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NICHOLAS HAWKSMOOR, ‘OBELISK LANGUAGE’ AND THE YORKSHIRE CAMPAGNA

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A monumental obelisk, erected in 1702 for the Mayor (John Aislabie of Studley Royal) and Corporation of Ripon to the design of Nicholas Hawksmoor, is situated in the centre of the market place there. This article asks why Hawksmoor selected an obelisk form. It locates the project in a wider cultural context and argues that the obelisk represents an early attempt to construct a rhetorical landscape. The choice of form and location signified not only Aislabie’s political ambitions but also memorialised King William III and signified a wider and deeper local connection with the past.

‘The oldest free-standing monumental obelisk in these islands still to survive’ is situated in the centre of the market place in Ripon, North Yorkshire.¹ An article by Richard Hewlings in *Architectural History* (1981) detailed the building history of the monument, which was erected in 1702 as a market cross for the Mayor, John Aislabie of Studley Royal (1670–1742)² and the Corporation of Ripon, to the design of Nicholas Hawksmoor.³ Thomas Gent described it in 1733:

‘1702 [...] this year the Market Place at Rippon was new paved, and adorn’d with an Obelisk, one of the Finest in England, of Free Stone, 82 feet high. The spindle (on which is the Star, Horn and Flower-De-Luce) is six feet long. All which cost 564l.11s.9d.’⁴ (Fig. 1)

Hewlings set its construction in the context of a scheme for developing the whole market place into a type of Roman forum. He argued that its erection was used a vehicle for promoting the political



Fig. 1. The Ripon Obelisk, designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor in 1702, from Thomas Gent’s *The Antient and Modern History of the Loyal town of Rippon* (York) [1733] p. 158.

fortunes of Aislabie through his association with the improvement of Ripon. He asserted that most of the subscribers were unaware of funerary symbolism of the obelisk form and that it was erected in an ‘iconological void’.⁵ Giles Worsley suggested that Hawksmoor initiated an ‘obelisk craze’ with its erection.⁶ In his recent monograph on Hawksmoor –



Fig. 2. 'The Church and Gothick Steeple of Allhallows in the Pavement; with the Market Cross before it', from Francis Drake's *Eboracum* (London, 1736), plate facing p. 292.

and in the context of obelisk construction – Vaughan Hart stresses Hawksmoor's 'concern to understand the original historical meaning and symbolic purpose behind his vocabulary of forms'.⁷ The present article assumes a dynamic and slippery relation between form and meaning; it examines the importance of the monument and asks why Hawksmoor selected an obelisk form. It also complements and extends Hewlings' article by locating the building of the monument within the wider cultural context of early modern Yorkshire.

Obelisks, monuments derived from Antique funerary and commemorative models, and other intermediate structures erected in the vicinity of York – formerly Eboracum – articulated a relationship between the past and the present, signalling a rhetorical landscape, both urban and rural, which was in part – but not exclusively – a reimagined Roman Yorkshire, drawing parallels between a shared historical grandeur and current relative decline.⁸ The early modern notion of a Yorkshire Campagna helps contextualise work conducted by Hawksmoor, Aislabe and others as a self-conscious linking of existing remains with the creation of modern tributes, while proposing a moral dimension that may account for why the Romanising of the Yorkshire landscape was embraced enthusiastically and at such an early date. Neil Levine emphasised the primacy of nearby Castle Howard in the creation of remote focal points on an extensive landscape that generates 'a spatial nexus in which the beholder must assume a new subjective stance and thus a much more personal and active role in the determination of meaning'.⁹ He claimed that this break with previous modes of generating architectural meaning was initiated in the erection of Vanbrugh's obelisk there in 1714.¹⁰ This article argues that the Ripon obelisk is an earlier attempt to construct such a rhetorical landscape.

'OBELISK LANGUAGE'

It is not known how Hawksmoor came to be asked by Ripon Corporation to design a new market cross for their town. The most likely connection is that Hawksmoor was working at Castle Howard with Vanbrugh for the third Earl of Carlisle from 1701,¹¹ and would have been familiar with the regional sensibility characterised below as the desire to evoke the Roman Campagna. It is not the intention to rehearse a detailed construction history of the Ripon obelisk, so thoroughly documented by Richard Hewlings, but to argue that Hawksmoor's choice of an innovative architectural form was sensitive to timing and cultural context. Hawksmoor was 'perfectly skill'd in the history of Architecture',¹² and the obelisk was a response to an increasingly influential antiquarian vision articulated in Yorkshire histories.

In the archives the monument is referred to continuously as the 'Ripon Cross'.¹³ Hewlings argued that this nomenclature shows that the iconological significance of its form was not in the forefront of the commissioners' minds since it was understood by the majority to have emerged from the local tradition of building market crosses in prosperous seventeenth-century Yorkshire towns. Yet the opening words of the earliest letter from Hawksmoor reflect his punctilious character: 'I have drawn this obelisk to the most exact antient symmetry'.¹⁴ While this refers to the precision of Hawksmoor's projected dimensions of the monument, Hawksmoor did not make decisions lightly and was well aware of the symbolic content of his design. Hawksmoor represents another cultural cadre; the architecturally literate practitioners of design who articulated a complementary visual dialect. Hawksmoor derived inspiration from his extensive reading; in this instance funerary monuments from pagan Antiquity, and Constantinian and early Christian architecture seem to have played a part, as we shall see.¹⁵

