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Life in the library

Susie West

This chapter explores portraiture in a particular space, that of the private library in the English country house. Through a discussion of a group of portraits positioned within that space, I examine some of the possible social and cultural meanings of this display, rather than follow a detailed analysis of individual images.¹ The country house library emerges as a key site for discourses around knowledge and identity for the English elite, from the seventeenth century onwards.² Although libraries within English country houses are familiar to heritage house visitors, as part of a standard tour around the reception rooms, there is an important caveat to this familiarity. As

¹ In this respect I follow Marcia Pointon's distinction between the individual image and the social constructions around the practices of viewing portraiture. M. Pointon, *Hanging the Head, Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-century England*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press for The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1993), p. 1.

² G. Jackson-Stops and J. Pipkin, *The English Country House, A Grand Tour*, (London, National Trust/Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984); J. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, (London, Harper Collins, 1997); S. Jervis, 'The English country house library' in N. Barker ed., *Treasures from the Libraries of National Trust Country Houses*, (New York, Royal Oak Foundation, 1999), 114; J. Raven, 'The representation of philanthropy and reading in the eighteenth-century library', *Libraries and Culture* 31 (1996), pp. 492-510; S. West, 'Studies and status: spaces for books in seventeenth-century Penshurst Place, Kent', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 22 (2002), pp. 266-92.

the first part of my discussion demonstrates, the library has a historical trajectory of moving around in the country house plan, as that plan itself responds to and shapes the social uses of the great house. Our ‘heritage’ encounters with libraries are usually in the context of a later nineteenth-century remodelling of routes around the house, often placing the library in a historically specific relationship to rooms such as dining and withdrawing rooms. It follows that such routes are not representative of earlier phases of these spatial relationships. I stress this spatial contingency as an essential preamble to considering how portraiture is deployed around the house.

The country house library in the long eighteenth century was an important resource for the creation and maintenance of cultural life, through the medium of print, both textual and graphic. Exchanges and debates between city and country, male and female personas, could be assembled on the shelves, representing the landed estate’s version of the coffee house.³ The library room became increasingly prominent within the country house, as the organisation of space within the house evolved to produce the suite of reception rooms that by the end of the period consistently linked the library to the drawing room as a public space.⁴ Libraries have been noted for their

³ R. Myers and M. Harris eds, *Property of a Gentleman, The Formation, Organisation and Dispersal of the Private Library*, (Winchester, St Paul’s Bibliographies, 1991); I. Jackson, ‘Approaches to the history of readers and reading in eighteenth-century Britain’, *Historical Journal* 47 (2004), pp. 1041-1054.

⁴ M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1978); this chapter draws on research in S. West, ‘The development of the library in Norfolk country houses, 1660-1830’ (PhD dissertation, University of

non-book collections, particularly assemblages of antiquarian curiosities and fine art groups of coins, medals and small bronzes. Little attention has been paid to portraiture within the library, beyond the antique tradition of author portraits above the bookcases.⁵ While this tradition was taken up in the eighteenth century through busts of classical authors (the lost interior scheme at Blickling Hall, Norfolk, is an excellent example), portraits tended not to infiltrate the library, at least partly as a result of the available space for display above the bookcases. Family portraits were least likely to be hung in the library, but portrait series of public figures are known and emerge as a distinctive category within the uses of portraiture in the country house.

My discussion focuses on the surviving library room at Narford Hall, Norfolk, as the vehicle for an exploration of how the portraiture, in a series of paintings hung above the bookcases and in busts and miniatures positioned on furniture, contributes to the interior scheme. The room was commissioned by Sir Andrew Fountaine (1676-1753), who was probably his own architect, and who was a well-known virtuoso. I argue for the presence of a complex scheme of interactions between the portraits, based on the associations and oppositions contained in the biographies of the depicted 'great men'. I suggest that there is an emerging theme of English cultural achievements represented within the portraiture, and a highly personal theme of

East Anglia, 2001) and my forthcoming monograph on the architecture and design of the English private library, University of Toronto Press.

⁵ André Masson, *The Pictorial Catalogue, Mural Decoration in Libraries*, trans D Gerard, (Oxford, Clarendon, 1981); Colin Tite, *The Manuscript Library of Sir Robert Cotton*, (London, British Library, 1994).

friendship specific to Fountaine. This was not a room open to all visitors, but one that was open to those who could understand and make use of the specialist collections, of books, coins and medals, within.

The library within the house plan

The uses of portraiture within this distinctive space relate closely to the design scheme for the room, and its evolving place within the country house plan.⁶ Libraries in English country houses become more visible, at least in the archives, during the seventeenth century. Typically, a small study was adjacent to the owner's bedchamber, on the upper floor of the house. It was segregated from the public rooms, or state apartments, which spread over the ground and first floors, linked by the great stairs. By the early eighteenth century, state rooms were laid out across one floor only, on the first floor or *piano nobile* of newly built houses. Libraries were still planned to relate to the owner's apartment (bed chamber, dressing rooms) and were not integrated into the new state room layout. A prime example of this arrangement is Houghton Hall, Norfolk. Houghton was built from 1720-9 for the most powerful politician of the time, Sir Robert Walpole, First Minister. The formal entrance to the house was up external stairs to the first floor Stone Hall, from which guests would be admitted to the state rooms on the right hand side of the house. Walpole's bedchamber apartment was on the left hand side, separated from the hall by a family parlour. His dressing room and library were next to his bedchamber, all luxuriously

⁶ The pattern of how the library moves around the house plan is discussed within my thesis and forthcoming book, where the following houses are discussed in greater detail.

fitted out but not on the state rooms route.⁷ The sole portrait in Walpole's library at Houghton Hall was that of George I, a royal gift, placed over the chimneypiece. The library room was otherwise entirely given over to books, in a fully architectural scheme of mahogany panelling, completed by 1729. This type of wood panelled interior for libraries, with only overdoor and overmantel spaces for paintings, is typical of late seventeenth and early eighteenth century libraries.

The architectural history of the private library within the country house took a new direction in the early decades of the eighteenth century, leaving the example at the newly fitted out Houghton Hall as a rather conservative nod to the past. Instead, newly built libraries began to encroach on the public side of the house plan, becoming more accessible from the state apartments: a decisive step on the long arc of the trajectory from family to reception room. This next phase is gloriously represented by the long library at Narford Hall, Norfolk, created from 1718, which forms the main subject of this discussion.⁸ Although libraries did not become fully integrated into the public rooms until at least the 1740s, they did lose their association with the owner's apartment. Bedchambers tended to be relocated to the second floor, away from the state room floor, while libraries remained on the principal floor. They were still not visible on the principal axis through the state rooms. At Holkham Hall, Norfolk, a

⁷ J. Harris, 'The architecture of the house,' in A. Moore, ed., *Houghton Hall, The Prime Minister, the Empress and the Heritage*, (London, Philip Wilson, 1996), pp. 20-4.

⁸ I am extremely grateful to Andrew Moore for his comments on this chapter and for sharing his knowledge of Narford Hall's collections so generously in the past.

palatial Palladian revival house for the Earl of Leicester, the long library was kept in a separate wing with the owner's apartments, away from the monumental state rooms and sculpture gallery of the main block of the house.

After the 1740s, the country house plan evolved into a circuit plan, in which the principal reception rooms opened in to each other, allowing guests to circulate, via the hall. The circuit plan, and the newly visible library within this plan, can be demonstrated in the houses of Robert Adam. He remodelled the Jacobean Syon House, Middlesex, for the Duke of Northumberland into this plan. The Syon library is a true room of parade, the final public room in the circuit, designed to equal the preceding dining and drawing rooms. Here, past and present portraits gazed down on the fashionable world. Adam's 1762 scheme for Syon House remodelled the Jacobean long gallery as a neoclassical library. Syon was not the principal venue for the display of Northumberland portraits, and the library scheme instead displays a series of portrait medallions integrated into the wall surface, contrasting with sculpture and the books. By the 1760s, the library carried equal social status and visibility with the great hall, dining and withdrawing rooms.

This mobility of the library within the house plan affected how the library was intended to be presented within a sequence of rooms, family or state. The increasing visibility and accessibility of the library therefore affected the intended uses and appropriate design schemes. With this contingent planning in mind, the Narford Hall library can be understood in the context of the spatial relations of its creation date, 1718. It was not intended to be an addition to the state rooms of the older house, but it was distinct from the owner's bedchamber apartment within the house.

