Of Druids, the Gothic, and the origins of architecture

The garden designs of William Stukeley (1687–1765)

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phy of eighteenth-century England is hardly insecure. His published interpretations of the megalithic monuments at Avebury (1743) and Stonehenge (1740) earned him a prominent position in the history of archaeology, and his *Vetusta Monumenta* ensured his reputation as a draughtsman and antiquarian. Recent research has shown that Stukeley was a polymath, whose related interests in astrology, Newtonian natural history and theology formed part of a broader Enlightenment world view. Yet, in the lengthy scholarship on Stukeley, insufficient attention has been paid to his interest in another intellectual and aesthetic pursuit of eighteenth-century cognoscenti: garden design.

Stukeley's voluminous manuscripts attest to his role as an avid designer of gardens, landscapes and garden buildings. His own homes were the subjects of his most interesting achievements, including his hermitages at Kentish Town (1760), Stamford (Barnhill, 1744 and Austin Street 1737), and Grantham (1727).4 In this, Stukeley can be located among a number of 'gentleman gardeners' in the first half of the eighteenth century from the middling classes and the aristocracy.5 He toured gardens regularly, and recorded many of them in his books, journals and correspondence. His 1724 Itinerarium Curiosum recounts his impressions of gardens, including the recent work at Blenheim Palace and the 'ha-ha' in particular, and his unpublished notebooks contain a number of sketches such as the gardens at Grimsthorpe, Lincs., where he was a regular visitor.6 Stukeley also designed a handful of garden buildings, apparently as gifts for friends and acquaintances. He prepared two versions of a bridge for the Duke of Montagu's park at Boughton, one in the reigning Palladian style and the other Gothic, although neither design was ever realized.7 Unsurprisingly, Stukeley's best-known portrait, attributed to Richard Collins c1726-29 and now at the Society of Antiquaries, features him in a garden setting which has been loosely connected with his gardens at Grantham (Pl. 1).8

It is the purpose of this paper to bring to light some previously unpublished material relating to Stukeley's gardens and garden buildings designed for his homes in Grantham and Stamford, Lincolnshire. Little survives of these gardens, but their original appearance, construction and meanings can be substantially reconstructed from Stukeley's unpublished drawings and notes. In doing so, this paper argues that gardens and garden architecture had an important and hitherto misunderstood place in Stukeley's thought. Aside from their intrinsic value as largely unknown garden designs and garden buildings, examination of them contributes to an understanding of Stukeley's theological interests and of his perceptions of architecture and its theoretical contexts.



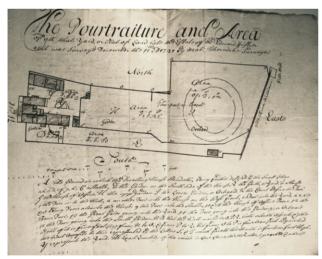
1 William Stukeley, attributed to Richard Collins (fl 1726–32), 1726–29. Oil on canvas, 234×147.5 cm. Society of Antiquaries of London

The Temple of the Druids at Grantham

The early 1720s saw Stukeley living in London and actively touring England and Wales with his friend and correspondent, Samuel Gale. During these years he conducted his research on Avebury and Stonehenge and published his *Itinerarium Curiosum*. But in 1725, an 'irresistible impulse seiz'd' him to retire from London to his native Lincolnshire countryside, where he acquired a house and property. The house has recently been described and some of Stukeley's drawings of its interiors have been published. Gardening appears to have begun almost immediately. By 1727 he had built a 'Hermitage Vinyard', which he recorded in a drawing, and he planned an Orangerie with Palladian temples and seats, which was apparently never executed. By October 1728 his plans for the garden had solidified. Stukeley states his intentions in a letter to Samuel Gale dated 14 October:

