

The Oxford Installation of 1759

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SUMMARY

This article examines the background to a remarkable 18th-century print, the largest and most elaborate work ever produced by the talented etcher Thomas Worlidge (1700–66). It was produced to commemorate the magnificent celebrations held in the first week of July 1759 to mark the Installation of the 7th earl of Westmorland as Chancellor of the University. These events aroused great interest and excitement both in Oxford and nationally, partly because they included an ambitious programme of concerts by the country's best musicians, but principally because of their political significance, as the last great demonstration by the old Tory establishment at a time when the University was still far from clear of the imputation of Jacobitism. The programme of celebrations is reconstructed, and an account given of the origins and subsequent history of the print.

When Charles Butler, earl of Arran, died on 17 December 1758 at the age of 88, the Chancellorship of the University of Oxford fell vacant for the first time in 43 years. The election of a successor took place with statutory rapidity on 4 January 1759, after a brief but intensive campaign. Discovering that the Whigs in the University had already promised their support to the bishop of Durham, Dr. Trevor, the Duke of Newcastle was prevented from fulfilling ministerial promises to the archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Secker, while Tory supporters in Oxford were split between adherents of John Fane, 7th earl of Westmorland, and George Henry Lee, 3rd earl of Lichfield. The potentially fatal consequences of Tory division were only averted when legal doubts about Lord Lichfield's eligibility for office brought about his withdrawal from the contest on the eve of the poll and secured Lord Westmorland's victory by the comfortable margin of 321 votes to 200. The Installation of the new Chancellor was appointed to take place during the next Commemoration, and the circumstances of his election ensured that this event, scheduled for early in the following July, would be attended with more than common public interest.¹

The potential of the Sheldonian Theatre as a setting for grand ceremonial was developed considerably during the middle years of the 18th century. The celebrations for the Installation of 1759, which resembled, but surpassed, those of 1749 for the opening of the Radcliffe Library, provided a pretext for the staging of Oxford's most spectacular public occasion between 1733, when Handel's personal superintendence of

¹ The election campaign is best discussed in W.R. Ward, *Georgian Oxford* (1958), 207–11. The circumstances leading to Lord Lichfield's withdrawal are discussed by L.S. Sutherland, 'The Laudian Statutes in the Eighteenth Century', in L.S. Sutherland and L.G. Mitchell (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 5 (1986), 197–203. Archbishop Secker's account of events, in Lambeth Palace Library MS 2598 (f. 52v.), is published in J.S. Macauley and R.W. Greaves (eds.), *The Autobiography of Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury* (University of Kansas, 1988), 40.

the musical arrangements at the last public Act had established an enduring enthusiasm for his oratorios, and 1773, when Lord North's Installation set new standards of magnificence.² In 1759 the programme occupied nearly a full week, and in addition to the ceremony of Installation and the associated creation of more than thirty honorary Doctors of Civil Law, it included a wide variety of 'Encaenia exercises', and a great deal of first rate music. Performances of Handel's *Samson*, *Esther* and *Messiah* followed precedents set in 1749, while a new attraction was added by the decision to hire the band and singers of the King's Opera, accompanied 'at prodigious expence' by leading vocal and instrumental soloists.

Anticipation of a memorable occasion seems to have brought about a determination to create a visual record of the event, and among those most closely involved in the preparations was Thomas Worlidge (1700–66), an artist and engraver whose portraits of fashionable sitters, and delicate drypoint etchings in the manner of Rembrandt, had brought him to high reputation. Worlidge had already worked in Oxford, and had prepared a print of an ancient statue of Cicero from the collection given to the University in 1756 by the countess of Pomfret, so he was probably aware that William Hogarth had taken sketches inside the Sheldonian Theatre during the celebrations for the opening of the Radcliffe Library in 1749, and he may have realized that there was a feeling of disappointment in Oxford that these had never been developed for an engraving. By 1759, moreover, it would also have been clear that the absence of any engraved view of the interior of the Sheldonian Theatre was an anomalous omission from the otherwise comprehensive available selection of engraved Oxford topography.³ The plates from David Loggan's *Oxonia Illustrata* (1675) already provided interior views of the Bodleian Library and the Divinity School, while the Oxford Almanacks, first produced in 1674, had largely abandoned their original allegorical and polemical tendency for a tradition of architectural representation that had recently included a handsome interior view of the Radcliffe Library (1751). At about this time, a set of eight plates showing views of Oxford streets had been engraved from studies made by the architect John Donowell, and these continued to be advertised in printsellers' catalogues until the end of the century.

