

David Hume's Tomb: a Roman mausoleum by Robert Adam

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ABSTRACT

Robert Adam's designs for the mausoleum of the philosopher and historian David Hume (1711–76) are examined in the context of the social and cultural history of Enlightenment Edinburgh. Sources for the various designs of 1777, which are arranged by distinct types, are suggested, and the possible Roman inspiration for that finally selected is discussed. The site in the Old Calton Burying Ground, Edinburgh, is commented upon, and attention is paid to the Hume mausoleum as an object of curiosity for tourists interested in the Scottish picturesque. The history of the monument since its construction is traced; changes to the building are noted; the ways in which the tomb was depicted by topographical artists are described; and allusions to the mausoleum in literature are included by way of illumination of the changing attitudes to Hume and his religious beliefs.

INTRODUCTION

Within this circular Idea,
Called vulgarly a Tomb,
The Impressions and Ideas rest
That constituted Hume.

The monument which Robert Adam designed in 1777 to house the mortal remains of his friend David Hume, and for which an Edinburgh wit later suggested this *jeu d'esprit* as a whimsical epitaph,¹ was a fitting tribute by Scotland's greatest architect to Scotland's greatest philosopher.

For a man of letters at the very centre of the European intellectual world, another great luminary of the Scottish Enlightenment had designed a mausoleum which was itself central to the classical tradition of European funerary architecture; and this monument was set in what was, in the course of time, to become the acropolis of the Modern Athens, or Scotland's national Valhalla on Calton Hill. The connection, symbolized in this single small building, between these two major figures of the Enlightenment – pillars of the mighty edifice that was Scotland's 18th-century cultural achievement – may be seen as a paradigm of Scotland's place at the very forefront of European taste and thought. This article is written in the belief that architectural historians may not have been fully conscious of the literary and cultural context of a building which today is seen as a distinguished example of neo-classical design, but which was to contemporaries a monument of particular significance for other reasons (*illus 1*). I hope

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ILLUS 1 Hume mausoleum, Old Calton Burying Ground, Edinburgh, by Robert Adam, 1777
(Photo: Joe Rock)

to show that the mausoleum became an object of interest on the developing Scottish picturesque tour and, more particularly, that the Hume tomb may be taken as a symbol of special relevance to students of the Scottish Enlightenment as the shrine of Reason and as a microcosm of the interrelation of the arts and learning of the age. Furthermore, it is probable that cultural historians (who may appreciate the tomb's wider significance) may not have been aware of the architectural sources of the building, nor the evolution of its design.

HUME'S DEATH AND BURIAL

The manner of Hume's death in August 1776, and his attitude to its approach, intrigued his contemporaries and has continued to fascinate historians to this day. This fact alone further

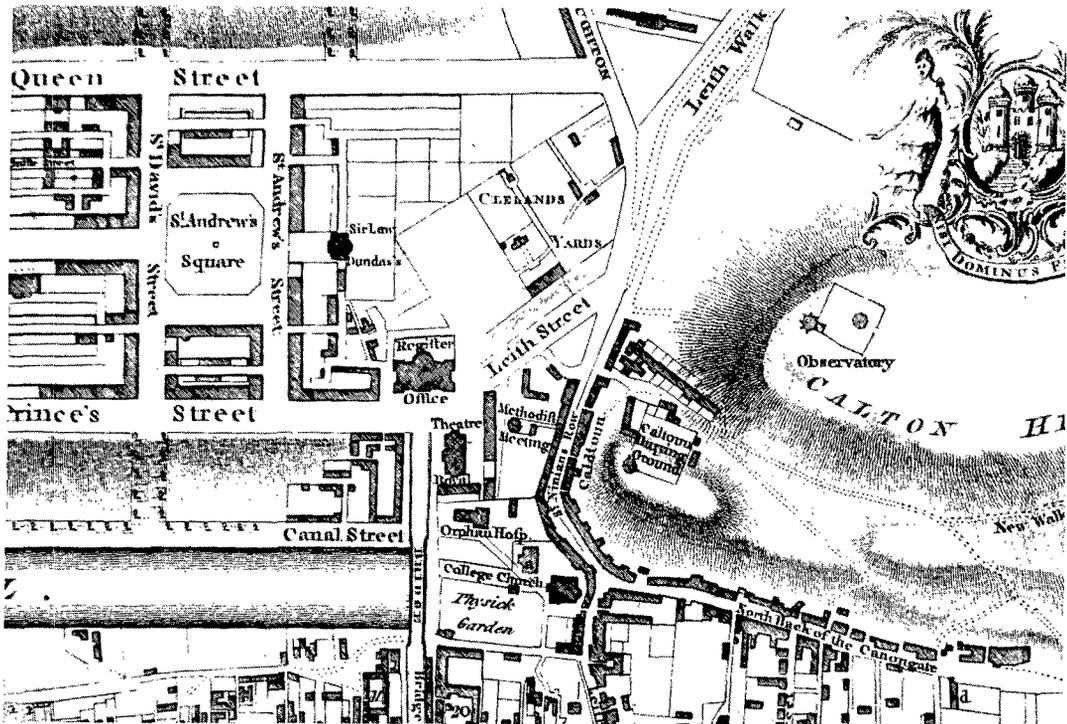
adds importance to the study of his funerary monument. Public interest in his death centred on the philosophical tranquillity with which he faced his end, and on what he himself called his detachment from life as he contemplated his dissolution. In his remarkable autobiography, *My Own Life*, which in its later passages changes to the past tense, as if the author were already dead, Hume accepted the realization that his fame was assured as he knew that his 'literary Reputation's breaking out at last with additional Lustre' coincided with a terminal illness.² Contemporary – and subsequent – opinion swung between admiration of the philosopher's Roman stoicism, and revulsion from his atheism. Boswell, for instance, who had (in typical fashion) skulked behind a wall in the graveyard to see Hume buried,³ expressed himself shocked 'to think of [Hume's] persisting in Infidelity. My notion is that he had by long study in one view, brought a stupor upon his mind as to futurity. . . . What a blessing it is to have a constant faith in the Christian Revelation!'⁴

Writing from Paris to (Sir) Gilbert Elliot in 1764, Hume expressed his disillusion at the lack of patronage and recognition afforded him by his countrymen: 'I have been accustom'd to meet with nothing but Insults & Indignities from my native Country: But if it continue so, ingrata patria, ne ossa quidem habebis.'⁵ Elliot replied thus: 'As to *Ingrata patria ne ossa quidem habebis*. Dont be at all uneasie . . . notwithstanding all your errors mistakes & Heresys, in Religion Morals, & Government, I undertake you shall have at least Christian Burial, & perhaps we may find for you a niche in Westminster Abey [*sic*] . . .'.⁶ In the end Hume the atheist returned to live and die content in Edinburgh, and his native land did indeed claim his bones; whereas the architect of his mausoleum was himself buried in Westminster Abbey.

In the year of his death Hume drew up his will. A codicil detailed his wishes in respect of his burial: 'I also ordain that, if I shall dye any where in Scotland, I shall be bury'd in a private manner in the Calton Church Yard, the South Side of it, and a Monument be built over my Body at an Expencc not exceeding a hundred Pounds, with an Inscription containing only my Name with the Year of my Birth and Death, leaving it to Posterity to add the Rest.'⁷ Lest the mention of a 'church yard' in connection with Hume strike a discordant note, it should be pointed out that the great atheist had simply made a mistake in his terminology: no church was associated with the ground of his choice, and indeed the location was as secular as could be found in 18th-century Edinburgh. To quote Hume's first biographer: 'He was buried in a rocky spot, which he had purchased in the Calton burying ground; and, agreeably to his will, a plain monument was afterwards erected on the place of his interment.'⁸ What is now known as the Old Calton Burying Ground, itself bisected by the present Waterloo Place, occupies the south-western spur of Calton Hill. The locality once called McNeill's Craigs was used as an additional town cemetery from 1719, the burying ground being extended in 1767, that year which was the birthdate of the First New Town, which subsequently developed from east to west. The Calton graveyard became the natural place of interment associated with this expansion of Edinburgh. On 29 February 1776 a 'lair' four yards by five was bought by Hume for £4, and in 1778 additional ground was acquired by John Hume of Ninewells, the philosopher's elder brother and heir, to allow construction of the monument⁹ (illus 2).

LOCATION OF THE MONUMENT, AND CHOICE OF ARCHITECT

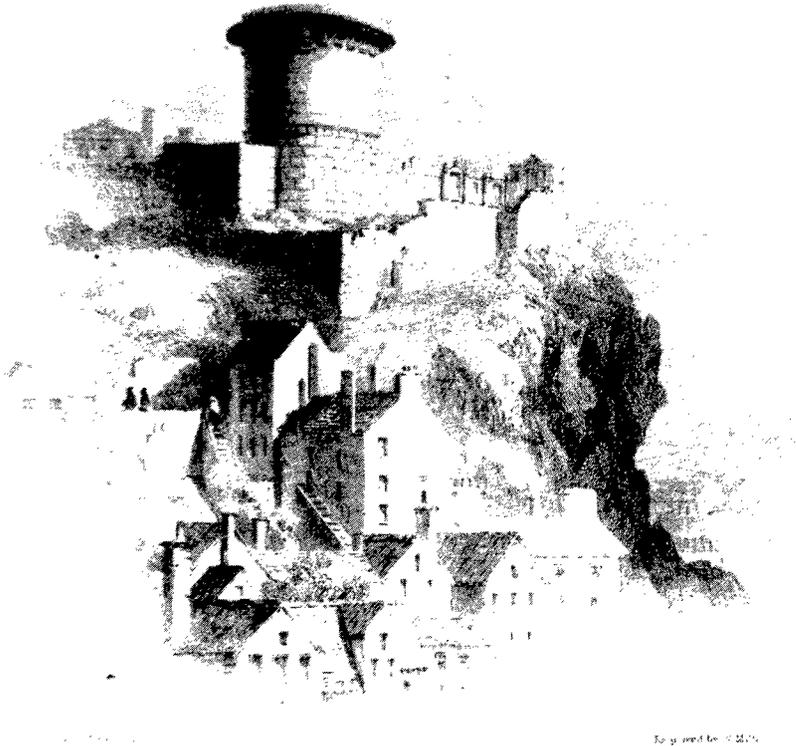
The site was a dramatic one – more so in the 18th century than since, when the Hume tomb came to be surrounded by subsequent development, and encroached upon by later monuments – and Adam's building exploited the picturesque possibilities of the topography.



ILLUS 2 The circular mausoleum and its spur walls, which join the boundary wall of the Calton graveyard; detail from map in Hugo Arnot, *History of Edinburgh* (1779) (Photo: NLS)

Hume's friend George Wallace early recognized the potential of 'a monument on that airy elevated cemetery, which, on account of a magnificent terrace now carried round the hill, is greatly frequented, [and which] will be extremely conspicuous, and must often call his name to remembrance'.¹⁰ (In an interesting example of the way that, in the popular imagination, the names of famous men are attached unwarrantedly to ordinary objects and events, the laying out of this very terrace or walk to which Wallace had referred was, within four years, attributed to 'the late ingenious David Hume' himself.¹¹) Adam will have approved of Hume's choice of burial place, and of the opportunity thereby afforded of constructing a monument on the craggy south-west edge of the Calton mass overlooking the valley where now is Waverley station. A building here would have the effect of being an eye-catcher for the spectator looking out from the Old Town, and would add an evocative and picturesque note to the prospect (illus 3). On the evidence of a romantic composition among the Adam drawings in Sir John Soane's Museum, London (Adam Volume [AV] 2/50), the Hume tomb was either the realization of an earlier idea in the architect's mind for a folly-like building in this place; or else it was, once constructed, the actual prototype of the fantasy structure which, in this drawing, occupies the same site – a domed, open, colonnaded rotunda with flanking lodges – which exploits well the situation on the edge of the beetling cliff above an elaborate bridge leading eastwards from Princes Street across St Ninian's Row and the Low Calton.