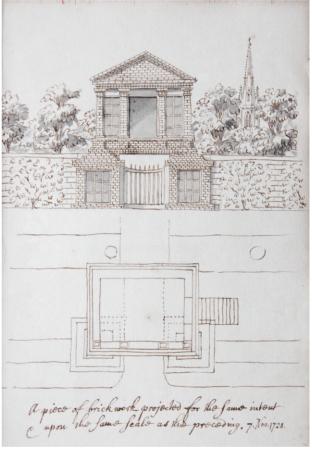




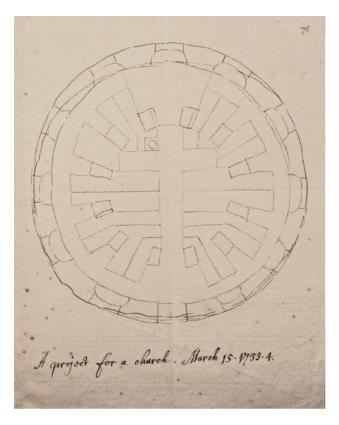


- ${\bf 2}$ Templum Druidorum by William Stukeley (1687–1765), 1728. Oxford, Bodleian MS Eng Misc. c538, f.~10r
- **3** *Plan of Templum Druidorum* by William Stukeley (1687–1765), 1727–8. Stukeley Portfolio, Spalding Gentleman's Society
- $\bf 4$ Survey of Stukeley's Grantbam Property showing circular orchard, by Mat. Thorndike (nd), 1725. Oxford, Bodleian MS ENG Misc. c 538, f. 77v and 78r
- $\bf 5$ $\it Il$ $\it Circo$ di $\it Chyndonacto$ by William Stukeley (1687–1765), 1727. Oxford, Bodleian MS ENG Misc. c 538, f. 5v
- **6** A piece of brickwork projected... by William Stukeley (1687–1765), 1728. London, British Museum MS 1928, 0426.1.1-24, f. 6r





If you enquire what I am now about: I am making a Temple of the Druids, as I call it, tis thus. There is a circle of tall filbord trees in the nature of a hodg [hedge], which is 70 feet in diameter, round it is a walk 15 foot broad circular too. For that the whole is 100 foot diameter. This walk from on a high point slopes each way and gradually, till you come to the lowest, which is the opposite point, and there is the entrance to the Temple, to which the walk may be esteemed as the portico. When you enter the innermost circle or temple, you see in the centre an ancient appletree overgrown with sacred mistletoe. Round it is another concentric circle of 50 foot diameter made of pyramidal greens, at equal intervals, that may appear verdant, when the fruit trees have dropped their leaves. These pyramidals are in imitation of the inner circles at Stonehenge. The whole is included $\,$ within a square wall on all sides, except that, where is the grand avenue to the porticoe, which is a broad walk of old appletrees. The angles are filled with fruit trees etc. and such are likewise interspersed in the filbord hedg [hazel] and borders with some sort of ir-





7 A project for a church by William Stukeley (1687–1765), 1733–4. Oxford, Bodleian MS Gough Maps 230, f. 78

8 *The Druid sacrifice of the vernal Equinox* by William Stukeley (1687–1765), 1759. Oxford, Bodleian MS Top Gen b 53, f 37v

9 *The Druid Kabla and Altar* by William Stukeley (1687–1765), nd. Oxford, Bodleian MS Top Gen.b.53 f. 36r

regularity to prevent a stiffness in the appearance, and make it look more easy and natural. But in that point where is the entrance from the portico into the temple is a tumulus, which was denominated Snowdrop Hill, being in Christmas time covered over with that pretty and early flower, but I must take it for a cairn or a celtic barrow. I have sketched you out the whole thing on the other page. It was formed out of an old orchard.

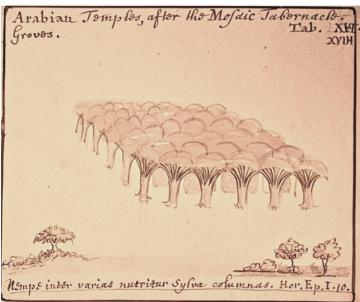
Fortunately Stukeley's drawing of the gardens survives on the verso of the letter as he indicated, but it has not hitherto been published (Pl 2). A second drawing taken from the same perspective shows a slightly different design for the garden and must be dated close to the first (Pl 3). Also surviving is a survey of the property of 1725 showing the state of the garden when he purchased it and indicating the presence of an original circular orchard upon which the Temple of Druids was based (Pl 4). The idea of transforming his circular orchard into a Druid Temple had occurred to him as early as 1727. In an earlier preparatory sketch for the tree-circle of April of that year (again appended to a letter to Gale) Stukeley provides a glimpse of what was to be his final plan, calling the circle 'Il Circo di Chyndonacto' (Pl 5).14 'Chyndonax' was a Druid pseudonym adopted by Stukeley at this time and employed in his letters and in much of his later graphic work.¹⁵ The 'Temple of the Druids' was enclosed in a stone garden wall with Classical gates, one an austere Doric design and the other with urns and zig-zag stairs, designed by Stukeley in 1728 and 1729 (Pl 6).16 Thus described, Stukeley created a miniature garden version of the famous neolithic monument he had carefully studied in the early 1720s and



