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A VERY EARLY PORTRAIT BY MICHAEL RYSBRACK: THE EARL OF MACCLESFIELD

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In 2005 Christie's, London, offered at auction a plaster bust (Fig. 1), which was described as a portrait of the first Earl of Macclesfield by the great sculptor from Antwerp, Michael Rysbrack, who settled in London about 1720 and remained there until his death in 1770. Apart from a solitary reference to the bust in 1732 by the eighteenth-century chronicler of the arts, George Vertue,¹ the auctioneer's catalogue noted that no other record of Rysbrack's bust existed and suggested that the plaster bust (which was only discovered while Christie's was undertaking an appraisal of the contents of the Macclesfield family seat) must have been cast after the terracotta model made by the sculptor, the terracotta then having 'either been lost or destroyed'.² My detailed examination of the bust on several occasions,³ and an analysis of its method of facture, demonstrate, however, that the bust is not a replica cast from a mould taken off the terracotta model: almost certainly due to the impatience of the sitter, the plaster bust was, in fact, cast in a waste-mould that was taken directly from the sculptor's unfired clay model, meaning that there never was a terracotta version of the bust, and there probably never was a marble version of the bust either. Nevertheless, the plaster bust – which is the only surviving record of the commission – is one of the most accomplished portraits produced by Rysbrack and is not only associated with the busts of a number of Rysbrack's sitters, but also is directly connected to the model for at least one other celebrated portrait by the sculptor.



Fig. 1. Michael Rysbrack, bust of Sir Thomas Parker, first Earl of Macclesfield, c.1722, plaster, h. 28½ in. (72.3 cm).
Private Collection. © Christie's Images Limited.



Fig. 2. John Michael Rysbrack (1694–1770) 1753 by Andrea Soldi (1707–71), oil on canvas, 45¼ in. × 35¾ in. (114.8 cm × 90.9 cm). *Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, USA/The Bridgeman Art Library.*

RYSBRACK AND HIS EARLY PORTRAIT BUSTS

Born in Antwerp in 1694, Rysbrack (Fig. 2) is one of the most important sculptors to have practised his art in eighteenth-century Europe. He ranks alongside Louis François Roubiliac, Joseph Wilton, Joseph Nollekens, Thomas Banks and John Flaxman as one of the greatest sculptors in England in the eighteenth century, and he can be credited with taking the first steps that led English sculpture out of the provincial backwater in which it had languished for many centuries. That process of advancement, initiated by Rysbrack, was further encouraged by the sculpture

of his fellow Fleming Peter Scheemakers, who arrived in England around 1721 or possibly a few years before.⁴ It accelerated at the end of the 1730s and during the following decade after the arrival in London in 1730 of the Frenchman Roubiliac, later progressing further with the productions of Wilton, the first English-born sculptor to receive a comprehensive continental training, and Nollekens, also born in England, who spent eight years in Rome before returning in 1770 and establishing himself as the foremost British sculptor of the day. In short, Rysbrack was one of the two finest portraitists (the other being Roubiliac⁵) in England between the

death of Sir Godfrey Kneller (1723) and the arrival in London in 1753 of Joshua Reynolds. Save for William Hogarth and Allan Ramsay (the latter of whom had settled in London by about 1739), there were almost no first-class portrait painters in England at the time that left a body of work of outstanding merit. This makes the work of the marble portrait carver such as Rysbrack even more significant, and ‘when compared with the painted portraits of the time the sculptured portraits will be found to rank very high’.⁶ As Matthew Craske has recently written, ‘the monuments and busts of Rysbrack and his competitors can justly be regarded as the forbears of the grand portraits of the aristocracy that were the speciality of Reynolds and Gainsborough.’⁷

Rysbrack’s influence in the development of the classical tradition in England was of the utmost importance and it has been remarked that ‘the main theme which runs through nearly all his work and makes it a coherent whole is the classical theme, the theme of heroes in Greek or Roman dress, classical draperies and more or less static poses.’⁸ Despite the fact that Rysbrack had never been to Italy and studied its classical sculpture, Katharine Eustace has demonstrated that there ‘was never any suggestion that he was not fully acquainted with the “Beauties of the Antique”’, since apart from a comprehensive training by a master (Michel Vervoort, or van der Voort) who had been so exposed, Rysbrack had a very extensive reference library of engraved publications of antique sculpture as well as an impressive collection of casts ‘after the antique’ and ‘not a few antique works’ as well.⁹

Rysbrack’s simple, refined and dignified brand of classicism enabled him to dominate the market for portrait busts and funerary monuments in an age when people of taste and discernment increasingly came to shun the vulgar magnificence – the periwigs, contemporary dress and, so far as concerned monuments, the elaborate architecture – expected by late Stuart clients, much of which was by the 1720s and 1730s viewed ‘as a state of vanity arrived at by



Fig. 3. Michael Rysbrack, bust of Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland, c.1722, marble. *Photo: Reproduced with kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Marlborough.*

pursuing modern fashions of French origin.’¹⁰ Portrait busts had a long history as component parts of English funerary monuments, often erected to the posterity of the landed elite, but before 1720 in Britain they were only rarely commissioned as independent images. As a mode of representation, however, the bust became a major medium of portraiture over the next hundred years, and at times during that period its ubiquity and desirability exceeded that of the painted image. An appreciation of the bust of Lord Macclesfield will best be achieved when it is considered alongside two other busts by Rysbrack in similar vein.

The bust by Rysbrack that is signed and bears the earliest date, and one that typifies his classical style, is that of Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland, a leading political figure in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, who died in April 1722. The bust of Sunderland (Fig. 3), which bears

the date 1722, still stands in the broken pediment over one of the fireplaces in the Long Library at Blenheim Palace, where it was recorded by Mrs Webb in 1954. Shorn of the wig in which he was usually depicted in portraits by artists during his lifetime, Sunderland is portrayed in Roman drapery and with close-cropped hair, Rysbrack employing antique convention for his portrayal of the Earl, 'indicative of the emphatic manliness of a Roman noble of the Augustan era.'¹¹ Mrs Webb argued that 'The bust seems to be the first of many commissions which were subsequently carried out for Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, and is the only work for the Marlborough family which is signed';¹² but Sarah's status as commissioner of the bust cannot now be supported. More plausibly, the bust was



Fig. 4. Michael Rysbrack, bust of Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham, seventh Earl of Winchelsea (1647–1730), c.1723, marble, h. 62cm. *Victoria and Albert Museum, London. V&A Images.*

either posthumous, a commemorative object commissioned by the Earl's widow or descendants, and inscribed, following its completion, with the date of the Earl's death, or it was commissioned by Sunderland himself and completed in the year of his death (or later, and dated with the year of the sittings), and went to Blenheim later.¹³ On the first Duke of Marlborough's death in 1722, and in the absence of a direct male heir, the Dukedom passed to his eldest daughter, Henrietta, who became Duchess of Marlborough in her own right. On her death in 1733, without heirs, the Dukedom (and in due course Blenheim Palace) passed to the first surviving son (Charles, fifth Earl of Sunderland) of Henrietta's closest (deceased) sibling, her sister Anne, the second wife of the third Earl of Sunderland. An inventory of the contents of Blenheim Palace made in 1740 contains no reference to the bust, and, whatever the circumstances of its commission, it is practically certain that Charles (fifth Earl of Sunderland and third Duke of Marlborough) took the bust to Blenheim Palace along with the famous Sunderland Library that was removed there in 1749, about the time that Charles himself took up residence at Blenheim. This is borne out by a 1783 guidebook to the Palace, which stated that the Long Library 'was originally intended as a gallery for paintings; but has since been furnished with the grand Sunderland Collection of books, comprising upwards of twenty thousand volumes... Above the first chimney, a bust of Charles [third] Earl of Sunderland'.¹⁴

Another early work, and arguably Rysbrack's most celebrated bust, is that of Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham (Victoria and Albert Museum, London). Although the bust is neither signed nor dated, Vertue recorded it in 1723,¹⁵ seven years before the Earl's death in 1730 at the age of 83. The bust (Fig. 4) was modelled 'from the life ... to a great degree of likeness & in an excellent stile', according to Vertue,¹⁶ and Horace Walpole added that 'the artist succeeded so well, that he began to be employed on large works, particularly monuments.'¹⁷



Fig. 5. After Sir Godfrey Kneller, Sir Thomas Parker, Lord Chief Justice, oil on canvas, 1712, 49½ in. × 39 in. (125.7 cm × 99.1 cm).
National Portrait Gallery, London.

