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LORD COLERAINE'S MAUSOLEUM

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Until 1875 there stood at the east end of the north aisle of the parish church of Tottenham in Middlesex a structure unusual – perhaps unique – in English church architecture: a circular domed building surmounted by an obelisk (Figs. 1 and 2). It was in fact a vestry that served also as a mausoleum. An inscription in Roman capitals cut in the frieze recorded in Latin that ‘In the year of our Lord 1696, the noble Henry Lord Coleraine had this Vestry built with a vault beneath as a burial place for himself and his family’ (A.D. MDCXCVI. NOB. HEN. D^{NI} DE COLERANE VESTIARIUM HOC FECIT ERIGI CRYPTAMQUE SUFFODI SIBI ET SUIS).¹

Henry Hare, 2nd Baron Coleraine (1636–1708), had succeeded to the family title, the lordship of the local manors and the ownership of Bruce Castle in 1667.² According to his own account, finding all the burial space near the altar already occupied by the bodies of his ancestors, and the vestry in decay, he decided to solve both problems by building a new vestry at his own expense with a vault under it for the burial of himself and his successors.³

The Tottenham Vestry Minutes show that Lord Coleraine’s proposal to rebuild the vestry had first been put before the parish in 1688. ‘Because [they record] the Vestry house of the said Parish is now become very old and ruinous and very Unfitt for the occasions of the said parish his Lordship would att his owne proper Cost and Charges, both enlarge and new build with brick the said Vestry and sett itt up more Conveinent [*sic*] than it stands at present if so he might [obtain] the leave of the Right Reverent the Lord Bishop of this Diocess and of the Reverent the

Deane and Chapter of St. Pauls London’.⁴ The consent of the Bishop of London was required as the diocesan authority; that of the Dean and Chapter as patrons of the living.

The Bishop’s Faculty was granted on 5 May 1689.⁵ In its preamble it states that Lord Coleraine ‘hath a desire to build and make a vault or burying place under the Vestry House belonging to the parish church of All Hallows in Tottenham’, that he had ‘at severall vestrys held for the sayd Parish in the year of our Lord 1688’, offered to rebuild it in brick ‘at his own proper Costs and Charges ... and set it more convenient than it now stands’, and that the consent of the churchwardens and chief inhabitants had been duly obtained. The dimensions of the existing vestry were stated to be 10 feet wide and 14 feet long, to which Lord Coleraine would add 6 feet in length and 3 in breadth, plus a chimney. What was envisaged in 1688 was therefore a rectangular vestry measuring 20 by 13 feet. What was eventually built in 1696 was a circular one linked to the east end of the north aisle by a vestibule containing the chimney (Fig. 1). Whatever discussions or negotiations with parish or bishop were required to accomplish this change of plan, it was not deemed necessary to record them either in the Vestry Minutes or in the Faculty Register of the Diocese of London. Although it is doubtful whether the new building can have provided as many square feet of floorspace as the Faculty of 1689 had envisaged, it was doubtless big enough for its purpose as a place of meeting for the vestry. But in terms of architectural form the change was basic: from an ordinary meeting-room with a



Fig. 1. North-east view of Tottenham Church, Middlesex, engraving dated 1809, in [Samuel Woodburn], *Ecclesiastical Topography, A Collection of One Hundred Views of Churches in the Environs of London*, London 1811, pl. 77.



Fig. 2. South view of Tottenham Church, Middlesex, as illustrated in William Robinson, *History and Antiquities of Tottenham*, 1840.



Fig. 3. Engraving signed by Lord Coleraine commemorating his first wife Constance, who died in 1680.
Bruce Castle Museum, Haringey Libraries, Archives & Museum Service, Idbcm: inv. 587.

