



# William Burton Conyngham's antiquarian tour of the Iberian Peninsula, 1783-84

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IN NOVEMBER 1782, THE PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR IN LONDON REPORTED TO THE SECRETARY of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon, Aires de Sá e Melo, that 'Col. Cuningham ... will leave Ireland for this court for the sake of his health'.<sup>1</sup> The ambassador was referring to the antiquary William Burton Conyngham (1733-1796), a tireless patron of the arts, Wide Streets Commissioner, passionate promoter of Ireland's mercantile interests, and architect of significant improvements on the Conyngham family's vast estates in counties Meath and Donegal (Plate 1).<sup>2</sup> Amidst complex dealings with architects and surveyors at Slane Castle, and plans for his new fishing village on Rutland Island at the Rosses on the Donegal estate, Burton Conyngham fell ill and abandoned his schemes temporarily to leave for the warmer climate of Spain and Portugal. He chose to spend almost two years on the Iberian Peninsula, travelling broadly throughout before returning through France and Holland in the winter of 1784.<sup>3</sup>

His extensive tour of the peninsula was not the first to be undertaken by a distinguished Irishman in the eighteenth century. Thirty years earlier, Joseph Henry of Straffan, a connoisseur of Italian painting and nephew of Joseph Leeson (1st Earl of Milltown), split from the erudite group of cognoscenti in Rome – Joseph Leeson junior, Lord Charlemont, Thomas Dawson and Ralph Howard – and in October 1752 set out on his own for Spain, where he produced a treatise on Raphael's *Madonna del Pesce* at the Escorial and added several landscapes by Antonio Joli to his burgeoning art collection.<sup>4</sup> Glimpses of Burton Conyngham's trip are revealed through detailed studies of James Murphy's discourse on the monastery of Batalha in Portugal, and through Burton Conyngham's own study of the Theatre of Sagunto, near Valencia in Spain.<sup>5</sup> But the narration of his Iberian tour remains incomplete. Using Spanish and Portuguese sources not

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1 – Hugh Douglas Hamilton, *WILLIAM BURTON, TELLER OF THE EXCHEQUER IN IRELAND* (detail) 1780, engraved by V. Green (courtesy National Library of Ireland)

hitherto examined, this essay serves to map out his journey throughout the peninsula and provide a more complete picture of his exploits there.

Although news of his sojourn broke in the autumn of 1782, correspondence between the architect and stonemason Michael Shanahan and his patron, the Earl Bishop of Derry, indicates that Burton Conyngham left Ireland at the earliest in the summer of 1783.<sup>6</sup> His companions on the trip were Colonel Charles Tarrant and a Captain Broughton. Tarrant features largely in Burton Conyngham's life, most significantly as a fellow Wide Streets Commissioner and a member of the Royal Irish Academy, and later as an advisor on the execution of the new port and village at Rutland Island in 1785. A military engineer, Tarrant worked in the drawing office of the Tower of London between 1750 and 1755, before he was employed as a draughtsman to the Board of Ordnance of Ireland in 1763, where he worked closely with Colonel Charles Vallancey. At Athlone Castle he prepared detailed reports towards its repair, and in Dublin he carried out a design for a meeting room for the Dublin Society's premises, of which he was a member.<sup>7</sup> Tarrant was also an accomplished map-maker and artist; he produced a forty-page manuscript, *Report on the store houses, powder magazines and fortifications in Ireland*, including rendered illustrations of fortifications at twelve locations and a commentary on each.<sup>8</sup> At some point, Tarrant's drawings were removed from the manuscript, and it is very likely that they came into Burton Conyngham's possession. They were eventually dispersed and sold on to various institutions, possibly through Austin Cooper, who bought much of Burton Conyngham's catalogue in 1810.<sup>9</sup> Within the realm of local history, Tarrant will be remembered for his curious (and possibly unfounded) behaviour on his property at Rathdown, county Wicklow, where G.N. Wright accused him of the destruction of the church of St Crispin's Cell and adjoining graveyard, a remarkable gesture given his background.<sup>10</sup>

We cannot be certain about who Broughton was, but the two most likely candidates are Captain William Broughton, a member of the Royal Navy, who travelled to North America on an expedition on the Columbia River with the explorer George Vancouver in 1792, and Richard Broughton, who was secretary to the Ballast Board, otherwise known as the Corporation for Preserving and Improving the Port of Dublin, founded in 1786.<sup>11</sup>

Burton Conyngham's primary aim was to recuperate and to visit noteworthy Iberian landmarks and archaeological sites, but aside from this aspect of the tour, a secondary interest lay in the promotion of commerce between Ireland and Spain and Portugal, and the study of contemporary local industries, with a view to their introduction in Ireland. The group began their tour of the peninsula in Portugal, landing in Lisbon and moving directly northwards along the coast to the fashionable spa-town of Caldas, where the royal family regularly took the waters (Plate 2).<sup>12</sup> The nature of transport throughout the peninsula in the late eighteenth century meant that the group could travel by coach along the newly laid-out principal routes before attempting the secondary thoroughfares by mule; a journey of about 350 Spanish miles, with the usual interruptions, could take almost a fortnight.<sup>13</sup> From Caldas, they travelled north on the main artery to Alcobaça, and from



