



# ‘An Ingenious Painter’: new factors in the early career of Charles Jervas

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MODERN SCHOLARS INTERESTED IN THE CAREER OF THE IRISH-BORN PORTRAITIST Charles Jervas (c.1675-1739) are presented with the inherited challenges of excoriating art-historical criticism, unchallenged for far too long, and a dearth of sound documentary evidence, the former having surely deterred the preservation of the latter (Plate 1). The long-accepted narrative is that of a feeble talent propitiously masked by the artist’s friendships with celebrated contemporaries such as Alexander Pope and Sir Robert Walpole, and is rooted in the anecdotal, and hardly disinterested, jottings of the antiquarian George Vertue.<sup>1</sup> Undisputed is the fact that Jervas enjoyed an extraordinary level of professional success, culminating in his appointment as Principal Painter to King George I in 1723, on the death of his former teacher Sir Godfrey Kneller. The early factors underpinning this career trajectory, such as family origins, artistic training, general education and earliest patrons, have largely evaded analysis.

This paper was prompted by the author’s discovery of a key manuscript post-marked Whitehall, 29th April 1698, just days before Jervas left England for Paris on his ten-year sojourn in continental Europe. The document is a letter of introduction given to the artist by John Ellis (1646-1738), then Under Secretary to the Secretary of State, addressed to Sir Lambert Blackwell, Envoy to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. It reads as follows:

Sir,

Mr. Charles Jervas, who will present you this, being an Ingenious Painter, and going into Italy, the schole of that art, in order to the perfecting himself in his profession, and having desired mee to recommend him to some person there, where he is a stranger, whose favour & Protection he might depend upon, it was not possible for mee to think I could more properly apply to any one on this occasion, or

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*1 – Charles Jervas, SELF-PORTRAIT (detail)  
signed and dated 1725, oil on canvas, 127 x 102 cm (private collection)*

with more hopes of succeeding, then to your self, who have the understanding requisite to encourage an artist, authority to protect him, and good Nature to pardon mee the trouble of asking it, and that you would please to permit him sometimes to give his letters the safeguard of your Cover, which I presume he will make a modest use of.<sup>2</sup>

Ellis's letter invites further enquiry; how, for example, was Jervas sufficiently acquainted with the Under Secretary of State to obtain so valuable a personal recommendation? What activities in the preceding years merited the title 'Ingenious Painter' when his only surviving works from this decade are a copy after Parmigianino and a portrait drawing dated 1699 (Plate 2)?<sup>3</sup> Little direct evidence can assist with these queries, but this paper attempts to draw together the disparate sources in order to sketch out Jervas's network of acquaintances in the few years preceding his departure for Italy. It is hoped that the resulting picture will demonstrate the character of his nascent patron base, and provide some context for his decision to transfer to France and, ultimately, Italy for the period 1698 to 1708/9.<sup>4</sup>

## PATRONAGE NETWORK

THE AUTHOR OF THIS LETTER, ELLIS, WAS A GRADUATE OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD, and through his university contacts gained his first diplomatic experience in the 1670s. He was subsequently secretary to Thomas Butler, Earl of Ossory, heir to the 1st Duke of Ormond, and following the latter's death in 1680 was engaged by Ormond himself, then serving as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Thanks to Ormond's influence, Ellis was appointed secretary to the Irish Revenue Commissioners in 1682, and was so employed in Dublin for the next six years. On his return to England, and having again served the Butler family, he became, in 1695, Under Secretary to Sir William Trumbull, Secretary of State. At any one time there were two serving Secretaries of State. Described as positions of 'extraordinary Trust and Multiplicity, attending upon the King every Day',<sup>5</sup> they were responsible for all foreign and domestic affairs, and each Secretary retained two Under Secretaries. Ellis, therefore, was playing a pivotal role in contemporary affairs of state, one he maintained successfully under three subsequent Secretaries of State.

The recipient of this letter was Sir Lambert Blackwell (c.1665-1727), then Envoy to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, based in Florence. Originally a merchant, Blackwell acted as Consul at Livorno ('Leghorn' to the English) between 1689 and 1696, defending the interests of the British merchants at that thriving port city. In 1697 he was back in London for a bountiful visit in which he was appointed to the more prestigious post of Envoy Extraordinary to the Tuscan Court, was knighted, and married the eldest daughter of Sir Joseph Herne, 'one of London's richest merchant-financiers'.<sup>6</sup> He and his entourage were making their way back to Florence via Holland and Genoa when Jervas was provided with the letter of introduction in April 1698.<sup>7</sup>



2 – Charles Jervas, MATTHEW PRIOR (1664-1721)

1699, crayon and watercolour on paper, 39 x 31 cm (private collection)

*This is Jervas's earliest surviving original art work. Prior was secretary to the ambassador in Paris, the 1st Earl of Portland, from January 1698 to August 1699. Jervas was known to the sitter from the time of his arrival in the city in May 1698, and executed a number of other portraits and paintings for Prior before he departed for Italy around autumn the following year.*



