

Chapter 10

“Spatial Texts: Women as Devisers of Environments and Iconographies”

Peter Davidson

In early-modern Europe, it was not uncommon to use the symbolic languages of the late Renaissance and Baroque to create temporary or permanent decorated environments, either designed as places of meditation and withdrawal, or else as statements of the religious, philosophical or political position of an individual or community. Amongst these, there is a particularly interesting group made for and by early modern women in England, which demonstrate the degree to which women, sometimes as executants, sometimes as patrons or ‘devisers’, could create or commission complex adornments of spaces, cogent within current symbolic conventions and legible as verbal and visual texts. Many of these spaces involve the use of needlework, communicating in the discourses of emblems and iconographies. Some are painted with carefully articulated inscriptions and symbolic pictures: ‘speaking rooms’ with an apprehensible intellectual content are in a continuum with contemporary works for male or civic patrons, and manifestations of a phenomenon once widespread, which can be conjectured to have enjoyed a comparatively poor rate of survival. (The painted cloth, which was perhaps the most common form of room decoration in early-modern Britain, has a very poor rate of survival indeed.)¹ Houses and gardens could be bearers of inscription and

¹ M.R. Pryor, and J.C. Morrison, ‘Caught in the Springe of the Kirke—For Covenant and King: Charles II 1650-51’ in Davidson and Bepler (eds.), *Triumphs of the Defeated*, 191-225. This article discusses the most substantial survival in Scotland; in England there are painted

meaning. Meditation practises can also construct a symbolic space internally, a place made in the mind for prayer and contemplation, as Anne Bacon Drury's painted closet was an externally expressed place of thought and prayer.

The Painted Closet of Anne Bacon Drury (1572-1624), now in the Christchurch Mansion Museum, Ipswich, has recently been the subject of an exemplary book-length study, which prompts this survey and reconsideration of the activities of early-modern British women as devisers and designers of environments.² This survey will re-visit the works of a diversity of early modern women, including Mary Queen of Scots (1542-87), and her jailer/gaoler and hostess, Elizabeth Countess of Shrewsbury (1527-1608). It will also consider Lady Anne Cooke Bacon (1527-1610) and her inscriptions at Gorhambury House, devised in collaboration with her husband Nicholas Bacon (1510-29), who was Anne Drury's grandfather, as well as the unrealised manuscript iconographies prepared in her circle, continuing with the carefully-determined, and very verbal, word and image medium of the *Great Picture*, devised by Lady Anne Clifford (1590-1676). A considerable contrast is offered by the microcosmic garden layout made in her youth by the future Winter Queen, Elizabeth of Bohemia (1618-1680) which offers an individual imagination of the world. The survey concludes by suggesting briefly some of the possibilities concerning the construction of interior space implied in with the work of a major English visual artist, the recusant Catholic designer and maker of ecclesiastical textiles, Helena Wintour (c.1600-71).

The panels from Anne Bacon Drury's painted closet, now in Ipswich, have been relocated twice: at some point in Lady Drury's lifetime from Hardwick House, Hawstead,

cloths at Hardwick Hall Derbyshire and Owlpen Manor, Gloucestershire, otherwise survivals are few.

² Meakin, *Painted Closet*.

Suffolk, to Hawstead place nearby, and then in 1924 to Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich (see Fig. 10.1).³ Professor Meakin's considered opinion is that Lady Drury designed the room for her own use, aware of Joseph Hall's 1606 *The Arte of Divine Meditation*, but original in her adaptation of *imprese* and Latin *sententiae* to her own purposes. Whether she painted all or any of it remains uncertain: the design—with its unifying backgrounds of stylised trees and pale sky in the emblem panels—is elegant. The details, especially of human figures, are relatively unsophisticated, possible work of a member of a family which included an accomplished amateur painter, equally plausible as the work of a regional professional painter.

1. **[INSERT Figure 10.1: Anne Drury's Painted Closet: CAPTION REQUIRED]****[Caption]** Lady Elizabeth Drury's Painted Closet from Hawstead, Suffolk, before 1615, now at Christchurch Museum, Ipswich. Photograph © Dr Stephen Plunkett, Wikimedia Commons.

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The room, as now constituted, consists of painted panels below a frieze with inscriptions. There are a number of panels now arranged together with no inscription above which may have changed their places in the course of the move, possibly originally having been above windows or doors,⁴ otherwise the 40 emblem panels are grouped in sixes and nines under the *sententiae* in an arrangement which Professor Meakin believes to be close to their original arrangement. The lowest rank of painted panels shows herbs, medicinal and symbolic. The sentences or mottos are perfectly described as 'commonplaces re-calibrated'.⁵

³ Meakin, *Painted Closet*, 2.

