

THE EARLIER CAREER OF ALEXANDER RUNCIMAN AND THE INFLUENCES
THAT SHAPED HIS STYLE.

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SUMMARY.

Alexander Runciman was in his mid-thirties before he adopted the monumental style of history painting on which his reputation has always been held to rest. What may be called the formative part of his career was therefore unusually extended. This thesis is a study of his development during this time, its background, and the sources from which derived his ideas on painting. This part of his life culminated in the monumental paintings that he did for Sir James Clerk of Penicuik in 1772 and the related work in the Cowgate Chapel, Edinburgh. These were the most important of all his works and were unique in eighteenth century painting. In them he combined the grand style that he had learned during the four years that he spent in Rome, with the native Scottish tradition of decorative painting in which he had been trained.

The thesis therefore falls into three parts. The first (Chaps.1-7) deals with his life and background in Edinburgh; the second(Chaps.8-15) with his four years in Rome; and the third(Chaps.16-18) with the works that he carried out on his return to Edinburgh. In the first part attention is given in Chapters 1 to 3 to the men of the older generation from whom he may have learnt not only his style, but also his ambitions as a painter. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the circles in which he moved among his own contemporaries, and the last two chapters in this part with his own and his younger brother, John's work in Edinburgh before they left for Rome in 1767.

In the second part the first three chapters(8-10) cover the brothers' stay in Rome up to John's death late in 1768, or early in 1769. Following this event Alexander became determined to succeed, not merely as a landscape and decorative painter, but in monumental history painting. Chapter 11 is a discussion of the work of Gavin Hamilton and of James Barry, the two painters who influenced him most at this time. This discussion is extended in Appendix D which deals more fully with the work of Gavin Hamilton. Chapters 12-14 are an account of Runciman's

first works in the new manner, with particular attention to his proposals for the decoration of Penicuik House. Chapter 15 deals with his relationship to Henry Fuseli at the end of his Roman stay.

The last three chapters give an account of the circumstances in which he finally carried out his work at Penicuik, and of the pictures themselves. As they were destroyed by fire in 1899 Chapter 18 and part of Chapter 19 are devoted to a reconstruction of their appearance. The thesis concludes with a discussion of his work in the Cowgate Chapel. The part of this which survives is all that is left of his monumental work.

CHAPTER ONE

The Edinburgh Painter-Decorators

Alexander Runciman was by training a tradesman. He served his apprenticeship as a painter and decorator, and worked at his trade until, at the age of thirty, he left his business to travel to Rome. He returned four and a half years later a committed historical painter, and carried out, at Penicuik House and in the Cowgate Chapel, Edinburgh, a series of monumental historical decorations in a highly individual style, a variation of the new Grand Manner which had been initiated in Rome by Gavin Hamilton. Unlike so many others, he remained thereafter to live and work in Scotland, and thus became the first important modern Scottish painter.

He was born in Edinburgh on the 15th August 1736, and was baptised in the Canongate Church. His parents, James Runciman and Mary Smith, had been married in the previous year.¹ On the 4th April 1750 he was apprenticed to Robert Norie, and on that occasion his father was described as "freeman wright in Portsburgh, now resident in the Canongate".² The suggestion made by Cunningham that his father was an architect is therefore groundless,³ and we have no evidence whereby we can explain his choice of the painter's trade. In 1766 a certain William Smith appears in the Penicuik accounts receiving 5 guineas on behalf

1. Daniel Wilson, Memorials of Edinburgh in Olden Times, Edinburgh, 1891, 2 vols. II, 174, n. i. Wilson's information came from the Runciman family Bible.
2. Register of Edinburgh Apprentices, 1701-1755, Scottish Record Society, Vol.61, Edinburgh, 1929, 75, and David Laing, Transcript of the minutes of the Incorporation of St. Mary's Chapel EUL.
3. Alan Cunningham, Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects, 6 vols. London 1829-33. V, 145.

of Runciman.⁴ He could conceivably be a maternal uncle, but there is no evidence that he was in fact a painter, or that he had anything to do with the Norie firm in which Runciman was an apprentice and in which he subsequently worked.

What kind of education Runciman received apart from his apprenticeship we do not know. The records of the Royal High School are incomplete or non-existent for this early date. There are no records at all for any other schools that may have existed. The little note in verse that he wrote in November, 1760, to Bremen, which is the first thing that we have by his hand of any kind, shows that he had quite a ready command of language.⁵ His other letters bear this out. Though they are not always orthodox in spelling or grammar, they are freely, fluently, and sometimes quite vividly written. On at least one occasion, if it is his own, he manages an apology, writing to Robert Alexander, that is both elegant and effective.⁶ His hand, if it is not beautiful, is usually firm, unaffected and legible. How much Latin or Greek he had, if he had any at all, it is impossible to say. For a painter of the kind that he became the classics were obviously of central importance. He refers to Homer, Virgil, Catullus and Ovid with the ease of familiarity, and he takes subjects from both Euripides and Sophocles, but he presumably relied on translation in all of this, like most of his contemporaries. Nevertheless his work after the death of his brother in 1768 or /9 shows a wide and imaginative appreciation of the kind of literature that was only then beginning to become fashionable

4. Penicuik Accounts, 1755-82, Register House, Edinburgh.
5. Appendix A, J. Bremen note to A.R., and A.R.'s reply, Nov. 18th 1760. EUL Laing Collection.
6. Appendix A, A.R. to Robert Alexander, July 1769. EUL, Laing Collection.

among the more advanced artists and poets. He was amongst the first of his contemporaries to turn his mind to the imaginative interpretation, not only of Shakespeare and Ossian, but also of Spenser and Milton.

In his understanding of the poetic possibilities of painting he was not entirely dependent on the influence of the painters that he met in Rome. Although his experience in Italy had a profound effect on his career, he had already spent his formative years, and more, in Edinburgh. The milieu to which he belonged there, as an apprentice and tradesman, was not entirely mundane. On the contrary it was remarkably lively both in his own, and in the older generation. Through his apprenticeship he was associated with James Norie, the father of Robert, and a circle of men who had been champions thirty years before of the status of the artist in Scotland. Because of James Norie and his friends the antiquated guild-system in which Runciman was trained to his trade did not prove inimical to his artistic aspirations. It encouraged them and fostered them.

In both England and Scotland by the mid-eighteenth century a number of artists had made respectable reputations as portrait painters. For example Sir John Medina, a portrait painter, was the last man to be knighted in the independent kingdom of Scotland. In the generation before Runciman, Alan Ramsay had gone forth from a very similar background to his own in Edinburgh. The case of portrait painting was however very different from that of other more elevated kinds of art, as Reynolds was painfully aware. The determination to gain proper recognition in England for art in this wider sense and for the artists who practiced it was one of the very few things that he and Hogarth had in common, and was a major factor in English art of the period. The foundation of the Royal Academy was one of its most significant manifestations.

Scotland had neither a Hogarth nor a Reynolds and had to wait till the next century for its Royal Academy. There are signs however that in the early eighteenth century there were painters who, though very humble, thought in a similar way to their illustrious English contemporaries. An important figure among these was James Norie who founded the firm in which Alexander Runciman was trained. Norie has left us his self-portrait seen as a dignified professional artist and clearly had aspirations beyond the house painting and whitewashing by which he made his living. (Plate 2)

Alexander Runciman was not apprenticed to James Norie but to his son Robert. James Norie was then still active however and apparently continued to be so up till the year before his death in 1757, though Robert's name appears more usually on the receipts in these last years.⁷ Robert apparently went on working in the tradition his father had founded and it was this tradition in which Runciman was trained. It seems appropriate therefore by way of introduction to this thesis to say what little we know about James Norie, and the part that he played in the earliest manifestations of artistic self-consciousness in Scotland.

James Norie was born at Knockando in Morayshire in 1684.⁸ He evidently moved to Edinburgh when young, and, though we do not know with whom he served his apprenticeship,

7. General accounts of Penicuik House, 1751-55, Register House; Dean of Guild Accounts, City of Edinburgh, 1752-56.
Scots Magazine, June 1757, Vol. XIX, 326; "Died at Edinburgh in the 73rd year of his age, James Norie, painter in that city".
8. (D. Werschmidt), James Norie, Painter, Edinburgh, 1890, 1.

he became a burgess and guild brother of the Incorporation of St. Mary's Chapel on 22nd December 1708.⁹ He had his essay-piece prescribed to him on 1st February 1709, a 'history of Susanna and the elders on primed cloth in oil, the other side to be painted in imitation of lapis-lazuli'.¹⁰ This he completed satisfactorily and quickly for he was admitted a freeman on the 19th February of that year.¹¹ According to James Colston the painters who Norie thus joined had only been members of the Incorporated Trades since 1703.¹²

On the 30th November 1717 the trades considered a proposal from the painters and agreed that 'whosoever of the painter's craft that shall hereafter be admitted to an essay shall be allowed the liberty of making a painting thereof in the high hall or convening house, and not in the laigh essay house. And whether they shall think fit to accept of the privilege or not, nevertheless in lieu and place of the twelve pounds formerly payable by such as should get the privilege of the said hall they shall be obliged to give and dedicate to this house the piece to be painted by them for this essay, put within a handsome frame done at their own charges and expenses'.¹³ The painters thus secured for themselves a privilege which must have conferred status, and which differentiated them from all the other trades.

9. David Laing, Notes and Transcriptions from the Minutes of the Incorporation of St. Mary's Chapel, EUL, Ms.La. IV.26.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. James Colston, The Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 1891, 65.
13. Laing, Transcriptions. EUL.

The model for this privilege may well have been the practice in the Roman and French Academies by which the painter on becoming a member presented his diploma piece to the academy. The Edinburgh painters were then perhaps thinking of their essays as diploma pieces, and the Incorporated trades as an academy in potential at least. James Norie's essay was clearly quite an elaborate picture.

The painter Roderick Chalmers, who was afterwards secretary of the short lived St. Luke's Academy, had, on completion of his essay, the Royal Arms of Great Britain, 'obliged himself to gift the foresaid essay piece to the Incorporation'.¹⁴ This was on the 21st May 1709, and in August the Incorporation decided to have a frame made for it and to hang it in the meeting house.¹⁵ Chalmers, who died in 1746, styled himself Ross Herald. According to Laing "he was known as a herald painter and was employed not only in emblazoning heraldic manuscripts, but in taking charge of funerals, providing banners and escutcheons".¹⁶ He contributed a chapter on Funeral Escutcheons to the second volume of Nisbet's *System of heraldry* and is there described as "Herald and Herald painter whose understanding and practice in these matters are well known".¹⁷ The names of Chalmers and Norie are associated in several places, notably in the minutes of the Incorporated Trades, in the founding deed of St. Luke's Academy, and also in 1736 working together for the City in St. Giles's.¹⁸

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. David Laing, *Notes on Artists*.

17. Alexander Nisbet, *A System of Heraldry, etc.*, 2 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1722 and 1742. Second volume edited with additions by R. Fleming. Cooper also contributed two important plates.

18. Dean of Guild's Accounts, City of Edinburgh.

James Cumming, Runciman's lifelong friend, apparently started his apprenticeship with Chalmers, the year before Chalmers' death. He transferred then to Robert Norie, but throughout his life remained interested in heraldry.

The next piece of evidence in the minutes of the Incorporated Trades involves both Norie and Chalmers. Between 1709 and 1711 Norie had appeared in the accounts in connection with a piece of work which he did not complete until 7th September 1718, though it was then a compliment to the house as Chalmers' coat of arms had been. It was the repainting of the chimney-piece in the convening hall whose completion he announced on the 7th September and which the Incorporation approved on the 11th October, agreeing that it should be put in place, which it was.¹⁹ The old chimney-piece had represented the various Edinburgh trades. Norie's chimney-piece was apparently painted over it with the same subject but altering the arrangement. On the 22nd November Deacon Smith of the masons complained to the house:

"Whereas James Norie, painter, having very lately handsomely painted a representation of the several arts of this Incorporation upon the chimney piece of the convening hall and complemented the Incorporation therewith. Which piece of painting having by their order been brought to this house, and afterwards affixed in the ordinary place, nevertheless James Brownhill, late Deacon of the wrights, with Thomas Herron, Robert Denholm, William McLean, John Yeats, and Laurence Andrew, wrights, and John Jack, slater, had in a clandestine manner come to the chapel, and without any warrant from this house, had at their own hand taken down the said chimney piece, and quite altered the same from the manner it was formerly in, and therefore craving they might

19. Laing, Transcriptions. EUL.

not only be censured for so doing, but also ordained to put the same in the condition it was formerly in." ²⁰

On the 29th November the chimney-piece was back in order, but the argument continued and it becomes clear that it was a question of conflicting claims of precedence. Whether or not innocently, in repainting the piece Norie had placed the masons on the right hand side of the wrights, to which the wrights took exception.²¹ The details of this argument are not very edifying and need not detain us. A compromise was reached of a simple but effective kind. The offending chimney-piece was to be taken down, cut in two and each group given its appropriate half. A plain landscape was to be put in its place, though Gilbert Smith and some members of the four arts were still objecting. Their objection is perhaps the only hint we have of Norie's reaction to this judgement of Solomon in the dispute that he had caused.²²

On the 22nd August 1719, however, the chimney-piece was apparently still causing offence, this time to the coopers, and on the 29th August Gilbert Smith seems finally to have settled the matter by offering to give 500 marks to the poor of the Corporation provided that the Guilds caused a new chimney-piece to be painted 'with the several arts thereon in the order of the chimney-piece that had formerly existed, before James Norie replaced it'. This was agreed to on the 23rd February 1720, great care being taken that everybody did in fact agree, and the new chimney-piece was put in place on the 18th March. The new painting was painted by Roderick Chalmers. The two halves of Norie's picture were hung each on the appropriate side of the coat of arms that Chalmers had presented which

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

evidently hung in the centre of the chapel.²³

Chalmers' painting can certainly be identified with the picture in the Edinburgh Trades Maiden Hospital . (Plate 3) It represents the ten trades in front of Holyrood Palace, each man engaged in his appropriate activity, but in view of the privilege of 1717 the way in which Chalmers represents himself is very illuminating. All the other trades are hatted and aproned; two, who are sitting down, are on benches, but the painter is wearing a fine velvet suit, white stockings, and a wig, with neither apron nor hat. He is seated at an easel on a splendid chair armed with his paint brush and mahl-stick. This is presumably Chalmers' self-portrait. Like Norie, he sees himself quite clearly as an artist and distinct from the tradesmen round about him. There is no proof, but it would certainly not be surprising if the artistic aspirations so plainly manifest in this image had something to do with the row over Norie's chimney-piece. Whatever the truth may be, Norie and Chalmers had made some impression on the Incorporation by 1720, if only on the physical appearance of its meeting house. Even by that date there is enough evidence to suggest that they were asserting a claim to be artists and not merely painters.

Nine years after the dispute over the chimney-piece was finally settled, Norie and Chalmers again appear together. Of the nine painters who were members of the Incorporated Trades in 1729 they are the only two whose names appear in the list of signatories to the document by which on October 29th of that year St. Luke's Academy was founded in Edinburgh. Chalmers is described as the secretary.²⁴ We know very little indeed about this institution, however, beyond the document of

23. Ibid.

24. Royal Scottish Academy Library. The document is published by Robert Brydall, Art in Scotland, its origin and progress, Edinburgh, 1889, 110.

its foundation. On the 6th January 1731 the Town granted free a room in the College to the Academy for Drawing,²⁵ but that is the last we hear of it so it was apparently short lived.

We learn from the document of the Academy's foundation that some of the members had 'a Fine Collection of Models in Plaister from the best Antique Statues', and that 'the Summer Season (was) ... chiefly designed for Drawing from Antique Models and Drawghts of the best Masters of Foraigne Schools by a Sky-Light; for which purpose, a large Portfolie to be kept in the Academy for preserving all curious Drawings already given, or that might be given for that end'.²⁶ Apart from Richard Cooper we do not know which members had collections of this kind, but it is significant that enough of them existed among the Academy's members to be of use to it.

Amongst twenty-eight members in the list of signatories appear, together with Norie and Chalmers, Richard Cooper, the Allan Ramsays father and son, James Norie junior, William Adam, Andrew Hay, John Alexander and Alexander Clerk. Richard Cooper was an engraver and was treasurer. He had been in Italy, and later on he ran an independent 'winter academy'.²⁷ He may have been an important figure in the Runcimans' background, and will be discussed at greater length in a later chapter. John Alexander was certainly an important figure though we know little about him.²⁸ He had apparently travelled out to Italy in 1710, and remained there for a period of at least eight years. He dedicated a series of etchings after Raphael's compositions in the Vatican Loggia to Cosimo III of Florence and may therefore

25. Laing Notes on Artists, transcribed from Edinburgh Council Register, Vol. 53, 270, 6th January 1731. Brydall, Art in Scotland, 113, gives June. 1731.

26. Brydall, Art in Scotland, 110, 111.

27. Robert Strange's fragment of an autobiography, published by C. Dennistoun in Memoirs of Robert Strange, 2 vols. London, 1855, I, 26. Strange dates Cooper's academy to 1735-7.

28. Information on John Alexander and his sons, Cosmo and John, who were also painters, derives mainly from (George Chalmers), Anecdotes of Painting in Scotland, Weekly Magazine, XV, 67, Jan. 16, 1772. David Laing in Notes on Scottish Painters transcribes a letter of Alexander of Sept. 1710 in which he reveals that he is about to leave London for Rome. According to Laing he was still in Rome in 1718.

have enjoyed some patronage of the Medici. He is the most likely of all the signatories to have had first hand experience of any Academy of St. Luke. He evidently worked as a portrait painter, but his most important recorded work is the baroque ceiling for the staircase of Gordon Castle, for which a sketch survives in the SNG. The subject was the Rape of Proserpine. We know very little of his other work however. There was apparently nothing else comparable to the Gordon Castle painting. According to George Chalmers his favourite subject was Mary Queen of Scots.²⁹ He probably died in 1757, or soon afterwards, so it is unlikely that he exercised any direct influence on Alexander Runciman.³⁰ William Aikman, the other much travelled Scottish painter of this generation, is absent from the list of names, probably because he was settled in London.

Andrew Hay had also been in Italy. He was a portrait painter and became quite important as a picture dealer. His nephew played Idleness to Robert Strange's Industry when both were apprentices of Richard Cooper. In his fragment of autobiography Strange tells us that Cooper and Hay were friends, and it seems likely that most of the signatories of the St. Luke's document were closely connected.³¹ We have already seen Chalmers and Norie connected independently. Norie was also godfather to one of Alan Ramsay's daughters. Ramsay and Cooper were connected in a venture of publishing a set of engravings of the Holyrood Kings.³²

29. Chalmers, Weekly Magazine, XV, 67.
30. His last dated work is a portrait of 1757, Catalogue of the National Gallery of Scotland, 1957 ed., 12.
31. Dennistoun, Strange, I, 33.
32. Daniel Wilson, Memorials of Edinburgh in Olden Time, Edinburgh, 1891, 2 vols., II, 126. The prints were advertised in the Caledonian Mercury, March 1st and 9th, 1735.

Alexander Clerk was a younger son of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, the first baronet, and an uncle therefore of Runciman's patron Sir James. He was trained as a painter and travelled to Italy. It is just possible that the James Clerk who appears immediately above him in the list could be his nephew, but it is a common name. If it was the future baronet, this would appear to be the only connection with wealth or title that the list of names contains, apart from Alexander Clerk himself. Article VI of the founding document suggests that the signatories were not unaware of the importance of this kind of connection however. It reads: "All Noblemen, Gentlemen, Patrons, Painters, and lovers of Painting, who shall contribute to carrying on the Designe, (if they do not incline to draw Themselves) shall have the Privilege by a written Order to our Director, to assign His Right to any Young Artist whom He is Pleased to Patronise".³³ There seems however to have been notably little support from those who could best provide it, and this perhaps partly explains the Academy's early demise. It also perhaps confirms that the enterprise was really the undertaking of a group of friends, and that the initiative came from the painters themselves and their immediate circle. It was therefore a sequel to the events in the Incorporation of St. Mary's Chapel ten years earlier, and part of a real attempt on the part of those who practised them to put the arts on a proper footing in Scotland, and to attain recognition for the artists.

Twenty years after the Academy of St. Luke, the Foulis Academy was founded in Glasgow on similar lines, though with better financial backing. Like the later Trustees Academy in Edinburgh it was housed in the College, and it seems to have run successfully for about thirteen years.³⁴ Its

33. Brydall, Art in Scotland, 111.

34. Brydall, Art in Scotland, 121-130.

existence helps to confirm that the St. Luke's Academy was not an isolated and rootless event, but beyond that it does not need to detain us now. Its existence does not seem to have affected developments in Edinburgh, where a quite distinct tradition was by this time beginning to appear. There is no evidence to connect either of the Runcimans with the Foulis's enterprise.

In Edinburgh the Trustees Academy which was first proposed in the budget of the Trustees of the Board of Manufactures in January 1760 was of great significance.³⁵ It was however distinct from the movement we have been discussing so far. It was probably originally proposed by Lord Kames and was intended for the teaching of pattern drawing for the linen industry. The first teachers were brought in from outside, and their skill in design in the modern sense was apparently a consideration above their wider artistic claims. From the announcement that opened the school, however, it is clear that the first teacher, Delacour, was expected to teach drawing in the wider sense privately.³⁶ By 1766 the Drawing School was being subsidised by the Town, who also provided accommodation for it in the College and this may have been connected with some more formal extension of its function.³⁷ It was however only with Alexander Runciman's appointment as drawing master at the end of 1772³⁸ that a native of Scotland took control and the school might therefore be said to be properly integrated with the existing Edinburgh tradition, such as it was.

35. Minute Book of the Board of Trustees, Register House.
36. Edinburgh Evening Courant, July 12th and 14th, 1760.
See below, Chap.III
37. Payments to Delacour, his successor Charles Pavillion, and to Runciman are recorded in the City Accounts 1766, and 1769-76.
38. Minutes of the Board of Trustees. ^{Register House} Runciman was appointed on 25th November 1772.

In the previous discussion of the circumstances surrounding the attempt to found the Academy of St. Luke, James Norie was constantly present even if his precise role was not clear. The suggestion that he was in fact an important personality in Edinburgh's artistic life is helped by the role that he and his firm played in founding a tradition of landscape painting that lasted right into the nineteenth century.

James Norie himself was according to Chalmers celebrated as a landscape painter³⁹ and what we know of his work suggests that landscape was his main genre, though there is also his self-portrait, and a still-life is recorded.⁴⁰ There are also several painters who achieved some distinction who can trace their artistic lineage back to James Norie. He had three sons, all of whom were trained as painters. His eldest son, James, was admitted a freeman painter on 26th May 1732, but died in 1736.⁴¹ His youngest son George was admitted burgess and guild brother on 13th October 1742.⁴² He seems to have worked as a paint-dealer rather than actually as a painter, or at least that is how he describes himself in his shop card of which a copy is preserved in the Penicuik Accounts. From the same accounts we can deduce that he died some time between June 1749 and September 1750.⁴³ Robert Norie, who was the second son, joined the Incorporation of St. Mary at the same time as George.⁴⁴ He inherited the family firm on his father's death in 1757, but he may have been in effective control some years earlier. In 1745 he discharged an account at Penicuik on behalf of his father, but by 1750, when

39. Chalmers, Weekly Magazine, XV, 67.

40. Werschmidt, James Norie, 11.

41. Laing, Transcriptions, EUL.

42. Scottish Record Society, Vol. 62, 1930, Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses, 1701-60, 154.

43. Penicuik Accounts, Register House.

44. Edinburgh Burgess Roll, 1701-60, 154.

Runciman was apprenticed, it was to Robert Norie & Co.⁴⁵ James Norie's own name does not disappear after this however. Father and son did not split up, and it seems that the evidence only reflects the flexibility of partnership arrangements at this time. Runciman in turn became a partner about 1760⁴⁶ and he became senior partner after Robert Norie's death in 1766. Helen Norie, who may have been a daughter, either of James or Robert Norie, preserved an interest in the firm however.⁴⁷

Jacob More, the landscape painter, became apprentice to Robert Norie in 1764.⁴⁸ After Norie's death he carried on with Runciman, but in 1768, when Runciman was in Rome, he transferred to John Bonnar, himself a former apprentice of Robert Norie.⁴⁹ Alexander Naysmith, in the next generation, was an apprentice of James Cumming,⁵⁰ who had been an apprentice of Robert Norie, as well as of Roderick Chalmers. Thus, including Runciman, all three of the leading Scottish landscape painters of the later eighteenth century were descended through the apprentice system from James Norie.

Naysmith was also a pupil of Runciman's at the Trustees Academy,⁵¹ and if those who learnt from Runciman are included in this family tree they include Francis Leggat and John Graham.⁵²

45. Penicuik General Accounts. *Register House*
46. See below, Chap. VI
47. Helen Norie appears as Painter in Williamson's Edinburgh Directory, 1775-6, 72. She was not the wife of old Norie, nor of any of his sons.
48. Scottish Record Society, Vol. 89, 1963, Register of Edinburgh Apprentices 1756-1800, 47.
49. Laing, Transcripts. Laing also cites Runciman's pupil George Walker as saying that More was apprenticed to Runciman and Norie. Bonnar was apprenticed to Robert Norie in 1743, Laing, Notes on Artists.
50. Edinburgh Apprentices, 1756-1800, 48.
51. Brydall, Art in Scotland, 281.
52. Leggat's connection with Runciman is implied by himself in a letter to Lord Buchan, no date, but at the time of Runciman's death, and in a poem on the same occasion, Laing, Notes on Artists. For Graham see Brydall, 252. His study with Runciman is recorded in a copy of his Perseus and the Medusa etching in the N.G.S.

As master of the Trustees Academy, Graham was important in the early career of David Wilkie.⁵³ Roderick Chalmers' second son, George Chalmers, who inherited a penniless title and became Sir George Chalmers, also became a painter.⁵⁴ He was a pupil of Alan Ramsay and worked as a portrait painter.

Without stretching the evidence it is thus possible to see a continuous tradition from the first self assertion of James Norie and Roderick Chalmers in the incorporation of St. Mary's Chapel to include almost all of the important Scottish painters of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although none of these painters was apprenticed to James Norie himself, it seems just to attribute pride of place to him, as he created the tradition in which his firm worked.

The figure of James Norie and what he stood for helps considerably in explaining the ambition that turned Alexander Runciman from a house painter into an artist, and which led him as an already mature painter, and in the face of considerable difficulty, to travel to Rome 'to improve himself'. It also helps to explain the emergence of his younger brother as an independent artist apparently outside the tradition of painter decorators. The ambition to succeed as an artist is already implicit in the self-portraits of Norie and Chalmers.

The Nories created the style and technique in which Runciman was trained and which continued to be influential in his work even after he had been to Rome. It is part of the business of the next chapter therefore to examine the evidence for this style. Although they obviously had the closest practical influence on Runciman's early career, they did not however constitute the whole of his circle and there were other Edinburgh figures who may have helped to shape his ideas, notably William Delacour, the two Richard Coopers, father and son, and the friends of Runciman's own generation in Edinburgh. These will be dealt with in the three succeeding chapters.

53. Alan Cunningham, Life of Sir David Wilkie, 3 vols., London 1843, I, 35-6.

54. Laing, Notes on Artists. EVL

CHAPTER TWO

James Norie and the work of the Norie firm

George Chalmers wrote of James Norie: 'The natural genius of Mr. Norie for landscape entitles him to a place among our Scots painters. His occupation as a house painter employed him so much that he had no time left to improve his natural talents nor exert his genius. His works are more to be valued on this account as original'.¹ Unfortunately, though we have a certain amount of evidence relating to Norie's work as a house-painter, we have far less for his work as an artist. Apart from the self-portrait, the most important pictures that we have on which to base an estimate of his style are the two landscapes in the National Gallery of Scotland which are signed and dated 1736. (Plate 4) These two pictures are in the shape of overmantels and are painted on canvas. They are both in the generalised 'classical' landscape idiom that the eighteenth century derived from the great painters of the century before. They are however characterised by a firm and broad handling and a freedom of drawing in detail that distinguishes them from otherwise comparable productions of contemporary painters in England, like George Lambert for example. This quality of the handling is matched by a bold and confident arrangement of light and shadow. A distinguishing characteristic of the way of painting is the representation of leaves by rapid repetitive brushstrokes that often make clear patterns against areas of shadow. The overall effect of the two pictures is that of the vigorous treatment of a conventional theme, pleasing because of a certain boldness of simplification and absence of fuss. A picture that might on comparison with these two be attributed to the same hand is a view of Edinburgh in the National Portrait Gallery. (Plate 5) It shows the same broad simplification, an interest in the shapes of things rather than their details, and a breadth of handling to match.

1. Chalmers, Weekly Magazine, XV, 67.

In the Hopetoun Inventory of paintings of 1808 a picture in Lord Hopetoun's study is described 'A view from the avenue with the row of trees afterwards cut down by John Earl of Hopetoun. Over the chimney, by Norry 3ft10 x 4ft8'. a second picture is 'Over the door, Landscape by Norry, 1ft10 x 4ft8'.² Though these pictures are now lost the record of the first of them shows that Norie did paint particular views like that of Edinburgh in the SNPG, and that they could form part of a decorative scheme. The shape of the Edinburgh view, like that of the two SNG classical landscapes, suggests that they were all originally part of decorative schemes. Apart from one or two pictures that were apparently separate, almost everything else that can be discussed in connection with Norie's style either is or has been associated with a decorative scheme of this kind. The decorative purpose of his work also seems to have dictated his palette. Although the two SNG classical landscapes are in comparatively full colour, the View of Edinburgh is typical of all the other works attributable to him and his firm in the limitation of the palette to silvery greys and greens.

Interior decorative schemes that include formal landscape painting of this kind are still fairly numerous in and around Edinburgh, and an equal number are recorded that no longer exist. They are in a good sub-Palladian tradition having the explicit authority of Vitruvius.³ They seem approximately dateable between 1730 and 1760 by the architectural style of which they form part. There is however apparently no connection between this kind of painting and the baroque decorative painting of men like Nicholas Heude, working in Scotland earlier in the century, although at Caroline Park and apparently at Kelly Castle there is work both by the Nories and by Heude.⁴

2. Hopetoun Inventory of Paintings, 1808, Hopetoun House.
3. Vitruvius, De Architectura, VII.v.2. Loeb edition.
4. There is a signed ceiling painting by Heude at Caroline Park, and a slightly more elaborate one at Kelly Castle in Fife.

The most characteristic schemes are associated with panelled interiors, for example in Caroline Park, Drylaw House, or in Riddel's Court, Edinburgh, though the latter has been recently dismantled. Of these three, only Drylaw can be dated. The two panelled rooms there were part of a redecoration undertaken in 1744.⁵ There is however no contemporary documentation to prove these attributions to the Nories. It is only at Hopetoun that we have documentary proof, both that the Nories worked there and that there were once pictures by them. Although S. Booth states that there is a decorative scheme at Mavisbank done for Sir John Clerk of Penicuik,⁶ any eighteenth century decoration there may have been was removed by alterations carried out in the mid-nineteenth century. Sir John Clerk did employ the Nories regularly after 1732, and they almost certainly did some work of this kind in the wing he added to the old house at Penicuik in the 1750s.⁷ They worked for him at Mavisbank between 1739-41, but the original decoration there seems to have been done by a painter called John Clark whom Sir John continued to employ until the 1740s.⁸

The Nories worked at Hopetoun between 1738 and 1764 during which time they submitted four large accounts for work done over periods of several years.⁹ There is no indication, however, to which of these periods the two landscapes belong that are described in the inventory of 1808. Three other landscapes over doors are mentioned in the same inventory though no artist is given.

5. Gordon Loch, The Family of Loch, Edinburgh, 1934, 140.
6. S. Booth, The earlier career of Alexander Runciman and his relations with Sir James Clerk, Warburg and Courtauld Journal, XXXII, 1969, 333.
7. Penicuik Accounts, Register House.
8. Ibid.
9. See below, Chapter VI.

A landscape was recently discovered during works in the house, beneath later panelling. It was covered up again as it had had an electricity conduit driven through it, but according to Basil Skinner who saw it, it was in the Norie manner.¹⁰ Also in the house is a small panelled room which is decorated with grisaille swags and lion masks which may be by the firm.

It would seem therefore that a considerable amount of work in the Norie style once existed at Hopetoun and some of it is recorded as by James Norie. Though none of it survives, except for the swags and lion masks, Hopetoun is nevertheless the only place where there is direct evidence both for his activity and for the existence of work in his style.

Apart from one later group of paintings by Robert Norie at Holyrood which will be discussed at the end of this chapter, most attributions of work to the firm depend in the first instance on the authority of writers in the nineteenth century. The most comprehensive list is given in a brief account of the elder Norie's work published in 1890 by D.A. Werschmidt, who apparently married a descendant.¹¹ His list has the advantage of stylistic unity and enumerates a body of closely comparable works. One of the most elaborate schemes included was formerly in Riddel's Court. The attribution to Norie is supported by Daniel Wilson writing about the same time.¹² These decorations are now dismantled, and by the time they were taken down had become a bit decrepit. The paintings have however been preserved by the National Trust and, though it is impossible to describe the scheme, the style of the painting can be seen. The basic type is the same as that in James Norie's two landscapes

10. Private information from Basil Skinner.

11. (D.A. Werschmidt), James Norie, Painter, Edinburgh, 1890, 7-11.

12. Daniel Wilson, Old Edinburgh, I, 217.

of 1736, but in a very limited range of colour. (Plate 6) Working from a white ground they seem to employ no more than four pigments other than white, brown, green, blue, and possibly yellow ochre, though this analysis of colour is a little uncertain seen through a film of yellow varnish. The most striking thing about the pictures is the freedom with which they are painted. The handling is rapid and bold without being clumsy. There is no evidence of any kind of drawing except with the brush. This is cursive and very simplified, treating masses rather than details. The sense of light and shade is bold but pleasing. The pictures depend upon this and in their original state on their silvery colour for their decorative effect. They are however clearly intended to be no more than decoration. In their swiftness and economy of means they might be quite reasonably compared to some contemporary painting on porcelain; nevertheless they do have a logical stylistic relationship with the two Norie landscapes in the Scottish National Gallery. The sense of tone, the breadth of handling, and the simplification of form are all implicit in those pictures. The Riddel's Court decorations are a logical development of this style for purely decorative ends.

The decorations at Drylaw House are less elaborate, but the actual painting is in every way similar. It seems therefore reasonable to regard them as the product of the same painter. The scheme at Drylaw is well preserved. It can therefore be taken as a fairly typical example of this kind of decoration, created to suit the panelled interiors. The panelling provides both the picture surfaces and the framing. The pictorial decoration is confined to the overmantels, but there is also fictive architectural detail painted in a free grisaille. All the intervening panelling is 'plain painted', in this case a cool greyish green which, as it is very like the colour at Riddel's Court, may be the original colour. It certainly harmonises very well with the rest of the painting, and thus the whole interior presents a single painted surface.

Caroline Park has a series of rooms with this kind of decoration. Two are panelled, and in the third the painting is directly on the plaster. At Chessel's Court in Edinburgh there are two landscape overmantels similarly painted on plaster. Those at Caroline Park have beautiful and elaborate fictive frames, supported by lions and birds, and surrounded by swags of fruit and flowers. (Plate 7) The landscapes are softly painted in the same grisaille as the frames. They are well articulated and quite delicate in mood. Some of the landscapes in the panelled rooms are bold and energetic, though rough. (Plate 8) Others, particularly the larger, are effective but at times somewhat uncertain in their handling of space. (Plate 9)

No firm conclusion can be drawn from the variations in these Caroline Park pictures. Where we know that the painters worked as a firm it is to be expected that different hands would be involved in a large project of this kind. It is also possible that the decorations are the product of more than one period of work, possibly separated by a number of years. The slightly literal handling of the detail and the uncertainty of the space in the larger panels (Plate 9) is comparable however to the four Holyrood landscapes by Robert Norie, which have not so far been discussed.

Three of the four Holyrood pictures are signed R. Norie and dated 1741. (Plates 10, 11, 12) The fourth is clearly part of the same set, and by the same hand. 1741 is the year before Robert Norie became a full member of the guild, but they are nevertheless very ambitious pictures. They are in two pairs, one on each of two adjacent walls in the dining-room of the private apartments of the Duke of Hamilton in the Palace. These have been occupied by the Dukes since the first half of the seventeenth century. The four pictures are on canvas. The two pairs are slightly different in width, but all four canvases are nearly six feet high. Two are straight landscapes with figures rather in the Gaspard style. (Plate 10)

The second pair are dominated by classical ruins, drawn with careful though not wholly secure perspective, and they appear to be dignified with subjects. One has the Holy Family seated in the foreground rather incongruously next to what appears to be the mouth of the Cloaca Maxima. (Plate 11) The group to the left of the Holy Family is of equal interest as they are taken directly from an etching by Salvator, and Salvator's etchings were an important source for the Runcimans in their early works. The second picture has a figure preaching to a small crowd. (Plate 12) There is nothing by which to identify him, but he seems most likely to be St. Paul.

The ambitious architectural drawing, together with the subjects of these latter two canvases, distinguish them from all the other works we have been able to consider in this context. They clearly have important bearing on what is probably Alexander Runciman's earliest work, the Jacob's Dream (Plate 16) which will be discussed in a later chapter. In spite of their pretensions, however, not least apparent in their size, these pictures are rather heavily painted. The figures, drawn with the brush, are awkward and lumpish, and the two pure landscapes particularly show a similar dislocation of the parts to that in the larger Caroline Park panels. All four lack the simplification of light, form, and colour and consequent unity of mood, that distinguishes the best pictures that we can associate with the Norie firm, and which we must attribute to James Norie, if these are typical of his son.

It is possible that amongst the works here attributed to the Nories there are early paintings by Runciman. The smaller paintings are Caroline Park, with their apparent echoes of Piranesi, for example, are close to some of his Roman landscapes (e.g. Plate 52), and it is possible he had a hand in them. Though we can make no decision on this last point, overall the practice of the Nories seems to conform very closely to what Fuseli tells us of Runciman's early training:

"He served an apprenticeship to a coach painter, and acquired a practice of brush, a facility of pencilling, and much mechanic knowledge of colour, before he attained any correct notions of design." 13

13. Pilkington's Dictionary of Painters, 1805 ed., edited by Fuseli.

CHAPTER THREE

William Delacour

1757, the year in which the elder Norie died, is the first year for which we have any evidence for the presence in Edinburgh of the painter William Delacour. Delacour, as his name implies, was of French origin. He was not perhaps a great artist any more than was James Norie, but he was evidently a man of wide experience and varied talents. The only evidence that we have to connect him directly with the Runcimans is a remark by Alexander Campbell writing in 1802, who says that Delacour 'initiated the Runcimans into the rudiments of design'.¹ A few pages earlier he makes exactly the same remark about Charles Pavilion who succeeded Delacour at the Trustees Academy in 1769, two years after the brothers had left Edinburgh.² It seems unlikely therefore that Campbell had any information to connect Delacour directly with the Runcimans. Nevertheless from the information that we have Delacour was certainly a significant figure on the Edinburgh scene, though the statement made by Booth that he 'absorbed the practice of the Nories' is without foundation.³ Even if the connection between him and the Runcimans was not close, he may well have played some part in forming their artistic attitudes.

1. Alexander Campbell, A Journey from Edinburgh through parts of North Britain, 2 vols., London, 1802, II, 275.
2. Ibid., 269.
3. S. Booth, The Early Career of Alexander Runciman etc., Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XXXII, 1969, 332.

Delacour is the subject of a brief but informative article in Country Life by John Fleming,⁴ and of an earlier study by D. Fraser-Harris in the Scottish Bookman.⁵ According to Fleming the first we know of him is in 1740 when he appears in London as designer for the opera 'Busiri' by G.B. Pescetti at the King's Theatre. Between 1741 and 1747 he was author of eight volumes of ornamental designs, of which if they were ever published apparently only fragments survive. In the latter year his name appears as the painter on a portrait of Sir Thomas de Veil, engraved by T. Riley and published in London. In 1752 he is described as 'portrait painter in oil and pastel' at Mr. Read's, Grocer, sign of the Ship, etc. In 1753 he announced from Winchester Street his imminent departure for Dublin where he had been invited to found an Academy.⁶

He is first recorded in Edinburgh on July 23, 1757, in the Edinburgh Evening Courant in the notice of a forthcoming production of John Hume's tragedy Douglas which had been first performed in the preceding December. The notice reads as follows:

"Theatre: On Monday 25inst. will be presented the Tragedy of DOUGLAS: The part of Douglas by Mr. Digges: Lord Barnet by Mr. Aickin, etc..... This night for the first time the stage on the sides and back will be decorated with an entire new WOOD SCENE painted for the occasion by De la Cour." .

The new scenery was evidently intended to be something of an attraction. On December 18 of the previous year a theatre notice in the same newspaper for a forthcoming production of the

4. John Fleming, Enigma of a Rococo artist, Country Life, Vol.131, 1962, 1224-6.
5. D. F. Fraser-Harris, William Delacour, Scottish Bookman, Vol.I, no.5, Jan.1936, 12-19.
6. Fleming, Country Life, Vol.131, 1224.

opera, *The Tempest*, announced "A principal scene of the TEMPEST rais'd by magic, is new painted for the occasion". There is no evidence to connect this earlier example of enterprising stage design with Delacour, but it is significant that this was the first season that the actor, West Digges, had control of the theatre. Digges was in Dublin from 1749 to 1753, again in 1753-4, and possibly 1755-6, though he was not acting during this latter season; difficulties with his creditors prevented his doing anything so public as appear on the stage.⁷ His mistress, Mrs. Ward, seems to have been in the Dublin company during this period however.⁸ Digges' first appearance in Edinburgh is probably as a 'gentleman from Dublin' who appears in the notice of the theatre for 6 March 1756, and again in a notice of March 29 in the role of Wolsey in *Henry VIII*.⁹ Wolsey was apparently one of Digges's favourite and best parts. He appears under his own name for the first time on 28th September, and by this time he was also apparently describing himself as manager of the theatre.¹⁰

Digges coming from Dublin, whither we know Delacour was intending to move in 1753, may very well have invited Delacour over to join him once he was established in control of the theatre. Delacour appears regularly in connection with the theatre between 1757 and 1763.¹¹ Digges only retained control of the theatre till 1758, however, when he was jockeyed out of position by David Beat who remained as manager till 1766, but he returned as a member of the company in 1759.¹² Delacour however evidently continued to work with Beat.

7. J.C. Dibdin, Annals of the Edinburgh Stage, Edinburgh, 1888, 82.
8. Letters which passed between Mr. West Digges, Comedian, and Mrs. Sarah Ward, 1752-9, Edinburgh 1833. See particularly the letters of 1753.
9. Dibdin, Edinburgh Stage, 82.
10. *Ibid.* 83.
11. Fleming, Country Life, Vol.131, 1224.
12. Dibdin, Edinburgh Stage, 100-104.

In the Edinburgh Evening Courant for January 18th, 1759, the notice for Voltaire's 'Orphan of China' states 'the whole appearance of the stage will be entirely new, the scenery, dresses and decorations designed and painted for the occasion by Mons. Delacour'. A benefit performance of this play was given for Delacour a few days later.¹³ According to Fleming, he also painted scenery for The Tempest, Twelfth Night, and The Dragon of Wantley during the next few years,¹⁴ and there is no reason to suppose that what is referred to in the newspaper represents all of his activity in connection with the theatre. There are, for example, notices like that of 25th August, 1762, that 'the inside of the theatre is now painting and decorating against race week'.¹⁵ When David Beat took over the Edinburgh theatre he was also manager of the theatre in Newcastle. The Edinburgh company also played in Glasgow.¹⁶ In the Edinburgh Evening Courant for 5th March, 1763, Delacour published the following notice from which it is clear that he had also worked in these two centres. The gist of the notice however is that at this time he severed his connection with the theatre. It reads as follows:

"MR. DELACOUR TO THE PUBLIC.

As the managers of the Theatre, in order to prejudice me, do now employ another to paint their Decorations for both here and Glasgow: spreading about I have been too dear; the only remedy I could think of to expose this false report, and undeceive the public, was, by giving an account of my prices, as also in what manner I have been payed.

13. Edinburgh Evening Courant, January 23rd, 1759.
14. Fleming, Country Life, Vol.131, 1224.
15. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 25th August, 1762.
16. Dibdin, Edinburgh Stage, 100.

For the front scenes, such as towns, chambers, forests etc, of fifteen feet square each, never above £7. 7s. for the wings £1. 1s., and so in proportion for the rest, tho' those I did for Newcastle were still cheaper.

As I received the payment of the above only by Benefits, the Managers instead of being losers, must have considerably gained because they were always on such nights as the charges of the house could not otherwise have been cleared. Last year for instance they gave me Monday February 1st, as this was a fast day in the Church of England (sic) had it not been for the goodness of my friends, I could not have defrayed my expenses, which amounted to £22, the rest were of the same kind. 'Tis plain therefore I am indebted to the Public and not to the Managers, for which I take this opportunity to return my most grateful acknowledgements.

W. DELACOUR. "

Delacour's notice suggests the range of his activities as scene painter, and that he was a fairly regular member of the theatre's company. Unfortunately we do not know who it was who had replaced him. Such was the intrigue surrounding the theatre that the notice is not itself evidence that he was permanently replaced, and that after this date he had no connection with the theatre. The chief manager, David Beat, and thus presumably Delacour's chief target, remained in control until 1766 when it was wrecked and closed down.¹⁷ It seems perhaps unlikely therefore that he worked again as a stage painter.

17. Ibid., 104. Also letter of Mrs. Baker to Tate Wilkinson, in Tate Wilkinson, Memoirs of his own life, York, 1790 4 vols. IV, 264.

At its establishment in 1760, Delacour was appointed drawing master to the Trustees Academy. The public notice announcing the opening of the Academy appeared in the newspaper of 12th and 14th July. It is dated from the Trustees Office 27th June, and in the minutes of the Trustees for that date the approval of the notice is recorded.¹⁸

The notice reads as follows:

"The Commissioners and Trustees for improving fisheries and manufactures in Scotland, do hereby advertise, that by an agreement with Mr. De la Cour painter, he has opened a school in this city for persons of both sexes that shall be presented to him by the Trustees, whom he is to teach gratis, the ART of DRAWING for the use of manufactures, especially the drawing of PATTERNS for the LINEN and WOOLLEN MANUFACTURES; and at the end of the year some prizes to be distributed among the scholars.

All persons that incline to be taught by him are desired to apply to the Trustees's secretary, with whom they will lodge certificates in their favour, or recommendations from persons of character etc

Mr. De la Cour is likewise to teach the art of drawing to all persons that chuse to attend his school, at one guinea per quarter. He has a room for girls of rank apart from his public school.

By order of the said Commissioners and Trustees.

D.A. Flint, secretary"

18. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 12th and 14th July, 1760.
Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 27th June, 1760.
Register House, NG.1/1.

In the minutes for the 24th January 1760, in the proposed budget for the year, a sum not exceeding £115 is set aside for 'the teaching and promoting the art of drawing for the use of the manufactures, especially the drawing of Patterns for the linen and wool manufactures'. This is the first mention we have of the drawing school. On the 10th July, Lord Kames reports: 'that having (agreeably to the remit to him of the last meeting) considered when Delacour's salary for teaching Pattern Drawing should commence he found that in the terms of the agreement with Delacour he had actually a good school House with the necessary Desks &c ready the 1st March last, that several young men had shortly after been admitted, and that he had prepared a good deal of work for the scholars, and that therefore his lordship was of the opinion that the Salary should commence from Lady Day or 15th March last, etc....' .¹⁹

It would seem therefore that Delacour was expected to act to some extent independently in the provision of equipment and so forth, and that he was also expected to run a conventional drawing school independently but concurrently with the school of design. By 1766 the drawing school was also being subsidised by the city, both by contributing to the salary and by providing space in the College.²⁰ When Delacour died however the sale of his effects, announced in the Caledonian Mercury for 25th April, 1767, included more equipment than the painter might have had for his own private use. The school may therefore still have been in a sense his own.

If only by the contribution that he made to establishing the drawing school, Delacour is of considerable historical importance. This importance must have been apparent at the

19. Minutes of the Trustees, 10th July, 1760.

20. City Accounts, 1766.

time, for the foundation of the Trustees Academy gave Edinburgh its first permanent art institution. It cannot at this date have affected the career of the elder Runciman however. The only important figure we can connect with this side of Delacour's work is John Brown. A chalk drawing in the National Gallery of a boy of about 14 is signed Delacour and inscribed John Brown.²¹ Though Brown and Runciman were friends in later life, there are unfortunately no grounds for connecting them at this early date.

Apart from his activities as a scene painter and drawing master Delacour worked in Scotland both as a decorative painter and as a portrait painter. In 1758 he decorated the dining-room of Lord Milton's house in the Canongate. There is a letter dated 5th October of that year from him to John Adam concerning this decoration and the need to do more enriching than had been originally planned. Delacour attached to this letter his revised estimate for the work. In it the decoration is described as 'painting a large room in arabesque agreeable to a sketch'.²² The estimate also includes areas of plain painting.

The house does not survive, but four of the paintings from the dining-room were taken down when it was demolished and were put up in the Milton House Board school that replaced it. While still in situ the scheme was described by Brydall as 'a series of landscape and allegorical subjects, enclosed by rich borders of fruit and flowers, executed with much spirit and still bright and fresh in colour'. He adds that among the borders were figures 'having the appearance of being copied from a fourteenth century illuminated missal'.²³ If any of these last had been preserved they would be of great interest, if indeed they were part of the original scheme.

21. SNG D.280.

22. Saltoun Papers, National Library of Scotland, formerly Ms.SB.89. The date is misprinted in John Fleming, Robert Adam and his circle, London, 1962, 339, as 1748.

23. Brydall, Art in Scotland, 109.

The four panels that survive are all octagonal, though it is not clear if this was their original shape. Three are landscapes on plaster. The fourth is a smaller oval landscape supported in a scheme of grotesques that clearly originally extended beyond the present edge of the panel. It seems however to be on canvas. None of the paintings have been photographed, and they are now somewhat grimy. One can still see, however, that they are lightly and freshly painted beneath the grime, though it does not seem likely that they were ever really brightly coloured. Two of the landscapes are open views framed by trees, with buildings and mountains in the distance. The third is a nearer view of rocks and trees with two figures in the middle ground.

Although the third of the landscapes described above might suggest the manner of Salvator, the decorative feeling for the shapes within all three compositions is distinctively rococo, and in this they are different from the style of the Norries. They, however much they may have subordinated their painting to its decorative purpose, still revealed in their pictures their inspiration in the landscape of the seventeenth century classical painters.

Delacour's most important surviving work is the series of landscapes that decorate the saloon at Yester House. This is a magnificent room apparently redecorated under the supervision of the Adam brothers.²⁴ There are eight landscapes in decorative frames filling the wall space above the dado. Seven of these are large vertical compositions. The eighth is an overmantel and is rather smaller. There is also a screen associated with these pictures by its style and technique. At least two of the large pictures are signed by Delacour and dated 1761. They suggest that the collaboration with the Adams, for which Milton House is the first evidence, was carried on.

24. Private information from Dr. Alastair Rowan.

The Yester paintings are in distemper on canvas. They are freely and rapidly executed, and both scale and technique strongly suggest Delacour's experience as a stage designer. The colour is generally cool and restrained.

These compositions are all in the manner of capricci, as in the example shown in Plate 13. Recognisable classical ruins, such as the Basilica of Constantine, or the Tomb of the Horatii are seen in fanciful relations to each other, and in imaginary landscapes of foliage, water, etc. Dainty rather rococo figures populate the foregrounds.

Though the classical element in the Yester pictures is really only superficial, it does make a contrast with the other surviving paintings of this kind that we have good grounds for attributing to Delacour. There are the four pictures from Milton House, and also three paintings in the Edinburgh Dental Hospital Library which were removed from a house in Brown Square demolished to build the Hospital. They are not signed, but they are attributed to Delacour by an anecdote recorded by John Ramsay of Ochtertyre of an exchange between Lord President Dundas and Thomas Miller who owned the house. Dundas, looking at the paintings, remarked, "Eh Tom, what is this? Green cow, red sheep, blue goats! Damned ridiculous!". The other, who was then Lord Advocate or Lord Justice Clerk, answered, "My Lord, not understanding these things, I left it to Mr. Delacour who, I thought, was a man of taste and knowledge in the fine arts."²⁵

This story is sufficiently circumstantial to be reliable in its main point. The three landscapes are in oil on plaster. Two are vertical compositions with elegantly dressed fishing

25. Scotland and Scotsmen in the eighteenth century, from the Mss. of John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, ed. by A. Allardyce, 2 vols. Edinburgh and London, 1888, I, 350,n.1.

parties beside rushing waterfalls in green mountain landscapes. The third, which is a horizontal composition, has two rococo peasant girls in the foreground going to market, one with a donkey. In the distance is a mountain landscape, and a large, rather Italianate building. All three pictures are predominantly green, but, though there is neither a cow, nor a sheep, nor a goat in any of the surviving pictures, the use of colour in the figure groups is such that it might have prompted Dundas's remark. In the costumes the artist uses saturated colour in the shadows, that is he starts from the pure tint in the dark tone and adds white for the light. On one occasion, in the dress of a woman in the foreground of the left hand of the two vertical compositions, he changes the colour from blue-white in the light to crimson in the shadow. If the anecdote recorded above did actually happen it may have been this use of colour that attracted Dundas's notice.

The overall effect of the Brown Square pictures is light and airy. In their frankly rococo character they are somewhat in contrast to the classical aspirations of the Yester paintings, which may reflect the influence of the Nories, or, more probably, the interests of Robert Adam newly returned from Italy.²⁶ The rococo quality of the Brown Square pictures on the other hand is close to two paintings belonging to the Duke of Hamilton at Lennoxlove, a Diana and a Flora, both signed and dated by Delacour, 1758. These nearly life size figure paintings are perhaps more ambitious than straightforward decorative painting. They are recognisably French and rococo in design and execution, though they reveal the weakness of Delacour's figure drawing. The Diana particularly shows the same feeling for the decorative use of bright colour using colour saturation and colour change that has already been noticed in the Brown Square paintings. For example, the white floating veil of Diana is lit with blue

26. Fleming, Robert Adam, 243, Adam returned to England in January 1758.

and yellow. Though this use of colour is nowhere bold enough to be striking, it does seem to be a feature of Delacour's technique, and it did after all prompt Dundas's remark. Even at Yester, in one of the paintings a female figure sports a crocus yellow hat with a bright blue ribbon. One of the most striking features of Runciman's painting, already noticed by Fuseli in the remark we have quoted, was his 'mechanic knowledge of colour'.²⁷ This is very apparent in the Origin of Painting for example, or in the oil sketch for the central panel of the Penicuik ceiling, both of 1772. As colour is notably lacking in the work we can attribute to the Nories it is possible that Runciman's use of colour may represent a link through Delacour with the Rococo. If this is the case however it is puzzling that there is no trace of any influence from this source in John Runciman's work.

There is a third decorative scheme which can be associated with the three so far discussed, and which is ^{of} considerable importance for its bearing on the earliest project for the decorations at Penicuik. This is the decoration of the saloon in Hawkhill House which survived intact until recently. Hawkhill was built by John Adam, and is dated 1757.²⁸ As Delacour was associated with the Adams both at Yester and Lord Milton's House, it seems likely that he was also employed at Hawkhill. Also Lord Ale Moor for whom the house was built was a member of the Board of Trustees.²⁹ There were ten paintings in the Hawkhill scheme. Three rectangular overdoors, a larger rectangular overmantel, two large and four smaller ovals. All are landscapes, most had figures, (though these have almost all been cut out and stolen) and they are painted in thinnish paint on fine grained canvas. They were framed with wooden mouldings and arranged symmetrically, filling the wall space in a manner very like

27. Pilkington's Dictionary.

28. Vitruvius Scoticus.

29. Andrew Pringle, Lord Ale Moor; his name appears in the minutes of the Trustees throughout the early 1760's.

the scheme at Yester though less grand, Plate 14. Stylistically they come halfway between the Yester and the Brown's Square pictures, having features in common with both. For example the waterfall and Scots pine in one of the Brown's Square panels reappears in an oval composition at Hawkhill, though the landscape is made more rugged, and perhaps more consciously Scottish. The figures were roughly drawn like those at Yester on the other hand. The pictures are so far decayed that it is impossible to say very much about the colour, but it is clear that the paint handling though in oil was very free and rapid like that at Yester.³⁰ This last point suggests a further link with the elder Runciman who in his surviving works tends to use thin transparent paint rather in contrast to the Norie's impasto. Jacob's Dream however, which is the earliest of his surviving works it seems, and therefore probably near in time to the Hawkhill decorations, is much closer to the Nories in this point than it is to Delacour. The other link between Runciman's work and the pictures at Hawkhill is their combination of traditional forms of landscape with recognisably Scottish features. Runciman in the Allegro of 1773 makes a major point of this, but it is also apparent in some of the Norie work, and he may not be dependent on the Frenchman in this.

The three decorative schemes that we can now attribute to Delacour reveal a different style from that associated with the Nories. John Fleming noticing the contrast between Delacour's established work and some of the work attributed to him suggests that the only way we can reconcile the two is by supposing that the latter represents his style before he first appeared in London.³¹ There seems to be no reason to suppose this was the case. Delacour's work in its delicacy, noticeably in his self-portrait of 1765,³² as well as in his decorative pictures

30. I attributed the Hawkhill scheme to Runciman in an article, Alexander Runciman in Rome, Burlington Magazine, Jan.1970.

31. Fleming, Country Life, Vol.131, 1224.

32. SNPG 41.

clearly reveals the French background that his name suggests. It is quite distinct from the bold but unsophisticated style of the Nories.

Runciman continued to work with the Nories as a partner until Robert Norie's death in 1766. His Roman landscapes are still very much in their style. Even at his most meticulous he could never match the fastidiousness of Delacour's two views of Roslyn dated 1761, now in the British Museum.³³ If there was any influence of Delacour on his work therefore it seems unlikely that it stemmed from close professional contact, though Delacour remained in Edinburgh till he died of old age in 1767.³⁴ Apart from his self-portrait the latest works we have by him are two portraits of Sir Stuart Threipland^{and} Lady Janet Sinclair dated 1764.³⁵

33. One is reproduced by Fleming, *Ibid.* Pl.1, 1224.
34. Fraser-Harris, Scottish Bookman, 16.
35. Fleming, Country Life, Vol.131, 1225 and Pl.3.

CHAPTER FOUR

Richard Cooper, father
and son.

The two Richard Coopers, father and son were engravers. The younger was evidently a friend of Alexander Runciman's, and though no correspondence between them survives, a letter from Runciman to Cooper is recorded.¹ The most important evidence for the connection between them however is in a drawing and an etching. The etching is a shop-card for Robert Norie, and the only copy has on it in a handwriting that might be Runciman's "Alex.Runciman inv: Richard Cooper Jun.sculp"., Plate 15. As Robert Norie died in 1766 the etching can be dated to that year or earlier. The design is a slightly eccentric rococo frame set in a landscape which it also encloses. There are a palette and brushes to the left and a canvas to the right. The whole effect is not unlike the eccentric etched design for a frontispiece to one of Delacour's volumes of ornament.²

The drawing is a similar design in wash and watercolour. ^{Plate 15a.} It bears Runciman's name as a signature, but it serves as the frontispiece to a scrapbook that belonged to Richard Cooper, Jun. The drawing is inscribed in a later hand "Frontispiece by A.Runciman for R.Cooper". Both these works are insignificant in themselves, but they suggest a friendly artistic relationship between the two young men. There is further evidence at a number of points in their work to confirm this.

The elder Richard Cooper was apparently born in England, by one account in 1705.³ He trained as an engraver under John Pine, father of R.E.Pine.⁴ He first appears in Edinburgh as a signatory of the St.Luke's Academy document in 1729, and it is recorded there that

1. Letter of David Stewart to David Laing, 1st June 1831, EUL.

2. British Museum Print Room, no catalogue number.

3. John C.Guy, Edinburgh Engravers, Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, IX, 82.

4. Dennistoun, Strange, 25 note.

he was its treasurer. He had before then spent some time in Rome where apparently he had made a collection of prints and drawings. He came to Edinburgh on his return from Rome in the company of a Scottish painter called Alexander Guthrie with whom he had travelled back from Italy. He was persuaded to settle in Scotland,⁵ and his position at the founding of St. Luke's Academy suggests that he may already have been here some time by 1729. It also associated him with James Norie, Roderick Chalmers and the other members of that enterprise.

A miscellaneous and not very large collection of his work survives or is recorded.⁶ He did however apparently continue to work as an engraver though he made an advantageous marriage, and he also took apprentices. Our main source of information on him is a fragment of autobiography by Robert Strange who was his apprentice between 1735 and 1741.⁷ According to Strange Cooper at one time ran a drawing academy. He was also sufficiently prosperous to build himself a large house which he decorated with history paintings or classical landscapes or both. When Dennistoun wrote his biography of Strange a 'landscape in the classical taste' about 5'6" x 9' was still visible.⁸

Strange himself wrote of Cooper's visit to Rome; "A considerable succession having reverted to him on the death of his father, he quitted his profession as an engraver, and went to Italy in order to study painting and passed several years at Rome. I am entirely a stranger

5. Ibid.

6. Guy, Old Edinburgh Club, IX, 82.

7. Dennistoun, Strange, 11-39, and 40.

8. Ibid. 25 note.

in what manner he employed his time whilst in that city; but certain it is he was an excellent draughtsman, had acquired a knowledge of the great masters and was himself no inconsiderable painter, notwithstanding he did not follow it in a professional line... He had formed an excellent collection of drawings, and many of them by the great masters. His own studies too were not inconsiderable".⁹

Cooper died in or before 1764.¹⁰ His experience of Rome may well have been important to the young painters who knew him, and it was evidently in a sense preserved in his collection which presumably contained his own studies after the masters in Rome as well as engravings and old master drawings.

The younger Cooper seems to have been born about 1740.¹¹ In 1761 and 1764 he exhibited at the Society of Artists and at the Free Society, and on both occasions he gave a London address.¹² In 1767 he was in Paris and had either been there before, or had already been there for some time. He wrote to the Earl of Buchan offering his services when the latter came to Paris, and said of himself that he was 'now no stranger to what was curious there'.¹³ He trained in Paris with Le Bas following in Strange's footsteps, and that was presumably before this date.¹⁴

His main purpose in writing to Buchan was to secure his permission to accompany him on a forthcoming journey to Spain. Cooper wished to

9. Dennistoun, Strange, 23.

10. Letter from Alexander Cunningham to David Laing, 1860, EUL.

11. Laing, Notes on Artists, gives 1740. Guy, Old Edinburgh Club, IX, 82 gives 1730. Samuel Redgrave, Dictionary of Artists of the English School, confuses the issue by inventing a third Richard Cooper.

12. Graves, Society of Artists etc. 63.

13. Cooper to Buchan, Paris, 5th Jan. 1757, EUL.

14. Dictionary of National Biography.

to make drawings for engraving from unpublished pictures there. He evidently did go to Spain and spent some time there, for there are a number of drawings by him from pictures in Spanish collections in two volumes of drawings after paintings that he did at various times. These are now in the National Gallery of Scotland.

In the same letter to Buchan he said that he would have an introduction to Mengs, then in Spain, "in the warmest manner by artists who were his (Mengs's) intimates in Rome". This does not necessarily imply that he had himself been in Rome by this date. He evidently became friendly with Mengs however for a drawing after Correggio's Education of Cupid is inscribed "as squared from the picture at Chevalier Mengs's house".¹⁵ A drawing after Mengs's own Adoration is inscribed "done at Rome spring 1772",¹⁶ so by that time Cooper had moved to Rome. By 1779 he had settled in England, for he published that year in London a set of engravings of Roman views.

Richard Cooper's scrapbook for which Runciman did a frontispiece contains a miscellaneous set of drawings by various hands.¹⁷ It included at least one significant old master drawing which has now been removed into the gallery's main collection. It also contains a series of drawings for the walls of a room, or rooms decorated with landscapes into which the doors and windows have been incorporated. The various details are noted, 'window', 'kitchen', etc. in a hand that is not Cooper's own and might therefore be his father's

A handful of the drawings in the book have dates, though not all these are signed. On the whole the dates fall between 1759 and 1764, though one might be 1757 and one 1739. One drawing is labelled 'Spain' and must therefore date ^{from} after 1767. The distribution of the dates

15. SNG ... Drawing book D.4823, 74.

16. SNG 4823, 16.

17. SNG 4280, no page numbers.

and Runciman's frontispiece together suggest that the book was mainly put together in the early 1760's. The earliest drawing signed by Cooper himself is a rather unsophisticated likeness of a mouse dated 1759. A very formal and French looking drawing of a boy is signed with a flourish, 'RC Paris'. A comparison of these two works suggests what is anyway likely, that Cooper did not go to Paris to study with Le Bas until after 1759. If he was in London in 1761 and 1764 he may not have gone to Paris until the mid-60's.

It is evidently impossible to work out his movements before 1767. The evidence of his scrapbook and the Norie shop-card suggest that he and Runciman were friendly in the early 1760's. Some further evidence supports this supposition. In the books of Cooper's drawings are one or two done in Scotland. One of these is a Madonna and child by Chiari inscribed 'belonging to Sir James Clerk, Mavisbank'. The other is of a Holy Family by Trevisani etched and drawn and inscribed 'belonging to Mr. Alexander', one of my drawings before I left Scotland'.¹⁸ This may very possibly be identical with the drawing 'after Trevisani' exhibited in 1761. It is striking that Cooper should be connected in this way with the Runcimans' two most important patrons. It is unlikely in the circumstances that this was independently of the Runcimans' own connection with these gentlemen, and so it suggests that this may go back at least to the beginning of the decade.

A most important point that connects the Runcimans with Cooper is their skill in etching. The earliest dateable work by either of the brothers is an etching, John's Taking down of the Netherbow. Both showed considerable skill in etching, and Alexander became perhaps the most notable etcher of his generation. Etching is not a technique they are likely to have been able to learn from the Nories. On the

18. SNG D.4823, 25 & 27.

contrary, Robert Norie's shop-card had to be etched by Cooper. The Runcimans' familiarity with the etching technique, and their knowledge of old master etchings as it is seen in their earliest paintings, can best be explained by their connection with the Coopers.

There is not much early evidence to suggest that their work was close in style to that of the younger Cooper however. So little is dateable to this period by any of the three that this need not be significant. In the scrapbook there is a drawing of David with a sword and sling that is closely comparable to the figure of David with the head of Goliath in the small picture of that subject at Penicuik. This picture is attributed to John Runciman though the attribution presents some problem. The drawing is inferior to the painting but its existence helps to connect both works with the Cooper-Runciman circle.

A later drawing by Cooper is very close both in treatment and in execution to Alexander Runciman's Roman landscapes. This is a large dramatic wash drawing of the Colosseum.¹⁹ It is unsigned and undated, but it was engraved and published in 1779 with the inscription 'Richard Cooper ad vivum del.'. If Cooper was in Rome in 1772, he may have been there earlier and so at the same time as Runciman. Even if he was not this drawing is evidence that their work was at times very close.

The connection of the Runcimans with the Nories, the Coopers and possibly with Delacour establishes a background for them that was lively and enterprising even if it was not one of outstanding achievement. If this background was socially humble, it was surprisingly outward-looking. Both the Coopers travelled abroad,

19. BM 1875.8.14.950.

and it was from the same Edinburgh circle that a little earlier Alan Ramsay and Robert Adam had gone out into the world to achieve international reputation. Both their fathers had been signatories of the founding document of St.Luke's Academy together with James Norie and the elder Cooper.

CHAPTER FIVE

Runciman's circle in Edinburgh.

The elder Norie died in 1757, Richard Cooper in or near 1764, Robert Norie in 1766, and Delacour in 1767. These men may all have contributed in different ways to Runciman's artistic education, but they were the older generation. He would naturally have looked for his personal friends among men of his own age. The younger Cooper was evidently a like minded friend, and he may well have helped to enlarge Runciman's artistic ambitions. Cooper had already been gone from Edinburgh for some time however, and probably for a period of years when in 1767 Runciman set off for Italy. These years immediately before 1767, in which Runciman was an independent painter and John Runciman was producing his brilliant small paintings, were clearly important in the lives of the two brothers.

There is one very important source of information about the circle of Runciman's friends during this time, between 1764 and 1767. This is in the records of his club, the Cape Club. Its rules were not formally set down and its records begun until Jan. 1769, probably by Runciman's life-long friend, and fellow apprentice with the Nories, James Cumming, the club's Recorder. In the introduction to the Sederunt Book it is stated that the club began 'about 1764'.¹ It originally had twenty four members, and was clearly very informal. By 1769 membership had risen to about 100. The club was purely social in intention, and met every evening in a tavern for drink, talk, music, and occasional riot.²

1. NLS Ms.2004, Sederunt Book of the Cape Club. The book was begun in Jan. 1769.
2. Occasional comments on riotous behaviour appear in the Sederunt Book. An account of one such evening is published by M.P. McDiarmid, The Poems of Robert Fergusson, 2 vols. Scottish Text Society, Edinburgh, 1954, Vol.I, 51-52.

More formal meetings were held from time to time which were called Grand Capes. These were dignified by a kind of mock masonic ritual. The club was presided over by a 'sovereign', and all the members were 'knights' each known by a pseudonym. Runciman was Sir Brimstone. James Cumming was Sir Nun and Abbess. These names were taken from some comic incident related by the knight about himself. There is unfortunately no clue to the origin of Runciman's Brimstone.

The Cape Club Sederunt Book contains a list of the members with their title and the date of their joining. During the first few years of its existence appear the names of Jacob More, Dugald McLaurie or McLaren, Walter Ross, Robert Fergusson, John Baxter, William Jeans, and John Brown, together with those of Runciman and Cumming. The first two were at one time apprentices of Runciman, the second becoming his partner. Ross was in charge of the Runciman's affairs during there absence in Rome. Fergusson was a close friend in 1772 and 1773. Baxter, Jeans and Brown were all with Runciman in Rome, and the two former were also engaged in work for Sir James Clerk at Penicuik. Also the best evidence for Runciman's friendship with Barry in Rome is that he proposed him to Cumming as a worthy knight,³ though there seems to be no record of Barry's joining the club, unless he is a John Barry who became a member in Sep. 1772 as Sir Ready.

With perhaps the single exception of Richard Cooper all those who we know for other reasons were closely associated with Runciman were members of the Cape Club. The presence in the membership of all his close friends does not permit us to argue that all the members were his friends, but it does suggest that the membership gives a pretty thorough account of his acquaintance. This is particularly likely to have been true in

3. Runciman to Cumming, Sept. 1769. Appendix A.

its early days, and Runciman was one of the twenty four original members. The most significant of the names with whom he was thus associated and certainly on friendly terms were Thomas Lancashire, Cornforth Gilson, and David Herd.

Thomas Lancashire was a comic actor and an important figure on the Edinburgh stage for nearly twenty years till his death, in 1772, which was commemorated in a verse by Fergusson.⁴ He is described by John Jackson in his History of the Scottish Stage; "Mr. Lancashire possessed a great fund of dry humour, and filled Shuter's line in low comedy. He was a great favourite with the public. He kept a tavern first in the Canongate, and afterwards in the New Town. He drank and joked with his customers; laughed and grew fat; and at length died respected by many and with the good will of all".⁵ Tate Wilkinson suggests that Lancashire took to tavern-keeping only during the interval between the closing of the old theatre wrecked in a riot in 1767, and the opening of the new Theatre Royal in 1769.⁶ However it may have been, with the significant title of Sir Cape he was clearly an important figure in the club's foundation and an appropriate symbol for us of its spirit.

Another theatrical figure who was a member of the club was David Beat, the manager of the theatre. He had the appropriate title of Sir Revels. Though not one of the original twenty four, his association with the club must have been early in its existence as he had to leave Edinburgh to hide from his debts in 1767.⁷ His presence together with that of Lancashire suggests that, though they may not have all been directly associated with the theatre, the other members are likely to have supported it.

4. McDiarmid, Poems of R.F., II, 50.
5. John Jackson, History of the Scottish Stage, Edinburgh, 1793, 42.
6. Tate Wilkinson, Memoirs, IV, 265.
7. Ibid., 264. He became a member of the Cape before Sept. 1768, but does not appear in the early Sederunts.

Although it was still properly speaking illegal before the Royal Patent was granted in 1768, the theatre in Edinburgh was a lively place, and even if the standard of performance was not high a surprising variety of plays were put on, including a large proportion of Shakespeare. Actors came and went from London and elsewhere with considerable frequency so that the theatre was by no means out of touch.

The earliest evidence of Runciman working for the stage dates from 1775. Topham in his Letters from Edinburgh describes a ridotto in the theatre decorated by him.⁸ It is highly unlikely however that this is the first time that he had done any work of this kind, for there is a variety of other evidence to establish his general connection with the theatre. At least one stage design by him survives. It is a large drawing of a perspective through a loggia to a formal garden beyond.⁹ It is however undated and undateable. Laing made copies of two etchings by John Runciman which were tickets for benefit performances at the theatre.¹⁰ The names are left blank, but the tickets must date from before John left Edinburgh in 1767. Laing also records a similar ticket by Alexander for a benefit on behalf of the musician Schetky.¹¹ He however did not arrive in Edinburgh till 1772. Also by John is a drawing, which seems to be from the life, of an actor declaiming a part which is most likely to have been done in Edinburgh.¹² Laing records that Alexander painted a picture of the actor Digges in the part of Lear.¹³ We do not know what his grounds for this identification were, but even if it was a portrait of Digges he first played in Edinburgh in 1756 and last in 1781,¹⁴ so the identification is no help with dating the picture.

8. Captain Topham, Letters from Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 1776, Letter of 10th March, 1775.
9. SNG D.354.
10. Laing, Notes on Artists, EUL.
11. Ibid.
12. SNG D.365.
13. Laing, Notes on Artists, EUL.
14. Dibdin, Edinburgh Stage, 82, & 178.

The foregoing evidence establishes a general interest in the theatre for the Runcimans at various points in time, but it does not establish the closer relationship that friendship with Beat and Lancashire might suggest. The most interesting piece of evidence in this respect does not concern the Runcimans directly at all. Jacob More who had been an apprentice of Runciman and Robert Norie made his first independent appearance as a painter in 1769 when he did the scenes for the Royal Shepherd.¹⁵ (This was the production for which Robert Fergusson wrote fourteen new songs,¹⁶ with which he also made his debut before the Edinburgh public.) It was the success of More's stage designs that prompted him in his turn to enlarge his ambitions and make the journey to Rome.

According to Laing, quoting George Walker, himself a pupil of Runciman, More was already connected with the theatre in 1767.¹⁷ If this was the case, and the theatre was not open for very long in 1767, the year in which it was wrecked, he was working there while still Runciman's apprentice. It is certainly unlikely that he would have been given the job in 1769 if he was an untried novice, but he could not have done any scene painting between 1767 and 1769 as the theatre had been closed.¹⁸ It seems as though he must have had experience of that kind of work when still with Runciman, and have been given the commission in 1769, in the older artist's absence, as his natural successor.

The evidence that Runciman was associated with Edinburgh theatrical circles, and that he may even have worked for the theatre in the mid-1760's is important for a number of reasons. As an ordinary tradesman, even later

15. Ibid., 178.

16. McDiarmid, Poems of R.F6, II, 319.

17. Laing, Notes on Artists.

18. Dibdin, Edinburgh Stage,¹⁰⁴/₂.

in his career, he is unlikely to have been received into the circles of the Literati. The theatre was therefore one of the most lively sources of stimulus available to him. It also establishes a direct link with Delacour. Even if the Frenchman did no more work for the theatre after 1763, his painted sets will have remained its property¹⁹. Judging by his pictures at Yester, Delacour's stage sets must have been quite striking, and they were possibly the most accomplished and professional painting with which Runciman was familiar at this time. It would be ironical if in fact it was he who had supplanted Delacour in 1763, and had been the occasion of his public complaint.