David Hume had been a loyal and long-standing friend of the Adam family; and so it was natural that Robert Adam should be the man chosen to design the philosopher's monument. Architect and philosopher held each other in mutual regard. Writing from Rome to his sister



ILLUS 3 Hume mausoleum. from an engraving after a drawing by Alexander Nasmyth
(Photo: Edinburgh City Libraries)

Peggy in 1755, Robert described the reception by his Italian acquaintances of Hume's essays, and most recently the first volume of his *History of England*, which were in 'great repute': 'The last I am not so much surprizd at as it favours a party protected by this country, but the first I own I did not imagine till I found on inquiring the Misbelievers about Rome are not few in number, which soon removed all my wondering.'¹² Hume, for his part, once, when writing to the Comtesse de Boufflers of a meeting with a French architect to whom he had given an introduction to Adam, took the opportunity to describe Robert as 'a man of genius, and allowed to be the best architect in this country, and perhaps in Europe'.¹³ On another occasion Hume wrote of his old friends: 'That Family is one of the few to whose Civilities I have been much beholden, and I retain a lively Sense of them.'¹⁴ And Hume was to show steady concern for all the Adam brothers in their repeated financial difficulties of the 1760s and 1770s.¹⁵ However, it must be said that there is no evidence to show how, and by whom, Robert Adam was chosen to design the mausoleum. All we know is that in 1777 several different designs were prepared, and that of these one was preferred to the rest. One of the drawings in the Soane Museum, is inscribed 'This was the one most approved of. Feb^y 1777'; and this drawing bears a close resemblance to the monument as built in 1778, though, as we shall see, many alterations to the fabric were made in the century or so after its original construction.

Other questions remain unanswered. Apart from one family letter, quoted below, we

have no details of the actual building of the mausoleum. We do not know who was the mason, nor how much construction cost, though this must without doubt have exceeded by a considerable amount the sum set aside by Hume in his will. Did his family, therefore, contribute the extra; or was there, perhaps, some subscription set in course among his friends, a circumstance not difficult to imagine in the case of a man so widely respected? However, on this last point, we have no documentary evidence to confirm what must remain merely conjecture. But Hume was a very rich man by the standards of the literary success of his day, and his estate could well have borne the additional cost of a tomb which was still massive and expensive even when stripped of some of the details and niceties of Adam's design.

The most intriguing question, indeed, relates to this matter of the selection of the most appropriate scheme. By whom was the design approved? Does it reflect the taste of Hume's heirs, family and friends? Does it represent what they considered would have been pleasing to him? Or does it represent the result of some expression of Hume's own wishes, otherwise unrecorded? Did Hume, indeed, care enough about architecture to be interested in whatever style of tomb he had? One of his biographers observes that Hume was indifferent to architecture, and to the visual arts in general. Hume gives in his writings no evidence of his taste. He did not care, for instance, what his own house looked like; what mattered was that it was cosy and convenient: 'books and people claimed his interest'. However Greig states categorically that Hume certainly had no liking for the Gothic; and that by his use of the term 'genteel' we are to understand that he meant something 'classical'.¹⁶ To his contemporaries, and in the eyes of the succeeding generation, there was no doubt that his funerary monument was classical in inspiration. Hugo Arnot, in a work published the year after the tomb was built, described it as being 'in the Greek taste' (his words being copied by subsequent topographical writers);¹⁷ but we recognize that his usage was imprecise and that he meant simply classical, or (more exactly) Roman. Hume himself had never seen Rome, and his personal experience of 'Classic ground' had been confined to a brief foray into northern Italy where, at Mantua, he boasted of having 'Kist the Earth that produc'd Virgil'.¹⁸ To the inspiration of the various designs, and the sources of the one finally executed, we shall presently turn; but first the designs themselves must be described.

THE DESIGN OF THE MAUSOLEUM

The differences in the designs are all within fairly narrow parameters: they are not the distinctions as, for example, between a monument in the form of a pyramid and one in the form of a Doric column. All have a common element in a cylindrical upper stage, this treated in differing manner, which is raised on a base of differing form; and, in all the designs, tribute is paid to the spirit of Antiquity, for the tomb is conceived in the style of an antique monument. Indeed, in Adam's various drawings the stonework of the mausoleum is shown as worn and weathered, especially around the joints and at the cornice, as if the building were already old. It remains uncertain whether the architect's intention was actually to use artificially weathered masonry, and so to construct something that would have the appearance of an antiquity: several of Adam's designs for bridges, one of which is described as being 'in imitation of the Aqueducts of the Ancients', incorporate masonry in a similar 'pre-antiqued' or 'ready-ruined' state.

In the course of the present study I have been able to dismiss from consideration one drawing in the Soane Museum which has been thought to relate to the Hume commission (AV 21/192, for a tablet surmounted by an urn, a composition clearly intended to be located on a

wall); and to add to the list of relevant drawings one which was previously uncatalogued as such.

It is possible to classify the known drawings for the Hume mausoleum – all in the collection of the Soane Museum, together with one in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh – as belonging to six types. I set out these below, with brief notes.

TYPE I

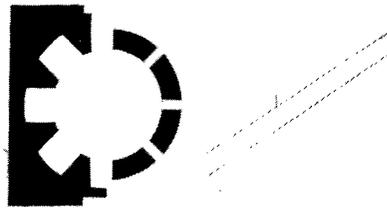
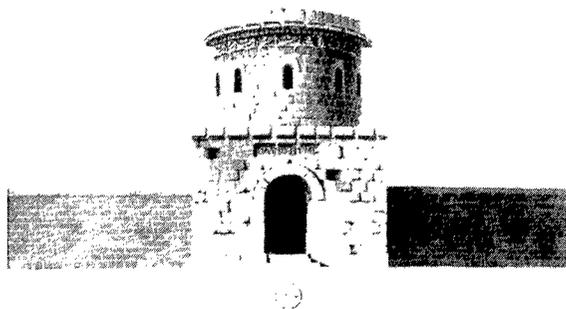
Soane Mus. AV 19/76 left: highly finished; pen, ink & grey wash over pencil; 439 × 625 mm (these measurements are for a sheet bearing two drawings).

Soane Mus. AV 19/84 left: highly finished; pen, ink & grey wash over pencil; 406 × 622 mm (sheet of two drawings) (illus 4).

Soane Mus. AV 19/77 left: not worked up; pen & ink; 437 × 622 mm (sheet of two drawings).

None of the drawings bears a date or gives measurements, but the scale of AV 19/76 is smaller than the other two.

A cylinder, the drum pierced by eight narrow round-headed windows, is raised upon a square base. Two steps lead to a simple round-arched door over which there is a tablet bearing the inscription DAVID HUME. The drum has a modillion cornice and a frieze of swags, *bucrania*



ILLUS 4 Adam's Type I design: Sir John Soane's Museum, AV 19/ 84 (left) (Photo: RCAHMS)

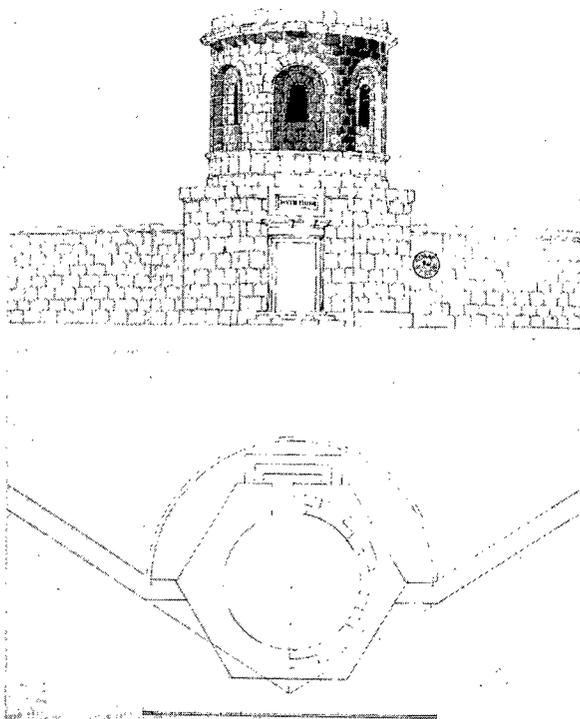
and *paterae*. The masonry is represented as if in decay, worn and weathered and with parts of the frieze and cornice missing, the drum fissured and some stones of the base out of alignment. The monument is set within the re-entrant angle of the graveyard wall, and a railing is shown describing a semicircle around the front of the square lower stage. The door leads to a circular burial vault within the square lower stage which has *loculi* to contain coffins: *loculi* do not feature in drawings for the other types.

TYPE II

Soane Mus. AV 19/78 left: fine, but not worked up; pen & ink, with addition of wash on drum; 436 × 620 mm (sheet of two drawings) (illus 5).

NGS D4801/z/41: highly finished; pencil, pen & grey wash; 266 × 323 mm; elevation only. Inscribed: 'Another Design of a Monument for the late David Hume Esq' (illus 6).

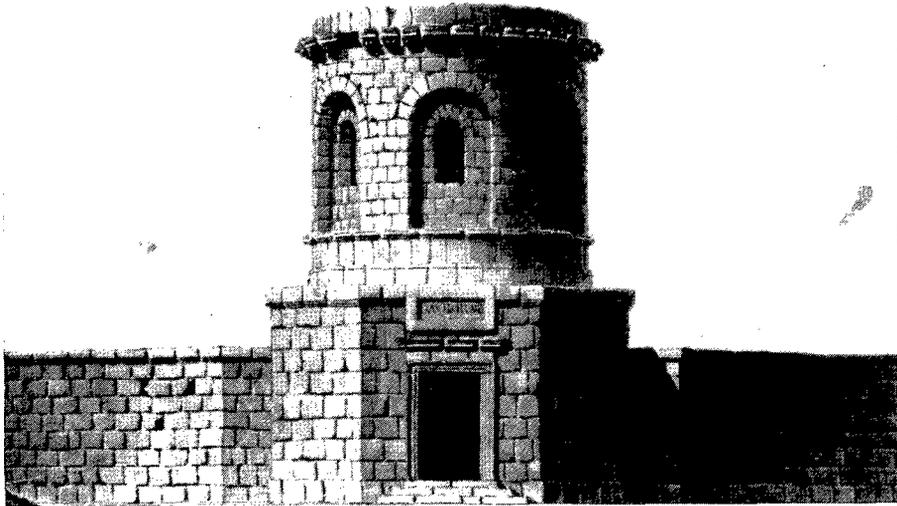
A cylinder, the drum pierced by six round-headed windows set within relieving arches, raised upon a hexagonal base, entered by a square-headed corniced door with moulded architrave over which there is a tablet bearing the inscription DAVID HUME. Two steps lead up to the door. In the Soane drawing the drum has a plain cornice, but this feature is dentilled in the NGS design. There is no frieze. As in Type I, the masonry is represented as in decay. On either side of the lower storey of the monument are short spur-walls which connect with the graveyard wall itself.



ILLUS 5 Adam's Type II design: Sir John Soane's Museum, AV 19/ 78 (left) (Photo: RCAHMS)

Further Design of a Monument for the late David Hume Esq.

B



ILLUS 6 Adam's Type II design, variant: National Gallery of Scotland, D4801/z/41 (Photo: NGS)

TYPE III

Soane Mus. AV 21/19: pen & ink sketch; 315 × 242 mm; elevation only (illus 7).

Uncatalogued by Bolton, and identified among the drawings in a volume containing designs for castellated buildings.

A cylinder, pierced by eight square-headed windows set within flat-backed relieving arches, upon an octagonal lower stage with, up three steps, a door and inscriptional tablet (very faintly inscribed in pencil DA. HUME), similar to Type II. The conceit of the building as antique is conveyed by the heavy overgrowth of vegetation.

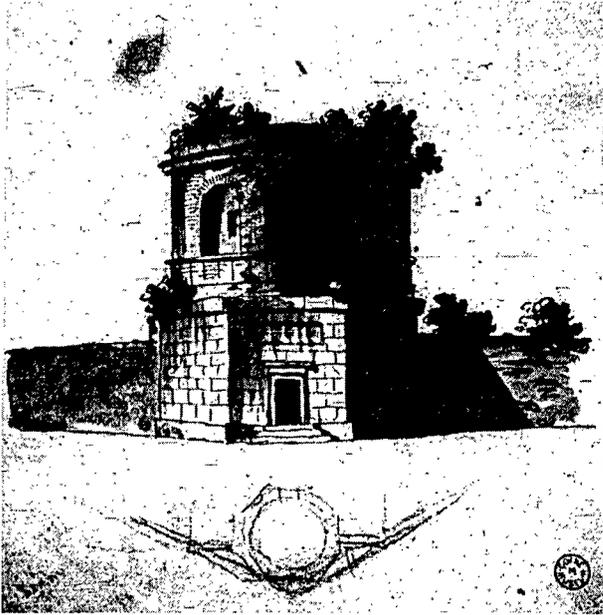
TYPE IV

Soane Mus. AV 19/76 right: highly finished; pen, ink & grey wash over pencil; 439 × 625 mm (sheet of two drawings) (illus 8).

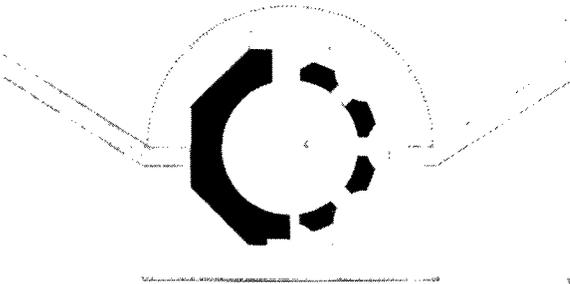
Soane Mus. AV 19/84 right: highly finished; pen, ink & grey wash over pencil; 406 × 622 mm (sheet of two drawings).

