



1979

IRISH GEORGIAN
SOCIETY

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BULLETIN OF THE
IRISH GEORGIAN SOCIETY

Vol XXII

1979

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

The author wishes to thank the following for help with her research: Professor Anne Crookshank, Dr. Edward McParland, Mrs. Rena Kleefeld, Mrs. Lena Boylan, Mrs. Philippa Garner, Mr. Sean Poplewell, The Hon. Desmond Guinness and Mr. Roger Wilson.

A.M.K.

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Cover: Niche in the Long Gallery at Castletown, attributed to Charles Reuben Riley. Photography by David Davison.

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THE LONG GALLERY OF CASTLETOWN HOUSE

CHAPTER ONE

Description and history, with notes on the furnishing and sculpture.

BY ANN MARGARET KELLER

(formerly of the Department of Visual Arts, Trinity College, Dublin).

The Long Gallery of Castletown House dates from 1722 when the house was built by William Conolly, but along with much of the rest of the interior it remained unfinished for many years, owing to his death in 1729. After the death of his widow in 1752, the great house was shuttered up until his great-nephew Tom "Squire" Conolly took up residence there at the early age of 24 in 1758. In that year he married the fifteen-year-old Lady Louisa Lennox, then living at Carton, home of her sister, Emily, Lady Kildare. Only then, when Lady Louisa became mistress of Castletown in 1758, did the interior of the house begin to take shape. The Long Gallery was one of the most important rooms to be attended to and its decoration and furnishing occupied Lady Louisa over many years.

There is one description of the interior of the Long Gallery before Lady Louisa's day, given by an Oxfordshire squire named Loveday, who wrote in 1732:

"The rooms are large and well proportioned, and as well furnished though ye inside be not finished throughout for ye great staircase is not yet begun and some of ye rooms have no furniture, as ye long gallery proportionately wide. Here is a length of ye Duke of Wharton, another ye Duke of Grafton, Lord Lieutenant and his Duchess, but a remarkably good length painting of Lord Chancellor West in his robes.

"There are a large number of prints here and some antique seals taken off in wax and put into glass picture cases. No tapestry but what was made in Dublin; ye figures are small ye colours lively."¹

While this description is obligingly detailed, there unfortunately seems to be no surviving record of what became of the contents of the gallery from this date.

The gallery is situated on the first floor of the house on the north front, and measures 79 feet 3 inches x 22 feet 9 inches. The room has eight windows of uniform shape and size, all on the north wall, so that

the view from all parts of the room is that looking out towards the Conolly Folly, built in 1740. A plan of the room before 1760 shows that originally there were four doors into the room. Two of them gave on to the landing (one facing the main staircase) and there was one at either end of the room by the window side of each fireplace. Since 1760 all these entrances have been changed. The ones by the fireplaces must always have been very draughty, and the present arrangement is much more satisfactory. Although there are apparently twin entrances to the room, aligned with the central windows of the opposite wall,² only one is genuine, and this is also in line with the centre of the balcony-landing outside that overlooks the hall. The second and blind door was created to balance the real one and disguise the fact that to accommodate the placing of the entrance from the landing side the real doorway had to be placed off-centre as far as the gallery was concerned. Between the doors is a tall niche containing a statue, and this balances the two smaller niches between the pair of mirrors on either side of the doors. Over the doors is the largest single feature of the painted decoration, a lunette copied from Guido Reni's *Aurora*.

At either end of the room, in the centre of their respective walls, is a simple marble mantel supported on two Ionic columns.³ Each has a small painted panel at the centre of the mantel. Above each mantel is a portrait in a gilt frame attached to the wall. The pattern on the gilding matches the frames of the wall mirrors and the strips that divide parts of the walls into sections (as the strips on either side of the portraits). The bookcases now flanking the fireplaces are modern, although there were bookcases there originally also. The original ones must have been removed in the nineteenth century when the gas light fixtures were installed, and it was then that the tall, slender, movable canvas panels were painted to fill the spaces. These panels (referred to in many accounts of the room as the 'pilasters') were only removed in the 1967 when Castletown was bought by its present owner, the Hon. Desmond Guinness. The marks on the walls where they hung can still be made out. Above the bookcases remain the original plaster-framed oval panels with antique motifs. As all the iconography is extensive and complex in the decoration, this will be discussed separately in Chapter Two of this study.

On either side of the doors, and outside the unframed arabesque paintings, is a pair of large rectangular mirrors framed in the gilded strips mentioned above. Over each of these mirrors, which are aligned (more or less) with the windows opposite, is a set of four frieze panels mounted on canvas on wooden frames. These panels are set into gilded stucco frames, and their width matches the width of the mirrors. Over each of the fireplace portraits is a further panel



1. The Long Gallery; the set of Venetian chandeliers was imported by Lady Louisa Conolly especially for the room. The lunette above the doors is derived from Guido Reni's *Aurora*.

similarly mounted and sized to match the width of the portrait beneath.

On each side of the doors, between the pairs of mirrors, is a decoratively painted niche containing a statue, and above each niche is an oval painted panel set into a plasterwork frame which is gilded. These panels appear to be painted in situ. Between the mirrors, niches and doors, and on the end walls framing the portraits, the blank wall spaces above the busts of philosophers and poets are painted strips of ornament, medallions in grisaille (to simulate *bas relief* plasterwork, a decorative trick common in neo-classical decoration of the time), linked by foliage, fruit, and flower motifs. The grisaille decoration is used also in the sphinx motifs on the tops of the mirrors, and on the tops of the portraits over the fireplaces.

The window wall is treated in a different, separate scheme. The space between the two windows at each end of the room is entirely covered by painting, from the dado level to the cornice. Each section has three main pictures, surrounded by subsidiary scenes, including more grisaille painted medallions, although the treatment of these is different from that on the other walls. The lowest part of the two end sections is decorated with the monograms of the respective families of Tom Conolly and Lady Louisa (Lennox) Conolly.

The section between the two centre windows of the wall, which is opposite to the central statue niche between the doors, is also painted with three main pictures and subsidiary scenes, but here the lowest portion is given to a further antique motif.

This leaves four blank sections between the remaining windows, and these were obviously intended to be left unpainted as over each of these sections, very high up and close to the cornice, is a painted roundel in a plasterwork frame, the four designed as a set. Below these were bookcases which were removed in the nineteenth century, when the gas light fixtures were installed.⁴

The ceiling is compartmented in three main sections by stucco work, the rather heavy style of which is similar to that of the main hall ceiling, and which contemporary records show belongs to the same era as that of the hall. Each of the three principal compartments is hung with a large Venetian glass chandelier, imported specially from Venice. They were ordered in colours to go with the rest of the decoration, a plan which did not quite come off, as Lady Louisa records:

“The chandeliers have arrived intact, but they are the wrong blue for the room.”⁵

Lady Louisa focussed her attentions on the decoration of the gallery from an early date after her arrival, for in a letter of May, 1759, to her sister Lady Kildare, she writes:

"We have sent by Lord Kildare the designs for finishing the gallery."⁶

Then in a letter dated July 28th of the same year, she writes:

"In one of your letters you mention that Mr. Conolly had forgot to send over the finishing for the great room. He says they were to send the rest of it afterwards or else Mr. Chambers the Architect had explained it to Mr. Verpaille."⁷

Progress however was not to be immediate, and by 1765 the gallery was still not completed and the Conollys were in financial difficulty after decorating the main hall, having the main staircase built and alterations made to Lady Louisa's bedroom, so that the next references to the room come in letters of the 1770's.

The first is in a letter of Lady Louisa's to her sister Lady Sarah, dated May 26th, 1774, when she writes:

"I am busy as usual but can't enjoy the out of doors work, as I do the Gallery, which is going so well, and I hope will turn out a very comfortable room, tho' not quite in the perfection that I could wish it. The ceiling is heavy, but the excessive sloaness of the Plaisterers work comforts me for not having taken it down, as it must have been ages before we could have lived in the room, and to say the truth I have a great deal of impatience about having things finished for the Irish workmen try ones patience not a little."⁸

The next mention of the room comes in September of the same year, when Lady Louisa wrote to her brother, the Duke of Richmond, owner of Goodwood House in Sussex. He was to send over the painter she always referred to as Mr. Riley or 'little Riley'. For a long time her confused identification of this artist caused erroneous attribution of much of the gallery's decoration, a problem that will be looked at in Chapter Three of this study. The first reference to Mr. Riley is in this letter of September 11th:

"If you can spare Mr. Reilly now, we are quite ready for him as soon as is convenient to you. The Duke of Leinster [Lord Kildare had been made a Duke in 1766] is not ready for him therefore it will only be our own work, which will not keep him long, and whatever agreement you make for us, we shall like. I believe he had better bring any nice colour that he may want with him as I don't know whether they have the choice of all colours here. The Painter and Gilder, I shall not want, as I [am] employing a person here, that I fancy will do it well enough."⁹

The Duke of Richmond, however, was not forthcoming with fulfilling his promise to send the artist, for in a letter of November 2nd, 1774, Lady Louisa laments to her sister Lady Sarah:

"I wish my Brother would send me Mr. Reily for I am impatient to get our room finished; Six weeks or two months are as long as I

should want him. By the by, Madam your drawing has never come but what has been done is in the style you intended it, for I have painted the ceiling in scarlet grey and white and gold and it really looks much better than I expected. If I am not to go to England pray send me Mr. Reily directly je petille d'impatience; I wrote to my Brother some time ago, about him but thinking that we should go to England I suppose made him think no more about it."¹⁰

While Lady Louisa includes no details of what part of the work had been completed at this time, other than the painting of the ceiling, an account survives of Thos. Ryan, Carvers, dated October 8th, 1774.

"To 5 days carving the Book Cases for the Ball Rom at 3/9 per day."¹¹

On January 8th, 1775, Lady Louisa records:

"Our gallery is finished all to Mr. Reily's part. I shall bring him when I return from England. I think it is really very pretty, but the French glasses are very bad and imperfect, however they look handsome up."¹²

By this stage she had obviously tired of relying upon her brother to send the artist over himself. This letter is also of interest concerning the mirrors — 'the French glasses', as there is no evidence to suggest that those now in position on the wall opposite the windows are not original, but they do not seem to merit being termed 'very bad and imperfect'. Indeed, the present century cannot always claim any greater perfection in mirror-glass.

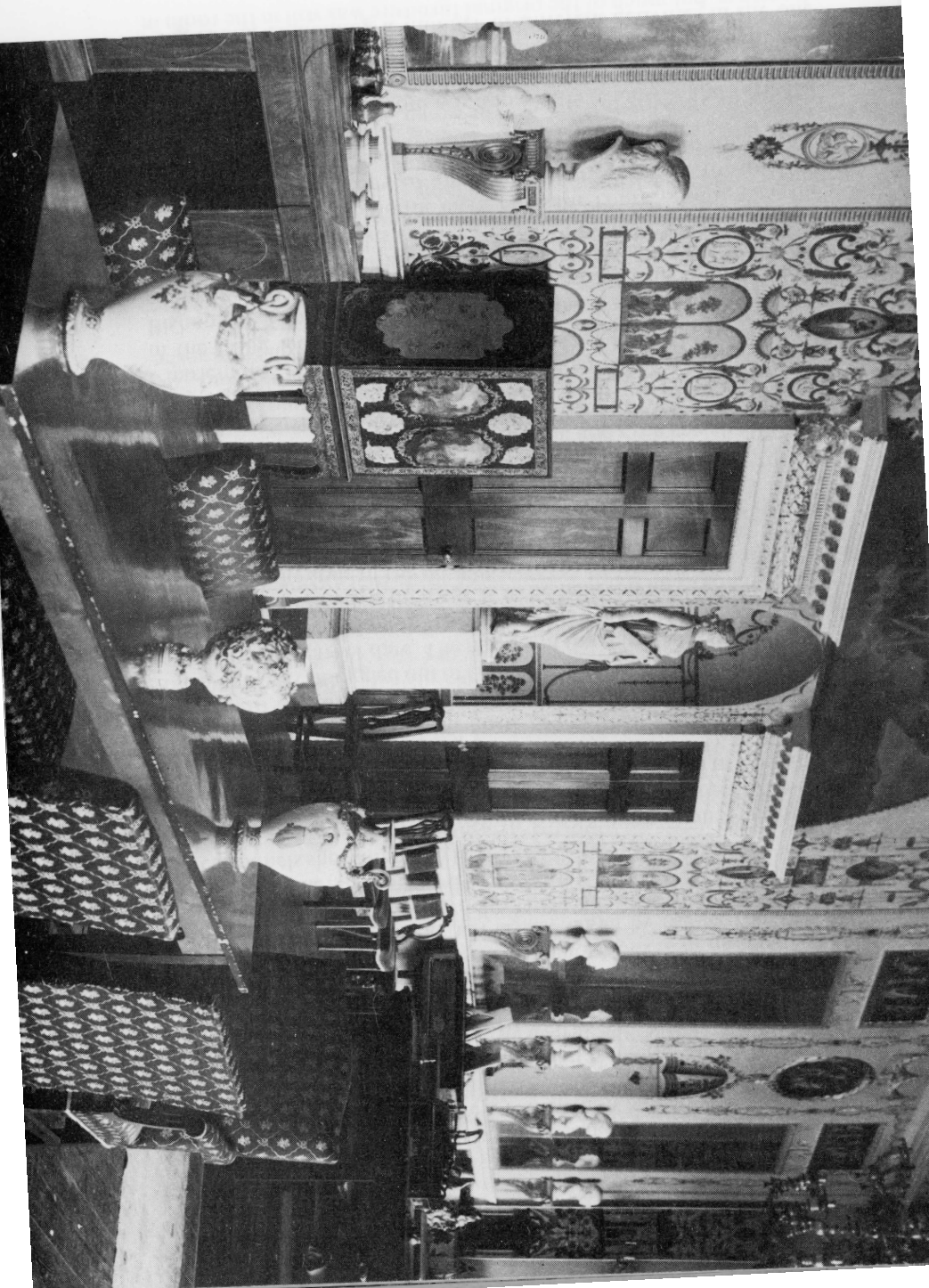
The visit to England proved successful in the matter of securing Mr. Riley, and the following June, Lady Louisa wrote:

"He is now painting our gallery in a most beautiful way. Sarah's taste is putting the ornaments together and mine in picking them out so that we flatter ourselves that it must be charming as Mr. Riley executes them so well."¹³

However, that summer of 1775 did not see Riley's work in the gallery completed, for on August 17th, 1776, Lady Louisa wrote to Lady Sarah:

"Mr. Riely goes on swimmingly in the Gallery but I am doing much more than I intended [;] that pretty grey, white and gold look that I admired in the ends of the room, did look a little naked by the painted compartment when finished and upon asking Mr. Conolly's opinion about it, he *meekly* told me, he had always thought it would be much prettier to have painting, but thought I knew best. Did you ever hear anything so humble? Upon which Mr. Riely has made me some pretty slight sketches that end at heads of the busts, and are an addition but they make the stucco panels look so very bad that they are going to be knocked off, smack smooth, which I know you will approve of."¹⁴

2. The Long Gallery, c. 1960.



It is interesting to note that in this passage Lady Louisa refers to the paint colours as including grey, rather than pale blue, for now some parts of the walls in particular have a decidedly grey tinge, while the entire background is definitely intended to be the same shade. That the colour is referred to as grey as well as pale blue suggests that the shade has not in fact faded unduly, which might otherwise be supposed. It is a great pity that Mr. Riley's sketches have not survived, as they would have thrown enormous light on the division of responsibility for the actual layout taken by the patron and the artist himself. Lady Louisa's record does however show that the busts were an original part of the scheme, although it is not clear where the stucco panels she planned to have removed were situated.

Lady Louisa's final reference to Riley's work is on March 25th, 1777, when she records that he finished three months before and was not working for other people, but he was due to return to England in April. (See Chapter Three).

Seven of the eight portrait busts of classical dignitaries, and the full-length statue of Diana, are still in the gallery. Tradition has it that the Diana was smuggled out of Greece in a coffin, and she does indeed seem of much earlier date. The marble of the statue is of very different texture and condition to the busts, showing signs of weathering (although extremely little if she is to be believed an original antique piece), and the style of the modelling is not of the modern eighteenth century technique. For in the features of the busts, the lips for example are fuller and more realistic; Diana's are in the more stylized, antique manner.¹⁵

From Lady Louisa's writings it is known that the sculptor Simon Vierpyl had connections with Castletown, and even specifically with the gallery. Strickland's entry on Vierpyl¹⁶ says he was a specialist in copying antique sculpture, and that he worked extensively for Lord Charlemont. Trinity College still has three of Vierpyl's portrait busts in the Long Room of the Old Library, including Robert Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, and Claudius Gilbert. The subjects being contemporary makes the approach rather different, but the same porcelain-smooth finish and pure white marble that characterizes the Castletown gallery busts can be observed. Simon Vierpyl may have been commissioned to do the eight busts for Tom Conolly. That the Cicero at least is a copy of an antique seems certain, for another edition of the same bust appears in the Long Room at Trinity, although not by Vierpyl.

The furniture for the room was apparently extensive and varied, a mixture of Irish and imported, and also a great variety of items. Lady Louisa's intention was evidently to create what would now be called a living-room, combining a number of different activities in the one

room. This idea must have been a relatively novel one in the 1770's, for as late as 1816, in his *Fragments on the theory and practice of landscape gardening*,¹⁷ Repton comments:

"The most recent modern custom is to use the library as the general living-room; and that sort of state room formerly called the best parlour, and of later years the drawing-room, is now generally found a melancholy apartment, when entirely shut up and opened to give the visitors a formal cold reception."

Repton also illustrated the fashion with verse:

"No more the Cedar Parlour's formal gloom
With dulness chills, 'tis now the Living room;
Where Guests, to whim, a taste, or fancy true,
Scatter'd in groups, their different plans to pursue."¹⁸

Castletown's long gallery was therefore very avant garde in the multiplicity of its uses, which is well illustrated by surviving letters. Lady Louisa was obviously aware of her room being so up-to-date and refers to its life more than once in her letters.

"In the gallery where we live 'tis the most comfortable room you ever saw, and quite warm; supper at one end, the company at the other, and I am writing in one of the piers at a distance from all . . ." ¹⁹

"Our gallery was in great vogue, and really is a charming room, for there are such variety of occupations in it, that people cannot be formal in it . . . I have seldom seen twenty people in a room so easily disposed of . . ." ²⁰

Tom Conolly, Lady Louisa's husband, wrote to the Earl of Buckinghamshire in January, 1781, saying:

"Our gallery is full, some singing, some playing at chess, others at cards . . ." ²¹

The fullest account of the gallery's life is in a much-quoted passage written by Lady Caroline Dawson, who visited the Conollys in 1778. She was much impressed by the whole estate, and of the house she wrote:

"It is the largest I ever was in, and reckoned the finest in the kingdom. It has been done up entirely by Lady Louisa, and with very good taste; but what struck me most was the gallery, I dare say 150 feet long, furnished in the most delightful manner with fine glasses, books, musical instruments, billiard table — in short, everything that you can think of is in that room, and though so large it is so well fitted that it is the warmest, most comfortable looking place I ever saw; and they tell me they live in it quite in the winter, for the servants can bring in dinners or suppers at one end, without anybody hearing it at the other."²²

Now all the furnishings have been moved out of the room or sold altogether, but much of the original furniture was still in the room in

the 1930's, when *Country Life* published three views of the room, the first and largest especially interesting as it shows practically the entire length of the room. The second shows the Broadwood pianoforte belonging to Lady Louisa and dated 1796. Unfortunately, although there is still a piano in the room, it is of a totally different style to the original. *Country Life* relates that most of the furniture was of the Chippendale and Adam styles, notably two fine veneered Chippendale commodes (one under each of the two smaller wall niches) and a pair of mahogany writing-tables.²³

There is one surviving account for items of furnishing for the gallery, dated 23rd December, 1774, showing that one Richard Wilson was to be paid:

"To 2 very Large fine pinch Beck mounted moving grates 30 inches in the back for the Ball Room — £14-0-0.

To 2 very large fine open work bow'd fenders engraved for Do — £4-0-0.

To 2 sets of Fire Irons with Pinch back flower Pott Heads to match Do Grates — £2-0-0."²⁴

Unfortunately these items have long since disappeared, as have the bookcases mentioned in the accounts entry quoted above (cf. page 13). The Irish Georgian Society Records,²⁵ Volume V, list the gallery as having fenders of steel as early as 1913.

A photograph of 1960 shows much less furniture, and most regrettably the floor by then uncarpeted and without many of the comfortable upholstered chairs, and without curtains. The only items still at Castletown that originally belonged to the gallery are the movable painted canvas panels now in the boudoir and two oval mirrors now in the green drawing room. It is a great pity that the lack of finance and the present use of the room (for concerts, plays, lectures and so forth) do not allow the restoration at least of curtains, carpeting and a few pieces of eighteenth century furniture, as this would bring some life back to what was clearly the most important and magnificent room in the house.

CHAPTER TWO

Iconography and sources for the decoration.

The decoration of the gallery is in the fashionable neo-classical style of the later part of the eighteenth century, the so-called 'Pompeian manner'. It is based on the revival of antique art which was stimulated by the discovery and subsequent excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum. These took place spasmodically throughout the century, but especially from about 1749 onwards, and their influence was incredibly widespread owing to the fashion for the Grand Tour among the gentry of the day, and more especially because of the large number of books produced that were filled with countless engravings of the treasures found. These books were widely circulated, with texts in Latin and all the modern European languages, often the same book translated from one language into another for distribution internationally. The volumes were often produced on a subscriber basis and the length of the lists of subscribers shows the widespread interest that was taken in the excavations. Another form of reproduction popular was the individual print, and prints were widely collected by travellers to bring home in the way that modern traveller would take photographs to show family and friends as souvenirs of a holiday. Some of these prints found their way into Print Rooms which became a fashion in country houses from about 1760-1780. Lady Louisa had one at Castletown which still survives intact. Other prints were bound into volumes, and an important set of coloured prints of Raphael's decoration for the Vatican Loggia in the antique style has been preserved at Castletown since the eighteenth century. It was a major source for the decoration of the gallery.

Volumes of engravings were the standard pattern books for the artists of the day and originality of design apparently counted for little or nothing as they copied slavishly and proudly from the plates. One of the problems now is to know whether patron or artist chose the designs to be copied. Did the patron own the books and choose the designs he wanted, then instruct the artist accordingly, or did the artist supply the designs from books he brought with him? It seems probable that a combination of both may have been the case, in the matter of the Castletown gallery anyway, for while the book of Raphael prints accounts for a sizeable portion of the decoration, the letter quoted above in Chapter One shows that the artist suggested at least some of the motifs himself. Then there is also a letter written by

3. Tom "Squire" Conolly painted in Rome by Anton Rafael Mengs, 1758.





4. Lady Louisa Conolly, after the portrait by Reynolds. The original is at the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University.

Lady Sarah, Lady Louisa's sister, to their sister Lady Emily, concerning the matter of proposed decorations in Lady Emily's house, Frascati, in Dublin. She recommends Lady Louisa's 'little Riley' for the job and says:

"... in spring when you are on the spot, you can infinitely better direct his work and get more done, by choosing things in books ready for him to lose no time; whereas if it's done in yours and Louisa's absence, he must only follow general directions, and you will be a loser by it."

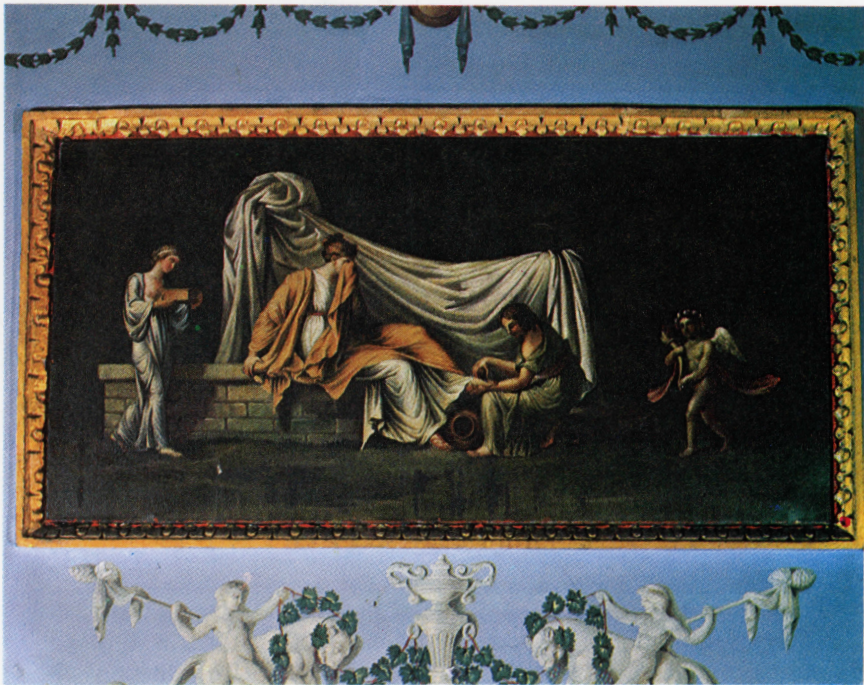
Her letter does not help to solve the problem, particularly as the artist Lady Louisa referred to as 'little Riley' was by profession an engraver as well as painter, and it is therefore to be assumed that he would have known a great number of the engraved volumes of the antiquities.