⁴ The evidence for the earlier arrangement of the panels comes from Rev Sir John Cullum, *The History and Antiquities of Hawstead* (London: J. Nichols for the Society of Antiquaries, 1813).

⁵ Meakin, *Painted Closet*, 8

They seem to function as headings below which the painted panels are grouped. These sentences, in Latin, are adapted in terms of grammatical gender to be apposite for a room owned and used by a woman. These *sententiae* are at once commonplaces and truths: ‘warnings for one who must contend with the world and know it for what it is’.⁶ They consider the limitations of mortality and the urgent need for prudence in the conduct of human affairs. To some degree, they offer the joint consolations of a learned Stoicism and Christian hope; in this, as Professor Meakin points out, the nearest parallel is the long gallery of inscriptions and emblems painted in 1613 for Alexander Seton, first Earl of Dunfermline, at his country villa (one of the first country houses in Scotland not to be fortified) Pinkie House in East Lothian, which also advocate prudence, reticence and temperance in dealing with a volatile body politic, and also offer the consolations of a Christian stoicism⁷.

2. [Figure 10.2 [Caption] Painted Gallery at Pinkie House, Midlothian, 1613. Photograph © Professor Michael Bath, reproduced by his kind permission.]

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Lady Drury’s *sententiae* include AMPLIOR IN COELO [there is a larger dwelling in heaven] suggesting that the meditations undertaken in the restricted space of the painted closet could lead to Christian fulfilment in heaven, a sentiment echoed also in the reminder FRUSTRA NISI DOMINUS [in vain, without the Lord]. PARVA SED APTA MIHI [small but fitting for me] is partly a reflection of a commonplace about the felicity of a small landed estate. This sentence, originating with the Roman poet Horace, is partly a reflection on how a small room can contain so many thoughts and infinite permutations of trains of thought. It is also, as Professor Meakin says, a reflection on women and private spaces: ‘These women and

⁶ Meakin, *Painted Closet*, 143.

⁷ Bath, *Renaissance Decorative Painting*, 79-94; and Bath, ‘Alexander Seton’s Painted Gallery’, 79-109.

others like them used the spaces allotted to them to come to terms with [the] world and its restrictions, in often freeing ways'.⁸ The inscription which has come to characterise the room is NUNQUAM MINUS SOLA QUAM CUM SOLA [Never (feminine) less alone than when alone]—an adaptation to a specifically female environment of thoughts about the value of contemplation and the companionship of God.

The forty emblem panels cover a very large range of thought and devotion—from a mild satire of Catholics as blind moles unable to see in daylight, to the condemnation of ignoble retirement—a hibernating bear with the motto that the obscure one is secure, albeit with the implication that no good can come of this course of action. The world is carried by a scuttling crab; thus the world's movement goes, SIC ORBIS ITER. There are endless reminders of the need for caution and negotiation, especially for an elite woman, as with the *impresa* of an unfinished woman's portrait on a painter's easel, with the motto DIC MIHI QUALIS ERIS [tell me what you will become.]

The grouping of panels does not follow a particular sequence, one leading to its neighbour, so much so that it would seem that here, as elsewhere, the inscriptions in the frieze serve as headings under which to group ideas, intellectual fingerposts to the whereabouts of the ideas disposed about the room; labelled repositories under which ideas can be contained. A precise analogy is to be found in John Aubrey's life of the schoolmaster Ezreel Tonge:

He afterwards taught at Islington at Sir Thomas Fisher's house, where was a long gallery and he had several printed heads of the Caesars etc: verbes under such a

⁸ Meakin, *Painted Closet*, 189.

heade governed a Dative Case, under another an Ablative. The boyes had it as readie as could be.⁹

So, as well as everything else, Lady Drury's room is a Theatre of Memory, ideas placed in physical (and also imaginary) space.¹⁰ It is a microcosm, the world in one room, and also a paradise garden in its panels of herbs and flowers. As such it is a fitting point of focus for all subsequent thoughts about women and the texts of place: all of the constructed environments play one or more of these roles. The last word on the use of the closet should go to Professor Meakin:

The closet presents us with another paradox, whereby we can discern . . . an attempt on Lady Drury's part to order the external world – and yet it is also a kind of Narnian wardrobe into which one can step and find oneself undertaking different wanderings that may never be repeated or that will bring one back to the center, the still center of the *mediocre firma* of the Christian Neostoicism which the woman who sat in the centre of the closet embodied.¹¹

Another way in which a small private space might be textualized is through embroidery. Mary, Queen of Scots had been taught how to make embroidered pictorial panels as a child at the Valois court, and continued to practice this skill throughout her life.¹² Such panels, appliquéd to larger textiles, of course lent themselves to the construction of personal iconographies. The Hardwick Hall inventory of 1601 suggests how they could be used to

⁹ John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Kate Bennett, 2 vols. (Oxford University Press, 2015), vol. I, 152-3.