2 – Map of Spain and Portugal showing locations visited by Burton Conyngham and his companions on their tour of the Iberian Peninsula, 1783-84 (drawn by the author)

there to their first landmark destination, the monastery of Santa Maria da Vitória at Batalha, in the district of Leiria, where they carried out a series of drawings of the fourteenth-century building. The monastery was a hybrid of various Gothic styles, which took two centuries to complete. It was begun by Afonso Domingues, a Portuguese architect, in 1386, until supervision of the building works was undertaken by Huguet in the early fifteenth century. Huguet, who was allegedly of Catalan descent, introduced the Flamboyant Gothic style to the building.<sup>14</sup>

This troupe of Irishmen were not the first travellers from northern Europe to be fascinated by Batalha. In 1760, the young Thomas Pitt (nephew of William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham) and his companions – the Earl of Strathmore and Philip Francis, who was of Irish origin and William Pitt's secretary – landed at Lisbon, from where they began a journey through central Portugal and Spain. Pitt's account of events in Portugal was recorded in a journal, providing detailed descriptions and sketches of the buildings they visited, the highlight of which was the Dominican monastery at Batalha.<sup>15</sup> Pitt was an amateur architect, a member of his neighbour Horace Walpole's 'Committee of Taste', to whom he provided plans for a Gothic interior at Walpole's fanciful Strawberry Hill in 1763. A full appreciation of architecture is reflected in Pitt's Iberian journal, and he concluded that if Batalha had been finished, 'it would have been the richest Piece of Gothick



3 – Martin Archer Shee,  
 JAMES CAVANAH MURPHY  
*mezzotint, engraved by W.I. Newton*  
 (from James C. Murphy, *TRAVELS IN*  
*PORTUGAL* (London, 1795) frontispiece)

Work in Europe'.<sup>16</sup> Although the journal remained in unpublished form, it was widely distributed as a transcript among fellow dilettanti, and by 1771 it was in the hands of Richard Gough, director of the Society of Antiquaries of London. Given Burton Conyngham's connections with this society (of which he was made a Fellow in 1790), he would have undoubtedly seen a copy of Pitt's manuscript, prompting his interest in Batalha and ultimately his exploration of Spanish architectural antiquities. It is well known that Batalha's free mix of Gothic styles, ranging from Rayonnant to Flamboyant, from English Perpendicular to Manueline, inspired James Wyatt, who was shown Burton Conyngham's drawings of the building and who was subsequently influenced by Batalha at Lee Priory in Kent (c.1785-89), as well as other domestic and ecclesiastical commissions in England.

It is possible that Burton Conyngham was searching for architectural concepts at Batalha to furnish the difficult completion of his seat at Slane Castle, but a more ambitious project was at play here, and Burton Conyngham was eager to make the splendour of the gothic monastery more widely known. Just as he had done in Ireland through his enlightened and generous patronage of many native and foreign artists who were engaged to record the country's vast collection of antiquities, Burton Conyngham commissioned James Murphy (Plate 3), the Cork artist-turned- 'ingenious and deserving young architect', to travel to Portugal a few years later to record the monastery at Batalha and eventually publish engravings from his detailed study of the architecture of the building in 1789.<sup>17</sup> Murphy recalls in his correspondence to Burton Conyngham in 1789 his excitement upon seeing 'your elegant sketches of this fine Building', which he refers to as 'very correct representations of the original'.<sup>18</sup> It was certainly not beyond these gentlemen to produce a few drawings of the monastery. Burton Conyngham's aptitude as a draughtsman and his capacity to sketch *in situ* has recently come to light in a series of watercolour copies by Beranger of Burton Conyngham's own drawings.<sup>19</sup> And Tarrant, in his previous role as engineer under Vallancey, had trained surveyors to draw on location so that their 'sketches [might be] taken in books chiefly on horseback – not laid down to scale, but the nature and appearance of the country proportioned by the eye only'.<sup>20</sup> Burton Conyngham subsequently confirms his authorship of a set of drawings of Batalha in a letter to the distinguished agriculturist and botanist Sir Joseph Banks: 'This letter which is delivered to you by a young artist, who made a visit to Portugal to compleat the drawings of a very beautiful Gothic church & monastery, of which I had taken some sketches...' <sup>21</sup>

As draughtsmen they were not entirely alone. In his travelogue published in 1795, Murphy refers to a 'Signor Glama', João Glama Ströberle, an artist from Oporto, of