The idea of decorating the gallery in the Pompeian manner may have come to Tom Conolly as early as 1758, for it was then that he visited Rome and had the portrait of himself that still hangs over the east fireplace in the gallery painted by Anton Rafael Mengs. The excavations would have been well under way at this date, and the first volume of one of the most important publications to arise from the whole new archaeological interest in antiquity, *The Antiquities of Athens* by Stuart and Revett,² was to be published the following year. It was most likely at this time that Tom Conolly brought back the Raphael prints, and it is interesting to note that his portrait has a background of antique figures painted in grisaille, apparently sculptures on an antique marble, beneath a pair of columns, which the handsome young Tom Conolly appears to be indicating to the viewer of the painting.

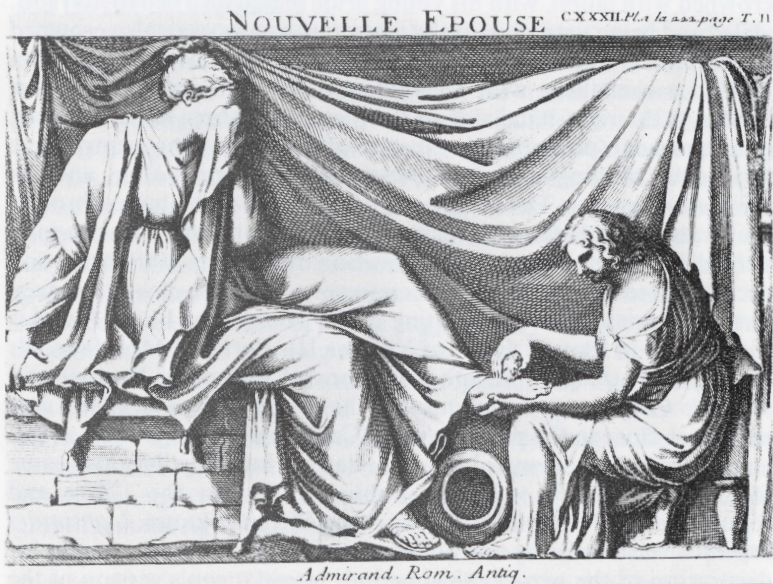
This fine portrait of Tom Conolly may well be the oldest part of the gallery's decoration and have therefore dictated the whole layout of the sections over both fireplaces, the rest of the scheme being organised around the dimensions of the portrait. The portrait of Lady Louisa on the opposite wall was probably commissioned from Sir Joshua Reynolds as a pair to the Mengs of her husband.³

The Aurora Lunette

The largest single painting in the room is the copy of Guido Reni's *Aurora* in the lunette over the doors, which was executed on canvas and subsequently attached to the wall. The immediate difference from the original is in the shape of the frame; the original is a straightforward rectangle, and the Castletown version is a scallop-edged lunette, of which the scalloped edge matches the scalloping of the painting in the niches on the same wall. The grouping of the figures is not as tight as the original as there is more space; the cupid flies higher



5. Frieze panel above the portrait of Tom Conolly. *La nouvelle épouse.*



5a. *La nouvelle épouse*, from Montfaucon's *L'antiquité expliquée*.

in the sky, and is less stoutly built than the original; the Aurora herself stretches her arms a little more with the bunch of flowers, and the drapes of the attendant female to the rear of the chariot flow more loosely behind her. The Castletown artist has extended the cloud, land and seascape all round the figures to fill the area. The result is compositionally most successful, and as the Aurora has been recently cleaned the colours are fresh and pleasing to the eye.

Guido Reni painted the original *Aurora* for the Casino dell'Aurora in the Palazzo Rospigliosi in Rome, 1613-14. The title is rather inaccurate, as the subject shown is in fact Apollo in his sun chariot attended by the dancing Horae, with Aurora before him scattering flowers on the dark Earth below. As an Apollo subject the *Aurora* fits into the scheme of the Castletown gallery very well, as will be seen in this chapter. It was a most popular painting in the neo-classical period and appears in painted form and in stucco in many country houses in England.⁴

The Six Frieze Panels

The most instantly recognisable of these panels depicts a subject which was particularly popular in the eighteenth century, and which features widely in Irish plasterwork of the time.⁵ It was taken from engravings of an antique marble now in the Louvre, the so-called Aldobrandini Marriage. It shows the young bridegroom seated and crowned with laurel, with his young bride seated on a bed to his right, veiled and being prepared for the ceremony by a woman also crowned with laurel. At the left side of the picture a woman leans on a column and does something with an unidentifiable instrument which she holds. At the right-hand side of the picture are three female figures, one crowned (probably the queen of sacrifice), the central one apparently making some sort of sacrifice at a small altar, and the third playing a lyre. The scene is engraved in various volumes through the century, and naturally each representation varies fractionally according to the accuracy of observation on the part of the artist and according to the skill of the engraver. The one closest (indeed virtually identical) to the painting in the gallery that I have found is that shown in Plate CXXIX of Volume III, Part I of Montfaucon's *L'antiquité expliquée*.⁶ In other versions of the scene, Borioni and Venuti's *Collectanea antiquitatum*,⁷ the details such as facial features are not as close to the painting in the Castletown gallery. Also, as this chapter will show, many of the other designs for the gallery also came from Montfaucon's volumes. Published first in the 1720's and republished and extended to no less than fifteen volumes, *L'antiquité expliquée* was obviously one of the most widely used source books for decoration of the neo-classical period. Montfaucon's version of the

Aldobrandini marriage differs only from the Castletown one in that in his engraving the scene has been broken up into framed sections (presumably for convenient placement on the page) and is not therefore shown as a continuous frieze. There is also one extra section which the Castletown master had not sufficient space to include.

The frieze panel set over the portrait of Tom Conolly shows a scene often confused with the Aldobrandini marriage (for example by C.P. Curran⁸). This is perhaps understandable in view of the fact that it appears in the same volume of Montfaucon, as Plate CXXXII, in the following chapter and it is discussed as a continuation of his explanation in the Aldobrandini chapter. He entitles the plate to *La nouvelle épouse*, and explains that it depicts the young bride who is weeping because she is leaving her parents' house for the first time, and her slave is anointing her feet with perfume to console her. Comparison of the Castletown panel with the engraving shows how faithfully the artist has adhered to the model, even to the folds of the drapery. He has had to imagine the final curl of the curtain in the background however as Mountfaucon does not include it, nor the two flanking figures shown in the Castletown frieze. I have not found the precise sources for either of these two figures, and it seems unfair to suggest that the artist would not have been capable of designing his own attendant figures to fill the space. Presumably he chose to include extra figures instead of altering the scale of the main figures to suit the size of the panel.

The panel above Lady Louisa's portrait also pertains to the marriage theme. The scene is shown in Montfaucon's Supplement Volume III, Plate LXIV, to supplement the scenes discussed above. Here the young bride is shown after the birth of her first child, and the child is being laid in a crib that is in the shape of a boat, while the two women on the left consult a globe set on a pedestal. Montfaucon's accompanying text is rather amusing, as he comments that the sculptor (the scene is taken from a Roman marble) has used artist's licence, for the supposedly newborn baby is shown already big and fat and well formed! The two women with the globe is a feature he has never come across before, but he suggests they represent the ancient Roman custom of marking down the exact time of birth so that a horoscope of the child's life may be prepared. The Castletown artist has omitted the background shown in the engraving to preserve uniformity with the other panels, and he has not had sufficient space to include the repetition of the bride and groom figures shown on the left of the engraving scene. In the engraving the two women with the globe form the right-hand motif.

Also from Montfaucon comes the frieze panel above the mirror nearest the Louisa Conolly portrait wall (i.e. the westmost mirror).

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5a

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This scene is the only one of the panels with no story behind it; possibly it was chosen last of all just to make up the set of six, taken because the figures depicted were of a similar style and attired in similar drapery to those in the other panels. Also, as the scene shows seven female figures, the artist (or patron, if Lady Louisa chose the design) may have thought they would blend well with the remaining two panels to be discussed which feature the daughters of Atlas, of whom there were seven. Montfaucon simply says the women are spinning and preparing cloth, and he does not explain their individual actions. The Castletown artist has spaced out the figures more than the engraver, except for the central three holding out the piece of cloth which he has left as a closely grouped unit. The only variation appears in the figure kneeling in the foreground of the central group, who in the engraving holds a pen and in the Castletown panel seems to hold dividers. However, since none of the panels has ever been cleaned and they are rather dark it is also possible that the second line was originally intended merely as a shadow.

The remaining two panels, although not placed together, form a pair, and both come from another book of engravings, Hancarville's *Antiquités*.⁹ This publication illustrated Sir William Hamilton's first collection of Greek vases which was sold to the British Museum in 1768. It was renowned for the fine quality of the engravings rather than for the text which is confused and tends to be inaccurate; it serves as source for no other part of the gallery's decoration. Both of these frieze panels show the daughters of Atlas who were stolen away by pirates of the king of Egypt because of their beauty and wisdom. They were rescued by Hercules returning from his voyage with Jason and the Argonauts, and were brought home. Hancarville's Volume II includes a series of engravings from one vase (which he claims as the most beautiful he has ever seen), and the two plates that are reproduced in the gallery are from this vase. The panel over the mirror nearest to the Tom Conolly portrait wall (i.e. the eastmost 6 which winds itself around a palm in the centre of the picture. The daughters of Atlas (not all of whom are shown) have been rescued and brought safely home by Hercules and present him with the garden's golden apples. Hercules is seated on his lion pelt at the right-hand side of the picture. He is attended by two men from the ship, and Hancarville suggests (quite reasonably) that the one on the right, who is more elaborately clad than the other, may be Jason himself, given pride of place next to Hercules as he is captain of the ship. This panel appears as Plate XX. The second, to the right of the doors in the gallery, appears as Plate XXIII, and the figures reappear in different order in Plate XXVI (Plate XXIII shows the figures in the same order 7



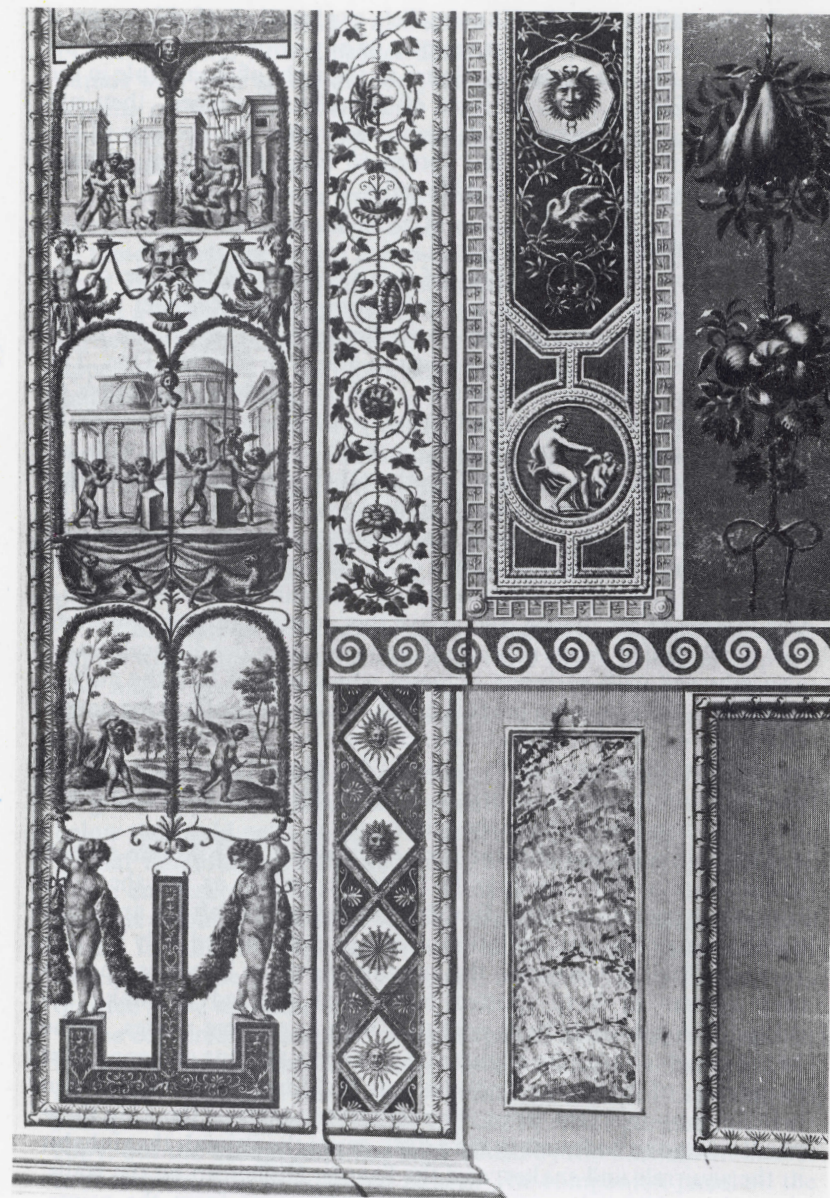
6. The daughters of Atlas in the garden of the Hesperides, from d'Hancarville's *Antiquités Etrusques, Grecques, et Romaines*. Frieze panel over mirror beside the portrait of Tom Conolly.



