Paper Palaces:
the Topham Collection as a source for British Neo-Classicism

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Curated by Lucy Gwynn & Adriano Aymonino

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A Window on Antiquity: the Topham Collection
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with Lucy Gwynn and Mirco Modolo
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This catalogue is dedicated to the memory of Louisa M. Connor Bulman.
This exhibition explores a beautiful, extensive, but now largely neglected collection of drawings housed at Eton College Library since the 1730s. The collection, assembled by Richard Topham (1671-1730) for private study, was in essence a reconstruction on paper of the staggering collections of antique sculptures, reliefs, frescoes, and other classical remains to be found in early eighteenth-century Rome. Some two decades after its deposition at Eton, the Topham Collection became one of the most important sources for British taste in classical art and decoration. The story of how these drawings came to be used by Robert Adam (1728-1792), one of the greatest of British architects, to create a new and highly influential idiom for the decoration of domestic interiors is shown through the exhibition and the accompanying catalogue.

The great variety of the Topham Collection, and the distinction of the artists involved, could easily sustain a much larger exhibition and a much longer catalogue. We have chosen, instead, to focus on some of those drawings which have had the most interesting afterlife: the copies of ancient ceilings and wall elevations done by Francesco Bartoli (1675-1733) in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. These drawings had a significant and enduring impact on British neo-classical style, above all through their adoption by Adam and his fellow architect Charles Cameron. Through their architecture, design and publications, the influence of Topham’s Collection was felt not only in Britain but also throughout Europe and amongst later generations of architects and designers.

With this exhibition, therefore, we hope to show the important influence that the Topham Collection had upon the development of British antiquarianism and classical taste as part of the wider history of European neo-classicism. We hope, too, that others will draw pleasure from exploring these intricate, bright and fascinating drawings, as we have while preparing the exhibition.
Richard Topham & Eton
by Lucy Gwynn

The construction of the current Fellows’ Library, paid for largely by subscription and completed in 1729 according to designs by Thomas Rowland (c. 1696-1748), was to some extent an act of faith. The College Library cannot have consisted of more than 2500 volumes at the turn of the eighteenth century, but the Fellows of Eton had built themselves a library which could hold a collection of some 20,000 books.1 It was a leap that was quickly justified, as the 1730s saw a series of distinguished gifts to the College, including the books of Bishop Edward Waddington (1670?-1731) and Provost Henry Godolphin (1648-1733) (the instigator of the building project). These gifts added to a collection which already reflected the academic interests of Eton’s Fellows over the preceding centuries, strong in classical and Renaissance literature and theology. The last great gift of the 1730s, the library of Richard Topham of Windsor, altered the tenor of the Library both as a collection of books, and as an institution.

Richard Topham had been born in Windsor in 1671, was educated at Eton, matriculated at Trinity College, Oxford in 1689, and was studying at Lincoln’s Inn in 1691. He came from a local family, owned the manor of Clewer Brocas as well as a grand house in Praced Street, Windsor, and was MP for Windsor from 1698 until 1713.2 Between the early 1690s until his death, he assembled an astonishing collection of books, prints, drawings and objects which were focused almost entirely on the documentation and paper-based reconstruction of the culture and heritage of ancient Rome and Greece. The library that came to Eton had over 1500 titles, and consisted largely of editions of classical texts (with an emphasis on the most recent or most significant editions), and associated literary criticism; printed illustrations and catalogues of antique remains; ancient histories; numismatics, sculpture and architecture; and some English histories and miscellaneous books. In addition, the library included nearly 2500 drawings ‘from the antique’ of statues, cameos, reliefs, mosaics and architectural remains.

Topham’s approach to collecting was enthusiastic, personally committed, and methodical. His finding aids, or catalogues, demonstrate that after an initial period in which a clerk listed the books, he updated and added entries himself. He replaced old editions of texts when they were superseded by more recent scholarship, and where only sixteenth or seventeenth century editions existed, he purchased these.3 His catalogue of the antique contents of thirty-three Roman palaces and villas, compiled in his own hand in Italian, shows him systematically ordering drawings of artefacts and marking their receipt in England, effectively creating a paper copy of the vast collections of antiquities then in Rome.4

When Topham died in 1730, he had resolved his original bequest that his library should be gifted to Eton College, due to concerns that Eton would not provide the public access he desired. His executors were left to arrange for the library’s accommodation, and, in 1736, were finally able to arrange for its transfer to Eton, as a result of certain conditions made for the maintenance and accessibility of the books, prints and drawings. The arrival of Topham’s library not only added a sophisticated scholarly library and art collection to Eton’s holdings, but also initiated a period of around fifty years when the College Library was open to visiting readers. That Topham and his friends intended his collection to function as a public reference library for classical studies after his death is implied by the gift, four years later, of Lord Burlington’s Fabbriche antiche of Palladio, inscribed ‘in bibliothecam Tophamianam collocandus’. This exhibition is testament to the uses Topham’s collection was put to by the artists and architects of the eighteenth century, and the impact this brief period of openness at College Library had on the development of European art and design.

“All my books, prints and drawings that are kept and placed in my new library, to be delivered to the said Provost and Fellows as soon as they shall have finished and fitted up a safe and convenient repository in their new Library for receiving and keeping them... and my will is that all learned persons at convenient seasons may have recourse to and reasonable use of said books, prints and drawings...”

Will of Richard Topham, proved 2 Nov. 1730.1

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Cataloguing Notes

Only the most relevant literature is reported for each entry; where no literature is reported, this means that the drawing or item has remained unpublished to date.

For the Adam drawings preserved in the Sir John Soane’s Museum, apart from the relevant literature reported in each entry, the reader can also consult the online catalogues of the travel drawings of Robert and James Adam compiled by professor Alan Tait and the drawings from the office of Robert and James Adam compiled by Dr. Frances Sands (in progress).

www.jeromeonline.co.uk/drawings/index.cfm

For the drawings by Francesco Bartoli preserved in the Topham collection at Eton College Library, the Catalogue refers to Ashby, 1914, the only published catalogue of the Bartoli drawings at Eton. Ashby used his own numbering system, whilst we have reverted to the location-specific album and drawing numbers imposed in the eighteenth century. Ashby’s album numbers correspond to ECL album numbers thus:

Ashby Eton I = ECL Bn4
Ashby Eton II = ECL Bn5
Ashby Eton III = ECL Bn6
Ashby Eton IV = ECL Bn7
Ashby Eton V = ECL Bn8
Ashby Eton VI (Mahogany Case) = ECL TP
Ashby Eton VII = ECL Br9

Measurement:
Measurements are given in millimetres. The measurement for height is followed by that for width. Where the measurements of prints are given, the measurement is the size of the plate, rather than the page.

Abbreviations:
AC Archives of the Duke of Northumberland, Alnwick Castle, Alnwick
ECL Eton College Library, Eton
GUL Glasgow University Library, Glasgow
HHL Holkham Hall Library, Holkham Hall, Norfolk
LWL Lewis Walpole Library, Farmington, CT
NAS National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh
RIBA Royal Institute of British Architects, London
SM Sir John Soane’s Museum, London
WRL Royal Library, Windsor Castle, Windsor

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Catalogue item 14, 33: The Earl and Countess of Harewood and Trustees of the Harewood House Trust
Catalogue item 20: The Mellerstain Trust
Catalogue item 21: The National Trust
Section 4, fig. 4: Sir Edward Dawood

Catalogue entries were written respectively by: Adriano Aymonino (nos. 3-4, 7-14, 16-21, 26-27, 29-33, 37-40, 42, 45, 47); Lucy Gwynn (nos. 1-2, 5-6); Mirco Modolo (nos. 15, 22-25, 28, 34-36, 41, 43-44, 46).
Section I: Richard Topham and his collection

Consisting of more than 3,000 drawings, watercolours and prints after antique sculptures and frescoes in Rome and Italy, the collection amassed by Richard Topham is the largest of its kind assembled in Britain. Simultaneously, the collection is one of the most significant resources for the history of antiquaries and for the culture and industry of the Grand Tour in Europe.

Richard Topham belonged to a generation of virtuosi and civil servants who, by education and political inclinations, perceived and sought to promote a direct use of the remains of classical antiquity for the culture and industry of the Grand Tour in Europe.

The meticulousness of the collection’s arrangement was supported by ‘finding aids’ compiled by Topham himself, which are the best evidence of his systematic approach.