which he would continue to study in the following decades, out of the remains of an original circular orchard.

This eccentric episode in the history of gardens must be explored within the contexts of Stukeley's own developing interests in the Druids in the 1720s. As students of Stukeley's career have often observed, the late 1720s saw not only a move from London to Lincolnshire, but also a profound shift in his thought from what might be called an archaeological antiquarianism, based on close analysis and recording of standing monuments, to a spiritual antiquarianism based in an interpretation of monuments within a broader theological system. 17 1728 and 1729 were crucial years. In 1729 he was ordained within the Church of England. In the same year he wrote to William Wake, archbishop of Canterbury (1716–37) stating that although he had long had designs to enter holy orders, 'the retirement from the hurry of a City life, & the





contemplative mood which a garden and the country disposes us to' quickened his resolve. He continues to assure the archbishop that he has 'ever been studious in divinity, especially in the most abstruse & sublime parts of it; & my disquisitions into the history of our Celtic ancestors, & their religion have... given me the opportunity of discovering some notions about the doctrine of the Trinity which I think are not common'. Provable in 'a thousand instances', Stukeley claims that the 'ancient Egyptians, Plato, our old Druids, and all the heathen philosophers had the divine truth' of the Trinity and thus of Christian revelation. ¹⁸

As this suggests, a dominant strand of Stukeley's thought was to demonstrate that the Druids or 'Celts' – the pre-Roman inhabitants of England – were recipients of the divine wisdom of Noah and Abraham. Apparently descended from the 'Egyptian Phoenecians' and colonized by the figure Hercules, the Britons followed a monotheistic, proto-Trinitarian doctrine, and were for all intents and purposes proto-Christians. The Druids and the 'Trinitarian Controversy' were actively explored by Isaac Newton, John Toland and William Whiston (among others) in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Stukeley's contribution to this debate famously took place in his archaeological publications: in *Stonebenge*

- **10** ABRAHAMS Temple, or Grove at Beersbeba by William Stukeley (1687–1765), nd. Oxford, Bodleian MS Top Gen b 52 f. 29r
- **11** *Arabian Temples, after the Mosaic Tabernacle Groves* by William Stukeley (1687–1765), nd. Oxford Bodleian MS Top Gen b53, f. 21r
- **12** *The Hermitage, Stamford* by William Stukeley (1687–1765), 1738. Oxford, Bodleian MS Gough Maps 230, f. 411
- **13** *Groundplot of the Temple of Flora* by William Stukeley (1687–1765), 1747. Stukeley Portfolio, Spalding Gentleman's Society

Stukeley sought to demonstrate that the stone circle was not a Roman monument as Inigo Jones had suggested,²¹ but rather a Temple of the 'Celtic Druids'; in Abury he applied Newtonian theology to prove that Trinitarianism was indeed 'Patriarchal' or pre-Noachian in origin, and that Trinitarianism connected many world faiths, from ancient Egypt to the pre-Roman or Druidic inhabitants of England, through a grand, spiritual teleology.²² The proof of this for Stukeley was found in Avebury, the groundplan of which was a 'hieroglyphic picture of the Trinity deduc'd from the Egyptians'.23 During the years in which these publications were written, Stukeley's syncretism also extended to the design of religious architecture. In 1733-4 he composed a groundplan of a centrally planned church based on Stonehenge with a Latin cross imposed on the centre, forming its nave and aisles, thereby physically syncretizing Druidic and Christian architectures (Pl 7). Conceived as a single work in two parts, Stonehenge and Abury were an attempt to 'promote... the knowledge and practice of true Religion [and] to revive in the minds of the learned the spirit of Christianity' as he understood it.24 A small but typical example of this is Stukeley's representation of the vernal equinox, which unmistakably juxtaposes sacrificial images of a ram and a crucifixion, set in front of a reconstruction of Stonehenge (Pl 8).25 Expanding upon this idea in 1723, Stukeley opines that the Druid's practice of 'crucifying a man at one of their festivals in the temple, is a wonderful tho' horrid notion of the sacrifice of the