**LORD MACCLESFIELD AND HIS
INTEREST IN PORTRAIT BUSTS**

Sir Thomas Parker (1667–1732), a highly successful and prominent barrister MP, whose legal skills had been employed to great effect in prosecuting enemies of Queen Anne’s ministry, was appointed Lord Chief Justice (Fig. 5) in March 1710, also becoming a Member of the Privy Council. In 1716 George I ennobled him as Baron Parker of Macclesfield, a rare honour for a Lord Chief Justice, probably reflecting Parker’s great popularity with the senior members of

the King’s German retinue. Shortly after his elevation Parker purchased Shirburn Castle and its estate in Oxfordshire. In May 1718 he was appointed Lord Chancellor (Fig. 6) on the resignation of Lord Cowper, and despite his lack of experience in the Chancery Court, was nevertheless a great success. He provided various services to the King in addition to his judicial and constitutional duties, and in November 1721 was created first Earl of Macclesfield (of the second creation). Among his ministerial colleagues he remained a committed member of the



Fig. 6. John Simon after Sir Godfrey Kneller, Thomas, Lord Parker of Macclesfield, Lord High Chancellor, c.1718, engraving, 35.6 cm × 25 cm.
© Trustees of the British Museum.

faction led by the third Earl of Sunderland, and after Sunderland's death in 1722 he showed similar attachment to Sunderland's successor, Lord Carteret. Macclesfield was a man of considerable intellect, and his attachment to Sunderland was probably strengthened by their shared taste for books and learning on a wide range of subjects.¹⁸

Macclesfield's downfall arose out of the factional rivalry in the administration of Robert Walpole, between Carteret and his followers on the one hand and the Townsend-Walpole group on the other. Having already sidelined Carteret by removing him from his Secretaryship of State to a position of much less prominence, Walpole – who was envious of

Macclesfield's intimacy with the King and his Hanoverian ministers – was now anxious to secure the removal from the Cabinet of Carteret's most prominent followers. In Macclesfield's case, he did this by first instituting a public enquiry (the publication of whose report led to Macclesfield's resignation from office in January 1725) and then organising a state trial over allegations that Masters in Chancery had been misusing suitors' money in their custody, a practice which Macclesfield himself was believed to have encouraged. Following impeachment by the House of Commons in May 1725, it was demonstrated in his trial at the bar of the House of Lords that not only had Macclesfield sold masterships in Chancery, but also that he had maximised his gain by selling to the highest bidder, while suitors had suffered as a result of their money being used by Masters in investments in order to recoup the exorbitant sums paid. On 25 May 1725 Macclesfield was found guilty by a unanimous vote of 93 peers and was sentenced to pay a fine of £30,000 – 'to be applied towards the relief of the suitors who had suffered from the insolvency of the masters in Chancery'¹⁹ – and to imprisonment in the Tower of London until the fine was paid. Macclesfield's disgrace was completed on 31 May when his name was struck from the roll of Privy Councillors. In his *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, John, Lord Campbell, wrote of Macclesfield that:

Alas! He was under the dominion of a vice ... – AVARICE. This never induced him to receive a bribe, but drove him as long as he could consider himself protected by existing usage, however objectionable, to regard the accumulation of wealth as the great object of his existence.²⁰

Macclesfield's son and heir, George, had set out for Italy on the Grand Tour in 1719, which lasted more than two-and-a-half years, and on which he made a number of significant acquisitions. The most important and interesting part of George Parker's purchases in Italy consisted of sculptures, although these were almost exclusively copies of antique

figures in either plaster (referred to as ‘jess’) or bronze. A group of over thirty plaster busts was purchased in response to Lord Macclesfield’s desire for copies from the Grand Ducal gallery in Florence, the Uffizi.²¹ On 3 January 1722 Parker wrote to his father from Florence, congratulating him on his Earldom, and stating:

As for the casts you mentioned to us in your last [letter] and others before, we have heard upon enquiry that the Grand Duke has resolved to give leave to nobody whatsoever to have new moulds made from the Statues or Busts in the Gallery, so that we endeavour to get casts from the best moulds we find ready made and of which we have bought several Heads a List of which your Lordship receives Inclos’d.²²

The ‘List’ stated the names of plaster busts that Parker had bought with ‘some others from the Gallery here which we have not yet compar’d with the Originals to be assur’d whose they are’.²³ The casts

were almost certainly executed by, or under the direction of, Pietro Cipriani. Cipriani’s master, Massimiliano Soldani-Benzi, had taken moulds of a series of busts from the Grand Ducal collection and cast them in bronze for the Prince of Liechtenstein. All of those busts are represented in the list Parker sends to his father, and it seems clear that Cipriani had re-used Soldani’s moulds and then added some others.²⁴

Among the heads of figures such as Cicero, Demosthenes, Alexander the Great and Marcus Aurelius, was a cast of the head of Michelangelo’s celebrated *Bacchus*, as well as Bernini’s head of his lover, Constanza Bonarelli. After their arrival in England, the plaster casts were displayed (along with two bronze busts also cast in Italy for Lord Macclesfield) at Shirburn Castle, latterly in Macclesfield’s libraries there. The busts could not have formed a display in the libraries at Shirburn until 1724 at the earliest, since a letter from Macclesfield to John Molesworth in Turin dated 21 May 1724 stated: ‘I have a gallery at Shirburn already. I am at work now in making another for a library, which I should be glad to see furnished with

what you like. I shall beg your advice and Sir T. Hewit’s [Thomas Hewett, Surveyor of the King’s Works] in fitting it up.’²⁵ Presumably, the plaster busts originally stood in the gallery that existed at the date of Lord Macclesfield’s letter to Molesworth. Busts and reliefs, usually in marble, were becoming a prominent feature of interiors of the houses of the nobility and gentry between 1720 and 1750, and by the latter date, the library was assuming an increasingly popular function as the location for busts, especially of ancient and modern authors (whose presence was intended to excite emulation in the viewer), often in material other than marble, for example, plaster and plaster painted to resemble bronze.

