Exit, Pursued by John Kay: The Staging of Graphic Satire in Late Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh

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Capturing Futurity: The Artistic Exchange of Alvin Langdon Coburn and H. G. Wells

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Exit, Pursued by John Kay: The Staging of Graphic Satire in Late Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh

Article by **Wendy McGlashan**
WORD COUNT:6,274

Abstract

John Kay (1742–1826), a late eighteenth-century Edinburgh barber turned graphic satirist, is generally presented as a quaint footnote to London-centric histories of British graphic satire, whose mild-mannered style lacks the bite of his London contemporaries. Focusing on a new analysis of *Copper-Bottom's Retreat, or a View of Carron Work!!!* (1797)—a satirical portrait of William Forbes of Callendar—this article challenges such assumptions about Kay. Previously described as a "naïve, but amusing, print", this article demonstrates that *Copper-Bottom's Retreat* actually presents a complex and multilayered burlesque allusion, constructed within the framework of eighteenth-century Scottish theories of laughter, and which engages with prints after European Old Master and contemporary British history paintings. The image therefore demands visual engagement across a range of cultural media: image, performance, and text. Kay's participation in and contribution to Edinburgh's vibrant print culture is explored, and new context provided for Henry Raeburn's monumental full-length portrait of the same sitter, painted the following year.

Introduction

In 1784, John Kay (1742–1826), an Edinburgh barber with no formal art training, published his first satirical portraits. Utilising the medium of etching to disseminate quick-witted criticism of the morals, manners, and corporeality of his Edinburgh contemporaries, Kay quickly incited the wrath of his disgruntled subjects. That November, one correspondent to the *Caledonian Mercury* vehemently denounced the "new species of *liberty*" Kay had introduced to the city, asserting that he deserved "the basting of a cudgel, or the sousing in a horse-pond"—stimulating an epistolary debate on the social value of Kay's prints and of graphic satire more broadly.[1] The next year, in 1785, spurred on by the attention that his prints had generated, Kay gave up barbering to set up as an autonomous artist-printmaker with his own independent shop.[2] Kay's print-selling career spanned more than forty years, during which time his etchings inspired further threats of violence, court action, barbed exchanges, and the writing of adulatory poetry.[3]

In late eighteenth-century Edinburgh, Kay's contemporaries viewed his satirical portraits as challenging and new. However, his enduring artistic reputation was posthumously shaped when

Hugh Paton published *A Series of Original Portraits and Caricature Etchings by the Late John Kay* (1837–38): two collected volumes of Kay's prints, with newly written biographical sketches and anecdotes. Paton located Kay in the nostalgic bygone world of Old Edinburgh, presenting him not as a confrontational and critically engaged social commentator, but as a naïve chronicler of Edinburgh's so-called "golden-age", who required "to go no farther than his own door in search of a subject fit for his pencil".[4]

Kay's work has been subsequently overlooked by histories of British graphic satire. Diana Donald's seminal London-centric study *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* confines Kay to the footnotes.[5] So too does Vic Gatrell's *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London*, where Kay is fleetingly referred to as Edinburgh's "mild-mannered caricaturist": a misconception universally repeated in scholarly and popular works alike, which consistently assert that Kay lacked the venom of his London contemporaries James Gillray (1756–1815) and Thomas Rowlandson (1757–1827).[6]

During the period of social unrest provoked by the passing of the Scottish Militia Act (1797), Kay created *Copper-Bottom's Retreat, or a View of Carron Work!!!*, a satirical etched portrait of William Forbes of Callendar (1743–1815) (fig. 1). Duncan Thomson and Lynne Gladstone-Millar described this as a "naïve, but amusing, print", and found Kay's "little etched portraits" to be "lively and humorous but entirely unsophisticated".[7] Conversely, following Ian Haywood's point that "the intervisual richness of caricatures is often underestimated by critics", this article's analysis challenges such assumptions about Kay, and demonstrates that *Copper-Bottom's Retreat* presents a carefully constructed mock-heroic burlesque.[8]

Figure 1

John Kay, *Copper-Bottom's Retreat, or a View of Carron Work!!! A Satricial Portrait of William Forbes of Callendar (1743–1815)*, 1797, etching and aquatint, 16.1 × 19.5 cm. Collection of National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG D16958) Digital image courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London (all rights reserved)

Burlesque Allusion and the Mock-Heroic

In Francis Hutcheson's *Reflections Upon Laughter* (1750), burlesque allusion—a jocular form of satiric representation in which an elevated style or a solemn subject is incongruously applied to the trivial or low—was praised as a great source of laughter and wit.[9] While Hutcheson's discussion pertained to literature, by the 1780s burlesque had become an established feature of graphic satire, employed not only in London but also in Edinburgh, as demonstrated by Kay's *The Modern Hercules Destroying the Hydra of Fanaticism* (1789), a satirical portrait of the Moderate Scottish clergyman Alexander Carlyle (fig. 2).[10]

Figure 2

John Kay, *The Modern Hercules Destroying the Hydra of Fanaticism*, 1789, etching, 18.3 × 13.7 cm. Collection of National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG D16841) Digital image courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London (all rights reserved)

In *The Modern Hercules*, Kay combines local cultural references with imagery repurposed from earlier prints on the subject of Hercules and the Hydra—as typified by Heinrich Aldegrever's *Hercules Fighting the Hydra* (1550) (fig. 3)—to create a theatrical and satirical portrait. Kay's satire takes as its subject Carlyle's 1789 bid to be elected clerk of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Initially appearing to have won by a majority of 145 votes to 142, Carlyle delivered a victory speech, stating that "it had ever been his object in ecclesiastical courts to correct and abate the fanatical spirit of his country"; only to be subsequently defeated following a recount of the votes.[11] In 1754 Carlyle, an enthusiastic supporter of Scottish theatre, wrote the prologue to Samuel Hart's *Herminius and Espasia: A Tragedy. As It Was Acted at the Theatre in Edinburgh*, which—couched in the language of classical mythology—promotes the cause of the "buskin'd *Scotian* muse" who tearfully pleads for praise and applause.[12] The satirical ballad "The first night's audience" (1756)—part of a pamphlet war which saw the Moderate and Popular parties of the Church of Scotland debate the morality of the stage following the first

Edinburgh performance of the Scottish tragedy *Douglas*, written by the Moderate John Home—describes "C___LYLE with a cudgel, and a genius rare, With aspects as stern as a *Hessian hussar*".[13]

Figure 3

Heinrich Aldegrever, The Labours of Hercules, 1550, engraving, 10.4 × 6.7 cm. Collection of The British Museum (E,4.404) Digital image courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Kay's print mockingly casts Carlyle as a classical hero and his orthodox opponents as a multi-headed hydra: a style of burlesque defined by James Beattie as "the mock-heroic".[14] Burlesques on this classical theme also appear in Rowlandson's *The Champion of the People* (1784), S.W. Fores's *The Modern Hercules or A Finishing Blow for Poor John Bull* (1795) and Gillray's *The Republican-Hercules Defending His Country* (1797) (fig. 4).[15] However, Kay adopts a somewhat different approach to his London contemporaries: eschewing fantastical costume, exaggerated physiognomic distortion, bright colouration, and elements of grotesque, he instead places natural portrait-heads on the Hydra and presents Carlyle as a real individual in everyday dress, making them appear all the more ridiculous.[16]

Figure 4

James Gillray, *The Republican—Hercules Defending his Country*, 1797, hand-coloured etching, 35.9 × 25.5 cm. Collection of National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG D12599) Digital image courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London (all rights reserved)

While Kay's *Modern Hercules* alludes to a single print source, *Copper-Bottom's Retreat* utilises visual elements repurposed from several prints to present a multilayered mock-heroic burlesque, constructed within the framework of contemporary Scottish theories of laughter, which alludes to the biblical works of Raphael and Shakespearean tragedy. It demands engagement across a range of cultural media: image, performance, and text.