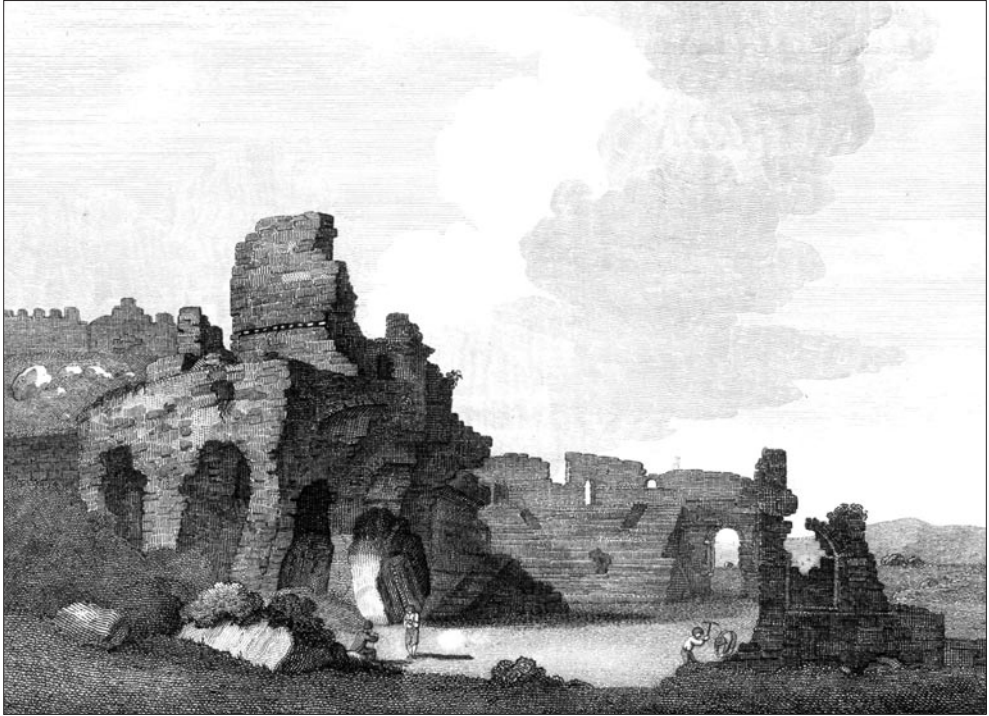
German origin, who was employed by Burton Conyngham and his companions to assist them with the bulk of the drawings at Batalha.<sup>22</sup> Given the scale of the monastery, and Burton Conyngham's ambition to record such a broad range of Iberian antiquities, the employment of local artists, surveyors and other workmen to measure and draw plans or to excavate sites is predictable. The Bishop of Béja, who announced that Burton Conyngham 'has done more for the Art than all of Portugal put together',<sup>23</sup> was a collector of Roman inscriptions and artefacts, and shared a special interest in Roman antiquities with Burton Conyngham. He may have encouraged Burton Conyngham's visits to the sites of Sagunto and Tarragona in Spain the following year. From his letters it appears that Murphy had traced a selection of Burton Conyngham's drawings whilst still in Dublin and used these tracings as templates to set up his own study of the church once he arrived at Batalha.<sup>24</sup> Bemused by the diverse gothic styles of the monastery, William Beckford remarked rather boorishly in 1835 that had the designs of 'that dull draughtsman Murphy' been employed in completing the unfinished mausoleum of King Emanuel, the result would have been 'most preciously ugly'.<sup>25</sup> But the young artist went on to fulfil Pitt's prediction that 'it is impossible to give an Idea of the Work [Batalha] by Words, or by any Drawing, except of the most exact & skilful Pencil'.<sup>26</sup> Murphy's experience under Thomas Ivory in the Dublin Society School is very evident in his exquisite measured drawings of Batalha published in 1795 and dedicated to his patron. A copy of a watercolour of the lavabo at Mellifont (the base for an engraving for Grose's *Antiquities*) is held at the Royal Irish Academy, but we know little else of his drawing commissions in Ireland other than a drawing of Slane Castle, as executed to Wyatt's design, and a plan for Col Clements House in Cork, dated 1786 and signed later – James C. Murphy, the Alhambra Arch<sup>t</sup> (sic).<sup>27</sup> Surprisingly, there is no evidence that Murphy was requested by Burton Conyngham to make any proposals for Slane Castle, but, if he did, regrettably none has survived.

From Batalha, the group travelled north through Marinha Grande, Coimbra and Oporto, before arriving in Braga in September 1783, where Burton Conyngham visited the pre-Roman settlement of Calcedonia in the hills above the town.<sup>28</sup> From there they moved eastwards on the main highway from Oporto to Salamanca and through the Castile region of Spain. In early November 1783, Burton Conyngham enthusiastically recounted his trip from Salamanca to Segovia to his friend Robert Clements. He spoke in glowing terms of the architecture of Castile, adding that he planned to go to Madrid, and from there to the east coast.<sup>29</sup> However, before reaching Valencia, Burton Conyngham visited Andalucía, where, in Seville, Jaén and Linares, he began his collection of inscriptions and copied those he found in Hebrew and Latin.<sup>30</sup> He was diverted once more between Alicante and Valencia to gather barilla seeds and plant samples for future cultivation in Ireland and England, and to inspect an 'extraordinary phenomenon' (as he described it to Revd Charles Peter Layard, foreign secretary to the Royal Society) at Alcira in November 1783.<sup>31</sup> The phenomenon that Burton Conyngham observed was the sinking of the summit of Mont Baladic during seasonal flooding of the river Júcar, and the resulting dis-

placement of limestone rubble, which was ‘jumbled together and the ruins tumbled down the sides to the foot of the hill’.<sup>32</sup> Burton Conyngham did not draw any definitive conclusions in his letter to Layard, but the mere title of his piece – *...account of the convulsion of a hill at Alcira* – and his detailed narrative, was sufficient to demonstrate that the hill had erupted like a volcano and that this was not the direct result of floods alone, but was a natural manifestation of the combination of heavy rainfall and the nature of the inner strata.