Narford Hall was built 1702-4, in the established form of the later seventeenth-century country house: a stripped down classicism, emphasising length over height, and easily adaptable to the funds available. The 1702 house took the form of a rectangle, two rooms deep, with a central hall and great stairs, and symmetrical rooms to either side (Figure 1). Narford's owner was the younger son of an old Norfolk family, who had returned to the county to establish his own landed estate. Andrew Fountaine (1632-1706) moved with his second wife, Sarah Chicheley, at a time when their children were adults; Andrew Fountaine had benefited from the patronage of his father-in-law Sir Thomas Chicheley of Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire, and his metropolitan presence helped his son, also named Andrew, establish his own early introduction into Court circles. In order to assess the younger Fountaine's creation of the new library room and its interior scheme, I am going to use a brief biographical discussion of his cultural interests and connections, which will be shown to be strong influences on the portraiture within the library.

[Figure 1 here]

Sir Andrew Fountaine: Collecting and Networks

Marcia Pointon reminds us that the uses of portraiture, by patrons and other viewers, can invoke assumptions about the competences required to access a range of meanings ascribed to these images. The means of decoding portraiture arise from the cultural milieu and experiences of the viewer, the accumulated education and aspirations that facilitate the viewer's understanding of the image-specific codes and

the wider social contexts of the encounter.⁹ In working with the gallery of portraits assembled and displayed within the Narford library, I am drawing attention to the competences primarily of the patron, the younger Andrew Fountaine (1676-1753). The son of a relatively obscure landed gentry father, albeit one who seems to have some virtuoso interests, the younger Fountaine was celebrated during his lifetime for his virtuoso achievements and social connections, and his reputation endured through the nineteenth century. More recently, scholarship on the Palladian revival of the early eighteenth century and on the cultural significance of county networks has further informed our historical appreciation of both Sir Andrew Fountaine and Narford Hall.¹⁰

While his father was building the house on the new estate, the younger Fountaine was away on his first Grand Tour from 1701-4. He was already knighted, as a result of his Oxford career at Christchurch College. Here he had been chosen to

⁹ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p. 9, drawing on Bourdieu's now familiar concept of cultural capital.

¹⁰ Narford collections are discussed in A. Moore, *Norfolk and the Grand Tour*, (Norwich, Norfolk Museums Service, 1985); A. Moore, *Dutch and Flemish Painting in Norfolk*, (Norwich, Norfolk Museums Service, 1988); A. Moore and C. Crawley, *Family and Friends, A Regional Survey of British Portraiture*, (London, HMSO, 1992); English Palladianism in J. Bold and J. Reeves, *Wilton House and English Palladianism, Some Wiltshire Houses*, (London, HMSO, 1988); J. Harris, *The Palladian Revival, Lord Burlington, His Villa and Garden at Chiswick*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1994).

make the Latin oration to William III on his visit to Oxford in 1698, and as custom dictated, William knighted him. As a student, he had already made something of a name for himself as a virtuoso, ‘one that has spent much of his time upon coyn’s & Pictures and understand’s them well. And has a good collection of both, especially of Italian prints’, as he was described in 1699 by Edward Thwaites, Dean of Queen’s College, Oxford.¹¹ Thwaites recommended Fontaine to the cleric and scholar George Hickes. Hickes needed help finishing his major publication on the early Germanic cultures, and Fontaine contributed an essay on Saxon coins which seems to have been innovative in linking linguistic and historical questions to the inscriptions found on the coins, ‘in the new spirit of historical investigation’.¹² However he had acquired this precociously advanced interest in numismatics, it is clear that he had a strong visual sense of coins as material objects, a sense also found in his interest in the visual arts.

Fontaine’s’s charm is a characteristic quality of contemporary accounts, and it must have been evident for his inclusion on the diplomatic mission to take the Act of Settlement, concerning the succession of the English crown, to the dowager electress Sophia (1630-1714) in Hanover in 1701. This was a highly politically-charged mission, designed to ensure the peaceful succession of the crown to a legitimate Protestant, after the death of the obvious heir, queen Anne’s son William, duke of Gloucester, in 1700. Sophia was a granddaughter of James I; it would be her

¹¹ R. Harris, *A Chorus of Grammars, The correspondence of George Hickes and his collaborators on the Thesaurus linguarum septentrionalium*, (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, 1992) p. 273.

¹² R. Harris, *Chorus of Grammars*, p. 51.

son George who succeeded after Anne died in 1714. The significance for Fountaine was cultural, rather than political, as he stayed on in Europe, a success at the Hanoverian court. Hanover was emerging as a centre of the Palladian revival, an architectural turn away from the Baroque towards new interpretations of Andreas Palladio's sixteenth-century classicism.¹³ Fountaine would adopt this new direction in architecture at his own house. He was already well enough versed in the arts and sciences to maintain a correspondence with the great German philosopher and mathematician, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1646-1716), then librarian in the ducal library at Hanover. Leibnitz supported his admission to the Royal Society of Berlin (Leibnitz was a corresponding Fellow of the Royal Society, London). In Italy, he established a friendship with Cosimo III de Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany. Fountaine's character is caught in a letter from a fellow traveller, Robert Nelson, to his mother, reassuring her of his Grand Tour progress and mentioning that 'tis well Sir Andrew has in the sweetness of his conversation so strong a remedy against those prejudices that might arise from his great Erudition'.¹⁴ Fountaine's happy combination of an evidently charming personality and deep knowledge of matters close to all virtuosos' hearts, especially of coins and medals, made him a sought-after acquaintance. He was also useful to his friends back in England, commissioning

¹³ B. Arciszewska, *The Hanoverian Court and the Triumph of Palladio: The Palladian Revival in Hanover and England c. 1700*, Warsaw, Wydawnictwo DiG 2002

¹⁴ Narford Library mss, quoted in Moore, *Grand Tour*, p. 28; H. Pagan, 'Andreas Fountaine Eques Auratus A.A.A.F. III Vir,' *The British Numismatic Journal*, 63 (1993), p. 120; Moore, *Dutch and Flemish*, p. 12.

works of art and exporting them on their behalf, as he did for Thomas Herbert, 8th earl of Pembroke (1656/7-1733).¹⁵

Sir Andrew Fountaine gained further experience of European culture when he travelled to Holland in 1705, on another diplomatic mission, with the earl of Pembroke. Here he made further purchases of books and coins, to be displayed at his London home.¹⁶ In 1706 he inherited the Narford estate, aged 30. His London life continued, enlivened by an official visit to Ireland where he befriended Jonathan Swift, with summer visits to Narford, until he undertook a second Grand Tour from 1713. He was away for four years, in Paris, Turin, Florence, Rome and Venice, returning through Germany.¹⁷ Still a keen collector, searching out coins and medals, he was said to have ‘out-Italianed the Italians themselves’ in his success.¹⁸ On his return to England in 1717, he began to alter Narford Hall, adding the library wing.

Fountaine never married, and the fragmentary records of his life, chiefly the vivid appearances he makes in Swift’s letters up to 1713, do not suggest any

¹⁵ F. Russell, ‘A Collection Transformed’, *Apollo*, 21 June 2009; Moore, *Grand Tour*, p. 94.

¹⁶ Pagan, ‘Andreas Fountaine’, p. 117.

¹⁷ B. Ford, ‘Sir Andrew Fountaine, one of the keenest virtuosi of his age’, *Apollo*, cxxii, 285, 1985, pp. 355-357.

¹⁸ J. Richardson the younger, *Richardsoniana: or, Occasional reflections on the Moral Nature of Man* (London 1776), pp. 331-32, cited in R. Dormant, *British Painting in the Philadelphia Museum of Art From the Seventeenth through the Nineteenth Century*, (Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1986), p. 166.

particular attachments.¹⁹ He remained close to his sister Elizabeth (m. Edward Clent) and his brother Brigg, although both predeceased him; his sister's grandson Brigg Price Fountaine continued the family line. His social persona as a single man, active at Court and welcome at the greatest aristocratic houses, prompts the question of who was the intended audience for his refashioning of his father's house, architecturally and through the collections? Whose gaze traversed the library portraits? The challenge here is to recover the meanings and associations that would have been shared by Fountaine and his milieu.²⁰ Any biographical approach needs to be supported and extended by a consideration of the significance of the portraits as a group and in their setting.