Alongside estimates for the obelisk, the archive bundle includes 'An Estimate of the Doome'¹⁶ which Hewlings calculated would have produced 'a circular

peripteral temple, with a stepped dome supporting a figure on a pedestal'.¹⁷ It is likely this design was also influenced by the local context – a market cross in the form of a peripteral Ionic hall with a shallow domed roof, surmounted by an octagonal lantern, located in Pavement, York, described by the historian Francis Drake (bap. 1696, d.1771),¹⁸ as being built at a date before 1671: 'Being a square dome, ascended into by a pair of winding stairs, and supported by twelve pillars of the Ionick order, but ill executed'.¹⁹ (Fig. 2)

By 18 June 1702, however, Aislabie had signed the articles of agreement to erect an obelisk.²⁰ In a fragmentary letter Hawksmoor alludes to a lack of familiarity of the craftsmen with this new architectural form: 'I ask your Pardon for not taking time enough to degest these Instructions fearing I may put you to some difficulty of understanding my Obelisk Language.'²¹ To those versed in architectural history the obelisk form was part of a classical lexicon requiring interpretation. What Hawksmoor understood by 'Obelisk Language' is illuminated in his pamphlet *The Explanation of the Obelisk* held at Blenheim.²² Hawksmoor regarded the obelisk as an appropriate monument for military heroes, to mark 'the Virtues and Actions of great and illustrious men'. They were associated with great Roman emperors: Trajan, 'one of the best of the Roman Emperours' [*sic.*], and Constantine, who 'set one up at Rome'.

The decision to reject the 'doome' in favour of the obelisk must have been in part coloured by the timing of the scheme for just over a month before Hawksmoor's first recorded letter to Aislabie, on 8 March, 1701/2, King William III died.²³ This surmise would seem to be supported by the clearest of the three drawings in Hawksmoor's hand.²⁴ (Fig. 3) This first design with the prominent Garter motto – which was not executed – suggests that there was a distinctly regal colour to Hawksmoor's original intentions. Hawksmoor had good reason to be grateful to the dead King. He had been Clerk of Works at Kensington Palace from 1689²⁵ and was Clerk of



Fig. 3. Nicholas Hawksmoor, unexecuted design for the Ripon Obelisk. *West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds, WYL 150, envelope VR5742 (245/3).*

Works at Greenwich from 1698 to 1735, the King's contribution to which – some £19,500 – was three times that of the next most generous benefactor.²⁶ Hawksmoor designed an equestrian monument as a mausoleum for William III that remained unexecuted, confirming that Hawksmoor acknowledged the monarch's martial heroism.²⁷ Indeed, his initial design for the Ripon obelisk spoke directly to its audiences since it included an inscription that he recognized may not be well received: 'I humbly ask

your pardon for the inscriptions, for I intend no more in 'em but to show where the inscriptions usually were'.²⁸ It is interesting to speculate on the dedication that was not included.

There would have been some support in Ripon for King William, who was locally known to have been a personally courageous monarch. In 1695 Christopher Wyvill, Dean of Ripon, prompted the congregation to be grateful to the King, 'who hath hazarded his Royal Person and Life in the Defence, and for the Honour of our Church and Nation';²⁹ and October 1701 saw a 'Loyal address from the corporation, the JPs of the liberty and other gentlemen and freeholders, to the king'.³⁰ So the late King William's stature as a military hero was one factor in the decision to erect an obelisk, and for some Yorkshire gentlemen, architects and antiquarians who understood this newly articulated architectural language, the obelisk can be understood as a patriotic memorial in addition to an expression of civic pride and a tangible symbol of Aislabie's active patronage.

A letter to Aislabie from Cornelius Barker, the Clerk of Works, indicates that the scheme had been locally controversial: 'the form is very well approved on, and our Obelisk now begins to get ye applause of its enemies'.³¹ Whether the cause of opposition was an intended Royal dedication is not known, but in Aislabie's papers – and in his hand – the replacement Latin inscription exists in two forms.³² Aislabie, as the patron, prevailed and Hawksmoor was unlikely to object since he was paid for this commission,³³ and because he needed to keep Aislabie's good opinion. Hawksmoor was currently involved in a controversy concerning the quality of the work at Greenwich.³⁴ He must have been anxious that nothing was found amiss by the parliamentary inspectors, and his desire to secure the committee's good opinion, through Aislabie's intervention, is documented in his letter to Aislabie dated 15 April 1702.³⁵ In the event all was well.

Aislabie's obelisk inscriptions, like those of earlier market crosses, spoke directly of the local benefactors and Aislabie's mayoralty, but an additional inflection

was created through the architectural form and its context. Hewlings has observed that Aislabie's self-consciously archaic idiom, in particular the phrase: 'in foro Columnnam' is suggestive of his understanding that the obelisk was envisioned as part of a Romanising development which was to include a paved forum and the erection of a symbol of civic authority – the pillory.³⁶ The subsequent population of the county with monuments that were redolent of the Campagna confirms Hewlings' interpretation, but there is an additional reason why Hawksmoor chose to design an obelisk for Ripon.