Blackwell's formal role was to represent the Crown at the Ducal court, and provide the relevant Secretary of State and Under Secretaries (for example, John Ellis) with frequent news bulletins.<sup>8</sup> Informally, he and other foreign diplomats routinely performed a wide range of tasks in which his relevance to Jervas becomes clearer. Primary among them was the protection of visiting compatriots, including an early generation of Grand Tourists, merchants, diplomats and professionals such as Jervas. Abraham Stanyan, a secretary at the Embassy in Paris, remarked to Ellis that 'all that don't make Acquaintance at first with Our family [i.e. the embassy] are in danger of falling into the hands of the St Germain beggars, who make a prey of all the Young Gentlemen they get into their Clutches, & debauch [them] of their principles besides'.<sup>9</sup> This paternalistic approach extended to briefing new visitors on the pertinent local etiquette, inviting the gentlemen among them to social soirées,<sup>10</sup> assisting with accommodation and, where relevant, recommending the services of appropriate locals – tutors, guides, translators, or dealers – according to the wishes of the visitor. Perhaps most crucially, Blackwell and his embassy colleagues, through their contacts with local Florentine merchants and bankers, would have assisted visitors in the business of cashing bills of exchange, accessing credit, and currency conversion.<sup>11</sup> Envoys themselves were frequently inconvenienced by the late reimbursement from London of debt incurred, and as a rule were financially depleted by their period in office. Blackwell provided one such instance in which a favour extended to a visiting nobleman was never repaid; he had covered the cost of 'a Picture and a Young Man's Expences and Instructions, which his Lordship left in Italy to Paint'.<sup>12</sup>

An introduction to Blackwell was indeed a valuable contact for Jervas to have when visiting Florence, where the former was stationed until 1705. Assuming that Jervas's activities in Florence mirrored those in Rome, where he spent most of his time abroad, he is likely to have used his contact with Blackwell for the purpose of social introduction, hoping to secure commissions for portraits or copies from the visiting *cavalieri inglesi* and to satisfy their acquisitive ambitions in an advisory capacity.<sup>13</sup> Given that Jervas was 'intent upon going through a regular course of study' in Italy, Blackwell may also have assisted him in accessing some of Florence's celebrated private art collections to this end.<sup>14</sup> The copy of Ellis's letter is obviously a chance survivor, but is likely to be just one of several which Jervas brought with him when leaving London in early May 1698. As his first destination was Paris, he is likely to have had a letter of introduction to the secretary at the embassy there, the poet diplomat Matthew Prior (1664-1721). When the Irish artist Hugh Howard was going to The Hague the previous year, Ellis had provided him with a warmly worded letter of recommendation to Prior, then based in that city, and it is quite possible that Ellis extended the same favour to Jervas.<sup>15</sup>

Writing to Ellis on his arrival in the French capital, Jervas mentions his delight at the 'Academy at the Louvre, where all the Antique Statues are very well cast in Plaister of Paris w[hi]ch will do my business for the present as well as the Originals'. Aside from study, he immediately engaged in purchasing engravings on behalf of his acquaintances, including Ellis.<sup>16</sup> The activity was not unusual; travellers were commonly commissioned



3 – Godfrey Kneller, *GEORGE CLARKE* (1661-1736)  
*n.d.*, oil on canvas, 124.5 x 100 cm (courtesy the Provost and Fellows of Worcester College Oxford)



4 – Godfrey Kneller,  
 ISAAC PEREIRA (c.1658-1718)  
 c.1696, oil on canvas  
 (© Spanish & Portuguese Jews'  
 Congregation, London)

by friends or patrons to purchase prints, books, paintings, wine or other local specialities, but significant to this paper is the fact that Jervas names two of his English patrons, relaying that he had ‘bought some [prints] for Mr. George Clarke & some for Pereyra and a great many for our English gentlemen now in Town [Paris]’.<sup>17</sup>

George Clarke (1661-1736) was a significant figure in Jervas’s formative years, recognised by Vertue as ‘a great Friend & patron’ (Plate 3).<sup>18</sup> He is closely associated with Oxford, being a graduate of Brasenose and a Fellow of All Souls College, an MP for the university first elected in 1685, and was involved in many of the college building schemes in his role as amateur architect. He was appointed Secretary at War in 1689, accompanying William III to Ireland the following year for the crucial engagement with the Jacobite forces at the Boyne, and remained in Ireland as advisor to General Ginkel, Commander in Chief of Their Majesties’ Forces, through the military campaign of 1691. Clarke was one of a small party which negotiated the articles of the Treaty of Limerick with the Irish in October, and it was his own servant, Mr Payzant, whose clerical error in transcribing the signed treaty caused a crucially flawed version to receive royal assent.<sup>19</sup>