In order to get round the law, until the royal patent was granted and the theatre made legal, the fiction was adopted that the public was paying for the concert which was always part of the proceedings. The play was put on free of charge. Cornforth Gilson another founder member of the Cape was one of the leading Edinburgh musicians. He had come to Edinburgh in 1753 or 1756 as Master of the Music to improve the standard of church music in the city.²⁰ He was a composer and song writer and also worked for the Edinburgh Musical Society at St. Cecilia's Hall. He may well have worked for the theatre from time to time, as most musicians appear to have done so. He was joined very shortly in the Cape by the Italian, Ferdinand Arrigoni, who worked regularly as conductor, both for the Musical Society, and for the theatre,²¹ and by John Smeaton who had worked as a musician with the theatre since 1758.²² The presence of these musicians in the Cape not only reinforces the importance of its theatrical connection, but also enlarges its cultural range. Music

19. Ibid., 76, mentions the sets as the property of the Theatre.
20. McDiarmid, Poems of R.F., I, 25, gives 1756. D.F. Harris, St. Cecilia's Hall, 2nd ed., Edinburgh, 1904, 150, gives 1753.
21. McDiarmid, Poems of R.F., I, 25, and Dibdin, Edinburgh Stage, 125.
22. McDiarmid, Poems of R.F., I, 25.



was evidently an important part of the proceedings. Not simply boisterous drunken song, but songs and music composed specially for a particular occasion. For example the birthday of James Thomson was celebrated on 22nd Sept. 1770 with an ode composed by Thomas Mercer and set to music by John Smeaton.²³ The birthdays of both Thomson and Shakespeare were honoured by the club. Thomson presumably as a national bard, Burns and Scott being unthought of still.

The presence of the musicians in the Cape illustrates another fact about its membership. Two of them were obviously of great importance to the Edinburgh Musical Society, but in spite of the musical pretensions of the Cape Club, there is almost no overlap between its membership and that of the Musical Society as it existed in 1775.²⁴ The difference between the two was clearly social. The members of the Cape were tradesmen, or officials and clerks on small salaries. These were the people with whom the musicians felt at home, and they were evidently distinct from those who employed them. The same is true of the actors, the artists and indeed the poets.

The last of the founder members of the Cape Club of particular interest is David Herd who worked all his life as a clerk. In his obituary it is mentioned that he was an intimate friend of Alexander Runciman,²⁵ though he had outlived him by twenty-five years. There is no reason to gainsay the obituary, and the records of the Cape Club suggest that this friendship may have gone back to 1764. In the same notice Herd was described as 'a most active investigator of Scottish Literature and Antiquity'. He

23. Cape Sederunt Book, cited by McDiarmid, Poems of R.F., I, 56.
24. The list of members of the Music Society is published by D.F. Harris, St. Cecilia's Hall, Appendix.
25. Scots Magazine, August, 1810, cited by Hans Hecht, Songs from David Herd's Mss., Edinburgh, 1904, 65.

was perhaps somewhat eccentric, but a man of real learning of a distinctly national kind. Walter Scott knew him in his old age, and has left a portrait of him as he was then: "He was a grim old Antiquary of the real Scottish cast, all feu-parchment, snuff, and an occasional deep glass of whisky toddy.... He was a fine figure, with a real Scotch face of the hawk, but manly and intelligent, and a profusion of grey hair--- a determined misogynist and always stipulated for the absence of my womankind when he came to see me".²⁶

David Herd published his first collection of Scottish songs in 1769.²⁷ Scott described his book as "the first classical collection of Scottish songs and ballads".²⁸ Other editors drew on his Ms. and published collections in his lifetime with his willing collaboration and have continued to do so since.²⁹ He was in no sense motivated by ambition, only by his dedication to the recording and preservation of Scots vernacular poetry. In this he carries on the tradition of Allan Ramsay, but he was no poet. His work is in fact distinguished by its accuracy and his refusal to tamper with what he found.³⁰ He was in his own way a scholar, and very much an individual.

Runciman's friendship with David Herd is matched by his friendship with James Cumming. Cumming too became an antiquary.

26. Walter Scott to W.S. Rose, Oct.12th 1825, published in Familiar Letters of Walter Scott,II, 353 & 354, cited by Hans Hecht, David Herd, 62.
27. The Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads, etc, Edinburgh, 1769.
28. Hecht, David Herd, 76.
29. Bishop Percy, Joseph Ritson, Chambers, Aytoun, Childe, etc, Hecht, David Herd, 10, 54, 76.
30. Ibid., 76.

He was an amateur of Scottish history and genealogy, and his enthusiasm seems to have begun early in his life. He was and remained a painter by trade, but already in 1766 he was exchanging books and information with George Paton, a customs officer, bibliophile, and antiquarian, who was also a close collaborator of David Herd. On 23rd Oct. of that year Paton wrote to Cumming, (with a fine disregard for pronouns), 'I shall value it a particular favour if Mr. Cumming will send him a note of what books are in your possession belonging to me, as I am just now taking a catalogue of my books'.³¹

Cumming's sister, Henrietta, wrote to Lord Monboddo recommending her brother, when she was still Miss Cumming, therefore sometime in the 1760's, and said of him, 'Heraldry and genealogy are the chief business he professes, but he keeps the best hands for house painting and does the ornamental parts himself'.³² In 1766 he was considering giving up his painting business and joining Paton in the customs office, no doubt to give himself more time for his antiquarian pursuits.³³

In 1773 Robert Fergusson, friend of Cumming and Runciman, gave us a portrait of Cumming. If it is not one of his best poems, it is nevertheless worth quoting at length for the picture it gives of Runciman's closest friend:

31. NLS Ms. 3648, 121.
32. Henrietta Cumming to Lord Monboddo, n.d. Correspondence of Henrietta Cumming, EUL, Bequest, La.II.82. She became Mrs. Fordyce about 1770.
33. Letter to H.C. from an unknown correspondent, 20th April, 1766, EUL.

'Just now in fair Edina lives
That famous Antient Town
At a known place hight Blackfry's Wynd
A knight of Odd renown

A Druid's Sacred form he bears
With Saucer Eyes of Fire
An Antique Hat on's head he wears
Like Ramsay's the Town Cryer

Down in the Wynd his Mansion stands
All gloomy dark within
Here mangled Books like blood and Bones
Strew'd in a Giant's Den

Crude indigested half devour'd
On groaning Shelves they're thrown
Such Manuscripts no Eye can read
No hand Write but his own

No Prophet he like Sydrophele
Can future times explore
But what has happened he can tell
Five hundred years and more

A Walking Almanack he appears
Step't from some mouldy wall
Worn out of Use thro' dust and years
Like Scutcheons in his Hall

By rusty Coins old Kings he'll trace
And know their Air and Mein
King Fergus he knows well by face
'Tho George he ne'er has seen

This wight th'outsides of Churches loo'd
Almost unto a Sin
Spires gothic of more use he prov'd
Than Pulpits are within. 34.

By the time that Runciman was writing to him from Rome, Cumming was clearly a fully fledged antiquary.

34. McDiarmid, Poems of R.F., II, 172, verses 1-8.

What was distinctive about Cumming, Paton, and Herd, and others of their circle as antiquaries was that they were devoted to Scottish antiquity. Their concerns were Scottish history, Scottish genealogy, Scottish literature, and Scottish historical remains. They were not exactly nationalists, but they were deeply concerned with their own indigenous history and culture. This will clearly have some bearing on Runciman's work when we come to consider the subject of his major undertaking, the paintings that he did for Penicuik house. It was a preoccupation and enthusiasm that distinguished this circle from that of the more famous and self-consciously European Literati. It was summarised by Walter Ruddiman whose weekly Magazine, begun in 1768, was the organ of this school of thought. In an editorial of 28th April, 1774, he wrote; "We hope to render our publication not a flimsy retail shop of foreign articles, but a genuine Caledonian Magazine".³⁵ It is not surprising to find that Walter Ruddiman too was a member of the Cape Club.

The series of notes between Cumming and Paton that begins with the note already quoted of 1766, goes on into the 1780's.³⁶ It is almost always concerned with books and antiquarian matters, and is testimony to a cordial friendship and the lively pursuit of a common interest. The Earl of Buchan wrote of Paton in a note on the back of an envelope; "George Paton of the Customs House at Edinburgh, son of Mr. Paton a bookseller at Edinburgh, a very diligent antiquary and collector of rare books. He was very serviceable to the researches of Mr. John Nicholls of Red Lyon Court, and to Mr. Richard Gough".³⁷

35. Cited Ibid., I, 36.

36. They are in EUL Ms La.II.82, and NLS Ms. 3648.

37. n.d. NLS Ms. 3648, 124.

Buchan might have added many other names to these two. Paton and Cumming were both industrious correspondents. Anybody in England or Scotland with a problem in Scottish History or bibliography seems to have addressed himself to Paton. As well as Gough and Nichols, he helped Grose, Ritson, Pennant, Thomas Percy and many others.³⁸ He helped Percy considerably with his collections of ancient English and Scots poetry, lending or finding for him rare books and manuscripts including David Herd's collections.

Paton's correspondence with Percy began in 1768.³⁹ It may have been through Percy that he became acquainted with Hugh Blair, champion of Ossian. In his first letter to Paton, Percy mentions Blair as though Paton might not know him personally.⁴⁰ Whether or not this was the case, it is through this correspondence that we can say that Blair and Paton were on friendly terms. This is as near as we can come to establishing any link between Blair and Runciman, for Paton and Runciman certainly knew each other after the latter's return from Rome, and most probably before.

There are two letters from Runciman to Paton, one of 1775, and the other of 1778.⁴¹ The first is an important letter describing the paintings in the Cowgate Chapel. The second is rather improbably an urgent request for a stuffed, or otherwise preserved gannet which Runciman had promised to a German friend. He had secured one, but his maid, unaware of its importance, had disposed of it. Now he hoped Paton could supply a replacement.

38. Hecht, David Herd, 8.

39. Letters from Thomas Percy and others to George Paton, edited by James Maidment, Edinburgh, 1830.

40. Percy to Paton, April 30th, 1768, Letters to Paton, 2.

41. Published in Letters to Paton, 157-160. See also Appendix A.

In view of the friendship between Paton and Cumming, and between Cumming and Runciman, it is not surprising if the painter should have been friendly with Paton. He was apparently not a member of the Cape Club as his name does not appear on its books, but in his earlier letters he constantly addresses Cumming as 'Sir James', referring no doubt to his Cape Club 'kighthood'. He mentions the Cape in his letters too, and was clearly familiar with its habits. Though he and Runciman were not brought together by membership of this club, in his first surviving letter to Cumming, of Oct. 1766, already quoted in part, he shows that he knew the Runcimans or at least their works.

He writes; "If you could spare me a copy or two, but no more of the Netherbow print it will be a favour, you see what an importuning beggar I am. I should be glad to see the Suttymans's view of Edinburgh from a chimney head, if not mistaken you mentioned this one to me...

With your convenience I shall beg a china-ink copy of the Abbey Porch, or rather I shall send you a book wherein I design to collect some of these views, designs etc. I should be obliged to your kindly hand of assistance".⁴²

Gough in his *British Topography* wrote, "Mr. Alexander Runciman on the back of a playing card pencilled a bird's eye (or rather chimney sweep's) view of Edinburgh, his station on a north chimney top near the Tron Church. In much the same neat style he has preserved the porch entry to the Abbey of Holyrood, now pulled down, above which lived the porter of the Palace... none of these were ever engraved".⁴³ Elsewhere he records as well as other works by Alexander and

42. NLS Ms. 3648, 121.

43. Richard Gough, British Topography, 2 vols, London, 1780, II, 676.

John, John Runciman's view of 'the Netherbow from the west with the scaffolding, drawn on the spot, and etched'.⁴⁴ According to Laing, Paton was Gough's informant,⁴⁵ which enlarges on the reference to Gough by the Earl of Buchan.

In Paton's letter therefore the Netherbow print is presumably John Runciman's, and Suttymen a pun for the occasion on Runciman. A drawing of the porch at Holyrood by Runciman exists, formerly attributed to David Allan, but signed in monogram AR.⁴⁶ It might be the drawing referred to in the letter, though it is not particularly neat. The Porch was apparently taken down in 1753, which would be too early for the drawing to be quite as Gough described it.⁴⁷ If in fact the drawing that Paton referred to was the same as that mentioned by Gough, it may be that the porch was actually demolished a few years later than the accepted date.

Whatever the precise status of the Holyrood Porch drawing, Paton's letter is of particular interest, when it is taken with Gough's remarks. It would seem that both John Runciman's Netherbow print and Alexander's Abbey Porch drawing were intended to be records of vanished or vanishing historical monuments. Cumming's interest in the matter clearly indicates a connection with his enthusiasm for 'Spires gothic', as Fergusson puts it in the last verse of his poem. The Gothic of Siena Cathedral was the first thing in Italy that really made an impression on Runciman.⁴⁸

44. Ibid. 678.

45. Laing, Notes on Artists. EUL

46. SNG D.736.

47. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, The City of Edinburgh, HMSO, Edinburgh, 1951, 146.

48. Runciman to Cumming, Dec. 1767. EUL Appendix A.

Clearly therefore before he left Edinburgh he was not only friendly with Herd and Cumming, and probably Paton, but he shared their enthusiasm, and was prepared to use his art in its service. This may also throw some light on the hint of 'mediaevalism' apparent in some of John's recorded works.

Though David Herd did not become directly involved, the shared enthusiasm of Paton and Cumming, and others like them, eventually led to the foundation of the Society of Antiquaries under the patronage of the Earl of Buchan in 1781.⁴⁹ Cumming was the secretary, and keeper of the museum. He and Paton were key figures in the society, and many others of Runciman's circle were involved in it. Runciman himself was "Historical Painter to the Antiquaries".⁵⁰ We do not know that he ever did anything to justify the title though he did paint a portrait of Buchan now in the Perth Museum. John Brown did the series of portrait drawings of the original members that are still preserved, and which include a posthumous portrait of Runciman.

The Society of Antiquaries, rather scorned by the Literati, and indeed the victim of open hostility and obstruction from the University,⁵¹ was very much the product of the enthusiasm and energy of these people who continued in the tradition of patriotic enterprise that in the older generation had inspired the abortive Academy of St. Luke, or Ramsay's attempt in 1736 to start the first proper theatre in Scotland. While the foundation of the Society of Antiquaries is much later than the period covered by this thesis it had real continuity with the interests of Cumming and Paton in 1766, and it is of particular interest to see Runciman associated with this kind of activity so early.

49. W. Smellie, Account of the Institution and Progress of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1782, & 1784, Part I.

50. Ibid., Part I, 37, and Part II, 41.

51. The opposition to the foundation of the Antiquaries is reflected in the correspondence of Cumming and the Earl of Buchan, EUL, Laing bequest, La.II.82, and is discussed by Lamb, The Earl of Buchan, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, the University of St. Andrews.

Discussion of Runciman's friends and their interests throws light on his own interests and enthusiasms, but the circles of the Cape Club were not those from which patronage and other more practical kinds of encouragement were likely to come. His relations with his patrons would have been different from with his friends. The practical details of his employment and the patronage that he enjoyed at this time will be considered in the next chapter, meanwhile some idea of the kind of social relationship involved has already been suggested by considering the status of the musicians who played in St. Cecilia's Hall.

An oblique but interesting light is thrown on this question by the correspondence of James Cumming's sister Henrietta. She seems to have been taken on as a companion by Mrs. Cockburn, famous for writing the Flowers of the Forest, who had been widowed since 1753.⁵² Her husband had been commissioner to the Duke of Hamilton, and she was therefore, quite apart from her real personal distinction, of fairly elevated rank. Henrietta was through this connection a constant guest of the Lindsays at Balcarres, and of Lady Dalrymple at her house in Argyle Square, and also in other great houses.⁵³ She was evidently something of a personality herself, and was welcomed in her own right and not merely as an appendage of her protector. It is clear from the letters that in this situation she enjoyed a quite different status from that of her brother. The letter to Lord Monboddo of which part was quoted above, recommending her brother as a house painter, is only one of several similar letters which show that she was fully aware of this

52. Mrs. Cockburn's biography is given in Chambers Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen, new edition revised by Rev. Thomas Thomson, 3 vols, Edinburgh, 1870, III.

53. Correspondence of Henrietta Cumming, passim. EUL.

difference of status, and that she did not hesitate to use her advantage to further his interest.

The question of Henrietta's status comes closer to the main topic of this thesis through her connection with Robert Alexander with whom she was evidently on friendly terms. Though we do not know the details, it is clear that he was one of the Runciman brothers two main patrons. A letter of his to Mrs. Cockburn speaks of Henrietta in glowing terms. Evidently she was fully prepared to exploit his good opinion, for an exchange of letters reveals that she had asked him to use his influence on her brother's behalf in securing an account with the Bank of Scotland.⁵⁴ This he evidently did though without success. Another fragment of a letter is also evidently from him, in it he attempts to exculpate himself from having dared have his house in Largo painted by someone other than her brother.⁵⁵ He had evidently been roundly reproached, probably not only by her but by all the ladies of Balcarres.

Henrietta Cumming's social elevation is unlikely to have affected the Runcimans directly. Their line of communication with Robert Alexander was through Walter Ross who evidently acted for him as some kind of agent, but it does reveal very vividly the importance of status. Their relationship to their patron would clearly have been the same as that implied in the relative status of Robert Alexander and James Cumming. Artists were still very much tradesmen seeking employment, and their relationship to their patrons that of master to man. Henrietta's own case is evidence nevertheless of the comparative ease with which social barriers still could be crossed at that time.

54. Robert Alexander to Henrietta Cumming n.d.(Dec.1768). H.C. to R.A. n.d.(1769).EUL.

55. (Robert Alexander) to Henrietta Cumming, n.d. EUL.

In one undated fragment of a letter, evidently to her brother, Henrietta does mention the Runcimans. She writes, "Runchoman's (sic) letter is worth the while. Pray you write to him, and lose not an opportunity of getting an account of all the curious original paintings abroad, an account from one whose skill is so much to be depended upon is much worth. I return you the letter, etc."⁵⁶ The letter in question is most likely to have been Runciman's first letter from Italy, in May 1767. Later on in the same letter to her brother, Henrietta mentions Robert Alexander, though only to declare her determination to attend a ball given by one of his opponents in the disastrous election that he fought in Fife in 1767. She herself was staying at Balcarres in Fife at the time of writing, but Cumming may very well have sent the letter over to her partly in order that she might show it to him, as he was at that time in Largo, and therefore virtually a neighbour of Balcarres.

Although already an artist in ambition at least, Runciman was, in 1767 and later, socially still a tradesman. Contact with the great and influential was not direct except in matters of patronage or employment. The lines between the social classes were distinct, and although communication across them was not difficult, he depended very much upon his friends and equals for real communication and the exchange of ideas. It is one of the most interesting facts about Edinburgh at this time that the status of tradesman was not limiting, but on the contrary gave him access to some of the most original if not the greatest talents of his generation. It must also be said however that the physical character of the Old Town of Edinburgh made the free exchange between men of ideas of all classes easier than almost anywhere else. A correspondent of William Smellie, (with Paton and Cumming a founder of the Antiquaries), who was visiting Edinburgh is

56. Henrietta to James Cumming, Balcarres, n.d.,(1767). EUL.

said to have remarked, "Here stand I at what is called the Cross of Edinburgh, and can in a few minutes take fifty men of genius by the hand".⁵⁷ This reflects quite as much the physically condensed society of the Old Town as any unusually high proportion of men of genius among its inhabitants.

57. R. Ker, Memoirs of the Life and writings of William Smellie, Edinburgh, 1811, quoted by Hecht, David Herd, 33.

CHAPTER SIX

Runciman in Edinburgh to 1767.

Runciman's petition for admission to St. Mary's Chapel is recorded on the 20th Oct. 1762. His essay was 'to paint on a three-quarter cloth a piece of white ornament on a dark ground with a landscape in the middle. And on another cloth a panel of dove coloured marble, and another of fir, both to be fielded with three-quarter round mouldings'.¹ As he was accepted a freeman the next day this essay must have been prearranged, and as with James Norie and Roderick Chalmers the subject may have been chosen to suit the applicant. Certainly the terms of the first part of his essay could almost be a description of one of the paintings on plaster at Caroline Park.

Runciman must have continued to work as a journeyman with Robert Norie after completing his apprenticeship, for on attaining his mastership he appears to have become Norie's partner. The first evidence we have of this is in a letter of Dugal McLaurie, to Lord Hope preserved at Hopetoun.² It is dated 16th April, 1768. The relevant part of the letter is as follows;

"My Lord,

The Countess of Hopetoun, your mother, was pleased on the Rev. Mr. Gath's recommendation to give directions for binding me an apprentice to Mr. Norie the painter, and paying the dues of indentures, and moreover my Lord Hopetoun and her Ladyship were graciously pleased to settle an annuity for clothing me during the apprenticeship.

1. Laing, Transcripts, EUL.
2. Hopetoun House, Muniment Room.

Mr. Norie before his death was in company with Mr. Runciman with whom after his death I continued to work as journeyman, and the better wages I had from him afforded me the satisfaction of ceasing sooner to be a burden on your noble family than their goodness had intended".

The letter continues and we shall deal with the later part in the appropriate place. As its tone suggests its purpose was to ask for money. According to Laing's Transcript of the minutes of St. Mary's Chapel, McLaurie was originally apprenticed to a painter called James Allan.³ Allan died, and at some unspecified date he was transferred to Robert Norie. After Robert Norie's death, McLaurie's name appears in the minutes of St. Mary's Chapel petitioning that his indentures should be transferred to Runciman, and that Runciman be empowered to discharge them. He was in fact discharged on the 12th May, 1768, by a letter from Runciman then in Rome.⁴

In his letter to Lord Hope therefore McLaurie is slightly simplifying the story of his indentures and apprenticeship. The important points that emerge however are that Runciman was in partnership with Robert Norie, and that he took over McLaurie, who became in turn his partner, as part of his inheritance from the partnership. Helen Norie appears in the Penicuik accounts in 1766, '67, '68, and '69.⁵ In the first of these years we know that

3. Laing, Transcripts, Minutes of 28th June, 1766.

4. Ibid. Minutes of 12 May 1768.

5. Penicuik Accounts, 1766-9, Register House.

Runciman was working there and in the last, McLaurie. They both therefore remained in some kind of working relationship with the Norie firm after the senior partner's death. Helen Norie however appears in her own right in Williamson's Edinburgh Directory for 1775/6.

There is also a series of documents in the Hopetoun papers relating to work done there by the Norie firm but with Runciman in charge. The occasion for these documents seems to have been a disputed bill. The first is a memorandum, dated Dec. 1763, and headed "Notes on the Account of Painting &c."⁶ All the calculations pertaining to a set of bills are examined and the document concludes "All the prices to be considered, particularly those of the Ornaments", and "Consider if the work at Philipstoun is to be allowed".

The second document is headed "Notes on Norie's account of Painting at Hopetoun House, 1763".⁷ This is a critical examination of the submitted Norie account, and refers to former Norie accounts for comparison. These have been summarised for the occasion on a third document dated Jan. 1764, from which we learn that the Norie's had worked at Hopetoun in 1738-43, 1746, and 1750-54.⁸ The "Notes on Norie's account" seem unfortunately only to refer to plain painting and not to mention the Ornaments which are regarded as particularly important in the first document. There are however two items in the second

6. Hopetoun House, Muniments Room, Building accounts.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid. "Notes on James Norie's discharg'd accounts of painting", January, 1764.

document which are of particular interest for the picture they give of Runciman at work.

The first of these reads as follows; "Painting and c. the dome of the main stair below the cupola is charged £70- which seems very extravagant. For supposing the men who wrought at it (...) to have 5/- per day, though some parts might require a better hand, this would be very near a year's work of a man at those wages-, and the colours of the whole could be no great matter though it be in oil as it is supposed to be, but if it be in watercolours it is still vastly more extravagant. Mr. Runciman told my Lord when he proposed this piece of work that it would come to no great matter. Upon which my Lord told him he would have the execution entirely to himself, which makes him the more surprised at its being charged so high

The Balcony passage- Mr. Runciman said that sort of painting would come but to a mere trifle, and considering how quickly it is done seems to be very highly charged".⁹

No other evidence that we have suggests that Runciman was a very careful business man, but his casual methods seem to have alarmed the Hopes. Relations seem however to have remained friendly, for in the General Account for the building of the Earl of Hopetoun's house at Moffat an item appears for 1766--"To account of Painting said house by Runciman and McLaurin 1766, including an account £2.19.9 for white lead and oyl etc. sent to Moffat in 1767 --£43.1.8."¹⁰ When Runciman was away in July 1768 McLaurie also did a major painting job at Hopetoun.¹¹

9. Ibid. "Notes on Norie's account of painting at Hopetoun House, 1763".
10. Ibid. "General account of Debursements at Moffat".
11. Ibid. "Measurements of painting at Hopetoun House by Mr. Dugald McLaurin taken 12th July, 1768".

Runciman must have worked again for Lord Hope before he left Edinburgh for Walter Ross in his account of his dealings for him includes an item of £15.18.1 paid to Lord Hope's factor.¹² It is followed by a note to the following effect: "Mr. Williamson (the factor) at my desire upon my letter took up a draft....upon Alexander Runciman for £56.12.6 & 7/6 interest, £57 in all upon supposition that Lord Hopetoun owed Runciman an accmpt to that amount, but upon measuring the work and deducting £10 (from) Runciman's receipt, it appeared there was only £40.1.11 due. Mr. Williamson kept the balance off Dugald McLaurin's accmpt and I repaid it to him". This cannot refer to the earlier job of work for which the account was disputed, but it seems as if Runciman had once again been rather free in his estimate.

From the records of Runciman's work at Hopetoun we get a picture of his working first as a partner in the Norie firm and then later independently, apparently in much the same way. As far as we know however, the Hopes did not turn from being his employers to being his patrons. His work for them seems to have been strictly in the house painting side of the business, and there is no evidence that they supported him in his artistic ambitions in any practical way. His working at Hopetoun did however give him, and most likely his brother, access to the important collection of pictures there.

Runciman's rather erratic business methods with the Hopes seem to have been matched by his treatment of another of his early employers, Colin Muir Campbell of Lawers. All that we know about the brothers' work for Campbell is contained in the letters of Walter Ross who wound up their account with him after they had left. Booth states without giving her

12. Alexander Runciman's Account with Walter Ross, Laing Coll. EUL.

authority that the Nories had worked at Lawers in 1765.¹³ Runciman had certainly worked in his house-painting capacity there, for in September 1767 Ross was asking Campbell for payment of 'the plain painting accompt'.¹⁴ It seems most likely that this work had been done in the previous year. If the Norie firm had in fact worked there in 1765 as well, it was very probably Runciman himself who represented the firm. This straight forward decorative work seems to have lead to a more elaborate commission. In August 1767 Ross wrote to John Runciman;

"Your two pictures have since come to hand which have been exhibited to the generality of (amateurs) in this place, all of whom are very loud in your praise. Having done so nobly on English ground, great will be the expectation from your intended transportation into classic ground.

But Signor Runcimani, in place of two pictures which your brother engaged for to Collⁿ Campbell he ought to have had four. If the other two do not come, besides breach of engagements, I shall be horribly affronted, besides losing a very good friend to both of you".¹⁵

On the 19th September Ross wrote to Campbell and in his letter referred to the business of the pictures as follows;

"There are two pictures sent to Lawers by the Carrier painted for your house, a Danae and a Silenus, both which are very much liked here. Mr. Runciman's brother has done a third which I daily expect from London, and is to paint the fourth

13. S. Booth, Alexander Runciman, Warburg and Courtauld Journal, I, 333.
14. Walter Ross to Colin Campbell, Sept.19, 1767, in Walter Ross's Letter book transcribed by Laing, Laing, Coll. EUL. See Appendix B.
15. Ross Letter book, EUL.

at Rome. When these arrive I shall take care to forward them".¹⁶

Three weeks later on the 6th November Ross again wrote to Campbell;

"I am very sorry Mr. Runciman's pictures did not answer the measures, but I hope you will find another place for them. Meantime in obedience to your orders I have written to stop the fourth being done, for as I mentioned before they left that place, I believe (the third) now lies at Leith. I presume you will not choose to throw it back upon them and therefore shall wait your directions about it. By their last they are very much pinched for money, and upon the faith of your account have drawn upon me to the order of Coutts and Co. It will therefore be a very singular favour if you will give the order for payment in course that their credit may be kept".¹⁷

The last letter in this series is from the 1st June of the following year. Ross is asking for the payment of 10gns. outstanding on the Runcimans' account as part of his effort to raise funds for them, the money already remitted them being 'quite exhausted'.¹⁸

From this correspondence it is clear that Alexander Runciman had committed himself to produce four paintings for Campbell as part of a decorative scheme. It was evidently left unfinished by his sudden departure from Edinburgh. The two pictures that he then sent were the two that he exhibited in London on his way to Italy, and

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

as they did not 'answer the measures' they may not even have been originally intended for Campbell at all. Alexander then left his brother in London to complete the commission. It is perhaps understandable that Campbell refused to accept the second two pictures as Runciman's whole attitude seems to have been somewhat cavalier.

Ross's letter to John Runciman is confusing in that he seems to attribute the first two pictures to him, calling them 'your' pictures and seeming to imply that they were painted in England. In the first letter to Campbell however he seems to mean that the Danae and Silenus were painted by Alexander, and it was in Alexander's name that these two pictures were exhibited according to Graves.¹⁹ There is room for confusion however. The pictures could conceivably have been joint productions, or Ross could mean that the particular responsibility for them was unimportant.

There are two drawings in the SNG by John which are plainly related to a composition of Silenus and Satyrs. One is of Silenus seated on a blanket being dragged along. Pl.44 The second is of a pair of satyrs dragging the tail of a blanket and it evidently continues the composition. Pl.45 There are two examples of the brothers treating the same or closely related subjects, the Good Samaritan and Lear in the storm. John's drawings of Silenus and satyrs does not prove that the painting of the same subject was by him. Nevertheless altogether this evidence seems to imply that the two were at least working very closely together. If in fact they did separate compositions of

19. Algernon Graves, Society of Artists etc, London 1907, 220, nos. 231-232.

this subject, the one that survives in John's drawings may therefore have some bearing on the one that is lost.

John's Silenus drawings indicate a light hearted cheerful composition of the kind that the subject requires. Even if the painting that was sent to Campbell was not done expressly for Lawers, it was clearly a suitable picture for a decorative purpose, closely comparable to the kind of pictures shown in Baxter's drawing for the interior decoration of Penicuik, Pl. ^{18.} which is discussed later in this chapter, and which actually includes Silenus.

Danae is perhaps slightly more a subject of 'serious history'. It is not a subject that either of the brothers ever treated again however as far as we know. We have therefore no clue as to what it may have looked like. If it was a suitable partner to the Silenus it is unlikely to have been more than a fairly light hearted mythology. It was certainly different in character from the biblical subjects which seem to have been John's main preoccupation at this time, and which Alexander tackled in the Jacob's Dream, and in a drawing of the Good Samaritan which will both be discussed below. The distinction between these two types of subject seems to confirm the existence of the distinction between 'ornament' and 'serious history' that Alexander himself made implicitly in his letter to Sir James Clerk of May 1770.

It was Sir James Clerk of Penicuik who was the Runcimans' most important patron and employer. He was very much a man of taste. When young he had travelled in Italy where he bought pictures from the fashionable artists, such as Imperiali, still to be seen at Penicuik. One of his uncles, Alexander Clerk had actually become a

painter, and William Aikman the most important native portrait painter of the earlier eighteenth century was a cousin of the family. One of his brothers, John Clerk of Eldin, later became an important amateur etcher of landscapes. Even Sir James's sister Betty Clerk appears occasionally in the Norie accounts buying paints, brushes etc.²⁰ His father, the second baronet, Sir John Clerk, was an enthusiastic antiquary ^{and} correspondent of William Stukely and others. He laid out the grounds at Penicuik with an original blend of classical erudition, and feeling for landscape and natural effect. Sir James did not inherit his father's antiquarian interests, but he was more than a dilettante in architecture, and carried on his father's work at Penicuik by undertaking the rebuilding of the house, begun in 1761.²¹ Sir James took an active part in its design, professionally assisted by John Baxter senior, father of Runciman's friend of the same name.

James Norie first appears in the Penicuik accounts in 1732, and from then on regularly until his name is replaced by that of his son Robert in 1762. Robert appears again in 1762-4 and 1766. Runciman appears under his own name for the first time in the latter year.

Considering the long connection of the Norie firm with Penicuik, Sir James decision to employ Runciman for the decoration of his house might have been no more than a natural inclination to employ the firm of decorators that he was accustomed to use. The Runcimans' journey to Rome was part of the contract however, and though we do not know whether it was Runciman or Sir James who suggested it, it

20. Penicuik Accounts, Register House.

21. Alastair Rowan, Penicuik House, I, Country Life 15 August 1968, 384.

clearly implies that something more ambitious than conventional house painting was intended. The commission did not simply continue the old relationship.

James Jackson who published a history of the Parish of Penicuik in 1829 implies that Runciman was to some extent a protégé of the Clerks while still very young, and records a tradition that he first came to their attention while working with the Nories at Penicuik on a grisaille decoration under the portico of the new house.²² Runciman did actually paint this decoration, but in 1766 when he was a well established painter in his own right. Nevertheless considering the long period that the Nories were associated with Penicuik the first part of the tradition that Jackson records may well be true. Even if he was not still an apprentice when he first came to the Clerks' attention as a likely young man, this may have been quite a long time before 1766, and when he was still fairly young.

There is a picture at Penicuik still that has an old attribution to Runciman. The subject is Jacob's Dream. Pl.16. It is a large canvas 5ft 10" x 3ft 7". It is however plainly immature, for the ambition apparent in the size is not matched by the artist's capacity to cope with it. The particular size of the canvas, and the relation of the subject to the picture field recall Robert Norie's Holyrood canvases. The landscape is in the Norie style, and the distinctive stippled pattern of the leaves is clearly apparent. The subject in two of Robert Norie's pictures also provides a precedent for this interpretation of the decorative

22. James Jackson, An Account of the Parish of Penicuik etc., Edinburgh 1833, 41.

landscape style. Runciman has however departed from the Norie tradition in one important respect. The composition of his picture is related to a painting of the same subject attributed to Aert de Gelder. Pl. 17.²³ Apart from the points of resemblance in the distribution of the figures, and other details, this is clearly apparent in the chiaroscuro which, although much of the effect is dissipated by the light distance, is clearly intended to be dramatic. Jacob's ladder is interpreted as a ray of supernatural light descending from a dark cloud to fall on Jacob reclining in the shadow of a tree. Even though it is inadequately realised, this effect is quite unlike anything in the decorative tradition either of the Nories, or of Delacour, and is directly dependent on the picture's pseudo-Rembrandt model.

We do not know if this picture was one of the three that Runciman exhibited in the Free Society in 1762.²⁴ Considering the importance of the subject it seems unlikely that it would have been exhibited without a title. Although the picture gives the impression of immaturity, this is largely because of the rather awkward drawing and uncertain placing of the angels on the ladder. The landscape is quite competent, if unexciting, but the figure of Jacob is very strongly realised, though not altogether orthodox in drawing. The facial type in a general sense resembles some of the faces in John Runciman's pictures. The use of Rembrandt is also matched by his brother. It seems most likely therefore that this picture dates from 1764 or '65 rather than 1762. Its presence at Penicuik may well represent an act of encouragement by Sir James Clerk, if not as Jackson says when Runciman was still an apprentice, nevertheless when

23. An etching after this composition was known in the (19th, and presumably existed in the (18th.

24. Graves, Society of Artists, 220, nos. 22, & 154.

he was still fairly inexperienced.

Cunningham says that he first exhibited landscapes in 1755 and had taken to history painting by 1760. Cunningham is often unreliable in such details, and the first pictures that Runciman exhibited were the three landscapes in 1762 at the Free Society. The Danae and Silenus that he exhibited in 1767 were, as we have seen, probably not history paintings as Reynolds would have understood the term. The existence of this painting however suggests that, even if he himself did not take up history painting in this sense until he was in Rome, Runciman was interested in it considerably earlier. It also throws light on the relation between his work and the aspirations implicit in his brother's at this time. Though inferior in quality to the best of John's small subject paintings, it makes them seem less isolated.

Runciman first appears in the Penicuik accounts on the 5th April 1766 with a payment of five guineas for white lead and oil.²⁵ He appears on 22nd November of that year in Sir James's Journal of Expenses when he was paid for painting the ceiling of the portico. The two items are probably connected and record the same programme of work. David Laing describes the ceiling of the portico in a note. He writes 'it is painted in fresco by Runciman, and represents sacrifice to the Heathen Deities. It is admirably executed in relief and closely resembles sculpture'.²⁶ John Gray, in his description of the pictures at Penicuik, describes the portico painting as simply grisaille.²⁷ Gray is usually fairly minute and had this decoration been significantly

25. Penicuik Accounts, Register House.

26. Laing, Notes on Artists, EUL; inaccurately quoted by Booth, AR, Warburg and Courtauld Journal, XXXII, 334.

27. John Gray, Notes on the Art Treasures at Penicuik House, Edinburgh, 1889, 8.

pictorial he would almost certainly have commented upon it. Although the portico is still standing there is no trace of the decoration left by which we could judge by ourselves. Presumably painted in oil on the plaster, not in fresco as Laing describes it, it has completely peeled away.

Although we know so little about it, the porch decoration is of particular importance for the bearing that it has on the main commission and Sir James's intentions. He records the contract for the main painting, which was with both the Runciman brothers, in a note in his Journal of Expenses made on 16th April, 1768; "To Messrs. Hogg and Son in payment of Messrs. Runsymans' draught upon me, which, with the former payments is in full of £150, the sum promised by me to them during their stay in Italy--- £30.

N.B. I have their bond obliging themselves to paint all the ornamental work in my great room and two staircases, for the above sum of £150 with perhaps some other small matters".²⁸

Runciman himself gave public notice of his intention to travel to Italy in the Edinburgh Evening Courant of the 9th Feb, 1767,

'ALEXANDER RUNCIMAN painter in Edinburgh having determined to travel into Italy, and remain for two years and a half for improvement in all branches of ORNAMENT PAINTING, which he has for some time practised in Edinburgh, judges it his duty to return his most respectful thanks to his employers.---Meantime it is necessary to inform the PUBLIC that his business is still to be continued at the Workhouse, St. Mary's Wynd for some time under the care of DUGALD MACLAURIE painter in Edinburgh, after which a copartnery takes place between them, and work carried on

28. Sir James Clerk, Journal of Expenses of My New House, Ms. Penicuik House, Muniments Room.

in town and country as formerly.--Mr. RUNCIMAN has reason to think his attentions will be generally approved of (...)pay the strictest attention to business, both of them would hope the number of their employers will not diminish during the absence of the former'.

In these two documents, Clerk describes the projected decoration as ornamental work, and Runciman describes himself as an ornamental painter. Elsewhere Clerk likens the ornamental part of architecture to the discreet handling of detail in a good piece of tailoring.²⁹ Runciman himself would be unlikely to reveal his more personal ambitions in a professional newspaper announcement of this kind, nevertheless the account he gives of himself would seem to be substantially accurate. What little we know of his professional practice up to this time, including his work for Sir James in the Penicuik portico belongs in the category of ornamental or decorative painting. There is evidence, including the Jacob's Dream, that he was already interested in other kinds of artistic activity, particularly landscape painting, but there is no reason to doubt his sincerity when he wrote from Rome after his brother's death, that if John had lived he himself might never have taken up 'serious history'.

Sir James's taste, as it was revealed in his new house, was, with the notable exception of the painted decoration, conservative. The building was in the pure Palladian manner. His intentions for the decoration of the interior seem to be represented in three drawings by John Baxter, and are consistent with a conservative taste of this kind. These drawings have always been at Penicuik, and there is no reason to doubt that they were for the new house.

29. Copy of a letter of Sir James Clerk to Colonel Clerk, March 1762, Register House.

Two are for the hall, showing an interior with a coved ceiling like that which was built, and with the same measurements. Pl's. 18, 19 & 20. The third is for a staircase, also of the same shape and size as that which was actually executed.

Apart from the general difference of character, the arrangement of the decorations differs in the drawings from that carried out. In both the hall and the staircase the number and shape of the compartments is different, and the hall has painting on the walls below the cornice which had no equivalent in the final scheme. The wall is also sub-divided by pilasters which were never carried out.

The interior arrangement of the house at Penicuik seems to have been substantially complete by 1769 when Dugald MacLaurie was at work on the decoration. The bill for his work there in that year specifically excludes the hall, the staircases, the 'Egyptian Gallery', and the great drawing room, but the way in which this is put implies that the reason was not that the arrangement of the interior was unfinished, but that Sir James did not yet know what kind of painted decoration they were to have. The painting in these rooms was to be finished 'at a time suitable to Sir James'.³⁰ The Baxter drawings must therefore have been carried out some time before the spring of 1769 when MacLaurie had begun work in the house. Certainly in May, of the next year Runciman knew that the centrepiece of the hall ceiling was to be an oval not a rectangle as Baxter has it.³¹ The drawings may of course date from considerably earlier, but we have no way of knowing even so whether from before or after the decision to employ the Runcimans. They have at some time or another collected an attribution to Runciman, though they are signed by Baxter. This is presumably no more than a reflection of the fact that Runciman's is the name most commonly associated with

30. Dugald MacLaurie, Account for work at Penicuik, Penicuik Account, Register House.

31. AR to Sir James Clerk, May 16th 1770, Register House; see Appendix A.

Penicuik and so should be disregarded. Nevertheless it is conceivable that they represent a collaborative effort of some kind between one of the Baxters and Runciman.

This might be more likely if the drawing was actually the work of the younger John Baxter as has been suggested by James Simpson.³² John Baxter junior, was a close friend of Runciman's in later life. He went out to Rome in 1763,³³ and may have still been there when Runciman went out in 1767. While he was in Rome he carried out commissions for Sir James Clerk. A portrait drawing of Runciman by Baxter has on the back an inscription by Runciman's pupil George Walker to the effect that it was done by Baxter in Rome. Pl.1.

In 1776 Runciman and William Jeans proposed Baxter for the Cape Club.³⁴ Jeans also worked at Penicuik and executed the figures on either side of the portico which he signed. According to Laing, Runciman painted his portrait,³⁵ and though very little else is known about him, he too went to Rome. He was there in 1768 when his name appeared in the 'Stato degli animi'.³⁶ Clerk might conceivably have sponsored his journey, and Baxter's, as he did the Runcimans. Baxter, Jeans, and Runciman all appear in the lists of artists associated with the Society of Antiquaries.³⁷

32. Private information from James Simpson.

33. Alastair Rowan, Penicuik House II, Country Life, 1968, 449.

34. Cape Club, Sederunt Book, 7th October 1776, NLS.

35. Laing, Notes on Artists, EUL.

36. Stato degli Animi, St. Maria dell Popolo, 'Via Babuino, verso il Monte, Guilielmo Jeans, Scozzese, Protestante, Scultore, 40(anni). Archive of the Diocese of Rome, S. Giovanni in Laterano, Rome.

37. William Smellie, Account of the Rise and Progress of the Society of Antiquaries, Edinburgh, 2 Parts, 1782, and 1784 I,37, & II,40.

Baxter was one of the trustees to Runciman's will and had in his possession at his death some of the Runciman brothers' most important works.³⁸

While none of this evidence proves that Runciman was involved in the designs for the interior of which these three drawings are a record, it does give the impression that the younger artists concerned with the project were sufficiently a team to remain friends for the rest of their lives. The pictorial parts of these designs are too slight to suggest that Runciman played any part in their production, but if they were done by the younger Baxter, this was presumably after he returned from Rome where he would have had plenty of opportunity to discuss with Runciman his proposals for the decoration.

It is reasonable to assume that such large, finished, and measured drawings as these represent the kind of decoration that was at one stage intended for the house, and that the Runcimans were employed to produce. We know Sir James's conservative taste, we also know that his initial reaction to Runciman's announcement that he was going to turn history painter was not exactly encouraging, for in his letter of May 1770 Runciman is clearly seeking to justify himself to Sir James.³⁹

In the same letter Runciman rejects Bacchus and Ariadne, of which he already has a drawing, as a subject, preferring to do something more 'serious' in keeping with his new principles. The Bacchus and Ariadne drawing survives though its whereabouts is unknown, and is comparable in mood and in general style to the pictures shown in these drawings.Pl.21.⁴⁰ Although in his letter he speaks of it

38. The Trustees of AR's will were John Baxter, David Herd, Walter Smeaton, & James Cockburn, Summons of David Herd against the other three trustees, NLS, Ms. 1925, 73-77. Catalogue of the Sale of John Baxter's paintings, Edinburgh, 1798.

39. AR to Sir James Clerk, Register House, see Appendix A.

40. L. Peek Deykin, Connoisseur, Vol.72, 1925, 127.

as a subject for a staircase, the size (17" x 22") and shape of the drawing as well as its obvious ancestry in the Farnese Gallery suggest that it was probably originally intended for the centre of the ceiling of the hall. In Baxter's drawing this position is occupied by the Judgement of Paris. It is of course much slighter than the Bacchus and Ariadne which is a complex and lively drawing, but the type of subject and even of composition, deriving in this case from Albano or one of the other Bolognese decorators of the previous century, are comparable and very much in contrast to Runciman's later style.

As it is comparable to the Bacchus and Ariadne drawing, the type of decorative painting represented by Baxter's three drawings may also have been comparable to the work done for Campbell of Lawers. John Runciman's Silenus and Satyrs are similar in subject and in mood to the smaller pictures in both the hall and the staircase. These are all light hearted scenes of satyrs nymphs and putti, and both Silenus and Ariadne do in fact appear in the cove of the hall ceiling. It seems very likely therefore that these drawings represent the kind of decoration that Runciman would have done at Penicuik had he not gone to Rome. One important feature of them is the comparison that can be made with Delacour's decorations at Yester, and, if they are by him, at Hawkhill. In the elevation drawing of the saloon, or great hall, every available surface below the cornice and between the pilasters is covered with landscapes. As far as we know the Nories never articulated a wall so completely with their paintings in this way. It would be natural for Sir James and his architect to look at Yester. As Runciman's part in the first designs for Penicuik is problematic, the connection between these and the Yester

paintings is not therefore proof of Runciman's connection with Delacour. Nevertheless it does seem to suggest that Delacour's type of decoration was the most up to date, and was seen as representing an improvement on the Norie style. Though we have no proof it may therefore have influenced Runciman in his own development during the 1760's. However the point in which the Penicuik drawings differ most significantly both from Delacour, and from the Nories, is in the importance of the subject paintings. From the slender evidence that we have this was the direction in which the Runcimans were developing their interests. Though this kind of decorative subject painting was not the same thing as serious history, it was a step in that direction.

The kind of painting shown in the three Penicuik drawings is still recognisable 'ornament', in Runciman's word. It seems that he had established the beginnings of a practice in this kind of work, and that his intention in going to Italy was, as he said, to improve himself in this branch of the art and to return better equipped to his business in Edinburgh. There is enough evidence however to suggest that his private interests were more varied than his professional practice might imply. There are the ambitions implicit in the Jacob's Dream, and his exhibiting in London, his probable connection with the stage, and the antiquarian interests of his friends Cumming and Paton. The existence of this more adventurous and imaginative side to his activity is confirmed by his younger brother's work from this time. This is strikingly original, but what little we do know about Alexander is enough to enable us to say that he shared his younger brother's interests.

It is mainly through comparison to his brother's work that we can place one important drawing by Alexander in this early period. This is the large drawing in pen and ink of the

Good Samaritan arriving at the Inn.Pl.22. In spite of the difference of scale and medium it is strikingly similar in technique to John's etching of the Taking down of the Netherbow Pl.25¹ which can be dated to 1764. Most distinctive is the use of long vertical strokes of parallel hatching. The figure style is also somewhat similar. The swaying weak-legged slightly unbalanced pose of the Samaritan is matched by the figures in the etching.

The same features are apparent in the earliest dated work that we have by Alexander, a little sketch of a party of Greeks in costume who travelled on his ship, and which he drew in the letter he wrote to Cumming from Leghorn on the 25th May 1767.Pl.23. In all three of these works the technique seems to be modelled on that of Salvator's etchings, and the figures reflect the slightly mannered contraposto that he uses. From what Alexander says in the same letter to Cumming, it was the exotic and Salvator like costume of the Greeks that attracted his attention. Both brothers took advantage of the common initial to model their monogrammes on Salvator's 'SR'. This admiration for Salvator is by no means surprising at the time, and the use of his etchings as models in drawing as well as etching is paralleled in the work of Mortimer. Alexander's own later etching style draws on the same inspiration. It is notable however that in his later work, where he uses this technique of drawing either with the pen or in etching, he has a much greater polish and suavity of line. Also although he is often erratic, on the whole he controls the balance of his figures better than he seems to do here.

The Good Samaritan drawing bears more than a casual resemblance to Rembrandt's composition of the same subject in the Louvre.⁴¹ The scale of the figures in relation to

41. Reproduced Librairie Hachette, Classiques des Arts, Paris, n.d., Rembrandt, Pl.293.

the picture field and to the architecture is the same. So is the distribution of the groups, the man and horse to the left, two figures supporting the wounded man in the centre, and the Samaritan and the inn-keeper to the right. In detail too, the wounded man's bandaged head, and the Samaritan's turban also appear in both pictures. The group of figures leaning out of the windows in the central background of Rembrandt's picture matches the single figure in Runciman's drawing. The wooden shutter to the right of him also matches the similar shutters in Rembrandt's painting. Generally there are enough points of resemblance to suggest that Runciman's drawing depends in some way on the painting, but there is no way of knowing how he might have known this composition. One detail that is foreign to Rembrandt's picture is the woman with an urn mounting the steps to the right of the drawing. She is taken, reversed, from the Fire in the Borgo, and presumably comes from an engraving. There is a study of this figure in the correct sense in the style of the Roman drawings, and therefore later and probably done on the spot.⁴²

John Runciman's painting of the Good Samaritan Pl.28 shows the previous scene to his brother's. The Samaritan is tending the wounded man as the Pharisee passes by on the other side. This composition, too, appears to be indebted to Rembrandt, or rather to a pseudo-Rembrandt picture, formerly in a private collection in Paris.⁴³ There are also two points of detail that connect the two brothers' pictures. In both the Samaritan is wearing the rather elaborate turban that he is wearing in Rembrandt's picture in the Louvre. Although he has a

42. Coll. Mr. Errol Bedford, Edinburgh.

43. Coll. Jules Porges, Paris; reproduced Classiques des Arts, Rembrandt, Pl.302.

turban in the composition that John appears to have used, it is less elaborate. Also the curious bicorn mitre worn by the figure leaning out of the window in the background of Alexander's drawing reappears on the Pharisee in John's painting. Its source appears to be in Durer's Small Passion where it is seen in Christ before Caiaphas and in the Mocking of Christ. As we shall see, John Runciman was familiar with at least one other of the scenes from this series.

The various points that they have in common suggest that the two Good Samaritan pictures were undertaken by the brothers at the same time and help to confirm the early date of Alexander's drawing. The way they both appear to use Rembrandt is not easily explained, but it is nevertheless consistent with what we know of John's other paintings of this time, and with Alexander's only surviving comparable work, the Jacob's Dream. It seems that, though perhaps he did not exploit it at this time, Alexander shared the inspiration that produced his brother's remarkable subject pictures.

This last suggestion may be supported by his drawing of Lear on the heath. Pl.24. It is the only drawing that we can perhaps associate on grounds of style with the Good Samaritan. It has the same rough, coarse pen technique with bold straight hatching. The faces are drawn in the same way, and the figures have the same wayward anatomy. Lear and the Samaritan are actually very similar both in pose and general appearance. Both drawings are vigorous and unsophisticated, but the differences between them are as important as the similarities. The Lear is a dramatic and moving drawing. In spite of its lack of polish it is among Runciman's finest works, while the Samaritan is really quite crude.

We have no way of knowing for certain whether Runciman's work had developed as far as the difference between these two drawings implies before he left Edinburgh. It is important however that at this time John's work underwent a striking development. The difference between his painting of the Good Samaritan which is undated, and his painting of King Lear Pl.42 of 1767 is, if anything, greater than that between Alexander's two drawings.

The shared subject of King Lear might suggest that, as they may have done with the Good Samaritan, the two brothers worked at the same time on their versions of it. Against this are two points; the first is the possibility, which will be discussed in the next chapter, that John's painting was done while he was in London, and his brother already in Rome; the second is that Alexander's use in the figure of Lear, of The Laocoon might suggest that the drawing was done in Rome rather than in Edinburgh. If the latter was the case however, because of its style, it must have been done early in his Roman sojourn. On the former point, even if the two works were not done at exactly the same time, they may nevertheless be connected, and a product of shared inspiration.

In their two works the brothers do not treat consecutive moments of the story as they did with the Good Samaritan. John paints what W.M. Merchant has shown is virtually a poetic image of Lear's state of mind.⁴⁴ Alexander follows the stage directions more closely, but his reading of the play is no less perceptive. He has chosen for his subject its central moment, when Lear moved for the first time to pity someone other than himself, tears off his clothes to cover Poor Tom's nakedness. He has chosen the figure of Laocoon for this gesture at the centre of the play with a real feeling for its significance,

44. W.M. Merchant, John Runciman's Lear, Warburg and Courtauld Journal, VII, 1954.

but he handles it with such tact that it does not disguise the human feelings that are the basis both of the gesture and of the whole tragedy. The sensitivity of his interpretation of the play is very much in contrast to the treatment of West, for example, who employs a very similar gesture in his painting of Lear in the storm, as an image of pure lunatic exaltation that does very little for the real feeling of the play.⁴⁵ In his understanding of the meaning of the text Runciman is close to his younger brother, and in fact the humanity of his figure of Lear is matched by that of John who sees him as a suffering individual, not as a kind of crazy demi-god.

Whether Alexander's drawing of King Lear was done in Edinburgh or in Rome, it would seem that it must have been done either in, or near 1767, and that it was a product of the kind of interests that the brothers shared before they travelled to Italy. For this reason it, and the drawing of the Good Samaritan, are of particular importance. They reveal a side of Alexander's interests that does not seem to be apparent either in his exhibited work or in his professional practice at this time. His brother's works from this time were precocious, but they were not isolated. They are for this reason of particular importance, not only for themselves, but for the light they throw on the brothers' common interests.

45. Benjamin West, Lear in the Storm, reproduced, David Irwin, English Neo-Classical Art, Pl.138.

CHAPTER SEVEN

John Runciman.

The earliest dateable work by either of the Runcimans is John Runciman's etching of the Taking down of the Netherbow Port, Pl.25. Edinburgh, which can be dated 1764, the year in which the gate was demolished. We only have one actually dated work by him which is the King Lear of 1767, but as he died in 1768 or early 1769 all of his work is earlier than anything important that survives by his elder brother that is certainly dateable. Before he left Rome for Naples, where he died, John Runciman destroyed all of his work on which he could lay his hands.

Writing to Robert Alexander on July 20th, 1769, Alexander Runciman says:

"I send you at the same time a small picture of my brother's. I have not anything else of his original which gives me real concern, it being his first work when he came to Rome and can give you no idea of what he was. It was owing to chance I had that for he had destroyed his better things and this happened to lay hid in a corner and escaped the fate of the rest".*1

In September of the same year he mentions to James Cumming two of John's pictures that he intended to exhibit whenever John's rival, James Nevay, should exhibit his picture.² We do not know whether these two included the picture sent to Alexander, but even if they did not, what he says implies that at most only three of John's Italian pictures survived the destruction of his work. There is no suggestion that any pictures had been sent

1. EUL. Laing Collection. *Appendix A*
2. A.R. to James Cumming, EUL. Laing Collection.

back to Britain before this happened. As there are about 27 recorded pictures by him³ the greater part of his surviving work must date from before he went to Rome, and have been executed either in Edinburgh or in London. Although only two works by him can be dated, all must belong to a period of little more than six years, and probably less, assuming that we have nothing done by him before he was eighteen. As what we do have is with one or two notable exceptions stylistically fairly consistent, it probably belongs to a narrower period than we allow. His paintings are perhaps the most important evidence that we have for the private artistic thinking of the two brothers while they were still in Edinburgh.

John Runciman was born in 1744⁴ and was therefore about eight years his brother's junior. We do not know of his serving an apprenticeship, or anything else about his training. We do know however from Sir James Clerk's Journal of Expenses that the decorations at Penicuik were to have been by both brothers. The £150 that he paid them was for them both to travel to Italy. We also know that the brothers were working together in the commission for Colin Muir Campbell at Lawers. John was therefore evidently in some sort of partnership with his brother, though it seems that from the beginning he was not intended to take part in the simple house painting side of the business. If he had been he would have had to serve an apprenticeship, and his name does not appear in the Apprentice Register.

When Alexander left Edinburgh in March 1767, he travelled straight through to Italy scarcely stopping, except inadvertently. John was however still in London on October the 18th of that year, when he drew money on a draft

3. By David Laing, Notes on artists, ^{and} elsewhere.
4. The date is given by Laing, Notes on Artists, EUL.

from Walter Ross.⁵ On the 6th November, Ross, writing to Muir Campbell, mentions 'their' last communication apparently implying that the two brothers were together.⁶ This is hardly compatible with John's having been in London only three weeks earlier, but he may have been speaking loosely of their common finances which are the subject of this part of his letter. They were certainly together in Rome by the 5th December, for in his letter of that date to Cumming, Alexander mentions a supply of paint that John has brought out with him.

If John was still in London in October, he had already been there some time when in August Ross wrote to him about the pictures for Muir Campbell.⁷ By September the 19th, when Ross wrote to Muir Campbell, John had painted a picture for him and had sent it off from London to Leith.⁸ John had written to Robert Alexander about the affair in which his brother was involved,⁹ so he was presumably in London with him at that time. He was apparently still in Edinburgh when the agreement was reached on Penicuik, for Clerk in his Journal speaks of having their bond, i.e. that of both brothers. Most probably John travelled south with his brother in the early spring. He may therefore have been in London seven or eight months. This residence may have been enforced by financial difficulty, but when Walter Ross speaks in a letter of his having done so nobly on English ground,¹⁰ it seems much more likely that he had stayed in London deliberately in order to make himself known there, and to launch himself as an artist.

5. Runciman's account with Walter Ross, EUL, Laing Collection: *Appendix C*
6. Ross Letter Book, Laing transcript, EUL. *Appendix B*
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ross to J.R. Letter Book.
10. Ibid.

Writing from Rome, Alexander several times implies that he had relied upon John to make the family name, and a stay in London would have been a very sensible part of fulfilling this ambition.

In his letter of Sept. 1769 to James Cumming Alexander names Burke, Reynolds, and Athenian Stewart (?) as friends of his brother together with Robert Alexander. It may be that he was only known to these three, who were all friends of Barry, at second hand through Barry whom both Runcimans knew in Rome. In the letter in which Barry describes to Burke the circumstances of John Runciman's death, he speaks of having mentioned him in a previous letter in a way that suggests that he expected that to have been Burke's first acquaintance with him or his work,¹¹ but it is equally possible that he was known to at least some of these people through his stay in London. If he had gone to London with the intention of making himself known, as the length of his stay implies, he is hardly likely to have gone unfurnished with some kind of introduction into the art world.

If John Runciman had ambitions to be an artist and to separate himself from the decorative tradition, as we have said, he was evidently supported in this by his brother. Alexander became a history painter in his turn at least partly inspired by the desire to vindicate his brother as an artist and confound his enemies. He makes this clear when he says to Sir James that he might never have thought of 'serious history' if it had not been for his brother's death.¹² It is therefore not surprising

11. Barry to Burke, n.d., Barry, Works, 2 Vols. London, 1809, I, 114.
12. A.R. to Sir James Clerk, 16th May, 1770. Penicuik Papers Register House.

that almost all John's recorded works should appear to be serious subject pictures, though mostly very small, at a time when, from the little that we know of it Alexander's main production~~s~~ was of a different kind.

The doubt about the total number of paintings recorded by David Laing and elsewhere as by John Runciman arises from the possibility of the same pictures appearing under different names in different places as well as from attributions that were doubtful at the time that they were made. The largest possible total is twenty eight paintings. Of these the present whereabouts is known of rather less than half. There are also a handful of drawings, some signed and some rather doubtful, and three etchings. Other works in both these categories are known to have existed in the nineteenth century. There are also two works said to be joint productions of John Runciman with his brother.

The first work that we have by John Runciman to which a date can be attached is the etching of the Taking down of the Netherbow Port in Edinburgh.

The demolition of the Netherbow began on August the 31st, 1764.¹³ According to Gough writing in 1780, on the information of George Paton, the drawing for the etching was done on the spot, and Paton as we have seen already knew the print in 1766 when he mentioned it in a letter to James Cumming.¹⁴ The appearance of the etching seems to confirm this. The etching and the drawing for it are closely identified, not only by Gough, but also in the Clerk of Eldin sale catalogue.¹⁵ As the purpose of the etching was to

13. Laing, Notes on Artists, EUL.

14. Richard Gough, British Topography, II, 678. See above p.

15. Clerk of Eldin Sale, Edinburgh 1833, no.

commemorate a particular occasion it seems unlikely that the date of its execution should have been widely separated from the date of the drawing on which it was based. The etching is vivid and detailed. It combines the detail of the architecture with all the variety of activity, and incident concerned with it, and going on round about it, in a way that presents the whole scene very strikingly. There is nothing quite like it in contemporary art. In work by an artist like Paul Sandby, for example, there is none of the wiry intensity of the drawing or the feeling for significant detail. These particular qualities seem to find their best parallel in Callot, particularly in the way a lot of detail is treated effectively on a small scale. Two copies of Callot's Military Punishments have John Runciman's name attached to them in the SNG. This may be by analogy with the Netherbow etching, but could equally be a genuine attribution.

The actual technique of the etching, though individual, seems to be closely modelled on Salvator Rosa. This is particularly apparent in the long parallel hatchings that run vertically across the buildings and figures. In the SNG there are two copies of the etching that have been worked on in pen and wash. One of them is also signed in pen. In it detail has been added and the vertical hatchings to the right have been strengthened with the pen in a way that emphasises the similarity between this print and several of Alexander's drawings. The second has been touched with grey wash, and is inscribed 'Netherbow Port, bought to be taken down by Will. Milne'. Probably because of its historical interest this is one of John Runciman's most widely known works and several copies of it exist.

Although connections exist between the work of the two brothers there is really nothing in Alexander's work to parallel either John's painting technique or his pencil drawing. In both these he shows a kind of wiry precision which nevertheless manages to preserve a real feeling of freedom. Alexander's work is much looser and more generalised.

With the single exception of his self-portrait which will be discussed later, and with significant points of difference, all John's paintings have a recognisable common technique. They are also all very small, though the Lear is a little larger than the others, and they are painted on panel or copper. The Lear is also distinct in its subject, for of all John's recorded subject paintings, only the Lear, the lost Romulus and Remus and ^{the lost} Pan and Syrinx, do not have biblical subjects. This choice of subject matter must reflect the predominantly sixteenth and seventeenth century inspiration of his work. Biblical painting was very unusual in the middle eighteenth century. In the first six years of the Academy exhibitions only nine biblical subjects were exhibited, of which no less than four were the Prodigal Son, and one of these was by Alexander Runciman and a second by David Allan.¹⁶ John Runciman produced over twenty biblical and religious paintings including a Madonna and Child. The Lear therefore represents an important change in his work.

As it differs in subject from the other pictures, it also differs in size and what may be called breadth of conception. We will discuss the handling of the subject more fully at a later stage, but it is undoubtedly a more ambitious picture than any of the others that survive.

16. Royal Academy Catalogues, 1769-1775.

If John spent the larger part of 1767 in London, there is a statistical probability that the picture was painted there. Its distinctive features might therefore be a response to a new environment and new stimulus. If that is the case, we are left with the suggestion that most, and probably all of the remaining pictures predate it and John's removal from Edinburgh to London on his way to Rome. There is nothing in the smaller pictures to conflict with the suggestion that they are all close in date. We know from the Netherbow etching that John was a competent artist by the age of twenty. If we can assume that he was unlikely to have produced much that has survived before he was eighteen, the twelve pictures now in question would date from a period of four or five years between c.1762 and 1766/7. A number of distinguishing features are apparent from which it is possible to suggest a chronology.

The starting point for John Runciman's painting seems to have been in the work of the elder Teniers. The story that both Runcimans learnt their technique from a very old man trained in the Rubens tradition was presumably invented to explain the Flemish characteristics so apparent in John's work, though the comparison with Rubens is made by Laing and has some point.¹⁷ Another possible candidate for this link with the Flemish tradition is Sir John Medina by whom a number of very striking subject pictures are preserved at Penicuik, notably Samson and the Philistine, and Minerva, and the Runcimans were no doubt familiar with them. Pl.26. They are however far more baroque in feeling and in colour than anything in John Runciman's technique,

17. Catalogue of the SNG entry for J. Runciman.
Laing, Notes on Painters, EUL.

which matches very closely that of Teniers. Fortunately there is one reasonably authentic Teniers that we can be certain that he knew. This is the Temptation of St. Anthony at Hopetoun, Pl. 27, though several other pictures were also attributed to Teniers in the old inventories. The picture has been at Hopetoun since 1742,¹⁸ and through Alexander's work there the brothers would certainly have had access to the collection at some time in the early 1760's. The balance of minuteness of detail and richly impasted lights, with areas of loose transparent paint, and the colour in John Runciman's work precisely parallel Teniers's handling. In the Good Samaritan, Pl.28. the Temptation of Christ, Pl.29. and the Hagar and the angel Pl.30. in the Hunter-Blair collection at Blairquhan, he also uses the ambiguous and slightly fantastic landscape construction characteristic of Teniers treatment of similar subjects. The Temptation of Christ seems to derive directly from the Hopetoun St. Anthony. The wilderness is populated with owls, toads, rabbits etc., in exactly the same way. This is also found in other pictures by Teniers for example two saints in the wilderness at Dulwich, a St. Peter, and a Magdalen. Pl.31. The freedom of the fantastic shapes of the rocks in these last two pictures is paralleled in the landscape in the Blairquhan Hagar. The brilliant colour of Hagar's robe, against the darker tints of the landscape is also similar to an effect used by Teniers and apparent in these two Dulwich pictures, though there is no reason to suppose that John knew these two particular paintings. The architecture in the Good Samaritan also may well derive from something in Teniers. The composition on the other hand bears a very close resemblance to a painting of the same

18. Old Inventory of Paintings at Hopetoun House, n.d.
Modern Inventory typescript, SNPG.

subject once attributed to Rembrandt, though the elements have been shifted around. The picture is now in a private collection in Paris.¹⁹ There is however no evidence of how John Runciman could have known it, or a version of it.

The looseness of composition in these three pictures, and their evident spatial uncertainty is sometimes a little awkward, and it is matched by a lack of security in the drawing of the figures, particularly in the Samaritan and the Temptation. This may partly reflect an uneasiness on the artist's part with the mannerist ambiguities of Teniers' composition, but it may also be a result of immaturity, particularly in the figure drawing.

Though they are no longer so closely related to Teniers in composition and subject, there are two more ambitious pictures of which the same criticism can be made. These are the Balshazzar's Feast Pl.32. at Penicuik and the Baptism of Christ Pl.33. in Aberdeen. The latter is signed. The former has on occasion been attributed to Alexander, but it appears in the Eldin sale catalogue as by John and there seems no reason to doubt this attribution. The two pictures are linked in a number of ways. Both have more figures than any other of John's surviving works, and both have dramatic subjects. In detail the costumes are alike. The figure in the left foreground of the Balshazzar's Feast and the two heads behind him looking in reappear in the Baptism though the two heads have become a group. In the former picture this detail of the two heads is very reminiscent of the whispering servants behind Pharaoh's daughter in Hogarth's Infant Moses. The whole of this composition has a number of points in common with the Election Entertainment in Hogarth's Election series, but

19. Classiques des Arts Rembrandt, Pl.302

its main source of inspiration is more likely to be the Feast in the Scipio Africanus tapestries by Giulio Romano.

Although the Balshazzar's Feast has a dramatic subject, the actual appearance of the divine hand, and the writing on the wall are rather lost in the confusion of the composition. It recedes steeply from the large dark figures in the left foreground to the small figures in the distance, and indeed to the tiny figures in the musicians' gallery top right. The uncertain handling of space, and the occasionally awkward figure drawing seem to be rather similar to the combination of mannerist inspiration and immaturity in the three pictures previously discussed.

In the Baptism the fanciful rock formations still reflect Teniers but the composition does not hang together. The group in the left foreground is executed with some assurance, and so are the figures in the boat though with far less finish. These latter who are presumably spectators are so small and distant that their relation to the central scene is uncertain. The figure of Christ, and the water in which he is kneeling also seem to be very uncertainly handled. Neither of these two pictures therefore, though they seem to represent an advance both in aspiration and achievement over the three previously discussed, could be called fully mature.

There are a further three pictures which while they are recognisably akin to these two former groups have a strength and maturity which is distinct. These are the Flight into Egypt Pl.34. and the Journey to Emmaus, Pl.36 both in the SNG, the latter on copper, and the Holy Family at the Inn, Pl.37. in the Mellon Collection. All three of these are much more firmly composed, and they

have a kind of intensity in the handling and the figure drawing which with their small size makes them very striking.

Mary and Joseph at the Inn differs from the others in that it is a night scene. It has a beautiful moonlit landscape, which is however otherwise comparable in handling to that in the other two pictures. The figures are drawn with great delicacy, particularly that of Mary which has a quality of feeling much closer to the early 17th century than to the mid-18th. The same is true of the Flight into Egypt. This derives its composition directly from Rembrandt's earliest etched version of the same subject, Pl.35.²⁰ Rembrandt provides the serpentine movement through the picture. John Runciman has modified the composition however by placing Joseph on a horse, and making him look back towards his wife and the child with a tender and touching concern. The direction of Joseph's glance seems to have been suggested by Rembrandt's own source, Durer's woodcut of the same subject. It is unusual to see Joseph riding rather than walking and this seems to be John Runciman's own idea. A very beautiful drawing in the Pierpoint Morgan Library by Lelio Orsi which also derives its inspiration from Durer is one of the rare occasions in which Joseph is seen mounted, but it was apparently never the source of any print, and one cannot suppose that Runciman knew it. In Runciman's painting Durer perhaps also suggested the luxurious woodland into which the figures are moving, but it is treated in a quite different way. The painter has not been subservient to his sources, but has brought his own sensibility in to the conception of the composition, and the delicacy of execution and figure drawing.

20. Bartsch, no.54.

The provenance of this picture is of some interest as according to Laing it belonged to Stodhart who had found it at a dealer's in St. Martin's Lane. Laing bought at the Sale of Stodhart's pictures at Christie's after his death.²¹

The third picture in this group, the Journey to Emmaus, is rather different in mood from the poetic tenderness of the first two. The artist is still seeking imaginative effect however. He has chosen to do this by giving to the discussion on the way to Emmaus the gestures of Christ's disclosure of himself in the inn. The figure drawing is again strongly reminiscent of the early Rembrandt, particularly the disciple on Christ's right for whom a number of precedents could be found. The whole composition however does not seem to be directly dependent on Rembrandt in the same way as the Flight into Egypt.

In technique these three pictures are more brilliant and controlled than those discussed previously. If at times they seem to come close to the early style of Rembrandt in handling, as well as in drawing and composition, this may reflect the common ground between Rembrandt and Teniers, rather than suggest that Runciman had an early work by Rembrandt on which to base his style. The use of Rembrandt here is quite different from in the Good Samaritan and clearly reveals a search for greater intensity of expression. It is of particular interest that as he progressed from Teniers to Rembrandt, so he seems to have been lead from Rembrandt's early style to one of his great models, Durer.

The three compositions that remain to be discussed in this group, including two of the most remarkable of all his paintings, are based directly on Durer. One of these,

21. Laing, Notes on Artists, EUL.

Salome with the head of John the Baptist, Pl.37. is a monochrome sketch based on Durer's woodcut of the same subject. The other two, Christ and the three Maries, Pl.38. and the Adoration of the Shepherds, Pl.40. both in the collection of Sir Steven Runciman are highly finished. All three, like the pictures in the previous group are very small.

The Adoration of the Shepherds is based directly on the Adoration in Durer's Small Passion and repeats its composition almost exactly. Pl.41. The Christ and the Three Maries is based on Christ's Farewell to his mother in the Life of the Virgin. Pl.39. Neither picture however is a tame reworking of its model, but instead the painter has shown a real sympathy for Durer's way of drawing. He has successfully adapted his painting technique to create an equivalent effect to Durer's engraving. Both these pictures are solidly painted without the kind of transparent turpentine washes that in the previous pictures seem to reflect the technique of Teniers. The whole effect is more solid, both in technique and in colour. They do however have the same dense and vivid impasto lights.

David Laing says that some of John Runciman's works were in 'a hard manner, as if he had studied the precision and stiffness of some of the early German masters'.²² If he means by this the use of Durer as we see it in these and possibly other lost compositions, we cannot agree with him, for the effect is astonishingly vigorous and intense. The surface of the pictures is very alive. We do know however from the Baxter Sale Catalogue that the Romulus and Remus was painted on an 'absorbent white ground in imitation of the old Flemish masters'.²³ It is of interest that the Adoration,

22. Ibid.

23. John Baxter Sale, Edinburgh, 1798, no.416.

being badly cracked, reveals a gesso ground. The fact of it being cracked suggests an experiment with an unfamiliar technique, and that the painter was following his admiration for Durer's engravings with an attempt to rediscover the technique of fifteenth and early sixteenth century painting. From the result we can say that John Runciman was pursuing this inspiration in the search for freshness and intensity of feeling. In its intention therefore, as well as in the means adopted this side of his painting is extraordinarily precocious, anticipating by forty years the painting of the Nazarenes, and of Blake and his followers, but perhaps reflecting the antiquarian interests of some of his friends in Edinburgh.

Antal has drawn a parallel between Fuseli's background in Zurich, a Protestant backwater of Europe, and the Runcimans in Edinburgh.²⁴ He argues that Fuseli's originality of thought and imagery was, to some extent at least, a product of his apparently provincial background. Out of contact with the main stream of European art, though not of European thought, Fuseli looked for inspiration in whatever came to his hand, without being able to select it according to the accepted canons of contemporary taste. In this way Antal seeks to explain Fuseli's precocious search for expressive force in the inspiration of the mannerists. Something rather similar is thought to have been important in the development of Alexander Cozens, brought up in St. Petersburg. There can be no doubt that John Runciman's precociousness was to some extent a product of his isolation. His use of the early Rembrandt and Durer was very far indeed from the correct taste of the 1760's. What is unexplained, as with Fuseli, is that his unconventional inspiration led him from isolation into a position that was at the centre of the nascent Romantic

24. Frederick Antal, Fuseli Studies, 1956, 19

movement. This is nowhere clearer than in the King Lear, the largest of his subject paintings.

The King Lear Pl.42. is the most widely known of all John Runciman's pictures. Its imaginative qualities have been discussed at length by W.M. Merchant.²⁵ Lear was performed in Edinburgh in 1763 and probably on other occasions.²⁶ It could therefore have been seen by the Runcimans. The signed drawing by John of an actor declaiming indicates that he like his brother was interested in the theatre.^{Plate 42a} The purpose of Merchant's discussion however is to show that the picture is related, not to a performance of the play, but to a reading of the text. Following Merchant's interpretation, the artist is using his imagination as complementary to that of the poet, rather than as had always previously been the case excepting Hogarth, as ancillary to it, or merely illustrating a performance. Through his interpretation of the imagery in the critical speeches the artist produces an image of the state of Lear's feelings at the crisis of the play, which is therefore a direct pictorial equivalent to Shakespeare's use of poetry. Merchant's thesis must be correct, though perhaps it is more elaborate in detail than John Runciman's intention in his picture. What Merchant does not discuss, however, is the way in which this use of poetic imagery makes the parallel between the literary and the pictorial imaginations that was central to the development of romantic painting from Hogarth onwards. Alexander Runciman's subject painting was inspired by this poetic idea, and one of the most important things about the Lear in the history of the two brothers' development is that it makes clear that their understanding of this was

25. W.M. Merchant, John Runciman's Lear, Warburg and Courtauld Journal, XVII, 1954.

26. On May 17th, 1763, Dibdin, Edinburgh Stage, 125.

something that they took with them to Rome and not something that they learnt there.

With the notable, and important, exception of Gavin Hamilton, history painting in the 1760's after the death of Hogarth was not distinguished. Beside John Runciman's pictures, paintings like West's Leonidas and Cleombrutus look as uninteresting as they really are. The imaginative quality of John Runciman's small paintings is a product of his search for a way of expressing, through painting, intensity of feeling and emotion of a kind that in the King Lear is identified with the poetic feeling of Shakespeare. Apart from his brother, of whom we know very little at this date, only Fuseli and Mortimer produced work that was at all comparable. Fuseli's drawing of 1766,²⁷ Garrick as Richard III, is not a mature work, nevertheless it does show the same feeling for drama in the play that goes beyond the stage directions. Through his developing style too, Fuseli is trying to create this effect by purely pictorial means. It would be satisfying to be able to demonstrate a link between Fuseli and John Runciman predating the former's friendship with Alexander in 1770 and '71. Although it is perfectly possible that they should have met in 1767, there is no evidence to suggest that in fact they did. The same is true of Mortimer, whose work has a number of analogies with that of John Runciman's. According to Benedict Nicolson, however, all his most relevant work was produced in the 1770's, including the Shakespeare heads which were not published until 1775.²⁸ Only the King John of 1768 is near in date to Runciman's Lear, and it is more a historical picture based on a theatrical presentation than a poetic subject.²⁹

From the foregoing discussion a development in John Runciman's work can be seen leading up to the King Lear.