Soane Mus. AV 19/77 right: fine, but not worked up; pen & ink; 437 × 622 mm (sheet of two drawings); bears date 'Feb^y 1777'.

A cylinder, pierced by eight round-headed windows recessed in round-headed niches, raised on an octagonal base, with entrance door and inscriptional tablet as in Type II, though



ILLUS 7 Adam's Type III design: Sir John Soane's Museum, AV 21/ 19 (Photo: Soane Museum)



ILLUS 8 Adam's Type IV design: Sir John Soane's Museum, AV 19/ 76 (right) (Photo: RCAHMS)

with lower-case lettering on AV 19/84. Two steps lead up to the door. Cornice and other masonry shown in feigned decay. No frieze. Spur-walls as in Type II; semicircular railing surrounds elevation towards graveyard.

TYPE V

Soane Mus. AV 21/187: pen and ink sketch with grey-brown wash; 320 × 200 mm (illus 9).

An attenuated cylinder composed of three stages. A rusticated lower storey is entered through a pedimented blind portico with Tuscan pilasters and the inscription DAVID HUME in large letters on the entablature. A fluted frieze and cornice mark off this lower section from the austere tower-like middle portion which is of smooth ashlar. Over the pediment is a niche containing a funerary urn. Above a plain cornice rises an attic pierced by a number of small round-headed windows. This stage has a Doric entablature with *paterae* in the metopes. At the level of the lower, fluted frieze, spur-walls, surmounted by sphinxes, join the graveyard perimeter wall. No steps are indicated. Vegetation adds a romantic note.

This drawing is marked in pencil with the outline of an upper entablature brought down to a point more nearly corresponding to the proportions of the monument as illustrated in the design listed here as Type VI. In other words the attic storey of Type V is dispensed with.

TYPE VI

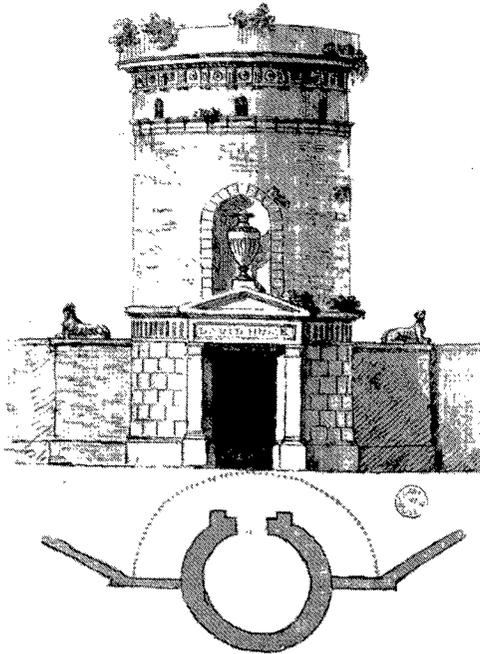
Soane Mus. AV 19/78 right: fine but not worked up; pen & ink; 436 × 620 mm (sheet of two drawings); inscribed in ink 'This was the one most approved of', and dated below in pencil 'Feb^y 1777' (illus 10).

A two-stage cylinder, the masonry of both sections appearing similar. Pedimented blind portico with pilasters and inscription as in Type V. Fluted frieze on lower stage, Doric entablature (with *paterae* on metopes) on upper. Niche with urn, sphinxes mounted on low plinths on spur-walls.

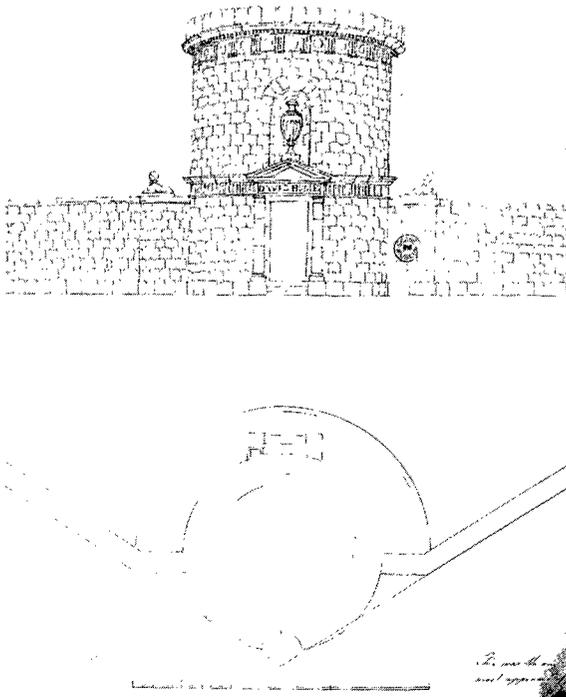
SOURCES

Having described the six types and variants of these types we must now attempt to establish the inspiration for, and the sources of, these designs; but we must pay particular attention to the derivation of that one 'most approved of'.

In regard to the design of the building as executed – a version of Type VI, shorn of some of the refinements – it seems unnecessary to look (as has recently been done)¹⁹ to Marie-Joseph Peyre's monumental design, published in his *Oeuvres d'Architecture* of 1765 but drawn probably in the mid-1750s, for a mausoleum or *chapelle sepulcrale*. The resemblance is remote; and if some of the elements are common to both mausolea, that is because they are common to many classical buildings. Apart from the vast difference of scale, Peyre's design has a Pantheon dome, rusticated masonry, and a tetrastyle pedimented portico. Certainly there is a note of similarity in the cylindrical shape, in the feature of an urn in a niche (albeit the Peyre design boasts many of these to the Hume monument's one), in the two-stage drum with upper and lower friezes and cornices (though the proportions of the stages in the two monuments are widely dissimilar), and (just) in the tablet over the entrance. One might even take into consideration the paired obelisks of the Peyre design, and the sphinxes on either side



ILLUS 9 Adam's Type V design: Sir John Soane's Museum, AV 21/ 187 (Photo: RCAHMS)

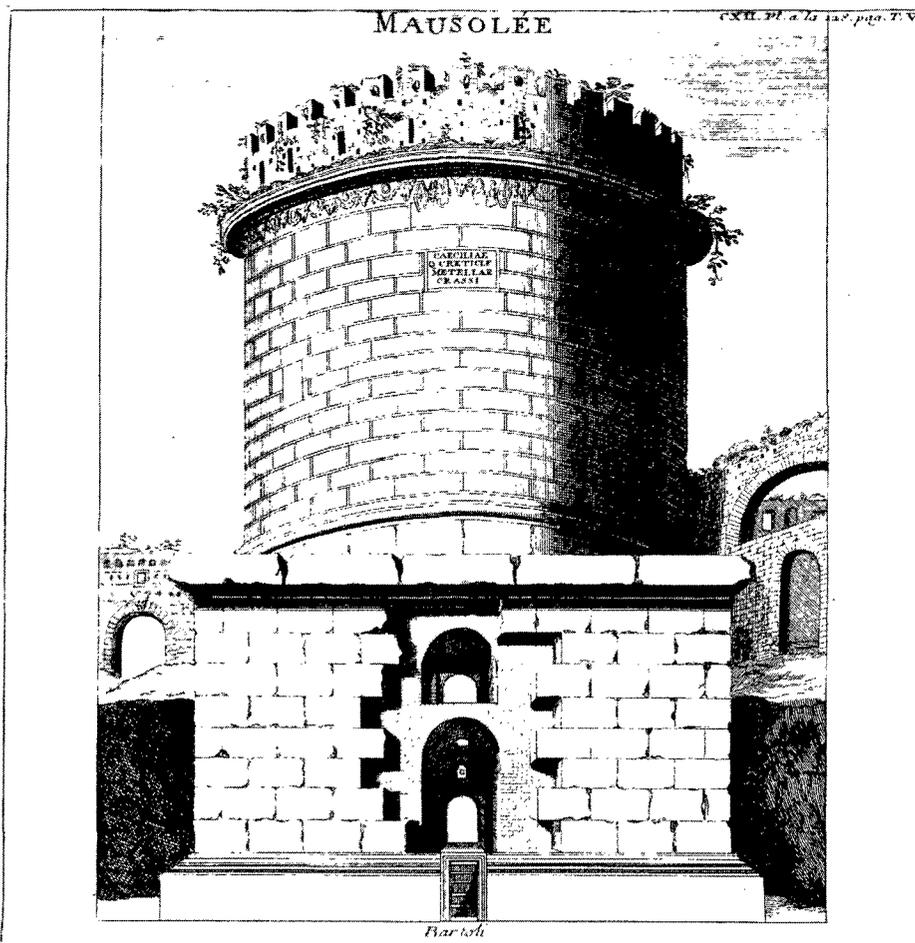


ILLUS 10 Adam's Type VI design: Sir John Soane's Museum, AV 19/ 78 (right) (Photo: RCAHMS)

of the steps which lead up to the podium on which the mausoleum stands. Of these elements, only the sphinxes are present in the Adam design, and sphinxes, of course, find a place in the general ornamental and decorative repertoire of Adam's neo-classicism.

Rather must we look to more obvious yet more significant sources: to Adam's Italian experiences, to the traditional source-books of classical archaeological scholarship, and to the influence of Piranesi. In so doing we should bear in mind the statement of Hawksmoor made in connection with the evolution of the design of the great mausoleum at Castle Howard: 'There are many forms of this nature of fabrick, the designs of which are published in ye Books of Antiquity. . .'. A starting point at Castle Howard had been that most celebrated of Roman mausolea, the Tomb of Cecilia Metella on the Appian Way, as illustrated by Pietro Santi Bartoli.²⁰

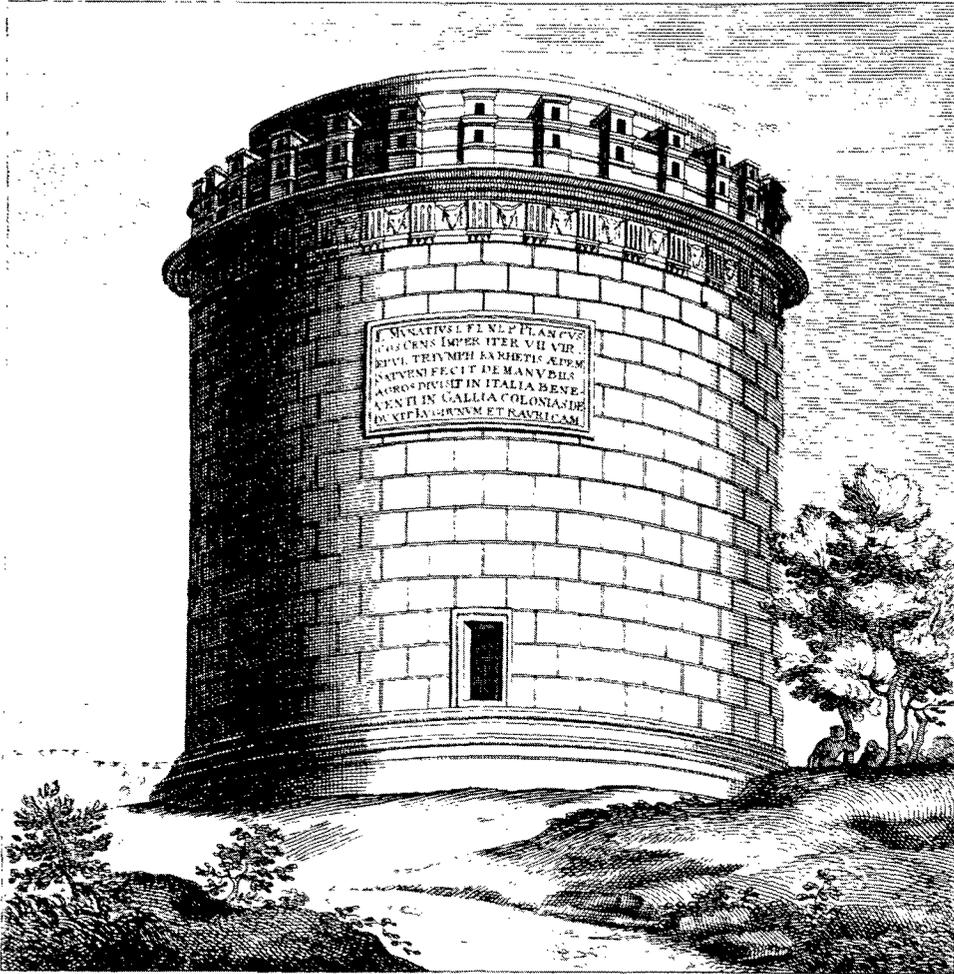
It is to the Tombs of Cecilia Metella and the Servilia family, as the elevations of these are represented in the plates of Santi Bartoli and later of Montfaucon,²¹ that we should look for the inspiration of Adam's Type I. The style of mausoleum consisting of a drum on a square