William Forbes of Callendar: From Coppersmith to Landed Gentleman

William Forbes's rapid rise to ascendancy was a major part of his public persona, and Kay embedded a reminder of Forbes's social origins in the title of his satire, in which he is styled "Copper-Bottom". William Forbes was from Aberdeenshire and in 1762 he and his older brother George inherited the family coppersmithing business. While George maintained the Aberdeen branch, William established a coppersmithing business in London, and by 1778 was contracted to the Navy Board in the supply of copper.[17] In the early 1760s, the Navy Board had recognised that copper sheathing the hulls of their ships offered valuable tactical advantages: protecting against shipworm, which weakened hulls, and preventing the accumulation of seaweed, which reduced speed and manoeuvrability.[18] During the American War of Independence (1775–83), copper-bottoming the British fleet assumed priority, with forty-six ships coppered in 1780 alone.[19] This brought immediate financial gain to Forbes, who was the sole contractor employed by the Navy Board to supply the new demand for copper.[20]

Copper sheathing soon led to serious problems, however, causing a chemical reaction that rapidly rusted the iron fastenings of the ship. By mid-1783 the complete suspension of copper sheathing was being considered and it was thus in Forbes's interest to find a solution.[21] An astute

businessman, he cunningly hedged his bets, securing a contract to produce compound metal bolts designed by William Keir, which were already in an advanced state of development, while at the same time designing his own solution: a copper and zinc bolt, strengthened by mechanical means.[22] Along with a similar design developed by Thomas Williams, Forbes's new bolt was adopted by the navy, being applied to all new ships, and replacing the old iron bolts in existing ones.[23] Copper sheathing recommenced in August 1783, earning Forbes his fortune.[24]

As a man of great social ambition, Forbes immediately invested his wealth in the purchase of Callendar estate, near Falkirk, which had been forfeited after James Livingston, the 4th Earl of Callendar and 5th Earl of Linlithgow (d. 1723), participated in the Jacobite rising of 1715.[25] In 1720, the York Building Company had purchased the estate, leasing it back to the Earl of Callendar's heirs: firstly to Lady Ann Livingston and then to her son, the Earl of Errol, who resided at Callendar House until the estate was put up for sale in 1783.[26] At the auction, the Earl of Errol attempted to buy back the family estate, only to be outbid by Forbes, who paid more than double the asking price, sending the people of Falkirk into "paroxysm", as Callendar House had ever been identified with "the bairns o' Falkirk".[27]

Forbes soon set about improving his new estate. In 1786 he engaged Edward Barwell Brasier, a London-based architect, trained at the Royal Academy Schools, to design new entrance lodges, while the Southwark nurserymen Abraham and William Driver were employed to redesign the park and garden, which was adorned with fashionable Coade stone ornaments, vases, and benches.[28] The walls of Callendar House were hung with a picture collection that included works by Rembrandt, Jacob Jordaens, Antoine Coypel, Charles Le Brun, and Alexander Runciman, and comprised largely biblical subjects and scenes from classical mythology.[29] Forbes thus transformed Callendar House and Estate into an epitome of refinement and taste, which both befitted and asserted his new status as a landed gentleman.

John Kay had a sharp eye for current affairs, and it was an embarrassing event, connected to a popular protest staged outside Callendar House, that first led Kay to satirise Forbes. On 1 February 1793, Britain entered the war against revolutionary France and the following year, as the fear of French invasion and revolution at home increased, the system of lord and deputy lieutenants was introduced to Scotland. This aimed to establish an hierarchical authority in the counties that were loyal to the Crown and capable of collecting local intelligence and organising home defence.[30] In Stirlingshire, the position of Lord Lieutenant, generally appointed to the highest-ranking noble in the county, went to the Duke of Montrose, while Forbes was appointed Deputy Lieutenant for Falkirk.[31] Though this appointment confirmed Forbes's status as a leading member of the landed gentry, it proved to be a double-edged sword, making him responsible, on its enactment on 19 July 1797, for enforcing the hugely unpopular Scottish Militia Act in the district of Falkirk, where his relationship with the local people was already strained.

The Scottish Militia Act was intended to bolster home defence by providing a force of six thousand men, aged between nineteen and twenty-three, to serve within Scotland for the duration of the war plus one month, enlisted by compulsory ballot on a "county quota basis".[32] The lord lieutenants and deputy lieutenants were responsible for carrying the Militia Act into execution, while the parish schoolmasters were to provide lists of those liable for service. However, the Militia Act met with unexpected resistance, causing a wave of riots and popular protests to spread across the Scottish Lowlands, and in Falkirk the schoolmaster refused to provide a list, causing the Falkirk ballot to be continuously deferred.[33]

On the night of 22 August, a group of protesters approached Callendar House, beating a drum and calling out "No Militia", causing Forbes to become so alarmed that he fled for the woods.[34]

Looking back through the trees to see a flickering glow, he imagined that Callendar House was ablaze. On reaching the safety of Edinburgh, Forbes raised the alarm, reporting that Callendar House had been burned to the ground, while he had only just escaped with his life; at Forbes's request, a troop of dragoons was dispatched to Falkirk in pursuit of the fire-raisers.[35] The next day the truth was discovered: nothing serious had happened, Callendar House was safe and unharmed, and all Forbes had seen was the glow of the furnaces at Carron ironworks.[36] News of this incident soon reached the press, and it was reported that "this fire proved to be, like Macbeth's dagger, 'merely of the mind' and the cavalry had 'been sent in pursuit of a *Will-o'-the-Wisp*' generated by the proprietor's inflamed imagination".[37] When the details of this event are considered within the context of Scottish eighteenth-century theories of laughter, it becomes even more apparent why Forbes proved such an irresistible subject to a satirist such as Kay.

The Philosophy of Laughter

In eighteenth-century Britain, laughter was a subject of serious philosophical study, and in Scotland was studied by prominent Enlightenment figures, including Francis Hutcheson, James Beattie, Henry Home (Lord Kames), and Allan Ramsay.[38] This concern was reflective of the contemporary "preoccupation with politeness" and benevolent sociability, stimulated by the rise of new convivial spaces, such as clubs and coffee-houses.[39] Hutcheson's *Reflections Upon Laughter* rebutted the negative seventeenth-century view of laughter presented by Thomas Hobbes, who described it as a "sudden glory rising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others".[40] Instead, for Hutcheson, "The implanting … a sense of the ridiculous, in our nature, was giving us an avenue to pleasure, and an easy remedy for discontent and sorrow".[41] Lord Kames, too, promoted the positive effects of laughter, arguing that because laughter is "mirthful, it most successfully unbends the mind and recruits the spirits".[42]

According to Hutcheson, laughter was caused not by a sense of self-superiority but by "the contrast between ideas of grandeur, dignity, sanctity, perfection, and ideas of meanness, baseness, profanity".[43] Any undignified mishap "befalling a person of great gravity, ability, dignity"—like William Forbes—was thus considered a matter of laughter, as was "any instance of gross inadvertence or great mistake".[44] The accidental raising of "violent passions, as fear … upon a small, or a fictitious occasion" was also presented as an object of laughter, and Kames similarly identified "imaginary distress" as laughable.[45] To illustrate this point, he cited two "extremely risible" examples from Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605).[46] In the first, the aspiring knight Don Quixote and his squire Sancho Panza become terrified by noises they hear in the night, only to discover at daybreak that all they had heard were the hammers of the local fulling mill. In the second, Sancho tumbles into a pit on a dark night and, believing there to be a bottomless gulf beneath him, clings to the side in distress until morning, only to find himself a foot from the ground—a scene of imagined distress which Beattie also found particularly humorous.[47] In a further parallel with Forbes and his moonlit escapade, both examples specifically relate to fear caused by imagined dangers in the night.