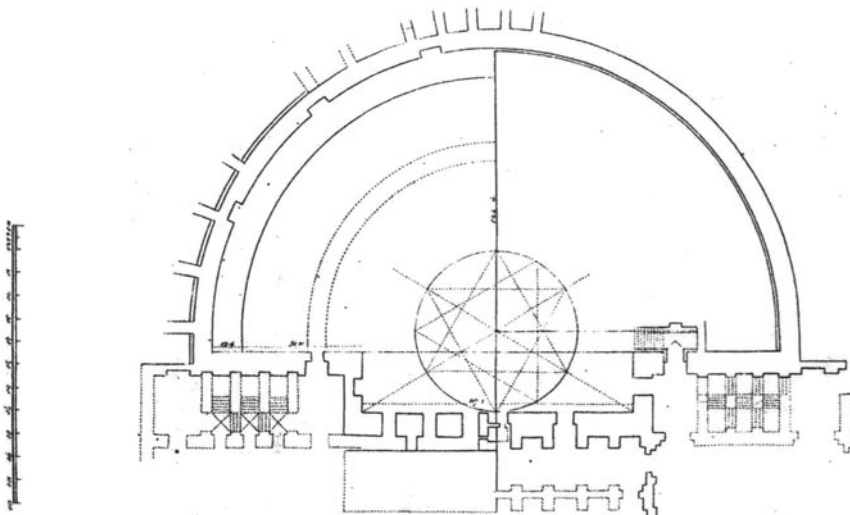
By January 1784 Burton Conyngham had reached the region of Valencia, with the intention of excavating the Roman theatre of Sagunto, which dates from the second century AD.<sup>33</sup> Burton Conyngham was among a group of erudite tourists such as Wilhelm von Humboldt, Alexandre Laborde and Filippo Schiassi, who, with their detailed treatises on the theatre, provided a complete view of the structure at the end of the eighteenth century. Laborde and Schiassi both produced measured drawings of the building. Burton Conyngham’s study has recently been described as the most accurate depiction of the theatre until a photometric survey was carried out at a much later date, and it may be assumed that Tarrant, in his capacity as a surveyor, had a hand in these drawings (Plate 4).<sup>34</sup> Until Burton Conyngham’s visit in 1784, the remains of the theatre had been examined solely by like-minded Spaniards; the most celebrated of these was Emanuel Martí, the dean of Alicante. Burton Conyngham based his thesis on Martí’s work in a paper presented to the Royal Irish Academy in 1789, this being the first monograph on the theatre to be produced by a foreigner.<sup>35</sup> His paper reflects an awareness of classical sources such as Julius Pollux, Vitruvius and Pausanias, and the contemporaneous texts of Le Roy, Stuart, Choiseul and, of course, Martí, all of which he complements with references to antique theatres in Italy and Greece. Burton Conyngham noted that Martí, and other Spaniards who followed a similar method of analysis, had preconceived ideas based on the principles of Vitruvius, which were superimposed on the theatre without a formal survey, therefore assuming that it was of Roman origin. Declaring this method redundant, Burton Conyngham proceeded with his own ‘profound study of the theatre’, and concluded that it might not have been the work of the Romans but possibly a theatre of Greek origin – a strong possibility given Sagunto’s history as an important Greek colony. He supplemented his hypothesis with measured drawings, demonstrating the similarities between Sagunto and the plans of the Attic theatres. The highly descriptive plates show that the measurements of Sagunto related closely to those of the Athens theatre devoted to Dionysius at the foot of the Acropolis, considered to be the prototype for Greek theatres. (In the second half of the nineteenth century, it was discovered that the remains of this Athenian theatre, built by Herodes Atticus, was, in fact, an *odeon*, another architectural entity, which scuppered Burton Conyngham’s theory.)<sup>36</sup> He produced five plates in total for his paper to the Royal Irish Academy, but only four were published: two plans of the theatre, one sectional elevation and one perspective view. The fifth plate was the plan of an unnamed theatre, intended for comparative purposes (Plate 5).<sup>37</sup>

In order to excavate the ruins, dozens of workmen were employed at the site. Their



4 – View of the Roman Theatre of Sagunto showing part of the terraced seating in the amphitheatre  
(from William Conyngham, 'Observations on the description of the Theatre at Saguntum',  
TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY, III, 1790, pl. 4) (courtesy Royal Irish Academy)

5 – Unpublished plan by William Burton Conyngham of an unnamed theatre to be used for his  
analysis of the Theatre of Sagunto, 1784 (courtesy Royal Irish Academy)







presence aroused the usual curiosity, and it was rumoured that Burton Conyngham was digging for gold bells worth £100,000, concealed there according to local tradition. These gold bells may refer to bronze or copper resonance vases inserted in the tiered seating by the Greeks (according to Vitruvius) to improve the reverberation of sound within the theatre space. Burton Conyngham did notice nine cavities, 0.49m wide and 0.65m apart, which he believed were for acoustic vases. No bells were discovered, but various treasures were unearthed during the works: 'a number of ancient inscriptions, bases and capitals of columns, and a curious Roman altar'.<sup>38</sup> Once drawings had been made of these artefacts, the originals were presented to Burton Conyngham in a generous gesture by the locals 'as a reward for his trouble'.<sup>39</sup>