ILLUS 11 Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella, after Bartoli; from Montfaucon, *L'Antiquite Explicée*, v (1719) (Photo: NLS)

MAUSOLEE

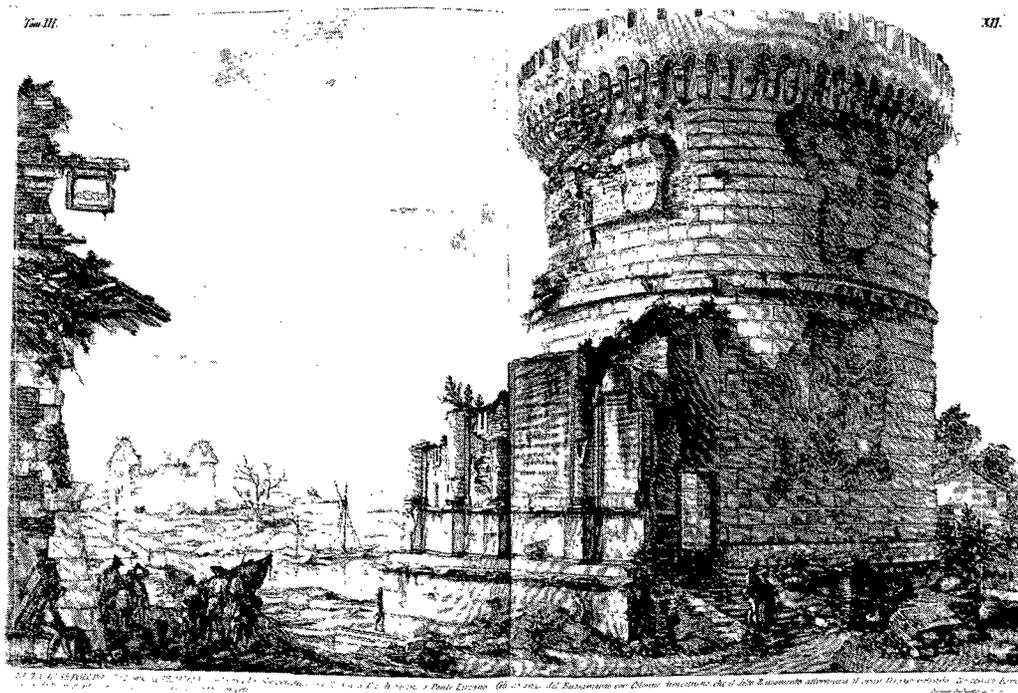
CXIII. Pl. a la 128. pag. I



Bartoli

ILLUS 14 Mausoleum of Munatius Plancus, after Bartoli; from Montfaucon, *L'Antiquité Explicée*, v (1719) (Photo: NLS)

Antichità Romane, Vol III, plates xii–xiii (illus 15–16). The inscriptional tablet flanked by engaged columns which, as Ashby notes,²⁶ forms a façade of a kind towards the road, could (with a little imagination) be translated into the doorway and portico of the Hume mausoleum in Adam's design Type V–VI; and the treatment of the masonry, together with the distinctive string-course, may also, perhaps, be reflected in Adam's designs. Inspiration will have come also from the imaginative works of Piranesi as well as those of his archaeological scholarship. The vast *capricci* of the *Opere Varie* contain among their megalomaniac fantasies details for which Adam found effective use: in the context of the Hume tomb, for example, one thinks of that feature of the urn set in a niche which recurs in the designs for an imperial mausoleum ('*Mausoleo antico*') and for a grand harbour ('*Parte di ampio magnifico Porto*'). The location

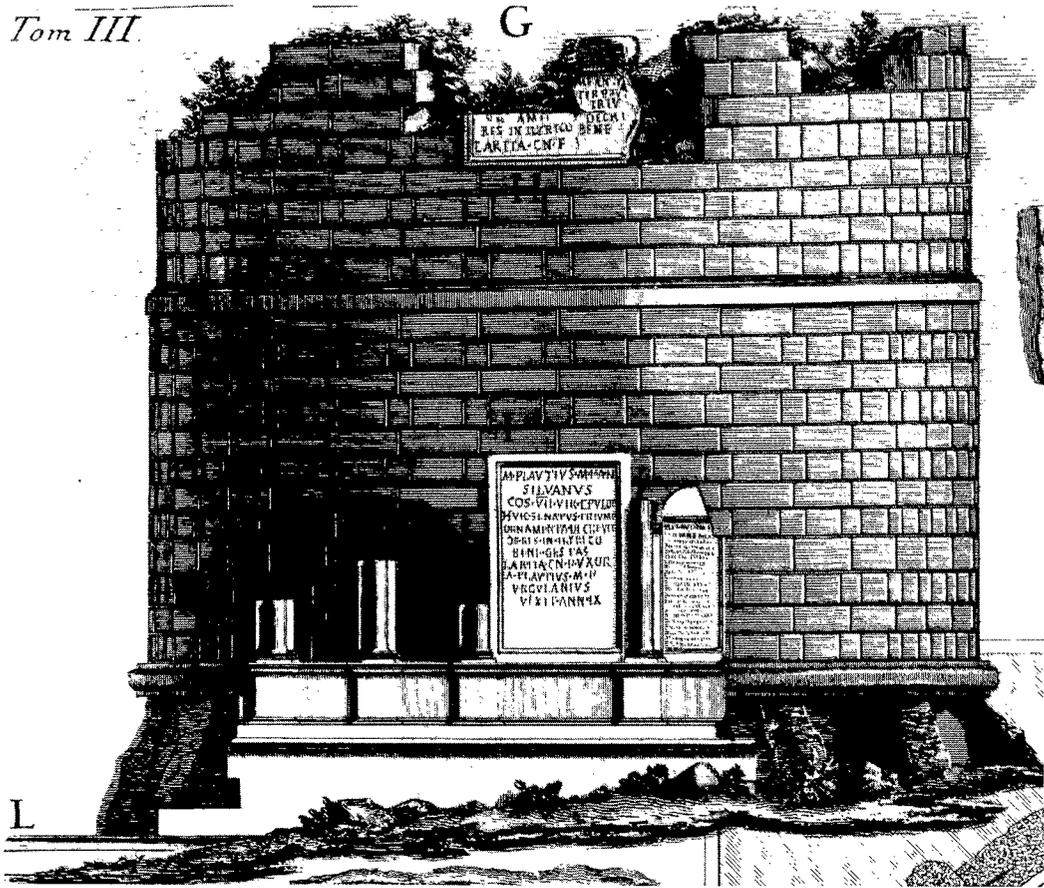


ILLUS 15 Mausoleum of the Plautii; from Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane*, iii (1756) (Photo: NLS)

of the Tomb of the Plautii beside a bridge may also have suggested that building as some sort of model: in a particularly fine drawing (illus 17) Adam had recorded both mausoleum and bridge (Penicuik album, no 128). The Hume tomb rises from the rocky hillside not far from the North Bridge. Indeed Alexander Campbell in 1802 commented upon ‘the similitude [the old North Bridge] bore to a Roman aqueduct’, and went on directly to mention the ‘tower-like appearance of the tomb of Hume’.²⁷

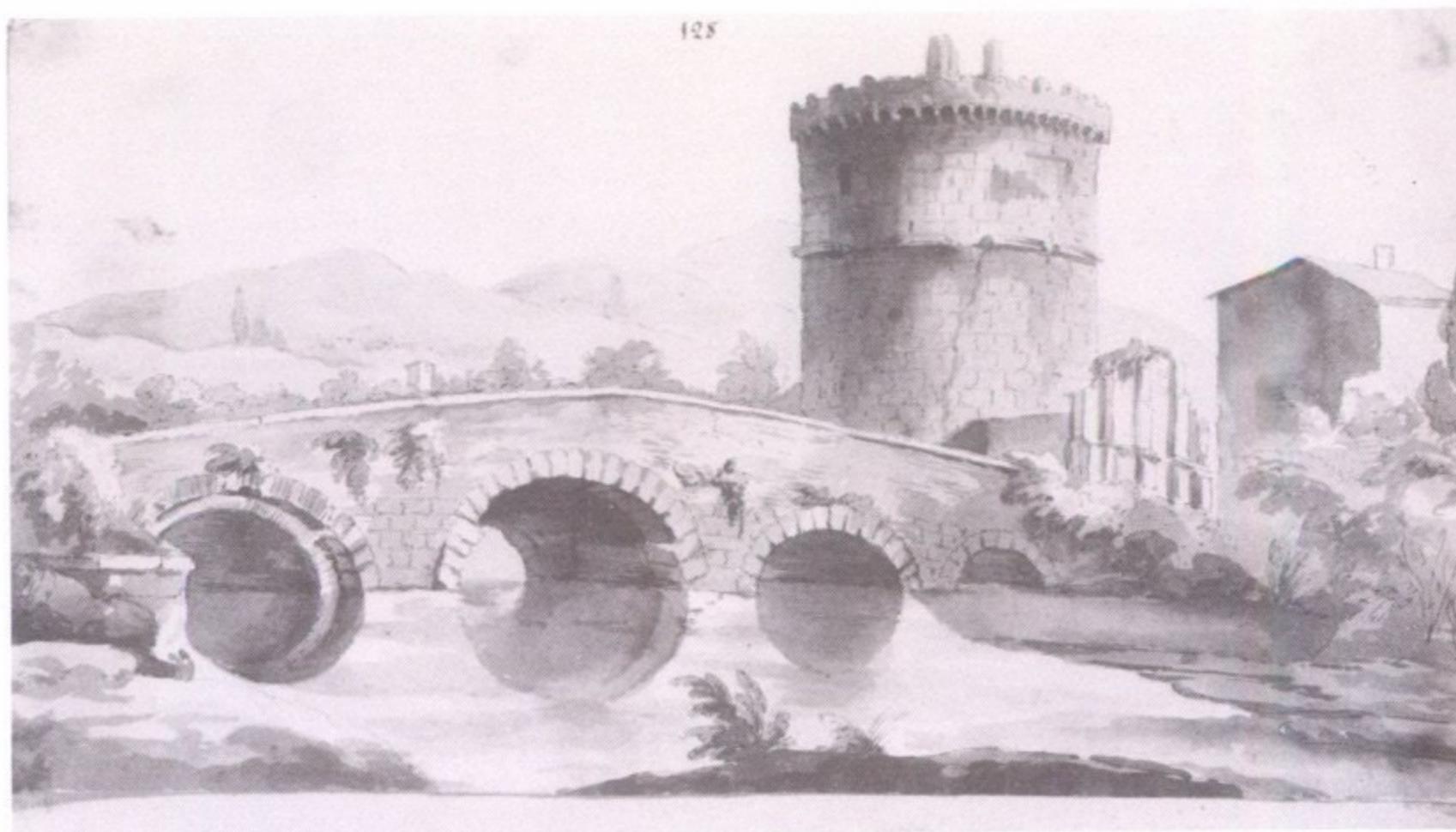
If a good deal of inspiration for the Edinburgh design came from the great source-books of Roman archaeology, there were also the drawings, whether those of record or those of the imagination, made by Adam himself during his Italian years which may have jogged his memory when he came to think of some suitable formulae from the elements of which he might concoct the most appropriate design. There is the tomb at Capua, known as *Le Carceri Vecchie*, which he drew, creeper-covered and romantic, with its circular form enlivened by its arched niches with alternating flat and curved backs (Soane Museum, Soane Vol 7/18), not unlike the ‘scalloped’ plan of Type IV. In a drawing (117) in Soane Vol 7 it is possible to see elements which, when boiled up with many others, might crystallise out, as it were, in new form as the Hume monument: a round tower with a cornice and a lower ‘belt’ delimiting the first stage, with an urn in a broad niche surmounted by a tablet, this feature being flanked by statues. The Soane Museum’s Adam Vol 56 shows in drawing no 51 a cylindrical tomb or tower at the end of a bridge in a classical landscape. This has a machicolated wall-head, an upper stage with windows, and a lower stage with a single arch or niche. Here the resemblance to the Type V design is distinct. Adam was fortunate in having for inspiration the towers of the Campagna and the fantasies of Piranesi, without the suggestion of structures of a wholly

Tom III.