Worlidge's plate (Fig. 1) was a far more important and interesting piece of work. Ambitiously large, with a multitude of portraits etched in a distinctive drypoint style, it combined architectural fidelity with an individual treatment of its subjects that was no doubt intended to enhance the print's appeal to fashionable patrons of the Installation celebrations. The artist's efforts to ensure the attractiveness of the print, and his understanding of the likely nature of the Installation proceedings, are evident in his subscription proposals, published shortly before the event in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* (no. 321) and the *Tory London Evening Post* (nos. 4935 and 4936). Interestingly, Worlidge did not advertise in the Whiggish *Public Advertiser*.

Mr WORLIDGE begs leave to acquaint the Publick, That he is now at Oxford, and hath near finish'd a Drawing of the Inside of the Theatre: Wherein is to be present the Company in their proper Order, Habits and Degrees, as they will appear at the Installation of the Right Hon the Earl of WESTMORLAND, Chancellor; which he proposes to print by Subscription at the Price of One

² Encaenia ceremonies of this period are discussed by V.H.H. Green, 'The University and Social life', and S.L.F. Wollenberg, 'Music and Musicians', in Sutherland and Mitchell, op. cit. note 1, 352–3 and 871.

³ The only published survey of Worlidge is by C. Dack: *Sketch of the Life of Thomas Worlidge, Etcher and Painter, with a Catalogue of his Works* (Peterborough, 1907). A copy is in the Print Room at the British Museum. Hogarth's activities in 1749, and inactivity thereafter, are noted in *A Pocket Companion for Oxford, or Guide Through the University* (new edn., 1762), 15.