Clarke, however, was also a virtuoso, and keenly sought out quality engravings; his collection of almost 10,000 is preserved at Worcester College, Oxford. As indicated in his letter from Paris noted above, Jervas was extremely well placed to source the modern French prints so prized by collectors for their superlative quality and range of subject matter. He also embarked on an enterprise with Clarke since described as a ‘startlingly

ambitious Anglo-French co-production'.<sup>20</sup> Jervas had made reduced copies of the seven celebrated cartoons then at Hampton Court Palace, being Raphael's blueprints for a set of tapestries for the Sistine Chapel.<sup>21</sup> Clarke had purchased these copies, and then lent them to Jervas when he left England in 1698. At Paris, Jervas made contact with the city's most accomplished engraver, Gérard Audran (1640-1703), and commissioned him, on Clarke's behalf, to produce prints after his drawings. Only two prints were published before Audran's death, and the project was never completed.<sup>22</sup> On Jervas's arrival in Rome towards the end of 1699, he sent Clarke a diagrammatic plan and detailed description of the Stanze di Raffaello in the Vatican, indicating the location of each of Raphael's famous murals and ceiling frescoes, presuming that his patron had prints of the individual compositions.<sup>23</sup> An extensive list of prints kept with the letter is probably a form of shopping list for Jervas while at Rome.

The other patron for whom Jervas was buying Parisian engravings in 1698 was 'Pereyra', whose identity has not previously been explored. The name is very likely, however, to refer to Isaac Pereira (c.1658-1718), an immensely wealthy Sephardi Jewish merchant of Portuguese origin (Plate 4). Isaac's father Jacob was partner in the firm of Machado & Pereira, which, from the 1670s, was the chief supplier of food and transport to the Dutch army. When the Prince of Orange was acknowledged as King William III in 1688, Isaac transferred to London to represent the firm in England. Given the company's unparalleled reputation, Isaac was naturally commissioned to supply the Williamite forces in Ireland between 1690 and 1692, at a rate of 1¼d per man per day.<sup>24</sup> Immediately he dispatched twenty-eight Bristolian bakers to Waringstown in county Down to erect bread ovens in preparation for the military campaign. His contract required him to source and distribute food to the army garrisons (men and horses) throughout the island, as well as wagons and horses as and when they were needed. Operations on this scale naturally required vast sums of private capital investment; Isaac himself is known to have contributed £36,000 of his personal funds.<sup>25</sup> Some indication of the overall financial scale with which he was dealing is revealed by an account of September 1691, recording payment of over £95,000 to Isaac for the previous twelve-month period.<sup>26</sup>

No evidence of Pereira's artistic acquisitions, beyond the prints Jervas bought in Paris, has survived, and neither this commission nor the existence of an arresting portrait by Kneller dated to 1696 are necessarily proof of connoisseurship.<sup>27</sup> That Jervas mentions both Clarke and Pereira in his letter is significant however; both men toured the Low Countries together in 1706 with James Brydges (later 1st Duke of Chandos), visiting the campaign grounds as well as artistic centres such as Ghent, and Clarke (at least) purchased prints and books. Further indication of a personal friendship is the fact that Clarke owned a portrait of 'Mr Pereyra' at the time of this death.<sup>28</sup>

An obvious connection between Jervas's three patrons so far identified – Ellis, Clarke and Pereira – is the fact that they were effectively colleagues in this period. As Secretary at War in Ireland 1690-92, Clarke relied heavily on the efficiency of Pereira's supply chain. On his return to England in 1692, the former continued in the post of





5 – *Simon Digby*,  
*JOHN HOUGH (1651-1743)*  
*before 1720, watercolour on vellum,*  
*7.9 x 6.4 cm (oval)*  
*Simon Digby was an amateur artist,*  
*and cousin of Lord Digby of Geashill*  
*(Plate 6)*  
*(© National Portrait Gallery, London)*

Secretary at War for the ensuing ten years, during which time Pereira's company maintained their monopoly on victualling the Anglo-Dutch army. And both would inevitably have been in communication with Ellis, as Under Secretary of State from 1695.

Another of Jervas's correspondents during his time abroad was the long-lived John Hough (1651-1743) who had been domestic chaplain to the 1st Duke of Ormond, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, from 1678 (Plate 5).<sup>29</sup> The exact duration of his time in Ireland is unclear, though he was still in this posting in Dublin in 1682, coinciding with John Ellis's employment in Ormond's retinue. Back in Oxford, he was central in a wrangle between King James II and Magdalen College in 1687-88, in which the King attempted, ultimately unsuccessfully, to browbeat the college into electing a Roman Catholic president in preference to Hough himself. He was granted the bishopric of Oxford in 1690, and, given the obvious connections, either Clarke or Ellis could credibly be responsible for introducing him to the young Jervas. Examining Hough's biography, however, reveals a more obvious tie, and introduces a figure who is likely to be pivotal in the artist's nascent career.

