Beihefte der Francia

Bd. 60

2005
At first sight, the relationship between the Grand Tour and neo-classicism in Great Britain seems unproblematic. In the course of the eighteenth century, both the architectural and the natural landscape were transformed in a manner which clearly reflected the influence of classical models. In what follows, I have adopted the definition of neo-classicism offered by Charles Rosen in his analysis »The classical style«, itself worthy of classic status, namely: »I have used »neoclassicism« in a narrow sense of a return to the assumed simplicity of Nature through the imitation of the ancients«¹, not least because it accords so well with the Earl of Shaftesbury’s demand for an art which was »chaste, sever [sic], just & accurate«². It can be stated with some confidence that there are more structures and spaces in Great Britain displaying a measure of classical influence than anywhere else in Europe. This is only due in part to its relative immunity to the havoc wrought on the continent by marauding armies and iconoclastic regimes. The primary cause of the ubiquity of houses such as Kedleston was the ubiquity of those who commissioned them. Viscount Scarsdale, like almost every great landowner, had been on the Grand Tour and had acquired a taste for classical aesthetics and classical artefacts. It was for Lord Scarsdale that James Stuart of Athenian Antiquities’ fame designed the tripod stands based on the tripod at the top of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates³.

For the English aristocrats (and I employ this convenient if misleading term to embrace both peers of the realm and great landowners), the Drang nach Süden was of long standing. As Edward Chaney has recorded, the first English traveller to leave an account of a journey to the continent which was something approaching a Grand Tour – as opposed to a pilgrimage – was Sir Thomas Hoby, who visited Italy in 1549⁴. But it was in the eighteenth century that the trickle of English visitors became a flood and then a torrent. In 1768 Baretti estimated that during the previous seventeen years, some 10 000 English people had travelled to Italy⁵. By 1770 one anonymous observer could

---

write: »where one Englishman travelled in the reign of the first two Georges, ten now go on a Grand Tour. Indeed, to such a pitch is the spirit of travelling come in the kingdom that there is scarce a citizen of large fortune but takes a flying view of France, Italy, and Germany«, while Edward Gibbon opined fifteen years later that there were 40 000 English travelling on the continent (although this must have been a guess and was almost certainly an over-estimate). Italy and its classical world was the preferred destination. Obliged of necessity to travel through France and usually also Switzerland, and occasionally prepared to make a detour to the courts of Germany and Vienna, the great majority of English grand tourists had Italy in their sights. As Dr Samuel Johnson observed: Sir, a man who has not been in Italy is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see. The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. Indeed, it was his own opinion that all our religion, all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come from the shores of the Mediterranean. John Northall agreed: Italy, thus enriched by nature and adorned by art, is therefore justly esteemed the most agreeable and most useful part of Europe to a lover of antiquity, and the polite arts and sciences; nor is it strange that it should be much frequented by foreigners of taste in this learned and refined age. He himself had gone because he considered a tour of Italy the finishing part of a polite education.

Alas, the behaviour of some English grand tourists suggested that they were badly in need of classical polish. In an imaginary dialogue with John Locke, Richard Hurd made the Earl of Shaftesbury observe that it was highly desirable that young English gentlemen should be encouraged to look beyond their own foggy air, and dirty acres. In his view, they were gauche and uncouth in social intercourse, retaining far too much of their Saxon or Norman antecedents, and taking an interest only in hunting, horse racing, eating, drinking and low wenching. The two English universities could not supply the necessary polish, for their religion is Intolerance, and their Morals, Servility, so a continental tour was essential. For most young Englishmen, their continental sojourn was indeed a substitute for a university education, so it was small wonder that their transition to adulthood was marked by rites of passage which had more to do with hedonism than with classical learning. A disgusted Lady Hertford complained from Florence in the middle of the century: most of our travelling youth neither improve themselves, nor credit their country. The easy availability of alcoholic and sexual diversion proved too much of a temptation for many, especially if – as in the case of William Beckford – their tastes were irregular. James Boswell wrote to none other than Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1765:

7 Ibid. p. 10.
9 John Northall, Travels through Italy. Containing new and curious observations on that country, London 1766, unpaginated preface.
10 Richard Hurd, Dialogues on the uses of foreign travel; considered as part of an English gentleman’s education: between Lord Shaftesbury and Mr Locke, London 1764, p. 39–45.
I must admit that in the midst of my Roman studies I indulged in sensual relaxations. I sallied forth of an evening like an imperious lion, and I had a little French painter, a young academician, always vain, always alert, always gay, who served as my jackal. I remembered the rakish deeds of Horace and other amorous Roman poets, and I thought that one might well allow one's self a little indulgence in a city where there are prostitutes licensed by the Cardinal Vicar... I was, however, brought to a halt by an unpleasant occurrence which all libertines have to reckon with. When we walked in your room, disputing about the commerce of the sexes, you said to me with a smile, »Watch out for Italian girls – for several reasons.« I discovered at Rome that your advice was very sound.12

The English travellers also acquired the reputation of rushing from one tourist site to another, very much in the manner of the stereotypical American tourist of the present-day – if it's Tuesday, it must be Rome. Thomas Cogan complained of them: Should their road lead through Paradise itself, or should they have taken a long and tedious journey expressly to see the garden of Eden, it is a question whether our impetuous gentlemen would not tip the post-boy half a crown extraordinary to mend his pace, as they were driving through it13. More abrasive still was the verdict of Dupaty: In a hundred there are not two that seek to instruct themselves. To cover leagues on land or on water; to take punch and tea at inns; to speak ill of all the other nations, and to boast without ceasing of their own; that is what the crowd of the English call travelling. The post-book is the only one in which they instruct themselves, although it should be borne in mind that this sour verdict derived from a Frenchman14. That the Grand Tour was conducted for reasons that were as much representational or recreational as educational, is difficult to deny. This was reflected in the very numerous portraits of British grand tourists painted in Rome and transported home as a suitable souvenir and to serve as a reminder to visitors of the stately home of the good breeding and culture of the patron.

As Dupaty observed – and innumerable other foreign commentators confirmed – the British were incorrigibly addicted to denigrating foreigners and their culture and to puffing their own. This sort of insularity was given unsurpassed artistic expression by William Hogarth in his celebrated painting »The Gate of Calais, or Oh! The roast beef of Old England«, also published as a hugely successful engraving in 1749. Hogarth himself gave his own comment on this scene:

The first time an Englishman goes from Dover to Calais, he must be struck with the indifferent face of things at so little distance, a farcical pomp of war, pompous parade of religion, and much bustle with little business. To sum up all, poverty, slavery, and innate insolence, covered with the affection of politeness, give you here a true picture of the manners of the whole nation.15

13 Quoted in Mead (see note 5) p. 107.
14 Ibid. p. 108.
Later travellers concurred. As George Ayseough recorded: *Whoever has seen Hogarth's famous print, has seen a true representation of the gates of Calais, except that the old fish-women are infinitely more ugly, adding to all rules there are, doubtless, exceptions; but a Frenchman is, in general, an unlettered prejudiced fop*16. Even some English contemporaries complained about the xenophobia of their fellow-country-men. In Hurd's imaginary dialogue between Locke and Shaftesbury, the latter laments:

You, who have been abroad in the world and have so just a knowledge of other states and countries, tell me, if there can be any thing more ridiculous than the idiot PREJUDICES of our home-bred gentlemen; which shew themselves, whenever their own dear Island comes, in any respect, to be the topic of conversation. What wondrous conceits of their own prowess, wisdom, nay of their manners and politeness! With what disdain is a foreigner mentioned by them, and with what apparent signs of aversion is his very person treated! They scarcely give you leave to suppose that any virtuous quality can thrive out of their own air, or that good sense can be expressed in any foreign language. Nay, their foolish prepossession extends to their very soil and climate. Such warm patriots are they, such furious lovers of their country, that they will have it to be the theatre of all convenience, delight and beauty17.