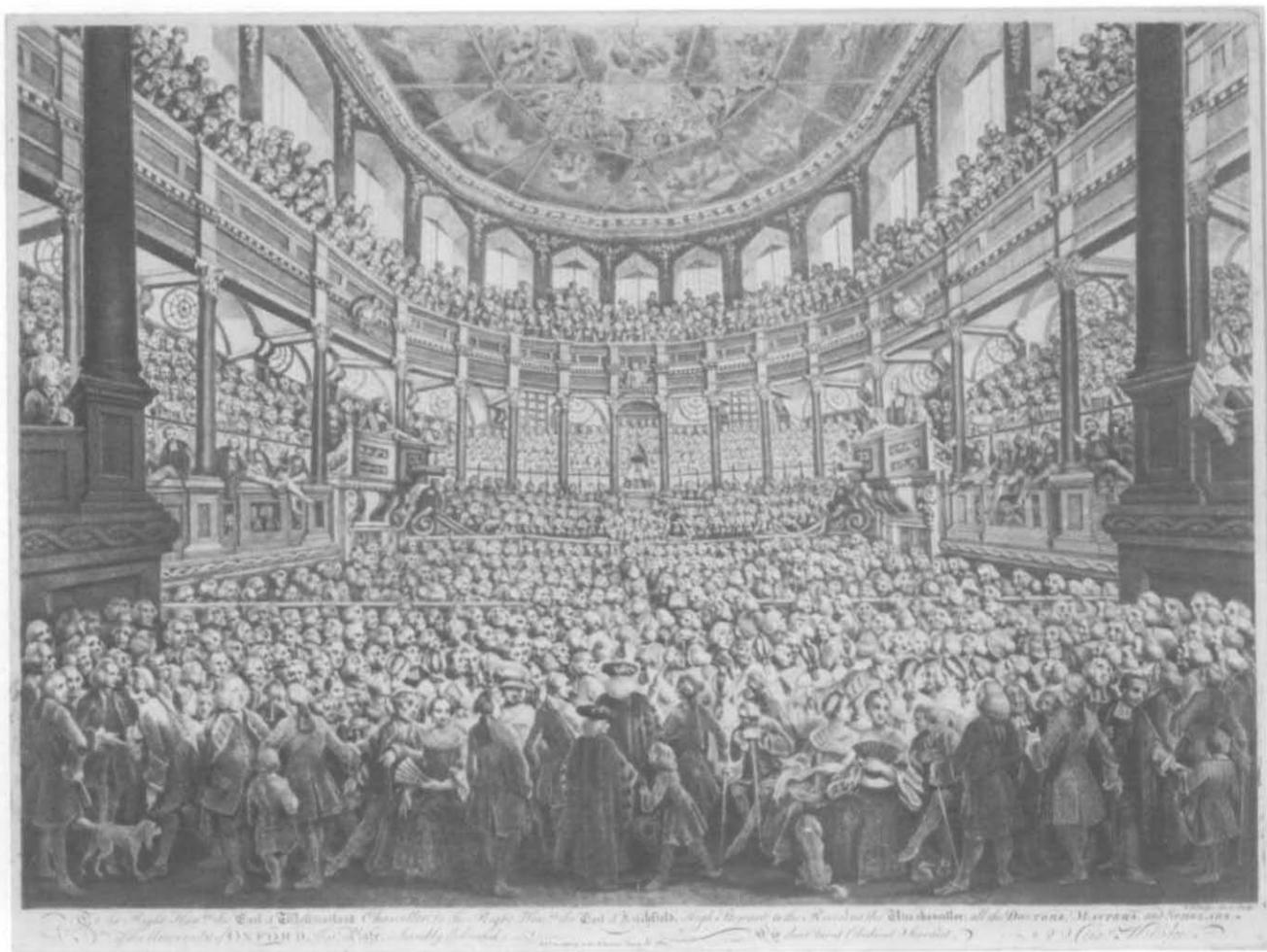


Fig. 1. Print by Thomas Worlidge of the Installation of 1759.

Guinea; Half to be paid at the Time of Subscribing; the other Half when finish'd, which will be some time in March next. Subscriptions are taken in by him at Mr Arnold's in High-Street, Oxford, where the Drawing may be seen; and at Miss Regnier's in Newport Street, near Long-Acre, London; and at his own House in Bath.

In the 1750s it was still common for an engraver to act as his own publisher. Although the businesses of John Boydell and Robert Sayer in London had already begun to extend the control that they were soon to exercise over wide areas of the British print trade, Worlidge preferred to publish his own prints, a practice shared by his near-contemporaries William Hogarth (1693–1764) and the famous mezzotint engraver James MacArdell (c. 1709–65). More unusual on this occasion was his decision to charge subscribers a guinea, at a time when prints of this size (approx. 460 × 620 mm.) seldom cost half that amount. Even William Woollett's sensational interpretation of the *Niobe* after a painting by Richard Wilson, published by Boydell in 1761, sold for only 5s., and it must be supposed that the cost of Worlidge's print reflected his confidence that the presence of large numbers of affluent visitors at the Installation would ensure demand at virtually any price.