William Digby (1661/2-1752), 5th Baron Digby of Geashill, was great grandson of Sir Robert Digby (d.1618), a follower of Queen Elizabeth's favourite Robert Devereux (1566-1601), 2nd Earl of Essex. Sir Robert had accompanied Essex on his failed mission to wrest control from the disparate Irish septs in the summer of 1599, and was knighted by him in Dublin Castle that year. The two men were also related, Digby having married Lettice Fitzgerald (1580-1658), Essex's first cousin, the previous year. Lettice was heiress

to the immense estates of the earls of Kildare, and following years of wrangling, her claim to 30,000 acres of her late grandfather's midlands estates, centred on Geashill in King's County (county Offaly), was recognised by the Crown. Sir Robert's son was created 1st Baron Digby of Geashill, and strove to consolidate and augment the family's holdings and influence in Ireland.

The Digbys were the pre-eminent landowners in the region when, in 1666, the artist's father, John Jervas, was rewarded for his army service with a grant of 676 acres in the barony of Ballycowan in the north of King's County.<sup>30</sup> John's father-in-law, Captain John Baldwin, had been in Ireland since at least 1659, when he was listed as one of three '*titulados*' in the parish of Geashill.<sup>31</sup> Baldwin's land grant of 1667 was more substantial, and involved land in the barony of Clonlisk in the south west of the county.<sup>32</sup> Charles Jervas is believed to have been born in Clonlisk on his maternal grandfather's property, where the ratio of persons of native Irish origin to those of English or Scottish origin was almost nine to one around this time.<sup>33</sup> The resulting kinship among these vulnerable settlers, based on mutual concerns and aspirations, was consolidated by intermarriage, as exemplified by that of Captain Baldwin's daughter Elizabeth to John Jervas. So too would these 'New English' have naturally sought an informal alliance with the previous generations of settlers, the Digbys being a particularly covetable partnership given the scale of their landholdings and consequent powerbase.

The Digbys and Baldwins are known to have had many professional and social connections from this period until at least the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>34</sup> The principal Digby home, both before and after the acquisition by marriage of Irish lands in 1598, was at Coleshill in Warwickshire, in which English county many branches of the Baldwin family thrived, so relations between the two families may even predate the Baldwin arrival in Ireland in the 1650s. As mentioned, Captain Baldwin was in Geashill by 1659, possibly representing or in the employ of the largely absentee Digbys. Certainly Captain Baldwin's son Martyn (Charles Jervas's maternal uncle) leased land in Geashill from Lord Digby, and in later life returned to his family property in Meriden, ten miles from Coleshill, which was eventually inherited by the Digbys in accordance with Martyn's will.

The significance of the Digby/Baldwin/Jervas familial connections lies in the fact that they may provide an explanation for Charles Jervas's transition from undeniable obscurity in the Irish midlands to the artistic hub that was Godfrey Kneller's studio in the early 1690s, where he is believed to have received his initial training. While Jervas's own family did not have the social cachet or financial means to penetrate London's artistic world, it is quite credible that Lord Digby could have affected such an introduction and even provided practical support to the young artist on his arrival in London. Digby, who inherited the baronetcy of Geashill from his older brother in 1686, was MP for Warwick from 1689 and an active parliamentary legislator until his retirement from public life in 1698 (Plate 6). Lord Digby was a lifelong friend of John Hough, who composed the epitaph for his mother in Coleshill church in 1692. The previous year, Hough was, by his own



6 – *Attributed to Godfrey Kneller, WILLIAM DIGBY (1661/2-1752), 5TH BARON DIGBY OF GEASHILL 1715 (?), oil on canvas, 123 x 99 cm (courtesy Sherborne Castle Estates, Dorset)*

admission, ‘instrumental’ in securing the appointment of Lord Digby’s cousin Simon Digby (d.1720) to the bishopric of Elphin in county Roscommon.<sup>35</sup> Simon could also be significant in tracing Jervas’s artistic origins. Unlike his cousin William, he was born, raised and lived primarily in Ireland. Educated at Trinity College Dublin, he rose within the Church of Ireland. Moreover, he was a noted watercolour miniaturist, and may have nurtured Jervas’s artistic abilities and encouraged his ambitions.<sup>36</sup> While the patronage of Lord Digby at the outset of Jervas’s career in the early 1690s is conjectural, their later relationship does provide supporting evidence. During his sojourn on the continent, Jervas forwarded the not inconsiderable sum of £240 to Lord Digby’s bank account, which could indicate the repayment of a loan.<sup>37</sup> And while Digby gave little indication of an interest in the arts, he commissioned portraits of at least four of his children from Jervas, which were until recently in the ownership of his descendants.<sup>38</sup>

Whether or not Lord Digby was the primary means, Jervas did indeed enter Kneller’s studio in Covent Garden (Plate 7). Vertue cryptically noted that he ‘learnt or *rather dwel’d with Kneller, one year*’, adding that it was with Kneller that ‘he *first* was put to study painting’ (author’s italics).<sup>39</sup> This is likely to have occurred at the start of the 1690s, an especially busy period in the master’s career. From 1691 Kneller held the post of sole Principal Painter to the King and Queen, by whom he was knighted the following year. He also managed London’s pre-eminent private practice, holding fourteen portrait sittings in a single day in June 1693.<sup>40</sup> A sizeable and organised studio, in which Jervas participated, must have supported his enormous output, though sadly little is known of its extent or make-up.

