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SIR HENRY CHEERE AND THE RESPONSE TO THE ROCOCO IN ENGLISH SCULPTURE

Malcolm Baker

In Rouquet's chapter on sculpture in *The Present State of the Arts in England* the author discusses at some length the monuments in Westminster Abbey, commenting on both Rysbrack's Newton and Taylor's Cornwall monuments but giving most praise to 'the Frenchman', presumably Roubiliac, 'who has decorated the church with some groups which are in every respect very ingenious'.¹ No mention is made, however, of Henry Cheere, whose smaller decorative ornaments were by the early 1750s already fairly numerous in the Abbey. A similar silence is observed by Vertue, who mentions Cheere's name on only three occasions, in each case linked with those of other artists who are discussed individually elsewhere.²

Yet, despite this lack of contemporary comment, the ubiquity of Cheere's work is a mid-18th-century phenomenon that deserves further investigation. With the notable exception of the monuments of Warkton and Walton-on-Thames, Roubiliac's works outside London remain relatively few, even including the smaller wall monuments. By contrast the wall tablets (sometimes with busts or urns) produced by Cheere's workshop may be seen in very considerable numbers throughout England. Characterized by their richly decorative use of coloured marbles, delicately carved swags of flowers and groups of cherubs' heads, these consist of variations on certain standard types, the popularity of which is registered in the copies made by provincial sculptors such as Ivory of Norwich or Thompson of Litchfield.³ During the third quarter of the 18th century, when some elements at least of the rococo style evolved earlier in the St Martin's Lane circle

1. J. A. Rouquet, *The Present State of the Arts in England*, 1755, p. 58.

2. *Walpole Society*, XXII (Vertue III), pp. 122, 142, 150.

3. For the Ivory family see N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, North-East Norfolk and Norwich*, p. 64 and H. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840*, 1978, pp. 447f. Other monuments in the Cheere style were signed by Rawlins of Norwich and Thomas Pritchard (e.g. Edward Cressett monument, Cound, Salop, illustrated in B. Kemp, *English Church Monuments*, 1980, pp. 4, 117 and others cited by Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 664) although it is possible that some were indeed from Cheere's workshop and merely signed by the local mason or architects who erected them.

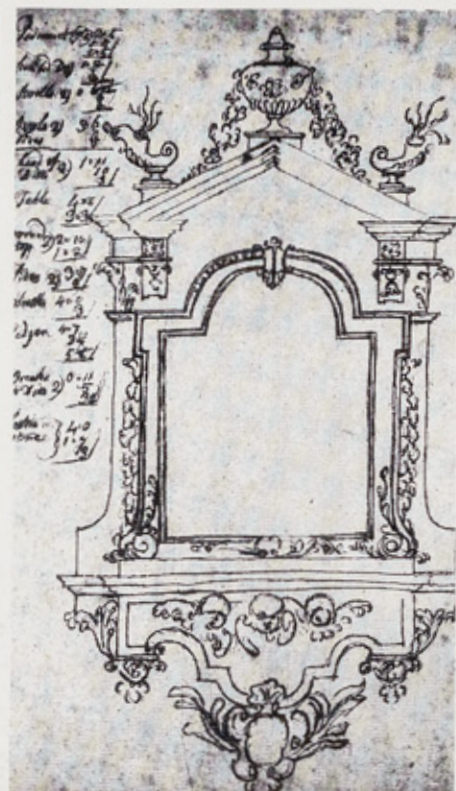


FIG. 1 Design for an unidentified monument. Attributed to Sir Henry Cheere, Victoria and Albert Museum.

4. M. I. Webb, 'Henry Cheere, Henry Scheemakers and the Apprenticeship Lists', *Burlington Magazine*, XCIX (1957), pp. 115–20 (hereafter 'Cheere ... Scheemakers'). Further documentary evidence is cited in M. I. Webb, 'Henry Cheere, Sculptor and Businessman and John Cheere', *Burlington Magazine*, C (1958), pp. 232, 274–79 (hereafter 'Sculptor'). Information given below without references is taken from these two fundamental studies.

5. 'Cheere ... Scheemakers', Fig 10.

6. 'Cheere ... Scheemakers', p. 119.

were being widely disseminated in porcelain, textiles and furniture, these elegant and highly decorative productions form the most popular and pervasive type of monument, despite their neglect by contemporary commentators. To what extent may Cheere's work be regarded as rococo and what role did he play in the development of mid 18th century English sculpture?

Before examining Cheere's sculpture it is worthwhile looking briefly at the different social and business circles in which he moved. One important network of connections was provided by the London mason-sculptor tradition in which he was trained. Apparently from a family of haberdashers, Henry Cheere was apprenticed in 1718 to Robert Hartshorne, an assistant of William and Edward Stanton. He therefore received his sculptural training from those London statuaries who were to dominate English sculpture until the emergence of Francis Bird and the arrival of immigrant Flemings such as Rysbrack and Delvaux.