The interior scheme of the library

Fountaine's architectural work at his house was in advance of the 1720s movement towards the Palladian revival in England, although he would become a member of the inner circle of patrons and designers associated with Richard Boyle, 3rd earl of Burlington (1694-1753) and his protégée William Kent (1686-1748), who supported the style.²¹ Kent met Lord Burlington making his Grand Tour in 1719 and

¹⁹ H. Williams ed., *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 5 vols, 1963); H. Williams ed., *Jonathan Swift, Journal to Stella* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2 vols, 1974).

²⁰ Marcia Pointon has described the 'field of the portrait and its connotations', *Hanging the head*, p. 1.

²¹ It is worth clarifying that the man most strongly identified as the designer of the English Palladian revival, William Kent, was not at this date (1717) associated with many of the English patrons of the 1720s. Kent was working in Italy from 1710,

accompanied him back to England later that year.²² There is no direct evidence that Fountaine and Kent knew each other in Rome, although it is hard to credit that the two Englishmen would not have been introduced by mutual friends.²³ However, by 1718, Fountaine was back at Narford finishing his rapidly constructed library wing, and Kent was yet to start his English career.

Current scholarship suggests that Sir Andrew Fountaine was his own architect, and that he went on to design at least one other room (for his friend Sir Matthew Decker's house in Richmond, Surrey) as well as being treated as an essential advisor for building projects in the 1720s elsewhere in Norfolk. The house at Narford was built against an older service courtyard; Sir Andrew used the projection of a rear wing

based in Rome, where he met the young Thomas Coke, Lord Lovel (the future Earl of Leicester), in 1714, who had as developed cultural tastes as Fountaine. Coke used Kent to assist him in purchasing books and works of art and to make commissions in Italy; years later, in the 1730s, Coke was able to rebuild his manor house at Holkham, Norfolk, into the Palladian palace that is Holkham Hall, assisted by Kent, Burlington and Fountaine.

²² J. Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press for The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2004), p. 138.

²³ Kent may have been aware of his presence in Rome in 1716, Kent letters MSS (14 January 1716) cited in *The Grand Tour, Dictionary and Archive of Travellers*, 'Arundell, Hon. Richard', www.grandtour.amdigital.co.uk/libezproxy.open.ac.uk/Dictionary/TravellerDetails.aspx?documentid=58119&prevPos=58119&let=a&vpath=TravellerBrowseonline edition, viewed 24 June 2012.

of this yard to create a new wing for his library (see figure 1). He followed the most recent examples of English architecture published in Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus* of 1715, treating the library exterior as a first floor piano nobile in a demonstration of 'advanced Palladian taste'.²⁴

The interior remains as 'an outstanding example of an early eighteenth century interior' (Figure 2). The long room (40 by 16 feet) is entered from the south, with four sash windows along the west wall. The north door exits to a later print closet, added in the 1730s. The fireplace on the east wall makes a sculptural contribution to the interior scheme through its swags, rams heads and satyr's face, in a 'forceful, Antique manner'.²⁵ Three walls are lined with bookshelves, to two-thirds of their height. The joinery of the shelving is simple, with divisions between cases marked by slim minimalist pilasters.²⁶

[Figure 2 here]

Above the shelves, the sequence of portraits attracts the eye, before the full splendour of the painted ceiling is perceived. There are 31 portraits, presented as three paired heads at each end of the room and as single heads along the east wall. The west

²⁴ S. Parissien, J. Harris and H. Colvin, 'Narford Hall, Norfolk', *The Georgian Group Report and Journal*, (1987), pp. 49-61.

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 53.

²⁶ The bookcases are currently painted in a light oak graining, but this may not be the original treatment (the delicate parquet floor was installed in 1860, a possible date for refreshing any paint schemes).

wall is hung with three three-quarter length portraits, one each between the windows, and with single heads at each end. The portraits have black frames, with gilded corner decorations, and are hung against a monochrome painted surface, greyish in tone. The frames of the double portraits are set between decorative panels that mark the vertical accents rising from the door architraves, the chimneypiece and the corners of the room. The deep coving is painted with classical grisaille figures with gilt highlights. The flat ceiling is given an illusionistic architectural treatment, with painted divisions containing allegorical scenes of Morning, Noon (Apollo driving his chariot) and Night.

The portraits are copies, the work of a single painter, using a variety of sources to create this unified sequence of heads. Andrew Moore suggests that the latest date for an original portrait source, that of Dr Richard Mead, is dated 1725, which may indicate a possible completion date for the sequence for Narford.²⁷ Some or all were set up by 1728, when Fountaine's friend Sir Matthew Decker and his family came to stay at Narford. Decker called the library 'prodigiously handsome', noting that 'above the bookcases are several pictures of great men, with the names upon them'.²⁸ Given the careful attention to detailing the proportions of the plaster work above the bookcases (above), it is difficult to imagine this interior scheme without the rhythm of the visual relationship between the bays of the bookcases and the frames of the

²⁷ Andrew Moore's long engagement with the artworks in Norfolk country houses is unequalled, and I am extremely grateful to him for access to his unpublished work on the Narford library portraits, also discussed in Moore, *Family and Friends*.

²⁸ Wiltshire Record Office, Sir Matthew Decker's diary of a tour, 21 June to 12 July 1728, Wilton Papers, 2057, F 5/2.

portraits above them. I suggest that if Fountaine initiated the construction of the library wing in 1718 he was also planning ahead for the completion of the portrait sequence, assembled over the ensuing seven or so years.

The library ceiling work is undated and unattributed and opinions diverge about the relationship between the style of the coving painting and the Morning, Noon and Night pieces: two hands and thus two dates? If so, in which order? The Georgian Group visit in 1991 identified a baroque ceiling and a later, classical coving, but more investigation is needed.²⁹ The *quadratura* effects in both coving and ceiling, of fictive brackets and an illusionary architectural frame for the view of Apollo, draw on established painting traditions from the seventeenth century; in early eighteenth century England, such painterly effects would mimic, or challenge, the success of Italian *stuccadores* working during the 1720s.³⁰ It is worth noting that the fictive cartouches of the coving each appear to stand away from an apse, whose interior surface is punctuated by gilt coffering, in the manner of William Kent's early painted ceiling for the new Cupola Room at Kensington Palace (1722). This illusionary coffering was not unique to Kent, but it is a visual trick he used extensively.³¹

This is not to propose an attribution, but to note that Kent's training in Italy as a painter resulted in painted schemes that were thoroughly Roman. Kent's first known commission on his return to England was to paint the coving and ceiling of the saloon

²⁹ Parissien, 'Narford Hall', p. 57; I responded on my visit to a Kentian coving and a possibly later ceiling on my encounter with the room.

³⁰ Cornforth, *Early Georgian*, pp.31-6.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 141.

at Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, for his patron the earl of Burlington; he began the sketches in January 1720.³² Fontaine was fully involved in London life on his return to England, appointed Vice Chamberlain to Caroline, Princess of Wales, and allegedly also tutor to her son prince William.³³ There is no direct evidence for the origins of Fontaine's friendship with Lord Burlington, although a letter of 1717 from Burlington to Fontaine survives.³⁴ A significant indication of their friendship survives at Narford, in the form of the large mythical canvases by Antonio Pellegrini (1675-1741) installed in the central hall.

Pellegrini first worked in England from 1708 to 1713. The canvases at Narford are said by family tradition to have been a gift from Burlington, possibly in 1720 when Burlington House was being remodelled.³⁵ The canvases were certainly installed by 1728, when they were viewed by Sir Matthew Decker, who noted 'a handsome hall, painted in panels, with History pieces; the carved work gilt'.³⁶ A family tradition at Narford records the creation of a painted ceiling in the hall,

³² Ibid. p. 139.

³³ Narford Library mss; Moore, *Family and Friends*, p. 31.

³⁴ Moore, *Grand Tour*, p. 38 note 12.