Details of the musical preparations for the week were also advertised in Oxford and London at around the same time.⁴ The three oratorios were to be performed on 3, 4 and 5 July respectively by 'a numerous and excellent Band from London and other Places', accompanied by soloists of the first rank. The composer Dr. Thomas Arne was joined by his mistress Charlotte Brent, arguably the most talented singer of her generation, whose performance as Polly in the *Beggar's Opera* at Covent Garden during the following autumn was to project her to national fame. Another soloist was Giulia Frasi, a singer at the King's Theatre and pupil of Dr. Burney, whose wide recital experience included frequent work with Handel himself. Another experienced Handelian was Samuel Thomas Champness, for many years the principal bass at Drury Lane, who in December 1759 introduced English audiences to Boyce's 'Hearts of Oak' to celebrate the Year of Victories; while John Beard of Covent Garden was considered by Charles Dibdin, a leading contemporary critic, to be 'taken altogether . . . the best English singer'. Tickets to the oratorios were advertised for sale at 5s. from Mr Cross's Music Shop and at the coffee houses. The 19-year-old James Woodforde, recently arrived at Oxford and shortly to be elected a Scholar of New College, was among those undeterred by such high prices, and the earliest pages of his well-known Diary include entries on July 4 and 5 for 'Ester Oratorio 5s' and 'Messiah 5s', and a note of the purchase on July 6 of '2 White waistcoats 1.16.0', presumably in response to the sartorial impulses of the week.⁵

Performances by the band and singers of the King's Theatre, under their director and principal composer Gioacchino Cocchi, were also advertised. Their principal soprano, Angiola Calori, is said by Grove to have possessed 'a voice of great extent, a profound knowledge of music, and extraordinary rapidity of execution', and Dr. Burney described her colleague, Columba Mattei, as a 'charming singer' and a 'spirited and intelligent actress'. Another member of the company at this time was Ferdinando Tenducci, the celebrated Sieneese castrato, whose voice, 'neither man's nor woman's, but . . . more melodious than either', was later described by an enraptured Lydia Melford in

⁴ Further details of the proposed musical programme were published in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* (no. 322) and the *London Evening Post* (nos. 4932, 4938), hereafter abbreviated to *J.O.J.* and *L.E.P.*

⁵ James Woodforde, *The Diary of a Country Parson*, ed. John Beresford (The World's Classics, 1935), 1. Details of musicians and singers are given in P.H. Highfill, K.A. Burnim, and E.A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and other Stage personnel in London, 1660–1800* (Southern Illinois U.P., 1973–).

Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker* (1771). Their performances were to take place during the second part of the Commemoration week, and consisted of a cantata, *La Vera Lode*, 'in honour of the Chancellor and University' on the morning of 6 July, and evening performances on 6 and 7 July of the 'grand Serenata' *Il Merito Coronato* and *Il Ciro Riconosciuto*, the most popular new opera of the season. Further attractions on these days included vocal and instrumental recitals at intervals during the performances by soloists including the virtuoso violinist Thomas Pinto and the cellist Peter Pasqualino. Admission to these performances also cost 5s., and an announcement giving notice of the availability of tickets at the coffee houses and also, rather unusually, at 'Mrs Dudley's, Fishmonger, in High Street', warned that strictly 'no money will be taken at the doors of the Theatre'.⁶

Anticipation of a keen demand for tickets was clearly justified. At the beginning of Commemoration week (3 July) the *London Evening Post* reported that '... the University is quite full of Nobility and Gentry; so much Company not having been seen here since the last Public Act in 1733'. Other sources identified fourteen peers, the Lord Mayor of London, eight baronets and thirty-one M.P.s, many accompanied by their wives and families, besides 'a very splendid Appearance of other Gentry ... too numerous to give a complete and accurate list'.⁷ Other notable visitors included Lady Primrose, the Jacobite hostess; Samuel Johnson, compensating for the missed pleasures of his curtailed undergraduate career; and the 13-year-old Jeremy Bentham, taken along by his father, but less than a year away from his own matriculation at Queen's, who later preferred to remember the occasion for the 'royal gingerbread' to which he had been treated by a fellow passenger during the journey by coach from London.⁸

