



West Wycombe

Sir Francis Dashwood: Connoisseur, Collector and Traveller

Essay by Jason M. Kelly

Introduction

Francis Dashwood, 2nd Baronet (later Lord le Despencer) was one of the most important connoisseurs of eighteenth-century Britain. The Grand Tour travels of his youth that took him across France, Germany, Italy, the Baltic, the Ottoman Empire and into Russia introduced him to the finest of art and architecture in Europe. He developed his estate, West Wycombe, as a laboratory to experiment with constantly evolving aesthetic ideas and, in the process, he became a patron of numerous artists and architects. He was one of the first individuals in Britain to adopt neo-classicism as an aesthetic mode and, as a prime example, West Wycombe became an architectural touchstone for architects and their patrons. Dashwood's influence on taste was often mediated through the institutions with which he was involved. For example, his participation in organisations such as the Society of Dilettanti and the Society of Antiquaries gave him a platform to influence the study of art, architecture and antiquities. Furthermore, his guiding role in the preparation of *Ionian Antiquities* (1769) set the framework for British classical archaeology for the next century.

Dashwood is often remembered as a drunk, libertine and political scoundrel. Horace Walpole famously remarked that he was seldom sober the entire time he was in Italy. Indeed, Dashwood portrayed himself as a rake in a series of portrait commissions, a reputation that he began to cultivate as early as the 1730s. As a man who came from a mercantile background, gaining a reputation for libertinism was a way to present himself as an elite gentleman, freed from bourgeois mores

and obligations. This mode of self-representation was, however, a leftover from the seventeenth century and became increasingly unfashionable in the 1760s. As a result, John Wilkes, his fellow MP and former friend, was able to turn Dashwood's reputation into a political weapon in 1763, leading to a political scandal that broadened to a constitutional debate over free speech and *habeas corpus*.

Even so, Dashwood's contribution to British politics went far beyond a single scandal. He actively served in Parliament for decades, often in the country opposition (a shifting set of sometimes reformist coalitions challenging what they saw as court corruption). He was a critic of the Prime Minister, Robert Walpole, leading to a lifelong dislike between Dashwood and Horace Walpole, Robert's son. Dashwood was a vocal politician with excellent rhetorical skills. His closest political allies were George Bubb Dodington, Baron Melcombe, William, 2nd Baron Talbot, and Philip, 2nd Earl Stanhope. He was known for his independence: he was no 'placeman'. Even Dodington could never be certain of his vote. In the late 1740s, Dashwood was calling for constitutional reforms.¹ In 1757, he defended Admiral Byng, calling his court martial unjust.² He pushed for regulation of the militia in the 1740s and 50s and was a first colonel in the Buckinghamshire militia between 1757 and 1762.

Before the 1760s, Dashwood refused several offers of government offices. Only with the accession of George III and the Bute ministry was Dashwood persuaded to join the government as Chancellor of the Exchequer. In an effort to raise revenue to pay the expenses of the Seven Years' War, Dashwood proposed several taxes, including the Cider Tax of 1763. Despite the bill passing, the Cider Act was unpopular and was a key factor in bringing down Bute and led to Dashwood's removal as Chancellor. After 1766, Dashwood served as Postmaster General, overseeing a series of reforms to the system. But, in his later years, he turned from politics to focus on his estates and his sociable world.

Dashwood lived during a period of rapid political transformation and historians have tended to focus on his participation in this political world.³ To a lesser extent, scholars have examined his social networks, focusing especially on his life as a libertine.⁴ To this point, there has been relatively little examination of his

intellectual life, especially the ways that his experiences shaped his development as a connoisseur, collector and patron of the arts.⁵ Here I examine Francis Dashwood against the background of his education, his Grand Tours and his social networks in order to provide a framework for better understanding the formation and development of West Wycombe and its collections.

The Dashwoods

Francis Dashwood was born in 1708. He was the only son of Sir Francis Dashwood, 1st Baronet (c.1658–1724) and Mary Fane (1674–1710). The 1st Baronet was the sixth child of Alice Sleigh (1621–1693) and Francis Dashwood (1603–1683), a saddler, merchant and alderman of the City of London.⁶ Francis and Alice Dashwood valued social status and inaugurated the generations-long process of transforming the family from a respectable middling family of traders into members of the peerage. Key to accomplishing this mission was making strategic marriage alliances. So, for example, they married their eldest daughter, Sarah, to Fulke Greville, 5th Baron Brooke, in 1665. The attainment of political office was important as well and here the family was also successful. Samuel Dashwood, the eldest child, was knighted and entered Parliament for the City of London in 1685. In 1702, he became Lord Mayor of London.

While moving up the ranks in society, Samuel and Francis extended the family's mercantile interests. The youngest child, Francis was made a freeman of the Vintners' Company in 1680 and Samuel became Master of the Vintners' Company.⁷ The scale of the international trade with which they were involved was substantial. In 1700, the brothers sent the frigate *Dashwood* to China to trade £40,000 in gold goods for porcelain.⁸ On another trading voyage, silks and other goods in the eastern Mediterranean brought them £21,000 in return.⁹ Samuel and Francis served on the board of directors for both the Royal African Company and the East India Company (Samuel became Deputy Governor in 1700¹⁰). As such, their investments were deeply implicated in Britain's international slave trade and imperial expansion. The brothers' fortunes were further increased by the marriage settlement in 1698 between their sister Elizabeth and her husband Thomas Lewis, an alderman of London. This settlement transferred the manor of West Wycombe from Lewis to Samuel and Francis. Tracts of land, such as those of West

Wycombe, were key pieces to the social mobility game, and they added this Buckinghamshire estate to the family properties in Well Vale, Lincolnshire, where Samuel lived and Francis's residence in Wanstead, Essex.

Always in the shadow of his brother, and without the wealth of a firstborn son, Francis made a series of successful investments in the 1690s, giving him more autonomy. In 1702, Queen Anne knighted Francis at Sir Samuel's mayoral inauguration feast.¹¹ On the death of his brother in 1706, Francis purchased West Wycombe for £15,000 from his nephew George Dashwood. He also made a politically important alliance, marrying Lady Mary Fane (d. 1710), the daughter of the Earl of Westmorland, in 1705. The queen made Sir Francis a baronet in 1707 and his election as an MP for Winchelsea in 1708 solidified his rise in social status and influence. That same year, his first son, Francis, was born. When Lady Mary died in 1710, her brother, John Fane (1685–1762), later the 7th Earl of Westmorland, took a great interest in the child's education and played a key role in his intellectual development. By the time Sir Francis died on 4 November 1724, young Francis was well positioned to live the life of a country gentleman. He inherited his father's title, estates and substantial wealth. And he had the protection of a peer of the realm.

Education

Like many other eighteenth-century gentlemen, the second Sir Francis Dashwood probably had a tutor as a young boy.¹² At the age of ten or eleven, he was sent to Eton.¹³ There, he set about learning Latin, both through memorisation and composition. In the lower years his teachers introduced him to Terence, Lucian and Aesop, while later he read Ovid, Cicero and Julius Caesar. Finally, in the sixth form, he learned Greek and studied Homer.¹⁴ During the fifth and sixth forms, leisure hours would have included time for reading Roman and Greek history as well as John Potter's *Archaeologia Graeca*, which was the standard text on the history of ancient Greece in the first half of the eighteenth century.¹⁵ With his budding interest in travel, Dashwood may well have browsed the library at Eton, which contained atlases of ancient geography and compilations of works illustrating the famous continental collections. They included Bernard de Montfaucon's *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* (1719–24), Pietro

Santi Bartoli's *Le Pitture antiche delle grotte di Roma* (1706) and *Admiranda Romanarvm antiqvitatvm* (1693) and Alessandro Maffei and Domenico de' Rossi's *Raccolte di statue antiche e moderne* (1704), among others.¹⁶

Beyond his formal education, it appears that his uncle John Fane had an important influence over the young Dashwood, introducing him to architecture, one of the great interests of his life. During Dashwood's youth, Fane employed Colen Campbell to design a villa for him, Mereworth Castle in Kent, which was completed in 1723 (fig. 1). Campbell based the house on Palladio's Villa Capra (constructed between 1566 and 1591 and better known as La Rotonda), which neither he nor Fane had ever seen in person (fig. 2). In fact, neither of them had even been on the Grand Tour. Consequently, Mereworth's dome followed the original designs of Palladio, rather than the actual one constructed by Vincenzo Scamozzi, who took over construction on Palladio's death.

