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# THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH'S IRISH FAVOURITES: THE ART AND ARCHITECTURAL PATRONAGE OF WILLIAM CADOGAN

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*This article examines the political lives and country estates of army officers at the heart of the most important military connexion in the early eighteenth century, that of Captain-General John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough. The most important member of Marlborough's staff was his Irish Quartermaster-General William Cadogan*

*and others included Thomas Meredyth and Francis Palmes. Whilst only Marlborough's Blenheim Palace was literally a reward for military service, the landed estates of these officers, particularly Cadogan, signified the professional success of their owners and could be used for several different purposes.*



Fig. 1. Sir Godfrey Kneller, *John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough*, c.1706. (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

It is difficult to overstate the military and political clout of John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough (1650–1722) (Fig. 1) in the early eighteenth century. Marlborough's famous victory at the battle of Blenheim in Bavaria in August 1704 was rewarded by Queen Anne with the grant of the royal manor of Woodstock in Oxfordshire. A decision was quickly (and quietly) made to construct a new house on the site paid for at the Crown's expense rather than Marlborough's. Replete with triumphant martial imagery, the process of building at Blenheim was, however, plagued with problems such as Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough's distrust of the architect Sir John Vanbrugh. Work continued for decades and was interrupted by the Marlboroughs' period out of favour during the last few years of Anne's reign. Rehabilitated after the Hanoverian Succession in 1714 (although unable to regain the pre-eminence he once had), the increasingly enfeebled Duke was finally able to move into the main house in 1719 though he died in 1722 and the project had to be completed by the dowager Duchess. Much like the timescale, Blenheim's costs spiralled out of control (the total amount expended probably being around £325,000) and the state funding eventually dried up. The Marlboroughs had to pay around £60,000 of their own money to finish the project and ended up involved in a series of fractious lawsuits concerning outstanding debts to the workmen.<sup>1</sup>

### PATRONAGE AND POLITICS

During his tenure as Captain-General during the War of Spanish Succession from 1702 to 1711, Marlborough's powers of military patronage were immense, and he wielded great influence over the higher promotions of army officers. Indeed, certain officers can be distinctly identified as particular favourites of Marlborough.<sup>2</sup> Those who prospered the most under Marlborough's protection provide an invaluable insight into how army officers were

able to settle into elite landed life in early eighteenth-century England. This process of interaction and integration is particularly interesting considering that many of Marlborough's most valued protégés were of Protestant Irish extraction. Yet whilst substantial research has been conducted into Marlborough's building project at Blenheim, two notable monographs being David Green's 1951 study and James Legard's 2013 doctoral thesis,<sup>3</sup> the same cannot be said for his favourites. An estate such as Lord Cadogan's at Caversham near Reading (where the present house is Victorian and only traces of the early eighteenth-century landscape remain) has had far less scholarly attention paid to it, the most recent being in William Alvis Brogden's study of the garden designer Stephen Switzer.<sup>4</sup> Very little information remains about the estates of other followers of Marlborough.

Marlborough's chief favourite was William Cadogan, first Earl Cadogan (1671/2–1726) (Fig. 2), the son of a landed Dublin barrister and grandson of a Welsh soldier and settler in Ireland. Joining William III's army in 1689, Cadogan first became acquainted with the Earl of Marlborough (as he was styled between 1689 and 1702) at the capture of Cork and Kinsale in 1690 during the Nine Years' War. Trusted and well-regarded by Marlborough, Cadogan held the vital logistical role of Quartermaster-General on the Captain-General's staff during the War of Spanish Succession, rising from brevet colonel in 1701 to lieutenant-general in 1709.<sup>5</sup> As Cadogan put it himself when joining Marlborough in voluntary exile at the end of 1712, accompanying the Duke was 'an indispensable duty on me, who for so many years have been honoured with his confidence and friendship, and [I owe?] all I have in the world to his favour.'<sup>6</sup>

Cadogan was the most successful of Marlborough's (often Irish) favourites and forged a noteworthy political career for himself after the Hanoverian Succession, particularly during the 1717–1721 Whig Stanhope-Sunderland ministry.



Fig. 2. Unknown artist, *William Cadogan, 1st Earl Cadogan, aft. 1716*.  
(© National Portrait Gallery, London)

He was raised to the peerage as Baron Cadogan in June 1716 and Earl Cadogan in May 1718, sworn into the Privy Council, held offices such as Master of the Robes (1714–*d.*), Governor of the Isle of Wight (1715–*d.*), and Master-General of the Ordnance (1722–1725), and was posted on a number of military and diplomatic assignments.<sup>7</sup> In the process, Cadogan acquired vast riches. Much of this fortune must have derived from the profitable ventures and speculation (such as the manipulation of exchange rates) which Cadogan engaged in during the War of Spanish Succession.<sup>8</sup> Certainly, in 1724 the French ambassador to Britain noted Cadogan's 'immense wealth' and observed that 'He keeps up his respectability only by the fortune he has amassed in the wars, and the revenues of his offices.'<sup>9</sup> Cadogan also had a reputation for ostentatiousness. Whether entirely accurate or not, it is telling that one report of his death in 1726 had it that Cadogan 'died in top dress, & kept on him to the last, his Great Wig, Embroidered Coat, Brocad Vest, Ried topt Shoes, diamont Buckles etc.'<sup>10</sup>