The business practices current among such mason-sculptors appear to have been adopted in Cheere's own extensive and efficient workshop. His two surviving bank accounts indicate that, like Stanton, or Green of Camberwell, he employed a large number of assistants; similarly, the way in which certain standard elements are reproduced in varying combinations in monuments produced over many years certainly suggests a business organized on traditional lines. Behind such large-scale production lay careful and accurate costing of time and materials, the procedures of which are outlined (albeit for more modest, provincial statuaries) in contemporary builders' manuals. They may also be glimpsed in the annotations alongside a design for a typical small monument by Cheere (Fig. 1).

In 1726 Cheere's workshop is recorded in the Westminster rate books but within a year or so he had been joined by one of the immigrant Flemish sculptors, Henry Scheemakers, with whom he worked until the early 1730s when Scheemakers apparently returned to the Continent.⁴ Their collaboration on monuments such as that to the 1st Duke of Ancaster (Fig. 2), erected in 1728,⁵

presumably meant that Cheere became well conversant with those new elements in English sculpture contributed during the 1720s by Flemish artists.

Another network with which Cheere was closely connected had its centre at Westminster. From 1726 he had his workshop in St Margaret's Lane⁶ and the Dean and Chapter Minute Books of the 1730s and 40s make frequent references to property transactions with Cheere.⁷ He also appears to have continuing links with the Tufnell family, several of whom were Master Masons to the Abbey.⁸ In 1743 Cheere himself was appointed 'Carver' to the Abbey by the Dean and Chapter.⁹ This official position in part explains his execution of monuments to several clerics associated with the Abbey, among them Bishop Boulter and Dean Wilcocks, the monument of the latter bearing a relief with a delicately carved perspective view of the Abbey. Cheere also undertook various civic duties in the City of Westminster, being appointed in 1749 Controller of the Free Fish Market; his involvement in public affairs was to lead to a knighthood in 1760.

It may have been through either Westminster or some City connection that Cheere was introduced to one of the various patrons for whom he produced works in Oxford during the 1730s. These include a monument to Henry Aldrich in Christ Church (erected in 1732), the statue of Christopher Codrington at All Souls' (commissioned in 1732 and erected in 1734),¹⁰ the figures of Law, Physic and Poetry commissioned by the Queen's College in 1734 and that of Queen Caroline for the same college. Shortly after its erection the figure of the Queen was already celebrated enough for Richard West to report to Walpole, in response to the latter's 'panegyric' about the city, that 'the royal statue in the dome of Queen's College has been thrice seen publicly to dance a courant'.¹¹

A training in the trade of a city mason-sculptor, a partnership with a Flemish sculptor, a continuing involvement with the Abbey as well as the City of Westminster and close links with various Oxford patrons form several of the intersecting social and business



FIG. 2 Monument to Peregrine, 2nd Duke of Ancaster (d. 1741). By Sir Henry Cheere, Edenham, Lincolnshire.

7. For example, on 9 April 1739 Cheere applied to renew the lease of six tenements in the Sanctuaries and on 17 October 1743 applied for renewal of the lease of the Bell and Dragon alehouse. I am grateful to the Dean and Chapter and the Librarian, Dr D. McMichael, for allowing me to consult and quote from the Minute Books and the Treasurer's Accounts, from which the details of 'fines' are taken.

8. For the Tufnells see 'Sculptor', pp. 277f. According to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1737, p. 61, Capt. Tufnell was appointed Master Mason at Westminster, fol-

lowing the resignation of 'Mr [presumably Christopher] Horsnail'. For a portrait of the Tufnell family see *Country Life*, 27 Feb. 1964.

9. Dean and Chapter Minute Books, 26 April 1743.

10. M. Whinney, *Sculpture in Britain 1530-1830*, pl. 72; for the contract see 'Sculptor', p. 232. Mr J. S. G. Simmons has kindly informed me that the New Titling Book for 1732/3 records a payment of £50 to Cheere on 18 October 1733 and that for 1733/4 a payment of £97-19-0 for 'Coll. Codringtons [sic] and carr. and putting up'.

11. W. S. Lewis (ed.), *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 13, p. 99.

12. Vertue III, pp. 141-2. A later continental visit was made by Cheere after his retirement when according to Hayward's list (L. Stainton, 'Hayward's List: British Visitors to Rome 1753-1775', *Walpole Society*, 49 (1983), p. 13) he arrived in Rome in 1770 with his sons.

13. D. G. C. Allen, 'Studies in the Society's History and Archives. Artists and the Society in the 18th century ii', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 132 (1984), p. 272.

14. J. T. Smith, *Nollekens and his Times*, 1828, p. 94.

15. A. Cunningham, *Lives of the British Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, 1830, III, p. 34.

circles in which Cheere moved. Linked with these was that of St Martin's Lane, which played such a major role in the development of the rococo style in England. Despite Vertue's relative silence, Cheere appears to have had a continuing association with members of this set. In 1748 he visited France in the company of Hogarth, Hayman, Hudson¹² and others and in 1755 proposed Hogarth for membership of the Society of Arts, being himself one of the first artists to join, and proposing in the same year 'a plan for the founding of an Academy'.¹³ According to some 19th century sources, he is credited with suggesting to Jonathan Tyers the idea of having Handel represented as Apollo¹⁴ and is also said to have employed Roubiliac during his early years in England.¹⁵ These fragmentary pieces of evidence suggest that he was at least in contact with the St Martin's Lane group, if not at the heart of it.

