THE KENDAL TOWN HALL SKETCHBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The Kendal Sketchbook is the most important source we have for tracing George Romney's development as an artist after he left Kendal in 1762 and moved to London.[1] The sketchbook was unquestionably regarded by Romney himself as a valuable record of his early years in London and gradually became a treasured heirloom that, despite all vicissitudes, has come down to us.

There are upwards of 625 drawings in the Kendal Sketchbook. The number is inexact because some drawings are so faint as to be virtually indecipherable, and in other cases, a judgment call is needed to decide whether in a given instance one is dealing with a single drawing or two. Nearly all the drawings use graphite as a medium, though black chalk, brown ink, and red chalk are employed to a limited extent. The orientation of drawings on the page is varied at the artist's whim.

Around a third of the drawings can be classified as compositions for history paintings, regarded in the 18th century as the highest genre of academic art. This category was broad, encompassing both direct history as well as biblical, mythological, literary, and allegorical themes. Given Romney's keen desire to excel as a history painter, it is not surprising that the number of drawings for subject pictures, i.e. history paintings, is roughly double the number of portrait studies. Some subjects, like *Perseus Freeing Andromeda*, are treated in a multitude of drawings; others, like *Romeo and Juliet in the Tomb*, in only one or two.

A few of the portrait studies in the sketchbook are small thumbnail sketches, often set off within boundary lines and darkly shaded. Often the entire picture plane is filled in. Some of the thumbnails can be connected to specific portraits. Another group of around twenty drawings can be tied to Romney's group portrait of *The Warren Family*. A much larger group, depicting two females, may or may not, in individual cases, be tied to *Two Sisters, half length*, a painting Romney exhibited in 1767. A small number of drawings can plausibly be tied to other portraits.

Around thirty per cent of the drawings are figure studies. These may be connected variously to subject ideas, portrait studies, or genre subjects. A few are altogether too faint to be interpreted with any confidence. Some compositions comprising figures with attributes, a woman with a shepherd's crook, for example, which might appear to depict literary subjects, may instead be allegorical portraits. It can sometimes be difficult to decide which.

Around ten percent of the drawings are most likely copies from sculpture, Old Master paintings, or prints. Several of these are landscapes. A few drawings present themselves as life studies. Lastly, several chance phrases and numbers in Romney's hand appear in the sketchbook.

The Kendal Sketchbook was in use roughly between 1763 and 1770/71. It will at times prove to be a confusing guide for one attempting to track the artist as he navigates the rutted streets and narrow alleys of London en route to artistic success. Romney is an elusive quarry, given to scattering false clues through random juxtapositions. This is made abundantly clear on page 14 of the sketchbook, where drawings for the artist's earliest exhibited painting, *The Death of General Wolfe* (1763), are placed next to drawings for *Melancholy*, a painting Romney exhibited much later (1770).[2] Marooned amidst a chaotic sea of unrelated sketches, these orphaned drawings frustrate as much as they intrigue us. The seven-year gap between the paintings counts for nothing in the artist's sequencing of his drawings. There is no rationale to explain why these should be together unless, in a wry moment of self reflection, the artist wanted to see in front of him the way his style had evolved over a few short years. We will come to see that Romney's placement of drawings rarely matches their chronology.

Further confusing the viewer, the artist often makes abrupt changes of direction. For example, another drawing for *The Death of General Wolfe*, also on page 14, shows the slumping figure of a man in 18th C. dress (Wolfe), propped up by two other figures. On page 15, this figure changes abruptly into a heavy set woman supported by two additional figures, with a third figure exiting at the right. These figures have now retreated into an entirely different narrative. Another quicksilver transformation occurs on page 13, where a portrait study of a standing male in 18th C. dress morphs on the same page into a helmeted Roman raising a dagger.

The unruly mass of material in the Kendal Sketchbook undermines an easy understanding of the artist's aims and methods. Nevertheless, certain resources are at hand: Archives can be combed. Sources of influence can be traced. Drawings can be connected to exhibited works of known date and to other sketchbooks that can be securely dated. While we cannot hope to state unequivocally what every drawing depicts, when and where a particular drawing was made, or why a subject may have appealed to the artist, we can nevertheless attempt to make

connections amongst drawings and to establish some useful parameters that will enable a reader to proceed more sure-footedly in examining the Kendal Sketchbook.

After raising funds through a lottery that disposed of twenty of his paintings, Romney departed Kendal for London, arriving on March 21, 1762. His first lodgings were in Dove Court, and by the beginning of August he was occupying rooms in Bearbinder's Lane, near the Mansion House. There he was mainly preoccupied with painting *The Death of General Wolfe*, a highly innovative work in that it focused on an event from recent history and clothed the protagonists in contemporary dress.[3] The painting was controversial when it was exhibited at the Free Society of Artists in the spring of 1763, along with a scene from *King Lear*. These were the first two paintings the artist sent for public exhibition in London. Romney was initially awarded fifty guineas when *The Death of General Wolfe* won the second prize for history painting, which must have deeply gratified the artist. Nevertheless, the award was subsequently rescinded although Romney was given a consolation prize of twenty-five guineas instead.[4]

Composition drawings and figure studies for *The Death of General Wolfe* occur on pages 14-15 of the Kendal Sketchbook. A drawing marked off by lines at the bottom right on page 15 is in general accord with a contemporary description of the painting, in that the general

> "is represented leaning against & supported (by) two Officers who Express great Concern, the Blood appears trickling from the Wound in his Wrist & from that in his Breast agt. which one of the Officers holds his Hand a third Officer is coming to the Genl. (to) inform him the French give way & appears greatly struck with Surprise."[5]

The composition drawing in question differs from a sketchier drawing to the left of it, which changes the poses of the figures to either side of the stricken general. This indicates that the artist was trying out various figural arrangements for his composition, the design for which is thus far unresolved. The sketchiness of the second drawing confirms this, as do the three figure studies upside down on the page presumably showing the General lying prone. In other words, Romney was evolving his ideas as he sketched. This precludes the possibility that the drawings were placed in the sketchbook long after the painting was completed as a record of its final appearance.

On page 14, in reverse, is a depiction of the fallen Wolfe that is more carefully modeled than the figure on page 15; one of the general's companions is also lightly indicated. Another drawing on page 14 depicts a strongly modeled Wolfe slumping between two additional figures. Closely related in technique to the study above it and presenting the general similarly clothed, this figure's rather ungainly pose would no doubt have been quickly disregarded by Romney for providing a less apt arrangement of the figures. Yet surely these cannot be all the drawings that Romney made for such an important work as *The Death of General Wolfe*. In keeping with his common practice, Romney would have produced a multitude of studies on this subject. We are left to wonder where any additional preparatory studies might be. They, as well as the painting itself, have yet to come to light.[6]

By late 1763, Romney was renting a larger studio near the Mews Gate, Charing Cross, a desirable location because of its closeness to the exhibition space in Spring Gardens. In that location Romney could also patronize the artists' academy in Saint Martin's Lane, likewise

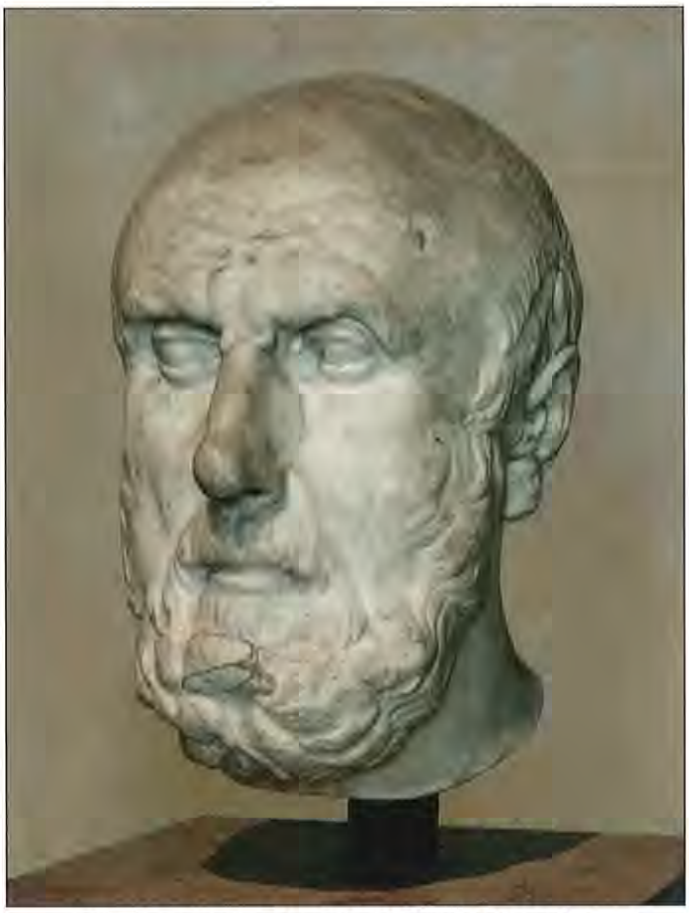

Plate 1. Portrait of the Stoic Philosopher, Chrysippus, Roman, 2nd C. AD (Paris, Louvre, Inv. No. MR 529)

nearby.[7] As the Kendal Sketchbook indicates, Romney also availed himself of the opportunity to draw from casts at the Duke of Richmond's gallery of casts, located in the garden of Richmond House in Privy Garden, Whitehall.[8] A large drawing in black chalk on page 1 of the sketchbook depicts the 3rd C. BC Greek Stoic philosopher Chrysippus. (Plate 1) Romney's drawing from the cast renders the philosopher's distinctive features of balding pate and prominent nose although in the drawing Chrysippus wears a somewhat fuller beard.[9] The artist's carefully shaded, sensitively detailed drawing bespeaks a very close concentration on the motif. (The same close concentration is exhibited in drawings of a hand and a tiny ball that appear above Chrysippus' head.)