It was presumably due to his master’s royal duties that Jervas became acquainted with John Norris (fl.1667-1714), joiner and frame-maker to the Crown. Vertue specifically records that Norris was ‘a great promoter & encourager of Mr. Jervaise’, and provided the young artist with access to the royal collection for study purposes.<sup>41</sup> On one occasion, this access was recorded in the papers of the Lord Chamberlain’s department, and is the earliest reliable documentary evidence of Jervas’s artistic practice. The Lord Chamberlain issued a warrant in July 1694 to the ‘Keeper of Their Ma[jes]t[ie]s’ Standing Wardrobe’ at Hampton Court, requiring him ‘to permit Mr. Charles Jervas to make Sketches in Little of ye Kertoones of Raphael which are in y[ou]r. Custody’.<sup>42</sup> The drawings executed on this or a later occasion were those sold to George Clarke and taken to Paris to be engraved. Nothing further is known of how Norris ‘promoted’ Jervas, but clearly an aspiring artist could have had no better artistic mentors in this period than Sir Godfrey Kneller and John Norris.

Two final figures ought to be mentioned in the quest to map Jervas’s network of patrons of the 1690s. In his will, Jervas made generous bequests of £1,000 to Lady Mary Clarke (c.1685-1754), ‘daughter of my old friends James and Elizabeth Clarke of Whitehall’, and the same to each of Lady Mary’s three daughters. James’s great nephew ‘William Clarke now of Constantinople’ was gifted £100.<sup>43</sup> James Clarke (c.1634-1709) held the offices of Constable of Dublin Castle, Store-Keeper of the Dublin Custom House,





7 – Godfrey Kneller, *SELF-PORTRAIT*, c.1688-90  
 oil on canvas, 78 x 63.5 cm (oval) (© Burghley House Collection)

and Comptroller of the Lord Lieutenant's household. He joined the royal household in London around 1674, rising to the position of Chief Clerk of the Kitchen from 1690 onwards.<sup>44</sup> Given Clarke's decease in 1709, his acquaintance with Jervas must predate the latter's departure for the Continent in 1698. Several warm and anecdotal letters between Clarke and John Ellis have survived, including evidence of correspondence between them and their mutual friend in Paris in the summer of 1698.<sup>45</sup> How James and Elizabeth Clarke (no relation to George Clarke) befriended Jervas is unknown, but the scale of his legacy to their daughter, granddaughters and great nephew is evidence of a close bond.

Finally, Jervas also bequeathed £100 each to the five daughters of Lady Elizabeth Handcock, widow of Sir William Handcock (1654-1701), 'for their father and mothers sake'.<sup>46</sup> Sir William, an Irish-born lawyer, was MP for Boyle in 1692-93 and for Dublin

city between 1695 and 1699.<sup>47</sup> He was Recorder of Dublin from 1695 until his death six years later, and was knighted in January 1699/1700 in Dublin Castle by the Lord Justices of Ireland. Three of the daughters referred to as beneficiaries were from Lady Elizabeth's second marriage to James Forth (1677-1731), also an Irish lawyer who represented King's County in the Irish parliament for one year in 1713-14, and Philipstown in the same county from 1715 to 1727.<sup>48</sup> Nothing is known of the family's relationship with Jervas, which may date to Sir William's period in office in Dublin in the 1690s, or (perhaps more likely) to the time of his widow's marriage to Forth, given that the latter was MP for the county in which Jervas maintained property interests throughout his life.

## CONCLUSION

JERVAS'S EARLY EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH HIMSELF IN HIS CHOSEN PROFESSION PROVIDE A case study of the pervasive phenomenon of informal patronage. For someone of his social origins, soliciting the favour of influential figures was nothing short of a necessity. The medieval Guild of St Luke in Ireland and the Painter-Stainers' Company in London still operated, but where they had once regulated standards within the profession and formalised apprenticeship training, they had become largely redundant. Mid-eighteenth-century artists would devise alternative means of training and publicity via the academies and public exhibitions, but, in this intermediary period, energetic self-promotion was the only route for the ambitious.

At least some of the techniques Jervas employed to attract patrons can be deduced from the present mapping exercise, and the most obvious recurring feature among those identified is an Irish connection. Ellis, Pereira, both Clarkes, Handcock and Hough, had all found employment in Ireland actively consolidating or closely associated with England's ruling administration. Similarly, if Lord Digby's influence was indeed as pivotal as suggested above, it would point to not only a demographic affinity with Jervas, but a local and familial kinship. Patronage of this kind is characteristic of the early careers of Jervas's contemporaries; the Aberdeenshire-born portraitist William Aikman (1682-1731) found favour with the Duke of Argyll and other Scottish nobles, while the architect and designer William Kent (1685-1748) relied on the support of fellow Yorkshiremen at the outset of his career.<sup>49</sup> Kneller too, on his arrival in England, first enjoyed the patronage of a Hamburg merchant with whom he lodged in order to establish his credentials in London.<sup>50</sup> Patronage among the New English population in Ireland, and Englishmen holding Irish offices, remains largely unexamined, but the evidence of Jervas's early career, outlining practical support and encouragement on the basis of racial communality, is surely not a unique case.