The plaster busts acquired by George Parker while on the Grand Tour were photographed, still *in situ* in the libraries at Shirburn Castle, in 2004. At that time, amongst the plaster casts was discovered a plaster head not included in the list of casts sent by Parker – the head of his father, the Earl of Macclesfield. Apart from additions, the libraries (incorporating the plaster casts) were to remain largely undisturbed for nearly 300 years, until a long-running family dispute between the ‘senior’ and ‘cadet’ branches of the family (culminating in proceedings in the High Court in 2003) ultimately led to the ninth Earl’s eviction from the Castle and the disposal of many of its treasures, including the contents of the libraries – their books and the plaster casts.²⁶

THE MAKING OF RYSBRACK’S BUST OF LORD MACCLESFIELD, AND THE CAUSE OF THE SCULPTOR’S IRRITATION WITH THE SITTER

As Christie’s catalogue stated, there is no reference to the bust of Lord Macclesfield in Vertue’s Notebook in 1723 when he first referred to Rysbrack and recorded certain busts modelled by him,²⁷ although Vertue did record the bust of Lord

Macclesfield in a list of Rysbrack's busts in his Notebook in 1732. Christie's posited:

It is inconceivable that the portrait would have been commissioned by Macclesfield after his dramatic fall from power in 1725, and Vertue does not mention the bust among his list of Rysbrack's portraits in 1723. It is therefore likely that the bust was executed in the years 1723–25, when Macclesfield was at the height of his power and during exactly the time he was taking possession of the various items of sculpture which he had commissioned through his son in Italy.²⁸

Certainly the Earl's life was not in due course commemorated by any form of sculptural monument,²⁹ and, with one exception, the statement by Christie's quoted above can be supported – the bust probably dates from no later than 1723, and was probably modelled in 1722, when the plaster busts from Italy are likely to have arrived at Shirburn Castle.³⁰ I part company, however, with the following statement by the auctioneer:

Although Rysbrack modelled his portraits in terracotta, there is no record of the existence of a terracotta bust of Macclesfield, so it has either been lost or destroyed. The earl may originally have left the model with Rysbrack with the intention that the latter would carve a version in marble, but events surrounding Macclesfield's political disgrace may have overtaken him before this was carried out. It would be relatively easy, however, to have had the bust cast in plaster.³¹

If – as implied by the auctioneer – the plaster bust had been made from a mould taken from the terracotta bust,³² that is the model after the clay had been fired in a kiln, the mould itself must have been a piece-mould, but this appears not to have been the method of facture of Lord Macclesfield's bust. In order to understand the point, it will help to discuss it first in relation to an unfired clay model.

A traditional method of preserving the features of a clay model (if the clay model itself is not to be fired in a kiln to produce a terracotta bust or otherwise preserved) is to create a plaster waste-mould around the model, which enables an almost exact copy of the

model to be cast in plaster. When the waste mould, consisting of two plaster shells fitted round the clay model, has dried and hardened and is then opened and separated from the model, it invariably results in the model being destroyed – because the plaster that has been applied to the model and filled the undercut parts of the model (particularly the drapery and hair on a bust) is effectively locked into the clay and once dry and hardened cannot be detached from the model without pulling apart the (softer) clay that forms the undercuts. The damaged clay has to be picked out of the mould. After cleaning, the interiors of the two shells of the mould are then coated with a layer of tallow (soap – in modern times dishwashing detergent also suffices), which prevents the casting agent adhering to the mould. The shells are then joined together, and sealed by the application all over them of a fresh coat of plaster, after which the casting agent (the plaster) is poured into the mould (in an aperture made for that purpose – this may in fact be the open base) and worked in the mould. In due course the casting agent sets, becoming the cast. The mould is then chipped off the cast in small pieces to get it free of any undercuts, wasting the mould in the process (hence the name), and the solid (dried) plaster cast is removed. 'So the waste mould is a destructive process by which the original positive is destroyed to get the mould off, and then the mould is destroyed to get the cast out.'³³

A piece-mould, on the other hand, consists of a mould (again normally of plaster) that is made in various sections or pieces in such a way that the pieces fit around the undercut parts of the model but are not locked into them, so that when the pieces of the mould are removed, the model remains intact. The piece-mould thereby created can be used (when the pieces are held in place together by a plaster jacket known as a mother mould) (Fig. 7) to make copies of the model, either in plaster or clay (slip or pressed-in), and the original clay model can be fired in the kiln if the sculptor so wishes.³⁴ After a clay model containing undercuts has been fired and

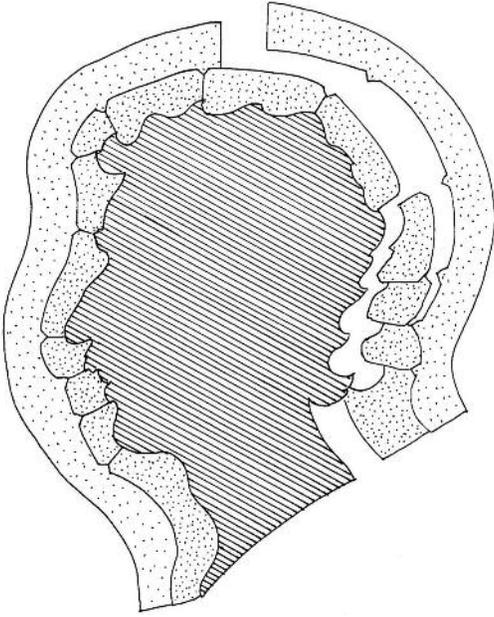


Fig. 7. From T. Langland, *From Clay to Bronze: A Studio Guide to Figurative Sculpture* (New York, 1999), p. 83. Reproduced by permission of Watson-Gupthill Publications, a division of Random House, Inc.

become terracotta, a plaster waste-mould then made around it will break into pieces when an attempt is made to detach the hardened mould from the undercut parts of the terracotta, which latter is the stronger material; accordingly only a piece-mould – where separate pieces are designed to detach themselves from the undercut parts without hindrance – will work.

Had the bust of Macclesfield in fact been made from a piece-mould (as implied by Christie's) rather than a waste-mould, the making of the mould and the casting of the bust would have been contracted to a professional mould-maker since Rysbrack was not himself able to produce piece-moulds. Rysbrack was not alone amongst professional sculptors in subcontracting the process of complex mould-making. For example, in Roubiliac's large scale practice of reproducing his work in terracotta and plaster,³⁵

it is known that he employed the services of those who specialised in mould-making, such as John Flaxman senior.³⁶

There is no evidence that Rysbrack took moulds off and then cast his unfired models – although it has been suggested that it was common in the workshops of eighteenth-century sculptors to make a piece-mould of the clay model before firing, 'as an insurance against disaster.'³⁷ Rysbrack almost invariably sent all his models to be fired in the kiln, and while he arranged for casts of fired terracotta busts to be made for clients, that was only when they were specifically requested; in that case, as when he produced statuettes that were intended to be sold in editions, it is well-documented that he contracted specialist mould-makers to make the piece-moulds and subsequently to produce the casts from them, 'it being a thing Entirely out of my way.'³⁸

There is no doubt that the plaster bust of Macclesfield was indeed cast from a plaster mould, and that the bust was not modelled directly in plaster. A bare patch of plaster on the bust's right cheek bears a surface that is commensurate with plaster being cast off plaster, with an adequate coat of tallow separating the mould and the casting plaster; the tallow would stop the plaster from sticking to the mould, but would not necessarily stop the water from being wicked away by the mould from the setting plaster, preventing it from forming a universally flawless surface.³⁹ There are, however, none of the usual indicia on the plaster bust of Lord Macclesfield that could reasonably be anticipated if it had been produced from a piece-mould (as opposed to a waste-mould) – for example, buttresses behind and supporting the shoulders or extra reinforcing agents applied manually after casting to strengthen the structure of the cast, or the appearance anywhere on the bust of very faint lines arising from a casting seam in an area where two of the many pieces from the mould would have joined in the casting, the presence of such lines being a very frequent (albeit not universal) occurrence on plaster busts that have



Fig. 8. Michael Rysbrack, bust of Sir Isaac Newton, inscribed 'Mich: Rysbrack 1739', plaster painted to resemble terracotta, h. 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (60.5 cm). Trinity College, Cambridge. *The writer*.

been cast in piece-moulds. Both features (for example, there is a casting line in the area of the sitter's left shoulder and chest) are to be found on Rysbrack's plaster bust of Sir Isaac Newton, in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge (Fig. 8), painted to resemble terracotta,⁴⁰ that is considered to have been made in a piece-mould taken off a fired (terracotta) model for the marble version of the bust, with which it is practically identical.⁴¹

As discussed below, the condition of the plaster itself is consistent with Rysbrack's bust of Macclesfield having been created from a waste-mould, in the making of which mould the clay model would have been destroyed and the clay discarded, so that the clay model could never have been fired to produce a terracotta bust. While the bust is covered

in a layer of paint over an undercoat or sealant, a very revealing vertical, long, and irregular ridge on the back of the head (Fig. 9) nevertheless appears to be damage caused when the mould was cracked by the casting medium (plaster) inside it expanding, with the crack itself then being cast. This strongly supports the theory of the object being cast in a waste-mould rather than a piece-mould, as piece-moulds forced open by an expanding medium would normally crack along a regular seam where two of the several pieces of the mould connect.