While to laugh at others was to engage in ridicule, a type of laughter associated with Hobbesian elements of mockery and contempt, Scottish aestheticians found ways to neutralise these negative associations, and Ramsay defended the use of ridicule in satirical prints. Presenting the moralising works of William Hogarth as an exemplar, Ramsay asserted that even the "most humane" men laugh at ridicules of "follies and vices", and that "the laugh in this case, is not a laugh arising from contempt of the person or thing ridiculed, but a laugh of pleasure, from the art

itself, and of applause to the artist".[48] Hutcheson argued that burlesque allusion raises benevolent laughter "in those who have the highest veneration for the writing alluded to, and so admire the wit of the person who makes the allusion".[49] While Forbes thus provided Kay with a subject that aligned perfectly with contemporary Scottish theories of laughter, Kay also constructed his mock-heroic image with a level of wit—evidenced in deft artistic and literary references—that would have provided his contemporaries with further amusement.

At its most basic level, Kay's print communicates the story of Forbes's embarrassing mistake in a widely accessible manner, in which the key elements of his narrative are clearly presented. Forbes runs across the moonlit landscape; his head and right-hand gesture back towards the flames of the furnaces on the right of the composition; while his left hand and bodily posture lead forward towards the woods on the left. His animated pose communicates a sense of alarm and forward movement; his wide-eyed stare and parted lips express a sense of fear; while the fashionable striped stocking wrinkled at his ankle, and the hastily dropped hat, contribute a sense of disarray. More than mere compositional devices, however, Kay deliberately imbued these elements with additional layers of meaning, accessible—and humorous—only to those with the requisite visual and cultural literacy.[50]

The Raphael Cartoons and Edinburgh Print Culture

William Forbes had a taste for history paintings and in *Copper-Bottom's Retreat*, Kay represents him in a mock-heroic format that mimics this high artistic style, parodying the biblical works of Raphael. In eighteenth-century Britain, Raphael was considered a paragon of history painting. In 1513, Pope Leo X had commissioned Raphael to design a set of tapestries of the Acts of the Apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul, which were to hang in the Sistine Chapel, and in 1623 Charles I (then Prince of Wales) purchased seven of the ten tapestry cartoons and brought them to England, for use as working designs at the Mortlake tapestry works.[51] As tapestry designs, the cartoons were cut into large strips, but in 1699, William III had these pieced back together, transforming the cartoons into autonomous High Renaissance works of art, which were hung in a purpose-built picture gallery at Hampton Court and soon assumed canonical status.[52]

In England, Jonathan Richardson's *Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715) promoted the Raphael cartoons as exemplars of invention, expression, and composition, while in Scotland, George Turnbull's *Treatise on Ancient Painting* (1740), described them as "sublime, divine pieces" with the capacity "to tell an instructive or moving Story in the most agreeable and lively manner".[53] Hogarth's etching *Characters and Caricaturas* (1743) promoted the Raphael cartoons as epitomes of the natural expression of character, contrasting three "characters" from the cartoons with four distorted "caricaturas" copied after Pier Leone Ghezzi, Annibale Carracci, and Leonardo da Vinci (fig. 5). A pictorial reference to this work sits on Kay's worktable in his painted self-portrait *Kay Painting the Barbers' Dinner* (circa 1788) (fig. 6) and in his etching *William Martin, Auctioneer in Edinburgh* (1784), the multiple heads of his print-viewing audience clearly reference those in the upper register of Hogarth's print (fig. 7).[54]

Figure 5

William Hogarth, *Characters and Caricaturas*, 1743, etching, 27.2 × 22.4 cm. Collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 32.35(152) Digital image courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (public domain)

Figure 6

John Kay, *John Kay Painting the Barbers' Dinner*, undated (circa 1788), bodycolour on paper, 17 × 22.7 cm. Collection of Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh Digital image courtesy of Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh (all rights reserved)

Figure 7

John Kay, *William Martin*, 1784, etching, 8.7 × 16.1 cm. Collection of National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG D31988) Digital image courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London (all rights reserved)

In late eighteenth-century Edinburgh, the study of prints was no longer the exclusive domain of the wealthy connoisseur but was now a widespread pursuit that was open to the middle ranks.[55] By 1799, Kay had amassed his own collection of "Ancient and Modern Paintings and Prints" and in his painted self-portrait in oils, Kay confidently presents himself as a print connoisseur, as he intently studies the printed portrait in his hand (fig. 8).[56] Both Old Master and modern British prints were readily available for purchase via Edinburgh print shops and auction rooms, and could also be borrowed from James Sibbald's circulating library and Thomas Brown's shop— both located in Parliament Square.[57] Complete sets of engravings after the Raphael cartoons by Simon Gribelin (1707) and Nicholas Dorigny (1719) were available to purchase in Edinburgh, as were numerous "capital and rare prints" after Raphael, including sixteenth-century Italian engravings by Marcantonio Raimondi, seventeenth-century Dutch examples by Cornelis Bloemaert, and eighteenth-century French works by Nicolas de Larmessin III.[58]

Figure 9

John Kay, *Self-Portrait*, circa 1786, oil on canvas, 26 ×
20.6 cm. Collection of Scottish National Portrait
Gallery, Edinburgh (PG 892) Digital image courtesy of
National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (CC BY-NC
2.0)

David Allan's painted conversation piece *The Connoisseurs* (1783) (fig. 9) shows the
companions John Caw, John Bonar, and James Bruce—all Edinburgh tax officials—examining
an engraving after Raphael's *Saint John the Baptist in the Wilderness*.[59] Caw was also a founder
member of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (1780).[60] Propped behind his chair sits a print
portfolio: an object that confers an elite status, with the portfolio collector generally being "a
wealthy gentleman of leisure, learning and enlightened sociability".[61] In his similarly titled
etching *Connoisseurs* (1785), Kay mocks the Edinburgh middle classes for imitating the elite
taste for Italian prints, depicting the plumber William Scott scrutinising a print of *The Three
Graces*, held up by the print-seller James Sibbald (fig. 10).[62] Representing different classes of
print collector, these works demonstrate that in late-eighteenth century Edinburgh, prints as a
medium were not simply collected and viewed, but actively discussed.