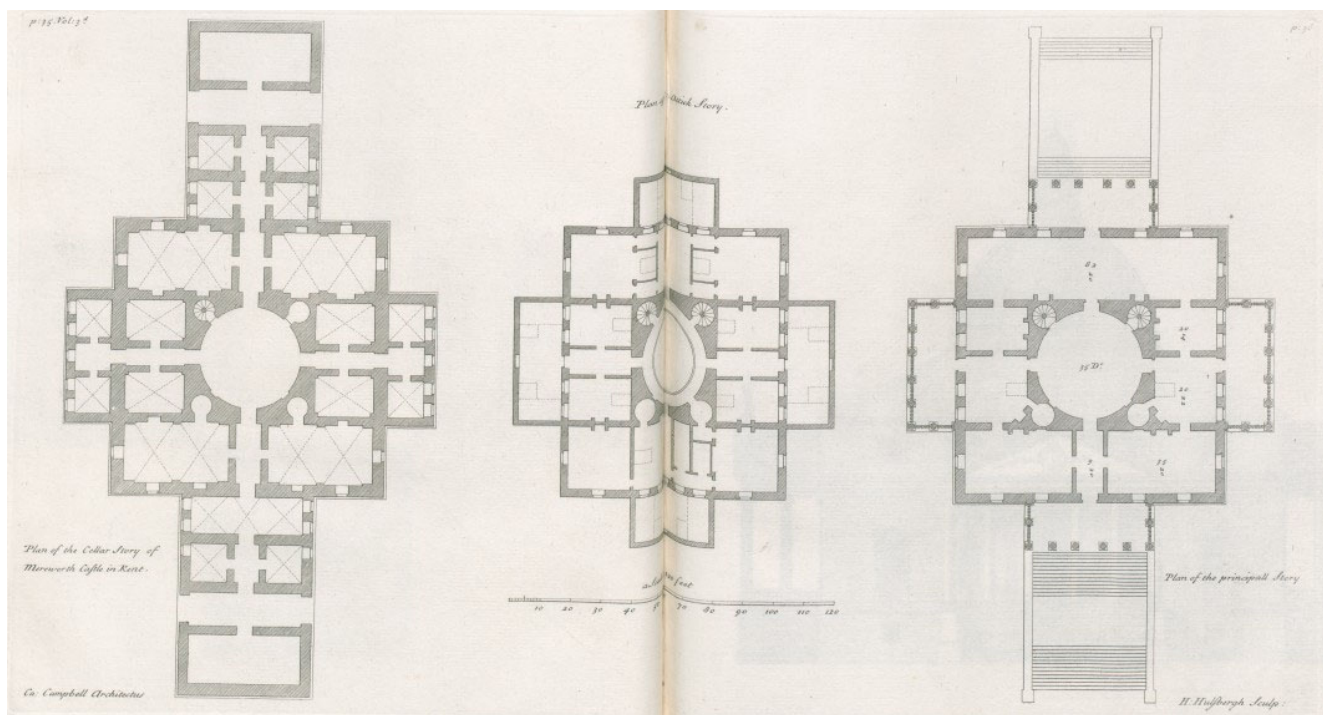


Figure 1.

Hendrik Hulsbergh, *Mereworth in Colen Campbell, Vitruvius Britannicus or the British Architect* (London: Colen Campbell, 1715): vol. III, pls. 35, 36, ETH-Bibliothek Zürich (Rar 445 fol.).

Digital image courtesy of ETH-Bibliothek Zürich. (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

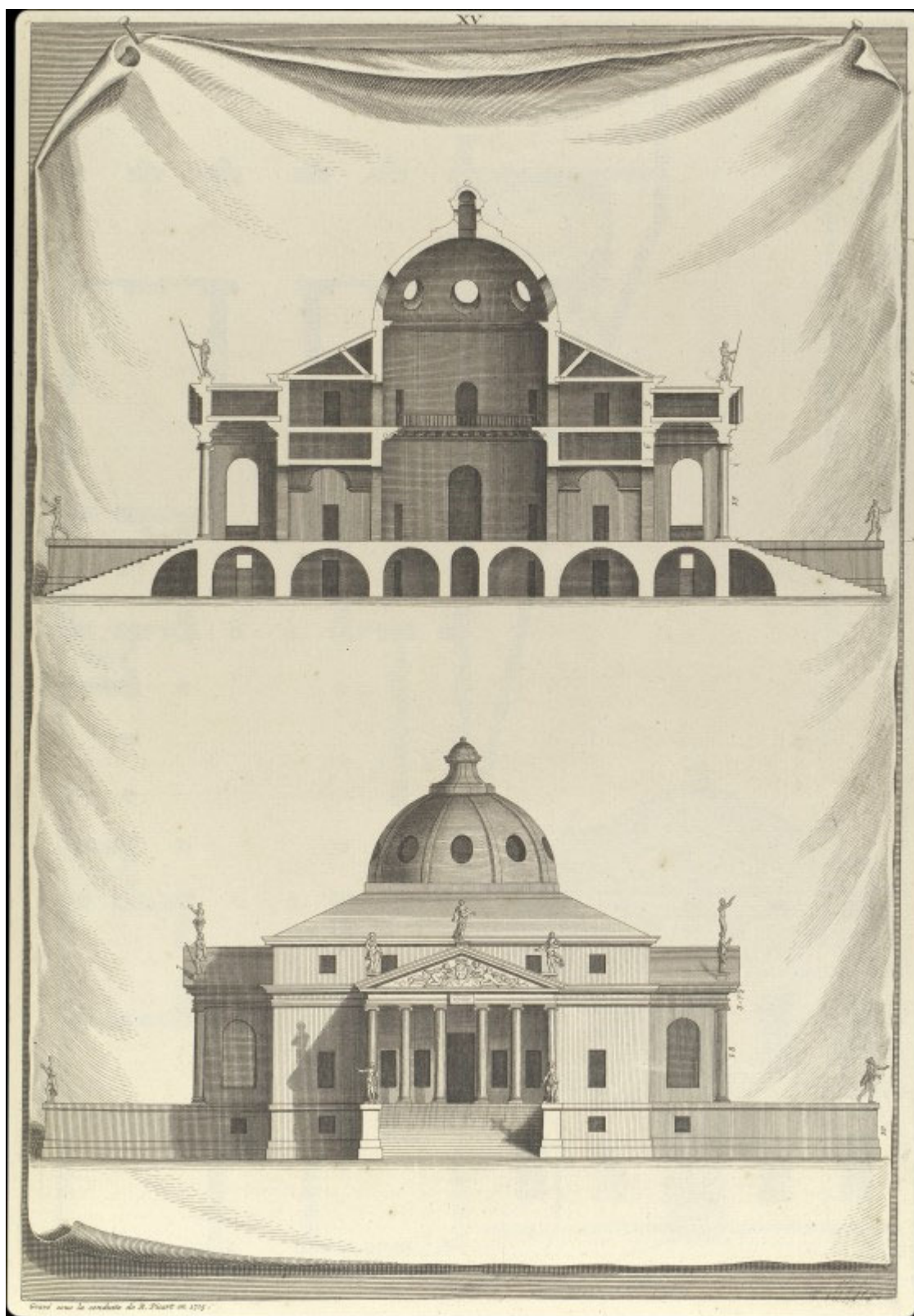


Figure 2.

Bernard Picart, *Villa Rotunda in Giacomo Leoni, The Architecture of A. Palladio in Four Books containing a Short Treatise on the Five Orders* (London: James Leoni, 1715): vol. 1, bk 2, pl. 15, etching and engraving, sheet 44.6 x 26 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (41.100.169 (1.2.15)).

Digital image courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (All rights reserved)

Campbell and his patron had been inspired by Palladio through the experiments of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century architects, new editions of Palladio's works, the circulation of prints and drawings and the amateur architectural circle of Lord Burlington.¹⁷ This milieu must also have excited the young Dashwood, who learned several things. First, he began developing a taste for Italy, the Renaissance and Burlingtonian Palladianism and, through this interest, he developed a penchant for a classical world mediated by Renaissance interpretations. For example, as at the Villa Capra, Mereworth's porticoes were derived from the Porticus Octaviae (early third century CE) in Rome and the house and estate cited numerous classical precedents, such the Arch of Titus in Rome, which Campbell recreated in about 1725 as a garden folly. In the following years, Fane and Dashwood discussed razing the old Church of St Lawrence at Mereworth and constructing a new church (fig. 3), which included a barrel-vaulted nave with faux-painted coffering that evoked ancient Rome as interpreted through Leon Battista Alberti's Sant'Andrea in Mantua (fig. 4).