A category in which the Collection is particularly rich are the copies of ancient ceilings and wall elevations by Francesco Bartoli, son of the more famous and talented draughtsman Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635–1700) (cat. 15, 24, 25, 28, 34, 35, 36, 41, 44, 46 and figs 5, 7).

If Topham’s ‘paper museum’ is not unique – others were assembled around the same time by Talman himself and by celebrated collectors like Henry Ffres, Lord Coleraine (1693–1749), Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester (1697–1759) and Dr Richard Mead (1673–1754) – its peculiarity lies in its sheer size and in its topographical arrangement.

While the general approach of antiquarian publications was to show antiquities either by artistic typology or by their subject, the Topham drawings were systematically arranged by location, thus providing invaluable documentation on the collections in Roman palaces and villas in the first decades of the eighteenth century.

On many fronts, the efforts of Richard Topham and other virtuosi of his generation to improve classical scholarship and reform the national taste were decisive: with their libraries, collections and paper museums they laid the ground for the revival of classical antiquity in the architecture, arts and culture of the eighteenth century.
The Renaissance architects. Claude Perrault used Desgodets’ findings as a basis for his belief that the orders could be subject to free interpretation. Desgodets’ meticulous approach established a model for the great architectural surveys of the late eighteenth century: Robert Woods’ Ruins of Palmyra (1753), Julien-David Le Roy’s Ruines de Plus Beaux Monuments de la Grèce (1758), and James ‘Athenian’ Stuart and Nicholas Revett’s Antiquities of Athens (1762-1816).

Cat. no. 3
Pompeo Batoni (1708-1787)
Endymion on Mount Latmos
Red chalk on paper
468 x 362
Undated: c. 1730
Inscribed in pen on verso, lower centre: ‘Rom. 61, no. 50’; inscribed in pen on verso: ‘Palazzo Albani con lettera A’.


ECL, Bm6.50

Pompeo Batoni, one of the young artists employed by Francesco Imperiali to supply drawings for Richard Topham, was destined to become the most successful portrait painter of eighteenth-century Grand Tour travellers. The fifty-three red chalk drawings that he produced for Topham can be considered among the finest copies after classical statuary produced in the eighteenth century.

This exceptionally subtle drawing depicts a relief that was found on the Aventine Hill in Rome in the early eighteenth century. It later entered the celebrated collection of Cardinal Alessandro Albani (1692-1779) and was displayed at the palazzo Albani del Drago at the Quattro Fontane, where Batoni copied it. The relief was among the group of antiquities sold by the cardinal in 1733-34 to Pope Clement XII (1652-1740) to form the nucleus of the Capitoline Museums, where it is well preserved today. Following the topographical division of the collection, most of the drawings in volume Bm6 are related to the collections in Palazzo Albani del Drago at the Quattro Fontane.
Cat. no. 4

Giovanni Domenico Campiglia (1692-1775)

Marcus Curtius leaping into the gulf

Black lead pencil on paper

404 x 554

Undated: c. 1725

Inscribed in pen on recto, lower centre: ‘Bm 2 vol; 2 no. 90’; inscribed in pen on verso, lower centre: ‘Villa Borghese. Famoso Curtio in atto di precipitarsi col cavallo nella voragine’.

Literature: Connor Bulman 1993, p. 34; fig. 5; Connor Bulman 2002b, pp. 65-67, fig. 9; Connor Bulman 2006, p. 329, fig. 11.

ECL, Bm2.90

Campiglia, better known for his prodigious output as a designer of reproductive prints, was one of the most gifted draftsmen employed by Imperiali to produce copies after the antique for Richard Topham. Hundreds of his drawings, the vast majority in black chalk, are still preserved at Eton and are easily recognizable for their soft treatment and high quality. This drawing depicts an ancient high relief, which, at the time Campiglia copied it, was fixed to the south façade of the Casino Borghese (today Galleria Borghese) in Rome. The Borghese Curtius was one of the most admired ancient reliefs in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was included in many antiquarian publications and guides to Rome (figs 1-2). During the refurbishment of the Casino in the 1770s, the relief was brought inside the entrance hall, where it can still be admired today.

V olumes Bm1, Bm2 and most of Bm3 are devoted to the large collections of antiquities of the Borghese family.

Cat. no. 5

Richard Topham (1671-1731)

ECL, Finding aid 1:

‘Catalogue of printed books’

Begun c. 1712


We know that Topham employed a librarian at his house in Windsor (a Mr Vowles, who was later to be employed by Eton as librarian-keeper, thereby fulfilling one of the College’s obligations under Topham’s will). Nonetheless, Topham added and corrected his own catalogues until the time of his death, implying a keen interest in his collection and its organisation.

Cat. no. 6

Richard Topham (1671-1731)

ECL, Finding aid 2:

‘Bassi relievì, pitture antiche, gruppi, statue, busti, vasi, etc. in diversi palazzi di Roma’

1720s

Literature: Connor 1993, pp. 26-29.

This listing by Topham forms the basis of his topographical approach to ordering drawn copies of Roman antiquities. He marks with a dash those artefacts of which he has ordered drawings, and a cross indicates that the drawing had been received. A double cross indicates that the artefact already existed as a print, for instance in Giovanni Pietro Bellori and Pietro Santi Bartoli’s Admiranda Romanarum antiquitatum (1693) (cat. 7). The antiquities in each palace are listed, sometimes room by room, which in turn provides us with a record of the astonishing wealth of the art collections of eighteenth-century Rome, soon to be dispersed by sales and political upheaval.

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Although the passion for antiquity was strong throughout the eighteenth century in Britain, the second half of the century witnessed a renewed enthusiasm for everything Greek and Roman. The unearthing of the remains of Herculaneum and Pompeii in 1738 and 1748 played a fundamental role in driving a new wave of antiquarian scholarship, an explosion in collections of antiquities and the progressive diffusion of a new classical taste. The 1750s saw the publication of some of the most important antiquarian works of the eighteenth century, such as the Comte de Caylus’s Recueil d’antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques, romaines et gauloises (1752-1767), Robert Wood’s Ruins of Palmyra (1753), Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s Antichità romane (1756) and the early volumes of the Antichità di Ercolano esposte (1757-1792) – the eight-volume opus that set off the diffusion of the ‘Pompeian taste’ all over Europe.21

Of the generation of architects whose work was shaped by this new cultural climate, it was undisputedly Robert Adam who aimed at the recreation of antique interiors and decoration in the most original and extensive way. After spending two years in Rome, where he assiduously studied, drew and collected antiquities under the guidance of the French architect Charles Louis Clerisseau (1721-1820), Adam returned to London in 1758 and set up his office with the intention of putting into practice what he had learnt during his Grand Tour. His aim, as he proudly stated in the Works in Architecture (1773-1779), was to bring about a ‘revolution’ in the whole system of architecture by introducing the ‘true style of antique decoration’.22

Although there were several earlier or competing attempts at recreating interiors based on antique examples, notably by William Kent (1685-1748) and by James ‘Athenian’ Stuart (1713-1788), Adam made use of details derived from the repertory of classical antiquity on a scale and with a consistency unknown to his predecessors and contemporaries.23 His aim, as he wrote in a letter to his brother James in 1755, was to outdo rival architects in figures, in bas-reliefs and in ornaments, which, with any tolerable degree of taste so as to apply them properly, make a building appear as different as night from day.24 For ‘figures’ and ‘bas-reliefs’, that is, decorative panels, grisailles, plasterwork plaques and marble tablets, Adam relied extensively on classical ‘narrative’ images available in antiquarian publications that would have been familiar to Richard Topham – and indeed many appear in Topham’s library.25

Above all, the publications produced in the seventeenth century by the celebrated duo Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1613–1696) and Pietro Santi Bartoli (1615-1700) were a constant source of inspiration. Images from their Admiranda Romanarum antiquitatum (1693), the most comprehensive collection of illustrations after Roman reliefs and sarcophagi, are ubiquitous in Adam country and urban houses (see cat. nos 7-8-9).

Section 2: Robert Adam and his antiquarian sources

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The extent to which antiquarian studies and architecture were related in the central decades of the century is evident in the fact that Adam himself embarked on the publication of an archaeological work. Inspired by Robert Wood’s Ruins of Palmyra and his model of ‘on-the-spot’ investigation of ancient monuments, in 1764 Adam published the Ruins of the palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia (cat. 12).
Poster of Nerva in Rome (cat. 7), reappear in several successive Adam’s interiors, such as Home House, London, Kenwood House, Hampstead, London and Newby Hall, Yorkshire.