7. The daughters of Atlas recounting their adventures on their return home. Frieze panel over mirror to the right of the doors.



20 8. Wall painting to the right of the doors.



8a. The source for No. 8, taken from a book of engraving still at Castletown of Raphael's designs for the Loggia of the Vatican.

as in the gallery panel). Hancarville's explanation of this scene is confused, and there does not seem to be any evidence to support his theory that the fleeing female figure to the right of the marble in the centre is Electra. The actions of the figures suggest they are recounting some drama, so it seems likely that the scene is of the daughters of Atlas after their return to him, telling him of their adventures with the pirates and Hercules.

The South Wall

The wide unframed sections of decoration on either side of the doors find their sources in a combination of the Raphael Loggia prints and engravings publications. Between the doors the niche contains the statue of Diana discussed above in Chapter One. The depiction is of Diana the huntress, and the goddess's attributes of bow and arrow and quiver, and the lyre and cithara, feature widely in the room's decoration along with the mythology connected with her twin brother, the god Apollo. Together, their representations form a continuous theme through much of the decoration.

The niche behind the Diana statue is decorated more simply and sparingly than two smaller niches of the same wall. Just beneath the level of the foot of the statue is shown a simplified colonnade with a tree in each of the arches, and above this, pencil slim columns hung with finely leafed swags support an appropriately slender architrave, also adorned with garlands, some of which extend into the curved roof of the niche to give a pergola effect. In each of the flanking panels of the niche, one against each door case, are two grisaille painted oval medallions showing female figures. All these figures are copied exactly from the Raphael prints, and the design of the medallions' settings is also derived from the prints.

The main paintings on either side of the doors, with double-arched frames, are also taken directly from the prints, as are the lions beneath those on the right. For the lion base to the left the artist has had to design his own variation as the prints supplied only the one version. Obviously he took the animals shown as lionesses, though they appear to have spotted hides, and decided to make the companion pair male lions complete with handsome manes. In the larger panels above, the cupids and putti play various games against backdrops of landscape and classical buildings, the whole design being a copy from the print. The elaborate acanthus flanking these panels is also to be found in the prints, as are the animals that inhabit it, the squirrels and snakes, and the lizards. Higher up on the walls, the coloured circular panels also to have come from the prints, although while the Apollo with the lyre is an exact copy, the female figure (intended as Diana?) is not. The swans that hold the ribbon

ornament in their beaks are also taken from the print schemes. Much of the fruit and flower basket decoration, as well as the putti and cupids who hold up the drapery, is also derived from the prints. The scheme on this part of the wall is not however, entirely borrowed from the prints; instead a number of the pieces appear in Montfaucon's volumes.

The four rectangular grisaille panels (two on either side of the doors) depict the other theme of the room, that of the cult of Bacchus. In these panels are shown the so-called Bacchanals and all are taken from Plate LXXXVIII of Montfaucon's Volume-II, Part I. This shows a series of five panels depicting processions of sacrificial rites carried out by followers of the cult in homage to Bacchus. The four uppermost panels of the engraving have been used here by the artist, and are copied exactly.

To the left of the doors two shield shaped, or pelta panels, show cupids driving or riding dolphins. The pelta on the left has a cupid driving a chariot, vaguely the shape of a scallop shell, drawn by two dolphins, the figures all taken exactly from Montfaucon's Volume I Part I, Plate CXVII medallion No. 2. The other pelta, with a cupid riding this time astride a dolphin, is from medallion No. 6 of the same plate.

The companion pelta panels on the other side of the door also have cupids with animals, here astride a lion and with a team made up of a lion and a goat. I have found no precise sources for these but Montfaucon does indicate that a cupid with a goat was a Bacchus theme.

One beautifully painted detail of this part of the wall is the quartet of grasshoppers featured unexpectedly in the acanthus leaf motif below the cupid pelta panels. The prints supply sources for all of the animal inhabitants of the acanthus; from here come the squirrel, snake and lizard motifs in the sections below. The acanthus of the prints is coloured with more variety, in subtle floral shades as well as green. It must be assumed the full palette would have been too expensive to use on a large scale, and so the variety of colours was omitted in the wall-painting.

The coloured rectangular panel to the left of the doors appears in the publication, *Le antichità di Ercolano*,¹⁰ brought out between 1757 and 1765. The panel shows the well-known subject of Leda and the swan, and is taken from Volume IV, Plate IV. The figures are an exact copy; but the background has been added by the Castletown master to match the nearby coloured panels. The companion panel on the other side of the doors does not appear in the publication, but it seems to depict Ariadne watching Theseus disappear across the sea in his ship.

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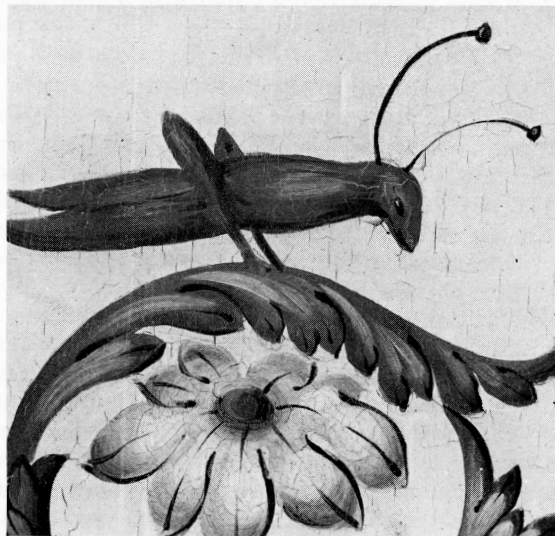
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9. Grisaille cupid driving his sea chariot; left of the doors. Taken from an engraving by Montfaucon.



10. One of a quartet of grasshoppers to either side of the doors, amid the acanthus foliage, taken from the Raphael volume.

On the same wall, in the painted arabesque strips that flank the mirrors, the upper circular medallions show portrait heads of philosophers, poets and other distinguished personages in grisaille, each inscribed with the sitter's name. Those on the left of the doors, from the east, are M.P. Cato (two men of that name appeared in Plutarch's *Lives*,¹¹ a grandfather and grandson, both politicians), Hypocrates (the famous Greek physician), Socrates and Zeno. These portraits are balanced below by the portrait busts, again of famous personages, that stand on gilded wall-brackets at dado level. From the east these are L. Verus, Hesiod, (the Greek poet), Homer and Plato.

To the right of the doors the medallions continue with portraits of Pindar, Hesiod, Philemon, and Cracchus, with below the busts of Cicero, Niobe, Sappho and I. Caesar. While I have found no definite sources for the portrait heads in the grisaille medallions there were many examples of these in all the publications of engravings. The artist may even have painted contemporary faces in the antique style to go with the titles.

Some of the arabesque ornament between the portrait medallions and the busts is derived from Montfaucon, and the rest must presumably have been borrowed from other publications of engravings in circulation at that time.

In Montfaucon's Supplement Volume III, Plate LXX, appears the medallion of the boy driving a lion that is on the right-hand side of the westmost mirror. As the engraving shows, the gallery version has an entertaining variation on its source, as the artist has decided to improve on the engraver and give his lion an undeniably human face. Surely the artist has given the lion the features of a man he knew? He repeats this trick in several of the other medallions, so that to the left of the eastmost mirror the main lioncat that the huntress figure is herding also has very expressive human features, as has the bull in the medallion of Europa and the bull to the right of the next mirror. It seems almost as if the artist was bored copying the monotonous medallions and decided to liven them up a little, and the viewer cannot help but wonder what Lady Louisa's reaction was — surely she must have noticed the handsome moustaches and goatees even if the artist was working from engravings not in her possession.

Of the other medallions on this wall, the cupid holding the lion's paw, to the right of the eastmost mirror, appears in Montfaucon's Volume I, Part I, Plate CXV, and is an illustration of one of the games of Cupid. The medallion of the boy feeding the eagle, to the left of the westmost mirror, appears in Montfaucon's Volume I, Part I, Plate XIX. The accompanying text explains that the eagle is Jupiter in disguise being fed by the youth Ganymede whom he is about to

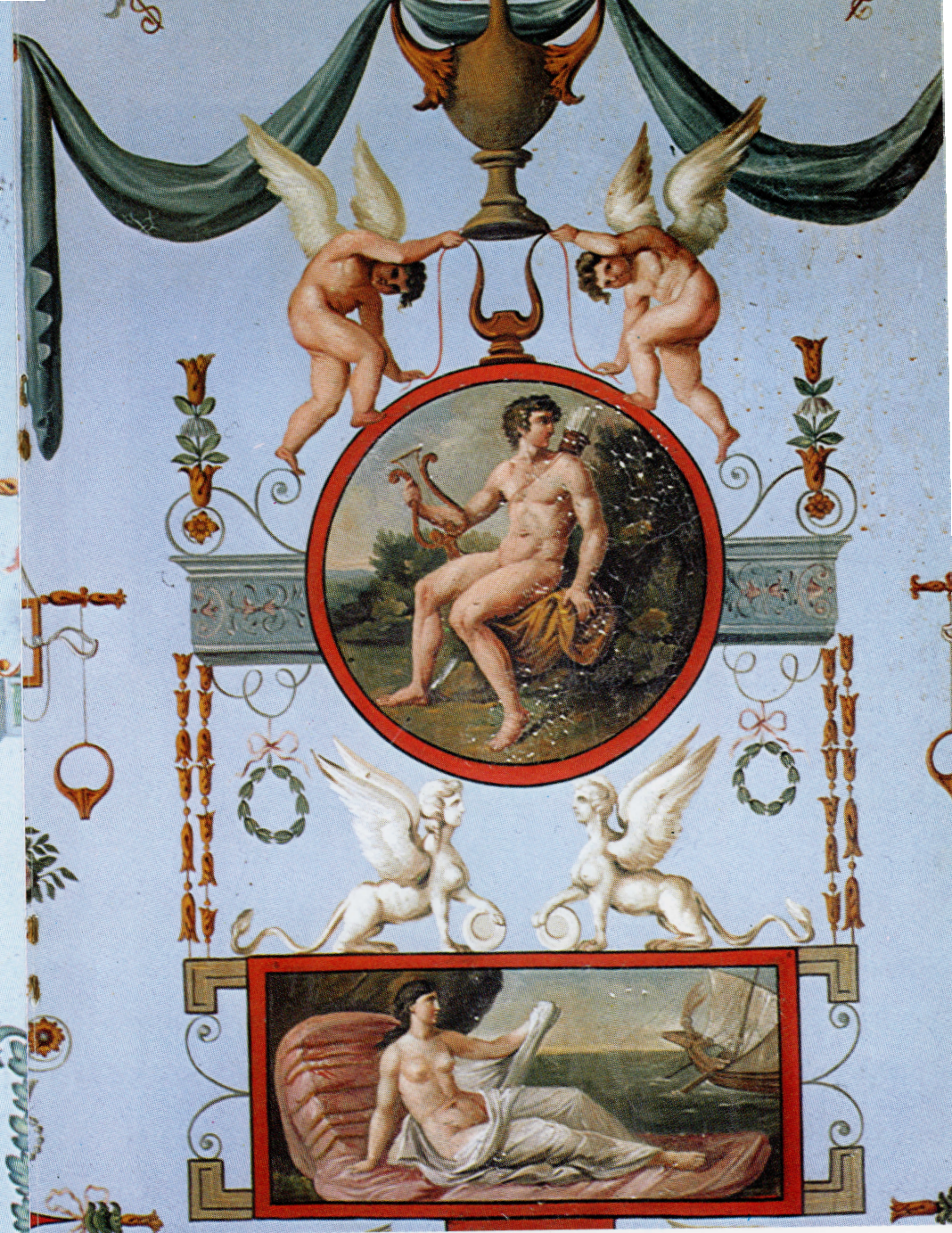
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11. Leda and the swan, attributed to Thomas Ryder, taken from *Le antichità di Ercolano*. Left of the doors.