ILLUS 16 Mausoleum of the Plautii, detail; from Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane*, iii (1756) (Photo: NLS)

different character that were to occur to later generations. Searching for a descriptive parallel, a modern authority has described the circular Roman tomb type as ‘gasometer-like’.²⁸

Several scholars have argued that the Mausoleum of Theodoric at Ravenna (illus 18), which Adam and Clérissieu inspected and drew in 1755,²⁹ is to be regarded as the original inspiration for the Hume tomb. Following these theories, the authors of the *Buildings of Scotland Edinburgh* volume go as far as to state that the Theodoric mausoleum ‘was the starting point for [Adam’s] design’.³⁰ Writing of Adam’s design for the projected sham ruined castle at Osterley, Alistair Rowan has linked the form of the principal feature of a squat round tower with the slightly later Hume tomb design, and derives both from the Ravenna mausoleum.³¹ Although it is certainly possible that – as is often the case in Adam architecture – a memory of one building seen and noted in the past resurfaces to be a ‘quarry’ for ideas and themes in another context, there remains the question of appropriateness of particular sources. No traces of Ravenna are detectable in Types I, V and VI. It may be that elements derived from Theodoric’s mausoleum are to be seen in Type III, where the heavy cornice (the monolithic roof at Ravenna being dispensed with), the oblong windows and the relieving arches (variants of the Ravenna pattern of paired windows and much smaller arches), and the



ILLUS 17 Mausoleum of the Plautii, by Robert Adam, c 1756. (Photo: NLS, by courtesy of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Bt).



ILLUS 18 Mausoleum of Theodoric at Ravenna, by Robert Adam, 1755. (Photo: NLS, by courtesy of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Bt).

decagonal lower storey – translated into an octagon – are carried over into the Edinburgh design. In any event, it is simply the general form – squat drum upon multangular base – rather than the details, that may be common to both buildings, or, more accurately, to Theodoric's mausoleum and to a number of the rejected designs for the Hume tomb. There is undeniably a feeling of the Ravenna mausoleum, both in theme and in scale, about Types II and IV; and indeed the size of the Hume tomb, either as projected in the early designs or as built, is much nearer to Theodoric's than to the huge tombs of Metella or Plancus. But the matter is by no means conclusive. It could be argued that a sixth-century Christian Ostrogothic monument in a town remote in the marshes of the Po valley, to which Honorius had removed the Western Imperial court, was hardly as evocative a prototype for the tomb of an urbane modern pagan as would be a classical mausoleum beside a road leading from the Eternal City itself. Was this, perhaps, a reason why the design that in no way reflects Ravenna was 'the one preferred'? (Or was it just that Uncle David had left only £100 for the purpose, and arches and octagons were awfully expensive. . .?)

If we take the Tomb of the Plautii, or some other tower-like structure in the Roman Campagna as the most probable source of the accepted design for the Hume monument, we still have a problem. That is: the nature of such astylar buildings in general – such as are found in the backgrounds of classical landscape paintings – and Robert Adam's castellated buildings in particular. This subject is much too complex to detain us here, but allusion to it must be made. Is a round tower in an Italian architectural fantasy of 1757, or a roughly similar round tower envisaged as a monument to David Hume twenty years later, or a round tower such as we have seen Adam designing for a sham castle at Osterley, or a round tower built as part of one of the great castle-style houses of his later years Roman or medieval in inspiration and origin? The dilemma is highlighted by an engraving by Cunego after Clérisseau (British Museum, C 11 *) of an 'Ancient Sepulchre situated at three miles distance from Pozzoli [*sic*] in the Kingdom of Naples'. This print has for its real subject the excavation of a great vaulted tomb ornamented with stucco grotesques; but at the right is a ruined tomb, a cylinder on a base, with a frieze and a ruined upper part covered with vegetation, which shows a striking resemblance to the conception of the Hume mausoleum in a state of semi-decay. When looking for sources, can we draw a real distinction, given the fact that the Roman tombs of the Campagna were so often converted in the Middle Ages into fortified buildings by the addition of battlements and machicolated wall-heads? Piranesi's views of the Tomb of the Plautii provide a good example. If this building were to be taken as a source of imitation, would that be imitation of the original Roman core, or of the complete structure as time, and its usage as a medieval keep, had rendered it more picturesque still? Distinctions break down; historical periods become blurred. The alteration and adaptation of buildings of one age for use in another gives a sense of timelessness; and such a mood seems to render this type of structure suitable yet again for memorial dedication. When, in the early 19th century, the volumes of Adam drawings now in Sir John Soane's Museum were being put together, that sketch (AV 21/19) which is here labelled Type III was grouped with a series of designs for castellated buildings: a fact itself indicative of the 'astylar' nature of such structures. Similarly there is in AV 54, Series iv ('Gothick Sketches') a drawing (f.1v) which in part closely resembles the first stage of the 'classical' Hume tomb. These astylar elements, and diversity of sources, such as can be seen in the various designs for the Hume tomb, are present also in the near-contemporary tea-house at Auchincruive (AV 19/161), and the later example designed for Balbardie (AV 32/90–91).

EARLY IMPRESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

John Clerk of Eldin, the distinguished amateur artist, wrote from Edinburgh to his brother-in-law Robert Adam on 5 December 1778:

I have been this day looking at the Monument it is now finished ye side towards the Bridge, except the filling up the earth at the Bottom, and whether it will be better as it is or better when filled up time will try. Both Mr Clerk my son [the future Lord Eldin] and my self are pleased with it, the Drysdalians [Adam's sister Mary and her husband the Rev Dr John Drysdale] are much better pleased than they were, but not quite. This day I sat down and drew it from the Doctor's window, to put it into ye drawing of the Calton Hill which I had formerly taken from that place, and in my drawing filled up the Bottom and made up ye yard wall so high as ye wings of ye Building as formerly wrote you – and this pleased his Reverendship very much. . .³²

An anecdote, which illustrates the way that contemporaries who saw the new building were prompted to consider the monument – solid, classical, pagan, yet in a Christian graveyard – in relation to Hume's atheism, also dates from this time when the mausoleum was not quite complete. Moreover, the story furnishes an instance of the debate, in the previous and subsequent literature, over the words which were actually inscribed upon the tomb:

On the death of the celebrated David Hume, his nephew, the present Professor of Scots Law, erected a conspicuous monument to his memory in the Calton-hill burying-ground, and in full view of the passengers on the north bridge of Edinburgh. This tomb is built in a massy and unadorned style, with the simple inscription of *David Hume, Esq.* After the tomb was nearly finished, MR SMELLIE was walking one summer day on the Calton Hill, in company with the late well known DR GILBERT STUART, and DR JOHN BROWN, author of the once famous *Brownonian* system of medicine. DR BROWN, who was a man of rough and coarse manners, observed to a mason, who was hewing a pavement stone for some finishing part of the tomb, 'Friend, this is a strong and massy building; but how do you think the honest gentleman will get out at the resurrection?' The mason archly replied, 'I have secured that point, Sir, for I have put the key under the door.'³³

The Hume mausoleum, complete with its short spur-walls (the 'wings' alluded to by Clerk of Eldin) which feature on the designs of Types II, IV, V and VI and which join the boundary wall of the Calton burying ground, first appears on the plan of Edinburgh engraved in 1778 and published in Hugo Arnot's *History* of 1779 (see illus 2). It was Arnot who wrote the first description of the tomb on the Calton

at the utmost verge of which, upon the brow of the rock, are deposited the remains of that ornament of his country, DAVID HUME. Over these, a monument, designed by Mr Adam, has this year been erected. This building is in the Greek taste; it is of a circular form, its diameter being twenty feet by about thirty high, the height of the walls concealing the roof. On the south and north sides of the building, are two pedestals, or wings, about ten feet high, and five wide, supporting a couple of sphinxes. Over the door, (which fronts the north-east) is a stone pannel, having this inscription:

DAVID HUME, NATUS APRIL. 26. 1711. OBIT AUGUST. 25. 1776

Over this a belt and cornice surrounds the whole building. Above the door there is a niche, containing an urn, and at the top, the building is encircled by a Dorick entablature, finished in the antique stile.³⁴

On the details of Arnot's description we shall comment presently. But it should be observed now that the building stands on an edge of the rock so that the masonry at the 'back' (which one sees from the North Bridge, even as Clerk of Eldin saw it from Dr Drysdale's window) extends down the slope to the south-west and gives much more the appearance of a tower than does the 'front', where the ground does not fall away. Apart from the upper and lower friezes and the other mouldings, the masonry throughout is distinctive rough ashlar,

almost rubble masonry, such as Adam used on virtually no other classical building.³⁵ In the drawings the impression conveyed was of a building in decay, as a tomb in the Campagna. Something of this idea is carried out (more or less) in the executed building by the use of stonework which graduates from rough but coursed ashlar in the upper part of the cylinder, to a kind of masonry which is dressed but not polished yet has the joints emphasized by a type of rustication which becomes more prominent in the lower stage. The boldly masculine Doric entablature accords well with the exposed and rocky site, and the rugged stonework of the drum, especially in its lower stage at the back.

Arnot mentions the roof. There is no roof today, nor any evidence that there has been one. Arnot also mentions the pair of sphinxes and the urn, which appear in the designs of Types V and VI. It does not seem likely that either sphinxes or urn were actually put in place, and it is probable that Arnot had seen drawings of what was originally intended, and wrote as if these intentions had already been carried out. The upper surfaces of the 'pedestals' or spur-walls show no evidence that anything ever stood or was fixed thereon. Comparatively few of the many sphinxes proposed by Adam as decorative features in his architectural designs survived the transition from drawing-board to execution. The saving to be made by omitting features such as these will have been important to Hume's heirs, operating as they were within a smallish budget. No illustration known to me of the tomb and its surroundings shows the sphinxes. Nevertheless, it should be put on record that, in an illustrated topographical work published in 1820,³⁶ the statement is made that the tomb has flanking 'pedestals' bearing sphinxes. Here, I believe, as is so often the case in guide-book writing, a statement by an earlier writer (Arnot) is simply taken over and repeated almost verbatim.

Topographical drawings, from the earliest on record to show the entrance front – a pencil sketch of July 1788 by Joseph Farington (British Museum: 201 C 1*, 1922–2–11–60) – down to about 1820, do not illustrate any urn; but those of the 1820s and after, by J M W Turner and others, do indeed show an urn in the niche. (This fact is to be established by minute observation of paintings, drawings and engravings made for purposes quite other than that of record of anything so specific as the Hume tomb, but rather general Edinburgh views from the Calton Hill, panoramas of the State Entry of George IV in 1822, and the like.) The urn that is there today – large and ungainly, and of inelegant post-Adam style – is surely the first funerary vase to occupy the niche. It is strange – and a regrettable piece of economy – that a feature so central to Adam's preferred design, and one so symbolic in the Roman tradition of funerary architecture, should not have been installed at the time of the tomb's construction. (It should be noted that the urn designed by Adam as a finial for the roof of the Johnstone family mausoleum at Alva, Clackmannanshire, was likewise not executed.³⁷) As well as mentioning the sphinxes, the volume of Storer views also records the presence of an urn, but links this solely with its memorial purpose in honour of Janet Alder (died 1816), wife of the philosopher's nephew, Baron David Hume: there is no suggestion that the urn is earlier than 1817, which date is inscribed upon it. Further evidence for the omission from its niche of the urn as originally designed is furnished by Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, who recorded his opinion of the Hume monument when he saw it in September 1813: 'over [the door] is a Niche, designed apparently for the statue of that eminent Man. But it is empty.'³⁸

Another point of interest is the inscription. Adam's drawings show nothing more than the two words of Hume's name. Hume himself, in his will, specified that his monument should carry only his name and the dates of his birth and death. Arnot stated that the inscription read, in 1778, 'Natus' and 'Obiit'. Today we read 'Born' and 'Died'. One can clearly see that neat little blocks of stone have indeed been inserted in the ashlar of the tablet over the door in