Cat. no. 10


Cat. no. 11
Robert Adam and Giovan Battista Cipriani (1727-1785)
The Dining Room at Syon House, Middlesex 1763-1764

The decoration of the ceiling of the Dining Room at Syon House was designed by Adam and executed by Cipriani, another of the Italian painters used by Adam to carry out the narrative panels in his interiors. All the figures of the ceiling were based on plates at the first three volumes of the *Antichità d'Ercolano* and were personally chosen by Hugh St. John Percy, who kept his copy of the prestigious publication in the adjoining Library (the dancer in Cat. no. 10 is visible here on the top left figurative medallion). Their application at Syon was one of the very first in Britain and put the villa of the Northumberlands firmly at the vanguard of the national taste. Adam went on using images from the *Antichità d'Ercolano* in various other places such as Home House, London, or Kenwood House, Hampstead, London.

Cat. no. 7
Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1613-1696), Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635-1700)
Admiranda Romanarum antiquitatum, Rome, Giovanni Giacomo & Domenico de Rossi, 1693, plate 36: ‘Palladis Artes’.

Cat. no. 8
Robert Adam (1728-1792)
The Dining Room at Syon House, Middlesex 1763-64

Cat. no. 9
Andrea Casali (c. 1720/24 – after 1783)
Graicule panel for the Dining Room at Syon House, Middlesex Oil on canvas  c. 1763

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Published in London in 1764, this impressive grand folio volume demonstrated to the world, and more importantly to his clients, Adam’s familiarity with the remains of antiquity. Of the various archaeological publications planned by Adam, including a revised and corrected edition of Desgodets’ *Edifices antiques de Rome* (see cat. 2), *Spalatro* is the only one that saw the light. The book was the result of five weeks spent in the Dalmatian town of Spalato (modern day Split) in 1757 at the end of Adam’s Grand Tour. Adam measured the palace in the company of Clérisseau and two collaborators who were to follow him to London, Laurent Benoît Dewez (1731-1812) and Agostino Brunias (c. 1730-1796). Although the book, with the plates executed in Venice under the supervision of Clérisseau, was almost completed by 1762, its publication was postponed in order to avoid competition with Stuart and Revett’s *Antiquities of Athens*, the extremely successful survey of Greek monuments published in that same year. *Spalatro* was originally intended to improve Adam’s burgeoning career but when it came out in 1764 he was already one of the most successful architects of his generation.
Adam may have discovered the copies after the antique by Francesco Bartoli in the Topham Collection through one of his early patrons, many of whom were old Etonians. It was exactly what he needed to give a distinctive identity to his style: an easily accessible treasure trove of brightly coloured drawings after ancient decorations. Of all the other collections of drawings after the antique available in England at that time — such as those of the 1st Earl of Leicester, of the 3rd Earl of Burlington, of Lord Coleraine, or of Dr. Moul — the Topham Collection at Eton was not only the most easily accessible but also contained the most details of ancient ceilings and wall decoration. Surviving copies of the Bartoli drawings in the hands of Agostino Brunias and Giuseppe Manocchi (c. 1731-1782), testify that Adam sent some of his most skilled collaborators to Eton to produce drawings that could be used as a source of patterns by the office (cat. 16-17-29-30). Furthermore, in the collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects is preserved a miscellaneous volume that contains further coloured copies, very likely coming from the Adam office. The Bartoli drawings prompted a rapid change in Adam’s decorative language. The first evident application of details derived from the Eton copies can be found in a series of drawings for the Lady Scarsdale’s Dressing Room at Kedleston Hall, produced in the summer of 1760 (see cat. 18). In the years immediately following, the Bartoli copies became an integral part of Adam’s interior design and direct mentions of them appear in the surviving correspondence of the Adam family. Colour became increasingly important and a flatter, yet more delicate and complex decoration replaced the simpler and thicker forms of previous ceilings and wall elevations. The way Adam employed this source was always original and inventive. It constituted the ‘legitimate’ ancient model from which his fertile imagination could constantly develop new forms and geometric patterns (fig. 3).

If Adam could rely on many publications for the ‘figures’ and the ‘bas-reliefs’ of his interiors, what he lacked at the beginning of his career were sources on ancient ‘ornaments’ that could be used to embellish walls, ceilings and carpets in order to give an antique consistency to the whole. Referred to since the Renaissance as ‘grotesque’, these decorations were derived from ancient walls and ceiling designs discovered in the Roman ‘grotte’, at the end of the fifteenth century, beginning with Nero’s palace, the Domus Aurea.

Adam knew that his success would depend on his ability to provide a new type of decorative language that could be perceived as ‘truly’ antique. During the early years of his practice he searched obsessively for sketches of antique painted ceilings or frescoes that could serve this purpose. In his Roman years of the mid-1750s, while busy sketching and assembling a collection of ‘antique Cornices, freezes, Figures, Basreliev. Vasos, Altars’, both original and casts, Adam also extensively copied examples of grotesque decoration by Raphael (1483-1520) and his pupils or by Pietro Ligozzi (c. 1533-1580) and Alessandro Algardi (1598-1654). All these artists, in his view, had been able to benefit from their study of antique decorations when ‘there was much greater remains of the grotte, than what are now to be seen and therefore could be considered as close to antiquity as one could get.’ He adopted this approach because most of the ancient Roman frescoes and plaster ornaments discovered in the sixteenth and seventeenth century had disappeared or had been destroyed by the time of Adam’s residency in Rome and the few unearthed in the eighteenth century had been in most cases detached and reduced to fragments. Furthermore, access to the recently discovered remains of Pompeii and Herculaneum was granted to very few privileged visitors and copies or drawings were strictly forbidden. Finally, comparatively very few ceilings had been illustrated in antiquarian publications by the late 1750s. It is not surprising, therefore, that the few available in print were used constantly by Adam, James ‘Athenian’ Stuart, James Wyatt (1746-1816) and other British architects of the final decades of the century (cat. 13-14).
the most comprehensive survey of antiquity ever constituted by more than 1,300 engraved plates it constituted the publications of the eighteenth century. With Montfaucon’s most successful and influential antiquarian Bickendorf-Kockel 2010, pp. 66-69.


15 vols, Paris, Florentin Delaulne ... [et al.], L’ antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures by Bernard de Montfaucon (1655-1741) was one of the Antiquité expliquée cat. no. 13

was a contemporary archaeological excavation on new ceilings that had just been discovered in Montfaucon published three plates illustrating different aspects of antique civilisations. Most of the illustrations were copied and re-engraved from previous antiquarian publications such as those by Bellori and Bartoli. Nevertheless, the third supplement published in 1724, Montfaucon published three plates illustrating the Palatine (see also cat. 15). This is a typical example of Adam relying on printed sources for the ornamental scheme of his interiors.

Francesco Bartoli (1675-1733) Drawing of an ancient ceiling from the Palatine Pencil, pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper 428 x 373


The Music Room at Harewood House, Yorkshire Robert Adam (1728-1792) The decorative scheme of his interiors. This is a typical example of Adam by the design of the carpet, and was inspired by the plate in Montfaucon’s ‘The Baths of Augustus’ (cat. 13). The Music Room at Harewood House, originally called Gardthorpe Hall, was jointly built by John Carr (1723-1807) and Robert Adam for Edwin Lascelles (1712-1759) from 1739. Between 1765 and 1771 Adam was also in charge of fitting up the interior of the ground floor consisting of seventeen rooms, including the highly adored Music Room. The decorative scheme of the ceilings was mirrored, as very often in Adam, from the designs of the carpet, and was inspired by the plate in Montfaucon’s ‘The Baths of Augustus’ (cat. 13). This is a typical example of Adam relying on printed sources for the ornamental scheme of his interiors.

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This unexecuted record drawing is the earliest ceiling-design showing colour in the collection of Adam drawings at the Soane Museum. The choice of colours is similar to those shown on the original Bartoli drawing (cat. 15). This is indicative of how the Bartoli drawings prompted the adoption of a more vibrant palette by Adam and his office.

Cat. no. 17
Adam office, Giuseppe Manocchi
Design for the ceiling of the Library at Mellerstain, 1770–1775
Literature: Bolton 1922, II, p. 252-62; Harris 2001, p. 249, fig. 368. Although Mellerstain’s exterior is one of the first examples of Adam’s castle style, the interiors present his typical language ‘all’antica’. The library ceiling, amongst the first elements to be completed, show how the original drawing and its colour scheme (cat. 19) were executed almost faithfully.