³⁵ George Knox has discussed the Burlington/Narford Pellegrini works in detail, and suggests that there are in fact two possible dates for their installation at Narford; the first being the gift of the large Burlington canvases, which were altered to fit the Narford hall, and the second being the occasion of Pellegrini's return to England in 1719 (for six months, a period Knox acknowledges is brief) to add to the scheme.

³⁶ Wiltshire Record Office, Sir Matthew Decker's diary of a tour, 21 June to 12 July 1728, Wilton Papers, 2057, F 5/2

whitewashed in the nineteenth century, and Knox attributes two of the hall overdoors to Pellegrini.³⁷ The putative painted ceiling commission for the hall (apparently too scandalously sexual, however mythological, for nineteenth-century viewers) does put the library scheme into a wider context for Fountaine's presentation of his interiors. In this continued Italian dominance, the presence of the Pellegrini canvases and the library ceiling at Narford remained at the forefront of taste.

In the library there is a distinct contrast between the ebullient effects of the coving and ceiling and their separation from the wall treatment by a very restrained cornice. This cornice is in harmony with the shallow relief of the cornice to the book cases, both alluding to the Doric order in their simplicity. The choice of frame style for the portrait sequence is similarly sober, taking a later seventeenth-century style at a time when the new preference for completely gilt frames was beginning to dominate.³⁸ The dark frames complement the dark backgrounds surrounding the heads, allowing the flesh tones and highlights from white linen or satin textiles to take prominence.

There was an early model for this use of portraits elsewhere in Norfolk, at Melton Constable, the house built by Sir Jacob Astley (1639-1729) between 1664 and

³⁷ Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini (1675-1741) worked in England 1708-13, and created a large scale set of mythological canvases for Burlington House; George Knox, 'Antonio Pellegrini and Marco Ricci at Burlington House and Narford Hall' *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 130, No. 1028 (Nov., 1988), pp. 846-853

³⁸ J. Simon, *The Art of the Picture Frame, Artists, patrons and the framing of portraits in Britain*, (London, National Portrait Gallery, 1996), pp. 50-1.

1687 (Figure 3). Here Astley framed his seventeenth-century family portraits in uniform dark frames, with gilt borders on the mouldings. The exception, hung over the fireplace, was the portrait of Sir John Astley, (d. 1639), Master of the Revels to James I, who (later) received a Kentian lugged frame with oakleaf pendants, also painted black. Sir Jacob inherited a group of ancestral portraits in 1694, which suggests the *terminus post quem* for setting them up in this manner in the Melton Constable library.³⁹ Sir Jacob Astley was of Fountaine's father's generation, both Royalists from old minor gentry Norfolk families. The Narford portraits are not family, but friends and great figures from the past; they are not old artefacts, but new versions. I suggest that the choice of frame style deliberately ages the Narford portrait sequence, emulating the 'authentic' accumulation of generations of images represented in the Melton Constable library. The imposition of a frame style imposes a systematisation that enhances visual similarities, and masks differences, between the images so treated.⁴⁰ For the Narford library portraits, then, in contrast to the contemporary impact of the painted ceiling, some historicising effects are deliberately produced through the choice of frame style.

[Figure 3 here]

³⁹ Melton Constable library interior, in its 1687 location, is discussed in S. West, 'Development of country house libraries', chapter 3; C. Hussey, 'Melton Constable, Norfolk, the seat of Lord Hastings, I', *Country Life*, Sept 15 1928, pp. 364-70 and 'Melton Constable, Norfolk, the seat of Lord Hastings, II', *Country Life*, September 22 1928, pp. 402-9. Some of the library portraits are displayed at Seaton Delaval Hall, Northumberland, there by descent.

⁴⁰ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p. 34.

Faces and Spaces

The men (there are no women) represented range from Titian (b. 1488) to contemporaries of Fountaine; despite this chronological expanse, there is a biographical logic in the way in which portraits are positioned in relation to others in the series. Given that this series was created from prints or accessible originals, by a single patron, I suggest that this deliberate assembly carries meanings that are recoverable. The portrait series carries iconographic weight, although a single scheme (such as political contemporaries or Fountaine ancestors) is not immediately discernible. The sitters' names are derived from the cartouches on each frame (Table 1). The same names were documented in the first publication discussing Narford Hall, the entry for Narford in the county history of Norfolk written during Sir Andrew's lifetime (the topographical project benefited from his scholarly assistance).⁴¹

The Narford heads, as copies, betray no value particularly assigned to the display of an original master's work; the painter is not a primary figure. Instead, I am adopting Harry Berger's notion of the 'fiction of objectivity'.⁴² The act of portrayal, where a sitter adopts a pose in a studio in consultation with the artist, is smoothed away, unacknowledged by either party in the creation of the image. The sitter is portrayed as if unaware of, or unengaged by, the artificiality of sitting for a formal image. The resulting image makes an appeal to the viewer's desire for an accurate and

⁴¹ F. Blomefield, *An Essay towards a topographical history of the county of Norfolk*, vol. III, (Lynn 1769), p. 521.

⁴² H. Berger, 'Fictions of the post: facing the gaze of early modern portraiture,' *Representations*, 46, 1994, pp. 87-120, p. 103.

objective insight into the sitter's personality, revealed by the privileged access to the 'unaware' facial characteristics of the sitter. This latter access is of course the fiction. As a result, the image is used to supposedly 'reveal' the character.

Berger prioritises a discussion of the meaning of the gaze to make the bridge between the formal properties of such portraits and the meanings that viewers, as socially and visually literate members of a group, bring to the images. He suggests that the gaze is the visual 'dimension of the dominant discourses by which a culture constructs its subjects to imagine and represent themselves'.⁴³ Such dominant discourses carry the normative values of dominant groups. In the Narford portraits, these are the discourses of the early eighteenth-century English elite, particularly the emerging ideas about relationships between artistic taste, social leadership and national identity. As David Solkin expresses it, early eighteenth-century masculine portraits displayed the mask of politeness, the successor to the moral virtues of Renaissance civic humanism, as a visual expression of society's norms.⁴⁴ These are historically and geographically specific discourses, played out in literary forms such as the new magazines (*The Spectator*, *The Tatler*), in the wider visual culture of landscape design (the shifts towards programmatic garden content and an identifiably English style) and increasingly in the English country house as the locus of cultural and political expression. This latter shift is exemplified by the deliberate presentation

⁴³ Ibid, p. 94.

⁴⁴ D. Solkin, 'Great Pictures of Great Men? Reynolds, Male Portraiture, and the Power of Art', *Oxford Art Journal*, 9:2, 1986, pp. 42-9.

of aristocratic houses as forums for and spaces of personal power, away from Court, and the rise of representations of interiors, seen in England after 1700.⁴⁵

I wish to argue that the Narford library portrait sequence is an expression of Fountaine's relationship to contemporary discourses about political power and aspects of English identity. As can be seen from Table 1, these are the 'famous men' or 'great men' acknowledged as such by visitors and inventory takers. The portrait series thus fits in to the established genre of portraits of historical notables, and to the Renaissance practice of collecting and displaying groups of such portraits.⁴⁶ The Narford series is not a collection that looks back to the antique — there are no ancient Greeks or Romans — but to creators of Renaissance and early modern European culture, with England at its centre.

⁴⁵ The key discussion of early eighteenth-century politeness is supplied by L. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness, Moral Discourse and Cultural Politeness in Early Eighteenth-century England*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994). H. Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, particularly pp. 103-36; H. Greig, 'Eighteenth-century English Interiors in Image and Text', in J. Aynsley and C. Grant eds, *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior Since the Renaissance*, (London, V&A Publications, 2006), p. 103, pp.102-127.

⁴⁶ Summarised briefly in Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p. 62; Eugene Dwyer, 'André Thevet and Fulvio Orsini: The Beginnings of the Modern Tradition of Classical Portrait Iconography in France', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 75, No. 3 (Sep., 1993), pp. 467-480.

The paired portraits are usually of historical contemporaries. Dr Richard Mead and Dr John Radcliffe are paired as friends, royal doctors and antiquaries. Titian and Aretino are both early sixteenth-century Italian cultural figures, Inigo Jones is the English apostle of Palladio. Over the fireplace, Prince Rupert, soldier and first cousin to Charles I, is with Sir Kenelm Digby, another seventeenth-century figure of chivalric achievements. Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare were friends, Jonson's role in the posthumous publication of Shakespeare ensured his reputation, echoing the relationship between Palladio and Jones. Cardinal Mazarin is paired with the Vicomte de Turenne, contemporaries under Louis XIV, and Samuel Butler and Charles Cotton are contemporary seventeenth-century poets.