Two other Irish officers who flourished under Marlborough's leadership during the War of Spanish Succession and were often mentioned in the same breath as Cadogan were Thomas Meredyth (*aft.* 1661–1719), who belonged to Co. Meath gentry, and Francis Palmes (*d.* 1719), whose family were English settlers in Co. Limerick. Like Cadogan, both were swiftly promoted and reached the rank of lieutenant-general in 1709. Admittedly, neither of them managed to enrich themselves to the same extent as the Quartermaster-General.<sup>11</sup> In contrast to Cadogan's profitable wartime economic activities, Meredyth made an unlucky speculative decision when he entrusted his savings of £10,000 to the merchant and South Sea Company director Francis Stratford. It was reported in March 1712 that Stratford had completely mismanaged the investment and lost all of Meredyth's money, although the latter was apparently able to recover some of it.<sup>12</sup> Despite this setback, Meredyth was able to build up a respectable

landed estate by the end of his life. His will referred to an estate in Oxfordshire as well as another estate he had purchased or agreed to purchase from one Thomas Carter subject to a £900 mortgage.<sup>13</sup>

Palmes's estate was more modest still. His will written shortly before his death in Dresden (where he was British envoy to Poland) in January 1719 referred to him having left behind in Dublin an older will which recent expenditure had rendered 'ineffectual and those annuities and Jewells sold'. His landed estate consisted only of his 'little house at Charlton [near Greenwich] surrounded with good Neighbours where my Friends used to laugh and I also'.<sup>14</sup> While it may not have been a palace, Palmes seems to have lived in comfort in Greenwich and formed part of a lively military community in an increasingly fashionable district. In 1713, the travel writer John Macky noted that at Blackheath in Greenwich 'are several Gentlemen's Seats very fine' including 'Lieutenant-General *Withers*, General *Palms*, Brigadier *Richards*, and several others whom we have known abroad, [who] have each their pleasant Retreats here.'<sup>15</sup> Similarly, in the 1720s Daniel Defoe remarked on the number of old army officers who had retired to Greenwich and 'having thus chosen this calm Retreat, live here in as much Honour and Delight as this World can give.'<sup>16</sup> Palmes's neighbours Henry Withers (*c.* 1651–1729) and Michael Richards (1673–1722) were other officers who prospered under Marlborough. Withers was for many years lieutenant-colonel in Marlborough's regiment of foot guards (becoming Governor of Sheerness in 1706 thanks to his support) and Richards was one of the Duke's trusted military engineers who later served under him at the Ordnance as Surveyor-General.<sup>17</sup>

The debt and obligations that Marlborough's favourites owed to the Duke for his protection and patronage were noted by contemporaries. In 1709, the Whig MP Arthur Maynwaring (who acted as the Duchess of Marlborough's secretary) imagined a hypothetical army commission which excluded

Marlborough but included 'some of those that had been thought useful and had been raised by him; such as Mr. Cadogan, Palmes, or the like.' Maynwaring thought that if these men accepted such a commission, they 'deserved to be hanged, and [I] should be ready to give my helping hand to it' due to the disloyalty and ingratitude it would convey.<sup>18</sup> For others less well-disposed to Marlborough, the perceived favouritism of so important a patron created problems. Ian Roy argues that the wartime demand for good-quality officers resulted in a gifted but diverse officer corps which included men of more middling or alien backgrounds whose rise to prominence under Marlborough agitated country gentlemen back home.<sup>19</sup> Marlborough's favouritism also caused friction within the allied army. As Major James Cranstoun of the Cameronians noted in October 1705, the Dutch officers 'and others also complain a little that the Duke does not advise so much either with the officers of experience and in the highest characters of his own and the States army as with two or three favourites whom he himself has raised, such as Brigadier Cadogan, Brigadier Palmes, and Brigadier Meredith, who are men of little service and experience.'<sup>20</sup>

After the sudden death of the Cameronians' colonel shortly afterwards, Cranstoun commented that one of the candidates to fill the vacancy was the spendthrift Ulster-Scot George Macartney who he feared would bankrupt the regiment. Macartney, the colonel of a newer regiment likely to be broken up at the end of the war, 'seeks to obtain ours, and has found the way to get Brigadiers Cadogan, Meredith, and Palmes to recommend him, and they you know are looked on with us as the three great favourites with the Duke.'<sup>21</sup> In a similar vein, the Chancellor of the Exchequer Robert Harley was informed in August 1710 that one of the army's paymasters 'has got lately very much the favour of the whole army, especially of the Duke of Argyll, Lord Orkney, Lumley, and Ross, having opposed Cadogan, who is hated as all the Irish favourites are.'<sup>22</sup> Argyll

in particular became a fierce military rival of Cadogan after the Hanoverian Succession and their relationship when leading the counteroffensive against the Jacobites in Scotland in 1715/16 bordered on the dysfunctional.<sup>23</sup>