These drawings, and an account of Burton Conyngham's archaeological interventions, were illustrated in a plan commissioned by the Conde de Floridablanca, José Moñino y Redondo (Plate 6). The count was a highly ambitious and effective statesman, gaining the title for his services in 1773 from Charles III – Spain's enlightened autocrat who was leading the country into a brief cultural and economic revival at that time. Floridablanca subsequently became First Secretary of State, a post equivalent to Prime Minister, and in this role he was responsible for the rebuilding of Madrid and the execution of canal networks and irrigation systems throughout Spain. His interest in antiquities is unknown, but he certainly shared the spirit of improvement with Burton Conyngham, and the nature of the excavation works at Sagunto would have been of sufficient importance to merit documentation. The manuscript plan commissioned by the count is conserved in the Historical Cartographic Library of the Geographical Military Service in Madrid, with the following legend (Plate 7):

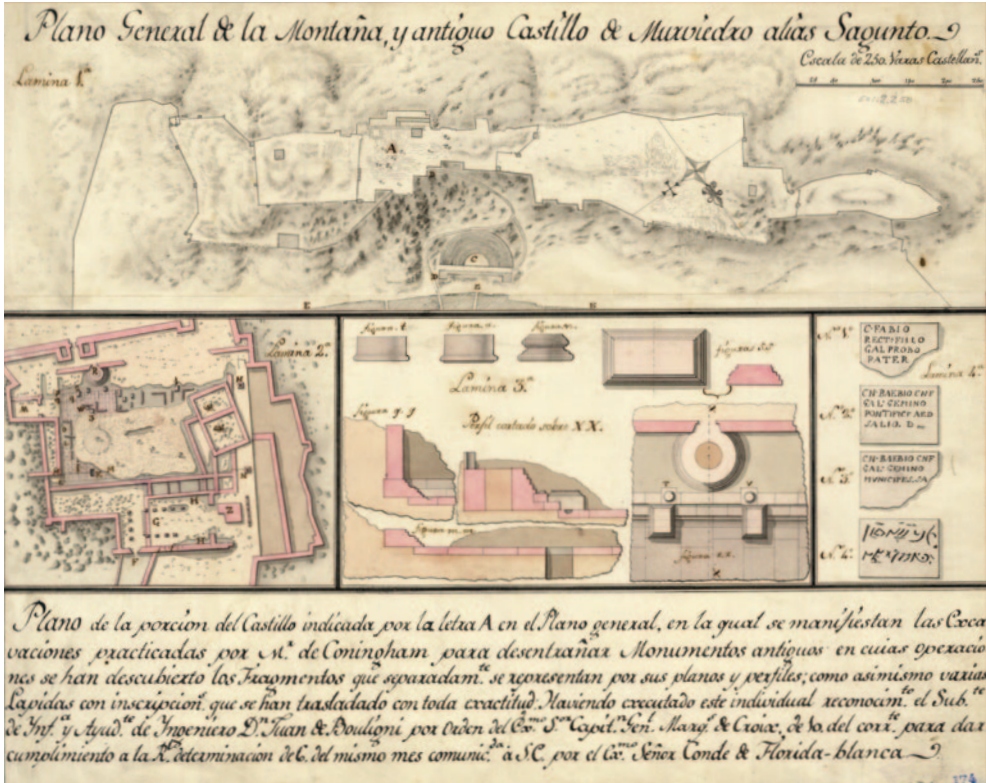
Plan of the location of the castle, marked by the letter 'A' in the main plan, in which excavations carried out by Mr. de Coningham [sic] to unveil ancient monuments are shown, and through which fragments have been discovered and these are represented separately though plans and sections, as well as several stones, with inscriptions which have been represented with full accuracy...<sup>40</sup>

The document is significant in its depiction of the context and scale of the work executed by Burton Conyngham, and is valuable evidence of his fascination with architectural antiquities and his attention to detail.

From Sagunto, the troupe followed the eastern coastline to Alcalá de Xisbert in Castellón, and further north to Teruel, where further inscriptions were copied and documented for publication in Burton Conyngham's paper.<sup>41</sup> Excavation work continued once more at the Roman circus of Tarragona, an event originally attributed to Burton Conyngham's uncle due to errors made by previous authorities concerning excavation dates and peerage titles. This has been clarified more recently by Jaume Massó, the

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6 – *Francisco de Goya, CONDE DE FLORIDABLANCA, JOSÉ MOÑINO Y REDONDO*  
1783, oil on canvas, 262 x 166 cm (courtesy Banco de España, Madrid)



Catalan archaeologist. Massó states that Burton Conyngham was the first foreigner to excavate the structure, and that he belonged to a small group of military engineers like J.A. Rovira who restored the monumental Bará Arch, and J. Boy, designer of the main water supply to the city, who was responsible for a large collection of artefacts entitled *Recopilacion sussinta de las antiguedades romanas*. Against a background of reform led by the ‘urbanist archbishop’ Joaquín de Santiyán, Burton Conyngham’s main contribution to the examination of Roman remains in the city was the unearthing of a passage around the entire circus, which, he claimed, was constructed at a larger scale than previously reported by the native Canon R. Fouget in Flórez’s *España Sagrada* in 1769.<sup>42</sup> This was to be Burton Conyngham’s last major work that we know of in Spain. By July 1784 he was already in Bordeaux, where it was reported that he ‘is likely to return to his native country perfectly recovered ... stout and hearty, and intending to return at the beginning of the winter’.<sup>43</sup> There is no evidence that Burton Conyngham’s cohorts accompanied him for the entire tour. A wonderful sketch by Tarrant of a street monkey in Oporto, dated 30th April 1784, implies his presence in Portugal at this date, but Captain Broughton was never heard of again.<sup>44</sup>