Romney's *Chrysippus* drawing demonstrates vividly the resources the artist took advantage of early on in London in order to perfect his art. Corroboration for the assumption that this drawing was made at the Duke of Richmond's gallery rather than having been drawn from a plaster cast Romney himself owned[10] is given by the fact that a very similar head is depicted in John Hamilton Mortimer's *Self Portrait with Joseph Wilton and a Student* (Plate 2), which dates from the mid-1760's.[11] The

Plate 2. John Hamilton Mortimer, *John Hamilton Mortimer, A.R.A with Joseph Wilton, R.A., and a Student,* Oil on Canvas (Royal Academy of Arts, London)

Plate 3. *Elizabeth, Lady Blunt*, Oil on Canvas ((Houston, Museum of Fine Arts, The Rienzi collection, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harris Masterson III)

setting for this painting is clearly the Richmond gallery since Joseph Wilton, who appears in the center of the painting, was its director.

The Kendal Sketchbook provides only limited evidence of Romney's activities at the Duke of Richmond's cast gallery,[12] and the artist's close study of the *Chrysippus* sculpture seems to have been pragmatically directed towards a specific need since it soon surfaces in his paintings. It appears in Romney's *Elizabeth, Lady Blunt* (Plate 3), which has been dated to the latter half of 1764.[13] The classical head in the portrait has the same features as those seen in the drawing of the Chrysippus on page 1, including the unusual beard, which curls inwards towards the center of the chin. Such classical trappings as these were part and parcel of portraits in the Grand Manner as popularized by Sir Joshua Reynolds. By adopting such props Romney indicates he was highly aware of current artistic trends in the capital.

A study for the portrait of Lady Blunt can be seen in a thumbnail drawing on page 24 at the bottom of the page. Lady Blunt's hairstyle and oval face are in evidence,

and her pose is rendered accurately. As in the painting, her right elbow rests atop a classical head and her left arm hangs down at her side. The staging of the drawing differs somewhat from that of the portrait, however. Instead of in a landscape setting, the sitter is placed in an interior amidst voluminous drapes from which an obtrusive tasseled cord hangs down. The sash in the painting, lightly held in sitter's left hand, is absent in the drawing[14], and a dark, crossed-through form (perhaps a small sculpture) replaces the rolled up scroll seen atop the plinth.

The drawing of Lady Blunt is a one-off. It is not part of a series of drawings made by the artist in order to work out the details of his composition. While it is true that another drawing upside down at the top of this same page (page 24) echoes to an extent, the pose of Lady Blunt below it, it also signals a scattered attention span on Romney's part since, on the very next page (page 25), a figure in the same pose has now become a person taking part in a narrative.[15]

Such densely shaded, fully worked up portrait studies of individual females punctuate the Kendal Sketchbook like raisins in a pudding, appearing a number of times throughout the volume. Earnest and static, they patiently aim to record specific portraits. Sometimes, as with *Elizabeth, Lady Blunt*, connections can be made between these thumbnails and finished works. *Mrs. Wilbraham Bootle* (Plate 4) provides another example. Completed in 1764, this is most likely the portrait Romney exhibited in April of that year at the Society for the Encouragement of Arts. It was the first time he had exhibited a portrait in London. The sitter is depicted wearing a soft, unshaped, low-cut gown, crossing over the breast, a gown similar to that of *Lady Blunt*. This represents a sort of generalized apparel in service to a timeless ideal, rather than a miring of the sitter in time-limiting contemporary dress. A lavish cape with ermine trim is thrown over the gown. A thumbnail sketch on page 30, even smaller than the drawing of Lady Blunt on page 24, reflects Mrs. Bootle's pose with some accuracy. Yet, once again, details in the drawing vary from those in the portrait. In the drawing, the hounds, if they are hounds, below the sitter's right hand, are unreadable. Though a gap in the sitter's cape at the waistline may indicate a bent arm, the arm does not cross over the waist as in the painting. Finally the wall to the right of the sitter has a pronounced curve, and the ornamental vase atop the wall is placed higher than in the painting.[16]

Both of the drawings discussed above can be tied with

Plate 4. *Mrs. Wilbraham Bootle,* Oil on Canvas (Private Collection, Switzerland)

confidence to specific portraits. Yet they do not seem to have been intended as a sort of *liber veritatis* i.e "book of truth" record since they do not mirror their prototype with complete fidelity. Romney appears to have been satisfied to use his thumbnails to provide a rough approximation of completed portraits while also preserving them as a convenient store of reliable poses, costumes, and attributes to be usefully employed again in future.

By late summer of 1764, Romney had amassed sufficient funds to enable him to take a trip to France with his childhood friend, Thomas Greene.[17] The pair left London on August 30th for a six-week trip, arriving in Paris on September 8th. After several weeks in Paris, they eventually returned to London on October 11th. It is within the context of that journey that we should examine drawings that come next in the sketchbook.

Drawings of flying figures on pages 3 and 4 introduce us to a subject seen with clarity in a more detailed drawing at the top of page 5. In this drawing, a bearded man in a voluminous robe is being lifted into the sky by winged

angels and floating putti. This singular image, shown *di sotto in su*, appears only once in the sketchbook. The *di sotto in su*, or "from below upward" format is typical for ceiling paintings in decorative cycles within architectural interiors. It is a highly unusual subject for Romney to have concerned himself with since it is hard to imagine he saw any possibility of being hired as a decorative painter.[18] The better known decorative cycles then on view in London, Rubens' Banqueting Hall ceiling in Whitehall or Thornhill's decorations at Greenwich, would not seem to have been the source for this unusual image. It is more likely that Romney was inspired by panel paintings with apotheosis scenes that he saw in Paris, and it is to be presumed that he aspired to produce a large panel painting like these rather than decorations for an architectural interior.

While in Paris, Romney and Greene had gone twice to the Luxembourg Palace, where they saw the *Medici Cycle* by Rubens.[19] Rubens' depiction of the *Apotheosis of Henry IV* (Plate 5) must surely have impressed Romney in its use of apotheosis imagery to glorify a secular figure. Yet the lumbering, muscular figures raising the king aloft did not suit Romney's fancy, and he is more likely to have been influenced by two other paintings he saw in the

Plate 5. Peter Paul Rubens *The Apotheosis of Henry IV and the Proclamation of the Regency of Marie de Medicis on May 14, 1610,* 1623-25, [detail], Oil on Canvas (Paris, Louvre, Inv. No. 1779)

Plate 6. Domenico Zampieri, known as Domenichino, *St. Paul Being Borne Aloft,* c. 1606-08, Painting on Copper (Paris, Louvre, Inv. No. 792)

French capital: Domenichino's *Saint Paul Being Borne Aloft* (Plate 6) and Eustache Le Sueur's *St. Bruno is Carried Up to Heaven* (Plate 7). Romney and Greene had twice visited both the Royal Collections, which contained the Domenichino painting, and the cloister of the Chartreux, a Carthusian monastery in Paris, which at that time possessed the Le Sueur painting.[20] Both paintings, with their winged angels and fluttering putti, find echoes in Romney's drawing.

After Romney's return to London, the images he had seen in Paris may well have inspired him to conceive a new grand project, as revolutionary in its way as his *The Death of General Wolfe* had been in 1763. In the *Wolfe* painting, Romney had demonstrated his ability to think in an original manner, initiating a topic that was new to history painting; now he could attempt to do the same again. Romney had a keen interest in Shakespeare, as he had already demonstrated in two paintings on subjects drawn from *King Lear*. He was also an avid theatergoer, having attended productions in both French

Plate 7. Eustache Le Sueur, *St. Bruno is Carried Up to Heaven,* c. 1645-48 (Paris, Louvre, Inv. No. 8046)

and Italian while in Paris and he continued to patronize theaters in London throughout his life.[21] The influence of Shakespearean drama is apparent in two fascinating drawings on pages 19 and 21 of the Kendal Sketchbook which depict a scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. Within the context of Romney's interest in Shakespeare, an idea may well have percolated in the artist's mind to honor the genius of that most illustrious poet in a painting. In making such an effort he would have been on the cusp of a new wave of bardolatry.