Implicit in any form of patronage is the issue of reciprocity. The patron, typically the social and financial superior in the relationship, could offer influence, material support, and of course potential access to other patrons through personal recommendations.

In Jervas's case, George Clarke purchased his drawings after the Raphael cartoons, and provided the artist with £50 towards the cost of his travels abroad;<sup>51</sup> Norris facilitated access to the country's principal private collection of European art works; and Lord Digby, possibly, used his social position to assist Jervas's introduction to the professional art world in London. What Jervas could offer in return is the more intriguing but elusive aspect. Undoubtedly he executed portraits of and for these early patrons, though few have survived. His artistic judgement was clearly sufficient to make him a trusted purchaser abroad on behalf of his collector-patrons, buying prints and paintings to order. That such expertise could be of service is testament to the emerging social ideals of artistic sensibility and taste. Nothing at all is known of his general schooling, but it too must have been of a standard to provide him with the social ease necessary to attract and retain the patronage of statesmen and politicians across an inevitable social divide. And given the artist's youth and inexperience, his personality too must have had a part in winning the confidence of his patrons and inspiring their evident goodwill. By its very nature, this economy of favours was a dense network tapped by countless others, including those figures profiled in this article, for whom it was also the normal means to professional advancement.

Within the context of the contemporary patronage system, Jervas's departure for Italy in 1698 can be interpreted as a bid to increase his credibility and 'worth' within this cultural economy. He might easily have calculated that in visiting Rome, the artistic *caput mundi*, he would acquire first-hand knowledge of the classical aesthetic then revered above all others. This practical education was but part of the advantage of his visit; the social 'polish' acquired by experiencing different societies, languages, governments and cultural mores was a significant part of the attraction of European travel for the English, Scottish and Anglo-Irish nobility, and a degree of gentrification could be attained by less exalted travellers, such as Jervas. He was clearly shrewd in charting his itinerary, mimicking those elite Grand Tourists on whom he would be dependent for his livelihood abroad, while inevitably benefiting from the opportunities for social mobility among small expatriate communities. Finally, and as demonstrated in his surviving correspondence and his post-mortem sale catalogue, he accumulated a vast collection of Old Master drawings, paintings and engravings for the purposes of future inspiration or in order to trade on his return to London.<sup>52</sup> The risks – professional, financial, even physical – of his intended travels were considerable, but the endeavour is evidence both of the scale of his ambition and the encouragement of patrons such as George Clarke and John Norris. For Jervas the undertaking produced generous dividends, and he was hailed in *The Tatler* within months of his return to London as 'the last great painter Italy has sent us'.<sup>53</sup>

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Unfavourably embellished by Horace Walpole in *Anecdotes of Painting in England; with some Account of the Principal Artists; And incidental Notes on other Arts; collected by the late Mr. George Vertue; And now Digested and Published from his Original MSS*, 4 vols (Strawberry Hill, 1762-71) IV, 12-15.
- <sup>2</sup> British Library, MS Add. 28,882, f.244, copy of letter John Ellis to Sir Lambert Blackwell, 29th April 1698. The original spelling is maintained in this transcription and subsequent quotations in this paper. Dates given in manuscript sources are transcribed unaltered. As a rule, correspondents in continental Europe used New Style dating, which, in this period, was ten days ahead of the calendar used in Britain and Ireland. The document was discovered in March 2009 in Ellis's letter book for the period in which he retained duplicates of correspondence sent. The survival of this letter, therefore, is due to Ellis's meticulous clerkship and the preservation of his own papers, rather than a reflection of any historical interest in Jervas.
- <sup>3</sup> The Parmigianino copy was first recorded in the Hamilton Inventory of the Royal Collection at Holyrood House in 1704: 'A halfe length of one who was Captaine of the Popes Guard done by Jarvis after one of the best pictures King William had by Parmajano' (John Shearman, *The Early Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen* (Cambridge, 1983) 182). As Jervas was travelling abroad between 1698 and 1708/09, the copy must predate his departure. The original and the copy are still in the Royal Collection.
- <sup>4</sup> The present paper draws on the author's unpublished M.Phil thesis, 'The Artistic and Literary Career of Charles Jervas (c.1675-1739)', University of Birmingham, 2010.
- <sup>5</sup> Anon, *An explanatory account of the nature and business of the severall offices, posts, employments and places of trust in this Kingdom* (London, 1727) 59.
- <sup>6</sup> E Cruickshanks, S Handley and D Hayton (eds), *The House of Commons, 1690-1715*, 5 vols (Cambridge, 2002) IV, 343.
- <sup>7</sup> William John Hardy (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the reign of William III, 1 January to 31 December 1697* (London, 1927) 321, 362.
- <sup>8</sup> M. Lane, 'The Diplomatic Service under William III', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th series, 10, 1927, 87-109.
- <sup>9</sup> British Library, MS Add. 28,903 f.450, Abraham Stanyan (c.1669-1732) to John Ellis, 19th August 1699. Stanyan was Secretary to the Ambassador, the Earl of Manchester, at Paris 1699-1700.
- <sup>10</sup> 'An Envoy that is obliging is a mighty advantage to a Stranger in introducing him into company at Conversations every night.' Charles Baldwyn in Genoa, to his cousin Adam Ottley, 13th November 1711. Evelyn H. Martin, 'History of Several Families connected with Diddlebury: 1. The Baldwyns', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 4th series, 2, 1912, 364.
- <sup>11</sup> Gigliola Pagano de Divitiis, 'Art and economics in the Grand Tour', XIII Congress of the International Economic History Association 2002, [www.eh.net/XIIICongress/Papers/deDivitiis.pdf](http://www.eh.net/XIIICongress/Papers/deDivitiis.pdf).