Cat. no. 18
Adam offices, Agostino Brunias
Record drawing of a ceiling for Lady Scarsdale’s Dressing Room at Kedleston Hall, undated: c. 1765
Literature: Bolton 1922, II, Index p. 19; Briont, 1986, p. 83. Kedleston Hall was refurbished by Adam in 1765. It is possible that the drawings were commissioned to replace the portfolio that Brunias likely took with him at the moment of his departure from the Adam office in 1764 (see cat. 16).42 This shows how Adam continued to rely on the Bartoli drawings as a source of inspiration also later in his career. Compared to the drawing by Brunias (cat. 16), Manocchi’s is more faithful to the original (cat. 15) although modifying three figures in the oval medallions.

Cat. no. 19
Adam office, William Hamilton
Design for the ceiling of the Library at Mellerstain House, Berwickshire, as executed with minor alterations
Pen, pen and watercolour and bodycolour on paper
360 x 631
1770
Inscribed in pen on recto, lower centre and right: ‘Ceiling [sic] of the Library and right: ‘Ceiling [sic]’ and in pen, lower centre and right: ‘Ceiling [sic] of the Library and to be completed, show how the original drawing and its colour scheme (cat. 19) were executed almost faithfully.

Cat. no. 20
Robert Adam
The Library at Mellerstain House, Berwickshire
1770–1771
1773

Robert Adam began his refurbishment of Osterley for the Child family in 1764, a task that took twenty years to complete. An Elizabethan building when Adam started his work, the house was eventually completely transformed to show some of the most lavish interiors ever produced by the Scottish architect.

Two of the most celebrated rooms of the house, the Tapestry Room (1772) and the Etruscan Room (1775), have ceilings that still show decorative schemes based on cat. 15, in this case with the introduction of black and terracotta medallions to give it an Etruscan flavour.

Cat. no. 21
Robert Adam
The Etruscan Room, Osterley Park, Middlesex
1773

Robert Adam began his refurbishment of Osterley for the Child family in 1764, a task that took twenty years to complete. An Elizabethan building when Adam started his work, the house was eventually completely transformed to show some of the most lavish interiors ever produced by the Scottish architect.

Two of the most celebrated rooms of the house, the Tapestry Room (1772) and the Etruscan Room (1775), have ceilings that still show decorative schemes based on cat. 15, in this case with the introduction of black and terracotta medallions to give it an Etruscan flavour.

Cat. no. 22
Church of Santa Costanza
4th century AD
Literature: Brandenburg 2004, pp. 69-86.

The church of Santa Costanza on the Via Nomentana on the outskirts of Rome was originally a circular mausoleum constructed by the emperor Constantine the Great in the mid-fourth century AD for his daughters Costanza, or Constantia, and Elena. Converted into a church in 1254, its spectacular mosaics have attracted the attention of artists and architects since the Renaissance, who wrongly considered it an ancient ‘Temple of Bacchus’.43

28

29

28

29
Church of Santa Costanza, details of the mosaics on the vault of the ambulatory
4th century AD


On the inside of the church, the ‘ambulatory’ walkway surrounding the whole inner space is covered with a ring barrel vault decorated with mosaics. These aroused vast interest among artists and antiquarians, as demonstrated by a large number of surviving drawings, such as those by Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Antonio da Sangallo the Elder and Francisco d’Hollanda, or by the illustrations in Sebastiano Serlio’s Third Book on Architecture (1540, pl. 21).45 The mosaics are divided into a series of panels that correspond to the spaces between the columns of the internal colonnade.

The various panels mainly show geometric patterns with frequent references to the harvest, also present in the monumental porphyry sarcophagus of Constantina, once in Santa Costanza and now in the Vatican Museums.

Cat. no. 24
Francesco Bartoli
Drawing of decorative mosaics in the vaulting of S. Costanza
Pen and watercolour on paper
167 x 212
Undated: c. 1721-25
Inscribed in pen on recto, lower centre: ‘B n. 7; n. 92’; inscribed in pen on verso, centre and lower right and left: ‘Fran. Bartoli fece’ and ‘no 22’ and ‘del Palazzo di Augusto’.
Literature: Ashby 1914, Eton IV, 92; Amadio 1986, p. 73, nos 45.

This drawing by Francesco Bartoli reproduces one of the panels from the mosaic ceiling of the ambulatory of Santa Costanza (see cat. 23). Bartoli’s geometric scheme is based on a sequence of modular cruciform elements alternating with octagons. It is likely that this watercolour is a simplified version of earlier drawings by Francesco’s father, Pietro Santi Bartoli, who may have actually seen the ancient vault or copied older drawings.46 Insofar as it is typical of the graphic production of Francesco Bartoli, this is not a perfectly identical copy of his father’s work. For example, only the original red and blue crosses and octagons are reproduced, while significant differences in both shape and colour are introduced in the decorative details within the octagons. The fact
that Francesco Bartoli inscribed the drawing as coming from the Palace of Augustus shows how unreliable his provenances are.

A partial copy of this drawing survives in the drawings collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects.47

Cat. no. 25
Francesco Bartoli
Drawing of decorative mosaics in the vaulting of S. Costanza
Pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper
161 x 221
Undated c. 1720-25
Inscribed in pen on recto, lower centre: ‘B n. 7.} no. 93’; inscribed in pen on verso, lower right: [Franc]co Bartoli fecit’ and ‘del Palazzo di Augusto’ and ‘no 22’.
Literature: Ashby 1914, Eton IV, 92; Amadio 1986, p. 74, no. 47.

This drawing reproduces a different panel of the mosaic ceiling of the ambulatory of Santa Costanza. A series of circular fields, encircled by interweaving coloured bands, depict multiple images of eros and psyche. The remaining spaces, in the shape of octagons with concave sides, feature birds and animals.

As in the case of cat. 24, this watercolour reproduces elements of drawings by Pietro Santi Bartoli.48

Although in this case there are no surviving copies by Brunias or Manocchi of Francesco Bartoli’s drawings from the vault of Santa Costanza, Adam or one of his collaborators must have seen and copied them at Eton. In fact, details which appear only in the Eton renditions of the celebrated mosaics resurface on the carpet for Mrs Montagu’s Chinese room. Adam transformed the rather loose interwoven spirals of cat. 25 into an ‘enclosed guilloche’ for the external square border of Mrs. Montagu’s carpet. At the same time he adapted the red crosses and blue octagons of cat. 24 for the circular inner border.

Cat. no. 26
Adam office hand
Preliminary design for a carpet for Mrs. Montagu’s House, 23 Hill Street
Pencil, pen and watercolour on paper
482 x 415
Undated c. 1766
Inscribed in pen on recto, lower centre: ‘Carpet for Mrs. Montagu’.

SM, Adam 17/167

In the final colourful design Adam retained the cross and octagons, this time complete, for the circular border, while the guilloche in the external border was replaced by continuous swags. The decorative details derived from Bartoli were mixed with several other sources, including Chinese subjects in the four oval medallions to match the general theme of the room. In this way, by a strange twist of fate, mosaic patterns from a Paleochristian mausoleum in Rome, which had been given a new but spurious ‘Augustan’ pedigree by Francesco Bartoli, ended up in a room devoted to the Chinese taste in fashionable Georgian London.

Cat. no. 27
Adam office hand
Design for a carpet for Mrs. Montagu’s House, 23 Hill Street
Pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper
461 x 405
Undated c. 1766
Inscribed in pen on recto, lower centre: ‘Carpet for Mrs. Montagu’.

SM, Adam 17/166

In the final colourful design Adam retained the cross and octagons, this time complete, for the circular border, while the guilloche in the external border was replaced by continuous swags. The decorative details derived from Bartoli were mixed with several other sources, including Chinese subjects in the four oval medallions to match the general theme of the room. In this way, by a strange twist of fate, mosaic patterns from a Paleochristian mausoleum in Rome, which had been given a new but spurious ‘Augustan’ pedigree by Francesco Bartoli, ended up in a room devoted to the Chinese taste in fashionable Georgian London.
Francesco Bartoli

**Dancing of an ancient ceiling**

Pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper

393 x 357

Undated: c. 1721-25

Inscribed in pen on recto, lower centre: ‘nella Casa di Caravaggio Hall / Topham Collection’.51

This drawing by Francesco Bartoli reproduces a frescoed ceiling of unknown origin. The central medallion shows a female figure encircled by other medallions, in the radial panels encircled by other medallions, in the circular compartment: a central medallion with rosettes. Adam then used the same design for the ceilings of the floor rooms of Harewood House, originally called Caravaggio Hall, for Edwin Lascelles (see cat. 14). From the late 1760s, elements from the Bartoli drawings frequently reappear individually in Adam’s original compositions, having become, by this date, an integral part of the office’s ornamental vocabulary. Here the connection with the Bartoli original is looser, but it remains very likely that Adam derived from cat. 28 the composition of the central circular compartment: a central medallion with radial panels encircled by other medallions, in this case rosettes. Adam then used the same panels to create a uniform decoration in the ceiling, which was intended for the saloon of a garden pavilion for La Trappe (later Brandenburg House, The Seat of Edwin Lascelles Esquire / 36.6 by 24.6° and ‘1767’. Literature: Bolton, 1922, II, Index p. 39; Harris 2001, p. 140; Stillman, 1966, pp. 85, 100, no. 131; and ‘1762’. Literature: Bolton, 1922, II, Index p. 39.