Figure 3.

St Lawrence Church, Mereworth, c. 1740s. Granville Davies/ Alamy Stock Photo BKHRJR).

Digital image courtesy of Granville Davies/ Alamy Stock Photo. (All rights reserved)



Figure 4.

Leon Battista Alberti, *Nave of the Basilica of Sant'Andrea, Mantua (looking towards entrance)*, 1472-94. Scala Archives / Diocesi di Mantova (0131707).

Digital image courtesy of Scala Archives / Diocesi di Mantova. (All rights reserved)

The second lesson Dashwood learned from his uncle was the importance of building a personal ‘paper museum’ as a tool to develop architectural literacy.¹⁸ Despite never having been to Italy, Campbell and Fane were able to create one of the finest villas of the early eighteenth century and they were able to accomplish this because of their access to prints and drawings. In the following years, Dashwood not only visited the drawing and print collections of other collectors but he also amassed a reference library at West Wycombe that would set the stage for his own building programmes. As a consequence of this interest in architectural prints and drawings, throughout his life he was a patron of artists and architects who wished to create accurate architectural reproductions on paper, especially of works that had not previously been studied in detail. His support culminated in James Stuart and Nicholas Revett’s *Antiquities of Athens* (1763) and the Society of Dilettanti’s *Ionian Antiquities* (1769).¹⁹

The Grand Tour

Dashwood left Eton in 1726 to begin his first Grand Tour. He visited France and Germany for eight months and was back in England the following year.²⁰ On 11 May 1730, he left again for the continent, and *The Daily Journal* reported that this was to be a two-year tour and that his first stop would be Germany.²¹ By December of that year he was in Venice, where he made the acquaintance of Gustavus Hamilton, 2nd Viscount Boyne, and Edward Walpole.²² In the following weeks, he made his way north, arriving in Dover from Calais on 6 January 1731.²³ His whereabouts for the following few weeks are unclear but he returned to Italy and was in Padua on 4 March 1731 when he visited the university with Richard Tylney, Richard Pilkington and Richard Grenville (later Earl Temple).²⁴ Dashwood’s visit to Padua may have overlapped with Boyne, James Gray and Joseph Alston, who visited the university at roughly the same time.²⁵ It was here that these three came up with the idea to travel ‘either to Spain or Constantinople’.²⁶ In the end, they chose Spain and departed from Venice on 13 April. According to the Secretary Resident, Elizeus Burges: ‘Lord Boyn, Sr James Gray, Mr Alston and Mr Swiny went on board a small Scotch-ship last night, in order to visit the isles of Malta & Minorca, Gibraltar, Cadiz and Lisbon; from whence they propose to come back by land, and see all that is worth seeing in

Spain in their return to Italy again, where they are under some sort of promise to be by the end of Autumn.'²⁷ There has been some debate over whether Dashwood travelled with this group of gentlemen to Spain. While Burges's letter makes no mention of Dashwood, there is at West Wycombe a group portrait by Bartolomeo Nazari (fig. 5) commemorating this voyage.²⁸ The painting portrays five individuals. They are, from left to right, Owen Swiney, an unknown individual pointing to a compass, James Gray, Joseph Alston and Lord Boyne.²⁹ The unknown individual could be Dashwood or he may be the ship's captain. There is a passing resemblance to Dashwood compared to his appearance in later images (fig. 6). However, Nazari depicts a man who is significantly older than Dashwood, then aged twenty-three, and, compared to more contemporaneous images (fig. 7), there is little resemblance. A key factor in identifying the individual may be his gesture towards the ship's compass. In Jacobite circles, a compass was a symbol of support for the Pretender.³⁰ Given the support for the Jacobite cause in Scotland, it is possible that the man in question is the 'Scotch-ship' captain.



Figure 5.

Bartolomeo Nazari, *Lord Boyne and Friends in a Ship's Cabin*, c.1731. Oil on canvas. West Wycombe Park.

Digital image courtesy of West Wycombe Park / Photo: Rodolfo Acevedo Rodriguez. (All rights reserved)



Figure 6.

Nathaniel Dance, *Francis Dashwood, 11th Baron Le Despencer*, c. 1776. Oil on canvas, 73.7 x 61 cm. National Portrait Gallery (NPG 1345).

Digital image courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0).



Figure 7.
John Faber Jr, after Adrien Carpentiers, *Francis Dashwood, 11th Baron Le Despencer*, 1753.
Mezzotint, 32.7 x 22.5 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG D5032).

Digital image courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London (All rights reserved)

Between March and September 1731, Dashwood's movements cannot be tracked via archival sources but one of his visits may have been to Rome. It was during this period that he first met Antonio Niccolini, who became a lifelong friend.³¹ Niccolini was an antiquary who took an active role in the European republic of letters. In addition to his correspondence with Italian luminaries, he cultivated a broader network including Montesquieu, Charles de Brosses and Albrecht von Haller, some of whom were also acquaintances of Dashwood.³² Over the course of his career, Niccolini was active in numerous societies, including the Accademia della Crusca, the Accademia degli Apatisti, the Accademia del Disegno, the Società Botanica (all in Florence), Accademia Etrusca di Cortona, Colonia Fulgina (the colony of the Accademia dell'Arcadia, Foligno) and the Royal Society (London). He was also a noted collector and a man of taste. De Brosses, who visited him in October 1739, noted: 'The Niccolini house has a number of statues, bas-reliefs, and rare antique busts – and a famous cabinet [*medaillier*].'³³ No doubt, Niccolini was influential on the young Dashwood, who returned home ready to follow his example.

By early October 1731, Dashwood was on his way to Bologna with a letter of introduction from Antonio Leprotti, Clement XII's physician, addressed to Eustachio Manfredi, the founder of the Accademia degli Inquieti and the keeper of the observatory at the University of Bologna. It stated:

'Sir Francis Dashwood, Bt. will present this letter to my most revered Signore Eustachio, who I hope will take pleasure welcoming and knowing him, and also be well received at the Observatory, since he is a gentleman who travels to learn about the rest of the world between here and Calais. He has already been in Constantinople, and in many other places.// Our Mr. Stevens is his friend, which is why I am all the more willing to ask him for this favour, and as usual entrusting myself to his good graces.'³⁴

Dashwood's friend was Henry Stewart Stevens, a mathematician at the centre of Jacobite circles in Rome.³⁵ Leprotti operated in this network as well, even serving

as a tutor to Prince Charles Edward Stuart and Henry Benedict Stuart.³⁶

Connections like these may have led to the nagging suspicion that Dashwood was a Jacobite, though Horace Mann (no great admirer) thought that he was simply not always aware of the political implications of his social connections.³⁷

What is significant is that Leprotti's letter provides a clue to Dashwood's travels in these early years, notably a visit to the Ottoman Empire by September 1731. This may be where he travelled in 1730, or it is possible that he left for Constantinople at the same time that Boyne and the rest left for Spain. If Dashwood kept a journal, it is now lost. However, a letter from Frank Skipwith to Dashwood, written in the 1760s, fills in some of the gaps. Apparently, Dashwood had advised Thomas George Skipwith, Skipwith's son and Dashwood's godson, who left for the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Europe in 1765.³⁸ As Skipwith senior told Dashwood, his son's tour 'so much resembles the Tour you once made yourself':

Athens, from thence went to Delos, and other Islands of the Archiepelago [sic], went over to the Asiatick side, and visited Ephesus, Smyrna, & the twelve Ionian Cities, from thence to the reputed spot, where Troy once stood, and then cross'd over to the place of residence of the Grand Signior. — when he left Constantinople he travers'd Moldavia, & Wallachia on his way to Warsaw, where the King then was, where great civilities are shown to the English, by that wise & benevolent Prince; from thence to Berlin, and then to the German Capitol; there he was to continue but a few days, and then set out on his Rout towards Venice.³⁹

During the period in question, this tour was exceptional. Rarely did Grand Tourists visit the eastern Mediterranean, let alone travel so widely across the continent. Dashwood was clearly an individual with curiosity and a taste for adventure.