Figure 9

David Allan, *The Connoisseurs*, 1783, oil on canvas, 87.5 × 101.9 cm. Collection of National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (NG 2260) Digital image courtesy of National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (CC BY-NC 2.0)
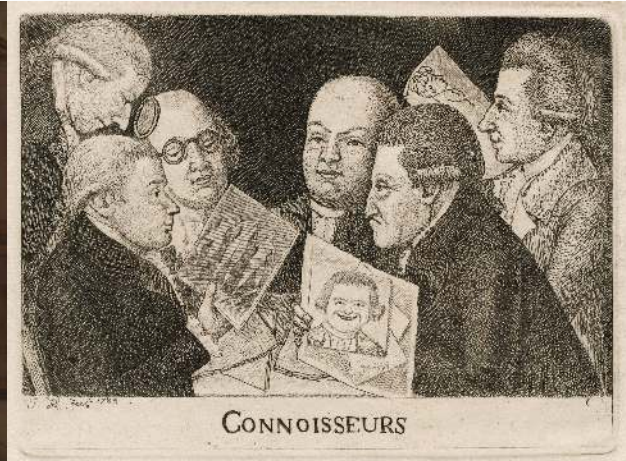

Figure 10

John Kay, *Connoisseurs*, 1785, etching, 8.2 × 10.7 cm. Collection of National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG D20513) Digital image courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London (all rights reserved)

Raphael: *The Conversion of Saul*

Forbes's pose—running, with his head looking back toward the source of danger, his arms raised in alarm, one leg elegantly outstretched, and his coat-tail dramatically flying behind him—instantly links him to a fleeing figure type found in the works of Raphael, such as the biblical scenes *Joseph Fleeing from Potiphar's Wife*, engraved by Marcantonio Raimondi (circa 1515–25) (fig. 11) and *The Conversion of Saul*, engraved by Miguel de Sorelló (circa 1721–65) (fig. 12).[63] Kay appears to have constructed his figure of Forbes from an amalgam of elements assimilated from *The Conversion of Saul* in particular. From the central figure he adapts the open-mouthed facial expression, elegantly poised muscular legs, and flowing drapery. Forbes's twisting torso, forward-leading left arm and backward-facing head in profile closely resemble those of the figure who exits on the far left of Raphael's composition, while Forbes's upstretched right arm with open palm echoes the figure of Saul, who raises his hands in fear as he is struck down by a vision of Christ. The gentle contours of Kay's rolling Callendar landscape also appear to have been assimilated from this work, and Forbes, just like the Roman soldiers, takes flight from a powerful burst of energy and light. Whereas the soldiers flee in fear of the power of God, Forbes runs away from a vision generated by his own imagination, and as Christ instructed Saul "Now … go into the city, and you will be told what you must do", so Forbes sought assistance in Edinburgh.[64]

Figure 11

Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael, *Joseph Fleeing from Potiphar's Wife*, circa 1515–1525, engraving, 20.7 × 24.1 cm. Collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (41.8) Digital image courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (public domain)

Figure 12

Miguel de Sorelló after Raphael, *The Conversion of Saul*, circa 1721–65, etching and engraving, dimensions unknown. Collection of Victoria and Albert Museum, London (DYCE.2661) Digital image courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London (all rights reserved)

By mimicking the elevated style and biblical subject matter of the Raphael cartoons, the most highly revered works of High Renaissance art in eighteenth-century Britain, and incongruously applying these to this ridiculous scene from the life of William Forbes, Kay created a witty burlesque, accessible to those with the required knowledge of Old Master prints and the imaginative ability to recognise and interpret these visual signs.

Shakespeare: Hamlet, Act 2, Scene 1

Through the addition of two key sartorial details—the fallen stocking and discarded hat—Kay extended his burlesque to include the theatre-going public, alluding to a recent performance of *Hamlet* by the local actor Henry Erskine Johnston at the Edinburgh Theatre Royal, where the audience is likely to have included members of the aristocracy, professionals, tradesmen, apprentices, and servants.[65] Johnston's performance as Hamlet—said to be "beyond all praise"—was immortalised by Kay in an elegant theatrical portrait (fig. 13).[66] Published in 1795, Kay's portrait presents a typical late eighteenth-century representation of Hamlet's "madness", depicting Johnston with one fallen-down stocking and his leg exposed, just as Robert Dighton did the previous year in *Hamlet in Scotland* (1794): a caricature depicting the Edinburgh performance of the portly Stephen Kemble in the same role*.*[67] Printed directly beneath Kay's portrait are words spoken by Hamlet in Act 3, Scene 1—"That undiscover'd Country from whose bourne no traveller returns"—a passage in which Hamlet reflects that fear of death makes cowards of us all.

Figure 13

John Kay, *Henry Erskine Johnston*, 1795, etching, 21 × 21.9 cm. Collection of National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG D31982) Digital image courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London (all rights reserved)

By repurposing the theatrical motif of the fallen stocking from his portrait of Johnston performing Hamlet's "madness" and reapplying this to his satirical image of Forbes, Kay deliberately associated Forbes with its meaning. Moreover, in *Copper-Bottom's Retreat*, his representation of Forbes conforms to Ophelia's description of Hamlet's appearance of "madness" in Act 2, Scene 1, when Hamlet comes before her "to speak of horrors" with "no hat upon his head" and his stockings "down-gyvèd to his ankle".[68] Looking back over his shoulder as he runs towards the woods, Forbes further reflects Ophelia's report that "with his head over his shoulder turned, [Hamlet] seem'd to find his way without his eyes".[69] Whereas Hamlet's episode of "madness" transpired after he encountered the ghost of his father, Forbes's occurred after seeing the phantom of Callendar House ablaze, and here Forbes is burlesqued as a player in a Shakespearean tragedy, just as he was compared to Macbeth by the contemporary press.[70]

Shakespeare: *The Winter's Tale Act 3, Scene 3*
In October 1797, following the death of the English painter Joseph Wright of Derby in August that year, an article titled "Memoirs of the Life and Principal Works of the Late Joseph Wright, Esq. of Derby" appeared in *The Monthly Magazine, and British Register*.[71] Considerable attention was paid to his "judicious combination of fire and moonlight": making prints after Wright's paintings an ideal source of reference with which to add further drama to Kay's theatrical nocturnal scene.[72] Wright's "principal firelights" were said to be his pictures of Mount Vesuvius and the Girandola fireworks at Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome, and Kay's bright white flames, with sparking embers ascending into the smoky night sky, and the moon partially obscured by horizontal lines, echo the nocturnal effects of Wright's *Distant View of Mount Vesuvius*, as interpreted in a monochromatic engraving by William Byrne in 1788 (fig. 14).[73]

Figure 14

William Byrne after Joseph Wright of Derby, *Distant View of Mount Vesuvius, from the Shore of Posilipo at Naples*, 1788, etching and engraving, 27.6 × 34.5 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1917,1208.3424) Digital image courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

However, one print after Wright provided a particularly relevant model: *The Winter's Tale, Act III, Scene III*, painted for John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and engraved by Samuel Middiman in 1794 (fig. 15).[74] Combining a depiction of a shipwreck in a storm with a representation of Shakespeare's famous stage direction "exit, pursued by a bear", this highly dramatic scene shows Antigonus, a noble in the service of the King, fleeing across a rocky cliff top, while looking back in terror towards the angry bear.[75] Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery aimed to establish an English School of history painting and as Shearer West has pointed out, the artists repurposed "the Roman or Raphaelesque style" to befit "the high seriousness" of the tragedies and histories of Shakespeare.[76] In keeping with the gravity of *The Winter's Tale*, Wright thus adopted a Raphaelesque figure style, basing the pose of Antigonus on *Joseph Fleeing from Potiphar's Wife*. But as West observes, the result was "unintentionally comic": an element of this work which must surely have appealed to Kay.[77]

Figure 15

The shared presence of a single fleeing Raphaelesque figure in both *The Winter's Tale* and *Copper-Bottom's Retreat* establishes an immediate visual link between these two works, which Kay deliberately exploits, utilising the granular tonal aquatint technique to approximate, in miniature, the smokiness of Middiman's etched and engraved tonal atmospheric effects, with Middiman's plate measuring 49.7 × 63 cm and Kay's sized only 16.1 × 19.5 cm. Mimicking Middiman's print after Wright, Kay introduces an area of turbulent white light behind Forbes, in the form of the rocketing white flames. In front he adds a looming area of darkness, with the oppressive dark band of storm cloud that diagonally engulfs the upper right-hand corner of Middiman's print echoed in the trees of Callendar Wood.