Yet it would be a mistake to write off all, or even the majority, of British grand tourists as dim-witted, xenophobic pleasure-seekers. Boswell certainly squandered a good deal of time – and money – on prostitutes, but he devoted a great deal more to visiting the classical sites and articulating his responses. In the same letter to Rousseau quoted from earlier, he wrote: *The study of antiquities, of pictures, of architecture, and of the other arts which are found in such great perfection at Rome occupied me in a wise and elegant manner. You must know that I have a great taste for virtù*18. Almost every traveller of rank was accompanied by a tutor and employed a cicerone or bear-leader once the party reached Italy. The very numerous volumes of correspondence, diaries and travel accounts which have survived, demonstrate that intellectual concerns were attended with an intensity and rigour which most present-day tourists of the same age would find intolerable. Of course the eighteenth century English travellers came equipped with a classical education and a habit of learning which have long since been abandoned. Consequently, the classical sites had a special relevance. No one put this better than Joseph Spence, accompanying the Earl of Middlesex in 1732:

This is one of the pleasures of being at Rome, that you are continually seeing the very place and spot of ground where some great thing or other was done, which one has so often admired before in reading their history. This is the place where Julius Caesar was stabbed by Brutus; at the foot of that statue he fell and gave

17 HURD (see note 10) p. 38–39.
18 BRADY (see note 12) p. 6.
his last groan; here stood Manlius to defend the Capitol against the Gauls; and there afterwards was he flung down that rock for endeavouring to make himself the tyrant of his country. 19

The most celebrated visual representation of English tourists engaged in aesthetic pursuit is of course Johann Zoffany's «The Tribuna of the Uffizi», commissioned by Queen Charlotte, consort of George III, in 1772. Among others to be identified in this endlessly debated picture are Earl Cowper, Sir Horace Mann, Sir James Bruce, Lord Lewisham and the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe. It is also a salutary reminder that the grand tourists were not only interested in classical antiquity but also paid much attention to the Renaissance. This is evident from the right-hand group of Zoffany's painting, where Thomas Patch, Horace Walpole's friend, appears to be comparing the classical group of male wrestlers with Titian's «Venus of Urbino» (although it has been conjectured that this reveals more a sexual than an aesthetic preference).

These connoisseurs were not, of course, merely interested in observing, analysing, recording, or enjoying. They also wanted to possess. From the late seventeenth century, when Sir Thomas Isham and the Earl of Exeter made major acquisitions, a constantly growing volume of artefacts old and new, genuine and fake, were purchased by British visitors. Many of them had the means to do so, with booming rent rolls at home and a very advantageous exchange rate abroad. Arthur Young estimated late in the eighteenth century that a man could live as well from £100 a year in Italy as from five times that sum at home. 21 When Thomas Coke, later First Earl of Leicester, arrived in Italy in 1712 at the tender age of fourteen, he had a spendable income of £10,000, a colossal fortune by any standards. The great collection of antique sculpture and other classical artefacts which he formed with the assistance of the antiquarian Francesco de Ficorini, was given an appropriate architectural setting at Holkham Hall in Norfolk, which also revealed the patron's source of inspiration. 22 The architect was William Kent, who had spent ten years in Italy and had been brought back to England by the Earl of Burlington and who lodged at Burlington House in Piccadilly (now the site of the Royal Academy) from 1719 until his death in 1748. 23 I might add that, such was his wealth, that Burlington took a retinue of fifteen with him on his Grand Tour which began in 1714, including a painter (the Frenchman Louis Goupy), a coachman, a groom, a cook, a book-keeper, sundry lackeys and his own bear-leader. 24 When he arrived back in Dover five years later, he brought with him 878 pieces of baggage. 25 The great wealth of ancient statuary to be found in British museums and stately homes are, for the most part, souvenirs of the Grand Tour. In 1720 Edward Wright recorded that