Cheere's native birth and his training in an English tradition distinguish him from the other significant sculptors in mid 18th century England. But, in addition to this, the social milieu in which he moved seems to have been far more mixed than those inhabited by Rysbrack, Roubiliac or Peter Scheemakers. This varied social and business background may help to explain some of the ambiguities seen in his monuments. These fall into several well-defined categories.

The first type involves a single standing figure placed within an arched or pedimental architectural setting. This format is employed for the monument to the Duke of Ancaster, executed by Cheere and Henry Scheemakers in 1728, and that to Robert Davies at Mold, Flintshire, by Cheere himself in the same year. Precedents for such standing figures may be found in the monuments of the Stantons or Green of Camberwell and the heavy architectural setting of the Davies work is very much in this mason-sculptor tradition.¹⁶ Davies' pose, however, follows that employed by Guelfi for his influential monument to James Craggs, erected in Westminster Abbey in the previous year and presumably well known to Cheere.

This same pose is used some twenty years later in the monument

to the 2nd Duke of Ancaster (Fig. 2), sometimes attributed to Roubiliac but described in August 1748 as 'now finished by Mr Cheere of Westminster',¹⁷ and the monument to Bowater Vernon (d. 1735) (Fig. 3), at Hanbury probably executed in the early 1740s. Although the Vernon is unsigned both the arrangement of the urns to flank the figure and the carving of the details such as the swags and cartouche support an attribution to Cheere.¹⁸ The same composition is used for the figure of George Cooke (d. 1740) (Fig. 4) which has been attributed to Roubiliac on account of the



FIG. 3 Monument to Bowater Vernon (d. 1735). Attributed to Sir Henry Cheere, Hanbury, Worcestershire.

FIG. 4 Statue of Sir George Cooke (formerly at Harefield House). Attributed to Sir Henry Cheere. Stoke Park.

16. Cf., for example, the monuments to Lytton Lytton (d. 1710) at Knebworth, (N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Hertfordshire*, 1977, pl. 67) and Elmley Castle, Worcestershire (B. Kemp, *English Church Monuments*, 1980, pl. 91).

17. *London Evening Post*, 2 August 1748. A terracotta model of 'A figure leaning on an urn' in Cheere's sale of 26 March 1770 (lot 28) may have been for the Ancaster monument. The coat of arms (including the modelling of the supporters) repeats almost exactly that

on the facing monument to members of the Bertie family (erected by Albemarle Bertie in 1738); it also occurs on an alternative design from the V&A album (4910.10) for the monument to Lord Thomas, 4th son of the 1st Duke of Ancaster (d. 1749) at Chislehurst (for which see John Physick's letter to *Country Life*, 2 May 1974, p. 1068). John Lord has kindly informed me that no reference is made to a monument in the detailed accounts kept by the 2nd Duke's executors up to the settlement of the estate in 1747 (Lincs. Archives 5 ANC 8/2/5). Later payments were made to John Cheere in May 1749 (£21-9-0), to either Henry or John in 1754/5 (£96-13-0; in connection with three chimney-pieces at Grimsthorpe and in 1764 to Henry (£187-15-0). The inscription on the Vernon monument refers to the death of one of his daughters in 1740 so that it was presumably executed after this date; the use of the pedestal instead of an urn may even reflect the influence of Schemakers' Shakespeare monument of 1740.

18. A similarly shaped cartouche, with swags and set against a tall pyramid, and urns with comparable finials are shown in a design (probably for Westminster Abbey since it is enclosed in a trefoil setting) in the V&A album (8933-27).

19. The angular drapery of the putti in some ways

reliefs on its base. The putti in these scenes, however, are as well paralleled by those on documented monuments by Cheere (where their drapery is similarly arranged) as by those in the relief on the Argyll monument.¹⁹ But if the Vernon and Cooke works are accepted as the work of Cheere, the crumpled texture of the stockings and, more strikingly, the slipper falling off Cooke's foot show the sculptor responding to the novelty of Roubiliac's Handel statue, completed in 1738. Some of the differences between these figures, particularly the variable quality of their execution, may be explained by the use of different assistants in the workshop. Nevertheless, in this group we may see a combination of different elements that include a continuation of the conventions of the mason-sculptor tradition, compositional devices from the most recent Westminster monuments and a hint at least of the new rococo style.