Having returned from the continent in 1732, Dashwood was once more on the move. In 1733, he was among those who travelled with George, Viscount Forbes (later 3rd Earl of Granard), to St Petersburg. The mission's purpose was to cement

a commercial alliance with Russia and to undermine any French overtures to the Russians.⁴⁰ Dashwood's own interest, however, was that of a tourist. Leaving on 10 May 1733, he travelled from Copenhagen via Kronstadt to St Petersburg, where he stayed for twenty days. His return included a visit to Gdansk (Danzig at the time) and a reprise of Copenhagen and its environs. Dashwood's travel journal from this tour reveals a curious traveller interested in architecture, as well as giving the earliest indication of his aesthetic taste. Observing the early stages of Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli's additions to the third Winter Palace (1732–6), he wrote, 'it will be very large when finished but not a peice [sic] of much Architecture'.⁴¹ Of Peterhof (fig. 8), constructed after designs by Jean-Baptiste Alexandre le Blond and Johann Friedrich Braunstein between 1714 and 1721, he noted that 'the home is of no consideration'. However, of Monplaisir (1714–23, by le Blond) and Marly (1720–3, by Braunstein), they were 'the prittiest things I have seen in these parts, and both worthy of a place in any Garden in Italy'.⁴² Dashwood was also taken by le Blond and Niccolò Michetti's gardens at the Peterhof complex.

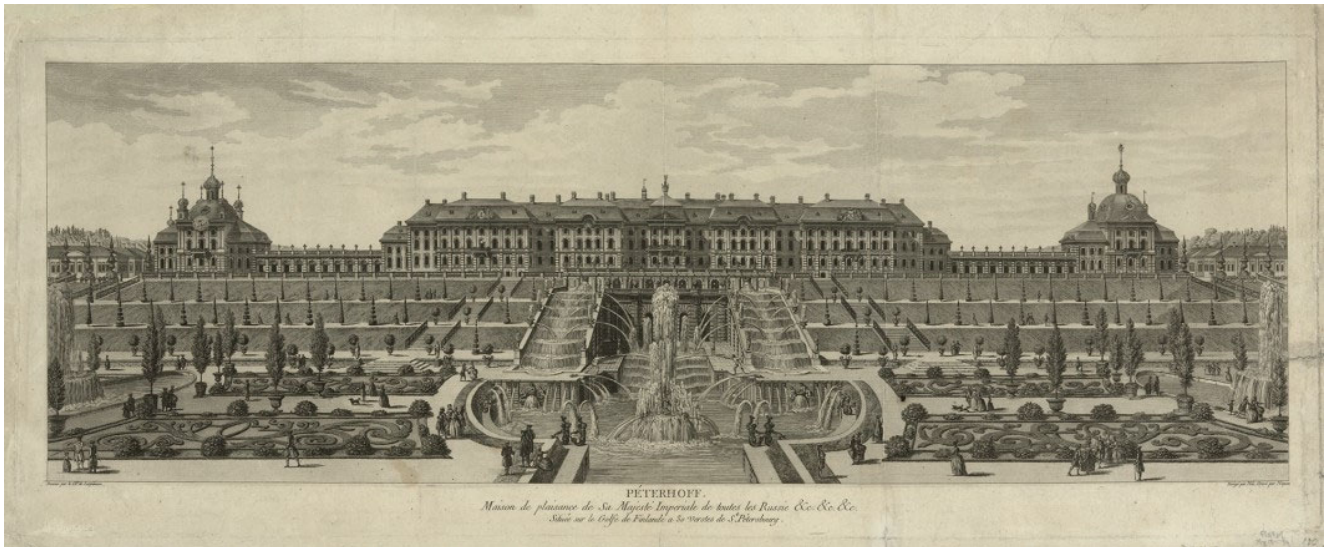


Figure 8.

Prokofij Ivanovič Artemev and Nikita Čelnakov after Mikhail Makhaev, *Peterhoff in Maison de plaisance de Sa Majeste Imperiale de toutes le Russie &c. située sur le Golfe de Finlande à trente verstes de St. Peterbourg*, 1761. Etching and engraving, 47 x 137.2 cm. Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Prints and Photographs Division (PGA - Niguët--Peterhoff. Maison de plaisance... (D size) [P&P]).

Digital image courtesy of Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Prints and Photographs Division. (All rights reserved)

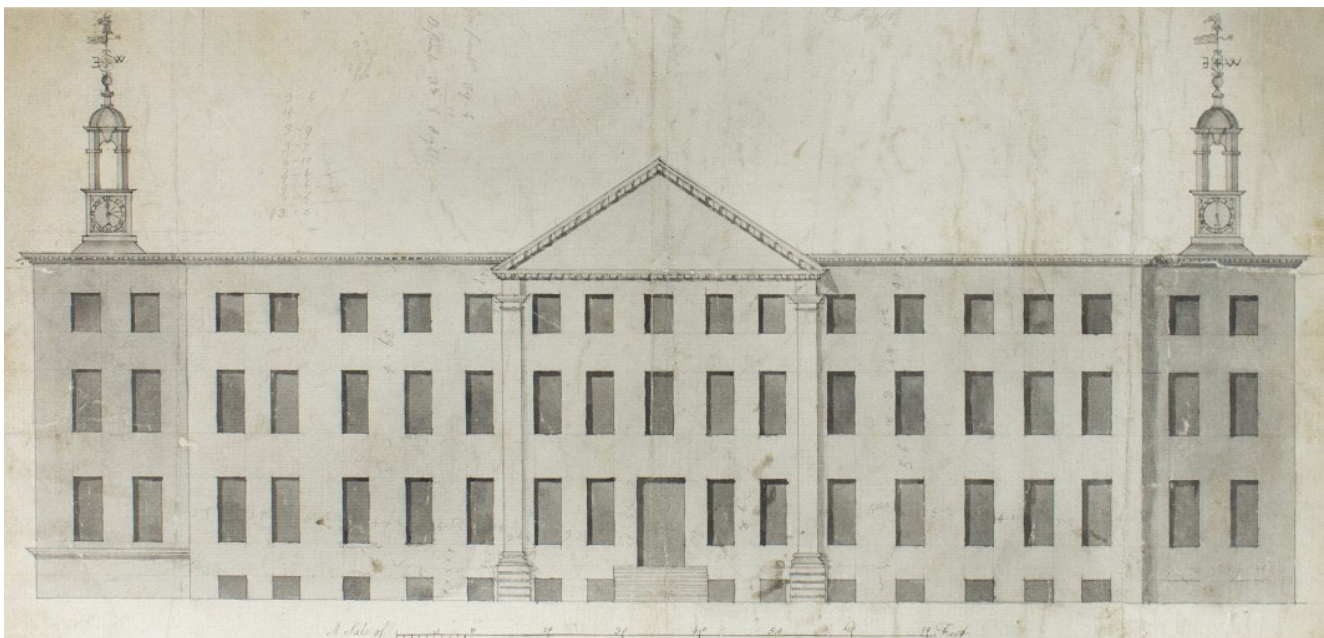


Figure 9.

Francis Dashwood, *Design for the north façade, West Wycombe Park*, 1739. Pen and ink on paper, 21.5 x 45 cm. West Wycombe Park.

Digital image courtesy of West Wycombe Park / Photo: Rodolfo Acevedo Rodriguez. (All rights reserved)

These early responses to architecture suggest that Dashwood found Dutch-style architecture more appealing than the French classical-inflected Baroque of Rastrelli or the more formal classicism of le Blond. Considering Dashwood's close links to the Palladian circle of Colen Campbell through his uncle John Fane, not to mention Dashwood's later classicism, his rejection of the Winter Palace and Peterhof might not initially seem to fit what we know of his taste. However, both Peterhof and the Winter Palace, for all their classicism, were essentially Baroque structures, full of ornament and broken facades. Marly and Monplaisir, despite their invocation of the Dutch vernacular, were much more simple, solid facades that Dashwood may have seen as having more in common with English Palladianism.

Dashwood's return from St Petersburg in 1733 found him in England for his most extended stay in the country since his first tour in 1726. During these years, he began the first round of updates to West Wycombe's interiors, as well as exploring the possibility of extensions and a new facade for the house (fig. 9). Like many other Palladians, he was an amateur architect. His first designs from the late 1730s lack confidence in draughtsmanship and skill in design but show his ambitious plans to build a seat fit for an aristocrat. During these years, he capitalised on the social and cultural networks he had established at Eton and subsequently abroad. He became a member of the Society of Dilettanti, joining Boyne, Gray and a host of other Grand Tourists in this sociable dining society. This network of travellers, collectors and connoisseurs crisscrossed Dashwood's political and social worlds, supporting him in his endeavours and shaping his taste.