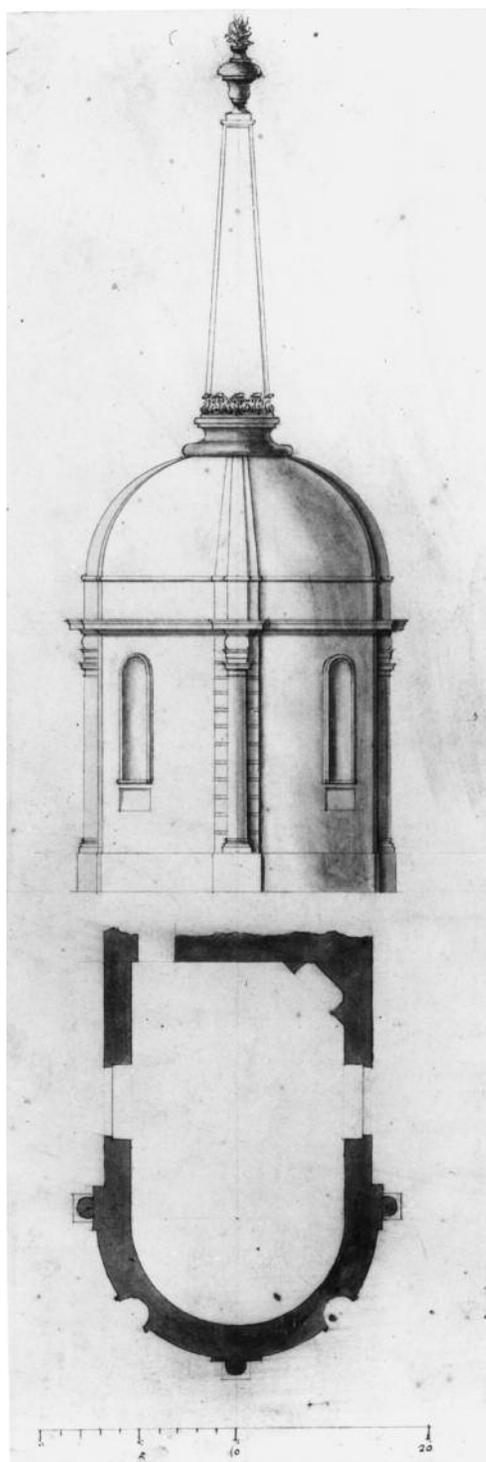
burial vault beneath it to a family mausoleum which could also be used as a place for the vestry to meet.

How had this change come about? Was the long delay between the Faculty of 1689 and the completion of the building in 1696 due to disagreement between Coleraine and the parishioners, or merely to indecision? The death, in 1692, of his second wife, the widow of the 8th Duke of Somerset, is unlikely to have been relevant, as they had lived apart for some time and she was buried in Westminster Abbey.⁶ It may be that it was his third marriage, in 1696, to Dame Elizabeth Read, that brought matters to a head. All that can confidently be stated is that by 1696 the rectangular vestry room envisaged in 1688 had been superseded by the circular mausoleum.

Between 1689 and 1696 a number of drawings may have been made to clarify Coleraine's mind or to demonstrate his latest intentions to the vestrymen of Tottenham. Some of these drawings may have been made by Coleraine himself, for there is reason to think that early in the 1680s he made alterations to Bruce Castle to his own designs, and before that repairs to his Wiltshire seat at Longford Castle appear to have been carried out under his personal direction.⁷ One drawing for Bruce Castle survives that may be in his hand.⁸ What, however, is particularly relevant to the Tottenham mausoleum is an engraved tribute to his first wife Constance Lucy, who died in 1680, which is signed 'H C desig.', *i.e.* 'designavit', with a coronet to indicate its author's rank as a peer (Fig. 3). It shows Lady Coleraine expiring in an architectural setting which is dominated by an apsidal recess whose classical architecture is tolerably correctly drawn and includes ornamental shells such as are sometimes found in domes and niches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Italy and elsewhere. The death-bed scene is emphasised by a profusion of funerary symbolism: skulls, sundials, an hour-glass, a smoking urn, a coiled snake and a broken column. Coleraine was clearly a man who would be capable of sketching an architectural idea on paper, and one for whom symbolical forms were important.

The only known architectural drawing for the mausoleum is, however, not by the amateur Lord Coleraine but obviously by a professional draughtsman (Fig. 4). It is to be found in one of the albums of topographical prints bequeathed to the Society of Antiquaries by the third Lord Coleraine on his death in 1749.⁹ Although unsigned and undated it is clearly of late seventeenth-century date and corresponds closely to the building as it appears in topographical prints of 1809 and 1840 (Figs. 1 and 2). The only important discrepancy between drawing and prints is in the plan, D-shaped in the former, but apparently circular with a rectangular vestibule as built. In the engravings the ribbing of the dome does not relate to the engaged columns below as it does in the drawing, and the form of the obelisk is more attenuated. Essentially, however, the drawing represents the same building as the two topographical prints. Its draughtsmanship points to the office of Sir Christopher Wren, and the form of the scale (always important as evidence of authorship) matches the scale on several drawings reliably attributed to Nicholas Hawksmoor, then Wren's leading draughtsman, or to his younger colleague William Dickinson.¹⁰ Coleraine himself had no known connection with the Court or the Royal Works that might have brought him into contact with Wren's office, but in the 1690s it was the only professional architectural establishment in the country, and its members were often sought out by private persons seeking architectural advice.