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- _____ 1. Dr Richard Mead, 1673-1754, physician, Whig virtuoso
 2. Dr John Radcliffe, 1650-1714, physician, patron
 3. Titian (Tiziano Vecellio), c. 1488-1576, Venetian painter, close friend of Aretino
 4. Pietro Aretino, 1492-1557, Italian poet and prose writer, journalist
 5. Inigo Jones, 1573-1652, English architect and scenographer to the Stuart courts
 6. Andrea Palladio, 1508-1580, Italian architect
 7. Nicholas Lanier, 1588-1665, composer, painter, engraver
 8. Sir Peter Paul Rubens, 1577-1640, Flemish painter and designer
 9. Dean Henry Aldrich, 1647-1710, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, divine, scholar
 10. Sir John Maynard, 1602-1690, judge, Whig constitutional lawyer

11. Gustavus Adolphus, 1594-1632, King of Sweden 1611-1632, expansionist
12. Pope Alexander VII, 1599-1667, pope 1655-1667, patron of arts in Rome
13. Prince Rupert, 1619-1682, nephew to Charles I, soldier and linguist
14. Sir Kenelm Digby, 1603-1665, author, naval commander, diplomatist, virtuoso
15. James Graham, 5th Earl of Montrose, 1612-1650, Royalist military commander
16. Admiral Robert Blake, 1599-1657, Commonwealth naval hero
17. Thomas Wharton, 1st Marquis of Wharton, 1648-1715, Whig politician
18. Cornelius Janssen, 1593-1664, Stuart portrait painter
19. Edmund Waller, 1606-1687, poet, royalist MP
20. Edward Pococke, 1604-1691, Christ Church orientalist
21. Ben Jonson, 1572-1637, poet and playwright
22. William Shakespeare, 1564-1616, poet and playwright
23. Cardinal Jules Mazarin, 1602-1661, Cardinal and Chief Minister of France, patron
24. Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne, 1610-1675, Commander French army
25. Samuel Butler, 1612-1680, satirical poet
26. Charles Cotton, 1630-1687, poet and linguist
27. Dr Humphrey Prideaux, 1648-1724, Dean of Norwich, orientalist and divine
28. William Cavendish, 2nd Duke of Devonshire, 1673-1729, Whig leader
29. Dr John Tillotson, 1630-1694, Archbishop of Canterbury, celebrated preacher

30. Thomas Herbert, 8th Earl of Pembroke, 1656-1733, President of the Royal Society

31. Dr John Wallis, 1616-1703, mathematician

Table 1 Narford library portraits, identifications.

Some of the sitters such as Dean Aldrich were known to Sir Andrew, indeed as Dean of Christ Church College, Aldrich selected the young Andrew for the oration to William III, resulting in his knighthood. By 1725 only three friends were alive, Dr Mead, the 2nd Duke of Devonshire, and the 8th Earl of Pembroke. Others are seventeenth-century British figures whose gentlemanly achievements transcended political divisions, such as Admiral Robert Blake and Sir Kenelm Digby. Several of them acted in the service of two contrasting regimes, like Dr John Wallis, chaplain to Charles II and codebreaker for William III, and Dr John Tillotson, chaplain to Charles II and Archbishop of Canterbury for William III. Both these men successfully negotiated the transition from Stuart to Orange royal rule, in support of a continued Protestant succession. International statesmen and patrons of the arts, such as Pope Alexander VII and Cardinal Mazarin, represent nationalist interests in their investment in the creation of Italian and French culture, but also participated in international dialogues around contemporary approaches to a classical inheritance. Despite Sir Andrew's travels around the German courts and his warm reception there, the German states are not represented. Hanoverian royals are represented elsewhere in the house, in the group of royal portraits hung on the great stairs, but in the library

there was no room, for example, for Leibnitz. This portrait scheme looks away from the new constitutional fact of a German-born monarch, back to the older triangular relationship of English, French and Italian culture, a relationship that has shaped English identity through conflict and adoption.

If the suggested cultural relationships are historically nuanced by political tension and increasingly by English cultural discourses about national style, the preceding linear analysis of the paired portraits is rather safe. The portraits are, after all, in three dimensional space, set around the walls of the room. The portrait scheme can be analysed for visual inter-relationships between sitters, suggesting a dynamic to the hang that utilises the great space of the library room. I have argued above that the paired portraits demonstrate biographical logic, not unexpectedly. But a wider view of how these faces interact with each other reveals a balanced and systematic arrangement, with portraits in groups representing sciences, the plastic arts, the art of chivalry, and literary arts. These groups are given greater force of meaning by cross-cutting oppositions, shown schematically in Figure 4. Mighty French figures stare the length of the library at great Italians, the Church (Archbishop Tillotson) faces the state (or the embodiment of divine rule through the house of Stuart, in the person of Prince Rupert). Complementary sightlines include two iconic figures of early Stuart culture in the plastic and literary arts facing each other down the length of the library. Friends Edward Pococke and Humphrey Prideaux look across the width of the room to each other, as do political co-ministers the 1st Marquis of Wharton and the 3rd Duke of Devonshire. The painted gazes interact with each other across the space of the room, and their placing must also draw the viewer into a more complex sequence of looking

than simply following a circuit. The gaze is male and the little world created within the library is also male.

[Figure 4 here]

Further spatial complexity is suggested when the furnishings of the library are considered, adding layers of visual and material richness to the interior. Later in the eighteenth century, that great experimenter with historic styles, Horace Walpole, created his own historicizing portrait scheme for the gothic library at Strawberry Hill, in which roundels of copies from seventeenth-century portraits sit within an architectural setting of heraldry and High Gothic. For Pointon, this scheme ‘inscribes Walpole into the past’.⁴⁷ Aspects of the Narford furnishings also contribute to the sense of the past within the library; I want to go on to suggest that one piece of furniture set the tone for much of this scheme, including the historicising frames. This piece is the Mazarin cabinet.

‘The whole furniture and ornaments herein’

The Norfolk antiquary Francis Blomefield declared of Narford Hall that ‘the whole Furniture and Ornaments herein, are sufficient to excite the Curiosity of the Learned, and preserve the Memory of their judicious Owner’.⁴⁸ Furnishings in the library are listed in the 1753 post-mortem inventory.⁴⁹ The collections in the room included sculpture, antiquities and specialist furniture such as coin cabinets. Fountaine had

⁴⁷ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p. 14.

⁴⁸ Blomefield, *Norfolk*, vol. III, p. 521.

⁴⁹ Narford archive, a second copy in the National Art Library, V&A REF

been a noted coin and medal collector since he was a student. The presence of these cabinets in the library, rather than in another room, suggest associations between the historical value of the coins and medals with the histories retained on the bookshelves. Such intended associations became a feature of collections during the seventeenth century, in European private and institutional libraries. Collector's coin cabinets could be invested with considerable design significance, signalling the rarity and historic value of the pieces they housed. For example, Horace Walpole commissioned a specialist cabinet on his return from his Grand Tour, in order to house and display a collection of ivory miniatures, both mounted on the outside of the cabinet doors and stored within.⁵⁰ When Sir Matthew Decker viewed the Narford room in 1728, he recorded that 'Two fine cabinets stand on one side, and two flat cabinets or book cases in the middle'.⁵¹ By the time of the 1753 inventory, there were three cabinets, two matching (for medals) and one in ebony 'with brass ornaments and 21 miniature Pictures upon it'. The ebony cabinet, which is said to have belonged to Cardinal Mazarin, contained a collection of wax casts of intaglios, numbering 1,430. Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1602-61) assembled extensive collections, displayed in the Palais Mazarin, Paris, and dispersed after his death. I suggest here that the Narford cabinet is indeed from the Mazarin collection.

The cabinet in Narford, recorded as having '21 miniature Picture upon it' in the 1753 inventory, appears to be a match for the description given in an inventory of

⁵⁰ The Walpole Cabinet, 1743, Victoria and Albert Museum: W.52-1925.