ISURIUM

The obelisk stands in the market square, which was understood to be a kind of paved forum, close to Ripon Minster. Daniel Defoe proclaimed:

'The market place is the finest and most beautiful square that is to be seen of its kind in England. In the middle of it stands a curious column of stone, imitating the obelisks of the antients, tho' not so high, but rather like a pillar in the middle of Covent Garden; or that in Lincoln's Inn, with dials also upon it'.³⁷

It has been suggested that the obelisk represents a reflection of the original spires on Ripon Minster that were removed between 1660–1664, thus reaffirming an architectural presence which had been lost in the recent past which would have had local resonances.³⁸

Hawksmoor's *Explanation of the Obelisk* described how:

'That Obelisk at Rome (Now in ye place of St John Lateran [...] was brought from Thebes (in Egypt) to Alexandria by Constantine the Great, afterwards brought to Rome by Constantius and set up there. The Goths when they burnt Rome overturn'd this Obelisk, and broke it into 3 pieces Anno: D: 409. Sixtus Quintus the Pope set it up again where it still remains in the Piazza of St Jno Lateran'.³⁹

The act of constructing an obelisk in a square adjacent to an important Christian church was a self-



Fig. 4. 'The South-East Prospect of Rippon', from Samuel Buck's *A Collection of Views of the Cities and Chief Towns of England* [London], [1725–1762], 2 vols, 2, (1745).

conscious re-enactment of the actions of Constantine whose importance to Yorkshire will be discussed below. The relation between the two structures was apparent from a great distance: two prospect views, from Thomas Gent⁴⁰ and Samuel Buck⁴¹ (Fig. 4) underline the effect of the obelisk on the Ripon skyline. The polite market town nestles between the massive Ripon Minster and the slender obelisk – symbols of its ecclesiastical and corporate authority. While to our eyes the Minster is patently a mediaeval Gothic structure, the eighteenth-century gaze differed. For Alexander Pope Gothic and Classical were interchangeable signifiers of the past; he speculated about 'planting an old Gothic cathedral, or rather some old Roman temple, in trees'.⁴² The obelisk was simultaneously a modern market cross, a memorial and an acknowledgment of Ripon's heritage.

There was some debate in antiquarian circles as to the historic importance of Ripon, and at least one authority believed the town to have Roman origins. Nathanael Salmon, (1675–1742)⁴³ equated it with the important Roman town of Isurium.⁴⁴ More accurate

accounts ascribed Isurium to Boroughbridge and its satellite village Aldborough, seven miles closer to York on the Roman road.⁴⁵ A great deal of antiquarian energy was expended investigating the course of Roman roads; Thomas Hearne asserted that Julius Caesar planned to drain the Fens and construct 'the Appian Way through them'.⁴⁶ Drake included an engraving of 'The Roman Roads in the County of York' that he dedicated to the Society of Antiquaries.⁴⁷ (Fig. 5) The Roman roads radiated from Eboracum in dynamic avenues of occupation and the map included the location of some of the new Romanising estates being constructed at Rokeby, Londesborough and Bramham. The map significantly does not include Ripon, and Drake dismissed Salmon's assertion that it was Isurium in his text;⁴⁸ however, from William Camden's *Britannia* onwards it was known that Boroughbridge – located en route from Catteractonium (Catterick) to Eboracum – bore considerable evidence of Roman settlement.⁴⁹ Camden identified 'four huge stones of pyramidal form' there as being a 'Roman trophy raised by the



Fig. 5. 'The Roman Roads in the County of York' from Francis Drake's *Eboracum* (London, 1736), plate facing p. 36.

highway'.⁵⁰ Drake devoted a great deal of space to these pseudo-obelisks that flank the Roman road and had them engraved 'lest time should at length overthrow and destroy these stupendous monuments of Antiquity'.⁵¹ (Fig. 6)

Hawksmoor was also familiar with Renaissance architectural theory; the writings of Alberti, not only concerning the use of ornament, but also with regard to town planning; and Pope Sixtus V's reordering of sixteenth-century Rome along axial models, influenced his landscape schemes.⁵² His unexecuted plans for Oxford and Cambridge responded to this organizing principle whereby space was articulated through the creation of vistas and the careful positioning of monuments. At Greenwich he also

planned grand axial vistas. In Yorkshire we see the start of an expression of this preoccupation on a wider scale.

In the light of the belief that Ripon may have had Roman origins, the proximity to authentic obelisks scattered across the landscape, and the presence of a monumental Minster, Hawksmoor was exercising the same sensitivity to context that he was to demonstrate throughout his career, such as at Beverley Minster in 1717. There he effected repairs and refitted the interior with a mixture of Gothic and Classical styling, with the help of William Etty, who had been contracted to build the Ripon obelisk.⁵³ So, as at Beverley, the Ripon obelisk also signified continuity with the past in addition to its other interpretations.

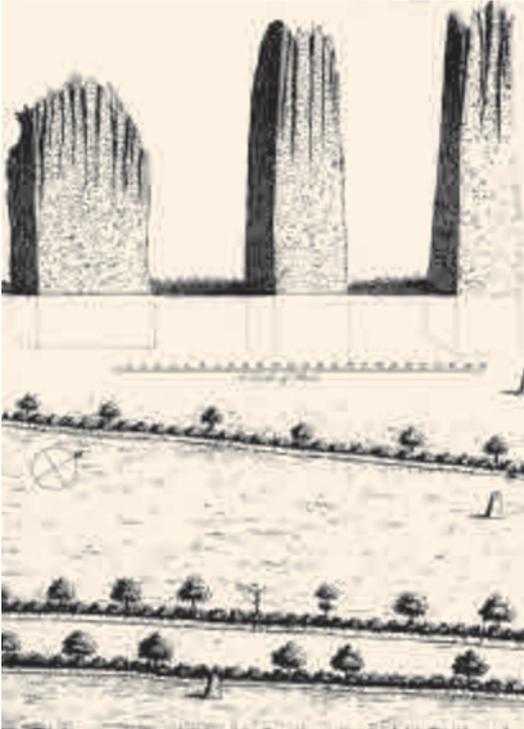


Fig. 6. 'The Obelisks at Boroughbridge', from Francis Drake's *Eboracum* (London, 1736), plate facing p. 28.