Comparable variety may be discerned in Cheere's monuments in which a figure of the deceased reclines on a sarcophagus. This convention was of course well-established by the late 17th century but became still more popular with the arrival of the Flemish sculptors and the execution of the influential Buckingham monument. In the early 1730s this form was splendidly exemplified by Rysbrack's monuments to Newton and Stanhope at Westminster Abbey. Placed against the choir screen confronting the spectator as he approached from the West door, these must have appeared still more impressive before the erection of the large monuments now dominating the nave, the earliest of which was Taylor's Cornwall monument, completed in 1755.²⁰ In an unusually well-coordinated arrangement Rysbrack's two monuments were balanced at the West end by Cheere's monuments to Admiral Hardy and John Conduitt. Although Hardy died five years before Conduitt, the 'fines' for the erection of both monuments were paid in the same year (1738), confirming that the two were conceived as one project, as is indeed suggested by the similarity in their design.²¹ This carefully conceived symmetry, which is quite untypical of planning in the Abbey at this period, follows partly

from the fact that Conduitt married Newton's niece, succeeded him as Master of the Mint and commissioned the Rysbrack monument.²² For this reason, however, it is perhaps surprising that the commission for his own monument should have been given to Cheere and this, together with the control exercised over the total scheme, may reflect Cheere's position at Westminster which was shortly to be recognized by his appointment as the Abbey's 'carver'.

Although Cheere's Hardy monument follows approximately the format adopted for the Newton and Stanhope, Rysbrack's broad late baroque drapery is abandoned in favour of smaller broken folds and slightly rippling surfaces that, like the Cooke figure, show some awareness of Roubiliac's style. The overall composition remains firmly static so that this can hardly be classed as a rococo work. Nevertheless, to a gadrooned sarcophagus, of a type employed elsewhere by Rysbrack, Cheere has added feet with rocaille ornament which, though firmly symmetrical, probably represent the earliest application of rococo decoration to a monument in the Abbey. Likewise, the cartouche on the pyramid background could well have been adapted from comparable designs in Brunetti's *Sixty Different Sorts of Ornaments* (1736)²³. A preliminary sketch for the corresponding, and also symmetrical, cartouche on the Conduitt monument is included in one of the albums of Cheere drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This collection, which may have originated in Cheere's workshop, also includes drawings after earlier Abbey monuments and, perhaps significantly, the Conduitt cartouche is accompanied here by copies of other Westminster cartouches.²⁴ The impression given by both design book and monuments is that the sculptor's awareness of new ornamental elements, such as Brunetti, was tempered by both his training and his respect for earlier Westminster traditions.

A fundamentally conservative composition into which a few more innovative elements are introduced may also be seen in the monuments to Henry, Earl of Uxbridge at Hillingdon (Fig. 5) and Bishop Willis at Winchester. Although the Uxbridge work is

resembles that of the putto of the Hardy monument in Westminster Abbey. Payments from a George Cooke to Cheere are recorded in the sculptor's bank account on 22 Dec. 1744 (£150) and 26 November 1749 (£186) and may be connected with this work.

20. M. Baker, 'Rococo styles in eighteenth century English sculpture', *Rococo*, 1984, pp 284-5, cat. no. 521. The monument is shown in its original position in the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *London I Westminster Abbey*, 1924, pl. 105.

21. M. Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 284. Neither monument is included in *The Antiquities of St Peters*, 1743, but (as Alastair Laing points out to me) the haphazard way in which this was apparently compiled means that the absence of a monument here should not be taken as evidence that it was not in position in 1742.

22. For the Newton commission see M. I. Webb, *Michael Rysbrack Sculptor*, London, 1954, pp. 83-85 and Fitzwilliam Museum, *The European Fame of Isaac Newton* (exhibition catalogue), Cambridge, 1973, cat. nos. 32-34. Rouquet (*op. cit.*, p. 57) states that Conduitt 'was at the whole expense of the monument' and Francis Haskell ('The Apotheosis of Newton in Art', *Texas Quarterly*, 1967, p. 220) has shown that he was responsible for inventing the iconography and

overall design of the monument. It is therefore not surprising to find that a version of the sarcophagus relief (perhaps the model painted?) is placed above the chimney piece in Conduitt's house, below a bust of Newton, as it is shown in Hogarth's *A Scene from the Indian Emperor*, painted between 1732 and 1734 (illustrated in M. Webster, *Hogarth*, 1979, pp. 84–5). The medallion on Conduitt's own monument alludes to his position at the Mint but, like the supporting putti, it appears to be of lead rather than bronze. Could Henry's brother John have been responsible for casting these?

23. No direct source can be cited but Cheere's cartouche involves a number of elements, used in a variety of Brunetti's cartouches.

24. The collection was purchased from Parsons in 1882, mounted in four volumes, all but one of which has since been divided into individual drawings. The high proportion of Cheere designs (many apparently tracings of original sketches) suggests a possible origin in the Cheere workshop, though it also includes drawings by Rysbrack and some late 17th century sculptors.

