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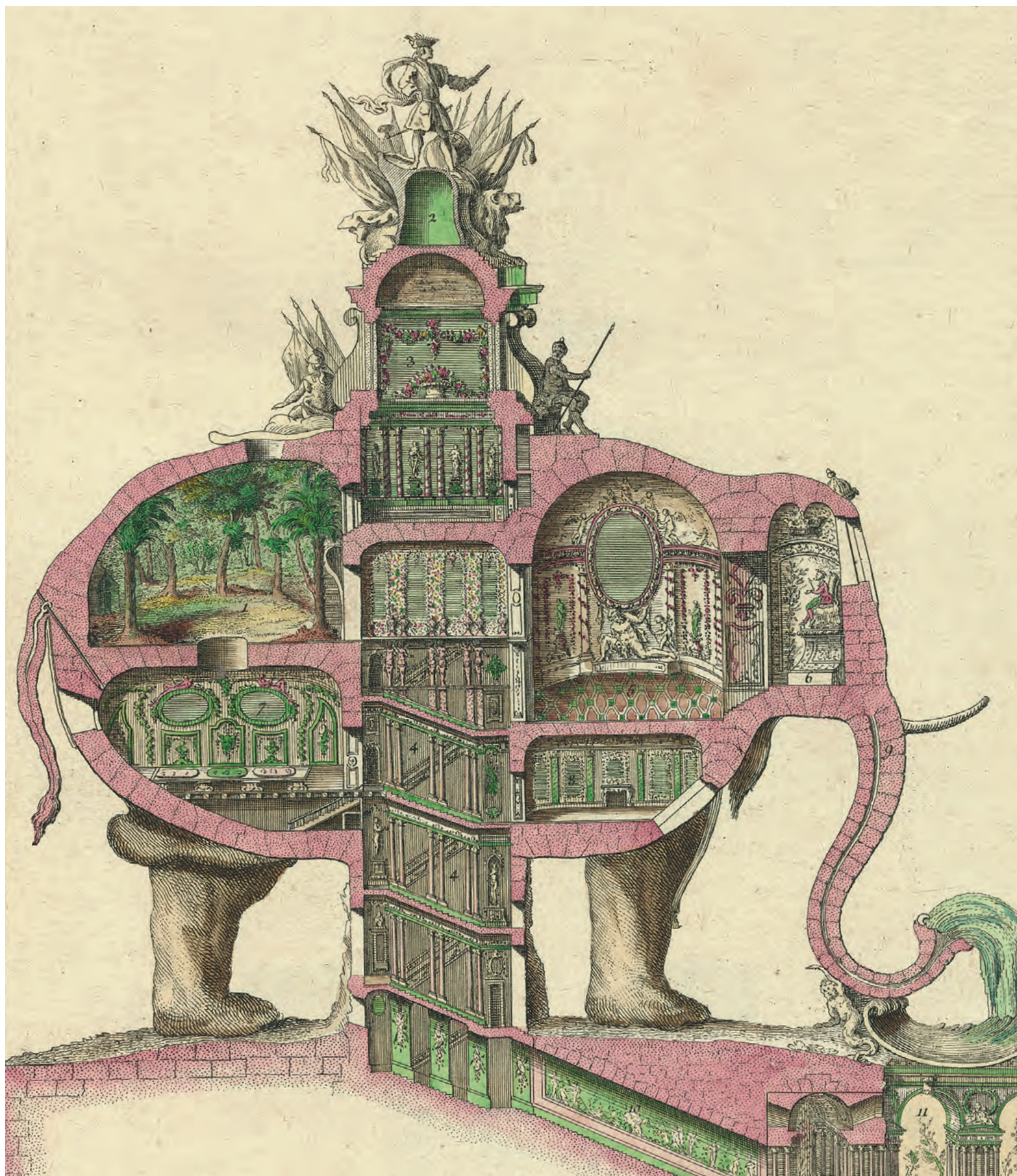
In memory of Julie Jones (1935-2021)

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Back cover illustration: Kneeling female figure, 15th–early 16th century. Mexico, Mesoamerica, Aztec. See fig. 5, p. 17.

Illustration on p. 2: Pierre Patte after Charles François Ribart de Chamoust. Section view of Ribart's elephant monument from Ribart 1758, pl. VI. Hand-colored etching. See fig. 4, p. 86.

Illustration on p. 4: Mask. Mexico. Olmec, 900–400 B.C. Jadeite, H. 5¾ × W. 5½ × D. 3 in. (14.6 × 14 × 7.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Alice K. Bache, 1977 (1977.187.33)

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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.

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Philippe Auguste Hennequin's *Portrait Drawing of Sir Sidney Smith in the Temple Prison*

KATHERINE GAZZARD

In an eighteenth-century drawing in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, a naval officer sits cross-legged at a desk and stares through the barred window of a prison cell, an open book in his hand (fig. 1). The drawing is pasted onto a blue mount and surrounded with inscriptions in English and French. Positioned immediately below the image, the French inscription comprises the artist's signature: "fait au temple par hennequin ce 28 brumaire an 5 de la R.f. une et indivisible" ["made in the Temple by Hennequin on 28 brumaire year 5 of the French Republic, one and indivisible"]. Expressed in the French Revolutionary calendar, the date here equates to November 18, 1796. The signature is written in the squat handwriting of the artist Philippe Auguste Hennequin, who was at the time a political prisoner in the Tower of

fig. 1 Philippe Auguste Hennequin (French, 1762–1833). *Portrait Drawing of Sir Sidney Smith in the Temple Prison*, 1796. Pen and brown ink over black chalk, 9⅝ × 7⅝ in. (24.5 × 19.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Stephen A. Geiger Gift, in honor of George R. Goldner, 2015 (2015.290)

fait au temple par Henriquin de 28 Germinal an 5 De la R. française une indivisible ...

With what a leaden and retarding weight
Does expectation load the wing of time

The pen of fate dipped in its direst gall
Perhaps on that illomened wall
Has written present of this tremendous day
All that our weaker sight
could read the mystic characters & spy
what to the unpurged mortal eye
Is hid in endless night.

Suspense! thou frozen guest begone
The wretch whose rugged bed
Is spread on thorns, more softly rests his head
Than he that sinks amid the cypress down
If these tormenting fixed so nigh
To prompt his irksome doubt, his useless sigh
The wish his prayer for lingering certainty

the Temple in Paris. A follower of the egalitarian ideals espoused by the political journalist Gracchus Babeuf (François-Noël Babeuf), Hennequin had been arrested in September 1796 in connection with a radical plot to overthrow the moderate Directory government.