Samuel Johnson's edition of Shakespeare's plays was published in 1765, fortifying general interest in the poet, and David Garrick was finding his own celebrity in his signature Shakespearean roles, focusing increasing public attention on both the Bard and himself. A gathering tide of interest in Shakespeare's personal biography was to reach a crest in 1769, with Garrick's first Stratford "Jubilee," which, as one writer noted, put Stratford on the map "as a sort of secular pilgrimage site."[22] This was to be a period when "Shakespeare stopped being regarded as an increasingly popular and admirable dramatist, and became a god."[23] Once again, Romney was ahead of the pack--in his aspirations at least.

As Romney wandered the streets of London, he could scarcely have failed to notice the signboard adorning the publisher Jacob Tonson's premises in the Strand, an establishment known as "Shakespeare's Head." The shop signboard illustrated here (Plate 8) may well be the very one which adorned Tonson's shop.[24] The image is based on the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare, now in the National Portrait Gallery, London. Though speculative, it is interesting to wonder if the man in the sign, this high-browed, thin-faced, appealing man with ample hair and a pointed beard subliminally entered Romney's mind as he walked past Tonson's shop and become combined with recollections of the apotheosis scenes the artist had seen in Paris. The result could well have been a plan on Romney's part to honor Shakespeare with an apotheosis scene.

Plate 8. Anonymous, *Shakespeare Signboard,* Late 17th or early 18th C., Oil on mahogany panel, Oval (Washington, D.C., Folger Shakespeare Library)

Though Romney does not appear to have carried forward plans to paint a Shakespearean apotheosis, his drawing may nevertheless signal an interest that would be realized later in the artist's allegories celebrating the Bard. In the 1770's, after his return from Italy, Romney made a black chalk cartoon of *Nature unveiling herself to the Infant Shakespeare*. Later, in the 1790's, he contributed two Shakespearean allegorical paintings to the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery: *The Infant Shakespeare Attended by Nature and the Passions* and *Shakespeare Nursed by Comedy and Tragedy*.[25] In their echoes of religious worship, they can be viewed in the same context as apotheosis scenes. In Romney's later allegories, the infant Shakespeare is equated with the Christ child, attended by the worshipful acolytes gathered round him. Romney's designs were steeped in the ideals of the Enlightenment and were influenced by the poetry of Gray. At the same time, they were also inspired by the religious paintings of Correggio.[26] They represent highly original depictions of Shakespeare as an untutored natural genius, a sort of secular deity. The aegis for these later Shakespearean allegories may well go back to the innovative thinking Romney exhibited in his apotheosis drawing in the Kendal Sketchbook.

Plate 9. After Philipe Jacques de Loutherbourg, R.A., *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook*, Line-engraving, Published by John Thane, 20 January, 1794 (London, Royal Academy of Arts)

Romney's idea of using the apotheosis theme to honor Shakespeare was expressed within a few years by others. Thomas Banks' sculpture of *Shakespeare attended by Painting and Poetry*, a high-relief sculpture commissioned to adorn the exterior of Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery in Pall Mall, became commonly known as "The Apotheosis of Shakespeare." Somewhat later, an anonymous early 19th century painting of Shakespeare, now in the Folger Shakespeare Library, depicted the poet surrounded by clouds and with faint rays issuing from his head, a true apotheosis scene.[27] Artists were also to apply the apotheosis apparatus to other 18th century English heroes. In 1785, Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg used it in depicting Captain James Cook being lofted into the sky by a grateful Britannia accompanied by Fame blowing her trumpet.[28] (Plate 9) Amidst all the trumpery, Cook, giddy from the heights, looks down upon Kealakekua Bay in Hawaii, the locale of his murder during his third Pacific voyage.

Though Romney abandoned his own idea for an apotheosis of Shakespeare, the influence of various

Plate 10. Charles Le Brun, *The Repentant Magdalen*, 1655, Oil on Canvas (Paris, Louvre)

religious paintings he had seen in Paris continued to be felt. Indeed, the impact of one of these appeared shortly in a painting he placed on public exhibition in 1765, *A Lady's head, in the character of a saint, three-quarters*. Thomas Greene's journal records his and Romney's visit to the Church of the Carmelites in the Rue St. Jacques in Paris, where they saw in one of the chapels "Mary Magdalen repenting of her sins. . .as fine a picture as any in the world by Le Brun."[29] (Plate 10). In Charles Le Brun's painting, now in the Louvre, the Magdalen kneels amidst a pile of colorful draperies looking upwards towards heaven as she mourns the sins of her past life and seeks forgiveness. A carefully worked up drawing by Romney on page 8 in the Kendal sketchbook reflects a similar scene. As in Le Brun's painting, a figure with a similar rapt gaze looks upwards towards heaven as a focused illumination descends upon her from above. Several related drawings for this subject appear later in the sketchbook (see pages 10 and 30).

Questions about the influence Romney received from artistic sources (and, in most instances his transformation of those sources) come up time and again as one peruses the Kendal Sketchbook. A case in point concerns drawings on page 16. At the bottom of the page is a detailed drawing that clearly mirrors Titian's *Venus and Adonis*. The best-known version of this is the painting in the Prado Museum, which the artist painted on commission for Philip II of Spain in 1554. (Plate 11) The composition includes the figures of Venus and Adonis in the centre. The goddess desperately holds on to her lover as he strains to depart for the hunt, his dogs by his side. In the background Eros is asleep under a tree, reinforcing the underlying theme that, when duty calls, love must of necessity retire from the scene.

Plate 11. Titian, *Venus and Adonis,* 1554, Oil on Canvas (Madrid, Prado Museum, Ref. No. P00422)

Plate 12. Titian, *Venus and Adonis* c, 1560, Oil on Canvas (Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica)

Romney would not have known the Prado painting though he would have been familiar with a later version by Titian (Plate 12) which was then in the Orleans collection at the Palais-Royal in Paris, which Romney and Greene visited on both September 22nd and 24th. Greene describes the Palais-Royal paintings as "the finest collection of paintings of any in Europe, by the most eminent masters."[30] Though Romney was doubtless familiar with the Paris version of Titian's painting, he did not directly copy it since in that version Adonis wears a hunter's cap, a feature not present in Romney's drawing. Further, since the pose of Venus is reversed from that in the paintings, Romney must have been working from an engraving (see Plate 13). As would also be the case in an engraving, the dogs and ancillary figures in the background have changed sides. Yet the artist's copying from sources is rarely, if ever, exact, and he has taken liberties here.[31] Instead of the sleeping Eros, Romney has instead depicted two putti handling arrows.[32] In another departure from his source, rather than placing Adonis to either the right or the left of Venus, Romney has placed him directly above the goddess, with his left arm raised high above his head as he somewhat awkwardly grips his spear. In addition, Adonis' upper body

Plate 13. Titian (after) *Venus and Adonis*, Engraving

connects awkwardly to his legs, an aspect not concealed successfully by Venus' overlying body. Finally, Venus' legs below the knees have been altered in pose. Romney, in Emily Dickinson's words, aimed to tell "the truth but tell it slant."

Interestingly, another drawing on page 16, upside down directly above the *Venus and Adonis*, shows a seated figure whose upraised arm echoes that of Adonis. Obviously not representing Adonis, however, this figure contains echoes of a painting by Eustache Le Sueur, the artist whom Romney appears to have been the most responsive to while in Paris.[33] Le Sueur's *Terpsichore* (Plate 14), one of a series of paintings of the muses by that artist, now in the Louvre, was still in its original setting in the Hotel Lambert when Romney and Greene visited Paris. A number of drawings in the Kendal Sketchbook remind us of this painting (see also pages 19, 38, and 79.) The triangle held by Terpsichore's in Le Sueur's painting is not made explicit in this instance, and the artist may have intended to adapt the image to a different theme (note the addition of a putto). However, we can sense the influence of Le Sueur's female type, most particularly in the drawing on page 38: ample hair framing an oval face and graceful draperies describing a buxom body beneath. Though not evident in these drawings, Le Sueur's rich warmth of coloring also made a strong impact on Romney.