25. For example, comparable ornament to that in the spandrels occurs in one of the V&A drawings (8933.32) while the fluted pattern on the urns is used (inverted) on the urns



FIG. 5 Monument to Henry Hillingdon, Earl of Uxbridge. Attributed to Sir Henry Cheere. Hillingdon, Middlesex.

unsigned, the carving of the swags and the ornament on the vases compare well with details on documented monuments by Cheere.²⁵ Erected by his widow it presumably dates from between the Earl's death in 1743 and his widow's death in 1749, recorded in an

additional inscription on the base. The signed monument to Willis (d. 1734) was erected by his son, whose date of death is unknown, but, by comparison with the Uxbridge tomb, this work perhaps dates from the mid-1740s.²⁶ In both the architectural setting is firmly symmetrical and shows the heavy late baroque manner characteristic of the earlier mason-sculptors modified by a certain Palladian refinement in the detailing. But the drapery employed in both monuments is distinct from either the rich, complicated patterns of William Stanton or the broad, diagonal folds used by Rysbrack. The individual forms are here smaller in scale, giving the impression of rippling movement, though not the remarkable illusionistic effect achieved by Roubiliac's drapery textures. A rather similar configuration of small folds was already to be seen in Peter Scheemakers' effigy of Dr Hugo Chamberlain erected in 1731,²⁷ but the softly crumpled draperies so characteristic of this group of Cheere monuments have their closest parallels not in sculpture but in paintings from the St Martin's Lane circle, particularly those of Hayman.²⁸

The work in which Cheere's awareness of Hayman is most apparent is the 'fine and curious monument' to the 9th Earl of Kildare in Dublin (Fig. 6), which was viewed by his son in the sculptor's workshop in September 1746.²⁹ The combination of sarcophagus, pyramid and flanking figure is quite conventional but the movement of the son (on the right) gives the composition a strikingly pictorial quality that in its animation recalls book illustrations by Hayman and Gravelot. Both the decorative use of the long coat and waist-coat – achieved partly through the distinctive undulating drapery edges – and the dance-like pose may also be seen in the standing figure of John Wood in one of Hayman's portraits of Jonathan Tyers and his family (Fig. 7).³⁰

To this group of monuments with reclining figures may also perhaps be added that to Roger Owen at Conover (Fig. 8), erected by his widow in 1746. Although already in the early 19th century said to be by Roubiliac, the looping drapery of this monument, with its undulating edges, resembles the patterns used

flanking the signed monument to Sir John Comyns at Writtle, Essex, erected in 1759.

26. Two drawings are included in the V&A album: a rough sketch for the figure (8933.132) and a design for the architectural setting inscribed with various notes of colours of marble to be used and 'for ye Bishop of Winchester Charged 600^l Cariage [sic] Excepted'.

27. For Scheemakers' model see M. Whinney, *English Sculpture 1720-1830*, 1971, pp. 58f.

28. Cf., for example, the patterns employed by Cheere for the Earl of Uxbridge's drapery with those used by Hayman in his Grant family (*Rococo*, cat. no. D17).

29. *General Advertiser*, 5 September 1746, adding that the monument is 'to be shipped off this Week for Ireland'. Two other notable Cheere monuments completed in the same year are those to Sir John Chardin in Westminster Abbey (*London Evening Post*, 15 February 1746) and to Viscount Mayo (*General Advertiser* 16 September 1746).

30. Cf. also Hayman's drawing of Henry Woodridge as 'The Fine Gentleman' (*Rococo*, cat. no. 015).



FIG. 6 Monument to 9th Earl of Kildare, by Sir Henry Cheere, Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin.

31. N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Shropshire*, 1958, pl. 38a and described as by Roubiliac in Neale's *Views of Gentleman's Seats*. The Victoria County History (*Shropshire*, VIII, 1968, p. 55) cites the Cheere contract (S.P.L., Deeds 13408) but is incorrect in stating that Roubiliac was working for Cheere at this date.

on the Uxbridge and Willis monuments and the contract for the monument was indeed made with Cheere.³¹ Although the overall composition of all these works is fundamentally conservative, the figure style may be interpreted as a response, albeit tentative, to the rococo styles being evolved in St Martin's Lane to which occasionally Cheere apparently made his own modest contribution. This ambivalent attitude to the rococo may be seen again in the remarkable series of monuments erected in Westminster Abbey during the late 1740s and early 1750s. These, together with his smaller wall monuments, have led Cheere to be described as 'after Roubiliac (but a long way after Roubiliac) ... the chief



FIG. 7 Jonathan Tyers and family. By Francis Hayman. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven Conn.

exponent of the Rococo in England'.³² The earliest of the group appears to be the monument to Bishop Boulter. According to the inscription the Bishop was translated to the Archbishopric of Armagh in 1723 and 'from thence to heaven Sept the 27th 1742'. The 'fine' was paid to the Abbey in 1745 and in April 1748 it was described in the *Gentleman's Magazine* as 'now erecting'.³³ In 1746 permission was given for the erection of a monument to Edward Atkyns which is described in the 1754 edition of the *Historical Description* as 'now erecting'.³⁴ Fines for monuments to Sir Edmund and Lady Prideaux and Capt Philip de Sausmarez (Fig. 9) were paid in 1745 and 1748 respectively; neither appear in the 1754 *Historical Description* but both are included in the 1761 edition. However, Cheere's letters to John de Sausmarez between 19th January and 13th March 1750 imply that the execution of the monument was already well advanced, if not complete, so that perhaps both works date from the early 1750s, their absence in the 1754 guide notwithstanding.³⁵