There are numerous holes (some quite deep) created by air bubbles in the Macclesfield bust – either on the head (one is prominently on the lid of the sitter's left eye), or on vertical surfaces, such as the roughly worked scalloped areas 'under' the

shoulders. This suggests that the cast was worked upside-down (as would be expected) but worked quite quickly too. It also suggests that an inadequate covering of tallow had been applied to the relevant areas of the mould before the casting plaster was poured in, or that the mould was not adequately doused with water before use, in which case the dryness of the mould would tend to absorb the moisture of the cast leaving air bubbles in place.⁴² A professional mould-maker/caster would be unlikely to have prepared the mould or worked the plaster in such a way as to produce the air bubbles; alternatively he would have filled the holes later. Moreover, the plaster surface on the inside of the cast (as seen from the reverse) (Fig. 10) is very rough, as though it has been very quickly worked up, and may be contrasted with the surface and interior of the bust of Newton discussed earlier, where the quality of workmanship of the piece-mould maker and caster has been rightly praised.⁴³ The sawn areas of the Macclesfield bust (which were probably removed to allow greater access to the area covered by the buttress that attaches the bust to the socle) are similarly indicative of a very quick, 'make-do' attitude to the cast. Had the plaster bust been cast by a professional mould-maker, one would have expected the sawn areas to have been smoothed-off, but this has not been done.

The ridges left by the modelling tool under the shoulders on the sides of the bust (Fig. 11) in the original clay body of Macclesfield's bust from which the mould was taken are unsmoothed and do not run in uniform parallel lines, unlike other busts by Rysbrack (e.g. George II, National Portrait Gallery, London, and Sir Hans Sloane, British Museum, London): they read as 'unfinished surface', a self-referential device of the sculptor, suggesting that the whole commission was completed in a rushed manner. Similar marks often appear on unfinished pieces of marble carving, for example Michelangelo's last *Pieta*. It seems the bust was modelled at speed, and then, rather than waiting for it to be fully dry and

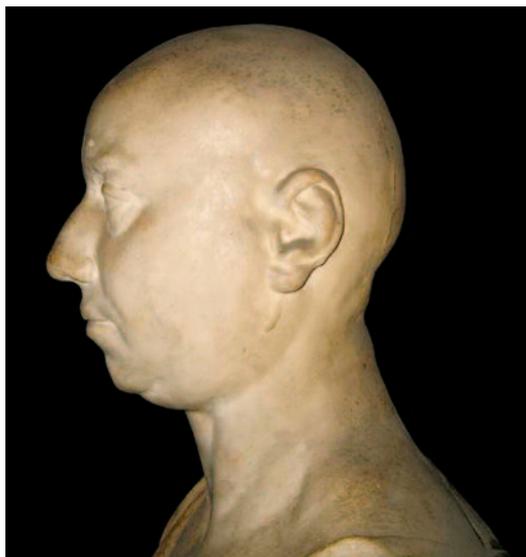


Fig. 9. Detail of bust in Fig. 1. *The writer*.



Above: Fig. 10.
Reverse of bust in
Fig. 1. *The writer*.

Right: Fig. 11.
Detail of bust in
Fig. 1. *The writer*.



be fired to produce terracotta, once it had reached a reasonable state of firmness, the waste mould was made, the clay then picked out and the plaster bust cast.

While Rysbrack may not himself have been making the reproductions of his busts and statuettes in the late 1750s, his own statements do not prove that he was incapable of making plaster versions of his busts. He was not comfortable or skilled in the art of making piece-moulds, and the use of plaster in his workshop seems to have been very infrequent (even the plasters referred to in any of Rysbrack's sale catalogues appear to be casts after the antique), but it is inconceivable that Rysbrack (and his own workmen) would not at least have been familiar with the basic process of making waste-moulds, a relatively simple and straightforward procedure that would not have required very special skill. Where all that was desired was a single plaster bust, it could easily be produced in Rysbrack's workshop from a waste-mould taken off the original clay model, one consequence of creating the waste-mould being the destruction of the clay model.

In summary, the evidence points to the Macclesfield bust being made from a waste-mould. Someone in Rysbrack's workshop both produced the mould and cast the bust, although among his employees it is not possible to say who this would have been.⁴⁴ It is clear that the person who made the mould and cast of Lord Macclesfield's bust was not a professional mould-maker skilled in the art of making piece-moulds and casts from them – there are too many rough areas, holes caused by air bubbles, and so forth, and it cannot be conceived that a professional caster would leave the interior surface as rough as the interior surface of Lord Macclesfield's bust. Even if the bust had been cast professionally (which cannot be the case), the cut shoulders convey a sense of familiarity or contempt that only the sculptor would be licensed to exercise. It is possible that someone else cut the shoulders, at a later date, although there appears to be no logical

explanation for that – unless the bust had been attached to a wall, which seems improbable given the evidence about the display of the bust with the plaster casts after the antique portraits in the libraries at Shirburn Castle. In any case, the rudimentary sawing of the shoulders forms part of a pattern.

As the bust of Lord Macclesfield is a plaster cast from a waste-mould taken directly from the clay model, it makes the bust rather more important than had been implied by the auctioneer's catalogue. It is practically the equivalent of the model and shows Rysbrack's modelling of the clay – an important matter, because the delicacy of the sculptor's touch is not always translated to the finished marble, and a plaster cast from a piece-mould taken off a terracotta model will usually lack the immediacy of the clay model, as well as a plaster cast of the model made in a waste-mould, or the fired terracotta itself.⁴⁵

All the factors discussed above suggest that, having received the plaster busts from Italy at Shirburn Castle in the first half of 1722, Macclesfield was very anxious to have his own bust completed and placed amongst the antique heads. Whatever may have been the Earl's original intention, he was impatient and reluctant to wait the amount of time that might be necessary to enable Rysbrack to carve a marble bust.⁴⁶ Given the long period during which the clay bust would have remained in the sculptor's workshop 'drying' (a minimum of six months and usually much longer) before it was sent to the kiln to be fired, Rysbrack most probably used his clay models as the reference when carving his marble busts. Had the bust been fired in a kiln, it would, of course, have been possible to have procured the making of a piece-mould of the terracotta bust from which a plaster bust could then be cast, but this would have taken a significant period to realise, possibly between eighteen months and two years. Rysbrack would normally require the passage of very many months to allow his clay models to dry before they were sent for firing.⁴⁷

It seems difficult to believe that in 1722 and 1723,



Fig. 12. Plaster casts from the Earl of Macclesfield's collection in situ in the libraries at Shirburn Castle (Oxfordshire) in 2004. *Photograph: David Smith.*

when he was already laying out significant sums on the acquisition of sculpture and other luxury items for Shirburn Castle, the Earl of Macclesfield, a very wealthy man, would have rejected the production of his bust in marble on the grounds of cost. Other motivations are likely to have guided him. Rather than the circumstances of Macclesfield's downfall in 1725 being the reason for the bust never being executed in marble, as suggested by Christie's, the more plausible explanation is the Earl's desire in 1722 to place himself without delay at the centre of his recently acquired group of classical heads, a desire which meant that, contrary to Rysbrack's normal practice, the clay model was never fired in the kiln and was merely used to create a waste-mould from which the bust could quickly be cast in plaster.

