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# A GREEK REVIVAL DETECTIVE STORY

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*This article arose from research by John Harris into a portrait at Badminton that led to a reassessment by Charles Hind of the history of the Royal Institute of British Architects Library's well-known set of gouaches of Athens and Pola by James Stuart, used as illustrations in Stuart and Revett's The Antiquities of Athens.*

Making enquiry about a portrait<sup>1</sup> of the young fifth Duke of Beaufort with his tutor Richard Phelps led me to John Bouverie (?1722–1750), connoisseur, collector and archaeologist, who is commemorated in this portrait, *writes John Harris*. When Bouverie died travelling through the Middle East in the company of the celebrated orientalist travellers, James Dawkins and John Wood, he was buried in Smyrna (modern Izmir). This led me to enquire into the history of James Dawkins. I learned that he was the eldest of four sons of Henry Dawkins, a wealthy sugar planter with a 25,000-acre estate at Clarendon, Jamaica.<sup>2</sup> So I looked up James's will.<sup>3</sup> What I read was a window to a fascinating item relating to the history of the emerging Greek Revival in England.

In the will, Dawkins first declares himself as of Clarendon in Jamaica and Laverstoke in Hampshire and then:

'I do further charge all and singular my Real and Personal Estate both in Great Britain and Jamaica with the Sum of Ten Thousand Pounds Sterling or any sum not exceeding Ten Thousand Pounds Sterling to be expended in Building a New house upon my Estate at Laverstock in the County of Southampton as soon after my death as conveniently may be and I request

my good friends Mr James Stuart and Mr Nicholas Revit [sic] or the Survivor of them to take upon them the entire Management and direction of the said Building and of everything relating thereto and I give unto the said James Stuart and Mr Nicholas Rivett [sic] or the Survivor of them the sum of five hundred pounds Sterling for the trouble they will have therein'.

Dawkins also bequeathed 'To my friend Robert Wood now abroad with the Duke of Bridgewater one hundred pounds a year'<sup>4</sup>; to the Foundling Hospital in London 'five hundred pounds Sterling'; 'and towards the Erecting and Supporting an Academy for Painters Sculptors and Architects the sum of five hundred pounds Sterling'. Both Stuart and Revett 'of the parish of St George, Hanover Square', witnessed codicils in January 1758. In their regrets at their friend Dawkins's death, Stuart, Revett and Wood recognized that Dawkins had championed and funded them in their search for a new architecture based upon Greek taste.

We read in G.F. Prosser's *Select Illustrations of Hampshire*, 1833<sup>5</sup> that Laverstoke House had been sold by Sir Stukely Shuckburgh of Shuckburgh, Warwickshire, to James Dawkins in 1754, and that his brother Henry Dawkins (1728–1814) sold it on to Joseph Portal in 1759. Portal's son Henry 'pulled down the old mansion that stood under the hill' in 1796 when Joseph Bonomi designed the present house on a new site some way to the north-west. A house designed by Stuart and Revett in 1758 is an intriguing might-have-been, for it would have been the earliest commission for a country house in the Greek style, less than a year later than the ornamental

‘portico’ erected by Revett in the garden of his brother’s house at Brandeston in Suffolk. Howard Colvin pointed out that this, if Grecian in character, would have been one of the earliest recorded buildings in that style.<sup>6</sup>