As the Boulter monument makes clear, all four monuments have their origins in a rather earlier form consisting of a sarcophagus, supporting a bust, sometimes set against a squat pyramidal background.³⁶ This type had been developed during the first half of the 18th century to fit within the trefoil headed bays of the 13th century wall arcade at Westminster and a number of examples by Scheemakers and others may be seen adjacent to the Boulter monument. Cheere followed this traditional Westminster convention but modified it by exaggerating the curves of the sarcophagus and adding various rococo decorative motifs and a rich cluster of attributes, so creating a far more decorative effect, enhanced by the use of coloured marbles. In his adaptations of this standard type, Cheere may have been influenced by the designs of Robert Taylor who produced various drawings that were probably for the Boulter commission and anticipate, or at least parallel, some of Cheere's innovations.³⁷

Although their decorative quality is clear, their specifically rococo features are more elusive, despite claims that Cheere 'excels



FIG. 8 Monument to Roger Owen. By Sir Henry Cheere. Condovery, Salop.

32. M. Whinney, *Sculpture in Britain 1530-1830*, 1964, p. 122.

33. These payments are recorded in annual lists in the Treasurer's Accounts.

34. J. Newbery, *Historical Description of Westminster Abbey, its monuments and curiosities ... designed as a guide to strangers*, 1754.

35. For the correspondence see 'Sculptor', pp. 239f.

36. M. Baker, *op cit*, p. 285. Characteristic of the rather earlier type is Scheemakers' Kirk monument, for which the 'fine' was paid in 1741.

37. *Rococo*, cat. nos. 522, 525.



FIG. 9 Monument to Capt. Philip de Sausmarez. By Sir Henry Cheere. Westminster Abbey.

38. N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, London I*, 1973, p. 90.

39. Although only together under this title in 1756, these plates were issued in sets of four in 1747 and then in two volumes in 1752 and were available separately as early as 1737. (*Rococo*, D7).

40. For the Apthorp monument see Gunnis, *op. cit.*, pl. IV.

in Rococo ornament'.³⁸ The Sausmarez monument, which is the most inventive and flamboyant work from this group, has a lower sarcophagus section, richly carved with decorative detail made up of swags of seaweed and ormer shells, together with a frilly-edged shell cartouche overlapped by reeds. This latter combination recalls some of Meissonier's engravings but there are no ornamental elements here that may be described as unambiguously rococo. The composition remains firmly symmetrical and, despite the boldly carved scrolls, the lower part of the monument has none of the fluid three-dimensional movement of the commode-like sarcophagus used by Taylor for his Guest monument.

The asymmetry lacking below may, however, be found in the upper section where two putti respectively unveil and mourn a medallion portrait of the deceased. Unlike some of Cheere's putti which continue the tradition of Stanton and other mason-sculptors, the Sausmarez putti form an integral part of a lively pictorial composition, the animation of which is heightened by the crumpled drapery and details such as the ruffled pages of the book. Although compositions involving draped medallions and putti had of course been used earlier by sculptors such as Rysbrack (on the Gay monument), the more pictorial nature and greater elaboration of Cheere's work have their analogy not in sculpture but in Houbraken's prints for Birch's *Heads of Illustrious Persons*, which was very much a St Martin's Lane enterprise.³⁹ Although none of Cheere's putti are direct copies of any in Houbraken, the pose of the mourning child on the Sausmarez monument resembles that of the figure below the portrait of George Buchanan (Fig. 10). The two compositions are also similar in their relationship between figure and ornamental setting. Likewise, a putto such as that in the Houbraken print of Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford, may have been the model for the seated putto on Cheere's Prideaux tomb, a type repeated on the monuments to Charles Apthorp (d. 1758) in the King's Chapel, Boston and Sir Crisp Gascoyne (d. 1761) at Barking.⁴⁰ As in those monuments with reclining figures, such as those to Kildare and Uxbridge, Cheere



FIG. 10. J. Houbraken after F. Pourbus and H. Gravelot, plate 34 from Thomas Birch, *Heads of Illustrious Persons*.

seems to be drawing here on predominantly pictorial devices current in the St Martin's Lane circle, while rejecting any overtly rococo ornamental motifs.

The adoption of such figurative elements from Houbraken is one feature that distinguishes the Sausmarez group of monuments from the traditional Abbey type of which they are a variant. The other striking difference (far more apparent in the Abbey itself than in photographs) lies in the use of variously coloured marbles and of small-scale naturalistic ornament. It is perhaps the effect of the contrasting marbles that the writer of the 1754 *Historical Description* had in mind when he described the Boulter monument as 'of the finest Marble and of a new invented Polish'. Although most of the Boulter tomb is of white marble, its setting against a ground of marble emphasises the decorative effect of details such as the smoking censer. This is developed further in the Atkyns monument which employs several different types of marble. The aesthetic underlying such contrasts found more elaborate expression in the rococo altarpieces of South Germany, in which white stucco saints are placed against richly veined marbled columns. Likewise, the precise and delicate naturalism already evident in the swags on the Sausmarez monument, and more extensively used on the later wall monuments, is analogous to the swags on George Wickes's ewer and basin or the patterns on Anna Maria Garthwaite's silks that are so characteristic of the English rococo decorative style.⁴¹ It is indeed in the use of these coloured grounds to set off small-scale and consciously pretty decoration of leaves and flowers, rather than in any bold effects of *rocaille* work or asymmetry, that Cheere's work may be seen as rococo.