Bentham's curiously selective memory may have been affected by the overwhelmingly Tory complexion of the week's celebrations. Although the earl of Macclesfield, who received a D.C.L. on 3 July, had supported the 'New Interest' in the great Oxfordshire Election of 1754, while other visitors included John Wilkes, at this time M.P. for Aylesbury, and Sir William Meredith, later noted as the presenter of the Feathers Tavern petition to Parliament in favour of relaxing the terms of subscription to the 39 Articles, the predominant tone was set by High Tories and friends of the Church. This group included the earls of Abingdon, Northampton, Oxford and Shrewsbury, with M.P.s such as Benjamin Bathurst, Charles Mordaunt, John Philips, William Cartwright, Thomas Rowney, William Grove, William Craven, Henry Pye, William Drake, William Bagot and Roger Newdigate. The last of these, the M.P. for Oxford University, kept a diary, in which his brief entries convey the distinct impression that the social pleasures of the week were not allowed to interfere with vigorous political lobbying.⁹

Lord Westmorland entered Oxford on the early afternoon of Monday 2 July, attended by 'a long Train of Coaches and other Equipages of the Nobility and Gentry of the County', which Horace Walpole subsequently claimed had been 'all be-James'd' with the 'true-blue ribbands' of Jacobitism.¹⁰ The junior members of the University, who had been forbidden to leave the town, were notified of his approach by the ringing of St. Mary's bell, and assembled along the North side of the High Street. Undergraduates were placed next to the East gate, and the B.A.s were stationed next to them. M.A.s gathered next to St. Mary's, and the South side of the street was reserved for townsmen.

⁶ *L.E.P.* 4939.

⁷ *J.O.J.* 324.

⁸ Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. G.B. Hill, i. 347-8; J. Bowring (ed.), *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* (1843), x. 35.

⁹ Warwickshire Record Office, Newdigate MS. CR/136/A/590, f. 34.

¹⁰ Walpole to Montagu, 19 July 1759, in *Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis et al. (Yale 1937-83), ix. 241-2.

On his arrival at St. Mary's, Lord Westmorland was received by the Vice-Chancellor and Doctors, who wore scarlet, and by the Proctors and Noblemen 'in their proper habits'. The Orator, Dr. Mather of Brasenose, made a brief Latin speech of welcome, to which the Chancellor-elect replied in kind, before retiring across the road with his attendants to dine and stay at St. Mary Hall, where the veteran Jacobite, Dr. William King (1685-1763), was in his 41st year as Principal. On the completion of the welcoming ceremonies, junior members returned immediately to their colleges, under the supervision of Occasional Proctors appointed 'to preserve order and decency during his Lordship's stay'.¹¹

At ten o'clock on the following morning, 3 July, the Doctors and Noblemen assembled in their robes at the lodgings of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Thomas Randolph, President of Corpus, to meet Lord Westmorland, who wore a gown of black silk trimmed with gold, with a full-bottomed wig and lace band. At eleven, the company moved off towards the Sheldonian Theatre in a procession described by those who saw it as 'more numerous than has been seen here in the Memory of Man'.¹² Passing through St. Mary's, where they were joined by the M.A.s, they proceeded by way of the Great Gate of the Schools and the Divinity School to the Theatre, where their arrival was greeted by 'a grand Piece of Music . . . performed by a well-chosen Band, consisting of most of the capital performers in England'. Here, spectators were assembled in accordance with orders issued in advance. Noblemen and Doctors occupied the rising semicircle on either side of the Chancellor's chair. The enclosure 'within the rails' on the floor of the House was reserved for M.A.s, and the first floor galleries were set aside for ladies and strangers, among whom 'all gownsmen' were 'forbidden to intermix', although Worlidge's print suggests that this order was not strictly enforced. Junior members were placed according to rank in the upper gallery. Gentlemen Commoners and B.A.s were placed at the North end, and undergraduate scholars and commoners sat on the east and west sides. Others, 'battelars, servitors, &c', were left to find what space they could.¹³

After a brief opening speech, 'applauding in a proper and polite manner the choice the University had made', the Vice-Chancellor proceeded immediately to the ceremony of Installation. Lord Westmorland was presented with the insignia of office, the key, seals and book of Statutes, and, at the word of command, the bedels laid their staves at the new Chancellor's feet. As he moved to take the Chair, a 'celebratory Ode' was performed to a setting by the Professor of Music, Dr. Hayes:

RECITATIVE:	Hark! Hark! from every Tongue loud Accents rise, Applause on wing now mounts the vaulted Skies.
CHORUS:	Isis with all her Choir, this Hour Her Guardian hails, reveres his Power; Ordain'd her empire to sustain, And rule where Kings have learn'd to Reign.
AIR:	The Muses in his Praise rejoice They echo to the Public Voice: Minerva's Sons glad Homage pay And to be happy court his Sway.
CHORUS:	(repeated)

¹¹ The full text of the Orders was reprinted in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxix (1759), 341-2. A description of Lord Westmorland's arrival in Oxford was given in *The New Oxford Guide, or, Companion through the University* (2nd edn., 1759), 87-8; hereafter abbreviated to *N.O.G.*

¹² *N.O.G.* 88.

¹³ *Annual Register* (1759, 8th edn., 1792), ii. 140-1.

After delivering what was described as an 'elegant Latin Oration', the Chancellor began to confer the first honorary doctorates of the week. Recipients included four diplomats, from Denmark, the States-General and Amsterdam; the earls of Northampton and Macclesfield; Lord Willoughby de Broke; Sir Richard Glyn, the Lord Mayor of London; and five Tory M.P.s: William Cartwright, Thomas Cholmondeley, Sir Charles Kemys-Tynte, Sir Charles Mordaunt and Edward Popham. 'Congratulatory Verses' followed, in English and in Latin, delivered by three young Noblemen: the earl of Suffolk (Magdalen), Lord Norreys (Magdalen), and the earl of Donegal (Trinity). After one more speech, by the Public Orator, proceedings were adjourned, and officials and guests returned in procession to Corpus, where the Chancellor entertained the noblemen and Doctors to dinner. Later that afternoon, a great part of the company reassembled in the Theatre to hear a performance of *Samson* conducted by Dr. Hayes.¹⁴

On the morning of the following day, Wednesday 4 July, the procession went again from Corpus to the Theatre, where the Poetry Professor Thomas Warton, author of the nostalgic Tory elegy *The Triumphs of Isis* (1749), delivered the Creweian Oration in commemoration of the University's benefactors. Lord Fane, a kinsman of the new Chancellor, and William Craven, the Tory M.P. for Warwickshire, were among further candidates honoured with the D.C.L. degree, and the young earl of Suffolk was presented for his M.A. with a 'much applauded' speech by the Public Orator. The Encaenia exercises then resumed, with speeches from seven more young gentlemen, coached, it was said, by the actor Thomas Sheridan, whose M.A. from Trinity College, Dublin, had been incorporated at Oxford in November 1758. The oratorio *Esther* was performed in the afternoon.¹⁵

On Thursday 5 July, Old Midsummer, the Chancellor met the Heads on University business in the Delegates' Room of the Clarendon Building. Afterwards, they went again to the Theatre, where five more Doctors were admitted, including the Tory M.P.s Harbord Harbord, Robert Shirley and Wilmot Vaughan, together with thirteen M.A.s. Eight more young gentlemen then performed further Encaenia exercises. Richard Cope Hopton and Charles Walcot, of Magdalen, delivered a 'Dialogue in Latin Verse on the late Improvements and Benefactions to the University', and Lewis Bagot, the future dean of Christ Church and bishop of St. Asaph, gave a 'Declamation'. His elder brother William Bagot, Tory M.P. for Staffordshire, was present to hear him speak. In the afternoon the *Messiah* was performed, and that night a ball and supper was given to select guests by the earls of Suffolk and Northampton. Sir Roger Newdigate stayed until nearly 4 a.m.¹⁶