I was able to supplement this enquiry into James Dawkins when I remembered that, years before, I had found a copy of a sale catalogue in the Getty Reference library in California, which I had deduced had a Dawkins connection (the auctioneer did not identify the vendor). Mr Squibb and Son of Savile Row sold up Pembroke House on the north side of Richmond Green in a nine-day sale from 12 May 1823, totalling 1139 lots.<sup>7</sup> This did not include the three-day sale of the three thousand volumes of the library reported as having been removed to Mr Squibb’s Great Room in Savile Row. What struck me browsing through the catalogue was the variety of the objects and the richness of the furnishings. One room was a museum cabinet that included Chinese, Indian and New Zealand curiosities, such as ‘The breast plate of a Otaheitan Chief, made of pigeons feathers and sharks teeth’.<sup>8</sup> But what excited me more were the contents of the Study, called ‘The Athenian Room’, ornamented and hung with some of James Stuart’s gouaches made in London after his *ad vivum* sketches drawn for the *Antiquities of Athens*. This provenance had been first referred to in the catalogue of the RIBA’s Drawings Collection,<sup>9</sup> but, as the cataloguer did not see a copy of the catalogue, the accuracy of the provenance was not proven. Throughout the Pembroke House catalogue were many items of antique Roman interest, suggestive of a traveller in the Middle East: a whole-length portrait of ‘Anthony Healey Esq. in Turkish costume’<sup>10</sup>; a painting of the Aldobrandini Marriage;<sup>11</sup> models of a Corinthian and Ionic capital ‘from the Temples of Jupiter Tonans and Minerva Polias’;<sup>12</sup> ‘A Beautifully Sculptured Tablet of Statuary Marble’, 5ft 4in wide by 2 feet 9in high ‘with five females in basso relievo, and pediment top surmounted by a bust of Antinous’;<sup>13</sup> and ‘An antique marble

sculpture in alto relieve, with the inscription PUNICA SVM DIDO STRVXI QUAE MOENIA BYRSA.<sup>14</sup> One would love to know the present location, if it survives, of ‘a large and well manufactured CABINET OF FUSTIC WOOD, the upper part with Doric pillars and pediment, and the inscription Προπυλαιον του λαιοπωλιου προται θηναϊ in brass on the pediment’.<sup>15</sup>

The provenance of the collection could be determined by the portraits, notably a lady of the Portmore family,<sup>16</sup> a Reynolds of Lady Juliana Dawkins,<sup>17</sup> two portraits by ‘Henning’ of ‘the late James Dawkins; Athenian Stuart’;<sup>18</sup> and a portrait of Sir David Colyear, first Earl of Portmore’.<sup>19</sup> The *Complete Peerage* revealed that the second Earl of Portmore’s daughter Juliana married Henry Dawkins (1728–1814) of Over Norton, Oxfordshire, and later of Standlynch, Wiltshire<sup>20</sup>, made wealthy through the Dawkins’s estates of 25,000 acres in Jamaica.

It was obvious from the catalogue that Mr Squibb included the collection formed by James Dawkins from his travels to ‘the most remarkable places of antiquity on the coast of the Mediterranean’. Dawkins and Wood (Fig. 1), with their Piedmontese draughtsman Giovanni Battista Borra (1713–1770), had during 1750–51 travelled to Asia Minor and Syria, and surveyed Palmyra and Baalbec,<sup>21</sup> before moving on to Athens to meet James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, who had arrived there in the spring of 1751. Dawkins, Wood and Borra left for London that autumn, leaving Stuart and Revett to record the monuments published in *The Antiquities of Athens* (1762), while the work of Wood, Dawkins and Borra appeared as *The Ruins of Palmyra* (1753) and *The Ruins of Baalbec* (1757). Returning to Mr Squibb’s sale catalogue again, I wondered: why Pembroke House? The *Complete Peerage* came to my rescue again.

The lineage of Pembroke House begins in 1696 when it was built by Sir Charles Hedges, who died in 1714. His successor there was Sir Matthew Decker with his famous formal garden and grotto, and a new Great Room designed for him by his friend, the



Fig. 1. John Hall after Gavin Hamilton, 'James Dawkins and Robert Wood first discovering sight of Palmyra'.