There is certainly evidence that the hostility towards Marlborough's favourites was exacerbated by their Irishness. As one government minister wrote in exasperation in March 1719, Cadogan 'has a notion of being *premier ministre*, which, I believe, you will with me think a very Irish one'.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, in July 1716 Brigadier-General Alexander Grant, an associate of the Duke of Argyll, referred to Cadogan as an 'Irish Mastif who wears a green string', meaning the green ribbon of the Order of the Thistle which Cadogan had recently been awarded. Continuing his disparaging canine comparison, Grant claimed that he had encountered 'the impudent Curr' Cadogan in Chelsea where he 'had a strong pick at him, but being musled he did no harm, so I hope his bark is not poisonous whatever his byte might have been.'<sup>25</sup>

In addition to military promotion, Marlborough's favourites could rely on the Duke's patronage to obtain a variety of appointments outside the army. For example, Marlborough helped Palmes secure a number of diplomatic assignments. As one French politician was informed in late 1707, 'You will agree that the Irish are more fortunate than the Scotch notwithstanding the Union when you learn that Mr. Palmes, one of the favourites of my Lord Marlborough, has just been named envoy-extraordinary to the Duke of Savoy'.<sup>26</sup> Marlborough's followers could also hope to benefit from the Duke's patronage in political offices. Most notably, from 1705 until his elevation to the peerage in 1716, Cadogan served as MP for Woodstock where Marlborough had cultivated an electoral interest following his acquisition of the manor. In the run-up to the 1710 general election, Marlborough identified Cadogan as one of those he would most rely on in the forthcoming parliamentary session.<sup>27</sup>

Of course, being politically affiliated with

Marlborough was a double-edged sword particularly when the Duke's influence began to wane towards the end of Anne's reign. His followers' antagonism towards the new ministry formed by Robert Harley in August 1710 after the dismissal of Marlborough's ally the Earl of Godolphin was punished accordingly. For example, Jonathan Swift alleged in December 1710 that the Marlboroughite general officers Meredyth, Macartney, and Philip Honywood had engaged in 'mutinous meetings' and been forced out of the army 'for drinking Destruction to the present ministry, and dressing up a hat on a stick, and calling it Harley; then drinking a glass with one hand, and discharging a pistol with the other at the maukin [an effigy], wishing it were Harley himself; and a hundred other such pretty tricks, as enflaming their soldiers, and foreign ministers, against the late changes at Court.'<sup>28</sup> For those like Swift who were wary of military men's involvement in affairs of state, such instances were evidence 'that Politicks are not their Business or their Element.'<sup>29</sup>

Despite the deaths of Palmes and Meredyth in 1719, the network of old Marlboroughite officers continued to play a political and military role into the 1720s. With Marlborough's health in decline, Cadogan quite openly sought to succeed his old patron in his military offices.<sup>30</sup> Once the Duke finally died in June 1722, Cadogan was able to go on the offensive and summoned a group of army officers who were 'said to be his Cabinet.' The group consisted of Macartney, Honywood, Lieutenant-General Charles Wills, and Colonel Sir Adolphus Oughton who was lieutenant-colonel in Cadogan's regiment and had been Marlborough's aide-de-camp during his exile. Cadogan's cabinet reportedly resolved that he should ask to be Captain-General or, if that was unsuccessful, Master-General of the Ordnance and given the colonelcy of the first regiment of foot guards, with Macartney being given the colonelcy of the second regiment. Cadogan's cabinet had only mixed success. Cadogan failed to succeed Marlborough as Captain-General which

was instead made dormant, although he received the Ordnance and the first regiment of foot guards. Furthermore, the second regiment of foot guards was given to a favourite of the Prince of Wales (Richard Lumley, second Earl of Scarbrough) instead of Macartney.<sup>31</sup> Cadogan's subsequent attempt in 1723 to style himself commander-in-chief also ended in failure and he was replaced at the Ordnance by his old rival Argyll in 1725.<sup>32</sup> Cadogan died the following year and it is difficult to detect further collective activity of the Marlboroughite officers as a political or military group. Nevertheless, whether during the political turmoil at the end of Anne's reign or following the death of Marlborough in 1722, the officers he patronised can be seen to have acted together as a faction.

#### CADOGAN, ART, AND ARCHITECTURE

Of Marlborough's key favourites, Cadogan made the most important contribution to country house building and gardening, as well as the patronage of artists. Cadogan wasted little time buying land in England with his gains and acquired the manor of Oakley in Buckinghamshire in 1707,<sup>33</sup> not far from his patron's great house and his own parliamentary seat at Woodstock. Cadogan later purchased and remodelled the Caversham estate near Reading around the same time as he was acquiring aristocratic titles and other offices under the Hanoverians. This became his main country seat. Cadogan apparently attempted to acquire Caversham back in 1709,<sup>34</sup> but it was not until July 1714 that he successfully leased Caversham from Elizabeth, dowager Countess of Kildare, and in April 1718 he bought the estate outright. Cadogan's purchase of Caversham foreshadowed his elevation from Baron Cadogan to Earl Cadogan in May 1718, suggesting that he required the freehold to support the dignity of the rank. However, whatever Cadogan's peerage aspirations, much of the impetus