In 1739, at the age of thirty-one, Dashwood left England for Italy again. On this tour, he cemented his reputation as a rake and his penchant for ribaldry led to more than one rumour about his illicit activities. In a letter to Lord Boyne from Rome dated 30 January 1740, Dashwood reported that he was drinking with a fellow traveller, Born, who added a postscript to the letter reminding Boyne that they had been drunk for six weeks together in Venice. He added that he had

consumed three bottles of champagne and a quantity of punch with Dashwood that evening. Signing off as ‘the drunken dutchman’, Born was just the sort of person to whom Dashwood was drawn.⁴³ The letter also provides an insight into some of Dashwood’s ambitions. He ruminated on taking a trip to Constantinople in 1741 or perhaps a trip to Ireland. Clearly, more serious matters such as taking a seat in Parliament were still far from his mind. Even so, Dashwood’s fortunes changed rapidly in the next year and he never did return to Constantinople. He was elected to the parliamentary seat for New Romney in 1741 and a few years later married Sarah Gould, the widow of the great book collector Sir Richard Ellys. His duties to the state and domestic life led him to focus his interests increasingly on building his estate and his social networks.

Dashwood's Social World

By the late 1730s, Dashwood had developed an alter ego, ‘St Francis’, the name by which he signed his letter to Lord Boyne. As St Francis, he held parties in the country with his friends, wrote licentious songs and generally mocked the Catholic Church. To his associates, he was a raffish joker, a ‘comic’, according to de Brosse.⁴⁴ Niccolini was clearly amused by him, even when Dashwood held a mock conclave on the death of Pope Clement XII, causing a ‘vrai scandalum magnatum’.⁴⁵ Dashwood had a reputation as among the most ‘clubbable’ individuals of the eighteenth century. He was a member of the Society of Dilettanti, the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Society, the Lincoln Club, the Egyptian Society, the Divan Club, the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce (later the Royal Society of Arts) and the Monks of Medmenham Abbey. Some of these organisations were scholarly, some were sociable and others were focused primarily on pleasure. The last, which included the Monks of Medmenham Abbey, were generally intimate affairs of close friends, while organisations such as the Royal Society brought together a broader milieu of men of letters.

Dashwood had a particular interest in connecting with other travellers to the Levant. This is clear from the fact that he joined the Earl of Sandwich’s Egyptian Society and formed his own group, the Divan Club, which met monthly between December and May from 1744 to 1746.⁴⁶ Like all the clubs with which

Dashwood was associated, these were all-male affairs.⁴⁷ There was also often quite a bit of overlap in membership, especially for clubs with similar interests such as the Dilettanti, the Antiquaries, the Divan Club and the Egyptian Society.

In the elite world in which Dashwood operated, education and knowledge were to be worn lightly. Certainly, erudition was appreciated but not to the detriment of humour and wit. In this spirit of blending knowledge and pleasure, Francis Dashwood proposed the motto *seria ludo* for the seal of the Society of Dilettanti in 1742, a reference to Horace, which he probably learned during his days at Eton. Limited to a few dozen individuals who had travelled on the Grand Tour, the group met six times a year in London. Its membership is a roll call of Dashwood's friends and political allies, including John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich, and Robert Wood, with whom he worked while in political office. The group also included several of the most important collectors of the age, who were central to the introduction of neo-classicism into Britain.



Figure 10.

George Knapton, *Sir Francis Dashwood*, 1742. Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 71.1 cm. Society of Dilettanti, Brooks's Club, London.

Digital image courtesy of Society of Dilettanti, Brooks's Club, London. (All rights reserved)

Formed in 1732, the Society of Dilettanti was known in its earliest years as a drinking club for libertines who loved opera and the fine arts.⁴⁸ When the group decided that members would be required to give portraits for the society's meeting rooms, many presented themselves in poses referencing classical or Renaissance art. Dashwood, for example, presented himself as St Francis (fig. 10), adoring the Venus de' Medici, a reference to his taste and his rakishness. He was not alone. Many of the younger members had also cultivated a reputation for libertinism and portraits such as that of Sir Bouchier Wrey, who later named his daughters Dionysia and Florentina, referred to their various escapades on the Grand Tour.

As an active member of the Dilettanti, Dashwood was involved in some of their more serious pursuits, from commissioning architects who were charged with designing Palladian accommodation for the society, to sketching out plans to establish an academy for arts and architecture in London, to serving on the Ionian committee, which oversaw the multi-year expedition of Richard Chandler, Nicholas Revett and William Pars to western Anatolia and mainland Greece. It was through the Dilettanti that Dashwood exerted his erudition and knowledge, helping to shape the taste of fellow aesthetes and participating in setting the foundations for the development of classical archaeology in Britain.

While organisations such as the Society of Dilettanti, the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Society were London-based groups, by the 1750s the Lincoln Club and the Monks of Medmenham Abbey were revolving round Dashwood's country life in Lincolnshire and Buckinghamshire. Both groups had strong sociable elements. The Monks of Medmenham Abbey was a club that Dashwood hosted at a Gothic ruin, which he began renting and restoring at that time (fig. 11). It functioned as a pleasure garden, where his friends could come and stay, reading books from the library and composing verse.



Figure 11.

James Newton, *Medenham [sic] Abbey near Henley on Thames*, in Francis Grose, *The Antiquities of England and Wales*, vol. 8 (London: S. Hooper, 1787): opp. p. 12, 17 February 1787. Engraving, 11.5 x 15.2. The Getty Research Institute.

Digital image courtesy of Hathi Trust Digital Library. (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Persistent rumours concerning the dubious activities of its members, dressing as monks, consorting with prostitutes and getting inebriated, are almost certainly true. Like the other groups with which he was involved, the Medmenham Monks helped consolidate Dashwood's political and social networks. Members included his political allies the Earl of Sandwich, Dodington, Simon Luttrell, later 1st Earl of Carhampton, Sir William Stanhope (the brother of Dashwood's political ally Lord Stanhope) and John Tucker. The membership also included literary types and local gentlemen, such as John Clerke of Aston, Thomas Potter and Paul Whitehead, a close friend of Dashwood. And, to Dashwood's later detriment, the

firebrand politician John Wilkes was also a regular participant.⁴⁹

The Lincoln Club was slightly more sober than the Medmenham and had more in common with other dining societies. The association met at the Green Man Inn in Blankney, near a pleasure ground that Dashwood built beneath Dunston Pillar, a beacon on the heath that he had constructed in 1751 to guide travellers. Its members were local gentlemen, including John Monson, 2nd Baron Monson, Lord Robert Manners of Bloxholm, Lord Sherard Manners and Lord Charles Manners (brothers of Dashwood's fellow Dilettante, John Manners, Marquess of Granby) and George Carpenter, 1st Earl of Tyrconnell.⁵⁰ In addition to being his friends, they were central to Dashwood's ability to function as an effective politician beyond the confines of the metropolis.

If the Grand Tour was significant in the education and formation of social networks for male members of British elite society, the associational world both in London and the counties was essential for maintaining and extending these networks. Certainly, Dashwood was effective at using his membership in societies to solidify his influence, both in London and beyond. Of course, there was more to projecting one's influence than active participation in social life. As a landed gentleman, it was Dashwood's responsibility to build up an estate that could project his wealth, taste and power.

West Wycombe Estate

At West Wycombe, Dashwood turned to designing a house that reflected his position in society and the ascendancy of the Dashwood family, instigating a rigorous building programme that lasted into the 1780s. Like his uncle, the Earl of Westmorland, Dashwood set out to reimagine his estate. Aside from the acquisition of pictures, Dashwood's principal focus as a collector was on prints, books and casts of statues. In 1732 alone, he purchased over £2700 in books from a bookseller in Amsterdam.⁵¹ Many of these volumes were editions of key seventeenth-century texts by authors such as Grotius, Racine, Corneille, Fontenelle and Bayle. As Dashwood continued to build his library, his collection of prints and books on architecture, antiquities and painting became the basis on which he grounded the architectural programme of the estate.⁵² He expanded the house, infusing it with references to the classical and Renaissance worlds,

ensuring that the interior was richly infused with quotations, references to and representations of the Grand Tour. Indeed, nearly every corner of the house refers not only to another work of art that could be seen on the Grand Tour but also to a work of art that had been engraved and was in the collection at West Wycombe. In addition, he created a garden of follies and sculptures that was constantly growing and changing to reflect the latest fashions.