The oil painting after which this engraving was made was commissioned by Henry Dawkins the year after his brother James's death. Not included in the Pembroke House sale of 1823, it was acquired in 1997 by the Scottish National Gallery from one of Henry's descendants. The engraving is bound into the volume containing Giovanni Battista Borra's original drawings for *The Ruins of Palmyra*. *RIBA Library Drawings and Archives Collections*.

amateur architect Sir Andrew Fountaine.<sup>22</sup> In 1744, the sixth Viscount FitzWilliam married Catherine Decker, Sir Matthew's only daughter, and at Decker's death in 1749 his property passed to the FitzWilliams. The sixth Viscount and his wife, despite having an Irish seat at Mount Merrion, Co. Dublin, found it more convenient to live in Richmond, he until his death in 1776, and she until hers in 1786, hence the name-change to 'Fitzwilliam' House. However, the reason for the next name change, to Pembroke House, dates back to 1733, when the fifth Viscount FitzWilliam's daughter Mary married the ninth Earl of Pembroke, the celebrated 'Architect Earl'. After inheriting in 1776, the seventh Viscount FitzWilliam was also happy with Fitzwilliam House as his seat. He was unmarried, and at his death in 1816 gave his

considerable art collection to the University of Cambridge to found the Fitzwilliam Museum. He also stipulated that his Mount Merrion estates should pass to his Merrion agent Richard Verschoyle and his wife for life,<sup>23</sup> and that the rest of his Irish estates, and his English ones, including Fitzwilliam House, were to go to the eleventh Earl of Pembroke for life (that is until his death in 1827), followed by a life interest to Sidney Herbert,<sup>24</sup> Pembroke's second surviving son.<sup>25</sup> Hence the name change from Fitzwilliam House to Pembroke House.

As the eleventh Earl of Pembroke was provided with a London house (in Whitehall) and a country seat in Wiltshire, he may well not have felt the need to hold on to a house at Richmond and we must assume that the house was let, to the James Dawkins

of the sale catalogue. James Dawkins (1760–1843) was the son of Henry Dawkins and nephew of the traveller James, whom we have discussed above. The Dawkins' tenure could hardly have been long. According to Thomas Cromwell,<sup>26</sup> Dawkins was in possession in 1821 and as we have seen, he sold up in 1823. Pembroke House was demolished in 1840. At this point, I passed the research on to Charles Hind, my successor as Curator of the RIBA's Drawings Collection and he now takes up the story with regard to the famous Stuart gouaches.

#### JAMES STUART AND THE GOUACHES FOR THE ANTIQUITIES OF ATHENS

Until 1971 (at which time two appear to have been stolen), the RIBA owned twenty drawings or gouaches by James Stuart, writes *Charles Hind*.<sup>27</sup> Gouache is an opaque medium that Stuart had learned to use during his apprenticeship to the fan painter Lewis Goupy. These twenty represented most of the set of 24 topographical views of Athens, Salonica and Pola that Stuart engraved in *The Antiquities of Athens*. The RIBA acquired the drawings in November 1873 as a gift from the executors of Thomas Howard of Blackheath. Howard certainly owned the drawings by 1861, when they were exhibited at Ironmongers Hall, London.<sup>28</sup> Formerly accompanying the drawings, and now stored in the RIBA's archives,<sup>29</sup> are an undated letter signed Elizabeth Ann Stuart and a note by Wyatt Papworth dated November 1886. The only additional information hitherto published is in Catherine Arbuthnott's biographical essay on Stuart in *James Athenian Stuart 1713–1788: the rediscovery of antiquity*,<sup>30</sup> which contained some new information on Stuart's daughter.

Wyatt Papworth<sup>31</sup> noted an unsourced memorandum from George Bailey (Curator of Sir John Soane's Museum 1837–1860) that stated: 'At a Sale at Pembroke House, Richmond, by Squibb in

1823, many paintings, &c., by Stuart and Revett made on the spot for the "Antiquities of Athens", were sold.' The cataloguer of the Stuart gouaches in the 1970s appears to have checked the existence of the sale catalogue in the V&A index of sale catalogues,<sup>32</sup> but did not see a copy of the sale catalogue itself, and the assumption was made, followed by later scholars, that *all* the RIBA's gouaches must have come from the Pembroke House sale. New research indicates a more complicated story.