The portrait's subject is Captain Sir William Sidney Smith (known as Sir Sidney Smith), a British naval officer who had been captured at Le Havre in April 1796.[1] Although Smith and Hennequin were fellow inmates in the Temple, they hardly could have been further opposed in their national and ideological allegiances. Prior to his capture, Smith had been an intelligence operative working for Britain in the nation's war against Revolutionary France. His role involved providing clandestine support to French royalist and counterrevolutionary groups, who stood at the opposite end of the political spectrum to Hennequin and his radical left-wing associates. A summary of Smith's imprisonment is written above the portrait in English: "Imprisoned in the Abbaye Paris on the 23d April 1796. / Transferred from thence to the Tower of the Temple on the 3d July 1796." A new line begins with the word "Released" but the sentence has not been completed, suggesting that Smith remained in prison when the text was written; space has been left for details of his release to be added in the future. It was perhaps Smith himself who wrote this note, since the looping script resembles his handwriting. Sixteen lines of what the captain's nephew termed "solemn poetry" have been added to the lower part of the mount in the same hand.[2]

These inscriptions appear to have been written with a view to the portrait's publication as a print, which remarkably occurred while Smith remained in prison. The publisher Antonio Poggi issued an etching based on the drawing in London on July 20, 1797 (fig. 2).[3] Smith would not obtain his freedom until the following April, when he escaped with help from his French royalist supporters. The etching was executed by the British artist Maria Cosway. Since her print faithfully copies the inscriptions on the portrait's mount, she must have worked from the original drawing, though it is unclear how she obtained it. As part of his contract with the artist, Smith may have paid Hennequin, who was released in February 1797, to ensure the drawing was sent to Britain for publication.[4] Alternatively, Smith may have entrusted the portrait to one of his spies in Paris. Whatever the case, Cosway was an obvious choice for a London-based artist to receive the drawing. Having spent considerable time in the city in the 1780s, she was well known in the Parisian art world.[5] She may have accepted the portrait because of its connection to her old friend Jacques Louis David, in whose studio Hennequin had trained. While the drawing's route from the Temple to Cosway's studio remains uncertain, it definitely has a complex history, which straddles the English Channel.

Hennequin's drawing was one of numerous prison portraits created in France in the decade following the Revolution, a period of violent political upheaval during which thousands of individuals were imprisoned.[6] This vast prison population included a number of artists, many of whom remained professionally active throughout their confinement.[7] Several scholars have examined

SIR
SIDNEY SMITH

Imprisoned in the Abbaye Paris on the 23ᵈ April 1796.

Transferred from thence to the Tower of the Temple on the 3ᵈ July 1796

Fait au Temple par Hennequin le 28 Brumaire An 5 de la R. F. une et indivisible.   *Etched by Maria Cosway London 1797.*

With what a leaden and retarding weight
Does expectation load the wing of time

The pen of fate dipped in its deepest gall.
Perhaps on that ill omen'd wall
Now writes th'event of this horrendous day.
Oh! that our weaker sight
Could read the mystic characters and spy.
What to the unpurged mortal eye
Is hid in endless night.

Suspense! thou frozen guest begone,
The wretch whose rugged bed
Is spread on thorns more softly rests his head,
Than he that sinks amid the trumpets down.
If thou tormenting fiend be nigh
To prompt his irksome doubt his unsafe sigh
Hes with his prayer for lingering certainty.

Published for the Proprietor at 91 New Bond Street, July 20 1797

the prison-made portraits of this period in the context of Revolutionary politics, finding within these works of art evidence of how individual French citizens refashioned their political, artistic, and personal identities in response to key shifts in the Republic's volatile ideological landscape.[8] However, given its British sitter and its publication as a print in London, The Met drawing presents a more complex subject for analysis. This article highlights both French and British cultural contexts for the work. It will be argued that, even as a prisoner in a hostile country, Smith endeavored to cultivate his public profile in Britain. Hennequin facilitated and encouraged this attention-seeking project, recognizing that he could exploit the captain's self-interest to earn a profitable commission. Seen in this light, Hennequin's drawing offers a remarkable insight into the power of portraiture in the eighteenth century's nascent culture of celebrity—a power that resonated across political divides and on both sides of the Channel.

THE OFFICER AND THE REVOLUTIONARY

The son of an army officer, Smith entered the Royal Navy in June 1777 and rose through the ranks over the course of the American Revolutionary War (1775–83).[9] After fighting as a volunteer in the Swedish navy during the Russo-Swedish War of 1788–90, he was named a knight of the Swedish Order of the Sword. This Scandinavian adventure proved controversial among Smith's erstwhile colleagues in the Royal Navy, since several British officers had fought and died on the Russian side of the conflict. Smith, however, seemed immune to his peers' consternation and delighted in wearing the insignia of his Swedish knighthood, exhibiting the flair for self-aggrandizement that colored his entire career. He rejoined the British navy in 1793 to fight in the war against Revolutionary France. In December 1793, he played a key role in the British retreat from Toulon, implementing a scorched-earth policy on the orders of Admiral Samuel Hood, 1st Baron Hood (later 1st Viscount Hood). Having overseen the burning of several French ships and Toulon's large arsenal, he returned to Britain a minor hero and was appointed captain of the frigate *Diamond*. While his official orders on this ship were to harass enemy merchants off France's northern coast, he was also charged with managing clandestine intelligence operations. This involved dispatching British agents into the French interior and supplying dissident royalists with money and weapons.[10] One of his principal agents was his close friend John Wesley Wright, whose official role as Smith's secretary was a cover for his espionage activities.

Wright was with Smith when the captain was taken prisoner at Le Havre on April 17, 1796. Also present was Jacques-Jean-Marie François Boudin de Tromelin, a former royalist soldier who had joined the British intelligence network. The three men were captured while attempting to seize a French privateer from the mouth of the Seine.[11] Following their capture, Smith, Wright, and Tromelin—the latter masquerading as the captain's servant under the false name "John Bromley"—were transported to Paris, where they were incarcerated with civilian prisoners, first in the Abbaye, then in the Temple. The British government offered to release a French officer in exchange for Smith's freedom but the French authorities refused the deal, reneging on the system of prisoner exchange that was a convention of eighteenth-century warfare.[12] The French Directory publicly justified Smith's exceptional treatment on the grounds that he was guilty of incendiarism because of his actions at Toulon, although the truth was that, knowing of his involvement in espionage, it believed he was too valuable to let go.[13] A fourteenth-century fortress, the Temple had held key members of the French royal family between 1792 and early 1796 and was a site of considerable public curiosity in both France and Britain.[14] By detaining Smith in this infamous prison, the Directory signaled to its British counterparts that it knew they had captured a high-value prisoner.