⁵¹ Wiltshire Record Office, Sir Matthew Decker's diary of a tour, 21 June to 12 July 1728, Wilton Papers, 2057, F 5/2

Mazarin's furniture, made during his lifetime.⁵² The cabinet is the upper chest of drawers, resting on a later base (Figure 5). The description in the Mazarin inventory is further confirmed by the presence of the portrait miniatures, in round and oval frames, set on the base, frieze and upper pediment of the cabinet. Sir John Cullum saw 'miniatures of French Persons, well done in oil-colours' on the cabinet, when he visited in 1767.⁵³ There are two outstanding differences between the Mazarin inventory description and the surviving cabinet at Narford. First, the number of miniatures: 48 in 1653, 21 in the 1753 Narford inventory. Second, the cabinet is on a later stand, which takes the form of a kneehole desk of shallow drawers, designed as a monumental archway and ornamented with a Vitruvian scroll motif. This later stand must have been commissioned by Sir Andrew and again, it bears the stylistic influence of William Kent's designs for library furniture (as that for Chiswick House, Burlington's villa).

[Figure 5 here]

⁵² H. d'Orléans Aumale, *Inventaire De Tous Les Meubles Du Cardinal Mazarin. Dressé En 1653, Et. Pub. D'après L'original, Conservé Dans Les Archives De Condé.*

(Londres: Imp. de Whittingham et Wilkins, 1861), p. 251-2. This describes a cabinet ornamented with four gilded lions, four gilded Corinthian columns, architectural frontispiece and gilded balustrade, an upper storey in the form of a segmental pediment supported by pilasters flanked by scrolls, as found on the Norfolk cabinet.

⁵³ Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds, *Journal of a Tour Through Part of Norfolk, 1767*, Rev. Sir John Cullum, E2/44/3. With thanks to Owen Thompson for supplying the reference and extract.

If, as seems likely from its correlation with the Mazarin inventory description, this is indeed a cabinet from the Cardinal's collection, there is a further association in Fontaine's circle to explain its arrival. The bulk of the Mazarin sculpture collection was acquired by Fontaine's close friend, Thomas, earl of Pembroke, for display at Wilton House, Wiltshire. Pembroke's purchase is not closely dated, but broadly assigned to the 1720s. The Mazarin cabinet seems to set a keynote for the decorative scheme. In its historical association with the outstanding cultural collections of a famous French statesman, partially on display in the Louvre and the Bibliotheque Mazarin and familiar to Fontaine through his visits to Paris, it adds material depth to the visual associations contained within the portrait scheme (which includes Mazarin's image) in the library. The visual richness of the black shades of the ebony and the gilt highlights from the ormolu fittings are exactly carried through in the portrait frames. It is no coincidence that the cabinet is displayed in the centre bay of the window wall, beneath the half-length portrait of Dr John Tillotson. This central position accords with the 1753 inventory's record of the three cabinets between the four windows. The portrait above is emphasised by reliefs immediately below the frame, modelled as the archbishop's mitre flanked by palms. This relief decoration finished exactly above the top of the Mazarin cabinet. Without the date of acquisition, it is speculation, but one supported by the associations noted here, to suggest that the Mazarin cabinet was owned by Fontaine by the time he returned from his second European tour and began planning his new library.

The function of the Mazarin cabinet as a receptacle for a large collection of wax casts of intaglios (engraved semi-precious stones referred to by Fontaine's contemporaries as 'gems'), is also significant not just for the scale of the collection

but for the nature of the objects. Fountaine was a serious collector of these small bearers of images, along with the 2nd and 3rd dukes of Devonshire and the 8th earl of Pembroke.⁵⁴ The tradition of engraving gems in relief (cameos) or incising them (intaglios) came from ancient Greece and Rome, and ancient specimens were particularly prized by collectors. The first publications of engraved images of these stones appeared by the early eighteenth century. Aside from the methodological problems in dating the gems and identifying their subjects, such collections and publications contributed to the tradition of using these stones for their portraiture and iconography, much as sculpture and pictures continued to be collected and engraved. The Mazarin cabinet is therefore shot through with representations of the human face, mythic, heroic and famous; in teeming multitude within its drawers, and in select miniatures on its exterior. It contributes to the extended scale and range of portraits within the Narford library, adding a micro level to the life-size heads above it.

The three cabinets made a greater visual impact through the additional collections that were displayed on and below each, as recorded in 1753. The Mazarin cabinet, with a decorative top unsuitable for supporting objects, was garnished below with ‘a broken antique statue’, presumably placed within the arch of the later base. It was flanked by ‘ancient earthen tubs’ which I am tempted to identify as locally

⁵⁴ Diana Scarisbrick, ‘Gem Connoisseurship - The 4th Earl of Carlisle's Correspondence with Francesco de Ficoroni and Antonio Maria Zanetti’, *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 129, No. 1007 (Feb., 1987), pp. 90-104; collecting practices for classical sculpture by English virtuosi, including coins and gems, are surveyed in Jonathan Scott, *The pleasures of antiquity: British collectors of Greece and Rome*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2003).

sourced funerary urns (a class of archaeological object discussed by Norfolk's great seventeenth-century antiquary, Sir Thomas Browne).⁵⁵ One of the pair of cabinets of medals supported a plaster bust of Raphael on it along with more antique urns, cups and covers; below, a large green terracotta vase and two gilt busts. The other cabinet of medals supported a Roubiliac clay bust of Fountaine and a selection of marble, 'Egyptian' alabaster and terracotta (with painted figures) antique vases; underneath were the pairs to the objects under the first cabinet (a vase and two gilded busts).

The antiquities added a greater historical dimension to the collections, reaching back in to British prehistory, and reaching outwards to the Old Testament civilisation of Ancient Egypt. The ancient objects take their place in the repertoire of virtuoso collections, the museum-like representation of a selection of cultures beyond those who produced coins. They contribute additional forms and materials to the library interior, but do not disturb the dominance of the human figure represented in paint and by sculpture.

The remainder of the inventoried contents included the display on the mantelpiece: Shakespeare's monument, flanked by vases and bronze sphinxes (Figure 6). The monument is a small-scale bronzed plaster reproduction of a cast of the *modello* for Shakespeare's monument in Westminster Abbey, by William Kent, executed by Peter Scheemakers in 1740 and installed in 1741. Shakespeare's burial monument was erected in St Mary's church, Stratford on Avon, Warwickshire, before 1623. The sculpted half-length of Shakespeare in the act of writing was engraved for

⁵⁵ Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia, Urn-Burial, or, A Discourse of the Sepulchral Urns Lately Found in Norfolk*, 1658.

reproduction in Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, a widely disseminated county history published in 1656 and again in 1730.⁵⁶ As a graphic image, Shakespeare's first monument was well-known to readers with antiquarian interests. The presence of a souvenir, or memorial of Shakespeare, in the material form of the model for the Westminster monument is notable for its early date: the cult of the author, or Bardolatry as literary critics have dubbed the discourses around Shakespeare, grew no earlier than from the 1730s, leading up to the tragedian Garrick's Jubilee in Stratford in 1769. There is an important point to note here for the significance of Shakespeare in the Narford library, that an eighteenth-century understanding of the Shakespeare plays appropriated them as 'celebrations of British monarchy and British power', as Robert Hume summarises arguments made by literary historians Michael Dobson and Gary Taylor.⁵⁷ Shakespeare, already represented in the framed portrait series, was awarded the prime position on the mantelpiece beneath representatives of English chivalry; I suggest that his presence was less for his artistic merits as a poet and playwright (merits only later explored) than for his emerging role as chronicler of the nation through the history plays. The artistic qualities of the cast of the *modello* are somewhat greater than the 1623 wall monument: other examples may have circulated in the Kent/Burlington circle but they remain to be identified.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Diana Price, 'Reconsidering Shakespeare's Monument', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. 48, No. 190 (May, 1997), pp. 168-182.

⁵⁷ Robert D. Hume, 'Before the Bard: "Shakespeare" in Early Eighteenth-Century London', *ELH*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (Spring, 1997), p. 67, pp. 41-75.