Defying hangovers, the company returned to the Theatre on the morning of Friday 6 July to hear further Encaenia exercises by six more young gentlemen and to listen to *La Vera Lode*, a 'grand Cantata' in honour of the new Chancellor, performed by 'the Whole Opera Band'. Three more Tory M.P.s, William Grove, Henry Pye and John Harvey Thursby, were admitted D.C.L. and Thomas Arne was created a Doctor of Music. Then the main business of the week concluded with a characteristic speech by Dr. King, who is shown in Worlidge's print, with raised hand, in the right hand rostrum. The rather bland official abstracts of this speech, which, unlike his notorious effort of 1749, was never printed in full, suggest that on this occasion King spoke with somewhat more restraint.¹⁷ However, Samuel Johnson clapped until his 'hands were sore', and Sir Roger

¹⁴ *L.E.P.* no 4940; *J.O.J.* no 323; *N.O.G.* 88-9; Warws. R.O., Newdigate MS. CR/136/A/590.

¹⁵ *N.O.G.* 89; *J.O.J.* no 323; W.R. Ward, op. cit. note 1, 211.

¹⁶ *N.O.G.* 89-90; *J.O.J.* no 323; Warws. R.O., Newdigate MS. CR/136/A/590.

¹⁷ *J.O.J.* no 323. For King, see D. Greenwood, *William King, Tory and Jacobite* (1969).

Newdigate recorded that King had performed 'admirably' for fifty minutes, so it is unlikely that the speech was lacking in Tory fervour. That afternoon, the forces of the Italian Opera entertained the company for the second time in the day, performing *Il Merito Coronato*, a 'grand Serenata' in two acts, with music by Cocchi.

Although the official ceremonies of the Installation had now ended, celebrations continued for several more days. On Saturday 8 July a concert performance of Cocchi's new three-act Opera, *Il Ciro Riconosciuto*, the most successful work of the preceding London season, was given in the Theatre by 'the whole band from the Opera House'.¹⁸ On Act Sunday, 9 July, the Chancellor attended University Sermons both morning and afternoon at St. Mary's. The Church was 'remarkably crouded', ladies being accommodated in the gallery space normally reserved for B.A.s. Latin anthems were performed by singers from the Italian Opera, and the pulpit proclaimed appropriate messages of encouragement. 'The respectable Appearance which grac'd the Solemnities of the past Week may assure Us . . .', Timothy Neve of Corpus reflected, ' . . . that there are not wanting Friends to patronize our Studies and to countenance this Nursery of Science . . .'; while Benjamin Buckler of All Souls, who preached in the afternoon on 'The Alliance of Religion and Learning', concluded that ' . . . the real patriot . . . can know no difference between assisting in [Oxford's] preservation, and in that of the Religion and Constitution of his country'.¹⁹ Strengthened in these sentiments, the company began to disperse, but many remained on Monday 10 July to hear a performance of *Farnace*, a new opera by David Perez that had been premiered successfully during the previous London season. The Chancellor attended this, as he had the rest of the week's musical events, and eventually left Oxford on the following Wednesday afternoon.²⁰

The many public events of the week gave Worlidge ample opportunity to prepare sketches of the company for his print, which includes a self-portrait, pen in hand, in the near right-hand balcony. The completed work undoubtedly succeeds in representing the scene, of 'Magnificence and Splendour', described in the following week's copy of *Jackson's Oxford Journal* (no. 324):

... the semicircular Part of this superb and spacious Room is so calculated to shew the whole Company at one View, from any Point, to the greatest Advantage; and on this occasion, from the Brilliancy of the Ladies, and the various Habits of the Doctors, young Noblemen, and other Academics, together with the Company in general, it afforded a most singular and unparalleled Appearance of Grace and Dignity.

The portraits in this print have sometimes been claimed to number as many as two hundred.²¹ They are executed in drypoint etching, Worlidge's most favoured technique, and are done in a style which closely resembles that adopted by William Hogarth in his

¹⁸ *N.O.G.* 91.

¹⁹ T. Neve, *A Sermon Preached . . . on Act Sunday* (1759), 19; B. Buckler, *A Sermon Preached . . . on Act Sunday* (1759), 35.