¹⁰ The best introduction to this vast topic remains Yates, *The Art of Memory*.

¹¹ Meakin, *Painted Closet*, 128.

¹² Wardle, 'Embroideries of Mary, Queen of Scots'.

create a closet: there was a set of hangings in ‘the little Chamber within the best bedchamber’ which had

Five peeces of hangings of grene velvet and Clothe of Golde and silver set
with trees and slips and ciphers with long borders of stories in nedleworke
and borders about all these hangings of Cloth of tissue silver and grene
silk, everie peece being Eight foote deep.¹³

Embroidered slips would often be applied to bed-hangings. Other people normally shared a royal bedroom,¹⁴ but a fourposter with its hangings makes a room within a room, the ultimate space for privacy and withdrawal. Mary created at least one politically-charged set of emblematic hangings for a state bed, which suggests that she was shaping her immediate environment in a highly conscious way. One set was described at Fotheringay after Mary’s death and another was subsequently seen in Edinburgh in the early seventeenth century by Drummond of Hawthornden: these may or may not be the same.

The hangings which were found at Fotheringay after the queen’s execution were described in French in October 1587 (perhaps from an inventory made by a member of Mary’s Francophone household).¹⁵ The description includes more emblems than Drummond lists, but there is a great deal of overlap. However, according to George Mackenzie, the set of hangings seen by Drummond was actually sent by Mary to her son James in 1579: if this were so, then it would demand to be read both as a personal apologia and a lesson in statecraft. This might explain why along with Valois emblems, it includes the *impresa* of

¹³ Boynton (ed.), *Hardwick Hall Inventories*, 26.

¹⁴ Whitelock, *Elizabeth’s Bedfellows* 29.

¹⁵ BL MS Cotton Caligula D. I., fol. 142^r. The description is dated to October 1587 by the State Papers.

Henry VIII, a portcullis with ‘*altera securitas*’ [an additional security], a reminder of common Plantagenet descent, and the consequent Stuart claim to the throne of England.¹⁶ It is far from impossible that there were two sets: the duplication of motifs can be explained by the tenacity with which Mary maintained the same political position throughout her life.

The hangings described by Drummond were decorated with the *imprese* of her mother, Henri II, François I, and the Cardinal of Lorraine, her uncle, among others, and also with more personal iconographies.

Two Women upon the Wheels of Fortune, the One holding a *Launce*, the other a *Cornucopia*: which Impresa seemeth to glance at Queen Elizabeth and her self; the word *Fortunae comites*. [companions of fortune] ... This is for her selfe and her Son, a big *Lyon* and a young Whelp beside her, the Word *unum quidem sed Leonem* [one, but he is a lion]. An Emblem of a Lyon taken in a Net, and Hare wantonly passing over him, the Word, *Et leopores devicto insultant Leoni* [hares insult the conquered lion].¹⁷

Other images—the camomile, all the sweeter for being trodden on, the palm tree, resisting the weight put on it through its innate virtue, the caged bird—all also read as self-representation. In these emblems, Mary not only expresses her sense of injury, but her sense of her own worth and significance.

¹⁶ George Mackenzie, *The Lives and Characters of Eminent Scotsmen* 3 vols. (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1711), vol. II, 328.

¹⁷ Bath, *Emblems for a Queen*, 147. Appendix 6 contains information on Mary’s bed of state collated from four early descriptions of bed hangings no longer extant. Bath’s chapter 3, ‘Incriminating Emblems’, is about the oppositional, political and religious iconographies in Mary’s work (49-69).

Similarly, the various emblems representing resistance against a stormy sea form part of a tradition of images particularly associated with royalty in adversity, such as ‘A Porcupine amongst Sea Rocks, the Word, *ne volutetur*’ [lest she be tossed about]. A rock in troubled sea was used with respect to her grandson, Charles I, in the frontispiece to *Eikon Basilike*, and by William of Orange in his motto *Saevis Tranquillus in undis* [calm amid the raging waves]. The illegal medal issued after the execution of Charles I also had the rock in a stormy sea and the motto ‘*Immota triumphans*’ [triumphing unmoved]. The image of the pruned tree was used by the house of Orange and by the Medici—examples could be multiplied infinitely.