Both Forbes and Antigonus emerge from a band of foliage, but where a bear snaps at the heels of the doomed Antigonus, at Forbes's heel we find only a broken tree stump: a landscape element assimilated from Dorigny's engraving after Raphael's *Christ's Charge to St Peter*, repurposed to provide a witty reminder of the imaginary nature of the threat (fig. 16). To those familiar with Shakespeare's plays, the placement of this pictorial element may have assumed further meaning, potentially being interpreted as an allusion to lines spoken by Theseus in Act 5, Scene 1 of *A Midsummer's Night Dream*: "Or in the night, imagining some fear, How easy is a bush supposed a bear!", adding further texture to this layer of humour.[78]

Figure 16

Nicholas Dorigny after Raphael, *Christ's Charge to Peter*, 1719, etching and engraving, 53.4 × 75.2 cm. Collection of Victoria and Albert Museum, London (20284) Digital image courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London (all rights reserved)

In *The Winter's Tale*, both the tragic death of Antigonus and the shipwreck are witnessed by a clown. In lines from the play, printed beneath the image, the clown reports: "how the poor souls roar'd, and the sea mock'd them;—and how the poor gentleman roar'd and the bear mock'd him, both roaring louder than the sea or weather". Just as Antigonus was pursued by a real source of threat, so the clown witnessed real scenes of death and destruction, reiterating Forbes's embarrassing mistake.

In *The Politics of Parody: A Literary History of Caricature, 1760–1830*, David Francis Taylor highlights the complexity of Isaac Cruikshank's "highly textual print" *The Near in Blood, The Nearer Bloody*.[79] Published in London in 1793, Cruikshank's political satire mobilised parodies of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *2 Henry VI*, and Colley Cibber's 1699 adaptation of *Richard III* to vilify the Duke of Orleans for his role in the regicide of Louis XVI.[80] Whereas Cruikshank communicated his Shakespearean allusions via the written word—the title, verbal elements, and text at the foot of the print—in *Copper-Bottom's Retreat* Kay achieved a comparable level of complexity through a series of deliberately placed visual signs: assuming a certain level of visual literacy on the part of his Edinburgh audience.

Fireworks and Popular Entertainment

Preserved among the Forbes of Callendar family papers are the remains of a handbill for a "FIRE-WORKS CIRCUS".[81] This pictures a small figure balancing upon its head, surrounded by exploding fireworks and appears to relate to a performance given by Benjamin Handy's equestrian troupe at the Edinburgh Circus in 1792, which included a performance by "the CHILD of PROMISE": Handy's nine-year-old daughter, who would "Stand on her Head ON JACOB's LADDER, Twelve feet high—surrounded with FIRE-WORKS".[82] The model for Kay's silhouetted furnaces and explosive serpentine flames appears to have been suggested by existing images of fireworks circuses, such as Wenceslaus Hollar's etching *Fireworks at Hemissem* (circa 1750) (fig. 17). By alluding to fireworks, Kay added an element of spectacle to his composition, associating Forbes with a further source of popular entertainment. These

references are complemented by the theatrical title of Kay's print—*Copper-Bottom's Retreat, or a View of Carron Work!!!*—*which mimics the format of the titles to contemporary plays, pantomimes, and circus performances, typified by *QUACK! QUACK!! QUACK!!! OR, THE BAKER OF BEDFONT*, performed at the Edinburgh Royal Circus in February 1797.[83]

Figure 17

Wenceslaus Hollar, *Fireworks at Hemissem*, circa 1650, etching and dry-point, 24.3 × 40.5 cm. Collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (20.81.2(32) Digital image courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (public domain)

William Forbes and Henry Raeburn: The Reassertion of Status

A year before etching *Copper-Bottom's Retreat*, Kay had published a satirical portrait of the landed gentleman Francis Sitwell, depicting him as a fop and criticising his unwavering penchant for luxury at a time of extreme food shortages in the city.[84] Sitwell's heated response prompted Kay to publish a retaliatory etching, which immortalised his angry outburst and subjected him to further ridicule (fig. 18). With his fist raised, Sitwell declares "You're a damn'd caricature painter, I've a good mind to give you a damn'd threshing", to which Kay defiantly responds "Do it if you dare Sir! Silly Infant!" Other disgruntled subjects who pursued revenge against Kay, only to suffer a similar fate, included Captain Hew Crawford and his sister Miss Crawford, Alexander Campbell and his brother John, Captain Dalrymple Horn Elphinstone and Miss Penelope MacDonald of Clanronald, and John Rae and Hamilton Bell. The latter appeared in the retaliatory etching *Examination *(1792), in which Kay nonchalantly stands before the sheriff, while Rae and Bell agitatedly sit, their faces contorted by rage.[85]

Figure 18

John Kay, *A Scene in the Caricature Ware Room*,
1796, etching Digital image courtesy of Mary Evans
Picture Library, London (all rights reserved)

Forbes's behaviour was not only ridiculed in Kay's satirical print, but also by the contemporary press, local and national, and it seems that Forbes adopted a different approach to the revival of his public reputation: commissioning from Henry Raeburn, Scotland's leading portraitist, a monumental full-length portrait, painted in oils on a canvas measuring over 236 × 150 cm (fig. 19). The portrait arrived at Callendar House in May 1798 and while Duncan Thomson has suggested that the date "does not appear to relate to any specific event in Forbes's life", it would seem to correspond with the humiliating events of the previous year, and could thus be interpreted as an effort by Forbes to reassert his status and authority through high art.[86]

Figure 19

Henry Raeburn, *William Forbes of Callendar*, 1798, oil on canvas, 236.8 × 150.5 cm. Collection of Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh (PGL 327) Digital image courtesy of National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (CC BY-NC 2.0)

In the hierarchy of pictorial genres, as set out in Joshua Reynold's "Discourses on Art", idealised images and morally elevated historic subjects were ranked highest, and those adhering to naturalism and the truthful depiction of everyday particularities ranked lowest.[87] Reynolds argued that artists should look to past masters as their models; and in his formal painted portraiture, pictorial allusions to Old Masters were used to elevate the sitter and imbue them with certain values.[88] Whereas printmaking was deemed a mechanical craft, with engravers only admitted to full membership of the Royal Academy of Arts in the mid-nineteenth century, painting was considered a learned, or "liberal" art.[89] *Copper-Bottom's Retreat* subverted these hierarchies. Though Forbes is represented in a graceful attitude repurposed from the biblical paintings of Raphael—an archetype of the highest academic genre—this "high" pictorial reference is located in a satirical print which depicts the local particularities of a specific place and event—relegating Forbes to a "low" pictorial rank.