In October 1784, Burton Conyngham returned home through Holland, armed with his sketches of Batalha, inscription drawings gathered at various archaeological sites, and

8 – Gilbert Stuart

WILLIAM BURTON CONYNGHAM

c.1791-92, oil on canvas, 112 x 98 cm

(courtesy National Gallery of Ireland)<sup>46</sup>

opposite

7 – Manuscript plan showing William Burton Conyngham's excavations in and around the Roman Theatre of Sagunto, as commissioned by the Conde de Floridablanca in 1784

(courtesy Cartoteca Histórica del Servicio Geográfico del Ejército, Madrid)



plans and accounts of his excavation work.<sup>45</sup> In addition to this antiquity-related material, he had made his own botanical drawings of a variety of plant species, which would partly inform his scheme to promote Ireland's commercial interests and develop new trade links with Spain. Burton Conyngham had already sent home trade samples, seeds, Indian rice (with a view to its cultivation), and publications on agriculture and husbandry which would be of benefit to Ireland. The purchase of these books and journals was supported by the Dublin Society's committee of commerce, who allowed Burton Conyngham funds amounting to £200 for this purpose. Most of the publications were foreign, and the artist Gabriel Beranger was engaged in Dublin to translate various titles and indexes.<sup>47</sup> Also of interest were the lists sent to John Foster of diverse woollen produce imported into Lisbon from England, and the two merino rams dispatched illegally (with the assistance of the governor of Almeida) from the borders of Castile to his farm at Slane Castle.<sup>48</sup> This was one area that Burton Conyngham doggedly pursued upon his return to Ireland, and although his attempts at the cultivation of the barilla plant (a valuable Iberian maritime species) at his gardens in Slane were not entirely successful, his experiments at crossing Castilian rams with native Irish sheep produced a very high-quality wool, called 'Hibernian Superfine', which he claimed was superior to any fleece produced in Scotland or in Herefordshire.<sup>49</sup> Sadly, as part of a remarkably aggressive clearance of his estate at

Slane after his death in 1796, his flocks were sold off by his heir, the farm gardens were cleaned of his botanical experiments to make way for the pig breeding his nephew excelled at, and Burton Conyngham's acts of economic patriotism ended there.<sup>50</sup>

The most celebrated outcome of Burton Conyngham's trip to Spain and Portugal was the material he gathered to spur James Murphy into action to record the monastery at Batalha, and the eventual impact of Murphy's document on the architectural world and on those aficionados of the Gothic Revival. Burton Conyngham's own dissertation on the theatre at Sagunto was not insignificant, and its format clearly informed Murphy's subsequent account of Batalha. Just as interesting were his collections of archaeological inscriptions and his observations on indigenous plant species and drawings thereof. His archaeological digs at the sites of Sagunto and Tarragona were pioneering, not only for the surveys and theories that emerged, but because he was the first distinguished Irishman of the late eighteenth century to undertake his own excavation work in Spain and Portugal.