12. Ariadne watching Theseus disappear across the sea in his ship, attributed to Thomas Ryder. Right of the doors.



13. Grisaille of boy driving a lion, west end of south wall.



13a The source for No. 13, taken from an engraving by Montfaucon.



14. Grisaille of Europa and the bull. The bull appears to have a human face.

carry off into the heavens.

Also in Montfaucon appears the long grisaille medallion to the right of the mirror immediately east of the doors. This figure appears in Montfaucon's Volume I, Part II, Plate CXXXIX, although it is in reverse of the one in the gallery. Montfaucon explains that the figure is either Iole, daughter of Jardan, king of Lydia, or Omphale, daughter of King Ecchritus, both of whom were dedicated to the cult of Hercules and carry the club and pelt which are Hercules' attributes and symbols of strength and courage. He cannot distinguish between the two women.

The two smaller niches, between the pairs of mirrors flanking the doors, are decorated in an especially Pompeian style, reminiscent of the mosaic fountain niches in the gardens of the Casa della Fortuna Grande and the Casa di M. Lucrezio Frontone in Pompeii. The scalloping of the roof of the niche in the latter is particularly like the Castletown niches. The thin-columned trompe-l'oeil architecture of the niches is clearly an imitation of the third style Pompeii wall painting, while the designs for many of the details — for example, the butterflies in the dark roundels above the red and white border, and the miniature figures supporting the stems of ornament — are derived from the Raphael prints.

The oval paintings painted in situ above the two niches remain one of the mysteries of the gallery. Their style does not fit in with the rest of the decoration; their source remains elusive, and their subject matter determinable only in conjecture. The panel to the east of the doors almost asks to be identified as a Christian scene with the curious halo-like crown of light, but obviously must be classical in context with the rest of the room. The honoured youth must be a home-coming hero, with his cloak and weapon on the ground behind him; the women in the background tend the horses of his chariot. The panel over the west niche shows four women discovering the body of a fifth who appears to be dead; the only clue seems to be the river in the landscape in the background, but the scene does not fit readily into any of the popular myths.

The End Walls

High on each of the fireplace walls of the room, is a pair of plaster-framed roundels, probably done on paper and pasted on to the wall. These seem to have darkened considerably, but definite sources for all four appear in *The antiquities of Herculaneum* and in *Le antichità di Ercolano esposte*. The roundels are from Volume I of both publications. The one to the left of Tom Conolly's portrait is from Plate XXII in both editions. The figure carries a tray of figs in one hand and a jug in the other. She wears sandals on her feet and a

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15. Niche with statue to the left of the doors (detail). The painting in the niches is attributed to Charles Reuben Riley.

bracelet on her right arm, and long narrow leaves from a crown on her head. The text fails to explain these but suggests they may indicate the figure is connected with the cult of Bacchus. This would suit the scheme well as the theme of Bacchus is dominant on the fireplace walls. Even the sphinx ornaments over the portraits feature bunches of grapes and vine-leaves. The text also notes that the figure was clad in purple, but obviously the Castletown master realised that purple would not go well with the colour scheme of the room.¹²

The roundel to the right of Tom Conolly's portrait forms a pair with the one discussed above, and it appears in Plate XXIII of both editions. Here the figure carries an empty dish and a basket, wears slippers and a crown of corn ears. This last could again indicate a connection with the cults of Bacchus and Ceres. The text says the original showed a green veil.

To the left of Lady Louisa's portrait the roundel shows a dancing figure clad mainly in yellow fluttering drapery which appears in Plate XVIII of both editions. This figure, the text says, is possibly a Venus figure, but more probably just a danseuse, although the tradition of Venus and dancing do go together. She wears a golden bracelet and a necklace of a wreath of pearls, and her hair is bound with white ribbons. In the original she is dressed in a yellow garment trimmed with blue.

The roundel to the right of Lady Louisa's portrait is the companion to the one on the left and appears in Plate XIX of both editions. She is dressed in very thin yellow garments and carries a silver dish. The figure in the original painting had a sky-blue ribbon binding her forehead.

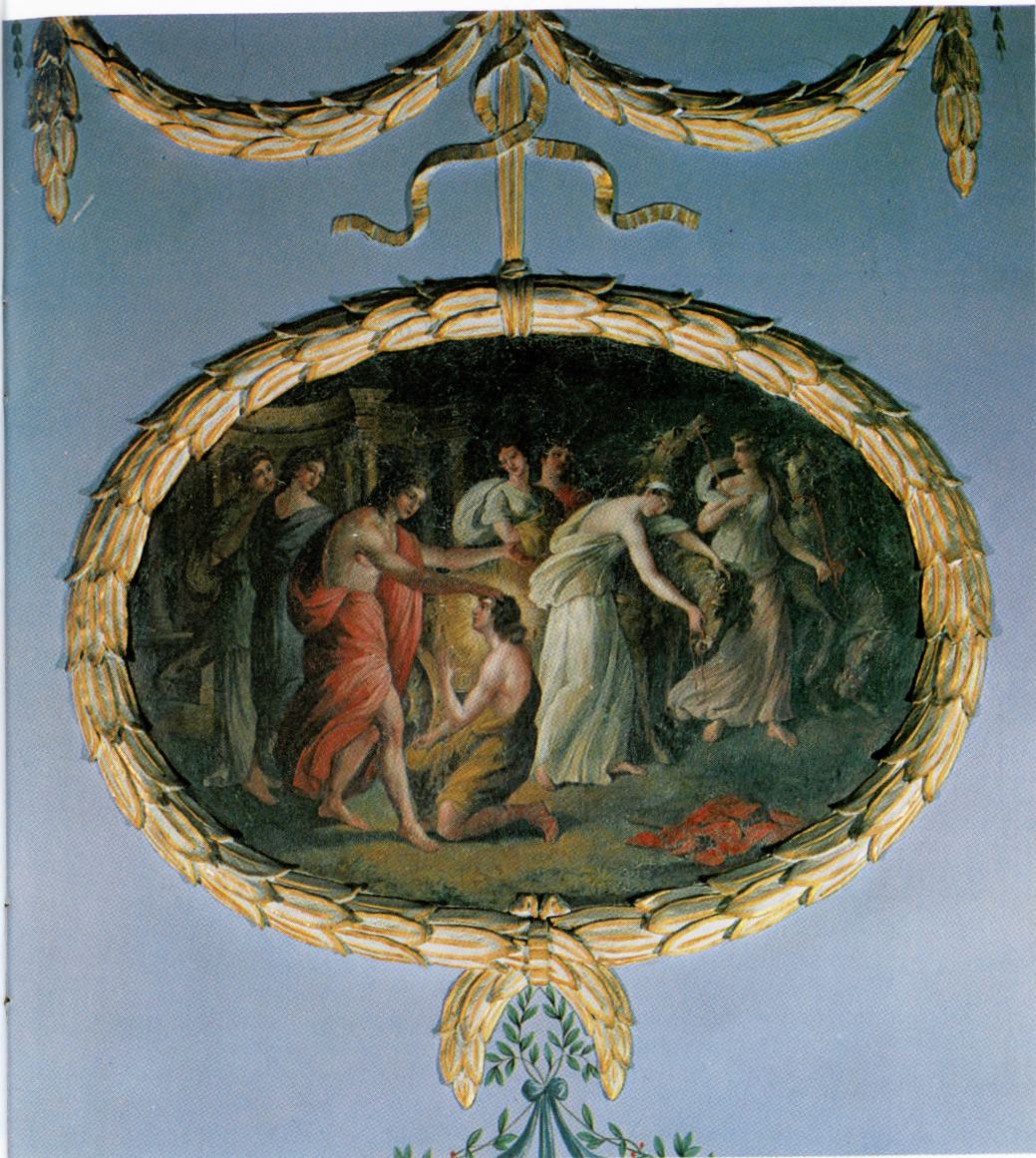
Two of the grisaille medallions flanking Tom Conolly's portrait appear in Montfaucon, the lower circular medallion on either side of the portrait. The one on the left is from Volume I, Part I, Plate CXV, medallion No. 5, and shows Cupid and Bacchus as boys. It is part of Montfaucon's chapter on the games of Cupid. The medallion on the right is from Volume IV, Part I, Plate XCVII. It shows a man planting a laurel plant, an action Montfaucon is at a loss to explain. Perhaps it could be a laurel of peace, planted as a victory symbol?

The two portrait medallions in grisaille above show Corinna to the left and Virgil to the right.

Also in Montfaucon appears the medallion to the lower right of Lady Louisa's portrait which depicts a man sacrificing wine to an altar of Bacchus. It is from Montfaucon's Volume II, Part I, Plate XC, and shows a peasant pouring wine from a skin sack, but the artist has omitted the statue of Bacchus shown in the engraving crowning the altar.

The two portrait medallions in grisaille above show Aristophanes

17



16. Oval painting to the left of the doors. Both the subject matter and the artist remain a mystery; help towards identification would be welcomed.

to the left and Sophocles to the right.

The sphinx motifs on the two fireplace walls match, as do the ones over the four mirrors on the long south wall. However, all the figures vary fractionally, showing that the artist did paint them freehand on to the wall and did not use transfers of any kind.

The spaces left by the bookcases removed from either side of the fireplaces in the nineteenth century, when gas-light was installed, were filled by the canvas pilaster panels. The painting is very crude indeed beside the rest of the decoration in the room, and of totally different colouring; the canvas dates the panels as definitely belonging to the nineteenth century. The artist was obviously given the Raphael prints and told to work from them as for much of the work the designs are copied in large portions directly from the prints.

The North Wall

The principal decoration on the window wall comes in three cornice to dado-level sections, between the two windows at either end of the wall, and between the two central ones. The underlying theme of the overall scheme of the wall's decoration is the cult of Apollo, popular in neo-classical decoration, and it is of interest here to note some of the principal traditions surrounding this god.

Apollo, son of Leto, the goddess of night, was god of light, although not of the sun (Helios), and as god of light he protected the fruits of the Earth and caused the first crop (this combines well with the decoration in the room pertaining to Bacchus and Ceres). He was also renowned as an archer, and, most important for the north wall, was god of music and the lyre. His attributes are the box, the quiver, the shepherd's crook and the lyre. The animals sacred to him include the swan, the vulture, the crow, the cock, the hawk, the cicada (cf. the insect perched on the acanthus by the doors opposite?) the wolf and the serpent. Of these, the swan and the serpent are certainly much in evidence in the gallery. The plants sacred to Apollo include the olive, the palm, the laurel and the tamerisk.

Apollo features on the north wall in his capacity as Apollo Musagetes, god of music, and in each of the three sections appear three of his nine muses in rectangular paintings, all with their respective attributes and clearly labelled.

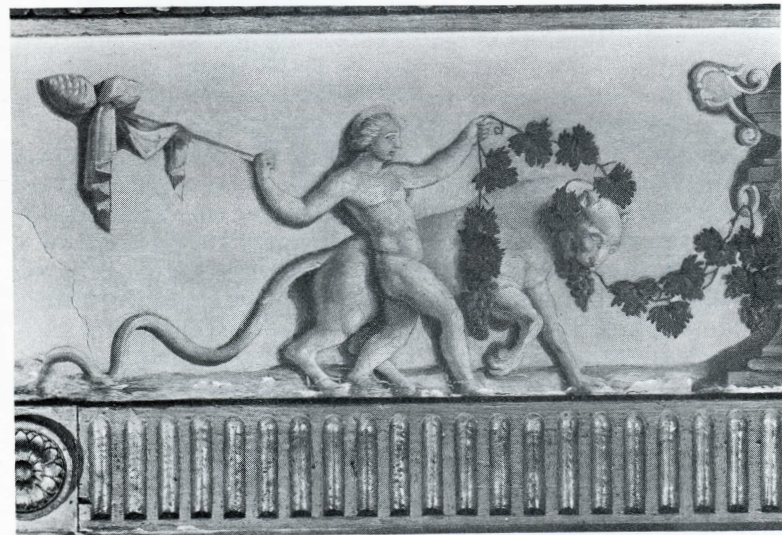
From the west end of the wall, the first section features from the top Thalia, Melpomene and Calliope. Thalia was the muse of Comedy, and her attributes are the shepherd's staff and the comic mask. Here she is seen holding up the comic mask. Melpomene was muse of tragedy, and her attributes are the tragic mask and the club of Hercules. Both attributes are shown here. Calliope was the leader of the muses, muse of epic poetry and of eloquence, and her attributes

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17. Danseuse roundel to the right of Lady Louisa's portrait. One of a set of four taken from *The antiquities of Herculaneum, or Le Antichità di Ercolano esposte*. The danseuse figures, along with most of the decoration on the end walls, are connected with the cult of Bacchus.