While Diana Donald noted that high art "represented not the actual, but the desirable—men as they ought to be, not as they were", Marcia Pointon has highlighted "the importance of portraits as indicative of people's desires, as a part of a history of feeling and aspiration".[90] Reflecting Forbes's lofty social ambitions, the Raeburn portrait associates him with gentlemanly portraiture conventions defined in the seventeenth century by Anthony Van Dyck's portraits of King Charles I—the poise, swag of drapery, pillar, indoor–outdoor setting, and table displaying accoutrements of status—locating him within a composition closely comparable to Thomas Lawrence's contemporary full-length portrait of *King George III* (1792) (fig. 20).[91] In a further assertion of elite status, Forbes adopts a nonchalant crossed-legged pose, characteristic of eighteenth-century portraits of British gentry and aristocracy, typified by Pompeo Batoni's Grand Tour portrait of *George Gordon, Lord Haddo* (1775) (fig. 21).[92]

Figure 20

Thomas Lawrence, *George III*, 1792, oil on canvas, 276 × 175 cm. Collection of Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry (VA.1950.32.1) Digital image courtesy of Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry / Bridgeman Images (all rights reserved)

Figure 21

Pompeo Batoni, *George Gordon, Lord Haddo*, 1775, oil on canvas, 259 × 170.2 cm. Collection of National Trust for Scotland, Haddo House (79.6) Digital image courtesy of National Trust for Scotland (all rights reserved)

When Forbes enquired where best to hang his portrait, Raeburn suggested "the Little Drawing Room" to be a suitable location, believing "21 or 22 feet a sufficient distance for it to be viewed at" and advising it "be placed 5 feet from the floor".[93] This advice reiterates the scale of the portrait, and points to the grandeur of Callendar House, with even "the Little Drawing Room" large enough to accommodate such a work.[94] When represented in the high academic genre of painted portraiture, and displayed at such an elevated height, Forbes's contemporaries would be obliged to look up to him. And in stark contrast to the undignified disarray of *Copper-Bottom's Retreat*, Forbes now stands confident and relaxed, with one hand tucked casually into his waistcoat pocket, and appears an epitome of composure and control as he defiantly gazes directly at the viewer.[95]

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that Kay's portrait belongs to a pictorial satiric tradition which Haywood described as "highly self-referential and richly intervisual, constantly borrowing from and innovating upon existing prints".[96] Donald's London-centric study reported that "in a few cases, provincial shops were established which published their own caricatures in imitation of the London fashion"—citing "John Kay's in Edinburgh" as an example.[97] But while Kay's satirical portraits were produced in dialogue with those published in London, he adopted a somewhat different approach, locating natural likenesses of everyday individuals within monochromatic, non-grotesque satirical prints, which, though more subdued in their aesthetic, were highly personal in their attack. Kay constructed his satirical burlesques from deliberately selected print sources, each specific to his target, imaginatively adapting these in reference to local culture, and

reapplying them to topical events. Whereas *The Modern Hercules* mobilised imagery from classical mythology, mimicking Carlyle's own use of language, while engaging with his presentation in a contemporary satirical ballad; *Copper-Bottom's Retreat* utilised the high-cultural language of history painting and Shakespearean tragedy to mock the socially ambitious and overly dramatic Forbes.

Donald attributed the growth in visual literacy in 1780s London to conditioning "by two decades of art exhibitions and, more importantly, by the ever increasing sales of reproductive prints".[98] While annual exhibitions such as those at the Royal Academy in London would not take place in Edinburgh until the formation of the Incorporated Society of Artists in 1808, public exhibitions of paintings for sale were staged in Edinburgh venues such as the Royal Exchange and New Assembly Rooms throughout the 1780s.[99] Reproductive engravings after original Old Master paintings were advertised for sale from the 1750s, and by the 1780s the latest reproductive engravings from London were also readily available, as were the latest political prints.[100] Moreover, by 1797 Kay had been selling and publicly exhibiting his own satirical etchings for thirteen years, which can only have furthered the visual literacy of the Edinburgh print-viewing audience.

At its most basic level, Kay's printed image was designed to communicate the key elements of its humorous narrative without recourse to its complex visual allusions, facilitating a simplistic reading of the image. However, *Copper-Bottom's Retreat* is best understood not in isolation but in creative dialogue with contemporary Scottish theories of laughter, local topical affairs, prints after modern British and European Old Master history paintings, Shakespearean tragedy, local theatrical and circus performances, and Kay's own theatrical portraits. By referencing these diverse cultural sources, Kay permitted engagement with his image on multiple levels, potentially widening his audience, while adeptly exhibiting his own cultural prowess as a print connoisseur and practitioner. This challenges the suggestion that Kay's prints were "naïve" and "unsophisticated", demonstrating that the accepted presentation of John Kay as a footnote to London-centric histories of British graphic satire is no longer tenable.

Acknowledgements

About the author

**Wendy McGlashan **is an independent art historian, specializing in British art and print culture in the long eighteenth century. Currently focusing on Enlightenment Edinburgh, her research explores the intermediality of visual imagery, examining its exchanges with literature, ballads, theatre, politics, gendered propaganda, natural history, and taxonomy. The recipient of a Carnegie PhD

scholarship, she was awarded her doctorate in 2020, by the University of Aberdeen. She has articles in *Archives of Natural History* and forthcoming in the *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, and is now developing a book manuscript.

Footnotes

1. Kay's work was described as such in a letter from "Horatio" to the *Caledonian Mercury* (*CM*), Wednesday, 3 November 1784. For further analysis of the debate that followed, see Wendy McGlashan, "'A New Species of Liberty': John Kay's Edinburgh Portraits, 1781–1822" (PhD thesis, University of Aberdeen, 2020), 207–15.

2. See Hugh Paton, ed., *A Series of Original Portraits and Caricature Etchings by the Late John Kay, Miniature Painter, Edinburgh; With Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Hugh Paton, 1838), 2, 99. This controversy was stimulated by the publication of a satirical portrait picturing one Miss Crawford, the aristocratic daughter of Sir Hew Crawford, being pursued by the grocer Alexander Thomson, and Kay commented that this print caused "great excitement at the time".

3. "Scottish Book Trade Index (SBTI): John Kay (engraver and miniature painter; Edinburgh)", National Library of Scotland, https://data.cerl.org/sbti/003720. Accessed 8 June 2022. For further analysis of the contemporary responses generated by Kay's prints, see McGlashan, "A New Species", 214–33.

4. Hugh Paton, *The Works of the Edinburgh Caricaturist, the Late John Kay* (Edinburgh: Hugh Paton, 1837), iv.

5. Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 204 (n. 157); 203 (n. 110).

6. Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007), 632 (n. 21). For similar comment on the mildness of Kay's satire, see, for example: Hilary and Mary Evans, *John Kay of Edinburgh: Barber, Miniaturist and Social Commentator 1742–1826* (Aberdeen: Impulse Publications, 1973), 27; Albert Morris, *Kay's Capital Characters* (Edinburgh: Pentland Associates, 1995), 5; Nick Prior, "Urban Portraits: Space/Body/City in Late Georgian Edinburgh", *New Formations* 47 (2002): 205; Iain Gordon Brown, *One City in Its Time: Views of Edinburgh in the Age of Enlightenment* (Glasgow: Scottish Records Association, 2008), 103. The formation of Kay's posthumous reputation is fully discussed in McGlashan, "A New Species".

7. Duncan Thomson and Lynne Gladstone-Millar, *The Skating Minister: The Story Behind the Painting* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 2004), 58–59.

8. Ian Haywood, *Romanticism and Caricature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 5. Haywood promotes the close reading of caricature, subjecting it to the type of "intensive analysis … normally accorded to 'serious' works of art". Such close reading is also found in David Francis Taylor, *The Politics of Parody: A Literary History of Caricature, 1760–1830* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018).

9. Francis Hutcheson, *Reflections Upon Laughter, and Remarks Upon The Fable of the Bees* (Glasgow, 1750), 7.

10. For discussion of the burlesque in graphic satire in London, see Donald, *The Age*, 67–73.

11. John Hill Burton, ed., *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle, Minister of Inveresk; Containing Memorials of the Men and Events of His Time* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1860), 555–58.

12. Alexander Carlyle, "Prologue. By a Friend [spoken by Mr Lee]", in Samuel Hart, *Herminius and Espasia: A Tragedy. As It Was Acted at the Theatre in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Printed for the author; and sold by G. Hamilton & J. Balfour, 1754). See Paton, *Original Portraits*, Vol. 1, 67; Richard B. Sher, "Carlyle, Alexander (1722–1805)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2008.