This concise narration of Burton Conyngham's hugely important antiquarian tour of the Iberian Peninsula is merely the beginnings of a mapping out of his extensive journey. A new source containing his unpublished correspondence has recently been discovered in the estate papers of Abbot Correia da Serra in Portugal.<sup>51</sup> Undoubtedly there are many more letters waiting to be revealed, and further research, specifically in the Spanish archives, may yield a wealth of uncovered sources concerning Burton Conyngham's tour, his architectural, antiquarian and botanical interests, or indeed the possibility of an entirely new and unexplored area of his attention.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Maria João Neto (ed.), *James Murphy, Gothic architecture: designs of the Monastery of Batalha, 1795 album reprint* (Lisbon, 2008) 59.
- <sup>2</sup> For biographical details, see C.E.F. Trench, 'William Burton Conyngham 1733-1796', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, CXV, 1985, 40-63; C.E.F. Trench, 'William Burton Conyngham, profound scholar and antiquary 1733-1796', *Ríocht na Midhe* (Journal of the Meath Archaeological & Historical Society), VIII, 1, 1987, 113-28; James Kelly, 'William Burton Conyngham', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XIII (Oxford, 2004) 80-81; Peter Harbison, 'Our treasure of antiquities', *Beranger and Bigari's antiquarian sketching tour of Connacht in 1779* (Bray, 2002).
- <sup>3</sup> British Library, Correspondence of Arthur Young, Add MS 35,126, f.246, Burton Conyngham to Arthur Young, 11th July 1783; William Beresford (ed.), *The correspondence of the Rt. Hon. John Beresford*, 2 vols (London, 1854) I, 247-48.
- <sup>4</sup> Cynthia O'Connor, 'Dr James Tyrell, agent at Florence', *Studies*, LXIX, 274, Summer 1980, 137-44; Joseph McDonnell, 'Joseph Henry of Straffan: a connoisseur of Italian renaissance painting' in Michael McCarthy (ed.), *Lord Charlemont and his circle* (Dublin, 2001) 77-89.
- <sup>5</sup> Michael McCarthy, 'Unpublished drawings of James Cavanah Murphy', *Irish Arts Review*, 19, no. 1, 2002, 114-17; Michael McCarthy, 'Three mausolea and a church; the drawings of James C. Murphy for his book on Batalha of 1795', *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, XI, 2008, 166-203.
- <sup>6</sup> Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, Hervey Bruce papers, D/1514/1/2/3, Michael Shanahan to Hervey, Earl Bishop of Derry, May 1783. Shanahan had been asked by Burton Conyngham to go to Rutland Island 'to set forward [his] works' there. For a full account of the fisheries at Rutland, see James Kelly, 'William Burton Conyngham and the Donegal fisheries', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, CXV, 1985, 64-85.
- <sup>7</sup> Christine Casey and Alistair Rowan, *The Buildings of Ireland: North Leinster* (London, 1993) 129-30; Royal Dublin Society, Minute Books of the Dublin Society, 14th April 1768.
- <sup>8</sup> Emer Singleton, 'Charles Tarrant, surveyor, architect, artist & cartographer (1730-1818)', *Old Bray Journal*, I, 5, 1991, 7-15.
- <sup>9</sup> The National Library of Ireland hold three sketches drafted by Tarrant: a map of the entrance to Cork Harbour (undated, 18th century), a plan of Athlone Castle (1793) and a sketch of Carrickfergus Castle (1793). A map of the neighbourhood of Lismore dating from the mid-eighteenth century is at the Public Record Office at Kew, and a copy of Tarrant's drawing of the market cross in Kilkenny is at the Crookshank Glin Archive at TRIARC, Trinity College Dublin. Tarrant's interest in the botanical world is revealed in a wonderful illustration, *Honey Plant* (c.1770), in the Currier Museum of Art, New Hampshire.
- <sup>10</sup> G.N. Wright, *A guide to the county of Wicklow* (London, 1827) 20. Tarrant's neighbours at Rathdown were John Brownrigg, surveyor and engineer, Redmond Morres, director of the Grand Canal Company, and David La Touche, a fellow Wide Streets Commissioner.
- <sup>11</sup> Broughton's role on the trip is not clear, but the attendance of a naval officer would have been a practical measure and he may have been skilled in the art of surveying.
- <sup>12</sup> Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, Foster Masserene papers, D/562/8575, Burton Conyngham to John Foster, 18th May 1783.
- <sup>13</sup> Gonzalo Anes, *El antiguo regimen: Los Borbones* (Madrid, 1983), 223-25.
- <sup>14</sup> In his preface to *Plans, elevations, sections ... of Batalha* (London 1795), James C. Murphy suggests that Huguet was, in fact, an Irishman called David Hacket, giving his authority as José Soares da

- Sylva, author of *Memorias para a historia de Portugal...* 4 vols (Lisbon, 1730-34) II, 533. In *Notes & Queries*, July 1854, 29, Hacket's identity is queried by James Graves, who asks whether he was a church dignitary and a native of Kilkenny who filled the See of Ossory from 1460 to 1479. If Hacket was indeed an Irishman, this would have undoubtedly pleased Burton Conyngham and fulfilled his expectations for the documentation of the Batalha project.
- <sup>15</sup> John Frew and Carey Wallace, 'Thomas Pitt, Portugal and the gothic cult of Batalha', *Burlington Magazine*, CXXVIII, 1001, 1986, 582-85; Roland Thorne, 'Thomas Pitt, 1737-93, first Baron Camelford, politician and dilettante', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XLIV (Oxford, 2004) 448-50.
- <sup>16</sup> *ibid.* Pitt's journal would also have been of interest to James Murphy, who went on to carry out his splendid study, *The Arabian antiquities of Spain*, published in 1815.
- <sup>17</sup> *Anthologia Hibernica*, I, 1793, 55. For biographical sources for James Murphy and an account of his tour through Portugal, see James Cavanah Murphy, *Travels in Portugal* (London, 1795); John Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, VI (London, 1831) 429-44; Count Plunkett, 'James Cavanah Murphy', *The Irish Builder*, LI, 15th May 1909, 295-97; McCarthy, 'Unpublished drawings of James Cavanah Murphy'; McCarthy, 'Three mausolea and a church'.
- <sup>18</sup> Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, 432-36.
- <sup>19</sup> I am indebted to Peter Harbison (who discovered the watercolours) for alerting me to the existence of the drawings and for kindly allowing me access to his copies of the Beranger reproductions.
- <sup>20</sup> William O'Reilly, 'Charles Vallancey and the Military Itinerary of Ireland', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, CVI, 2006, 125-217.
- <sup>21</sup> National Library of Australia, Joseph Banks papers, MS 9/43-43d, William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 3rd October 1790 (<http://www.nla.gov.au>).
- <sup>22</sup> Murphy, *Travels in Portugal*, 10; Neto (ed.) *James Murphy, Gothic architecture*, 63. Restoration works were carried out at the monastery after the earthquake of 1755 by João Vicente, a builder from Lisbon. Burton Conyngham had initially sought the associated construction drawings for King John's chapel from the Abbot Correia da Serra, but Glama's commission on the project would indicate that he never received Vicente's drawings.
- <sup>23</sup> Neto (ed.), *James Murphy, Gothic architecture*, 95.
- <sup>24</sup> Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, 436.
- <sup>25</sup> William Beckford, *Recollections of an excursion to the monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha* (London, 1835) 136.
- <sup>26</sup> Frew and Wallace, 'Thomas Pitt, Portugal and the gothic cult of Batalha'. Pitt was among the long list of subscribers who were issued the early drafts of Murphy's work between 1792 and 1795.
- <sup>27</sup> I am grateful to Dr Edward McParland for this reference. Col Clements may refer to Theophilus Clements, Robert Clements' cousin. Robert was a close friend of Burton Conyngham and a brother-in-law to Francis Pierpoint Conyngham. The signature on the drawing (which is in the National Library of Ireland, MS 4824) makes reference to Murphy's seminal work, *The Arabian antiquities of Spain* (1815). Murphy's façade of Slane Castle is in the Murray Collection (no. 1131) at the Irish Architectural Archive. The copy of the lavabo at Mellifont is in portfolio 3C.29 at the Royal Irish Academy.
- <sup>28</sup> National Library of Australia, Joseph Banks papers, MS 9/43-43d, William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 7th May 1791 (<http://www.nla.gov.au>); Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, 438-40. It is possible that the group also travelled south to Évora and Béja to visit the Roman temple of Diana and the gothic castle of Menagem, as James Murphy did in 1789, but there is no hard evidence that Burton Conyngham had been there from his correspondence.