However, Smith had powerful protectors within the French government, who shielded him from harsh punishment.[15] He benefited from privileges not afforded to ordinary prisoners, including unrestricted correspondence and significant personal liberty.[16] Furthermore, his allies on the outside kept him supplied with funds, allowing him to maintain a genteel standard of living.[17] Although initially separated from his colleague Wright, this imposition was eased after a few months, from which point onward Smith, Wright, and their co-conspirator Tromelin (in his servant disguise) were able to associate freely with one another.[18]

It was not long after the trio's reunion that they encountered Hennequin, whose circumstances were vastly different.[19] Known for his neoclassical history paintings, Hennequin had studied in his native Lyon under the Swedish artist Per Eberhard Cogell before joining David's studio in Paris in 1779. He worked for a number of years in Rome and then returned to France, where he became engaged in political activism. Like many of David's pupils, Hennequin supported the Jacobin cause. His arrest in September 1796 followed his involvement in a foiled plot to infiltrate the garrison

at Grenelle with the aim of raising an armed insurrection against the Directory. This attempted uprising was conducted by followers of Gracchus Babeuf, a radical proponent of egalitarian ideals, including the abolition of private property. Along with other radicals, Babeuf's adherents had been subjected to relentless state persecution since the Directory's assumption of power in autumn 1795.[20] As a result of this persecution, the revolutionaries who staged the assault at Grenelle were impoverished and desperate, Hennequin included. He was arrested alongside more than one hundred others, thirty of whom—including two of the artist's closest friends—were executed on October 9, 1796. On the same day, Hennequin received an indefinite sentence.[21] His lawyer launched an appeal on his behalf, which was eventually successful. However, at the time of his encounter with Smith, he remained poor and uncertain of his fate. That two prisoners so drastically opposed in their circumstances and ideology could come into contact in the same political prison is testament to the unique predicament of the Directory, which relied heavily on prisons to stabilize the Republic against left- and right-wing subversion.

TWO DRAWINGS

Hennequin's dealings with Smith are described in the artist's memoirs, which his widow compiled from his notes after his death in 1833.[22] According to this account:

> The facility I had to see M. le Commodore [Smith] gave me the idea to make some drawings to show him to try to arouse his desire to have one. Having succeeded in this, he did not hesitate to ask for a drawn portrait, as well as one of his secretary and even one of his servant who, like him, was English and had not left him since his arrest. I made a drawing of three figures, which I presented to him. He was satisfied and asked me the price. . . . I no longer had anything in the world and the smallest sum would have been of great help to me. I ended up begging the commodore to excuse me from putting a price on the sketch and to do what he saw fit. He presented me with four doubles louis which I received with gratitude, but I added to this first drawing another drawing which I offered him.[23]

The above passage suggests that Smith received two drawings from Hennequin, the first being a group portrait of three figures for which the captain paid four doubles louis. This drawing is now in the British Museum, London, and depicts Smith with his friends Wright and Tromelin (fig. 3).[24] In an image that recalls the ease and glamour of an aristocratic portrait, the captain leans nonchalantly against a plinth while Wright wraps an
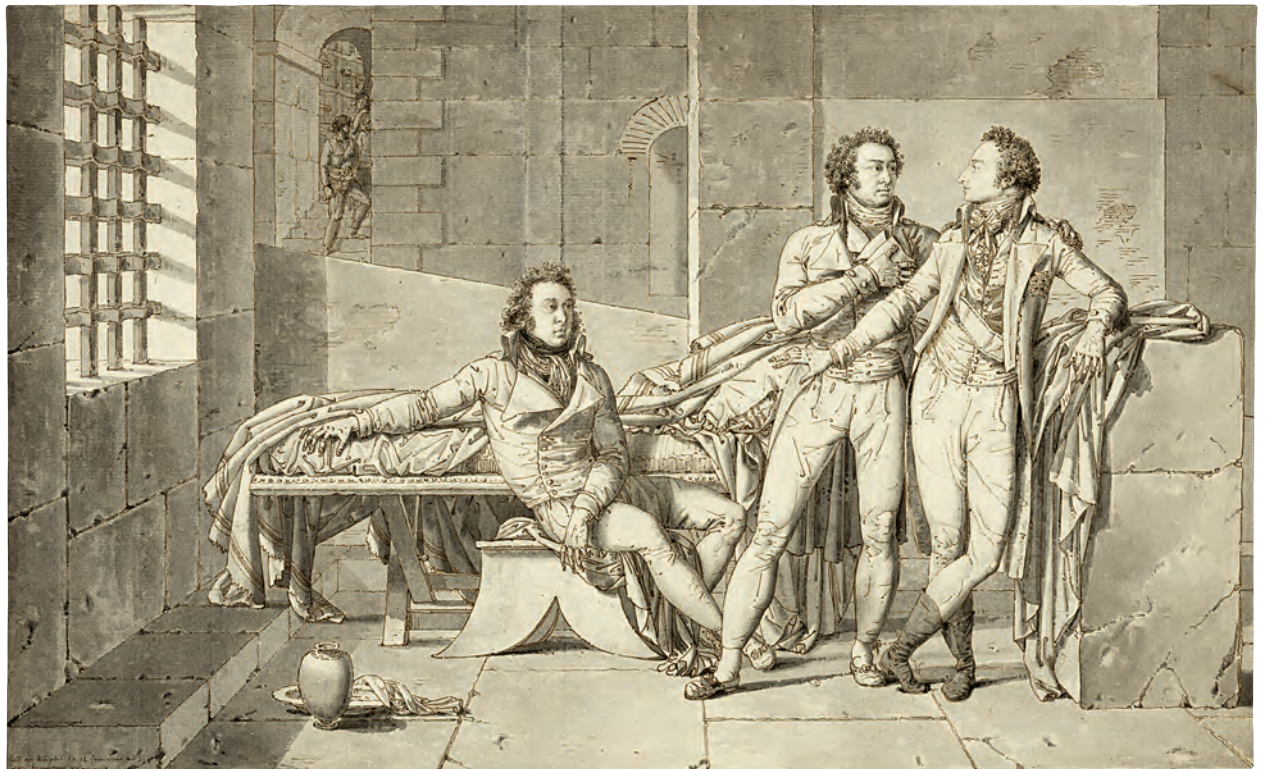
affectionate arm around his shoulders and Tromelin relaxes on a nearby bench. The portrait in The Met is generally assumed to be the second drawing mentioned in Hennequin's memoirs, which the artist claims to have presented to Smith after accepting payment for the group portrait. However, it should be noted that the drawing in The Met is actually signed with an earlier date (28 brumaire an 5 [November 18, 1796]) than the London one (12 frimaire an 5 [December 2, 1796]). This apparent discrepancy demonstrates that Hennequin's account should be read with a cautious and critical eye, written as it was decades after the fact.

The memoirs give the impression that Hennequin and Smith enjoyed a cordial relationship. The artist writes that he often had tea with the captain, whom he found to be an art lover, and that their meetings relieved the monotony of prison life.[25] However, taking into account the profound differences in their politics and circumstances at the time, we should perhaps treat this rose-tinted recollection of friendship with skepticism. It may be more productive to examine their relationship through the lens of business and to ask what both men stood to gain from each other. Reading between the lines of Hennequin's account, in which he mentions that "the smallest sum would have been of great help to me," it seems that the artist's motivation was in large part economic. In his impoverished state, four doubles louis—gold coins, which, unlike the paper currency introduced after the Revolution, could not lose their value—represented a small fortune, significantly increasing his family's chances of survival. We can imagine that, confronted with the captain's wealth and ego, Hennequin recognized Smith as a potential client who could be persuaded to pay handsomely for a portrait.