John Harris has established that the contents of Pembroke House in 1823 were the property of James Dawkins, junior, nephew of the celebrated James Dawkins senior (1722–1757). His father Henry Dawkins inherited the family estates in Jamaica at his elder brother's death and, although not as cultured as his brother, was elected a member of the Society of Dilettanti after James's death as a token of esteem. Ignoring his brother's stipulation in his will that £10,000 be laid out on building a new house to Stuart and Revett's designs on his property at Laverstoke in Hampshire, Henry sold Laverstoke and in 1766 purchased another estate at Standlynch, Wiltshire (since 1814 known as Trafalgar Park). Perhaps to carry out his brother's requirements in part, here Henry employed Nicholas Revett to add a portico and wings to the existing house (probably designed by Roger Morris in the 1730s). On Henry's death in 1814 he stipulated that the house be sold, which is presumably why his son James needed to rent Pembroke House in Richmond to house the family collections that Mr Squibb was to disperse in 1823.

James Dawkins junior was born in 1760 and died in 1843. In 1784 he succeeded his father as Member of Parliament for Chippenham and represented it until 1812. After a ruinously expensive election in 1807, he sold his property in Chippenham, and through the influence of the Treasury, in 1812, he obtained a new seat at Hastings, which he represented until 1826. After a period out of the Commons, he sat for Wilton 1831–2. He is recorded as having applied for a peerage several times and was always turned



Fig. 2. The Tower of the Winds in Athens. *RIBA Library Drawings and Archives Collections.*



Fig. 3. The Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, Athens. *RIBA Library Drawings and Archives Collections.*



Fig. 4. The Erechtheion, Athens. *RIBA Library Drawings and Archives Collections.*



Fig. 5. The Theatre of Bacchus, Athens. *RIBA Library Drawings and Archives Collections.*



Fig. 6. The Arch of Hadrian, Athens. *RIBA Library Drawings and Archives Collections.*

down, despite the wealth from the sugar plantations in Jamaica and his inheritance in 1835 of the estates of his cousin the fourth Earl of Portmore. Not surprisingly, given the source of his wealth, he was a die-hard opponent of the abolition of slavery.<sup>33</sup> Why he decided to sell up the family collections in 1823 is presently a mystery, as shortage of money does not seem to have been an issue.

Now we must return to the RIBA's archives and the piece of information documenting the gouaches, namely the letter from Miss Stuart. Elizabeth Ann Stuart (1783–1832) was the younger daughter of James Stuart and one of only two of his five children to survive to adulthood. Her letter is addressed to Jer<sup>h</sup>. Harman, Broad Street. It gratefully acknowledges receipt of a draft [of money] and states how pleased she was that 'my father's drawings' should now be in such good hands. So clearly some of Stuart's drawings had been sold by his daughter to Mr Harman.

Mr Harman was certainly Jeremiah Harman (1764–1844), of Adam's Court, Broad Street, London

and Higham House, Woodford. He was a Quaker and a banker (head of Messrs. Harman and Co., and Governor of the Bank of England 1816–18). He was also a noted collector of paintings, owning amongst others Claude Lorrain's 'Aeneas with his father and son visiting Helenus at Delos'. He was involved with the sale of the Orleans Collection in 1798, which he bought in the name of his bank and sold on to Michael Bryan, acting for the Duke of Bridgewater, the Earl of Carlisle and Earl Gower. His collections were sold in May 1844 but did not include any works by Stuart.<sup>34</sup>

Having noted that the drawings *may* have been sold from Pembroke House by Mr Squibb and Son in 1823, the RIBA cataloguer in the 1970s seems to have assumed that they were then acquired by Stuart's daughter. However, examination of Mr Squibb's catalogue, made possible by John Harris from a copy in the Getty Reference Library,<sup>35</sup> shows that Pembroke House did indeed contain some but *not* all of the RIBA's collection (lots 5–10, Second day's sale, 13th May 1823). Sold in pairs, the Pembroke



Fig. 7. The Propylaea at the Hippodrome, Salonica (Thessaloniki, Greece).  
*RIBA Library Drawings and Archives Collections.*



Fig. 8. The amphitheatre at Pola (Pula, Croatia). *RIBA Library Drawings and Archives Collections.*