**Adam office, Agostino Brunias**

**Section of an ancient ceiling, after Francesco Bartoli**

Pen, pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper

445 x 380

Undated: c. 1765


This is one of the fifteen copies by Agostino Brunias after the Bartoli drawings at Eton collected in a portfolio now at the Getty Research Institute.

Here, as in cat. 16, Brunias copied only a quarter of the original drawing but in this case he remained almost completely faithful to the original details.

**Cat. no. 29**

Adam office, Agostino Brunias

Section of an ancient ceiling, after Francesco Bartoli

Pen, pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper

445 x 380

Undated: c. 1765

Inscribed in pen on verso, lower left: ‘nella Villa Adriana’.

Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2002.M.22*, no. 7

See also cat. 16, 39, 40

This is one of the fifteen copies by Agostino Brunias after the Bartoli drawings at Eton collected in a portfolio now at the Getty Research Institute.

Here, as in cat. 16, Brunias copied only a quarter of the original drawing but in this case he remained almost completely faithful to the original details.

**Cat. no. 30**

Adam office, Giuseppe Manocchi

**Dancing of an ancient ceiling, after Francesco Bartoli**

Pen, pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper

430 x 484

Undated: c. 1765

Inscribed in pen on recto, top centre and lower right: ‘Design of a Ceiling for the Circular Room / N.B. This ceiling would answer extremely well, if the mouldings had but answer extremely well, if the mouldings were in Stucco & Gilt, & the Figures & c painted / for Lord Melcombe’s Garden Building’ and ‘1762’.


SM, Adam 26/180

This is one of the eight coloured drawings by Giuseppe Manocchi directly copied from Francesco Bartoli’s drawings at Eton, today preserved at the Soane Museum (see cat. 17). Again, Manocchi introduced minor modifications to the original (cat. 28): although the general decorative elements are the same, Manocchi’s radial figures differ from Bartoli’s and are in different positions.

**Cat. no. 31**

Adam office, Giuseppe Manocchi

**Finished design for the ceilings for a garden pavilion for La Trappe (later Brandenburg House), Hammersmith, Middlesex, unexecuted in 1762, but several drawings executed by the Adam office are still preserved in the Soane Museum**

Pen and watercolour on paper

338 x 342

1762

Inscribed in pen on recto, top centre and lower right: ‘Design of a Ceiling for the Circular Room / N.B. This ceiling would answer extremely well, if the mouldings were in Stucco & Gilt, & the Figures & c painted / for Lord Melcombe’s Garden Building’ and ‘1762’.


SM, Adam 11/152

Adam was employed in 1762 by George Bubb Dodington (1691-1762), Baron Melcombe of Melcombe Regis, to design a garden pavilion for his house in Hammersmith, La Trappe, located beside the River Thames. The pavilion was never executed, perhaps because of Melcombe’s death in 1762, but several drawings executed by the Adam office are still preserved in the Soane Museum (SM, Adam, 19/22-26; 11/17-49).

The ceiling, which was intended for the circular room of the pavilion, shows how Adam and Brunias retained the essential appearance of Francesco Bartoli’s drawing (cat. 28), with radial figures distributed around a central medallion, but freely modified other elements to create an original composition.

**Cat. no. 32**

Adam office, William Hamilton

**Design for the ceiling of the Saloon of Hatfield House, Yorkshite, as executed**

Pen and watercolour on paper

440 x 622

1767


SM, Adam 11/152

Between 1765 and 1771, Adam was in charge of fitting up the interiors of the ground floor rooms of Hatfield House, originally called Greenhough Hall, for Edwin Lascelles (see cat. 14). From the late 1760s, elements from the Bartoli drawings frequently reappear individually in Adam’s original compositions, having become, by this date, an integral part of the office’s ornamental vocabulary. Here, the connection with the Bartoli original is looser, but it remains very likely that Adam derived from cat. 28 the composition of the central circular compartment: a central medallion with radial panels encircled by other medallions, in this case rosettes. Adam then used the same panels to create a uniform decoration in the ceiling, which was intended for the circular room of the pavilion, shows how Adam and Brunias retained the essential appearance of Francesco Bartoli’s drawing (cat. 28), with radial figures distributed around a central medallion, but freely modified other elements to create an original composition.

**Cat. no. 33**

Adam office, William Hamilton

**Design for the ceiling of the Saloon of Hatfield House, Yorkshite, as executed**

Pen and watercolour on paper

440 x 622

1767


SM, Adam 11/152

Between 1765 and 1771, Adam was in charge of fitting up the interiors of the ground floor rooms of Hatfield House, originally called Greenhough Hall, for Edwin Lascelles (see cat. 14). From the late 1760s, elements from the Bartoli drawings frequently reappear individually in Adam’s original compositions, having become, by this date, an integral part of the office’s ornamental vocabulary. Here, the connection with the Bartoli original is looser, but it remains very likely that Adam derived from cat. 28 the composition of the central circular compartment: a central medallion with radial panels encircled by other medallions, in this case rosettes. Adam then used the same panels to create a uniform decoration in the ceiling, which was intended for the circular room of the pavilion, shows how Adam and Brunias retained the essential appearance of Francesco Bartoli’s drawing (cat. 28), with radial figures distributed around a central medallion, but freely modified other elements to create an original composition.
The Baths of Constantine on the Quirinal Hill – an excavation that gained considerable fame at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Together with the frescoes from the imperial domus on the Palatine (see cat. 15, 41), this is the archaeological site most extensively represented among the Bartoli drawings in the Totham Collection. In this case, the Bartoli drawing seems to be a first-hand rendition of a contemporary archaeological find – as the inscription testifies. Some doubts about the accuracy of the representation emerge, however, in light of a comparison with a drawing of the same wall elevation in Francesco's hand, in the Thomas Coke collection at Holkham Hall. The wall elevation was destroyed shortly after its discovery but parts of it were detached and retained. The drawing represents a wall punctuated by slender architectonic structures framing representations of gods encircled by scrolling foliage. The figure in the centre, Apollo, is still preserved in Palazzo Rospigliosi today (see cat. 43-44). Two painted panels at the sides contain narrative scenes: the panel on the left, still preserved in Palazzo Altemps in Rome, depicts a naked hero crowning himself with the palm of victory. On the right is depicted a scene of libation with a priestess and two women.

Cat. no. 35
Francesco Bartoli
Drawing of an ancient wall elevation from the ‘Baths of Constantine’
Pencil, pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper. 393 x 502
1711
Inscribed in pen on verso, lower centre and right: ‘B.n 7} no. 39’ and ‘in aedibus Rospiliosi, e Balneis Constantini M. Repert. 1711’; inscribed in pen on verso, lower left: ‘No. 2’.
Literature: Ashby 1914, Eton IV, 39; Conner Bulman 1999b, p. 65-66; Conner Bulman 2001a, pp. 343-344.

ECL, Bn7.39

This wall painting was discovered during the excavations for the expansion of the Palazzo Rospigliosi in 1709, as a dossor on the site of the Baths of Constantine on the Quirinal Hill – an excavation that gained considerable fame at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Together with the frescoes from the Palatine (see cat. 15, 41), this is the archaeological site most extensively represented among the Bartoli drawings in the Totham Collection. In this case, the Bartoli drawing seems to be a first-hand rendition of a contemporary archaeological find – as the inscription testifies. Some doubts about the accuracy of the representation emerge, however, in light of a comparison with a drawing of the same wall elevation in Francesco’s hand, still preserved in Palazzo Altemps in Rome, depicting a naked hero crowning himself with the palm of victory. On the right is depicted a scene of libation with a priestess and two women.