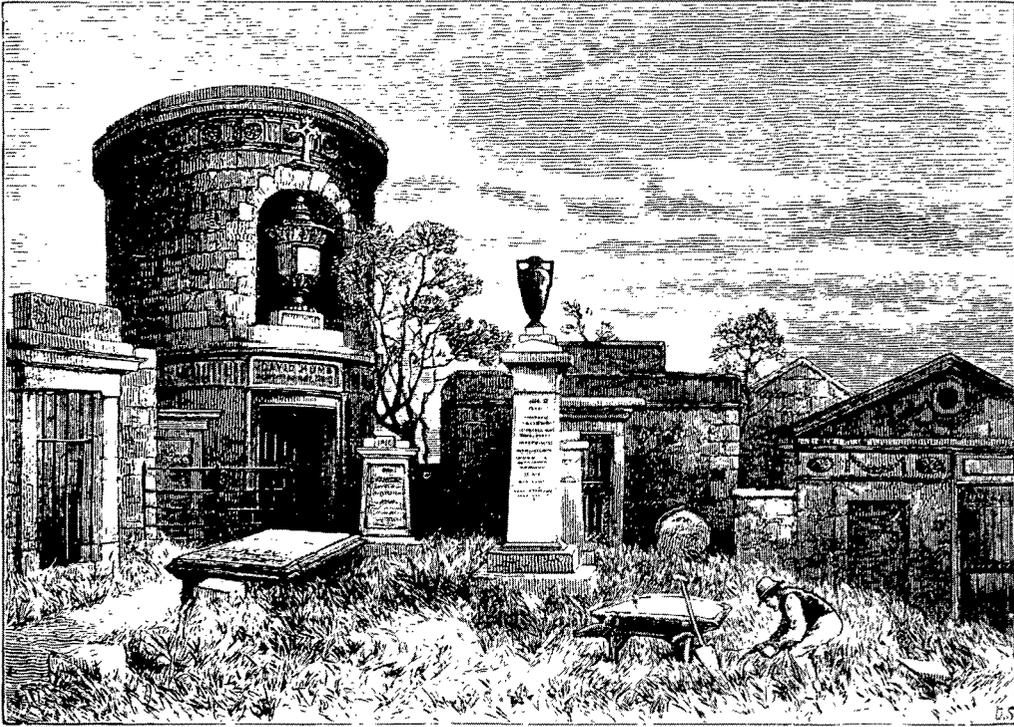
order to make this change. Why the two Latin words were chiselled out at what must have been some effort and expense is a mystery. Wraxall's journal records the inscription in English in 1813.³⁹ At some point before 1820, moreover (when the additional wording is recorded in the Storer book), a further inscription was added below the tablet, the words 'Erected in Memory of Him / in 1778' being cut into the frame of the tablet itself and even the architrave of the door. This enlargement of the simple primary inscription was made, presumably, when Humes other than 'le bon David' himself were interred or commemorated in what had become a family vault. The original economy of language had been felt to give dignity to the monument. Indeed the German traveller S H Spiker observed in 1816 – and he tells us, incidentally, that the door of the mausoleum was studded with iron, whereas today it is an iron grille – that the simple words of Hume's name were infinitely more expressive than a long inscription. The burial-place, Spiker noted, could not fail to be held in reverence by every visitor, containing as it did the remains of one of the greatest men Scotland ever produced.⁴⁰

PAGAN OR CHRISTIAN?

Hume's contemporaries had long suffered a dilemma, never better expressed than by Mrs Alison Cockburn, one of those who 'overlooking [Hume's] errors, loved [his] Worth'. She wrote thus to Hume, then in Paris, in 1764: 'The very cloven foot for which thou art worshipd I despise – yet I remember thee with affection. I remember that in spite of vain philosophy of dark doubts – of toilsome learning – God has stampd his Image of benignity so strong upon thy Heart that not all the labours of thy Head could efface it.'⁴¹ The memory of Hume the man and the social being was indeed generally revered in Edinburgh, the credo of the sceptic philosopher less so. Given the laconic inscription actually engraved upon his tomb, the satire suggested by Lieutenant-General Sir Adolphus Oughton, Commander-in-Chief in North Britain, and a littérateur, has mordant wit.⁴² His likening of the round tomb to a lighthouse of faith in a sea of atheism gives a satiric twist to the actual facts:

QUOD CREDIDI ET VOLUI
 NUSQUAM
 QUOD RESPUI AT TIMUI
 CERTUM
 INVENI.
 NAUFRAGIUM FIDEI FACTURUS
 QUISQUIS ES
 HANC PHAROS
 RESPICE ET SALVOS SIS

Oughton imagined the tomb surmounted by a cross. In a final irony, a cross indeed appeared at some time in the mid-19th century, and this survived until at least the 1880s, though it had been removed by the early 1920s. This cross, apparently of metalwork, is visible in the wood-engraving in Grant's *Old and New Edinburgh* (illus 19),⁴³ and it explains the presence of the odd little stone bracket above the keystone of the frontal niche, which otherwise appears to serve no purpose and is not part of the Adam design. The date 1841, cut on the keystone, may relate to the setting up of this cross, and is possibly connected with the commemoration in the mausoleum of Hume's nephew David, the Baron of Exchequer, who had died in 1838. Finally, account must be taken of the four-line religious text carved below the urn on the theme of victory over death through Christ. A cross and a pious sentiment may seem strange



THE CALTON BURYING-GROUND: HUME'S GRAVE.

ILLUS 19 Hume mausoleum in later 19th century; from James Grant, *Old and New Edinburgh*, ii (1882)
(Photo: NLS)

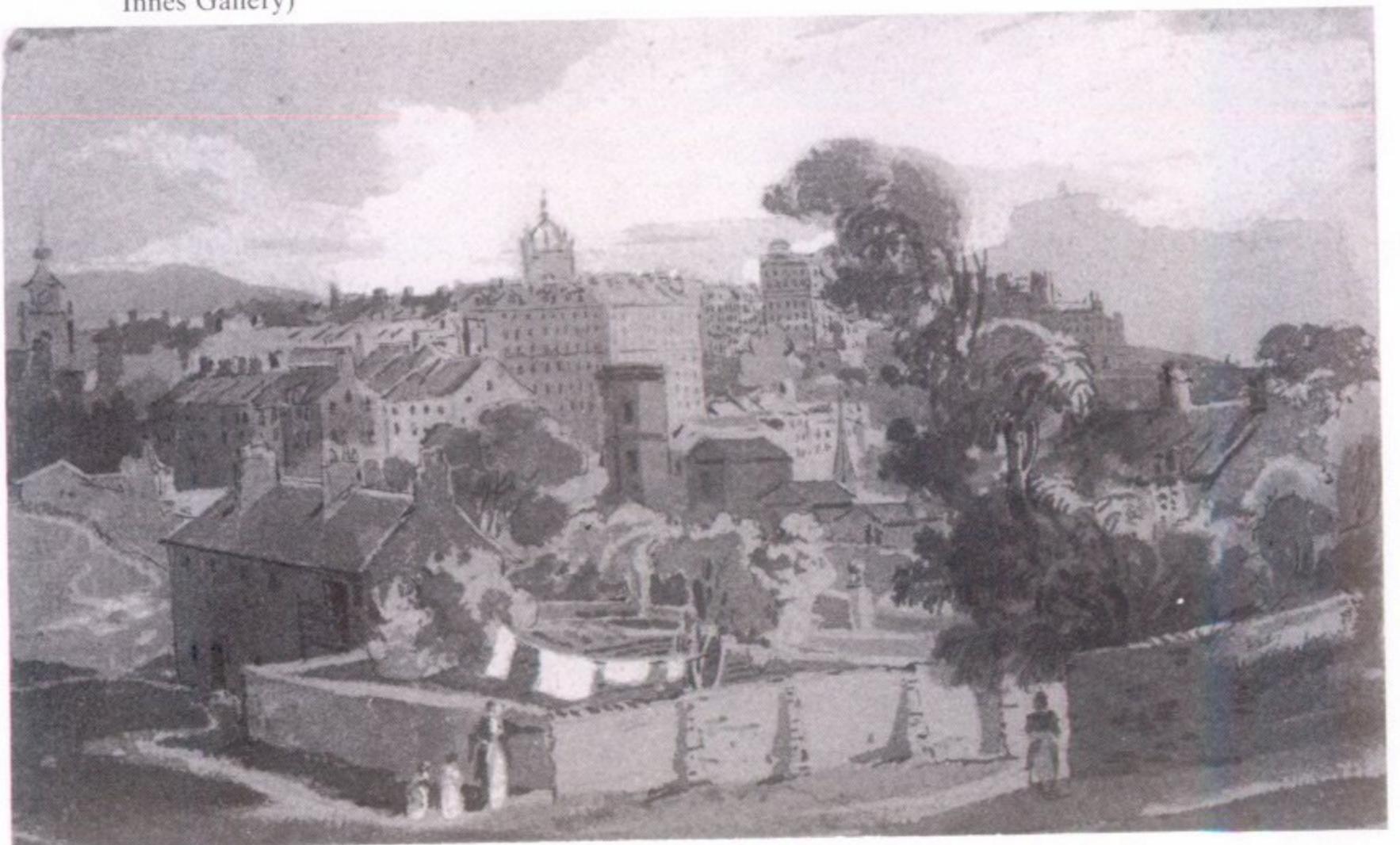
things to find on the tomb of David Hume; but, in all probability, they represent evidence of attempted atonement by later generations of his family for the scepticism of the great philosopher.

EARLY VIEWS

The setting of the Hume mausoleum, standing alone (as Oughton put it) 'on the Brink of the Calton-Hill Rock', perfectly exploited the picturesque possibilities of the dramatic location. The structure early attracted notice. As has been mentioned, Clerk of Eldin, with his keen sense of the romantic characteristics of castellated buildings in the Scottish landscape, drew it during its construction on its split-level site. (The whereabouts of this drawing are unknown.) The tomb features three times in Joseph Farington's album of 'Views on the River Forth and in its Vicinity from its Source to the Sea' (British Museum: 201 C 1 *); no 56 in this volume is a view from the Calton towards the Castle, which shows the tomb in the middle ground at the centre of the picture: no urn or sphinxes are visible. The succeeding drawing, taken from lower down the Calton cliff, has the tomb at the upper right, and the then isolation of the building is clear. The mausoleum forms the centrepiece of Farington's view of the High and Low Calton which is number 60 in the Forth sketchbook. A similar view of the monument as in the Farington album no 57 occurs in Alexander Nasmyth's painting (illus 20) of



ILLUS 20 Hume mausoleum and the Old Town, by Alexander Nasmyth (Photo: I G Brown, by courtesy of Malcolm Innes Gallery)



ILLUS 21 Hume mausoleum and the Old Town skyline, by John Harden, 1810 (Photo: NLS)

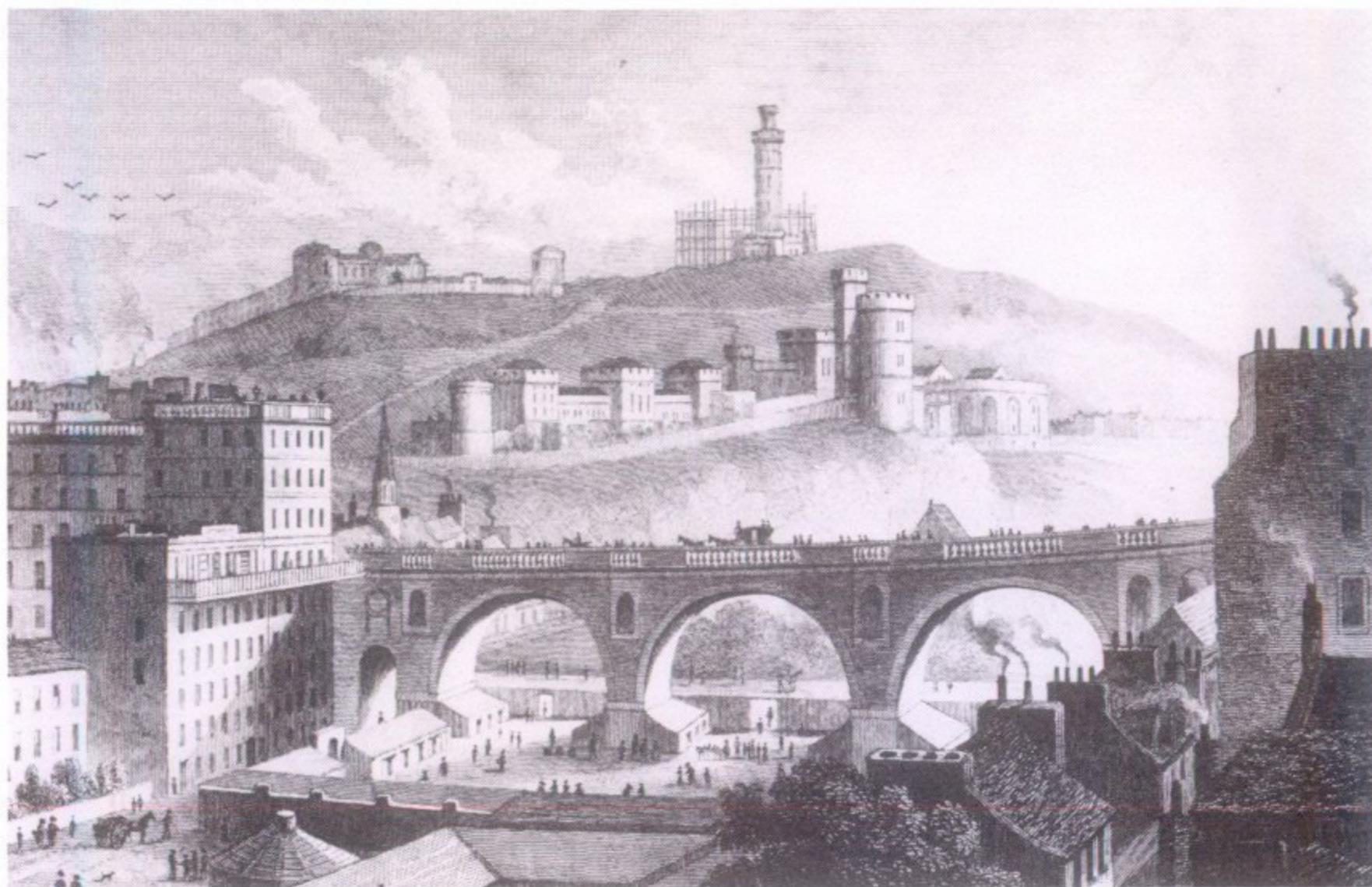


ILLUS 22 Hume mausoleum, by John Harden, 1810 (Photo: NLS)