20 See Oliver Millar, Zoffany and his Tribuna, London, New York 1967, passim, although it does not contain a colour reproduction of the full painting.
21 Hibbert (see note 6) p. 24.
24 de Seta (see note 8) p. 13.
25 Hibbert (see note 6) p. 19.
such was the craze for important artefacts that the Italian dealers had a saying: >Were our Amphitheatre portable, the ENGLISH would carry it off.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, those stately homes themselves testify to the enduring influence of exposure to classical buildings and values. Such was the confidence of many of these aristocratic patrons that they felt well qualified to tell their architects not just what they wanted but how they wanted it. Indeed, prominent among those architects was the Earl of Burlington himself, responsible for two of the finest Palladian buildings to be erected in the period – Chiswick House and the York Assembly Rooms. No less an authority than the late Rudolf Wittkower commented: >Burlington must be assigned a decisive share in the development of English neo-classicism, not only as a patron of artists but mainly as a practising architect. Burlington was himself responsible for a number of extraordinarily important buildings and used his friend William Kent to spread his architectural ideals«.<sup>27</sup>

The same sort of bouquet could be handed to the grand tourists for their promotion of classical scholarship, especially archaeology. Sir Joshua Reynolds lampooned the grand tourists in his satirical group-portrait »A parody on Raphael’s School of Athens«, in which he poked fun at the British grand tourists he encountered in Rome in 1751, but he also painted a much more flattering group portrait of the same breed in »The Society of Dilettanti« of 1778/79. The origin of the society was described in the preface of Stuart and Revett’s »Ionian Antiquities« whose publication in 1769 it had made possible: In the year 1734 some gentlemen who had travelled in Italy, desirous of encouraging at home a taste for those objects which had contributed so much to their entertainment abroad, formed themselves into a society under the name of the Dilettanti, and agreed upon such resolutions as they thought necessary to keep up the spirit of the scheme<sup>28</sup>. This was a highly aristocratic society, consisting mainly of young noblemen recently returned from the Grand Tour. The list of members of 1736 shows that almost all were peers, sons of peers, baronets or knights. They included Sir Francis Dashwood (later Lord Despencer), the Earl of Middlesex (later Duke of Dorset), Viscount Harcourt, William Ponsonby (later Earl of Bessborough), Richard Grenville (later Earl Temple), and so on and so forth<sup>29</sup>.

Horace Walpole, commented sourly in 1743 about the Dilettanti: the nominal qualification is having been in Italy, and the real one being drunk<sup>30</sup>, but this verdict may have stemmed from his disappointment at never gaining admission to the society himself. It was certainly unfair. No doubt the Dilettanti did carouse merrily at their weekly dinners, but they also engaged in serious, expensive and physically demanding scholarship. The Earl of Sandwich, for example, returned in 1739 from a major expedition to Italy, Sicily, Greece, the Aegean Islands, Turkey and Egypt laden with mummies, papyri, medals and marbles. He had measured the principal Athenian monuments,

26 Edward WRIGHT, Some observations made in travelling through France, Italy, etc. in the years 1720, 1721 and 1722, 2 vol., London 1730, I, p. 7.
29 Ibid. p. 5–13.
30 Ibid. p. 36.
then barely known in the West, and had produced creditable ground-plans\textsuperscript{31}. All Dilettanti made a contribution by financing a number of important expeditions to Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean, the most celebrated being James Stuart and Nicholas Revett's great series of volumes »Athenian Antiquities«, the first volume of which was published in 1762. In the words of the most authoritative of modern historians of neo-classicism in Great Britain, Joseph Mordaunt Crook, the Society of Dilettanti »completely transformed the study of Greek antiquities«, adding: »In many ways the history of the Dilettanti Society is the history of neo-classicism in England. First it was Roman. Then it was Greek. Then it was Graeco-Roman. And in all three phases its success was based on the labours of learned amateurs«\textsuperscript{32}. So rich was the Society that by the end of the eighteenth century it had a running annual surplus of some £ 10 000\textsuperscript{33}.