Smith was regarded in his own time as a highly conceited individual. The Duke of Wellington called him "a mere vaporiser," by which he meant that Smith talked incessantly about himself and never said anything of substance.[26] However, this theatrical self-promotion was not without self-awareness. Exploring Smith's intelligence work, Michael Durey argues that the captain could be discreet when required and that at other times he deployed his pomp and bluster deliberately to obfuscate the clandestine schemes of his fellow spies.[27] Underneath his narcissistic tendencies, Smith understood the value of a prominent public profile and the mechanisms through which one could be maintained and manipulated. His commissions from Hennequin should be viewed in light of his careful management of his own reputation.

In this context, it is worth noting several important differences in the style and presentation of the two drawings that Hennequin produced for Smith. Layers of gray wash create subtle tonal modeling in the British Museum's group portrait, emphasizing the sculptural forms of the frieze-like composition and making the drawing appear like an exquisite grisaille painting. Like its counterpart in The Met, the portrait has been pasted onto a blue sheet. In this case, however, the mount acts primarily as a framing device, having been trimmed around the image and decorated with ruled lines. A brief inscription beneath the image highlights Smith's friendship with Wright: "Sir Sidney Smith Transferred from the Abbaye prison to the tower of the Temple, Paris and confined separately from his friend and fellow prisoner Mr Wright 3 July 1796." The work would have been somewhat mystifying to those outside Smith's immediate circle of friends and colleagues. Most viewers would have struggled to appreciate why Wright and Tromelin (or "Bromley")—ostensibly a secretary and a servant—were important, much less how they came to be on such relaxed and intimate terms with their commander. Given that both men were involved in espionage, the true nature of their work was necessarily secret. Seen from this perspective, it seems likely that the British Museum drawing was intended for private display before an exclusive audience of those with knowledge of Smith's covert activities.

The portrait in The Met, by contrast, presents Smith as a solitary figure, conforming to the widely understood cultural trope of the heroic officer. The drawing is rendered entirely in pen and ink, without any of the gray wash used in the group portrait. Light, shade, and texture are suggested with hatching, dots, and curlicues in a bravura exhibition of mark-making, which seems designed to show off Hennequin's superlative draftsmanship. Moreover, the linearity of this approach was ideally suited for translation into print, raising the tantalizing possibility that the artist and the sitter had the publication of the portrait in mind from the start. The idea of creating a portrait for the print market could have originated with either Hennequin, who clearly recognized the captain's penchant for self-promotion, or Smith, who was already well-versed in courting fame.

THE CULTURE OF CELEBRITY

An important context for the drawing in The Met and the resulting etching is the eighteenth century's burgeoning culture of celebrity, in which portrait prints played a central role. The history of celebrity
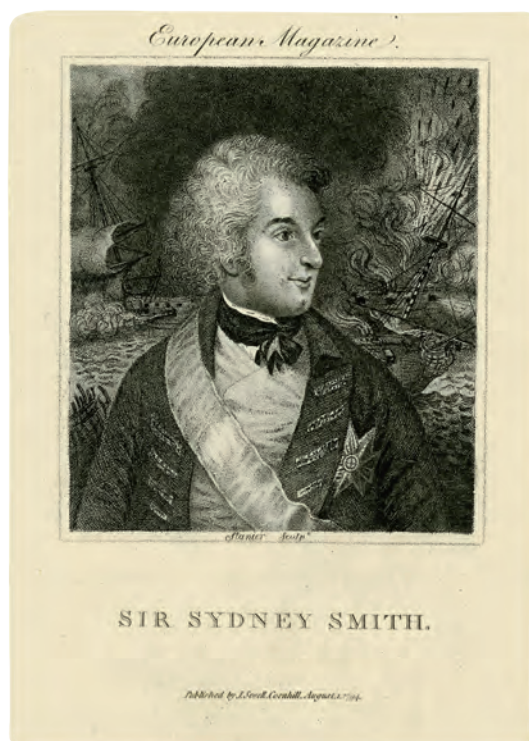
has become a major area of research in recent years. Although the concept of fame has a much longer history, scholars generally agree that celebrity—defined as a wide-reaching, commodified type of fame that is produced through the mass-media circulation of an individual's image—first emerged in the long eighteenth century, when the growth of the press and the print market established an extensive apparatus for disseminating fame.[28] Studies of early celebrity have typically focused on stage performers, literary personalities, and others in the arts.[29] Cheryl Wanko suggests that this bias has arisen because "activities traditionally considered not very useful or important (such as singing or acting, in comparison to military prowess) generate the surprising divorce between meaningful achievement and the level of renown that helps characterise modern celebrity."[30] However, as the psychologist David Giles argues, celebrity should be "seen as a *process*," which can apply to anyone: it does not describe *what* an individual is known for but rather *how* he or she becomes known.[31] Proceeding on this basis, an increasing number of scholars are now investigating the phenomenon of eighteenth-century celebrity in relation to various public figures, from military personnel and explorers to statesmen and radicals.[32]

In eighteenth-century Britain, there was a particularly well-developed culture of naval celebrity, from which Smith profited. The prominence of naval officers within the British cultural imagination at this time was linked to the nation's emergence as the world's dominant maritime power. Britain's manifold successes at sea during the eighteenth century were seized upon as grist to the mill of national mythmaking, constructing a powerful identity for Britain as a "maritime nation," the prowess and virtues of which were embodied in its naval heroes.[33] At the same time, officers in the Royal Navy faced fierce internal competition for the best assignments. Promotions were awarded through a combination of merit and patronage, meaning that officers needed to exhibit their talent as frequently and publicly as possible in order to impress their superiors.[34] Distinguishing oneself in the course of one's naval duties could also have social benefits, enabling officers to gain access to the upper ranks of fashionable society. Cultivating a heroic public image was therefore important. Throughout the eighteenth century, a vast body of popular literature, including books, newspapers, pamphlets, and ballads, chronicled the exploits of the nation's leading military and naval commanders, granting these individuals the kind of public visibility associated with celebrity status. Alongside this textual coverage, portraits of naval officers circulated as prints, appeared as magazine illustrations, and annually adorned the walls of the Royal Academy's summer exhibition.

Smith's career exemplifies the processes through which a naval officer could become a public figure. He first tasted fame in January 1794 after he was singled out for praise in official reports from the evacuation of Toulon, where he had been instrumental in destroying French ships in the harbor.[35] Laudatory articles appeared in contemporary newspapers, including one report in the *Public Advertiser* declaring that Smith had "an intrepidity which could be equalled only by his coolness and presence of mind" and that he had done "more in one day towards the destruction of the French navy, than ever was done by any one of our most splendid victories."[36] A few months later, Smith was the subject of a substantial profile in the *European Magazine*, which detailed his family background, education, and early career.[37] An engraved portrait by R. Stanier accompanied the profile (fig. 4).[38] It featured the destruction of Toulon in the background, and although the likeness was crude, Stanier nonetheless emphasized many of the features that would become central to Smith's public image, including the ribbon and star of his Swedish knighthood, his pointed nose, and his short curly hair. Praising Smith's "cool resolution and undaunted courage," the profile concluded with the declaration that "we anticipate the honours he will acquire should the enemy afford him an opportunity."[39]

This statement underscores the extent to which naval officers conducted their careers in the public eye and the weight of expectation under which they labored. Given this context, it is easy to imagine that Smith might have felt frustration during his imprisonment in Paris, which deprived him of opportunities to acquire the honors that the press had anticipated for him.