Cat. no. 36
Francesco Bartoli
Drawing of an ancient ornamental panel from the ‘Sette Sale’
Pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper. 252 x 368
Undated: c. 1720-25
Inscribed in pen on verso, within the red border, lower left: ‘un ornamento del Palazzo di Tito’; and in pencil, lower right: ‘R T VI’.


ECL, Bn5.26

The inscribed provenance from the ‘Palace of Augustus’ on the Palatine is almost certainly spurious.

Cat. no. 34
Francesco Bartoli
Drawing of an ancient wall elevation from the ‘Baths of Constantine’
Pencil, pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper.
393 x 359
1711
Inscribed in pen on verso, lower centre and right: ‘B.n 7} no. 39’ and ‘in aedibus Rospiliosi, e Balneis Constantini M. Repert. 1711’; inscribed in pen on verso, lower left: ‘No. 2’.


ECL, Bn7.39

This wall painting was discovered during the excavations for the expansion of the Palazzo Rospigliosi in 1709, as a dossor on the site of the Baths of Constantine on the Quirinal Hill – an excavation that gained considerable fame at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Together with the frescoes from the Palatine (see cat. 15, 41), this is the archaeological site most extensively represented among the Bartoli drawings in the Totham Collection. In this case, the Bartoli drawing seems to be a first-hand rendition of a contemporary archaeological find – as the inscription testifies. Some doubts about the accuracy of the representation emerge, however, in light of a comparison with a drawing of the same wall elevation in Francesco’s hand, still preserved in Palazzo Altemps in Rome, depicting a naked hero crowning himself with the palm of victory. On the right is depicted a scene of libation with a priestess and two women.

Cat. no. 35
Francesco Bartoli
Drawing of an ancient wall elevation
Pen, pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper.
287 x 408
Undated: c. 1710-25
Inscribed in pen on verso, lower centre: ‘Rn 7} no. 95’; inscribed in pen on verso, lower right: ‘Fran(ce)sco Bartoli Vero’ and ‘del Palazzo di Augusto’ and ‘16’ and ‘No. 22’.

Literature: Ashby 1914, Eton IV, 95.

ECL, Bn7.95

This drawing depicts a painted wall punctuated by four Doric half columns attached to piers dividing the space into three sections. The central section is occupied by a female hero flanked by two peacocks, while the left panel depicts a satyr with a little Eros and a goat. The right panel has a drunken Silenus supported by a satyr and accompanied by a panther – giving a Bacchic character to the whole composition. There are strong suspicions that this composition was invented by Francesco Bartoli, since again relying on his father’s drawings the two couples of figures on the side panels are in fact found also in earlier drawings by Pietro Santì Bartoli reproducing metal plaques on ancient furniture. These drawings were certainly known to Francesco, since copies in his hand are preserved in the Thomas Coke collection at Holkham Hall. The inscribed provenance from the ‘Palace of Augustus’ on the Palatine is almost certainly spurious.

Cat. no. 36
Francesco Bartoli
Drawing of an ancient ornamental panel from the ‘Sette Sale’
Pen watercolour and bodycolour on paper. 282 x 368
Undated: c. 1720-25
Inscribed in pen on verso, within the red border, lower left and right: ‘Fran(ce)sco Bartoli’; and lower centre: ‘Rn 5} no. 26’; inscribed in pen on verso, lower left: ‘un ornamento del Palazzo di Tito’; and in pencil, lower right: ‘RT VT’.


ECL, Bn5.26

This drawing depicts a painted wall punctuated by four Doric half columns attached to piers dividing the space into three sections. The central section is occupied by a female hero flanked by two peacocks, while the left panel depicts a satyr with a little Eros and a goat. The right panel has a drunken Silenus supported by a satyr and accompanied by a panther – giving a Bacchic character to the whole composition. There are strong suspicions that this composition was invented by Francesco Bartoli, since again relying on his father’s drawings the two couples of figures on the side panels are in fact found also in earlier drawings by Pietro Santì Bartoli reproducing metal plaques on ancient furniture. These drawings were certainly known to Francesco, since copies in his hand are preserved in the Thomas Coke collection at Holkham Hall. The inscribed provenance from the ‘Palace of Augustus’ on the Palatine is almost certainly spurious. This drawing depicts a painted wall punctuated by four Doric half columns attached to piers dividing the space into three sections. The central section is occupied by a female hero flanked by two peacocks, while the left panel depicts a satyr with a little Eros and a goat. The right panel has a drunken Silenus supported by a satyr and accompanied by a panther – giving a Bacchic character to the whole composition. There are strong suspicions that this composition was invented by Francesco Bartoli, since again relying on his father’s drawings the two couples of figures on the side panels are in fact found also in earlier drawings by Pietro Santì Bartoli reproducing metal plaques on ancient furniture. These drawings were certainly known to Francesco, since copies in his hand are preserved in the Thomas Coke collection at Holkham Hall. The inscribed provenance from the ‘Palace of Augustus’ on the Palatine is almost certainly spurious.
In this drawing of a decorative panel, two winged half-figured centaurs accompanied by two Erotes are arranged symmetrically on a brown background. For this composition Francesco Bartoli copied a near identical pencil sketch by Pietro Santi Bartoli today preserved at Holkham Hall. The caption on the pencil sketch explains that the panel was part of a long frieze including scenes of a battle against the Amazons. These drawings document frescoes belonging to a luxurious domus discovered in 1683 on the Oppian Hill in the area of the so-called Sette Sale, thought in the eighteenth century to be part of the palace of the emperor Titus.

In this case, the inscribed provenance from the ‘Palace of Titus’ derives directly from the Pietro Santi drawing. A partial copy of this drawing survives in the drawings collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Cat. no. 37 & 38
Adam office, Agostino Brunias
Design for the wall elevations of the closet at the top of one of the towers at Syon House, Middlesex, probably as executed
Pencil, pen and watercolour within a single ruled border on paper
Cat. no. 37: 497 x 364
Inscribed in pen on recto, various dimensions.
SM, Adam 27/73
Cat. no. 38: 488 x 360
Inscribed in pencil on recto, lower left: ‘Sion’; inscribed in pen on verso, top right: ‘Sion’.

SM, Adam 27/78
Both undated c. 1760.
Literature: Harris 2001, p. 83, fig. 123 (cat. 38).
Ecdetically combining details from Francesco Bartoli’s drawings of ancient wall elevations and decorative panels (cat. 34, 35, 36), in these designs Adam crafted one of his first interiors in the ‘true style of antique decoration’. The ‘closet’ (actually a small cabinet) at the top of one of the towers at Syon House was fitted, painted and ornamented after ye antique; being the first essay in that Taste executed in England. It has since so universally prevailed in this Kingdom. The ‘closet’ has long gone, possibly destroyed during nineteenth-century refurbishment works on the house, but the Sir John Soane’s Museum still preserves two wall elevations, here attributed to Agostino Brunias (cat. 37, 38).

Cat. 37 & 38
Adam office, Agostino Brunias
Design for the wall elevations of the closet at the top of one of the towers at Syon House, Middlesex, probably as executed
Pencil, pen and watercolour within a single ruled border on paper
Cat. no. 37: 497 x 364
Inscribed in pen and pencil on recto with various dimensions.
SM, Adam 27/74
Cat. no. 38: 488 x 360
Inscribed in pencil on recto, lower left: ‘Sion’; inscribed in pen on verso, top right: ‘Sion’.

SM, Adam 27/78
Both undated c. 1760.
Literature: Harris 2001, p. 83, fig. 123 (cat. 38).
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To produce an original and inventive decorative scheme, Adam dismissed the architectural structure shown in the original antique wall elevations (cat. 34, 35), but retained and freely reinterpreted many of the fanciful details introduced by Francesco Bartoli. For instance, the two herms shown in the lateral panels of the closet wall in cat. 38 derive from the central figure drawn by Bartoli in cat. 35, but with elements (such as the peacock feathers, the foliage, or the pedestals on which the herms rest) derived from decorative elements encircling the main figures in cat. 34. The same is true for the vertical panel at the centre of cat. 38 and flanking the window in cat. 37, where the figures and the swirling foliage derive from cat. 34 but with decorative elements borrowed from the central panel in cat. 35. Other elements, such as the dogs flanking an urn painted within a circle on the dado of both cat. 37 and 38, derived from the central panel of the frieze in cat. 35 while the central panel in the upper register of the wall in cat. 37, with winged centaurs and Erotes, is almost a literal copy of cat. 36. These two drawings show very clearly how Adam and Brunias made free and inventive use of the Bartoli originals, as a source of inspiration rather than a constrictive model.