19



18. Grisaille of a man leading a sphynx-like lion, adorned with grapes and vine leaves, above the portrait of Lady Louisa Conolly.

are the tablets and stylus. Here however, she appears with the lyre of Apollo.

In the next section from the top feature Terpsichore, Erato and Euterpe. Terpsichore was muse of lyric poetry and of dance; her attribute was the cithara. The instrument she is seen with here, however, again appears to be a lyre. Erato was muse of love poetry, and here she is in pensive mood, attended by Cupid. Euterpe was muse of flute-playing, and her attribute was the flute. The instruments here can perhaps pass as two flutes, although they have trumpet-like ends.

In the eastmost section are Urania, Polyhymnia, and Clio. Urania was muse of astronomy, and she is shown with both her attributes, the celestial globe and the compass. Polyhymnia was muse of heroic hymns, and later of mimic art. She is usually distinguished by her representation in a pose of meditation with her finger in her mouth. Here she appears to be considering one of her hymns, and has her finger lifted towards her mouth. Clio was muse of history, with as attributes the heroic trumpet and the clepsydra. Neither of these is shown here and she seems to be reading her history from a scroll she has taken from a container beside her.

The source for the designs of these muses remains a mystery but it seems likely they are copied from engravings of antique treasures rather than from paintings, and that the Castletown master has himself filled in the landscape backgrounds. That there are specific engraving sources for all of the figures is proved by the fact that they are also to be found, on a plain background, in the decoration of another house. Together with some of the same danseuses figures that feature in the gallery, they appear in paper paternae painted by Cipriani for Robert Adam on the drawing-room ceiling of Syon House. This decoration was carried out about 1761-63.

Flanking Calliope and Clio are two pairs of coloured paintings showing Roman scenes. The curiosity of these is that the pair flanking Calliope are the only decorations of the window panels not done in situ but on paper to be pasted up afterwards. The scenes show a woman apparently being honoured in some way by her companions, but there is no clue as to the specific subject. The scenes in the other pair appear to be Roman games of some kind, on the left showing a chariot race and on the right a procession, perhaps of victory.

The surrounding decoration of the muse paintings is a mass of intricate detail, and whoever thought out the scheme knew his iconography for the attending scenes in many cases are related to the central muse panel. Of all parts of the decoration in the room, the upper parts of the three wall sections have kept their colour best, and they show how fresh and bright (but definitely not gaudy) the



19. Decoration between the windows beside the portrait of Lady Louisa, dominated by Thalia, muse of Comedy, possibly derived from a figure on the drawing room ceiling of Syon House painted by Cipriani.

decoration of the room must have looked when it was first finished in the 1770's. On the upper part of each of the end sections a pair of serpents look up towards a pair of vultures holding a laurel frond in their beaks and supporting a drape which passes over a celestial globe motif. On either side of Thalia, muse of Comedy, are various scenes pertaining to comedy, and beneath, two strange little horned figures. One has a tail and is perhaps a faun; the other has wings and a lyre and is conceivably Pan. In some versions of Apollo's most famous musical contest it was Pan who challenged his skill with the lyre. Some of the comedy panels appear in the engravings publications, notably the grisaille panel on the left of the putti playing with a mask which appears as Plate XXXIV in Volume II of *The antiquities of Herculaneum*, and the two inner coloured masks looking towards each other which appear in Plate XXXVIII of Volume IV of *Le antichità di Ercolano*. The left one of this pair must surely be the most famous mask from Pompeian decoration. The putti panel differs from the engraving in that clouds replace the architectural background and in the engraving the figures are winged and therefore cupids.

On the upper part of the section at the far end of the wall, the same serpents and vultures appear again, but Urania is surrounded by subjects suited to her function as muse of Astronomy. For in this section is featured a fine set of the signs of the zodiac. Above the muse painting Sagittarius and Capricorn flank the globe on its stand; to the upper left Aquarius the water-carrier pours water for Pisces; to the upper right are Scorpio and the scales of Libra. The other signs appear below; to the lower left Aries the ram and Taurus the bull; below the muse painting in the centre a strange rendition of Cancer the crab, and Gemini the twins. To the lower right appear Leo and Virgo.

In the grisaille panels on either side of Urania appear charioteers. The panel to the right is taken from Montfaucon's Volume II, Part II, Plate CV, which shows illustrations of the East and West. This chariot with the strange horses and the cloaked female charioteer is part of the West scene, although the Castletown master has omitted the cupid above the chariot holding the reins and a further figure below. The scene for the East has not been used. The charioteer in the left-hand panel is male and wears a crown, and Roger Wilson has suggested that the scene could depict Apollo in his sun chariot. Both scenes are full of lively movement.

The upper part of the central section differs in the basic motifs from the other two sections. Here, grisaille portrait heads appear again, but on this wall there is no indication of their identity, and they are simply two more of the many small grisaille portrait heads that are

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20. Grotesque masks of Comedy flank Thalia (No. 19). They are derived from a set of wall paintings still intact at Herculaneum which were much copied in the eighteenth century. Four of these are to be found in *Le antichità di Ercolano*.

scattered widely over all the walls and that are tantalisingly unidentifiable (if indeed they do depict specific individuals). This section is dominated by musical subjects, and at the top, above the Terpsichore painting, a pair of harpies support a golden lyre on a stand. On either side a pair of peacocks sit among foliage and drapes, and below these a pair of cupids (partly obscured by the gilded pelmets) play lyres on either side of the muse painting. In semi-circular grisaille panels below, two youths play lyres, and just above these appear small coloured tambourines suspended on ribbons. Beneath the muse painting, butterfly motifs appear in square and circular frames, and these recall the ones featured in the two smaller niches on the opposite wall, which are traceable to the Raphael prints, as is the acanthus beneath.

From the lower portions of this central section the six figures playing slender trumpet-like instruments are also traceable to the Raphael prints, and the two grisaille panels of cupids with musical instruments find their sources in *The antiquities of Herculaneum*. In the panel to the left the two left-hand cupids appear in Plate XXXII. The gallery panel is not an exact copy however, the leftmost figure has no cloak in the engraving and the cithara is not quite so large in proportion to the figures. The cupid on the right of this panel, playing the lyre, does not appear in the publication. The cupid on the right in the panel on the right of the muse painting comes from Plate XXX of the same publication, and is an exact copy; the other cupids do not appear.

In the lowest part of this wall-section the central portion is the most interesting. It shows two pairs of colourful griffins with chariots, while below the coloured section a pair of grisaille, clawfooted furies bow their heads and wings towards each other. The chariots contain, on the left, the bow of Diana, a strange-looking spear, and the laurel crown which was a musical prize of Apollo's. The other chariot contains the quiver of Diana and Apollo's lyre, and it bears a strange sail-like attachment. The design seems to have been taken from Volume II of *Le antichità di Ercolano*, and appears on several different pages; page 177 and page 313 shows the griffins from the right-hand side of the gallery scene but the chariot from the left, and a variation of the scene appears in Plate LIX of the same volume. While the gallery painting is not an exact copy of these engravings, I have found nothing similar anywhere else and the parallels are sufficiently close to indicate a derivation, especially as the publication has been used elsewhere in the decoration.

On either side of the griffin scene, grisaille figures on black background form further musical motifs, and this grisaille-on-black technique matches the lower portions of the two end sections of the



21. Flanking Urania, muse of Astronomy, are the signs of the zodiac. Top: Aquarius pours water for Pisces. Centre: Aries and Taurus. Bottom: Leo and Virgo.

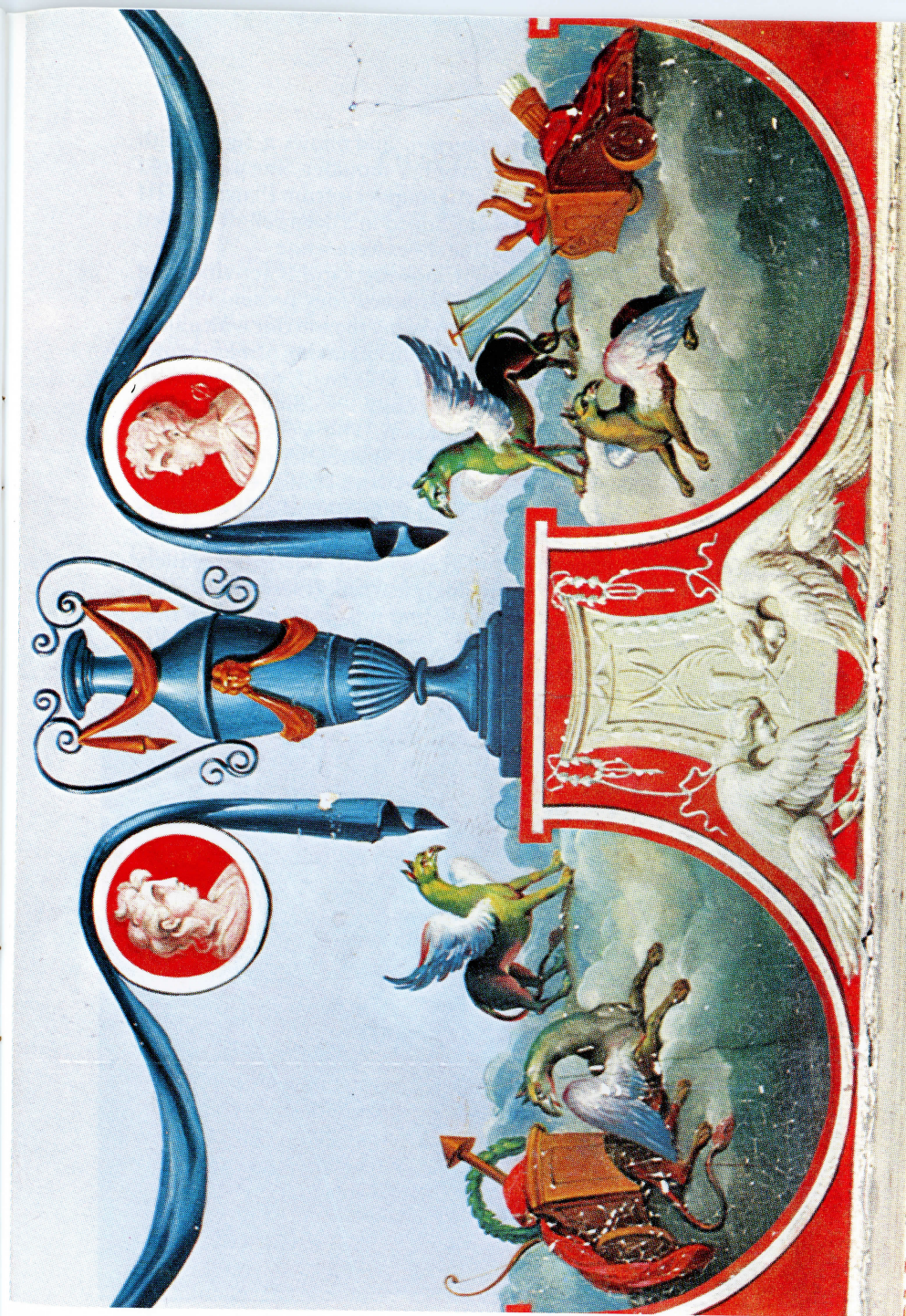
wall, which feature the monograms of the Conolly and Lennox families. Those on the westmost panel are nearest to the portrait of Lady Louisa and show the monograms of the Lennox family, and those at the east end of the wall, nearest to Tom Conolly's portrait, show the monograms of the Conolly family.

