for instance—and in any case the appropriate dress on stage would have been more clearly classical. What is presented here is something more generalized but still outwardly performative. For both sitter and sculptor alike, this bust would have been viewed as a tour de force, a true register of the exceptionality of Senesino as a celebrity and a performer, while at the same time it makes a claim for the sculptor's own exceptionality as an artist. It is this parallel between Senesino and Roubiliac that is indeed brought out in Lockman's verse.

With its distinctive mode, Roubiliac's 1735 bust of Senesino might also be seen in relation to the bust and the statue of Handel or rather the other way round, as the reappearance of the Senesino image allows us to see the Handel sculptures in a different way. At once wittily allusive and informally contemporary, the statue of Handel presents the sitter in modern dress, including a soft cap and a falling sandal, but also with a lyre, referring to his mythical role as either Apollo or Orpheus.⁶² Similarly, the bust shows him in contemporary dress, albeit with a little classicizing drapery to mask the bust's truncation. Might the choice of down-to-earth contemporary dress be seen as a rejection of the overt showiness of Senesino's bust? While it might be tempting to see both the Senesino and lost Farinelli images as being associated with the familiar images of Handel, the fact that they were created earlier in the sculptor's career should prompt us to see them separately and so perhaps look at the images of Handel in a new way. The discovery of the bust of Senesino allows us to place Roubiliac's early work in a new light and to recognize how his virtuosity as a sculptor was already apparent some years before the Handel statue.

Placing the bust of Senesino in this context also allows us to see the role that the execution of busts, whether in terracotta or marble, played in the making of a sculptor's reputation during the first half of the eighteenth century. The portrait bust had become increasingly prominent as a genre from the 1720s onward, and by 1747 Robert Campbell's *London Tradesman* could refer to "Figures in Clay, Wax, and Plaister of Paris" and comment that "the taste of Busts and Figures in these Materials prevails much of late Years, and in some Measure interferes with Portrait Painting." Traditionally used to commemorate or celebrate the illustrious (usually aristocrats or historical figures), the bust increasingly became a mode of representation employed to promote contemporary celebrity, as may

be seen in the case of Senesino's bust. Busts indeed formed a significant component of what Berta Joncus has described as "an emergent industry of star production."64 Such celebrity, from the sculptor's point of view, made these images more marketable, and some sculptors such as Roubiliac and Houdon took advantage of this by developing business practices involving the making of multiples in plaster and terracotta.65 In Roubiliac's case this began as early as 1738, when he was producing plasters of his Pope bust, and continued throughout his career and indeed after his death.66 At the same time, making a bust of a celebrated figure, especially a living sitter, not only brought fame to the person represented but also to the sculptor, who could use it to build a reputation. Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of Roubiliac in the 1730s, when the sculptor followed his busts of Turenne and Newton with those of Senesino and Farinelli, and then with images (steadily replicated by the artist) of Pope and Handel. The emergence of Roubiliac's virtuoso terracotta of Senesino brings into sharper focus not only Roubiliac's career in the 1730s but also the role that the making of busts could play in the formation of a sculptural reputation.

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NOTES

- 1 Vertue 1933-34, 145.
- 2 On its acquisition by The Met, the bust was conserved by Jack Soultanian Jr. According to Soultanian (quoted in an email sent by Elyse Nelson to the author, September 10, 2021), "The small traces of dun found on the surface of the bust may suggest that this coloration was the initial intention, perhaps as an imitation of grayish-green stone, and that the predominant white now visible is largely a preparation for this darker layer."
- 3 This seems unlikely to be a signature—even though Roubiliao's signatures on his early busts are not standard, none uses his first name in full: see Baker 2022.
- 4 "Il mio Busto fatto dal' famoso Roubiliac." Avanzati 2009. I am grateful to Patricia Wengraf for copies of the entry and the title page of this document, described by Avanzati as a "registro delle uscita" (exit register), which forms part of the Archivio Famiglia Bernardi Siena. The payment recorded was seven pounds, fifteen shillings. This compares with ten pounds, ten shillings, paid for each of the terracotta busts of Lady Grisel Baillie and Lady Murray in 1745 (Baker 2014c, 292).
- 5 The full title reads: "F[rancesco] [symbol of Marian cross here] B[ernardi] Nº: &= Al Sigí: Gio: Valen. / Berardi [sic] / Livorno per Siena; / Libro di Spese di momili [=monili?] ed / comodità per la Casa di Siena / fatte da me Francesco Ber- / nardi e mandate in Casse con la sudº: Marca numerale / ed altre picciole spese di commissioni di Particolare / fatte in Londra nell' anno / 1732. / con la grazia di Dio amen." (Francesco Bernardi. Number: &= To Signor Giovanni Valente/Valentino Berardi [presumably