House sale included only 12 of the gouaches,<sup>36</sup> two of which are *not* in the RIBA's collection (the Choragic Monument of Thrasyllos and the Aqueduct of Hadrian). The ten that the RIBA now owns<sup>37</sup> are the Gate of Athene Archegris, the Ionic temple on the Ilissus, the Tower of the Winds (Fig. 2), the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates (Fig. 3), the Acropolis, the Erectheion (Fig. 4), the Theatre of Bacchus (Fig. 5), the Arch of Hadrian (Fig. 6), the Monument to Philopappos, all of which in Athens, and the Temple of Apollo in Corinth. Unfortunately we do not know the purchaser of the Pembroke House gouaches as the sale catalogue in the Getty has no prices or buyers, but it would be interesting if a marked-up copy could be found.

We might reasonably assume that James Dawkins the traveller bought his drawings from Stuart in the two years between Stuart's return to London in 1755 and Dawkins's death in 1757. Stuart presumably retained the rest of the set, which numbered in total 24. These may well have passed to Stuart's daughter, who in turn sold them on to Mr Harman. The postmark on her letter is of a type that was in use between c.1820 and 1854 and, since Miss Stuart died in 1832, we have a date span for her letter.

So, in summary, of the 24 gouaches originally painted by Stuart and engraved for the *Antiquities of Athens*, twenty drawings are now or were formerly in the RIBA and the remaining four are lost. Twelve of the 24 were formerly in the Dawkins Collection, of which ten are in the RIBA and two are among the lost four.<sup>38</sup> Probably the remaining ten of the RIBA's collection, including the Propylaea at Salonica (Fig. 7) and the Amphitheatre at Pola (Fig. 8) were sold separately by Stuart's impoverished daughter to Jeremiah Harman, who might well have purchased some or all of the Dawkins drawings from Pembroke House.

Wyatt Papworth's note of 1886 seems to have misread Elizabeth Stuart's letter. Beneath her signature was written *Mrs Hands/Clapham*. Despite the letter being addressed *Dear Sir* and the front of the sheet postmarked over *Jer<sup>h</sup> Harman/Broad Street*, Papworth

made the strange assumption that the drawings Elizabeth referred to were actually sold to Mrs Hands and wrote that what the address of Harman 'means is not clear'. I believe that Elizabeth was writing from Clapham and that Mrs Hands was her landlady. The 1841 Census reveals the likely address to have been in Clapham High Street and it is a mark of Elizabeth's poverty that she was a lodger above the shop of William Hands, Bootseller, his wife and four daughters. One hopes that the sale of her father's drawings to Jeremiah Harman eased her last years.

The last part of the journey of the twenty surviving gouaches into the RIBA's collections has emerged through the continuing researches of Catherine Arbuthnott, to whom I am very grateful for her generous gift of the details. They are being published here for the first time. Jeremiah's will directed that his estate should be sold for the benefit of his widow Mary but that she could retain for herself anything that she wished.<sup>39</sup> One must assume that Mary Harman (1765–1851) liked the gouaches enough to keep them from her late husband's sales and although it has not been possible to trace her will, at her death, her nearest male relative was her nephew, Thomas Howard Esq. of Blackheath. It was his executors who gave the gouaches to the RIBA in November 1873. Somewhere out there are the remaining six missing gouaches, which are at least recorded in Stuart's engravings. It is to be hoped that one day they will resurface.

#### NOTES

- 1 In the possession of the eleventh Duke of Beaufort at Badminton, Gloucestershire.
- 2 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XV, p. 536.
- 3 National Archives PROB 11/835, will dated 5 June 1755, codicil dated 11 February 1757: 'whereas I am about to make a voyage to the Island of Jamaica'. Probate granted 7 January 1758, signed by James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, both of the parish of St George's Hanover Square, Dawkins having died on his Jamaican estates.