Influenced as he was by Titian and Le Sueur, Romney at the same time continually transformed his sources even as he learned from them. An instance of this appears immediately when one turns from page 16 to page 17 in the sketchbook. We see once again a figure reflecting the pose of Titian's Venus, yet here a leaner figure has been transfused with greater vigor and energy. Reversed from the way it appears on page 16, the figure twists about with dynamic force, the repeated lines on its back stressing the muscular tension of this charged position as the figure reaches towards the lightly indicated standing figure to the right. In another study on the page, the figure is

Plate 14. Eustache Le Sueur, *Terpsichore*, 1652-55 (Paris, Louvre, Inv. No. 8060)

splayed out along its support, reaching with both arms to attempt to restrain the second figure. Titian's Venus, epitomizing feminine amplitude and grace, has been internalized by Romney to emerge infused with a new dynamism. Romney no doubt found Titian's iconic nudes useful in the self-tutorials he engaged in to increase his skill in representing the female form. These sessions of self-instruction were necessary in no small part because the artist was never able to engage a live female nude model until living in Rome some years later.

Titian's *Venus* undergoes a particularly intriguing transformation in drawings on page 84. Here, in landscape orientation at the top of the page, Romney once again draws the Venus prototype, shown from the back and reaching upwards towards Adonis, who appears to hold a staff in his hand. Superimposed on the first drawing is a second, apparently on the same subject, in which the second figure is now shown more clearly. Meshing with this drawing, however, is one in which the Venus figure, viewed from the front in reverse, now has a different identity. The nude Venus has become instead the clothed Rinaldo reaching towards a mirror. This drawing, echoed in two additional drawings on page 84, depicts *Rinaldo and Armida in Armida's enchanted Garden*, a subject Romney derived from Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. It is a subject the artist treated a number of times in the Kendal Sketchbook (see note on cat. 22). Once again, the influence of Paris may have been decisive. Domenichino's painting of *Rinaldo and Armida* (Plate 15) had been acquired by Louis XIV in 1685, and thus was in the Royal Collections when Romney visited with Greene in 1764. Domenichino's painting reflects the moment in Tasso's saga of the Crusades when Rinaldo, having sought out Armida to beg her to reverse the spell she has put on his companions, holds up a mirror. As Armida looks at her reflection in the mirror, Rinaldo gazes at the sorceress's beautiful face, immediately falling in love. Like the painting, Romney's drawings effectively capture this seminal moment. In

Plate 15. Domenico Zampieri, known as Domenichino, *Rinaldo and Armida,* c 1617-21 (Paris, Louvre, Inv. No. 798)

Plate 16. Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, *Armida abandoned by Rinaldo*, 1642/45, Oil on Canvas (Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, Bequest of James Deering, 1925.701)

the drawing at the bottom of page 22, even Armida's reflection in the mirror is clearly visible.[34] In choosing to illustrate subjects from *Gerusalemme Liberata*, Romney was taking up a theme favored by many earlier artists[35] as well as reflecting a current trend: In 1763, Robert Hoole had published a new English translation of Tasso's epic, and various artists came to adopt the poem as a subject, among them Romney's contemporaries Benjamin West and Angelica Kauffmann.

On fifteen or more pages in the Kendal Sketchbook, Romney made approximately thirty-five drawings of *Rinaldo and Armida in Armida's enchanted Garden* (see 22, 23, 37, 42, 47-50, 63, 74, 84-89). A second subject from the poem, *Rinaldo abandoning Armida,* is represented by a lesser number of drawings, on nine pages (6, 20, 23, 24, 34, 75, 80, 81, and 93). Another artist who had painted the abandonment scene a number of times was Giambattista Tiepolo. Though Romney would not have known the particular Tiepolo painting shown here (Plate 16), he might have encountered other of the artist's paintings on that theme in London.[36] In any event, Romney's composition drawing on page 6 reflects, to an extent, Tiepolo's conception of the subject. In the episode in question, Rinaldo's companions, Carlo and Ubaldo, have persuaded the reluctant crusader to abandon Armida, his new-found love. Armida is left behind on the beach as Rinaldo and his companions head towards the boat that will take them out of reach of the sorceress's powers. While Tiepolo shows Armida pleading with her lover, Romney's drawings instead show her lying insensate on the ground after falling into her swoon.

There is very little development of either episode from *Gerusalemme Liberata* in drawings spread throughout the Kendal Sketchbook although Romney is marginally more innovative with the *Garden* scene than with the *Abandonment* episode. The artist's basic

composition stays the same in both though there is some experimentation with poses. Since there are so many drawings related to Tasso's poem, it is obvious that episodes from *Gerusalemme Liberata* were of serious interest to Romney even though he does not seem to have begun a painting on either of them. In this, we gain a sense of how the sketchbook usually functioned: A capacious volume rather than a pocket sketchbook, the Kendal Sketchbook must have been kept near at hand in the artist's studio. One visualizes the artist snatching moments between sitters to sketch ideas that played in his mind. Such activity provided a rest from his toils, a form of recreation even. Aspiring as he did to reach the heights as a historical painter, Romney was continually musing about topics for subject paintings. Opening a page—any page—he would set down his ideas. Forced to spend his days shackled by "this cursed portrait painting," he could at least momentarily put down his paint and brushes to escape into "those delightful regions of imagination."[37]

Another literary subject Romney depicted in the Kendal Sketchbook is the myth of Perseus and Andromeda. As with *Gerusalemme Liberata*, he selected two episodes from the story to illustrate. In drawings depicting the first of these episodes, *Perseus Freeing Andromeda*, we sense once again the influence of art works the artist had seen in Paris. Pierre Puget's *Perseus and Andromeda*, completed in 1684 and now in the Louvre, was commissioned by Louis XIV for the gardens of Versailles. (Plate 17) Romney and Greene had spent many hours strolling through the gardens at Versailles. They had even hired a guide to accompany them as they viewed the various statues on the grounds.[38] Puget's sculpture depicts Andromeda chained to a rock by her father in order to appease a monster that was ravishing their land. She is in the process of being freed by the helmeted Perseus. A drawing by Romney at the bottom of page 53 accords with Puget's staging of the myth in that it shows both figures perched on a steep rocky base though Puget shows Andromeda's arms already loosened from her chains. Romney's drawing is part of an extended series on this theme in the Kendal Sketchbook. The drawings all run together, with but one page interruption, between pages 50 and 63. Since the drawings were set down so close together, they may well represent an instance of the artist's executing many drawings on a single theme in one or more extended sessions. This is highly unusual. It is far more common in the Kendal Sketchbook for Romney to flit randomly from one page to another. Such habits mean that the sequencing of drawings in the sketchbook is but rarely a guide to their chronology.

Plate 17. Pierre Puget, Perseus and Andromeda , 1678-84 (Paris, Louvre, Inv. No. M.R. 2076)

In his drawings for *Perseus Freeing Andromeda*, Romney shifts the position of Perseus from one side to another and varies the poses of both major figures, but, overall, the staging of the composition remains the same. In his most detailed depiction of the composition, on page 57, we see that additional figures have been added. The bearded man at the right wearing a crown is presumably King Cepheus, Andromeda's grateful father, accompanied by one of his attendants. A similar crowned king appears in several other drawings in the Kendal Sketchbook (see 35-37). This small group of drawings may very likely comprise a second episode from the Perseus and Andromeda myth: The confrontation of King Cepheus and Queen Cassiopeia with Phineus, the man who had

been Andromeda's fiancé before Perseus rescued the heroine and subsequently married her.

The impact of Romney's trip to Paris has been seen in numerous drawings thus far, and many other drawings appear to reflect this influence as well (see, for example, pages 2, 45, 46, 64, 78, 83, and 86). This raises the question of whether or not Romney physically carried the sketchbook with him to France, however cumbersome it may have been to transport. We do know that it accompanied him to the Duke of Richmond's gallery of casts and he may have also taken it to the north (see below). It is not entirely implausible that he may also have taken it to Paris. It's true that in a letter from France, Romney informed his brother Peter that "the vast collections I see every day, make me feel no inclination either for designing or writing at present,"[39] yet his mind was reeling with a tumult of new impressions, and it must have been important for him to fix them in his mind. He may not have executed individual drawings *avant le motif*, but, instead, at his inn. Perhaps he sketched when it rained and he and Greene didn't go out, or when Greene spent time on his own walking the whole of Paris.[40] All in all, reading between Greene's lines, Romney had plenty of time when he could have amused himself by sketching. In any event, Romney's Paris drawings are approximations, not precise copies of works of art. They comprise recollections of works that had impressed the artist and which he wanted to record for future inspiration. Whether the drawings were done in Paris or back in London after his return, the vivid impressions that were still fresh in his mind would continue to provide inspiration for him.[41]

Romney's drawing cycles depicting *Rinaldo and Armida* and *Perseus and Andromeda* stress the importance for him of painting subjects from literature and myth, both of them categories under the banner of history painting. However, Romney had to earn his daily bread by toiling in the far more secure realm of portrait painting. In late 1765, to generate income (and also to see the wife and family he had left behind in Kendal), Romney made a trip north. While there he painted a number of portraits, chiefly in Lancaster. Romney's brother Peter, also an artist, was living in Lancaster at the time, and it was here the artist began a portrait of Peter and another brother, James. Finished after Romney's return to London, this double portrait was exhibited in 1766, under the title *A Conversation*.