- Bernardi] Livorno to Siena; Book of payments for necklaces [i.e., valuables] and comforts for the house in Siena made by me Francesco Bernardi and sent in cases with the above numeric mark and other small payments for particular commissions made in London in the year 1732. by the grace of God amen.) (I owe this transcription to Gordon Balderston and am grateful to him and Dimitrios Zikos for help with the translation.) The name "Gio: Valen. Berardi" may refer to Senesino's brother, with the surname misspelled, but it is perhaps more likely to refer to an entirely different person, named Berardi. The word "momili" may be a mistake for "monili," meaning "pendant necklaces" and perhaps standing here for "valuables" or "plate."
- 6 Bindman and Baker 1995, 66. Balderston has pointed out to me that the Beinecke transcription of Lockman's verses appears to postdate December 12, 1737, since the poem immediately after "To Mr. Roubillac" refers to Miss Bincks as "now Mrs. Vincent"; the marriage took place on December 12, 1737. My transcription here modernizes the spelling in accord with customary literary practice.
- 7 Bindman and Baker 1995, 66.
- 8 For the mezzotint after Hudson, see J. C. Smith 1883, 1412, no. 13; for that after Goupy, see Simon 1985, 123–24, no. 93. For an impression of the Goupy image, see British Museum, London, inv. 1902.1011.2968.
- 9 Scotting 2018, 22.
- 10 Letter from John Gay to Dean Swift, London, February 3, 1723; see Melville 1921, 58, quoted in part by Scotting 2018, 3.

- 11 Avanzati 2009, 146.
- 12 Ibid. The account book also includes purchases of silver, including pieces by Paul de Lamerie.
- 13 Burrows et al. 2013-, 2:630.
- 14 Thomas McGeary (2013) has argued that this was not, as sometimes assumed, associated with the opposition group centered around Frederick, Prince of Wales. For a contrary view, see Donald Burrows (2004).
- 15 Burrows et al. 2013-, 2:126-27.
- 16 On Farinelli, see McGeary 2005 and Joncus 2005 along with other articles in that issue of the *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*. For the place of both Farinelli and Senesino on the London operatic stage, see Aspden 2013, 207–44.
- 17 Dean 1980, 130.
- 18 In recent years records of the Roubiliac family's presence in Frankfurt from 1710 to 1718, of the death of Pierre Roubiliac in Berlin on May 11, 1723, and of the burial of the sculptor's younger sister Gabrielle (a Roman Catholic) in Dresden on March 12, 1724, have been found in www.ancestry.com by Balderston, to whom I am grateful for this information. Roubiliac was first associated with Dresden and Permoser by John T. Smith (1829, 2:96), but the significance was played down in favor of his later French training. However, Smith's statement seems to be corroborated by an independent Dresden source, the implications of which were first explored in Baker 1984. Roubiliac's origins and connections will also be discussed in a forthcoming study about newly discovered archival material concerning Roubiliac and Nicholas Sprimont by Tessa Murdoch and Sandra Robinson (n.d. [forthcoming]).
- 19 For Roubiliac's possible relationship with Permoser and Paul Egell, see Baker 1984.
- 20 Bindman and Baker 1995, 58-60.
- 21 John T. Smith 1829, 2:90, 96. These sources as well as the ambiguous nature of sculptural collaboration in the 1730s are discussed in "Collaboration and Sub-contracting in British Sculptors' Workshops," in Baker 2000, 70–85.
- 22 The bust of Lord Chief Justice Raymond (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. A.1-1947), whose monument had been made by Cheere, has been attributed to Roubiliac on the basis of a back of a type later used by Roubiliac (Baker 1995a, 827–28; Baker 2000, 82), although Cheere may also have used the same pattern earlier. The involvement of Roubiliac in the design of Cheere's statue of George Cooke (proposed in Baker 2000, 79–82) now seems less convincing in the light of more recent work on Cheere by Matthew Craske (2007, 162–68, 416–22). The Cooke statue is on loan at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford.
- 23 "M. le Duc d'Argyle fait faire deux Bustes en marbre, l'un du grand Condé, l'autre du Maréchal de Turenne. Il n'employe point M. Rysbrack, mais les Connoisseurs n'estiment pas moins la main dont il se sert. C'est celle de M. Roubillac, jeune François, éleve & digne imitateur du célebre Coustou." Antoine François Prévost, Le Pour et contre 1, no. 14 (November 1733): 329, note c; see Prévost 1993, 1:190. This report is based on an article in the London periodical The Free Briton 195 (August 16, 1733). Both the English source and Prévost's slightly truncated version are concerned with Rysbrack's sculptures, and this passage added by Prévost in a footnote introduces Roubiliac as a worthy alternative to Rysbrack. For Adderbury, see Hewlings 1996; for the sculpture in the gallery, its arrangement, and interpretation, see Baker 2000, chap. 11:29–43, 179–80 ("Ancient and Modern. French and English, War and Peace: The Sculpture in the Duke of Argyll's