However, Smith's capture in April 1796 did have the benefit of catapulting his name into the headlines once again. The British newspapers followed closely the developments of his imprisonment.[40] The *Evening Mail*, for example, announced on April 22, 1796: "we learn that Sir Sydney Smith has been sent to Paris. Every person must lament the loss of such an excellent Officer, who has, on every occasion, distinguished himself in the most brave manner."[41] More printed portraits of the captain were issued about this time to capitalize on his resurgent celebrity. These included a mezzotint published on May 2, 1796, by the Norwich-based print-maker Edward Bell (fig. 5). Based on a painting by the artist John Westbrooke Chandler, Bell's mezzotint featured the burning of Toulon in the background, an allusion to Smith's famous earlier exploits reinforcing his reputation as a courageous man of action.

As P. David Marshall notes in his influential study of celebrity, the word is derived from the Latin terms *celebrem*, connoting both "famous" and "thronged," and *celere*, meaning "swift," as in the English word *celerity*.[42] Thus, by definition, a celebrity image is one that

fig. 5 Edward Bell (British, act. 1794–1826) after John Westbrooke Chandler (British, 1764–1804/5). *Sir William Sidney Smith, K.S. of Sweden and Captain in His Majesty's Navy,* 1796. Mezzotint on paper, 19⅞ × 13⅞ in. (50.5 × 35.2 cm). British Museum, London (2010,7081.2807)

rapidly gains widespread exposure and popular recognition. By the same token, celebrity can be short-lived, fading from memory as quickly as it emerges. However, in Smith's case, political factors kept his plight in the public eye. His imprisonment received regular notice in parliamentary debates and political pamphlets, typically from pro-war Tories who exaggerated Smith's suffering in order to vindicate the continuation of the war effort: no peace could be made, they argued, with enemies who treated prisoners of war so barbarously. Edmund Burke, for instance, wrote an open letter in 1797 opposing the idea of a peace settlement with France, in which he declared that the bleakness of Smith's captivity "will best be understood, by knowing, that amongst its *mitigations*, was the permission to walk occasionally in the court [the courtyard of the prison], and to enjoy the privilege of shaving himself."[43] In fact, Smith enjoyed comfortable living conditions and extensive personal liberty within the Temple. However, while statements like Burke's were inaccurate and propagandistic, they nonetheless ensured that Smith's ordeal remained current in British public discourse. From his knowledge of British politics and his correspondence with his friends on the outside, Smith probably had some sense of how his situation was being reported in his native country. Moreover, as a man who understood the workings of the period's nascent celebrity culture, he would have appreciated the value of keeping his image in circulation through the publication of a portrait print.

While likely ignorant of the reputation that his sitter enjoyed on the other side of the Channel, Hennequin would have been familiar with the general conventions of celebrity. The emergence of this new type of fame was a widespread Anglo-European phenomenon, which transcended national boundaries. Antoine Lilti's study of Enlightenment philosophes has provided ample evidence for the existence of an extensive culture of celebrity in eighteenth-century France.[44] However, it was not only the world of celebrity that inspired the drawing in The Met. Another source of inspiration came from a type of image that enjoyed significant public visibility in the wake of the French Revolution: the prison portrait.

PRISON PORTRAITURE

Against a backdrop of revolution, counterrevolution, and radical agitation, prison imagery appeared frequently in exhibition rooms and print shops on both sides of the Channel during the 1790s. Campaigners from across the political spectrum deployed prison-themed portraits for purposes of propaganda and

fig. 6 Louis Pierre Henriquel-Dupont (French, 1797–1892) after Joseph-Benoît Suvée (Flemish, 1743–1807). *Portrait of French Poet André Chénier*, 1838. Etching on chine collé, 13¹¹⁄₁₆ × 8¹³⁄₁₆ in. (34.7 × 22.4 cm). British Museum, London (1927,1008.202)

fig. 7 Jacques Louis David (French, 1748–1825). *Thirius de Pautrizel*, June or July 1795. Pen and gray ink with gray wash and pale brown wash (on the face) over touches of graphite, heightened with white gouache on laid paper, laid down on an old circular mount, Diam. 7⁹⁄₁₆ in. (19.2 cm). Gift of Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (1990.47.2)

protest. Both Hennequin and Smith would have been aware of these images and the public fascination that they inspired. In Britain, sentimental images of Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and other royal martyrs in their prison cells were used to stir up public outrage, the pathos of the regicide being invoked to justify the war against the French regime.[45] At the same time, prints and tokens depicting activists and journalists imprisoned under repressive government laws against "seditious libel" became rallying images for radical and opposition groups.[46] In France, meanwhile, the Revolution spawned numerous high-profile representations of prisons and their inmates. Initially, there were heroic images celebrating prisoners who had suffered under and courageously resisted the tyranny of the ancien régime.[47] However, the prison theme acquired a darker tone during the Reign of Terror in 1793–94. This period was the bloodiest phase of the Revolution, during which Maximilien Robespierre and his radical Jacobin allies took brutal measures against aristocrats, royalists, and moderates. An eventual backlash led to Robespierre's deposition and execution in July 1794, after which the Jacobins found themselves facing persecution. A significant proportion of the prison imagery produced during this turbulent period was created within prisons, as was the case with Joseph-Benoît Suvée's portrait of the poet André Chénier, who was imprisoned with the artist and sat for his portrait shortly before his execution. Suvée exhibited Chénier's portrait at the Salon of 1795, along with images of four

other prisoners, and an etching after the painting was made in 1838 (fig. 6).[48] Other prison-made images circulated privately, such as the scenes of everyday prison life that the painter Hubert Robert produced during his incarceration, or the profile drawings that Jacques Louis David made of his fellow Jacobins after they had been detained, the artist included, for their roles in the Terror regime.[49]

Many of these prison portraits expressed specific political positions. Suvée and his sitters, for example, were anti-Jacobin, while David's profiles endeavored to reframe their disgraced subjects as true representatives of the people. However, scholars generally agree that, despite their differing political orientations, a shared tone of solemnity pervades these works. As Amy Freund argues, the prison portraits of this period sought to evoke "a kind of deathbed sincerity," providing a visual analog to the written self-justifications of political prisoners and the last letters that the condemned wrote to their loved ones.[50] Various pictorial strategies were employed to achieve this effect. Discussing Suvée's portrait of Chénier, Tony Halliday has shown how the sitter's disheveled clothing and the artist's viewpoint (looking slightly down on his subject) combined to create a sense of intimacy.[51] David, meanwhile, peppered his profiles with carefully observed sartorial and physiognomic details, such as loose hairs escaping from queues, wrinkled skin, and gaping buttonholes, as exemplified in the portrait of Thirius de Pautrizel (fig. 7). Here, the specificity of the sitter's face and clothing serves as a visual shorthand for his candor and sincerity.[52] Since Hennequin was David's former pupil and moved in similar political circles, he may have been

aware of David's works. His own drawing of an adolescent boy in Revolutionary costume (fig. 8), sketched in the Temple and dated a few weeks before the drawing in The Met, shares several features with David's prison portraits, including the profile format.[53] Crossing his arms over his chest, his liberty cap pulled down over his scraggly hair, Hennequin's grim-faced boy appears simultaneously defiant and defensive. Although his identity is unknown, it is clear that he was not a prominent Jacobin looking to expiate his controversial past, as David's sitters had been. Nevertheless, eschewing grandeur and pretension, his portrait typifies the earnest and introspective prison imagery of the Terror and its aftermath, a period of national, political, and

personal soul-searching for the Republic's leaders and citizens alike.