Cat. no. 39 & 40
Adam office, Agostino Brunias
Design for the wall elevations of the closet at the top of one of the towers at Syon House, Middlesex
Pencil, pen, watercolour and gouache on paper.
Both 445 x 380
Cat. no. 39: Inscribed in pen on recto, lower left: ‘No. 17’.
Cat. no. 40: Inscribed in pen on recto, lower left: ‘No. 16’.
Both undated c. 1760
Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2002.M.22*, nos 17-18
See also cat. 16, 29.

While the two wall elevations of the square closet at Syon House preserved in the Soane Museum are monochrome (cat. 37-38), two finished drawings by Agostino Brunias in the volume held at the Getty Research Institute depict the same elevations in full colour, likely reporting what was actually executed. The two plates show that Adam and Brunias retained the colours of the original drawings by Francesco Bartoli for most of the details (cat. 34, 35, 36). The actual decorative elements and the figurative panels of the closet were almost certainly executed, as at Kedleston, by Agostino Brunias, who then recorded the whole scheme in his volume, therefore joining together in the same pages the sources of his decorative language and one of the first examples of their practical execution, the ‘closet’ at Syon House, Middlesex.

Elevations of the Syon ‘closet’ were later published by Michelangelo Pergolesi, another decorator who worked for Adam at Syon, in his Designs for various Ornaments (plates 64 and 70). A collection of plates published serially in London between 1777 and 1801, it served as a pattern book for neo-classical decorators.
Section 4: The Topham Collection's broader Influence: Charles Cameron and other Neo-Classical Architects and Decorators

Adam and his collaborators were not the only ones to draw inspiration from Francesco Bartoli's drawings of ancient ceilings in the Topham Collection. The accessibility of the drawings at Eton attracted several other architects and painters in search of decorative schemes for their interiors. 

Among the most prolific was James Wyatt (1746-1813), who was in fact for the most part a miscellaneous architect of eighteenth-century Europe. Although the example of Adam and his highly successful office must have been a powerful incentive, especially for the generation of architects who followed in his steps, there is at least one example of the use of the collection unrelated to Adam's and perhaps even predating it. This was West Wycombe Park, Buckinghamshire, home of the notorious Sir Francis Dashwood, who had travelled extensively in his steps, there is at least one example of the collection unrelated to Adam's and perhaps even predating it. This was West Wycombe Park, Buckinghamshire, home of the notorious Sir Francis Dashwood (1701-1761) and William Hannan (1720-1772). Hannan decorated his house with an eclectic mixture of references to antiquity and copies of the most renowned frescoes by Raphael, Annibale Carracci (1560-1609) and Gaudo Reni (1575-1645). The classical past and the Roman-Bolognese school were paired to create a ‘temple of the arts’ devoted to the classicistic taste. In the Red Drawing Room and in the Tapestry Room, the ceilings, painted by Hannan in the late 1760s, were very faithfully transcribed from two of the most elaborate Bartoli drawings at Eton (figs 4-5). Sir Francis interest in classical antiquity was profound and lasting. As an Old Etonian and a founding member of the Society of Dilettanti, he must have been delighted that a major source on antique decoration was within easy reach in the library of his old school. Of the generation of architects that followed Adam, one who must have relied on the Bartoli drawings as a source for his decorative language is prolific James Wyatt (1746-1813). The archives of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle still hold a drawing in his hand that is a faithful copy of one of the antique ceilings at Eton (figs 6-7).84 while the influence of the Bartoli drawings on Wyatt is clearly discernible in many of the ceiling and decorative schemes that he produced in the 1770s and 1780s – a subject that has not received scholarly attention so far.85 A set of copies of the Bartoli drawings is still preserved in the collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Consisting of forty-two black and white pen drawings (most of which replicate in detail only a quarter-section of each of the Bartoli ceilings), this set was produced after 1766, as the watermarks on the paper show.86 Although the draughtsman still needs to be identified, this set is further proof of the success of the Eton drawings as sources of antique decorative patterns. The architect of this generation to make the most extensive use of the Bartoli drawings, although released from the path of Inverness, is without doubt Charles Cameron (1745-1812). Cameron is celebrated for his efforts at the behest of Catherine II of Russia in transforming St Petersburg, and for his impact on the architecture that they inspired. In demonstrating the link between the antique originals, the drawings assembled by Richard Topham, and the architecture that they inspired, this exhibition has sought to provide one account of how the language of classicism was revived in the eighteenth century, and the architecture that they inspired. Although Cameron’s book, published in Lord Burlington’s Architecture, was the result of careful research, the drawings he published were closely copied from the Bartoli drawings at Eton, while a few were copied from previous publications, a fact that has so far escaped close examination (see cat. 41-47). Therefore, what was presented by Cameron as body of original illustrations found a wide audience of devotees who could not, for all their interest in the designs, trace their provenance. In demonstrating the generative potential of the Bartoli drawings, the exhibition has provided one example of how the language of classicism was revived in the eighteenth century, and the architecture that they inspired. The architect of this generation to make the most extensive use of the Bartoli drawings is without doubt Charles Cameron (1745-1812). Cameron is celebrated for his efforts at the behest of Catherine II of Russia in transforming St Petersburg, and for his impact on the architecture that they inspired. In demonstrating the link between the antique originals, the drawings assembled by Richard Topham, and the architecture that they inspired, this exhibition has sought to provide one example of how the language of classicism was revived in the eighteenth century, and the architecture that they inspired.
Francesco Bartoli
Drawing of an ancient ceiling from the Palatine
Pen and watercolour on paper
385 x 743
1721
Inscribed in pen on recto, lower centre: ‘No XIV’.
Formerly inscribed: ‘Una volta arcata trovata nel Monte Palatino, 1721’.74

Literature: Ashby 1914, Eton VI, 14; Bastet 1971, p. 154; Maranda 2000, p. 224.

This large drawing depicts the vault inside one of the chambers of a Neronian nymphaeum in the Domus Flavia, discovered during excavations at the Farnese Gardens on the Palatine Hill in 1721 (see cat. 15). The fame of the nymphaeum, known in the eighteenth century as the ‘Baths of Livia’ or ‘Baths of Augustus’, is testified by the numerous surviving drawings and engravings that reproduce it.75 The Topham Collection includes several drawings that represent the front and the architectural plan of the nymphaeum’s fountain, as well as the frescoes of the ceilings of the nearby chambers.76 Some of the original frescos were detached on the orders of the Farnese family and moved first to Parma and then to Naples, where they are still preserved in the National Archaeological Museum.77 Others, such as this vault, were visible during the second half of the eighteenth century and are still in situ.78 Later, part of the building was re-buried and only at the beginning of the twentieth century did the excavations of Giacomo Boni allow the attribution of this vault to the Neronian nymphaeum.79

The comparison of the original vault with the drawing by Francesco Bartoli, the direct source for Cameron (see cat. 42), reveals some relevant differences in its value as documentary evidence, as so often with Francesco Bartoli’s drawings, should therefore be questioned.80

A partial copy of this drawing survives in the collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects.81
Cat. no. 44

Francesco Bartoli

Drawing of an ancient fresco from the ‘Baths of Constantine’

Pen and watercolour on paper

290 x 215

Undated: c. 1711

Inscribed in pen on recto, lower centre: ‘Francesco Bartolus. Fecit’ and ‘Bn7.} no. 62’; inscribed in pen on verso, lower right ‘in aedibus Rospigliosi’.


ECL, Bn7.62

The preservation of the original ancient fresco from the ‘Baths of Constantine’ (cat. 45) allows a close analysis of Francesco Bartoli’s working method. Although the fresco appears to be heavily restored, it is very likely that Bartoli introduced many decorative details to ‘improve’ the original image. The luxuriant scrolling branches where the Apollo rests on the drawing appear much reduced in the original, and the vegetable festoons and the slender pilaster to which they are attached are completely absent.

Cat. no. 45

Charles Cameron

The Baths of the Romans explained and illustrated

London, George Scott, 1772, plate 43: ‘At the Baths of Constantine’

304 x 225


ECL, Bn.1.1

The extent to which Cameron relied on the Bartoli drawings at Eton is easily recognisable when comparing the fanciful decoration of foliage, flowers and peacock feathers framing Apollo visible in Bartoli (cat. 44) and copied by Cameron, with the original fragment preserved in the eighteenth century, as today, in Palazzo Rospigliosi (Cat. no. 43).
Cat. no. 47
Charles Cameron
The Baths of the Romans explained and illustrated
London, 1772, plate 48: ‘At the Baths of Constantine’
281 x 202

ECL, Bi.1.1

As in cat. 42 and 45, Cameron’s copy of the Bartoli drawing, as for the vast majority of his decorative plates, is almost completely faithful to the original.