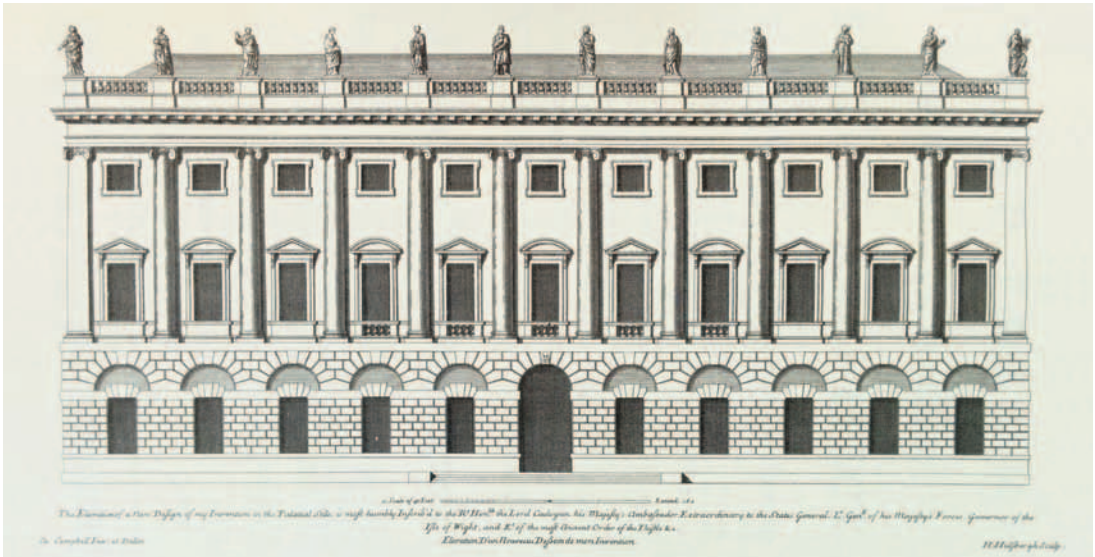


Fig. 3. Colen Campbell, *The Elevation of a New Design of my Invention in the Palatial Stile, is most humbly Inscrib'd to the Rt Honble the Lord Cadogan,* in *Vitruvius Britannicus* (3 vols., London, 1715–25), ii., pl. 99–100.

behind his purchase of Caversham in 1718 came from the family of the late Earl of Kildare who urgently needed the money from selling the estate to pay off Kildare's various debts and legacies. Cadogan, who was renting Caversham for £200 per year on a 99-year lease, thus agreed to purchase the estate for £6,200 and also advanced a £500 payment to Kildare's nephew.<sup>35</sup>

Caversham's economic value was never particularly significant for a man of Cadogan's stature and expensive tastes – by his death the estate's annual income was only around £800,<sup>36</sup> but it fulfilled an important social role. In addition to hosting friends and fellow Whigs, Cadogan used Caversham to entertain county society as observed by Alexander Pope in 1716.<sup>37</sup> Courting the local society was important as Cadogan also had political ambitions in the area. From 1715 onwards he tried to exert electoral control over the notoriously independent nearby borough of Reading albeit with

rather limited success. According to one hostile source, at the 1722 general election the electors of Reading 'shut their doors against Cadogan's brother and another who came with him, and declared that, though they starved, they would not be bribed this election.' Defeated, Cadogan's brother had to seek election elsewhere. The same year, the deer park at Caversham was twice raided by a poaching gang, further adding to Cadogan's woes in the borough.<sup>38</sup>

A man of Cadogan's wealth and prominence was an attractive target for architects looking for a commission or an Office of Works place. In the second volume of his *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1717), the Scottish architect Colen Campbell published a design for an eleven-bay house built 'in the *Pallatial* Stile, where a large Rustick Basement supports an *Ionick* Colonnade' and inscribed it to Cadogan, evidently hoping to secure his patronage (Fig. 3).<sup>39</sup> This attempt failed however, and the actual