41. *Rococo*, C4, N3-12.

The setting of small-scale naturalistic ornament against a brightly coloured contrasting ground is best exemplified not by Cheere's monuments but by his chimney pieces. Usually regarded as a peripheral aspect of his sculpture and never systematically studied, they apparently formed a significant part of his business and include more progressive, fashionable decorative elements

than many of the relatively traditional monuments. The large-scale production of such chimney pieces would probably have been seen as an activity of some importance for a workshop operating in the older mason-sculptor tradition. Furthermore, working in the same context as (and perhaps sometimes in close collaboration with) architects, carvers, upholsterers and *stuccatore*, Cheere would have been more closely involved with those evolving the rococo decorative style in England than he would have been in the Abbey. It is therefore not surprising that the chimney pieces at Picton Castle or Langley Park with their *rocaille* work, asymmetrical scrolls and reliefs reminiscent of prints after Oudry or Boucher, are more rococo than any of his monuments.⁴² The chronology of the chimney pieces and their relationship to the monuments is not yet established. Nevertheless, Cheere's translation of an earlier Abbey type into a far more obviously ornamental form of monument may be interpreted as the introduction of an aesthetic and a decorative mode into a church context that had hitherto been employed primarily in domestic interiors.

The small sarcophagus monument that apparently begins with the Boulter may have been developed to suit the context of the Abbey but it was frequently used by Cheere's workshop elsewhere. In one case a patron had a specific Abbey monument in mind. Although his wishes were never carried out, Ralph, 2nd Earl Verney, in his will of 1752 left £200 'for erecting a monument to my late dear wife in Middle Claydon Church after the model of the monument set up in Westminster Abbey for Archbishop Boulter'.⁴³ The Boulter design was indeed used for the monument to William Cust (d. 1747) at Grantham but with naval trophies substituted for the ecclesiastical attributes. These trophies repeat exactly those already placed on the monument to Admiral Medley in York Minster which was described as 'now erecting by Mr Henry Cheere' in September 1749.⁴⁴ Here, however, the *rocaille* feet follow yet another Abbey pattern, that of the Hardy monument.

Similar use of a design originally created for the Abbey is seen

42. *Rococo*, 552. The Picton Castle chimneypieces are mentioned in correspondence between 1749 and 1752 (for which see M. Girouard, 'Picton Castle', *Country Life* 14 January 1960). A chimneypiece in Goldsmiths' Hall, which (as Susan Hare has kindly informed me) was supplied by Cheere in 1734 is of a conventional caryatid form and still in white, rather than multi-coloured, marbles.

43. Gunnis, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

44. *General Advertiser*, 8 September 1749. In the previous week's edition the monument was said to be 'near finished'. For an illustration see J. B. Morrell, *York Monuments*, pl. xxxviii, wrongly attributed to William Tyler.

in the various adaptations of the Atkyns monument in which a sarcophagus with four rococo feet is surmounted by an inscribed panel with decorative frame, below an elaborate cartouche. Another Atkyns monument with the same inscription was erected at Ketteringham, Norfolk, near the family seat; this includes a similar, but not identical, panel, a different form of cartouche and a more modest sarcophagus with less coloured marble and claw, instead of rococo, feet. The sarcophagus pattern alone was already being employed as the 'tributary stone' erected to Mary, Lady Wrey, in 1754 at Tawstock, Devon, and five years later it was used, with the addition of a bust, for another judge, Sir John Comyns, at Writtle, Essex.

In all these cases an earlier design is employed, with only slight modifications, as if it were a standard type. This no doubt reflects the workshop organisation of Cheere's business and contrasts markedly with Roubiliac's practice in which a pattern is only rarely repeated. Cheere's manner of working may, however, be paralleled by that of Peter Scheemakers whose smaller monuments, supplied in larger numbers outside London, appear to conform to a range of stock designs, or variations on them. Scheemakers' business was well-established by the 1730s but the success of the Shakespeare monument in 1743 'tossed this Sculptor above on the summit of [Fortune's] ... wheel' and 'brought him considerable employments of profit and honour'.⁴⁵ These apparently consisted largely of commissions for monuments both in the Abbey and in the provinces. Viewed against this background, Cheere's transformation of an older Westminster pattern into a type of small monument, that was distinctively decorative in character, may be understood not simply as a stylistic innovation but as a response to Scheemakers' growing domination of the market for dignified monuments combining both Flemish and neo-Palladian traditions. By evolving a monument type sharply differentiated from those of Scheemakers and Rysbrack, Cheere was meeting (and encouraging) a taste for something recognisably different from the static, somewhat solemn forms of his rivals.

45. Vertue, III, p. 101.

46. These cherub's heads appear on the apron of a monument shown in a Rysbrack drawing probably dating from the late 1730s, for which see K. Eustace, *Michael Rysbrack*, 1982, cat. no. 12.