- Also discussed in Antoni Maczak (transl. Ursula Phillips), *Travel in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1995) 87-89.
- <sup>12</sup> Lambert Blackwell, *A True and Exact Particular and Inventory of all and singular the lands, tenements and hereditaments ... which Sir Lambert Blackwell...late one of the directors of the South-Sea-Company, was ... possess'd of* (London, 1721) 8. According to Blackwell, the nobleman was the late Earl of Kingston. The debt was still outstanding in 1721.
- <sup>13</sup> For a more thorough discussion of Jervas's travels 1698-1708/09, see Pegum, 'The Artistic and Literary Career of Charles Jervas'.
- <sup>14</sup> J.M. Rigg (ed.), *Calendar of the manuscripts of the most honourable, the Marquess of Bath*, 5 vols (London, 1904-81) III (Prior Papers), 432.
- <sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, 110-11, John Ellis to Matthew Prior, 17th April 1697.
- <sup>16</sup> British Library, MS Add. 28,882, f.292, Charles Jervas to John Ellis from Paris, 26th May 1698. Ellis had previously corresponded with another artist then in Paris, Robert Pooley (c.1644-after 1699), brother of the painter Thomas Pooley (1646-1723). Robert had priced a list of prints, mainly after paintings by Nicholas Poussin, for an unnamed friend of Ellis's. When Jervas arrived in Paris, the two men set out to purchase the chosen items, seeking out 'the best impressions & the easiest rates'. The Ellis/Pooley correspondence is at the British Library, MS Add. 28,901, f.66 (15th April 1698); MS Add. 28,882, f.253-254 (1st May 1698).
- <sup>17</sup> British Library, MS Add. 28,882, f.292, Charles Jervas to John Ellis from Paris, 26th May 1698. This letter is transcribed in Jane Fenlon, "Until the heats of Italy are over": Charles Jervas writes from Paris in 1698', *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, 4, 2001, 48-51.
- <sup>18</sup> The Walpole Society, *Vertue Notebooks*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1929-52) III, 42.
- <sup>19</sup> J.G. Simms, 'The original draft of the civil articles of Limerick, 1691', *Irish Historical Studies*, VIII, 29, March 1952, 37-44.
- <sup>20</sup> Timothy Clayton, 'The Print Collection of George Clarke at Worcester College, Oxford', *Print Quarterly*, IX, 2, June 1992, 123-41.
- <sup>21</sup> The cartoons have been on loan from the Royal Collection to the V&A Museum since 1865. Four of the Vatican tapestries were loaned to the V&A in autumn 2010 for display alongside their relevant cartoons.
- <sup>22</sup> Impressions of these two prints are kept among Clarke's other engravings at Worcester College. They are of the cartoons depicting *The Death of Ananias* and *Paul and Barnabas at Lystra*.
- <sup>23</sup> Worcester College, Oxford, MS 181, f.515-16. A second, untidier, diagram by Jervas dated 1700 is in volume 1 of Clarke's print collection at the same institution (loose sheet, unpaginated).
- <sup>24</sup> John Childs, *The Nine Years' War and the British Army 1688-1697: The operations in the Low Countries* (Manchester, 1991) 53.
- <sup>25</sup> Louis Hyman, *The Jews of Ireland from the Earliest Times to the Year 1910* (Shannon, 1972) 19.
- <sup>26</sup> William A. Shaw (ed.), *Calendar of Treasury Books volume IX, 1689-1692*, 5 parts (London, 1931) III, 1318-19. Payment was made by Charles Fox and Thomas Coningsby, Paymasters of the Forces in Ireland.
- <sup>27</sup> Edgar R. Samuel, 'A Kneller Portrait Discovered', *The Connoisseur*, CXC, 764, October 1975, 108-11.
- <sup>28</sup> [George Clarke], *A True Copy of the Last Will and Testament of George Clarke Esq; LL. D* (London, 1737) 24.
- <sup>29</sup> Two letters from Jervas to Hough have survived. The earlier is written from Rome, and dated 24th February 1703, the second is from the artist's London studio, dated 1st May 1725. Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Lett. c275, f.18-20. The only surviving letter between Jervas and Jonathan Swift was sent by the artist from his residence in Hampton, dated 24th November 1734, and refers to Hough, their