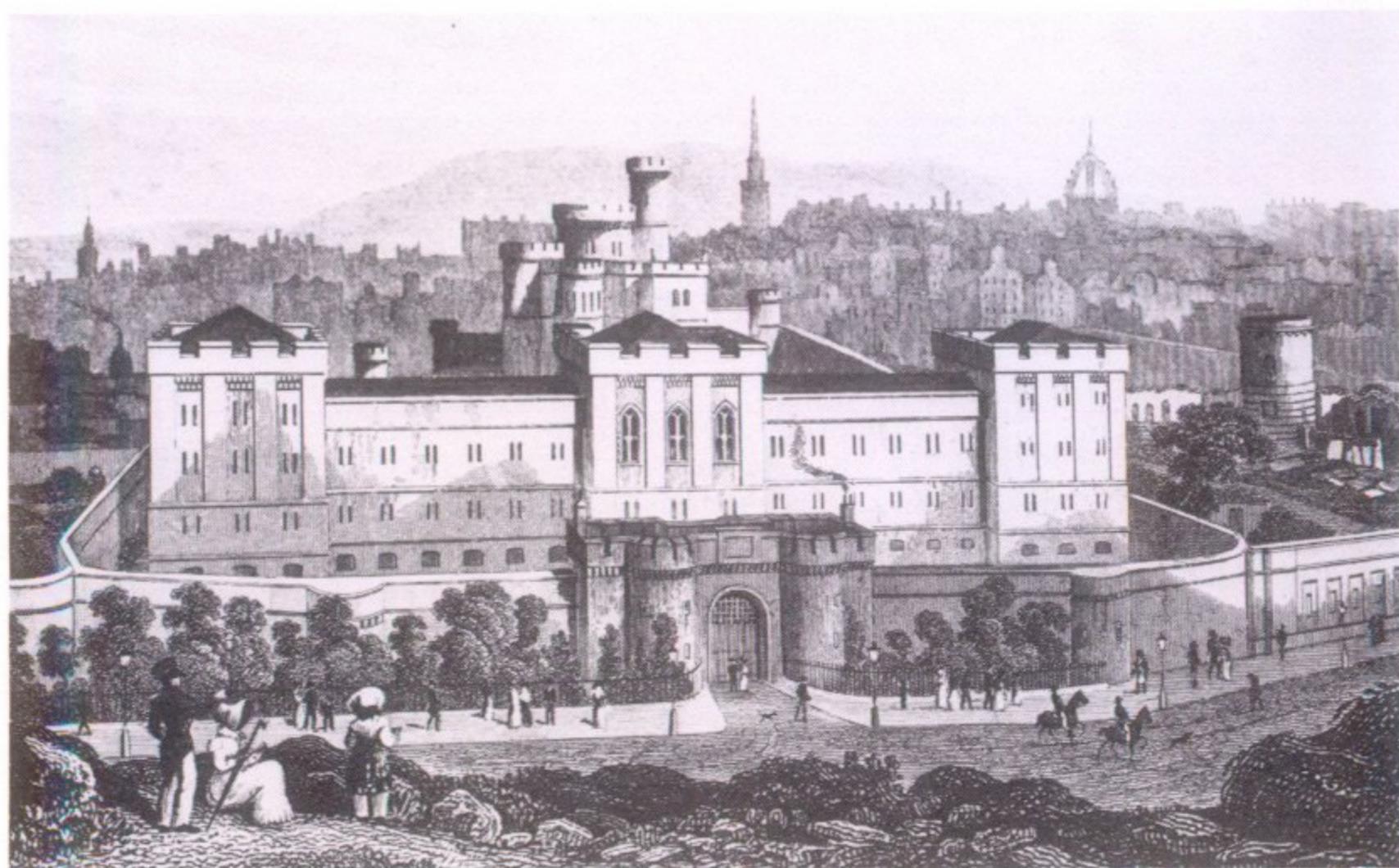
Edinburgh Castle and the North Bridge (Malcolm Innes Gallery, Edinburgh, Festival Exhibition 1991). This is, perhaps, the earliest oil painting to show the tomb, and here it assumes a position of importance at the right-hand side of Nasmyth's composition where ordinarily one might have expected to find, according to the conventions of classical landscape painting, a tree or a bush-covered bank. In Nasmyth's view, the Hume mausoleum appears as the only structure on that side of the Nor' Loch defile which separates old and new Edinburgh; and, despite its position on top of its crag, it seems but a small man-made feature to balance the mass of towering buildings on the dramatic natural setting of the Old Town ridge. The tomb appears, prominent, isolated and eye-catching, in Nasmyth's watercolour of Edinburgh from St Anthony's Chapel of 1789 (National Gallery of Scotland, Barlow Bequest, 5023/31).⁴⁴ Robert Barker's panorama of Edinburgh from Calton Hill (1789–90) shows the mausoleum at the corner of a nearly empty Calton Burying Ground. In an etching after Aeneas Macpherson it features in *Edina Delineata* (1798), the plate being re-used as a guide-book illustration for the *New Picture of Edinburgh* (various editions). The mausoleum was drawn again by Alexander Nasmyth, and by J C Nattes, in dramatic compositions, published as vignettes in printed books, each of which must represent very much the view that Clerk recorded; and it was illustrated several times by John Harden (1810) in evocative watercolour views (illus 21–22) of the Edinburgh townscape (National Library of Scotland, MS 8866, 1, 30–1).

THE MAUSOLEUM IN THE EARLY 19th CENTURY

When newly built the mausoleum stood alone. Then, as first Adam's Bridewell, and subsequently Archibald Elliot's Calton Gaol (with its adjoining Governor's House, which still remains) within its towered curtain wall, came to occupy contiguous sites, the mausoleum



ILLUS 23 Hume mausoleum appearing as if part of the Calton gaol complex; from Shepherd, *Modern Athens* (1829)
(Photo: NLS)



ILLUS 24 Hume mausoleum drawn by Shepherd as if it were a watchtower; from *Modern Athens* (1829)
(Photo: NLS)

began to look as if it belonged to this growing castellated complex, and to be a piece of quasi-military architecture. Environmental change meant that it was almost like a tomb in the Roman Campagna acquiring the trappings of a medieval stronghold. A visitor from York in 1817, a great admirer of Robert Adam's work in Edinburgh, described the Bridewell as having 'much the appearance of an old castle', and went on directly to discuss the Hume tomb, almost as if the two were related by a common style.⁴⁵ This tourist also records the reported belief that the design of the mausoleum was Hume's own choice. By the time that T H Shepherd drew the prospect of the Calton Hill for *Modern Athens: or, Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century* (1829) (illus 23) the Hume monument appears to be part of the towered and battlemented walls of the Bridewell, Prison and Governor's House: there is no mention in the descriptive text of the tomb as a separate building. A more detailed view of the mausoleum, in Shepherd's plate illustrating 'The New Jail from Calton Hill' (illus 24), records the urn in the niche, but conveys but a poor impression of the other architectural features of the monument: there is a strangely shown frieze and a further, lower niche in place of the door. To contemporary viewers of this print, the Hume tomb must have appeared for all the world like a watchtower erected beside a cemetery as a defence against the grave-robbers or 'resurrectionists' who then haunted the burial grounds of Edinburgh. The growing impression that the tomb was associated with later castellated buildings is reinforced by the observation of Sir John Carr, who had been struck by the similarity of the mausoleum to that contemporary building-type of the Napoleonic Wars, the Martello tower.⁴⁶

It was after the Napoleonic Wars, and with the growth of the idea of the Calton Hill and its surroundings as some sort of Caledonian acropolis, a Scottish Valhalla, a national sacred precinct, a *temenos* of greatness, that the appropriateness of having buried Hume thereabouts became especially evident. Sir Walter Scott wrote of the 'learned and scientific dust' of the Calton graveyard, where lay Hume and other leading intellectuals.⁴⁷ J G Lockhart, in *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* (1819), makes his hero, Dr Peter Morris, a middle-aged Welsh tourist, visit the Calton Hill in the company of Professor John Playfair (himself soon to be commemorated on the Calton by a fine monument – in Greek rather than Roman style – by his nephew, William Henry). On the descent they visit the graveyard to see Hume's tomb:

There are few things in which I take a more true delight than in visiting the graves of the truly illustrious dead, and I therefore embraced the proposal with eagerness. The philosopher reposes on the very margin of the rock, and above him his friends have erected a round tower which, although not in itself very large, derives, like the Observatory on the other side, an infinite advantage from the nature of the ground on which it is placed, and is, in fact, one of the chief landmarks in every view of the city. In its form it is quite simple, and the flat roof and single urn in front give it a very classical effect [Jane Alder's memorial had very recently been put in place; whether Lockhart really means a 'roof' or simply the top of the building is open to question]. Already lichens and ferns and wall-flowers begin to creep over the surface, and a solitary willow-bush drops its long slender leaves over the edge of the roof and breaks the outline in the air with a desolate softness. There is no inscription except the words DAVID HUME; and this is just as it ought to be. One cannot turn from them and the thoughts to which they of necessity give birth, to the more humble names that cover the more humble tombs below and around, without experiencing a strange revulsion of ideas. The simple citizen that went through the world in a course of plain and quiet existence, getting children and accumulating money to provide for them, occupies a near section of the same sod which covers the dust of Him who left no progeny behind him except that of his intellect – and whose name must survive, in that progeny, so long as Man retains any portion of the infirmity or of the nobility of his nature. . . .⁴⁸

Lockhart continues to muse at great length on how the dust of 'the Prince of Doubters' is now mingled with that of lesser mortals – and even that of some women! – but what is

interesting to note is his description of the effects of time upon the tomb: it is already assuming the romantic air of a mausoleum on a desolate stretch of the Appian Way, or in some lonely spot in the Roman Campagna, almost as Adam drew his designs as structures in decay, with vegetation creeping over the stones.

Lockhart's father-in-law, Scott, observed on the appearance of *Peter's Letters* that the book 'threw a Claude Lorrain tint over [our] northern landscape' – in other words that Lockhart's view was exaggeratedly romantic. A more accurate picture of what may have been the actual circumstances of the Hume tomb and its surroundings in the midst of a city never known for its cleanliness is given by Wraxall in his manuscript journal:

But in this nasty City, for such the Inhabitants certainly are however beautiful may be the Aspect of the Place, the near approach to the Historian's cenotaph was impeded by many abominable nuisances, and I was drawn from offering my Hommage at his Tomb by a Worshipper of another Description, who could not be approached without Disgust. Johnson might well say to his friend Boswell, when he first arrived at Edinburgh after dusk, 'I smell you in the dark.' That characteristic of the people and place has not disappeared in the lapse of forty years. . . .⁴⁹

In a splendid satire which captures perfectly the mood and spirit of the picturesque antiquarian tour of the early 19th century, the Revd Dr Paul Prosody, out to rival the exploits of his cousin Dr Syntax, arrives in Edinburgh, where

The Picturesque was here combin'd
With the Antique, to charm the mind. . .

He ascends the Calton Hill, where patriotism, inspired by the monuments, warms his breast:

Whilst to his eye the classic tomb,
That marks the memory of Hume,
The British Tacitus, appears.
Our sage exclaims with flowing tears,
'What monument canst thou require,
Beside thy writings, to inspire,
In future ages veneration,
Both for thy name and for thy nation!'