⁵⁸ York Castle Museum collection, noted in a wider discussion of the pose by Terry Friedman, 'Scheemakers's Monument to the Best of Sons', *The Burlington Magazine*,

[Figure 6 here]

Shakespeare's statue joined the named portrait busts, and the anonymous gilded busts. Busts in the early modern library are a well-known visual trope, and Malcolm Baker has led recent scholarship in exploring the relationship between the sculpted image and the book collections they adorn, particularly for the series of busts acquired by college libraries in Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin. Contemporaries treated series of portrait busts as equivalents to painted portraits, in calling on the 'famous men' trope; Baker has shown that portrait busts were readily reproduced, and that verisimilitude in facial features was more important to contemporaries than 'individualistic' treatment of drapery. On these terms, portrait sculpture was judged for the quality of representation of the face, more than for its adoption of visual codes for drapery or pose.⁵⁹ In the Narford library, its creator was represented in clay by a contemporary artist, Roubiliac, who had also modelled the 8th earl of Pembroke (for the library of Trinity College, Dublin).⁶⁰ The marble head of Fountaine by Roubiliac is still at Wilton House, and it is tempting to speculate on whether Sir Andrew Fountaine or Lord Pembroke was the patron, and which version was the gift. The bust of Raphael introduced the most famous artist of the High Renaissance to the

Vol. 122, No. 922, Special Issue Devoted to Sculpture (Jan., 1980), pp. 61-62+64-65+67, fn 19.

⁵⁹ M. Baker, 'The Making of Portrait Busts in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: Roubiliac, Scheemakers and Trinity College, Dublin', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 137, No. 1113 (Dec., 1995), pp. 821-831; M. Baker, 'Public Images for Private Spaces? The Place of Sculpture in the Georgian Domestic Interior', *Journal of Design History*, 20:4, 2007, pp. 309-23.

⁶⁰ The Roubiliac clay bust is now in the Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery.

room, one even more highly regarded than Titian, whose portrait is included in the painted series. The busts and statuary add further layers of scale and texture to the complex assemblage of portraiture within the room.

‘Great Men’: Friends in the Library

This then is the library room as it survives, as it was inventoried in 1753 on the death of its creator, and as I reconstruct some aspects of its creation: I do not wish to claim that this is a complete reconstruction, like the room itself, this representation is a palimpsest with some obscured features. The survival of the decorative scheme, and of a large part of the historic book collection, despite the loss of the extra layering created by time and the portable objects, is a rare example of early eighteenth-century taste. I have argued that this is a historicizing taste. But how was the viewer intended to perceive this gallery of images as a group?

Recorded comments on the portrait sequence used already in this discussion easily identified the subjects as ‘great men’ or ‘famous men’. The competences called on from the viewer to make this identification were relatively simple: aided by the textual identification on the frame of each sitter, contemporary viewers understood the whole (made up of the parts of each portrait) to represent those men who had entered the history books. Each sitter could be viewed as fulfilling the norms of ‘being great’, in the terms that my biographical table of identifications suggests for each individual, and as the dominant discourses of fame and greatness created a canon of exclusively masculine historical persons. Rather than emphasise the biographical correlations that could be made between Fountaine’s political and cultural allegiances and his choice of sitters, I prefer now to turn towards the uses of this particular group of portraits in

this particular setting: the ‘purposes of display’ that Patrick Maynard reminds us are intended in pictures ‘made for use’.⁶¹

Narford Hall, in its compact original form of 1702, does not appear to have had a picture gallery. A Norfolk neighbour, the architect and virtuoso Sir Roger North, remodelled his purchase of an old manor house at Rougham Hall from 1690, to house his collections on retiring to the country from London. As well as creating a suite of rooms for his own use (library and study, away from his lively family), Sir Roger created a first floor picture gallery. Such galleries were not the prerogative of the aristocratically wealthy, and I think the emphasis on display that this term gallery carries is a useful one to bear in mind for Narford. Galleries, with or without pictures, were frequently occurring spaces in sixteenth-century great houses, used for indoor walking and associated with opportunities for private conversations, away from formally conducted social exchanges in state rooms.⁶² Their lengths of wall became a site of display for pictures; by the time Sir Andrew was touring Europe, he could encounter picture galleries in any royal or elite house that he gained access to.

Practices of viewing picture galleries have been investigated recently by Frances Gage, in a discussion of the relationship between picture galleries, medical theories of the relationship between exercise and health in the late Renaissance, and the uses of princely collections in Italy in the seventeenth century. Gage is particularly

⁶¹ P. Maynard, ‘Portraits as Displays’ *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, 135:1, 2007, p. 115, pp.111-121

⁶² R. Coope, ‘The ‘Long Gallery’ : its origins, development, use and decoration’ *Architectural History*, 29 (1986), pp. 43-84.

interested in the uses of landscape paintings, viewed within the more public galleries and open loggias, but she makes a useful distinction between genres and appropriate levels of public access within palaces. The enormous households of family, officials and lower status servants in Italian palaces had segregated and hierarchical access to spaces within the palace, and would view pictures distributed accordingly. In her review of treatises on health, Gage also reminds us of the English author Robert Burton's views on the beneficial effects of artworks and antiquities of all types for the mental and physical health of the viewer, as expressed in *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). The viewer is expected to use a combination of close looking and gentle walking to achieve the ideal balance.⁶³

This combination (Burton included reading as a beneficial practice) is possible in the Narford library, as the preceding discussion of the furnishings has shown. The genre of paintings on display is that of portraiture, and it is one that requires the competences of informed understanding to retrieve the exemplary qualities of the sitters. The Narford library was not filled with quantities of furniture to impede the walking viewer during Sir Andrew's lifetime, and we should not conflate its early eighteenth-century appearance with later presentations of country house libraries set up for Victorian house party entertaining. The length of the room and the interplay between the sitters in the painted portraits encourages the viewer to perambulate, pause and reflect. The viewer's gaze must also shift in focal length, from upwards and outwards to the portraits above the bookcases, to downwards and inwards to

⁶³ F. Gage, 'Exercise for Mind and Body: Giulio Mancini, Collecting, and the Beholding of Landscape Painting in the Seventeenth Century', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 61:4, 2008, pp. 1167-1207.

contemplate the micro scale of the portrait miniatures and the ‘hidden faces’ within the coins, medals and intaglio collections. This is not a disembodied gaze, then, but one that must be mobilised through an active body.

I opened this discussion with an insistence that the country house library has had a changing position with the house plan over time, and that each example needs to be understood within historically specific spatial relations, that may have been erased in later manifestations of libraries within the same house. This spatial distinctiveness is particularly relevant to the related issue of access: who in the household and as a visitor might be expected to enter the room and use it for its social purpose (rather than simply to service it). Who, then, might the active viewers, seeking recreation and solace within the gallery-like library at Narford, have been?

Fontaine, particularly through his London life, was a sociable man, moving within Court circles and also linked, through personal contact and the exchange of letters, to wider European circles of learning, discussed earlier. He was an active figure in a series of male networks, formed through shared interests in collecting; his life spanned the emergence of formal institutions centred on collecting practices from the early years of the Royal Society (founded 1660), the refounding of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1707, to the foundation of the British Museum in 1753.⁶⁴ Informal networks also flourished, such as the Kit Kat Club, founded at an unknown date in the 1690s by the publisher (and Shakespeare enthusiast) Jacob Tonson for the

⁶⁴ Sweet, R., *Antiquaries, The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-century Britain*, (London, Continuum, 2004).

promotion of the arts.⁶⁵ Tonson insisted that members had their portraits painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller, later displayed in Tonson's newly built gallery to his outer London house; Burlington was a member.⁶⁶ Less structured still, but important meeting places for like-minded men, were the new urban coffee houses, multi-purpose sites of display and talking shops for virtuosi; a familiar milieu for Fountaine.⁶⁷ The range of public meeting spaces (nodal points in these social networks) available to men of the correct social status complemented and reinforced the private practices of collecting possible in domestic settings.

Away from the London networks, Fountaine appears to have sustained a local network based on his virtuoso interests. Norfolk antiquaries and book collectors certainly knew of Fountaine's interests and Blomefield thanked him for help with materials for the county history of Norfolk. Fountaine also welcomed house guests such as Decker and his family, and I presume that his strong friendships with other Norfolk landowners such as Thomas Coke of Holkham and Charles Townshend of

⁶⁵ Field, O., *The Kit Kat Club, Friends Who Imagined a Nation*, (London, Harper Press, 2008).