Much of Romney's attention during 1766 was focused on planning his portrait of *Two Sisters, half length*, which he exhibited at the Free Society of Artists in the spring of 1767. It was the only painting he exhibited that year. The painting is now lost although a record of it is presumably preserved in the mezzotint that Robert Dunkarton exhibited three years later, in 1770. In Dunkarton's engraving, the portrait is entitled *Sisters Contemplating on Mortality* (Plate 18).

A considerable number of drawings in the Kendal Sketchbook are related to this commission. The project was clearly much on the artist's mind while the sketchbook was in use since, in the most generous assessment, upwards of fifty individual drawings on twenty-two pages may represent this subject. The defining characteristic is the presence of two females together, in portrait staging. Interestingly, most of the

Plate 18. ***Sisters Contemplating on Mortality,*** **engraving by Robert Dunkarton after George Romney, published by J. Boydell, 20 September 1770 (London, British Museum)**

related drawings depict full-length figures rather than the half-length figures adopted in the completed painting. While one could argue that some of the drawings might relate to different portraits altogether, it seems unlikely

that Romney would have had commissions for more than one female double portrait at the same time. A number of drawings show the two females walking, descending stairs, or sitting. Featured in some are props associated with mortality.[42] (Mortality, as Robyn Asleson has demonstrated, was an important underlying theme for Romney in the 1760's and early 1770's.)[43] That Romney should have produced such a large number of drawings for this commission is consistent with John Romney's observation that:

> It was a regular custom with Mr. Romney to make sketches for his principal works; and as most of his sketch books have been preserved, every picture of importance that he has painted, and many that he intended, may be traced in them almost in chronological order. Upon some occasions, so many different modes of representing the same subject presented themselves to his fancy, that he made several studies either varied in part or in the whole, and executed in a slight, bold, and rapid manner, just sufficient to convey the ideas; and from these he afterwards, made his selection.[44]

The first drawing in the sketchbook that may be tied to the Dunkarton engraving, appears on page 23. Two females are shown striding forward. The flung back arm of the figure to the left echoes that of one of the figures in Dunkarton's engraving (where the figure is reversed, as would happen in a print). Like the woman in the engraving, the figure wears an elbow-length gown. Though full-length, these figures bear a fairly close resemblance to the figures in the engraving. (For additional, somewhat varied, drawings of two females standing together, striding forth, or descending stairs, see pages 39, 43, 52, 63, 72, 73, 75, 77, 88, 89, 91, 100, and 102.)[45] In only one drawing amongst this group, on page 63, are the figures presented in a composition marked off with lines and given a spatial context. The girls' dark hairstyles are indicated, and a delicate chiaroscuro gives their figures three-dimensional form. A second drawing, on page 72, while it shows the figures within a rectangular format, does not make use of shading.[46]

Among the drawings that include props related to mortality is one on page 43, in which two females stand before a sculpted pedestal topped by an urn. An urn can either evoke the cinerary urns used in the classical period or be symbolic of the soul; in either case urns allude to mortality. Another sculpted monument topped by an urn is seen in a rather detailed drawing at the bottom of page 47.[47] The urn and the impressive monument on which it sits lend grandeur as well as a note of seriousness to the scene. Such devices were appropriate to portraits in the Grand Manner as popularized by Sir Joshua Reynolds. It was an approach that aimed to ally the portrait to the elevated ideas of history painting. Further, Romney's two figures, posed with insouciant ease and nonchalance amidst a rustle of silks and satins, convey an elegance that is also appropriate to the Grand Manner.

The figures in the drawing just alluded to are part of a group of drawings that show the two females seated rather than standing. One of these drawings, on page 45, reverses the position of the two seated females as seen on page 47. The figure on the left on page 47 is now at the right, changing places with the grave monument. An urn, the mortality prop, has now been placed at the center of the composition, an effect that cannot be missed. A less detailed drawing of this same composition is seen on page 21.

In other of Romney's drawings incorporating urns as symbols of mortality, the ground begins to shift as additional props are added to the composition. On page 43 a female figure sits with her arm atop an urn as in the drawing on page 45, discussed above. The cracked stone slab she sits on further alludes to deterioration and decay, i.e. mortality. Here, however, the second female holds a staff. The figure with a staff also appears in two drawings on page 7.[48] (Additional related drawings include drawings on pages 46, 47, 51, 52, and 104.) The composition at this point is obviously evolving thematically.

Portrait studies of two females that contain altogether different props are found on pages 40 and 64. In these drawings, one of the figures plays a stringed instrument while the other is shown with an open book.[49] An open book can find proper place within a painting stressing contemplation on mortality. For example, the so-called *Book of Life* records each person's deeds, and those whose names are written within it will have eternal life. Here, however, any certainty that the drawing reflects the mortality theme begins to break down. The presence of a book and a musical instrument can suggest, instead, that the theme is the arts, with allusions to poetry (the book) and music (the musical instrument). In typical fashion, Romney has created a fluid situation in which, as his ideas play across the page, he constantly changes their focus. His figures change position and adopt different attributes; a theme related to death segues into a celebration of the arts. The portrait itself may become transformed into a literary subject. That could be the case on page 52, in a drawing of two women in a landscape.

One holds a staff while the other sits in profile, thus ignoring the viewer. Here, the line between portrait and literary subject has become very thin.

In addition to the figural studies in the Kendal Sketchbook that are connected to *Sisters Contemplating on Mortality*, several drawings of dancing figures may also be related to this painting. At the upper right side in the Dunkarton mezzotint is a bacchanalian relief depicting dancers caught up in a frenzy of activity. Similar dancers appear in drawings on pages 17, 72, and 76 in the Kendal Sketchbook. Indeed, on page 72, the dancers appear on the same page as probable portrait studies for *Sisters Contemplating on Mortality*.[50]

If most of the double portrait drawings discussed above do have a connection to *Sisters Contemplating on Mortality*, the implication is that the Kendal Sketchbook was in concentrated use during 1766 and into 1767. In addition, drawings for the Sisters' painting in The Kendal Sketchbook are presumably earlier than those from one or more disassembled sketchbooks, now dispersed among various collections, which more closely adhere to the composition of *Sisters Contempating on Mortality* as it was eventually realized.[51]

Plate 19. ***Mrs. Edward Salisbury and Daughter,*** **c. 1767 Oil on Canvas (Owens Art Gallery, Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada)**

In the late summer of 1767, Romney returned to the North, where he executed a number of portraits, largely in Lancaster. One of the portraits presumably painted at this time is *Mrs. Edward Salisbury and Daughter* (Plate 19). The sitters are Mary (nee Sandys) and her three-year-old daughter Jane.[52] Four studies related to this portrait are on page 29 in the Kendal Sketchbook. All show a small child standing or seated on a plinth alongside her mother. Missing is a clear depiction of the basket of fruit which the child holds in the painting, but otherwise the staging is very similar. There can be little doubt that these drawings are preliminary ideas for this portrait. Two studies for different portraits also appear on this page, as well as two small sketches of a seated nude. These, along with a landscape featuring a three-arched stone bridge, show how scattered the artist's thoughts often were as he filled a page with drawings. This landscape, one of very few in the sketchbook, gives the appearance of having been done *avant le motif.* There were several three-arched bridges in Cumbria that could have provided the focal point of such a view as this (though the boat seems rather large for this locale); perhaps we see here a response to the beautiful landscapes Romney had known in his youth and to which he had briefly returned.

John Romney observed that his father painted so many portraits while in the north in 1767 that "he was obliged to take several with him to finish in London."[53] One of these portraits is *The Warren Family* (Plate 20)[54] Romney's new premises in Great Newport Street, to which he moved upon returning from the north, allowed him ample space to work with ease on this large group portrait. With other portraits also consuming his time, it would take the artist over a year to complete the Warren portrait.

At least fifteen studies for *The Warren Family* appear on six widely dispersed pages of the Kendal Sketchbook. The drawings begin on page five and end on page 96,[55] this indicating that the artist turned sporadically to theme rather than engaging with it in a concentrated run. In the first six drawings (on pages 5, 7, and 18), one of the adults is seated as the other stands. In three instances it is Sir George who stands; in three instances his wife. The child, always standing, moves variously from the center, to the left, to the right. The next drawing, on page 20, is made more emphatic by dark shading and the addition of a landscape background and a sculpted monument to the right. It depicts a seated Sir George, firmly planted in the

Plate 20. *The Warren Family,* 1769, Oil on Canvas (Private collection, UK)

center. His daughter is at the left while his wife stands at the right. Two more lightly sketched studies at the bottom of the page, however, show both adults standing. All of these give the impression that Romney is actively pursuing alternatives in his figural arrangements.