- mutual friend, being ‘so hale at 83-4’. Harold Williams (ed.), *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, 5 vols (Oxford 1963-65) IV, 272.
- <sup>30</sup> ‘Abstracts of grants of land and other hereditaments under the Acts of Settlement and Explanation 1666-1684’, *Irish Records Commission, Reports from the Commissioners appointed by His Majesty to execute the measures ... respecting the public records of Ireland*, 15 reports (Dublin, 1815-29) XV, 3, Appendix 16, 77. Measurement given in English acres.
- <sup>31</sup> A *titulado* was ‘the principal person or persons of standing in any particular locality’. Séamus Pender (ed.), *A Census of Ireland circa 1659, with supplementary material from the Poll Money Ordinances (1660-1661)*, (Dublin, 1939) v.
- <sup>32</sup> ‘Abstracts of grants of land and other hereditaments’, Irish Records Commission, 94.
- <sup>33</sup> Pender, *A Census of Ireland*, xvi.
- <sup>34</sup> The connections are further explored in Pegum, ‘The Artistic and Literary Career of Charles Jervas’.
- <sup>35</sup> [Richard Congreve], ‘Table-Talk and Papers of Bishop Hough 1703-1743’ in Montagu Burrows (ed.), *Collectanea*, 2nd series (1890), 394.
- <sup>36</sup> Toby Barnard, *Making the Grand Figure. Lives and Possessions in Ireland, 1641-1770* (New Haven and London, 2004) 163. Few examples of Digby’s art have survived, and little is known of his practice. Barnard notes that Jervas’s (now untraced) portraits of Bishop Digby and his wife were recorded in the latter’s inventory at the time of his death.
- <sup>37</sup> Hoare’s archive, London, Ledgers of William, 5th Baron Digby. The payments were made in October 1705.
- <sup>38</sup> Offered at Bonham’s London, 10th July 2002, Old Master Paintings sale, lots 232, 315, 316, 331.
- <sup>39</sup> The Walpole Society, *Vertue Notebooks*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1929-52) III, 15.
- <sup>40</sup> J. Douglas Stewart, *Sir Godfrey Kneller and the English Baroque Portrait* (Oxford, 1983) 51.
- <sup>41</sup> The Walpole Society, *Vertue Notebooks*, op. cit., III, 42. See also endnote 3.
- <sup>42</sup> National Archives, Kew, MS LC5/151, f.375, Lord Chamberlain’s Warrant Books 1691-1696.
- <sup>43</sup> National Archives, Kew, PROB 11/699, Will of Charles Jarvis [Jervas], dated 2nd September 1738, proved 3rd December 1739.
- <sup>44</sup> R.O. Bucholz (project director), *The Database of Court Officers 1660-1837, Household Below Stairs List 1 and 2*, [www.luc.edu/history/fac\\_resources/bucholz/DCO/DCO.html](http://www.luc.edu/history/fac_resources/bucholz/DCO/DCO.html); and National Archives, Kew, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/A2A/records.aspx?cat=074-acc1215&cid=-1#-1](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/A2A/records.aspx?cat=074-acc1215&cid=-1#-1).
- <sup>45</sup> British Library, MS Add. 28,882, f.292 [postscript], Charles Jervas to John Ellis from Paris, 26th May 1698; f.333, Charles Jervas to John Ellis from Paris, 24th June 1698; f.346 James Clarke to John Ellis from Bath, 29th June 1698; MS Add. 28,883, f.1, James Clarke to John Ellis from Bath, 2nd July 1698.
- <sup>46</sup> National Archives, Kew, PROB 11/699, Will of Charles Jarvis [Jervas].
- <sup>47</sup> Edith Mary Johnston-Liik, *History of the Irish Parliament 1692-1800*, 6 vols (Belfast, 2002) IV, 359.
- <sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, 218-19.
- <sup>49</sup> For example, Sir William Hustler (c.1658-1730). Timothy Mowl, *William Kent. Architect, Designer, Opportunist* (London, 2007) 13-19.
- <sup>50</sup> The Walpole Society, *Vertue Notebooks*, op. cit., I, 27; II, 120.
- <sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, III, 42.
- <sup>52</sup> John Heath [auctioneer], *A catalogue of the most valuable collection of pictures, prints and drawings late of Charles Jarvis, Esq; deceased* (London, 1740); Christopher Cock [auctioneer], *A catalogue of the valuable collection of prints and drawings ... of Charles Jarvis, Esq., deceas’d* (London, 1741).
- <sup>53</sup> *The Tatler*, IV, 16th-19th April 1709, unpaginated.