27. Reproduced Ganz, Fuseli Drawings, Pl.5.

28. (Benedict Nicholson), J.H. Mortimer, Catalogue of exhibition at Kenwood House, London, 1969.

29. Ibid., no.37.

There is however one small picture which does not fit into this pattern, but which has a strong claim to be by him. This is the picture at Penicuik of David with the head of Goliath. Pl.43. It is unsigned, and was attributed by Laing to Alexander Runciman.³⁰ Reference has been made to this picture in a previous chapter in connection with a drawing of David in The Richard Cooper scrap-book. It is a more relaxed seeming picture than those discussed so far, more loosely drawn and without the distinctive build up of paint in the minute details of the highlights which characterises the others, and which we have suggested derives from Teniers. There is, because of this, less contrast between light and dark, and between impasto and transparency. The colour, which is soft and decorative, and the lightness of mood, are different in character from the other pictures. On the other hand for all these differences, the painting is fluid and precise, and the small scale is handled with a delicacy that is not apparent in any of Alexander's work.

The lighter side of John Runciman's work is seen in four drawings in the SNG of Silenus, satyrs, and nymphs. These drawings are all signed, though two of them in what appears to be Alexander's hand. Two of these drawings clearly belong together. One shows Silenus on a blanket, and from a foot visible on the right hand edge, we can see that he is being dragged along. Pl.44. The second drawing, slightly less finished, shows two satyrs dragging something heavy, and clearly continues the composition. Pl.45. The possible connection between these drawings and the picture of Silenus and Satyrs that Alexander exhibited in 1767 has been remarked on in a previous chapter.

30. Laing, Notes on Artists, EUL.

Stylistically these two drawings are very close to John's paintings, particularly the Silenus. The point of the pencil is used rather as the tip of the brush is used in the paintings, to give a feeling of high finish without losing freedom. The face of Silenus is very like several of the faces of bearded old men in the paintings, and though it is so much less finished, the companion drawing of two satyrs is closely comparable.

Of the other two drawings that have related subjects, one is fairly closely compatible with the two already discussed. It shows three nymphs and a satyr dancing, accompanied by a goat. Pl.46. It is a very lively drawing giving a splendid image of the dance. It is drawn in a mixture of red and black chalk with hardly any pencil. The actual drawing technique is correspondingly more open, and this, together with the sophisticated use of pose, and the suggestion of a more classical approach to anatomy might mean that it was an Italian drawing. On the other hand the sheet on which it is drawn carries the number 107, and the drawing of two satyrs 108. If these are the numbers of the pages in John Runciman's sketch book then the drawings must be connected in time as they are in subject.

The fourth of these drawings is somewhat different. Although its subject is evidently a satyr, the satyr's head seems to have been added to a sketch of the Torso Belvedere. Pl.47. The drawing is in red chalk and the whole feeling of scale and confidence is different from anything we have discussed so far. The drawing has a clearly authentic signature. Also on the sheet is a profile portrait of John Runciman's brother identified by an inscription that reads; 'This face is Alexander Runciman's -- a most striking likeness'. Even though this inscription has clearly been added, the face

is a recognisable likeness, and the whole drawing is undoubtedly by John Runciman done when the two brothers were in Italy. The implications of this will be discussed at a later stage. Meanwhile, however, without discussing the other evidence this drawing gives some idea of the direction in which the artist's style developed after he had left Britain.

Although all four of these drawings are in a lighter mood than any of the paintings, with the exception of the Penicuik David, there is nothing in any of them that helps to confirm the attribution of that picture to John Runciman. Its being at Penicuik however gives strength to the attribution, and it is a picture of real quality. A final decision on its authorship cannot be made on the existing evidence, but it clearly comes from the Runciman circle.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Runcimans in Rome 1767-69.

In the later half of the eighteenth century the journey to Rome became a natural part of the ambition of any aspiring young artist, and particularly so with the Scots. It seems that gradually, as the memory of the Stuart cause faded, the presence of the Scottish exiles in Rome turned from an embarrassment into an advantage to their compatriots. In the 1770's there were more Scots amongst the members of the Accademia di San Luca than any other foreign nationality.¹ This fact was almost certainly due to Gavin Hamilton whose place in Rome is summarised in a letter of John Aikman to John Forbes, August 29th 1767, concerning Anne Forbes impending journey to Rome. "Mr. Gavin Hamilton ... can be more useful to Annie with respect to cultivating her natural genius for painting than any man. He is what the Italians call the Premiero, and we call the Principall, in the Academy of painting at Rome, and all the young students apply to him for direction and instruction in their studies. I have known him well from his infancy. He is a sweet blooded, polite gentleman, and being now the most renowned of all the History Painters of this age, is highly respected at Rome".²

There were at least seven young Scots in Rome at the same time as the Runcimans, or who travelled out while Alexander was still there. These were David Allan, William Jeans, John Baxter, Anne Forbes, John Brown, James Nevay, and James Clark. In March 1768 the Runcimans were living in the same house in the Via Gregoriana as Anne Forbes and her mother.³

1. Archive of the Accademia di San Luca, Rome. Sederunt Books of the Academy, 1760-80.
2. John Aikman to John Forbes. Forbes correspondence Col. W. Robertson-Aikman. Transcribed by Basil Skinner.
3. Stato degli Animi, S. Andrea delle Fratte, 6th March, 1768. Rome, Lateran Archive.

In his letter to James Cumming of Sept. 1769 Runciman wrote in very friendly terms of James Clark, who came from Edinburgh though he was apparently no connection of Penicuik. He had travelled out in the spring of 1768, and was under the patronage of James Grant for whom Hamilton had painted the picture of Achilles mourning Patroclus. He went out therefore with a letter of introduction to Hamilton, and carrying out for him a smoked glass and several other commissions.⁴ David Allan was also very much under the patronage of Hamilton, and it was almost certainly through his influence that he won the medal at the Academy competition in 1773 with his Hector and Andromache.⁵ James Nevay, with whom the Runcimans quarrelled so bitterly, also seems to have been a protege of Hamilton's. He published an engraving of one of Hamilton's pictures, and almost his only recorded painting, Agrippina with the ashes of Germanicus finished in 1769, was clearly dependent for its subject on the older painter.⁶

William Jeans, the sculptor, and John Baxter architect and son of John Baxter, Sir James Clerk's architect, were both connected with Penicuik. They were certainly friends of Runciman's in later life.⁷ William Jeans appears in the Stato degli Animi for 1768.⁸ The only evidence that

4. Letter of James Clark to Mr. Dalrymple, London, Feb. 2nd, 1768. Seafield Papers, Register House.
5. See C. Crowther Gordon, David Allan, the Scottish Hogarth, and (Basil Skinner), The Indefatigable Mr. Allan, Scottish Arts Council exhibition, Edinburgh, 1973.
6. The completion of Nevay's Agrippina was announced by Mrs. Forbes in a letter to her daughter, Rome, August 29th, 1769. It was exhibited in 1773, (Graves)
7. See Chapter III note 50.
8. Ibid. note 52.

Baxter was still in Rome when Runciman was is the inscription on the back of a portrait drawing by Baxter of Runciman that it was done in Rome. John Brown travelled out to Italy in 1769.⁹ Although he was much younger, his friendship with Runciman probably dates from this time.

Runciman was also friendly with Fuseli and James Barry, and his relations with them will be dealt with separately. The community to which the two brothers belonged in Rome was however composed mainly of their compatriots, more than half of whom were under the direct protection of Gavin Hamilton. His example was so important to all the young painters that it is not surprising to find Alexander Runciman in 1770 admitting the desire to emulate him.¹⁰ For this reason it will be necessary in a later chapter to study his work up to this time before proceeding with our account of Runciman's own work in Rome.

Runciman's earlier friend Richard Cooper may also have reached Rome before Runciman himself returned to Scotland. The Runciman's wish to go to Rome was therefore not at all exceptional among their contemporaries in Scotland, and their reasons for going are not difficult to explain in general terms.

Runciman arrived at Leghorn on the 25th May 1767.¹¹ He had left London ^{three} weeks earlier and travelled the whole way by sea. He travelled from Leghorn to Rome overland, going by way of Siena where he was very much impressed by the cathedral,¹² and he was joined in Rome by his brother sometime between the

9. John Brown, letter from Falmouth to Charles Esplin, Oct. 15th, 1769. Laing Coll. EUL.
10. AR to Sir James Clerk, May 1770, see Appendix A.
11. AR to James Cumming, 25th May, 1767, see Appendix A.
12. Ibid.

18th October and the 5th December. It would seem that his departure from Edinburgh was not the product of long planning. In August of 1766 he had taken as an apprentice Laurence Watson whose father, Alexander Watson, addressed himself to the meeting of St. Mary's Chapel on the 17th July of the following year to complain that his son had been left without a master by Runciman's going to Italy.¹³ The Incorporation decided that he should go to whoever had Runciman's business which was in fact Dugald MacLaurie still technically an apprentice himself. It would have been very cavalier of Runciman to take Watson as an apprentice if he had known at the time that he was going to leave him masterless six months later.

Sir James Clerk records the first payment towards the promised total of £150 for the Penicuik contract¹⁴ on March 6th 1767, and the agreement was presumably reached before Runciman put the announcement of his intended departure in the paper on February the 9th. Writing to Baron Grant on the 24th August 1768 trying to raise more money for the Runcimans, Walter Ross makes it clear that the contract with Sir James was the financial basis of their enterprise,¹⁵ and although they did have some other resources, this seems to have been true. The decision to travel to Rome must therefore have been dependent on this agreement. It seems anyway that it must have been taken after August 1766, when Runciman took on Laurence Watson, and before February 1767. If it was between these dates it cannot have been far either side of 22nd November when Clerk paid Runciman for the work that he did in the portico at Penicuik. This may therefore have been a trial piece for the main commission, or else the work, begun with the portico, was interrupted for the journey to Rome in order that it could be better

13. Laing, Transcripts, EUL.

14. Sir James Clerk, Journal of Expenses, Register House,

15. Walter Ross, Letter Book, Appendix B.

completed after the Runcimans returned 'improved'.

When he announced his impending departure in the paper Runciman stated that it was his intention to stay away for two and a half years, though he was in the event away from Edinburgh for four and a half, and that he was leaving the business in charge of Dugald MacLaurie. MacLaurie gave his version of the arrangement in a letter to Lord Hope of 16th April 1768 from which quotation has already been made in a different context. ---- "Fifteen months ago Mr. Runciman resigned the whole business in my favours which I have been carrying on this last twelve month, and which I have the greatest reason to believe will yield me £150 sterling good yearly, provided I am assisted to stand out the expense of the first year".¹⁶

When Runciman left Edinburgh he had according to Ross's account about £140 owing to him in outstanding bills, though he also had debts.¹⁷ It would seem from McLaurie's letter that he withdrew everything he had from the firm, leaving McLaurie to cope as best he could. The arrangement must have been quite amicable however for the two were established in partnership soon after Runciman's return.

Walter Ross was left in charge of the Runcimans' finances after they left Edinburgh. In his letters he twice refers to 'the company' and to a slightly mysterious affair in London in which Alexander Runciman appears to have been detained for debt.¹⁸ In an undated letter to John Runciman then in London, he writes; "I had a long conversation with Mr. Alexander where I cleared up everything about the London affair and did my utmost to bring you into favour".¹⁹

16. Hopetoun House, Muniments Room.

17. AR's Account with Walter Ross, EUL; Appendix C.

18. Walter Ross, Letter Book; Appendix B.

19. August 1767, Ibid.

In a letter to Sir James Clerk of August 24th, 1768, explaining the Runcimans' financial difficulties he writes; "The reasons they assign for this (their money being exhausted) are first Alexander's being attacked at London before he set out, by a creditor of the former company and detained at considerable expense. Mr. Alexander relieved him and has since been refunded out of the company's effects".²⁰

This must have been an action on the part of a creditor of the Norie-Runciman firm which Runciman had dissolved so hastily. It must have been a misunderstanding however, for if Runciman had intended to debunk, leaving his debts unpaid, he would hardly have announced his impending departure in the newspaper.

Mr. Alexander was Robert Alexander who has already been mentioned on several different occasions. He was a merchant and financier and a member of a rich family whose fortunes were made in the West Indies trade.²¹ He was a member of the Board of Trustees, and seems to have taken quite an active interest in the arts. Walter Ross concluded his Description of the Paintings at Penicuik; "I since learned upon good authority, and am well pleased to conclude, by informing the public, that if this artist shall do honour to himself or his country, the merit is solely due to the worthy proprietor of Ossian's Hall, and to Robert Alexander, Esq; Merchant in Edinburgh: To this gentleman it is certain, his country owes more for the countenance and support of rising genius, than to the whole body of her nobility".²²

20. Ibid.

21. Private information, Mr. Boyd Alexander.

22. A Description of the Paintings in the Hall of Ossian at Pennycuik near Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 1773, anon. Ross is identified as the author by Gough in British Topography, II, 682.

As an employee of Mr. Alexander and so himself dependent on his patronage, Ross was perhaps not wholly disinterested, nevertheless there is some evidence to support what he says. When Runciman was detained in London, as Ross says, it was Mr. Alexander who came to his rescue, though he was reimbursed from the company's funds. In August 1767, however, writing to John Runciman, Ross suggested that some more direct subsidy might be forthcoming;

"I had a long conversation with Mr. Alexander where I cleared up everything which you omitted about the London affair, and did my utmost to bring you into favour. In short, altho' that Gentleman's expense has been of late so prodigious, his generosity is not an iota diminished. I gave him your address, and I believe you will find a credit sent you upon Italy for 50 guineas or more which is to be repaid pictura inani".²³ Two years later writing to Robert Alexander, Runciman is certainly acknowledging him as a patron, he also thanks him for help extended to his mother, and this may explain the item of £30 paid to 'Mrs. Runciman his mother' in Ross's account.²⁴ Writing to Cumming, also in 1769, he mentions sending a picture of John's to Mr. Alexander as though he owed it to him to do so.²⁵ The Runcimans' funds were exhausted by June 1768 according to Ross.²⁶ It may well therefore have been mainly due to Robert Alexander that they were able to stay on after that date, and that Alexander was able to stay two years after John's death. We do not know however of any money paid to the brothers after Oct. 1768.

23. Walter Ross, Letter Book, EUL; Appendix B.
24. AR to Mr. Alexander, July 1769; Appendix A: Ross Account, EUL, Appendix C.
25. AR to James Cumming, Rome, Sept. 1769; Appendix A.
26. Walter Ross to Colin Muir Campbell, June 1st, 1768, Letter Book, EUL; Appendix B.

Writing to Sir James, Ross says that they might have been able to make some money by copying, but that they found a closed shop.²⁷ As far as we know this continued to be the case.

It would seem however that neither Clerk nor Alexander gave the brothers the security of a fixed and regular supply of money of the kind that was enjoyed by their contemporaries in Rome like James Clark, or Anne Forbes. When in August 1768 Ross was trying to raise money for them, he wrote to Sir James and to Baron Grant. He implied to Baron Grant that Clerk's £150 was the only money they had had so far.²⁸ He wrote to Sir James as their chief patron asking for a further £50, and saying that he hoped to raise £40 or £50 from other sources.²⁹ It was presumably in answer to this request that Sir James contributed the £30 recorded in his Journal for 22nd October of that year. If further support was forthcoming from Robert Alexander, Ross gives no hint of it, and in January 1771 Runciman applied again to Sir James for an advance of £30 (he originally wrote £50) to get him home.³⁰ Whether or not Clerk sent it to him we do not know. It does not appear as a separate item in Sir James's Journal, though he does record there payment of £100 to Runciman on three different occasions 'over and above what I gave him while in Rome'. Generously therefore Clerk had in the end nearly doubled the original promise of £150, nevertheless Runciman had to borrow money from Ross to get him home from London to Edinburgh.³¹ As soon as he had finished working at Penicuik he had to take an advance on his salary with the Trustees as drawing master.³²

27. Ross to Sir John Clerk, August 1768, Ibid.

28. Ross to Baron Grant, 24 August, 1768, Ibid.

29. Ross to Sir James Clerk, August, 1768, Ibid.

30. AR to Sir James Clerk, Jan. 12th 1771; Appendix A.

31. Runciman's Account with Walter Ross, EUL; Appendix C.

32. Accounts of the Board of the Trustees for Manufactures in Scotland, Register House.

However generous his two main patrons may have been in the end, the financial arrangements for Runciman's absence of nearly five years seem to have been very much hand to mouth. The original arrangement whereby the two brothers hoped to stay abroad for two and a half years on £150 from Sir James and whatever resources they had of their own seems to have been hopelessly unrealistic. In his letter to Cumming of December 1767, Runciman mentions coming back to Italy, and he must by then have realised that his money was not going to last. In fact it lasted less than eighteen months. This suggests that their journey to Rome was recklessly undertaken, or at least that they were badly advised. It is however also a measure of their determination to get there at all costs, even without the security that really powerful patronage could provide.

The Forbes family correspondence deals in some detail with the financial arrangements to send Anne Forbes with her mother as chaperone, on the same errand and at the same time as the Runcimans. She actually travelled out some time between the two brothers, carrying a letter from James Cumming to Runciman.³³ It seems to have been thought that a sum of between £150 and £200 would be necessary for a year's residence for mother and daughter, over and above the cost of the journey which was expected to be between £30 and £35.³⁴ Even with a sum of £200 per annum assured and covenanted, Mrs. Forbes complained about the cost .

Her letter dated March 1st 1768 is within a week of the Parish priest's census that shows the Runciman brothers living under the same roof.³⁵ Mrs. Forbes's language is lively, and the image of this good Scots lady coping with Rome is so vivid that it would be worth quoting even without the close connection that her account must have with the kind of life that the Runcimans

33. AR to James Cumming, Dec. 1767; Appendix A.

34. Margaret Forbes to John Forbes, Musselburgh, 27th July, 1767.

35. Stato degli Animi, S. Andrea delle Fratte. *This is the only appearance of the Runcimans in the Stato degli Animi of central Rome between 1767 and 1771. There is no evidence of where Alexander was living after John died.*

were leading. She is writing to her daughter Margaret; "The expense of coming, and of the living here being not at all so easy as I imagined, my opinion is that we are hungered and harried. The luxuries of life such as coaches, plays, operas, wine are cheaper here, but for the necessaries they are to the full as dear as at home....As for eatables, for dinner we deal with a tratteur, which is the common way of going on here in private families and for that we pay six paols a day, which is three shillings. For this we have soop, a slice of beef boild tasteless with greens without butter, then a wee bit of something roasted--- I believe they are mavisés and blackbirds, for they're long nebbéd things. This with rolls or 'panes' as they call them is what we have for our pay.... I do assure you money matters fash me very much and I grudge the expense most devilishly, and am afraid our folks may imagine we are living at a high and antipole rate. I am forever calculating and grumbling that I cannot fall into any more reasonable way of doing; but I find its to no purpose, for it's true that when one lives in Rome one must do as they do there, and nasty, clarty and awkward are all its ways, I do assure you. However I'll do the best I can, but oh! this first year's expense comes with a heavy loss upon it. We had long travelling by sea and land stay'd a little at different places. After we came here we lived a month in a hotch potch and still more expensive way than at present, till we should see what to do. After getting a house, the most reasonable to be found furnished, I had many things to buy that the landlady could not provide me in... All this together with the expense of our household until the first Sept. which will make our first year, I dare say will be to the best of my reckoning £270".³⁶

Mrs. Forbes's son John, in the year and a half he spent in Italy, including a trip to Naples, reckoned that he spent about £380.³⁷ Admittedly the Forbes family though not rich were

36. Mrs. Forbes to Margaret Forbes, Rome, March 1768.

37. John Forbes to John Aikman of the Ross, Rome, March 2nd, 1771.

comparatively smart. The Runcimans would probably have been prepared to live more cheaply, but living in the same house they could hardly have got away with spending very much less. James Clark hoped to be able to live on an allowance of £50 a year from James Grant. We do not know how he fared but he clearly had access to more, for in his letter to Dalrymple of Feb. 1768 he is modestly declining an offer of a further £10 a year.³⁸ In the light of Mrs. Forbes's remarks however it is not surprising to find Walter Ross in August 1768 desperately trying to raise money to keep the Runcimans in Rome.

Anne Forbes had the advantage also that her patrons had agreed to support her over a number of years, so too had James Clark. The original agreement for Anne Forbes was £205 a year for three years.³⁹ Though it was apparently extended for she stayed a fourth year. This makes the Runcimans' financial resources seem very slender indeed. It is hardly surprising that they ran short as quickly as they did, and it seems they were fortunate to have Walter Ross to raise support for them at home. Booth suggests that Alexander undertook the series of landscape drawings that will be discussed in the next chapter in order to raise money. Like all artists he always hoped to sell his work, though he was never particularly successful in doing so. There is no evidence that he undertook these Roman landscapes as a chore. On the contrary they are consistent both with his understanding of ornament and his antiquarian interests. Nevertheless he might reasonably have expected landscapes of this kind to be saleable.

38. James Clerk to Mr. Dalrymple, Seafield Papers, Register House.

39. Margaret to John Forbes, 27th July, 1767.

CHAPTER NINE

Alexander Runciman's Roman work 1767-9.

Runciman's own account of his purpose in going to Rome was, as we have seen 'to improve' himself in ornament painting. In his letter to Cumming of December 1767 he mentions study, and though he talks of 'a new plan of study' at that time,¹ it seems that for the first two years that he was in Rome, his study was in branches of painting directly related to the decorative style. Its basis was landscape in the tradition in which he had been trained. He was a landscape painter of real talent and originality, and he continued to produce landscapes throughout his life.

About twenty Roman landscape drawings survive. They are in various combinations of pen, wash, and water-colour. There are also at least two surviving oil-paintings, 'A Tower in the Wall of Rome' much damaged,² and 'View of the Tiber',³ while others are known to have existed. 'The Cascatelle, Tivoli, with a rainbow and a distant view of Maecenas's Villa', and a companion, were in the Baxter Sale, and a 'View of the Via Appia' was in Runciman's own sale of 1778.⁴ Of all the surviving Roman landscapes only one is dated, a small freely painted and richly coloured water colour of a Tower in the Wall of Leo IV. Pl.48 It is signed and dated 1770, and may have been the basis of the oil painting of this subject and of a small etching. It is one of a group of five similar small watercolours which give the impression of having been painted on the spot. One of these is a different view of the same tower, a wash drawing of great freedom and effect. Another is a view of the Tiber, a sketch for the small oil painting of the same subject in the Scottish National Gallery. Pl's. 49 & 50.

The single dated landscape makes it clear that although by

1. AR to James Cumming, Rome Dec. 1767; Appendix A.
2. Collection Mr. Errol Bedford.
3. SNG 790.
4. John Baxter Sale, Edinburgh, 1798, AR's Sale 1778.

1770 Runciman was becoming increasingly preoccupied with history painting he had not abandoned landscape. In his letter to Sir James Clerk of Jan. 1771 he wrote that he had been prevented from working for four months during the previous summer by 'a fluxion of the eyes'.⁵ This sort of free landscape sketching would certainly be a better convalescence than indoor study. We know that in the latter part of 1769 he was working in the Capitoline, for his letter to Cumming of September that year is addressed 'from the Capitol where I'm at work everyday'.⁶ At this period too he was engaged on his major painting, the Ulysses and Nausicaa. No landscape drawings can be associated with the reconstructed sketch book begun in 1769.⁷ We have his own testimony that without his brother's death he might never have turned to history painting.⁸ Even if his disavowal of all historical ambitions was not entirely genuine, he clearly did think of himself as more a landscape and decorative painter during the earlier part of his Roman sojourn. It seems likely therefore that in spite of the single dated water-colour, the majority of his Roman landscapes should belong to these first two years. The character of the majority of these pictures fits in with this suggestion.

Early in his Roman stay we know from his letter to James Cumming of Dec. 1767 Runciman had been on a walk to Tivoli, Grotta Ferratta, and Albano, and had 'made some views of Tivoli'.⁹ The view of Tivoli may be a result of this expedition. It is possible that a very free wash drawing of the Tomb of the Horatii also dates from this trip. Pl.51. It gives the impression of being

5. AR to Sir James Clerk, Rome, Jan. 12th 1771. Appendix A.
6. AR to James Cumming, Rome, Dec. 1769. Appendix A.
7. See below Chapter XII.
8. AR to Sir James Clerk, May 1770. Appendix A.
9. AR to James Cumming, Dec. 1767. Appendix A.

done on the spot. It also evidently provided the basis for two large and dramatic drawings of the same subject which elaborates the tomb and its surroundings in a very fanciful way. Pl.52, & 52a. The bold light and shade, and massing of both these drawings, and the freedom in approach to the subject of the latter of the two is clearly in the Norie tradition.

There is a group of ten drawings of ruins and architecture in and around Rome in the Scottish National Gallery, and another two comparable drawings in the Coll. Hon. G. Runciman. All are similar in size, and in the general character of the subject. They seem to be the record of a fairly energetic campaign on the artist's part. Some of these, for example the two views of the Forum in the Hon. G. Runciman's collection, are boldly dramatic compositions in light and shade like the Tomb of the Horatii drawings. ^{Plate 53.} They are still consistent with the Norie style though perhaps not uninfluenced by Piranesi. There is no evidence in them of any particular effort to be accurate. Two of the drawings, however, one of St. Peter's Piazza with the Janiculum, and the other of S. Andrea in Via Flaminia Pl.54 show the most scrupulous attention to detail however, though in the latter the perspective of the steps is somewhat crooked.

Taken together this large group of Roman landscapes, in spite of the variations within it, is sufficiently consistent in conception to belong to a single period of time. There is only one other important landscape that does not fall into the two categories outlined. This is a water colour of a view in the Campagna with the Tomb of Cecilia Metella or some similar monument in the middle distance. Pl.55. This is a very beautiful, lightly handled picture with a spaciousness not apparent in the others. The way in which it is signed 'A. Runcimano' certainly suggests it was done in Italy. This drawing is incidentally the best

evidence to confirm the attribution to Runciman of a series of very beautiful unsigned Scottish landscapes in the S.N.G.

Runciman evidently devoted quite a lot of energy to landscape while he was in Rome, and probably particularly during the first part of his stay, but he was evidently also working at other kinds of 'ornament' at the same time. In the important letter that he wrote to Sir James Clerk in May 1770 in which he outlined his first proposals for a historical scheme of decoration, he concluded his account with the following remarks: "I think the Salloon will be best in the Taste of some of ye Baths of Titus or Lodge of Raffaele, that is Light Ornaments with small pannells and pictures, but I have matterills for a great Variety of that sort of work both for ye Salloon and pannelled Staircase. I have ye Triumph of Bacchus and Araidne[?] for the other (staircase), but I have a drawing I have made from the Eneiad that I should like to do better".¹⁰

What he writes here is very different from the long and enthusiastic account he has given earlier in the letter of his proposed series of the Life of Achilles. He almost throws away the 'great variety' of light ornaments etc. that he has collected, but that he has them at all is evidence of his having applied himself at some time to this branch of ornament. If the 'study' that he mentions in his letter to Cumming of December 1767 was for the purposes of his ornament painting, then this kind of work and landscape drawing would both be a logical part of it, but by 1770 when he wrote this letter, in keeping with the new more serious ambitions of which it is testimony, he had temporarily lost interest in these branches of his art.

The change in his interests is even clearer in his treatment in his letter of the Bacchus and Ariadne drawing. This is almost

10. AR to Sir James Clerk, May 1770. Appendix A.

certainly identical with a large drawing published in the Connoisseur by L. Peek Deykin and then in his collection.¹¹ Pl.21. He identified it as a drawing for the early Silenus and Satyrs, but it is plainly Bacchus and Ariadne. The drawing's size 17" x 22", and in spite of its freedom, its elaboration, suggest that it was originally intended for a more important purpose than that assigned to it in the letter. Its obvious debt to the central picture of the Farnese Gallery ceiling makes it seem very likely that it was to have been the central picture of the Penicuik ceiling, but in his letter Runciman first banished it to the staircase, and then suggested scrapping it altogether.

It is significant that the subject that he proposed to replace the Bacchus and Ariadne was from the Aeniad. We suggest below that it may have been the Death of Dido.¹² Such a subject was in keeping with the new ambitions to be a serious history painter that he evidently declared in 1769. These new ambitions are the subject of the later part of this thesis. For the present it is sufficient to note that they do seem to have been adopted as a conscious decision however much his previous experience may have prepared him to make it. A decision of this kind is not without parallel. A few years earlier, also in Rome, Richard Wilson changed from portrait painting to landscape with equal decisiveness. In a later generation J.E. Millais was impatient to finish his Cymon before he could begin Lorenzo and Isabella in the new Pre-Raphaelite style. Runciman, by 1770, when he was writing to Sir James, had lost interest in work like the Bacchus and Ariadne, or grotesque decoration in the classical manner. These belong to his earlier interests, perhaps when he first arrived in Rome, certainly before 1769.

The Bacchus and Ariadne is a light, open, and cheerful drawing. It is eminently suitable for a decorative purpose, and closely

11. L. Peek Deykin, Connoisseur, Vol. 72, 1925, 127, whereabouts unknown.

12. See Chapter XIII.

comparable to the kind of picture shown in Baxter's designs for the interior of Penicuik. It is freely composed in light and shade, with plenty of space and an open background. The basic drawing is in light pen but in places is entirely in wash. The main inspiration is inevitably the central picture of the Farnese Gallery, but it is a very free variation, and though it is easy to see how much has been suggested by Annibale's invention, there is little direct quotation. Bacchus's own figure is similar to Annibale's Bacchus. The trumpet player and the woman with cymbals are both based on figures in the Farnese, but they are much more abandoned. The figure between them with his back turned seems to be the Dancing Faun from Naples. The foremost of the tigers repeats in reverse the foremost tiger from the Farnese, but his whole demeanour has been changed to one of comic disgruntlement by the attentions of a putto. Silenus' ass is suffering similarly and is protesting. The lecherous group of satyr and goat in the lower left corner seems to be a reference to the reputation of a group from Herculaneum of a goat and satyr that was so rude that even Wincklemann was not allowed to see it, or felt that he should not ask. He adds after explaining the circumstances 'ainsi quelques Anglois qui se ventent d'avoir vu ce morceau en imposent'.¹³ It was clearly an object that had aroused some interest, and it is amusing to see Runciman's comment on this piece of antiquity, but it is also a measure of the difference in spirit between this drawing and the Peleus and Thetis, which probably replaced it. This is the drawing discussed in Chapter XII. It dates from some time after May 1770, and is a meticulous and finished drawing, carefully composed and loaded with classical references. Pl. 68 It was to be the centre piece for the ceiling in the Achilles project that Runciman outlined in his letter to Sir James of that date.

13. J.J. Wincklemann, Lettre de M.l'Abbe Wincklemann, Antiquaire de Sa Santété, a M.le Comte de Bruehl, Paris, 1764, 35.

The Jacob's Dream, and The Good Samaritan, and King Lear drawings are evidence that even before 1769 Runciman was not exclusively concerned with ornamental and landscape painting. When he embarked on his first major historical picture, the Ulysses and Nausicaa in that year, he was clearly already thoroughly familiar with the ideas of the serious history painters of whom Gavin Hamilton was the leader. There is nothing in his own work before this time to illustrate this however, and if this was all we had we could only say that it must have been so because of the way he developed subsequently. We can reconstruct something of his brother's work, however, during the eighteen months or so that he was in Rome before he died, and this suggests that Alexander took up in 1769 where John left off.

CHAPTER TEN

John Runciman in Italy.

From the paintings that were at Penicuik we can see that Alexander learnt in Italy to render dramatic expression on a monumental scale, and to model himself on Michaelangelo, and Giulio Romano. The interest in dramatic expression is quite consistent with what we know of John's work before 1767, but the interest in monumentality, and the search for it in the inspiration of Michaelangelo are not. In fact quite the contrary was the case. His painting was characterised by its minuteness and its implicit rejection, or ignorance of the dramatic force of the High Renaissance. We have already seen that one of John's few surviving drawings is a copy of the Torso Belvedere. There are three other works that we may suppose were done in Italy. The main reason for doing so is their common reference to Michaelangelo. These four works are quite distinct from any of the painter's other work. Together they suggest that before he died he was already taking the direction which is quite clear in his brother Alexander's subsequent paintings.

The four proposed Italian works are the drawing from the Belvedere Torso already discussed, Pl.47. a drawing of the Fall of Phaeton Pl.57. very close to it in several ways, an etching known for no very good reason as "The Return of Ulysses" Pl.59. and the Self-portrait Pl.56. which is one of the most important of all the painter's surviving works.

John Runciman's Self-portrait Pl.56. is recorded in a letter from Francis Leggat, a pupil of Alexander Runciman, to the Earl of Buchan, written shortly after Alexander's death.¹

1. Francis Leggat to the Earl of Buchan, Dec.30th, 1786, transcribed by Laing, Notes on Painters, EUL.

There seems no reason to doubt that this is the picture concerned. It differs very much however from the pictures so far discussed. It is comparatively large, and unlike any of the others it is painted on canvas. The broken fluid style of the panel paintings has been replaced by an apparently more orthodox kind of painting in which the ground is fairly evenly and smoothly covered, though in the lighter parts the nervous brushwork of the other style can still be seen. In keeping with the more regular style, the light and shade are more evenly balanced, the light less broken, and the drawing more orthodox. The painter represents himself gazing out from beneath the shade of an elegant hat, stroking his chin with his left hand in a gesture in keeping with the expression of speculative contemplation on his face. His partly shadowed features and dark hat are seen against a wide blue sky that is broken by a thin layer of high cloud. The placing of the figure against the sky is strongly reminiscent of Salvator's self-portrait now in London, which may well have been the model. Over the artist's left shoulder is seen with its back to us, Michaelangelo's figure of Day. The painter is placed as though it is the object on which he has been reflecting.

We know that Alexander was contemplating a trip to Florence when he wrote to James Cumming in September 1767. His picture of the Return of the Prodigal in the Cowgate Church, Edinburgh is modelled on Tintoretto's composition of the same subject in the Uffizi and may be evidence of his having made such a trip. If he did, it might well have been in order to meet John. The choice of the back view of Michaelangelo's figure reveals very clearly its relationship to the Belvedere Torso, and so helps to confirm the importance of that object as it is suggested by the drawing.

According to Leggat, after Alexander's death John's self-portrait was in the possession of his maid, though this is more likely to be the woman with whom he lived and who bore him a son, than an actual servant.² This suggests that he had kept the picture for himself. As he was clearly very attached to his brother this needs no explanation, nor would the picture have been an appropriate one either to present to John's patrons after his death to show the standard of work that he had destroyed, or to exhibit to confound his enemies. If it is necessary to do so this may explain the absence of any mention of the picture in Runciman's correspondence.

The presence of Michaelangelo's figure in John Runciman's self-portrait is a declaration of artistic faith. He would hardly have included it casually, and even if there were no other evidence his expression and gesture would reveal the place of Michaelangelo in his thoughts. Perhaps the most important piece of corroborating evidence is the Phaeton drawing. Pl.57.

This is a drawing in red chalk and pencil, signed in ink. The signature may have been added, but there is no reason to doubt the attribution. The drawing has never been highly finished, and has been cut down. It clearly has Michaelangelo for its starting point in a number of different ways. The subject may have been suggested by the reputation of Michaelangelo's own celebrated drawing of Phaeton now at Windsor. There is however no precise relationship between John Runciman's composition and its great predecessor. The feeling of the terrified Phaeton falling through space recalls the right hand side of the Last Judgement which the artist will certainly have known and admired. Again, however, the drawing does not reveal any precise dependence on this model.

2. Ibid.

The figure of Phaeton is clearly a figure of Michaelangelo's turned upside down, and it recalls several figures in the Sistine ceiling, for example God creating the Sun and Moon, or the crucified Haman. Through Michaelangelo its relationship to the Laocoon can also be seen. These general points establish the relationship with Michaelangelo. In detail the figure seems to depend on Hercules with the Hydra in the drawing at Windsor of the Three Labours of Hercules.³ Pl.58. The points of resemblance between John Runciman's figure and Michaelangelo's Hercules are so close in the exact position of the head, the legs and arms, that, though it seems unlikely, one must suppose that he had access to Michaelangelo's drawing, or something closely based upon it.

On the verso of this sheet is a study of a nude figure apparently based on the crucified Haman in the Sistine Chapel, a figure also copied by Alexander.⁴ The drawing is strikingly Michaelangelesque. This figure, the figure of Phaeton, and the drawing of the Belvedere Torso Pl.47. all seem to reveal an attempt on the artist's part to imitate not only the poses and anatomy of Michaelangelo's figures, but his actual drawing style. The change from pencil in the earlier drawings to chalk in these is perhaps part of this attempt to imitate a Renaissance style.

The fourth of these works is the etching, the so-called Return of Ulysses. Pl.59. Two states of this exist. One is signed and the other unsigned. The signature reads 'J. Runciman Inv. Fecit'. This may be a case of Alexander or someone else putting John's name to something after his death, but he could equally have added his name to the plate himself after it had already been used. It is extremely unlikely that such a signature

3. L. Goldscheider, Michaelangelo Drawings, London, 1951, Pl.68.
4. Collection Lord Runciman.

would be added to the plate without good reason. The etching is the closest of any of John's works to Alexander's subsequent style. The etching technique is also comparable, but the drawing is more robust, and more solid.

The subject of the etching is obscure. It has for some time had the title Return of Ulysses, but it does not seem to fit any episode in the Odyssey. It would be satisfactory if it did, as Ulysses and Nausicaa was the subject on which Alexander embarked in a monumental painting immediately after his brother's death. The supposition that it is some kind of classical subject is certainly consistent with the figure style, the vaguely classical costume and the hair styles of the women, but these are not conclusive. The picture certainly represents a reunion, or reconciliation of some kind, and it is between two men, one of whom by his bare legs and feet, his dog, and the vignette of a landscape and winding road on the right hand side, has clearly returned home after a long journey. This might suggest the Prodigal Son as the subject, but that leaves unexplained the apparent youth of ~~both~~ the couple embracing, and the three evidently significant but mysterious women seated side by side.

The subject must remain an unsolved problem for the time. The composition and style however are of particular interest, in themselves and as the only major composition by the artist that may be of this Roman period. The main group derives from Jechonias, one of the ancestors of Christ in the Sistine ceiling. The fact that it is an obscure group suggests that it was taken from the ceiling itself and not from any reproduction. Also, although it is an unimportant group in the ceiling as a whole, as it is in the lowest register, and actually on the wall surface and not the vault, it is well placed to catch the eye of somebody

in the chapel. Its position also makes it easier to copy. The same is also true of the Crucifixion of Haman. Fuseli, probably for the same reason was also interested by the figures in the lower registers of the ceiling.

The use that John Runciman makes of Michaelangelo in this etching is consistent with the tendency revealed by the other three works in this group. Perhaps partly because of the etching technique however, but also in order to achieve a monumental effect, he has simplified the masses and the shapes of the composition. The pyramidal grouping of the two main figures is strikingly contrasted to the perspective of the three strangely reduplicated figures on the right, but it is also linked to them by the flying cloak. Together these two groups make a pronounced shape against the dark background. The half isolated figure to the left links these to the surrounding space.

The features of this composition are similar in a number of points to Fuseli's first important work, the drawing of the Death of Cardinal Beaufort which he exhibited in 1772. . Pl.60. The most obvious point is the thrice repeated figure which Fuseli uses in two places in his composition. The group on the left of Fuseli's drawing is linked by the line of the young king's cloak to his figure. The effect is to give a very strong shape to the whole composition, which is underlined by the use of light and shade, but is prevented from becoming boring by the variation in the individual figures, and by the complication of space within and between the groups.

This tendency in Fuseli's work was apparent before the Cardinal Beaufort, and the hint contained in John Runciman's picture is not enough to explain its development. Nevertheless the combination of features in this etching is such that it

suggests that Fuseli knew it, and was influenced by it. The thrice repeated figure in a single group became one of Fuseli's most characteristic devices.

The suggested connection between Fuseli and John Runciman, in which Alexander Runciman was presumably the intermediary, gives us a hint of the importance of what John Runciman was doing in the short time that he lived and worked in Rome. It also suggests the degree to which Alexander carried on from where his younger brother left off, after his death. As it is seen in Alexander Runciman, in Fuseli, Blake, and even Reynolds, one of the first and most important manifestations of the developing romantic movement was the move away from the stability and correctness of Raphael and the Bolognese, to the intensity and dramatic power of Michaelangelo. The search for inspiration in the poets of genius and poetic fire, Shakespeare, Homer, and Ossian reflects the same movement. As we shall see in the next chapter, Gavin Hamilton was the pioneer of this in his paintings from the Iliad. John Runciman in his exploration of the works of Durer and in his precocious Shakespeare painting anticipated this movement independently. When he moved to Rome he continued in his search for poetic intensity, but, almost certainly encouraged by his compatriot Gavin Hamilton, he turned away from the eccentric inspiration of his early works to the monumental power of Michaelangelo.

The event that concluded the first part of Alexander's career was his brother's tragic death. The effect that it had upon him has already been referred to in passing and will be dealt with later, but the circumstances that seem to have lead up to his brother's death, if they did not cause it, are part of the history of Alexander's first two years in Rome. Already in

August 1768, explaining in his letter to Clerk the Runcimans' inability to make money by copying, Ross writes that they might have been able to do so, 'but that branch is engrossed by one or two people who have created a prejudice against them on account of their short stay at Rome'.⁵ This is the same account that Barry gives of the quarrels in which he was involved in Rome.⁶ The fact that Barry was the first to volunteer to accompany Alexander on his melancholy errand to Naples, and that in September 1769 he was a sufficiently close friend for Runciman to recommend his membership of the Cape Club⁷ may suggest that Barry was also involved in these quarrels to which Runciman refers. Writing to Cumming in Sept. 1769 he mentions 'others that were sufferers with Jacky and me and in a very public manner'.⁸ However it began, the quarrel seems to have developed into some kind of spite campaign of which John Runciman was the main target. Writing both to Cumming and to Robert Alexander, Runciman suggests that if John's talents were made properly known they would confound his enemies (whom he held responsible for his brother's death).⁹ John died of illness in Naples, but the destruction of his paintings before he left Rome indicates that something had happened to upset his confidence in himself. From the tone of Alexander's remarks this was done quite deliberately. The person who was John's particular enemy was James Nevay, a fellow Scot, It is the exhibition of Nevay's Agrippina, newly completed in autumn 1769, which is named by Runciman¹⁰

5. Walter Ross, Letter Book, EUL: Appendix B.
6. Barry to Burke, Rome, n.d. Barry, Works, I, 114.
7. AR to James Cumming, Rome, Sept. 1769; Appendix A.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. and AR to Robert Alexander, Rome, July 1769; Appendix A.
10. AR to James Cumming, Rome, Sept. 1769; Appendix A.

as the occasion on which the exhibition of John's surviving pictures will put him to shame. The subject of Nevay's painting, Agrippina with the Ashes of Germanicus,¹¹ is an indication of how close a follower he was of Hamilton who exhibited in 1770 a very similar subject.

On September 13th, 1769, Mrs. Forbes wrote to her son hotly denying rumours of an engagement between her daughter Anne and Nevay. These rumours, having got amongst the artists in the coffee house, had 'given the gumples.. to Mr. Nevay, who never now comes near us but when he's sent for...when formerly he used to come almost every day to see what she was doing'.¹² Nevay's interest was according to Mrs. Forbes strictly in her daughter's painting. When the Forbes family had come out to Rome in the autumn of 1767 they had brought a letter from James Cumming to Runciman. In March of 1768 Mrs. Forbes and her daughter were in the same lodgings as the Runciman brothers. At this same date Mrs. Forbes mentions Nevay along with Hamilton and Byers as her daughter's chief instructors.¹³ Without turning this thesis into a romance it is easy to see how in such circumstances and in such a small community complicated and irreconcilable rivalries could easily develop, not only for the favours of Miss Forbes, but perhaps also for those of Mr. Hamilton who must have been in a position to direct patronage.

Sometime in the winter of 1768/9 John Runciman left Rome for Naples. According to Barry he was consumptive,¹⁴ and his health was certainly the main motive for his departure, but it

11. Mrs. Forbes to John Forbes, Rome, Aug. 29, 1769, and Sept. 13th, 1769. Graves, Society of Artists etc., 181, Society of Artists, 1773, no. 210.
12. Mrs. Forbes to John Forbes, Rome, Sept. 13th, 1769.
13. Mrs. Forbes to John Forbes, Rome, Sept. 3rd, 1768.
14. Barry to Burke, Rome, n.d., Barry, Works, I, 114.

was also precipitated by events in Rome. Alexander certainly held his rivals and enemies responsible for his death at least indirectly, though he also says in a letter to Sir James Clerk of January 1771 that since John's death he was himself afraid of catching cold, suggesting therefore that if John was consumptive his death was actually brought about by catching a chill.¹⁵ The combination of causes is therefore clear and John's death anticipates that of Keats 60 years later. As far as Sir James Clerk knew John was still alive on Oct. 22, 1768, for on that date he records a draft upon him by the Messrs. Runciman.¹⁶ When Alexander wrote to Robert Alexander in July of the following year John had already been dead for some time. All the circumstances suggest that his death was in the winter. Early 1769 therefore seems a reasonable guess, though it is no more than that, though R. Wark suggests ^{however} that Barry and Runciman travelled to Naples in 1768.¹⁷

When Alexander received the news of his brother's critical illness according to Barry's account¹⁸ he was in a public place, presumably the coffee house. Barry describes him going around his friends trying to get someone to go with him to Naples. After Barry had joined him they were joined by a third person. When they reached Naples, John was already dead and buried. They stayed in Naples long enough to see the sights and then returned to Rome where Runciman in his own words 'retired from the faction and dissipation that reigned among the English'.¹⁹ Barry makes a rather similar remark, and it was in September that Runciman proposed Barry for the Cape Club. It may have been these circumstances that brought the two painters together. Certainly it is striking that apart from Nevay, James Clark, Hamilton, and Miss Forbes in passing, Barry is the only painter whom Runciman

15. AR to Sir James Clerk, Rome, Jan. 1771; Appendix A.

16. Sir James Clerk, Journal of Expenses, Register House.

17. R. Wark, James Barry, unpublished thesis, Harvard University, 1952, 19.

18. Barry to Burke, Rome, n.d., Works, I, 114.

19. AR to Robert Alexander, July, 1769; Appendix A.

mentions by name. He had arrived in Rome six months before Runciman and left in the spring of 1770.²⁰

Barry's work has been very little studied. The study of Runciman's own work makes it clear however that he was very close to Barry in 1769, and that he was influenced by him. In order to make clear the nature of Barry's influence it will be necessary to study his work of the period in some detail. Runciman's drawings that he produced when he was close to Barry are somewhat different in character from his later work, and from the work that we know that his younger brother was producing in 1768. John's study of Michaelangelo, and the evidence, in his only complete composition of the period for a developing style, akin both to that of Alexander's later work and that of Fuseli, reveal a different inspiration to that provided by Barry. John's work also suggests that the influence of Barry provided something of a digression from the underlying tendency of Alexander's own style. Contact with Fuseli at the end of Alexander's stay in Rome may therefore have reaffirmed the original tendency of his work shared with John, but was not his point of departure.

The most important influence on Alexander's work of all his contemporaries, by his own direct admission, and more importantly by the evidence of his surviving work, was Gavin Hamilton. The enormous size and the Homeric subject of his first major history painting, Ulysses & Nausicaa, and the Achilles subject of his first scheme for Penicuik are both direct homage to Hamilton. The whole idea of a historical scheme for Penicuik reflects Hamilton's thinking. The tendency of John's work towards scale and dramatic force implicit in his attitude to Michaelangelo is also consistent with Hamilton's work and the effect that it had on Alexander's.

20. R. Wark, Barry, chronology.

Although Hamilton was the most important contemporary painter in the eyes of his own generation modern scholarship has with one notable exception made no attempt to explain its appeal.²¹ As it is central to our study of Runciman, and to the understanding of the whole movement to which he belonged, it is necessary to study his work of the period in some detail. For reasons of space however this discussion which is included in the next chapter has been condensed. It is given more fully in Appendix D.

21. Ellis Waterhouse, The British Contribution to the Neo-classical style, Proceedings of the British Academy, XL. 1954.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Gavin Hamilton and James Barry.

Hamilton's reputation among his contemporaries is amply expressed by the quotation made earlier from a letter of William Aikman of the Ross to John Forbes in which he calls him 'the most renowned of all the history painters of the age'.¹ By the time that the Runcimans arrived in Rome the first three of Hamilton's Iliad pictures were complete and engraved.² The fourth, Achilles parting with Briseis was completed while Runciman was still in Rome, and was exhibited in London in 1770.³ The six pictures that eventually made up this series were the most important of all his works, and were widely influential. They represent most clearly the view of history painting that influenced Runciman and his friends, and which Hamilton continued to subscribe to into the 1770's. He did however produce other important works in the period of his career relevant to the main subject of this thesis.

In 1765 he probably received commissions for the Oath of Brutus for Hopetoun, and Agrippina landing with the Ashes of Germanicus for Countess Spencer. Pl.61.⁴ The first of these was completed in 1767, and the engraving published in 1768. The picture was still in Rome when Runciman arrived there, for in an undated letter which was answered on the 20th Nov. 1767, he asked Lord Hope if he could keep it until after the Emperor's visit to Rome because it was his 'last and

1. See above Chapter IX.
2. These were Andromache mourning the dead Hector, exhibited 1762, engraved in 1764, Achilles and Patroclus completed 1763, and Achilles with the body of Hector engraved 1766.
3. RA Catalogue 1770.
4. Lord Hope was in Rome in 1765. Waterhouse gives the date for the commission of the Agrippina, The British Contribution to the Neo-classical style, Proceedings of the British Academy, XL, 1954,72.

best picture'.⁵ The second was exhibited in 1772,⁶ and was therefore almost certainly on the easel at the critical period of Runciman's career from 1769 to 1771. This was the subject that John Runciman's rival, Nevay, completed in 1769, obviously in direct homage to Hamilton. Runciman himself treated it in one of his most important later easel paintings exhibited at the R.A. in 1781.⁷ ^{Plate 62} In spite of the lapse of time his composition is still based directly on that of Hamilton.

At the R.A. in 1770 Hamilton exhibited a different version of the same subject. This was Agrippina weeping over the ashes of Germanicus.⁸ It was probably a single figure. Runciman did an etching of this subject which is undated, and there is also a drawing dated 1771. Pl.63. Both of these show the single figure of Agrippina with an urn. In the etching she is seated and in the drawing she is standing and seems to be based on the figure in Hamilton's larger composition. He also produced a third version of the Agrippina subject in a drawing done in Rome of the Funeral of Germanicus. Pl.90 This seems to be his own invention, and shows Agrippina waiting with an urn beside the pyre on to which the body of Germanicus is being lifted. Together these uses of the Agrippina theme reveal how important this side of Hamilton's work was to Runciman while he was in Rome and afterwards. As these were the two picture on which he was engaged while Runciman was in Rome this is perhaps not surprising.

The story of Agrippina from Tacitus, with its combination of tragedy, dignity, and pathos was an understandably attractive one.

5. Letter of Gavin Hamilton to an unknown correspondent, Hopetoun House.
6. RA Catalogue 1772.
7. Graves, Society of Artists etc.
8. RA Catalogue 1770.

In it the relationship between situation and sentiment is clear and unambiguous. This simplicity makes it easy for the spectator to identify the required response, and so opens the way to sentimentality. In this way Hamilton's two Agrippina pictures differ from the moral and dramatic complexity of his Iliad series which, although it was still incomplete at this time, had been planned a few years earlier.

This greater formality is also to some extent apparent in the composition of Agrippina landing at Brindisium. The figures are still large in relation to the picture field as they are in the Iliad pictures, and in contrast to West's version of the subject, for example, which uses Poussin's figure scale.⁹ The composition is centralised with Agrippina at the apex of a pyramid. This is achieved by placing the main figure group on a kind of dais or podium created at the expense of logical space. There is no real middle ground between the figures in the background on either side and those who form the central group. This may be simply a formal weakness for which there are parallels elsewhere in his work, but it may also be a feature of the incipient neo-classicism every where apparent in this work.

In some respects therefore this Agrippina composition represents a retreat from the position that Hamilton adopted in his Iliad series. The complex background to this series and its implications are such that it cannot be dealt with here.¹⁰ In his six Iliad pictures . . . Hamilton deliberately set out to create an equivalent in history painting to the epic style of poetry. In doing this he pioneered a quite new

9. Reproduced by David Irwin, English Neo-classical Art, London, Pl. 38.

10. I have discussed this in Appendix D.

approach to the relationship between painting and literature. His first inspiration was probably Hogarth who provided the dramatic form of his cycle, but like Hogarth he also drew on the literary tradition which was very strong in Britain at a time when there was virtually no tradition in painting. While this literary tradition had a strong classical bias, it also included Shakespeare, upon whom both Hogarth and Hamilton drew. Hamilton approached Homer through Pope who interpreted him not simply as a classical poet, but, like Shakespeare, as a supreme poet of the liberated imagination. He wrote of him in the introduction to his translation; "His fancy... grows in the Progress (of the poem) both on himself and on others, and becomes on Fire like a Chariot-Wheel, by its own Rapidity. Exact Disposition Just Thought, correct Elocution, polish'd Numbers, may have been found in a thousand; but this Poetical Fire, this Vivida vis animi, in a very few".¹¹

Pope's view of Homer was developed by Robert Wood who for the first time separated him from the classical criticism with which he had been identified since Aristotle and placed him in a proper historical perspective. He wrote that the Poetic Age of Homer differed as much from the age of his classical critics, 'as we do... from our Gothic ancestors in the days of Chivalry and Romance'.¹² This new perspective made it possible to see Homer as directly comparable to Shakespeare, or indeed Ossian. Hamilton painted Wood's portrait and almost certainly knew him personally. His attempt to identify in his series the dramatic force of Homer is therefore probably partly a reflection of these new ideas.

11. Alexander Pope, Introduction to his translation of the Iliad, London, 1715, no page number.

12. Robert Wood, An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer etc, London, 1775, ed.

Hamilton did not entirely dissociate Homer from classical antiquity as Wood had done. He did however draw on a new idea of Greek antiquity, and particularly Greek painting, outlined by Shaftesbury but developed in detail by George Turnbull in A Treatise on Ancient Painting.¹³ Shaftesbury proposed the absolute artistic superiority of the Greeks over the Romans on the basis of their moral and political superiority. Turnbull developed this argument with respect to Greek painting, assuming its equality to all other art forms and to philosophy.¹⁴ In doing so he gives a complete account of its history as it is recorded in antique literature, and provided a very important handbook for classically minded painters, but he also created the idea that the most important achievement of Greek painting was an epic style based on Homer. One of the most important passages in his book states, "Painting plainly admits the same Variety as Poetry... There is plainly the Epick, the Lyrick, the Tragick, the Comick, the Pastoral, the Elegiack in the one Art as well as in the other. Those pictures, for instance, which described the Siege of Troy were as properly Heroick or Epick Pictures, as a Poem having that for its subject is an Epick Poem".¹⁵

Turnbull therefore provided the initial point of departure for Hamilton's series. In style too he seems to have derived as much as he could from Turnbull's account of the Greek grand manner. This is particularly clear in the scale of his pictures. Turnbull quotes Quintillian who wrote of Zeuxis that he was thought to have made his bodies larger than life, 'and to have imitated Homer in that respect, who has been observed to give even his women a largeness

13. George Turnbull, A Treatise on Ancient Painting etc., London, 1740.

14. Ibid. XII - XIII.

15. Ibid. 67.

approaching masculine'.¹⁶ Turnbull also quotes and endorses Shaftesbury who in his Essay on Wit and Humour wrote; "The greatest of the ancient as well as the modern artists were ever inclined to follow this rule of the philosopher (Aristotle); and when they err'd in their Designs or Draughts, it was on the side of Greatness, by running into the unsizeable and gigantic, rather than the minute and delicate. Of this Michaelangelo, the great beginner and founder among the Moderns, and Zeuxis, the same among the Ancients may serve as instances".¹⁷ The figures of the women in the first of Hamilton's six pictures, Andromache mourning Hector, in their enormous size and echoes of Michaelangelo, illustrate these points in Turnbull and Shaftesbury almost literally. The size of the completed pictures which seems with one exception, to have been approximately 8' x 13', reflects the same inspiration and ambition.

In detail Hamilton's pictures draw on Roman relief sculpture, and High Renaissance narrative painting as their main sources of inspiration. He has also drawn to an important extent on baroque devices of movement into depth and chiaroscuro, and has used these, together with his own feeling for figure scale, to bring out the dramatic effects inherent in the relief style. In this as well as in the absolute size of his pictures he is very much in contrast to Poussin to whom his work is usually compared.

16. Ibid., 23, quoting Quintillian, Inst.Oratoria,XII, x,5.

17. Earl of Shaftesbury, Characteristics of Men, Manners etc., London, 1714, 3 vols, I, 143-4, note.

The conjunction of poetic inspiration and dramatic pictorial effect in the Iliad series is obviously of primary importance for Runciman's grand style as it is seen in his Ossian series, ignoring its wider implications for the Romantic movement as a whole. Amongst those who followed him, this side of Hamilton's work is most clearly developed by Fuseli, and in this respect it is important that Runciman's Penicuik decorations probably began to assume their final style when he and Fuseli were together in Rome. Before Runciman met Fuseli however, he was friendly with James Barry. Barry was also influenced by Hamilton, but less by the poetic and dramatic side of his work than by the method of his attempt to recreate an antique style.

Runciman himself virtually acknowledged that his first major history painting, Ulysses and Nausicaa, was undertaken in direct emulation of Hamilton, and when he spoke of 'serious history' he meant painting in Hamilton's 'Grand Manner'. He was clearly thoroughly familiar with Hamilton's work and was influenced by it in a number of ways. Though he certainly must have known the older artist personally, he is unlikely to have been on intimate terms with him. His own associates, particularly after his brother's death, and at the time when he himself was first embarking on his career as a history painter, were more likely to be men like himself though he was over 30, at an early stage in their development as artists. There were plenty of people of this kind to choose from, mostly living round the Piazza di Spagna, and meeting in the Coffee House. Some of Runciman's compatriots among them have been mentioned in previous chapters. Amongst these the quarrel with Nevay probably alienated the Forbes

family. We only know of William Jeans that he was in Rome in 1768. David Allan was certainly in Rome all the time that Runciman was, but there is no evidence that the two were ever particularly friendly, either in Rome or later.¹⁸ James Clark was however certainly a close friend in 1769, as Runciman recommended him to Cumming in his letter of September that year for membership of the Cape Club.

Fuseli and Runciman were also friendly, and their relationship will be the subject of a later chapter. Fuseli travelled out to Rome in the early part of 1770,¹⁹ so that he and Runciman were only together in Rome during the last year of the latter's stay there. John Brown, who travelled out in 1769, can have been little more than seventeen, if the date of his birth is rightly recorded. Nevertheless his friendship with both Fuseli and Runciman seems most likely to date from this time. There is one piece of evidence that also connects Fuseli's friend Sergels with Runciman. George Walker's inscription on the portrait of Runciman by John Baxter reads...

"Alexander Runciman historical painter, 1736-85. This sketch was done at Rome by his friend J.B. and then suggested to Serghelli the sculptor the idea of the small basso-relievo of Runciman's head executed by him, the mould of which was in Mr. Baxter's possession a few years ago..."²⁰

The Fuseli-Sergels circle was certainly important for Runciman, but at the end of his stay in Rome. In 1769 which was Runciman's year of crisis there is more evidence to connect him with James Barry than with any other painter or group.

18. Though C. Crowther Gordon, David Allan, the Scottish Hogarth, Edinburgh, states that they were friendly.
19. Peter Tomory, The Life and Art of Henry Fuseli, London, 1972,
20. Inscription by George Walker transcribed from the back of the portrait to the present mount, SNG D.540.

In his letter to Cumming of Sept. 1769 Runciman wrote; "Send a Diploma for James Clerk and one for James Barry, both of whom will make excellent knights". The knights of course were the knights of the Cape. Runciman's proposing Barry for the Cape Club would not have been an idle gesture, and suggests that the two were close friends.

In the letter in which Barry told Burke of John Runciman's death, he also told how he had volunteered to accompany Alexander on his melancholy journey to Naples when no one else would do so.²¹ Writing of the Runciman brothers he mentions his admiration for John's talent, and his 'friendship for both of them'. Barry's acquaintance in Rome was divided pretty sharply into those who were his friends, and those who were not, the latter being by far the larger company. After the quarrel with Nevay, Runciman's circumstances may not have been altogether different. Writing in July 1769 to Robert Alexander he says that on his return from Naples he 'retired from the Faction and dissipation (sic) that reigns amongst the English'. In the circumstances he and Barry may well have been drawn together.

Barry arrived in Rome late in 1766, and left the city on April 22 1770.²² He was already a forceful character with very energetic views, as his letters to Burke reveal. Runciman's association with him is therefore very likely to have had a significant effect on his work, but before we can assess this properly it is necessary to try and form some idea of Barry's own position while in Rome.

Barry had been an admirer of Gavin Hamilton before he left Britain. In a letter of 1765 he wrote of the Achilles mourning

21. Barry to Burke, Rome, n.d., Works, 114.

22. R. Wark, Harvard Thesis, 14.

Patroclus; "I have not escaped the censure of several artists for crying up the merit of this performance, but am perfectly easy while I am countenanced in it by men of true taste and discernment".²³ When he was in Rome he wrote of getting to know Hamilton,²⁴ and the older artist's example was certainly important in the formation of his own style and predilections. In London working for Athenian Stuart he had an opportunity to develop an enthusiasm for classical art, and an up to date acquaintance with it. Testimony to his interest in narrative history painting is the time that he spent in Paris on his way out to Rome copying a work by Le Sueur, "Alexander taking Poison".²⁵

Although Barry was in Rome for four years we only know of two important works that he painted while he was there. One of them, the Farewell of Dido and Aeneas was left unfinished and is now lost.²⁶ Though we can therefore say nothing about the style of this picture its subject is of particular interest to this study as Runciman, in 1770, wrote to Sir James Clerk that he had a subject from Virgil that he wanted to do for the staircase at Penicuik, and in fact the Death of Dido which he painted some years later may go back in conception to this time. The second picture The Temptation of Adam that he undertook in Rome was not completed until his return to England in time to be exhibited at the R.A. of 1771. Pl.70. It may have been begun as early as 1767. Wark has also pointed out that it is probably a Miltonic rather than a biblical subject.²⁷ It is therefore

23. Barry to Doctor Sleight, London, n.d., Works, I, 22.
24. Barry to Burke, Rome, n.d., Works, I, 74.
25. Barry to Burke, Paris, n.d., Works, I, 35.
26. Wark, Harvard Thesis, 63, citing Barry's posthumous sale, Christie's April 10th, 1807.
27. Ibid. 64.

an early example of a kind of subject that became extremely fashionable in the next decades. It is however a somewhat surprising picture for Barry's main undertaking in Rome, and it is perhaps significant that he did not finish it while he was there. His attention was distracted by different inspiration. All the important pictures that he undertook immediately after leaving Rome and when he returned to Britain were uncompromisingly classical. The Temptation of Adam is of interest however for its style. It is a flat picture in which the elegant but mannered figures are seen in distinct silhouette against the dark ground. It is far more stylised than anything by Gavin Hamilton at this date, and is also in contrast to him in its complete lack of action, or even of animation. It was not until the RA of 1774 that Barry exhibited in his first painting of King Lear,²⁸ a dramatic subject with more than two figures engaged in anything like activity. The formality and stylization of his painting as it is seen in this picture seems to be reflected too in the account of his drawing technique as it is described by Ozias Humphrey in 1772: "It is a constant maxim of Barry in making designs, and after having first made a rude imperfect sketch of the idea to get an outline, form it correct, or nearly so with a lead pencil or crayon, and then to fix it with a pen and ink. He recommended to avoid a multiplicity of lines, but to get everything as correctly as possible with one".²⁹

Particularly in its style therefore the Temptation of Adam presents a contrast to the work of Gavin Hamilton and his followers, but the pictures that Barry painted in 1770 and 1771 reveal another aspect of his thought in which he does come very close to Hamilton. While he was in Rome Barry was aware that he might seem to be idle, although he claimed on several occasions

28. Ibid., 66.

29. Ibid., 202, quoting Ozias Humphrey's Notebook, 1772, B.M.

that he was not.³⁰ We do not know precisely what his method of study was, but there is no doubt that his knowledge of antique art was pretty comprehensive. The evidence of his pictures suggests that he regarded antiquity not as a quarry for motifs but as a subject for study, and for which the surviving works of art were only a part of the evidence. Following the initial impetus provided by Turnbull it was natural for him to study the literary evidence for the art of antiquity and to base his own art, as Hamilton had done, on a combination of both sources, giving preference to the latter.

In the absence of the Dido and Aeneas Barry's approach to a classical subject, which was perhaps a development of Gavin Hamilton's learned and literary treatment of his Iliad pictures, is best seen in Philoctetes, Pl.64. the picture that he painted in Bologna in the summer of 1770, immediately after he had left Rome.³¹ It seems very likely that it was planned in Rome therefore. It certainly reflects his Roman experience, and the approach that it reveals has a close bearing on the drawings that Runciman produced under his influence.

Barry himself described his inspiration for the picture as in Sophocles play, Philoctetes, and in an epigram in Anthologia Palatina.³² This account itself is evidence for the contention that the painters of this group went directly to classical literature for their inspiration. David Irwin remarking on the rarity of Philoctetes as a subject suggests that Barry may have been influenced in his choice by Lessing's Laocoon published in 1766 where Lessing discusses Sophocles

30. Barry to Burke, Works, I, 160, 165, 175.

31. Barry to the Burkes, Bologna, n.d., Works, I, 189-90.

32. Ibid., loc.cit.

treatment of Philoctetes at some length.³³ This however seems unlikely.

He had a more readily accessible and more likely source for his inspiration in Wincklemann's Monumenti Antichi Inediti. This was written in Italian, and also failing all else, was illustrated. Barry came to Rome with an introduction from Horace Mann to Cardinal Albani, and was received by him in Jan. 1767,³⁴ so it seems very likely that he had actually met Wincklemann. Monumenti Inediti was an important source book to Runciman too. In this book Wincklemann gives three classical works that he interprets as showing Philoctetes.³⁵ One of these seems to be a quite groundless interpretation, but the other two are quite clear and unambiguous identifications of the subjects of two seals, which he illustrates in reasonably large and clear engravings. One shows Philoctetes at the moment of desecrating the shrine of Hercules bitten by the poisonous snake from which the wound in his foot arose. The second shows him limping with his poisoned foot bandaged in rags. Not only does Wincklemann in his discussion of the illustrations give a brief account of the story of Philoctetes, but also, and most importantly, he gives a full set of classical references to the hero. These include the two sources that Barry mentions, but also the fragmentary description in Philostratus Junior of a picture of Philoctetes, which contains the following paragraph; "...now with face haggard because of his malady, and with clouded brow above lowered eyes, hollow eyes with sickly glare, showing hair that is full of filth and grime, his beard unkempt, shivering, himself clothed in rags, and with rags concealing his heel".³⁶ Except for the single detail of

33. Irwin, Neo-classical Art, 40. Lessing, Laocoon, in Selected Prose of GEL, trans. by E.C. Beazley & Helen Zimmern, London 1890, Chap.iv.

34. Lesley Lewes, Connoisseurs and secret agents in 18th century Rome, London, 1961, 232.

35. J.J. Wincklemann, Monumenti Antichi Inediti, Rome, 1767, 159-162.

36. Ibid., 160, quoting Philostratus, Imagines.

the eyes in Barry's picture looking up not down, it conforms exactly to Philostratus's description which is far more precise than anything in Sophocles or the epigram of Glaucus. The two points in which Barry does seem to depend on Sophocles, are the cave, though in the play it is described as double mouthed; and the shot dove lying at the archer's feet. Though Wincklemann describes Philoctetes as living on the birds that he could shoot, Sophocles twice mentions doves specifically,³⁷ and the bird is so prominent that the connection must be real. One other important reference to Philoctetes which Barry would certainly have known is in Pausanias where he mentions an Odysseus on Lemnos taking away the bow from Philoctetes that was painted in the Portico at Athens.³⁸ This is a reference that would have helped to make the subject attractive to Barry, though the far more explicit account of Philostratus is itself good enough reason for his preferring it to Pausanias's vague mention. The Portico was certainly an important inspiration to Barry, and Runciman too seems to pay it homage in his first grand composition, the Ulysses and Nausicaa, begun in 1769.

In its approach to antiquity and in its particular kind of learning Barry's Philoctetes is comparable to Hamilton's Trojan pictures. Irwin suggests that the visual basis of the picture is in a combination of the Torso Belvedere, the Farnese Hercules, Tibaldi, and Salvator Rosa.³⁹ If this is the case he is as eclectic in the composition of his style as Hamilton was, though the end product differs in a number of important ways from anything that Hamilton produced. In place

37. Sophocles, Philoctetes, Loeb edition, lines 289-90 and 1090.

38. Pausanias, Loeb ed., I, 22,6.

39. Irwin, Neo-classical Art, 40.

of the elder artist's Baroque tendencies, his use of light and shade and his sense of scale, Barry is restrained in his chiaroscuro, and relies on clarity of outline and simplicity of design. Though his picture is expressive, it is so through restraint, and in this it comes close to the Greek ideal as Wincklemann had expressed it. If the Torso Belvedere is the basis of the figure it is surprising how little it is reminiscent of Michaelangelo, though Reynolds on three different occasions stressed the importance that Barry should attach to the study of the Sistine Chapel.⁴⁰ The figure of Philoctetes is surprisingly unsculptural, and the overall effect of the picture is similar to the Temptation of Adam. It has a light silhouette seen against a dark ground, and greater importance is given to line than to mass.

The three pictures that followed Philoctetes in Barry's work, Medea, Venus rising from the sea, and The Education of Achilles were all exhibited at the R.A. in 1772.⁴¹ One of them, Medea, which was Barry's Diploma piece, is lost, but all three seem to have shown the same approach that he had used in Philoctetes. For this reason the discussion of that picture might be held to stand for the other three. The Education of Achilles is however of particular interest as it is a subject that was included by Runciman in his proposed Achilles series, and several drawings of it survive. Venus Anadyomene and Medea have no direct bearing on this discussion.

The present whereabouts of Barry's Education of Achilles is unknown, but there is a photograph of it. Pl.65. It shows a compact group of Achilles and Chiron. Achilles with his back turned is standing in front of the centaur who is demonstrating

40. Reynolds to Barry, London, n.d., Works, I, 84-6

41. RA Catalogue 1772.

to him a bow on which they both have their hands.

The picture has a good classical precedent in the painting of the same subject from Herculaneum. Pl.66. Barry has changed the composition however, and his opinion of the Herculaneum pictures given in a letter to Burke may suggest his reason for doing so. The letter is the same in which he tells Burke of the death of John Runciman, and of the trip that he and Alexander made to Naples. In it he writes, "I honestly think the large picture of Chiron and Achilles, and the other large pictures which are the most talked of are the least valuable; perhaps they might appear so much inferior to the rest, as they are brought nearer to the eye than the painter intended they should be, which makes the inaccuracies of them so striking; but as we know that these were but paintings upon the walls in a village, and were to be considered in no other light than as ornaments contributing to the coup d'oeil of a room so there is no danger that the works of the ancient painters (which were always portable, and on wood) will suffer in the least from any objections these may be open to".⁴² In his own composition of this subject, and probably in the Medea, he altered the composition in order to improve it, it would seem.

The Elder Philostratus makes Achilles and Chiron the subject of an important discourse, but though his discourse is full of description it does not at any point add up to a single image.⁴³ He describes Achilles bringing back game to Chiron and being rewarded. He mentions the playing of the lyre and describes Achilles riding on Chiron's back, a subject chosen by Rubens, but his description could not depend on a single picture.

42. Barry to Burke, Rome, n.d., Works, I, 113.

43. Philostratus, Imagines.

The Herculaneum painting represents Achilles being taught the lyre, and it has been suggested that it is related to the famous group of this subject described by Pliny that stood in the Saepta.⁴⁴ Its subject was given a literary form, before Philostratus, by Statius in the surviving fragments of his Achilleid. In book one, Achilles is made to entertain his mother on the lyre at Chiron's request. In book II where Achilles speaks of his education retrospectively he says, 'Already at that time weapons were in my hand and quivers on my shoulders, nor laboured I more therein than when I struck with my quill the sounding strings'.⁴⁵ The Achilleid was well known and had already been translated into English.⁴⁶ Runciman certainly knew it. It would be quite natural for Barry to turn to it to find a variation on the Herculaneum composition which was probably his starting point. In Barry's picture Achilles is seen with his quiver on his back as he described himself in Statius 'labouring' with weapons as he did with the lyre.

Barry's composition is based on a painting now in the Corsini Gallery Rome. This represents Jupiter and Ganymede in the same close grouping. The figure of Ganymede and the head of Jupiter being identical to the figure of Achilles and the head of Chiron. This painting was illustrated in the 1764 edition of Wincklemann's History of Ancient Art where he described it as appearing somewhat mysteriously from Herculaneum in 1760.⁴⁷ Wincklemann accepted the picture without reservation as antique, but according to Mengs biographer, shortly before he died Mengs

44. Pliny, Natural History, Loeb edition, VI, 29.

45. Statius, Achilleid, II, 945.

46. Translated by Sir Robert Howard, London 1660.

47. Wincklemann, Gesichte der Kuhst des Altethums, Dresden, 1764. Book, vii, Chapter 3, 100,n.22, and Illustration XI.

revealed that the picture was his creation. It was previously known that he had restored it. Wincklemann's German editor claims that the Mengs story was itself a fabrication, and that the picture was genuine though restored, though he acknowledged the fake by Casanova of a group of dancing women also purporting to come from Herculaneum that Wincklemann had accepted,⁴⁸ and which Barry also makes use of in his Grecian Harvest Home in the Society of Arts. This latter picture was illustrated in Wincklemann's first edition but was dropped from later editions. In 1950 Tronti sought to demonstrate the Jupiter and Ganymede picture as a complete fake.⁴⁹ More recently Pelzel has confirmed this, and has shown that the picture was a cruel but highly successful practical joke perpetrated by Casanova and designed, in the figure of Ganymede, to take advantage of Wincklemann's most personal weakness.⁵⁰ Casanova used Raphael's group of the same subject in the Farnesina as the basis of his composition.

Barry clearly also thought of these compositions as antique, and perhaps reveals that his taste at this time was close to that of Wincklemann and Mengs. His method of selecting a subject and a composition is still however very close to that of Hamilton, though possibly even more learned. In all four of these classical pictures his most important source of inspiration was the antique literature of art. In the Education of Achilles and also in the Medea his inspiration is also related to, though not directly dependent upon surviving classical or pseudo-classical works.

48. Ibid. 1826 edition introduction.

49. Anna-Maria Tronti, n fausso antico opera di Raffaello Mengs, Commentarii, I, 1950, 109.

50. Art Bulletin., Sept.1972.

In style however Barry's pictures are not simply 'classical'. They are flat in composition with a strong feeling for outline that often ignores anatomy. In several places in his correspondence he expresses his admiration for Parmigianino,⁵¹ and the influence of that kind of mannerism is apparent in his work. Their willingness to subordinate direct observation to pictorial effect is a feature common to the work of Barry, Runciman, Fuseli, and Blake, and it clearly distinguishes the British artists of this generation from their French contemporaries.

51. Barry to Burke, Florence, n.d., Works, I, 185.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Alexander Runciman, History Painter.

It has been suggested several times in the foregoing chapters that Runciman went to Rome without serious ambitions as a history painter, at least for himself, and that the decorations that he was planning to carry out at Penicuik on his return were to have been in the general category of decorative painting. The first evidence for this is the little that we know about his own work in the years up to 1767 in spite of his brother's precocity, and the drawings that we have by John Baxter apparently for Penicuik. The second is his own public statement that he was going to Rome as an ornament painter. In the absence of any works by Runciman himself, excepting the Jacob's Dream, and in the face of the striking originality of his brother the first piece of evidence is fragile. The second is certainly unambiguous as it stands, but a newspaper advertisement would hardly be the place to which he would entrust his most cherished ambitions.