By far the most popular of Cheere's monument types, as well as that most common outside London, was indeed the wall tablet with central inscription. These usually contain no figurative elements other than the frequently repeated device of three cherub's heads or the occasional bust or putto. This last feature – almost Cheere's hallmark⁴⁶ – occurs in the shaped apron at the bottom of the annotated drawing mentioned earlier, which represents a characteristic monument of this class. Although the flaming lamps here derive from the earlier mason-sculptor tradition, the starting point for at least some of these tablets was the well-established type popularised by Gibbs and Rysbrack. One of Cheere's earliest wall monuments is that to Bishop Bradford (d. 1731) which was apparently already erected at Westminster by 1739.⁴⁷ In this design Cheere adopts the pattern illustrated in plate 113 of Gibbs' *Book of Architecture*, but modifies it slightly by the substitution of two cross palm fronds for the customary pair of supporting brackets. Another adaptation of a Gibbs design, with a bust placed in the broken pediment, is found in the tablet at Ely to Bishop Butts (Fig. 11), which the *Penny Evening Post* reports to be 'making by Mr Cheere' in August 1748.⁴⁸ Perhaps in deference to the ecclesiastical rank of the deceased, its form is still rather restrained, the only fanciful additions being the distinctive incurving volute supports and the uncharacteristically asymmetrical cartouche, a wholly rococo detail almost unrelated to the composition below. The same form of bracket, which may have a Netherlandish source, occurs on a Cheere design for one half of a vertical wall monument, showing the close connection between these various tablet patterns and the way in which Cheere's workshop would use certain standard elements in seemingly endless combinations.⁴⁹ By the 1750s this fundamentally Palladian form had been developed by Cheere into the richly decorative composition represented by the monument to Sir John Harpur at Calke. The central tablet flanked by volutes here conforms to the Gibbs pattern but to this has been added not only the incurving supports and group of cherubs heads,⁵⁰ but also busts (on Cheere's

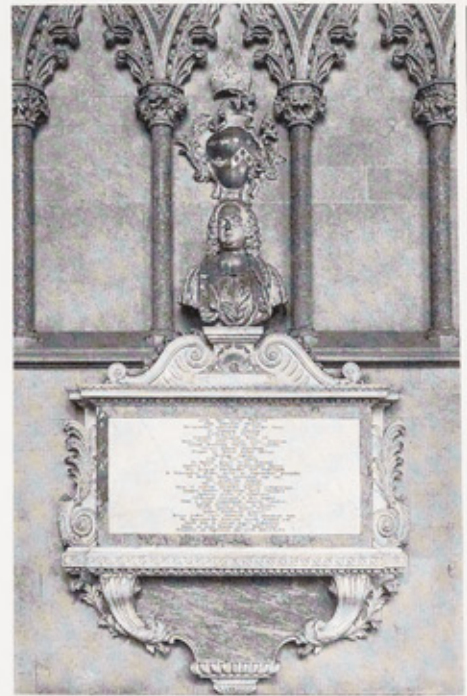


FIG. 11 Monument to Bishop Robert Butts (d. 1747). By Sir Henry Cheere, Ely Cathedral.

47. It is mentioned in connection with permission to erect the adjacent monument to Richard Kane in the Dean and Chapter Minutes for 1739.

48. J. Gibbs, *A Book of Architecture*, 1728, pl. 123. For Rysbrack's adaptations of these designs see K. Eustace, *op. cit.*, cat. nos. 11, 33–34.

49. Cf. Michael van der Voort's monument to Jan-Antoon Tucher in the Jakobskerk, Antwerp, illus. in M. E. Tralbaut *De Antwerpse 'Meester constbeld thouwer'*, Michiel van der Voort de Oude, Antwerp, 1950, pl. 96.

50. A Cheere design (V&A 8933.35) uses incurving brackets to enclose a pair of cherub's heads.

characteristic flattened volute socle) and a delicately ornamented urn and sarcophagus with floral swags. These features, together with the brightly coloured, contrasting marbles, are combined to transform a traditional monument pattern into a richly decorative, if not strictly rococo, composition that was one of Cheere's most distinctive contributions to English sculpture.

The large number of Cheere's surviving monuments and the still somewhat approximate chronology of their development make it difficult to define clearly his role or to assess properly his importance. Trained in a well-established native tradition, that was to some extent threatened by the innovations of immigrant sculptors, Cheere showed himself responsive to at least some aspects of the new style being evolved in St Martin's Lane, a development in which he himself may have played a modest but distinctive part. His Westminster connections gave him the opportunity to translate certain conventional forms into a more decorative, if not wholly rococo, idiom. But above all his background, organizational ability and sound business sense apparently allowed him to run a large workshop that produced for patrons throughout England chimney-pieces and small wall monuments in which the more extreme qualities of the rococo decorative style were tempered to suit more modest pockets. Cheere's activity in this area of mass-production may be one reason why Vertue did not apparently consider him an artist in the way that he regarded Rysbrack, or Roubiliac. Perhaps the dependence of 20th-century art historians on Vertue's opinions has meant that the contribution made by Henry Cheere to mid-18th century English sculpture has received rather less than its due.