Despite the proliferation of references to architecture, sculpture and painting, Dashwood and his architects did not design haphazardly. The rooms were intended to tell a story that could represent his erudition and taste, as well as embodying the motto *seria ludo*. So, while the Entrance Hall on the south side of the ground floor appears nothing but serious – a Palmyrene ceiling derived from *Ruins of Balbec* and a hypocaust floor based on William Stukeley's discoveries in Lincoln serve as the framework for a hall of worthies – the view to the east terminates in an alcove in the Dining Room that prominently houses a copy of the Venus de Medici, a pointed reference to Dashwood's alter ego, St Francis. And, in fact, images that initially appear mundane, such as the frieze and fireplace in the Dining Room, become more complex when read in a broader context. The frieze and fireplace designs, for example, cite the so-called 'Tomb of Bacchus', then in the Church of Santa Costanza in Rome. In the early decades of the century, a group of Dutch artists in Rome known as the Bentveughels would take pilgrimages to the tomb, which became an icon to the group known for its Bacchic revelries. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that the Society of Dilettanti recreated the tomb to contain the organisation's papers.

The desire to blend intellectualism and libertinism spilled into the garden. As an example, the Temple of Venus was one of the earliest features of West Wycombe's gardens. It was a round temple perched on a small hill. Below it was a section of the garden, known as Venus's Parlour, which was cleared when Humphrey Repton re-landscaped West Wycombe beginning in 1796. A view by William Hannan from the 1750s portrays the temple *in situ* (fig. 12).⁵³ On an artificial hill, a circular temple – an allusion to the rotunda at Stowe but situated in gardens with a different moral programme – housed a copy of the Venus de' Medici. A path led down the hill to a grotto built underneath the temple. A design for the grotto still exists in the Dashwood collections (fig. 13). It appears

that this section of the garden followed the design of a nymphaeum similar to those found in the gardens of Renaissance Italian villas. In effect, it was similar to Palladio's for the Villa Barbara, although on a much smaller scale. The oval entrance to the grotto alluded to sexuality and temptation, with symbols that all but the most obtuse visitor could understand. Perched above the 'door of life', as John Wilkes later referred to it, was a lead copy of Giambologna's sixteenth-century *Mercury*.⁵⁴ Mercury's association with commerce and communication are well known but eighteenth-century libertines also associated Mercury with sexual commerce.



Figure 12.

William Hannan, *View of West Wycombe Park from the North*, early 1750s. West Wycombe Park.

Digital image courtesy of West Wycombe Park / Photo: Rodolfo Acevedo Rodriguez. (All rights reserved)



Figure 13.

Design for the grotto, West Wycombe Park, ca. 1750s. Pen and ink on paper. West Wycombe Park.

Digital image courtesy of West Wycombe Park. (All rights reserved)

While few textual descriptions of the site exist, and those that do are dubious descriptions, the tone of the site is embodied in John Wilkes's description of West Wycombe. In 1763, he wrote that 'you find at first what is called an *error in limine*; for the entrance to it is the same entrance by which we all come into the world, and the door is what some idle wits have called the door of life'.⁵⁵ He mentioned also that Lord Bute had encouraged Dashwood to erect a Paphian column – a reference to the Temple of Venus at Paphos on Cyprus – in front of the entrance: 'There are in these gardens no busts of Socrates, Epaminondas, or Hampden [a reference to the Temple of Ancient Virtue and the Temple of British Worthies at Stowe]; but there is a most indecent statue of the unnatural satyr [the Satyr with a Goat in the King of Naples's collection]; but at the temple I have mentioned, are two urns sacred to the Ephesian matron, and to Potiphar's wife,

with the inscriptions *Matronae Ephesiae Cineres, Dominae Potiphar Cineres*'.⁵⁶

For Dashwood, managing the West Wycombe estate also involved attending to the welfare of the local community. In 1747 he supported a poor relief bill and was generally a supporter of the concept that public works should be voluntarily funded by local gentlemen in times of need. As a result, Dashwood was responsible for a series of architectural and topographical works that benefitted the community.⁵⁷ With the crop failures of 1750, Dashwood put his poor relief designs into practice by employing the agricultural workers of West Wycombe to excavate chalk from the hill, which was used to re-pave the Oxford road. The flint that they removed with the chalk was used in new buildings across the estate and in the town. This associated construction both employed the locals and also provided an unfinished rustic look that was popular at mid-century.⁵⁸ Likewise, during a period of intermittent grain shortages in the 1760s, Dashwood rebuilt the parish church, St Lawrence.⁵⁹ This was significant not only for the builders but also for the West Wycombe furniture-makers. Dashwood hired them to refit the church, which, when it opened on 10 June 1763 to 'a suitable Anthem', included a £6000 organ and 'Seats covered with green Cloth'.⁶⁰ The painted ceiling, by Borgnis, was a spectacular adaptation of Robert Wood's drawings of the Temple of the Sun at Balbec, reflecting the cutting edge of mid-century taste.

Conclusion

After his term as Chancellor of the Exchequer was completed, Dashwood continued working for the government, specifically as Postmaster General. However, after the 1760s he effectively withdrew from politics, spending his remaining years building his collections and extending his house. Dashwood never gave up his desire for travel. And, while as far as we know he never revisited Constantinople, he did return to Italy in 1768. Writing to Sir William Hamilton and the first Lady Hamilton, he thanked them for 'the many civilities you were pleased to shew to Mr. Delon and myself during our stay at Naples'. It is not clear who 'Mr. Delon' was but Hamilton ended his reply with an intriguing postscript: 'I beg you will be so obliging to send the enclosed to Mr. D'hancarville'. This was Pierre-François Hugues, the self-styled Baron d'Hancarville, who published *Collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman*

*Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Hon. William Hamilton in 1767–76.*⁶¹ This was one of the seminal antiquarian publications of the eighteenth century.

In all, Dashwood was a collector of representations and West Wycombe was a curatorial extension of these representations. As a three-dimensional re-creation of his travels and collection, he could expect visitors to see it as a material embodiment of his knowledge, connoisseurship and wit. In January 1769, after several years of illness, Dashwood's wife, Mary, died. Francis Dashwood died twelve years later, in 1781, and was buried with friends and family in a flintwork mausoleum on the West Wycombe estate, which he designed with his architects (fig. 14). This structure was in effect an outdoor columbarium that evoked the ruins of ancient Italy – a fitting resting place for this highly idiosyncratic connoisseur and collector.



Figure 14.

Nicholas Revett, *Mausoleum, West Wycombe Park*, West Wycombe Park.

Digital image courtesy of Marcus Loveday / Alamy Stock Photo. (All rights reserved)

Author

Jason M. Kelly is Director of the IUPUI Arts and Humanities Institute and Professor of History in the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. Dr. Kelly is the author of *The Society of Dilettanti: Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment* (Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Yale University Press, 2010), lead editor of *Rivers of the Anthropocene* (University of California Press, 2017), and co-editor of *An Anthropocene Primer* (2017).

Footnotes

1. [Francis Dashwood], *An Address to the Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of All the Counties in Great Britain, and to the Mayors, Jurats, Bailiffs, Aldermen, Common Councilmen, and Burgesses of All the Cities, Towns-Corporate, and Boroughs throughout the Said Kingdom of Great Britain. The Following Necessary and Friendly Advice Is Humbly Offered, by a Cordial Admirer of Truth and Liberty, and a Zealous Friend to This Constitution*, London, 1747.
2. Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of the Reign of George the Second* edited by Lord Holland, 2nd ed., 3 vols, London: H. Colburn, 1847, vol. 2, pp. 318–24.
3. Betty Kemp, ‘Some Letters of Sir Francis Dashwood, Baron Le Despencer, as Joint Postmaster General, 1766–81’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester*, vol. 37, no. 1, 1954, pp. 204–48; Betty Kemp, *Sir Francis Dashwood: An Eighteenth-Century Independent*, London: Macmillan, 1967; Jason M. Kelly, ‘Riots, Revelries, and Rumour: Libertinism and Masculine Association in Enlightenment London’, *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 45, no. 4, 2006, pp. 759–95.
4. Ronald Fuller, *Hell-Fire Francis*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1939; Donald McCormick, *The Hell-Fire Club: The Story of the Amorous Knights of Wycombe*, London: Jarrolds, 1958; Bruce Redford, “‘Seria Ludo’: George Knapp’s Portraits of the Society of Dilettanti”, *The British Art Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2001, pp. 56–68; Robin Simon, ‘Reynolds and the Double-Entendre: The Society of Dilettanti Portraits’, *The British Art Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2001, pp. 69–77.
5. There have, however, been a number of studies that intersect with these concerns. See, for example, Betty Kemp, ‘Sir Francis Dashwood’s Diary of his Visit to St Petersburg in 1733’, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 38, no. 90, 1959, pp. 194–222; Francis Dashwood, *The Dashwoods of West Wycombe*, London: Aurum, 1987; Anne Purchas, ‘Maurice-Louis Jolivet’s Drawings at West Wycombe Park’, *Architectural History*, vol. 37, 1994, pp. 68–79; Michael Symes, ‘Flintwork, Freedom and Fantasy: The

Landscape at West Wycombe Park, Buckinghamshire’, *Garden History*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2005, pp. 1–30; Tim Knox, ‘Sir Francis Dashwood of West Wycombe Park, Buckinghamshire, as a Collector of Ancient and Modern Sculpture’, in Nicholas Penny and Eike D. Schmidt, eds, *Collecting Sculpture in Early Modern Europe*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008, pp. 397–420.