In the west section, at the centre is Lady Louisa's own monogram of her full name Louisa Augusta Conolly. Above, to either side, appear the monograms of her parents, Charles Lennox, 2nd Duke of Richmond, and Lady Sarah daughter of the 1st Earl of Cadogan. Below, in each of the black backgrounded panels are the monograms of three of Lady Louisa's six brothers and sisters. She was the fifth-born of the seven children. On the left are Emily, Duchess of Leinster; Caroline, Lady Holland, and Lady Louisa's eldest brother, Charles George who was the 3rd Duke of Richmond and owner of Goodwood House. On the right are Lady Louisa's closest sister, Lady Sarah, her second brother, George Henry Lennox, and the youngest of the family, Cecilia Margaret Lennox who died unmarried in 1769, aged twenty.

Tom Conolly's monogram appears at the centre of the section at the east end of the room, with his parents, William Conolly and Lady Anne, daughter of the 3rd Earl of Strafford, on either side. In the black backgrounded sections are the monograms of his six sisters. On the left are Anne, who married George Byng, M.P. for Middlesex, Katherine, whose husband Ralph Gore was created Earl of Ross, and Harriet, wife of John Staples, M.P. whose daughter Louisa Pakenham's son Edward inherited Castletown and changed his name to Conolly. On the right are Caroline, wife of the Viceroy the second Earl of Buckinghamshire, Frances (Fanny) wife of the fifth Viscount Howe and Jane, who married George Robert "fighting" Fitzgerald.

High up near cornice level, the four blank wall sections have plaster-framed roundels of danseuse figures. These are the most darkened part of the decoration in the room, and are very hard to see clearly. All four figures are related and form a set, and are copied directly from a series of plates in *Le antichità di Ercolano* and *The antiquities of Herculaneum*. The westmost roundel is taken from Plate XXX of *Le antichità di Ercolano*; the figure is enveloped in a transparent yellow hooded cloak, carries a gold box, and wears red ribbons on her shoes. In the original painting she was dressed in an aquamarine cloak. Moving east, the next roundel is from Plate XX, of *The antiquities of Herculaneum*, and this figure is the liveliest of the four, having a tambourine over her head and a mass of swirling drapery in white with a red border. She also has bracelets on her arms, a necklace and sandals on her feet. The engraving of this figure is particularly delicate and beautiful. The third roundel is from Plate

23



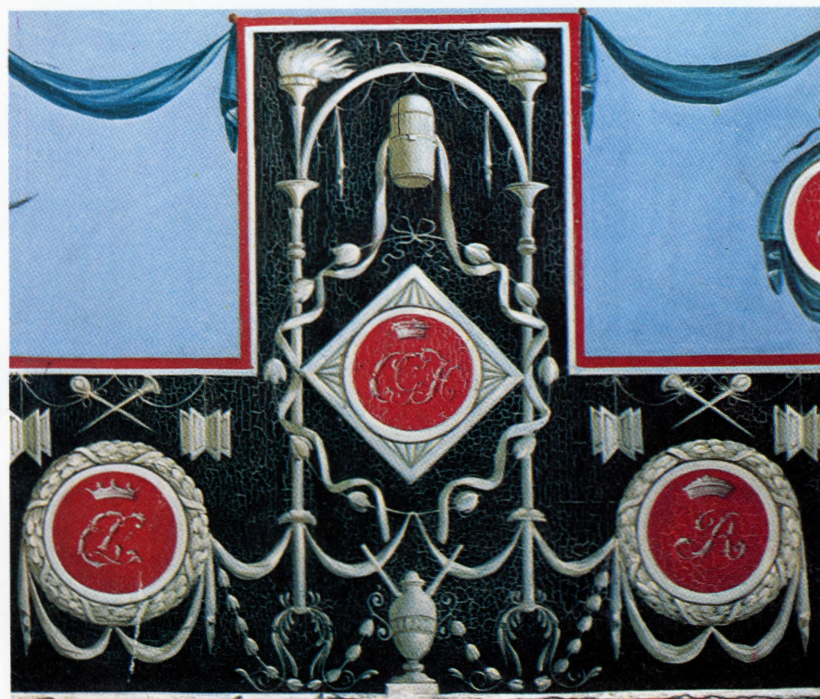
22. Gryphons bestride the clouds with chariots carrying the attributes of Apollo and Diana. Probably taken from *Le antichità di Ercolano*.

Masters of the gallery and the problem of attribution.

XXI of *The antiquities of Herculanum*, and shows a figure with cymbals and an animal skin slung over her shoulder. She wears gold bracelets and yellow shoes. The fourth roundel is from Plate XXVIII of *Le antichità di Ercolano* and is enveloped in a deep yellow hooded cloak and red shoes. In the original the shoes were white.

For some of the grisaille roundels showing various activities and scenes of war I have found no precise sources; they presumably did exist in engraving form. The roundel showing the warrior with a slain female figure is very close to a Winkelmann engraving of a terracotta vase in the Vatican Library; Plate XCVII, Volume II, of *Monumenti antichi*,¹³ although it is not an exact copy. Nothing else in the decoration is traceable to this publication. The scene of the man about to be rescued from a fiery death by the soldier on horseback appears in part in the plasterwork of Riverstown House, Co. Cork. A possible source is reproduced (No. 102) in Guilmar's *Les Maitres Ornemanistes*.

As will now be apparent, the iconography of the Castletown gallery is intricate and complex, and surprisingly learned. It seems very likely that exact sources exist for each detail and it is just a matter of time and sufficient research before they all come to light.



23. Cyphers of the initials of Lady Louisa Conolly's family, between the windows near her portrait. From the left, Emily, Duchess of Leinster, Caroline, Lady Holland, her brother the third Duke of Richmond, and her father the second Duke.

The most awkward matter in the Castletown gallery's decoration is its authorship, and in most of the literature of any date concerning the room, authorship is given to Thomas Riley, presumably because of Lady Louisa's use of this name in her writings about the decoration. However, as Ada Longfield¹ and Edward Croft Murray² have shown the gallery in fact had more than one master (even leaving aside the problem of Cipriani³). For in the lists of artists of the time no Thomas Riley appears, although both parts of the name do, and in connection with the Castletown gallery. For some unknown reason, Lady Louisa always confused the names of the two English artists at work there, Charles Reuben Riley⁴ and Thomas Ryder. Of the two it is perhaps Charles Reuben who was the best known, for his name appears in more of the literature of the time than does that of Thomas Ryder. The vital clue to the identification of Riley was of course that the letters show 'little Riley' had worked first at Goodwood for Lady Louisa's brother. There is no record of Thomas Ryder working there at any time.

Redgrave's *Dictionary of artists of the English school*⁵ lists a Charles Reuben Ryley, a history painter, who lived c.1752-1798. He worked at Goodwood and several other country seats, but was principally a book illustrator and a drawing teacher. In his early life he was a religious man but careless ways caused him to fall into ill health and shortened his life. He exhibited at the Royal Academy, mainly drawings and sketches, but Redgrave's opinion of the standard of his ability is not very high.

Redgrave also lists Thomas Ryder, who lived 1746-1810, and was an engraver. He was a pupil of Basire at the Royal Academy and was intended as a painter, but he turned to engraving instead and became one of the best of his time. Many of his engravings were in browns, and some were coloured. His son of the same name also practised as an engraver.

Bryan's *Dictionary of painters and engravers*⁶ also has an entry on both masters. His text explains that Charles Reuben Ryley was the son of a private in the Life Guards. For some time he worked as an engraver, and in 1767 he was awarded a prize for his art in the Society of Artists. Then he studied under J.H. Mortimer, and in 1778 obtained the gold medal at the academy, where he began to exhibit from 1780. However, his lifestyle curtailed his chances to become a great painter. Bryan also mentions the Goodwood decoration, the book illustrations and Riley's work as a teacher.

Under Thomas Ryder's name this time there is more detailed information. Bryan says he was among the artists employed by Boydell to engrave the Shakespeare Gallery, for which he produced eight of the large plates. He also engraved in the dotted manner, which was regarded very highly.

Edwards' *Anecdotes of painters*⁷ lists only Riley, as Charles Ruben Riley. Edwards says he was son of a Londoner in the Horse Guards, and notes that he was deformed and of poor health. In 1778 he won a gold medal for his *Iphigenia* in oils. At the recommendation of his master, Mortimer, he was commissioned to work at Goodwood, and then at Castletown for Mr. Conolly:

"At the recommendation of his master, he was employed by the Duke of Richmond in the Decoration at Goodwood, and afterwards went to Ireland upon similar employment for Mr. Conolly, which journies much improved his health and spirits."⁸

Edwards adds that he also worked for Mr. Willet at his seat at Merly in Dorset, where he painted a ceiling. He was chiefly an engraver and taught at a school in Kensington.

Tradition has always maintained that the author of the gallery was a pupil of Reynolds'. However, there is no evidence of any connection between Reynolds and either Riley or Ryder, and the only possible explanation is that the idea arose out of some confused comment on the portrait of Lady Louisa by Reynolds which originally hung in the gallery.

Having established the identity of the two painters, the next problem is to distinguish the work undertaken by each one, and here the letters of Lady Louisa offer some additional help. For in a letter to Mr. Ogilvie, second husband of her sister, Lady Emily, dated March 10th, 1776, she writes concerning her sister's plans for decoration:

"But you will be pleased to remind my sister of what Sarah told her, that little Ryley can't work upon his back and upon his belly, as Mr. Dean did at Carton many years ago for her Ladyship; and therefore it will be necessary to have some sort of slight mouldings that the paintings may be done on canvas, and so pasted up in the different compartments like my brothers'."⁹

Lady Sarah, Lady Louisa's sister, offers further information in letters she wrote to Lady Emily concerning the same decoration Lady Emily was planning to have done at Frascati. She thoroughly approved of having Riley do the work, for he was so good and so cheap; she estimated the ceiling decoration would take about three months and would cost ten guineas a month, and she knew of a Dublin man who would charge thirty guineas per month. However:

"Ryley cannot paint *on* the ceiling, therefore you cannot have the least scrap of his painting done any way but on paper or canvas,

which is pasted up."¹⁰

She also commented:

"If you are quite sure you like a good deal of painting in your house, I must advise you not to let little Ryley escape you by any means whatsoever, for his taste, his execution, his diligence and his price are really a treasure, and will not be met with again. For Mr. Conolly and Louisa *se font conscience* to give him so little as £100 a year, and mean to add a little more to it."¹¹

The sole problem seemed to be:

"The misfortune is that he hates Ireland,"¹² but he did get something out of his time in the country apparently, as Lady Louisa tells Lady Sarah in a letter dated March 25th, 1777:

"First of all little Ryley finished three months ago, but is now working for other people.

However he proposes going to England next month and 'tis whispered has some thoughts of being nuptialed. At least Harry Stewart says so. The object is not beautiful [:] it is Mrs. Stevens the Woman I have got about the Children [,] who is going to leave me next Month, as she had the offer of a school in London to my great joy, for I did not like her, and yet had no essential fault to part with her."¹³

History does not relate what the outcome of this news was.

The principal importance of these letters, however, as far as the gallery is concerned, lies of course in the references to Riley's health and deformity. It is not clear in what manner he was deformed, but it is clear he could not paint on the ceiling. This would suggest that he could not mount high scaffolding, which limits the possibilities for his work in the gallery, and a visit to Goodwood and study of his work in the library further confirms that he worked only on panels or very low down on the wall. His work at Goodwood consists of attached *paternae* on the ceiling, one overmantel and one overdoor painting, and *sepia*, brown and black panels on the bookcase doors at dado level.¹⁴ The eight danseuses figures of the Castletown gallery are all included, but since they appear time and again in decoration of that date, no conclusion can be drawn from this. However, in the dado panels also appears the Hancarville scene of the daughters of Atlas recalling their adventures, and this is much less common; in fact, I have seen it nowhere else but at Castletown. While this cannot be called conclusive either, it does provide a starting point.

The stylistic study is not aided by the fact that the Goodwood ceiling was heavily restored in 1976 and nothing in the Castletown gallery other than the *Aurora* and the Mengs portrait of Tom Conolly has ever been touched. However, a great difference in quality is visible in the various parts of the gallery's decoration. To begin with,

the frieze panels bear no resemblance to the arabesque and muse panels, the frieze panels being of much superior quality and executed with a sophisticated, competent classicism, while some of the brush work in the muse panels is heavy and the draughtsmanship at times decidedly poor. Since the records show that Charles Reuben Riley was trained as a history painter, since all the frieze panels are executed on canvas and attached to the wall afterwards, and one of the scenes appears at Goodwood, it seems reasonable to give authorship of these to Riley.