At this point in the text, a note adds: 'A handsome cenotaph has been lately erected by the *Scotch Presbyterians* to the *deistical* Hume! It might be justly styled the *Tomb of Superstition*, as it evinces the progress of *liberal opinions*.'⁵⁰

Thomas Froggnall Dibdin, the bibliomaniac, climbed the windy Calton Hill to examine the 'public monuments of the illustrious dead'; describing the Hume tomb as 'solid, simple and circular' he went on: 'It may have the authority of antiquity for its shape, but "far from me and from my friends", after death, be these bulky, circular forms, which look like reservoirs of water . . . The honours to the dead have here exceeded those to the living. The fact is not an isolated one. Much good may be doubtless gained by a constant contemplation of these "monuments of the illustrious dead". It may excite sloth and kindle emulation; but I desiderate such objects to be in a more sheltered and solemn locality – such as the street of tombs at Herculaneum or Pompeii. . . .'⁵¹

Opinions on the mausoleum have tended to vary according to the writer's views on the merits of Adam, or Hume, or both. Sir John Stoddart in 1801 appears to suggest that, in his monument, Hume fared better than his taste deserved: '. . . very simple in its design: it is said to be his own choice, and is copied from the antique, with more taste than might have been expected from such a writer.'⁵² It is as if Hume had designed the structure himself, and Adam



ILLUS 25 Hume mausoleum: tailpiece vignette from *Scotia Depicta* (1804) (Photo: NLS)

had played no part. In the 20th century, Hume's biographer, J Y T Greig, made this assessment: 'It is a round, ugly, ill-proportioned tower – which is the more surprising, since the designs for it were drawn by Robert Adam.'⁵³ (In the index to Greig's book, the mausoleum is reduced in size and dignity, and slighted by prosaic listing as 'Hume's tombstone'.) Back in the 1820s, an anonymous and ascerbic Frenchman had written thus: 'A Mr Adams pretends to great merit in architecture here; and I, for his credit, hope that Edinburgh is not indebted to him for the heavy turret dedicated as a mausoleum to Hume, the truncated column of Nelson, the chapel in the form of an inverted pipkin, the theatre, and twenty other monuments more inelegant still, appertaining to a city, the site of which alone ought to have inspired a true taste in architecture.'⁵⁴ Hume's great biographer, John Hill Burton, writing in the 1840s when Robert Adam's reputation had all but vanished, makes mere mention of the mausoleum as 'built after the simple and solemn fashion of the old Roman tombs'.⁵⁵ The author of the text of *Scotia Depicta* (1804) praised the pleasing simplicity of the tomb, but made the telling observation which must always be true of a great man of letters: that he had 'raised to himself a monument of a much more durable nature than the perishable works of stone or marble, the productions of his great mind. His *History* will be a monument "aere perennius" and remain a lasting proof of the splendid abilities of a man, who, among many others of brilliant talents, will be an honour to the Scottish nation, as long as literature and science are cultivated in Great Britain.'⁵⁶

Adam Smith would have agreed with the truth of this last remark. Some years after Hume's death he is alleged to have said, on catching sight of the tomb: 'I don't like that

monument. It is the greatest piece of vanity I ever saw in my friend Hume.⁵⁷ Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, by contrast, declared the mausoleum to be 'the finest monument . . . erected in our time, in Europe, to any man of speculative Genius and Letters'.⁵⁸

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- 3 Weis, C McC & Pottle, F A (eds) 1971 *Boswell in Extremes 1776–1778*, London, 27.
- 4 National Library of Scotland [NLS], MS. 3278, f 54, Boswell to ? Mrs Thrale, 30 Aug. 1776.
- 5 Greig, J Y T (ed) 1932 *The Letters of David Hume*, 2 vols, Oxford, I, 429.
- 6 *Ibid.*, II, 351.
- 7 This transcript is taken from a printed proof of the Will, preserved in the National Library of Scotland (pressmark 6. 2274).
- 8 Ritchie, T E 1807 *An Account of the Life and Writings of David Hume, Esquire*, London, 301.
- 9 Paton H M 1933 'The Barony of Calton', pt ii, *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, XIX (1933), 127, 131.
- 10 *Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon, Esquire. With Memoirs of his Life and Writings, composed by Himself: illustrated from his Letters, with Occasional Notes and Narrative, by Lord John Sheffield*, 2 vols (London 1796), I, Appendix, Letter lxxx, 508, extract of letter from Mr [George] Wallace to Mr [William] Strahan, 30 Aug. 1776.
- 11 Douglas, F 1782 *A General Description of the East Coast of Scotland from Edinburgh to Cullen*, Paisley, 8.
- 12 Scottish Record Office [SRO], Clerk of Penicuik Muniments, GD 18/4792, Robert Adam to Margaret Adam, 15 Nov. 1755.
- 13 Greig, *Letters of David Hume*, II, 172–3, 27 Nov. 1767.
- 14 *Ibid.*, I, 436, to Hugh Blair, 26 April 1764.
- 15 Klibansky, R & Mossner, E C (eds) 1954 *New Letters of David Hume*, Oxford, 82, Hume to Col James Edmonstoune, April 1764; Greig, *Letters of David Hume*, II, 263, Hume to Adam Smith, 27 June 1772.
- 16 Greig, J Y T 1931 *David Hume*, London, 53, 287. Writing to his sister Helen from Rome, James Adam declared that Hume's works 'deserve immense praise from everybody, unless when he happens to fall in with Painting, Sculpture & Architecture & in these he is no wiser than his brother Literati, who follow the vulgar way without knowing anything of the matter . . .' (SRO, Clerk of Penicuik Muniments, GD18/4956, James Adam to Helen Adam, 15 Jan 1763).

- 17 Arnot, H 1779 *The History of Edinburgh*, Edinburgh & London, 328; and see, eg. Carlyle, N 1813 *A Topographical Dictionary of Scotland*, 2 vols, London 1813, II, s.v. 'Leith, South'.
- 18 Greig, *Letters of David Hume*, I, 132.
- 19 Daiches, D, Jones, P & Jones, J (eds) 1986 *A Hotbed of Genius: the Scottish Enlightenment 1730–1790*, Edinburgh, 66, citing the view of Joe Rock who put forward the theory of derivation from Peyre's design, though this is said to be for a mausoleum for Frederick, Prince of Wales. In fact, Peyre did not intend the design for any such specific memorial purpose: Rock has been confused by the miscaptioning of plate 5 in John Harris's *Sir William Chambers* (London 1970). In this work Harris states quite clearly (p. 24) that Chambers was the only architect to design a mausoleum for the late Prince of Wales, which he did in 1751; and he makes no suggestion that Peyre's *chapelle sepulcrale*, designed in Rome between about 1753 and 1757, had anything to do with a Protestant Hanoverian prince who had died in 1751. Peyre's design is conveniently illustrated (and correctly captioned) in John Harris, 'Le Geay, Piranesi and International Neo-Classicism in Rome 1740–1750', in *Essays in the History of Architecture presented to Rudolf Wittkower*, ed. by D Fraser, H Hibbard & M Lewine (London 1967), 189–96, pl XX, 37.
- 20 Downes, K 1959 *Hawksmoor*, London, 223. Hawksmoor's source was Pietro Santi Bartoli, *Gli Antichi Sepolcri, ovvero Mausolei Romani et Etruschi* (Rome 1697), pls 35–7.
- 21 Santi Bartoli, *op cit*, pl 36 (Cecilia Metella) and 31 (Servilia); Bernard de Montfaucon, *L'Antiquité Explicée, et représenté en figures* (Paris 1719), V, pls 112 (Cecilia Metella) and 108 (Servilia).
- 22 Toynbee, J M C 1971 *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, London, 143, 155.
- 23 Santi Bartoli, pls 28–29; Montfaucon, V, pl 107; cf. G B Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane*, 4 vols (Rome 1756), II, pl 27.
- 24 G B Piranesi, *Antichità Romane*, III, pl 17. Adam's drawings are preserved in the album of Italian views by himself, Clérisseau and others in the collection of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Bt, Penicuik House, Midlothian (nos 86 & 89).
- 25 Plancus tomb: Santi Bartoli, pl 88; Montfaucon, V, pl 113. Tomb of the Plautii: Santi Bartoli, pl 33; Montfaucon, V, pl 114.
- 26 Ashby, T 1906 'The Classical Topography of the Roman Campagna: part ii', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, III (1906), 127.
- 27 *A Journey from Edinburgh through Parts of North Britain*, 2 vols (London 1802), I, 3.
- 28 Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, 154.
- 29 There are two drawings in the Adam and Clérisseau album in the Clerk collection at Penicuik House, Midlothian (nos 129 [illus 18] and 142): see John Fleming, 'An Italian Sketchbook by Robert Adam, Clérisseau and Others', *Connoisseur*, 146 (Nov. 1960), 192 and fig 13. A further drawing by Clérisseau was engraved by Paul Sandby in 1778: British Museum, Dept of Prints & Drawings, 1872–7–13 462.
- 30 Gifford, J, McWilliam, C & Walker, D 1984 *The Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh* Harmondsworth, 438.
- 31 Rowan, A 1988 *Robert Adam* (Catalogue of Architectural Drawings in the Victoria & Albert Museum) London, 82–3.
- 32 SRO, Clerk of Penicuik Muniments, GD 18/ 4209/ 2. Dr Drysdale, Minister of the Tron Church, lived 'back of the Theatre', and thus will have looked out at the Calton slopes and the new Hume monument: see Williamson's *Directory for the City of Edinburgh*, 1st edn (Edinburgh 1773).
- 33 Kerr, R 1811 *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, & Correspondence of William Smellie*, 2 vols Edinburgh, II, 261–2.
- 34 Arnot, *History of Edinburgh*, 328–9.
- 35 I owe this point to Dr David King. For a brief description of the Hume tomb in the context of all Adam's mausoleum designs see King, D 1991 *The Complete Works of Robert and James Adam*, London, 359.
- 36 *Views of Edinburgh and its Vicinity; drawn and engraved by J & H S Storer, Exhibiting Remains of Antiquity, Public Buildings and Picturesque Scenery*, 2 vols (Edinburgh & London 1820), II [f 23]. Arnot's description of the Hume tomb, complete with its neo-classical appendages in the form of sphinxes and urn, is carried forward unchanged to the new edition of *The History of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1816), 251, despite the fact that this edition had been updated by the inclusion of a sketch of developments in the city between 1780 and 1816.
- 37 I am again indebted to Dr David King for this observation.

- 38 NLS, MS. 3108, f 59v.
- 39 *Ibid.*, f 43.
- 40 Spiker, S H 1820 *Travels through England, Wales and Scotland in the year 1816*, 2 vols London, I, 165–6.
- 41 NLS MS. 23154 (RSE IV), f 28, Alison Cockburn to Hume, 20 Aug. 1764; quoted in Mossner, E C 1980 *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd edn, Oxford, 447.
- 42 The MS. inscription is to be found in NLS, Fettercairn Papers (Acc 4796), Box 106, File 3. The paper is endorsed: 'Inscription for the Monument of David Hume by Sir Ad. Oughton given me by himself. A fine piece of satire on the literary character of Mr Hume.'
- 43 Grant, J 1882 *Old and New Edinburgh*, 3 vols, London, II, 108.
- 44 Nasymth's watercolour of 1789 is reproduced in [Keith Andrews] *English Watercolours and Other Drawings: The Helen Barlow Bequest* (National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1979), no 33; and see also Mungo Campbell, *Drawings and Watercolours of Edinburgh in the National Gallery of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1990), 10.
- 45 NLS Acc. 6793 (journal of one 'G W T').
- 46 *Caledonian Sketches, or a Tour through Scotland in 1807* (London 1809), 73.
- 47 Anderson W E K (ed) 1972 *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, Oxford, 68.
- 48 J G Lockhart, *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, new edn (Edinburgh 1952), 71–2, Letter 8 [Letter 15 in 1st edn].
- 49 NLS MS. 3108, f 43.
- 50 *The Tour of Doctor Prosody in Search of the Antique and Picturesque through Scotland . . .* (London 1821), 23, 68, 247–8.
- 51 Dibdin, T F 1838 *A Bibliographical, Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour in the Northern Counties of England and in Scotland*, 2 vols, London, II, 480–1.
- 52 Stoddart, J 1801 *Remarks on Local Scenery and Manners in Scotland during the years 1799 and 1800*, 2 vols, London, I, 73–4.
- 53 *David Hume*, 410.
- 54 *Historical and Literary Tour of a Foreigner in England and Scotland*, 2 vols (London 1825), II, 309.
- 55 *Life and Correspondence of David Hume*, 2 vols (Edinburgh 1846), II, 518.
- 56 *Scotia Depicta; or the Antiquities, Castles, Public Buildings, Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Seats, Cities, Towns, and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland . . . with Descriptions, antiquarian, historical and picturesque. Etchings by James Fittler, ARA, after John Claude Nattes* (London 1804), pl xlviii.
- 57 Greig, *David Hume*, 410.
- 58 NLS, MS. 3108, f 59v.