EBORACUM AND THE YORKSHIRE CAMPAGNA

The obelisk can be more fully understood by placing it in a wider cultural and ideological context. The extensive county of Yorkshire is home to many of the earliest examples of Classical architectural design. For Giles Worsley the Castle Howard landscape represented 'the deliberate desire to recall, even recapture, Antiquity, and specifically the Roman Campagna'.⁵⁴ He recognised that the archaeological recovery of the remains of Roman Antiquity in England had a direct influence on architectural design, pushing back the origins of neo-Classicism to the start of the eighteenth century and arguing that patrons intended to reconstruct Roman remains. The notion has gained support more recently from John Harris's discussion of influences on Burlington's

Chiswick Gardens: 'On those Roman uplands of North Yorkshire, I believe, Carlisle took a considered decision from 1697 to the making of his Anglo-Roman Campagna'.⁵⁵ While these influences are unmistakable, something more nuanced was afoot than a direct imitation, for this allusive landscape – as in the case of Ripon – linked private and shared associations, and the present with the past.

It has been argued that Edmund Gibson's 1695 edition of William Camden's *Britannia* was the stimulus for the renaissance in interest in British Roman antiquities,⁵⁶ accelerated by the sense that Britain, north and south of Hadrian's Wall, was, for the first time since the Roman occupation, united by the 1707 Act of Union. But York's ancient role as a Roman *colonia* had been recognised in the discovery of a sarcophagus in February 1579/80.⁵⁷ Antiquarian interest in Yorkshire's archaeological remains can be documented from at least the second quarter of the seventeenth century when Sir Thomas Widdrington (c.1600–1664),⁵⁸ then the Recorder of the City of York, delivered an address to King Charles II in 1639, in which he extolled the city's grand imperial past.⁵⁹ Widdrington stressed the primacy of Eboracum as 'the chief Seat and Court of the Emperors in Britain'.⁶⁰

The continuous occupation of York from the first century had left a rich legacy of material remains, and the building activity – a feature of the early modern English urban renaissance – resulted in fragments of the county's past, including Roman ones, being disinterred.⁶¹ Widdrington had seen a Roman altar, discovered in 1638, in a cellar in York.⁶² Knowledge of this inscribed stone was widespread among the intellectually curious antiquarian community concerned with material culture in Restoration Yorkshire.⁶³ Martin Lister (1639–1712),⁶⁴ a Fellow of the Royal Society and eventually its vice-president, lived in York between 1670 and 1683 where he gathered an informal grouping of antiquarians, artists and natural philosophers known collectively as the York Virtuosi.⁶⁵ Lister's circle included Ralph Thoresby, (1658–1725),⁶⁶ the antiquarian author of

Ducatus Leodiensis, or, The Topography of Leedes (1715), and Thomas Gale, (1635/6–1702),⁶⁷ sometime Dean of York, father of a dynasty of antiquarians and a prolific author. Lister wrote to the Royal Society regarding finds in York.⁶⁸ In 1702 – the year of the obelisk's construction – a dedication tablet bearing the inscription GENIO LOCI FELICITER was discovered while a cellar was being dug.⁶⁹

This devotion to the spirit of the place resonated with another distinct circle – Yorkshire gentlemen – for their land was scattered with Roman remains. In the same year, Thoresby notified the Royal Society of a Roman Town discovered near Leeds where they had found the remains of houses, statues, pillars, millstones and an aqueduct.⁷⁰ There was also evidence of burials, urns and funerary monuments. Thoresby described a network of military Roman roads that traversed the region, one so prominent that Camden had asserted that he never saw 'in any part of England so manifest a token as here [Bramham Moor Road]'.⁷¹

Antiquarian writing was critical in constructing a shared understanding of the artefacts for these overlapping audiences of the landowners, virtuosi and architectural patrons and designers. Before 1750, Yorkshire was a focus for an unusually high concentration of urban histories,⁷² and close reading of them reveals an expression of a particular enduring sensibility. Widdrington, who was MP for York in the late seventeenth century, composed *Analecta Eboracensia* at some point around 1660. He recounted how the Emperor Severus, who had erected a palace in Eboracum, was cremated in Acomb, west of York. Emperor Constantius Chlorus died in York after having 'laid good beginnings for the introduction of Christianity',⁷³ and 'Constantine the Great [...] was first saluted Emperor in this place, and, as some conjecture, born here'.⁷⁴ Widdrington's eulogy of Constantine is unstinting in its praise.⁷⁵ This accepted association of Yorkshire with the origins of the Christianising of the Roman Empire was crucial in morally validating the intense

identification made from the Restoration onwards between some members of the contemporary ruling elite and their august predecessors.⁷⁶ This knowledge was widely rehearsed in gazetteers.⁷⁷