Whatever view one takes of British Grand Tourists in general and the Dilettanti in particular, the relationship between the sojourn in the south and the reception of neo-classicism seems relatively unproblematic. However, the account presented so far is inadequate because it fails to take account of the presuppositions of the travellers and the uses to which they put their foreign experiences. Neo-classicism in Great Britain was never solely an aesthetic movement. It also had a social, cultural and political agenda. A figure of central importance in this regard was Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, the single most important intellectual influence on the development of British neo-classicism. Shaftesbury had embarked on his own Grand Tour in 1686 at the tender age of thirteen, never lost his enthusiasm for the antique and indeed died in Naples in 1711, but he used his knowledge of classical civilisation to pursue a domestic agenda. This was nothing less than the legitimisation of the post-1688 Whig regime. The Glorious Revolution had ushered in an era of gentlemanly rule and gentlemanly culture and it was this which he sought to explicate. A free state, he held, was both supported by and helped to create a true culture. Writing during the War of the Spanish Succession, when the world was once more threatened with a Universal Monarchy, and a new Abyss of Ignorance and Superstition\textsuperscript{34}, Shaftesbury was especially sensitive to the interaction between political and cultural achievement. In particular, he was convinced that public virtue could not exist under an absolutist system:

\begin{quote}
A PUBLICK Spirit can come only from a social Feeling or Sense of Partnership with Human Kind. Now there are none so far from being Partners in this Sense, or Sharers in this common Affection, as they who scarcely know an Equal, nor consider themselves as subject to any Law of Fellowship or Community. And thus Morality and good Government go together. There is no real Love of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid. p. 6–7.
\textsuperscript{34} Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, Soliloquy: or advice to an author, London 1710, p. 64.
Virtue, without Knowledge of Publick Good. And where Absolute Power is, there is no PUBLICK.  

In a later essay he went further, arguing that absolutism also precluded patriotism, of all emotions the noblest and most becoming human Nature. In a polity whose subjects were held together only by force, there could be no true sense of community, for Absolute Power annuls the Publick. And where there is no Publick, or Constitution, there is in reality no Mother-COUNTRY, or NATION. Although Shaftesbury was a Deist who had moved beyond Protestantism, he stressed that England’s fortunes had only taken a turn for the better at the Reformation. Under Henry VII, in his opinion, England had been little better than Poland, wracked by civil strife and subject to the priests at home and the Pope abroad. But there was still a long way to go. He was under no illusions about the current state of the creative arts in England, still very much in their infancy: They have hitherto scarce arriv’d to any thing of Shapeliness or Person. They lisp as in their Cradles: and their stammering Tongues, which nothing but their Youth and Rawness can excuse, have hitherto spoken in wretched Pun and Quibble. Indeed, Shaftesbury was too much the urban aristocrat to appreciate even the great names of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Shakespeare, Jonson, Fletcher and Milton, he conceded, had asserted Poetick Liberty by discarding the horrid Discord of jingling Rhyme, but they were very much diamonds in the rough.

In this last respect, he anticipated Frederick the Great’s notorious critique of German literature, also feeling that, like Moses, he had been allowed to see the promised land from afar but was to be denied entry. For Shaftesbury had no time for the superior polish of Louis XIV’s classicism. Certainly the French had taken far more trouble to seek correct proportions and stylistic grace and had been particularly successful in raising their Stage to as great Perfection, as the Genius of their Nation will permit. But their best efforts were foiled inevitably by their fundamentally flawed political structure: the high Spirit of Tragedy can ill subsist where the Spirit of Liberty is wanting. That was the lesson taught by the fate of the Romans: no sooner had they emerged from barbarism under the tutelage of the Greeks than they began to subjugate the rest of the world, thus condemning their culture to decadence. Shaftesbury might well have used that cautionary tale to signal the dangers of British imperial expansion, but he trusted in liberty to serve as an antidote to over-vaulting ambition:

37 Ibid.
38 Ibid. p. 150–151.
39 Shaftesbury (see note 34) p. 63. See also Shaftesbury, A Letter sent from Italy, with the Notion of the Judgment of Hercules etc., in: Letters of the Earl of Shaftesbury, Author of the Characteristicks collected into one volume, London 1746, p. 106–111.
40 Ibid. p. 64.
41 De la littérature allemande (1780).
42 Shaftesbury (see note 34) p. 65.
We are now in an Age when LIBERTY is once again in its Ascendant. And we are ourselves the happy Nation, who not only enjoy it at home, but by our Greatness and Power give Life and Vigour to it abroad; and are the Head and Chief of the EUROPEAN League, founded on this common Cause. Nor is it to be fear'd that we should lose this noble Ardour, or faint under the glorious Toil; tho', like antient GREECE, we should for successive Ages be contending with a foreign Power, and endeavouring to reduce the Exorbitancy of a Grand Monarch.43