What is, however, important to realise is just how unequivocal the message of the lost state bed, or beds, is—and just how much of a confrontational statement is made by it, albeit made within the terms of a discourse which, though it may now seem remote, was wholly serious and comprehensible in the sixteenth century. It is worth observing the fascination with which Drummond of Hawthornden pores over its meaning(s), and that Ben Jonson evidently shared this interest. After plotting secretly to marry Mary, the Duke of Norfolk was beheaded on Tower Hill on 2 June, 1572: part of the evidence that he had conspired with her which was brought forward at his trial earlier that year was her gift to him of an embroidery, with the motif of the hand pruning the sterile branches of the vine (i.e., Elizabeth), and the motto ‘*virescit vulnere virtus*’ [Its strength grows when it is wounded].¹⁸ These draperies with their word-and-image statements about mistreated royalty and royalty in adversity would also appear to have been re-used as part of the furnishings prepared for the reception of Charles I in Edinburgh on his disastrous visit in 1633—just as, with equal irony, the

¹⁸ Bath, *Emblems for a Queen*, 58-9.

hangings made by Queen Claude, intimately familiar to the young Mary, were hastily pressed into service to decorate the St Germain apartments of her exiled great-grandson, James II.¹⁹

Also using needlework, but on an altogether grander scale, is the environment created in 1572 by Mary's sometime hostess (or gaoler) Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury. Space does not permit a detailed examination of these here, but it is useful to reflect, in the light of her independent power and wealth, and her often adversarial relation to her husband, that the set of black-ground applique hangings which were made for Chatsworth in the early 1570s, and which were hung together in the Great Withdrawing Room at Hardwick by 1601 are a powerful statement about the power of heroines and the virtues which they embody (see Fig. 10.2).²⁰ On a black ground, she formed a complete textile equivalent of interior architecture: dado with pilasters, columns with bases, frieze or entablature with her and her husband's monogram, and in the intercolumnations of each panel a kind of Venetian window composed of three round-headed arches. In the central arch is a boldly-designed female heroic figure worked in the applique of rich (probably mostly ecclesiastical) textiles: Artemisia. Zenobia, Cleopatra, Lucretia, Penelope. These are flanked in the lesser arches by two virtues which they could be said to embody: perseverance and patience for Penelope; Zenobia flanked by magnanimity and prudence. As a whole the scheme must have been very strong—the black and gold and gold-shot brocades and the monumental figures of great women and their virtues.

¹⁹ Wardle, 'Embroideries of Mary, Queen of Scots', 11.

²⁰ Santina Levey, *The Embroideries at Hardwick Hall, a catalogue* ([Swindon]: National Trust, 2007); the 'set of five hangings depicting the noble women of the ancient world' are fully described on 74-9.

~~INSERT Figure 10.2: Elizabeth Talbot Shrewsbury, Hardwick Hangings.~~

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A well recorded instance of the extensive use of inscriptions in a domestic space is at Gorhambury. This house was built for Sir Nicholas Bacon, Queen Elizabeth's first Keeper of the Great Seal, and his wife, Anne, née Cooke (c. 1528-1610). It is long since destroyed, though it survived long enough to be mourned by Horace Walpole.²¹ The Long Gallery was built after 1572, when Queen Elizabeth commented on the smallness of the house, and before a second royal visit in 1577. Sir Nicholas was considered by contemporaries as 'a most eloquent man, and of rare learning and wisdom, as ever I knew England to breed'.²² His second wife Anne was one of the four formidable daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke: a Latinist, a scholar, and a translator.²³ Though Bacon was to describe the texts as 'selected by Him owt

²¹ See Horace Walpole, *Selected Letters*, ed. W. S. Lewis (Oxford University Press, 1927–1928), vol. I, 21: 'it is a most respectable and agreeable retirement, with an air of sober simplicity, yet calculated for great enjoyment, & evidently designed as such'.

²² Puttenham, *Art of English Poesie*, 117.

²³ See Allen, *Cooke Sisters*; and see Jaime Goodrich's chapter in this volume, 00-00, on Anne Cooke Bacon's translations. Her translation of Jewel's *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* in 1564 was a significant undertaking since the volume was the official document defining the precise theological position of the Church of England, which the Convocation of 1563 had ordered to be placed 'in all cathedral and collegiate churches, and also in private houses.' See Ruth Hughey, 'Lady Anne Bacon's Translations', *Review of English Studies* 10 (1934), 211. C.S. Lewis comments on her translation in his *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama* (London: Clarendon Press, 1954), 307, 'if quality without bulk were enough, Lady Bacon might be put forward as the best of all sixteenth-century translators'.

of Divers Authors', given that Lady Bacon was one of the most learned women in England, and the marriage was one of close intellectual companionship, the collection of *sententiae* which were used to adorn the long gallery in the 1570s are probably the work of the couple jointly.²⁴ It may be relevant to note a poem which Bacon wrote to his wife in 1558, on the occasion of his 'greate sicknes':

Thinkeinge also with howe good will
 The Idle tymes whiche yrkesome be
 You have made shorte throwe your good skill
 In readeinge pleasante thinges to me
 Whereof profitte we bothe did se,
 As wittenes can if they coulde speake
 Bothe your Tullye and my Senecke.²⁵