The York histories are coloured by a nostalgic tone that articulated an acute sense of relative decline. Widdrington regretfully opined that 'the dial of this city hath a long time gone backward, and many special pieces of antiquities are already mouldered dust'.⁷⁸ The most extensive expression of this yearning is to be found in Francis Drake's magisterial county history of York, *Eboracum: or the History and Antiquities of the City of York, from its original to the present times* (1736), – a model of rational and erudite endeavour imbued with intense longing. Drake's second chapter – in excess of 50,000 words – concerns 'The State of the City under the Roman government in Britain'.⁷⁹ It blends evidence of archaeological fieldwork by antiquarians, including himself, with literary sources from Antiquity and contemporary scholarship, including that of the Royal Society, to construct York as the pre-eminent Roman city in Britannia. He evokes the Roman concept of *Civitas* – applicable to Eboracum – which 'does not only denote a city, but a place, people, constitution, custom, laws, religion, and everything annexed to its jurisdiction, within the whole province'.⁸⁰ So Drake includes a detailed account of much of York's hinterland and connects the topography of Rome and Eboracum: 'what is on the west side of the River Ouse with us seems to agree also with the old Transtyberium of Rome'.⁸¹

Alongside empirical archaeological extrapolation Drake conjures an image of Eboracum when 'our city shone in full lustre [...] the height of sublunary grandeur',⁸² and he evokes the pageantry at the apotheosis of Constantius Chlorus.⁸³ Eboracum becomes a metonym for Rome in Britannia – an understanding reinforced with the description of the acclamation of Constantine, which 'gives me reason to call it here once again Altera Roma'.⁸⁴ In the absence of concrete evidence that Constantine was a



Fig. 7. Castle Howard and its monuments, from Thomas Gent's *The Antient and Modern History of the Loyal town of Rippon* (York) [1733] Preface, p. iii.

Yorkshireman, Drake concludes 'that if the birth of Constantine cannot be clearly made out, York has more to say for it than any other city in the world'.⁸⁵

The identification of York with Rome extended from the city to its Roman occupiers: Drake surmised that legionaries based in York over the course of three hundred years must have had cause to marry with the local population and therefore this should 'make a York man proud of his decent'.⁸⁶ Thus the people of Yorkshire embodied a direct line of succession – an important concept especially for a class for whom genealogy was a key tool in establishing social identity. Drake animated noble events that took place there,⁸⁷ and the direct association with the great Christianiser of the Roman Empire legitimated the deep resonance with the Roman past by investing it with a moral dimension.

Drake was acutely aware – almost embarrassed – that few substantial vestiges of 'Roman grandeur' remained.⁸⁸ The city of York had been badly damaged

during the Civil War, and Drake's identification with Rome extended to the ruinous present as well as the glorious past.⁸⁹ He lamented: 'Rome is still in Italy, and Eboracum is York; but alas! How mutilated from both their former states may be easily conjectured'.⁹⁰ For some then there was a shared imperative to memorialise the putative birthplace of the Christian Roman Empire through a restoration of the vanished glories of Imperial Britain, and to stimulate such reimagining there were traces of the Roman occupation still inscribed on the palimpsest of the landscape. Drake identified burial places in the city, and told of how Severus was commemorated by the construction of three tumuli on the outskirts of Eboracum.⁹¹ Drake and Widdrington were not alone in lamenting York's past glories: Heneage Dering (1665–1750),⁹² the sometime Dean of Ripon, published *Reliquiæ Eboracenses* – a lively narrative poem set during the Roman occupation of Yorkshire that combines topographical references with animated

Roman personalities.⁹³ Such an imaginative response to the known facts of the importance of Eboracum found expression not only on the page but also on the ground.

Thomas Gent's *The Antient and Modern History of the Loyal town of Rippon* [1733] commences with a Preface surmounted – rather unexpectedly – with a view of Castle Howard. (Fig. 7) This is surprising since Castle Howard is forty miles from Ripon. In the view a radiant sun is flanked to the left by the pedimented garden front of the house, surmounted by its distinctive dome, which dominates the image, and to the right by Ray Wood – the strikingly informal garden. The foreground is crowded with monuments from the estate; there among the Temple Belvedere, the Mausoleum and the Pyramid cenotaph, is 'a small plantation of obelisks'.⁹⁴ The woodcut suggests a landscape densely populated with memorials and overlooked by the Classical cupola of the house.

Gent's history of Ripon was conceived as a complementary extension to his *Antient and Modern History of the Famous City of York* published three years earlier.⁹⁵ Perplexingly, he also includes in Ripon's history, a description of the York Assembly Rooms: a 'Palace of Delight, founded by the Maecenas of the Age';⁹⁶ an account of Beverley, its Minster and the repairs that were recently conducted upon its fabric by Hawksmoor; and descriptions of other local antiquities across the county. To the modern reader this all seems evidence of his eccentric – even chaotic – method, yet Gent's work is not so disordered as it might first appear, for both the collocation of these monumental forms, derived from classical Antiquity and Renaissance Rome, and the topographical slippage which permits Castle Howard to front a text which is notionally about Ripon – are indicative of the intensely-lived imagination shared by some of the culturally engaged which permitted Gent's easy movement between towns since they were all part of the Yorkshire Campagna. This was not an exclusive vision however, for while the Roman occupation was one focus in the antiquarian local histories, and

a key in the creation of local identity, so equally were the monumental remains of monastic Yorkshire in the countryside, and the seat of the Primate at York Minster.