Work on *The Warren Family* was interrupted for many pages at this point. When drawings resume later in the volume, on page 82, a drawing at the bottom of the page creates an interesting variant in that both adults are depicted standing. Another drawing on the page, however, which is fully worked up and heavily shaded, indicates that the final arrangement of the painting has now been arrived at. In this drawing Sir George stands at the rear, pointing towards the Colosseum. Lady Warren is seated in the center, and daughter Elizabeth stands to the right. A low pedestal in the left foreground stands in for the silhouetted sculpture-topped urn that appears in the painting. Minor adjustments are made in the drawing on page 96; Lady Warren's arm is now extended down her side rather than crossing at her waist, and Sir George's sash no longer crosses his chest. The Warren drawings are unusual in that they present a rare, if not unique, instance within the sketchbook where Romney worked sequentially through the volume to develop a solution for a pictorial problem, methodically trying out different patterns until he arrived at the optimum choice.[56]

Romney completed *The Warren Family* in time to place it on exhibition in May, 1769, at the Free Society of Artists. One year earlier he had shown the well-received *Leigh Family*, another large, complex portrait, which once again had made abundantly clear Romney's aspirations as a portraitist in the Grand Manner. Yet, in spite of the artist's active and growing portrait practice, he still devoted much attention to exploring ideas for historical paintings. By comparing drawings in The Kendal Sketchbook to drawings in other sketchbooks known to overlap in date, we can identify additional subjects and gain a fuller understanding of the artist's intent.

Several drawings are of particular interest because of connections they have to drawings in other intact sketchbooks that date from between c. 1768--1771. Among these are drawings on pages 28, 32, 38-40, 40, 53, and 78 depicting a man in a helmet grasping a woman. The woman struggles against the man or, alternatively, slumps lifeless in his arms. The subject is presumably *Tarquin and Lucretia*.[57] Lucretia, a legendary figure in Roman history was raped by Tarquin, a son of the king of Rome. Following the rape, Lucretia stabbed herself to death with a dagger. This led to the expulsion of the Tarquinii from Rome and the establishment of the Roman Repubic. A drawing on page 53 includes a faint suggestion of a dagger in Lucretia's hand. However, one must turn to Barrow Sketchbook No. 1, to see this made explicit and thus confirm the identification of the subject (Plate 21)[58] The Barrow sheet also includes a detailed facial study of the female as well as two slight line drawings of the male's face. A facial study of the male on page 40 of the Kendal Sketchbook renders his features with more clarity and detail. Thus the drawings complement one another and comparison of the two increases our understanding of Romney's treatment of his subject.

Another subject that benefits from comparison with drawings in other intact sketchbooks is *The Accusation of Susannah*. Romney explored this subject in many drawings both during this early period and later in his career although there are but a few drawings for it in

Plate 21. ***Tarquin and Lucretia*****, Barrow Sketchbook No. 1 (Cumbria Record Office & Local Library, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria. Inv. No. Z-241, page 77).**

the Kendal Sketchbook.[59] These must be considered together and then compared with a drawing in Courtauld Sketchbook No. 1 in order to understand Romney's intended composition.[60] On page 25, a woman with slightly bowed head advances slowly, followed by other figures. On pages 31 and 99 focus is given to two bearded old men, Susannah's accusers, who are faintly suggested to the right in the previous drawing. The lightly sketched male seated to the left in drawings on pages 25 and 31 is paralleled by a seated figure in a drawing in Courtauld Sketchbook No. 1. (Plate 22) Here we have the full composition, in this instance showing the two old men in the center and Susannah to the right. Through examining all these drawings together we can gain an idea of how Romney developed his composition. Many additional drawings in the Courtauld sketchbook further explore the *Accusation of Susannah* in a variety of ways and thus add to our understanding.

The drawings we have been considering from the Barrow and Courtauld sketchbooks use the medium of pen and ink while those in the Kendal Sketchbook are almost entirely in graphite. It may well be that the latter were initial thoughts set down in Romney's studio in stolen moments between work on various portraits.

Plate 22. ***The Accusation of Susannah,*** **Courtauld Sketchbook No. 1 (Courtauld Institute of Art, London, Inv. No. D. 1952 RW 1848, page 25v)**

Subsequently, the small, portable sketchbooks the artist habitually carried around with him could then be used in periods of greater leisure, when the artist was free to produce an extended run of drawings on a subject, often using pen and ink.

The difference in medium has implications for Romney's drawing style. In the graphite drawing of *The Accusation of Susannah* on page 25, the figure of Susannah is dense with shading. A contrast of light and dark models the leg and gives the figure corporeal weight. Earthbound, the Kendal Susannah plods forward, bowed under the weight of her misery. By contrast, the Courtauld pen and ink Susannah seems light as air. Her elongated body is dematerialized, summarily presented by an unbroken arc sweeping from breast to feet. Freed from the tyranny of physical description, lines now form surface patterns.

Royal Academy Sketchbook No. 2, like the Barrow and Courtauld volumes, is a sketchbook that shares subjects with the Kendal Sketchbook.[61] One of these subjects is *Daphnis and Chloe*, derived from a romance by the Greek writer Longus. A composition on page 48 in the Kendal Sketchbook is probably an early drawing on the theme (with additional figure studies on page 49).[62] Amidst a bucolic landscape, a seated shepherdess twirls her distaff and spins her yarn while her companion plays his flute as his flock of sheep stand near him. While the Kendal volume has very few drawings that can be securely identified as *Daphnis and Chloe*, the Royal Academy

Plate 23. *Daphnis and Chloe,* Royal Academy Sketchbook No. 2 (Royal Academy of Arts, London, Inv. No. 781B, 4v, 5)

sketchbook has a considerable number. Two of these are of particular interest in that contrasting media share verso and recto of the same opening, (Plate 23) Pen and ink are used on the left, and graphite on the right. Side by side comparison can demonstrate clearly how medium affects style.

Similar forms mark both drawings, i.e. roundish shapes behind Chloe's buttocks, as well as the abbreviated "V" to indicate her right forearm, which ends in a summary scoop suggesting a hand. However, there the similarities between the drawings end. Conversely, the differences between them are striking and numerous. In the graphite drawing, cross-hatching establishes spatial context in the background and creates a dark pool of shadow on Chloe's breast. The figure's neatly coiffed chignon is anchored in physical fact. A crisp outline encloses Chloe's arm, conveys the fullness of her body, and ends in a recognizable foot.

By contrast, in the ink drawing the surface becomes activated, freeing the artist from a dogged descriptiveness. Chloe's arm escapes its imprisoning outline. Her foot turns into a squiggle. Forms dissolve into a welter of curling lines racing pell-mell across the page, creating patterns that incorporate breasts, face, distaff, and all. The tidy chignon becomes a snarled web and Chloe's face disappears altogether. Done at roughly the same time, these two drawings share a few lingering formal similarities, while at the same time they contrast sharply because of their different media. An even greater contrast between drawings in different media can be seen by looking again at drawings on page 14 of the Kendal Sketchbook. Here, it will become apparent how considerably the artist's graphic technique evolved over the span of a few short years.

As noted earlier, page 14 contains drawings for both *The Death of General Wolfe* (1763) and for *Melancholy* (1770). (Plate 24) In the Wolfe drawings, the artist's chief aim is description. Carefully applied areas of shadow provide a spatial context for fully modeled forms. Three drawings on the page for *Melancholy* bring a sea change. Here, a sensitive, approximating line takes liberties with physical form. In a drawing of *Melancholy* (upside down) next to a slumping Wolfe, a single sweeping S-shaped line traces the contour of *Melancholy's* body from breast to hem. Repeated wide V-shapes make a pattern of the folds of drapery falling from the plinth. In these side by side drawings, the sober seriousness of 1763 gives way to the ease and grace of 1770. The stage is now set for the glorious deluge of Romney's delicate line and dramatic wash drawings of the 1770's, which will stress personal expression over the recording of physical fact.

Yet Romney never takes a direct path and can be known to double back. For example, near the end

Plate 24. ***Melancholy,*** **1770, Oil on Canvas (Private Collection, UK)**

of the sketchbook there is a throwback of sorts in a small graphite drawing (upside down) on page 102, which may possibly lay claim to being the last drawing chronologically in the sketchbook. A stately figure descends a stairway trailing a voluminous wrap behind her. This calls to mind the portrait of *Mrs. Henry Verelst* (Plate 25), which Romney began in the summer of 1771.[63] The drawing's sculptural modeling and sensitively handled illumination give the figure a monumental character despite the drawing's small size. In general bearing the figure is very close (in reverse) to that of the *Verelst* portrait though the figure's hairstyle is different, and she does not hold a rose in her hand. If one accepts this drawing as a study for *Mrs. Henry Verelst*, then 1771 provides the end date for the active use of the Kendal Sketchbook. Nonetheless, what may be the last drawing in the sketchbook chronologically does not appear on the last page of the volume. Romney habitually eschewed coherence in the arrangement of his sketches, and the location of a drawing within in the sketchbook is not germane to its date. Thus it is no surprise that, in coming to the very last page in the sketchbook, we are thrust back to its beginning. A profile head of the Greek philosopher Chrysippus on page 104 requires us to turn back to page 1, where we see a frontal view of the same classical cast. Surely both drawings must have been made at the same time at the Duke of Richmond's cast gallery despite the fact that they appear so far apart in the sketchbook. Their separation may have resulted from the simple expedient that it was easier for the artist to prop open his

Plate 25. ***Mrs.Henry Verelst,*** **Oil on Canvas (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Permanent Coll.)**

sketchbook at the beginning and at the end of the volume rather than in the middle while making such detailed drawings. In any case, we have come full circle.