Gardening, Stukeley admits, and his work at Grantham in particular, was central to the change in his thought in the late 1720s. In a letter provisionally dated to 1729 Stukeley suggests that as 'the sweet tranquility of country retirement and self conversation in a garden had given me leave to look into my own mind, I soon discovered again the latent seeds of religion, which God's Holy Priest effectively revived in me'. The letter continues, '...if ever any person in this world was ever more sensible of it, I must acknowledge the divine notions thereof, so apparently that it surprises me more and more every day, in throwing rubbish out of my thoughts, and giving me such a vigor of mind, as to reach with great facility, to new heights and lengths in the most sublime doctrines of Christian faith... The more I consider it, the more I am enamored with it, and all other little acquisitions of learning, which by industry I have made, shall only be subservient to that grand purpose'.27

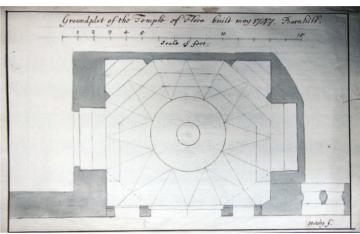
The construction of a Druid temple within his garden was more than simply a clever translation of stone-built architecture into the natural forms of the garden, something that had ample precedent in early eighteenth-century garden design.²⁸ In his *Ichnographia Rustica* (1718), for example, Stephen Switzer advocated the practice of creating gardens after the ground plan of a building, thereby theorizing a mimetic relationship between the forms of the garden and the forms of architecture.²⁹ Actually, it fit neatly into Stukeley's developing image of the Druids as contemplative people whose lives and religious rituals were conducted in

nature. Stukeley developed the existing idea that the earliest Druid Temples were oak groves and sacrifices were made at a tree with a natural cross, upon which the names of the deity were inscribed (Pl 9).30 He wrote at length on the symbolism of trees and the intimate connection of Druids to nature and to mistletoe, and it is not coincidental that this sacred plant featured prominently in his garden. As David Boyd Haycock has shown, Stukeley's interests in and perceptions of gardens influenced his appreciation of the ancient 'landscapes' at Avebury and Stonehenge: conceived as theatrical sites that were intended to be viewed from a distance, interrogated, explored, and then interpreted, the translation of Stonehenge from megalithic monument to garden folly was not a radical conceptual leap for Stukeley, as his prosaic description of his garden suggests.31

The Templum Druidorum also fit neatly into Stukeley's own conception of the very origins of architecture itself. Stukeley's typology of Celtic/ Druid temples suggests that the earliest 'Patriarchial Temples' were initially formed by rings of planted trees to create arboreal canopies prior to post-and-lintel stone constructions. He illustrates this in a drawing entitled 'Abraham's Temple or Grove at Beersheba' - the prototype of a grove as religious architecture - in which he draws a circle of trees creating a vaulted walk beneath them, a drawing that clearly reflects his 'Circo di Chyndonacto' (Pl 10).32 Stukeley prepared a series of drawings exploring early architecture, including his imaginative reconstruction of 'Arabian Temples after the Mosaic Tabernacle Groves' (Pl 11), a rectilinear grid of planted trees whose branches grow together to form vaults. Typical of contemporary authors, Stukeley had considered the Druids to originate in 'Arabia', 33 thus suggesting that this reconstructed Temple was a prototype of Patriarchal Temples in general.³⁴ Understood in these terms, Stukeley's Templum Druidorum was more than simply the product of a fanatical and highly topical interest in Stonehenge.³⁵ It functioned as a theoretical experiment, a recreation of an ancient architecture, and a validation of his theories of the architectural origins of the Patriarchial religion in England. In this, Stukeley's Templum Druidorum was a predecessor of sorts to Sir James Hall's experimental 'Wicker Cathedral' erected in the 1790s: an elaborate garden structure designed to grow into a Gothic building, thereby 'proving' the origins of the Gothic in the forms of the forest (a point to which I shall return below).³⁶