Taking all the foregoing points together, it is

reasonable to surmise that the sculptor was working with undue haste, probably reluctantly and with some considerable degree of irritation, to satisfy the demand of Lord Macclesfield for the early delivery of his bust, factors which might also explain why there is no signature to be found on the bust, although it is undoubtedly Rysbrack's work. An interesting contrast to this is the plaster bust of Martin Folkes by Roubiliac (British Museum) that Malcolm Baker has suggested is a plaster cast from a waste-mould,⁴⁸ the technique that would, like Rysbrack's bust of Macclesfield, have led to the destruction of the clay model. If Baker's theory is correct, it will at once be observed that the finish of the bust of Folkes is far superior to that of Rysbrack's plaster bust of Lord Macclesfield, and that the bust of Folkes suffers from none of the apparent defects that affect the Macclesfield bust.

**LORD MACCLESFIELD'S REASONS FOR
COMMISSIONING HIS BUST AND
SELECTING PLASTER AS THE MEDIUM**

Given the very severe classicism of Macclesfield's own bust, it seems practically certain that he intended his bust to be included in and to form part of the display at Shirburn Castle of the antique heads (Fig. 12).

The portrait bust, with well-established formats and a lineage from antiquity, suggested permanence and authority, qualities that were of particular attraction to some eighteenth-century English clients of sculptors, particularly noble patrons. By 1730 Sir Thomas Robinson was recommending to the Earl of Carlisle that in the hall at Castle Howard the sideboard for the display of plate, 'too mean an object for so noble a room', should be replaced with 'your Lordship's Statue', thus following the custom of Italian noblemen of 'leaving themselves to posterity in a more durable and grave manner than our method by pictures, that is by Sculpture, in either statues or busts'.⁴⁹ Seventeen years later Campbell's *London Tradesman* reported that 'The Nobility now affect to have their busts done ... rather than sit for their Pictures, and the Fashion is to have their apartments adorned with Bronzes and figures in Plaister and Wax.'⁵⁰ The growing vogue for busts in the antique style from the third decade of the eighteenth century had, as Craske has pointed out, 'particular associations ... with the formation of oral and private dynastic histories. Exhibited without the inscriptions of tombs, their moral role depended on the viewer's intimate knowledge of the character represented',⁵¹ and their ability to excite recollection by the viewer of the glorious actions or words of the sitter, so that they might be stirred to emulate them.

Just as the Earl of Nottingham was to be portrayed by Rysbrack *all'antica* with short hair and wearing classical drapery, in a manner that would become accepted as the norm for a man who had occupied a prominent position in public affairs, so the Earl of Macclesfield would have appreciated – something that became generally recognised a little

later – the associative quality to be derived by placing his own head with that of known, famous and highly desirable antique heads, an association he determined to foster at the outset. This is very well demonstrated by the facts that the socle on his bust in plaster has been fashioned with a cartouche so as to make it resemble very closely those of the plaster busts from Italy that also incorporate the cartouche, and that the painted surface of Lord Macclesfield's own bust is the same as the painted surfaces of the plaster casts of the antique busts – thus certainly establishing that the Italian casts were painted after they had arrived in England: the sawn section of the shoulder at the reverse of the Macclesfield bust on the viewer's right appears to have been cut shortly after the bust was painted, as the saw has dragged paint onto the cut surface while it was being cut (the cutting being done presumably to enable the buttress to be fixed). This has obvious implications for the age of the paint – if Rysbrack himself or a workshop assistant cut the bust, then the paint is obviously contemporaneous. Regrettably, the break-up and disposal of this important assemblage of plaster busts,⁵² whose creation is well documented in contemporaneous correspondence, was a loss both to the nation and to scholars in particular: much analysis remained to be done, for example, on the method of facture of the various casts, which is now unlikely ever to be realised.

Christie's informed the writer in 2006 that no information relating to the bust had been found by them in the family papers. The writer has himself been unable to research Lord Macclesfield's accounts and private papers since the family archive 'has for many years been entirely closed to researchers and that ... situation seems unlikely to change for the moment. Indeed the difficulties appear to have worsened following a family dispute a few years ago.'⁵³ Neither the Bank of England, nor Drummonds (Royal Bank of Scotland), Coutts & Co. or C. Hoare & Co. hold any relevant banking records relating to the Earl of Macclesfield and his descendants that might have disclosed payments by

the Earl to Rysbrack. It may be the case that even in the family papers, there is nothing that touches on this matter. When researching his *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, Campbell was informed by the fifth Earl of Macclesfield that the family's collection of manuscripts contained very few connected with the first Earl and 'none that would be of use to your Lordship for the valuable work you are now publishing. Had it been otherwise, I should with pleasure have forwarded them to you.'⁵⁴ Campbell himself conjectured, 'as far as we know, [Macclesfield] did not even keep a Diary'.⁵⁵

The plaster bust, executed for reasons of speed, is the only surviving version of the bust. In that regard, no record has ever come to light of any terracotta bust of Lord Macclesfield, nor is there any record of a marble bust. It has previously been assumed that the bust recorded by Vertue was missing⁵⁶ and that it at least existed as a finished terracotta,⁵⁷ even if the marble had never been carved; but until Christie's visited Shirburn Castle in 2004, the existence of the plaster bust was not even recorded, suggesting that no previous commentator had considered the possibility that neither a terracotta nor a marble version ever existed. It is only now that the plaster bust has come to light, and from an examination of its method of facture, that it can be stated with practical certainty that the clay model was never fired to produce a terracotta bust and that the bust was never carved in marble.

There is one further very telling point: in his Notebook where Vertue lists the bust of Lord Macclesfield,⁵⁸ he does not state whether the bust was plaster, marble or terracotta. Vertue's statement, prefacing the list, that 'I have seen the Models when done' must be read with caution: while it might on first reading be thought to be a statement that he had seen the models for all the busts he recorded, this would have been practically impossible – many of them would have gone to the client and some might not have survived firing in the kiln; rather, he is likely to be referring only to those items in the list that are

specifically described as models, and in that regard he specifies only a 'Modell' of a bust of Lord Orkney, and a 'Wax. Model' for a statue of King George II to be erected at the Royal Exchange. The omission from Vertue's list of information about the medium in which the bust was executed not only indicates Rysbrack's reluctance to supply details (other than the name of the sitter) to Vertue, but also almost certainly reflects Rysbrack's irritation arising from the clay model not being preserved in permanent form as terracotta or from the original commission for a marble bust (if such it was), not ultimately being realised.

RYSBRACK'S SKILL AS A PORTRAITIST

Rysbrack had good reason to feel irritated because, while the modelling of the Macclesfield bust is indisputably of the first order, the final product is marred by the poor casting and areas of bad workmanship that no doubt arose in an effort to satisfy the urgency of his client. Rysbrack was an extremely fine portraitist, understanding the importance of giving effect to the characteristics of the individual he was portraying, not merely producing a generalised representation drawing on classical precedents. Rysbrack's ability to reproduce a likeness and endow it with distinction 'was far beyond anything that had yet been seen in England in his own art, and noticeably greater than that of the portrait painters who succeeded Kneller.'⁵⁹ In an era of portraying judges and bishops in the formal guises of their office in life, often in elaborate gowns, vestments and wigs, 'representing the honour of their office in perpetuity',⁶⁰ the decision to portray Macclesfield in his natural state possibly reflected in part the growing distaste in portraiture for the outward trappings of luxury and distinction represented by fine clothing and elaborate wigs that was now viewed as 'a conspicuous sign of the



Fig. 13. Reverse of bust in Fig. 1. *The writer.*

conquest and corruption of the country by Gallic foppery and pomposity.⁶¹ The focus on the bald head emphasised its role as an ‘icon of personal identity’.⁶² Not only was his Lordship prepared to be depicted bald, but Rysbrack’s bravura modelling of Lord Macclesfield’s head even extended to the folds of skin on the back of the head well below the base of the skull in the location of the lower cervical vertebrae (Fig. 13).