For Smith's portrait, however, Hennequin adopted a different visual mode. While the prevalence of prison portraiture in this period must have helped to inspire the creation of the drawing in The Met, it is more glamorous and theatrical than any of the above-mentioned works. As a foreign agent, Smith did not have to endure the same hardships and uncertainty as the French citizens with whom he shared his prison. Moreover, his portrait was intended to address an audience of British viewers, before whom Smith wished to appear heroic. Recognizing the distinctive demands of this commission, Hennequin eschewed the sensitive and politically

freighted imagery of contemporary French prison portraiture in favor of timeless tropes of stoic endurance.

Smith is shown reclining elegantly in his chair, his gaze drifting from his book to the barred window of his cell in a carefully staged display of calm dignity in the face of imprisonment. His status as an officer and a gentleman is affirmed through his richly decorated clothing, which includes his naval uniform coat and the insignia of his Swedish knighthood. He also sports tight-fitting trousers and calf-high Hessian boots, highlighting his distinctive personal style. At a time when most British naval officers still favored breeches, stockings, and buckled shoes, Smith's legwear marked him as a man of fashion who kept abreast of the latest trends.[54] With his coat swept back to expose his thighs, his legs are an important component of the portrait. As Karen Harvey has shown, the accentuation of the lower half of the male body in light-colored clothing functioned as a potent signifier of manhood in the eighteenth century.[55] In Smith's case, his legs act as a manifestation of masculine strength and self-possession, suggesting that, although captive, he remains physically and psychologically undiminished.

Prison imagery was a stock subject of pre-Revolutionary history painting, and Hennequin would have been familiar with examples such as David's *Death of Socrates* (1787; Metropolitan Museum) and François-André Vincent's *Arria and Paetus* (1784; Saint Louis Art Museum).[56] Featuring bare stone walls, minimal furnishings, and a barred window, his representation of the Temple prison in the drawing in The Met echoes the austere visual vocabulary of these historical works. Smith is thus framed as the protagonist in a heroic narrative of captivity and fortitude, recalling ennobling precedents in classical literature and historical art. However, other details within the portrait bring more specific anglophone references into play. As we shall see, allusions to well-known works of English literature further enriched the meaning of the portrait for the intended British audience.

POETIC REFERENCES

Two words are written on the pages of Smith's book: "tragedy" and "Caractacus." This inscription referred to a celebrated dramatic work by the eighteenth-century British poet William Mason, whose writings were highly regarded in his own time.[57] Modeled—in the author's words—"on the Ancient Greek [art of] tragedy," Mason's *Caractacus* was published in 1759 and later adapted for the stage, becoming an instant hit following its first performance in 1777. Twenty years later,

the text was included in *Bell's British Theatre*, confirming its place in the literary and theatrical canon of the day.[58] There was thus a good chance that British viewers of the portrait would have recognized the reference. Hennequin was probably not familiar with Mason's work, but Smith loved poetry and could recite his favorite passages of English, Latin, and French literature from memory.[59] It therefore seems likely that the captain devised this poetic reference, maybe even adding the words "tragedy" and "Caractacus" to the drawing himself.

The reference to a British poem was perhaps intended to demonstrate Smith's patriotic ardor. The subject matter of *Caractacus* was rich in patriotic significance, having been drawn from Britain's ancient past—a world of druids, bards, and warriors that was frequently invoked by eighteenth-century writers seeking to construct a British national mythology.[60] The poem is set during the Roman invasion of Britain in the first century A.D. The title character is a Celtic chieftain engaged in a doomed battle to defend his homeland. In a narrative full of warlike imagery, Caractacus is characterized as an inspiring military leader. By identifying himself with this fearsome warrior, Smith perhaps hoped to suggest his own martial prowess. Added to this, imprisonment was an important motif within the poem, serving as a foil for the ideal of liberty that was Mason's central theme.[61] The story ends when Caractacus is captured and deported to Rome for incarceration, a fate that he accepts with dignity and grace. *Caractacus* was therefore an appropriate poem for Smith's situation, offering a literary model for the heroic endurance of captivity.

The lines of poetry inscribed on the drawing's mount are also drawn from Mason's oeuvre:

> With what a leaden and retarding weight
> Does expectation load the wing of time.
>
> The pen of fate dipped in its deepest gall
> Perhaps on that ill omen'd wall
> Now writes the event of this tremendous day.
> Oh! That our weaker sight
> Could read the mystic characters & say
> That to the unpurged mortal eye
> Is hid in endless night.
>
> Suspense! Thou frozen guest begone
> The wretch whose rugged bed
> Is spread on thorns, more softly rests his head
> Than he that sinks amid the Cygnet's down
> If thou tormenting fiend be nigh

To prompt his irksome doubt, his useless sigh
His wish, his prayer, for lingering certainty.

These lines come not from *Caractacus* but from Mason's earlier poem *Elfrida*, first published in 1752.[62] Like *Caractacus*, *Elfrida* is a patriotic tragedy about a subject from British history. The plot follows the romantic tribulations of a tenth-century noblewoman (the eponymous heroine), culminating in her forced marriage to Edgar, king of England, after his murder of her beloved husband, Athelwold. Elfrida speaks the first two of the above-quoted lines near the beginning of the poem as she awaits her husband's return from the royal court.[63] The other stanzas inscribed on the mount are uttered later by the chorus. They highlight the suspense brought about by the arrival of Edgar at the home of Elfrida and Athelwold, his presence throwing the fates of the couple into jeopardy.[64]

At first glance, *Elfrida*'s narrative of threatened female virtue seems to offer few parallels for Smith's situation as a prisoner of war. However, these particular passages appear to have been chosen because they foreground the psychological effects of uncertainty, referring to the "leaden and retarding weight" of expectation and the "frozen guest" of suspense. While not explicitly concerning prisoners, such sentiments recalled the melodramatic conception of imprisonment as a source of mental anguish that, as John Bender has shown, became a powerful part of the English literary imaginary during the eighteenth century.[65] On one level, then, the mount's poetic gloss invited viewers to sympathize with Smith's plight. At the same time, the captain's dignified composure in the portrait is far removed from the state of anxious insomnia described in the verses. The juxtaposition of text and image therefore served to enhance Smith's characterization as a stoic hero capable of rising above the stresses of captivity.