Cicero ('Tullye') and Seneca are the principal sources for the Gorhambury *sententiae*. From other evidence, such as letters, Lady Bacon was certainly familiar with Cicero's *De Officiis*, *De Amicitia* and *De Finibus*, Seneca's *Epistulae morales* and *De Ira*, all of which are drawn upon.²⁶

The inscriptions are preserved in the form of an illuminated manuscript on vellum which Bacon had made and sent to Jane, Lady Lumley 'at her desire', probably c. 1575: *Sentences Painted in sir Nicholas Bacons lorde Keepers gallerie at Goramburie, and by him*

²⁴ MacCutcheon, *Sir Nicholas Bacon's Great House Sententiae*.

²⁵ Nicholas Bacon, *The Recreations of his Age* (Oxford: The Daniel Press, 1919), 27.

²⁶ Allen, *Cooke Sisters*, 38.

sent to the la. Lumley.²⁷ Its recipient was one of the several well-educated ladies of the Elizabethan court. Born Lady Jane Fitzalan (1536–1576). She was the daughter of Henry Fitzalan, 12th Earl of Arundel, and married John, Baron Lumley in 1550, becoming Lady Lumley. She is listed as a lady of honour in 1558/9, and has left as translation exercises a translation of Isocrates from Greek to Latin, and a translation of Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis* into English, which she loved doing: 'ex huius lectione incredibilem semper cepi voluptatem'.²⁸ Both her husband and father were serious bibliophiles, and she shared their interests: we see here one seriously intellectual member of court circles reaching out to another.²⁹

With this manuscript, which is now all that survives, instead of a house made to be read like a manuscript, we have a manuscript made to be read as a paper house (comparable to the 'paper triumphs' in which princes and prelates in adversity entered imaginary or

²⁷BL MS Royal 17 A xxiii, 'Sentences painted in the Lorde Keepars gallery at Gorhumbury' (1558-1577). This manuscript merits study in its own right, as part of a group of particularly fine presentation manuscripts associated with the Cooke/Bacon/Cecil circle, including BL MS Royal 2 B X, 'Psalter, in Latin, preceded by a Calendar' (mid-fifteenth century); and Bartolo da Sylva's 'Giordano Cosmografico Cultivato', Cambridge University Library MS li.5.37.

²⁸ BL Royal 15 A ix, 'Translations by Joan, Lady Lumley' (sixteenth century); and Dorothy Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School* (Oxford University Press, 1929), 180.

²⁹ Jayne and Johnson (eds.), *Lumley library*.

occupied cities), made for the latinate Lady Lumley.³⁰ It is clear from this that the inscriptions formed part of a carefully worked out decorative scheme. There were large windows of painted glass, 'every pane with severall figures of beast, bird, or flower'. The surviving fragments of glass suggest that each of the windows may have represented the flora and fauna of a different continent: this interest in creating a 'mirror of the world' in miniature is also found in the private paradise of Princess Elizabeth.³¹ The walls were panelled in oak, gilt in compartments. The *sententiae*, never more than two lines long, were painted on the portals at both ends of the gallery, and on all four sides above the compartments of the wainscoting. Their spatial arrangements are an intrinsic part of their appeal.

The portal at the west end (which led to the private apartments) is dedicated 'De Summo Bono'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, quite a few inscriptions reflect on the nature of political life:

SI HONORES PETITURI, CUM AMBITIOSIS, CULMEN DIGNITATIS
ADEPTIS, DELIBERARENT: VOTA MUTARENT

if those who seek office were to consult the ambitious who had attained
the highest honours, they might change their prayers.

QUANTO PLUS QUIS FORTUNAE SE DEDAT, TANTO MAGIS

³⁰ For an example of a virtual or paper triumph, see Jelena Todorović, 'Spectacles in the Shadow: the Semi- Official Festivals of the Orthodox in the Habsburg Empire', in Davidson and Beppler (eds.), *Triumphs of the Defeated*, 55-76

³¹ Some glass was salvaged from Gorhambury before it was pulled down, and installed in a subsequent Gorhambury House constructed by the Grimston family in 1777-84.

MATERIAM PERTURBATIONIS SIBI FECIT.

The more anyone gives himself to fortune, the more he has fashioned
causes of anxiety for himself.

AMOR, INSANA AMICITIA: ILLIUS AFFECTUS: ISTIUS RATIO, CAUSA:

AT EA SOLA AMICITIA DURAT, CUI VIRTUS BASIS EST

Love is friendship gone mad: one arises from attraction, the other from reason:
only that friendship lasts, whose foundation is virtue.

All these, like most of the others, are adapted from Seneca; though other authors, notably Cicero, are also laid under contribution. Montaigne's house had a very similar scheme, as far as the actual *sententiae* go, though the inscriptions were (and are) painted along roofbeams rather than decoratively deployed round the walls.