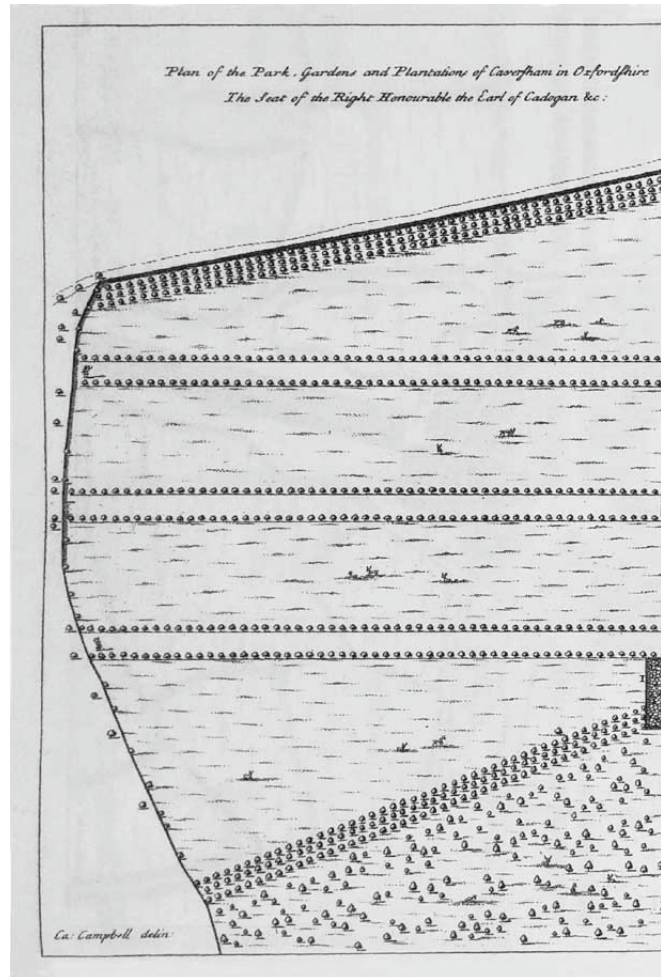


construction and appearance of Cadogan's new mansion at Caversham built c.1718–1723 unfortunately remains something of a mystery in the absence of surviving building papers or elevations. The footprint of the building is recorded and shows it to have consisted of a main rectangular block with quadrant wings at the front with colonnades, an entrance portico with columns, and a long garden front with another set of wings at the back.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, some idea of Cadogan's taste (or lack of) is given in travellers' descriptions. In 1776, by which point the estate had undergone extensive alteration, one visitor referred to the house as being 'now white, formerly of brick and infinitely larger than at present'.<sup>41</sup> A detailed contemporary description is provided by the Scottish politician and lawyer Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, second Baronet, who visited in 1727 shortly after Cadogan's death and saw:

'a vast expense but Laid out without either taste or judgement the House consists of various parts irregularly put together as his Losp's fancy or occasions requir'd the front in all may be near 200 feet but the avenue which faces it, is not above 20 feet wide, some parts of the house are finish'd in with a cornice & some not, however the Rooms are Large & not bad. the Garden Room is very Large handsome & well proportion'd. of about 60 feet Long & 30 broad so near as I cou'd guess the wainscoating is of Cedar the chimnie & buff[f]et of Marble very Large & well wrought. The roof of Stuko work & the ornaments gilt.'<sup>42</sup>

Admittedly Clerk was quite the connoisseur, but even so his more critical observations suggest that Cadogan was not a country house builder particularly well-versed in the finer points of architecture.

Compared with the house, the gardens at Caversham are better documented and are depicted in the third volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1725) (Fig. 4).<sup>43</sup> An unsigned contract dated 21 April 1718 indicates they were designed by Stephen Switzer,<sup>44</sup> who had previously been employed at Blenheim.<sup>45</sup> Switzer's design was however apparently executed



by Thomas Acres, the nephew of the gardener and nurseryman George London.<sup>46</sup> When in 1722 John Macky described Caversham in the second edition of his *Journey Through England*, the site was still a work-in-progress but Macky thought it would be one of England's finest seats when Cadogan's 'Avenues, gravel Walks, Gardens, and other Plantations, are finish'd'.<sup>47</sup> A tree-lined avenue approached the house from the north and similar avenues were planted to the south of the house through the park. Remnants of these formal avenues were retained and