- <sup>29</sup> Trinity College Dublin, Manuscripts, Clements papers/letter books, MS 1743, Burton Conyngham to Robert Clements, 5th November 1783. Other than Salamanca, most of the Irish colleges in Spain had closed with the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767.
- <sup>30</sup> William Conyngham, 'Observations on the description of the theatre at Saguntum', *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, III, 1790, 21-49.
- <sup>31</sup> National Library of Australia, Joseph Banks papers, MS 9/43-43d, William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 22nd February 1788 (<http://www.nla.gov.au>); Royal Society London, Correspondence between the Royal Society and the European periphery 1600-1800, RS/PPI/L&P viii/148, 'William Burton Conyngham's account of the convulsion of a hill at Alcira in November 1783'.
- <sup>32</sup> Royal Society London, Correspondence between the Royal Society and the European periphery 1600-1800, RS/PPI/L&P viii/148, 'William Burton Conyngham's account of the convulsion of a hill at Alcira in November 1783'.
- <sup>33</sup> Beresford (ed.), *The correspondence of the Rt. Hon. John Beresford*, I, 247-48.
- <sup>34</sup> Alicia León-Gómez, *El teatro romano de Sagunto en el siglo XVIII* (Seville, 2006) 156.
- <sup>35</sup> Conyngham, 'Observations on the description of the theatre at Saguntum'.
- <sup>36</sup> León-Gómez, *El teatro romano de Sagunto en el siglo XVIII*, 158.
- <sup>37</sup> Burton Conyngham mentions it in his addendum as the 'Athenian Theatre' but does not attach the drawing in his paper to the academy.
- <sup>38</sup> Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, 435.
- <sup>39</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>40</sup> I am very grateful to Alicia León-Gómez of the Archaeological Department at the University of Seville for guiding me to this manuscript.
- <sup>41</sup> Conyngham, 'Observations on the description of the theatre at Saguntum'.
- <sup>42</sup> Jaume Massó, 'Un Irlandés, el primer excavador del Circ, l'any 1784', *Diari de Tarragona*, 2nd December 1987.
- <sup>43</sup> *Dublin Evening Post*, 1st July 1784.
- <sup>44</sup> There is a copy of Tarrant's sketch at the Crookshank Glin Archive at TRIARC, University of Dublin, Trinity College.
- <sup>45</sup> National Library of Ireland, MS 16,353, John Beresford to Thomas Orde, 27th October 1784.
- <sup>46</sup> There are three paintings of Burton Conyngham by Stuart, the originals of which are in the Norton Museum of Art (West Palm Beach, Florida), the National Gallery of Ireland (Plate 8), and at Slane Castle. The two volumes behind Burton Conyngham (to his left) are depicted in the Norton Museum as *Travels in Spain* – possibly bound volumes of his own trip as it was too early for James Murphy's publications and unlikely to be those of Richard Twiss. The portrait at Slane Castle was amended after his death in 1796 to incorporate the titles of Francis Grose's work, *Antiquities of Ireland* (1791-96), of which volume one was dedicated to Burton Conyngham in 1794.
- <sup>47</sup> Trench, 'William Burton Conyngham 1733-1796', 47.
- <sup>48</sup> Harold Burnell Carter (ed.), *The sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks 1781-1820* (London, 1979) 159.
- <sup>49</sup> National Library of Australia, Joseph Banks papers, MS 9/43-43d, William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 7th May 1791 (<http://www.nla.gov.au>); Carter (ed.), *The sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, 205, 232. For a full account of Burton Conyngham's experiments, see Livia Hurley, 'Some late eighteenth-century agricultural developments under the Conyngham family at Slane', *Ríocht na Midhe – Journal of the Meath Archaeological & Historical Society*, XXI, 2010.
- <sup>50</sup> *Drogheda Journal*, 8th October and 15th November 1796.
- <sup>51</sup> Neto (ed.), *James Murphy, Gothic architecture*, 59.