Though expertly drawn, the design is somewhat awkward. The three engaged Doric columns are too few and too widely spaced to be altogether effective and might have been better omitted. Although circular domed buildings and obelisks both had funerary associations going back to Antiquity,¹¹ to place one on top of the other created an awkward juxtaposition: an obelisk that should have stood firmly on the ground rising from a timber-framed dome that needed only an urn or a ball to finish it off. In short, the dual function of the building produced



some incongruities: a mausoleum with a fireplace and chimney, a vestry crowned by a symbol of mortality.

It would be surprising if this rather gauche design was conceived in Wren's office, and least of all by Hawksmoor, then 35 years old and at the beginning of his career as an architect in his own right. It seems more likely that it was sketched by Coleraine and that he employed Hawksmoor or Dickinson to draw it out for him. Other professional drawings may have been provided by Wren's office, for the detailing of the columns, for instance, or for the carpentry of the dome and obelisk, which it is unlikely that Coleraine would have been capable of working out for himself.

How, finally, does Lord Coleraine's mausoleum-vestry rank in British architectural history? Although in modern times many funerary chapels have been appropriated for use as vestries, to combine the two functions in the same building was, in the seventeenth (or for that matter the eighteenth) century, almost certainly unprecedented.¹² The circular domed form, derived ultimately from Antiquity, had been anticipated in England by Wren's unexecuted design for a mausoleum to the memory of King Charles I, made in 1678, and in Scotland by the monument in the Greyfriars churchyard in Edinburgh to Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, built in 1691 under the direction of the Scottish architect James Smith – the latter a far more sophisticated design than Lord Coleraine's.¹³ The Tottenham mausoleum was, nevertheless, an early example of a form of funerary architecture whose grandest expression was to be built to Hawksmoor's design at Castle Howard in Yorkshire in 1729–36.

Fig. 4. Plan and elevation of Lord Coleraine's proposed mausoleum, *circa* 1690, probably drawn by Nicholas Hawksmoor. *Society of Antiquaries of London, Coleraine Collection, III, London and Middlesex, fol. 46.*

When Lord Coleraine died in 1708 his body was duly buried in the vault which he had constructed, but the mausoleum-cum-vestry was demolished in 1875, when the whole east end of the church was rebuilt to Butterfield's designs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Dr Nicholas Doggett for suggesting to me some years ago that the second Lord Coleraine might qualify as an amateur architect; to Dr Anthony Geraghty for his help in identifying the surviving drawing as a product of Wren's office, and to Dr Gordon Higgott for concurring. Ms Deborah Hedgecock, Curator of the Bruce Castle Museum, kindly drew my attention to Lord Coleraine's engraving commemorating his first wife. The drawing is reproduced by kind permission of the Society of Antiquaries of London, the engraving by that of Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Libraries, Archives and Museum Service).

NOTES

- 1 As recorded by Daniel Lysons, *Environs of London*, 2 (II), London, 1811, 756, n. 95. Lysons's version is preferable to the slightly variant version in William Robinson, *The History and Antiquities of Tottenham*, 2nd edition, London, 1846, II, 8, where the date is given as 1697 in Roman figures, but as 1696 in the text.
- 2 G.E. C[okayne], *Complete Peerage*, III, London, 1913, 366; *Dictionary of National Biography*, VIII, Oxford, 1890, 1250-1; Victoria County History, *Middlesex*, V, 327.
- 3 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawlinson D.405, 33, Coleraine's MS. "History of Tottenham".
- 4 Tottenham, Bruce Castle, Haringey Archives, Tottenham Parish Records, Vestry Minutes 1678-1735, 36.
- 5 London, Guildhall Library, Records of the Diocese of London, MS. 9532/1 (Faculty Register, 1685-1704), fols. 37-8.
- 6 C[okayne], *loc. cit.* .
- 7 Nicholas Cooper, "The work of two antiquaries at Bruce Castle", *infra/supra*, page?
- 8 *Ibid.*, page?
- 9 London, Society of Antiquaries of London, Coleraine Collection, III, London and Middlesex, fol. 45.
- 10 I am grateful to Dr Anthony Geraghty of the University of York, who has made a special study of the draughtsmanship of drawings from Wren's office, for pointing out to me the identical scales (and particularly the distinctive form of the dots above the notation of the figures) in *Wren Society*, V, pl. 57; VI, pl. 6; and XII, pl. 8. Wren Soc. XI, pl. IV (left) is a late (1715) drawing by Dickinson with the same scale.
- 11 Cf. Howard Colvin, *Architecture and the After-Life*, New Haven and London, 1991 (for domes, chapters IV-VI, for obelisks, 43 and 340-1).
- 12 In Italy, however, sacristies were sometimes built by patrons who were interred in them [Colvin, *op. cit.*, 191 and 217].
- 13 Colvin, *op. cit.*, fig. 280.