It is clear that when he first went to Rome, even if he was still working mainly as a landscape and ornament painter, he was interested in and willing to produce subject drawings of a kind comparable to his brother's paintings. There is however one important piece of evidence for his original intentions in going to Rome that has not so far been discussed, which confirms the evidence already given, and which also shows that while he was in Rome his intentions changed. This is the letter that he wrote to Sir James Clerk in May 1770 and which has already been referred to in several places. It is a long and very important letter and it opens as follows;

You will no doubt be surprised at my writing instead of my setting out for home, and will think it extraordinary my pretending to put any interest of my own in competition with your conveniency. But however odd it may appear at first upon an investigation of the matter I am persuaded I should not want for your approbation of my conduct. The objections you make to my following History Painting seem very just (and) true, for there is not wanting there many malencholy instances of your observations with respect to wasting many years on what is called Study, and people never seeming to think it a duty incumbent upon them to produce something originall till too late they find they have been pursuing shadows for substances. For my own part, since ever I came to Rome I took matters in a different light, and think that after a few years proper study and as it were digging underground, a man might so qualify himself as to imerge with some degree of credit. As to what you say about rivalship, when I look at an Old Greek Statue, or picture of the fifteenth(?) century, I am very much humbled and imagine myself a very despicably figure, and had my poor brother been alive, I probably never would have thought of serious history, but the debility of my living contemporaries more than any great Oppinion I had of my own Abilities made me take the resolution of disputing the preheminance for Reputation with them, and a few months is all I beg to show if I have made a wrong or right judgement."¹

From what he says here it is clear that this letter was written in reply to a letter from Sir James which was itself a reply to a letter the painter had written announcing that he was going to take

1. Appendix A.

up history painting. Such an exchange of letters probably took six months and allowing for dilatoriness in the correspondents may have taken longer. This would put Runciman's original letter back to the second half of 1769, and so make it comparable in date as it seems to have been in content to the letters that he wrote to Robert Alexander and to James Cumming in July and September of that year, so providing a further piece of evidence to link his decision to the period immediately after his brother's death. The fact that he is defending himself against Clerk's objections to his new course also makes it clear that, at least as far as Clerk knew, his part at Penicuik was not originally intended to be 'historical' in the sense that he now understood that word. This in turn bears out the suggestion that the Baxter drawings are in some way related to Runciman's original intentions for the decorations, or at least to what Sir James wanted for his house and what he expected to get from the Runcimans. We cannot be certain however how sudden the development of Runciman's new ambitions really was. In this passage he says 'ever since I came to Rome I took matters in a different light etc.'. As early as December 1767 in his letter to Cumming to whom he would naturally confide himself more freely than he would to Sir James, he says, 'I find since I came here I've been (on) a wrong plan of study for painting all my life, but I've begun an entire new system of which I hope to show something if I come home, that's if God spares me ye ken'.² The same letter is however mostly concerned with what might be called the picturesque. Nevertheless, whatever his remarks to Clerk and Cumming may signify about his activity in Rome during the first two years of his residence there, and it would be surprising if he was completely innocent of historical ambitions considering his brother's work and in a circle dominated by Hamilton, it is clear from his letter to

2. Appendix A.

Clerk and from his letters to Cumming and Alexander of 1769, that his brother's death provoked a crisis in his career from which he emerged a publicly avowed historical painter.

Runciman's immediate reaction to his brother's death was in his words to Robert Alexander, 'rage and a desire for revenge'. He then goes on to say that after a time 'I began to think it more eligible to let you see to what purpose you had been so very liberal and know what time to stop. So I resolved not to write until I had done a picture to send you. But it was a desperate undertaking, for it has only served to convince me that not only the most vigorous and assiduous application, but even a long time is required to bring to a small degree of perfection the subject I had undertaken. So I find myself under the necessity of sending something of less consequence which will however serve to show if I have misspent my time, or if I should prosecute that sort of study any farther'.³

In his letter to Cumming he writes; "I hope you'll not conclude from that picture (the one sent to Alexander) when you see it what sort of a painter I'll turn out. It's very bad and I'm ashamed of it, but serious history is not to be learned but with great patience and assiduity. The next picture I send shall be for the exhibition. It's from Homer. When I write you next I'll send you a small sketch of it. Nevey has after a ten years siege finished a picture. Christ forbid I should make my large picture like it. But mum for your life. I send, whenever he sends his picture, two of Jacky's etc."⁴

In the first of these quotations he says his picture will show 'if I should prosecute that line of study'. In the

3. July 1769, Appendix A.

4. Sept. 1769, Appendix A.

second he says 'serious history is not to be learned but with great patience'. Both quotations make it clear that the whole thing was something of an experiment or new departure, and so confirm the implication of his letter to Clerk. The other thing made clear by these quotations is the way that this new departure is directly associated in his mind with his brother's death, and with his brother's enemies. In his letter to Alexander he proceeds directly from ideas of rage and desire for revenge to the 'desperate undertaking' of his new picture, to Cumming he writes of his picture and Nevay's together. Both of these remarks amplify the meaning of his saying to Clerk, 'if it had not been for my brother's death I might never have thought of serious history'. Whatever ambitions he may have had to be a serious history painter when he first went to Rome he undertook his first historical painting at least partly in order to vindicate the family honour and in a spirit of direct competition with his brother's rivals.

The picture he undertook in 1769 and that he described as a desperate undertaking is itself perhaps evidence of the mood in which he embarked upon it. He had already begun it in July 1769. In September he described it as a subject from Homer. In his letter to Clerk of the next year he describes it in greater detail.

"I have begun a picture and am a good way advanced in it. The story is from the Odyssey of Homer where Ulysses meets Nausicaa. There is nine figures in the picture, the two principal being a little larger than life. I know it may be said I might (have) done it in Edinburgh as well, but it's certainly Necessary to bring something home to convince you I have not mispent my time, for what proff

of Abilities is a parcell of drawings from statues &c,&c.? But another reason is that I may have the advantage of exhibiting next May in London with Mr. Hamilton, but this summer should any gentleman come here of reall Taste that judges for himself unbiassed and unprejudiced by Antiquaries and dealers, I shall take care to be seen by him. And notwithstanding Mr. Hamilton's justly acquired Reputation, I am under no apprehensions of comparisons being made to much to my disadvan(ta)ge when seen together. The reason I mention Mr. Hamilton in particular is only in consequence of his being our first character here. As to any other persons here at present I don't think of them".⁵

The picture was finished in January 1771 when he wrote to Sir James Clerk, but it is now lost. Although in this letter to Clerk he says that he had lost four months in the summer of 1770 due to a 'fluxion of the eyes',⁶ his picture must have represented more than a year's work. For a painter apparently not practised in history the scale alone is a measure of the picture's 'desperation'. The two main figures being larger than life, as they must have been standing, suggest a canvas seven or eight feet high. This is in keeping with the size of Hamilton's pictures and even without the specific mention of Hamilton, this and the nature of the subject would lead us to suppose his influence. The whole nature of the enterprise shows that Runciman already belonged to the Hamilton circle, and that if his rivals were also Hamilton's followers he was challenging them on their own ground.

Runciman's choice of subject shows him being not simply Homeric in a general sense that would depend loosely on the example of Hamilton's pictures, but also being antiquarian in

5. May 1770, Appendix A.

6. Jan. 1771, Appendix A.

a way that we know both Hamilton and Barry to have been. The scene of Ulysses and Nausicaa comes in the *Odyssey*, Book VI, lines 125ff. In Pope's translation the passage reads as follows:

'Wide oe'r the shore with many a piercing Cry
To Rocks to Caves the frightened Virgins fly:
All but the Nymph; the Nymph stood fix'd alone,
By Pallas arm'd with boldness not her own.
Meanwhile in dubious thought, the King awaits,
and self-considering as he stands debates,
Distant his mournful story to declare,
Or prostrate at her knee address the prayer.
But fearful to offend, by Wisdom swayed
At awful distance he accosts the Maid.'

For all that it was treated on a monumental scale, and that it comes from Homer, in its lightness this is clearly a different category of subject to the paintings that Hamilton had done up to this time, but it is a subject with the best possible classical antecedents. Turnbull devotes quite a lengthy discussion to the story of Nausicaa.⁷ First of all he seeks to identify the picture of Protogenes called the Nausicaa with the description in Homer of Nausicaa and her maidens on their way down to the sea shore. Then he proceeds; "As for the Sequel of the Story, Ulysses surprising Nausicaa and her Damsels, it was painted in the various Gallery at Athens by Polygnotus, who it seems had done all the more beautiful pictoresque parts of Homer. So Pausanias tells us in his Atticks. And what a charming Subject it is for a Master of Expression and Grace?'. He then quotes the passage from Pope's Homer. We have already pointed out the importance of Turnbull as a source for Hamilton and probably for Barry, and this is undoubtedly where Runciman took his idea. We have

7. Turnbull, Ancient Painting, 56.

also seen how Barry's Philoctetes may well have been undertaken with the 'various Portico' in mind. If Barry and Runciman were friendly they were also thinking along similar lines. Nevertheless Runciman's particular choice of subject may show that at the beginning of his career as a history painter he felt more secure with the elegiac side of the *Odyssey* than with the full epic tragedy of the *Iliad* as Hamilton had rendered it.

Fuseli who arrived in Rome in 1770 knew Runciman's picture and describes it in Pilkington. It was evidently on the basis of this picture that he wrote in his famous letter to Mary Moser that Runciman was the best painter 'amongst us here in Rome'. In Pilkington he wrote of the picture that it was of considerable size, "it exhibited with the defects and manner of Giulio Romano in style, design, and expression, a tone, a juice, and a breadth of colour resembling Tintoretto".⁸ In other words, if in scale and subject Runciman was close to Hamilton, his work was already marked by the freedom of colour and drawing by which it is distinguished, and which Fuseli confirms was something he had already learnt before he left Edinburgh. "He served an apprenticeship to a coach painter, and acquired a practice of brush, a facility of pencilling, and much mechanic knowledge of colour before he had any attained correct notions of design".⁹ Although we do not know what it looked like, the *Ulysses* and *Nausicaa* can therefore be seen to illustrate very clearly Runciman's position at the turning point of his career. Close to Hamilton and Barry, he may in his choice of subject still have been showing loyalty to his earlier career, while as a painter his style preserved the vividness and energy that were the virtues of the tradition in which he had been trained.

8. Pilkington's Dictionary, entry for AR .

9. Ibid.

The Ulysses and Nausicaa is the most important work that Runciman undertook in Rome. It was probably not long after that he began his first project for historical decorations at Penicuik. The subject was to be the story of Achilles, and he described it in detail in his letter to Sir James of May 1770; "I had several thoughts about the dining room at penny cuik (sic) but none gave me any satisfaction until going one day into a room in the Baths of Titus I saw something there that pleased me. It being underground and with torchlight I could not make a drawing of it but the thought was enough for me as it was very much faded and but ill executed. The Story was the Council of the Gods on the Fate of Troy, but that's at best you'll say a beaten subject, but it's being antique put me doing something of the same kind. What I propose is in ye Oval the Marriage of Peleus and Thetis. I took it from Homer who indeed mentions it but slightly. I got a little more particulars from Catullus and Ovid. I made at present but a sketch of it but I propose to make a more correct one immediately after my picture is done, as there's some characters in it I can get nowhere out of Rome. The figures are disposed so as to take up the Whole Space. Jupiter, Juno, Hebe, Neptune, and Pluto(?), are in ye principall part of ye picture and higher than ye rest. Below them is Thetis on the bed, and Venus untying her Zone and a Love untying her Sandals. Hymen is bringing Peleus forward, the Graces are leading the Hours dancing round the Marriage Bed, and Appolo is playing the Epithalamium. The principall light falls on all that group as it occupys the Middle of the picture. On one side is Bacchus with ye rurall deities, and on the other Oceanus with the Marine. Round the room upon the concave I have made designs for some of the pictures. The subjects are as follows:

1st, the Birth of Achilles.

2nd, his Education by Chiron.

3rd, Thetis conveying him to the Court of Lycomedes.

These three take up one side. On the End the commencement of the Iliad where Achilles going to draw in Agamemnon is stopp'd by Pallas. Of this I have made a pretty large drawing. For the other picture on that end I have not fixed yet. On the other side the first is Thetis bringing him Arms, the next his Combat with Hector, the third his dragging Hector round the tomb of patrocles. Of the principall part of this I have made a drawing. On the last End;

1st, Priam begging the Body of Hector.

2nd, the death of Achilles.

Certainly if I was not to paint some subject of consequence before I begin this you might expect my inability to go through *with* a subject of this kind, which is so far as to the choice the finest ever came under man's hands. Whatever the execution may be, the attempt at least merits something of praise".¹⁰

To summarise the letter, the scheme proposed one large picture representing a subject that might reasonably be thought central to the whole cycle, supported in the cove of the ceiling by ten smaller pictures in which the narrative was set out. The decoration that was actually carried out differed from this only in the total number of scenes. There were twelve not ten. The two extra were accomodated on the end walls which each carried three scenes instead of two. In this account also he does not mention the spandrel shapes left between the central oval and the corners of the ceiling which were an important part of the finished decoration.

The idea of a decorative cycle of this kind has the approval of Vitruvius. In Book VII he writes, "the battle of Troy and the wanderings of Ulysses" were used by the ancients for wall painting.¹¹ Turnbull cites several examples that are

10. May, 1770, Appendix A.

11. Vitruvius, De Architectura, VII.

discussed in the context of Hamilton's epic paintings. Hamilton himself however is likely to have provided Runciman's immediate inspiration for a scheme of this kind.

Hamilton's Iliad pictures had launched the idea of a narrative cycle of history paintings, but they were never intended to hang in one place and depended instead for their unity on engravings. By 1771 however Hamilton was planning a series of pictures as a scheme for a room and with a simpler narrative. This was the set of six small pictures telling the 'story of sweet Helen' for Lord Shelburne. He mentions it first in a letter of Dec.15th 1771, though he refers to it there as a proposal already made, and so the project was presumably discussed with Lord Shelburne when he was in Rome a year earlier.¹²

Hamilton mentions his pictures again in a letter of 13th March, 1777 to the same patron; "My great plan in life are those six small pictures representing the story of Paris and Helen".¹³ This project was eventually realised in the Villa Borghese in the early 1780's where Hamilton painted the Sala di Elena e Paride.¹⁴ In its final form it has clearly developed some way from the six small pictures originally proposed. It would seem however that all along he had had in mind something much closer to the Renaissance type of narrative decoration than his original Iliad series had been.

Runciman's proposed Achilles series was more elaborate than what Hamilton actually proposed to Lord Shelburne, but it had in common that it was the story of the life of an individual which had not been the subject of any single work of literature, and that it used the space of a room to set out the narrative.

12. Hamilton to Lord Shelburne, Rome, pub. Christie's Catalogue of the Sale at Lansdowne House, 1930, 78.

13. Ibid. 98.

14. See Ferrara, Sala di Elena e Paride, Riv.dell'Ist.Naz.d'Arch. e Storia dell'Arte, N.S.III,1954.

Hamilton's project was probably the product of ideas going back before 1771. It was a logical development of his Iliad series still incomplete, and an earlier . proposal^{for}/some kind of historical decoration for Yester House in the 1750's. It was certainly very much a fashionable idea about this time. Barry was preoccupied with very similar schemes on his return to Britain, finally realising in his Society of Arts paintings a project very like Runciman's. Fuseli's 'Shakespearean Sistine' drawings, even if only half-serious showed a similar line of thought, and in 1774 an unknown painter called Thomas Freeman exhibited at the R.A. a design for a ceiling with the twelve Labours of Hercules. Two or three drawings of Hercules suggest that Runciman may have considered him as the subject of his own scheme before deciding on Achilles. *Plate 66A*

Runciman's scheme was perhaps the first in date of a number of similar projects. The idea was however probably common property of the circle in which he moved in Rome. Gavin Hamilton has a good claim to be its originator, though it is not supported by any detailed evidence.

Runciman's choice of the Life of Achilles for his subject also reveals an obvious debt to Hamilton's Iliad paintings. Dora Wiebenson points out that the Life of Achilles was a subject that had enjoyed popularity in the 17th century when the Iliad itself was out of fashion.¹⁵ Perhaps the most important example of this is Rubens' tapestry series. There is also an antique prototype which Runciman probably knew, the Capitoline 'well-head' that has the story of the life of Achilles round its rim.

15. Wiebenson, Subjects from Homer in Neo-classical Art, Art Bulletin, 1964, XLVI, 29.

The 'well-head' was already in the museum by the middle of the eighteenth century.¹⁶ It is late antique, or even early mediaeval in origin and is not a very important piece of sculpture. It may however have served as a source for Runciman as it includes a number of unusual subjects that he also intended to include in his series. There are seven scenes;

1. The birth of Achilles.
2. Thetis dips Achilles in the Styx.
3. Thetis hands Achilles over to Philyra, Chiron's mother(?)
4. Achilles on the back of the centaur hunting the lion.
5. Achilles on Skyros.
6. Achilles fighting with Hector.
7. Achilles dragging Hector round what is intended for Troy, but more closely resembles the tomb of Patroclus.

The first, second, sixth and seventh of these are all fairly unusual subjects which Runciman either mentions in his letter, or which appear in his drawings for the scheme. He was of course also familiar with other sources for the life of Achilles, most importantly perhaps the surviving fragment of Statius's Achilleid.

In the arrangement of his scheme Runciman was limited by the arrangement of the room decoration as it was already fixed, nevertheless he is clearly inspired by the Farnesina. There the centre of the ceiling is occupied by the two most important tableaux, and the narrative takes place in the cove around. The Palazzo del Te decorations and the Farnese Gallery of course depend on the Farnesina, but Runciman was certainly also aware of them. In the most important of the drawings that can be associated with this scheme he acknowledges these sources of inspiration. We should also bear in mind however his own account of the effect that the classical decorations that he saw in the 'Baths of Titus' had upon him.

16. It was presented by Clement XIII some time between 1758 and 1769.

Describing his project Runciman names nine subjects. Drawings can be identified of six of these. One of them, the Education of Achilles appears twice, which gives a total of seven drawings therefore. There is a further group of drawings which it may be possible to identify as Achilles subjects, and therefore to regard as part of this project. Some of these identifications are rather doubtful. The total list is as follows:

Drawings of subjects mentioned in the letter;

The Wedding of Peleus and Thetis.

The Education of Achilles; Achilles playing the lyre.

The Education of Achilles; Achilles and Chiron hunting.

Achilles draws on Agamemnon and is stopped by Pallas.

Thetis bringing arms to Achilles.

Hector dragged behind Achilles chariot.

Priam begging for the body of his son.

Drawings of subjects not mentioned in the letter;

Achilles dipped in the Styx.

Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes.

Achilles in his tent with Briseis and Patroclus.

The parting with Briseis.

Thetis comforts Achilles by the sea-shore.

Achilles fights the River Scamander.

Doubtful identifications;

The birth of Achilles.

Achilles mourning Patroclus.

There is also an etching which seems to represent the Ghost of Patroclus appearing to Achilles, and there are two oval drawings of 1772, the Education of Achilles, and Achilles entrusted to Chiron. The etching probably does not belong with the drawings in which Runciman planned the project. The two oval drawings will be discussed at a later stage.

The most important and elaborate of these drawings is the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis. It is closely comparable in style to Achilles drawing on Agamemnon which is also a fairly large drawing. The other large drawing is Achilles and Scamander. The others are all smaller and in various techniques and degrees of finish. All but one of them carry page numbers, and these are consecutive with a single gap suggesting that they were done in a drawing book in a single period of work. The two doubtful drawings also carry similar page numbers, but well outside of the series.

If we are right in supposing that Runciman's 'graduation' to history painting took place in 1769 it is reasonable to suppose that this historical scheme does not predate it, and in fact this is evidently the first mention he had made of it to Sir James though he had written to him previously on the subject of history painting. In his letter of 1770 he only describes two drawings as actually carried out, but some of the others are so slight that they might be described as no more than 'thoughts'. Lack of mention in the letter is therefore probably not proof that all these drawings did not exist when it was written. It seems likely however that this was when the project was uppermost in Runciman's mind. One of the large drawings, the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis, certainly post-dates the letter, as we shall see, but it seems fair to suppose that the smaller, the 'thoughts', are near to it in time, and that they were done in the first half of 1770. The evidence of the drawing book supports this approximate dating.

If the identification is correct two of the larger drawings can be dated more precisely. These are The Wedding of Peleus and Thetis and Achilles drawing on Agamemnon. The second of these is a large and finished drawing it seems right to identify with the

'pretty large drawing' of this subject that is mentioned in the letter. Pl.67. This would date it to before May 16th 1770. The Peleus and Thetis drawing answers to the description in the letter, except that it is certainly not a sketch, it is more elaborate and it contains more figures. Pl.68. It seems right to connect it therefore with the 'more correct' version of this subject that he proposed to do when his big picture should be finished. If he did as he intended it might place the drawing as late as early 1771, certainly it is after May 1770. These two drawings have a certain amount in common with each other but are isolated from his work as a whole.

The first of the two taken therefore in order of execution is the 'Achilles stopp'd by Pallas'. It is a vertical composition with Athene bending over Achilles shoulder to take him by the hair and whisper in his ear. He, with his hand on his sword, is turning energetically away from her towards the assumed figure of Agamemnon which is off the page. The subject is taken from the Iliad, Bk.I,197ff. 'She (Athene) took her stand behind him, and caught the son of Peleus by his golden hair' and then line 220, 'he stayed his heavy hand on the silver hilt'. It is among those ^{subjects} mentioned by Virgil in his description of Dido's temple, but no classical examples were known in the 18th^o except for one mistaken identification which is however an important one, though several have been discovered since. In his Monumenti Inediti Wincklemann published as Achilles and Agamemnon the sarcophagus then in the Villa Borghese, now in the Louvre, which is correctly identified as Achilles among the Daughters of Lycomedes.¹⁷ Wincklemann's work has already been mentioned in connection with Barry's Philoctetes, and it will be seen that it has some relevance to the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis, it may well therefore be a source of inspiration here too. Runciman's composition however is not related so much to this sarcophagus as to the other more famous sarcophagus with Achilles on Scyros, the so-called 'Sarcophagus of Alexander Severus' in the

17. Wincklemann, Monumenti Inediti, 124.

Capitoline. Pl.69. The figure of Achilles in Runciman's drawing is that from the Capitoline sarcophagus. On the sarcophagus too Dedameia daughter of Lycomedes is represented with one hand on each of Achilles shoulders peering round from his right to look into his face. She has a long and curiously twisted neck, and her whole pose recalls that of Athene, though transferred to the other side of Achilles. In its general outline also Runciman's group is roughly similar to the group of the two main figures on one end of the sarcophagus thought to represent the arming of Achilles. The evidence of the drawing is of particular interest when we know from Runciman's letter to Cumming that he was working in the Capitoline in September 1769, when he addressed his letter to James Cumming as 'from the Capitol where I'm at w(ork) every day'.¹⁸ Earlier in the letter he writes; "I'm here burried(sic) among Old Statues &c: and very shortly I'll leave them for a while to go upon Titian for six months. After that I'll to the Antique again. The divill's(sic) in it if that plan of education follow'd with care dont produce something".

Barry writes of copying the Titian in the Palazzo Barberini,¹⁹ and he and Runciman may both have worked there about this time. For the present however Runciman's letter confirms the evidence of the drawing that at this time he was seriously studying the antique. A very sketchy drawing on the verso of page 7 of the Roman drawing book is a study from the central group of the Capitoline sarcophagus Achilles with the body of Penthiselea, and so may also belong to this period of work in the Capitoline.

Achilles drawing on Agamemnon is amongst the most strictly linear of all Runciman's works. The technique matches precisely

18. Sept. 1769, Appendix A.

19. Barry to Burke, Rome, n.d., Works, 114. It is the same letter in which he mentions the Runcimans.

Ozias Humphrey's account of Barry's drawing technique; "After having made a rude imperfect sketch of the idea to get an outline form it correct, or nearly so with a lead pencil or crayon, and then to fix it with a pen and ink. He recommended to avoid a multiplicity of lines, but to get everything as correctly as possible with one".²⁰

In the details of the anatomy the drawing reveals its sculptural inspiration, but the figures are seen quite unsculpturally, and in a way that is also quite extraordinary for a landscape painter whose work depended on his feeling for light and shade. They are in linear silhouette against a plain ground without context of any kind. This composition, like the technique also recalls Barry whose Temptation of Adam shows two figures in sharp silhouette against a very empty background. Pl.70. The vertical shape of Runciman's composition, the actual poses of the figures, and their relationship to each other and to the picture field all recall Barry's picture which was still incomplete though it had been begun for some time. Runciman certainly knew it, and his drawing probably reflects its inspiration. The letter that he addressed from the Capitoline was the one in which he asked Cumming for a Cape Club Diploma for Barry. It seems very likely therefore that this drawing belongs to the same moment in time, and that in the last year before Barry left Rome he and Runciman were close friends.

All Barry's pictures up until the King Lear of 1774 were simple single or paired figures of this kind. None of them are in any sense narrative pictures. Runciman's drawing does not appear to have been cut, as it is signed in the bottom left hand corner, yet it is difficult to see how it could form part of a narrative sequence, as without Agamamnon it is only half a subject.

20. See Chap.XI note 31.

Further, although it is a vertical composition, the space for which it was apparently intended was certainly a horizontal one. It seems very unlikely to be a later drawing in view of its dependence on the Capitoline relief and its closeness to Barry. The best alternative that is left is that the drawing predates the conception of the Achilles scheme. This would fit the evidence of the letters, for although Runciman had apparently written to Clerk some time in the summer or autumn of 1769, he only describes the Achilles scheme in May of 1770. Also, from the later part of the letter to Clerk dealt with in Chapter X, it is clear that he had been making plans for the decoration which by the time that he was writing he had already decided to reject. This helps to give a probable date to the Achilles and Pallas drawing of the second half of 1769.

The wedding of Peleus and Thetis Pl.68. may have been done more than a year after the Achilles and Pallas, but the two drawings are similar in style and the thinking behind them is quite consistent, The Peleus and Thetis is the most elaborate of all Runciman's drawings. He himself ascribes the inspiration of the subject to a picture in the 'Baths of Titus', which is in fact the Golden House of Nero, and says that he took his details from Homer, Catullus and Ovid. There is no picture in the Golden House of Nero identifiable as a Council of the Gods, though there is one picture, the Meeting of Paris and Helen, which Runciman certainly used in his finished drawing.²¹ None of the classical sources that he cites describe the occasion quite as he has seen it. The nearest is Catullus who describes the splendour of the reception in Peleus's palace, and how after

21. Illus. Weege, Domus Aurea, Jahrbuch Deutsches Archaeologisches Inst. XIII, 214.

the wedding the gods came bearing gifts.²² Catullus does not in any sense describe an actual wedding. Amongst the gods who came to pay their respects to Peleus and Thetis he specifically excludes Apollo who is present in Runciman's drawing.²³ Ovid describes the struggles between Peleus and the sea nymph in which she resisted by changing her shape.²⁴ It was only on the second attempt that Peleus succeeded in taking her, still against her will. The story as Ovid tells it is the one most commonly represented in classical art, and indeed subsequently. In the Iliad in Book XVIII Thetis speaks of how she endured the bed of a mortal 'against her will'.²⁵ In the same book Homer describes Peleus armour as a wedding gift from Hephaestos, and so in passing mentions the wedding,²⁶ but it is only in Book XXIV that he actually mentions the wedding at all significantly.²⁷ He describes how Hera gave Thetis to Peleus and how all the gods came to her marriage. In contradiction of Catullus he particularly names Apollo who he says played the lyre. Runciman had certainly read Catullus poem as there is drawing of the Ariadne that could only be taken from it, nevertheless the brief mention in Homer of the marriage seems to be his most important literary source. It is not much on which to build such an elaborate drawing and he must also have had some alternative sources of inspiration.

Raoul Rochette, in his Antiquité figurée, makes the following remark writing of the story of Peleus and Thetis; "La célébrité de cette fable avait porté Wincklemann à rechercher, avec un soin

22. Catullus, Odes LXIV 30-50, & 280. The same account is given in a scholiast on Iliad XVII, 140 quoting the Cypria.
23. Catullus, Ode LXIV 300.
24. Ovid, Metamorphoses XI 221ff.
25. Iliad XVIII 432-4.
26. Ibid. 84ff.
27. Ibid. XXIV 59-63.

particulier, les monuments qui pouvaient s'y appor^{ter}".²⁸
We do not know what grounds he had for calling the story particularly celebrated at the time that Wincklemann was writing, but in the context it is an interesting remark. In his Monumenti Inediti Wincklemann has four objects that he identifies as representing the subject under discussion.²⁹ With the first of them his identification was certainly right. It is the sarcophagus in the Villa Albani that shows the gods in procession presenting gifts to the couple who are seated together at the right hand end of the relief to receive them, a representation that is readily compatible with Catullus's description, but which does not however seem to have any bearing on Runciman's drawing. The second of Wincklemann's suggestions is the Aldobrandini Wedding from which Runciman does seem to have taken the central figure for his own figure of Thetis, but not the rest of the composition. The remaining two of Wincklemann's suggestions may be treated as one in that they are two versions of the same composition. Both are sarcophagus reliefs in the Palazzo Mattei. They are now identified as representing Mars and Rhea.³⁰ It seems to be this composition that provided Runciman with his starting point. It was the only iconography available to him that professed to represent the actual marriage of Peleus and Thetis with the gods as witnesses, and it seems to be the oddity of Winckleman's identification that explains the oddity of Runciman's iconography and his choice of subject.

As he describes it in his letter the details of Runciman's sketch are not very close to the Palazzo Mattei reliefs. He does however describe his drawing as having figures filling the whole surface which is a feature of relief sculpture, not of painting or

28. M. Raoul Rochette, Monuments Inedits d'Antiquite Figuree, Paris, 1883, 50.
29. Wincklemann, Monumenti Inediti, 145-151.
30. Reinach. Repertoire de Reliefs Grecs et Romains, 3 vols. Paris, 1909.

drawing, and this can still be seen in the version that we have. Even in this version a basic similarity to the Mattei reliefs can still be seen. Pl.71. In the centre of the composition Peleus comes in from the left with his helmet and spear, ushered by cupids, one of whom hangs on to his spear with both hands, to approach the reclining figure of Thetis. There are several other figures in this, the middle zone of the composition, including the figure leaning on an oar whom Wincklemann identifies as Proteus. The same figure reappears in the right hand side of Runciman's drawing as a river god, apparently the Thames, and finally in the finished ceiling as the Clyde. Immediately above the central group in the relief is a figure with a torch. Above and behind all of this middle zone appear the Olympians in a horizontal row. In the lowest and foreground zone of the relief, to the right and to the left are a marine deity with a conch and a terrestrial deity with a cornucopia. Comparing this description with Runciman's drawing one sees that all the most important features and even the general shape of the composition has^{ve} been transferred from one to the other.

If Runciman based his subject and his composition on the mistakenly identified Palazzo Mattei reliefs, he has nevertheless considerably elaborated on his original. One other literary source that he seems to have used is Lucian's description given by Turnbull of Echion's painting of the Wedding of Alexander and Roxana.³¹ Turnbull writes; "The Virgin Roxana, a perfect Beauty, with modest downcast eyes, expressing a great reverence for Alexander, who is at a little distance reaching out a crown to her. Several Cupids are differently employed in this piece; but all of them look exceeding sweet and chearful; one standing behind her wantonly draws aside her veil to shew her charms to the Bridegroom: Another is employed about her feet, and takes off her sandals that she may go to bed: A third wrapping himself in Alexander's mantle

31. Turnbull, Ancient Painting, 50, quoting Lucian, Dialogue of Panope and Galeus.

seems to pull him with all his force to the Lady. Their friend Ephestion is there as a Paranymp with a burning torch in his hand, and leans upon a beautiful youth representing Hymneus". This description would fit the main group in Runciman's drawing particularly in the 'modest downcast' eyes of the bride, and the groom led towards her by a putto with his hand stretched out to her. The love untying her sandals is particularly reminiscent both of the detail in the drawing and of the phrase with which Runciman described it.

Two other antique sources of inspiration have both been mentioned in passing. The first of these the Aldobrandini Wedding seems to have provided the general pose of Thetis. The second is the painting in the Domus Aurea of Paris and Helen united by Venus, which was in the Laocoon room and is a partner to the Hector and Andromache that may have been used by Hamilton in his painting of that subject.³² Both pictures are much ruined but their composition is still just readable. The central group of Runciman's drawing seems to be related quite closely to the Paris and Helen, particularly in the relationship of the figures of Venus and Peleus and in the detail of the Cupid who pulls Peleus forward holding onto his garment. This part of the picture is fairly closely comparable to the description quoted above from Lucian.

Not content with all this classical learning Runciman has also drawn heavily on the High Renaissance in this composition, particularly on the Farnesina, but also on the Farnese Gallery and the Sala di Psiche in the Palazzo del Te. The figure of Jupiter is taken directly from the Farnesina, so in fact are the figures of Venus, Hymen, and several others. The figure of

32. See Appendix D.

Bacchus, the group of Silenus on his ass, and perhaps also the idea of Hercules in amorous embrace all seem to come from the Farnese. The little relief of Pan and Syrinx on the vase in the foreground also comes from the Farnese. The figure of Ariadne however seems to come from the marriage feast in the Sala di Psiche, and in fact Silenus braying ass as much resembles his prototype in the Palazzo del Te as it does the same animal in the Farnese. Juno has the pose of the Muse on Apollo's left in the Vatican Parnassus. Apollo himself suggests the figure of Hercules resting in the Camerino Farnese, or he may be taken directly from the antique in a figure illustrated by Turnbull as Orpheus.

This lengthy catalogue of the sources of Runciman's drawing could probably be extended to cover almost every figure, but enough has been said to show very clearly what he understood by 'study', and the direction which his studies were taking him at this date at least. The drawing is supremely delicate in its details, which is testimony to the artist's real talents, but it is inevitably overcrowded, to the point of being difficult to read. With its combination of the literary study of ancient art and of antiquarianism, of classical literature, of sarcophagus relief sculpture and Roman painting, with the narrative painting of High Renaissance and post-Renaissance classicism, this drawing is a microcosm of all the most important interests of contemporary painting. Perhaps fortunately in its 'learning' it is unique in Runciman's work. Except for what it has in common with the Achilles and Pallas it is also unique in its style.

The Achilles and Pallas drawing is in line against a plain ground, and the group though forceful is tightly composed. It is also isolated in a sculptural way. The Peleus and Thetis has as we have seen the compositional style of relief sculpture which

is different in principle, but it is also very tightly composed, and it is rigorously symmetrical with carefully balanced groups around a vertical axis. The figures are spread across the whole surface and there is hardly a vacant square inch. Landscape has only been introduced where it has a specific purpose, behind Apollo as a memory of Parnassus. The figures are all drawn in outline though of an even lighter and more open kind than in the previous drawing. The line is frequently interrupted, and sometimes as in Thetis's right arm disappears altogether. Perhaps partly to compensate for this the ground has been shaded in behind the figures that are all virtually without light and shade, thus throwing them into silhouette. This arrangement may simply recall the convention used by engravers for the representation of relief sculpture, but it also and more interestingly suggests comparison with the very remarkable series of drawings that Runciman did in 1772 and which will be discussed in connection with the work done at Penicuik in that year. These 1772 drawings are clearly based on Greek vase painting and the same idea may already be present here. Sir William Hamilton's first collection of Greek vases had been published just before Runciman went to Rome,³³ and for the Homeric minded admirers of Gavin Hamilton they must have been a source of considerable excitement. Fuseli used them in several drawings of the early 1770's. Not many vases had been published before that date, and none in a manner from which their style could really be grasped. Good as they are however the elegant illustrations to Hamilton's volumes have the wooden quality of so much contemporary classicism that is very different from the real appearance of the vases. Runciman's 1772 drawings are striking in that they are clearly inspired by the freedom and originality of the originals which he must have seen in London in 1771./ ^{Pl's. 128 & 129.} The Peleus and Thetis

33. Sir William Hamilton's Collection of Antiquities, pub. by P.F.Hughes called D'Hancarville, Naples 1766-7.

drawing, if it does represent this inspiration its formality may derive from the reproductions.

The two drawings discussed in detail in this chapter testify in style as well as in content the seriousness of Runciman's attempt to 'improve' himself. The larger drawing particularly seems to demonstrate 'learning' of a most scrupulous and detailed kind quite different from the informal tradition of his training, or indeed from his later work. Both drawings are almost completely without light and shade which in all the rest of his work is the basis of his style. In these points they are very close to Barry, and seem to be clear evidence of his influence. Nevertheless, although the drawings are unusual in his work, he manages to combine his own sense of life and rythm, with the formal language of nascent neo-classicism in them as he also does in the best of his etchings.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The remaining drawings for the first Penicuik project.

After the two drawings discussed in the preceding chapter there remain one other large drawing and the series of smaller drawings. We have already remarked that these latter are associated with each other by the page numbers that they carry, and that this suggests that they were originally part of a drawing book. The page numbers are as follows:

26. The parting of Achilles and Briseis. Pl.72.
27. Achilles receiving arms from Thetis. Pl.73.
28. gap.
29. Achilles dipped in the Styx. Pl.74.
30. Achilles discovered amongst the daughters of Lycomedes. Pl.75.
31. Achilles and Chiron playing the lyre. Pl.76.
32. Achilles and Chiron hunting the lion. Pl.77.
33. Achilles playing the lyre to Briseis and Patroclus. Pl.78.
34. Priam pleading with Achilles. Pl.79.
35. Achilles with the body of Hector. Pl.80.

Thetis comforting Achilles by the sea shore Pl.81. has no page number but is otherwise conformable with the drawings of this group. Many of the other sheets which still have numbers have nevertheless been trimmed, and the number could well have been trimmed off this one as it is within the standard sheet size of the book. It may therefore have originally formed part of the series.

Page 18 of the drawing book could conceivably represent the Birth of Achilles, Pl. 85 but it seems more likely that it belongs with an unidentified subject on page 20. It will be discussed in the next chapter. Page 63 of the drawing book is identified by Booth as Achilles mourning Patroclus but there seem to be no

grounds for this.¹ It represents four warriors standing. Pl. 91 They are evidently grief stricken, but there is nothing to identify their grief as for Patroclus. His corpse is not shown, nor is the restraint of their grief in keeping with the violence that characterises Achilles reaction in the Iliad to the death of his friend. The drawings' remoteness in the presumed drawing-book from the main series of Achilles drawings also suggests that it does not belong with them in conception. It is actually neighbour to Agrippina at the funeral of Germanicus Pl. 90 and has some points in common with that drawing. On the other hand, three of the most important drawings in this group do not belong to the drawing book series at all, and one of these, Achilles drawing on Agamemnon, shows Achilles and Minerva without Agamemnon who one would have thought an essential part of the subject, as Patroclus's corpse would seem an essential part of the subject in a representation of the Grief of Achilles. This seems however to be a special case and to reflect the drawings' origin as a study of the central group of the Alexander Severus sarcophagus. This drawing also gives Achilles a general likeness to the main figure in the supposed Achilles mourning Patroclus. None of the other drawings in the series seem to show an attempt to give Achilles a consistent likeness however and this may only be a casual similarity. Achilles mourning Patroclus cannot therefore be accepted as a certain identification for this drawing, though it is nevertheless one of the best in the drawing-book series.

The Achilles drawings in the drawing book are all in pen or pen and wash though the unfinished ones also show that pencil was used. One or two of the drawings are quite highly finished, notably Priam pleading with Achilles Pl. 79. and Achilles dragging the body of Hector round the walls of Troy. Pl. 80. Others are

1. J. Booth, The earlier career of AR, Warburg and Courtauld Journal, 1969.

little more than rough ideas, or in his own word 'thoughts', for example Thetis comforting Achilles Pl.81. and Achilles parting with Briseis. Pl.72. In between these two extremes are drawings in pen that seem fairly rough but which are evidently finished, for example Thetis bringing arms to Achilles, Pl.73. and the two versions of the Education. Pl's. 76 & 77. Taken together, in technique and style this group reveals how much the care and finish of the two drawings discussed in the previous chapter represented a conscious effort on the artist's part. Compositionally too they are less learned and more freely inventive. The Parting with Briseis and Achilles with the body of Hector inevitably reveal his familiarity with Hamilton's works. Priam pleading with Achilles perhaps suggests that he was familiar with the illustrations to Ogilby's Homer as Hamilton evidently was,² but overall he seems to be less concerned with literal quotation from either classical or modern sources than he is in the larger works discussed in the last chapter.

A suitable representative example of the small drawings is Achilles dipped in the Styx. Pl.74. It is not a common subject either in art or in literature. It receives a mention in the Achilleid of Statius,³ and Runciman was almost certainly familiar with Statius, but his most important source for the idea seems to have been the Capitoline 'well-head' or tondo. The group of the figure leaning over with the child, and particularly the way she holds him by the ankle seem to derive directly from that source. If Runciman had been relying simply on literary tradition he might have contrived for Achilles to be held somehow by the heel not the ankle. The whole composition of Runciman's Styx drawing however derives from that of Moses in the bull-rushes in the Vatican Loggia, though in reverse. In technique the composition relies almost entirely on chiaroscuro expressed by free and lively wash. The

2. John Ogilby, Homer his Iliads, London, 1669.

3. Statius, Achilleid, I, 269.

line drawing is rough and cursory. Although the figures are recognisably classical, particularly Thetis, they have an elegant and quite unsculptural freedom and grace. The painterly technique of wash drawing was one that Runciman almost always used in landscape and came increasingly to favour for subject drawings.

The technique of Achilles dipped in the Styx is in contrast to the two versions of the Education of Achilles Pl's. 76 & 77. which use the pen and hatching of the Lear and Good Samaritan drawings. The subject of these drawings of Achilles and Chiron is of some interest for, as we have already pointed out, it is paralleled in Barry's picture at the R.A. of 1772. It is perhaps a mark of Runciman's interest in the subject that he treated it in two different forms. Achilles playing the lyre could be his own variation of the Herculaneum picture which he must have seen in Naples, but the scene with the lion and cub seems most likely to be derived either from the Capitoline 'well-head', or from Statius in the second book of the Achilleid, where Achilles speaks of hunting a lioness and her cubs, though he also mentions that Chiron sent him out alone on such hunts.⁴

Of the remaining subjects in this group, the fact that he describes Achilles with the body of Hector, as Achilles dragging Hector round the tomb of Patroclus is of some interest. It may simply have been that he did not want to appear to depend too directly on Gavin Hamilton that led him to choose this particular subject. On the other hand, though, it is unlikely that he knew it, this form of the subject is the most common in classical Greek vase painting. His most likely source was the Capitoline tondo again where, though Achilles is in fact represented in front of the walls of Troy, Troy is seen as a little box with a man on top that could quite reasonably be mistaken for a tomb.

4. Ibid. II, 94f, also Pindar Nemean Odes, III, 43f.

Two other unusual subjects among the drawings, though neither exists as more than a sketch are Thetis comforting Achilles on the seashore, Pl.81. and Achilles playing the harp to Patroclus and Briseis. Pl.78. The first of these is a subject which presents the hero at such an unheroic moment that it is not surprising that it should not have been a common subject. The second, if it is correctly identified, seems also to be unique, but has some precedent in the left hand end of the Louvre sarcophagus, Achilles in Skyros, which was formerly in the Borghese collection. This shows Achilles playing the harp to Deⁱdamei^a, and may well have been interpreted formerly as Achilles and Briseis.

The Birth of Achilles for which sketch-book page 18 might be a drawing, and the combat of Hector and Achilles for which there is no drawing, are both subjects for which the Capitoline tondo provides the only precedent. The latter is in Homer's account so far from the customary view of heroic combat that Runciman's choice of it is unlikely to have been inspired directly by the poet.

Of the other subjects that he mentions but for which no drawings are known, the most remarkable is Thetis carrying Achilles across the sea to the court of Lycomedes. The only possible source for this is in Statius who describes it in some detail.⁵ Knowledge of the passage in Statius may have led Runciman to identify with this subject the central picture of the vault in the room in the Golden House of Nero already mentioned. This picture certainly represents Thetis travelling across the sea in a manner that can easily be related to Statius description.⁶

5. Ibid. I, 215f.

6. Weege, Domus Aurea, Jarzbuch XIII.

This group of smaller drawings therefore, while they show Runciman working in a more natural and relaxed manner, nevertheless show the same range of interest and the same kind of inspiration as the more formal drawings with which they are presumably nearly contemporary. We cannot argue the date of particular drawings on the evidence of Runciman's letter, for mention of a subject in the letter cannot really be held to prove that a drawing existed at that date any more than the opposite is likely to be true. If, as seems possible the Achilles and Pallas drawing predates the rest of the cycle, and itself belongs to the latter half of 1769, it would seem a reasonable assumption that the smaller drawings all belong close in time to Runciman's account of his scheme to Clerk, in 1770 therefore. The fact that the drawings are grouped together by the numbers that they carry, would suggest that they were all done at much the same time.

There are two further important drawings that can be connected with Runciman's account of his proposals for the Penicuik decoration. The first of these is the large drawing of Bacchus and Ariadne, which is mentioned in his letter to Sir James and which has been discussed in chapter X. It seems to belong to an earlier stage of his development, before he took up serious history painting. Now that the other drawings intended for Penicuik have been discussed more fully this early dating seems even more secure. In his letter he suggests that he would rather do a subject from the Aeneid than Bacchus and Ariadne. The most important subject that he did from this source was the Death of Dido, though he also did Aeneas at the Court of Dido.⁷ He did three drawings of the Death of Dido and an important painting which appeared in his catalogue of 1778.

7. Now lost but recorded by Laing, Notes on Artists EUL.

One of the drawings of Dido is number 44 in the sketch book series, and therefore is probably close in date to the drawings for the Achilles series. It is a wash drawing showing her alone against the sea, a sword in her hand with the ships of the departing Aeneas visible in the distance. Pl.82. This drawing was formerly identified as Ariadne. A later drawing, dated 1775, also in the SNG, shows her in different pose, but also alone against the sea, sword in hand. The third is a more elaborate composition, though only a small, unfinished drawing. It shows Dido on the pyre surrounded by attendants. Pl.83. The whole group makes a symmetrical pyramid shape. Although it is so much less finished, this drawing recalls Peleus and Thetis both in the number of figures, the type of the composition, and the use of unshaded pen, all of which are very unusual in Runciman's work. It also differs from both the other drawings and the painting of this subject. It may very possibly have been to this drawing that he was referring in his letter when he mentioned having a subject from Vergil that he wanted to do. In the light of the connection between his work and Barry's apparent in Peleus and Thetis, and Achilles and Pallas, also in unshaded pen, the fact that Barry embarked on a painting of Dido and Aeneas when in Rome, though he never finished it, may add strength to this identification.

The last important drawing to be discussed is Achilles and Scamander. Pl.84. For a long time it was thought that it was connected with the Hall of Ossian, and it was identified as Fingal encountering the Spirit of Loda, or as Cormac and the Spirit of the Waters, but it does not fit either of these compositions as we know them from the photographs of the great hall before it was destroyed, nor does it fit with Ossian's text. The drawing clearly represents a heroic classical figure fighting with a river god in the form of a great wave. The figure is standing on a

small piece of ground but is surrounded by water and the water appears to be full of corpses. This fits all the details of Achilles fight with the river as Homer tells it in the Iliad.⁸ Homer's account does not make the combat particularly heroic however. Achilles never really faces up to the river, as he is seen doing in Runciman's drawing, but runs away and is almost overwhelmed before he is rescued by Hephaestos. The battle of Hephaestos and Scamander is the subject of the first of Philostratus Imagines, which probably explains why it is the only violent and dramatic scene in Caylus long and tedious list of subjects from Homer.⁹ It may also explain the importance that Runciman gives to his drawing by its size. He has however not followed Philostratus at all closely.

Apart from Philostratus who does not after all describe exactly the same subject, Runciman is probably developing a hint given by Catullus in the poem from which he had already derived some of the inspiration for the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis. At the wedding, as Catullus describes it, the Parcae sing a song in which they foretell the future of Achilles and this includes his battle with 'the wave of Scamander'.¹⁰ This is very much as Runciman sees his subject. The battle of Achilles and Scamander also appears in the Tabula Iliaca Capitolina which was presented to the museum some time during the pontificate of Benedict XIV, and before 1750.¹¹ It is rather obscure however and is unlikely to have been a major source.

The traditional association of the Achilles and Scamander with the Penicuik decorations is also a reflection of its style. Of all the drawings discussed so far it is closest to the Ossian designs. Its technique matches very closely the most finished of the Ossian drawings, the Death of Oscar, though it is different in mood.

8. Iliad Bk XXI.

9. Philostratus, Imagines I.1. Caylus, Tableaux tires de Homer etc., Paris, 1757, lll.

10. Catullus, Odes LXIV, 357.

11. Description of the Capitoline Museum, by G.P. Locatelli, Rome, 1750.

We do not know when the subject of the decorations was changed from Achilles to Ossian, but in the light of the foregoing evidence it seems reasonable to suppose that this Achilles drawing even if it is nearer in time to the Ossian designs, was conceived as part of the original scheme. It is a wild and violent drawing. The details are in pen, but it is mostly in wash and its real design is in chiaroscuro. The main figure seems to be a blend of Giulio and Hamilton. It is a wild variation of Hamilton's figure of Achilles in his chariot as he drags Hector round Troy. This is itself a pretty baroque figure but is apparently based on a figure from the Sala di Troia, Mantua. As everything about the drawing is in contrast to the other important drawings for the Achilles cycle, so it underlines the contrast between them and the decorations that were actually carried out. The drawing can perhaps be seen as turning away from Barry's kind of neo-classicism back to the original spirit of Hamilton's Homeric paintings, and also perhaps to the direction that his brother might have been taking before his death, with which his own drawing of King Lear shows he was not out of sympathy. Nevertheless it is odd that such a change in direction should take place with this apparent suddenness. There is only one historical fact that we can point to as a cause. When Barry left Rome early in 1770, Fuseli arrived. In Chapter XV the evidence that Fuseli and Runciman knew each other well and worked together will be discussed. There seems to have been a degree of mutual influence, and the final form of the Penicuik decorations and style in which they were carried out seem to have taken shape either at the time that they were together in Rome or shortly afterwards. Therefore although the basis of Runciman's style was probably laid earlier, his contact with Fuseli may have helped it to take its final form. The situation cannot have been a simple one of the influence of Fuseli replacing that of Barry however for the

Peleus and Thetis was not begun until after May 1770 which is three months after Barry had left Rome and as long after Fuseli had arrived. If it was not begun until after Runciman had finished his Ulysses and Nausicaa this may not have been till early in 1771. Its evident learning may well be a sign of its having been done especially in order to take home to Scotland to show that he had not been wasting his time.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Other Roman drawings.

Using Runciman's surviving letters as primary evidence, a fairly clear outline of his development as an artist while he was in Rome, and the circumstances affecting it, can be established. What remains to be considered are the works that may date from his Roman period, but which cannot be dated by the kind of evidence considered in the previous chapters. The most important group of such works are the drawings which because of their page numbers may have been part of a drawing-book. The possibility of the existence of such a book was discussed in a previous chapter in connection with the Achilles drawings. This group of small drawings with Achilles subjects is in fact the best evidence for its existence. The drawings are likely to have been conceived together and they carry consecutive page numbers.

There is a considerable number of other drawings that may have belonged to this drawing-book. Its reconstruction is not simple however, as a great many carry more than one page number. Equally, all those that do carry clear numbers may not belong to the same series or sketch book. The Achilles group have distinctive numbers, in the corner of the sheet, though not always the same corner, and they are fairly bold. Some of the sheets show evidence of stitch marks on one edge, and though most appear to have been trimmed, all are within, or very near to, 7 1/2 x 10 inches. Taking these as the basis of identification the following pages of the sketchbook can be identified:

2, 5, 6, 7, 14, 18, ^{19(?)}20, 23, 26, 27(?), 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, 41, 44(?), 48, 4?, 52, 53, 55, 57, 5?, 59, 6?, 61, 62, 63, 66, 67, 75, 80(?).

Some consecutive numbers represent recto and verso, though not all. None of the drawings is dated, and only one, No.2, is a straight landscape. 67,75, and 80 are drawings for the Penicuik decorations and so provide a terminus antequem. The terminus postquem is not so easy to establish. The appearance on the verso of sheet 7 of a sketch apparently done in the Capitoline may suggest a date for the beginning of the book in 1769/'70. The main group of Achilles drawings fall between sheets 26 and 35, and so this part of the book can be dated by Runciman's letter to Sir James Clerk to approximately May 1770. There are therefore eight drawings in the series that may predate these.

Of these early drawings two of the most interesting are 5, and 6, Una and the lion, and Sir Satyron carrying a lion cub both subjects from Spenser.¹ These are fairly accomplished though they are not inconsistent in execution with the Achilles group. If they can be dated to early 1770, or 1769, the subjects are of particular interest. They are contemporary with Fuseli's Prince Arthur's Dream of 1769 which is possibly the earliest use of Spenser as the source of an imaginative composition. This might cast doubt on the early dating, but alternatively they may show that Runciman's interest in literary subject matter was already wide before he met Fuseli, and was therefore independent.

Drawings 18 and 20 are connected by having the same arched top. Pl's.85 & 86. 18 shows a mother and child with several other figures apparently listening to the prophecy of a witch visible on the left with one hand raised in prophecy. 20 shows a warrior and a group of skeletons and other weird figures surrounded by a sea of skulls. It is tempting to suppose that these two drawings represent two occasions in the life of a hero. The source would therefore be literary, but both the hero and the source are for the

1. Spenser. *Faerie Queene* bk II

present unidentified. There is another drawing that has the same arched top as these two that might be No.19 of the drawing-book series. Pl.87. It actually exists in two versions, one very much less finished than the other, but otherwise identical. In this composition a group of figures sit in terror beneath a harp playing bard who appears in the sky above them. This is clearly not Ossian who never appears to have struck terror into his audience. The best candidate would be Gray's Bard, but none of the figures in the foreground appears to be identifiable as King Edward.

All three of these drawings are similar in mood, and may therefore be connected in subject. If the poem which they might illustrate is not immediately identifiable several of Gray's poems are similar in spirit notably the Bard and the Descent of Odin. Runciman's drawings are of particular interest if they are as early as their place in the drawing book suggests. They seem to indicate an interest in poetry similar to MacPherson's Ossian that he eventually illustrated, but also the arched top that connects these three compositions might suggest that they were done with some kind of decorative idea in mind. This cannot have been for Penicuik as the shape of the composition is quite inappropriate. It may have been intended to be Gothic only in a general sense in keeping with the 'horrid' nature of the subject matter. The drawings together show Runciman a long way from an orthodox neo-classical position immediately before he embarked on his Achilles series. They may have been done more than a year before he and Fuseli met, but they are very much in sympathy with an aspect of Fuseli's work and may help to explain how the two became friends.

One other drawing in this group is of interest, page 23 a sketch of Hercules between Virtue and Vice. Page 37 is a drawing of Hercules resting after slaying the Nemean Lion. Pl. 87A.

The presence of these two Hercules subjects on either side of the Achilles group suggests that Hercules was a possible alternative for the Penicuik project.

Amongst the group immediately following the Achilles drawings, apart from the Hercules drawing at page 37 the most interesting are 36, 44, 48, and 52. 36 is an elaborate wash drawing of the Origin of Painting. Pl.88. It differs in a number of points from the finished painting of this subject of 1772, but it is sufficiently close to be considered a drawing for that composition. The general distribution of the figures is similar. The main difference is that in the drawing the figures are represented full length or nearly so, whereas in the painting they are half length. In spite of the differences this is the earliest drawing that we can connect with a surviving painting, and is therefore of considerable importance. There is a second less finished drawing in Lord Runciman's collection which seems to come between the sketch-book composition and the finished painting.

Drawing 44 is the wash drawing of the Death of Dido which has already been discussed in the context of the Penicuik decorations. Pl.82.

The most striking in the whole of this series is 48. Pl.89. It is a pen drawing of great vigour showing Ossian playing his harp beneath a tree, his cloak blowing over his head. His pose is adapted from that of the Delphic Sybil of Michaelangelo. On the verso is a rough sketch from the Sistine of God creating Adam, which indicates that this part of the sketch-book still dates from Rome. It is therefore the earliest reference to Ossian in Runciman's work. It shows that his thoughts were already on the subject before he returned to Scotland. The drawing cannot

be connected with any of the pictures that were at Penicuik, though Ossian singing was the central picture of the ceiling. The decision to use Ossian as the subject of the decoration cannot therefore be dated from this drawing, but it certainly suggests that the germ of the idea may belong to this time. It is also of interest that both the pose of Ossian and the sketch on the back connect the drawing with Michaelangelo and the Sistine ceiling.

Drawing 52, which has 53 as its verso represents Ariadne. In one of his most beautiful etchings Runciman shows Ariadne in the classic pose described by Philostratus² and shown in the celebrated antique figure in the Vatican. In this drawing however he seems to have used the account given by Catullus in his description of the mantle of Thetis, in which Ariadne climbs up to a place where she can look out to sea after the departing Theseus to pursue him with her complaint.³ Runciman shows her amongst rocks looking out to sea after the departing ships.

The move from Rome to Edinburgh is not clearly marked in the sketch-book. Drawing 55, a fine study of the Rest on the Flight into Egypt has on its verso a sketch in brush of two figures, one of which appears in the background of the central oval of the Penicuik ceiling. The earliest clear reference to Penicuik is drawing 67 Malcolm leading Margaret to the Church. Pl. 127. This is a magnificent drawing which may date from the summer of 1772. It is identical, except in minor details, to the etching taken from the finished composition.

2. Philostratus, Imagines I, 15. "Ariadne is asleep her bosom is bare to the waist and her neck is bent back, and her delicate throat and all her right armpit is visible, but her left hand rests on her mantle that a gust of wind may not expose her".
3. Catullus, Ode LXIV, 127f.

Amongst the dated drawings which will be discussed later in this chapter one of the most convincing is a study of Agrippina with the ashes of Germanicus dated 1771. Pl.63. This was an important subject to Runciman. One of his major exhibited pictures was the Landing of Agrippina of 1781. Gavin Hamilton had exhibited in 1770 Agrippina mourning over the ashes of Germanicus, and in 1772 he exhibited the Landing of Agrippina.⁴ The Runcimans' enemy James Nevey finished 'after a ten years seige' his version of the Agrippina subject in 1769. In the drawing-book series at page 62 and 63 are two classical subjects both of which have been discussed earlier. The first of these, page 62, seems to be identifiable as Agrippina at the Funeral of Germanicus. Pl.90. It is an unusual version of the Agrippina subject, but it was reasonable for Runciman to want to get away from the already stereotyped treatment of her story. This identification and the drawing's place in the book may help to confirm the dating for this part of the book to roughly that year by comparison with the dated drawing of 1771. It must be said however that this drawing is only one of a number of similar studies of Agrippina some of which at least are clearly connected with the painting of ten years later.

Page 63 is the drawing identified by Booth as Achilles mourning Patroclus. Pl.91.

There is no evidence when Runciman started work on the compositions for Penicuik, but three of the last pages of the sketch-book can be associated with these designs. The Malcolm and Margaret drawing has already been mentioned. Page 75 is a drawing of Cormar and the spirit of the waters.^{Pl.120} We know the final version of this subject from an old photograph and from Runciman's etching after his own composition. The drawing differs from both of these though the general arrangement of the subject is similar,

4. See Chapter X

the Spirit is fleeing to the left while Cormar manages the boat. Members of his crew are visible in the background, terrified.

Page 8(?) of the sketch book is a study for the river Tweed in the Penicuik ceiling. ^{P. 112} Again it differs slightly from the picture that was painted, but the basic idea is recognisable. A large Michaelangelesque figure is thrusting apart the two kingdoms. If this page is numbered 80 or is in the 80's it is the highest number in the series. The period covered by the sketch book must have been therefore from sometime before May 1770 to the summer of 1772.

As we have seen none of the sketch-book drawings are dated individually. Many, but not all of them, are in the two bound volumes of drawings in Lord Runciman's collection. Although these two volumes existed in 1833 when they appeared in the Clerk of Eldin Sale⁵ the sketch book must have been broken up some time before they were created. It must have been still intact however when the drawings now in the two volumes had dates added to them as it seems unlikely otherwise that none of the sketch book leaves would be dated. Of the two hundred drawings in this collection, some fifty have dates. In the SNG collection of nearly one hundred drawings scarcely more than half a dozen are dated. The problem of these dated drawings in Lord Runciman's collection has been mentioned in a previous chapter. Although so many of them have dates, very few are dated in a way that fits the technique of the drawing. One or two are plainly unreliable, particularly the single drawing claiming a date of 1763. In one case a date of 1776 has been cancelled and 1782 substituted in the same hand, and in another two identical drawings have dates six years apart. It is most likely to have been the artist himself who has added the dates, but it is difficult to know how much confidence to place in his memory.

5. Clerk of Eldin Sale, Edinburgh 1833.

Only about a dozen of these dated drawings fall into the period of the present discussion however. Of these the Agrippina of 1771 has already been discussed. Most of the rest are figure studies that cannot be connected with any known projects. Two of these, a standing woman, and a sleeping nymph, have the date, 1771, and the signature in the same pen and ink as the drawing, and may therefore be reliable. Into this category too comes a vigorous drawing of Jupiter and Semele also dated 1771. Pl. 91A Of the drawings to which dates have been added, two in red chalk are labelled as after Polidoro. Though they are otherwise similar one is labelled 1763 and the other 1769. A third drawing is a copy of the Libyan Sybil from the Sistine, and is dated 1769. It seems reasonable to assume that all three of these are Roman drawings. The remaining drawings, a sleeping nymph with the date 1768 added, a seated girl, and a fine Madonna and child, 1769, and a sleeping nymph, 1771, can probably only be taken as belonging approximately to the period indicated.

Two extravagantly dramatic drawings with Shakespeare subjects, Othello, Pl.92, and Macbeth, Pl.93, may belong to Runciman's later years in Rome. Both are far more flamboyant than the early drawing of King Lear. The best reason for suggesting that these were done in Rome is the signature on Othello, 'A. Runcimano'. The drawing shows Othello murdering Desdemona, but his face and the upper part of his body are the only parts of the picture worked up in detail. The rest is only roughly sketched in. The drawing is also inscribed with the relevant lines from the play.

Macbeth is a larger drawing. It shows Macbeth starting back in horror from the vision of an armoured head conjured up by a figure clearly intended for Hecate rather than the one of the three hags who are more usually chosen to represent this scene in the play.

In fact the weird sisters are given no prominence, but form part of the general ghoulish background. Superficially the pen and ink technique suggests a resemblance to the Lear, but the greater suavity in the form of the two main figures, and particularly the Michaelangelesque Hecate indicate that this drawing was done at the end of his Roman stay rather than at the beginning. It seems reasonable to suppose that both these drawings reflect a common inspiration, and that the Macbeth is close in date to the Othello. There is however no proof, and the former drawing may have been done some time later. Both seem however to be consistent with the mood of the Ossian designs.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Runciman and Fuseli.

Ever since Cunningham wrote his Lives the names of Fuseli and Runciman have been closely linked. Indeed on occasion Runciman has been regarded as little better than a follower of Fuseli because of Cunningham's stress on the importance of their relationship. Cunningham does not seem to have had access to any evidence not available to us however, and that is fairly slight. The only documentary evidence that we have that definitely proves their acquaintance is the celebrated letter of Fuseli to Mary Moser written in April 1771, whose purpose was really to introduce Runciman to Miss Moser, and in which Fuseli describes him as 'the best Painter among us here in Rome'.¹ Fuseli's opinion of Runciman is amplified, though tempered by time, in the article he wrote on him in Pilkington's Dictionary.² From his account there of Runciman's Ulysses and Nausicaa Fuseli reveals that he knew his work reasonably well at least while he was in Rome, and this lends some substance to the warm opinion that he expressed to Mary Moser. Apart from these two references however there is no other documentary evidence to connect them. Runciman himself never mentions Fuseli. Cunningham's view of the influence of Fuseli on Runciman seems only to be based on the obvious sympathy that Runciman's more dramatic creations have with Fuseli's work.³ Even if only because of the historical importance that it has been given, their relationship is however worth investigating, and in fact there is enough evidence to suggest that contact with Fuseli at least helped to confirm a natural tendency in Runciman's style.

1. Smith, Nollekens and his times, 2 vols. London, 1828, I, 68.

2. Quoted above Chapter XII.

3. Cunningham, Lives of the Painters, V.

Fuseli's work has been studied more than that of any of the other painters that it has been necessary to discuss in this thesis. There is therefore no need to deal with it at length here, though the part of his career that is of most interest to the present topic seems to be that for which the least evidence is readily available.⁴

Fuseli arrived in Rome in May 1770.⁵ Judging by Fuseli's letter Runciman left Rome at the end of April, or early May 1771. There is therefore no more than a year in which the two painters were together in the city. As it was only shortly before he set out for Rome that Fuseli decided to devote himself to art it is perhaps not surprising that dated early works by him are rare. Such drawings as there are that are securely dateable, as for example the drawing of Richard III which is signed and dated 1766, (Zurich, Kunsthaus) already show some of the idiosyncracies of his highly individual style in the figure drawing and in the distribution of light and shade. The subject and its treatment are also of importance with their clear stress on the dramatic and poetic. Nevertheless this early drawing has a certain gaucheness that betrays the amateur status of its author. Some of the figures are awkwardly drawn, the space is most uncertain, and the handling of pen and wash lacks confidence giving a slightly fussy and uncoordinated appearance to the whole drawing. The drawing that Ganz dates 1766, called Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard in Macbeth is so much more developed that its dating might be doubted.⁶ One of the first securely dated drawings that Ganz illustrates and that seems to show a mature style is the splendid drawing of Arthur's Dream from Spenser that is signed and dated 1769. Pl.94. Though this drawing is very important, and indeed advanced, both in its subject and in its highly poetic treatment, it has a softness, delicacy and fineness of line that is

4. This continues to be so after the publication by Tomory of The Art of Henry Fuseli, 1972.

5. Ibid. 24.

6. Paul Ganz, Drawings of Henry Fuseli, London 1949, Pl.6.

very striking. There is also an elaboration of detail, for instance in the plume of Arthur's hat, or in the plant by his right foot, that is very much in contrast to the bold simplicity and eliminated detail of the later works. Rowena and Vortigern a large and less finished drawing also dated 1769 however already shows links with the Death of Cardinal Beaufort of 1772 which was Fuseli's first important exhibited work.⁷ The figures on the extreme right of this drawing actually reappear on the extreme left of the finished version of the Cardinal Beaufort. The chiaroscuro too is already bold and strong and its simplification is beginning to eliminate the finer details of the modelling.

The Rowena and Vortigern is clearly a drawing of major importance, though its lack of finish is significant, but there appears to be nothing quite comparable to it securely dated until the Cardinal Beaufort and its associated drawings. There are however two small drawings in the British Museum dated "Rome 1770" which, while they clearly show Fuseli's hand are in many respects even more distinct in style from this drawing than is Arthur's Dream. These are a pair in style as well as subject. They represent the Stoning of Stephen, Pl.95. and the Conversion of Saul. Pl.96. Even more than the Spenser drawing they show a delicate and sometimes almost decorative pen-line, and they are strikingly atmospheric with soft, detailed and naturalistic chiaroscuro. Both in the individual poses and in conception these drawings are violent and dramatic enough, but this is not achieved by any radical simplification of space or of tone.

The slightly unusual character of the two Saul drawings is matched by that of a third drawing dated 1770. The drawing is published by Federman⁸ and the subject is the Seven against Thebes. Pl.97.

7. Gert Schiff, J.H. Fussli, Zurich, 1959,13.

8. Arnold Federman, J.H. Fussli, Dichter und Mahler, Zurich, 1927,41.

In composition and figure style this is comparable to these two but it differs from them and from the other dated drawings of this period in its technique. Although it is a fairly elaborate drawing it is entirely in pen without wash, and Fuseli uses a hatching technique strikingly similar to Runciman's. Also the scene is moonlit and a real attempt has been made to capture the special quality of the light rather than to use it simply as dramatic stage lighting. In general, though more controlled, this drawing is reminiscent of Runciman's Lear, or of the later etching of Fingal and Corban Carglas (middle version).

The Seven against Thebes and perhaps the two other drawings of 1770 are certainly slightly exceptional in the work of Fuseli, but by themselves they do not constitute proof of the influence of Runciman on Fuseli. They do suggest that this is a possibility however, and they do at least help to strengthen the case for real contact between the two artists. If however Runciman did influence Fuseli, though he may have contributed to the loosening of his style as it is seen for example in the smaller versions of Cardinal Beaufort, he did not divert him from the main course of his artistic development. The next important dated subject drawing is the Murder of Hamlet's Father of Oct. 1771.⁹ It is closely comparable to the Spenser drawing of 1769. This and several similar though undated drawings help to underline the exceptional nature of the drawings of 1770, and to relate them to another undated drawing which also stands slightly outside the artist's main line of development. This is a drawing in the British Museum of Oedipus and the Sphinx.

In Oedipus and the Sphinx Pl. 98. Fuseli has used a wandering broken pen-line that indicates the breaking of light on form, not contour. This is most clearly apparent in the figures of Oedipus himself and of the Sphinx, but it is true of all the figure drawing.

9. Schweizerisches Inst. für Kunstwissenschaft, Zurich, 1959, Zeichnungen von J.H. Fussli ed. Gert Schiff p.19.

Though the figure of Oedipus is comparable to Saul's in the Conversion drawing, this characteristic is more marked here than it is in the Saul drawings. In the figures too the chiaroscuro is broken up into little areas of light and shade without any attempt to formalise it into a pattern, except in the distinction of foreground from background. Fuseli's usual treatment of light and shade can be seen in the columns and the architecture behind the Sphinx, but presumably in order to soften the effect of the architecture and so preserve the kind of picturesque unity that he is aiming for he has reversed the perspective and the light and shade of the lowest step, and has placed a strong shadow on the top of it. In the strong central axis of this drawing and in its clear division of foreground from background Fuseli's hand can still be seen, nevertheless the similarity that it bears to Runciman's work is unmistakeable. It is comparable in technique to works like Achilles dipped in the Styx, or even Bacchus and Ariadne.

Oedipus and the Sphinx is at this date an unusual subject, but there is a version of it by Runciman. Pl.99. There is an antique painting of the subject which as it was published by Bartoli was presumably well known. It shows Oedipus with one attendant and a horse, facing the Sphinx who is seated above him on a rock, behind them there is an extensive landscape. This provided the basis of the iconography that Ingres made familiar. Except that Oedipus confronts the Sphinx who is seated on a raised place, neither Fuseli nor Runciman have used this arrangement however. Instead both have used a very peculiar iconography in which Oedipus is indicating to the Sphinx the solution to its riddle by pointing to an old man leaning on a stick, a young man, and a baby who are all conveniently present among the spectators. In both their drawings there is a pile of skulls on the ground beside the Sphinx. The city of Thebes in the background of Runciman's drawing is indicated in Fuseli's by the architecture in which the scene takes place. Fuseli's drawing bears an inscription in bad

Greek that seems to mean "Oedipus having saved the city by solving the riddle of the Sphinx is made tyrant of Thebes by acclaim". In later life Fuseli became something of a Greek scholar. Knowles remarks however on his determination at this stage 'to renew his knowledge of Greek'.¹⁰ This inscription is presumably of his own composition, and it reveals that his Greek was still somewhat rusty. It is certainly not a quotation from Sophocles. The riddle of the Sphinx is not actually part of Sophocles play, but is described in the prologues that were at some time added to the play, but even in these prologues such a scene of confrontation does not take place. The subject does not seem to have a strict literary source any more than it has a sculptural or pictorial one. It must therefore be thought of as an invention, and if that is the case it is striking that both artists should invent the same solution if they were not working either in conjunction or dependent one on the other. The drawings however are variations on the same theme rather than in any kind of dependent relationship, except as has already been pointed out in the apparent dependence of Fuseli's drawing style on Runciman's. Although the latter is not using wash in this drawing this relationship can still be seen, for example in comparing Fuseli's Oedipus with Runciman's young man. The combination of these very important points with the lack of detailed similarity suggests that the most probable conclusion is that the drawings were actually done concurrently, the artists working together, rather than that one is in some way dependent on the other.

From the documentary evidence and the evidence provided by Fuseli's surviving works of the period it seems clear therefore that Fuseli and Runciman were closely associated while they were in Rome, though it can have been for a period of only a few months.

10. Knowles, The Life and writings of Henry Fuseli, 2 vols. London, 1831, 54.

It now remains to be seen, whether this association affected Runciman's work in any way.

With Fuseli the dynamic relationship between art and poetry already explicit in the Trojan paintings of Gavin Hamilton, was taken a stage further. Hamilton's attitude towards Homer was still inextricably bound up with his attitude towards antiquity. For Fuseli Homer was only one of a number of poets who were important not for any associations that they might have but for the simple poetic force of what they wrote. Thus even Fuseli's early drawings include subjects not only from Homer, but from Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton and Dante. In his choice of subjects from these authors too, Fuseli extended Hamilton's notion of the grand and heroic sublime to include the violent and horrid. This is first clearly apparent in the Cardinal Beaufort of 1772, but is already adumbrated in the Richard III of 1766. Though his work seems to have been comparatively restrained at the time that he knew Runciman, even in the Conversion of Saul of 1770 his interest in dramatic effect is clearly apparent, while as his choice of subjects reveals, his interest in the poetry of genius never abated.

It may well have been a common attitude towards poetic feeling in painting that brought Fuseli and Runciman together, for we know from John Runciman's work that at an earlier date the Runcimans shared an attitude at least towards Shakespeare and Michaelangelo very close to that of Fuseli. Nevertheless the evidence of the drawings discussed in the previous chapter is that in the year or so before Fuseli came to Rome, Alexander Runciman under the influence of Barry had moved away from this proto-romantic position towards one that could be called more strictly neo-classical. The appearance of a drawing as bold dramatic and indeed violent as Achilles and Scamander coming, as it must have done, after May 1770, was to some extent a reassertion of the natural tendency of Runciman's art, but there is no doubt at all that in this reassertion he could

have been assisted by the powerful example of Fuseli's interest in the poetic and the dramatically forceful. In the two Oedipus drawings, while Runciman's may have been the dominant technique, the subject seems almost certainly to have been Fuseli's. These two drawings perhaps summarize the relationship of the two artists. Although often eccentric, Runciman's work at its best had a vitality and expressive fluency which explains the terms in which Fuseli expressed himself to Mary Moser, Fuseli's literary education and poetic understanding were probably wider than anything that Runciman had encountered before. It is therefore in this area that his influence on Runciman should be sought. It may be that Fuseli had a share in the decision to substitute Ossian for Achilles as the subject of the Penicuik decorations. The Achilles and Scamander both in style and in feeling is so close to the decorations that were eventually executed, that it links them directly to Runciman's late Roman style.

A point that helps to connect the inspiration of the Hall of Ossian with Fuseli is the use that Runciman makes in it of Michaelangelo. While Gavin Hamilton and apparently John Runciman had already turned to Michaelangelo for inspiration, nowhere in Runciman's Achilles drawings is there any hint of the Sistine Chapel. Barry in spite of Reynolds repeated advice seems never to have learnt from Michaelangelo, but in the Hall of Ossian the four great river gods that must have been amongst the most striking things in the decoration were unashamedly Michaelangelesque. Fuseli was the most devoted and enthusiastic of all Michaelangelo's eighteenth century followers. Runciman's river gods are so different in every way from the kind of decoration envisaged in the Peleus and Thetis drawing which they replaced that it is really necessary to suppose some powerful influence to bring about this change of direction during Runciman's last year in Rome. Not only is Fuseli the only available candidate, but we now know that the two artists were sufficiently close for his influence to have affected Runciman in this way.

It seems unlikely that any direct contact was maintained between the two painters after Runciman left Rome. Tomory suggests that Fuseli received copies of Runciman's etchings and was influenced by them, and that Fuseli's project for a Shakespeare ceiling was influenced by his knowledge of Runciman's Penicuik pictures.¹¹ One coincidence of subject matter and composition may reflect the strength of their original relationship if it does not imply its continuation.

Runciman's first important exhibited picture after the Ulysses and Nausicaa was Satan in the Garden of Eden Pl.100. exhibited at the RA in 1773. It illustrates the lines from Paradise Lost;

"Back step't those two fair Angels half amazed
So suddenly to behold the grisly King".¹²

which are inscribed on its frame, and which were quoted in the RA catalogue. The scene is where the two angels Ithuriel and Zephon discover Satan in the Garden of Eden whispering in the ear of the sleeping Eve. At the touch of Ithuriel's spear Satan is revealed in his true nature, and both he and the angels are startled by mutual recognition. It is an important scene in the poem and Runciman has treated it faithfully. It is night and the moon is visible behind a background of trees. Adam and Eve are sleeping in a tender embrace to the right. Satan is a dark and bearded figure at the centre of the composition, and the two angels are at the left in an aureole of brilliant light.