Cat. no. 46

Notes

1 Will proved Nov. 2 1730; Pennington Court of Canterbury 319, Aubor.
2 Bailey 1970, p. 34.
4 Quarrie 1993.
6 On the Topham Collection see esp. Ashby 1904 and the articles by Louisa Connor Bulman mentioned in the bibliography.
7 On this see esp. Ayres 1997; specifically in relation to Topham see Connor Bulman 2008, p. 289.
8 A good overview is Scott 2003, esp. pp. 53-84.
10 On Topham’s library see Quarrie 1993.
12 On early eighteenth-century collections of drawings after the antique see esp. Connor Bulman 1998a; Connor Bulman 2002b.
14 An earlier, c. 1720, far inferior drawing of the same relief by Sempronio Subissati (c. 1680-1758) is in ECL, Bn.w.24. See Connor Bulman 1998a, p. 55, cat. 30; Bowron-Kerber 2007, p. 203, note 20.
15 On Campiglia see Quarto 1984; Connor Bulman 1998a; Bowron-Kerber 2008, pp. 484-86.
16 See Haskell-Penny 1981, pp. 191-93, no. 27.
Adam's knowledge of the Eton drawings has been acknowledged in passing especially by Bristow, 1986, pp. 83, 1998; Connor Bulman 1999; De Lac henal 2000.


The Montfaucon plate was based on this or a similar drawing by Francesco Bartoli. Montfaucon specifies in fact that Francesco Bianchini had been published earlier in an undated manuscript, the second half of the nineteenth century: Matthiae 1988. Mosaics on the central dome were destroyed in 1620 by the cardinal Fabrizio Vassali, as their iconographical content was judged obscene: De Lac henal 2000, pp. 662-63.

They can be undoubtedly assigned to Pietro Santi Bartoli. Bulman is indebted to Frances Sands for the date of Brunias' departures from the Adam office. Adam 11/53 and Harris 1987, pp. 32-33, cat. 17. It was also copied by Monacchi years later: SM, Adam 26/19 (published in Holkham 1996, pp. 62-63, fig. 85 and Roman 2003, p. 22, cat. 33).

The same drawing had been copied by Brunias in his portfolio: Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2002.M.22*, no. 11. The drawing was used by Adam and Brunias in 1764-1765 as inspiration for the ceiling of the Dining Room at Kedleston; see SM, Adam 11/33 and Harris 1987, pp. 33-33, cat. 17. It was also copied by Monacchi years later: SM, Adam 26/19 (published in Holkham 1996, pp. 82-83, fig. 85 and Roman 2003, p. 22, cat. 33).


The ceiling was illustrated in Cylinders 1752-67, VII, 1767, pp. 184-85, 41, signed "Pietro Bartolini del c. on the basis of a similar drawing published in Montfaucon (Montfaucon 1719-24, supplement III, 1724, pl. 99) (see cat. 41), TP 15. The curtain would have been inspired by a Bartolini drawing at Eton ECL TP 15. The drawing had been copied by Brunias in his portfolio: Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2002.M.22*, no. 11. The drawing was used by Adam and Brunias in 1764-1765 as inspiration for the ceiling of the Dining Room at Kedleston; see SM, Adam 11/33 and Harris 1987, pp. 33-33, cat. 17. It was also copied by Monacchi years later: SM, Adam 26/19 (published in Holkham 1996, pp. 82-83, fig. 85 and Roman 2003, p. 22, cat. 33).

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Windsor Royal Library (WRL, Nettuno, RL 11359). A similar drawing by Pietro Santi depicting the chest is contained in the Walpole Library of Yale University (LWL, 49 2371, ff. 115-116).

A volume titled ‘Scritti di varie cose antiche’ now in the Lewis Library contains eighteenth-century, was reproduced in a drawing by Gaetano Piccini in 1741, pl. 43 and in Carletoni 1780, pl. I.

Another version, in the hand of Francesco Bartoli is in the Topham Collection: ECL Bn4.37: see Ashby 1914, Eton I, p. 345; De Vos 1990, pp. 205-07; Negro 1999, pp. 119-20. This inscription, reported by Ashby, 1914, Eton VI, 14, was very likely trimmed when the drawing was relined in the course of the twentieth century.

Some images of Wyatt’s ceilings see Dale 1953, fig. 3; Robinson 2012, Ireland, which are clearly based on ECL, Bn6.21 (see fig. 5). For further explanations see ECL, D1, 34; Robinson 2012, fig. 107.

The Francesco Bartoli drawings can be found in: HHL, I, f. 32 (Ashby 1916, Holkham II, 26); in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York: see Harris 1971, p. 154-55. The marbles and columns of the Domus Transitoria’s fountains survive.

This comment appears in a handwritten annotation (c. 1777) by Thomas Perry – celebrated master of letters and tutor of the sons of the 1st Duke and Duchess of Northumberland – to the Duke’s annotated copy of Dodgson and Dodgson, 1761, IV, p. 17-18.

Adam 1773-75, p. 5, note C.

This inscriptions, reported by Ashby, 1914, Eton VI, 14, was very likely trimmed when the drawing was relined in the course of the twentieth century.


Francisco Bartoli’s drawings documenting fountains from the Domus Transitoria are kept in ECL, Bn7.100-101; ECL, Bn6 and ECL, TP. See also De Viso 1990.

Carletoni 1949.

Especially in comparison with the more faithful engravings of the ‘Baths of Livia’ published in Ponce 1789, pl. 7.

The plates in Cameron’s book of the Romans were based on Francisco Bartoli’s drawings: nos 44 (copied from ECL, Bn7.64; in reverse); 42 (ECL, Bn6.73; in reverse); 43 (ECL, Bn7.62); 47 (ECL, Bn7.63; in reverse); 45 (ECL, Bn7.46; in reverse); 46 (ECL, Bn7.46; in reverse); 47 (ECL, Bn7.65; in reverse); 48 (ECL, Bn7.52; in reverse); 50 (ECL, Bn7.44); 51 (ECL, Bn4.42; in reverse); 52 (ECL, Bn7.56); 53 (ECL, Bn7.54); 54 (ECL, TP 13, in reverse); 55 (ECL, TP 14, in reverse); 56 (ECL, TP 13, in reverse); 57 (ECL, Bn4.49); 58 (ECL, Bn6.46; in reverse); 60 (ECL, Bn6.39); 62 (ECL, Bn6.30, in reverse); 63 (ECL, Bn6.30, detail a); 64 (ECL, Bn6.32, in reverse); 65 (ECL, Bn6.48); 66 (ECL, Bn6.18); 67 (ECL, Bn6.10, in reverse); 68 (ECL, Bn6.11); 69 (ECL, Bn6.11, detail a); 70 (ECL, Bn6.12); 71 (ECL, Bn6.12, detail a); 72 (ECL, Bn6.12, detail a); 73 (ECL, Bn6.52); 74 (ECL, Bn6.52, detail a); 75 (ECL, Bn6.52, detail a). Ashby 1914, page 4, draws a parallel between the Bartoli drawings at Eton and the plates in Cameron, although without establishing a direct connection. The only scholar who recognized Cameron’s debt to the Eton drawings, although in passing, is Louise M. Connor. Connor-Bulman 2001, p. 346. Plates 59 and 61 in the Baths of the Romans were based on Bellori, Bartoli, De La Chausse 1750, respectively plates 6, 7, both in reverse. Plates 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 in the Baths of the Romans, depicting details of wall elevations, were based on Turnbull 1740 (crowned with no introductory essay and additional explanatory notes for the plates as Turnbull 1741) respectively plates 23, 24, 20, 17, 18, all in reverse. Nevertheless, Cameron depicts them in a more fragmentary condition than Turnbull, with cracks and losses, suggesting perhaps that he copied these from the original frescoes in Rome. Salmon 1993, pp. 90-91, note 25, already acknowledged Cameron’s reliance on Bartoli’s and Turnbull’s publications.

Napoleone 2000, pp. 55.

Turnbull 1740, p. 178 and pl. 37; Turnbull 1741, pp. 36-38 and pl. 37.

Carleton 1780, p. 5.


Ponce, Nicolas, Arabesques antiques des Bains de Livie et de la Ville Adrienne, avec les plafonds de la Ville-Madame, peints d’après les desseins de Raphael, etc., Paris, the author, 1789.


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