Rysbrack’s portrait of Macclesfield is far more noble than any portrait of his Lordship executed in two dimensions, even that (Fig. 14) from 1721 by Giuseppe Grisoni (1699–1769), depicting the sitter in the peer’s robes of a Baron. That latter portrait is forced to rely on the device of extraneous classical and mythological background references⁶³ to legitimise Macclesfield’s claim to recognition of his

qualities of intellect, sagacity, resolution, refinement, charity and fair-mindedness, that might justify him a place in the Walhalla of worthies, ancient and modern. Even if it had not been destined to stand amongst the ancient greats assembled on the bookcases in the libraries at Shirburn Castle, Rysbrack’s bust of Macclesfield, in its severe classicism, embodies the virtues associated with those great figures of antiquity. In its treatment of the Earl’s bald head, firm nose, and deep hawkish eyes, as well as the manner in which the fullness of the face has been accentuated rather than minimized, the bust also reflects the specific features of the sitter, investing him with an energy and vitality, a liveliness that the artist working in two dimensions can only hint at by portraying Macclesfield in some act of movement. To quote Craske again, Rysbrack’s ‘genius lay in locating, through the study of the noble head ... a self-evident inner worthiness.’⁶⁴

THE GENESIS OF MACCLESFIELD’S BUST AND ITS ROLE AS A MODEL FOR OTHER RYSBRACK BUSTS

In style, the bust of Lord Macclesfield is similar to Rysbrack’s signed and dated (1722) marble bust of the Earl of Sunderland (Blenheim Palace), although Sunderland’s bust portrays him with close-cropped hair and wearing the Garter Star. Macclesfield was not a Knight of the Garter. As a close colleague of Sunderland, Macclesfield no doubt would have been aware of the former’s bust if it had been completed before the sitter’s death, through having seen it at Sunderland’s residence. Macclesfield may also have seen Rysbrack’s (now missing) bust of Sir Thomas Hewett, first recorded by Vertue in 1723 and again in 1727 when he saw it at the family’s country seat.⁶⁵ Macclesfield appears to have been on very friendly terms with Hewett⁶⁶ whom he engaged on works of improvement at Shirburn Castle. Accordingly, it is possible that Macclesfield was attracted by the



Fig. 14. Giuseppe Grisoni, *Lord Parker of Macclesfield, Lord High Chancellor*, c.1721, oil on canvas, 96 in. × 76 in. (244 cm × 193 cm). *National Trust, Hinton Ampner* (The Ralph Dutton Collection). *Photograph: Photographic Survey, Courtauld Institute of Art.*

possibility of the busts of Sunderland and Hewett as models for his own bust.

At the same time it is clear that certain aspects of the Macclesfield bust were also derived from – or were perhaps themselves subsequently employed by Rysbrack in the modelling of – another early and important portrait by the sculptor, that of the

architect James Gibbs (1682–1754), for whom Rysbrack executed several commissions after his arrival in England. Vertue's first reference to the bust of Gibbs in 1723 reads 'his head a Moddeld by Mr Rysbrack extreamly like him a bald head. Cutt in marble from that another basso relievo. with a wigg on', and it may be assumed that the bust of Gibbs

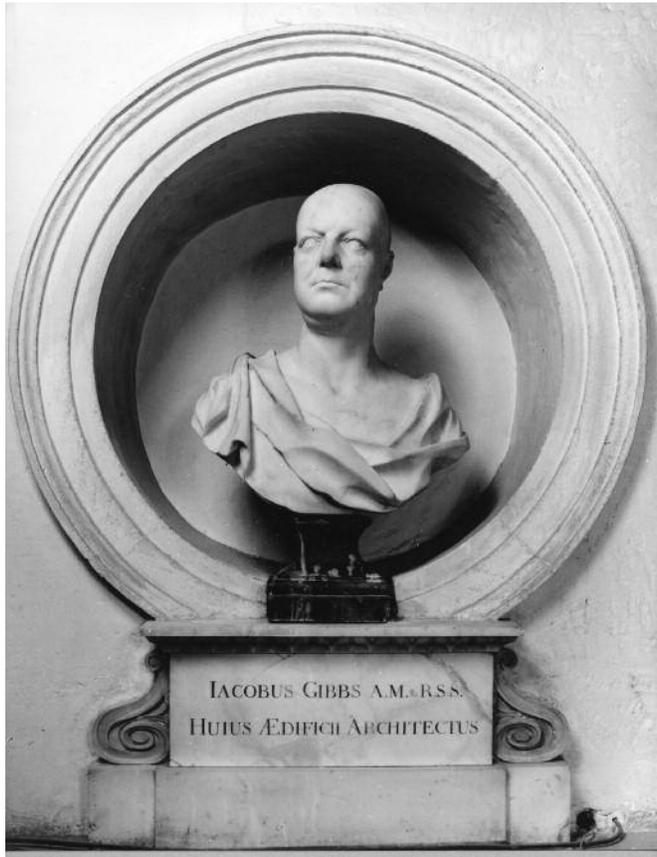


Fig. 15. Michael Rysbrack, bust of James Gibbs, signed and dated 1726, marble, Radcliffe Camera, Oxford. *Photograph: Photographic Survey, Courtauld Institute of Art/The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.*

with a bald head, observed by Vertue in 1723, was the model for and was identical with or similar to the marble bust (Fig. 15) now in the Radcliffe Camera, Oxford, which is signed by Rysbrack and dated 1726.⁶⁷ The similarity between that bust and the bust of Macclesfield is striking and cannot be purely coincidental. Gibbs's bald head is very slightly inclined to the right, Lord Macclesfield's slightly to the left, and the drapery pattern on the bust of Gibbs is almost a reversed copy of that on the bust of Macclesfield, save that there is a strong vertical fold

in the drapery of the bust of Gibbs, which is not present in that of Macclesfield, perhaps being dispensed with by Rysbrack in the latter case for reasons of speed. Since Lord Macclesfield's bust cannot date from later than 1724 and more likely was made in 1722, it is quite possible that it served as a model for Rysbrack's bust of Gibbs. Alternatively, the model for Gibbs's bust may have served as the model for the bust of Lord Macclesfield. On either basis their form and structure are remarkably empathetic.

CONCLUSION

Rysbrack was undoubtedly one of the leading sculptors ‘during a period when sculpture, alone of all the arts in England, could compete with the continent, and when, in England, the status of sculpture outshone that of painting.’⁶⁸ The discovery of the plaster bust of Lord Macclesfield involves an interesting story about the circumstances surrounding its commission and making, and provides important new information about Rysbrack’s working practices. At the same time, its bravura modelling, where the specific physical characteristics of Lord Macclesfield are recorded with a precision that eschews mere reliance on antique precedents, aptly justifies a comment by Margaret Whinney in 1964. She stated that, in England, Rysbrack ‘was beyond question the leading sculptor between 1720 and 1740, setting a standard that his rivals failed to reach during these years. He was inherently a more talented artist than any sculptor who had worked in England since the visit of Torrigiano in the early sixteenth century.’⁶⁹

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Donald Johnston and Andreas Pampoulides of Christie’s Sculpture Department, London, for permitting me to examine the bust on several occasions in Christie’s strongroom in February 2006, and to the bust’s present owners for allowing me to reproduce it in this article. I am also grateful to Benedict Carpenter, sculptor and specialist mould-maker, winner of the Jerwood Sculpture Prize 2001, and senior lecturer in sculpture at the University of Wolverhampton, for his technical comments on the construction of the bust. My thanks are due to Professor David McKitterick, Fellow, Tutor and Librarian, Trinity College, Cambridge, for permitting me to examine and photograph Rysbrack’s plaster bust of Sir Isaac Newton at Trinity College.