⁶⁶ Ingamells, J., *Later Stuart Portraits, 1685-1714*, (London, National Portrait Gallery, 2009), p. 376; portraits displayed in the National Portrait Gallery, London, and Beningborough Hall, Yorkshire (National Trust).

⁶⁷ The roles of coffee houses in the formation of public discourse has recently been explored at length by B. Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee, The Emergence of the British Coffee House*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2005) and M. Ellis, ed., *Eighteenth-century Coffee House Culture*, (London, Chatto and Pickering, 2006) 4 vols.

Raynham (who also remodelled the Raynham library), and the marriage of Lord Burlington's sister Elizabeth to Henry Bedingfeld of Oxburgh, meant that each would have had regular access to the other libraries.⁶⁸ However, at home, the unmarried Sir Andrew had no other family members to make claims on the library's space, beyond visits from his sister and brother. The contents of the library represent a set of personal connections that extended across Europe, but which were primarily enacted away from Narford.

Friendship figures in the way in which Fountaine settled his affairs, making particular provision for the care of the library collections. Sir Andrew's will left the enjoyment of the house to his brother-in-law before his nephew came of age, and appointed James Thom, 'clerk', to act as librarian until that time. Thom also received the medal collection, which is a strong hint that this was more than a straightforward custodial position.⁶⁹ Thom is otherwise unknown as a member of the household; the surname may be Scottish. A Rev. James Thom, visible in archive collections from the 1750s to 1803, was vicar of Castle Acre, Norfolk, from 1750 until 1756 and subsequently rector of nearby Southacre and Bridgham, Norfolk.⁷⁰ I think it is

⁶⁸ West, 'libraries', for Holkham, Raynham and Oxburgh Halls and their owners.

⁶⁹ The National Archives, PROB 11/184, 268.

⁷⁰ James Thome [sic] is listed as vicar by Blomefield, "Freebridge Hundred and Half: Castleacre" in Norfolk, vol VIII, pp. 356-377; Norfolk Record Office, MC 240/4, 678X6 Label of three brace of partridges sent from Sir Harry Fetherston and B. Lethieullier to Revd James Thom, vicar of Castle Acre, 1750-1756; MS 6461, 6C4 Indenture: Lease for 7 years. John Knight of Langold (Notts) and Revd James Thom,

reasonable to identify the temporary librarian of Narford with the Rev. Thom of Castle Acre, a neighbouring parish to that of Narford. Interestingly, Sir Andrew had the gift of the living for Narford (he could appoint the vicar to the parish), but the Rev. Thom, in Castle Acre was appointed by a different patron, the earl of Leicester, as Thomas Coke had become in 1744. Thom, then, was in the circle of the Burlington friends, and perhaps something of an antiquary himself, as he left some notes on the history of Castle Rising, a neighbouring parish and the Norman seat of the Dukes of Norfolk.⁷¹ I suggest that the gift of the medals, housed within the library, and the honorary appointment of librarian, shows a close friendship based on trust and shared interests, between the young clergyman (who must have been in his first appointment) and Fountaine.

It is fitting that the chronology for Fountaine's use of his library ends with an act of friendship, because the portraits include two of his closest friends, the earl of Pembroke and the duke of Devonshire. Lord Burlington's portrait was hung in the hall, surrounded by his generous gift of the Pellegrini canvases. Naomi Tadmor's recent work on the roles of friendship in eighteenth-century England has noted the intersecting relationships between friendship and patronage. The language of friendship was used to mediate patronage relationships; those in relations of power need not have excluded friendship from their account of how that power was

clerk, rector of Bridgham, executors and trustees of Richard Croftes of West Harling, esq., decd, to John Smith of Bridgham, farmer. 30 Jan 1788.

⁷¹ Norfolk Record Office, HOW 836, 350X1, Historical notes on Castle Rising by Revd Thom, nd [18th century].

exercised.⁷² Tadmor is less interested in male friendships, although there is a body of research that does explore historically situated male friendships.⁷³ The eighteenth century has been identified as a period in which gender relations, the socially codified norms for male and female personas, shifted from an older, more loosely defined set of acceptable interactions between and within different genders, towards more rigorously policed behaviours suitable for appearing masculine or feminine. Members of society biologically defined as male or female were increasingly expected to behave as overtly masculine or feminine, and not to transgress behavioural boundaries; for men, into non-masculine effeminacy.

I have been exploring the cultural milieu of a man born towards the end of the seventeenth century, a period when the language of male friendships clearly extended comfortably into the realms of affection and erotic love, a discourse written in to play texts so thoroughly as to produce ‘its own seeming normativity’.⁷⁴ Literary historians have pursued these discourses in texts, whereas at Narford we are viewing the visual signs of friendship, but I do not wish to ignore the persuasive conclusion advanced by George Haggerty, for example, that male romantic friendships were unexceptional well into the eighteenth century.

⁷² N. Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: household, kinship and patronage*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001) for chapter 6.

⁷³ See most recently the literature on aspects of masculinity reviewed in K. Harvey, *The Little Republic, Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-century Britain*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 2-23.

⁷⁴ G. Haggerty, *Men in love, masculinity and sexuality in the eighteenth century*, (Columbia, Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 26.

Haggerty insists that we do not import the gender codes of our own time into these friendships, particularly over the question of sexual activity between men. Instead, he argues for a culture in which male affection and desire could be expressed in public discourses, drawing on the classical concepts of the value of male friendships. This is not to exclude women, particularly as marriageable commodities, although individual female characters are hard to identify in the fragmentary records of Fountaine's social interactions. His success in his life is marked by older, more powerful men selecting him for friendship and the advantages flowing from that connection, from Dean Aldrich at Christchurch, to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. These friendships, broadly constructed around esteem and affection, are on display in the Narford library.

Of course, the visual display of friendship carries with it aspects of personal memory, the evocation of past experiences, just as the visual display of the remaining 'great men' more generically prompts the act of recollection of their achievements.⁷⁵ Memory is intimately connected to history, both personal and also the practice of history that Sir Andrew himself contributed to, through his numismatic work and antiquarian interests. As a gallery, the library room functioned to display the tools for recollection, in the forms of the 'great men' portraits at micro and macro scales and the books on the shelves. As a personal assemblage, the library room reflected Sir Andrew's enduring friendships in the form of a material biography of his own life and

⁷⁵ A distinction pursued by P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. K.

Blamey and D. Pellauer, (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 1-55.

times. This material environment is overseen by the ceiling depiction of Apollo, the omniscient Roman god, under whose gaze all of these lives were played out.

Conclusion

Fontaine was a gentleman scholar of the Palladian revival, an associate of Lord Burlington and his aristocratic circle, and his library represents a new direction in the presentation of book rooms. In the context of Palladian libraries, the Narford room is exceptional in its iconographic complexity; mixing restraint in the form and detailing of the wall shelves and the historicizing portrait frames, and brio in the allegorical painted schemes. Throughout this discussion, I have insisted that the historical significance of this room must be derived both from a reading of the creator's biography and the contexts of the scheme within the house and wider currents. As a result, several readings are possible, carried by the portraits. The first is that the interior scheme displays messages about English national identity, based on a proud history of cultural achievements (rather than conquest or mercantile success, which are also possible narratives for English history). England takes her place alongside the Renaissance figures of Italy and France, a scheme enhanced by the later acquisition of the Shakespeare cast.

As I suggest, its meanings are informed by reflections on the circumstances of Fontaine's life. The library portrait series contrasts with Sir Andrew's use of portraits elsewhere at Narford, including a set of royal portraits which reference his service to the court of the Princess of Wales. The library portraits also commemorated personal friendships, and I have suggested that male friendships, across a spectrum of emotional bonds, took the place of kin relationships in Sir Andrew's life. This is a

highly personal presentation of works that, in the case of the portrait series, were carefully programmed and positioned with acquired pieces, such as the Mazarin cabinet. The portraits on the walls interacted with each other, through their paired associations and their own gazes across the space of the room; and with the presence of the sculptural faces below them, in the busts and the hidden faces on the coins, medals and intaglios secreted away in the cabinets. This layering of portrait genres suggests the visual richness that once filled Sir Andrew's library, a room that retains considerable impact as an emblematic expression of its virtuoso owner.