- 4 Frances Egerton, third Duke of Bridgewater. See John Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travelers in Italy 1701–1800*, (1997), p.125.
- 5 Prosser, unpaginated.
- 6 H. M. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840* (2008), p.859.
- 7 *Pembroke House. A Catalogue of the Valuable Effects of the above distinguished residence, ... which will be sold by auction, by Mr Squibb and Son, on the premises, ... on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1823, and 8 following days, ...*
- 8 Third day, lot 48.
- 9 *Catalogue of the Drawings Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects: S* (1975), p. 125.
- 10 First day, lot 10.
- 11 First day, lot 71.
- 12 Third day, lot 13.
- 13 Fourth day, lot 58.
- 14 Fourth day, lot 72.
- 15 Third day, lot 94. Fustic wood has a strong yellow colour and the cabinet would have made quite an impact. It was in the Athenian Room, together with the Stuart gouaches and may be the earliest piece of Greek Revival furniture. The inscription is obscure and can be loosely translated as: ‘at [or in front of] the oil merchant’s stall in Athens’. This was researched for me by Charles Hind and Lucy Wood, to whom I am very grateful.
- 16 First day, lot 14.
- 17 First day, lot 83.
- 18 Second day, lot 21.
- 19 Second day, lot 92.
- 20 G.E.C, *The Complete Peerage*, X (1945), pp. 603–6.
- 21 Two volumes containing Borra’s drawings of Palmyra and Baalbec are now in the RIBA Library Drawings and Archives Collections, VOS 147 and VOS 149. Presumably formerly the property of James Dawkins, they bear the bookplate of his brother Henry. I have been unable to locate a copy of Squibbs’s sale of Dawkins Junior’s library in 1823, but these volumes presumably come from it.
- 22 Decker, Fountaine and the tenth Earl of Pembroke formed a close-knit coterie of friendship and patronage.
- 23 National Archives, PROB 11/1577. I am much obliged to Catherine Arbuthnott for elucidating the Viscount’s will.
- 24 (1810–1861). Later Lord Herbert of Lea
- 25 Who was also to inherit a life interest in Mount Merrion after the deaths of the Verschoyles.
- 26 Thomas Cromwell, *Excursions in the County of Surrey* (1821), p. 76.
- 27 The two depicting the Acropolis and a general view of Athens.
- 28 *Catalogue of the Antiquities and Works of Art Exhibition at Ironmongers Hall, London, in the month of May, 1861* (1869), I, p.127.
- 29 HaJe/1/1.
- 30 Published 2006, pp. 59–101 and in particular note 291.
- 31 Wyatt Angelicus von Sandau Papworth (1822–1894) was the younger son of the Regency architect John Buonrotti Papworth. He was also an architect, a writer on architecture and architectural history and an assiduous member of the RIBA and many of its committees.
- 32 *Pembroke House. A Catalogue of the Valuable Effects of the above distinguished residence, ... which will be sold by auction, by Mr Squibb and Son, on the premises, ... on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1823, and 8 following days, ...*
- 33 <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/790-1820/member/dawkins-james-1760-1843>
- 34 His paintings collection was sold by Christie’s on 17–18 May 1844, whilst Messrs Evans of Pall Mall sold his books on 20–24 May, 1844 and his prints and drawings on 25 May. I am extremely grateful to Catherine Arbuthnott for these references.
- 35 Getty reference not known but the catalogue is recorded bibliographically as Lugt 10457. Lugt recorded copies in 1938 in the Bibliothek der Staatlichen Museen, Berlin, and in the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. This latter copy cannot be traced in the National Art Library’s catalogues today.
- 36 Arbuthnott mistakenly thought there were 15, but lots 11–13 are not in fact illustrations to *The Antiquities of Athens* and are probably not by Stuart either, as they are views in Palmyra, Segesta and Agrigento. The likely artist is Giovanni Battista Borra
- 37 Or more correctly did own as one of the drawings stolen in 1971 (of the Acropolis) is amongst the Dawkins drawings.
- 38 Namely the Aqueduct of Hadrian and the Choragic Monument of Thrasylus, while the two stolen in 1971 remain untraced.
- 39 National Archives, PROB 11/2002.