It is notable that the source of the poetic extracts on the mount is never mentioned. Without this information, the viewer is encouraged to assume that they come from the book in Smith's hand. The feminine themes of *Elfrida* are thus obscured in favor of the masculine associations of *Caractacus*. This is not necessarily a deliberate deception. If Smith added the verses to the portrait himself during his incarceration, he may not have had access to the original text. Quoting from memory, he could have confused one Mason poem with another. With its emphasis upon manly resistance and martial prowess, *Caractacus* was certainly better suited to the heroic tone of the portrait.

The addition of an anglophone literary gloss to the drawing appears to have been undertaken with a view to its publication as a print in Britain. Cosway copied precisely the portrait's poetic inscriptions in her etching, leading to the inclusion of the same lines in *A Congratulatory Poem on the Escape of Sir Sidney Smith from France, and His Happy Arrival in England*, which was published to commemorate the prison break that freed the captain in April 1798. The *Congratulatory Poem* included the following footnote, which perpetuated the misattribution of the verses to *Caractacus*, rather than *Elfrida*: "the above extract from Mason's *Caractacus* is introduced beneath the engraved Portrait of Sir Sidney Smith, as reading that dramatic poem, and taken originally, in the tower of the Temple, by Hennequin, a French artist."[66] This reference indicates that the portrait's poetic references did indeed inform how the print was presented to and understood by British audiences.

LEGACY

Reported in the British newspapers as a dramatic and opportunistic flight (although it was actually a well-planned and smoothly executed operation), Smith's escape from prison in 1798 reinvigorated his public profile and provided another opportunity for self-promotion, as the *Congratulatory Poem* demonstrates.[67] The identity of the poem's author is not known, but the text was widely recognized in the literary press as a puff piece originating from Smith's inner circle. The *British Critic*, for example, noted that "the zeal of friendship is more conspicuous in this poem than the fire of genius," and the *Critical Review* stated that it was "the production of one who is well acquainted with Sir Sydney."[68] The poem's reference to Hennequin's drawing and the resulting print suggests that the portrait remained relatively well known one year after its publication. It also demonstrates how successive visual and textual representations built upon one another to construct Smith's reputation.

This pattern continued throughout his career. Vying for attention against other successful naval officers, including, notably, Horatio Nelson (another talented self-publicist), Smith courted celebrity at every opportunity, making further use of portraiture to hone his flamboyant public image. For example, he was quick to capitalize upon his prominent role at the siege of Acre in spring 1799. As an officer in the Mediterranean fleet and a diplomatic envoy to the Ottoman court, Smith successfully reinforced the Turkish garrison in the city, enabling them to withstand a siege from

Napoleon's invading army.[69] Afterward, he commissioned the painter John Eckstein to produce a highly theatrical portrait celebrating his actions (fig. 9). Evoking heroic ideals of leadership and daring, Eckstein's image shows Smith brandishing his sword and leading Ottoman troops into battle, a Turkish sash tied raffishly around his waist. The portrait was publicly exhibited in 1802 and published in mezzotint the following year, joining numerous depictions of the same subject that were already circulating on the print market.[70] Examples include the *Defence of the Breach at St. Jean D'Acre by Sir William Sidney Smith* (fig. 10), which was engraved by Anthony Fogg after a painting by William Hamilton in 1802, and *The Gallant Behaviour of Sir Sydney Smith at the Seige* [sic] *of Acre*, which appeared as an illustration in George Courtney Lyttleton's three-volume *History of England* in 1803.[71]

These lively images of Smith's Turkish escapades came to some extent to dominate his public image, the siege of Acre supplanting his imprisonment in the public memory. Nevertheless, the portrait in The Met was not totally forgotten. Cosway's print after the

fig. 9 John Eckstein (British, act. 1787–d. 1838). *Sir William Sidney Smith; Possibly Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar ('Jazzar or Djezzar Pasha') and Two Unknown Men,* 1801–2. Oil on canvas, 93½ × 57 in. (237.5 × 144.8 cm). National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 832)

drawing was mentioned in two biographies produced at the end of Smith's life: Edward Howard's *Memoirs of Admiral Sir Sidney Smith* (1839), published the year before its subject's death, and John Barrow's *Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir William Sidney Smith* (1848). The latter was based on Smith's own papers and autobiographical writings, which—in accordance with his lifelong desire to cultivate his reputation—he had left to his executors with instructions for their publication.[72] The fact that Howard and Barrow refer to the print testifies to its lasting impact: it was remembered more than forty years after its creation.

Yet, while both biographers were aware that the portrait had been drawn inside the Temple prison, they erroneously declared that Cosway herself had produced the original sketch.[73] Barrow alleged that Cosway visited Smith in his cell: "among the female visitors at the Temple is mentioned Mrs. Cosway, who employed her pencil in taking [Smith's] miniature portrait."[74] Meanwhile, Howard claimed the portrait was based on surreptitious observation from the outside, suggesting that Cosway "contrived to obtain a sight of Sir Sidney from a window or by some other means, and made a sketch of him as he sat by the bars of his prison."[75] It is not clear what the sources were for these stories, but it is easy to understand why the idea of Cosway's authorship appealed. Naming Cosway as the drawing's creator enabled Howard and Barrow to frame the work's significance in terms of contemporary gender stereotypes. In their accounts, the portrait became an expression of the artist's "natural" feminine regard for a masculine hero. This interpretation echoed a wider theme within the two biographies, both of which stressed Smith's success in attracting the support and sympathy of women. For example, they asserted that he received secret aid during his incarceration from a trio of women living opposite the prison.[76] Barrow also published a poem supposedly written by "a young lady" upon receiving a copy of Cosway's etching. In this poem, the female author engages in a patriotic and sentimental reading of the image, tracing "in the mimic semblance . . . the pensive languor of a captive's breast" and hailing Smith as the object of "a nation's love."[77] The poem thus further entrenched the portrait within a discourse of feminine admiration, which occluded the ironies of its real history.

In erasing Hennequin from the story, Howard and Barrow sidestepped the most problematic aspects of the drawing's production. They did not have to acknowledge that its artist was a foreign revolutionary with radical beliefs, or that Smith had paid for his services,

fig. 10 Anthony Fogg (British, act. 1792–1806) after William Hamilton (British, 1751–1801). *Defence of the Breach at St. Jean D'Acre by Sir William Sidney Smith,* published April 7, 1802. Engraving, 21⅛ × 24 in. (53.5 × 60.9 cm). National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG D1367)

displaying what could be construed as a conceited interest in his own image. Such points would not have sat comfortably with the conventions of early Victorian naval biography, a genre that typically offered idealized depictions of national heroes.[78] However, it is the portrait's complex history that should concern scholars today. As this article has shown, Hennequin's drawing can be understood in the context of the eighteenth century's burgeoning culture of celebrity, the portrait having been designed with the intention of enhancing the sitter's public profile. It demonstrates how key aspects of celebrity culture, including the use of portraiture in the production of popular fame, transcended national and political divides. Despite their ideological differences, Hennequin recognized in Smith someone who appreciated the value of a portrait print. The result is a unique cross-cultural production, combining references to French art and English literature. The fact that it was conceived, executed, and sent for publication from within one of the most formidable prisons in Revolutionary Paris is a testament to the artist's resourcefulness in the face of bleak personal circumstances and to the resilience of the sitter's desire for publicity.