While still back on page one, one should take note of jottings in the artist's hand. As is common, Romney's writing is difficult to decipher. The lines appear to read: "Mr. Daves/Gloster Street [unreadable]/of the/ Co[?] Joinson Collculla." One's mind races to make connections: A man named Thomas Davies kept a bookshop in London. It was in his shop that James Boswell first met Samuel Johnson, on May 16, 1763.[64] Colculla was a foe of Fingal, and both are characters in the Ossianic poems of James MacPherson, whose disputed tales of early Celtic history were first published in 1761 and 1763, close in time to Romney's arrival in London.[65] In line with his aspirations as a history painter and his keen interest, in particular, in British history, Romney was constantly on the lookout for promising subjects.[66] He did later take up Ossianic themes.[67] Is it possible he was drawn to Ossian this early in his career? Was there a chance encounter with Johnson at Davies' shop? To stem such speculation, one needs to step back and reconsider the text: Davies' shop was in Covent Garden. If Romney's allusion was to Old Gloucester Street, this is near Great Russell Street, not Covent Garden."Joinson;" and "Collculla" might possibly be meant as "Calcutta," with "t's" left uncrossed. We are no closer to an understanding of the text, yet at least a cautionary note has been sounded lest we head down a possible blind alley. Accessing Romney's world in the 1760s presents its challenges.

George Romney will continue to intrigue anyone interested in 18th C. British art. His graphic techniques are so widely varied, his subjects so cryptic and continually evolving, his transformation of his sources so fascinating, and his output so prodigious that he inspires continuing interest, if occasional confusion. However, amidst the astonishing wealth of material that has come down to us, there are gaps, particularly in connection with Romney's early years in London. Yet there is always hope that unknown caches of drawings may be found, thereby opening up new avenues of research. Even the elusive *The Death of General Wolfe* might conceivably resurface. Tracking Romney towards a full understanding of the srtist's early years may be impossible, but the chase is always exciting as we follow the artist into "those delightful regions of imagination."

Endnotes

[1] For information on Romney's early life in London, see David A. Cross, *A Striking Likeness: The Life of George Romney*, Ashgate, 2000, pp. 19-47.

[2] Romney exhibited two paintings, *Mirth* and *Melancholy*, in 1770 and an all-time high of six paintings in 1771. He continued to exhibit publicly until 1772, after which he ceased entirely. It is notable that such a prolific artist as Romney exhibited a total of only twenty-five paintings over a continuous span of ten years, beginning in 1763. This is in stark contrast to his rival Sir Joshua Reynolds, who exhibited 268 works over the period 1760-1790. (See Martin Postle, "Factions and Fictions: Romney, Reynolds and the Politics of Patronage," *Those Delightful Regions of Imagination: Essays on George Romney*, edited by Alex Kidson, *Studies in British Art 9*, Yale University Press, 2002, p. 74.) A complete list of Romney's publicly exhibited paintings is given in Jennifer Watson, *George Romney in Canada*, exhibition catalogue, Waterloo, Ontario, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, 1985, pp. 21-26.

[3] The artist John Hamilton Mortimer visited Romney while at work on the Wolfe painting in Bearbinder's Lane and was amazed at the cramped quarters the artist was forced to work in. Cited by Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[4] For reaction to the *Wolfe* painting see Alex Kidson, *George Romney 1734-1802*, exhibition catalogue, Walker Art Gallery Liverpool, National Portrait Gallery London and the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California, 2002, pp. 13-15.

[5] Horace Walpole, cited in Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[6] The painting was sent to Calcutta, where it ultimately disappeared. Paintings proposed as studies for *Wolfe* include heads in Canada and in Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal. See Watson, *Ibid*, cat. 1. See also Kidson, *George Romney 1734-1802*, pp. 53-54. Porcelain pieces decorated with transfer designs have occasionally also been proposed as depicting Romney's *The Death of General Wolfe*.

[7] See John Romney, *Memoirs of the Life and Works of George Romney*, London, 1830, p. 45.

[8] For a history of the Duke of Richmond's sculpture gallery and an inventory of its casts, see John Kenworthy-Browne, "The Duke of Richmond's Gallery in Whitehall," *British Art Journal*, March 22, 2009.

[9] Various sculptures of Chrysippus' head survive, among them in Rome (Vatican Museums) and London (British Museum, Payne Knight col.), as well as the version from the Louvre illustrated here. For information on cast makers and dealers see Gaye Blake-Roberts, "Flaxman and his Work for Wedgwood", *Transactions of the Romney Society*, Vol. 14, 2009, pp. 4-24. See also Timothy Clifford, "The Plaster Shops of the Rococo and Neo-Classical Era in Britain," *Journal of the History of Collections* (1992) 4(1) pp. 39-65.

[10] Romney did collect his own plaster casts, particularly towards the end of his career; see Yvonne Romney Dixon, "Romney's Drawings and Academic Tradition," *Those Delightful Regions*

of Imagination, Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 187-221. The Chrysippus cast in the Duke of Richmond's gallery must have been one of a group of unspecified "busts" in the collection since Chrysippus is not mentioned by name in the inventories.

[11] Brian Allen dates the painting to the mid-1760's (see "Joseph Wilton, Francis Hayman and the Chimney-pieces from Northumberland House," *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 125, No. 961 [Apr., 1983], p. 195); the Royal Academy of Art catalogue of collections gives the date as ca.1765. These dates imply the painting is retrospective since both Wilton and Cipriani, his assistant, resigned from the Gallery in 1762. See Kenworthy-Browne, *op., cit.*

[12] See page 27 in the Kendal Sketchbook for a drawing that presumably represents another session at the cast gallery. The female head may have been taken from the Ludovisi "Juno," in reality a representation of Antonia Minor, Augustus' niece. (The Richmond gallery's inventory lists a head of "Juno.") The collection also had hands and other body parts, among them hands from *Charity and Fortitude* from Bernini's *Tomb of Alexander VII* and hands from Pierre Le Gros' *St. Ignatius* .

[13] Kidson, *George Romney 1734-1802*, cat. no. 11. Another early work in which the bust appears is A Conversation, the artist's double portrait of two of his brothers, Peter and James, exhibited in 1766 (see Kidson, *Ibid*, cat. no. 15). The painting is now at Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Paul Mellon Collection.

[14] The thumbnail on page 100 has also been suggested as a study for *Lady Blunt* on the basis of its pointing finger and the landscape setting. In other respects the composition is different, however. (See Kidson, *George Romney 1734-1802*, cat. no. 11.)

[15] William Hayley's description of Romney's habitual flitting from one subject to another is particularly relevant: "Romney had a rapidity of fancy, too apt to indulge itself in desultory excursion. He was like a bee, who flies off from a flower, before he has gathered half the honey." William Hayley, *The Life of George Romney, Esq.,* London, 1809, p. 131.

[16] While the half-length of a woman on page 3 is similar in some ways to the portrait of Mrs. Bootle, a grand, sculpture-topped fountain assumes a prominent place in the drawing and suggests, instead, that this drawing may be related to a different portrait, at present unknown. It is always possible that additional early portraits may turn up which can be tied to this drawing or others in the sketchbook.

[17] Thomas Greene's journal of the Paris trip is published, along with notes, in Felicity Owen, *Thomas Greene, Romney's Friend & Patron,* exhibition catalogue, Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, 1986.

[18] A series of drawings beginning on page 84 depicting *Rinaldo and Armida* within a lunette format suggest, however, that Romney may have continued to have some interest in producing paintings designed for architectural interiors.

[19] Thomas Greene took particular note of the Rubens Gallery. See Greene in Owen, *op. cit.*, entries for September 19 and 26.

[20] Ownership of the *St. Bruno* cycle of paintings was transferred by the monks of Chartreux to Louis XVI in 1776. They are now in the Louvre. Poussin's *Apotheosis of Saint Paul* (Louvre Inv. 7288) could also have influenced Romney.

[21] One of Romney's theatrical friends was Shakespearean actor John Henderson. The two were fellow members of the Unincreasables Club. Romney's later career was dominated by his work for the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery.

[22] Richard M. Waugaman, "The Psychology of Shakespearean Biography," *Brief Chronicles*, Vol. I (2009), p. 38 (available online).