Fuseli did a drawing of this subject. Pl.101. It is one of the drawings formerly bound together in a volume in the British Museum. These ^{are} usually dated to the mid-1770's, but as this volume was not a sketch book but a collection put together at a later date, the dating of individual items is only conjectural.

Fuseli's composition is generally similar to Runciman's. The angelic group is seen to the left flying above the ground and

11. Tomory, Fuseli, 82.

12. Paradise Lost, BkIV, 820-1.

Adam and Eve are lying in a sleeping embrace. Satan however is a noble winged figure starting off to the right. Both interpretations of his appearance are legitimate as Milton does not give a single clear image, but describes him in a number of ways. Both artists would appear to have started from the text therefore, and one is not dependent on the other. Nevertheless it is a striking coincidence that they should both choose to treat the same subject, and do so in a similar way. It may be no more than a coincidence, but it could also be that their compositions reflect a common idea dating from the time when the two were together in Rome, or alternatively that they remained in contact after Runciman's return.

One other coincidence of a similar kind occurs in their both treating the unusual subject of Hubert and Arthur from King John. Fuseli did his in a drawing which Tomory dates variously as 1770-2 and 1775-6.¹³ Runciman's is a painting dated 1780.¹⁴ The compositions bear no resemblance to each other, but the common subject again suggests either that they remained in contact, or that they continued thinking along very similar lines.

From the lengthy discussion of the last chapters, the pattern of Runciman's four years in Rome does eventually emerge. The three large drawings that we have of his Roman period, Bacchus and Ariadne, Peleus and Thetis, and Achilles and Scamander can each be seen to represent a separate phase. When he arrived in Rome Runciman produced serious history only as an amateur. He was mainly preoccupied with Landscape and the lighter kind of decorative subject of which the Bacchus and Ariadne is the example. His brother on the other hand was experimenting with Michaelangelo. After John's death, and partly because of it, his first model was Gavin Hamilton, but he came increasingly under the influence of Barry's approach to antiquity. The Peleus and Thetis drawing is a monument to the learning that he accumulated at this stage. Right at the end of his stay in Rome

13. Tomory, Fuseli, 76, dates the drawing 1770-2, but dates the illustration, Plate 22, 1775-6.

14. SNG.

contact with Fuseli seems to have helped him to turn back to the idea of the epic with renewed confidence. It is to this point in his career that the Achilles and Scamander must belong. While it is still a classical subject its mood and its treatment point to the change from Homer to Ossian which may have been, through Fuseli, the final, if unlikely outcome of his classical experience.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Runciman's return to Scotland.

The monumental paintings that Runciman carried out immediately after his return to Scotland were the climax of his career. His main work however which was in Penicuik House was destroyed by the fire there in 1899,¹ and his second enterprise of the same kind in the Episcopalian Cowgate Chapel was mostly painted out when the church changed hands in 1818 or soon afterwards.² It is technically recoverable but is unlikely to be so in the foreseeable future. The four subsidiary pictures in this scheme are still visible though very dirty and somewhat damaged by earlier cleaning, but they are the only works in Runciman's large scale decorative manner that survive. Of the others we have an incomplete set of old photographs of the Penicuik ceiling, an oil-sketch and ten or possibly a dozen other working drawings for it, and the adjacent staircase. There are also six etchings deriving from the compositions in these two places. The decorations at Penicuik are also described in two printed accounts, and Runciman himself described the Cowgate pictures in a letter to George Paton.³

The first of the descriptions of Penicuik was published anonymously on 25th January 1773.⁴ It was written by the painter's friend Walter Ross. It is a lengthy and quite detailed account though much of it is taken up with a very general essay on painting. The descriptive part is devoted to the hall of Ossian and no mention is made of the St. Margaret cycle. This pamphlet was obviously intended as a puff, but it is difficult to know how much of a part Runciman himself may have taken in its composition.

1. Rowan, Penicuik House, Country Life, Aug. 15th, 1968.
2. Rev. Thomas Veitch, The Parish of St. Paul and St. George, Edinburgh, 1958, 19.
3. Runciman to George Paton, Edinburgh, Oct. 12th, 1775, pub. in Letters to George Paton, ed. Maidment.
4. Description of the paintings in the Hall of Ossian etc, Anon, Edinburgh, 1773. Publication on 25 Jan was announced in the Edinburgh Evening Courant 23rd Jan. 1773. Gough, British Topography, II, 682, states that it was written by Walter Ross. His authority was probably George Paton.

The account is on the whole fairly impersonal, and though Ross at one point states that the painter furnished him with the texts that he had illustrated, it would seem to be largely Ross's own point of view that is presented.

The pamphlet does not seem to have been a great success. It is now extremely rare, and according to Laing most of the copies were used for wrapping parcels of tobacco. This is confirmed by George Paton who in a letter to Herd wrote that he had great difficulty in securing a copy for him and that he had to rescue it from a tobacconists.⁵

The second account was published in 1889 by John Gray keeper of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.⁶ His account is much briefer than that of Ross, but it does include a full description of the St. Margaret pictures in the staircase which are otherwise unrecorded. In doing so he also gives a very detailed account of the colour of which Ross gives hardly any hint. The two descriptions therefore complement each other.

From this evidence it is possible to reconstruct the appearance of the lost pictures in some detail. If they were not the most solemn it seems that they were the most vigorous and painterly historical decorations carried out anywhere in Britain after the death of Thornhill

Runciman appears to have returned to Britain in the summer of 1771. In his letter to Sir James of the 12th January that year he asked for an advance of £30 (or £50, the figure is tactfully obscure) to enable him to travel home. He expressed his willingness to leave Rome as soon as the money should reach him, and went on to say;

5. Laing, Notes on Artists, EUL. Paton to David Herd 7th July 1778 in Letters to Paton, ed. Maidment,
6. John Gray, Notes on the Art Treasures at Penicuik House, Edinburgh, 1889.

"Sooner than that I could not travel as I am very much afraid of getting cold ever since the death of my brother... Italy is not the most commodious place for a poor man to travel in such a season".⁷

When he finally left Rome Runciman carried a letter from Fuseli to Mary Moser dated 27th April, 1771,⁸ He was still in Rome at that date therefore, but presumably he left soon after. In Walter Ross's account there is an item for money loaned to the painter for his journey north in October,⁹ so he may possibly have spent some months in London during the summer. He first appears in Edinburgh again on the 27th January 1772, and so by then he had taken up his old life once more.¹⁰

He had originally intended to exhibit Ulysses and Nausicaa in 1771 at the RA, but evidently he was not back in time. He exhibited it instead in 1772, and travelled to London in order to do so. He appears in the RA lists with his address given as c/o Mrs. Hogarth, Lincoln's Inn Fields.¹¹ He was back in Edinburgh by July 18th when he appeared at the Cape Club.¹²

The Penicuik decorations were not begun until June 1772 at the earliest, however, and presumably therefore not until his return from London. There is an elaborate account in the Penicuik papers from Dugald MacLaurie for work done in June in Ossian's Hall, so named, and in the staircases.¹³ These places where pictorial decoration was eventually carried out had been left unfinished "to be finished at a time suitable to Sir James" in MacLaurie's

7. Appendix A.
8. John T. Smith, Nollekens and his Times, London, 1828, 2 vols. I, 68.
9. Ross Account, Appendix C.
10. Cape Club Sederunt Book, NLS.
11. RA Catalogue 1772.
12. Cape Club Sederunt Book, NLS.
13. Penicuik Accounts, Register House.

account for work done between June 1769 and August 1770.¹⁴

The account for the work done in Ossian's Hall describes in detail all the gilding and decoration of the mouldings and frames including the spandrels, Bagpipe, stock, and Horns (£5) and painting the foliage and all the enrichings (£16) it concludes with an item "plain painting the ceiling £2". As there was no plain surface on the ceiling at all this can only have been the preparation of the ground for Runciman's decorations. The accounts for the two staircases both conclude with the same "Plain painting do". The intermediate decoration was therefore carried out before the main decoration was begun.

Three of the four pictures of the Life of St. Margaret in the N. stair were dated, according to Gray, Sept. 7th 1772, Oct. 6th 1772 and Oct. 14th 1772.¹⁵ The decoration of the stair was at least 3/4 complete by the latter date. No firm date exists for the completion of Ossian's Hall beyond the publication in ^{Jan.} 1773 of Walter Ross's Description. On the 20th Nov. 1772 however, Runciman's name was proposed to the Trustees of the Board of Manufacturers to take the post of drawing master in their Academy vacated by the death in June of Charles Pavillion the previous master.¹⁶ On the 25th Nov. the Trustees resolved that "Mr. Alexander Runciman painter in Edinburgh be & hereby is appointed drawing master". He must have taken up office almost immediately as there is a request from him to the Town Council that the customary allowance of £15 for coal & candle & "the use of the two rooms near the College" be continued.¹⁷ It is dateable 2nd Dec. by a note on the back referring the matter for consideration by the Council. He is installed anyway by the 17th Dec. as there are two letters bearing that date recommending new pupils from the Trustees,¹⁸ (Trustees letter Books). His work at Penicuik was therefore over by the end of November.

14. Ibid.

15. Gray, Art Treasures at Penicuik, 60.

16. Trustees Minutes, 20 Nov. 1772, Register House.

17. Edinburgh City Archives, City Chambers, Edinburgh.

18. Trustees Letter Books, Register House.

In the Trustees accounts for December 1772 an item of £10 appears for an advance to Alexander Runciman.¹⁹ Sir James Clerk records payment to Runciman of £100 'over and above what I gave him while in Rome'.²⁰ When Runciman returned however he was owing £182 to Ross.²¹ The money from Clerk therefore probably went straight to the payment of his debts, and so at the completion of his major work he apparently found himself penniless and obliged to ask for this advance on his salary, as soon as he took up his new post. In his letter of Jan. 1771 to Sir James he wrote, after asking for £30 to get him home, 'I should blush to make this demand on you were I not conscious you will have no reason to regret your indulgence. I hope the work I do for you will not reflect less honour on you than be advan(ta)ge to me. I do not mean by that pecuniary advantage. All my ambition is to be a great painter rather than a rich one'.²² Whatever he achieved as a painter he was certainly never rich.

The Penicuik decorations were complete therefore by the end of November 1772. Two months later Ross published his Description. There is no explanation why John Bonnar was employed ten years later to paint one of the stairs with Jupiter, Apollo, and the months.²³ MacLaurie's bill includes decoration of both staircases, and so both were ready in 1772 for Runciman to paint. The series of oval drawings with mythological subjects, in a style derived from Greek vase painting, which are dated 1772, would have fitted the arrangement of the staircase decoration as it is seen in a copy of Bonnar's work. The dome contained twelve small oval compartments of the same shape as these drawings. There is no evidence that Runciman quarrelled with the Clerks, or that in spite of initial

19. Trustees Accounts, Register House.
20. Sir James Clerk's Journal of Expenses, Penicuik House.
21. Ross Account, Appendix C.
22. AR to Sir James Clerk, Register House; Appendix A.
23. The ceiling is described by Gray, Paintings at Penicuik, 57-8. The design is preserved in a drawing in the possession of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical monuments which appears to be a copy of an original by John Bonnar dated 1782.

misgivings Sir James was unhappy with the work that he did. Bonnar appears in the Penicuik accounts in 1766. He was, like Runciman, an apprentice of the Nories.²⁴ There may be a simple explanation of why Runciman left this part of the decoration incomplete but we do not know what it is.

Pennant in his *Tour of Scotland* of 1772 records during his visit to Edinburgh between the 17th and 26th September of that year that the new Episcopalian chapel 'when completed, will be a most elegant building; and the front adorned with a beautiful portico supported by six doric pillars, with suitable finishing. Over the altar is an Ascension by Mr. Runciman, and here are besides four other paintings by the same gentleman'.²⁵ If this is to be taken literally Pennant saw the Cowgate paintings in the late summer of 1772. This account however only appears in the 1790 edition of his *Tour* and not in the earlier editions. The fact that he describes the church as unfinished makes what he says seem very circumstantial as it was built between 1771 and 1774. He may however be referring only to the portico which was in the end never built. Pennant had many correspondents including George Paton as we have seen, and he drew on their information widely in compiling the various editions of his book. This may be the case here.

The church was founded on April the 3rd 1771 and was opened in October 1774.²⁶ In the *Scots Magazine* of that month it is described and the description includes a mention of Runciman's painting. "The altarpiece is beautifully decorated with some scripture pieces judiciously chosen and finely painted by Mr. Runciman".²⁷

24. Bonnar was apprenticed to Norie 8th March 1743 for 8 years, Laing, Notes on Artists, EUL.
25. Thomas Pennant, Tour in Scotland, 1772, London 1790, 2 vols. II, 243.
26. Veitch, St. Paul's and St. George's, 16.
27. *Scots Magazine*, October 1774, XXXVI, 506.

The Scots Magazine provides a terminus ante quem for the pictures. There is nothing in their actual appearance however to conflict with the early dating apparently implied by Pennant. Henry MacKenzie says of Runciman that 'he wrought in too hurried a maner for any great correctness in the drawing'.²⁸ The Cowgate pictures although very large were evidently painted very rapidly without underdrawing, or without even preparing the plaster properly on which they were painted as it is still very rough.

Unfortunately we know nothing of the progress of the building. It is large, but also very simple and it could possibly have been roofed in a year as it would have to have been if the paintings were done before September of 1772. If Runciman was in England in the spring or early summer his work in the church could not have been started until after his return to Scotland some time before the 18th July. The story told by Cunningham that he ruined his health working at Penicuik is probably an invention to explain his early death (though some thirteen years later).²⁹ Nevertheless it does seem possible that the summer of 1772 saw an extraordinary burst of creative energy of a kind that he never repeated.

Though we cannot reach any conclusion on it, the question of the dating of these works is of interest. If they were painted some time after the Penicuik pictures, even though before the church was completed in 1774, it would be reasonable to suppose with Booth, who gives the latter date as the date of the commission, that it was given him as a result of the success of his work at Penicuik.³⁰ If the paintings were done concurrently with his work for Sir James Clerk on the other hand the commission must have depended on the reputation that he brought back from Rome, or on the successful

28. Henry MacKenzie, The Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry MacKenzie, 1745-1831, ed. by H.W. Thompson, Oxford and London, 1927, 213.

29. Cunningham, Lives of the Painters, V,

30. Booth, AR, Warburg and Courtauld Journal, XXXII, 342.

intervention of one of his backers. Unfortunately we know nothing of the circumstances in which he was given the commission. None of the names prominent elsewhere in this story appear in the list of Trustees for the building of the church.³¹

According to Henry Mackenzie it was Sir James Clerk who suggested the subject of the ceiling at Penicuik.³² MacKenzie was a contemporary and his brief profile of Runciman is for that reason important, but he does not appear to have written with any particular authority. He was also a frightful snob much more inclined to impute originality to the master than the servant, and this alone might serve to explain his crediting the suggestion to Sir James. Sir James on the other hand took a very active part in the design of his house, and though from his approach to the matter in his letter the initiative in the choice of subject seems to have been Runciman's own, his patron is unlikely to have been entirely passive in a matter affecting him so closely.

Cunningham probably with no more authority than Henry MacKenzie says that it was Runciman who chose the subject,³³ and whatever part Sir James may have played in the matter the final choice is certainly consistent with the tendency of Runciman's work and the ideas of his friends both in Edinburgh and in Rome. His earliest Ossian drawing Pl.89 was almost certainly done in Rome.

Ross remarks that 'no idea of the paintings since executed entered into the original design (of the hall), but had been adopted after the ceiling was finished and ready for the pencil'.³⁴ This probably only confirms what we already know, that the architectural design of the ceiling was already established when Runciman decided

31. Scots Magazine, October, 1774, XXXVI, 506.

32. MacKenzie, Anecdotes, 213.

33. Cunningham, Lives of the Painters, V, .

34. Ross Account, Appendix C.

to make the decorations 'historical'. It could however also be read as suggesting that the final choice of subject was not made until the summer of 1772 when MacLaurie was preparing the ceiling 'for the pencil'. The paintings are nevertheless very much the product of Runciman's Roman experience.

After four years in Italy that he should choose so unclassical a poet as Ossian might at first sight seem a paradox. It is clear from all the foregoing discussion however, that although like his contemporaries he was profoundly excited by his contact with antiquity this was not the strongest impression that he brought home.

At one time, perhaps under the influence of Barry, he came very close to what may be called the conventional neo-classical position, an approach to classical antiquity in which there was a strong element of the academic. A different way of thinking about the function and purpose of painting had however had its first important exponent in Gavin Hamilton partly inspired by Hogarth. John Runciman's work shows that the brothers were moving towards a very similar position apparently independently at the time that they left Scotland. In its imaginative force is the main standard by which a picture should be judged. John Runciman's Lear shows that he at least saw that it was through exploiting the ideas of poetry that painting could achieve this end. As it clearly was for Fuseli who supported and encouraged him, for Alexander Runciman contact with antiquity was a constant source of inspiration in pursuit of this dominant idea, but it was in the study of Michaelangelo above all that it was epitomised. Michaelangelo was the artist of the sublime and of grand poetic thought. Reynolds himself called him the Homer of painting.³⁵ He was therefore in the visual arts the equivalent of Homer and Shakespeare, and, for the eighteenth century, Ossian.

35. Reynolds opinion is quoted by William Burke in a letter to Barry, St. James, Oct. 1766, Barry, Works, I, 61.

The equation of Homer with Ossian may now seem absurd, but in the 1770's it was a commonplace. Hugh Blair, Ossian's champion, made the analogy, and he saw in Ossian that 'poetic fire' which had been increasingly seen in Homer, since Pope published his translation. In his introduction Blair wrote: "Irregular and unpolished we may expect the production of uncultivated ages to be; but abounding at the same time, with that vehemence and fire which are the soul of poetry. For many circumstances of those times which we call barbarous are favourable to the poetical spirit. That state in which nature shoots wild and free, though unfit for other improvements, certainly encourages the exertion of fancy and passion".³⁶

Ossian had the advantage over Homer that he had never been adopted by classical criticism. It was only in the 1760's that Robert Wood was beginning finally to free Homer of the burden of classical ideas. Ossian was free of all this and had the advantage of belonging apparently to the Iron Age culture of Gaelic Scotland that had emerged to astonish Europe for a brief moment in 1745. The confrontation that resulted was epitomised by Scott in the first encounter of Waverly with Evan Dubh, a clansman bristling with arms, over the Baron of Bradwardine's civilised breakfast table. It became one of the most abiding clichés of the romantic imagination. Ossian was published less than twenty years after these events. Its astonishing success is therefore easy to explain, so too is the hostility it aroused. Dedicated to Lord Bute, a highly unpopular Scot, and claiming a cultural heritage for the recently suppressed clansmen far older than the existence of England, hostility to Ossian was inevitable. In the subsequent debate, and because of the equivocations of MacPherson, the genuine importance of much that he had done was lost from sight.

Hugh Blair as one of the leading literati was in a position in which his ideas would be well known. John Gray points out that he

36. Hugh Blair, Introduction to the Poems of Ossian first published in the edition of 1762, p. 2 .

had remarked on the suitability of Ossian as a subject for painting,³⁷ and he was perhaps the only one of the literati who could be said to belong to the international movement of which the Runcimans were part. Gray suggests at the same time that it was actually Blair who proposed the subject of the ceiling. It seems unnecessary to suppose that was the case, nevertheless in the light of the evidence given for the connection between Blair and George Paton, he and Runciman may very well have met. Even if they had not, Runciman's friends like Cumming and Paton were certainly familiar with Blair's ideas and would have provided enthusiastic support for a project of such national significance. Some years later Cumming wrote with approval of a Mr. Clerk as 'the vindicator of Ossian'.³⁸ Henrietta Cumming's friends were in the habit of writing Ossianic verses to each other, of citing Ossian, and of using Gaelic phrases. Laing with reason calls the decorations 'national designs'.³⁹ Runciman's experience in Rome had equipped him exactly to meet the national sentiment which was both inspired by Ossian, and Ossian's inspiration.

In several places in his Description Ross writes as though the Ossian pictures had some kind of antiquarian pretension. The antiquarian element is however clearer in the pictures that Runciman painted from the life of St. Margaret of Scotland for the staircase.

There is a pictorial antecedent for the St. Margaret pictures which seems to be unique, but which Runciman certainly knew. This is the painting of St. Margaret in front of Edinburgh Castle, by an unknown artist in S.Andrea degli Scozzese, Rome. Nevertheless the choice of subject almost certainly reflects the ideas of Cumming and Paton. Runciman's source was Fordun's *Scotichronicon*, a

37. Gray, Art Treasures at Penicuik, 61.

38. James Cumming to the Earl of Buchan, NLS MS3873.207.

39. Laing, Sketch for a biography of AR, Notes on Artists, EUL.

mediaeval latin chronicle which had been published in Edinburgh in 1759. It is mentioned in several places in Paton's correspondence, and is a book that the Edinburgh antiquarians would naturally have regarded as a primary source for Scottish history, though Runciman by himself would probably not have been able to make much sense of its text.

The kind of nationalist antiquarianism that was evidently an important part of the inspiration of Runciman's choice of subject did have something of a tradition at Penicuik. Old Sir John Clerk had been one of the pioneer Scottish antiquarians. The national element was particularly important in Scotland, but it was by no means unique. It was part of the general romantic revival of interest in national antiquities. The change from Sir John Clerk's 'Roman remains' in the grounds of Penicuik to the sentimental nationalism of Runciman's paintings is paralleled over almost exactly the same period of time by the change at Stourhead from the Claudian temples round the lake to the Gothick of Alfred's Tower.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Hall of Ossian.

The hall at Penicuik was a very large room, 37 feet long by 25 feet wide. Pl.102. It had a coved ceiling and three tall windows in the West wall. The flat part of the ceiling was filled by a large oval which may have been as much as 15 x 20ft or even more. This was framed by an elaborate border apparently of painted swags, a gilded moulding, and then a second border decorated with painted flowers and with a gilded rim. In the centre of each of the short sides was a medallion with bagpipes in one and horns in another.

In the four corners of the ceiling were spandrel shaped spaces in each of which was a river god. These spaces were bounded on one side by the border of the central oval, and on the other two by the border running round the whole of the ceiling above the cove. This outer border merged with the oval border on the long sides. It was the same painted floral strip against gold, and was edged by a gilded egg and dart moulding, and a rich convex moulding of laurel leaves also gilded running round the top of the cove.

The cove of the ceiling was in twelve sections divided from each other by elaborate painted pilasters, and in the corners by arms nad trophies. The central panels on the short sides according to the inscription on the drawing of the Death of Oscar were 4 x 5ft. By this calculation the remaining panels on the short sides were 4 x 4ft, and on the long sides the panels must have been 4 x 10ft and 4 x 7ft. The wall below the cove was topped by a fine white and gilt cornice.

From Runciman's description of his first project for the decoration of 1770, the arrangement of the ceiling was essentially

fixed by that time. The difference from Baxter's original project was that the main field of the ceiling was now occupied by a large oval and no longer a simple rectangle. The subdivisions of the cove were also slightly different. In his letter of 1770 Runciman speaks of the central oval, though his Peleus and Thetis drawing was rectangular. He also seems to intend that the pictures in the cove should be three to a long side, and two to a short side, not three and three as they eventually were. From the earliest drawings it appears that the surfaces of the ceiling were to be treated as picture fields in the manner of 'quadri reportati', and that at no time, even before Runciman came into contact with modern taste in Rome, was any kind of illusionistic painting intended, though considering the enormous size of the ceiling, particularly of the central picture, it is difficult to see how the kind of painting originally proposed in Baxter's drawing could ever have been thought appropriate. Runciman was almost compelled by the nature of his problem to adopt a more monumental style.

Technically we can judge the Penicuik paintings by those that survive in the Cowgate Chapel. They were evidently painted straight on to the plaster which was primed with white, or a very light colour. The painting is very free, and the paint transparent. There is no evidence of under drawing, and although enough preliminary drawings survive to indicate that the compositions were quite carefully worked out before hand, it seems that in the finished compositions the drawing was done with the brush. The technique is therefore very little changed from that of the Nories in their paintings on plaster. The resulting painterliness, combined with the evidently brilliant colour, must have been unique in its effect, and very striking.

Walter Ross in the commentary that he wrote on Runciman's paintings, complained about the richness and gaiety of the first

impression as perhaps out of keeping with the solemnity of the theme.¹ He particularly mentions (in this respect^{of} the secondary decoration. The whole effect must have been very rich and dazzling. Rather than out of keeping with the solemnity of the whole, the elaboration of the secondary decoration perhaps reveals the degree to which Runciman was thinking in terms of decorative effect. In this his early training gave him an immeasurable advantage over Barry whose paintings in the Adelphi are the only comparable scheme. The solemnity of Barry's theme quite overshadows any visual impact that his paintings might have had.

Runciman's approach to his subject matter was also very informal. Ross writes "no regard had been paid to the order of the poems or any connection kept up between them", the painter chose "from works of his poet in general, such subjects as could best be told by the pencil, without regard to connection".² In places Runciman illustrates particular passages quite precisely, but at other times he elaborates upon a mere suggestion in the text.

MacPherson was true to his sources to the extent that he did not try to make a single epic, but instead produced a series of poems linked by Ossian's narration and by a certain number of common characters. Runciman follows him in that the main source of unity in his scheme is the central picture of Ossian singing from which the illustrations of his songs in the surrounding ceiling cove depend. In the long sides of the cove the two central pictures, the Murder of Agandecca, and the Murder of Cairbar have an obvious symmetry of theme. In the two short sides the two central pictures tell the story of the Death of Oscar. In the remaining eight scenes there is no attempt to link them either to each other, or to the main pictures on each wall.

The central oval was the largest and most elaborate of all the pictures. It is also the best recorded. There is a good photograph of it though unfortunately it is not complete. Pl.103. There is also a

1. Ross, Description, 21.
2. Ibid., 20.

complete sketch in pen and pencil with the draperies and flesh tints of the main figures coloured in oil. Pl.104. So far as can be seen the sketch conformed almost exactly to the finished picture. On the left it includes three figures not visible in the photograph but mentioned in the commentary. Ross writes "At each end common men in various coloured garments are pointing and gazing in contrasted postures, full of superstitious wonder".³ On the right hand side of the sketch these figures are not clearly defined. In the foreground of the sketch two dogs can be seen, and these appear in one of the other photographs that includes the bottom edge of the oval. Two drawings of dogs, one in the NGS and one in Lord Runciman's collection may possibly be related to this part of the composition.

The composition of this picture is taken from Marcantonio's engraving of Raphael's Judgement of Paris. Ossian is seated to the left of the picture in the position and pose of Raphael's Paris. Opposite him, dressed in white, at the centre of a group equivalent to the three goddesses, sits Malvina, his chief listener. Other figures are grouped round. To the right are rocky cliffs with a waterfall and trees above. The background is a seascape with a stormy sky. In the sky the cloudshapes are made to suggest "the ghosts of departed heroes, supposed to ride in the clouds and be delighted with the songs of bards., 'The awful faces of other times look from the clouds of Crona'".⁴ These figures are suggested by the Gods presiding in the sky over the Judgement of Paris in Raphael's composition. Runciman has made this supernatural event into a second centre of interest. The figures closest to the bard, including the dogs, are in various attitudes of rapt attention, but on the edge of the group various figures react with excited gestures to the phenomenon in the sky.

On the extreme left a soldier is seated and looks up in the direction in which the figure next to him points. This latter figure

3. Ibid., 25.

4. Ibid., 24.

appears in a rough sketch on the back of page 55 of the sketch book. A man immediately behind the old Culdee who is leaning over Ossian looks round to see what is happening. In the centre a small girl attracts the attention of the woman standing next to her and points to the sky. Behind and above Malvina a man in a helmet raises his hands and looks upwards with a gesture of astonishment. To the extreme right a further pointing hand is just visible in the photograph, while a small boy points to the sky and is silenced by his mother.

Runciman it seems likely chose Raphael's composition in place of anything more obviously dramatic for the stability that he needed at the centre of his scheme. The inclusion of these animated secondary figures helps to make the composition more lively. It also helps to convert it to the shape of the oval. This is not immediately apparent in the photograph which by reproducing only part of the composition makes it seem rather awkwardly related to its frame.

The figure of Malvina is one of the few apparently antique figures in the ceiling. She could derive from one of several Roman matrons. Ross suggests she is derived from the Agrippina in the Capitoline. He remarks however; "Her drapery is not ideal; I am told it is the arasaig yet known in the Highlands".⁵ If in fact this is the case it is remarkably close in effect to classical drapery. The costume throughout the ceiling appears to be a blend of fanciful Celtic and antique. Ross's remark is of interest however as it does testify to a degree of antiquarian intention in the design of the ceiling, however slight.

The oil sketch gives the only visible guide to the kind of colour that Runciman used. It matches the colour described in some detail by Gray in the paintings of St. Margaret. It is light in tone and the hues are nicely contrasted. Malvina wears a white

5. Ibid., 23.

robe shading to brown in the shadows beneath, but the dark areas in the folds above are blue. The girl upon whom she leans wears a robe which is dark blue green above in its shadows, but bright yellow green on the knees. It is seen against the robe of the youth standing behind which shades from a strong dark pink to a light pinkish white. The figure gesticulating behind him has blue lights in his helmet. Next to this figure the girl pointing to the sky wears pale blue white. The woman on her left wears pink shading to ochre, and the third girl in this group wears light bright blue.

The Culdee bending over Ossian wears a habit of pinkish brown. Ossian himself has white hair and beard, and a robe which is deep sea-green in the shadow and light blue in the light. His harp is gold. The flesh tones throughout are warm. Judging by what is visible in the Cowgate Church, though there the paintings are dirty and damaged, this use of colour must have been typical of his work in this medium and at this time. Working in thin paint directly onto a light ground, the colour must everywhere have been light and brilliant. His use of clear strong colours and the distribution of warm and cool took maximum advantage of this. The whole effect must have been dazzling. The comment in the *Earwig* on his painting of the Parting of Lord and Lady Russel at the RA in 1781, "a sturdy raw-boned Caledonian picture coloured with brick dust, charcoal and Scotch snuff",⁶ is evidence that his colouring was unconventional, though in his later oil-paintings it was less brilliant than it seems to have been at this time.

The best measure of the brilliance of his colour and handling of paint is the only surviving easel painting of 1772, the Origin of Painting. This shows the same balance of warm and cool, and the coloured shadows apparent in the oil sketch. In the painting too we can see what we cannot recapture at Penicuik, the brilliant fluency

6. The Earwig, 1781, quoted SNG Catalogue of Scottish drawings, The Parting of Lord and Lady Russel, by AR.

of the paint handling which touches the girl's white robe with delicate reflections of the boy's ochre pink robe, and lays against its white a brilliant blue ribbon. Pl. .105. The cherub who guides her hand has red and blue wings and golden hair. In the flesh tones the colour is broken in broad strokes. This gives to the drawing with the brush a lightness that absorbs and is enhanced by the eccentric drawing. In striking contrast to his contemporaries it would seem to have been their painterly qualities above all that made his paintings at Penicuik outstanding.

In a footnote in the commentary Ross writes; "Before surveying the work the painter gave me the passages of Ossian from which his pictures are taken".⁷ As we have observed the connection of the pictures to the text is fairly tenuous. Also in spite of the benefit of the references from Runciman, Ross appears to make at least two mistakes in noting them. The scene in the central picture is based on a passage actually in Fingal BkIV though given by Ross as BkIII.⁸ Ossian introducing a digression about his past speaks momentarily in the first person, and so indirectly describes himself as he is at the time of reciting; "Daughter of the hand of snow! (Malvina), I was not so mournful and blind, not so dark and forlorn when Everallan loved me",⁹ he says referring to Everallan mother of his son Oscar. There are however several other passages from which the picture could equally be drawn,¹⁰ and in effect it is a general picture of the poet reciting rather than an illustration of a particular text. There is no authority in the text for the other figures in the picture apart from Ossian and Malvina. Here as elsewhere Runciman is improvising.

7. Ross, Description, 22.

8. Ibid., 22.

9. The Poems of Ossian, with an Introduction by Hugh Blair, 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1765, Fingal BkIV, I, 72.

10. Temora, BkI, II, 72; Cathloda, Duan I, etc.

In the four corners of the ceiling were four massive river gods representing four great rivers of Scotland. Pl's.106 & 107. The idea for these figures goes back to the original inspiration of the Marriage of Peleus and Thetis, and so they provide the only clear link between the first project and the finished paintings. In the commentary they are given titles, or epithets, in the manner of Homer.¹¹ They were, at the North end the Spey 'Overturner of woods', and the Tay 'Tamer of Bulls'. At the other end were the Clyde 'Protector of ships' and the Tweed 'Divider of kingdoms'. Each of the river gods sits in a landscape appropriate to its epithet. These four figures make one of the most interesting parts of the ceiling. They are conceived in a grand Michaelangelesque style, but each is set in a landscape appropriate to the river that he represents. This combination treated in this way is original. It enlarges the traditional idea of the symbolic river god, and makes it a real poetic image of the river. Its development can be seen in the series of drawings for the river gods. There are nine in all, more than for any other part of the ceiling. This may simply be an accident of survival, but it might also reflect their importance in the artist's mind.

Of the nine drawings that survive, three are not related to any of the finished figures in composition or pose. Two of these by their technique and general character seem to belong with the drawings for the ceiling. One is a rough drawing of a river god seated full face with a flowing urn under his arm and one beneath his foot. ^{Pl.107a} The general shape that this makes is appropriate for one of the spandrel shaped spaces of the ceiling and the drawing may therefore be an early thought for one of the four figures. The second of these drawings, is clearly spandrel shaped. The figure is seated with his head resting on his arms which are supported on an urn. He is surrounded by foliage. The artist is therefore considering the problem of how to set the figure and is moving towards the idea of using landscape.Pl.108.

11. Ross, Description, 44.

The third of these drawings may not be for Penicuik. It is a chalk drawing partly reworked in pen. The use of chalk is unusual at this time it seems, and it may therefore be that an inscription on the back, which says that the drawing was for work at Newhall House is correct though it is in a later hand. Runciman evidently had connections with Newhall, and at least three of his pictures were there in the early nineteenth century, however there is no record of any decoration of this kind. In the drawing the figure is derived from the large antique river god in the Capitoline arranged on a horizontal base line therefore not suitable for the kind of composition that Runciman eventually adopted. In conception however the drawing clearly does relate to the Penicuik figures and it is therefore appropriate to consider it with them.

The remaining six drawings belong more directly in the development of the finished compositions. Five of them have names of the rivers they were intended to represent written on them. There are two drawings for the river Tay. The most finished of these is the only one of the drawings to show clearly the final conception of the river god sitting in a proper landscape. Pl.109. The drawing is inscribed "Tay". The figure is, in the body and legs, the same as the painting, but faces to the left not to the right. The head with his hand on his chin is that of the Sistine Jeremiah. In the painting the change of direction of the gaze, the headdress and the position of the arms seem to come from the figure of Lazarus in an engraving of Sebastiano's Raising of Lazarus. The landscape in the drawing of trees, river and mountains is developed in the painting into a beautiful river landscape that might well be an actual view of the Tay. In the middle distance there are three bulls on a promontory, and beyond there is a view of distant mountains.

The second drawing for the Tay has the name written on it but it has been blotted out. ^{Pl.109A.} The composition is for a left hand spandrel, and therefore for a different position to that which the river was

given in the ceiling. The figure is basically the same as the final version though reversed and with the legs differently placed. There is no indication of any landscape.

The Clyde like the Tay is a figure in repose against an open landscape. There is a broad river with ships on it, a six arched bridge, and mountains in the distance. Ross says of this that it was 'intended no doubt for the bason at Greenock'. The river god has an oar as his symbol of navigation, a detail that goes back to the Mars and Rhea sarcophagus that was the model for the Marriage of Peleus and Thetis. The pose of the Clyde is adapted from that of Jupiter in the ceiling of the Sala de Teste, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua.¹² In the less finished of the two drawings for this picture the figure already has this pose though as it is rather more upright it is closer to its model. ^{Pl. 109B.} In Giulio's painting Jupiter is sitting rather than reclining. In the second and earlier drawing, the figure, facing the opposite way, was evidently intended for a different position in the ceiling to that it was finally given. The drawing is labelled Clyde. The figure is an adaptation of Michaelangelo's figure of Night in the Medici Chapel. The position of the arms has been changed but the head body and legs are all from the statue. The river god is set among reeds with an urn beneath his left elbow. At the stage at which this drawing was done therefore Runciman was thinking of treating his subject in the conventional manner. Pl. 110.

The two remaining river gods are set in landscapes, but are also engaged in the activity from which their epithet is taken. The Spey is Michaelangelo's Day in reverse. That figure's tense contraposto has been adapted to a sweeping gesture with which he overturns the woods by which he is surrounded. He is sitting also in the midst of a storm among mountains. The drawing

12. Hartt, Giulio Romano, Plate .

is facing in the opposite direction to the painting, and thus in the same direction as Michaelangelo's figure on which both are modelled. In the drawing however the force of Day's gesture has been softened by modifying the position of his left arm. Pl.111. This suggests that the idea of matching the figure's gesture to the river's characteristic activity occurred to Runciman only during the later stages of the genesis of the project, like his idea of using landscape.

The Tweed 'divider of kingdoms' is seen literally thrusting apart two great masses of land, the walls of a valley. His figure is derived, either from the Sistine God creating Adam, of which Runciman did a drawing, or from Raphael's variation on this figure in the Loggia "God dividing the Earth from the Waters". Just visible in the photograph of the painting is a river landscape showing that the figure is actually seated in a river valley, like a giant with his hands on the mountain tops. The origin of this idea can be seen in the drawing which shows the figure in a ravine in much the same pose as that of the painting, but the urn beside him and the reeds make the scale that of a small mountain stream not the mighty river in the painting. Pl.112.

These four compositions show very clearly how Runciman depended on Michaelangelo, but they are also highly original, for the adaptation of Michaelangelo to the idea of poetic landscape is really unique. It reveals very well the two sides of Runciman's experience, and successfully brings them together.

There were twelve pictures in the cove. Nine of these we can make out more or less from the photographs. Pl's.113, 114, 115. The remaining three which were over the windows are unrecorded except in the description. The photographer evidently thought it was not worth while photographing them against the light.

A rough sketch in the NGS has been thought to bear some relation to one of the pictures on this side, but a comparison with the description demonstrates that this was no more than a similarity of subject. The picture described was "Hunting Piece from Cathloda, Duan II".¹³ It seems to have been a kind of Calydonian boar hunt improvised upon the merest suggestion in the text. The passage referred to in Cathloda concerns Strina-Dona 'stately huntress of Tormoth wild'.¹⁴ She is wooed by two brothers who fight, and one is killed. No boar hunt is mentioned, but her father was 'Rurmar, hunter of boars'.

According to the description in the picture "She (Strina-Dona) has just let fly her arrow with an exulting air; and seems to think her shaft alone fatal to the boar". The two brothers are described as vying with each other. "One of the lovers is receiving the animal in front, upon his spear, to show his courage, the other aims a blow at him with his sword from behind a tree to prove his dexterity".¹⁵ The description also mentions a second female, and ends up particularly praising the landscape.

The drawing does not really fit this description at all. Pl.118. There is a female figure to the left with a bow and arrow, but there are also five or six other figures. Several of them are on horse-back, and one is on the ground beneath the boar's feet. The three main figures are very close to the account in the younger Philostratus of Meleager at the hunt. There is also an account in the elder Philostratus of a boar hunt in which the hunters are described as on horse-back.¹⁶ A third and possibly the most likely source of inspiration for the drawing is in a Capitoline Sarcophagus with the Calydonian Boar Hunt.¹⁷ Ross writes "the hunting of nymphs is a beautiful and favourite subject of the pencil".¹⁸ Runciman's

13. Ross, Description, 32.
14. Ossian, II, 260, Cathloda, Duan II.
15. Ross, Description, 33.
16. Philostratus, I, 28.
17. Bauermeister, Antike Denkmaler, II, 918.
18. Ross, Description, 33.

drawing might render the subject quite independently of his work at Penicuik. On the other hand it may have been his interest in the classical subject that led him to this particular improvisation on a hint from Ossian.

From the description this hunting scene was at one end of the window wall. At the opposite end was a picture even less closely related to the text. In it some kind of megalithic monument was being erected, apparently to Ossian himself. "The four stones amid the withered grass, the narrow house of the warrior". Three robust bold figures are pushing up one of the stones with amazing strength; and at a distance some others, chiefs of rank, are attending the ceremony in solemn sadness.¹⁹ This was in keeping with the contemporary revival of interest in what were regarded as Druidic remains, and their identification with this period of remotest antiquity. Burke had already put Stonehenge into the category of the sublime, and it is clearly with this intention that the megalithic monument is introduced here. Exactly what kind of monument it was intended to be is not clear. Three stones would have made a dolmen. Four as MacPherson and Runciman have it, are more difficult to compose into any recognisable structure. It is nevertheless interesting as it anticipates Barry's use of megalithic monuments in the background of his painting of Lear two years later, and indeed the whole Stonehenge symbolism of Blake.

We know something of the shape of this composition from a comment that Ross makes. He writes,; "It is certainly to be wished that he (the artist) had paid more regard to the triangle, which, without all question is a beautiful form. The stones, and labouring figures in the last picture, are a fine instance of its superiority, and I should not have been displeased to have met with more frequent instances of the same kind".²⁰

19. Ibid. 43.

20. Ibid. 47.

The third picture occupied the central space on this side, and was therefore the very awkward proportion of 4 x 10ft. It was evidently a specific illustration of a passage in the text.

Cormac, boy king of Ireland and successor of Cuchullin was murdered in his own hall by Cairbar who usurped the throne.²¹ This incident precedes the main action of Temora (which is Fingal's revenge on Cairbar). The story is told in retrospect by one of the bards.

The picture apparently represented the actual moment of the murder when Cairbar drags Cormac from his throne.

"It is impossible to imagine a more terrific figure than that of Cairbar. The bold contour and high swelling muscles; the red hair, dreadful visage, and horror of the action are wonderfully heightened by the youth, beauty and well expressed innocence of Cormac".²²

Judging by the description this composition must have been the central one on this side. The murder took place in front of the assembled court and in theme exactly parallels the "murder of Agandecca" the central picture on the opposite wall.

"I am unable to convey in words (says the commentator) the terror of the women flying off on both sides, or do justice to the boldness of their figures or the variety of their attitudes.... Terror and astonishment appear among the bards and guests; and yet what is highly admirable the character and rank of each remains conspicuous in their passion. The same thing is observable in the variety of their draperies in this piece: they are light and substantial, narrow or broad, according to the different ages of the women, and rank of the bards and others present".²³

21. Ossian, II, 29, Temora, BkI.

22. Ross, Description, 39.

23. Ibid. 40.

Clearly, like the Agandecca, facing it this was a dramatic and elaborate piece with a large number of figures.

The central picture in the opposite wall was the Death of Agandecca, Pl. 113. from the third Bk. of Fingal.²⁴ James Barralet had exhibited a picture of the same subject at the RA of 1771,²⁵ but there is no reason to suppose that Runciman was influenced by this. He himself painted a second subject from the story of Agandecca at some later date for "The shade of Agandecca appearing to Fingal in a dream" was one of the three paintings by Runciman at Newhall at the beginning of the nineteenth century.²⁶

The 3rd book of Fingal tells the story of an expedition of Fingal to Ireland to relieve Cuchullin who has been invaded and defeated by Suaran son of Fingal's enemy Starno, King of Lochlin. The story of Agandecca is told within the main action of the book and is an episode from Fingal's earlier life. Starno lured Fingal to Lochlin with the promise of his daughter Agandecca's hand in marriage, and with the intention of murdering him. Agandecca warned Fingal of the plot, and in revenge Starno killed her in front of Fingal. "She fell at Fingal's feet like a wreath of snow that slides from the rocks of Ronan; when the woods are still and the shadow deepens in the vale".²⁷

In the picture Agandecca lies dying to the right of centre. She is in the pose of the sleeping Psyche from the Sala de Psyche by Giulio Romano.²⁸ She is at the centre of a recognisable Lamentation group. Starno is standing to the left of her with a drawn sword, making a very dark figure in contrast to hers. Fingal stands to the left again. He is raising one arm in an expression of horror and starts back. Behind him are two soldiers. The composition is closed by a group of his soldiers in the distance "seizing their

24. Ossian, I, 55, Fingal Bk III.

25. RA Catalogue 1771.

26. Alan Ramsay, Gentle Shepherd, Newhall ed. 1808, Introduction.

27. Ossian, I, 55, Fingal Bk III.

28. Hartt, Giulio Romano, II, Pl.

arms and pressing forward to support him".²⁹ At the other end of the composition Starno's men are coming up. One of them is sounding the alarm striking a shield hanging on a tree, and "prodigious mountains, covered with snow, rise in the background".

By movement in and out of depth, the alternation of light and shade, and the loose and varied profile of the composition Runciman has avoided the frieze-like effect which such a long narrow composition would obviously tend to produce. Fingal's cloak rises up to meet the frame and so underline the division between himself and Starno, who stands isolated. The body of Agandecca instead of emphasizing the flatness of the composition forms the base of an almost free standing pyramid.

Next to the Agandecca picture, on the left was "Cormar attacking a spirit of the waters".Pl.114. Calmar, one of Cuchullin's warriors recalls the prowess of his ancestor Cormar, the 'first of his race' who was apparently a fearless sailor. He had once put to sea in a particularly violent storm but turned back to land:

"He feared and came to land. Then blushed that he feared at all. He rushed again among the waves to find the son of the wind. Three youths guide the bounding bark. He stood with the sword and shield. When the low hung vapour passed, he took it by the curling head, and searching its dark womb with his steel. The son of the wind forsook the air. The moon and stars returned".³⁰

Cormar stands in the middle of the composition in a violent attitude seizing the crest of the wave with one hand. Tomory suggests that his pose is that of the Gladiator, but it seems to derive more directly from a variation of this figure in Raphael's composition of the Flood in the Loggia.

29. Ross, Description, 31.

30. Ossian, I, 56, Fingal Bk III.

Just visible behind the wave to the right is a recoiling figure. 'The son of the wind'. To the left the three steersmen are just visible in the gloom. The violence of the storm is well expressed by the tipped up and twisted shape of the boat emerging from the gloom right into the foreground, though the commentary remarks that "the painter does not seem sufficiently acquainted with the management of the vessel upon canvas".³¹ This is in fact a particularly characteristic composition where Runciman not being dependent for his effect upon outline or sculpturally coherent shape is able to exploit his consequent freedom of handling in the interests of expression. The clearest part of the composition is the figure of Cormac in the middle, on either side it disappears into suggestive gloom, "the light is only a lesser gloom opening to discover the figure of Cormar".³² This and the change of direction in the composition between the movement of the boat and the way Cormar is facing, admirably describe the mood of the storm. "The colouring, says the commentary, is a reflection of nature".

The right hand part of the composition is recorded in reverse in an etching though rather compressed. Pl. 119. The right side of the etching contains three figures but they seem to be different from the figures just discernible in the photograph and are running away rather than steering the boat. The position of the boat is also changed. From the etching it is clear to see in the figure of Cormac how the general lines of an action were enough for Runciman's purpose. He never designs a figure in action that is balanced or contained in itself. Instead his figures are contained within the wider lines of the whole composition, so here. The action runs fluently right through the whole composition. The main figure only concentrates and transmits it.

31. Ross, Description, 38.

32. Ibid. 37.

The drawing for this subject has already been discussed as it is page 75 of the sketch-book.Pl.120. It differs considerably from the finished painting. The direction of the composition has been changed, and Cormar is in a different pose. Contrary to the description he appears to be managing the boat. The drawing is however only very loosely finished and the detail is therefore not very clear.

The scene at the other end of this wall to the right of Agandecca is a fantasy, "Scandinavian wizards making their incantations". According to Ross, Runciman found his authority for this scene in Sulmalla of Lumon:

"Where spirits descend by night in dark red streams of fire; there mixed with the murmur of waters rose the voices of aged men; they call the forms of night to aid them in their war".³³

Ross writes, "The landscape is exactly that of the poet: a roaring torrent and high broken rocks around: in these rocks the painter has opened a large and dark cave: before the mouth of it stands the image of Loda, a black unshapely Gothic figure; round the image within the circle, a number of skulls and bones lie scattered, five old wizards in distorted frightful attitudes are howling around. A dismal light is thrown on this group from the fiery stream and uncouth ghostly forms issuing from the cave, and hovering in the sky: bats and owls flutter on each side, and over the neighbouring torrent the full moon is seen rising".³⁴

From the dim record of this composition in the photograph it can be seen that it was a splendid bit of fantasy.Pl.115. In the middle the image of 'Loda' can be seen. This is mentioned in Fingal BkIII as the 'stone of power'. In a footnote MacPherson writes "This almost certainly alludes to the religion of Lochlin, and the

33. Ossian, II, 229, Sulmalla of Lumon.

34. Ross, Description, 41.

stone of power here mentioned is the image of one of the deities of Scandinavia".³⁵ Runciman seems to have used this as the basis of his hilarious black Polynesian idol.

The whole effect of this picture is comic, though it is carried out with enough gusto to avoid being ridiculous. Although Michaelangelo is remembered in one of the seated wizards, Runciman has made no attempt to emulate Fuseli's use of style for bizarre and horrific effect. His approach is more light hearted, and he seems more at home with the pictorial values of landscape, colour, and light and shade, than sublime effect.

The central pictures on the two end walls represented two scenes from the same episode in Temora Bk.I, the death of Oscar Ossian's son, treacherously killed by the usurper Cairbar.

The first scene is on the north wall.Pl.106. Cairbar invited Oscar to a pre-battle feast with the intention of picking a fight with him, and so taking him at a disadvantage kill him. Oscar acquitted himself so valiantly in the ensuing fight however that the poet writes: "Cairbar shrinks before Oscar's sword and creeps in darkness behind his stone. He lifted the spear in secret and pierced my Oscar's side".³⁶

Runciman handles this scene very well. In the centre of the composition stands Oscar in a heroic pose engaged with an enemy who almost repeats his pose in reverse. Behind him Cairbar is creeping out from behind his stone, looking very underhand. Behind Cairbar, rather in the attitude of one who prefers not to notice what is going on, stands Olla, his bard, 'raising the song of battle'.

The two fighting figures seem to be derived from figures in the main battle painting in the Sala di Troia in the Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, by Giulio.³⁷ The peculiar shape of the right hand figure's

35. Ossian, I, 52.

36. Ossian, II, 17, Temora Bk I.

37. Hartt, Giulio Romano, II, Pl .

shield however is taken from an Amazon sarcophagus in the Capitoline, and so perhaps there may be other references to relief sculpture in the composition.

The picture is an excellent example of Runciman's method of composition and his handling of the figure in action, both of which are very distinctive. The figure of Oscar for example is spread almost flat across the picture and described in long curling lines which completely ignore the conventional requirements of contour, and which run on through his shield and drapery into the figure of his opponent. He similarly handled leans away, but apparently without the vital support of his right leg which, at least in the photograph, is invisible. He is balanced instead by the overall lines of the composition. Nowhere does Runciman seek to make an architectural unit out of his figures, he relies instead upon his composition to contain them. His approach to history painting therefore remains that of a landscape painter.

According to the commentary the tone of this scene was set by Oscar's bright red cloak. By contrast the opposing scene at the other end of the room, Oscar's death, was in "the very tone of the poet, dark brown and melancholy".³⁸ Pl.116.

In this scene Oscar is seen lying on his shield supporting himself on one arm, in a pose derived from the Death of Ananias, He is surrounded by his mourning friends who have come up too late. At his head Fingal, his grandfather wipes away a tear on his cloak. At his feet Ossian, his father hides his head in his hands in a gesture of despair. Immediately behind raising his head in most lugubrious melancholy is Oscar's favourite dog, Bran. Other figures form an enclosing group.

38. Ross, Description, 29-30.

There is a finished drawing for this in the N.G.S. which so far as can be seen differs only slightly in detail. Pl. 121. Oscar's left arm in the drawing is slightly bent and the figure is therefore closer to the Ananias. The position of Ossian's feet has been changed from the sketch to the finished work. The figure leaning over Oscar in the drawing faces to the left not to the right, and the profile of the group behind is altered slightly. Visible in the drawing but not the finished picture is Oscar's spear lying diagonally across the foreground and so leading the eye into depth, so that again he avoids the sculptural group and deliberately breaks it up.

On the left of the Death of Oscar is "Fingal encountering the spirit of Loda" from Carric Thura Pl. 116. Fingal takes on and defeats the spirit of Loda himself (Odin according to Macpherson).

"He (the spirit) lifted high his shadowy spear! He bent forward his dreadful height. Fingal advancing, drew his sword; the blade of dark brown Luno. The gleaming path of the steel winds through the gloomy ghost. The form fell shapeless into air, like a column of smoke, which the staff of the boy disturbs as it rises from the half extinguished furnace. The spirit of Loda shrieked, as rolled into himself, he rose on the wind".³⁹

Fingal stands legs firmly apart, and faces his ghostly opponent four-square with his arm raised to strike. His pose may be derived from one of the representations of Diomedes in his chariot in the Sala di Troia, or from an engraving after Polidoro of Theseus.⁴⁰ His body is twisted in a most curious way, and his right arm is radically foreshortened. In spite of the oddness of the figure Runciman succeeds in expressing most effectively, both Fingal's determination, and his readiness for violent action.

39. Ossian, I, 279., Carrick Thura.

40. Hartt, Giulio Romano, II, Pl. ; Cherubino Alberti after Polidoro, Theseus in the Garden of the Hesperides, Bartsch, XVII, 85, no.109.

The spirit approaches from the right seeming to materialise out of a streaming cloud. He is reminiscent of the figure of God creating Adam in the Sistine, but is perhaps closest to Tintoretto's figure of God creating the birds and fishes in the Accademia, Venice.⁴¹ The detail of his lower foot is especially reminiscent of the Tintoretto. If he has in fact used the Tintoretto, Runciman must have known it from an engraving.

In this figure too Runciman has ignored conventional anatomy in order better to express energy. While the spirit's face seems to look forward, his right arm is bent back, and his torso seems to face directly behind him. With the exception of his shield and one foot the rest of the figure seems composed of more or less abstract streamlined shapes, half cloud, half drapery. Both of the figures in this picture are seen against the sky, but in the background are what seem to be trees.

In this and the preceding picture Runciman's treatment of anatomy is certainly outlandish. One of the peculiarities of the group of painters with whom he associated was that none of them studied the human figure from the life. They took their poses, and perhaps much else, from the antique and from the Renaissance masters, but in their drawing they made their figures subservient to the needs of their pictures. Runciman's attitude to the figure was no different to theirs, though the results are very distinctive.

To the right of the death of Oscar, Fingal rescues Corban - Carglas. Pl.117.

Corban-Carglas was kept prisoner in a cave by Fingal's enemy, Starno, King of Lochlin. Fingal was blown by a storm to Lochlin while on an expedition to the Orkneys. On a nighttime reconnoitre against Starno he discovered Corban-Carglas in her cave, by accident, and rescued her.

41. Reproduced. H. Tietze : Tintoretto, London, 1948, Pl.28.

"Who art thou", said Fingal, "voice of night"?

She trembling turned away.

"Who art thou in thy darkness"?

She shrunk into the cave. The King loosed the thong from her hands".⁴²
The scene is moonlit, though Runciman has taken some liberty with the direction of the light. Fingal is seen armed, approaching from the right. His right arm is raised in a gesture of astonishment.

The girl is seen her head bowed and turned away. Her hair is blowing in the wind, and her drapery forms a graceful curve around her head. Her captivity seems to be notional, as she is standing at liberty in front of the cave. Though thongs are mentioned in the text nothing is visible that might constrain her either in the photograph or in the etchings that derive from the composition. Tomory suggests that the girl's figure may derive from Rosa's etching of Phytalus and Ceres, and this certainly seems a likely kind of source. It is also very like Polidoro's figure of the capture Andromeda engraved by Volpato.⁴³
Her blowing drapery may have an antique source also however.

There are three etchings derived from this composition. Two are closely similar to each other though one is considerably larger than the other. All of them vary considerably from the painting, though in them all the figure of the girl is the same.

In the two largest ^{etchings} the composition is reversed and expanded to include a pine tree and an open landscape with hills and a very Scottish looking castle behind Fingal. Pl's. 122 & 123. His pose has been changed into one of those bandy-legged slightly contraposto poses with billowing drapery which Runciman favours so much, and which so effectively represent a dramatic action instantaneously suspended. The composition is overall more elaborate than the painting and the figures occupy much less of the total space. It is held together by the light, and the balanced distribution of light and shade. The figures are treated simply as objects in the landscape.

42. Ossian, II, 244, Cathloda, Duan I.

43. Tomory, Fuseli, 82; Giovanni Volpato after Polidoro, Perseus and Andromeda.

The third etching is in the same sense as the painting but compresses the composition into a vertical shape. Pl. 124. Fingal approaches from beneath and behind and is only partly visible. Though it perhaps describes more accurately the actual movement of the finding, it is overall less effective as a composition.

At the other end of the room to the left of the central picture is "Gelchosa mourning over Lamderg" from Fingal Bk V,⁴⁴ Pl. 106. This is a story told within the main story of Fingal by one of the bards. Lamderg fought his rival, Ullin, for Gelchosa and killed him, but was himself mortally wounded. Gelchosa mourned beside him for three days till she herself died. In the photograph only her figure can be seen seated in gloom her head bowed and her hands clasped. It seems to be a graceful figure with abundant drapery, but one arm and one shoulder bare. Instead of making it ponderous and sculptural Runciman has used the drapery to unify the figure with its background and so emphasise the delicacy of the head and arm. At her feet the body of Lamderg can perhaps be partially discerned.

To the right of the central picture is "Oina-Morul serenading Ossian", from the poem of that name.⁴⁵ Pl. 106. This is a kind of "contingence of Scipio". Ossian, who is dimly visible to the right of the photograph, was given Oina-Morul by her father in gratitude for his services against a rather belligerent suitor called Ton-Thormod, whom Ossian had succeeded in overcoming. Oina-Morul comes to Ossian in the night and tells him in a song that she in fact loves Ton-Thormod. Ossian magnanimously agrees to let her return to him. The commentary remarks upon the impropriety of portraying the girl alone with Ossian so late at night, but excuses it as only underlining the hero's continence. The scene is lit by torchlight. The right hand side is really indecipherable in the photograph. The figure of the girl however is clearly visible playing her harp. She is delicately drawn and somewhat elongated in proportion. Runciman seems to fine down his women as he exaggerates the muscles of his men. Once again she is completely unsculptural and is described by light not line.

44. Ossian, I, 102, Fingal Bk V.

45. Ossian, II, Oina-Morul.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Staircases and the Cowgate Chapel.

There were two staircases at Penicuik, symmetrically placed on either side of the entrance hall. They were identical in plan, an oval 18ft x 20ft with a domed ceiling. The arrangement of the decorative panels in the domes was different however. One had four large oval picture spaces. These were presumably wider than they were high. The second stair had twelve small panels, oval, but vertically placed. Runciman had originally intended to decorate both stairs, and planned decoration accordingly, but one was left unfinished, and was painted by John Bonnar at a later date. The drawings for his proposed decoration of the second stair can however be identified with some certainty, and it will therefore be appropriate to discuss them here.

The paintings that Runciman carried out of the Life of St. Margaret are described by John Gray in some detail. As this is the only direct evidence that we have of their appearance, it is worth quoting in full. Gray first of all describes John Bonnar's paintings.

"We have now to examine the mural decorations of Penicuik House, which include the celebrated Ossian ceiling of the room designed for a picture-gallery, and now used as the Drawing-room. But first, two smaller cupolas surmounting the staircases which give access to the upper floor of the mansion are deserving of notice. One is decorated in upright compartments, showing Jupiter in his car drawn by snakes, wielding his thunderbolts, with a moonlit landscape beneath, and on the other side a figure of Apollo, with yellow rays circling his head, driving his team of fiery white steeds over a landscape which is beginning to blush beneath the rosy light of dawn. Between these are

ranged a series of allegorical figures of the Months, each marked with a sign of the Zodiac, and surrounded by scrolls, grotesque birds, and beasts, and vases. The whole is relieved against a light green background, and the compartments are divided by broad bands of ochre.

This curious example of the decorative art of the end of the last century is the work of John Bonnar, then a decorative painter in Edinburgh; and when, a hundred years after its execution, his grandson and great-grandson, who were at the time pursuing the same business in the same city, cleaned and restored the work, along with the Runciman ceilings, their ancestor's signature was disclosed upon a corner of its surface.

The other cupola is decorated by the hand of Alexander Runciman, with scenes from the life of St. Margaret of Scotland, whose history furnished only the other year a subject for the brush of another of the most imaginative of our Scottish painters, Sir Noel Paton. Curiously enough we can find no single reference to this important St. Margaret series in any of the biographies of Runciman, or in the anonymous pamphlet, published in 1773, which so elaborately describes the ceiling of the Ossian Hall. Both series are executed in oil colours upon the plaster. Here the decorations consist of four oval compartments, each occupied with a scene from the life of the Queen.

The first shows The Landing of St. Margaret. Its background is a rich blue sky, and a distance of stormy sea. In the centre is King Malcolm, clad in a broad Scottish bonnet with a little white plume, red knee-breeches, white hose and white shoes, with ample rosettes, and with a red cloak flapping around him in voluminous folds. With one hand he leads the lady, robed in a yellow mantle and a white dress, her long yellow hair tossed by the wind, and with the other points energetically towards the church before them, where white-robed monks, with clasped hands, are awaiting their arrival.

The second subject is The Royal Wedding. The pair are being united by a venerable and aged ecclesiastic with a grey beard, whose bronzed, weather-beaten countenance tells splendidly against his elaborate white vestments. To his right is the King, crowned and robed in red, placing the ring on the hand of the Queen, who stands draped in gold-brocaded white and green. An altar appears to our right, and besides it a mail-clad knight, with head bowed in worship. The figures of women are introduced to our left, and white flowers and a steaming censer lie on the ruddy marble pavement beneath.

The third subject shows the manner of the saint's queenship. She is known to her people in the breaking of bread; clad in the same robes that she wore at the marriage festival, she is feeding the poor, and her husband, in his red mantle and wearing his royal crown, follows in attendance upon her, bearing a heaped platter.

The fourth subject shows the final development of Queen Margaret's saintship. Having on earth filled herself with the life of heaven, she is now seen, white-clad, and with a red robe falling from her shoulders like the mortal life that she is done with, ascending inevitably into skies, where the clouds dispart to disclose the benignant figure of the Almighty Father and the white shape of the Holy Dove. Beneath is outspread a familiar landscape which she is leaving forever - the Fifeshire hills appear on the right on the farther side of the Firth, and beneath is the town of Edinburgh, with the Palace, and the Castle rock crested with her chapel, and to the left the Pentlands which overlook Penicuik, with a kindly ray streaming from above, and irradiating their summit.

In spite of all deductions that may be made on account of occasional crudities and defects, and of the glaring anachronisms of costume that are apt to offend our more archaeologically cultured eyes, the series is a remarkable one, with great richness and variety of

colouring, and with a dramatic power which goes directly to the heart of the legendary tale, and portrays its incidents in a vivid and impressive manner. Dealing for the most part with definite history, the series is more complete in its realisation than was possible in some of the visionary subjects from Ossian which the painter afterwards essayed in the Hall of Penicuik House.

The three last-named subjects are signed: the second bears the date of "Sept. 7, 1772", the third "Octr. 14, 1772", and the fourth "Octr. 6, 1772". The inscriptions are interesting as showing that the subjects were executed immediately after the painter's return from Italy, and as illustrating the impetuous speed with which he must have worked."¹

Gray's account is detailed and from it a fairly complete ~~clear~~ idea of the paintings can be deduced. It is especially valuable for its description of the colour, which is the only clear account we have of the colour of any part of the Penicuik decoration. It gives an impression of brilliance. The amount of white is especially notable and the way it is placed against red or gold.

From the description the main figure groups from the Landing and the Wedding can be recognised in two etchings of these subjects. Pl's. 125, 126. These are in the Landing the figure of Malcolm and Margaret, and in the Wedding, the group of the King, Queen and Bishop. They seem to be repeated in the etchings unchanged but, except that the white robed monks mentioned as in the Landing seem to appear to the left of the etching of that subject, the compositions of the etchings seem to differ in their other details. A proof exists of the central part of the Landing with the details of the rest of the composition

1. Gray, Art Treasures at Penicuik, 57-60.

sketched in pencil.² This might seem to indicate that in the etching Runciman incorporated the main figures into new compositions. There is no indication of the exact shape of the original painted ovals, but whatever it was, some modification would be necessary to reproduce them as rectangular compositions.

There is also one drawing for these decorations. It is the vigorous ink sketch of Malcolm and Margaret that has already been mentioned in discussion of the sketch book. Pl. 127. The poses are virtually the same as those in the etching. Margaret is a massive Michaelangelesque figure with the blowing hair of one of the Sistine ignudi, and the head and shoulders of the Cumaean Sybil. Malcolm combines an ignudo, or the Sistine Jonah, with a figure from the Flood. The group that they make may derive from Giulio's Rape of Helen in the Sala di Troia. Gavin Hamilton used the same group in his Rape of Helen a few years later. Runciman has changed it by making Malcolm hold Margaret's right hand in his own right hand thus bringing his arm across his body to make a serpentine energetic movement, in place of the open composition of Giulio, in which the two figures hold adjacent left hand and right hand. The energetic movement that Runciman creates by this change is carried on in the splendid flourish of drapery.

In the etching of this subject the dress seems to be more or less exactly that described by Gray. In the drawing Malcolm is wearing a short tunic and species of casque. The alteration has given him more finery, and so presumably added more colour to the finished composition.

Gray points out the difference in treatment between the St. Margaret and the Ossian pictures and ascribes it to the fact that in the former Runciman was dealing with definite history, but the difference is already sufficiently explained by the subject. The contrast between the life of an attractive saint like St. Margaret and

2. Edinburgh City Library.

the melancholy gloom of Ossian would be difficult to ignore and the two would hardly be susceptible of the same treatment. As it will be shown Runciman's attention to historical fact was pretty loose. The only real example of greater particularity was in the landscape seen in the Ascension, the view looking west over Edinburgh from the Fife hills to the Pentlands.

The life of St. Margaret as a subject is unusual. It has a precedent in two paintings in S. Andrea degli Scozzese, Rome, but this was not a very respectable one in the context as it was both Jacobite and Papist. Runciman clearly chose the subject for its national historical interest which was enough to overrule any suspicions of papism. He would certainly have been encouraged in his choice by Cumming and Paton, if they did not actually suggest the subject, for they were both deeply interested in Scottish mediaeval history. It seems likely therefore that they would also have provided him with the historical information on which the paintings were based.

The best known mediaeval chronicle was John of Fordun's Scotichronicon which had twice been republished in the eighteenth century, on the second occasion by subscription in Edinburgh.³ The book is mentioned several times in Paton's correspondence and is likely to have been regarded as a prime source for early Scottish history. Turgot's Life of St. Margaret which would have been the most obvious source for the subject was not published until 1789. Runciman's friends may well have had access to a manuscript but there is no evidence that they did. Turgot was however the basis of Fordun's account. Andrew of Wyntown's verse chronicle was another mediaeval source of which a manuscript was available to Paton a few years later and to which he may therefore have had access at that time.⁴ Holinshed was another possible source of information.

3. Johannes de Fordun, Scoti Chronicon, etc, ed Thomas Gale, Oxford, 1729. Folio ed. by Walter Goodall, 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1759.
4. James Callander to George Paton, 23 and 28 March, 1781, Maidment, Letters to Paton, 119 & 122.

In view of Runciman's usually easy going approach to his text this list of scholarly material might seem a little irrelevant. It is however just the kind material to which his friends had access and which the pictures suggest he did in fact use, even though he takes considerable liberties.

His first subject which shows Malcolm leading Margaret straight from her ship to the church is both unhistorical and ungeographical. Most of the authorities agree that Margaret came to Scotland by accident when with her family she was blown off course escaping from England to the continent, and that she arrived with no plans of marriage. When she and Malcolm were married, which was some time later, it was in Dunfermline several miles from the sea. Fordun however gives a lengthy and dramatic account of the arrival in the Forth, and of how the King himself hearing from a messenger a glowing account of the dignity and majesty of the strangers hurried down to the seashore to greet them in person, and to inquire who they were and whence they came,⁵ and then continues; "Rex igitur utcunque Margaretam viderat, et eam de regio semine, simul et imperiali genitam esse didicerat, ut eam in uxorem duceret petiit, et optinuit, tradente eam Edgardo Ethlinge fratri suo, magis suorum quam sua voluntate".⁶

From what he says one might legitimately deduce that Malcolm impulsively sought Margaret's hand in marriage on first seeing her. Thus Fordun provides the explanation of Runciman's energetic image though it is in fact quite unhistorical. The painter's picture comes very close in feeling to the touching picture that Turgot gives of the affection that Margaret inspired in her rude and energetic warrior husband.

The second picture, the Wedding of Malcolm and Margaret is a more straight forward subject. Fordun continues his account with a description of the wedding and says; "Nuptiae quidem factae sunt non procul a sinu maris quo applicuit, et magnifice celebratae anno Domini millesimo LXX, loco qui dicitur Dunfermlyn".⁷ Runciman may also have known Wyntown's account which although it is brief is slightly more explicit;

5. Fordun, *Chronicon Gentis Scotorum*, ed. by William Skene, 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1871, I, 211-2.

6. *Ibid.* I, 213.

7. *Ibid.* I, 213.

Malcolme our kyng than til his wiff
Weddit Sancte Mergret; with her his liff
In leil spouse he thocht to lede,
Depertit qwhyl thai sulde be withe dede.
Off Sancte Androwis bishope than
The second Fothauche, a connande man,
Devotly made that sacrament
That they then tuk in gud intente.⁸

The presence of the bishop and the prominence of the actual ring giving of the sacrament may recall Wyntown's account but it is scarcely full enough to provide much basis for the composition. This seems to derive from Kent's Marriage of Henry V in Kensington Palace. In fact the whole of Kent's series is quite an important precedent for Runciman's pictures.

In the etching of the Wedding the vigour of Runciman's handling transmits itself to the two chief figures and gives a remarkable ardour to their expression. The central act of Malcolm placing the ring on Margaret's finger is at the point of convergence of a number of curving lines satisfactorily balanced between the plane of the picture and the implied space. This complex knot is crowned by the dignified head of the bishop, and framed by the light and dark of King and Queen.

In these last two compositions, more clearly perhaps than in any of the other pictures that we have discussed, the peculiar quality of Runciman's work can be seen, and the special nature of his talent, in his approach to the figure. Like his friends and contemporaries he pays homage to the monumental figure style of the Renaissance, but in his approach to it he allows his contour to develop with such freedom that the resulting balance between form and design sometimes has more in keeping with French art of the next century than with

8. The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun, edited by F.J. Amours, Scottish Text Society, 6 vols, Edinburgh and London, 1903-14, IV, Bk VII,iii, 259.

contemporary ideas of style. Delacroix, applying the lessons of landscape to the figure arrived at very similar conclusions, and it is perhaps for this reason that Runciman, particularly in his etchings, seems at times to anticipate Delacroix.

Runciman seems to have made no attempt at establishing historical authenticity of detail in either of these pictures. The church in the latter is certainly mediaeval but is no particular place. The costumes so far as they are anything, are the kind of sixteenth century garments that stood in the eighteenth century for the costume of the middle ages.

The last two scenes have no visible record. St. Margaret giving alms seems to have been inspired by Fordun who following Turgot gives quite a lengthy account of the royal charity formally conducted by the King and Queen, as in penance they washed the feet of the poor and fed them.⁹ In the only particular that can be deduced from Gray's account however Runciman differed from Fordun. Gray describes Malcolm following Margaret carrying the platter of food. Fordun explicitly states, "Rex ex una, regina quidem ex altera parte Christo in pauperibus servierunt",¹⁰ thus making it clear that they participated as equals.

For the last scene there is only very slender authority. According to Fordun Margaret died in Edinburgh Castle while it was besieged by Malcolm's brother Donalbain. A miraculous mist descended on the castle which allowed her followers to take out her body in secret and carry it to Dunfermline. No-one anywhere claimed a full ascension for her. The idea may have come however from the words used in Fordun's account of her death; "Deo se precibus commendans, animam sanctam coelo reddidit...in castro...ubi illius felix anima ad Christum quem semper dilexerat migravit".¹¹ Though neither phrase is

9. Fordun, Scotichronicon, I, 216-7.

10. Ibid.I, 217.

11. Ibid.I, 219.

exceptional, they might be taken as suggesting that there was no delay in the passage of her soul to heaven, and so have provided the inspiration for Runciman's uncanonical image.

The landscape in this last picture was evidently panoramic, covering a sweep of more than 180 degrees. Its high view point recalls the drawing that Runciman had done a few years earlier from a chimney top in the High Street.

In the SNG there is a series of very beautiful water colour drawings of views in East Lothian that are long and low in shape and seem to be taken from a high position. . . . They are unsigned, and have at one time been attributed to Paul Sandby. A drawing of Craigmillar Castle that is closely related to this group is clearly by Runciman from the style of the figure drawing and the draughtsmanship. Attribution of the others to him may therefore be safe. If it is, the drawings suggest that he may have carried on and developed his interest in panoramic types of landscape. The first recorded full scale panorama was painted in Edinburgh shortly after his death.

From Gray's description of Bonnar's decoration of the second staircase a nineteenth century drawing of the ceiling can be identified that is preserved in the National Building Records. From this we can derive an idea of the shape and size of the twelve upright compartments described by Gray. The shape of the ovals fits that of six drawings by Runciman with classical subjects all of which are dated 1772. These are, Achilles entrusted to Chiron, Mercury summoning Thetis(?), Perseus and the Medusa, Bacchus and Ariadne, Apollo and Daphne, and Hercules(?) with a bear. Two of these are illustrated in Plates 128/9. From the range of subjects it would seem that no programme was intended, only a series of mythologies. This did not however represent a reversion to Runciman's earlier ideas of decoration, for the style of the drawings based on vase painting is thoroughly up to date. The

figures are created by reserving an area of paper in an even dark wash. There are several drawings by Fuseli, one of them dated Oct. 1771, similarly based on the vase painter's technique, and since the publication of Hamilton's first collection of vases in 1766 there is no doubt that they were the source of considerable excitement among the young enthusiasts for Greek art. Runciman may have had an opportunity to see Hamilton's Collection which was first on exhibition in London about the time of his return from Rome. In the freedom of his treatment he comes closer than any of his contemporaries to the spirit of the originals.

THE COWGATE CHAPEL

The new Episcopalian church founded in the Cowgate in Edinburgh in 1771, was to be a large and ostentatious building rather on the model of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, with a great Corinthian portico. It was consecrated on the 9th Oct. 1774, but without its portico which was never completed. The present front is modern. Putting the church in the Cowgate in the old town had been a mistake for it was exactly at this time that the New Town was beginning to expand. First of all Adam's church of St. Paul's was built in York Place and then in 1818 a second church was consecrated also in York Place, the present St. Paul's and St. George's.¹² The building of these two churches in the New Town where most of the congregation now lived rendered the Cowgate Chapel redundant and, it was sold to the United Secession. They in turn sold it to the Catholics to whom it now belongs as St. Patrick's.

The building of an episcopal church in Edinburgh was quite a remarkable event. It was even more remarkable that it should have been quite as ostentatious as this one was intended to be. Arnot in his History of Edinburgh in 1779 remarks, - "Not many years ago that form of worship and all its ceremonies would not have been tolerated. The organ and the paintings would have been downright idolatry, and the chapel would have fallen sacrifice to the fury of the mob".¹³ There is no reason to doubt that he was right. The organ was by Snetzler who also built the organ for St. Cecilia's hall almost next door in the Cowgate, and likewise left high and dry by the move to the New Town.

The paintings decorated the apse over the altar. The altar is on the east side of the church though apparently the seating has always faced north and south. In the plan published in the Scots

12. Veitch, St. Paul's and St. George's, 19.

13. Thomas Arnot, History of Edinburgh, Edinburgh 1779,

Magazine for Oct. 1774 the seats face the pulpit in the north with the altar on their right.