6. Alfred B. Beaven and City of London (England), *The Aldermen of the City of London Temp. Henry III.–1908*, vol. 2, London: E. Fisher & Company, 1913, p. 88. The Sleights were a Derbyshire family who were tangentially implicated in the regicide of Charles I. Alice’s brother Edmund Sleight, a mercer and alderman of London from 4 November 1652, was the business partner of Edmund Harvey. Both were supporters of the Parliamentarians and Harvey served as a colonel in the army. Harvey served on the jury at the trial of Charles I but did not sign the death warrant. See Heneage Finch, Earl of Nottingham, *An Exact and Most Impartial Accompt of the Indictment, Arraignment, Trial, and Judgment (According to Law) of Twenty Nine Regicides, the Murtherers of His Late Sacred Majesty of Most Glorious Memory*, London: R. Scot, T. Basset, R. Chiswell and F. Wright, 1679, pp. 283–4. The business partners donated £300 to suppress the Irish revolution in 1642. See John P. Prendergast, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland*, 3rd ed., Dublin: Mellifont Press, 1922, p. 443. Harvey was imprisoned in Pendennis Castle where he died in 1673.
7. Oxford: Bodleian Library, MS DD, Dashwood, A/1/1.
8. Tim Knox, *West Wycombe Park*, Swindon: National Trust, 2001, p. 47.
9. Bodleian, MS DD, Dashwood, A/1/5.
10. *Post Boy*, no. 928, 29 April–1 May 1701. Sir Francis Dashwood was a Director of the Royal African Co. See William Andrew Pettigrew, *Freedom’s Debt: The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672–1752*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press and Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2013, p. 237.

11. *Post Boy*, no. 1165, 29–31 October 1702.
12. On the education of elites in the eighteenth century, see Vicky Coltman, *Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760–1800*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. pp. 146–7.
13. Dashwood was in the 5th Remove in a list of pupils from 1725. See Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh, ed., *Eton College Lists, 1678–1790*, Eton College: Spottiswoode, 1907, p. 20.
14. Sir H. C. Maxwell Lyte, *A History of Eton College, 1440–1875*, London: Macmillan, 1875, pp. 146–7.
15. John Potter, *Archaeologia Graeca*, Oxford, 1697.
16. Pietro Santi Bartoli, *Admiranda Romanarum antiquitatum ac veteris sculpturae vestigia: anaglyphico opere elaborata ex marmoreis exemplaribus quae Romae adhuc extant in Capitolio, aedibus hortisque virorum principum ad antiquam elegantiam a Petro Sancti Bartolo delineata incisa, in quibus plurima ac praeclarissima ad Romanam historiam ac veteres mores dignoscendos ob oculos ponuntur; notis Io. Petri Bellorii illustrate*, Rome, 1693; Pietro Santi Bartoli, *Gli antichi sepolcri, ovvero, Mausolei Romani, et Etruschi, trouati in Roma & in altri luoghi celebri: nelli quali si contengono molte erudite memorie raccolti, disegnati, & intagliati da Pietro Santi Bartoli*, Rome: Antonio de Rossi, 1697; Pietro Santi Bartoli, *Le Pitture antiche delle grotte di Roma, e del sepolcro de' Nasonj*, Rome, 1706; Giovanni Battista Cavalieri, *Antiqvarvm statvarvm vrbis Romae primvs et secvndvs liber*, Rome, 1585; Bernard de Montfaucon, *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*, 15 vols, Paris, 1719–24; François Perrier, *Segmenta nobilium signorum e statuaru[m]: quae temporis dentem inuidium euasere Urbis aeternae ruinis erepta, typis aeneis ab se commissa perptuae uenerationis monimentum*, Rome, 1638; Domenico de' Rossi, *Raccolta di statue antiche e moderne: data in luce sotto i gloriosi auspicj della Santità di N.S. Papa Clemente XI*, Rome, 1704; Joachim von Sandrart, *Sculpturae veteris admiranda, sive, Delineatio vera perfectissimarum*

eminentissimarumque statuarum: unà cum artis hujus nobilissimae theoria, Nuremburg, 1680.

17. Rudolf Wittkower, *Palladio and Palladianism*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1974; John Harris, *The Palladian Revival: Lord Burlington, his Villa and Garden at Chiswick*, exh. cat., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994; Irena Murray and Charles Hind, eds, *Palladio and his Legacy: A Transatlantic Journey*, Venice: Marsilio, 2010.
18. On paper museums, see Elisabeth Décultot, Gabriele Bickendorf and Valentin Kockel, eds, *Musées de papier: l'antiquité en livres, 1600–1800*, Paris: Musée du Louvre and Gourcuff Gradenigo, 2010.
19. James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *Antiquities of Athens*, 1763; Richard Chandler, Nicholas Revett and William Pars, *Ionian Antiquities*, 5 vols, London: Society of Dilettanti, 1769.
20. Kemp, in both 1959 and 1967, states that Dashwood was abroad in 1726 but she provides no reference for this trip. Nevertheless, it appears that he was abroad in 1726–7. Thomas Wotton, *The English Baronets*, vol. 3, London, 1727, p. 114, noted that the young baronet ‘is abroad on his travels’ at the time of printing.
21. *The Daily Journal*, no. 2915, 11 May 1730.
22. Letter from William Mildmay to Earl of Westmorland, 1 December 1720 [1730], in Historical Manuscripts Commission, *10th Report: Appendix, Part 4*, London: HMSO, 1885, p. 32.
23. *London Evening Post*, no. 324, 3 January 1731, reporting that Dashwood landed with his brother. This could have been one of his half-brothers, John Dashwood-King or Charles Dashwood, but at 14 or 13 years old respectively both probably too young to have gone on the Grand Tour with Dashwood.
24. Horatio Robert Forbes Brown, ‘Inglesi e Scozzesi all’Università di Padova dall’anno 1618 sino al 1765’, in *Monografie storiche sullo studio di Padova*:

Contributo del R. Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, alla celebrazione del VII centenario della università, Venice: Ferrari, 1922, p. 208.

25. Ibid; James Gray became a well-known diplomat and member of the Dilettanti but little is known of Joseph Alston.
26. Ibid.
27. Letter from Elizeus Burges to Thomas Pelham-Hollis, 1st Duke of Newcastle, 13 April 1731, NA, SP 99/63, f. 159; John Ingamells, ed., *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701–1800: Compiled from the Brinsley Ford Archive*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1997, pp. 115–16.
28. Versions also exist at the National Maritime Museum, London, and Castle Howard, Yorkshire.
29. On attributions see F. J. B Watson, ‘The Nazari, a Forgotten Family of Venetian Portrait Painters’, *The Burlington Magazine*, no. 91, 1949, pp. 75–9; Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini, eds, *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, London: Tate Gallery, 1996; Ingamells, 1997, p. 116; Jason M. Kelly, ‘The Portraits of Sir James Gray (c.1708–73)’, *The British Art Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2007, pp. 15–19; Royal Museums Greenwich, ‘Gustavus Hamilton, 1710–46, 2nd Viscount Boyne, and Friends in a Ship’s Cabin’, <http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/14041> (accessed 14 December 2018). As Watson noted, there were multiple copies made of the portrait – certainly more than have survived. Probably commissioned through Swiney, one may have been purchased by Dashwood to commemorate his friendship with the other travellers. There is also a copy at Castle Howard, though it does not appear that Henry Howard, then Lord Morpeth and later Lord Carlisle, was on the continent at the time. Like Dashwood, he may have acquired the painting as a Grand Tour conversation piece rather than as a portrait to commemorate a specific voyage. Earlier writers may have named Dashwood and Carlisle as sitters because copies existed at their estates. The manuscript record offers a more convincing list

of sitters.