VIA APPIA

The architectural parterre, shown in Gent's woodcut, and the Pyramid Gate joined Vanbrugh's Castle Howard obelisk, during the 1710s and 1720s. Vanbrugh's correspondence regarding the positioning of these structures in 1721 makes it clear that they formed a part of his overall scheme for the house.⁹⁷ While Vanbrugh was the designer, the man on the ground in Yorkshire was William Etty, Clerk of Works at Castle Howard. Eventually obelisks forty feet high were erected around an Ionic pillar of fifty feet and interspersed with lead statuary and urns – all contributing to the memorialising element of the landscape.⁹⁸ The Belvedere Temple was followed by Hawkmoor's Pyramid, erected by Etty,⁹⁹ the Temple of Venus (since demolished) and the Mausoleum.¹⁰⁰ As the visitor approached Castle Howard from York, along the avenue, which should be understood as a continuation of Roman road making, they were confronted with the Carrmire Gate. While its central focus is loosely reminiscent of the Tomb of Porsenna, its flanking towers evoke nothing so forcefully as the Roman Multangular Tower in York, which was published by the Royal Society in 1683 and, for a later generation, in *Eboracum*.¹⁰¹ (Fig. 8) The conflation of actual and literary, Antique, mediaeval and Gothic sources articulated continuity with the past informed by the antiquarian vision shared by architectural practitioners and classically educated patrons. As Levine has argued, the rhyming of forms and the monumental scale invited the beholder to derive personal and contingent meaning by moving across the landscape.¹⁰²

John Aislabe responded to the same cultural influences at Studley Royal near Ripon.¹⁰³ Peter

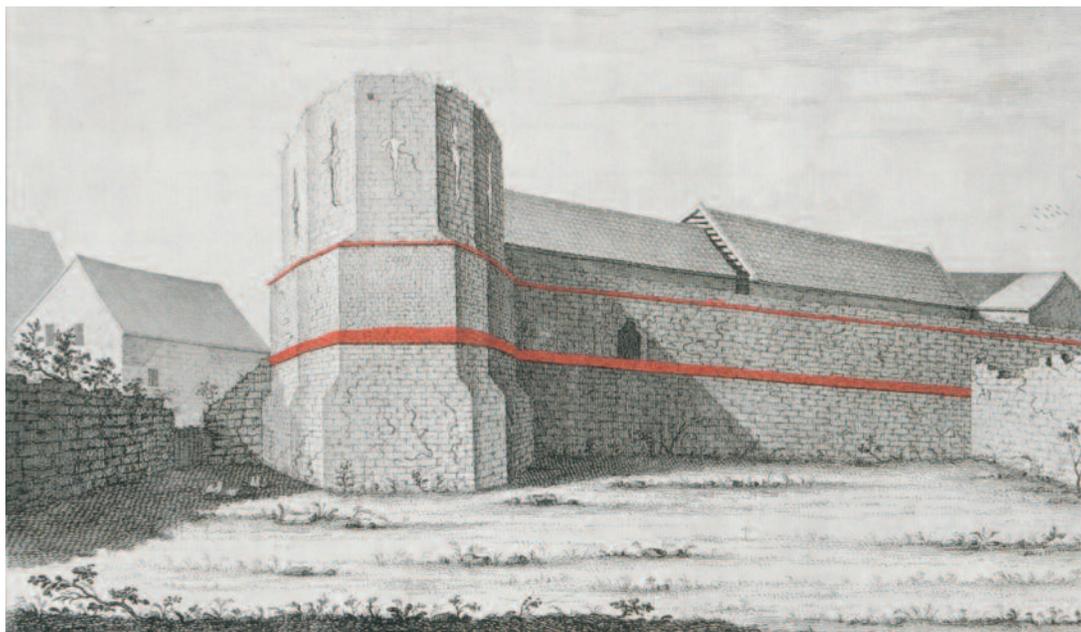


Fig. 8. 'A Roman Tower and Wall in York', from Francis Drake's *Eboracum* (London, 1736), plate facing p. 56.

Aram's Virgilian Eclogue 'Studley Park' self-consciously avoided topographical description in favour of a poetic evocation of an Arcadia, inspired by the 'Genius of the Place', populated with nymphs and muses, and presided over by a Christian deity. It recreates a dynamic rather than pictorial engagement with the landscape, taking the form of a perambulation around the park, pleasure gardens and wider estate, at points punctuated by reflections on the seasons, country pursuits and the passage of time. The relationship between Studley Royal and Ripon was visual, historical and intimate:

'No Rippon, Thee the Muse shall not forget,
Proud to be Neighbour to this beauteous Seat:
Thy Domes and Towers in pleas'd Confusion rise,
View'd from two Avenues, they meet our Eyes,
And greet the Prospect from the Paradise
Plac'd in rich Soil, and a salubrious Air'.¹⁰⁴