According to John Aubrey, when Francis Bacon eventually inherited Gorhambury (his mother had life interest in the house, and clung tenaciously to it in her widowhood), the Long Gallery had become rather different from the impression given by the Lumley manuscript.

Over this Portico there is a stately Gallerie, whose Glasse-windowes are
all painted: and every pane wi[t]h severall figure, of beast, bird, or flower:
perhaps his Lordship might use them as Topiques for Locall memo[rie].

The windowes looke into the Garden: the side opposite to them no
window; but is hung all with pictures at length, as of King James, his
Lordship, and severall Illustrious persons of his time. at the end you enter
is no windowe, but there is a very large picture, thus. In the middle on a

Rock in the sea stands King James in armour with his regall Ornaments;
 on his right hand stands (but whether or no on a Rock I have forgott) King
 Henry IV of France, in armour; and on his left hand the King of Spaine in
 like manner. These figures are (at least) as big as the life: they are donne
 only with umbre and shell-gold; all the heightning and illuminated part
 being burnisht gold and the shadowed umbre, as in the pictures of the
 Gods on the dores of Verulam-howse.³²

It seems likely that it might eventually be possible to put together the *sententiae* and the surviving *ex situ* glass windows and make a reconstruction, as Aubrey hints, of a memory palace, with *loci memoriae*. Though the glass may go back to the Lord Keeper's day, the resemblance of the umber-and-gold kings to contemporary work at Verulam House suggest that they are a scheme superimposed on the inherited one after 1610. However, Aubrey additionally mentions mottoes and emblems in other rooms, notably the Hall, which he specifically says is 'of the auncient building': the Hall has 'an Oake with Akornes falling from it' on the wall over the chimney, 'the Word, *Nisi quid potius*, [unless something better turns up] and on the wall over the Table is painted Ceres teaching the Soweing of Corne, the Word, *Moniti meliora*' [we now have better counsel].³³ These emblems do not seem to have the political charge of those deployed by Mary, Queen of Scots. Gorhambury was a private house: unlike some of the Queen's courtiers, Bacon and his wife were evidently using it primarily as an expression of their common, domestic concerns, rather than as a location of theatrical displays of exaggerated loyalism.

³² Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, vol. I, 217.

³³ Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, vol. I, 218

Another set of manuscripts with a provenance from the circle of the Bacons is also relevant to the idea of the inscribed house. British Library Sloane MSS 1041, 1063, 1082, and 1096 all contain allegories for a painter.³⁴ Sloane MS 1169 is something of an iconographer's handbook: it has extracts from ancient and modern writers describing classical gods, personifications and allegories.³⁵ Sloane MS 1041 contains a remarkable ideal decorative scheme with *sententiae*, probably for large panel paintings, though there is no evidence they were ever executed.³⁶ It describes a scheme with 'an allegory of the Tempest'. Jupiter is depicted sitting on a cloud of fairest azure: next comes 'Pietas', the Fates, Saturn and Mars, Orion (the star associated with storms), 'the soonne in the tempest', 'the Queene within a cloud'. The main text of the manuscript describes this characteristically eclectic collection of images, with a set of marginal notes down the left hand side which tell the painter to label the images, and point their meanings by Latin and Greek tags and sentences in boxes, banners, scrolls and other forms of label. Other paintings in what is conceived of as a series are 'an allegory of Justice' and 'an allegory of Fortuna'. Thematically, this more elaborate scheme is related to the subjects of the Gorhambury *sententiae*. It would have looked—being very full of scrolls with very long inscriptions—not at all unlike Lady Anne Clifford's *Great Picture*.³⁷

³⁴ BL Sloane MS 1082, 'Directions for painting a table or picture containing allegorical and other figures' (late-sixteenth century). BL Sloane MSS 1041, 1063 and 1096 contain the same text.

³⁵ BL Sloane MS 1196, 'A collection of extracts in Latin and English, from ancient and modern writers, intended to serve for authorities in depicting mythological, historical or allegorical personages' (seventeenth century).

³⁶ David Evett, 'Some Elizabethan Allegorical Paintings: A Preliminary Enquiry', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 52 (1989), 149-65.

³⁷ See Jessica Malay's chapter in this volume, 00-00, on Clifford's *Great Books of Record*.