30. Neil Guthrie, *The Material Culture of the Jacobites*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 42.
31. Letter from Antonio Niccolini to Francis Dashwood, 13 May 1763, Bodleian, MS DD, Dashwood, B/11/4/11a: 'Beato quel primo momento in cui in Roma nel 1731 mi accordatte la vostra amicizia, è me la confermatte in Firenze, ed in Inghilterra nel 1746, 1747, & 1748 con immensi non mai seordevoli benefizi me la abbe'.
32. Antonio Prosperi, *In lode dell'abate Antonio Niccolini patrizio fiorentino e fulignate de' Marchesi di Ponsacco Camugliano ec. ec: Orazion funerale detta nell'Accademia Fulginia il dì 2. giugno MDCCLXXI da Antonio Prosperi frate minore conventuale e dal Collegio de' XII.*, Fuligno, 1771, p. 7; letter from Montesquieu to Niccolini, 14 October 1739, in John Rogister and Mireille Gille, eds, *Correspondance du President de Brosses et de l'abbé Marquis Niccolini*, Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2016, p. 212.
33. Letter from Charles de Brosses to Monsieur de Quintin, 4 October 1739, in Charles de Brosses, *Le Président de Brosses en Italie: lettres familières écrites d'Italie en 1739 et 1740*, Paris: Librairie Académique Didier, 1869, p. 259.
34. Letter from Antonio Leprotti to Eustachio Manfredi, 29 September 1731, Bologna: Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Fondo speciale Leprotti, II, f. 62: 'Il Sig.e Cavaliere Baronetto Francesco Dashwood presenterà questa lettera al mio Rever.mo Sig.e Eustachio favore il piacere di recepirlo e conoscere, e insieme essere favorito all'Osservatorio, essendo questo un Cavaliere che viaggia per informarsi di quel resto di mondo, che è di quà da Calais. Egli è già stato a Costantinopoli, et in molte altre parti.// Il nostro Sig.e Stevens è suo amico, onde io tanto più volontieri prendo a pregarla di questo favore, al solito della sua buon grazia raccomandandomi'. I am thankful to Drew Armstrong for sharing this reference and transcription with me.

35. Letter from R. Lowth to Dashwood, 11 May 1748, Bodleian, MS DD, Dashwood ,B/11/7/13a, later refers to this friendship, noting that Stevens was making his way to Turin. Ingamells, 1997, p. 895, names Henry Stewart Stevens as ‘Celsius Stevens’.
36. William Eisler, ‘The Construction of the Image of Martin Folkes (1690–1754), Part I: Art, Science and Masonic Sociability in the Age of the Grand Tour’, *The Medal*, no. 58, 2011, pp. 4–29; *ibid.*, ‘Part II’, *The Medal* no. 59, 2011, pp. 4–16.
37. Ingamells, 1997, p. 278.
38. Richard Chandler (the leader of the Society of Dilettanti’s Ionian expedition, which was organised by a committee that included Dashwood), *Travels in Asia Minor*, London, 1775, p. 227, noted the group’s arrival in Smyrna: ‘When we were about to quit Smyrna, three English gentlemen, Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Skipwith, and Mr. Wilbraham, arrived from Athens, with Mr. Turnbull, a very worthy physician, who had lived many years at Smyrna, and was highly esteemed there by the Europeans in general’.
39. Letter from Frank Skipwith to Francis Dashwood, 2 August 1766, Bodleian, MS DD, Dashwood, B/11/3, quoted in Kemp, 1967, p. 100.
40. Kemp, 1959, pp. 194–222; Jeremy Black, *British Politics and Foreign Policy, 1727–44*, Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge, 2016, pp. 119–20.
41. Kemp, 1959, p. 203; James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Architecture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 170.
42. Kemp, 1959, p. 213.
43. Letter from Francis Dashwood to Lord Boyne, 30 January 1740, West Wycombe Archives, copy from *Manuscripts, Annotated Books, Literary and Historical Portraits, and Artefacts*, Great Haseley, Oxon: R. Davids, 1996, pp. 35–6.

44. Charles de Brosses, *Lettres d'Italie du Président de Brosses*, Paris: Mercure de France, 1986, vol. 2, p. 445.
45. Ibid.
46. 'Journal of the Egyptian Society', British Library Add. MS 52362; Divan Club, 'Al Koran', London: National Maritime Museum MSS SAN/V/113.
47. The paintings *à la turque* in the Divan Club's current dining room do not represent its membership, as indicated by the club minute books, but may refer to a salon that met at West Wycombe.
48. Bruce Redford, *Dilettanti: The Antic and the Antique in Eighteenth-Century England*, Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008; Jason M. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti: Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009.
49. I have compiled this membership list from unlabelled estate archives at West Wycombe.
50. Basil Sweirt, 'History of the Lincoln Club; with Anecdotes of its Members', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, no. 56, pt 2, October 1786, p. 837.
51. Bodleian, MS DD, Dashwood, B/12/3/14.
52. On the library, see Adriano Aymonino, 'Playing with the Canon: West Wycombe Park's Iconography and the Principle of Citation', in this case study.
53. Hannan's view was popular in the 18th century, no doubt spurred by William Woollet's engraving in 1757. Another version of Hannan's painting (www.artnet.com/artists/william-hannan/a-view-of-walton-bridge-and-the-temple-of-venus-9WZObzjdPBgjZrPng77tfg2) was sold at auction on 13 May 1998 (oil on canvas, 43.2 x 61 cm) and a third version is in the Government Art Collection (oil on canvas, 64 x 102 cm, GAC 3723). Copies continued to be made for decades. Later in the century, Chinese-export

reverse-painted mirrors were produced of this scene: see Christie's, New York, *500 Years: Decorative Arts Europe*, 29–30 November 2012, lot 152; Thomas Coulborn & Sons Ltd, BADA Antiques & Fine Art Fair, London, 2013. Note also the similarities in composition to Hannan's *Prospect of Duncombe Park* (oil on canvas, 55.5 x 71 cm) which is a formulaic rendition based on the model of the West Wycombe view. It is a capriccio that fills the canvas with key architectural elements from the Duncombe estate. Thomas Duncombe (c.1724–1779), who inherited the house and joined the Dilettanti, may have been introduced to Hannan through Dashwood. There is also a connection between Dashwood and Duncombe in that Duncombe's father and Dashwood's uncle were part of the circle of early 18th-century Palladians. Duncombe House was illustrated in Colen Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus: Or, The British Architect*, vol. 3, London, 1725, pp. 85–8.

54. Not only did Giambologna produce several copies himself (Museo del Bargello, Florence; Villa Medici, Rome; Museo Nazionale, Naples originally in Farnese collection; Kunsthistorisches, Vienna) but collectors such as Sir Hans Sloane and Lawrence Dundas also obtained copies in various sizes for their own collections: e.g. Johann Zoffany, *Lawrence Dundas and Grandson*, Aske Hall, Collection of the Marquess of Zetland; see Jeremy Warren, 'Sir Hans Sloane as a Collector of Small Sculpture', *Apollo Magazine*, vol. 159, no. 504, 2004, p. 38.
55. John Wilkes in 1763, quoted in *New Foundling Hospital for Wit*, London, 1768, p. 44.
56. Ibid., p. 45. The reference to the Ephesian matron was from Petronius's *Satyricon* in which the chaste Matron Ephesia despairs at her husbands death and begins to starve herself in his tomb. Eventually, she is seduced by a soldier who brings her food. Potiphar's wife was the woman who attempted to seduce Joseph in the biblical story. Thus, two of the most 'sacred' items in the gardens were models of female infidelity.
57. Kemp, 1967, pp. 12, 119.

58. Nikolaus Pevsner and Elizabeth Williamson, *Buckinghamshire*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994, p. 27.
59. Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical History of England*, vol. 4, London: S. Lewis & Co., 1831, p. 585; T. S. Ashton, *Economic Fluctuations in England, 1700–1800*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959, pp. 36–7.
60. *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 14 June 1763; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1763, p. 359; John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 8, London: John Nichols, 1814, pp. 683–4.
61. Pierre-François Hugues, Baron d'Hancarville, *Collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Hon. William Hamilton*, 4 vols, Naples, 1766–7 [1767–76].

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