The 'pleas'd Confusion' of the monuments suggests not a linear equivalence between the remnants of the past and the present understanding but a fluid

movement through a landscape which evoked a half-remembered longed-for past and resonated with a rich cultural heritage across an extensive landscape. Arthur Young described the effect of happening upon the avenue aligned on Ripon Minster: 'You rise to the command of a vast prospect of distant country. The town of Rippon and its minster is seen in the centre of a finely cultivated and well peopled vale'.¹⁰⁵ The start of that avenue was originally marked by a sixty foot high stepped pyramid – like the Tomb of Mausolus at Halicarnassus – now replaced by an obelisk and obscured by trees and St Mary's Church at Studley Royal.¹⁰⁶ Young recorded other obelisks in the garden and 'upon the edge of this bank of wood stands the Roman monument, the model of that erected to the Horatii and Curiatii'.¹⁰⁷ Aislabie's original landscape was populated, like Lord Carlisle's, with an eclectic range of forms derived from the past, including funerary monuments. Both men planted far-reaching avenues, like Roman roads, and a collocation of monuments whose architectural form

was derived from Antiquity that had the effect, in part, of evoking, for those schooled in architectural history, the Appian Way. Yet Studley was also linked dialectically to Ripon – the seat of Aislabie's personal political influence and an ancient Christian community.

An antiquarian vision of the past conditioned Gent's prefacing the history of Ripon with an image of Castle Howard as an expression of a reimagined local history that included, but was not limited to, Roman Antiquity in the Yorkshire Campagna. Hawksmoor and others continued to articulate the Yorkshire landscape for the following half century with monuments that commemorate personalities and events from recent memory while evoking a deeper understanding of the place. Yorkshire gentlemen and architects were not rebuilding the Roman Campagna. Rather, an understanding of architectural history, local tradition, the scenographic qualities of their projects and the overall relationship between them evoked a memory of place – at once personal and shared – and a moral warning regarding the mutability of human life and of Empires.

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NOTES

- 1 Richard Hewlings, 'Ripon's Forum Populi', *Architectural History*, 24 (1981), p. 39.
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- 3 Kerry Downes, 'Hawksmoor, Nicholas (1662?–1736)', ODNB online, accessed 17 June 2010.
- 4 Thomas Gent, *The Antient and Modern History of the Loyal town of Rippon* (York) [1733], p. 158.
- 5 Hewlings, *op. cit.* p. 41. He has since comprehensively demonstrated the importance of meaning. See 'The Link Room at Chiswick House: Lord Burlington as antiquarian', *Apollo*, CXXI (January 1995), pp. 28–9; 'Chiswick House and Gardens: Appearance and Meaning', in Jane Clark and Toby Barnard (eds.), *Lord Burlington: Architecture and Politics*, (London & Rio Grande, 1995), pp. 1–149; 'Chiswick House: recent historiography', in Franco Barbieri, Donata Battilotti and Guido Beltramini (eds.), *Palladio 1508–2008: Il Simposio del Cinquecentenario* (Venice, 2008), pp. 18–26; 'England's Palladio', *Country Life*, January 28, 2009, pp. 70–5.
- 6 Giles Worsley, 'After Ye Antique': Vanbrugh, Hawksmoor and Kent', in Christopher Ridgeway and Robert Williams (eds.), *Sir John Vanbrugh and Landscape Architecture in Baroque England 1690–1730* (Stroud, 2000), p. 133.
- 7 Vaughan Hart, *Nicholas Hawksmoor: Rebuilding Ancient Wonders* (London, 2002), p. 123.
- 8 I am here extending Diana Balmori's category: see 'Architecture, Landscape and the Intermediate Structure: Eighteenth-Century Experiments in Mediation', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians (JSAH)*, 50, No.1 (March 1991), p. 38.
- 9 Neil Levine, 'Castle Howard and the Emergence of the Modern Architectural Subject', *JSAH*, 62, No. 3 (September, 2003), pp. 327–51.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 335.
- 11 Letter from Hawksmoor to Howard dated Henderskelfe, 26 May 1701 reproduced in Kerry Downes, *Hawksmoor* (London, 1959), Appendix A, pp. 234–35.
- 12 Nathaniel Blackerby, Obituary Notice for Nicholas Hawksmoor, *Read's Weekly Journal*, 27 March 1736, reproduced in Downes, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
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- Minute Book, 1666/7 – 1742/30). For the subscription list for the market cross or obelisk, see pp. 284–85; West Yorkshire Archive Service (henceforth WYAS) WYL150 (Vyner of Studley Royal, Family and Estate Archive); WYAS, WYL150/5742 (245/3) Bundle plus envelope VR 5742 (245/3) Drawing of Obelisk.
- 14 WYAS, WYL150/5742 (245/3), Letter from Nicholas Hawksmoor to John Aislabie, 15 April 1702.
 - 15 Downes, *op. cit.*, p. 28–29; Hart, *op. cit.*, pp. 140–44.
 - 16 WYAS, WYL150/5742 (245/3), An Estimate of the Doome to be Erected on Ripon Market Place May ye 13: 1702.
 - 17 Hewlings, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
 - 18 C. Bernard L. Barr, 'Drake, Francis (bap. 1696, d. 1771)', ODNB online, accessed 12 Dec 2010.
 - 19 Francis Drake, *Eboracum: or the History and Antiquities of the City of York, from its original to the present times* (London, 1736), p. 292.
 - 20 WYAS, WYL150/5742 (245/3), Articles of Agreement, 18 June, 1702.
 - 21 *Ibid.*, Hawksmoor, undated fragmentary letter.
 - 22 Blenheim, Long Library, portfolio 'Inscriptions of Blenheim I'; No. 14 F. The full text can be found in Downes, *op. cit.*, pp. 262–64.
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 - 24 WYAS WYL150/5742 (245/3) Bundle plus envelope VR 5742 (245/3) Drawing of Obelisk.
 - 25 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840* (New Haven & London, 2008), p. 496.
 - 26 Nicholas Hawksmoor, *Remarks on the Founding and Carrying on the Buildings of the Royal Hospital at Greenwich*, (London, 1728), p. 10.
 - 27 Downes, *op. cit.* For work executed for King William III, see p. 65–66; for the mausoleum, p. 284 and plate 10b.
 - 28 WYAS, WYL150/5742 (245/3), Letter from Nicholas Hawksmoor at Whitehall to John Aislabie, dated 15 April 1702.
 - 29 Christopher Wyvill, D.D., *A sermon preach'd in the Collegiate-Church of Ripon, on Sunday 22 of September, 1695, for the Right Worshipful the mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen and other inhabitants of the Town of Ripon* (London, 1695).
 - 30 NYCRO, DC/RIC (Ripon Corporation Minute Books), MIC 2058/3521.6, Loyal address dated 11 October in the thirteenth year of the Reign of William III (1701).
 - 31 WYAS, WYL150/5742 (245/3), Letter from Cornelius Barker to the Worshipfull John Aislabie Esquire a Member of Parliament, Westminster, dated Ripon 22 November 1702.
 - 32 The text of the relevant inscription runs: Solutis hoc Anno in manus Johannis Aislabie Majoris/ Quinquaginta libris quas ad extruendam in foro Columnam/Ex testamento dedit Guliebrius Gibson, hujus Burgi/Modo Aldermannus:/Rev^{mus} in Xto Pater Johannes Archiepus Ebor/Ex Summa Sua in hume Burgum gratia et munificentia/ Quinquaginta Libras operi addi dedicariq jussit./In cujus Rei Exemplum, inter alios benefactores/quorum nomina Subscribuntur, Rev^{di} admodum Decanus et Capit [illeg.]/Ecclesia Collegiatae de Ripon Viginti Libras Impendebant./Johannes Ingleby Bar^{us} – 10:00:00 /Ec. /Hic impensis et auspicijs [illeg.] ad Tantam molem Surgit Obeliscus/Curante Joh. Aislabie Majore/1702.
 - 33 *Ibid.*, Note on the verso of a memorandum to self by John Aislabie, includes reminders 'to write to my uncle Ingram; to write to sister Betty; to pay Mr Hawksmoor'.
 - 34 Hawksmoor, (1728) *op. cit.*, p. 21.
 - 35 WYAS, WYL150/5742 (245/3), Letter from Nicholas Hawksmoor at Whitehall to John Aislabie, dated 15 April 1702: 'I take the liberty to tell you that the Committee of Parliament will visit Greenwich hospital next Tuesday in the morning and wish your affairs would permit you to be there. I shall desire nothing of you relating to my character but what you find just and honourable so far I entrust your patronage'. Hawksmoor subsequently recorded: 'The Committee, instead of finding Things as represented, in a very bad Condition; on the contrary, found every Thing right and well to their Satisfaction, which was reported accordingly', Hawksmoor, (1728), *op. cit.*, p. 21.
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 - 39 Hawksmoor, *Obelisk, op. cit.*
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 - 41 Samuel Buck, *A Collection of Views of the Cities and Chief Towns of England* [London], [1725–1762], II. The engraving is dated 1745.