Very few of Shaftesbury's fellow-grand tourists shared his sophisticated intellect, but most, if not all, of them were keen to make a distinction between the glories of classical Rome and the decadence of its papal successor. Significantly, one of the very few encomiums of modern Rome stemmed from a Catholic recusant, Edmund Warcupp, who wrote of Rome:

Being at this day the Queen of Cities, the Flower of Italy, and as one may say the Epitome of the whole Earth. She is the Lodging for all Nations, The theatre of the best Ingenuities of the World, the Habitation of vertue, of Empire, of Dignity, of Fortune, The Native Countrey of the Laws, And of all People derivatively, the Fountain of Instruction, the Head of Religion, the Rule of Justice, and finally the Original of infinite blessings, although the Hereticks, Enemies of the truth will not confess it, as this Author is pleased to term those of the Reformed Religion.44

He was in a very small minority. As Francis Haskell observed, most Britons came to admire the past and scorn the present.45 Whether it was Deism in the case of Shaftesbury, or Protestantism in the case of most of his fellow-countrymen, they all arrived in Italy, and more especially in Rome, knowing what they were going to find: a decadent present to highlight the splendour of the ancient ruins. In Joseph Addison's couplet:

*Where the old Romans deathless Acts display'd,*  
*Their base degen'rate Progeny upbraid*.46

Horace Walpole wrote home from Rome in 1740: *I am very glad that I see Rome while it yet exists; before a great number of years are elapsed, I question whether it will be worth seeing. Between the ignorance and poverty of the present Romans, everything is neglected and falling to decay, the villas are entirely out of repair, and the palaces so ill

43 Ibid. p. 69.  
44 Edmund WARCUPP, Italy, in its original glory, ruine and revival. Being an exact survey of the whole geography and history of that famous country; with the adjacent islands of Sicily, Malta etc. and whatever is remarkable in Rome, The Mistress of the World And all those towns and territories mentioned in antient and modern authors, London 1660, p. 146.  
45 Francis HASKELL, Preface, in: Wilton and Bignamini (see note 4) p. 10.  
kept that half the pictures are spoiled by damp\textsuperscript{47}. George Ayscough found some of the Roman remains tolerable perfect and beautiful but his enthusiasm was dampened by the recollection that this city, which was once inhabited by a nation of heroes and patriots, was now in the hands of the most effeminate and most superstitious people in the universe\textsuperscript{48}. This kind of observation could be repeated ad nauseam. Especially after the War of the Spanish Succession had been won and the threat of a French universal monarchy had been banished, the British could afford to be more assertive about their own virtues and the decadence of the continentals. The tone became more strident, more xenophobic. One further example must suffice, written by Joseph Spence, accompanying the Earl of Middlesex. He reported to his mother about the use of castrati in opera and how much like women they looked, adding:

\begin{quote}
This is not so great a wonder among the modern Romans, as it would have been among the ancient ones. They are now in general effeminated to the last degree: and that roughness and courage that formerly made them masters of all the world is sunk into such a softness and indolence, that I verily believe they could not now defend their own city against five hundred good old battered soldiers – unless the prayers of the priests should be sufficient to save themselves and the laity\textsuperscript{49}.
\end{quote}