13. Paton, *Original Portraits*, Vol. 1, 66. See Richard B. Sher, *Church and the University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), 74–92; Thome Compton, "Adam Ferguson and John Witherspoon in 'Satan's Seminary': Douglas, the Critics, and Moral Philosophy", *Studies in Scottish Literature* 18:1 (1983), https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol18/iss1/12.

14. James Beattie, *Essay on Laughter, and Ludicrous Composition* (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1776), 375; Donald, *The Age*, 67.

15. See: BM 1851,0901.138; BM 1868,0808.6474; NPG D12599. See also, Kate Heard, *High Spirits: The Comic Art of Thomas Rowlandson* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2013), 66.

16. This difference in approach is further illustrated by Kay's re-characterisation of Henry Dundas in *Patent for Knighthood* (1792) (BM 1937,1108.98), in which he reworks Gillray's *Wha Wants Me* (1792) (BM J,4.41) to satirise the corruption of Dundas and Edinburgh Town Council, replacing William Pitt with Lord Provost James Stirling.

17. "Introduction to Forbes of Callendar Papers", Falkirk Archives (hereafter, FA), https://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/learning/archives/finding-aids. Accessed 8 June 2022; Duncan Thomson, *Raeburn: The Art of Sir Henry Raeburn, 1756–1823* (Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1997), 116; R.J.B. Knight, "The Introduction of Copper Sheathing into the Royal Navy, 1779–1786", *The Mariner's Mirror* 59 (1973): 303.

18. R. Martello, *Midnight Ride, Industrial Dawn: Paul Revere and the Growth of American Enterprise* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010), 219–20; J.R. Harris, "Copper and Shipping in the Eighteenth Century", *The Economic History Review* 19, no. 3 (1966): 552.

19. Knight, "The Introduction", 303; Martello, *Midnight*, 220.

20. Knight, "The Introduction", 303.

21. Knight, "The Introduction", 304.

22. Harris, "Copper", 557.

23. Harris, "Copper", 559; Knight, "The Introduction", 306.

24. Harris, "Copper", 307.

25. *CM*, Saturday, 9 August 1783; "Our History", Callendar Estate, https://www.callendarestate.co.uk/history. Accessed 8 June 2022.

26. "Our History", Callendar Estate, https://www.callendarestate.co.uk/history. Accessed 8 June 2022.

27. John Abercrombie to William Forbes, 23 August 1783, Forbes of Callendar Papers, Part 1, William Forbes, 1747–1815 (hereafter, Forbes of Callendar Papers 1), FA, A727/118/36; Paton, *Original Portraits*, Vol. 2, 107.

28. "Edward Barwell Brasier", Dictionary of Scottish Architects, http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=407944. Accessed 8 June 2022; "Callendar Park", Historic Environment Scotland, http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/GDL00078. Accessed 8 June 2022. For more on the fashion for Coade stone, see Alison Kelly, "Coade Stone in Georgian Gardens", *Garden History* 16, no. 2 (1988): 109–33.

29. Mr. John Madinae, Memorandum of Original Paintings, 15 August 1789, Forbes of Callendar Papers 1, FA, A727/359/9. Forbes purchased sixteen paintings from the Edinburgh sale of the picture collection of the late Walter Ross, writer to the signet, antiquary, and patron of the arts. See: List of Paintings Bought from John Ross, 14 August 1789, Forbes of Callendar Papers, Part 9, Callendar and Almond Estates, FA, A727/2343/13; *CM*, 30 July 1789; *CM*, 1 August 1789.

30. Kenneth J. Logue, *Popular Disturbances in Scotland 1780–1815* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1979), 75–77; J.E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation 1793–1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 133–34, 138–40; Brian Bonnyman, *The Third Duke of Buccleuch and Adam Smith: Estate Management and Improvement in Enlightenment Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 175.

31. Commission and Instructions by Duke of Montrose as Lieutenant of Stirling, to William Forbes of Callendar, as a Deputy Lieutenant, August 1794, Forbes of Callendar Papers, Part 8, Papers on Stirlingshire Administration, FA, A727/1976; Bonnyman, *The Third Duke*, 175; Cookson, *The British*, 134; Logue, *Popular*, 77.

32. J. McGowan, *Policing the Metropolis in Scotland, A History of Police and Systems of Police in Edinburgh and Edinburghshire, 1770–1833* (Musselburgh: Turlough Publishers, 2012), 84; Atle Wold, *Scotland and the French Revolutionary War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 88.

33. Logue, *Popular*, 81; Wold, *Scotland*, 90; Bob Harris, *The Scottish People and the French Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2008), 169.

34. Logue, *Popular*, 81; Paton, *Original Portraits*, Vol. 2, 107.

35. Logue, *Popular*, 81; Paton, *Original Portraits*, Vol. 2, 107.

36. Logue, *Popular*, 81; Paton, *Original Portraits*, Vol. 2, 107.

37. *Staffordshire Advertiser*, Saturday, 2 September 1797; *Cambridge Intelligencer*, Saturday, 2 September 1797. This report is said to be taken from an Edinburgh paper, and also to have appeared in some of the London papers.

38. Michael Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2005), 57–85. For eighteenth-century theories of laughter, see also, John Morreall, *Taking Laughter Seriously* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983); Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 159-77; Kate Davison, "'Plainly of Considerable Moment in Human Society': Francis Hutcheson and Polite Laughter in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland", *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 88 (2020): 143–69, DOI:10.1017/S1358246120000132.

39. Davison, "Plainly", 146; Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule*, 58–61.

40. Hutcheson, *Reflections*, 6.

41. Hutcheson, *Reflections*, 27.

42. Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, Vol. 1 (London: A. Millar, 1762), 338.

43. Hutcheson, *Reflections*, 19.

44. Hutcheson, *Reflections*, 21.

45. Hutcheson, *Reflections*, 22; Kames, *Elements*, Vol. 1, 340.

46. Kames, *Elements*, Vol. 1, 340.

47. Kames, *Elements*, Vol. 1, 340; Beattie, *On Laughter*, 385.

48. Allan Ramsay, *An Essay on Ridicule* (London: A Millar, 1753), 69, 72–73.

49. Hutcheson, *Reflections*, 7.

50. The audience for Georgian graphic satire is a subject of debate in the field. For a recent overview, see James Baker, *The Business of Satirical Prints in Late-Georgian England* (Palgrave Studies in the History of the Media, 2017), 3–8 and Taylor, *The Politics*, 24–26. Taylor highlights the intermediality of graphic satire, arguing that it "is not a 'universal language', and it invites not the glance but the educated gaze".

51. Arline Meyer, *Apostles in England: Sir James Thornhill & the Legacy of Raphael's Tapestry Cartoons* (New York: Columbia University, 1996), 18.

52. Meyer, *Apostles*, 18.

53. Jonathan Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (London: W. Bowyer, 1715); George Turnbull, *A Treatise on Ancient Painting* (London: A Millar, 1740), 14.

54. Kay's earliest frontispiece portrait appears to be that published in Gavin Wilson's *Collection of Masonic Songs and Entertaining Anecdotes *(1788), in which year William Creech noted in the preface to his *Account of the Trial of William Brodie and George Smith* that Kay "has lately begun to miniature painting". The inclusion of a printed book illustration and a painted portrait miniature on Kay's worktable thus suggest a date of circa 1788 for this undated work. See McGlashan, "A New Species", 79–86. The influence of *Characters and Caricaturas* is also evident in Kay's *Dr James Graham Lecturing in Edinburgh* (1785) (BM 1935,0522.13.7) and *A Sleepy Congregation* (1785) (BM 1937,1108.39). See McGlashan, "A New Species", 85–86, 100, 117, 133, 194, 204, 334–35.