Exceptionally we have Runciman's own account of the pictures in the Cowgate Church. It is given in a letter to George Paton dated 12th Oct. 1775 quoted here in full:

'Mr. Runciman's compliments to Mr. Paton; is sorry the dimentions of the Picturs in the chaple is fallen out of the way, but AR can give a pretty near guess of the matter, viz. the large picture in the top of the niche is thriteen feet high, and thrity broad at the bottom; the form is a semi-circle. The subject painted in it is the Ascension of Jesus Christ, Luke the 14th cap.verse the 51 and 52 (and he was taken up into heaven and they worshippied him). The figures are the twelve Apostles, and the three Maries, all the syze of life; the Figures nearest the eye are something larger below. Above the two small windows are two pictures eight feet wide and five feet high; the picture on the right hand is Christ talking with the woman of Samaria at the well; Pl.130 . on the left is the Prodigall's return,Pl.131 . the figurs large as life, but only half length. On each side are two ovals,seven feet high and five feet wide; in that on the right hand is painted the Prophet Elias Pl.132 . when he retired to the mountain; in that on the left hand is Moses with his Tables.Pl.133 . The figures are something larger than the life, and are both sitting, all invented and executed by A. Runciman. The searching for the measure is the reason Mr. Paton did not get this sooner".¹⁴

Runciman's measuring seems to have been rather approximate. The apse, or niche as he calls it, is a half ellipse 24' x 8'. The rectangular panels are 3'6" x 5'6", and the ovals 6' x 3'. The whole apse is more than 30' high. The rear wall is pierced by a Palladian window. The two oval panels are placed on either side of this at much the same level, and the two rectangular panels are above the side

14. Maidment, Letters to George Paton, 157-159.

lights of the window. The secondary pictures were originally surrounded by elaborate stucco festoons and chains. The wall between the lights of the window may also have had painted decoration.

The main part of the decoration, the Ascension, was always thought to have been destroyed in the nineteenth century, but examination showed that this was highly unlikely, and a proper technical investigation proved that it had in fact survived. A small part of it has now been uncovered. It was presumably overpainted by the United Secession who must have considered it too popish. It has since been covered with several layers of oil paint, and has also been adorned with a wooden dove in glory. The original painting was also given a heavy but very uneven coat of coarse varnish to add to the difficulties of restoration.

The paintings are all carried out in oil directly onto the plaster which was apparently white primed, but is surprisingly coarse in texture. The four pictures that are visible are so much blackened by dirt and varnish that it is not easy to reconstruct their original appearance, but infra-red photographs, and the parts that have been experimentally cleaned give some idea. The paint is very loosely handled with long rapid brush strokes. In places it is very thin and transparent, evidently taking advantage of the white ground. The colour is rich and brilliant. In Christ and the Woman of Samaria, Christ's coat is bright orange and his cloak deep blue. The woman's robe seems to be a kind of strong lilac. The sky behind is light blue. Christ's halo is yellow against it. The part of the Ascension that is visible is the arm of one of the figures. The sleeve is yellow and reddish orange and is seen against a dark blue robe with a light blue reverse. The rest of the decoration seems to be in an equally strong key. Elijah is dressed in light blue and yellow and is seen against a stormy sky. Moses wears a pinkish robe which is light green in the fold across his knee.

The iconography of the Cowgate Chapel paintings may have been laid down by the commissioners of the Church. The choice of the

Ascension was unexceptional in the 18th century. Hogarth's St. Mary Redcliffe altarpiece is the most obvious precedent and one with which Runciman's undertaking is more or less comparable in size.

Elijah and Moses accompany the Ascension quite appropriately and make a suitable reference, to the Transfiguration. Moses indicates the tablets of the Law with his right hand, but with the curve of the wall the same gesture also serves to indicate to the spectator for the Ascension above and behind him. The two rectangular panels seem to refer to the position of the Episcopal church in Scotland. In the one it is seen as Christ in Samaria, in the other Scotland is seen as the Prodigal returning to his father, episcopacy, both quite consistent with the conscious ostentation of the whole enterprise. If this interpretation is correct it is ironical that the United Secession should have covered up the Ascension as idolatrous while preserving these monuments to the pride of resurgent episcopacy.

The two prophets are both very Michaelangelesque, but the main features of the Moses, the position of his head, legs and right arm, seem to come from Raphael's Isaiah in Sant'Agostino rather than any direct source in Michaelangelo. His left hand and the book however seem to be from the same prophet in the Sistine, while his feet, and perhaps his legs as well recall Daniel also in the Sistine. Elijah seems to be modelled on the Sistine Jeremiah, but Jeremiah's profound meditation has been converted into a rather restless abstraction. Elijah is tapping his finger impatiently on the rock while he stares moodily out over the spectator.

In the two rectangular panels Christ's pose suggests an angel of the Annunciation. The woman of Samaria is a distinctly Sybilline figure though much modified from any prototype. She is a typical Runciman figure and her elongated head and neck appear again and again in his work. The loose drawing with long strokes of the

brush is clearly apparent. The composition of the Prodigal son seems to be based directly on Tintoretto's Adam and Eve in the Uffizi.¹⁵ If this is the case it is not clear how Runciman knew the painting unless he had in fact gone to Florence. The composition has not been reversed which suggests that it was probably borrowed from the painting rather than any engraving. Fuseli's remark that the Ulysses and Nausicaa had 'the juice and fire of Tintoretto' may have been inspired by his knowledge of Runciman's own interest in the artist's work. It is surprising however if this is the case that the only apparent references to Tintoretto should be to two comparatively minor works, the painting in the Uffizi, and the Creation of the birds and fishes in the Academia, Venice used for the composition of Fingal and Loda. These two pictures are related however, both in subject and in form. If Runciman knew of one he may have known of both.

There seem to be no drawings connected with this project directly. A red chalk drawing recently acquired by the SNG is a variation of the Christ and the Woman of Samaria composition. Pl. 134. It is paired with a Raising of Lazarus. There is a drawing in Sir Steven Runciman's collection of the head of a saint or apostle looking up in wonder. It may well be connected with the Ascension, but this cannot be confirmed until the picture is recovered. Pl. 135

The major paintings that Alexander Runciman carried out on his return from Rome, in Edinburgh and Penicuik, reflect very clearly the two sides of his artistic experience, his training and practice as a decorative painter, and the imaginative self-consciousness of the early Romantic movement of which he became part in Rome after his precocious brother's untimely death. The effect of his Roman sojourn was to divert him from the landscape and decorative painting of his early career to monumental figure painting and poetic subject matter. He never really became intellectual in his work however as did his contemporaries, though

15. Reproduced H. Tietze: Tintoretto, Pl. 29.

at times he earnestly tried. This was both a weakness and a strength. The painters of his generation were precariously balanced between the demands of their literary self-consciousness on the one hand and of genuine visual expression on the other. This is very clear in the way they treated the art of the past as a given language needing no further reference to nature. The risk of sterility in this situation is clear. Barry fell a victim to it and was only one of a number of British painters to do so. Fuseli, who was one of the most original visual artists of his generation, for all his unorthodoxy seems at times repetitive and his work as a whole curiously incomplete. Only Blake of all this group succeeded in making a true marriage of what might be called his mental purpose and his power of making images. He did this by developing both activities of his mind together. His thought was as creative as his painting, but was inseparable from it. It was rooted in reality and his painting was its means of expression.

Runciman perhaps stopped short of all of these painters, and only partially understood the full meaning of the aspirations that he shared with them. Nevertheless he had an advantage in that he was a painter before he learnt to think of himself as a poet and intellectual. Fuseli called him 'the best painter among us', and he was right. Runciman was really the only one of the artists of his circle in Rome who was a real painter. The strength of his work was its colour and its freedom, and its consequent energy and expression. These were qualities that only became fully part of the Romantic vocabulary at the beginning of the next century when artists began to think again of the force of their work as deriving exclusively from its visible properties. It is notable that when this did happen it was apparent first in the work of the landscape painters.

The continuing importance for Runciman of landscape was not as an interesting sideline. Its qualities and the kind of feeling for pictorial unity that it engendered informed his subject painting

and explained quite as much as his lack of training his peculiar figure style. The four great Michaelangelesque river-gods so successfully identified with the landscapes from which the rivers spring, are therefore a central expression of his style. In his etchings where he has to rely entirely on line, the lively and often very complex relationship of form and design is a product of this same painterly approach. If he fell short of the serious ambitions of the late eighteenth century historical painters, as a simple painter he held his own.

One of the most interesting pictures that he painted in the period immediately after his return to Edinburgh was the landscape with a scene from the Allegro of Milton dated 1773.Pl.136 . This is also his most important surviving landscape. It illustrates in some detail lines 69-90 of the poem, but instead of using a generalised pastoral idiom to do so, it fits Milton's description to a known landscape near Perth. The rustic cottage 'between two aged Okes' (line 82), is of course invented, and so too are the figures, Corydon and Thyrsis attended by 'the neat Handed Phyllis', (line 86), but the mountains in the poem are the Sidlaws and the foothills of the Grampians, the river is the Tay, and the 'towers and battlement boosomed high in tufted trees', (line 78), appear to be Kinfauns Castle on the north bank of the Tay just outside Perth. In the left foreground the 'tanned haycocks', (line 90), and the cattle are all recognisable features of the Scottish agricultural scene. In the background the relationship of the city and its bridge to the river have been adjusted but are still readily identifiable. The picture is painted with real freedom and openness.

Runciman's Allegro is original in the same way as his river gods at Penicuik. It gives new life to an established image by seeing it in a real context. Robert Fergusson wrote an Ode on the Rivers of Scotland¹⁶ whose subject, the Forth, the Tweed, and the Tay was very probably inspired by Runciman's paintings at Penicuik.¹⁷ Its conventional

16. Poems of Robert Fergusson, MacDiarmid, II, 40-45.

17. Ibid. II, 258.

classical imagery misses the point of the pictures, but in his best verse he and the painter seem at times to share a common inspiration. This is particularly true of a poem written in 1773 called Hame Content, A Satire. Like Runciman in the Allegro of the same year he takes a tired convention, the pastoral satire, but gives it new vigour and life by the immediacy of his language. The vividness with which he writes is fairly represented by the first four lines:

Some fock, like Bees, fu glegly rin
To bykes bang'd fu'o'strife and din,
And thieve and huddle crumb by crumb
Till they have scrypt the dautit Plumb. etc.¹⁸

Just as Runciman opposes the rustic peace of his foreground to the city life implied by the view of Perth in the distance, Fergusson contrasts this image of Edinburgh life that he develops with an account of the real feeling of the countryside that begins:

Now whan the Dog-Day heats begin
To birsel and to peel the skin
May I lie streekit at my ease
Beneath the caller shady trees
(Far frae the din o'Borrowstown) etc.¹⁹

The analogies between the picture and the poem are probably not accidental. Fergusson became a member of the Cape Club in October 1772.²⁰ According to Thomas Sommers who wrote a life of Fergusson it was he who introduced him to Runciman,²¹ though he does not say when. Runciman he claimed needed a sitter for the Prodigal son in a picture that he was painting but could find no-one suitable. Sommers suggested Fergusson to him and introduced the two for that purpose. When finished the picture, he says, 'strikingly exhibited the Bard in the character of a

18. Ibid, II, 157. 1-4.

19. Ibid, II, 157. 17-21.

20. Ibid. I, 49.

21. Thomas Sommers, The Life of Robert Fergusson, the Scottish Poet, Edinburgh, 1803, 23.

Prodigal, sitting on a grassy bank surrounded by swine, some of which were sleeping, and others feeding; his right leg over his left knee; eyes uplifted, hands clasped, tattered clothes and, with expressive countenance, bemoaning his forlorn and miserable situation! This picture when finished reflected high honour on the painter, being much admired. It was sent to the Royal Exhibition in London, where it was also highly esteemed, and there purchased by a gentleman of taste and fortune at a considerable price'.²²

Sommers account is circumstantial, and Runciman did exhibit a Prodigal Son at the RA in 1774, but although a Return of the Prodigal survives besides the one in the Cowgate Chapel it is dated 1780, and there is no record of a Prodigal among the pigs except for this account. It was written thirty years after the event and may not be accurate in detail. It probably reflects some truth however, and there is no doubt that the two were close friends. They appear together at the Cape Club, and apparently cooperated on the Capeiad, a facetious poem written for the club.²³ Fergusson also wrote a poetic Summons to James Cumming as Recorder of the Club, and the manuscript of this and another Cape Club poem is addressed to Mr. Runciman in the Pleasance.²⁴ A strange visionary portrait in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery by Runciman is identified as of the poet, Pl.137. and he in turn wrote a short poem, on seeing a Collection of Pictures painted by Mr. Runciman.

O could my Muse, like thee, with magic skill
Subdue the various passions at her will,
Like thee make each idea stand confest,
That honours or depraves the human breast;
Like thee could make the awe-struck world admire
An Ossian's fancy, and a Fingal's fire,
Boldly aspiring at exalted lays,
The Poet then should sing the Painter's praise.²⁵

22. Ibid. 23.

23. Laing Coll. EUL.

24. Poems of Robert Fergusson, II, MacDiarmid, 167, and 295.

25. Ibid, II, 172.

The relationship between the poet and the painter was clearly closer than these elegantly conventional couplets would suggest. The analogies between Runciman's Allegro and Fergusson's Hame Content, and the poem's subtitle 'to all whom it may concern' may perhaps permit us to interpret some of the poem as intended for the painter personally. It includes the following lines:

The Arno and the Tibur lang
Hae run fell clear in Roman sang;
But, save the reverence of schools!
They're baith but lifeless dowy pools.
Dought they compare with bonny Tweed,
As clear as ony lammer-bead?
Or are their shores mair sweet and gay
Than Fortha's haughs or banks o' Tay?
Tho'there the herds can jink the show'rs
Mang thriving vines and myrtle bow'rs,
And blaw the reed to kittle strains,
While echo's tongue commends their pains,
Like ours they canna warm the heart
Wi'simple, saft, bewitching art.
On Leader' haughs and Yarrow braes,
Arcadian herds wad tyne their lays,
To hear the mair melodious sounds
That thrive on our poetic grounds.²⁶

In these lines the poet may be gently teasing his friend's enthusiasm for Italy and classic art, but at the same time he implicitly acknowledges by his own blend of the classic form with the Doric tongue that it is Runciman's marriage of the vernacular tradition of the Scots painter-decorator with the grand style that is the source of his vigour as an artist.

26. Ibid. II, 159, lines 75-92.

Appendix A.
ALEXANDER RUNCIMAN'S LETTERS.

J.Bemen to AR and AR's reply in verse, Laing Bequest EUL.

Nov^r.18, 1760.

Dr.Alaster,

In case you come before I comm back this (in George Whitfield's style) serves to inform you that I have just gone to Duncan McQueen to cause him(to) make 2 white iron things for the vases of the glasses and as soon as I have given my insctructions I will come directly out again.

am ever thine

J.Bemen.

At your desire
before the fire
I sāt me down to stay,
but if you don't come
or an hour be run
by Jove I'll be away,
To pass the time
you see I ryme,
but, Oh, I see a Traesure
of maen a Book
wheron to look
makes me brack of my Maesure

I'm smock'd to death
I'm out of breath
I must go to the Kitchen
and with the lass
to make time pass
discourse of Ghosts and Whitching.

To Mr.Alex Runciman, very carefully.

AR to James Cumming, Laing Bequest, EUL.

May 1767.

Dear Jamie

I write agreeable to my promises but as yet I have very little to inform you of for your entertainment except you'll take a sort jurnall of my Voyage till something of more consequence comes in the way which I except(expect?) now very soon of which I shall let you know in the meantime I'll proceed with said Journall Set sail Aprill 16th from London the 20th arrived at Falmouth and escaped a cursed storm 2(?)set sail from ditto 24th lost sight of England at 11 at night Arrived the Bay of Biscay on the 26th. I never before that had an Idea of what the the Sea must be in a Storm every Wave was like a Hill the Ship betwix't these Waves seem'd a boat in a large Valley of Melted Metall for it was not a very high Wind but a great swell and what seemed to labour to move that Vast Weight of Waters Sometimes a Wave Broke on the side of the Vessel and went over the whale deck I was standing looking at it when one these ruffian Billows came and knocked me fairly down the cabin stair wet me all over and sore bruised my bones had I been on deck over I would(have) gone Good gales and fine weather succeeded that days work & the 5th May at 3 in the afternoon was opposite Cape St.Vincent Drank to all my friends (in) Edin^r. in London Porter a fine Breeze sprung up & the 7th we passed Gibraltar in coming through the Straits believe me dear Jamie I wish'd only for you the looking at Africa on One side and Spain on the other was a thing so New I could (have)been quite happy a person that had the same notion of things with myself a thousand curious Observations we could have made to furnish Entertainment for ourselves, but Nobody had I but a foolish Sea Capt. that knew no more than the Coast side he sailed along though he had been in Spain often he could give no acct. of it it was the same to him as London or Leith He never went further than the Key he goes up to Constantinople what (a) fine voyage he has all through Classick Seas where not a Island but is sung appears There is three

Greeks in the ship 2 Men & a Woman I did not care to put you
to double postage so scrawelled these if possible to give you
Idea of the dress (see Plate 23) the woman's head dress
They are always large lazy divells in short you cann't conceive
anything so unlike the idea of Greeks. Yet they are I do think
better shap'd than we are & their dress is more commodious all their
Necks & Breasts & Legs & Arms being Bare gives them a good strong a
manly look When we got to the Mediterranean the Climate was quite
canged The Winds were hushed and seemed not to be acquainted
with that Sea Sometimes they made a small effort to be boisterous
for an hour then they subbsided and Sea was like Oill sometimes they
blew one way some another and in short was through all the points of
the compass in half a days time becalm'd till the 17th passed
Majorca 21st Minorca 22nd 23rd Corsica & the 25th landed in Leghorn
Its just a trading town No curiosities in it the statue of the
G.Duke and Slaves that Mr.Addison speaks of and the Grand Square
Ithink Nothing of the Square is but small in comparison of a great many in
London The Houses are all Bricks plastered and some of them painted
with pillars &c but very indifferently executed as is also the above
mentioned Statue and Slaves Thir Bigeger than life The Duke of
Marble and the Slaves of Copper I never in my Life saw such odd
like beings as there is Here There is above 3000 Jews a great
many of them are Beaus but suchlike ones never were seen Some has
straw hats dyed black & Cock'd like ours & white feathers in them
bright silk coats & green & red scabbards to their swords and shoes
of unblack'd leather & each carries an umbrella There is a street
of licenced W(hore)s & a Guard to wait on them They pay a good deal
of the revenues of the Grand Duke They are generally very handsome
the slaves here are a horrible (-?-) sight I shall be sure dr Jamie
to let you hear from me in Rome If you will take the trouble to let
Mother know I'm well she will write word if I shall send any more news
or you may write a short paragraph in her letter of what you want to
be informed of I beg you to remember me to all friends & to
J.Douglass tell him I'm sorry I could not see him before I went
away I am in the John Currie ship a Kinghorn man that's well acquainted

with John & desires to be remembered to him they ask you to do it & you will greatly oblige me I intend to set for Rome in day or 2 so tell my mother which will be a particular favour If I go by Florence I'll send you an exact acc^t. of everything worth while I see I did propose to go by sea but its dangerous on account of Turkish vessels They are at variance with the Italians at present & being taken by them wou'd not be the thing & if they only (--?--) us we must lay quarantine ere we get into any port if living be as cheap through Italy as its here I shall like it a Drink of Coffee is but a farthing for Dinner today I had at an Ordinary for eighteen pence these things a roasted turkey soup Roast Mutton plumb pudding Stewed Mutton salted green peas Strawberris and a bottle of wine This was an extraordinary day I'll have no more such & it was an English House which is twice as dear as an Italian one If you do not tell my mother of my arrivall I'll never forgive you, if you do I'll send you some drawings (of) Curious places

I am dear Jamie

yours sincerely

Alex^r Runciman

Leghorn 25th May 1767

AR to James Cumming, Laing Bequest EUL.

Dec. 5th 1767

Dear Jamie

I received yours by Miss Forbes I thank you for your News both serious and Entertaining I beg you write me often as to your enquiries about Ombre &c I can only tell their is no good Ochre here at all if you could send me some flanders yellow I'd be obliged to you but I believe what Jock has brought will do the turn till I return to Italy for the second time which I hope to do after I have been a few years with you for I dout it possible almost to paint a good picture out of Italy as to your wanting

to know about Florence I must tell you about it when I go there for I came by Sienna where there is indeed the most magnificent thing I ever saw of Gothic architecture its Interly built of black and white marble in Rows the front is a Collection of all the Different kinds of Marbles in ye World: & the inside is past description the Pantheon is I assure you in good condition & the finest thing in the World it is that's certain the Roof was covered on the Outside with Coper which was all taken to StPeter's to make the high altar the inside was all covered with silver which was all taken away by the Goths & the Brass gates but there is bronze Gates on it at present & the ancient pillars on the inside are all intire and perfectly beautiful I wish I coul but see you in Rome but I believe I shall have something to entertain you with when I see you in the mean time I must tell you I had a most delightful walk into the Country about Tivoli which is the most romnatick place in the World I made some Views of it that I'll show you you'll know that Horace's Villa and Maecenass was at that place from that I went to Grotto Ferratta the Tusculum of Tully & than to Albano but Addison describes all that road better than I can there is something he says about the Rotunda which he is in a mistake about it is this that Admirers of the Ancients find a Beauty in it which was not intended by the Architect such as the figures in looking like Angels and the light being so finely diffused on them its fact by God they do and that it was intended is plain from his way taken to light the places where the Statues stood which is done by a borrowed light from the top of the Rotund for he might with great ease and propriety(have) lighted them from other places but that would(have) spoiled the fine Awfull Grand look it has tho' St.Peter's Cupola is just the size of the Whole Pantheon yet it has not that Majesty which its impossible to give Idea of in any drawing that I've seen the drawing of StPeter's looks grander than the church but of it less, tho' in St.Peter's its impossible to conceive the riches and profusion of fine Marbles that's in it I'm going in a month or so to Naples & shall write you anything I think is not mentioned in by Writers & where the yellow is found I suppose the Terra Sienna is found near that place its very cheap there so is N.Yellow everywhere everything else is dear &/ad I find since I came here I've been(on) a wrong plan of study for painting all my life but I've begun an intire new

system of which I hope to show something if I come home that
is if God spares me ye ken till then

believe me d^r Jamie yours

Alex^r Runciman

Rome Dec^{ber} 5th 1767

P.S. If it were possible to send me some Scotch pebbles I should
like it as I want to make a small present to a Curious German
that's here and will give me an account of every Naturall
production of this Country you want to know he has restored
the way of making the antique Cameos and is a Curious Man in
everything almost I wish I had a leathern Snuff Box of the
best kind all of leather as it is reckond curious here send word
what quantity of Terra Seenna you want and N: yellow my best
com^p to your spouse I beg you inquire at Mr. Alexander if he
got a letter I wrote him Jacky's comp. to you.

AR to Robert Alexander, Laing Bequest, EUL.

July 1769.

Sir,

I find that Neglecting(...)
of Favours Receiv'd subjects a man to the most uneasy of all
sensations and that seeming Triffles when accumulated grow to
a Hydra that requires other than Herculaean Force to overcome
for to be conscious of having done wrong & Inability of making
reparation is a constant reproach and preys on the spirit with
ye same virulence a serpent would on the body and such a foe I
have created to myself and the combat will be more difficult
than that of the Hero as I have no Iolus to assist me with the
proper weapons to conquer except you by forgiving should at once
crush the monster and so render further struggle unnecessary
you may remember when I went to Naples to my poor Brother
I wrote you a short letter in haste & promised to be more
particular on my arrivall since which time you may well wonder
not to have heard from me and more when I own I can say

nothing in excuse but what appears to myself mean and poor
& not in the least calculated to answer the purpose design'd
the perturbation I was in at first on finding poor Jack dead
before my arrivall rendered me incapable of writing when that
was a little abated Rage and a desire of Revenge took possession
of me & I had just reflection enough to consider if I wrote than
I might be guilty of some rash and unbecoming thing which might
be cause of regret even after when I came back to Rome &
retired from the Faction and dissipation that reigns among the
English I began to think it more eligible to let you see to
what purpose you had been so libarall & know at what time it
was necessary to stop. So I resolved not to write till I had done
a picture to send you but it was a desperate undertaking for
it has only served to convince me that not only the most vigorous
and assiduous application but even a long time is required to
bring to a small degree of perfection the subject I had undert-
aken so I find myself under the necessity of sending somthing of
less consequence which will however serve to show if I have mispent
my time or if I shou'd prosecute that sort of study any farther
I send you at the same time a small picture of my brothers
I have not anything else of his Original which gives me real
concern It being his first work when he came to Rome & can
give you no Idea of what he was It was owing to chance I had
that for he had destroyed his better things & this happened to
lay hid in a corner & escaped the Fate of the rest had God
but spared him one year more he wou'd have done his Country Honour
died in Reputation and thrown a justly merited Odium on his
Shamless & cruell Enemies. in three weeks or a month there is
a ship Expected to sail from Civita Vecchia by which I shall s(end
...) pictures derected to the care of (....)Martin so soon as I
get the Ship Masters Receipt I shall write you give me leave
to assure you I find myself quite unable to make the proper
acknowledgment for the Favours you did my poor mother as that is of

more concern than anything that relates to myself I am Sir
your much obliged and very Humble Ser^t

Alex^r Runciman

Rome July 20th 1769.

Robert Alexander, Edinburgh, via Londia, Received 4th Sept.

AR to James Cumming, Laing Bequest EUL.

Sept. 1769.

Dear Jamie

your letter gave me a great deall of pleasure I wish
I cou'd send you satisfactory account of the things you desire but
a present I really cannot as for the Pope's Coronation although
I saw it I can give you no description of it It was very grand
and all Gold and Gems & Silk & Velvet & Cannons & Horses and every-
thing but I have no great relish for processions I have seen so
many I would not go five miles to see a Jubilee but I'll bring
home a print of it for you as for the manuscripts in the Vatican
I'll enquire about them the next time I'm there for that was not
what I minded when I saw the Library I'm sorry for the misfortune
of the Bridge If Mylne was in fault I hope it will ruin him
God d-n him cou'd he not have seen in Rome how the Old Boys built
I'll be c-d if the buildings, that is the ancient ones, here
wou'd not have lasted till The End of ye World had they not been
Industriously destroyed I need say nothing of ye Comet here
I dare say your Newspapers informs you all about it better than me
who am but a bad Astrologer I have sent off a picture of Jacky's
with one of my own to Mr.Alexander but though its gone from this a
month I have not got the Ship Masters receipt yet I hope you will not
conclude from that picture when you see it what sort of painter I'll
turn out its very bad & I'm asham'd of it but serious History is not
to be learn'd but with great patience and assidouity the Next picture
I send shall be for the Exhibition its from Homer when I write you
next I'll send you a small sketch of it Nevay has after a ten years

seige finish'd a picture Christ forbid I should make my large
Picture like it but mum for your life I send whenever he sends
his picture two of Jacky's to let Mr. Alexander Rynolds Burk & Stwerat
(Stewart?) & some more freinds of Jackys see the difference there was
betwixt him and Nevay & it will open a scene of Villany that's
been practis'd here for some time The Story is much too long for
me to enter into at present some time hence you'll learn it all
not from me perhaps but from others that where sufferers with Jack
and me & in a very publick manner you'll hear it but I beg you hush
Navays picture being Exhibited will open the scene I'm here burried
amongst Old Statues and c. & very shortly I'll leave them for a while to
go upon Titian for six Months after that I'll go to the Antique
again the Divells in it if that plan of Education follow'd with
care don't produce somthing I'm gald the Knights are in a thriving
way I beg send me dertected to Mess^{rs}: Marcha Ragueneau & Co: Leghorne
for Mr. James Clark in Rome the following things you may send by
the Carron Ship you know a diploma for James Clark & one for James
Barry both which will make worthy Knights & send per le amor de Deu
Monro Osteology & Douglas on the muscles if you send me these
things you bind ever your give my Comp:^{ts} to all the Knights
I'd write them but nothing cou'd I say but about old Walls & pictures
which is no Entertainment for them remember me particularly to Mr.
Carrick I am dear Jamie ever your Alex^r Runciman
P.S. I'm an unluky dog the Frenchman I sent a drawing with is dead
at Venice Remember me to Mrs. Cumming Adieu
Rome Sept.(1769) from the Capitol where I'm at w(ork) every day.

AR to Sir James Clerk, Scottish Record Office, Register House
GD 18

Rome May 16th 1770

Sir

You will no doubt be surprised at my writing instead of my

setting out for home & will think it extraordinary my pretending to put any interest of my own in competition with your conveniency but however Odd it may appear at first upon an investigation of the matter I am persuaded I shou'd not want for your approbation of my Conduct. The Obejections you make to my following History Painting seem very just & true for there is not wanting there many malencholy instances of your Observation with respect to wasting many years on what is called study people never seeming to think it a duty incumbent on them to produce somthing Originall till too late they find they have been pursuing Shadows for Substances. for my own part since ever I came to Rome I took matters in a different light & think that after a few years proper study & as it were digging underground a man might so qualify himself as to Immerge with some degree of credit as to what you say about rivalship when I look at an Old Greek Statue or picture of the sixteenth century I am very much humbled and imagine myself a very despicably figure & had my poor Brother been alive I probably never wou'd have thought of Serious History but the Debility of my living Cotemporaries more than any great Oppinion I had of my own Abilitys made me take the resolution of disputing the preheminance for Reputation with them & a few months is all I beg to show if I have made a wrong or right judgement I have begun a picture & am a good way advanced in it The Story is from the Oddyssey of Homer When Ulysses meets Nausicaa There is Nine figures in the picture the two principal being a little larger than life I know it may be said I might done it in Edin^r as well but it is certainly Necessary to bring something home to convince you I have not mispent my time for what proff of ability is a parcel of drawings from statues &c &c. but another reason is that I may have the advantage of Exhibiting next May in London with Mr.Hamilton but this summer should any Gentleman come here of reall Taste that judges for himself unbiasid & unprejudiced by Antiquaries and deallers I shall take care to be seen by him & notwithstanding Mr.Hamilton's justly acquired Reputation I am under no apprehensions of Comparisons

being made much to my disadvan(ta)ge when seen together The reason I mention Mr. Hamilton in particular is only in consequence of his being our first charachter here as to many other persons here at present I don't think of them. I had severall thoughts about the dinning room at penny cuick but none gave me any satisfaction till going one day into a room in the Baths of Titus I saw something there that pleased me it being far underground and litt with torchlight I could not make a drawing of it but the thought was enough for me as it was very much faded & but ill executed the story was the Councill of ye Gods on the Fate of Troy but thats at best you'll say a beaten subject but its being antique put me doing something of the same kind & what I propose is in ye Ovall the Marriage of peleus & Thetis I took it from Homer who indeed mentions it but slightly I got a little more particulars from Catullus & Ovid I made at present but a sketch of it but I propose to make a more correct one imediately after my picture is done as there some caracters in it I can get nowhere out of Rome The figures/^{are} disposed so as to take up the whole space Jupiter Juno Hebe Neptune & P (iota?) are in the principall part of the picture & higher than ye rest bellow them is Thetis on the bed & Venus untying her zone & a love unty(ing) her sandalls Hyman is bringing Peleus forward the Graces are leading the Hours dancing round the marriage bed & Appolo is playing the Epithalamium the principall light falls on all that group as it occypys the Middle of the picture on one side is Bacchus with ye rurall Deities & on the other Oceanus with the Marine round the room upon the concave I have made disigns for some of the pictures the subjects are as follows first the birth of Achilles 2^d His Education by Chiron 3^d Thetis conveying him to the Court of Lycomedes These three take up one side on the end the commencemnet of the Iliad where Achilles going to draw on Agamemnon is stopt by Pallas of this I have made a pretty large drawing for ye other picture on that End I have not fixed yet on the other side the first is Thetis bringing him Arms the next his combat with Hector the 3^d his dragging Hector round the tomb of patrocles of the principall part of this I have made a

drawing on the last end 1st priam begging the Body of Hector
2^d the death of Achilles certainly i I was not to paint some
subject of consequence before I begin this you might suspect my
inability to go through a subject of this kind which is so far as
the Choice the finest ever came under man's hands & whatever the
execution may be the attempt merits at least something of praise
I think the Salloon will be best in the Taste of some of ye Baths of
Titus or Lodge of Raffalee that is Light Ornaments with small
pannelles and pictures but I have Matterills for great variety
of that sort of work both for ye salloon and pannelled Stair Case
I have ye Triumph of Baccus & Ariadne for the Other but I have^a drawing
I made from the Eneiad that I shou'd like to do better I hope
you dont think I stay here from any Other motive but merely from the
desire of making myself if possible some sort of Characher as an Artist
I am sure I studied hard for it & My Only Masters has been the
Anceint Greek Statues & if they are studyed with attention I'm certain
they dont make Dunces I hope what I have said may have some Influence
with you & help to pave the way for your forgiveness which I never
can hope for till by my Work I have convinced you that all along I have
had Nothing more in View than Endeavouring to merit your furtherfavour
I am

Sir with Respect your humble ser^t.

ARunciman

Sir James Clerk Bart. at Pennycuik Edinburgh
via London.

AR to Sir James Clerk, Scottish Record Office, Register House,
Ms GD 18 4682

Sir

I have now finished the Picture I told you I had begun
ten months ago & with it all the studys that I think Nessecary for
my future conduct & I can with confidence assure you I have not

deceived you nor myself the undertaking of a Historycall Picture of that Consequence I have proved by the Execution of it not too hard a task for me which makes me hope by Industry and perseverance to attain something not despicable in Art & I am now impatient to give proffs of it in your House to you I owe being what I am & certainly the first fruits of my Labour are due to you The delay that has been, so far from causing me any regret makes me rejoice as they are by that more refined & more worthy your acceptance This last summer a Fluxion in my Eyes incapacitated me from doing anything for four Months else I had left Rome by this time with money of my own Earning but it is now too late to think of un.ertaking anything therefore I shall not seek after it but must trouble you once more to advance me (fifty) 30£ which I find is not more than sufficient to bring me Home I shall not stay a day in Rome after the receipt of your Letter & sooner than that at any rate I cou'd not travell as I am very much affraid of getting Cold ever since the death of my Brother & tho I have by very regular living confirm'd myself in a good state of health I do not think it prudent to run to great a risk as Italy is not the most commodious place in the World to travell in for a poor Man in such a Season I should Blush to make this demand on you were I not conscious you will have no reason to regret your Indulgence I hope the work I do for you will not reflect less Honour on you than be advan(ta)ge to me I do not mean by that pecuniary advantage all my Ambition is to be a great painter rather than a Rich one I am Sir

with respect your much Oblidged
humble Se^t

Alex^r Runciman

Rome Jan the 12th 1771.

AR to George Paton, published in Letters of Thomas Percy etc to George Paton, ed.J.Maidment, Edinburgh, 1830, from NLS Adv.Ms.29.2.8.

12th Oct. 1775, the letter, which describes the paintings in the

Cowgate Chapel, is given in full on p. of this thesis. The second letter, though outside the main period of this discussion is given here for interest.

Sir,

I beg you would not think me impudent in making the following request. I had this Spring given my promise to a gentleman (a German) to procure him a Solan goose, which, after I had got prepared for him, was by the mistake of a servant maid destroyed, and the season is now past for procuring another; I should therefore esteem it as a particular favour if you have one, to give it me, and I assure you that next season I will most thankfully and faithfully return you another for it, as the gentleman is curious in Naturall History, and a stranger. I hope you will, if possible, enable me to keep my word to him; he leaves this country very soon, and I should be sorry he had not what he esteems a curiosity, and would add to the collection he has made in this country a valuable aquisition. If you will let me know by a line if you can do me this favour, I shall take it as a very particular favour; if you cannot yourself give one, I shall take as the next favour to it, to tell if you know of any person that I could get one from. Dr Ramsay I have tried, but the three he had, are all useless and destroyed, and I am not acquainted with any collectors else. I am,

Sir,

Your very humble servant,

Alex. Runciman

Edin. Nov.2. 1778.

Appendix B

The Letter Book of Walter Ross transcribed by David Laing,
EUL Ms.La.IV.25.

Walter Ross to John Runciman.

J.R. Painter London

(13th & 17th August, 1767)

Dear John,

I received your letter in Fife where I have been for a long time close engaged in Mr.Alexander's business, and therefore could not possibly pretend to be punctual in Correspondence.

Your two pictures have since come to hand which have been exhibited to the Generality of (amateurs) in this place, all of whom are very loud in your praise. Having done so nobly on English ground, great will be the Expectation from your intended Transportation into Classic ground.

But Signor Runcimani, in place of two Pictures which your brother engaged for to Collⁿ Campbell he ought to have had four---- If the other two do not come, besides breach of Engagements I shall be horribly affronted, besides losing a very good friend to both of you. Therefore let me have (them if) they are to be had-- Altho' you have not sent me one stroke of your pencil to my new house as I expected I have not been forgetful of you. And I hope the good news I have now to tell will produce something.

I had a long conversation with Mr.Alexander where I cleared up everything which you omitted about the London affair and did my utmost to bring you into favour. In short, altho' that Gentleman's expense has been of late so prodigious his generosity is not an iota diminished. I gave him your address and I believe you will find a credit sent you upon Italy for 50 guineas or more which is to be repaid pictura inani. I insist upon hearing from you with a distinct answer in course of post about the two pictures (otherwise) by St.Paul you won't hear a word of me this two months.

If you do, keep touches, my next letter in all probability (will) loosen you from England for there is magic in the touch.

Walter Ross to Collⁿ Mure Campbell

19th Sept. 1767

Sir,

Mr. Runciman of this place left the inclosed Account among others with me when he went for Rome, and desired it to be sent you-- There are two pictures sent to Lawers by the Carrier painted for your house, a Danae and a Silenus, both of which are very much liked here. Mr. Runciman's brothr has done a third which I daily expect from London and is to paint the fourth at Rome. When these arrive I shall take care to forward them. Meantime it would be a great favour to AR should you be pleased to order Payment of the plain painting account as he wants a remittance at present. I shall discharge it as his factor.

WR.

Same to Same.

6th Nov^r 1767

Sir,

I am just arrived from the Country otherways would have duly acknowledged the Receipt of yours. --- I am very sorry Mr. Runciman's Pictures did not answer the measures. But I hope you will find another place for them--- Meantime in obedience to your orders I have written to stop the fourth being done. --- For, as I mentioned before, they left that place, I believe (the third?) now lies at Leith. --- I presume you will not choose to throw it back upon them and therefore shall wait your directions about it.--- By their last they are very much pinched for money and upon the faith of your account have drawn upon me to the order of Coutts & Company--- It will therefore be a very singular favour

if you will give order for payment in course that their credit may be kept.

Meantime I am & c.

Same to same

The Honb.^{le} Collin Mure Campbell

8th June 1768.

Sir,

By letter from Messrs. Runciman I find the money remitted them is quite exhausted & I am now collecting the remainder of their funds in this Country to be sent them for their relief --- I presume to trouble you with this that you may order payment of the £10-10 Stg. remaining after your Accompt which will do the young Artists considerable service at present.

I am etc.

Walter Ross to Sir James Clerk.

Sir James Clerk of Pennycuik Barr.^t

24 August 1768.

Sir,

By letters from Alex^r and John Runciman presently at Rome I find the money advanced them by you is exhausted & that they have been for some time past upon very short allowance living upon the little Cash which John had saved at London & some assistance generously given them by Mr. Alexander --- The reasons they assign for this are first Alexanders being attacked at London befor he set out by a Credit^{or} of the former company and detained at considerable expence --- Mr. Alexander reliev^d him, & has since been refunded out of the Companys effects. next the expence of their journey which (from) their ignorance of travelling greatly exceeded the sums set apart for it --- & last the price of provisions and necessaries at Rome which has been much higher than usuall during their residence --- They tell me they could make a good shift to live

by copying for english gentlemen &c but that branch is engrossed by one or two people who have created a prejudice against them upon account of their short stay at Rome, which it seems is there considered a standard of merit --- They seem to be extremely fond of the place & of their own improvement but tell me that necessity will oblige them to leave it --- They would have told you their own story, but after trying, gave it over & desired me to do it --- To keep them another year and bring them home will take £100 at least, and this sum they say would at once make them happy and complete the intention of their journey---

I have tried their friends in Edin^r & I believe will be able in some time hence to make out between £40 & £50 Stg. & I take the liberty to lay their situation in this manner before you as their prin(cipa)l patron --- I know you will not allow these young artsist to be distressed or to return re infecta and I am fully persuaded they will behave with all gratitude & repay your advances with the best of their labours. £50 more will do the business Compleatly, & such is my own opinion of their honesty that I will engage they will repay you that sum in the same manner as that already owing you --- Should you approve you will give orders to Mr.Hogg that a remittance may be made them immediately, for it will be some little time before I get in my collection here

I am & c

(Walter Ross)

Walter Ross to Baron Grant

Mr. Barron Grant

24 August 1768

Sir,

In troubling you with this I take an uncommon liberty, but I hope upon perusall you will excuse it by letters from Alex^rRunciman late painter & John Runciman his brother presently in Rome I am informed that the money advanced them by Sir James Clerk is exhausted & that at present they are on very short allowance

this money was only £150 --- the Expence of their journey cut much deeper than they were aware of & the expence of provisions for some time past has been much higher in that city than usuall --- In short unless they are relieved they will be obliged to return in distress without accomplishing the purpose of their journey, a circumstance which must greatly affect their after success in life---

They dont give me the least hint of troubling you upon (their) (this) head but I am so affected with their presnet situation that I determine to lay it before two or three of their best friends in this place in order to raise £100 Stg. to releive their present want, keep them another year, and bring them home to their own country this sum they say would compleat their design & make them compleatly happy.

Alexander the eldest has frequently mentioned to me the many obligations he lies under to Mr.Barron Grant to whom I dare say he will prove forever grateful.

They have se(ver)all considerable pieces of work to execute upon their return which must put them in cash & they will without doubt most thankfully repay any assistance now given them --- If therefore it is agreeable to you to join in making them a remittance you will please let me know the sum by a note & I shall oblige myself to procure the oblig(ation) of both parties for repay^t as I undertook the care of their little affairs till their retrun

I am &c

(Walter Ross)

Same to same

Mr. Barron Grant

24th November 1768

Sir,

Mr. Isaac Grant has this day by yr, order paid me £27 upon Acco^t of A.Runciman painter in Edinburgh presently residing for his improvement in Rome. And as this m~~o~~ney was generously given to enable Runciman to continue his studies I hereby engage to

procure(?) you a proper obligⁿ from him for your reimbursement,
or otherways to repay the above sum with interest from this date.

I am &c

(Walter Ross)

A note by Laing appended reads; "In the Letter Book there are
unluckily no letters elating to the Runcimans of a later date than
the above, 24th Nov.1768".

Appendix C

Alexander Runciman's account with Walter Ross.

Alexander Runciman Painter

1767

March 12 To John Runcimans Draft upon me to the order of
Gilbert Bertram & Co @ 30 days sight £22

Oct. 28 To John Runcimans Draft upon me from London
at ten days date to the order of Messrs
James Coutts & Co £45

1768

March 9 To Alexander Runcimans Draft upon me from
Rome to the order of Francis Barrazzi for £50
To Do.paid Mr Alex.Williamson Factor for
Lord Hopetoun a Ballance due him by
A.Runciman £15 18 1
N(ote) Mr.Williamson at my desire & upon
my letter took up a Draft by ?ralfield &
Caldwell upon Alex.Runciman for £56.12.6
& 7s.6d of interest in all £57 upon supposition
that Lord Hopetoun owed Runciman an Accompt to
that amount, but upon measuring the work and
deducting £10 fr.Runciman per reciept it
appeared there was only £40.1.11 due ---
Mr. Williamson kept the Ballance off Dugal
McLaurin's accompt & I repaid it to him
Pr.receipt and Letter.

By Cash from Mr. Barron Grant for A.Runciman £25

To Cash advanced him preceding 2nd Jan(?)1767		
Pr. receipt in all	..	£113.12.
By Do. to Accompt	£ 14	
By Do. the amount of Accompts due him collected by me	£140.13.10	
By Dougald McLaurin Bill for	£ 37	
To Do. paid Mrs. Runciman his mother pr. receipt		£ 30
		<hr/>
Carried	£216.13.10	£276.10.1
1771		
1771	Brought forward	£216.13.10 £276.10.1
Octo ^r	To cash in loan in London 27 guineas & ½	£ 28.18
	To his half of joint reckonings paid by me	£ 6.14
	To his half of our Journey to Scotland £28 in all	£ 14
	To cash paid Miss Grays Accompt	£ 20
	To Do. your Draft to the order of William Hume	£ 5.15
	To cash paid him at sundry times since he came to Edin ^r	£ 39.5
	To Do. paid William Ker for him	£ 5.5
	To Mr. Mullon Accompt	
	To Mrs. Kressaurs Accompt	
	To Cash advanced since the 1st Feb	£ 3
		<hr/>
	£216.13.10	£399.7.1

Ballance due W.Ross

£182.13.3

£399.7.1

£399.7.1

(Krassans £5.6)

1st March 1772

The above account settled and a Note given for the Ballance
Mr.Millon & Mrs.Kressans Accompts

W. Ross

Alex^r Runciman

Ballance due as above

£182.13.3

To Cash given him since 1st March 1772

£ 16.10

Ballance due 20 Septem^r 1772

£199.3.3

APPENDIX D

Gavin Hamilton's Iliad pictures and their literary inspiration

"Mr. Gavin Hamilton...is what the Italians call the Premiero, and we call the Principall, in the Academy of Painting at Rome, and all the young students apply to him for Direction and Instruction in their studies... He is a sweet blooded, polite gentleman, and being the most renowned of all the History Painters of this age is highly respected at Rome." (John Aikman of the Ross to John Forbes, Aug. 29, 1767).¹

Gavin Hamilton's contemporaries recognised his importance as a painter, but modern scholarship has really only taken notice of his work since Prof. Waterhouse in 1954 gave to the British Academy his paper The British Contribution to the Neo-classical Style of Painting.² Hamilton's most important work was undoubtedly his series of six pictures from the Iliad. The first of these, Andromache bewailing the Death of Hector, was exhibited in 1762, and according to Waterhouse may have been commissioned in the spring of 1758, the last, Hector taking leave of Andromache, seems to have been commissioned in 1777,

1. Forbes Correspondence, Family Papers, Col. W. Robertson-Aikman. Two contemporary references to Hamilton in the writing of young painters are in James Barry, letter to Dr. Sleight, 1765, in Works of James Barry, London, 1809, I, 22, and Alexander Runciman, letter to Sir James Clerk, 16th May, 1770, Appendix A.
2. Ellis Waterhouse, The British Contribution to the Neo-classical style of Painting, Proceedings of the British Academy, XL, 1954, 57.

though it existed as a modello before that date.³ Though the pictures, therefore occupied him for nearly twenty years, three years after the first was exhibited he wrote of them as a unified group to Viscount Palmerston. The letter is one of three to the same patron in which he mentions his Trojan pictures. The relevant passages are as follows: Aug. 2nd, 1765. "I should be glad to know what your Lordship thinks of my print of Andromache bewailing the Death of Hector: it is the first of a set of six prints I intend to publish from Homer, and consequently I am anxious about the success of it. The order of the subjects is as follows: viz: the Anger of Achilles, where the Heralds of Agamemnon carry off Briseis; the second, Achilles bewailing the Death of Patroclus; the third, Hector taking his leave of Andromache; the fourth, Achilles dragging the dead body of Hector round the walls of Troy; the fifth, a night piece when Priam comes to demand the dead body of Hector; and the last, Andromache, etc., lamenting over the dead body.

"The first of these subjects, the Anger of Achilles, I have already painted for the Duke of Bridgewater, but of a size and proportion that would not accompany the rest of my set, so that I intend to paint this subject a second time and have, accordingly begun a sketch - the invention of which, and composition, is entirely different from the former; in short it turns out a favourite composition in so much that I cannot help wishing that in place of the Macbeth I was to paint this subject for your Lordship."

3. Waterhouse notes that Andromache mourning Hector was exhibited at the Society of Artists in 1762. He also suggests that the future Earl of Northampton may have given the commission when in Rome in spring, 1758, The British Contribution, P.B.A., XL, 67 & 69.

In a letter to Lord Shelburne, 13th March 1777, pub. Christie's Catalogue of the Lansdowne Sale, 1930, 98, Hamilton says that he is now engaged on a large work for the Duke of Hamilton. The picture is still in the Hamilton Collection and is at present on loan to Glasgow University. The sketch for this picture was described by Copley as 'long since done' in 1775 (Waterhouse). In 1773 the subject set for composition in the St. Luke's Academy competition was Hector and Andromache. David Allan's prize winning picture is clearly based on Hamilton's composition which must therefore have existed in some form by that date. Allan's composition is reproduced in Macmillan, Runciman in Rome, Burlington Magazine. Jan.1970.

April 12th 1766. "It gives me great pleasure to hear that my print is likely to meet with success as a great part of the pleasure of my life depends upon it." Undated, 1766. "It gives me great satisfaction to hear that my print meets with approbation from the public, which will the more encourage me to follow out my plan of six prints from Homer. I have got a companion for it now finished, the Achilles dragging the dead body of Hector and it has turned out still better than the former, having more force and spirit

"What puzzles me most (in the Anger of Achilles) is the Achilles, to preserve dignity without extravagance in this violent character is no easy task."⁴

Hamilton's own account of his project is obviously of primary importance in any discussion. It is most striking that, though he mentions the paintings, his letters are really concerned with a set of six prints. He had already written in January 1765 to James Grant of Grant asking permission to have a drawing made of Achilles and Patroclus, due to be delivered at that time and finished 15 months before, "in case I should be encouraged to follow out a plan already begun of publishing a sett of prints from Homer."⁵ He may have started

4. Quoted in part by David Irwin, Gavin Hamilton, Archaeologist, Painter, Dealer, Art Bulletin, XLIV, 1962, 93, and at greater length by B. Connel, Portrait of a Whig Peer, London, 1957, 55-8.

The Anger of Achilles for the Duke of Bridgewater does not appear in the 1851 Catalogue of Bridgewater House Collection and is apparently lost.

5. Letter of Gavin Hamilton, dated Rome January 1765. Seafield Papers, Register House, Edinburgh, Ms.GD 248 37609. See below o, 30.

with one picture but like Hogarth in the Harlot's Progress, he decided to build a series on it. This has one important consequence for our approach to the pictures. As paintings they could never have been the subject of a single commission, nor could they have been hung in one place, and there is no evidence that Hamilton ever thought of them in this way. If they were only a series of subjects from Homer each one commissioned by a different patron, there would have been little point in linking them very closely but, on the other hand, planned as a set of engravings they would obviously be available together, and the artist had an opportunity to treat them as a dramatic unity. The way in which he has already decided in the letter on the number and choice of his subjects suggests, before we have examined them in detail, that this is what he had in mind.

In the end there were six paintings, but only five prints seem to have been published.⁶ Nevertheless, though it was not in fact this series that he referred to in an often quoted remark as his "great plan in life", but to the Paris and Helen pictures originally intended for Lansdowne House, he refers to it in very similar terms, and it is clear that even if the series of prints was never completed, he attached great importance to it at the time that he was writing.⁷

6. The prints are dated as follows: Andromache mourning Hector, 1764: Achilles dragging Hector, 1766: Achilles and Patroclus, 1767: Achilles and Briseis, 1768: Achilles and Priam, 1775: Hector and Andromache was apparently never engraved.
7. The mistake first appears in Irwin, Gavin Hamilton, Art Bulletin, XLIV, 93.

In a letter of 16th July, 1768 to Carlo Bianconi in Bologna Hamilton again refers to his pictures; "Ho recato una consolazione grandissima nel sentine che le siano piaciuti le me debole prove che ho fatto per esprimere in parte le sublime idee del incomparabile Homero, e altra tanto piacere mi averebbe fatto se si fosse degnato di assistarmi (?) con qualche consiglio ed avviso da vero amico, che almeno mi sarebbe giovato nel compimento delli altri tre sugetti da farsi per compire l'opera, questa condescenza spero che mi sara da lei concessa in aproso, che infatti mi dara animo di sostenere piu resolutamente un peso cosi grave, come loe (?) an intrapresa simile .." ⁸ What he writes here is conclusive evidence that he thought of his six pictures as a single work, but it is also clear from the previous evidence that he could only do so if they were to be engraved. Thus the letter to Bianconi explains the importance that he attaches to the engravings in his letters to Palmerston.

The remarks in his third letter to Lord Palmerston also throw some light on his approach to his subject. He evidently regards the substitution of the Wrath of Achilles for his proposed subject from Macbeth as unexceptional. This is in keeping with the contemporary critical approach to both poets Shakespeare and Homer, and with the 'force and spirit' which he feels distinguishes the engraving of Achilles with the body of Hector. In the light of this remark, the dignity that he feels puzzled to achieve in the Wrath of Achilles, which was a particular problem in that picture, should not be misinterpreted as an aspiration in the whole cycle to Wincklemann's kind of neo-classical calm.⁹

8. National Library of Scotland, Ms.3648/113. The letter is mentioned by Irwin, Gavin Hamilton, Art Bulletin, XLIV, 93, as to an unknown correspondent.

Carlo Bianconi (1732-1802) was an antiquarian and designer, later secretary of the Brera in Milan.

9. Irwin, Gavin Hamilton, Art Bulletin, XLIV, 1962, 94-95.

The six subjects that Hamilton eventually painted were the same as those that he listed in his letter. A seventh subject that has been mentioned in the literature, the Death of Patroclus, appears never to have existed, but to have arisen out of confusion over the title of Achilles mourning Patroclus.¹⁰ In his list Hamilton puts this picture and Hector's Farewell to Andromache in reverse order to their order in the poem, but this appears to be no more than a slip. Giulio Romano, Primaticcio, and Rubens had all taken the Iliad as the starting point for a series of pictures, or in the case of Rubens, tapestries.¹¹ The latter two however take as their subject the life of Achilles which has only a partial bearing on the Iliad itself. Giulio bases his pictures much more closely on Homer, but even he elaborates his subject into the story of the Trojan war, including for example the Rape of Helen which has no direct place in Homer's narrative. Giulio's are the pictures that Hamilton is most likely to have known, and he may perhaps have been influenced by them, but his approach to his subject is quite different from that of any of his

10. This confusion seems first to appear in the catalogue of the exhibition Romantic Art in Britain, Detroit and Philadelphia, 1968, 46. The title Death of Patroclus, first appears in the Gazette Litteraire de l'Europe, 25 April, 1764, I, 55-6, but the picture described is clearly Achilles mourning Patroclus.
11. Giulio Romano in the Sala di Troia, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua; Primaticcio in a series now destroyed at Fontainebleau, and Rubens in a set of eight tapestries. There are also two antique works that Hamilton certainly knew. These are the Capitoline Tabula Iliaca, and a marble relief, apparently a well-head, with seven scenes from the life of Achilles, also in the Capitoline.

predecessors. An examination of his choice of subjects reveals that, starting from a careful reading of the poem, he has sought to make his pictures a dramatic unity in themselves, and they become a commentary on the structure of the poem. His starting point is therefore to a very important extent a literary one, though this does not mean that his pictures are mere illustration.

Though significantly developed, his subject is the Anger of Achilles, and this Pope in the preface to his translation identifies as the main argument and the source of the Aristotelian unity of the Iliad. The 'probable fable', as he calls it, is "the Anger of Achilles, the most short and single subject that ever was chosen by a poet."¹² From the way that he interprets Homer in several of his pictures it is clear that Hamilton used Pope's translation as his text. It was through Pope that Homer was generally known to British readers and his preface is important for establishing the general attitude towards his poetry that prevailed right through the romantic period. Homer's invention is the first and main quality that he identifies, and in a memorable passage he likens it to the abundance and variety of nature herself. He then proceeds: "It is to the Strength of this amazing Invention we are to attribute that unequall'd Fire and Rapture, which is so forcible in Homer, that no Man of a true Poetical Spirit is Master of himself while he reads him. What he writes is of the most animated Nature imaginable; everything moves, everything lives and is put in Action..."

12. Pope's translation of the Iliad was first published in London in 1715. In the first edition the pages of the preface are not numbered.

"... his Fancy ... grows in the Progress (of the poem) both on himself and on others, and becomes on Fire like a Chariot-Wheel, by its own Rapidity. Exact Disposition, Just Thought, correct Elocution, polish'd Numbers, may have been found in a thousand; but this Poetical Fire, this Vivida vis animi, in a very few."¹³

Fire is the true poetic gift. No poet possesses it as Homer does, though significantly it is shared, amongst a very few others, by Milton and Shakespeare. In his preface Pope thus reverses the judgement of Dryden that Virgil is the superior poet because he is the more polished, and paves the way for the whole romantic scale of values in literature.

As well as the preface, Hamilton would have had Pope's notes to the text to help him in his choice of subjects. These are full and often illuminating, and draw on a wide range of preceding Homeric scholarship.¹⁴ He also very probably knew the rather indifferent illustrations that adorn the second edition of Pope's translation.¹⁵ A more interesting set were those in Ogilby's translation published in 1669. They are in a style deriving ultimately from Rubens, and though far more numerous than Hamilton's cycle, do include all but one of the subjects that he painted, and it seems likely that he knew them.¹⁶

13. Pope, Iliad, preface.
14. Notably Mme. Dacier, and Eustathius. Mme. Dacier, L'Iliade de Homer traduit en François, Paris, 1711. Pope cites Eustathius frequently, but I do not know what edition he had.
15. The second edition of Pope's translation was published in 1718. The illustrations are by Picart.
16. Homer his Iliads, translated by John Ogilby, London, 1669. The illustrations are by various hands.

It has been suggested that in the first of his pictures in order of narrative Hamilton was combining two subjects that were properly separate, the Wrath of Achilles, and Briseis lead away by the heralds of Agamemnon¹⁷, but the picture represents a precise incident in Homer's narrative. When the heralds came to take Briseis, Achilles repeated the vow, that he had first made in the council of the Greeks, to abandon them, and to withdraw from the fight, and he called upon the heralds to be his witnesses.¹⁸ This is what he is seen doing in Hamilton's picture.

In his interpretation of the scene Hamilton appears to be following Pope who expands and interprets Homer's text. Homer describes Briseis departure as reluctant but says no more. Pope writes:

"She, in soft sorrows, and in pensive thought,
Past silent, as the heralds held her hand,
And oft looked back, slow moving o'er the strand".¹⁹

In a note to line 451, Pope explains his interpretation of Homer in words that exactly fit Hamilton's picture; "We see Briseis passing unwillingly along with a dejected air, melted in tenderness and not able to utter a word." In the text and in the note he is clearly implying an affectionate relationship between Achilles and the girl. This has the authority of Ovid, but very little justification in Homer.²⁰ For Hamilton however it is a

17. By Dora Wiebenson, 'Subjects from Homer in Neo-classical art', Art Bulletin, XLVI, 1964, 27.

18. Homer, the Iliad, I, line 333f.

19. Pope, Iliad, I, 1.450-453.

20. Ovid, Amores, II, 8.

very important gloss on the original poem. It enables him to treat the departure of Briseis as revealing two sides of Achilles nature, his terrible anger and his capacity both to feel and inspire affection.²¹ He thus introduces in his first picture the theme of the conflict of the passions that is central to his whole interpretation. Achilles affection, as we see it here for Briseis, and later for Patroclus, by providing the occasion for his anger, has tragic consequences for Patroclus, for Hector and Andromache and ultimately for himself.

The theme that is introduced in the first subject is expanded by the second, Hector's Farewell to Andromache. In this Hector and Andromache provide a parallel to Achilles and Briseis. The scene was one of the most famous in Homer,²² and had been treated by a variety of poets, including Dryden and Hamilton's own acquaintance William Hamilton of Bangour. Pope too discusses it at length. Nevertheless, in spite of its obvious attraction treated in isolation, the painter succeeds in making it a coherent part of his cycle. His naming it as the third subject suggests that the pathetic aspect, apparent when it is considered in conjunction with the fourth, Achilles with the body of Hector, was uppermost in his mind. By introducing the story of Hector and Andromache in parallel he underlines the pathos in the whole tragedy. He is able to show, not only Achilles anger, but also its effect.

21. Thetis love for her son, and the mutual devotion of Achilles and Patroclus are critical to the whole story. Homer gives Briseis hardly any positive role, but in her one speech, lamenting Patroclus she reveals that she had enough feeling for Achilles to wish to be married to him. Iliad, XIX, 297.
22. Iliad, VI, 1.404f. The subject is generally known as the Parting, or the Farewell of Hector and Andromache, but it is more properly their meeting at the Scaean Gate.

Hector's encounter with his wife takes place in the sixth book. At that stage in the narrative he is triumphant because of Achilles' withdrawal. Unable to sit back any longer and watch Hector routing the Greeks, Patroclus rejoins the battle in the sixteenth book and is killed by him. It is not however until the eighteenth book that Hamilton returns to the story to show Achilles mourning over his corpse.²³

Pope thinks very highly of Homer's account of Achilles' first reaction to the news of Patroclus's death, when he rolls on the ground pouring hot ashes on his head in frantic grief. In a note he calls it "a fine picture."²⁴ and in fact it is the scene chosen for illustration in Ogilby. Hamilton however chooses the scene at night, though he does not so render it, later in the book, where Achilles with the corpse of Patroclus clasped in his arms laments his death. He vows a terrible revenge on Hector and the Trojans, and at the same time foresees his own death.

This picture also throws a further light on Achilles' character. In deciding to return to the battle, he recognises that he is doomed. In Pope's words he chooses "the short and active life rather than the long inglorious one."²⁵ His love for Patroclus is one of the mainsprings of the action, and in his determination to avenge him he is consciously sacrificing himself. The picture thus suggests the nobility of sentiment that paradoxically inspires his most savage deed.

23. Iliad. XVIII, 316f

24. Pope, Iliad, XVIII, note 1.27

25. Pope, Iliad, XVIII, note to 1.379

In proceeding directly to Achilles' revenge on the corpse of Hector in the fourth picture, Hamilton ignores the varied action of Books 19, 20 & 21, and also the fight itself between Achilles and Hector. He takes us straight to the climax of Achilles' wrath in book 22, in a picture that is also the dramatic climax of the cycle and appropriately the most dramatic composition. For his text he follows Pope:

"Proud on his car the insulting victor stood,
and bore aloft his arms distilling blood." 26

The image of Achilles brandishing Hector's arms is not in Homer, who only describes him lifting them into his chariot. It does not appear either in any of Hamilton's pictorial antecedents, and it seems therefore to be evidence of his depending directly on Pope. His actual choice of the subject, however, seems to be contrary to Pope's taste. Explaining Homer's purpose in making Achilles do this thing, "unworthy of himself and of the dead", he also writes that he thinks that Homer has been justly criticised for it.²⁷ In making this the dramatic climax of his cycle Hamilton is departing significantly from Pope's view, and perhaps reveals an affinity with Burke's idea of the sublime. The careful choice of this central subject also reveals very clearly the dramatic intention of the whole cycle.

26. Pope's Iliad, XXII, 501-2. Homer, Iliad, 395f, describes Achilles lifting Hector's arms into the chariot, and he is seen doing this in Picart's illustration in Pope's second edition. Pope makes Achilles actually wave the arms in the air as he is seen doing in Hamilton's picture.
27. Pope, Iliad, XXII, 496. In his note to this line Pope writes: "This inhumanity of Achilles in dragging the dead body of Hector has been severely (and I think not without some justice) censured by several, both ancients and moderns."

The penultimate scene is that in which Priam, having come into the Greek camp under divine protection, appears before Achilles to plead for the restitution of Hector's corpse. He prostrates himself before him, clasps his knees, and kisses his hands, while Achilles looks on "Breathless, pale, amaz'd." ²⁸ Pope in his note to the passage, recommends this scene as "an admirable subject for the painter", and it appears as the illustration to the final chapter of his second edition. The picture nevertheless forms an integral part of Hamilton's cycle. The dramatic contrast that Achilles' compassion makes with the previous picture reveals most vividly the extremes of his character, and so his capacity for feeling, which is greater but not different from that of more ordinary humanity. As Pope says of his response to Priam: "His anger abates very slowly: it is stubborn, yet still it remits: had the poet drawn him as never to be pacified he had outraged nature, and not represented his hero as a man but as a monster". ²⁹ At the same time in his reception of Priam, and in conceding his request, Achilles is submitting to the express command of the gods, and so implicitly accepts his fate.

The place of Priam in the fifth scene continues the pathetic counter plot of the story of Hector that Hamilton has created. It leads naturally therefore to the final picture, Andromache and the Trojan women mourning over the corpse of Hector. ³⁰ This is the penultimate and last significant scene in the Iliad. It makes a pair with the third of Hamilton's pictures, Achilles mourning Patroclus, with which it is so clearly contrasted. The last picture provides a comment on the whole cycle, the deepest tragedy is in the suffering of the innocent.

28. Pope, Iliad, XXIV, 584-593, translating Homer, XXIV, 477f

29. Pope, Iliad, note to line 439

30. Homer, Iliad, XXIV, 723-776. Pope, XXIV, 906-980.

In his six scenes Hamilton gives the essence of the story of the wrath of Achilles which although it only occupies a small proportion of the whole text of the Iliad gives it its dramatic unity.³¹ In parallel, however, he tells the story of Hector and Andromache. Thus in his choice of subjects and their presentation he interprets Homer but also subtly modifies him. The fatal conjunction in Achilles of violent affection and violent anger is revealed as the source of the tragedy. The climax of the drama comes in the fourth scene which, in spite of all the fighting in the poem, is the only violent scene of the six that Hamilton chooses. In this way its importance is underlined and the violence is focused in the fearful anger of Achilles. This fourth scene goes beyond mere savagery into tragedy through Achilles own consciousness of his fate, and through the pathos of Hector's death and maltreatment.

Hector and Achilles receive equal attention in the cycle. They each have two scenes to themselves, and in the remaining two pictures they are the joint subject, though in the second of these, the fifth of the series, it is Priam not Hector who is in the foreground. The tragic consequences for Hector and Andromache of Achilles' violence are therefore as important a part of the cycle as the story of Achilles himself.

Hamilton's interpretation is one that in its main outlines could be derived from any close and intelligent reading of Homer, but the manner in which he condenses it into a dramatic form suggests that he found some guidance outside Homer's text. His presentation of Achilles as a strong man with a weakness that becomes tragic has a clear analogy with Shakespearean tragedy. His intention to publish the pictures as a series of engravings on the other hand suggests the influence of Hogarth. Though Hogarth's cycles were apparently

31. For a modern statement of this view see G.S. Kirk: The Songs of Homer, Cambridge, 1962, 353

so very different they had not only shown how engraving could provide support for new kinds of painting for which there was no conventional patronage, but also how pictures could use the dramatic forms of literature without being subordinate to it. Charles Lamb was the first to point out the Shakespearean element in Hogarth, ³² but the sophistication of his dramatic form is clear enough to any careful observer. Hamilton therefore may well have borrowed the dramatic form of his cycle from Hogarth together with the simpler idea of a series of engravings. In detail several points of comparison exist between his cycle and the Rake's Progress in particular. The most striking is the parallel between the sixth scene of the Rake's Progress, its dramatic climax where the Rake defies his fate against a background of destruction, and the climax of Hamilton's cycle, the fourth scene, Achilles with the body of Hector. In both the position and working of the scene is clearly Shakespearean. Apart from the cycles it is striking that the closest precedent in style and dramatic presence to Hamilton's pictures is Hogarth's isolated but very important portrait of Garrick as Richard III.

The example of Hogarth was important to Hamilton, nevertheless he did not produce a modern moral cycle, nor did he turn as Hogarth might have led him directly to Shakespeare. Instead he turned to Homer and to Antiquity. His use of the Iliad as the subject of his first major undertaking as a

32. Charles Lamb, Essay on the Original Genius and Character of Hogarth, The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb, ed. by E.V. Lucas, London, 1903, I, 71. Lamb's Essay on Hogarth was first published in 1811, and is one of the most perceptive accounts ever written.

painter is usually explained by referring to the publication in 1757 of Tableaux tirées de l'Illiade de Homer etc. by the Comte de Caylus.³³ The date of publication is only a year before he may have received the commission for the first of his series, though Andromache mourning Hector is a subject Caylus does not mention. The coincidence of dates has helped to establish the idea of this book's importance, but without it, and if the book had been differently titled, it is doubtful if it would be remembered at all. It is a pedestrian work in which the author reveals that his understanding of the visual arts is limited to the rococo-baroque of early eighteenth century France. It has no bearing on the ideas that were turning painters to a fresh consideration not only of Homer, but also of Shakespeare and Milton. The first of whom Caylus does not mention, and the latter he dismisses with even less credit. Of Milton he writes, "La perte de la vue a peut être été son plus grand rapport avec Homer."³⁴ He also writes from a point of view that is very disparaging of artists and of painting. From Dryden's translation of Dufresnoy well into the nineteenth century, for British painters painting and poetry were closely allied, but equal and independent in their claims to express the things of the mind. For Caylus however painting was inevitably inferior; it could not express time as poetry could, not could it express any other abstract idea except through allegory and personification.³⁵ The paintings

33. Comte de Caylus, Tableaux tirés de l'Illiade, de l'Odyssey d'Homer et de l'Eneide de Vergile, etc. Paris, 1757. Caylus is regarded as a major influence by David Irwin, 'Gavin Hamilton', Art Bulletin, XLIV, 93, and passim by Dora Wiebenson, in Subjects from Homer, Art Bulletin, XLVI
34. Caylus, Tableaux, xiv
35. Caylus, Tableaux, xxxiii

that he is proposing could only have client status to the poetry that they were to illustrate, and this is how he thinks of them throughout. Perhaps most insulting however was his main purpose in writing the book. This was to make available subjects from Homer, sparing the artist the trouble of reading the poem, and so overcome "un certain manque de scavoir, dont on peut faire se reprocher aux peintres." ³⁶ Though he explains this as a consequence of their devotion to art and not as a fault in their birth or education, nevertheless the accusation is there, and the fact that we have no reply from one or other of the highly articulate artists of the eighteenth century rather suggests that they did not trouble to read his book, than that they took it as a key to all the secrets of Homer.

In his text Caylus divides Homer's narrative into 136 separate tableaux which form a continuous sequence from detail to detail of the poem though with some surprising omissions. In several places he includes subjects for continuity which he acknowledges are inappropriate as pictures. ³⁷ At one point he admits implicitly that his imagination is bankrupt for he writes, to justify the introduction of yet another god riding on a cloud: "Au reste on ne doit pas critiquer la répétition des nuages que l'on voit dans le plus grande nombre de ces compositions: il faut les regarder comme la voiture générale des dieux." ³⁸ His attitude

36. Caylus, Tableaux, iii: 'Il ne faut donc pas attribuer un certain manque de scavoir, dont on peut faire se reprocher aux peintres, à leur défaut de naissance, ou d'éducation, mais à l'art lui même, qui veut que dès l'enfance on soit absolument à lui'.

37. eg. Mars and Minerva watching the battle. subject 33

38. Caylus, Tableaux, 41, subject 40

to style and the mechanics of painting reveals his admiration for painters like Coypel and La Fosse whom he mentions approvingly in the introduction.³⁹ It is in keeping therefore that he tends to play down the dramatic and violent aspects of Homer in his choice and recommended treatment of subjects.

One of Caylus most important general recommendations is that the pictures should be of Poussin size. The canvasses should not be more than three or four feet high. This is partly for practical reasons, in order to make it possible to accommodate the vast number of pictures that he proposes, but also out of consideration of the effect of scale. Humanity, he says, even with inanimate objects, derives pleasure from the feeling that it can dominate.⁴⁰ It is the same understanding of the effect of scale that leads Hamilton to do precisely the opposite in his paintings. By making the figures larger than life and his canvasses enormous, his pictures dominate the spectator and impress him with the powers and grandeur of the epic and its heroes. In this Hamilton is close not to Caylus, but to Shaftesbury who in his 'Letter concerning Designs', writes of his proposed 'Judgement of Hercules', that the figures should be "taken as big, or bigger than the common life; the subject being of the Heroick kind, and requiring rather such figures as should appear above ordinary human Stature."⁴¹

39. Caylus, Tableaux, xviii

40. Caylus, Tableaux, xxvii

41. Shaftesbury, Characteristicks of Men Manners Opinions Times, 2nd ed. London 1714, 3 vols. III, 396. The two of Hamilton's pictures for which I have measurements are Achilles mourning Patroclus, and Hector and Andromache, they are 8 ft. 3 ins. x 12 ft. 10 ins. and 8 ft. 6 ins. x 13 ft. 2 ins.

The sophisticated and careful design of Hamilton's cycle could not have been arrived at without lengthy reflection on the poem. When he embarked on his first picture therefore he may have been contemplating the project for some time, and we know from his contact with Stuart and Revett in 1748 that his interest in Greece was already 'alive' at that time.⁴² An amusing insight into his state of mind when he returned to London in 1751 is provided by a letter of Andrew Stuart to his father, 2 July, 1751. Andrew Stuart was, it seems, a family friend of the Hamiltons of Murdieston, and was over many years a correspondent of Gavin Hamilton. He writes referring to Hamilton's capacity for finishing pictures, in this case portraits, which had apparently been the subject of some comment by his enemies (all painters in Rome seem to have made enemies): "I must own he very often requires a spur to industry, it often happens that he is not in the humour of painting and loves to indulge himself in thinking of fine pictures and fine compositions, but this sort of indulgence is very natural to a man who has been so long in Italy, and will wear off by degrees in England."⁴³ While this obviously has no direct bearing on the Iliad pictures it clearly suggests a state of mind from which they are a not surprising result. It also incidentally helps to explain why the pictures once embarked on took him so long to finish.

It has been suggested that Hamilton's connection with the Scottish poet William Hamilton of Bangour, whose portrait he painted, may help to explain his interest in Homer.⁴⁴ William Hamilton's claim to be a translator of Homer however only

42. David Irwin, English Neo-classical art, London, 1964, 32

43. National Library of Scotland. Ms. 8250 fol. 1.

44. Catalogue Romantic Art in Britain, 45

rests on a short rendering into blank verse of Hector and Andromache. He was a Jacobite and was in exile from 1746 until his death in 1754.⁴⁵ If a painter had any contact with him after 1746, therefore, it must have been in France where we do not know of his spending any considerable time. If the connection between the two Hamiltons was at all significant for the painter's career, it may be because it suggests a Jacobite connection. It would thus help to explain how it was that he was apparently given the commission to paint the altarpiece in the Jacobite church in Rome, S. Andrea degli Scozzese.⁴⁶

A more important student of Homer whose portrait Hamilton also painted was Robert Wood, author of An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer.⁴⁷ Wood had passed the winter of 1749-50 in Rome on his way out to Greece on his second expedition, and in Athens in 1751 he and James Dawkins had met Stuart and Revett to whom they "gave much encouragement and assistance", which apparently they also extended at a later

45. For the life of William Hamilton see N. Bushnell, William Hamilton of Bangour, Aberdeen, 1957
46. The archives of the Scots College in Rome were lost in the Napoleonic Wars, and I can find no documentary evidence for this attribution which has however been for a long time accepted by the Scots College themselves. The picture is close in a number of ways to Achilles dragging the body of Hector round the walls of Troy, and may therefore be by Hamilton. It is undated, though presumably early.
47. Robert Wood, An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer, with a Comparative View of the Ancient and Present State of the Troade, privately printed 1767, published London 1769; posthumous and revised edition, 1775, from which the present refs. are taken.

date to the publication of the first volume of the Antiquities of Athens.⁴⁸ The painting of Wood and Dawkins discovering Palmyra was commissioned from Hamilton then in Rome in 1757 by Henry Dawkins to commemorate his brother's death in that year. The connection between Wood and Dawkins, and Hamilton's friends, Stuart and Revett, may explain why Hamilton, who was not at this date particularly well known, nor on the spot, was given this commission. Wood however could not have sat to Hamilton for his portrait, at least not for this particular picture. Hamilton was still in London in April of 1756, but shortly after that returned to Rome.⁴⁹ Wood was in Rome in 1754 and 1755, as tutor to the Duke of Bridgewater, but left for England in August of the latter year. In spite of the portrait there is therefore no clear proof that Wood and Hamilton actually knew each other, nevertheless their movements are such that they could have met. The existence of the picture and their friends in common suggest that it is very likely that they did meet. The fact that Hamilton later painted an Anger of Achilles for the Duke of Bridgewater may also be relevant.

If there is no proof that Hamilton actually knew Wood, there is no doubt about their common interest. Wood's book was not properly published until 1769, but he says in his preface that he had submitted his ideas to James Dawkins in a letter, and as we have seen he died in 1757. Wood also mentions showing the letter to John Carteret, Earl of Granville, who died in January 1763.⁵⁰ He seems therefore to have been airing his ideas a long time before they were actually published.