- Gallery at Adderbury"). The bust of Turenne (along with several other busts from Adderbury) was added to the sale on April 15, 1777, "of a nobleman gone to France" held by Walsh, Clayton & Co, where it (as lot 58) was attributed to "Bouchardon of Paris."
- 24 The bust by Coysevox (sometimes ascribed to Jérôme Derbais) in the Musée Condé, Chantilly, France, inv. OA367, reproduced in early nineteenth-century bronze versions such as that in the Royal Collection Trust, United Kingdom, inv. RCIN 33466; Marsden n.d. (forthcoming), lacks the collar but the Roubiliac bust differs significantly in other ways from it.
- 25 Royal Collection Trust, inv. RCIN 1418.
- 26 Croft-Murray 1943; Murdoch 2013.
- 27 Murdoch 2015. It is conceivable that Roubiliac's modeling of small-scale figures for casting in other materials continued in the later 1740s through his connections with Sprimont and the Chelsea porcelain factory. My impression, however, is that such attributions rest only on a combination of circumstantial evidence and vague stylistic analogies. Roubiliac's reported aim of casting the relief for the Hough monument in porcelain (in Bindman and Baker 1995, 280) is perhaps best interpreted not as evidence for any work by him as a modeler for Chelsea but rather an aspiration prompted by an awareness (through his relatives in Dresden) of the larger-scale sculptural use of the material for the Saxon court.
- 28 London Daily Post and General Advertiser, May 18, 1738; the verse is transcribed in Esdaile 1928, 43. David Bindman (in Bindman and Baker 1995, 58–59) has suggested that these works were akin to the small-scale sculptures of mythological subjects characteristic of Robert Le Lorrain.
- 29 According to the Society's Council Minutes Original (CMO/7), August 18, 1785, the terracotta was bequeathed to the Royal Society by John Belchier with the intention that it should be "placed at the Observatory in Greenwich Park, and to be scheduled in like manner as the bust of Flamsteed which I gave to the Society some years ago. N.B. This Bust in Terra Cotta was made under the Eyes of Mr Conduit [sic] and several of Sir Isaac Newton's particular friends by Roubiliac, from many Pictures and other Busts." See Baker 1995a, 822n12.
- 30 Keynes 2005, 84; Einberg 2016, 107–10. Although Hogarth was already engaged on initial sketches of the figures as early as April 1732, the painting (in a private collection) was executed over several years and we cannot assume that Roubiliac's model of Newton was available to the painter in 1732.
- 31 According to the entry in the Royal Society's Journal Book 17
 (April 1738): 231–32, Freman had purchased the bust "with the intention of making a present of it to the Society." The Society's Council Minutes Original (vol. 3, 1727/28–42; CMO/3/79, https://catalogues.royalsociety.org/CalmView/Record.aspx?src =CalmView.Catalog&id=CMO%2f3%2f79) recorded on June 19, 1738, stated that approval had been given for payment of "Mr Roubillac's Bill for a Pedestal to Sir Isaac Newton's Bust . . . £2.7.0." See Baker 1995a, 829.
- 32 Baker 1995b, 125–27, 133; for the version in the Long Room, Trinity College, Dublin, see Baker 1995a, 829.
- 33 Bindman 1997; Aspden 2002; Baker 2014c, 249–61; McGeary 2015.
- 34 Baker 1998.
- 35 As Tessa Murdoch (1983, 30) has shown, the London Daily Post and General Advertiser for Thursday, November 16, 1738, reported, "Mr. Roubillack the Statuary, is carving a curious figure of a Ldy for Sir Andrew Fountaine Knt, which we hear, will