NOTES

- 1 ‘Vertue Notebooks, Volume III’, *Walpole Society* XXII, 1933–34 (hereafter Vertue III), p. 56; the reference appears in a list by Vertue of more than sixty busts which had been modelled by Rysbrack by 1732; see further text below.
- 2 Christie’s, *The Macclesfield Sculpture*, 1 December 2005 (hereafter Christie’s), lot 71, p. 84.
- 3 Christie’s have informed me that no reference to the bust has been found in the Macclesfield family papers. Lord Macclesfield’s Will dated 24 June 1724 (National Archives, PROB 11/651) makes no reference to the bust, which probably passed to his widow under a general bequest to her of all his personal property.
- 4 See M. Whinney, *Sculpture in Britain 1530–1830* (Harmondsworth, 1964, hereafter Whinney), p. 79 and M. I. Webb, *Michael Rysbrack Sculptor* (London, 1954, hereafter Webb), p. 64.
- 5 For a detailed discussion of the respective merits of Rysbrack and Roubiliac, their differences (and frequently similarities) of style, and the cultural contexts in which they operated, see Webb, pp. 23, 69, 76 and 81, and Whinney, p. 102. As regards the respective funerary monuments made by the two sculptors, see the illuminating discussion by Matthew Craske, *The Silent Rhetoric of the Body: A History of Monumental Sculpture and Commemorative Art in England, 1720–1770* (New Haven and London, 2007, hereafter Craske). Craske remarks (p. 152): ‘At issue in the comparison of the work of Roubiliac and Rysbrack are two distinct interpretations of the sublime. Rysbrack’s sublime . . . was a state of elevation, which distinguished the ideal from the commonplace. Roubiliac’s art conformed to the Longinian sublime which, essentially, was defined as a superior emotional intensity’.
- 6 Webb, pp. 62–3. In relation to Hogarth and Ramsay, see also D. Shawe-Taylor, *The Georgians: Eighteenth-Century Portraiture & Society* (London, 1990), pp. 81–7 (Hogarth) and 19, 91–2 (Ramsay).
- 7 Craske, p. 37.
- 8 Webb, p. 46.
- 9 Katharine Eustace, *Michael Rysbrack Sculptor 1694–1770* (City of Bristol Museums and Art Galleries, 1982, exh cat, hereafter Eustace), p. 11.
- 10 Craske, p. 110.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 139.
- 12 Webb, p. 51.

- 13 By way of support for the argument that the bust was commissioned posthumously, in George Vertue's first reference to Rysbrack, in 1723 (Vertue III, p. 17), he mentions only busts of the Earl of Nottingham, Sir Thomas Hewett and James Gibbs. Had it either been completed or have been work in progress, the bust of one of the most important political figures of the day (albeit recently deceased) would surely have justified a mention in Vertue's list of Rysbrack's busts in 1723. As it happens, there is no record at all by Vertue of the bust.
- 14 *New Description of Blenheim* (London, 1783), pp. 50, 52. I am grateful to the authorities at Blenheim Palace, particularly Ms. Jeri Bapasola, for their assistance.
- 15 Vertue III, p. 17. Craske, p. 139, gives the date of the bust as 1719, but cites no evidence in support, and since there is no evidence that Rysbrack was even in England before 1720, this dating seems very doubtful.
- 16 Vertue III, p. 56, quoted in Webb, p. 51.
- 17 Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (London, 1879), p. 374, quoted by Webb, p. 51.
- 18 A.A. Hanham in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* XLII (Oxford, 2004, hereafter Hanham), pp. 746–7. 'Lord Macclesfield's scholarly interests were widely recognised, notably by the dedication to him of Henley's translation of Montfaucon's *Diarium Italicum* of 1725': T. P. Connor, 'The Fruits of a Grand Tour: Edward Wright and Lord Parker in Italy, 1720–1722', *Apollo*, CXLVIII (July 1998, hereafter Connor, *Apollo*), p. 23.
- 19 John, Lord Campbell, *Lives of the Lord Chancellors and the Keepers of the Great Seal of England, from the earliest times till the reign of King George IV* (London, 1846, 10 vols., vol. IV, hereafter Campbell), at p. 522.
- 20 Campbell, p. 523.
- 21 T. P. Connor, 'Lord Parker on the Grand Tour', Christie's, *The Macclesfield Sculpture*, 1 December 2005, pp. 10–13 (hereafter Connor, Christie's), at p. 10.
- 22 British Library, Stowe Ms. 750 (hereafter Stowe Ms), ff. 393–394.
- 23 Stowe Ms, f. 403 (incorrectly catalogued in the British Library – it should have followed on George Parker's letter as f. 395): 'A List of the Casts in Jess of Heads and Busts that we have bought in Florence'.
- 24 Christie's, p. 15.
- 25 *Hist. MSS Comm.* LV (Various Collections VIII), p. 371. Hewett had earlier directed the building of the celebrated library at the Earl of Sunderland's residence in Piccadilly between 1719 and 1720.
- 26 See D. Wilson, 'Roubiliac, the earl of Pembroke, and the chancellor's discretion: preservation of the nation's heritage by the consistory courts of the Church of England', *Journal of the Church Monuments Society*, XXI (2006, hereafter Wilson, Roubiliac), pp. 145–6.
- 27 Vertue III, p. 17.
- 28 Christie's, p. 84.
- 29 Macclesfield had earlier 'constructed a family vault' in the church at Shirburn, 'and there he lies interred without monument or epitaph': Campbell, p. 560.
- 30 It seems reasonable to deduce from a sequence of letters written by Parker to Lord Macclesfield between 17 January and 10 February 1722 (Stowe Ms. fols. 395–397) that the busts were shipped back to England, probably from nearby Leghorn (Livorno), shortly after Parker left Florence, presumably in late January 1722. He was certainly back in London by 17 July 1722: J. Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish travellers in Italy, 1701–1800* (New Haven and London, 1997), pp. 737–8.
- 31 Christie's, p. 84.
- 32 The mould is the negative shape made from the positive – e.g. the fired or unfired model – into which shape the casting material is poured. When the casting material sets, it becomes the cast. The mould itself is usually formed of soft material or liquid, e.g. plaster, that is placed around the positive and allowed to harden, taking a perfect negative impression of the positive.
- 33 T. Langland, *From Clay to Bronze: A Studio Guide to Figurative Sculpture* (New York, 1999, hereafter Langland), p. 73.
- 34 On the process for making moulds for casts, and casting in clay and plaster, see Langland, pp. 72–83, 95–7 and 100–109; Edouard Lanteri, *Modelling: A Guide for Teachers and Students* (London, 1902, 1903 and 1911, hereafter Lanteri), Volume III, pp. 203–215; Nicholas Penny, *The Materials of Sculpture* (New Haven and London, 1993), pp. 165–214; and Marjorie Trusted (ed.), *The Making of Sculpture: the materials and techniques of European sculpture* (London, 2007), p. 161.
- 35 See M. Baker, 'The making of portrait busts in the mid-eighteenth century: Roubiliac, Scheemakers and Trinity College, Dublin', *Burlington Magazine*, CXXXVII (1995), pp. 826–7.
- 36 J. Gandon, *Life of James Gandon, Esq* (Dublin, 1846), p. 214; and see D. Bindman and M. Baker, *Roubiliac and the eighteenth century monument:*