48. Dictionary of National Biography, Robert Wood.
49. I am very much indebted to Mr. Brinsley Ford for information communicated privately regarding the painting of Wood and Dawkins, and the movements of Hamilton and Wood.
50. Wood, Original Genius of Homer, vi and vii.

Wood's Essay is treated by the late Sir John Myers as the most important English contribution to Homeric criticism in the eighteenth century.⁵¹ His central conviction was that Homer's poetry was rooted in experience, and he frequently refers to him as a painter, meaning by this one who records his experience directly.⁵² The obvious way to prove his point was by comparing the landscape of the Eastern Mediterranean to the landscape that Homer describes, but he also takes his argument much further. The first important effect of his attempt to reconstruct a Homeric reality is that he puts Homer for the first time in a historical perspective. He is able to see how different the world of remotest antiquity in which Homer lived was, not only from his own time, but from classical times. He expresses this very clearly when he writes that the Poetic Age of Homer differed as much from the age of his critic Longinus in all significant things, "as we do, in these respects, from our Gothic ancestors in the days of Chivalry and Romance."⁵³ This understanding of the historical perspective Wood also brings to his analysis of Homer's language, and he points out how his poetry is conditioned by the fact that he was composing in a language that was probably not written down, and which lacked sophisticated critical, philosophic or scientific terms. The whole critical apparatus which had been built on Homer was therefore quite foreign to him, as Wood himself puts it, "That Homer should escape so entire out of the hands of the Lawyers and Grammarians is a piece of good fortune to letters."⁵⁴ Pope's feeling for the poetic fire and animation of Homer, and

51. Sir John L. Myers, Homer and his Critics, London, 1958, 59-68.
52. Wood, Original Genius of Homer, viii-ix, 16, 19, 125 and elsewhere.
53. Wood, Original Genius of Homer, xii-xiii.
54. Wood, Original Genius of Homer, 74

his translation itself, had prepared the way for a much more informal and lively appreciation of his qualities than hitherto, but by separating him from classical antiquity and the whole of classical learning Wood prepares the way for Homes to be with Shakespeare, the presiding genius of Romanticism. With Wood "We break away from the tradition of the elders ... even if it be the monumental work of Alexandrian scholarship; at the touch of Homeric wind from North and West, blowing out of Thrace upon Greek lands and Greek seas, the sleeping beauty has awakened from her Egyptian sarcophagus: from dogmatic slumber to the renaissance of romance."⁵⁵

It is unlikely that Hamilton was familiar with the details of Wood's argument when he embarked on his series. His consistent use of Roman antiquities as models suggests that if he was, one of the most important points escaped him. Nevertheless, Wood's enthusiastic advocacy of a new Homer, a poet whose vitality sprang from his response to experience, and whose experience belonged to the very childhood of mankind, must have been well known in his circle and very influential. Wood himself records how, whenever he was in attendance on the Earl of Granville, "I seldom had the honour of receiving his commands on business, that he did not lead the conversation to Greece and Homer."⁵⁶ In view of his friendship with Stuart and Revett, and the picture of himself and Dawkins, it seems highly unlikely that Hamilton did not have some acquaintance with these infectious new ideas.

55. Myers, Homer and His Critics, 68

56. Wood, Original Genius of Homer, vii.

If Robert Wood may have helped to inspire Hamilton's approach to Homer's poetry, his view of it as a subject for painting and the kind of pictures that he sought to produce, seem to have been influenced by another writer who, although he was a Scot, because he belonged to an older generation Hamilton probably could not have known personally. This was the philosopher George Turnbull. Turnbull had taught at Aberdeen University where he had been an associate of the Homer scholar Thomas Blackwell, and he is now really only remembered as teacher of the philosopher Thomas Reid.⁵⁷ He did however publish a wide variety of miscellaneous works including in 1740 'A Treatise on Ancient Painting' which, although it has never been given the attention it deserves by modern scholars, was of great importance in the eighteenth century.⁵⁸

Turnbull was much influenced by the Earl of Shaftesbury who saw the achievement of the Greeks as a demonstration of the importance of liberty to the arts of civilisation and consequently had little time for Rome: "No sooner had that nation begun to lose the Roughness and Barbarity of their Manners and learn of Greece ... than by their unjust attempt upon the Liberty of the World they justly lost their own."⁵⁹ Turnbull followed Shaftesbury in these views, and held that the encouragement of the arts, particularly painting, had an important

57. Information on Turnbull is scant. These details are taken from James McCosh, The Scottish Philosophy, Biographical, Expository, Critical, from Hutcheson to Hamilton, London, 1875, 95-106.
58. George Turnbull, A Treatise on Ancient Painting, London, 1740. The book was published by the Scots publisher Andrew Millar who also published James Thomson among many others. In the list of subscribers the name Gavin Hamilton appears for no less than twelve copies. This can however hardly be Hamilton himself who was only eighteen at the time. It is more likely to be Gavin Hamilton of Aberdeen who was a bookseller.
59. Shaftesbury, Characteristicks I, 219, Vol. 1.

part to play in the enlightened development of a nation. Not only did Greek art depend upon Greek liberty, but itself contributed to the promotion of 'Virtue and Public Spirit'. His avowed purpose in writing his book was to demonstrate the importance of painting in society by proving its importance in ancient Greece, and to demonstrate its equality with philosophy: "The Conclusion that is principally aimed at (is) the Connexion of Painting with Poetry, and of both with Philosophy ...".⁶⁰

To make his point Turnbull devotes the first three chapters of his book to a history of Greek painting reconstructed from ancient authors. He first of all seeks to establish the antiquity of painting, laying particular stress on Homer's knowledge of it. He then traces its rise and decline in antiquity, using as illustration the analogies that had long been familiar between ancient painting and the painting of the Renaissance. In the third chapter he discusses the recorded works of particular painters and the comments made upon them by antique authors. Throughout he quotes at length and usually in translation his classical authorities. He acknowledges his debt to Junius, but points out quite rightly that his book is in no sense a duplication of the earlier work.⁶¹ His clear and straightforward narrative in English made easily available the whole history of classical painting, and was of central importance in the genesis of eighteenth century British art.

60. Turnbull, Ancient Painting, XII, see also 46, 147, and elsewhere.

61. Fransiscus Junii (Du Jon), De Pictura Veterum etc., Amsterdam, 1637, enlarged edition, Rotterdam, 1694. English edition, The Painting of the Ancients in 3 Bookes, etc. written first in Latine by Fransiscus Junius, and now by him Englished, London, 1638. Turnbull, Ancient Painting, xxv

Throughout the historical part of his book Turnbull constantly stresses the importance of Homer:- "For this we are sure of that the best ancient Statuaries and Painters studied Homer constantly: from his writings they took almost all their ideas and subjects: whatever Affections, Passions, Virtues, Vices, Manners, Habits, or Attitudes they drew: whatever Characters of Gods, Demi-Gods, or Men and Women they represented they had Homer always in their view as their best pattern to copy after. Zeuxis was considered by the Painters as their Legislator with respect to Divinities and Heroes because he had folloed Homer as his."⁶² Homer was therefore to be considered the chief inspiration of painters in antiquity, and Turnbull returns to this point several times with particular illustrations.

One of the most important examples that he gives of Homeric painting is in the third chapter where he discusses the paintings of Theodurus (or Theorus) "who is said to have represented the whole war of Troy in several pieces."⁶³ He associates these paintings, which were in Rome in Pliny's time, with Vergil's description in Aeneid Bk I of the paintings of the Trojan war seen by Aeneas in Dido's new temple of Juno. From this association he makes the main point of this chapter, to show "how nearly allied painting and poetry are," and concludes by saying: "To these reflections it may be added that Painting plainly admits the same Variety as Poetry...

62. Turnbull, Ancient Painting, 3

63. Turnbull, Ancient Painting, 63-4

There is plainly the Epick, the Lyrick, the Tragic, the Comick, the Pastorla, the Elegiack in the one art as well as in the other. Those Pictures, for instance, which described the Siege of Troy were as properly Heroick or Epick Pictures, as a Poem having that for its subject is an Epick Poem."⁶⁴ This seems to express the basic idea of Hamilton's whole project.

There are also one or two particular points of style in Hamilton's pictures that he may have derived from Turnbull's account. We have already seen Shaftesbury's advocacy of figures larger than life for heroic subjects in painting. In his Essay on Wit and Humour, in a footnote, he gives the classical authority for this opinion which is Aristotle, and adds "a small remark of my own which may perhaps be noticed by the Studiers of Statuary and Painting; that the greatest of the ancient as well as the modern artists were ever inclined to follow this rule of the philosopher; and when they err'd in their Designs or Draughts, it was on the side of Great, as running into the unsizeable and gigantic, rather than into the minute and delicate. Of this Michalangelo, the great beginner and founder among the Moderns, and Zeuxis, the same among the Ancients may serve as instances."⁶⁵ Turnbull quotes this passage at length, and adds for good measure: "The same hath been already observed with respect to Euphranor, and Nicias, and in general all the best masters."⁶⁶

64. Turnbull, Ancient Painting, 67

65. Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, Vol. I, 143-4, note

66. Turnbull, Ancient Painting, 80

Hamilton may have taken this idea directly from Shaftesbury, but it is of particular interest that Turnbull also places such stress on it, in view of the general stress he places on the importance of the epic and two remarks he makes elsewhere on Zeuxis, quoting Quintillian in both. In the first, as we have seen, he says that Zeuxis became a model to other painters because of his treatment of figures from Homer, and in the second, Zeuxis was thought to have made his bodies always larger than life, "and to have imitated Homer in that respect, who has been observed to give even his women a largeness approaching masculine."⁶⁷ These remarks on Zeuxis constitute the most explicit practical recommendation to emerge from his whole survey of classical painting. These remarks together with his constant stress on Homer and the epic style, and Shaftesbury's ideas of 'magnitude', provide a programme very close to that of Hamilton's series, whose intention can now be seen as to create, in Turnbull's words, "properly Heroick or Epick Pictures." His subject matter, the scale of his pictures, and of the figures within them, particularly the women in the first of the series, Andromache mourning Hector, and the grand poetic intention of the whole cycle, all have their precise parallel in Turnbull's account of ancient art.

67. Turnbull, Ancient Painting, 23. Turnbull is quoting Quintillian, Institutio Oratoria, XII, x,5, to which clearly Shaftesbury is also referring. The modern reading gives limbs, rather than bodies, as exaggerated by Zeuxis. The reading given by H.E. Butler in the Loeb translation of Quintilian reads "Zeuxis emphasised the limbs of the human body etc..."

Whatever general lines of approach Turnbull could provide, he could not provide actual models on which Hamilton could base a style. He does illustrate in his book examples of surviving classical painting, but he is aware that they are scarcely even a pale reflection of the great lost originals.⁶⁸ Hamilton setting out to create an epic style in the manner of the ancient Greeks had therefore to come to his own conclusions what the details of that style should be. Dora Wiehenson remarks that coming from Scotland he did not belong to any established tradition of painting, and sees his eclecticism as a reflection of this.⁶⁹ Even if this is true he could very easily have adopted the late baroque or contemporary Roman in which after all he was trained. His Wood and Dawkins discovering the ruins of Palmyra is very much in that style, but it is in marked contrast to his own picture of Andromache mourning Hector which was begun about the same time. This contrast must have been conscious, and suggests that the style of the latter picture was deliberately adopted to suit its purpose. It was therefore purposefully synthetic in a way that goes beyond the usual interpretation of eclecticism.

Although the six Iliad pictures were executed at various times they are unified in style. Of them all 'Andromache mourning Hector' is probably the most discussed.⁷⁰ For the subject the best precedent is the illustration in Ogilby's Homer of the same scene, and this rather indifferent engraving bears enough general

68. Turnbull, Ancient Painting, 170

69. Wiehenson, Homer in neo-classical art, Art Bulletin, XLVI, 32

70. Notably by Waterhouse, in his British Academy paper, by Irwin in the Art Bulletin, 1962, by Wiehenson, in the Art Bulletin 1964 and elsewhere.

resemblance to Hamilton's composition for it to have provided its starting point, though the pictures are very different in style. Hamilton's picture is however generally seen as Poussinesque. Waterhouse for example relates it to Poussin's Death of Germanicus. He also suggests that the standing woman to the left of the composition is derived from a figure in Poussin's Theseus Discovering his father's sword, or, he adds, to Poussin's classical source.⁷¹ David Irwin compares Hamilton's picture to the second version of the Extreme Unction,⁷² while the Testament of Eudamias, and the first version of the Extreme Unction are also amongst works by Poussin cited in this context. Hamilton may indeed have known all these works by Poussin, and there are certainly several points in the picture in which he seems to be directly indebted to him. To give just one example, the child, presumably Astyanax, has the gesture and position of a child in the later version of the Extreme Unction. While Hamilton undoubtedly admired Poussin however, overstressing the importance of his admiration has tended to obscure differences between the work of the two painters. It is Waterhouse's suggestion, that Hamilton might have looked beyond Poussin to his classical source, that should be most carefully considered in this context. He did after all have access to the same range of classical models.

71. Waterhouse, The British Contribution, P.B.A., XL, 70

72. Irwin, Gavin Hamilton, Art Bulletin, XLIV, 93

Poussin's deathbed scenes are all based on one or the other of the reliefs in Rome of the Death of Meleager. While Hamilton's Andromache can be related to Poussin's compositions, it can also be related to these same Roman reliefs. The examples that Poussin knew were still in Rome in the eighteenth century.⁷³

Hamilton's composition seems to be most closely related to the relief in the Villa Albani, to which he certainly had access, and which was anyway available in Bartoli's engraving. He looked at Poussin, and it might have been Poussin who led him to use the Meleager composition, but he was undoubtedly looking at the original and not just using it second hand. Even in the Death of Germanicus, which is the closest in style to the relief on which it is modelled of all the Poussin compositions under discussion, the figures are set back and occupy no more than half the total height of the canvas. Hamilton on the other hand sets his figures in the foreground and makes them seem to fill the composition in a way that is directly dependent on the sarcophagus style. Also in place of Poussin's calm and even light and shade (to which the Germanicus is something of an exception) he agitates and enlivens his composition in the broken patterns of detail and drapery in a way that is suggested by the relief.

73. The three most important examples are in the Capitoline museum, the Villa Albani, and the Louvre. This last was in the Villa Borghese in the eighteenth century.

There are several other points in which Hamilton reveals his very different understanding of the relief style. Poussin by emphasising the planar element that is an inevitable part of relief sculpture makes his compositions stable and orderly. Hamilton on the other hand appreciates a very different quality of the relief which is its energy and dramatic force. He preserves this first of all in the manner suggested above by the way in which his figures dominate the picture field, and by the light and shade but he also emphasises this quality by devices borrowed from other sources. For example, while the relationship of the bed and curtain to the architecture may recall Poussin's Germanicus the feeling has been completely changed by the introduction of the epitome of the baroque, Bernini's twisted columns from St. Peter's. The enormous drapes are set against the steeply receding baroque interior more in the manner of Rubens than of Poussin. Finally in pursuit of his purpose Hamilton also used scale. This is apparent in the painting's size and in the individual figures. For this he turned to Michaelangelo. Andromache leaning over the bed in the centre of the picture recalls both in scale and in detail the Cumaean Sybil. The seated woman to the right is close to a figure from one of the Sistine lunettes identified by Tolnay as Roboam. In these last points Hamilton reveals himself as quite at variance with any kind of Poussinism as it is usually understood, but strikingly close to Turnbull's account of Zeuxis.

The use of baroque devices in this picture recall the paintings of Lebrun and his school, who as several authors have pointed out,⁷⁴ provide the nearest precedent for Hamilton's

74. Notably Irwin, Neo-classical Art, 36

pictures, but to make this observation is only to show how he is distinct from the painters of that school. The picture which comes closest to any of the French paintings is Hector's Farewell to Andromache which as Wiebenson points out has a number of points in common with Antoine Coypel's version of the same subject which had been engraved.⁷⁵ If there is a relationship between these two pictures however it is one of critique rather than dependance. The main points of resemblance are the central placing of Hector moving to the left, the figure with his back to us in the left foreground, and the kneeling figure of the nurse supporting the child. In place of the dainty arabesque of Coypel's Hector, Hamilton has put a figure from the Triumph of Titus which is clear solid and energetic. The horses behind him may also be a memory of the same relief on the arch of Titus. The contraposto of all the other figures in Coypel's composition is straightened out, so that the nurse, for example, has become a solid pyramidal shape. Hamilton has lowered the viewpoint to set Hector's massive figure against the sky at the centre of the perspective behind him, and so raises him above the other figures, especially the willowy imploring Andromache. Against the firmly established foreground plane a steep perspective moves back dramatically through light and shade. The agitation of the figures in the background adds to the drama of the scene.

This picture has one classical precedent to which it may be related, the painting in the Golden House of Nero of the same subject. It is the only important classical example of this subject

75. Wiebenson, Subjects from Homer, Art Bulletin, XLVI, 28 & 32, and pl. 16.

surviving, but it is much ruined.⁷⁶ It was published by Bartoli as Coriolanus and Volumnia, and in the general relation of the figures to each other and to the architectural background it may have some bearing on both Hamilton and Coypel's compositions.

Hector's Farewell to Andromache was the last of the series to be exhibited. The second was Achilles mourning Patroclus. This appears to have been commissioned by James Grant in Rome in 1760, and its completion was announced by the Abbé Grant in a letter to him dated 12th Sept. 1763.⁷⁷ It was exhibited in 1765. Achilles dragging Hector round the walls of Troy, Waterhouse suggests was commissioned in 1762 when the Marquis of Tavistock was in Rome.⁷⁸ It was under way in March 1763 when Daniel Crespin wrote to James Grant that it was already "dead-coloured".⁷⁹ It was apparently not exhibited but the print was published in 1766.

Achilles and Patroclus does have several classical precedents as a subject, but there is no example of it likely to have been known to Hamilton. It appears, for instance on the Berthouville vase which was not discovered until 1830, and on a sarcophagus at Woburn, that was not removed from Ephesus until 1819, Achilles is seen seated, grief-stricken, while the body of Patroclus is carried in to him.⁸⁰ As Waterhouse suggests Hamilton's

76. It is reproduced in Weege, Jarhbuch Deutsches Archaeologisches Inst. 13, 1913, 214
77. Seafield Papers, Register House, Edinburgh, Ms.GD 248/3
78. Waterhouse, the British Contribution, P.B.A., XL, 70
79. Seafield Papers, Register House, Edinburgh, Ms.GD 248/49
80. Bulas, Illustrations Antiques, 96. An engraving of the sarcophagus after William Pars is the frontispiece of Wood's Original Genius of Homer (1775 ed.). It may not have been unknown therefore at an earlier date. The subject of the sarcophagus is not strictly in accordance with the Iliad. Bulas remarks that it may be an intrusion from the story of Meleager.

As Waterhouse suggests Hamilton's composition is partly derived from a Meleager relief.⁸¹ The particular relief seems to be that in the Palazzo Sciarra which had been published by both Bartoli and Montfaucon. The body of Patroclus is in the same position as that of Meleager. It is supported at the head and by Achilles' arm in a way that is directly related to the Meleager relief though modified. As a unit however the central group of Achilles and Patroclus is certainly inspired by the subject of several sarcophagi, the Death of Penthiselea. In this Achilles is always seen supporting the body of the dying Amazon, stricken with grief at her death. It is not possible to say which particular relief Hamilton was using, but the one that comes closest to his composition ^{was} ~~is~~ ^{now in the British Museum.} at Richmond/. The same motif is used by Giulio in the Sala di Troia in the battle round the body of Patroclus.

Irwin remarks that Achilles dragging Hector round the walls of Troy is the most dramatic of the series, but this is in keeping with the subject.⁸² There is no essential difference in style or purpose from the two pictures that preceded it. The subject was treated frequently in antiquity, and several examples may have been known to Hamilton,⁸³ however apart from the details of armour etc., the main lines of the composition derive from a single modern source. Waterhouse suggests a precedent in Rubens, and Wiebenson that Hamilton is using a composition by Testa.⁸⁴

81. Waterhouse, the British Contribution, P.B.A., XL, 71
82. Irwin, Neo-classical Art, 37
83. K. Bulas, Les Illustrations Antiques de l'Illiade, Lwow, 1929, lists numerous examples of this subject, though they are mostly on vases and gems.
84. Waterhouse, the British Contribution, P.B.A., XL, 70: Wiebenson, Subjects from Homer, Art Bulletin, XLVI, 29, and fig. 24.

The illustration of this subject in Ogilby also bears more than a casual relationship to the composition, particularly in the detail of the architecture and the way in which the horses are seen against the sky above the ships. His composition seems to be based most closely on what is probably the common original of the others, a passage with the Flight of Meriones in the main battle painting in the Sala di Toia. The pictures in this series by Giulio, themselves probably inspired by the same classical memories as Hamilton's cycle were the closest modern precedent that he has.⁸⁵ In this particular composition the whole group of the horses and chariot, the corpse, and the charioteer seem to come from Giulio. The group of figures to the right however are reminiscent of Testa's picture, so is Achilles' towering position, but the details of his pose seem to come from Giulio's composition of Achilles receiving arms from Thetis.⁸⁶ He has set the figure more clearly against the sky than Giulio and increased and simplified the chiaroscuro. He has also increased the diagonal movement and opened up the depth of Giulio's composition. Isolating Achilles' figure against the sky and emphasising it by the dark shadow of the upraised shield is a device of Hamilton's own that must in the original have derived maximum advantage from the picture's scale.

Of the remaining pictures, Priam pleading with Achilles, is undated, and was never exhibited. It was engraved in 1775, and it was certainly planned ten years earlier. It differs from the other pictures in that it was apparently never carried out in large, but was sold in what seems to have been its modello size. The sixth picture, Achilles parting with Briseis, was exhibited at the R.A. in 1770.

85. Frederick Hartt, Giulio Romano, New Haven, 1958, II, Pl. 385-402

86. Hartt, Giulio Romano, II, Pl. 396

Priam pleading before Achilles is also related to relief sculpture. Wiebenson points out the relationship between the main group and the relief published by Wincklemann in his Monumenti Antichi Inediti.⁸⁷ This is however a rather weaker version of the relief on the back of the great sarcophagus in the Capitoline Museum, the so-called Sarcophagus of Alexander, and this is certainly the source to which Hamilton turned. He has however changed his model in one respect. The sarcophagus shows Priam kissing the hand of Achilles who, moved by thoughts of his own father, turns away his face. Hamilton shows Priam kissing Achilles' hand, but with his other hand Achilles reveals his astonishment using the rhetorical gesture for surprise as it is recommended by Quintillian,⁸⁸ and it is used by Raphael in the Death of Ananias. The same gesture was used on the stage by Garrick and appears in Hogarth's portrait of him as Richard III. Hamilton has preserved the backward lean of the figure on the sarcophagus, and the position of the legs, adapting them to the action of starting back in surprise.

A second classical relief which Hamilton will certainly have known and perhaps thought of as representing Priam and Achilles, and which may therefore have influenced his composition, is now in Los Angeles. This is the left hand end of a sarcophagus that used to stand near St. Peter's.⁸⁹

87. Wiebenson, Subjects from Homer, Art Bulletin XLVI, 30. Wiebenson describes the relief as in the Villa Borghese. It was however removed to the Louvre by Napoleon, and it is still there.
88. Quintillian, Institutio, XI, iii, 115
89. This sarcophagus is the subject of an article by E.P. Leoffler, Art Bulletin, XXXVII, 1957, 1

It represents a captive kneeling before a general, clasping his knees and pleading for mercy. It differs from the Capitoline relief in that the general is turned toward his captive like Hamilton's Achilles. Two armed soldiers also stand behind the kneeling figure in a way that may be related to the figures behind Priam in the picture. Finally Wiebenson suggests that Hamilton's composition is related to that of the silver Hoby cup.⁹⁰ While the compositions are obviously similar, the cup can have little bearing on the picture as it was buried in a Danish bog till fifty years ago.

Waterhouse regarding the Priam and Achilles as the latest of the paintings, suggests that in it Hamilton is coming closest to Poussin.⁹¹ The picture is certainly reminiscent of Poussin, but this is partly because of its unusual size and its colour. There is very little specific reference to Poussin in it. The suggestion made by Wiebenson that the figure of Priam derives from a king in Poussin's Adoration of the Magi is no more than recognition of the casual similarity of two kneeling figures.⁹² By the same argument any number of kneeling Magi could be named as Hamilton's source. A similar figure to the man covering his face standing behind Priam appears in Poussin's Germanicus. The use of this gesture by Timanthes in the Sacrifice of Iphigenia was however very highly thought of in antiquity. It is one of those few scraps of specific information

90. Wiebenson, Subjects from Homer, Art Bulletin, XLVI, 30
91. Waterhouse, the British Contribution, P.B.A., XL, 73
92. Wiebenson, Subjects from Homer, Art Bulletin, XLVI, 30, n.39

that we have about the details of any classical picture. Turnbull discusses it at length pointing out how Poussin borrowed the gesture from Timanthes, and how Timanthes himself could be said to have borrowed it from Homer.⁹³ Homer makes Priam cover his face in his grief in Book 24 in the beginning of the passage from which Hamilton takes his subject. Pope gives a note on Priam's gesture in which he too points out its use in ancient painting.⁹⁴ As it has such a pedigree Hamilton could perhaps hardly resist using the device somewhere, nevertheless the precise purpose that he gives it here is unclear. As Timanthes and Homer used it, it conveyed tragic grief, here it seems rather to express respect in the onlooker for the sorrow which has brought Priam as a suppliant to the feet of the man who killed his son.

The nature of the lighting in this picture is Poussinesque. Hamilton however by opening up the composition to the moonlit distance on the right breaks up Poussin's enclosed space. His figures are large in proportion to the picture surface, thus giving a sense of scale, and light and shade are broken up by the surface of costume and drapery. In these things he is still relying directly on relief sculpture and the devices that make it dramatically effective.

The last of these pictures is Achilles wrath at the departure of Briseis. The composition bears a recognisable relationship to the illustration of this subject in Ogilby's Homer, which as we have seen is endorsed by Pope. In both

93. Turnbull, Ancient Painting 52

94. Pope, Iliad, XXIV, note to line 200, Pope calls Timanthes, Semanthes. He does not mention Poussin's use of the gesture.

Ogilby's illustration and Hamilton's picture, Achilles is seated at one end of the composition while Briseis is led away from his tent, across it towards the ships, looking back over her shoulder at Achilles. The subject also exists in various antique versions, but there is none that we can safely say that Hamilton knew. There are two red figure vases, one in the Louvre, and one in the British Museum,⁹⁵ which show the same kind of processional composition, but there is no evidence elsewhere of Hamilton's interest in vase painting, and all the other aspects of this picture suggest Hellenistic, Roman, and Renaissance inspiration. Briseis herself for example is in the pose of the Venus Callypigous. Achilles' pose derives partly from the central figure in the Blinding of Elymas. The rather odd pose of the foremost seated figure to the right is explained by his originally appearing bareback on a spirited horse in Raphael's Repulse of Attila. He and his companion however also recall the Sistine ignudi, and like the sails, drapery and curving prow of the boat, are introduced to add energy and action to an otherwise static composition.

Hamilton's purpose in his Homeric paintings is to create an epic style to suit his subject. Its most important single inspiration is the common resource of all classicizing Renaissance and post Renaissance painters, Roman relief sculpture. While he has borrowed from Poussin, Raphael and Giulio Romano he has turned back to a remarkable degree to their original source. He has produced a kind of painting that exploits the dramatic energy of classical relief, and he seeks to enhance it by the use of scale and the devices of

95. Bulas, Illustrations Antiques, 80, lists a variety of antique versions of the subject. The two vases are B.M. Cat. III, E76, and Louvre, G146.

the baroque. He has also, very significantly, turned on at least one occasion to Michaelangelo. His eclecticism is guided by the clear intention that his pictures, both individually and as a cycle should be dramatic and forceful.

In a recent broadcast, Professor Pevsner remarked that "Neo-classicism proper starts with Peyre and Wincklemann on the continent, and proved for a whole generation ineffectual in England because English architecture had been classical for so long already." ⁹⁶ Professor Pevsner's remarks are intended to apply to architecture, and there is of course not the same tradition in British painting, which scarcely goes back beyond Hogarth, but when works like Hamilton's Iliad pictures are considered in their proper context their links with the British literary and intellectual tradition becomes apparent. In a sense therefore the tradition in which British painting belongs does have a continuity like that in architecture, and in the eighteenth century does not show the same kind of conscious and radical break with the past as contemporary continental neo-classicism. Unlike Palladianism however to which Pevsner's remarks refer, and which he describes as "a very perfect style, but a style without daring, and a style of minimal invention", the tradition with which British painting is thus linked was vigorous and fertile. Nor was the identification of painting and poetry unconscious. Shaftesbury wrote that "in a real history painter, the same Knowledge, the same Study and Views are required as in a real Poet": and Turnbull "No country in modern Times hath produced better Painters with Words ...

96. Professor Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, 'My William Chambers', published in The Listener, Oct. 12th, 1972

Surely the climate cannot be too cold, nor the air too gross, to bring forth even an Apelles or a Raphael that produced a Milton."⁹⁷ Hogarth with characteristically forthright and to the point painted his self-portrait supported by volumes of Shakespeare, Milton and Swift.

Shaftesbury, who was almost the founder of British philhellenism, had a very different attitude to ancient Greece from that of Wincklemann, and it was Shaftesbury who inspired Turnbull to hold up Greek painting as a model for the role that painting could play in a free society. Though Hamilton's classical models were of necessity mostly Roman, there can be no doubt that Shaftesbury and Turnbull together inspired him with the idea of Greek painting. In view of the place of Homer in ancient art it was natural too that he should turn to the Iliad. In his understanding of Homer he had the guidance of Pope and possibly of Robert Wood, who had begun to free the poet of the obsolete constructions of classical criticism, and to see him as the great poet of the liberated imagination. Hamilton could thus approach Homer, as Hogarth had approached Shakespeare, as an inspiration to an imaginative art uncluttered by classical preconceptions. Therefore, even though he turned to Homer, and not to Milton, or Shakespeare, and even though his later works show the influence of continental neo-classicism, his inspiration in the Iliad pictures, and his approach to his subject, are such that these must be seen as part of the British 'poetic tradition' that runs from Hogarth to Blake and beyond, and to which it is so difficult to apply the conventional distinctions of neo-classical or romantic.

97. Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, III, 387, Turnbull, *Ancient Painting*, 110

Manuscript Sources

Here, and in the bibliography following, documents or works included, are only those to which reference is made in the text or notes. No attempt has been made to list works consulted.

Edinburgh University Library

Invaluable in any study of eighteenth century Scottish painting is the collection of documents and information put together by David Laing and now preserved in the Laing Collection of Mss.EUL. Laing did a great deal of pioneer research, though he never put it together in any coordinated way, and this thesis must acknowledge a debt to him.

The documents in this collection fall into three main categories:

1. Original letters and documents collected by Laing.
2. Transcripts by Laing from documents extant in the nineteenth century but now lost.
3. Laing's own notes on Scottish painting and letters relevant to it.

These include several apparently incomplete outlines for an address or paper on Alexander Runciman, perhaps connected with the erection of a plaque to the memory of the brothers Runciman in the Canongate Churchyard in which Laing played an important part. Of particular interest among these notes are several lists and parts of lists of the works of both brothers.

1. Letters and documents

- La.IV.25. Alexander Runciman's account with Walter Ross, 1767-1772.
- La.IV.26. J. Bremen to AR and AR's reply in verse, November 18th, 1760.
AR to James Cumming, Leghorn, 25th May 1767.
AR to James Cumming, Rome, 5th December 1767.
AR to Robert Alexander, Rome, 20th July 1769.
AR to James Cumming, Rome, September 1769.
John Brown to Charles Esplin, Falmouth Harbour, October 15th 1769.
- La.II.82. This classification includes important collections of the correspondence of James Cumming, of his sister Henrietta, and of George Paton which have been drawn on in general. Only those documents are itemised here however from which direct quotation has been made.

Unknown correspondent to Henrietta Cumming, 20th April 1766.
Henrietta to James Cumming, Balcarres, n.d. (1767).
Henrietta Cumming to Robert Alexander, n.d. (1769).
Robert Alexander to Henrietta Cumming, n.d. (December 1768).
(Robert Alexander) to Henrietta Cumming, Largo, n.d.
Henrietta Cumming to Lord Monboddo, n.d.

2. Laing transcripts

La.IV.25. Letters concerning the Runcimans from Walter Ross's Letter Book 1767-1768.

Francis Leggatt to the Earl of Buchan, 30th December 1768.
Francis Leggatt, Poem on the death of AR, dated from Hampstead, 30th October 1785 (pub. Caledonian Mercury, November 9th).

La.IV.26. Transcriptions from the Minutes of the Incorporated Trades of St. Mary's Chapel, various dates.

Transcription from Edinburgh Council Register, 6th January 1731.

John Alexander to James Anderson, 12th September 1710.

3. Laing's notes, etc.

La.IV.25. Fragments of an address on AR
Notes on the work of AR and JR
David Stuart to David Laing, 1st June 1831.
Alexander Cunningham to David Laing, 1860.
James Dennistoun to David Laing, n.d.

National Library of Scotland

The numerous manuscript collections of the NLS contain much that is of interest to this thesis. Of particular importance are the Antiquaries Papers that include the Records of the Cape Club (Ms 2000-2045),^{and} the Summons of David Herd against the other three trustees of Runciman's will. Runciman's two letters to Paton are in the Advocates Mss. A third though unimportant letter in the Watson Collection of Autographs is listed here for completeness. It is probably late in date.

- Ms.590 f.1599 AR to James Cumming, Edinburgh, n.d.
- Ms.1925 f.73-7 Summons of David Herd against John Baxter, James Smeaton and James Cockburn, 8th December 1789.
- Ms.2003 Roll of the Knights Companions of the most Sovereign and Social Order of the Cape etc.
- Ms.2004 Sederunt Book of Knights Companions of the Cape, 1764-1787.
- Ms.2041-2 Record of Cape Petitions.
- Ms.3648 f.113 Gavin Hamilton to Carlo Bianconi, 10th July 1768.
f.121 George Paton to James Cumming, 23rd October 1766.
f.124 Note on George Paton by the Earl of Buchan, n.d.
- Ms.3873 f.207 James Cumming to the Earl of Buchan, n.d.
- Ms.8250 f.1 Andrew Stuart to his father concerning Gavin Hamilton, London, 2nd July 1751.
- Adv.Ms.29.3.8 f.1 AR to George Paton, Edinburgh, 12th October 1775.
f.2 AR to George Paton, Edinburgh, 2nd November 1778.

Scottish Record Office, Register House

The most important papers here are naturally the Penicuik collection (GD 18), but information has also been taken from the Seafield papers (GD 248) on the painter James Clerk and on Gavin Hamilton. Such papers as survive of the Trustees for the Board of Manufactures are also preserved in Register House, (NG 1).

- GD 18. 1729. Penicuik general accounts, 1726-1755, six bundles.
1730. Penicuik Cash Book, 1755-1776.
1731. Penicuik Account Book, 1755-1782.
1758a. Sir James Clerk's "Journal of Expenses of my New House, Penicuik", 1761-1776.
4679. Wm. Hogg to Sir James Clerk, 19th April 1768.
4680. AR to Sir James Clerk, Rome, 16th May 1770.
4682. AR to Sir James Clerk, Rome, 12th January 1771.
5014. Sir James Clerk to his cousin Colonel Clerk, (copy) 1762.
- GD 248.49. Daniel Crespin to James Grant of Grant, Rome, March 1763.
178. Gavin Hamilton to James Grant of Grant, Rome, January 1765.
839. James Clark to Mr. Dalrymple, London, 2nd February 1768.
- NG 1/1. Minute Books of the Trustees for the Board of Manufactures.
General Precept Book of the Trustees.

Hopetoun House Muniment Room

The Hopetoun muniments have not been catalogued and are very extensive. They have however been arranged into sections. The ~~three~~ that have been drawn on here are the building accounts, the general correspondence, and the inventories of paintings.

- Building Accounts. Notes on the account of painting &c, December 1763.
Notes on Norie's account of painting at Hopetoun House, 1763.
Notes from James Norie's discharged accounts of painting, January 1764.

Building Accounts
cont.

Measurement of painting at Hopetoun House by
Mr. Dugald MacLaurin, 12th July 1768.

General account of Debursements for Building,
Finishing and Furnishing the Rt. Hon. Earl of
Hopetoun's House at Moffat from 1760-1768 incl.,
by Alex. Williamson.

General Correspondence Gavin Hamilton to an unknown correspondent, Rome,
22 November 1767.

Abbé Grant to Lord Hope, 6th January 1768.

Dugald McLaurie to Lord Hope, 16th April 1768.

Inventory of Paintings at Hopetoun House, 1808.

Scottish National Portrait Gallery

Typescript Inventory of Paintings at Penicuik House.

Typescript Inventory of Paintings at Hopetoun House.

Col. W. Robertson Aikman Collection

The Forbes family correspondence, 1767-1771, typescript by Basil Skinner.

Margaret Forbes to John Forbes, Musselburgh, 27th July 1767.

John Aikman to John Forbes, the Ross, 29th August 1767.

Mrs. Forbes to Margaret Forbes, Rome, 1st March 1768.

Mrs. Forbes to John Forbes, Rome, 29th August 1769.

Mrs. Forbes to John Forbes, Rome, 13th September 1769.

John Forbes to John Aikman, Rome, 2nd March 1771.

Edinburgh City Archives

Dean of Guild Accounts, 1736.

City Accounts, 1766, and 1769-1776.

Petition of AR to the Council to continue provisions made for the
Drawing School in the time of his predecessor, Pavillion,
December 1772.

Archive of the Diocese of Rome

S. Giovanni in Laterano

"Stato degli Animi", parish of S. Maria del Popolo, Easter 1768.

"Stato degli Animi", parish of S. Andrea delle Fratte, Easter, 1768.

Archive of the Accademia di San Luca

Rome

Sederunt Books of the Academy, 1760-85.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography is divided into three main sections:

1. Books before c.1770. These are listed separately as they are likely to have been available to the artists discussed and to have helped shape their ideas.

2. Contemporary and near contemporary printed sources. Here the approximate limit is 1830, the lifetime of Runciman's younger contemporaries. Some important first hand accounts published later are included in the third section.

3. Printed works since c.1830. (This also includes two unpublished theses.) Where appropriate each section is subdivided into a. Books; b. Periodicals and newspapers; c. Sale and exhibition catalogues.

1. Books before c.1770

Hugh Blair; A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, son of Fingal, 1763. Republished as an introduction to the Poems of Ossian in 1765 and subsequently.

Edmund Burke; A Philosophical Enquiry into the origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, 1757.

Comte de Caylus; Tableaux tirés de Illiade, de l'Odyssey d'Homere et de l'Eneide de Vergile etc, Paris, 1757.

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Herculaneum; Le Antichita d'Ercolano Esposte, 6 vols, Naples 1757.

P.F. Hughes, called D'Hancarville; Collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Hon. William Hamilton etc, 4 vols., Naples 1766-7.

- Fransiscus Junii^u (du Jon); De Pictura Veterum etc. Amsterdam, 1637; enlarged edition Rotterdam 1694; English edition, London, 1638.
- G.E. Lessing; Laocoon, Berlin, 1766; translation by E.C. Beazley and Helen Zimmern in Selected Prose Works of G.E.L., London, 1890.
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- Alexander Nisbet; A System of Heraldry and c., 2 vols, Edinburgh 1722 and 1742, (vol. 2 edited by R. Fleming).
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- Ossian; The Works of Ossian, the Son of Fingal, translated by James McPherson, third edition in 2 vols., London, 1765.
(This is the first complete edition though called the third.)
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- George Turnbull; A Treatise on Ancient Painting, London, 1740.
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- J.J. Wincklemann; Gesichte der Kunst des Alterthums, 2 vols., Dresden, 1764. Reference is also made to the Donauöshingen edition of the works of JJW, 1825-29.
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- J.J. Wincklemann; Monumenti antichi inediti, spiegati ed illustrati, Rome, 1767.
- Robert Wood; An Essay on the Original Genius of Homer with a Comparative View of the Ancient and Present State of the Troade, privately printed London 1767, published 1769, posthumous and revised edition 1775.

Classical authors. Early translations are listed above, elsewhere the Loeb editions of texts have been used. The following list refers to the Loeb editions therefore.

Callistratus;

Catullus; Odes.

Homer; Iliad, and Odyssey.

Ovid; Amores, and Metamorphoses.

Pausanias; Description of Greece.

Philostratus; De Imaginibus.

Pindar; Nemean Odes.

Pliny; Natural History.

Quintillian; Institutiones de Oratoria.

Sophocles; Philoctetes.

Statius; Achilleid.

Virgil; Aeneid.

Vitruvius; De Architectura.

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Heinrich Fussli, Zurich, 1959.

LIST OF THE PLATES CONTAINED IN VOL.2.

1. John Baxter junior, Portrait of AR, pencil 12 3/8"x 8 1/2". Signed and inscribed on the back to the effect that it was drawn in Rome.
2. Self-portrait of an artist traditionally identified as James Norie, 30"x25". SNPG on loan from the RSA.
3. Roderick Chalmers, Chimney piece from the Guild Hall of St. Mary's Chapel, oil on panel. Edinburgh Trades Maiden Hospital.
4. James Norie, Landscape with ruins, oil on canvas, 25 1/2"x 52". Signed and dated 1736. SNG 1768.
5. View of Edinburgh, attributed to James Norie, , SNPG.
6. Landscape with a view of Linlithgow, attributed to James Norie oil on oak panel, 12"x 24". Provenance unknown but closely comparable to decorations formerly in Riddel's Court. In possession of the author.
7. Landscape wall decoration in the Norie manner, oil on plaster, Caroline Park.
8. Landscape wall decoration in the Norie manner, oil on panel, Caroline Park.
9. Landscape wall decoration, in the Norie manner, oil on panel, Caroline Park.
10. Robert Norie, Landscape, oil on canvas, 41 1/2" wide, Palace of Holyrood House.
11. Robert Norie, Landscape with the Rest on the Flight, oil on canvas, 38 1/2" wide. Signed and dated 1741. Palace of Holyrood House.
12. Robert Norie, Landscape with St. Paul preaching, oil on canvas, 38 1/2" wide, signed and dated 1741. Palace of Holyrood House.

13. William Delacour, Landscape with the Tomb of the Horatii, distemper on canvas. Signed and dated 1761. Yester House.
14. The Saloon, Hawkhill House, built by John Adam, decoration attributed to William Delacour.
15. Shop card for Robert Norie. Designed by AR, etched by Richard Cooper jun. Signed by both. EUL Laing Bequest.
- 15a. AR, frontispiece for Richard Cooper jun., wash and watercolour, Signed, SNG.
16. AR, Jacob's Dream, oil on canvas, 70"x 45½". Penicuik House.
17. Aert de Gelder (formerly attributed to Rembrandt), Jacob's Dream. Dulwich College.
18. John Baxter, projected design for the ceiling of the hall, Penicuik House. Scottish Record Office, Penicuik Papers.
19. John Baxter, projected design for the wall of the hall, Penicuik House. Scottish Record Office, Penicuik Papers.
20. John Baxter, projected design for ceiling of a staircase, Penicuik House. Scottish Record Office, Penicuik Papers.
21. AR, Bacchus and Ariadne, 17"x 22", formerly coll. L. Peek Deykin.
22. AR, The Good Samaritan, pen, 16 7/8"x 22", signed. SNG D 320.
23. AR, A Party of Greeks. Drawing from the foot of a letter to James Cumming, Leghorn, May 25th 1767. EUL Laing Bequest.
24. AR, Lear on the heath, pen, 11"x 9¼", signed. SNG D 313.
25. John Runciman, Taking down the Nether Bow Port, 1764. Etching. SNG.

26. Sir John Medina, Samson and the Philistine, Oil on canvas, Penicuik House.
27. Attributed to David Teniers the younger, Temptation of St. Anthony, Hopetoun House.
28. John Runciman, The Good Samaritan, oil on panel, 8 7/8"x 11 1/8". Listed by Laing. SNG 2116.
29. John Runciman, Temptation of Christ, panel 7 1/4"x 11 1/4". Listed by Laing. SNG 792.
30. John Runciman, Hagar, panel. Listed by Laing. Hunter Blair Coll.
31. David Teniers, St. Peter in the desert, Dulwich College.
32. John Runciman, Balshazaar's Feast, panel 14"x 18". Listed by Laing. Penicuik House.
33. John Runciman, Baptism of Christ, panel 6 5/8"x 10 3/4". Signed. Listed by Laing. Aberdeen Art Gallery.
34. John Runciman, Flight into Egypt, panel 11 3/4"x 8 3/4". Signed. SNG649 from Laing Bequest.
- 34a. Rembrandt, Flight into Egypt, etching.
35. John Runciman, The Road to Emmaus, copper 6 1/2"x 8 1/2". Signed. Listed by Laing. SNG.
36. John Runciman, Mary and Joseph at the Inn, panel 9"x 11 1/2". Collection Mr. & Mrs. Paul Mellon.
37. John Runciman, Salome receiving the head of the Baptist, panel 7 1/4"x 5 1/2". Attributed to JR by an inscription on the back dated 1804. SNG 1005.

38. John Runciman, Christ and the three Maries, or Christ taking leave of his mother, panel $10\frac{1}{2}$ "x $6\frac{1}{2}$ ". Collection Sir Steven Runciman.
39. Durer, Christ taking leave of his mother, woodcut from the Life of the Virgin.
40. John Runciman, Adoration of the Shepherds, panel $9\frac{1}{2}$ "x 7". Listed by Laing. Collection Sir Steven Runciman.
41. Durer, Adoration of the shepherds, woodcut from the small Passion.
42. John Runciman, King Lear, panel $17\frac{1}{2}$ "x 24", signed and dated 1767. SNG 570, Laing Bequest.
- 42a. John Runciman, An Actor, pencil $6\frac{7}{8}$ "x $7\frac{3}{4}$ ", signed. SNG D 365.
43. John Runciman(?), David with the head of Goliath, panel 12 "x $14\frac{3}{4}$ ". Listed by Laing as AR. Penicuik House.
44. John Runciman, Silenus, pencil 10"x 12", signed. SNG D 361.
45. John Runciman, Two satyrs, pencil $6\frac{1}{2}$ "x $5\frac{7}{8}$ ", signed. SNG D 364.
46. John Runciman, A satyr with two nymphs, red and black chalk, $5\frac{7}{8}$ "x $6\frac{3}{4}$ ", signed. SNGD 384e.
47. John Runciman, Torso of a faun, with a profile portrait of AR, red chalk $6\frac{3}{8}$ "x $5\frac{5}{8}$ ". Signed. SNG D 362.
48. AR, Tower in the wall of Leo IV, watercolour $6\frac{3}{8}$ "x $3\frac{7}{8}$ ". Signed and dated 1770. SNG D 335.
49. AR, View of the Tiber, watercolour $5\frac{1}{4}$ "x $8\frac{3}{4}$ ". SNG D 791.
50. AR, View of the Tiber with a hermit, oil on panel $11\frac{1}{4}$ "x $14\frac{1}{2}$ ". Signed. SNG 790.

51. AR, Tomb of the Horatii, pen and wash. Collection Lord Runciman.
52. AR, Tomb of the Horatii, 8 5/8"x 12 1/4". Pen and wash, signed. SNG D329.
53. AR, Ruins in Rome, pen and wash, signed. Coll. Hon.G.Runciman.
54. AR, St.Andrea in Via Flaminia, pen and wash 9"x 12 7/8". SNG D327
55. AR, Landscape with the Tomb of Cecilia Metella, pen, wash, and watercolour. Signed A.Runcimano. Collection Hon.G.Runciman.
56. John Runciman, Self-portrait, oil on canvas 26 1/2"x 21 1/2". SNPG.
57. John Runciman, Phaeton, red and black chalk, 7 3/8"x 9 5/8". Signed. SNG D 358.
58. Michaelangelo, Hercules and the Hydra, Coll. H.M.the Queen.
59. John Runciman, unknown subject, etching. Signed in second state. SNG.
60. Fuseli, Death of Cardinal Beaufort, pen and wash. Exhibited RA 1772. British Museum.
61. Gavin Hamilton, Agrippina landing with the ashes of Germanicus, Collection Lord Spencer. Signed and dated 1771.
62. AR, Agrippina with the ashes of Germanicus, red and brown chalk and wash, 10*3" x 5". Signed and dated 1771. Coll. Lord Runciman.
63. AR, Agrippina with the ashes of Germanicus, 39"x 51". Signed. Exhibited RA 1781. Coll. Lord Runciman.
64. James Barry, Philoctetes, 1770. Bologna, Academy of St.Luke.
65. James Barry, Education of Achilles, exhibited RA 1772. Present whereabouts unknown.

66. Herculaneum, The Education of Achilles; plate from the Antiquities of Herculaneum.
67. AR, Achilles stopped by Pallas, pen 14"x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", signed. SNG D4179 as Perseus and the Medusa.
68. AR, Marriage of Peleus and Thetis, pen 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", signed. SNG D4800.
69. Sarcophagus of "Alexander Severus". Capitoline Museum.
70. James Barry, Adam and Eve, National Gallery of Ireland.
71. Sarcophagus with Mars and Rhea. Plate from Winckelmann's Monumenti Inediti.
72. AR, Briseis lead away by the heralds of Agamemnon, pen pencil and wash, 7.4"x 10". Signed. RDB p.26. Coll. Lord Runciman.
73. AR, Thetis bringing arms to Achilles, pen 7.4"x 9.7". Signed. RDB p.27. Coll. Lord Runciman.
74. AR, Achilles dipped in the Styx, pen and wash, 7"x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Signed. RDB p.29. British Museum.
75. AR, Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes, pen 6.9"x 7.5". RDB p.30. Coll. Lord Runciman.
76. AR, Education of Achilles with the lyre, pen, 6.9"x 7.5". RDB p.31. Coll. Lord Runciman.
77. AR, Education of Achilles, the lion hunt, pen and wash, 7"x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", signed RDB p.32. Coll. Lord Runciman.
78. AR, Achilles with Briseis and Patroclus, pen and wash, 7.4"x 10". Signed. RDB p.33. Coll. Lord Runciman.

79. AR, Priam and Achilles, pen and wash, 7"x 9.6". Signed. RDB p.34.
Coll.Lord Runciman.
80. AR, Achilles with the body of Hector, pen and wash, 7.4"x 10", signed.
RDB p.35. Coll.Lord Runciman.
81. AR, Thetis comforting Achilles, pen and pencil. Coll.Lord Runciman.
82. AR, Dido, pen and wash, 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ "x 9 5/8". Signed. RDB p.4(?). SNG D 309.
83. AR, Dido on the pyre, pen, 6 3/8"x 8 1/8". Signed. SNG D323.
84. AR, Achilles and Scamander, pen and wash, 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ "x 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". SNG D295
as Fingal and the Spirit of Loda.
85. AR, unidentified subject, pen, wash, and pencil, 7"x 10". RDB p.18.
Coll.Lord Runciman.
86. AR, unidentified subject, pen and pencil 7.2"x 9.8". RDBp.20.
Coll.Lord Runciman.
87. AR, unidentified subject, pen and wash. RDB p.(?)9. Coll.Lord Runciman.
- 87a. AR, Hercules and the Nemean lion, pen, 7.3"x 9.95". Signed. RDB p.37.
Coll.Lord Runciman.
88. AR, The Origin of painting, pen and wash, 7.4"x 9.6". Signed .
RDB p.36. Coll.Lord Runciman.
89. AR, Ossian, pen, 7.4"x 9.9". Signed. RDBp.48. Coll.Lord Runciman.
- 89a. AR, Ariadne, etching, 4"x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ ".
90. AR, Agrippina at the Funrral of Germanicus, pen, wash, and Chinese
white. Signed. RDB p.62. Coll.Lord Runciman.

91. AR, unidentified subject, pen and wash, 7.4"x 10". Signed. RDB p.63.
Coll.Lord Runciman.
- 91a. AR, Jupiter and Semele, pen and wash, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x 9". Signed and dated 1771.
Coll.Lord Runciman.
92. AR, Othello, pen, wash, and chalk, 10"x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Signed A.Runcimano.
Coll.Sir Steven Runciman.
93. AR, Macbeth and Hecate, pen and wash, 24"x 18". Signed, SNG D296.
94. Fuseli, The Dream of Prince Arthur, 1769.
95. Fuseli, The stoning of St.Stephen, signed and dated 1770. British Museum.
96. Fuseli, The conversion of Saul, signed and dated 1770. British Museum.
97. Fuseli, The Seven against Thebes, 1770.
98. Fuseli, Oedipus and the Sphinx, British Museum.
99. AR, Oedipus and the Sphinx, pen, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ "x 10". Signed. Coll.Lord Runciman.
100. AR, Satan in the Garden of Eden, 40"x 50". RA 1773. Coll.Lord Runciman.
- o01. Fuseli, Satan in the Garden of Eden, British Museum.
102. The Hall of Ossian, Penicuik House; destroyed 1899.
103. AR, Ossian singing, oil on plaster, Ossian's Hall.
104. AR, Ossian singing, pen, wash, and oil on paper, 18 1/8"x 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".
SNG D 299.
105. AR, Origin of Painting, 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x 44 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Signed and dated 1771. Penicuik House.

106. AR, western end of the ceiling of the Hall of Ossian with the Tay and Spey. In the cove; centre, Oscar fighting, 4'x 5'; left, Oina Morul; right, Gelchosa mourning Lamderg.

107. AR, east end of the ceiling of the Hall of Ossian with the Clyde and Tweed. In the cove; centre, the Death of Oscar, 4'x 5'; left, Fingal and the Spirit of Loda; right, Fingal and Corban Carglass.

107a. AR, River God, wash and pencil, 7.4"x 5.5". Coll.Lord Runciman.

108. AR, River God, drawing for the Tay, pen and wash, 7.4"x 5.5". Coll.Lord Runciman.

109. AR, River God, the Tay, pen and wash, 7"x 9". Coll.Lord Runciman.

109a. AR, River God, the Tay, pen and wash. Signed. Coll.Lord Runciman.

109b. AR, River God, the Clyde, pen and wash, 7.4"x 9.5". Coll.Lord Runciman.

110. AR, River God, the Clyde, pen and wash, 7"x 9". Coll.Lord Runciman.

111. AR, River God, the Spey, pen and wash, 7.1"x 10". Signed. Coll.Lord Runciman.

112. AR, River God, the Tweed, pen and wash, 7.1"x 8.5". Signed. Coll.Lord Runciman.

113. AR, North wall of the Hall of Ossian; the Death of Agandecca.

114. AR, North wall of the Hall of Ossian; Cormac and the Spirit of the waters.

115. AR, North wall of the Hall of Ossian; Scandinavian Wizards.

116. AR, East wall of the Hall of Ossian; right, Fingal and the Spirit of Loda; left, the Death of Oscar.

117. AR, East wall of the Hall of Ossian; right, Fingal and Corban Carglas ; left, Fingal and the Spirit of Loda.
118. AR, The Hunting of the Calydonian Boar, pencil and wash, $17\frac{3}{4}$ "x $23\frac{1}{2}$ ". signed, SNG D 298.
119. AR, Cormac and the Spirit of the waters, etching.
120. AR, Cormac and the Spirit of the waters, pen and pencil $7\frac{1}{4}$ "x $9\frac{3}{4}$ ". Signed. Coll. Lord Runciman. RDB 75.
121. AR, The Death of Oscar, pencil, pen, and wash $13\frac{3}{4}$ "x $19\frac{1}{2}$ ". Signed. SNG. D 300.
122. AR, Fingal and Corban Carglas, etching, large version.
123. AR, Fingal and Corban Carglas, etching, middle version.
124. AR, Fingal and Corban Carglas, etching, small version.
125. AR, Landing of St. Margaret, etching, $5\frac{1}{2}$ "x $7\frac{1}{4}$ ".
126. AR, Wedding of St. Margaret, etching, $8\frac{3}{4}$ "x 7".
127. AR, Landing of St. Margaret, pen and wash, 10"x $7\frac{1}{2}$ ". Signed. SNG D 311. RDB 8 .
128. AR, Achilles entrusted to Chiron, pen and wash, 10 x $7\frac{1}{2}$ ". Signed and dated 1772. Coll. Hon. G. Runciman.
129. AR, Mercury summoning Thetis, pen and wash, 10"x $7\frac{1}{2}$ ". Signed and dated 1772. Coll. Hon. G. Runciman.
130. AR, Christ and the Woman of Samria, oil on plaster, 3'6"x 5'6". Cowgate Chapel.
131. AR, Return of the Prodigal, oil on plaster, 3'6"x 5'6". Cowgate Chapel. Infra-red photograph.

132. AR, Elias, oil on plaster, oval, 6'x 3'. Signed. Cowgate Chapel.
Infra-red photograph.

133. AR, Moses, oil on plaster, oval, 6'x 3'. Signed. Cowgate Chapel.
Infra red photograph.

134. AR, Christ and the Woman of Samaria, red chalk. SNG.

135. AR, Adoring figure, red chalk and wash, 14"x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Coll.Sir Steven
Runciman.

136. AR, The Allegro with a view of Perth, signed and dated 1773.
Coll.Sir Steven Runciman.

137. AR, Visionary head, said to be a portrait of Robert Fergusson. SNPG.

Abbreviations; RDB-- Roman Drawing Book.

SNG-- National Gallery of Scotland.

SNPG-- Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

THE EARLIER CAREER OF ALEXANDER RUNCIMAN AND THE INFLUENCES
THAT SHAPED HIS STYLE.

JOHN DUNCAN MACMILLAN

Ph.D

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

1973

THE EARLIER CAREER OF ALEXANDER RUNCIMAN: VOL.2

Plates.





N94

John Baxter Esq Archt fecit

























Richard Cooper Junr del.

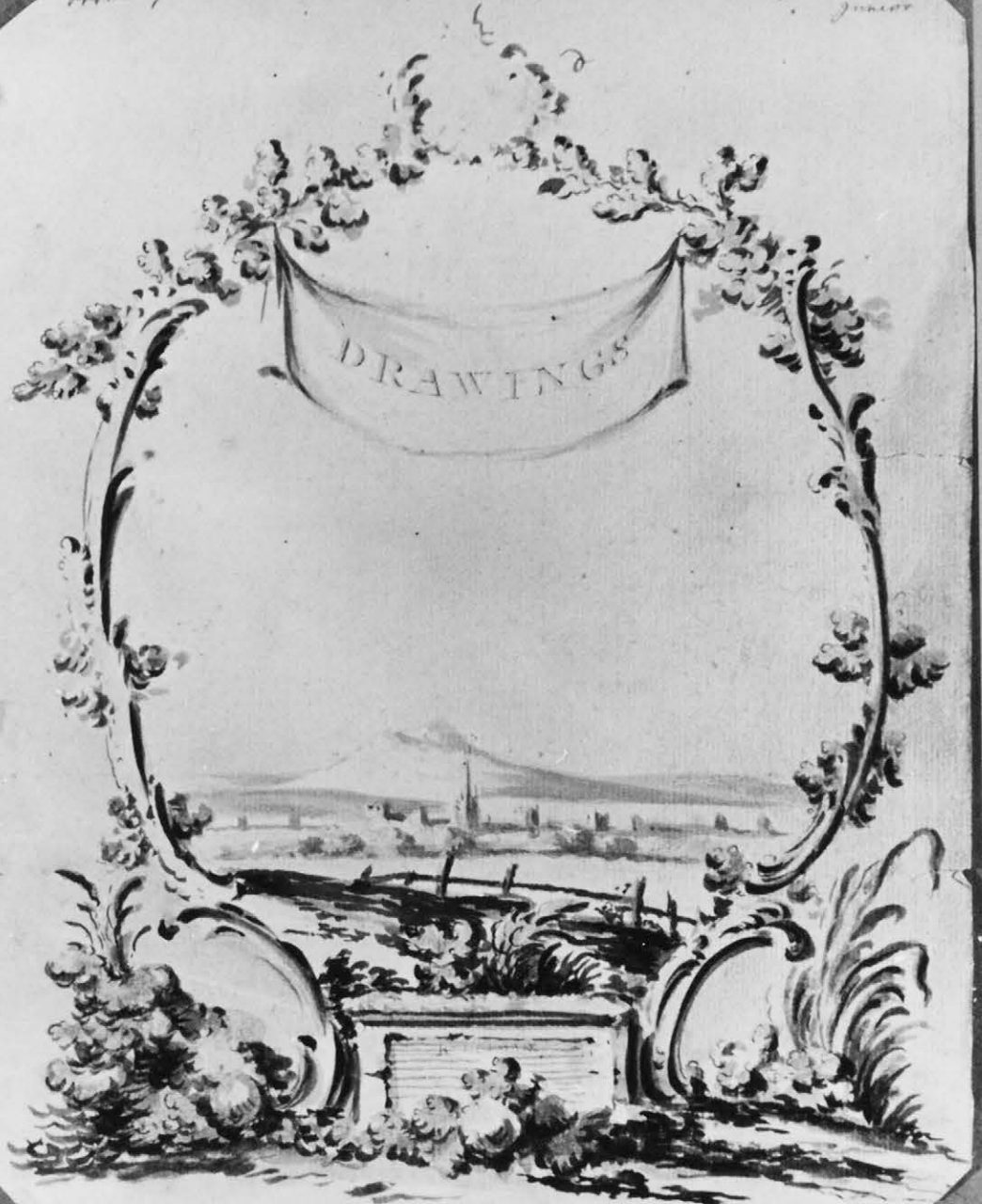
Alcorn Remington inv.

Robert. Vose Painter -
At his Oil & Colour Warehouse Edinburgh.