Stukeley's time in Grantham was to be short-lived, and his Templum Druidorum did not grow to maturity under his ownership. On 10 August 1729, Thomas Hearne commented upon the event that would precipitate Stukeley's move from Grantham to Stamford: 'Dr. Stukeley, to the surprise of everybody, has taken orders. His friends think him crazy'.37 On 16 October 1729 the Lord Chancellor granted him the living of the Church of All Saints, Stamford, where he was to take up residence as vicar in early 1730. Even if it was never fully realized - as his drawing indicated - Stukeley's Templum Druidorum appears to have been the first example of a trend for simulated megalithic monuments in eighteenth-century English gardens. These include the so-called 'Three Shire Stones' of 1736 (which may re-employ ancient megaliths) marking the juncture of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset, and the Druid's Circle at Bierley Hall, Bradford of c1740-50.38 Undoubtedly inspired by Stukeley's design, the Earl of Pembroke (dedicatee of his Abury) created a second 'fine and costly model of Stonehenge' in his garden, which was described in 1759 as 'a





Stonehenge in miniature, as 'twas supposed to have been in its first glory'. ³⁹ Posterity connected Stukeley with megalithic garden monuments. In the later 1780s Henry Seymour Conway removed the newly discovered passage grave from Mont St Hilier in Jersey to Park Place, near Henley. Calling the monument a 'Druidic Temple' and 'Little Master Stonehenge', Horace Walpole praised the apparent archaeological exactitude of the monument's recreation, lauded its natural setting, and concluded that 'Dr Stukeley will burst his cerements to offer mistletoe in your temple. ⁴⁰

The Gothic Temple of Flora at Stamford

The earliest evidence of his gardening activities in Stamford appears in the second half of the 1730s. A drawing of 1738 illustrates his 'Hermitage' garden at Austin Street, which reflects aspects of his earlier design at Grantham (Pl 12). This, it seems, was underway in 1737, when he described finishing niches in his 'hermitage grotto called Merlin's Cave', undoubtedly following the famous example at Richmond. 41 Stukeley's Stamford works were poised to benefit from the destruction and defenestration of various Lincolnshire churches and houses in the first half of the eighteenth century. 42 In May 1745, for example he 'put up the painted glass in the upper window of my hermitage [at Barnhill], being S. Joseph the Virgin's husband and S. Wilfred archbishop of York', and shortly afterward he 'put up the painted glass in the stone window in my hermitage, containing the effigies of S. Simon, S. Jude, S. Jamys, S. Barnabas. The stone window was given me by Mr Seabroke when he rebuilt his house'.43 Stukeley also employed pieces of sculpture bought or pillaged from local churches. He describes either a retrospective sculpture, or a sculpture to which he has given an historical



14 *Side Section of the Temple of Flora* by William Stukeley (1687–1765), 1747. Stukeley Portfolio, Spalding Gentleman's Society

15 *The Temple of Flora* by William Stukeley (1687–1765), 1747. Oxford, Bodleian MS Gough Maps 230, f. 106r

16 *Unlabelled drawing*, presumed plaque from interior of the Temple of Flora by William Stukeley (1687–1765), nd (presumed 1747). Oxford, Bodleian MS Gough Maps 230, f. 409

identity and an inscription, thus: 'I made a niche in my garden to set up Lord Turketyl's head, by the hermitage. On a pedestal this inscription: DNS TURKETYLUS ABBAS CROYLANDIE AD 946 FUNDATOR ACADEMIARUM CANTABRIGIE ET STAMFORDIE'.⁴⁴

The jewel of the Stamford garden was his Temple of Flora, begun in 1747. In a letter to Samuel Gale, Stukeley states,

I am now busy in making your sister [Stukeley's second wife] the Temple of Flora, where she is to put her numerous pots of elegant curiositys in nature.