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- 46 Hearne, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
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- 50 Camden, *op. cit.*, p. 717.
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- 52 For planning, see Howard Colvin, *Unbuilt Oxford* (London, 1983) pp. 67–69; for Rome, Hart, *op. cit.*, pp. 192–219; for Greenwich see Downes, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–98; Hart, *op. cit.* pp. 221–26.
- 53 WYAS, WYL150/5742 (245/3) Articles of agreement dated 18 June, 1701. William Ety, a carpenter, was simultaneously being paid as 'Surveyor' at Castle Howard where he had day-to-day oversight of the works. See Charles Saumarez Smith, *The Building of Castle Howard*, (London, 1990), pp. 60, 86. Samuel Carpenter also worked at Ripon and at Castle Howard, p. 62. Gent, *op. cit.*, pp. 90–92; For an account of the restorations see Ivan Hall, 'The First Georgian Restoration of Beverley Minster' *Georgian Group Journal* (1993), pp. 13–31.
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- 73 Widdrington, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
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- 75 Widdrington, *op. cit.*, p. 285.
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- 106 See details of this Scheduled Ancient Monument at: <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-331057-the-obelisk-approximately-80-metres-west>. For Hawksmoor's use of Halicarnassus see Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 23; 53–54.
- 107 Young, *Tour*, p. 326–28. See <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-331065-the-devils-chimney-on-north-cliff-top-ov> The current name, the Devil's Chimney, evokes the mausoleum to the Horatii and Curiatii but the National Trust Guidebook *Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal* (text on Studley Royal by Lydia Greeves) suggests that it has lost the 'four tall pinnacles' which originally surmounted it, which is suggestive of the Tomb of Porsenna. For an image from John Greave's *Pyramidographia: or a description of the pyramids in Egypt* (1646) see Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 41; for Wren's reconstruction, p. 51.