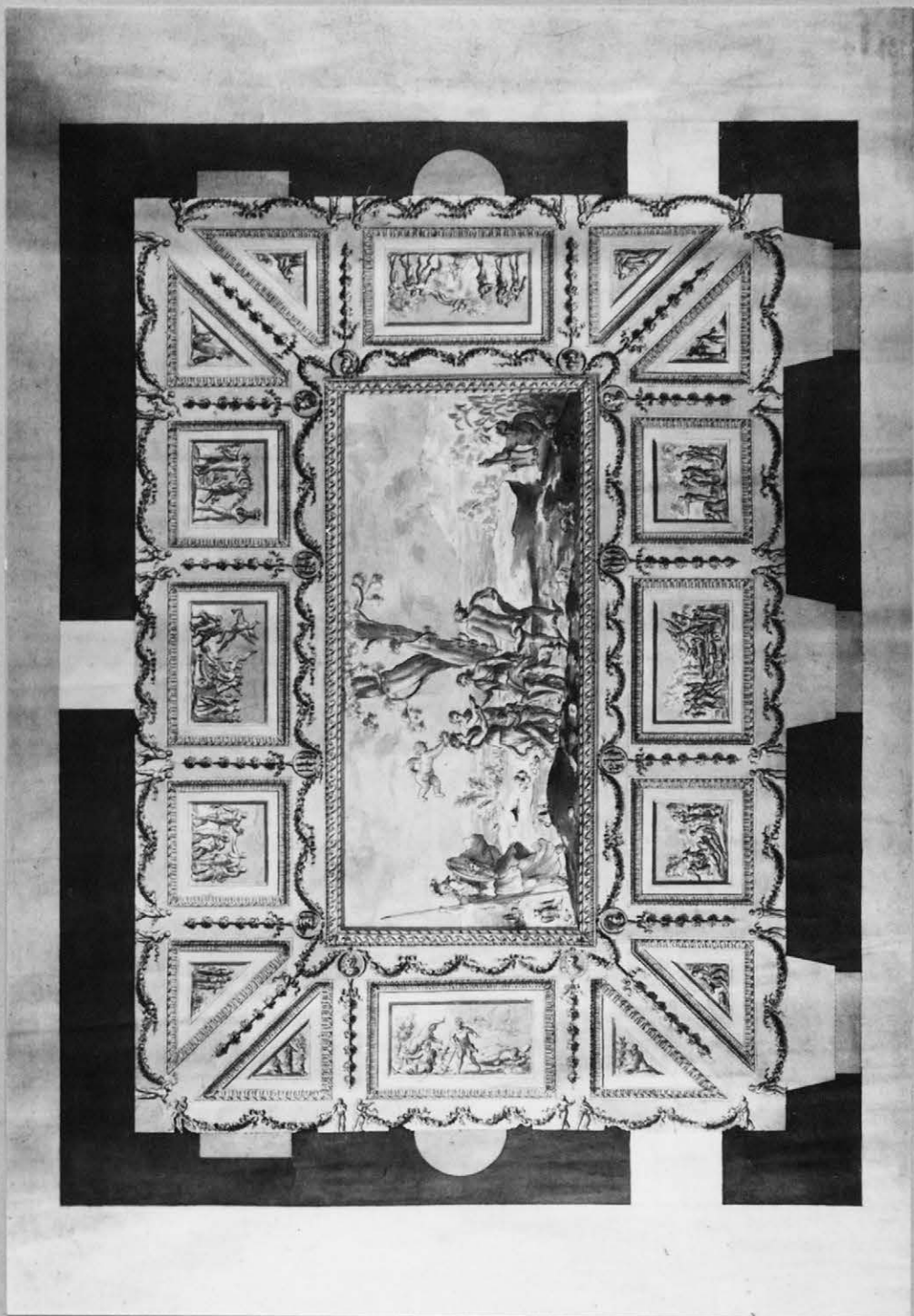
207

Frontispiece to Book by Alex^r. Runciman Esq^r per R^c
Junior

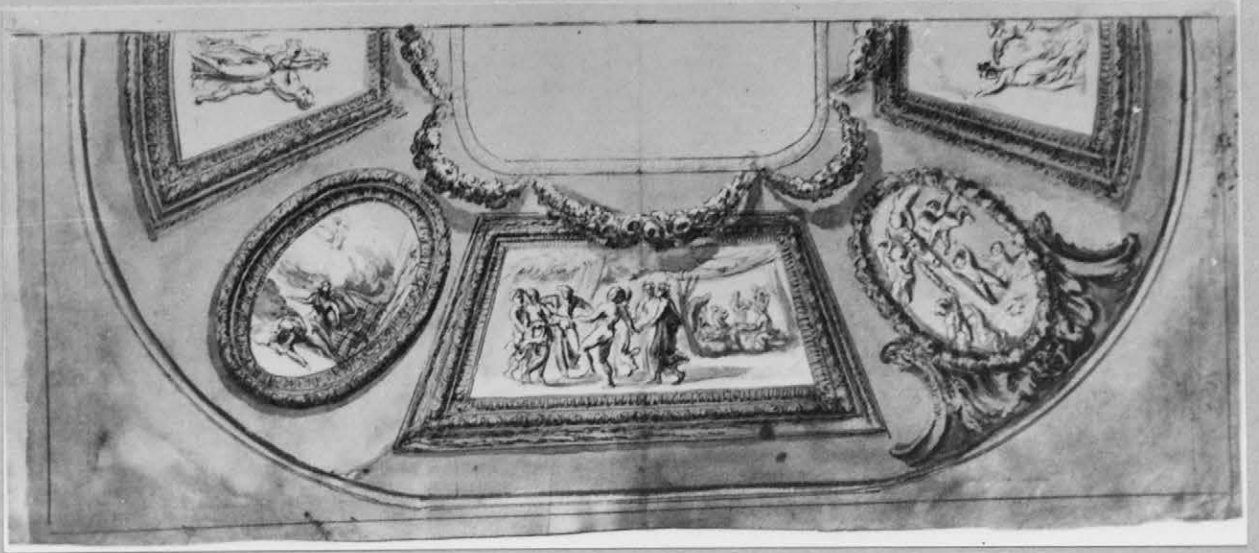


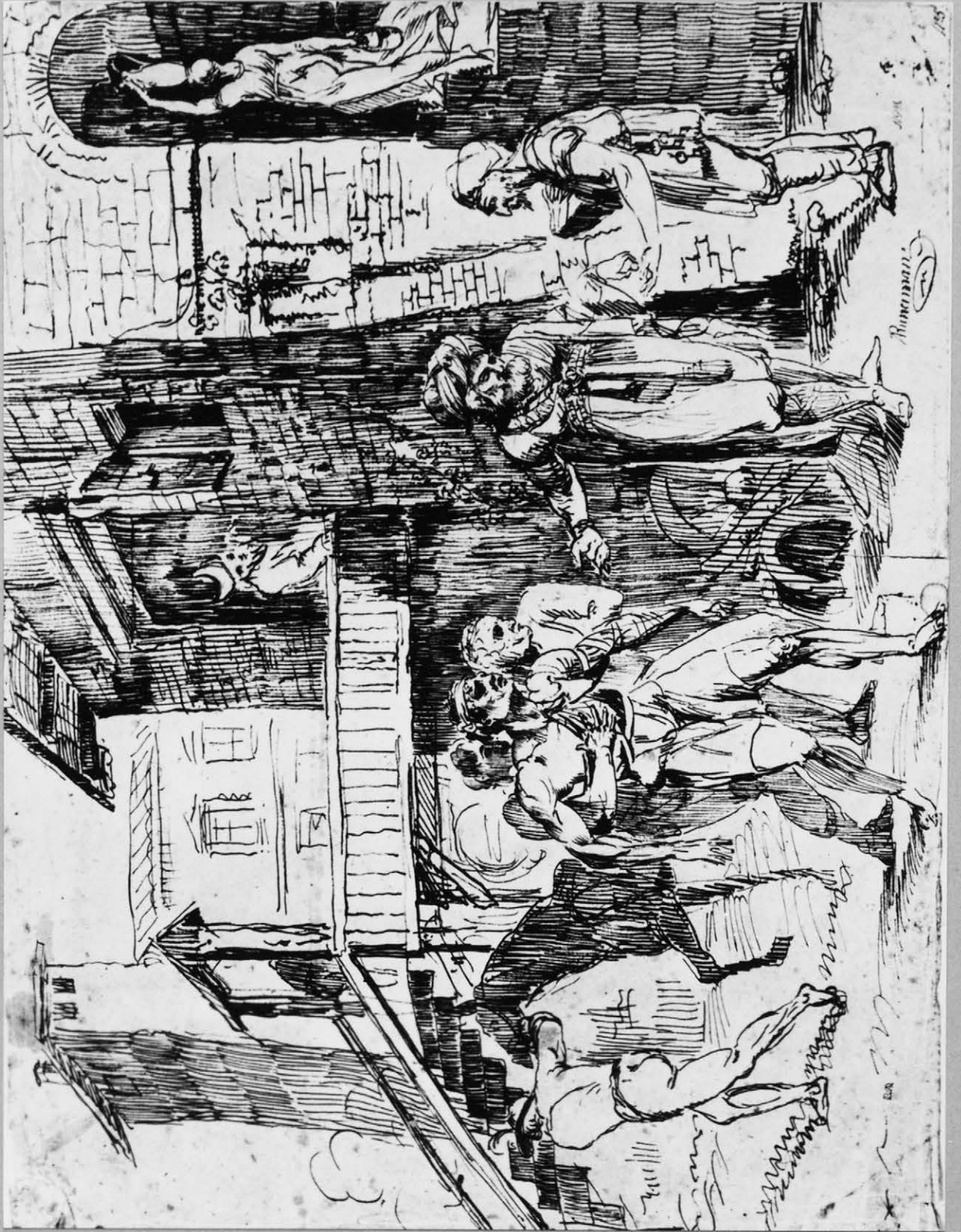






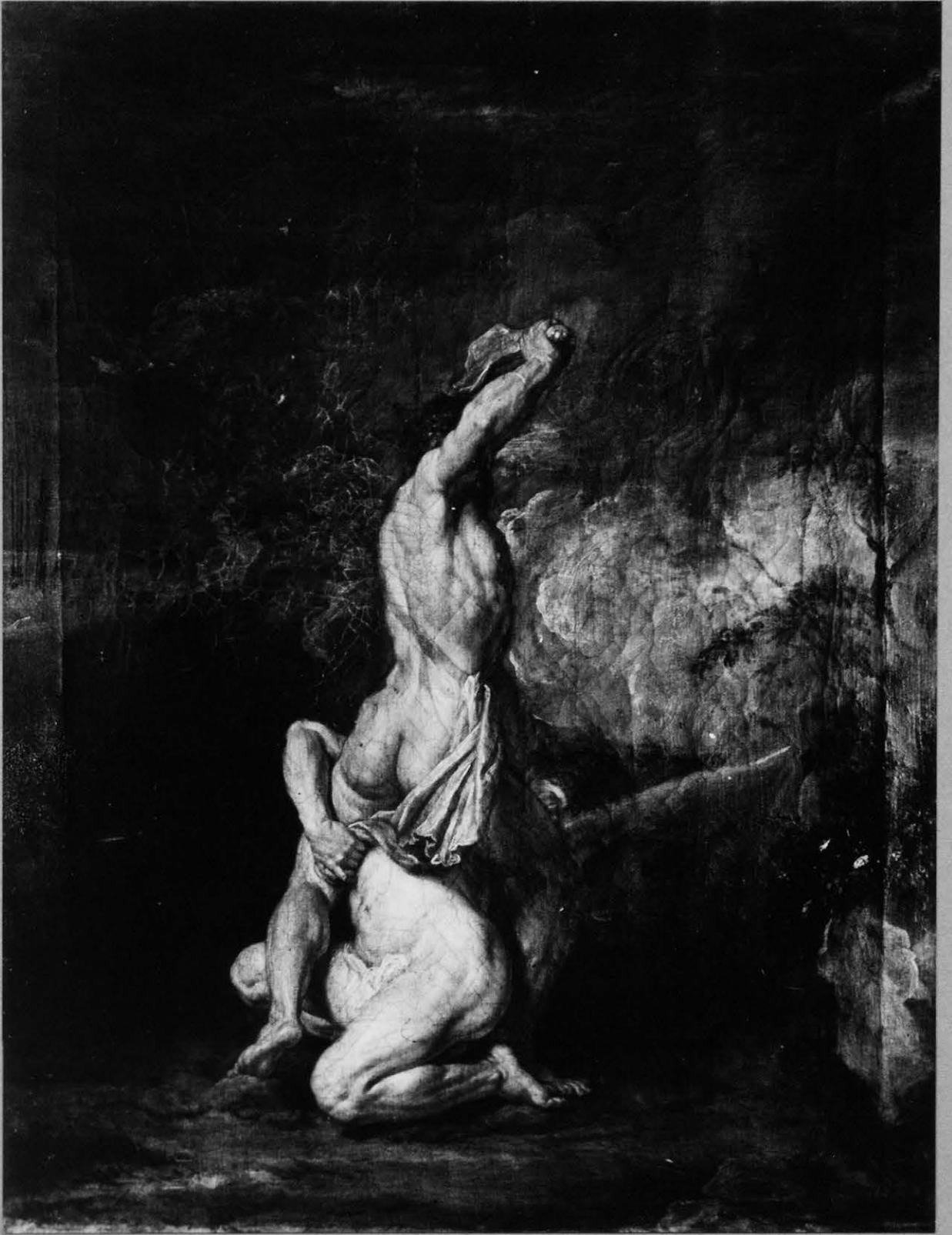


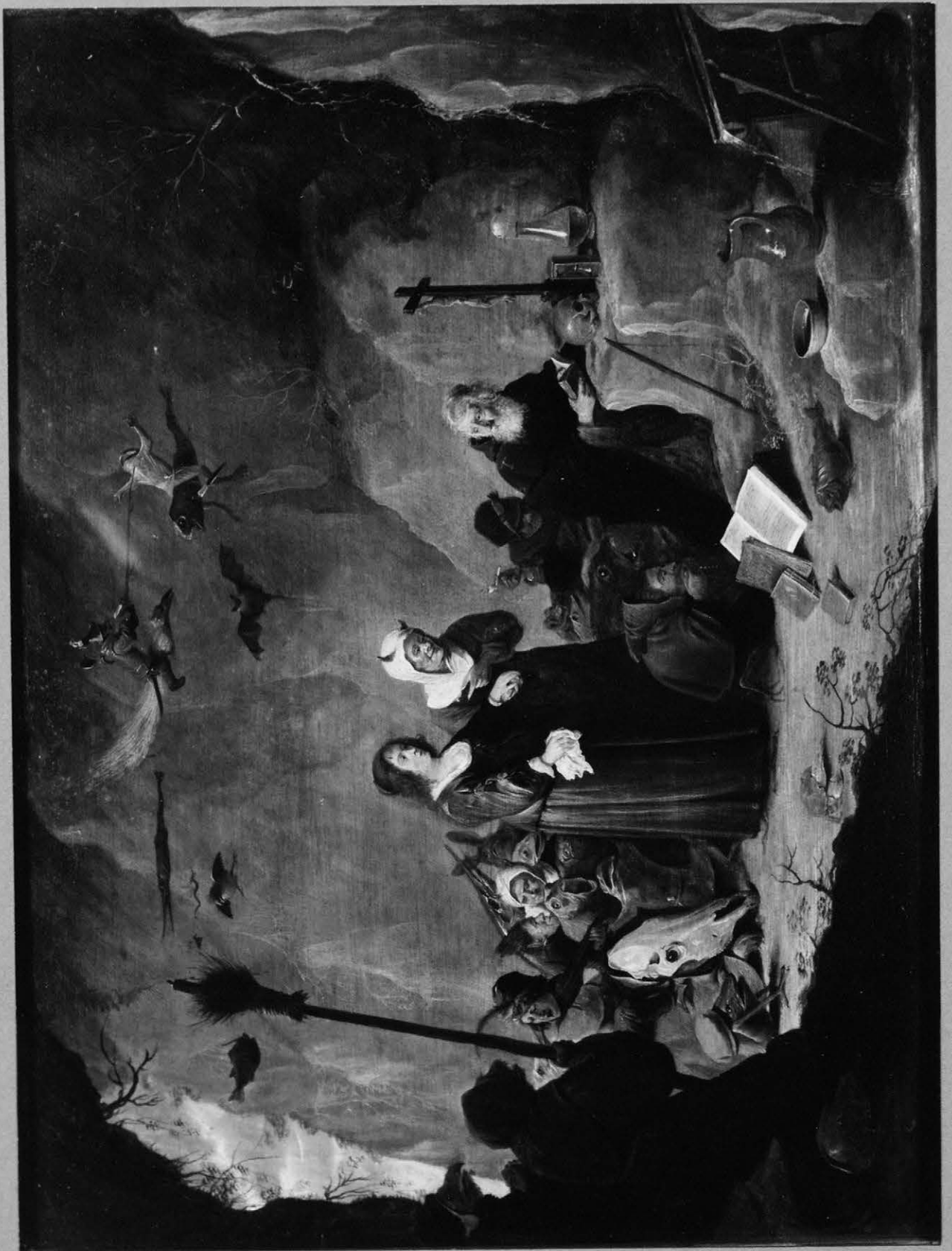




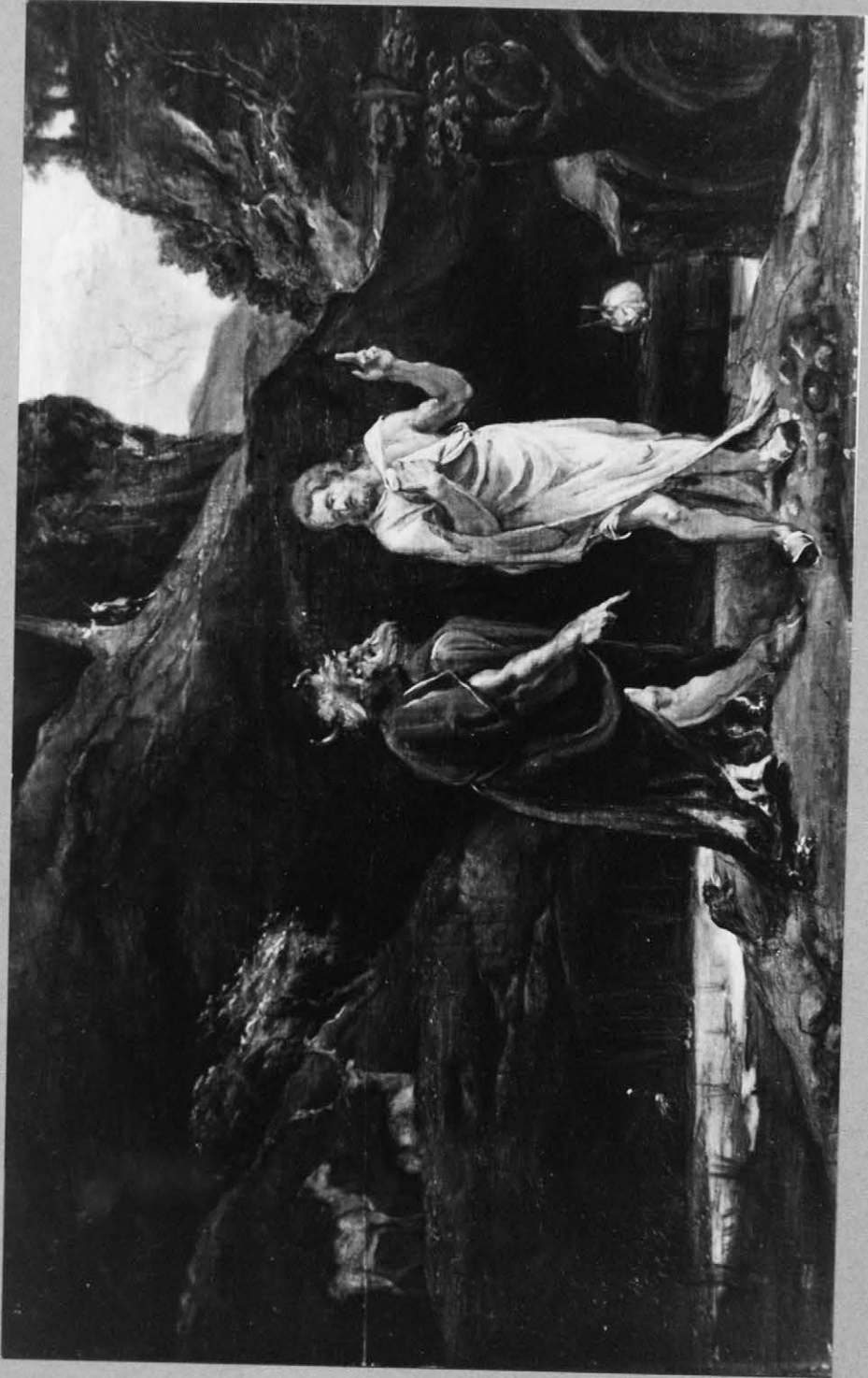










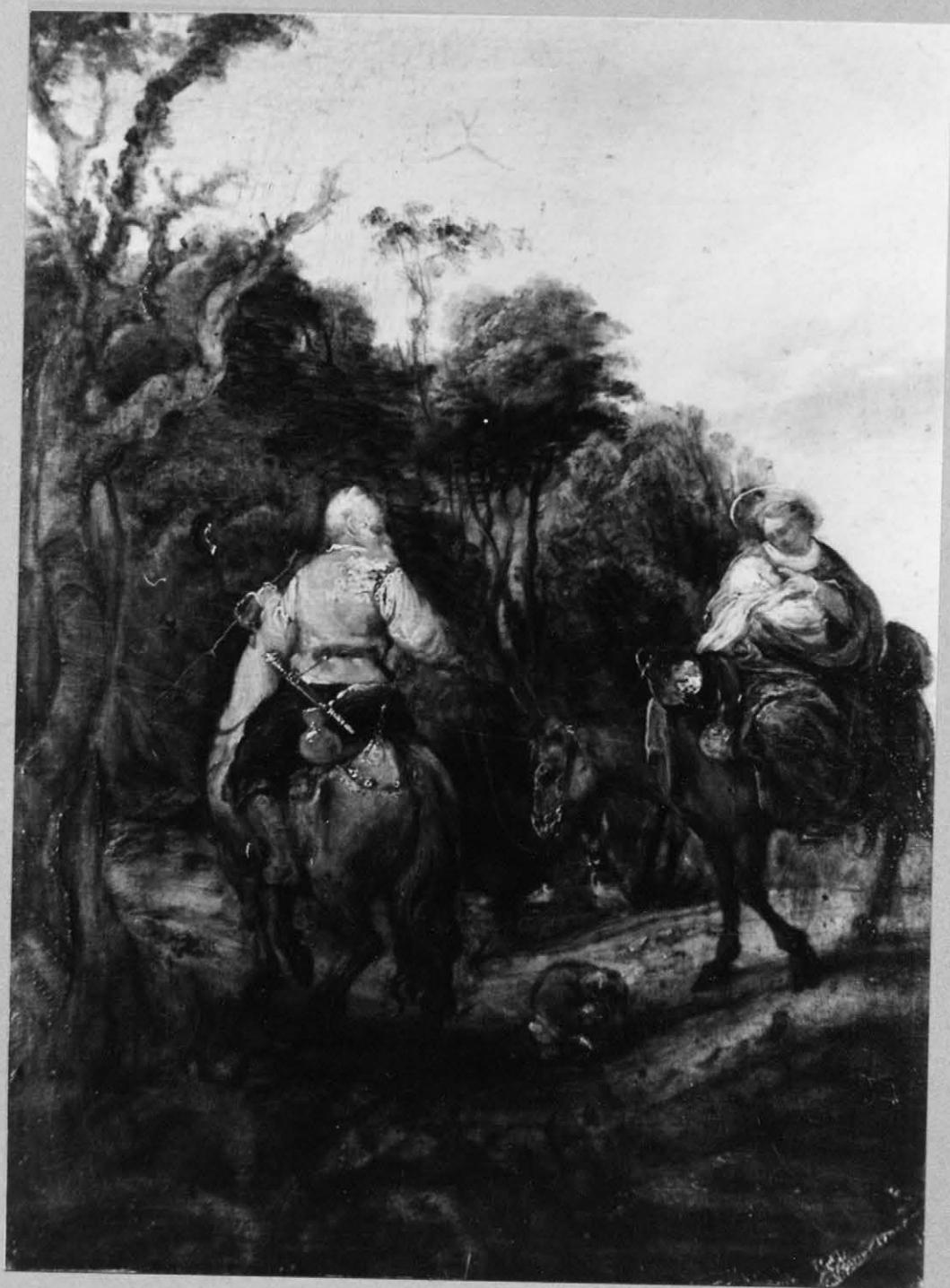








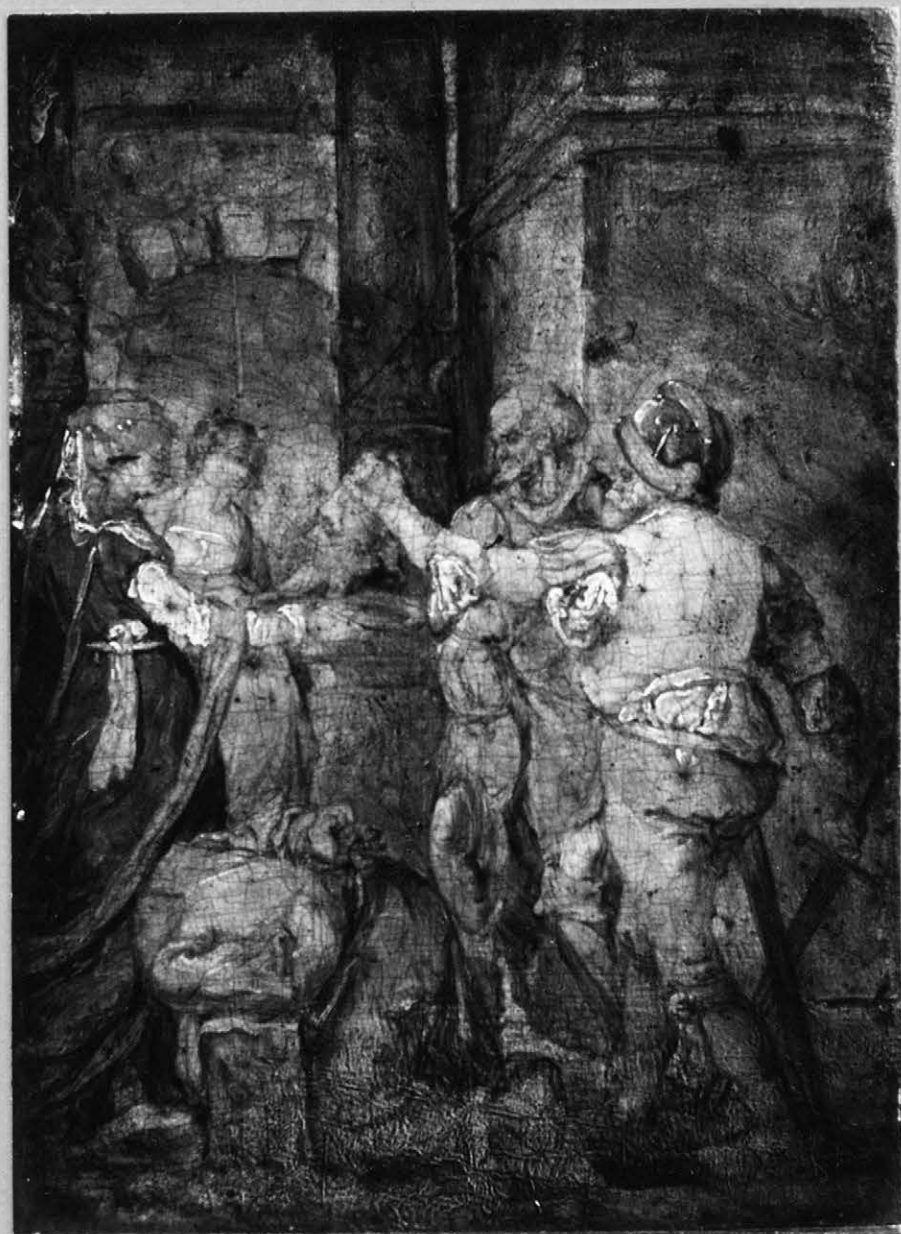






















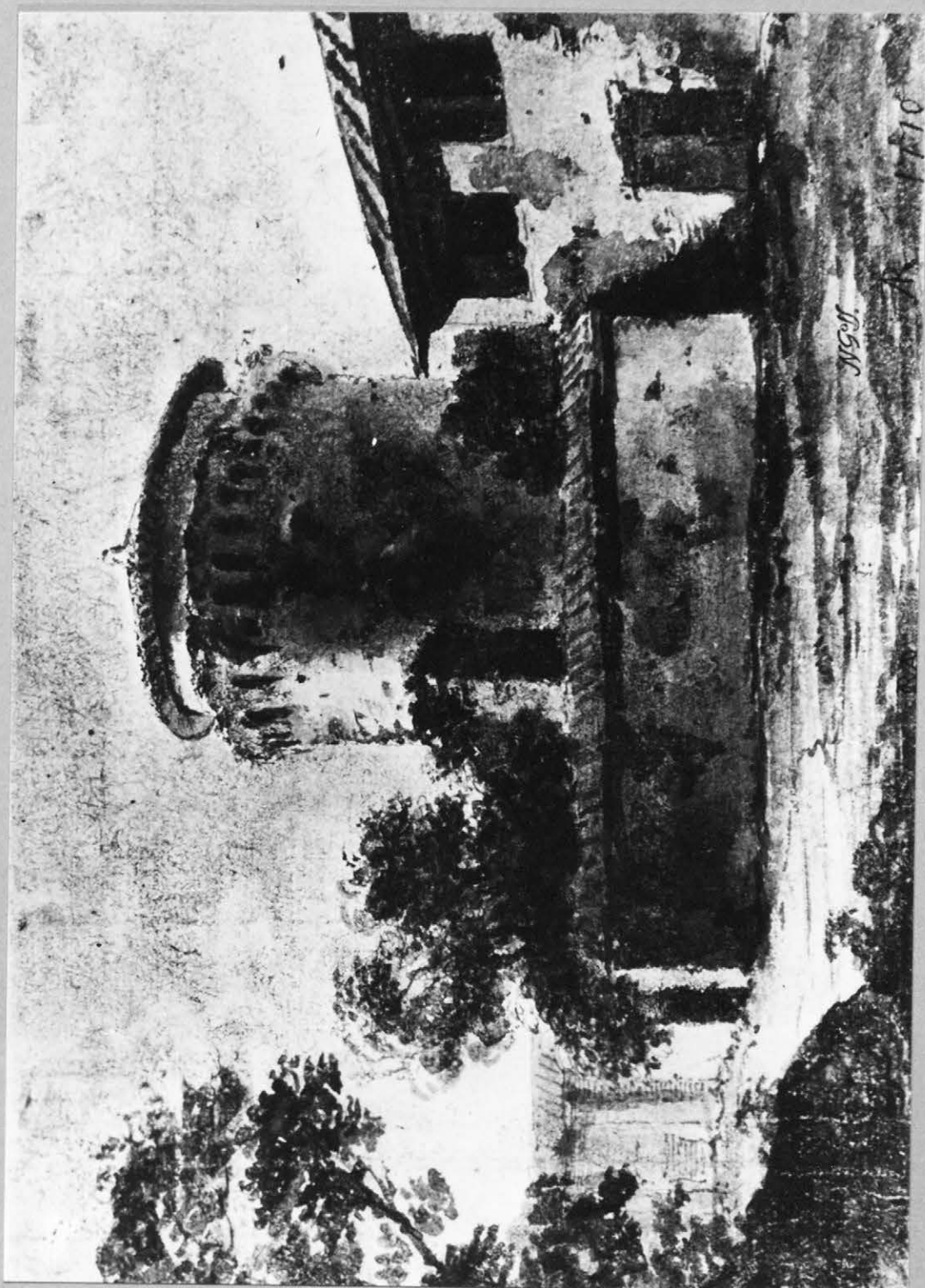








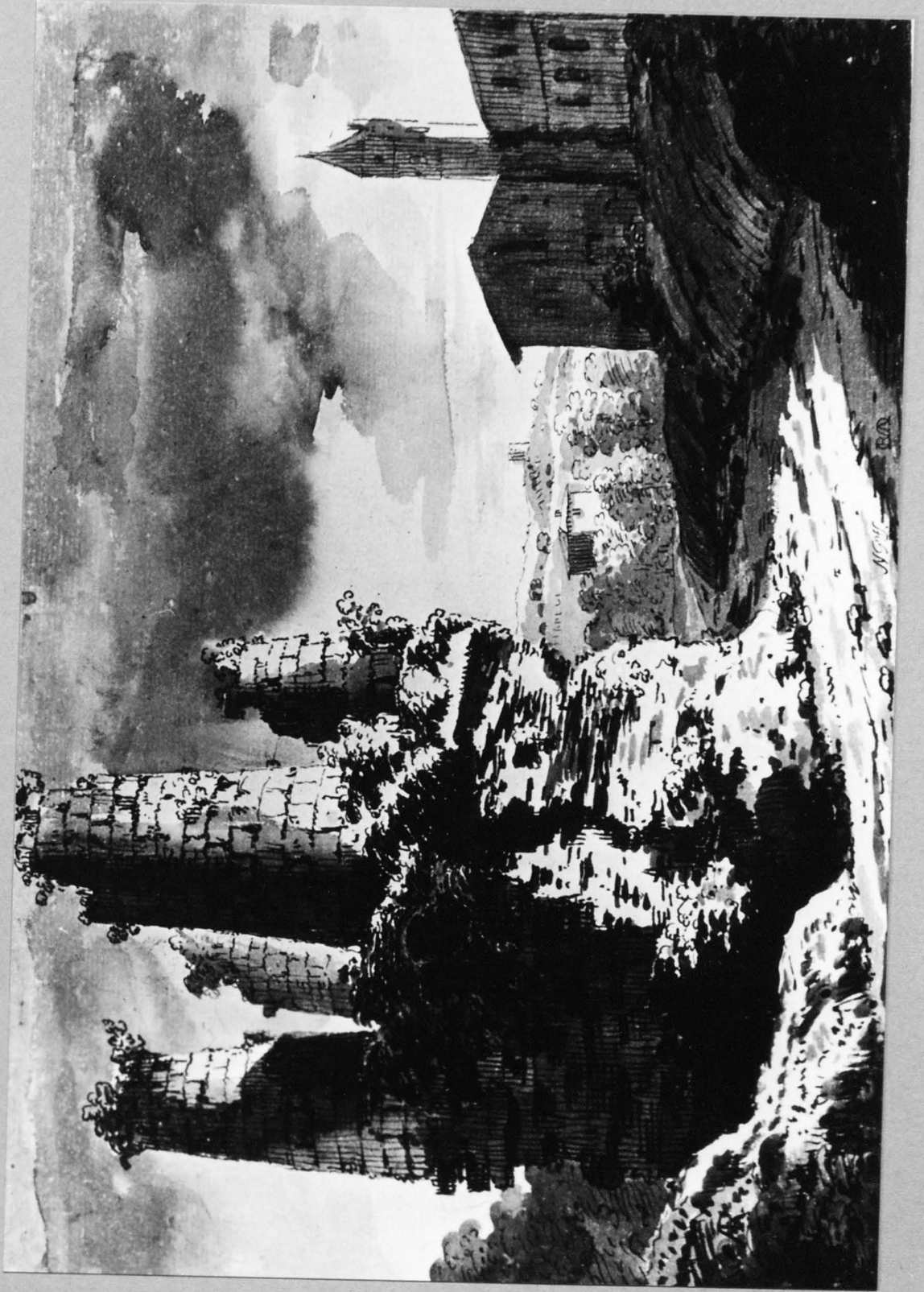


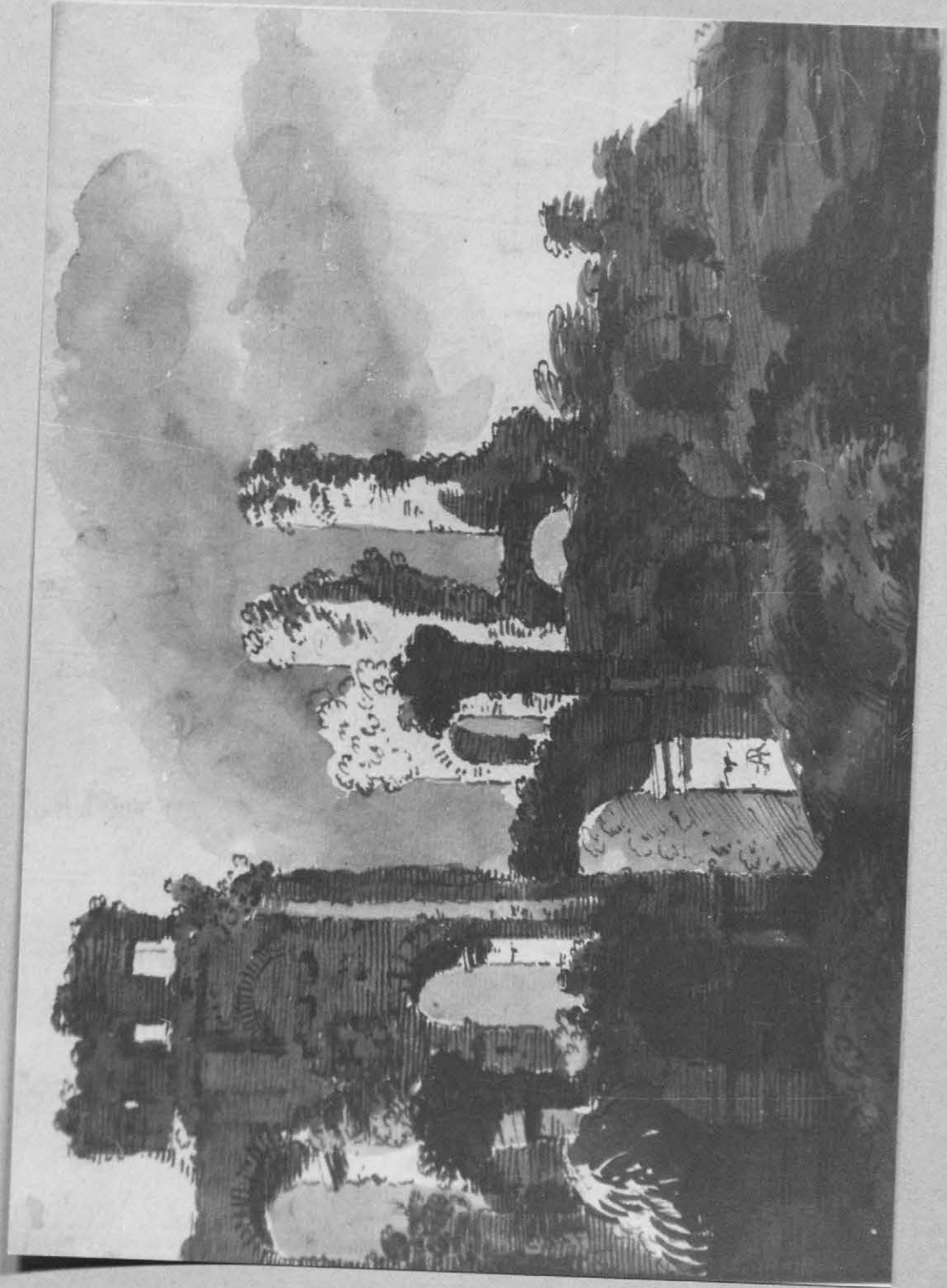


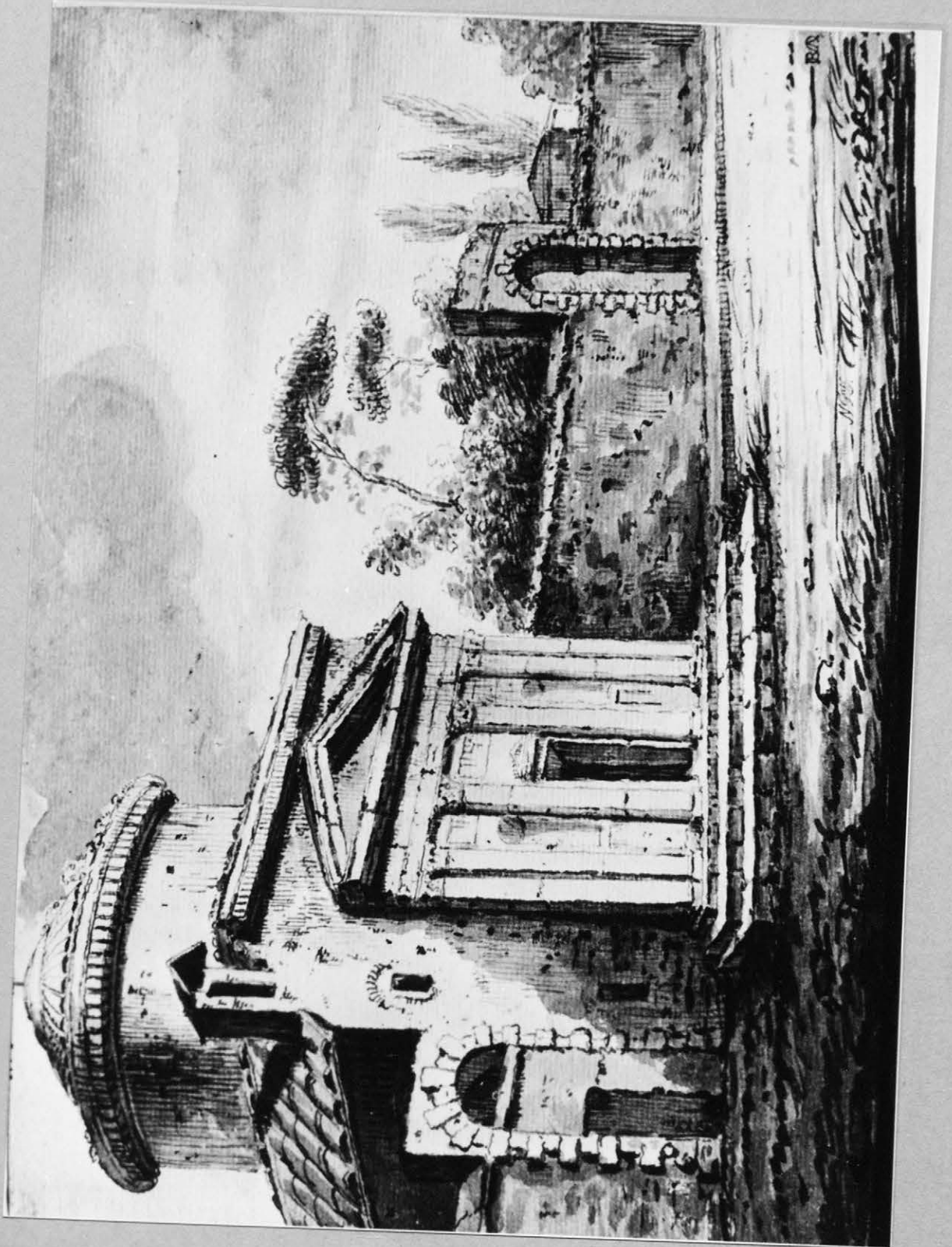


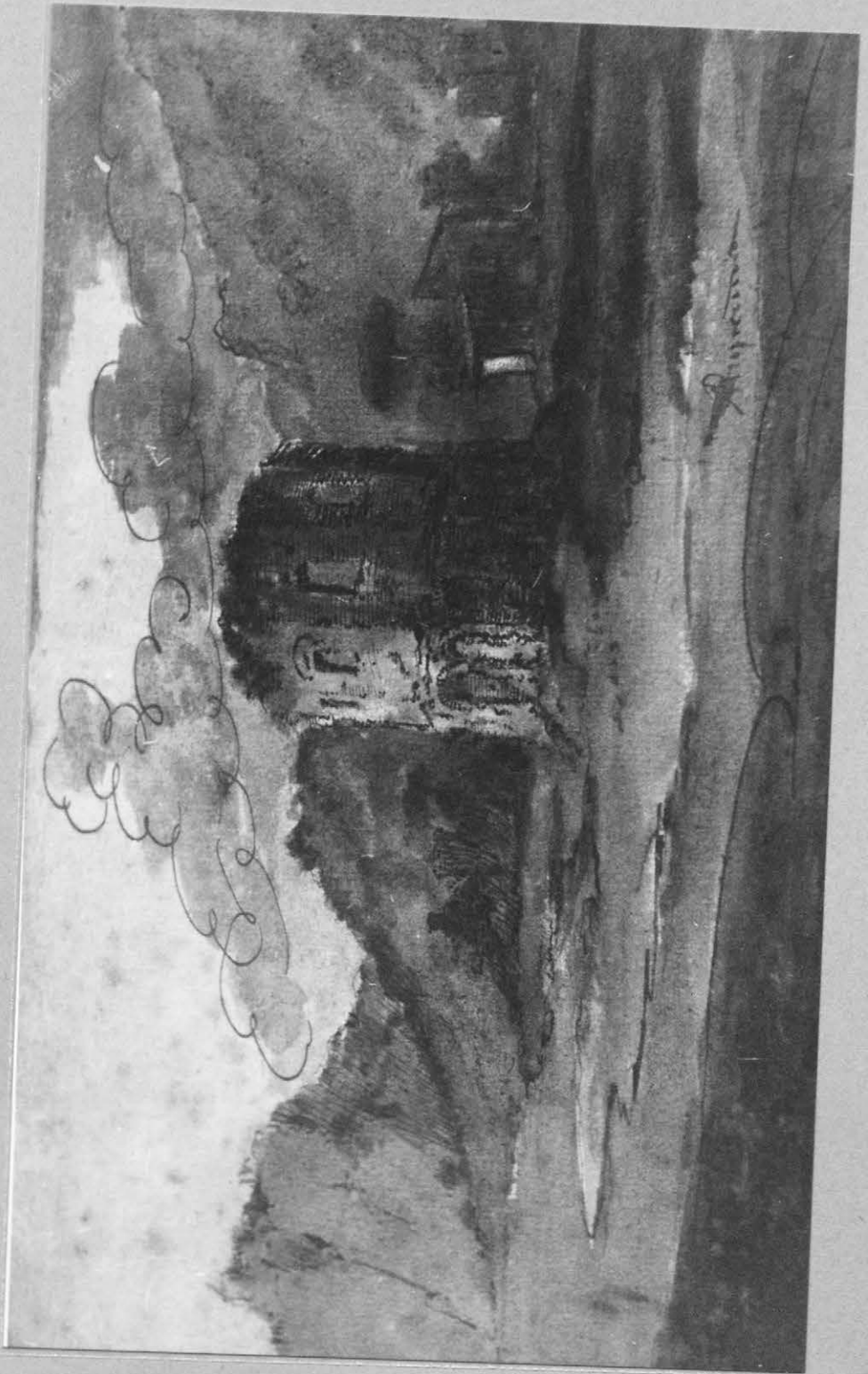


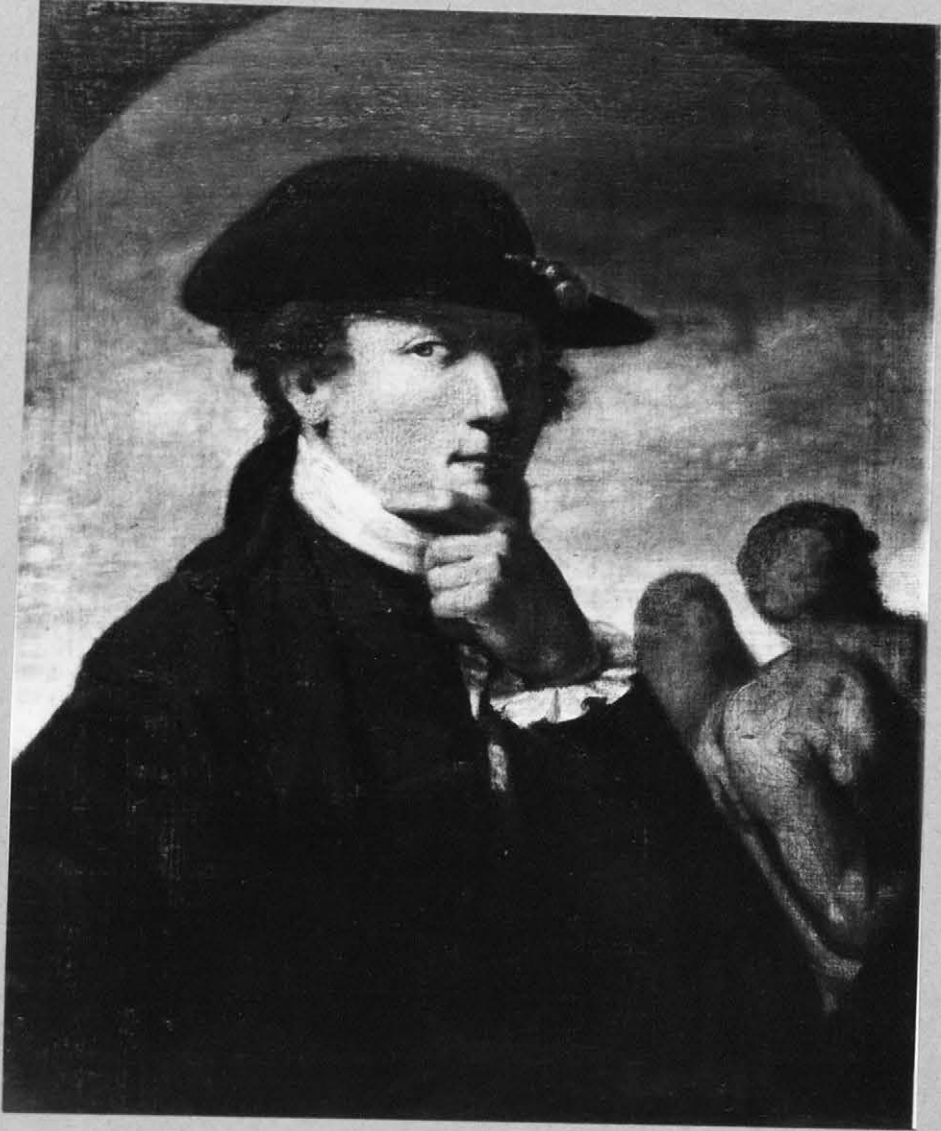












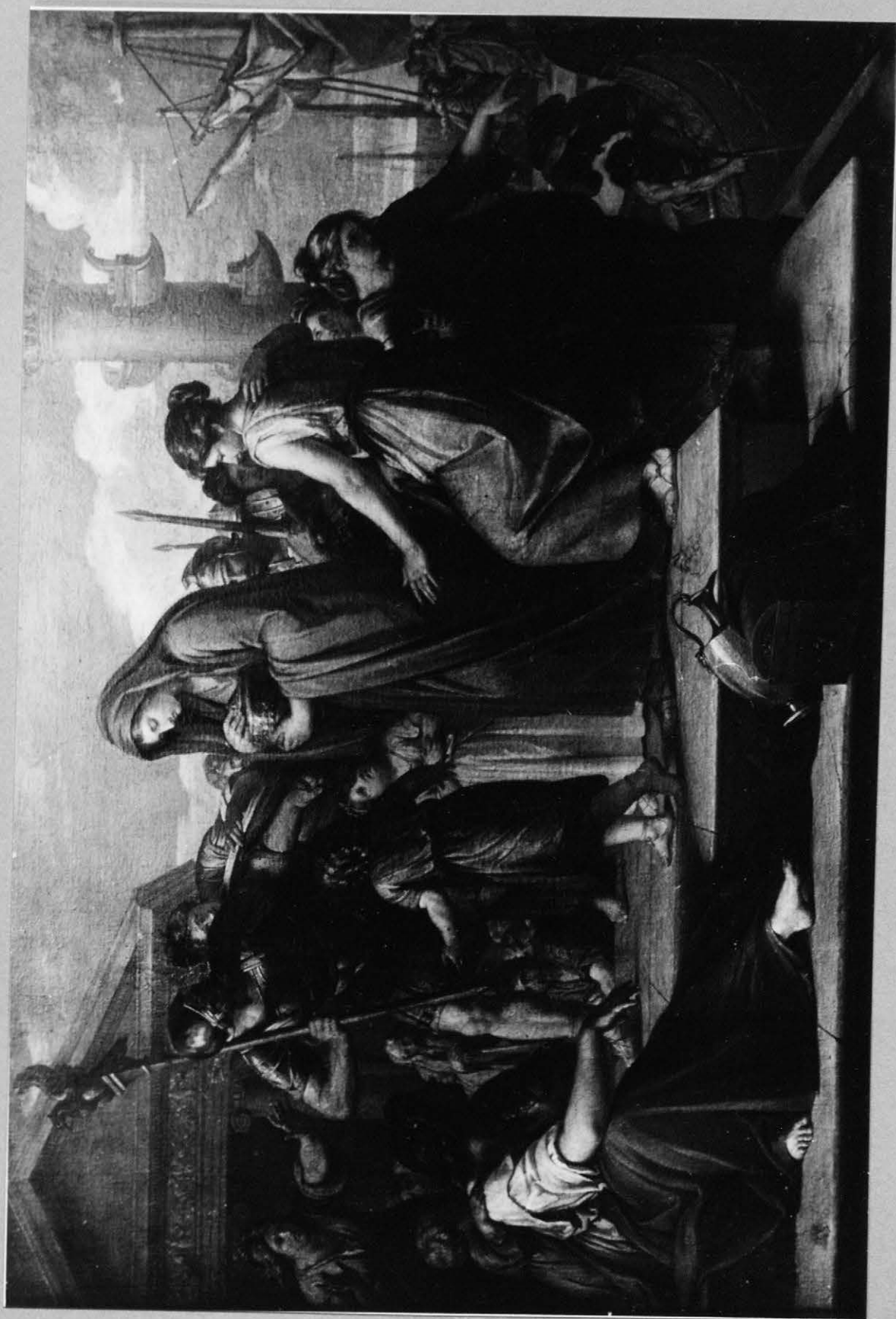


1904
106 John Rumanan
D. H. Rumanan



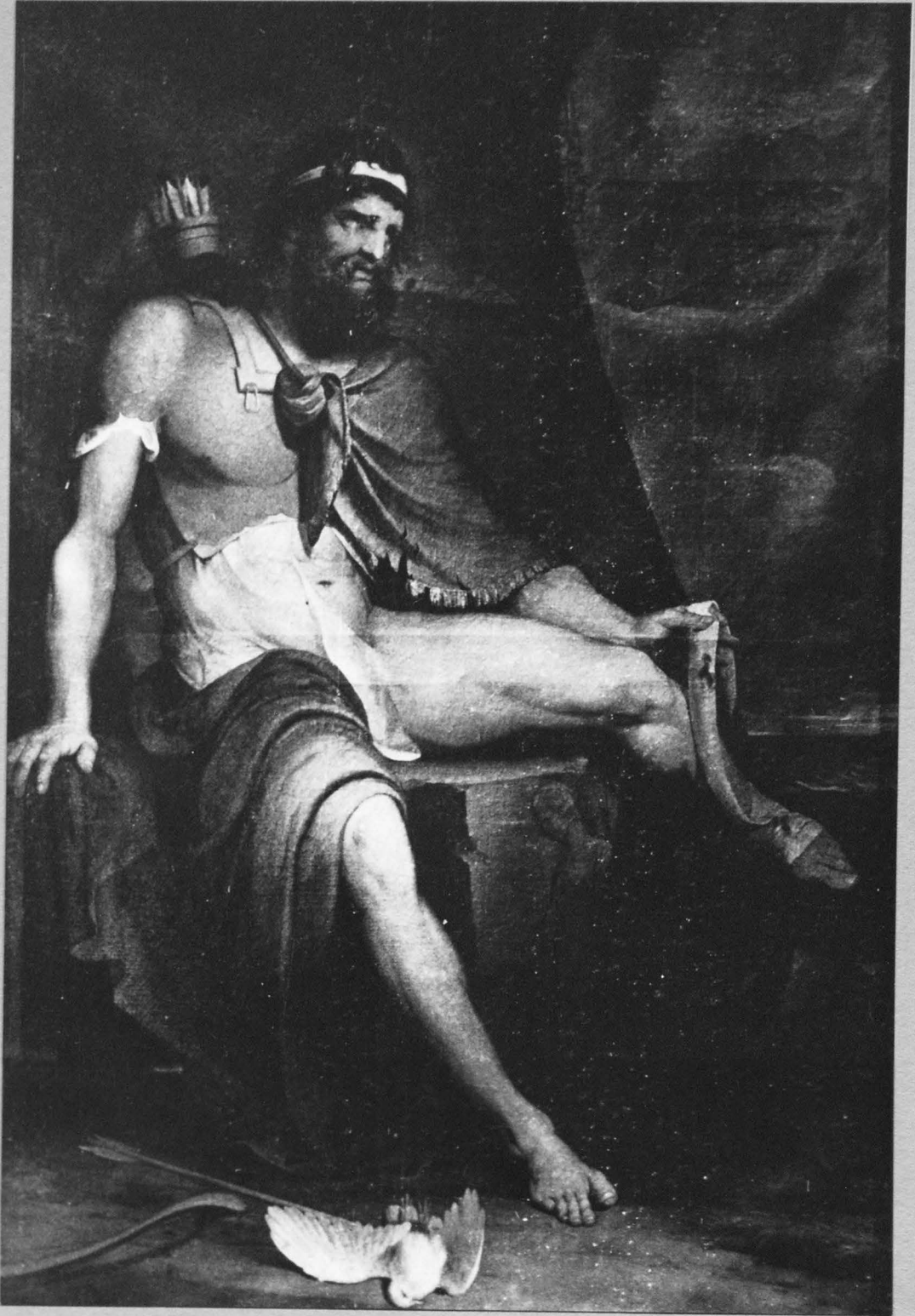
















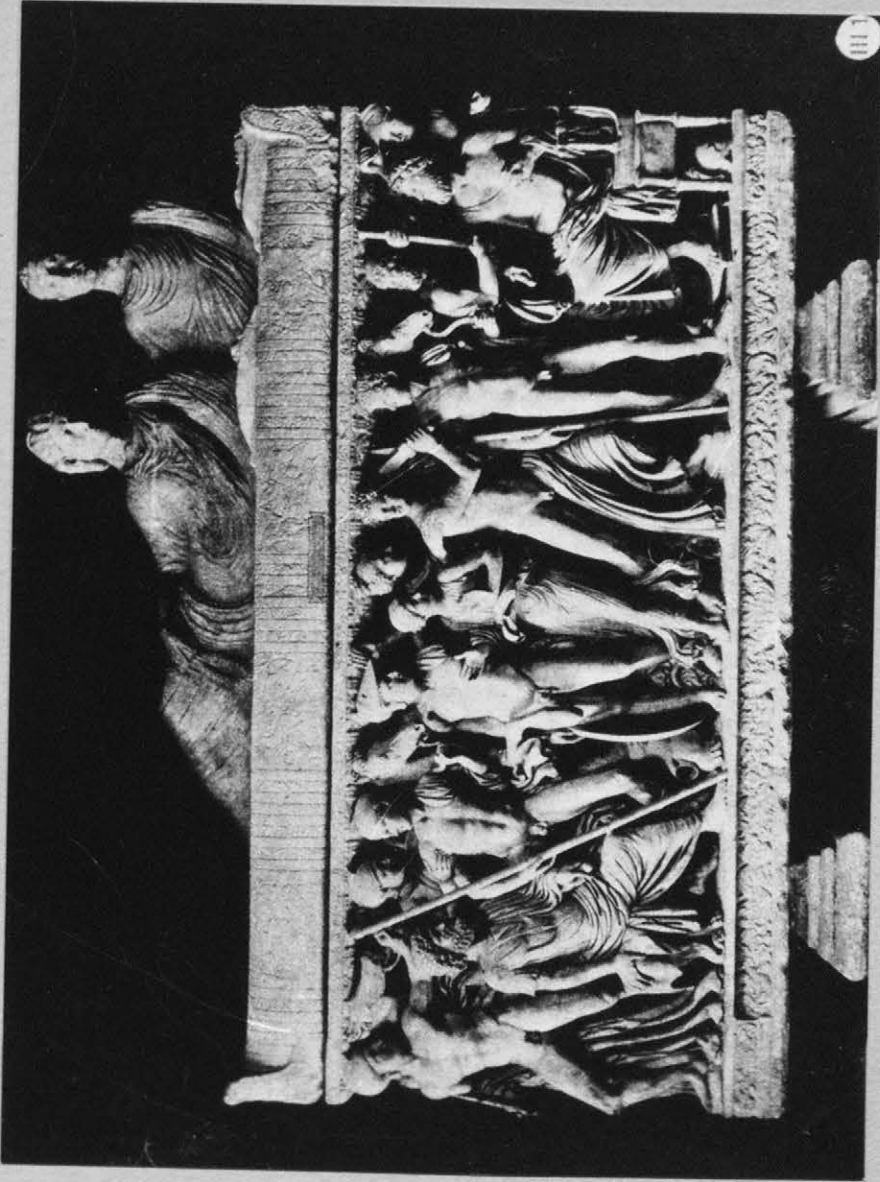
Lion, Regis la Grece, etc.

Stato di palmi cinque Romani

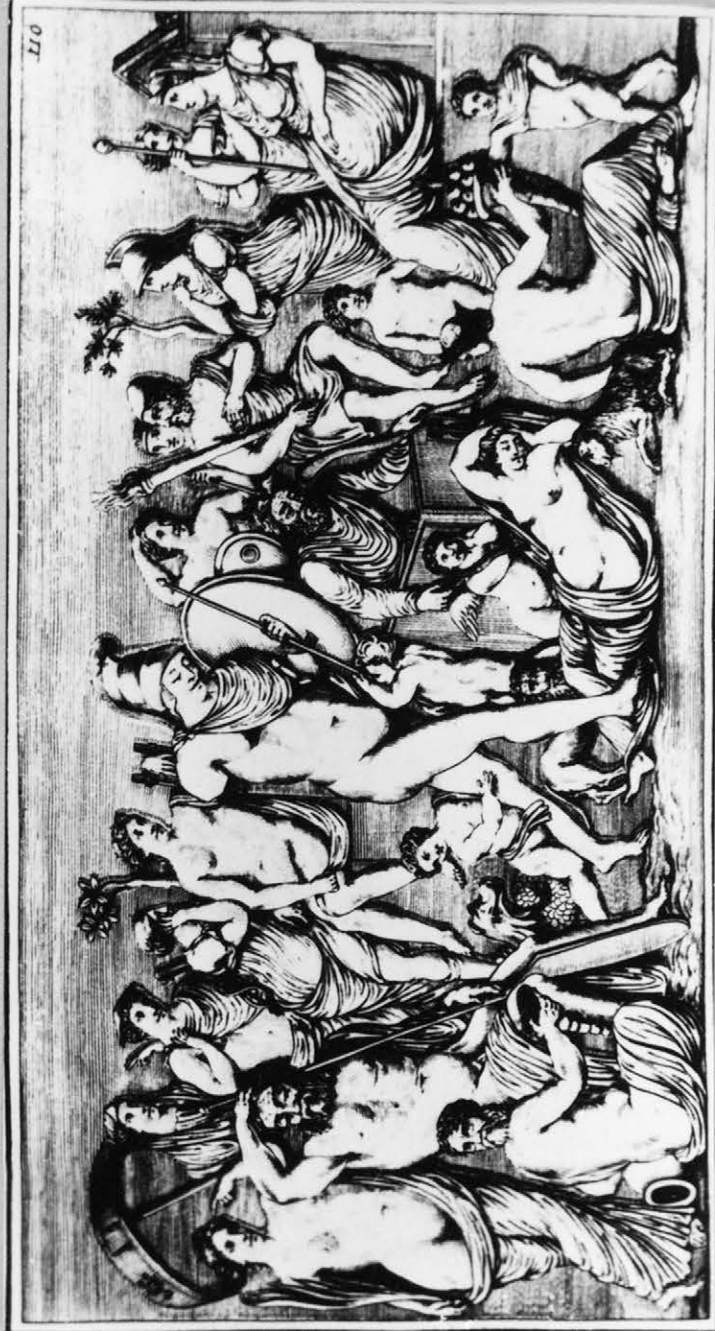
Piccola Donna Romana Regis, Sculp. P. P.

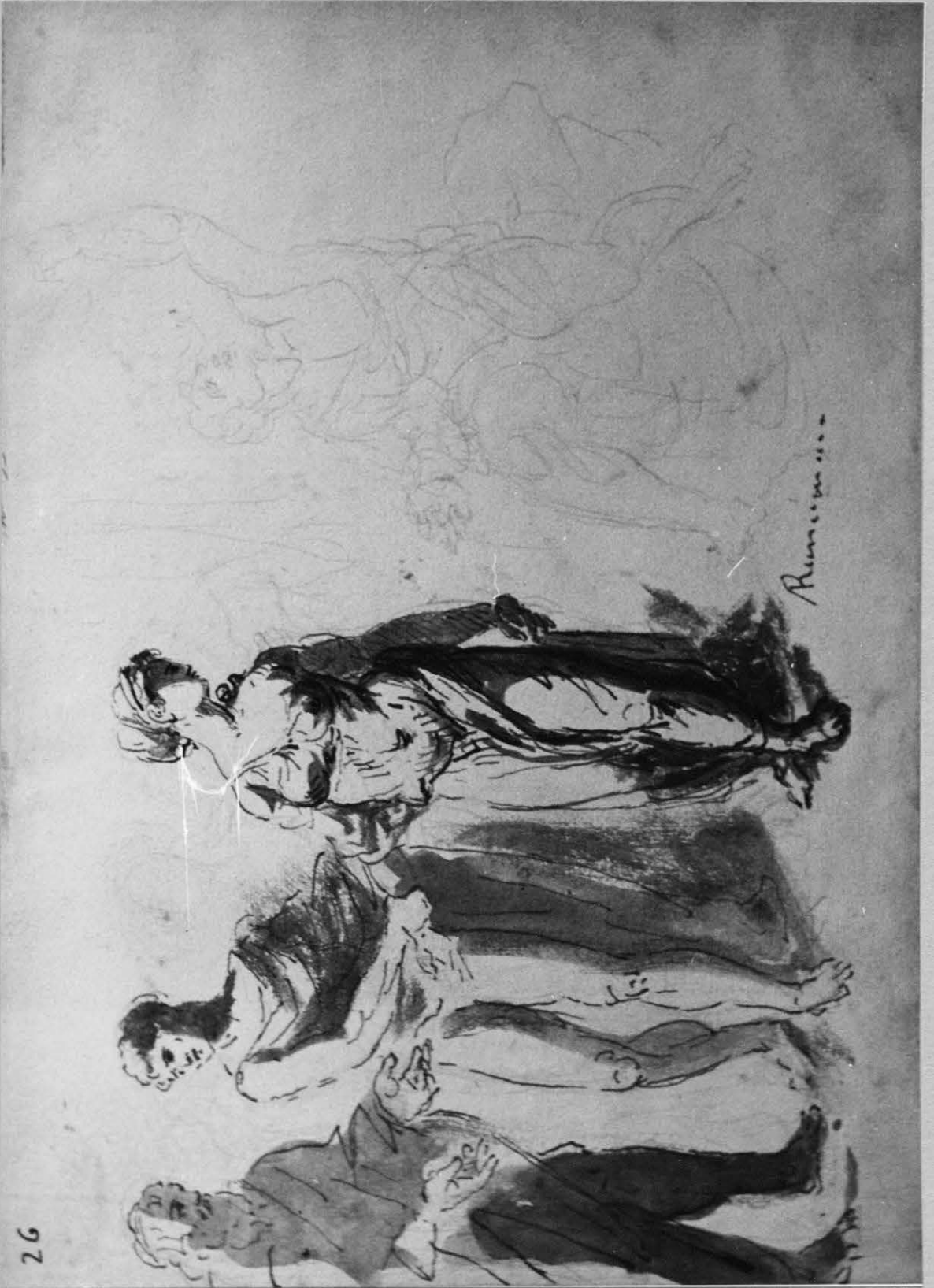






















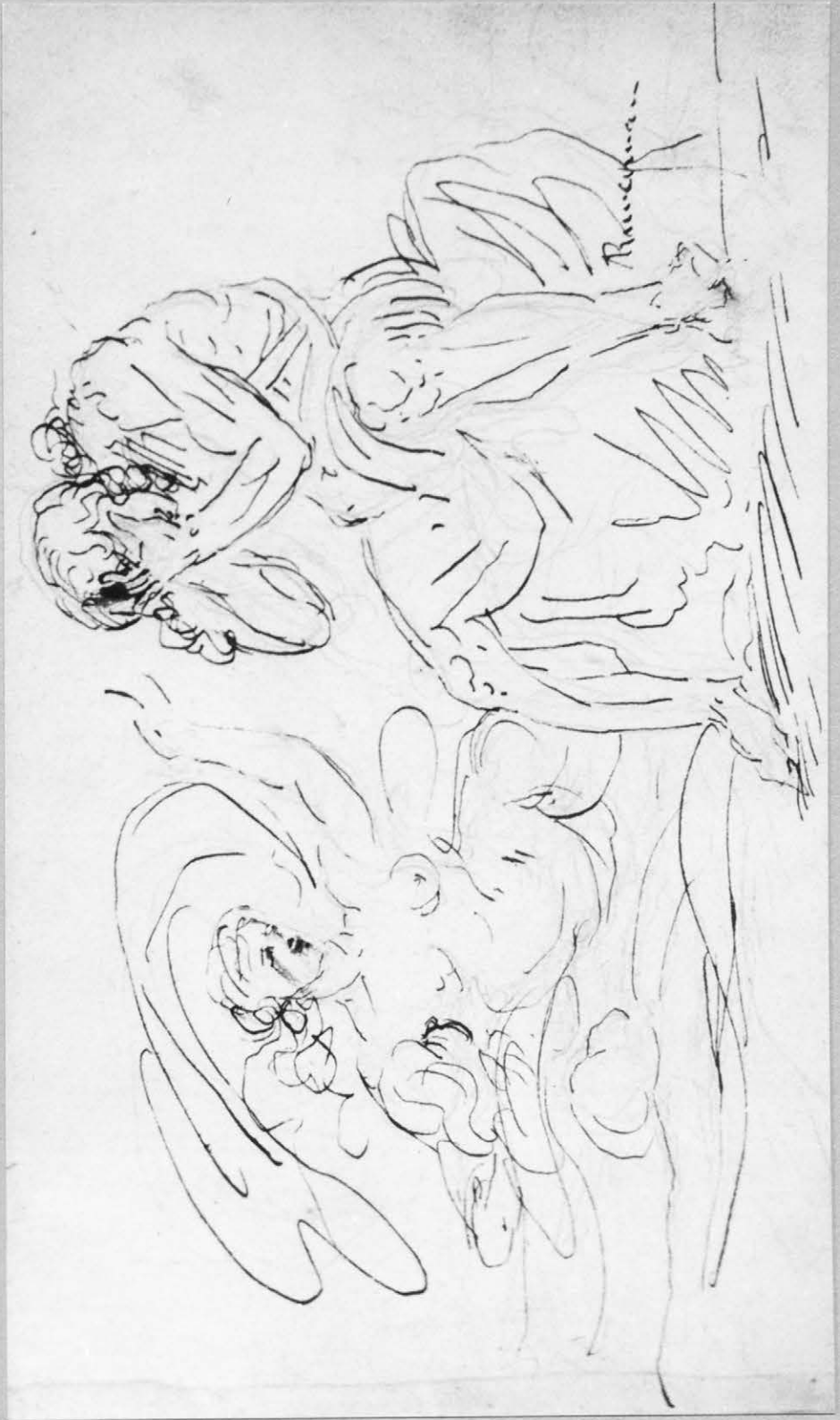


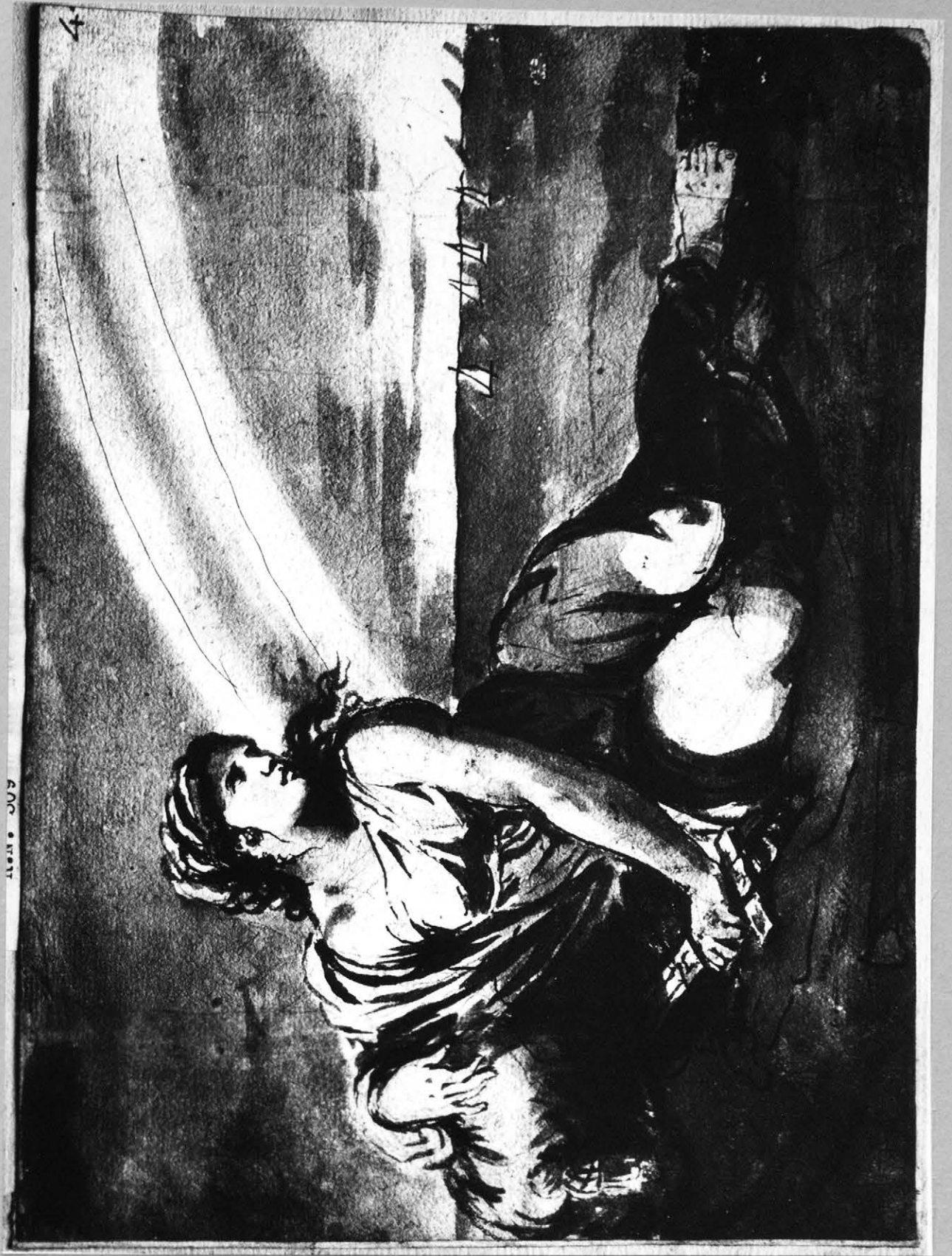




At the same time

35







MS. RA

189
Dido on the funeral pyre, with her calling the
immortal bird















8+

Arundel 1880



62









Runciman

Amilia (at the Door) — My Lord, My Lord! what hoa! my Lord! my Lord!
 Othello — What noise is this? not dead? not yet quite Dead?
 I that am cruel, am yet merciful;
 I would not have thee linger in thy pain.
 So fo. —

Shakespeare Moor of Venice Act 5













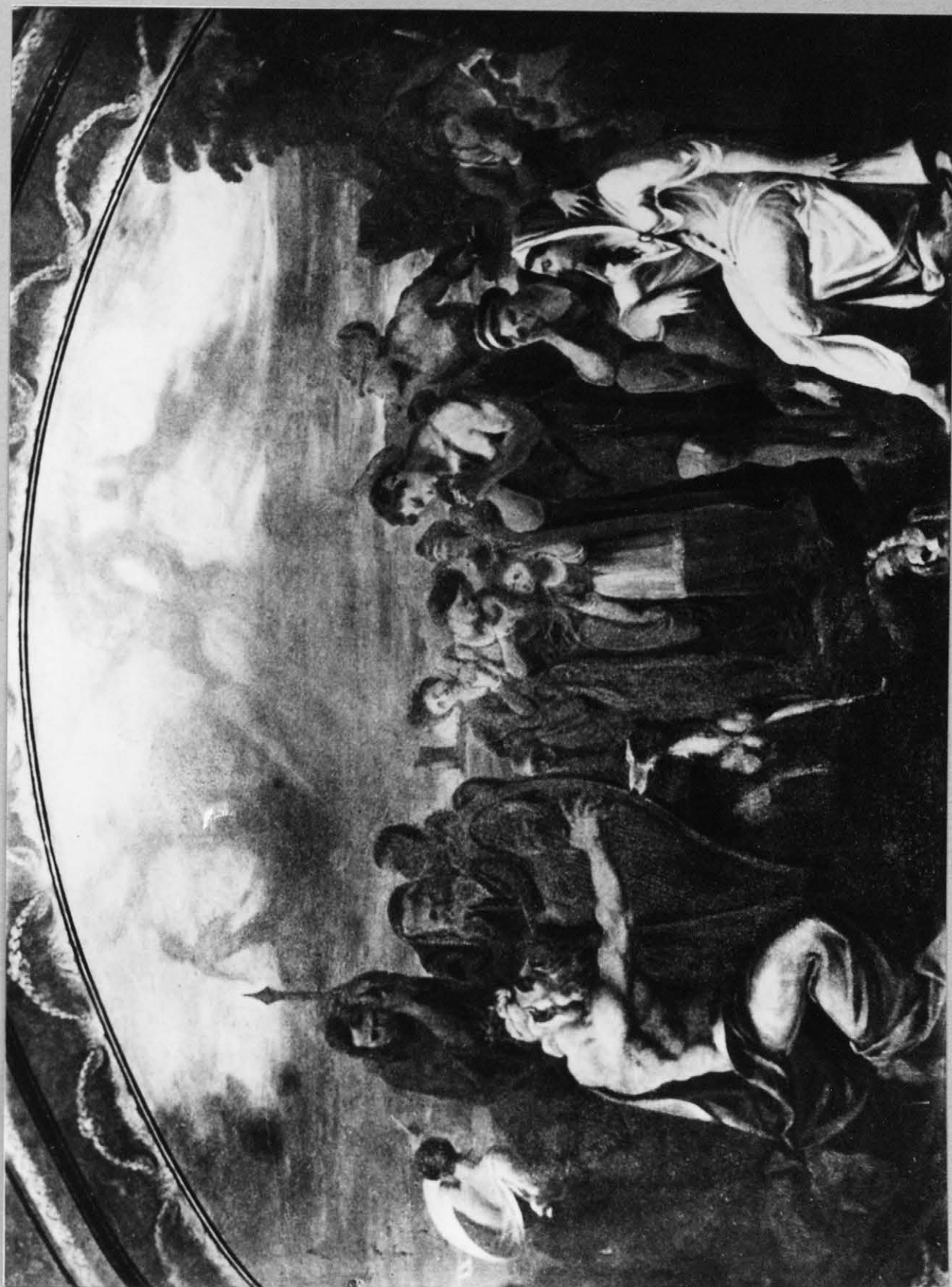
ΟΙ ΔΙΠΤΟΥΣ ΚΑΤΑΛΕΞΑΣ ΤΟ ΤΗΣ ΣΦΙΝΤΟΣ ΑΙΝΙΓΜΑ ΣΟΣΑΣ ΤΗΝ ΠΟΛΙΝ ΜΕΤΧΑΝΕΣΥΝΕΠΙΑΣ ΕΙ ΤΗΝ ΕΒΡΩΝ ΤΥΡΑΝΝΙΑΣ





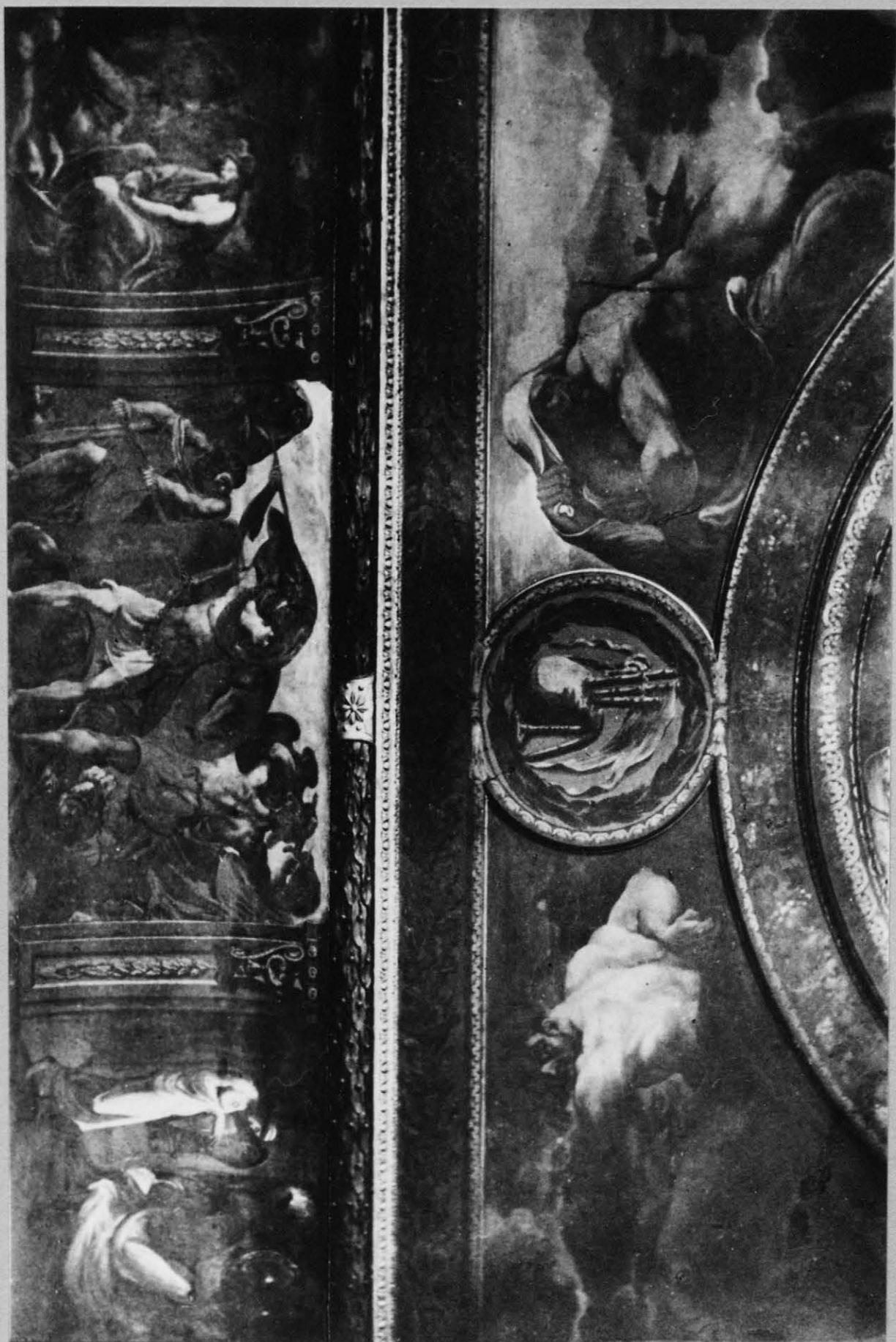


















15

52



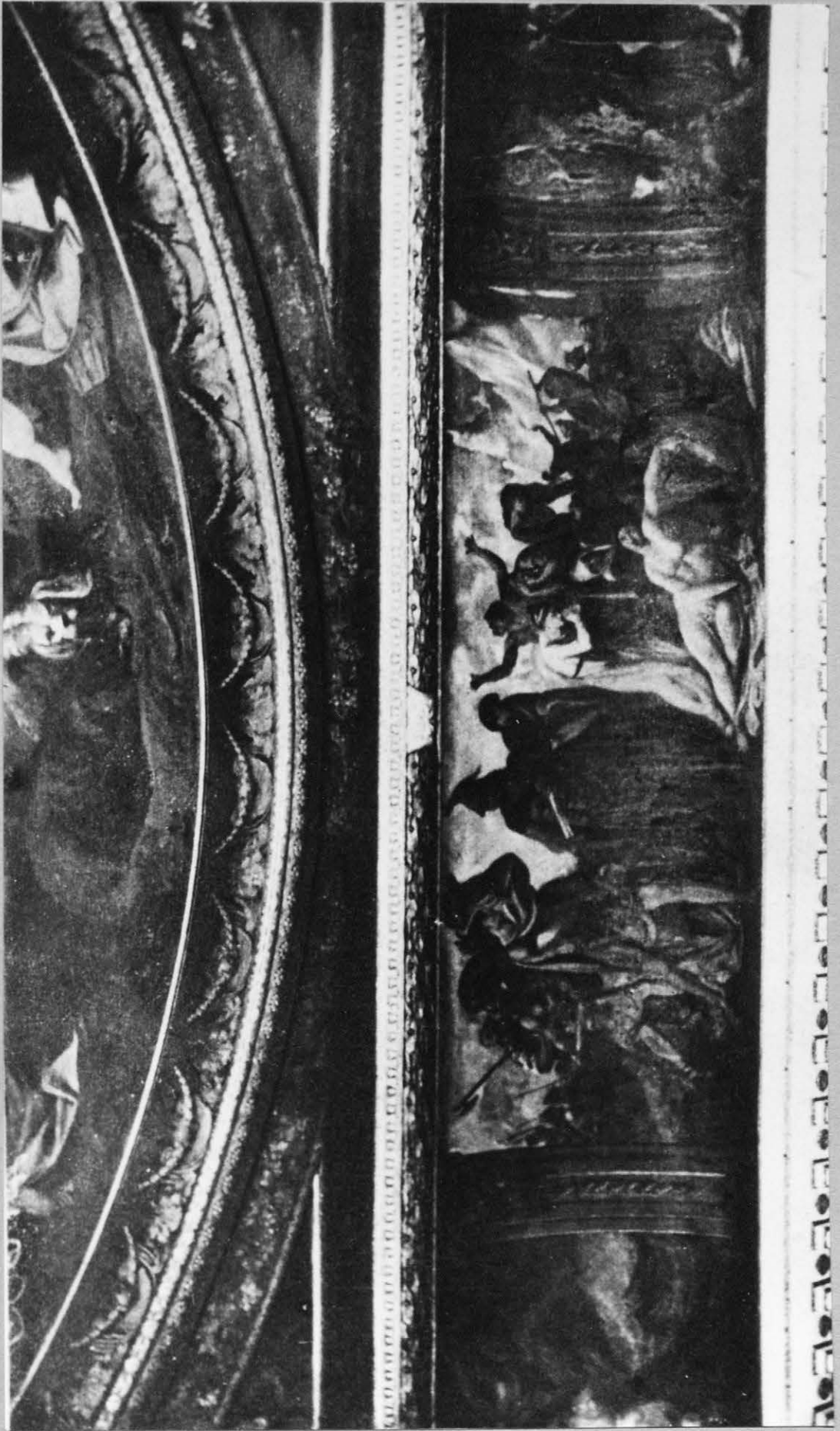


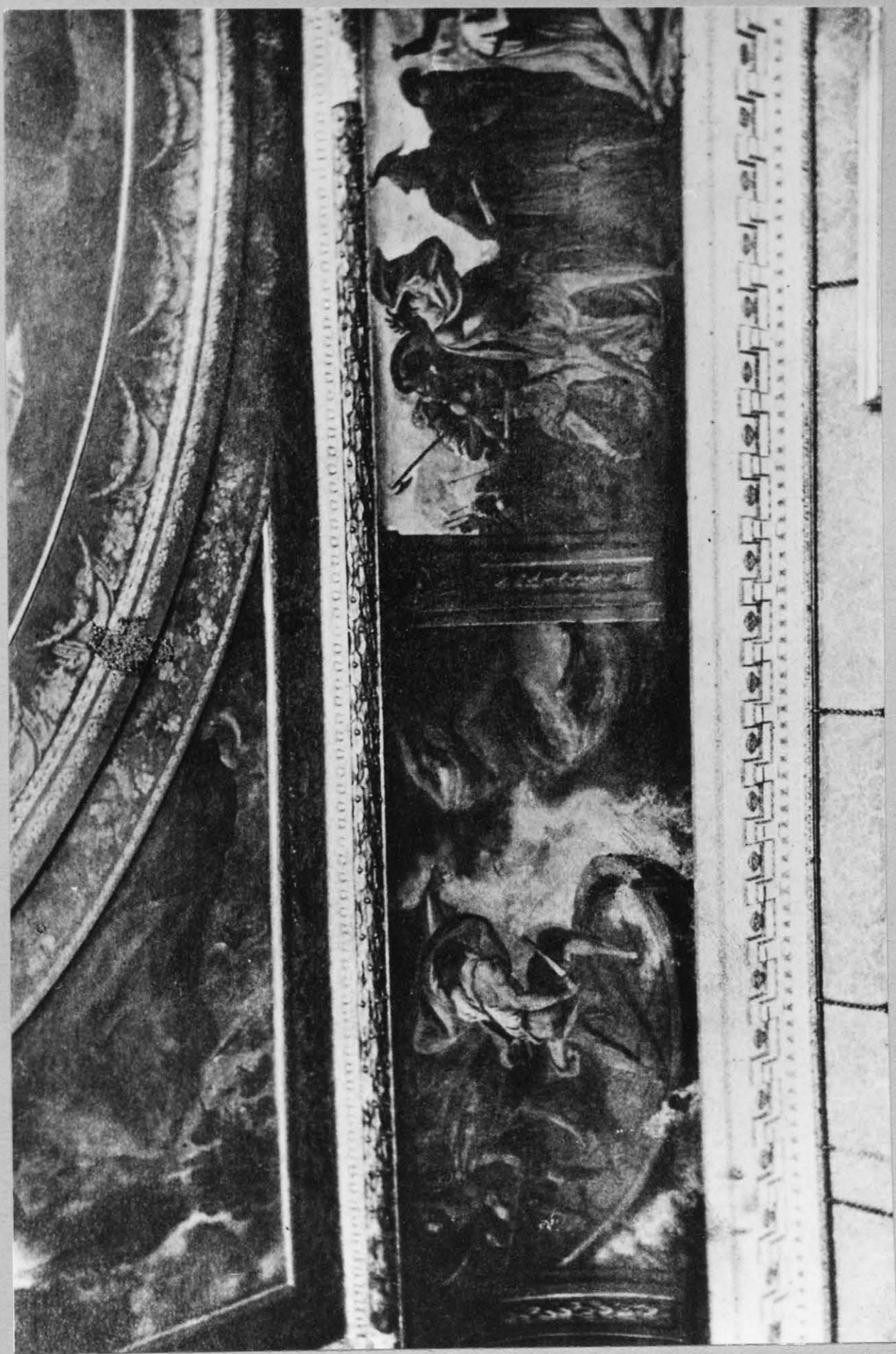


























Ch. M. P. 1850

A. M. 1850