55. Stana Nenadic, "Print Collecting and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland", *The Historical Association* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997): 203.

56. On 12 July 1799, William Martin's saleroom hosted a sale of "A Collection of Ancient and Modern Paintings and Prints, Belonging to Mr John Kay, Miniature Painter". A catalogue was published by William Bruce and Sons, suggesting that the size of the collection offered for sale was significant, but it seems that this catalogue is now unfortunately lost. See *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 11 July 1799.

57. For print sales, see advertisements in the *CM*, for instance: James Sibbald, "Ancient and Modern Prints", Monday, 26 May 1783; Robert Jameson, "New Prints and Stationary", 30 August 1783; Mr Laurie's Auction Room, "Prints and Paintings After the greatest masters ancient and modern, viz. Rubins, Raphael […] &c.", Saturday, 3 February 1787. For the lending of prints, see Sibbald, "A New Catalogue of the Edinburgh Circulating Library", *CM*, Monday, 1 December 1783; Sibbald, *A New Catalogue of the Edinburgh Circulating Library: Containing Twenty Thousand Volumes, English French, and Italian* (Edinburgh: James Sibbald, 1786); Thomas Brown, "Print and Drawing Material Shop", *CM*, Thursday, 27 September 1787. Kay's first print shop was situated "near the Cross" and was thus located within this print-selling hub. See SBTI.

58. Engravings after the Raphael cartoons were advertised by Sibbald in the *CM*, Monday, 26 May 1783. Further prints after Raphael were advertised by Sibbald, William Martin, Alexander Jamieson, Henry Farquharson, and others. See, for example *CM*, Monday, 10 March 1783; Saturday, 12 August 1786; Thursday 29 May 1788; Thursday, 9 April 1795; Saturday, 13 May 1797. See also "Catalogue of Prints to be Sold at Auction by T. Philipe" (Edinburgh, 1779). A copy exists in the Papers of Clerk family of Penicuik, Midlothian, NRS, GD18/4681.

59. David Allan, *The Connoisseurs*, National Galleries of Scotland, https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/29632/connoisseurs-john-caw-died-1784-john-bonar-1747–1807-and-james-bruce. Accessed 8 June 2022.

60. David Allan, *The Connoisseurs*.

61. Nenadic, "Print Collecting", 209.

62. Paton, *Original Portraits*, Vol. 1, 411, 413.

63. *The Conversion of Saul* is the sixth of Raphael's ten *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries, but one of three cartoons absent from Hampton Court. Taking into account the wide range of prints after Raphael that were circulating in Edinburgh at this time, it seems feasible that Kay would have known Sorelló's print.

64. The Bible, Acts 9:1–6.

65. The composition of audiences at contemporary patent theatres is discussed in Jim Davis, "Spectatorship" in Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 57.

66. *CM*, Thursday, 19 February 1795.

67. BM 1935,0522.17.3. See Alan R. Young, *Hamlet and the Visual Arts, 1709–1900* (London: Associated University Press, 2002), 174.

68. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 2, Scene 1: 89–94.

69. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 2, Scene 1: 109–10.

70. *Staffordshire Advertiser*, Saturday, 2 September 1797; *Cambridge Intelligencer*, Saturday, 2 September 1797.

71. "Memoirs of the Life and Principal Works of the Late Joseph Wright, Esq. of Derby", *The Monthly Magazine, and British Register* (October 1797), 289–94. This was reprinted in the *Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany* in November 1797.

72. "Memoirs of the Life", 291.

73. "Memoirs of the Life", 291.

74. For a dedicated study of Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, see Rosie Dias, *Exhibiting Englishness: John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and the Formation of a National Aesthetic* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).

75. Shearer West, "Shakespeare and the Visual Arts", in Fiona Ritchie and Peter Sabor, eds., *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 244.

76. West, "Shakespeare", 243–44.

77. West, "Shakespeare", 244.

78. I would like to thank Dr. James Harriman-Smith, lecturer in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature at Newcastle University for bringing this connection to my attention.

79. Taylor, *The Politics*, 5; BM 1868,0808.6274.

80. Taylor, *The Politics*, 5–7.

81. Fragment of an Advertisement for a Fireworks Circus, Forbes of Callendar Papers 1, FA, A727.468/8.

82. *CM*, Monday, 30 July 1792.

83. *CM*, Saturday, 18 February 1797. For further discussion of the use of theatrical titles in eighteenth-century satirical prints, see Taylor, *The Politics*, 18.

84. This print is in the collection of the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh, where a handwritten inscription identifies the subject as "Mr Francis Sitwell". For further discussion of this work, see McGlashan, "A New Species", 95–100.

85. NPG D3447. See Paton, *Original Portraits*, Vol. 2, 289–90; McGlashan, "A New Species", 224–26.

86. Thomson, *Raeburn*, 116; Receipt signed by Henry Raeburn respecting Forbes's portrait, 19 May 1798, Forbes of Callendar Papers, Part 9, Callendar and Almond Estates, FA,

A727/2446/37; Receipt for carriage of a Picture from Edinburgh, 24 May 1798, Forbes of Callendar Papers 9, A727/2446/48.

87. Reynold's presidential Discourses were delivered at the Royal Academy between 1769 and 1790. See Robert Wark, ed., *Sir Joshua Reynolds, Discourses on Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975).

88. For Reynolds's portraiture, see Mark Hallett, *Reynolds: Portraiture in Action* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014).

89. Holger Hoock, *The King's Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture 1760–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 32–34.

90. Donald, *The Age*, p. 28; Marcia Pointon, *Portrayal and the Search for Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 21.

91. For the continuing influence of Van Dyck in Britain, see Karen Hearn, ed., *Van Dyck & Britain* (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), 204–34; Hallett, *Reynolds*, 105–108.

92. A similar pose is found in Batoni's portraits of John, Lord Mounstuart, later 1st Marquess of Bute (1767; The Bute Collection at Mount Stuart) and Douglas, 8th Duke of Hamilton (1776; private collection). See Viccy Coltman, *Art and Identity in Scotland: A Cultural History from the Jacobite Rising of 1745 to Walter Scott* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 23–61.

93. Thomson, *Raeburn*, 116; Robert Buchan to William Forbes, 20 July 1798, Forbes of Callendar Papers 1, FA, A727/631/13.

94. Thomson, *Raeburn*, 116.

95. Thomson, *Raeburn*, 116.

96. Haywood, *Romanticism*, 9–10.

97. Donald, *The Age*, 20, 204 (n. 157).

98. Donald, *The Art*, 67.

99. For the Incorporated Society of Artists, see Duncan Forbes, "Art and Anxiety in Enlightenment Edinburgh: The Society of Incorporated Artists, 1808–1813", *Scotia*, Vol. 21 (1997): 1–18. For the public exhibition of paintings in Edinburgh, see *CM*, Wednesday, 28 June 1786; Monday, 12 May 1788; Monday, 13 July 1789.

100. Engravings by the Scottish engraver Robert Strange, after allegorical works by Guido Reni and Andrea Sacchi, were advertised in *CM*, Monday, 13 January 1755. For the availability of contemporary London prints, see the advertisements placed in *CM* by printsellers such as Sibbald. On Monday, 18 November 1782 alone Sibbald advertised engravings after "the admired paintings of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Romney, West, Copley, Angelica Kauffman, Cipriani, Dance, Gainsborough, Zoffanii, Zuccarelli, Wright, Begg, Walton, Paton, Serres, Stubbs, Bunbury, and other eminent painters, ancient as well as modern". Among the "NEW PRINTS" advertised by Sibbald on Monday, 7 April 1783 were included "a great number of Political Prints".

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