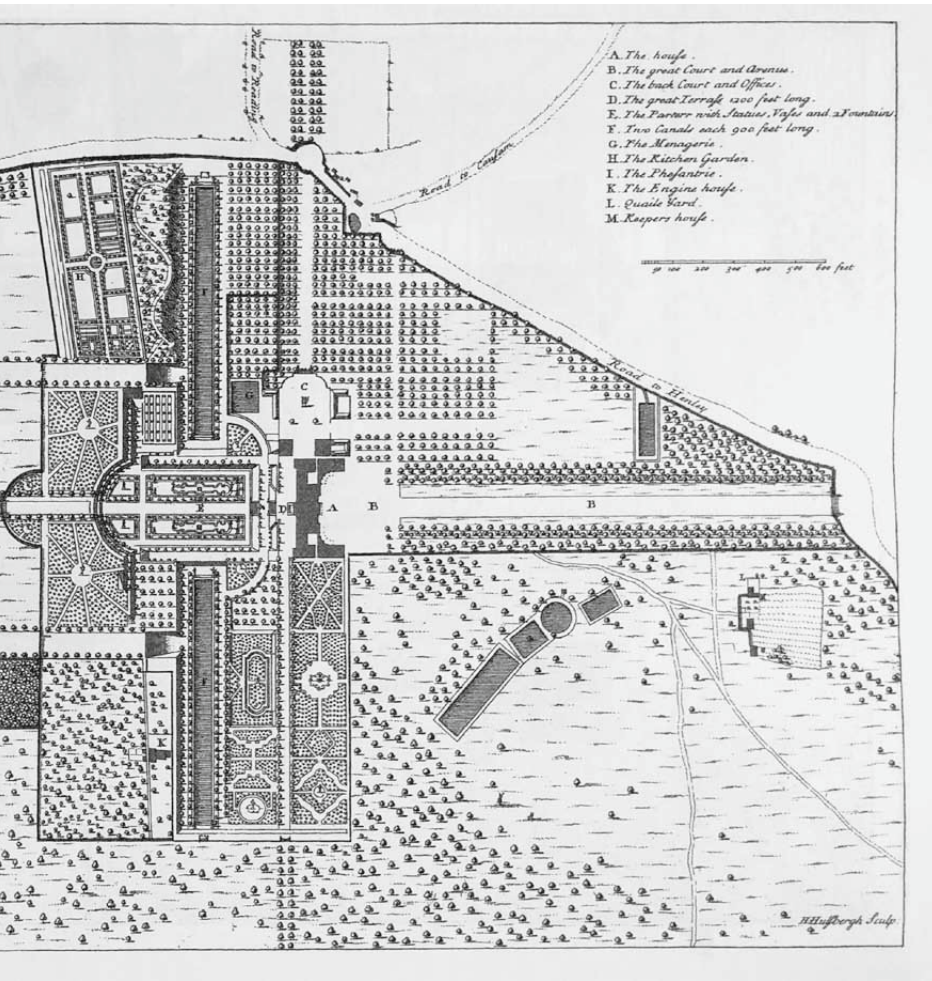


Fig. 4. Colen Campbell, *Plan of the Park, Gardens and Plantations of Caversham in Oxfordshire The Seat of the Right Honourable the Earl of Cadogan &c*, in *Vitruvius Britannicus* (3 vols., London, 1715–25), iii., pl. 96–7.

integrated into ‘Capability’ Brown’s new scheme when he remodelled the landscape for Cadogan’s successor at Caversham, his younger brother and fellow soldier Charles, second Baron Cadogan (1685–1776), later in the century.<sup>48</sup> The gardens featured two 900-foot-long rectangular canals ‘with a *Dorick* Portico at each End’, and a 1,200-foot-long terrace walk ran above the parterre below.<sup>49</sup> Beyond the formal parterres stood areas of wilderness with avenues cut through them, and an iron palisade rather than a solid wall (Switzer liked to open

up views of surrounding country) separated the gardens from the deer park beyond.<sup>50</sup> In the centre of the palisade was a bastion-like semi-circle which protruded into the parkland and was punctuated by ‘great Iron Gates’.<sup>51</sup> As at Blenheim, the kitchen-garden was placed away from the house, askew to the main garden. Offices and other outbuildings stood immediately west of the house and more formal gardens were planted to the east.

Whilst it is by no means unreasonable to suggest that Cadogan was influenced by Marlborough’s work

at Woodstock, it should be emphasised that it would be hasty to identify some of Caversham's features as direct imitations of Blenheim when they may simply have been manifestations of current design trends. For example, placing the kitchen-garden away from the house was increasingly common in this period and can be seen in the gardens of Claremont, Sacombe, Bramham, and Heythrop.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, considering Cadogan's military and political links with Marlborough, the relationship between Blenheim and Caversham is worth considering thoroughly. Even if Switzer was not consciously imitating aspects of Blenheim at Caversham, the fact that he regarded the gardens created there as 'stupendous' may suggest he incorporated elements of them into his own designs.<sup>53</sup> The fortified bastion garden at Blenheim created by Vanbrugh and the gardener Henry Wise certainly left its mark on Switzer. As he wrote before citing it as an example: 'I need say little as to the reducing Fortification into Gardening; 'tis what will, I believe, be very pleasing to all the martial Genius's of our Country; and it seems somewhat of Wonder, that it has not been made Use of before now.'<sup>54</sup> Garden historian Judith Roberts argues that Switzer's fortified garden at Grimsthorpe Castle in Lincolnshire begun c.1711 was heavily influenced by the one at Blenheim,<sup>55</sup> so it is feasible that other Switzer designs such as Caversham could have been too, albeit in a subtler manner.

Like Switzer, Cadogan would also have been familiar with Blenheim. He was even granted his own lodge there although in 1713/14 the Duchess of Marlborough thought he would not use it, adding that 'I believe it is the Duke of *Marlborough's* intention that non but keepers should bee in that Parke, therfor 'tis no matter how little is don to it [Cadogan's lodge], or whether Anything at all.'<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, Cadogan's visits to Blenheim are evidenced by a 1714 housekeeper's report which noted crockery broken by him there.<sup>57</sup> Cadogan also interacted with Marlborough's material world in other ways. For example, during the Marlboroughs'

exile on the Continent, Cadogan took care of some of the Duke's possessions.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, Cadogan's advice regarding design choices at Marlborough House (the Marlboroughs' London mansion) was alluded to by the Duchess when she wrote in May 1714 of 'Mr *Cadogan's* thought about the Pannels of Wainscote in the Hall being painted, which I think will do very well, when I have Occasion (if ever that bee) to remove all my Pictures to another Place'.<sup>59</sup> It was certainly not unusual for officers to call in colleagues to assist with their building projects. For example, Colonel John Armstrong (1674–1742), one of Marlborough's military engineers during the War of Spanish Succession, was employed at Blenheim in the early 1720s to assist with the design of a new canal system.<sup>60</sup> It is difficult to know whether the frail Duke (who died before the project was finished) had much involvement in this or whether it was largely the Duchess's initiative. Nevertheless, Marlborough and Armstrong, an Irish officer who hailed from King's County (Co. Offaly), must have been relatively close as evidenced by the commissioning of a double portrait of both men.<sup>61</sup> It can therefore be surmised that not only was Armstrong's engineering expertise sought by the Marlboroughs, but there was also a more personal element.