Of equal quality, and probably, as Philippa Garner believes, by the same hand, are the two small paintings on paper flanking Calliope, which do not match up with anything else on that wall. The drapery of the women's robes in particular is very close to the frieze panels. The painting on the walls of the three niches is also of comparable quality, much more delicate in the foliage treatment for example than elsewhere in the arabesque motifs. The palette also is at variance with the rest of the arabesque decoration, being of more vivid and expensive shades, in particular the rich green and yellow ochre. Since the niches are low down, it seems reasonable to suggest that Riley could have been positioned on some kind of high chair to carry out that work.

The assignment of the panel work to Riley leaves the major part of the wall decoration to the hand of Thomas Ryder, including the sections flanking the doors copied from the Raphael prints and the many medallions taken from engravings, as well as the muses. The same style, though perhaps slightly better in execution, is visible in the eight danseuses roundels, which are painted in situ. The danseuses figures are a great deal livelier than the muses, but this may have been helped by the lively quality of the engravings they are taken from.

Lady Louisa's writings refer to Riley alone; never does she mention any assistants, but they must have existed. It is even possible that to some extent Ryder worked under Riley, for in the letter quoted above in Chapter One Lady Louisa makes it clear that Riley thought up the scheme for the grotesques above the portrait busts; yet the painting style and poorer quality shows them to be part of Ryder's work in execution.

The *Aurora*, now cleaned and clear in every detail, is unsigned, undated, and of inferior quality to much of the rest of the decoration. The hand that painted it appears nowhere else in the room. It is on canvas, not done in situ, yet it fits into the space above the doors satisfactorily. Perhaps it was one of the first pieces bought for the room, before the major part of the work was done, but after the twin doors were put in, in the 1760's. The dominance of the Apollo theme may stem from the presence of the *Aurora* when the 1770's decoration

was embarked upon. It was a very popular theme, and if it was already in the room, in the *Aurora*, it would have been logical to continue it. Edward Croft Murray attributes the *Aurora* to Cipriani, but it must be remembered that when his assessment was made the painting was in very bad condition, covered in a thick layer of dark brown varnish and even adorned by birds nesting in the room. Before cleaning, many of its flaws would not have been visible.

Ada Longfield attributes the frieze panels to Cipriani, though Croft Murray does not (he does not attempt to attribute them specifically at all), but this attribution seems unlikely. If the letters are to be believed, it must be accepted that Riley's work is on panels, and the frieze paintings are the panelled work in the room. Also, the patrons were apparently delighted by the excellence of Riley's work, and the frieze panels would merit their praise much more than the arabesques. I am aware this attribution excludes Cipriani from the masters of the gallery. However, it is well known how the Irish liked to claim foreign names for their art, much of which is only now beginning to be truly identified, and it is very possible that an indirect connection with his name caused him to be associated with Castletown rather than his actual presence. It may even have sprung from Riley or Ryder explaining that the muse figures were copied from Cipriani's Syon House ceiling.

The last question-mark over the authorship of the gallery lies with the oval paintings set in stucco above the niches. Philippa Garner considers it conceivable but not likely that they are by the same hand as the danseuses and the muses, but the draughtsmanship is cruder and very clumsy. In the west panel the position and length of the dead woman's arm is anatomically impossible! Again, the palette is different to the rest of the decoration. However, there is a possible answer in the letter quoted above in Chapter One, in which Lady Louisa refers to the paintings of Riley making the 'stucco panels' look so bad that she was going to have them 'knocked off smack smooth'; but there is no record of her having had this done. The oval paintings' stucco work matches nothing else in the room except that of the roundels on the window wall, and is heavy in quality, but the leaf design is very similar to that of the ceiling painting in the boudoir. It is just possible that the oval panels and the frames for the roundels were done for the gallery in the 1760's when the boudoir was being done, and at the same time that the doors and niches complex was designed for the gallery. Then, when the 1770's decoration was done, their lack of quality became apparent and Lady Louisa intended to have them replaced, but for some reason this was never done.

In the attribution above all, this study can offer no more than theories and suggestions for further lines of research. Records of the

gallery are scarce and very incomplete. One inventory¹⁵ from the nineteenth century only came to light several years ago, and much more may yet be discovered. The room is undoubtedly one of special interest in the history of Irish decoration, and is certainly worthy of further discussion and of a renewal of the enthusiasm felt for it by its original mistress, Lady Louisa.

NOTES TO THE TEXT

Abbreviations:

Vol : Volume.

ed : editor.

Lnstr Lttrs : *Correspondence of Emily, Duchess of Leinster*, (1731-1814) ed. Brian FitzGerald, Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin 1949-57, 3 vols.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE:

- 1 Account written by Mr. Loveday, an Oxfordshire squire who toured Ireland. The passage is quoted in *Castletown House*, an unpublished article of 1967 by Lena Boylan. Part of the passage also appears, in slightly varied form, in Desmond Guinness and William Ryan *Irish Houses and Castles*, London 1971, page 196.
- 2 The alignment cannot be exact since the windows were already in situ at the time the twin doors were added, but the measurements are close enough for it to be clear the idea of alignment was intended.
- 4 The gilt gas candelabras were electrified in 1968 and are now in use in the Victorian kitchen, west wing.
- 5 This passage is quoted frequently, being popular with the many visitors to the house, but Lady Louisa's letters are scattered and I have been unable to locate the original source and am without an exact date for it. However, Mrs. Boylan tells me that there is a set of letters which has survived but is now missing, and the quotation may come from one of these.
- 6 Brian FitzGerald, ed., *The Correspondence of Emily, Duchess of Leinster, 1731-1814*, Dublin 1949-57 3 vols, vol II, page 20.
- 7 This letter was also to Lady Kildare. Lnstr Lttrs vol III, p. 23. "Mr. Chambers the Architect" refers to Sir William Chambers who, together with James Wyatt, was architect of Goodwood House in Sussex, home of Lady Louisa's brother, the 3rd Duke of Richmond. "Mr. Verpaille" refers to Simon Vierpyl the Dublin sculptor.
- 8 Unpublished letter, Collection: the Hon. Desmond Guinness.
- 9 Unpublished letter, Collection: the Hon. Desmond Guinness. Lady Louisa had obviously been promised 'Little Riley' for some time, in fact since 1773 when he painted the library for the Duke of Richmond, as on January 21st of that year she wrote to Lady Kildare: "the library is doing, and to my taste is one of the prettiest rooms I ever saw; if Mr. Conolly approves, I shall wish mightily to finish our gallery in the same manner." (Lnstr Lttrs Vol III, p. 67). The spelling of Riley varies. In letters several versions are found, and in the literature of the time Riley and Ryley appear. Although Ryley is slightly more common I have chosen Riley to avoid possible confusion with another master of the gallery, Thomas Ryder, to be discussed below.
- 10 Unpublished letter, Collection: the Hon. Desmond Guinness.
- 11 Extract from unpublished Castletown House accounts.
- 12 Lnstr Lttrs Vol III, page 112. Letter is to Duchess of Leinster.
- 13 Lnstr Lttrs Vol III, p. 141. Letter is to Duchess of Leinster.
- 14 Unpublished letter, Collection: the Hon. Desmond Guinness.

- 15 The two statues in the flanking niches, of small boys, are of the pure white marble and obviously belong to the modern works, being probably copies of antique figures.
- 16 Walter George Strickland, *A Dictionary of Irish Artists* Dublin and London 1913 2 vols.
- 17 Humphry Repton, *Fragments on the theory and practice of landscape gardening*, London 1816.
- 18 Ibid; p. 52.
- 19 Lnstr Lttrs Vol III, p. 169. Letter is to Duchess of Leinster.
- 20 Lnstr Lttrs Vol III, p. 181. Letter is to Duchess of Leinster.
- 21 Historical Manuscripts Commission; *Report on the manuscripts of the Marquess of Lothian preserved at Blickling Hall, Norfolk*. London, 1905; pp. 380-381.
- 22 This frequently quoted passage appears in Desmond Guinness and William Ryan, *Irish Houses and Castles*, London 1971, in the Castletown booklet by Desmond Guinness, and in the unpublished article by Lena Boylan, *Castletown House*, 1967.
- 23 *Country Life*, Vol LXXX, August 22nd, 1936, page 199.
- 24 Extract from unpublished Castletown House Accounts.
- 25 The Georgian Society; *Records of eighteenth century domestic architecture and decoration in Dublin*, Dublin 1909-13, 5 Vols..

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO.

- 1 Lnstr Lttrs Vol II, p. 156.
- 2 James Stuart and Nicolas Revett, *The antiquities of Athens*, 1st edition 1762-1816 (Vol I 1762).
- 3 The original portrait of Lady Louisa, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, was sold out of Castletown early in this century and the copy done to replace it. The original is now in the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, U.S.A.
- 4 Examples: Buckland House, Berkshire, saloon ceiling, stucco; Ionic Temple ceiling, Rievaulx Terrace, North Yorkshire, painted by Guiseppe Mattia Borguis. (Also, see Constantine Curran, *Dublin Decorative plasterwork in the seventeenth century and eighteenth century*, Dublin 1967, p. 97, for Irish examples).
- 5 Examples: No. 9, Merchant's Quay, Dublin; No. 8, Ely Place, Dublin.
- 6 Bernard de Montfaucon, *L'antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*, 1st edition Paris 1719 (2nd edition Paris 1722; supplement Paris 1724), 5 Vols Part I, 5 Vols Part 2, 5 Vols supplement. (All references to Montfaucon in this study refer to this publication).
- 7 Antonius Borioni and Rodolph Venuti, *Collectanea antiquitatum Romanorum*, 1st edition Rome 1736.
- 8 See Constantine Curran, *Dublin Decorative Plasterwork of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, London 1967, plates 124, 154.
- 9 Pierre-Francois Hugues d'Hancarville; *Antiquités étrusques, grecques, et romaines, gravées, par F.A. David, avec leurs Explications*. First edition Paris 1767, 4 Vols. (Edition consulted Paris 1787, 5 Vols).
- 10 Academia Ercolanese, *Le antichità di Ercolano esposte*, 1st edition Naples 1757-76, 5 Vols (Vol 6 1779).
- 11 Plutarch: *Lives of famous men*, (classic) various editions.
- 12 The limited range of colours in the gallery may also be due to finance, as colours such as purple, bright reds, yellows, greens, and certain blues, would have been exorbitantly expensive in the 1770's.
- 13 Johann Winkelmann (or Winckelmann), *Monumenti antichi inediti, spiegati ed illustrati*, 1st edition Rome 1767.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE.

- 1 See "Some wall-painting in Ireland in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century," in *Journal of the Royal Society of antiquaries of Ireland*, Centenary Vol, 1949, pp.84-90.

- 2 See Edward Croft Murray, *Decorative Painting in England* Vol II, London 1970.
- 3 At one time or another, all parts of the decoration in the gallery have been attributed to Giovanni Battista Cipriani, successful Italian painter who came to England with Sir William Chambers about 1755. No contemporary documentary evidence survives to support the attribution.
- 4 Unpublished letter, collection: the Hon. Desmond Guinness. See Chapter One, note 9.
- 5 Samuel Redgrave, *A dictionary of artists of the English school*, 2nd edition 1878.
- 6 Michael Bryan, *Bryan's Dictionary of painters and engravers*, London 1930-34, 5 Vols.
- 7 Edward Edwards, *Anecdotes of Painters*, 1st edition London 1808.
- 8 Ibid; p. 261.
- 9 Lnstr Lttrs Vol III, p. 188.
- 10 Lnstr Lttrs Vol II, P. 152.
- 11 Lnstr Lttrs Vol II, p. 156.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Unpublished letter, Collection: the Hon. Desmond Guinness.
- 14 I applied in advance for permission to photograph the library; unfortunately this was not forthcoming. It was illustrated in 1932, in *Country Life* 9: VII, page 43, figs. 2,3,4.
- 15 This inventory was found when Mr. Gerald Kenyon bought a piece of furniture formerly at Castletown. He kindly made a gift of the inventory to the Irish Georgian Society. It contained a full catalogue of all the structure, decoration, and contents of the entire house. As far as the decoration of the gallery is concerned it offered little of interest, making no attributions, although someone had at some time added the name of Cipriani to the entry on the six frieze panels and the two oval paintings. The inventory is dated October, 1893.

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24. Diana the huntress in the niche between the doors.