- cost 300l"; as she suggests, this was presumably the same as "the fine Venus... finish'd at a Sculptor's in St Martins Lane for a person of Quality" reported in the same newspaper three days earlier.
- 36 J. T. Smith 1829, 2:90.
- 37 See note 4 above.
- 38 The bust of Farinelli was recorded by Vertue in 1738 when, in an early note about Roubiliac and the Handel statue, he mentions "a Model in Clay the portrait of Farranelli [sic] the famous singer very like him, and well done." Vertue 1933–34, 84. The Farinelli terracotta must of course have been made before late June 1737, when Farinelli left for Spain, but Thomas McGeary has suggested that it may have been made by June 30, 1735, when Lady Mary Brown wrote to the Earl of Essex in Turin reporting that "Farinelli . . . says he hopes your Lordship has not forgotten to send the head to the person that was to have it." McGeary 2005, 348, citing British Library Add. MS 27,733, f.194v. It is unclear, however, if this refers to the bust since the word "head" might well refer to a painted or engraved portrait. In any case, the period between September 1734 and June 1735 would seem to be too short a time for Farinelli to sit for Roubiliac, have his bust modeled in clay, have the clay model allowed to dry, and then be fired and dispatched to Italy. If the terracotta had already been sent to Italy before June 1735 it also seems odd that Vertue comments on it in 1738 as if he had seen it recently. Nonetheless, given Farinelli's celebrity in London, why was this bust not more commented on?
- 39 The way in which visual images were employed to promote Farinelli's fame is compellingly demonstrated by Joncus 2005.
- 40 Fara 2021, 60-78.
- 41 Fara 2002.
- 42 Roubiliac to James Harris, July 10, 1741; see Burrows et al. 2013-, 3:713.
- 43 Among the few examples of busts being reproduced in print were Giovanni Battista Guelfi's images made for Queen Caroline's Hermitage at Richmond Lodge (disseminated as mezzotints by John Faber, no doubt on account of their patron and location) and Rysbrack's terracotta of the Scottish poet Arthur Johnston, engraved by George Vertue in 1740 as a frontispiece to Johnston's Psalmi Davidici Interpretatione (1741). Fictive busts were frequently considered appropriate for author frontispieces; see Baker 2021. Although busts sometimes appear in conversation pieces, it is difficult to associate them with specific sculptures. For Vertue's lists of 1738 and 1741, see Vertue 1933–34, 84 and 105.
- 44 In Hogarth's painting The Indian Emperor (private collection; 1732–35), which shows the Conduitt family below the bust of Newton, the bust represented appears to combine elements from the busts by both Roubiliac and Rysbrack.
- 45 For the location of the grave slab, see Bertagna 1984. For the reference to the will, see Avanzati 2006, 6, and Avanzati 2009, 149; this was presumably the document of April 30, 1747, that was then replaced by a will of March 30, 1757, following Senesino's dispute with his nephew. The copies of the wills in Archivio Famiglia Bernardi in Siena are inaccessible so I have relied on the references in the two versions of Elisabetta Avanzati's article.
- 46 On these, which remain in the church, see Cornici 1984, 58-67.
- 47 Some were removed in the 1890s, and others in a restoration of the 1920s. The present appearance of the interior was established in a postwar restoration following a bombing raid in 1944.