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NOTES

1 Smith's name is spelled "Sydney" in some historical sources.
2 William Sidney Smith II inherited the drawing from his uncle. His description of the portrait, featuring the reference to "solemn poetry," is pasted to the back of the drawing's mount.
3 The print's publication line reads "Published by the Proprietor at No. 91, New Bond Street," which was Poggi's address.
4 For Hennequin's release, see Hennequin 1933, 189n1.
5 For Cosway's life and career, see Lloyd 2005.
6 Jean-Clément Martin estimates that 500,000 people were incarcerated at some point between 1789 and 1799. See Bohm 2001, 3.
7 See Sophie Matthiesson's 2016 doctoral thesis on the prison-made object in the French Revolution.
8 For example, Lajer-Burcharth 1994; Halliday 1999, 76–82; Freund 2014, 126–61; Baumgartner 2019.
9 The following account of Smith's career is based on Russell 1964 and Pocock 2013.
10 For Smith's espionage work, see Durey 1999.
11 Ibid., 441–42.
12 *The Times* (London), July 18 and 19, 1796; Durey 1999, 445.
13 Durey 1999, 444.
14 For British representations of the Temple, see Bindman 1989, 131.
15 Durey 1999, 451.
16 Howard 1839, 1:136.
17 Durey 1999, 449.
18 Ibid., 443.
19 The following account of Hennequin's career is based on Hennequin 1933 and Benoit 1994.
20 For the persecution of Babeuf and his followers, see Rose 1978.
21 See Hennequin 1933, 173–83, for the artist's imprisonment.
22 The original manuscripts are in the Archives et Musée de la Littérature, Brussels (ML 9398). De Haes 2007.
23 Hennequin 1933, 187–88.
24 Stein 2005, no. 69.
25 Hennequin 1933, 186.
26 Duke of Wellington to John Wilson Croker, 1826, in Jennings 1884, 1:348.
27 Durey 1999, 454.
28 For an overview of scholarship on eighteenth-century celebrity, see Wanko 2011.
29 For example, Luckhurst and Moody 2005; Mole 2007; Engel 2011.
30 Wanko 2011, 352.
31 Giles 2000, 2.
32 For example, Banister 2018, 151–84; Jones and Joule 2018, part 2; Scobie 2019.
33 For the idea of the "maritime nation," see Quilley 2011.
34 For eighteenth-century British naval officers' careers, see Rodger 2001 and Wilson 2017.
35 *London Packet*, January 15–17, 1794; *Sun* (London), January 17, 1794; *General Evening Post* (London), January 16–18, 1794; *London Chronicle*, January 16–18, 1794.
36 *Public Advertiser* (London), January 17, 1794.
37 *European Magazine*, July 1794, 3–4.
38 For Smith's iconography, see Walker 1985 (2020 ed.).
39 *European Magazine*, July 1794, 4.
40 For example, *Daily Advertiser* (London), April 22, 1796; *General Evening Post* (London), April 21–23, 1796; *Gentleman's Magazine* 66, part 1 (January–June 1796): 346.
41 *Evening Mail* (London), April 20–22, 1796.
42 Marshall 1997, 4–6.
43 Burke 1797, 22. See also *Parliamentary Register* 5 (1798): 320 and *The Senator* 20 (1797): 607.

44 Lilti 2017. See also Kathryn Desplanque's work on eighteenth-century French artists and celebrity; Desplanque 2016.

45 Barrell 1998; Bindman 1989, 131.

46 For examples, see Bindman 1989, 190–206, and Barrell 2007.

47 Examples include Antoine Vestier's portrait of Henri Masers de Latude (Musée Carnavalet, Paris), which was exhibited at the Salon of 1789 and published as an etching. Latude was famed for his escape from the Bastille.

48 Suvée's *Chénier* is in a private collection. See Join-Lambert and Leclair 2017, no. P.178, and Halliday 1999, 76–82.

49 For Robert's prison portraits, see Baumgartner 2019; for David's, see Lajer-Burcharth 1994.

50 Freund 2011, 336.

51 Halliday 1999, 76–78.

52 Freund 2014, 76–77.

53 This drawing was sold in *Maîtres anciens & du XIXᵉ siècle*, sale cat., Artcurial, Paris, June 16, 2020, lot 88.

54 For boots in eighteenth-century fashion, see McCormack 2017.

55 Harvey 2015, 807.

56 Lorenz Eitner (1978) provides an overview of eighteenth-century prison imagery.

57 For Mason's career, see Draper 1924 and Addison 2011.

58 *Caractacus* appeared in *Bell's British Theatre* 31 (1797). For the poem (Mason 1759), see Addison 2011, 86–91.

59 Barrow 1848, 2:471.

60 For ancient Britain in eighteenth-century art, see Smiles 1994.

61 Addison 2011, 87.

62 *Elfrida* was adapted for the stage in 1772 and included in *Bell's British Theatre* 34 (1797).

63 Mason 1752, 12.

64 Ibid., 42. The penultimate line on the drawing diverges from Mason's text, which reads "To prompt his starting tear, his ceaseless sigh."

65 Bender 1987.

66 Anonymous 1798, 13–14. Many thanks to Christina J. Faraday for facilitating my access to this text.

67 For Smith's escape, see Durey 1999.

68 *British Critic* 12 (1798): 667; *Critical Review* 24 (1798): 352.

69 For Smith's role in the Siege of Acre, see Pocock 2013, 104–30.

70 Anthony Cardon's stipple engraving of Eckstein's portrait was published on January 1, 1803; an impression is in the British Museum, London (1857,0613.288). For the portrait's exhibition history, see Walker 1985 (2020 ed.).

71 Lyttleton 1803, vol. 3, facing p. 513. An impression of *The Gallant Behaviour of Sir Sydney Smith* can be seen in the British Museum, London (1873,0510.1240).

72 Barrow 1848, 1:v–ix.

73 Cosway may have produced a painting based on the drawing, since a note on the reproduction of the drawing in the Courtauld Institute of Art's Witt Library refers to a painted version of the portrait (currently untraced) that was with Brumhead, Cutts and Co., London, in 1920. Benoit 1994, 145.

74 Barrow 1848, 1:207.

75 Howard 1839, 1:135.

76 Ibid., 111–12; Barrow 1848, 1:200–201.

77 Barrow 1848, 1:207–8.

78 Hamilton 1980.

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