²⁰ *J.O.J.* no 324.

²¹ C. Dack, *op. cit.* note 3, 21. Although many of the figures are clearly drawn from life, virtually none can now be identified, apart from Dr. King, Lord Westmorland and Worlidge himself, who is shown accompanied by his wife. The gentleman in the corresponding position in the left-hand balcony is said to be Worlidge's brother-in-law, while it is possible that the young man in the left-hand rostrum, who wears the gown of a nobleman, is the earl of Suffolk. The writer of this article would be very grateful to hear of any further identifications that readers may be able to suggest.

pioneering study 'Characters and Caricaturas' (1743), and subsequently developed by early caricaturists such as Thomas Patch (fl. 1755-75). Unfortunately, since no accompanying key plate appears to have been issued, and no subscription list survives, it is now very difficult to identify more than a few of the figures represented.

Demand for the print may have been disappointing, and Worlidge did not advertise its completion until 11 April 1761, a year later than his original declared intention. When the advertisement finally appeared, it did so only in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* (no. 415), and not, as the proposals of 1759 had done, in the *London Evening Post*. The presence of 73 unsold impressions of the print in the sale of Worlidge's stock held after his death in 1766 also increases suspicions that sales had not matched the engraver's hopes, and possibly explains why the plate was quickly sold to the London publisher Robert Sayer, whereas most of Worlidge's plates continued to be published by his widow. Sayer, significantly, immediately reduced the price of the print drastically, to 5s., although he was careful to ensure that his customers were not allowed to forget that the 'capital and elaborate' print, which contained 'mostly real portraits', had originally cost subscribers more than four times as much.²²

Marketed in this way, the print proved much more successful. Throughout the 1760s and 1770s it was listed in catalogues issued by Robert Sayer and his principal rival, John Boydell, who must either have bought a share in the plate with Sayer, or purchased a stock of impressions from the sale of Worlidge's goods in 1767. By 1795, the price had risen with inflation to 7s. 6d. in the catalogue of Sayer's successors, Laurie & Whittle, and John & Josiah Boydell were offering impressions at 10s. 6d. in their catalogue of 1803 (p. 51). On the dissolution of the partnership of Laurie & Whittle in 1818 the plate was acquired by another publisher, Benjamin Beale Evans. In 1824 it was sold again, this time to an unknown buyer,²³ and only reappeared in 1990, when it was listed in the stock of an antiquarian print dealer in London. It is now in a private collection.

Impressions from the plate, which are not uncommon, continued to be taken until well into the 19th century. By that stage the plate had deteriorated badly with use, and despite evident attempts at re-engraving, particularly in the inscription space, the quality of late impressions is extremely poor. Concern at this deterioration is likely to have contributed to the decision in 1834 to produce a new view of the interior of the Theatre for the duke of Wellington's Installation as Chancellor. Thomas Dighton's lithograph of this event is a good piece of work of its sort, but it can hardly claim the originality of conception or attention to detail that make Worlidge's view a landmark in the history of British printmaking. However, both prints share the distinction that they commemorate occasions of defiance in the face of fundamental change, as the University contemplated the imminent extinction of lingering Jacobite hopes in 1759, or, in 1834, the beginning of the end of Anglican hegemony. The invention of photography may not be the only reason why no such scene has been engraved since.

²² *A Catalogue of the Genuine, Large, and Curious Collection of Prints and Capital Drawings, of Mr. Thomas Worlidge, Deceased* (1767), in the Print Room at the British Museum (A1-11). *A Catalogue . . . by Robert Sayer* (1766), 60, item 26, also in the Print Room.

²³ Trade catalogues of: John Boydell (1773), 16, item 31; Sayer & Bennett (1775), 56, item 6; Laurie & Whittle (1795), 4, item 28; and the sale catalogue of B.B. Evans (May 1824), day 1, lot 99 (Print Room, British Museum).