[23] Jack Lynch, *Becoming Shakespeare*, New York: Walker & Co., 2007, p. 243 (cited by Waugaman, *Ibid*, p. 39).

[24] For a discussion of whether or not this painting is the specific one that adorned Tonson's shop, see William Pressly, *A Catalogue of the Paintings in the Folger Shakespeare Library*, Yale University Press, 1993, pp. 288-89.

[25] For a discussion and illustrations of these works see Kidson, *George Romney 1734-1802*, cat. nos. 67,76, 78 and 132. See also Pressly, *op. cit.*, cat. 176. The chubby babes of the Kendal Sketchbook drawing are retained in the later allegories.

[26] Pressly, *ibid*, p. 320.

[27] See Pressly, *ibid,* cat. no. 177.

[28] Cited by Richard Holmes, *The Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science*, New York: Vintage Books, 2008, p. 53. De Loutherbourg's 1785 pantomime, *Omai, or a Trip Round the World*, ran to fifty performances in Covent Garden. It concluded with the unfurling of an enormous painting of the apotheosis of Cook. See Lynne Withey, *Voyages of Discovery: Captain Cook and the Exploration of the Pacific*, University of California Press, 1989, p. 408.

[29] See Greene in Owen, *op. cit.*, entry for Thursday, September 20th. The Carmelite monastery was demolished after the French Revolution and its paintings, this among them, were transferred to the Louvre.

[30] Greene in Owen, *op. cit.*, entry for September 22nd. After being sold off from the Orleans collection, the painting was purchased by Paul I of Russia. It is now in the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Rome.

[31] A second *Venus and Adonis* by Romney (see Kendal Sketchbook, page 100) departs even further from the Titian prototype.

[32] With his typical capacity for conflation, combined with his free copying from sources, Romney also used two figures instead of one (albeit adult figures) in another drawing depicting Venus, this one being *The Toilet of Venus* (see Kidson, *George Romney 1734-1802*, cat. no. 22).

[33] Romney opined in a letter to his brother Peter that paintings "of the time of Louis the fourteenth are very great, and every church and palace is filled with them." (Romney, *op. cit.*, p.

51.) John Romney goes on to observe that, "Among the French painters, the works of Le Sueur seemed to coincide the most with his own ideas." (*Ibid.* p. 52) On Romney's visit to Paris see also Hayley, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-45. Romney's drawings in the Kendal Sketchbook that echo Le Sueur's *Terpsichore* have close parallels with several drawings in Abbot Hall Sketchbook No.1, which also has two portrait compositions with a strong French flavor.

[34] A number of Romney's drawings for *Rinaldo and Armida in Armida's enchanted Garden* also have echoes of Titian's Venus and Adonis and of depictions of *The Toilet of Venus*. A figure looking in a mirror is a subject common to both *The Toilet of Venus* and *Rinaldo and Armida.*

[35] For Poussin and other 17th century artists who used subjects from *Gerusalemme Liberata*, see Jonathan Unglaub, *Poussin and the Poetics of Painting: Pictorial Narrative and the Legacy of Tasso*, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

[36] Tiepolo apparently painted subjects from *Gerusalemme Liberata* in London between 1750-1755, though I have not been able to gain further information about these paintings.

[37] Hayley, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

[38] See Greene in Owen, *op. cit.*, entries for September 11th, 12th, and 13th. Kidson, *George Romney 1734-1802*, p. 68, note 3, suggests that Jared Leigh's 1765 painting *A Romantic View, with a Rainbow, wherein is introduced the story of Perseus and Andromeda* may have influenced Romney to adopt the theme. Romney was to paint the Leigh family in 1768.

[39] Quoted in Romney, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[40] Greene, in Owen, entries for September 14th and October 2nd. On Friday, September 21st they "saw or did very little." They also stayed indoors on the morning of September 26th. On Saturday, September 29th, the "morning being wet did not go out." On September 30th Greene went out on his own, and thus Romney's activities are unknown. On Monday, October 1st they "staid at home and wrote" after dinner.

[41] It seems highly likely that Romney purchased prints of French works of art in Paris, which he took back to London. For example, figures from Jean Jouvenet's *The Resurrection of Lazarus* (Louvre Inv. No. 5489) are reflected in a drawing in 86; also, a group of a mother and two children from this painting are echoed in drawings in Courtauld Sketchbook No. 1 (e.g. nos. 11 and 26), which dates from c. 1770. Romney could have acquired Jean Audran's engraving of Jouvenet's painting, along with other engravings, while he was in Paris and then turned to them for inspiration thereafter. Romney and Thomas Greene saw paintings by Jouvenet on September 22nd, 24th, and 25th. As Greene's journal entry for September 22nd noted, "We went to see the paintings in St. Martin's in the Fields by Jouvenet." *The Resurrection of Lazarus* was one of Jouvenet's paintings confiscated from this particular church during the French Revolution and now in the Louvre.

[42] Drawings which use props connected to mortality that contain only one, not two, figures are not included within this group (see 80, 81, 91, 97, and 98).

[43] See Robyn Asleson, "Antiquity, Mortality and Melancholy in Romney's Portraiture," *Those Delightful Regions of Imagination*, Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 159-186.

[44] Romney, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

[45] In one faint drawing on page 73, one of the figures is studied twice, seeming to suggest that a third figure is present.

[46] Two drawings on page 74, showing one of two females gesturing forcefully, may or may not be related to the *Sisters* drawings.

[47] A sketch of two figures in a similar pose is on page 62.

[48] The small figures below the urn on page 7 are presumably meant to suggest a sculptural relief on the base supporting the urn.

[49] In a late sketch for *Two Sisters Contemplating on Mortality*, one of the sisters holds an open book. See Edith Powney, *Drawings by George Romney 1734-1802*, exhibition catalogue, Morton Morris and Company, London, 1980, cat. no. 5.

[50] Drawings on pages 41 and 44, on the other hand, show the dancers playing instruments (triangle, tambourines), which gives them a connection to Romney's *Mirth,* a painting he finished by 1770. See Barrow Sketchbook No. 1 for other studies of *Mirth*. Full details on Romney's sketchbooks in public collections are given in *Transactions of the Romney Society*, Vol. 8, 2003.

[51] See Kidson, *George Romney 1734-1802,* cat. no. 16; Watson, *op. cit.*, cat. nos. 3 and 4; Powney, *op. cit.*, nos. 4, 5, and 6v. The drawings alluded to here are much closer to the final work than those in the Kendal Sketchbook.

[52] See Jennifer Watson, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 2.

[53] Romney, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[54] Romney may have only been able to make one black chalk drawing for this commission while still in Lancaster. See Kidson, *George Romney 1734-1802*, cat. no. 24. The reason for the artist's trip north in 1767 may well have been to raise enough money to enable him to afford more ample accommodations when he returned to London, See Kidson *Ibid*, p. 64. For the reception of the *Warren* portrait by the public, see John Romney, op. cit., p. 60.

[55] The drawing on page 99 may also relate to the Warren portrait.

[56] It remains to be considered, however, whether or not a drawing on 99 should be deemed a study for the Warren portrait.

[57] That Lucretia is a subject that interested Romney is borne out by a notation in the artist's hand, "Lucrecia" [sic] in Yale Sketchbook No. 7.

[58] There are also drawings on the subject in Baroda Sketchbook No. 4 and Courtauld Sketchbook No. 4. For more information on these sketchbooks, see *Transactions of the Romney Society*, vol. 8, 2003.

[59] A figure study of a standing female on page 24 might also be related to *The Accusation of Susannah*. In addition, a figural group to the right on page 92 seems connected to the subject; however, if this group is considered to be part of a composition that includes the nearby figure standing before an altar, an entirely different subject is intended.

[60] Drawings on *The Accusation of Susannah* that overlap with those in the Kendal Sketchbook include those in British Museum Sketchbook 1, Courtauld Sketchbook No. 1, Holborn Library Sketchbook, and Royal Academy Sketchbook No 1.

[61] This sketchbook also has drawings for *Rinaldo and Armida in Armida's enchanted Garden.*

[62] Others that might possibly be related are on pages 69 and 100. There may be other drawings on the subject in Courtauld Sketchbook No. 4, pages 8v and 9.

[63] See Kidson, *George Romney 1734-1802*, cat. no. 36.

[64] James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, Penguin Classics, 1986, p. 95.

[65] Samuel Johnson spearheaded an attack on the Ossianic poems' authenticity.

[66] William Pressly notes that Romney's history painting during his first decade in London is significant for its focus on British history. See "Romney's 'Peculiar Powers for Historical and Ideal Painting,'" *Those Delightful Regions of Imagination*, Yale University Press, 2002, p. 103.

[67] See Anne Crookshank, "The Drawings of George Romney," *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 99, no. 647 (February, 1957), p. 43.