 The inventory of works in the Osservanza taken in 1862 (Brogi

- 1897, 228–34) mentions several eighteenth-century sculptures, including a marble group of angels and seraphim by Giuseppe Mazzuoli that stood on the high altar until 1895; see Cornici 1984. 51 and 53.
- 48 There is no evidence that a marble version was made in England. Interestingly, while the manuscript version of Lockman's verse describes the bust as "carv'd" (suggesting it was in marble rather than modeled clay or terracotta), the title in the printed version apparently corrects this to "made," so more accurately describing a terracotta.
- 49 This was the case, for example, with the bust of Lady Lechmere, placed on a monument in Westminster Abbey, long after her death, alongside a bust of her husband, Sir Thomas Robinson; both had been carved decades earlier in Rome. See Baker, Harrison, and Laing 2000.
- 50 Avanzati 2006.
- 51 Burden 2013, 1:151–71, 179–89. Michael Burden also suggests that Lockman was the likely translator of Luigi Riccoboni, An Historical and Critical Account of the Theatres in Europe (1741).
- 52 Joncus and Barlow 2011, 41. For the anecdote about Rich's daughter's ear, see Esdaile 1928, 156; this must have taken place later than the 1730s.
- 53 For Belchier and Freman, see Burrows et al. 2013–, 2:102, 379–80, 406–7.
- 54 Murdoch 1983; Bindman and Baker 1995, 62-69.
- 55 Versions of these busts include Royal Collection Trust inv. RCIN 35255 (Handel); National Portrait Gallery, London, inv. NPG 707a (Garrick); Earl of Pembroke, Wilton House, Salisbury, England (Folkes); National Portrait Gallery, inv. NPG 5829 (Chesterfield).
- 56 For the Garrick bust see Baker 2014c, 328–43. On Houdon's busts of Gluck and Arnould and the representation of musicians and singers, see Sauerländer 2002, 22–28. On the busts of Gluck and Larive (Jean Mauduit), see Bückling and Scherf 2010, 170–73, 213. Versions of these busts include Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. RF 2596 (Arnould); Cleveland Museum of Art, 1988.59 (Gluck); and Musée de la Comédie-Française, Paris (Larive).
- 57 Rysbrack's fine terracotta survives in the collection of Waller's descendants at Hall Barn, Beaconsfield, England; see Rogers 1977.
- 58 Coysevox's bust was later incorporated into the poet's monument by James Gibbs and Rysbrack in Westminster Abbey. For the Pope bust and changing notions of authorship, see Baker 2014a; Baker 2014b; Baker 2014c; Baker 2018; and Baker 2023, forthcoming. For the commemoration of authors, see also Connell 2005. The various autograph versions of Roubiliac's Pope bust include that in the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven (B1993.27).
- 59 For busts of architects, see Baker 2000, 95-107.
- 60 Interestingly, however, an enigmatic marble bust in Sir John Soane's Museum, London, inv. M444 is said to be of the operatic manager J. J. Heidegger and, with its still rather baroque features, is likely to have been carved about 1720. Its flat back suggests that it was set in an architectural context. If the identity and date are correct this would predate any bust representing a sitter associated with the Italian opera in London. I am grateful to Greg Sullivan for discussing this with me.
- 61 Mary Beard (2021, 107, 315) has observed that the apparent imitation or re-creation of Roman Republican images by eighteenth-century sculptors was more problematic than has been acknowledged.

- 62 Baker 2014c. For the argument for seeing Handel in the guise of Orpheus, see Bindman 1997; for a challenging counterargument in favor of Apollo, see McGeary 2015.
- 63 Campbell 1747, 139.
- 64 Joncus 2005, 438.
- 65 Baker 2006; Baker 2014c, 207-16; Baker 2014d.
- 66 Although Roubiliac was evidently producing multiples as early as 1738, his workshop and working practices seem to have been regularized about 1740; see Murdoch 2021 and Baker 2022.

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