The Great Picture might be seen as another virtual closet.³⁸ It is very like the kind of highly-determined, very word-heavy, representations urged in the Sloane manuscript iconographies—interesting for that alone, in its old-fashioness and as an example of the realisation of a whole kind of visual/verbal imagination characteristic of the early seventeenth century. It is a triptych (unusual, for a secular subject), and was commissioned to record Lady Anne Clifford's eventual succession to the inheritance she and her mother had always argued was rightfully hers.³⁹ It depicts her family history and personal accomplishments: her parents and dead brothers occupy the central panel, her youthful self is on the left, and her self at age fifty-six is on the right. Within the fictive space are carefully labelled portraits of other family members, together with her governess and tutor (in the left hand panel), and shelves with labelled books significant to her intellectual development: there is a considerable quantity of 'writing' within the pictorial space, as there would have been in the Sloane pictures, had they been realised. *The Great Picture* is a remarkable statement of personal identity and formation, achieved in entirely visual terms.

The other, more public, message which Lady Clifford's works convey, apart from the careful heraldic management of family tombs at Skipton and Appleby, is expressed through the conservative style, and implicit claim of continuity with the past, of her numerous rebuildings of the castles on her inherited lands in the north of England.⁴⁰ As John Goodall writes, 'By owning and repairing castles, she was articulating her lordship over the lands

³⁸ Hearn, 'Lady Anne Clifford's Great Triptych'.

³⁹ Friedman, 'Constructing an Identity'.

⁴⁰ See Peter Sherlock's chapter in this volume, 00-00, on Clifford's funeral monuments; and see John Goddall, 'Lady Anne Clifford and the Architectural Pursuit of Nobility', in Hearn and Hulse (eds.), *Lady Anne Clifford*, 76-7.

attached to them'.⁴¹ Thus her actions moved oddly in parallel to the conservative, even deliberately anachronistic, styles which had been adopted by some post-Reformation Catholic builders in the later sixteenth century, both in England and in Scotland, who are also articulating a religious connectedness to the past, albeit one born of the specifically Catholic antiquarianism of the counter-reformation.⁴²

~~INSERT Figure 10.3. Portrait of Elizabeth of Bohemia. CAPTION REQUIRED~~

Lady Drury's painted closet existed in an intellectual territory between the Memory Palace and the Paradise Garden; the microcosmic gardens laid out under the direction of the future Elizabeth of Bohemia, in her childhood, at Lord and Lady Harrington's house at Combe Abbey in Warwickshire, were both a paradise and a cabinet of wonders—that particularly late Renaissance and Baroque development of the epitome which is also a theatre of memory (see Fig. 10.3).⁴³ The overall setting sounds like something of an anticipation of the gardens of later centuries, with groves, water, and concealed boundaries, but the Princess's main focus of activity was an island in a small lake:

Nothing took the Princess's Fancy so much, as a little Wilderness at the End of the Park, on the Banks of a large Brook, which ran winding along, and formed in one Place; a large irregular Bason, or rather a small Lake, in which, there was an

⁴¹ Goddall, 'Lady Anne Clifford', 74.

⁴² Examples of this phenomenon can be found at Samelsbury Hall in Lancashire and in the group of Aberdeenshire castles attributed to gentleman-masons of the family of Conn of Auchry.

⁴³ This is described in some detail in Lady Frances Erskine, whose *Memoirs relating to the Queen of Bohemia, by one of her Ladies*, were published privately, possibly at London and by her granddaughter, in 1772. It can be conjectured that they were written about 1670.

Island covered with Underwood, and flowering Trees and Plants, so well mixed and disposed, that for nine Months in the Year, they formed a continual Spring. This Place, and the adjoining Thicket, my Young Mistress begged to have the Disposal of, during her Stay, which was granted with great Pleasure, by Lord and Lady Harrington, who made it their Study to render their Habitation agreeable to her . . . she now formed the Design of collecting, in this little Paradise, all the different Kinds [of bird and fowl] that are in Nature; which, though she could not accomplish, yet she soon had a greater Variety than I ever saw.⁴⁴

This paradise had also an aspect of museum or cabinet of rarities, with elements of the laboratory:

Whoever had any Thing curious, or could procure it from any of their Acquaintances, in other Parts of the World, hastened to present it to the little Princess: Her Garden and Green house, were as well stored with Curiosities, and exotic Plants, as her Minagerie, with Creatures ... If a Butterfly or Glow worm took her Eye, some Account was given her of their Nature, and of the wonderful Changes, most of them go through ; from Flies to Worms, and from Worms to Butterflies again; looking at these and smaller Insects, through the Microscope, which had been very lately discovered by Dribill, a Dutchman, was a frequent and favourite Entertainment.⁴⁵

It seems possible that the formalised landscape in the background of Robert Peake's 1603 portrait of Elizabeth, painted for Lord Harrington of Exton, shows some part of this contrived

⁴⁴ Erskine, *Memoirs*, 113-14.