Coming from a rapidly expanding and prosperous economy, the British visitors were quick to criticise both the general level of poverty and the stark contrast between the conspicuous consumption of a tiny elite and the abject destitution of the masses: »I think no city in its general appearance can unite more magnificence and poverty than this; as adjoining the most superb palaces, we see the meanest habitations; and temples, the boasted ornaments of antiquity, choked up by sheds and cottages«\textsuperscript{50}. An especially popular symbol of Rome’s fall from grace was the fate of the Forum, once the centre of a world empire and now the grazing-place of cattle:

\begin{quote}
How grand the appearance when the whole was extant! How correspondent to the majesty of the Roman people! But, alas, this valley, which was the most honorable part of ancient Rome (the capitol excepted) is now the most vile. Here, where not only the ambassadors of powerful monarchs, but even they themselves have sued for protection: where the decrees of popular assemblies have decided the fate of nations; and in short, where every thing of the greatest moment was transacted, is now heard the lowing of oxen. The Forum Romanum is the Smith-
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{48} Ayscough (see note 16) p. 140.
\textsuperscript{50} Thomas Watkins, Travels through Switzerland [sic], Italy, Sicily, the Greek Islands to Constantinople; through part of Greece, Ragusa, and the Dalmatian Isles in the years 1787, 1788, 1789, 2 vol., London 1792, I, p. 323.
field of modern Rome, and the walls of those sacred edifices, which were more revered than any earthly object, are constantly polluted by the dung of cattle.51

Yet even as they gloried in their sense of superiority at the sight of the decadent Romans languishing in poverty, the British were thinking more of their own country and the paramountcy of liberty. Why were modern Italians so poor in the midst of so much natural blessing, asked Joseph Addison? The answer was of course political:

But what avail her unexhausted Stores,  
In blooming Mountains, and her sunny Shores,  
With all the Gifts that Heaven and Earth impart,  
The Smiles of Nature, and her Charms of Art;  
While proud Oppression in the Valleys reigns,  
And Tyranny usurps her happy Plains?52

So the lesson he derived from his travels through Italy was to cherish British liberty even more:

We envy not the warmer Clime that lies  
In ten degrees of more indulgent Skies;  
Nor at the Courseness of our Heav'n repine,  
Though' o'er our Heads the frozen Pilads shine:  
'Tis Liberty that Crowns Britannia's Isle,  
And makes her barren Rocks, and her bleak Mountain smile.53...

This equation could also counsel restraint. Just as Rome and Rome's heir, Venice, had been corrupted by aristocracy and luxury, so could Venice's successor as the commercial and cultural capital of the world – Great Britain – be laid low in its turn. Writing about the fate of the Romans and their villas, Robert Morris pointed a warning finger to his fellow-countrymen: »perhaps too fatigated with too great an Excess of Indolence, and enervated by Luxury ... they lost their Liberty. Then their noble Palaces, their magnificent and beautiful Villas, their delicious Situations were wrested from them, and at length the whole Empire became a seat of wild desolation«.54 Rare, however, was the observer who could see past present triumphalism to future decadence. Most grand tourists returned home, laden with purchases and greatly reinforced in their self-confidence: »I leave the bella Italia without a sigh, and the vasty field of France without regret, in order to hasten to the only region in the universe which can be said to be the residence of Liberty«.55

51 Ibid. p. 373-374.  
52 ADDISON (see note 46) p. 6-7.  
53 Ibid. p. 7.  
55 AYSCOUGH (see note 16) p. 231.
In conclusion, a comment on the concept of Kulturtransfer, which has come to the fore in the recent historiography of international cultural relations, is appropriate. Johannes Paulmann has defined Kulturtransfer as «the transference of ideas, goods and institutions from one specific system of societal relations and meaning patterns into another»\textsuperscript{56}. It is underpinned by the acceptance of a clear demarcation between what is transferred and the agent who does the transferring, as the transferred item must be perceived as belonging to the other rather than the self. The reception of neo-classicism, aided and abetted by the Grand Tour, certainly fits this pattern very well. However, it does not fit Paulmann's chronological scheme. He went on to argue that the long nineteenth century was the obvious period of Kulturtransfer, because it was characterised by the emergence of discrete national units. As so often, the post-dating of the development of nationalism in Europe gets in the way. The English certainly, and the British probably, had a clear sense of national identity long before the long nineteenth century. Indeed, medieval historians such as James Campbell and Patrick Wormald push it back to the first millennium AD\textsuperscript{57}. Their experiences on the Grand Tour only served to intensify that identity.