- sculpture as theatre* (New Haven and London, 1995), p. 385, n. 12, which suggests that on at least one occasion Roubiliac used the services of the specialist mould-maker (Peter Vanina or Vannini) generally employed by Rysbrack.
- 37 J. Simon (ed.), *Handel: A celebration of his life and times*, exh. cat., National Portrait Gallery (London, 1985), p. 46, no. 16.
- 38 See the sculptor's correspondence in the late 1750s with Sir Edward Littleton, quoted in full by Webb, pp. 199–201. The 'Vannini' referred to there by Rysbrack is almost certainly the same 'Peter Vanina of Dover Street' whose wife, 'Anna Maria Vanina' was to receive £25 and various personal chattels under Rysbrack's will: see Webb, p. 190; Eustace, p. 144, cat. nos. 57, note 6 and 58; and R. Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660–1851* (London, 1953), p. 408.
- 39 For an example of a sculpture that was directly modelled in plaster, see the bust of the Prince Imperial by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux (1827–1875): see Sotheby's, *19th and 20th century European Sculpture*, 28 June 2007, lot 24; and see A. Middleton Wagner, *Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux – Sculptor of the Second Empire* (New Haven and London, 1986), pp. 185–199.
- 40 As noted by K. A. Esdaile, 'The Art of John Michael Rysbrack in Terracotta', Spink & Son Ltd, 1932 (hereafter Esdaile, Rysbrack), pp. 6, 35 – but overlooked by Mrs Webb in 1954, who described it (p. 82) as a terracotta. See also, M. Keynes, *The Iconography of Sir Isaac Newton to 1800* (Boydell Press, 2005), pp. 82–4.
- 41 Esdaile, Rysbrack, p. 19. Marble reproduced in Webb, p. 66, Fig. 24. In addition to this plaster and the related marble bust, there are numerous marbles, including a bust and statue by Roubiliac (both at Trinity College, Cambridge), and others by Rysbrack (Webb, p. 81 and Appendix 2, p. 222), and it seems likely that demand for the bust of Newton would have been such that it was necessary to reproduce it often, thus implying reproduction of plaster busts by casting from a piece-mould.
- 42 Lanteri, p. 212. See also Langland, p. 105, to the same effect.
- 43 Esdaile, Rysbrack, p. 19.
- 44 On Rysbrack's workshop and his assistants, see, e.g., Craske, pp. 121, 175, 453 n. 47, 182; Eustace, p. 15, n. 19; and *The London Evening Post* of 12–14 September 1738.
- 45 Despite the fine quality of the Newton bust, discussed in the text and made from a piece-mould, the outline of the features is softer than would be expected from a plaster made by the sculptor from a waste-mould – certainly the bust does not have that crispness and vitality evidenced by the bust of Lord Macclesfield.
- 46 While there is evidence that Lord Macclesfield was less than patient or polite with some counsel who appeared before him in court (Hanham, p. 746), a rather more flattering account of him was written by his son-in-law, William Heathcote, in his memorandum book: 'As a Husband, a Parent, and a Master, he was truly below'd by every one who stood in those relations towards him. No man ever serv'd his friends more readily & cheerfully, and they found in him the most agreeable, innocent, and instructive companion': Hampshire Records Office, 63M84/287, ff. 7–8.
- 47 In a letter dated 12 February 1756 to Sir Edward Littleton, Rysbrack explained, 'The Reason of not sending [the bust of] Sir Francis Bacon is; that it must be Dried first, and afterwards Burned which Cannot be Done till summer, it not Being half Dry Yet' (Quoted by M. Greenacre in Eustace, p. 53, and Webb, pp. 194–5.) As Mrs Webb has noted, while the bust was actually completed the month before, still it had not been sent by 31 July to be fired in the kiln. The bust was actually not delivered to the client until June 1757 (Webb, pp. 193, 196–7).
- 48 See Aileen Dawson, *Portrait Sculpture: A catalogue of the British Museum Collection c.1675–1975* (London, 1999), p. 101 (illus.).
- 49 Quoted by M. Baker, 'Public Images for Private Spaces? The Place of Sculpture in the Georgian Domestic Interior', *Journal of Design History*, XX, No. 4 (hereafter Baker, Interior), p. 315.
- 50 Quoted *Ibid.*, p. 315.
- 51 Craske, p. 10.
- 52 Christie's sold the plaster busts in various lots.
- 53 Advice received by me in November 2007 from the National Archives, Kew. I was also informed by the Countess of Macclesfield in March 2008 that access could not be provided to the small quantity of family archive material in the possession of the ninth Earl.
- 54 Quoted in Campbell, p. 501.
- 55 Campbell, p. 562.
- 56 Both Webb (Appendix 2, p. 220) and Christie's, p. 84.
- 57 Christie's, p. 84.

- 58 Vertue III, p. 56; the list continues on p. 57. Moreover, regarding the Macclesfield bust, Vertue gives his Lordship's name as 'Macclefield', not 'Macclesfield', although a search of peerages at that date does not suggest any other peer to whom the reference could relate. Vertue may inadvertently have misspelt the name in his list, or he may have relied on Rysbrack's own list or a verbal statement from the sculptor. Mrs Webb gives an example of the bust of Richard Miller, described in one of Vertue's lists as 'Mr Muller', which, says Mrs Webb, 'is understandably the result of faulty foreign pronunciation [by Rysbrack] of the name Miller': Webb, pp. 53-4, and Webb, Figs. 16 and 17.
- 59 Whinney, p. 86.
- 60 Craske, p. 77.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 137.
- 62 *Ibid.*
- 63 The other figures in the portrait by Grisoni 'are truth overcoming calumny, referring to the Lord Chancellor's reputation, then untouched by scandal, while two putti with attributes of architecture suggest his building at Shirburn': Connor, Apollo, p. 24.
- 64 Craske, pp. 134-5. Similarly, when discussing Rysbrack's bust of the second Earl of Nottingham, Whinney (p. 86) noted that 'In it there is therefore a combination of the lofty idealism and the veneration of Antiquity ... with a richness of pattern and a fullness of form'.
- 65 Vertue III, p. 17; *Walpole Society* XX, 1931-32 (Vertue Notebooks, Volume II), p. 36. An inventory of Hewett's property at his death (see H.M. Colvin, *The History of the King's Works*, V (London, 1976), p. 73, n. 5) included his portrait by Sebastiano Bombelli (1635-1719), probably painted while Hewitt was in Italy on the Grand Tour during the 1680s; the portrait's present location is unknown, so there is no available likeness of Hewett.
- 66 See Hewett's letters of 5 April 1722 and 12 December 1723 to John Molesworth: *Hist. MSS. Comm.* LV (Various Collections VIII), pp. 336, 368. An earlier letter of February 1720 from Hewett to a correspondent abroad (cited in Connor, Apollo, p. 24) reveals that Hewett had seen Grisoni's drawing for his oil portrait of Macclesfield, something that he is unlikely to have been shown without the Lord Chancellor's express agreement.
- 67 Vertue III, p. 13. While the words written by Vertue are somewhat ambiguous - possibly suggesting his recording in 1723 also of a marble head - previous commentators have all accepted that the description of 'marble' is a reference to the (presently missing) 'basso-relievo', not to the bald head of Gibbs: Webb, Appendix 2, p. 216; Eustace, p. 74, cat. no. 10; G. Balderston, 'Rysbrack's busts of James Gibbs and Alexander Pope at Henrietta Street', *Georgian Group Journal* 11 (2001), p. 5; and M. Baker, *Figured in Marble: the Making and Viewing of Eighteenth Century Sculpture* (London, 2000), p. 101.
- 68 Eustace, p. 9.
- 69 Whinney, p. 83.