⁴⁵ Erskine, *Memoirs*, 115-16. There was also an astronomical telescope.

landscape of wood, waters and bridges. It certainly has some of the atmosphere of removedness and enchantment which Lady Erskine describes:

She was delighted with her Island, as I told you before, and the first Orders she gave about it were, to have a little thatched Building, which was in it, rendered commodious within, for the Dwelling of a poor Widow and her Children, who had been recommended commended to her Charity, and who, she intended should live in it, and take care of the different sorts of Fowls that were to be kept there; the Out-side of this House was to have some Alteration made in it, to give it the Appearance of an Hermitage, and near it a Grotto, the Adorning of which with Shells and Moss, was the Amusement of many of her leisure Hours, in which, as in every Thing else, she shewed a Genius above her Years. In the Wood, which I told you was on the other Side of the Brook, she had an Aviary made, like that she had heard Queen Elizabeth had admired so much, at the late Earl of Leicester's. The Top of this was round, with coloured Glass, that looked, at a little Distance, like rough Emeralds and Rubies, seemingly the Produce of a Rock, overgrown with Moss, which formed the Back and Roof of the Aviary ; the rest was inclosed with a Net of gilt Wire: Within were many Bushes, for the Birds to perch upon, and Water falling continually from the artificial Rock, into a shallow Marble Bason, in which the pretty little feathered Inhabitants drank and bathed at Pleasure, and Recesses were made in the Rock for them to build their Nests in.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Erskine, *Memoirs* 120-1.

To the zoological collection was added a museum of preserved specimens and something of an outdoor 'paper museum' of paintings of exotic specimens, interspersed with ideal and exotic buildings:

... as there are many beautiful ones in other Countries, which cannot live in this, such as the Bird of Paradise, and humming Birds, their Feathers and Skins were stuffed, and hung about the Aviary. Representations of several other Creatures were placed in different Parts of the Wood, and the Pictures of such, whose Skins could not easily be had, adorned the little wooden Buildings, which were dispersed about, in all the different Orders of Architecture, which was a Science Lord Harrington thought a Princess ought to understand, and took this, Method of giving the Lady Elizabeth a Taste for it. Some of the Edifices were after the Draughts, given in Books of Travels, of those of India, and in them Figures drest according to the Manners of those Countries, so that this was a kind of World in Miniature.

This is an extraordinary construct altogether, probably best thought of as the outdoor laboratory, cabinet and architectural studio, designed for the education of a virtuosa, a future princess in an era of discovery and curiosity, in which the focus of Europe inevitably shifted outwards. It also would appear to have constituted an extraordinary anticipation of the exoticisms in garden building, and indeed the hermitages and aviaries of the eighteenth century garden.

In conclusion, there is only space to draw attention, very briefly, to an urgent and beguiling possibility: the corpus of ecclesiastical textiles designed and executed by the Worcester~~er~~shire recusant gentlewoman (and daughter of one of the gunpowder plotters who had planned to snatch Elizabeth from her microcosmic paradise at Coombe Abbey and put her on the throne) Helena Wintour, made from the mid-1650s until her death in 1670 (see

Fig. 10.4). These textiles are ecclesiastical, vestment and altar-frontals, not designed to decorate a room or environment, but they are a fascinating instance of the use which an educated early-modern woman made of the idea of symbolic and imaginary place. The meaning expressed by flowers, symbols and inscriptions on the various vestments and textiles from Helena Wintour's *atelier* indicate clearly the cultivation by her and her collaborators of an intense interior or imaginary space—the symbolically furnished paradise garden of the Blessed Virgin, as set out in the meditation treatise *Parthenia Sacra*, published in 1633 by the English Jesuit Henry Hawkins (1577-1646). Again and again the symbolic flowers of the Virgin from Hawkins's treatise appear in the needlework, especially on the white 'Alleluia' chasuble – tulips, irises, marigolds, lilies, roses and gillyflowers – on one vestment, the 'spangled sute' seen astonishingly in juxtaposition with the hedgerow campion, punning on the name of the great Jesuit martyr of the English mission, St Edmund Campion, executed in 1581.

~~INSERT Figure 10.4. Helena Wintour, 'Alleluia' Vestmen. CAPTION~~

~~REQUIRED.~~

These flowers, framed by the sweeping geometries of the parterres of a paradise garden, are illuminated by the sunburst and starburst monograms of the Society of Jesus, of the Jesuit saints, of the monogrammed Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. While they were constructing the embroidered garlands and sprays it would seem wholly likely that Helena Wintour and her friends would have read and meditated on Hawkins, and thus would have created for themselves, a group of women in opposition to the state and its religion, an interior place of memory and devotion. As Anne Bacon Drury made her little world with painted panels and

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inscribed letters, so Helena Wintour and her companions, made an invisible garden of symbolic flowers, an inviolable, mental paradise.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ The most comprehensive account of Helena Wintour and her work is Graffius (ed.), *Plots and Spangles*.