That Cadogan would have felt qualified to advise the Marlboroughs on design matters is supported by fragmentary evidence which suggests that he was an engaged and active patron of the arts. One of the most notable aspects of Caversham was the sculpture that Cadogan collected. Most of Cadogan's military career took place in the Low Countries. He married a Dutch woman, Margareta Munter (1675–1749), and he served as British envoy (later ambassador) to the Dutch Republic in 1707–10 and 1714–21. In light of these personal, military, and diplomatic connections, it is therefore unsurprising that he also patronised the region for sculpture. For example, the engraver and antiquary George Vertue recorded in 1721 that Pierre-Denis Plumier was 'a most Excellent Statuary who came here from Antwerp by the

Encouragement of my Lord Cadogan for whom he was to make some Statues.' Unfortunately, Plumier had died of consumption after less than six months in England 'to the great regret of all lovers of arts', leaving behind a number of unfinished statues.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps some of the statues Plumier made, or intended to make, for Cadogan were destined for his collection at Caversham. Certainly, sales particulars for Caversham dating from after Cadogan's death in July 1726 value the garden statuary at £3,987 and highlight that the 'large Gardens' were 'adorn'd with Statuary, Obalisks, Urns and Vasas,' with twelve of the statues being made of marble.<sup>63</sup> Cadogan also encouraged painters from (or working in) the Low Countries such as the Dutch painter Herman van der Mijl and the Venetian painter Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini who Cadogan invited to England whilst both were at The Hague in 1718.<sup>64</sup> Cadogan was clearly an important patron of the arts during this period, something which has often been neglected in the historiography which more usually describes him as something along the lines of 'a coarse, bull-necked Irishman'.<sup>65</sup>

Whilst Cadogan evidently had an interest in the arts however, the fruits of his craftsmen's labours did not meet with universal acclaim. Sir John Clerk complained that Cadogan's garden ornaments were 'very bad. amongst other things of this kind his Losp at a vast expense brought several huge marble statues from Holand there are here several Godesses but of such a clumsey make as one may see they were made in a Country where women are valened [valued?] by the pound of Ar-s.'<sup>66</sup> Indeed, Clerk thought Cadogan's 'many Huge vases' at Caversham greatly resembled their thickset and gaudy owner in that they too were 'heavy things covered with Gold'.<sup>67</sup> It was not only Clerk who saw the satirical potential of Cadogan's collection. When John Hervey (later second Baron Hervey) visited Cadogan at Caversham in the summer of 1723, he wrote a short verse titled *Written on the Gilded Statue in Lord Cadogan's Garden*. In the poem, the

eponymous gilded sculpture instructed Cadogan on how to court a woman as beautiful and mindless as the statue itself: 'So much our Qualities agree,/ 'Twill do for her that did for me;/ Guild her but well, you may with ease/ Carry her naked where you please.'<sup>68</sup> Hervey's acidic tongue may have been directed at the ageing Cadogan's affair with the young (and married) Margaret Poultney. A friend of the Duchess of Marlborough had written the previous November that Cadogan's 'great passion for Mrs. Pultney is ... the Joke of the Town ... He is the most ridiculous sight imaginable in all publick places',<sup>69</sup> and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu similarly noted in May 1723 that Poultney condescended 'to be publically kept by the noble Earl of Cadogan'.<sup>70</sup>

The description of Caversham in Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus* gives further details of some of its sculptures: 'The Parterre is nobly adorned with Fountains, Vases and Statues particularly Four Originals in Statuary Marble, of King WILLIAM, King GEORGE, Duke of MARLBOROUGH, and Prince EUGENE, all so very like, that they are known at Sight; besides many valuable ones, cast from the best Antiques.'<sup>71</sup> The choice of subjects in this series of statues created by the Flemish sculptor Michiel van der Voort was clearly deliberate.<sup>72</sup> The statues of William III and George I played into a pro-Protestant narrative endorsing the Revolution of 1688–9 and the Hanoverian Succession of 1714. They were also two kings to whom Cadogan owed much – from the beginnings of his military career during William III's reign to the accumulation of aristocratic titles and other offices during George I's. Deploying sculptures of both kings also helped to promote George I as William III's rightful male successor. This was in line with other pro-Hanoverian writings and imagery as well as a wider propaganda programme which sought to associate George I and George II with heroic historical and legendary figures of England's past such as Edward III, the Black Prince, and St George.<sup>73</sup> The omission of a statue of Queen Anne, the monarch under whom

Cadogan acquired most of his battle honours, could simply be attributed to a woman not aesthetically fitting into this masculine pantheon of soldiers and royalty (two overlapping categories). Alternatively, it may have been a calculated snub due to Anne's ill-treatment of the Marlborough circle in the last few years of her reign. In this sense, Cadogan had something in common with his now-adversary the Duchess of Marlborough who, amongst other points of friction, accused Cadogan of speculating with some of the Duke's investments that he had been entrusted with during the Marlboroughs' exile.<sup>74</sup> Sarah also struggled with the legacy of her relationship with her old mistress. Unlike Cadogan, she finally commissioned a statue of Anne from John Michael Rysbrack for Blenheim in the 1730s complete with a deeply flattering eulogy that Frances Harris argues was designed to implicitly contrast with one of the Duchess's latest enemies – George II's queen, Caroline of Ansbach.<sup>75</sup>

The erection of statues of Marlborough and his Imperial ally Prince Eugene of Savoy in Cadogan's sculptural pantheon at Caversham not only commemorated their military service during the War of Spanish Succession, but also Cadogan's through his association with both men and his commissioning of these sculptures. Additionally, by the inclusion of Prince Eugene, Cadogan was commemorating more than just British military commanders. Cadogan was clearly happy to embrace the war's broader European context as well as the contributions of Britain's allies who the Tories had (in the Whigs' opinion) shamefully deserted following the dismissal of Marlborough as Captain-General at the end of 1711. This in turn hints at the idea of an elite pan-European cosmopolitanism that scholars such as Gerald Newman have detected in the eighteenth century.<sup>76</sup> Cadogan's statue of Marlborough was not the only representation of the Duke at Caversham. Cadogan also acquired paintings celebrating his old patron's military efforts. For example, his picture collection at the

time of his death included 'A Battle of the Duke of Marlborough's' and 'A large Triumph of the Duke of Marlborough's, painted at Rome, by Sanctus Piati'.<sup>77</sup> Further planned commemoration is hinted at in the letters of the impresario and art dealer Owen McSwiny who in 1723 referred to the creation of a series of paintings concerning the deeds of Marlborough intended for Cadogan, though it is unclear what became of the project.<sup>78</sup>

Additionally, Cadogan was apparently one of several senior army officers who emulated Marlborough and acquired copies of the Flemish 'Art of War' set of tapestries. The series portrayed various activities of a campaigning army such as living in a camp, foraging, marching, and ambushing the enemy. According to a 1797 guide to Stowe in Buckinghamshire, *Art of War* sets of varying sizes were created for Marlborough at Blenheim, Cadogan at Caversham, Viscount Cobham at Stowe, the Duke of Argyll at Inveraray Castle in Argyllshire, the Earl of Orkney at Cliveden in Buckinghamshire, General Henry Lumley at his brother the Earl of Scarbrough's estate of Stansted in Sussex, and Lieutenant-General John Richmond Webb presumably at his estate of Biddesden in Wiltshire. Unfortunately (assuming they existed), it is unknown what became of Cadogan, Argyll, or Webb's tapestries.<sup>79</sup> Marlborough commissioned his *Art of War* set in 1705, and Richard Johns argues that the Duke's six subordinate officers' commissioning of their own versions (presumably around the same time) not only demonstrated their shared cultural taste, 'but also a collective commitment to Britain's recent military affairs and, at that moment, an unquestioned loyalty to Marlborough as their leader'.<sup>80</sup> Such loyalty could be short-lived and, unlike Cadogan, officers such as Argyll and Webb subsequently became deeply disillusioned with the Captain-General for various personal and professional reasons.<sup>81</sup> Overall, despite much of his taste being met with the opprobrium of a connoisseur like Sir John Clerk, Cadogan's

patronage of the arts and development of his house and gardens at Caversham demonstrate how by acquiring sufficient riches he was able to purchase a country estate in the heart of England and engage in the sort of cultural activities expected of a member of the aristocratic landed elite. Whilst his estate at Caversham is now largely forgotten, unlike Marlborough's Blenheim, in its heyday it would have evidenced the prosperity achievable by one of Marlborough's most favoured officers.

### CONCLUSION

As this article has shown, Marlborough's Irish favourites had numerous overlapping military and political links with the Captain-General. Certainly, the partiality he showed towards them provoked many hostile comments from the Duke's critics. In light of these strong personal and professional connections, the key question begs itself: did Cadogan and the others consciously seek to emulate Marlborough in their own movement into elite society in southern England? Frustratingly, this can only be inferred rather than conclusively proven. Certainly, the peculiar nature of Blenheim – the fact that the land was granted by Queen Anne in an act of royal munificence and the construction (for the first half a dozen years at least) funded by the Crown, makes it somewhat of an outlier amongst other estates of the period. Yet it is inconceivable, considering Cadogan and the other favourites' close ties to the Duke and the sheer fame (or notoriety) of the Blenheim project, that it would not have had at least a subconscious effect on their own attempts, as career army soldiers, to settle into elite landed life. In this they were successful. Although the riches acquired by Marlborough's star protégé Cadogan set him apart from the rest, even an officer such as Meredyth and his ill-judged financial investment was still able to purchase an English estate in retirement. The blossoming of their military careers

during the War of Spanish Succession was thanks to Marlborough's patronage and allowed them to settle into comfortable retirement or high-profile political careers particularly after the Hanoverian Succession.

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