The work is gothic, that suits the place best. Four demi-columns stand in the front. It faces the rising sun. The statue of Flora is pure statuary marble, as big as life, which the Duke of Montagu gave me, is placed before it. Over the entrance is pinnacle work, foliage work &c., proper, & coats of arms. Two folding doors, 8 feet high, turn back on each side, & let in the air. The building is theatrical, upon steps of Ketton stone for the pots of flowers to stand on, some 5 steps, one above another, some fewer. The walls are of brick, built together in niche arch. Above the flowers are golden boys supporting two spandrils of the roof.

Before you, a niche with a gilt statue of the Venus de Medicis, 2 foot high. Several bustos, & other curiositys, in proper places. Toward the south is a pointed window composed of painted glass, of figures, & coats of arms, inscriptions &c. St Laurence with the grid-





iron; S. Kyniburga, Abbess of Caster near us, wife of King Peada, first christian King of Mercia; they built Tickencote church, Peterborough cathedral; King Alkfrid, who lived in our castle, to whom St Wilfred was chaplain.

The roof is supported by 8 spandrils which bear up a cupola open at top. Above is my dumb dell, which I ring every morning, a most agreeable exercise.

In my Temple of Flora I placed this inscription:

HIC SPARGE FLORES, SPARGE BREVES ROSAS. NAM VITA GAVDET MORTVA FLORIBUS. HERBISQVE ODORATIS CORONA VATIS ADHVC CINEREM CALENTEM.⁴⁵

Stukeley's description can now be supplemented by his unpublished drawings in Oxford and Spalding, Lincolnshire, allowing us visual access to a significant early example of eighteenth-century medievalism. The groundplan now in the



 ${\bf 17}$ $\it The Temple of Flora$ by Anon, nd. Oxford, Bodleian MS Top gen g 2, f. 21r

Spalding Gentleman's Society shows that the Temple of Flora was a centrally planned structure based upon an octagon set within a square (Pl 13). In this, it is related to garden buildings such as Batty Langley's Gothic garden temple, the Gothic temple at Painshill, or the Gothic temple elevation in the Yale Center for British Art. 46 A further drawing from Spalding is a cross-section of the Temple, showing its domical vault, the interior seats, the dumbbell, and a sculpted bust placed in a niche (Pl 14). A drawing now in Oxford shows only the doorway of the Temple (Pl 15). The style of the doorway is composite: the columns, bases and capitals reflect early Gothic forms, while the canopies are close approximations of late medieval architecture in Lincolnshire, particularly Stukeley's own All Saints. A second drawing from the same portfolio, whose notation has been lost due to cropping, may be provisionally considered Stukeley's designs for the interior of the Temple (Pl 16). A complex design of three Decorated arches over an uninscribed plaque and a bust with two flanking arches containing niches, the design confirms closely to Stukeley's description. The stylistic inconsistencies of Stukeley's Temple may suggest that parts of the building particularly the doorjambs and bases - were spolia from local buildings. The acquisition of these disjecta membra and various aspects of the description can be confirmed elsewhere in Stukeley's diaries. 47

Typical of eighteenth-century garden designs, Stukeley's Temple of Flora was encoded with layered literary allusions. The inscription derives from Abraham Cowley's (1618–67) *Epitaph of a Living Author*. Cowley was of course a logical reference in this context, since he had published a famous *Essay on Gardening* that was sympathetic to Stukeley's sentiments on gardens as loci of meditation removed from

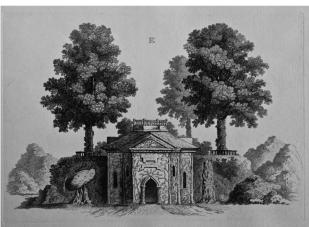
worldly concerns: 'I never had any other desire so strong, and so like to covetousness, as that one which I have had always, that I might be master at last of a small house and large garden, with very moderate conveniences joined to them, and there dedicate the remainder of my life only to the culture of them and the study of nature'. Stukeley also visited Cowley's own garden⁴⁸ which may have provided the source for the inscription. As likely a source was Addison's *Spectator*, which reprinted and translated Cowley's epitaph in full in 1712:

Bring flow'rs, the short liv'd roses bring, To life deceas'd fit offering! And sweets around the poet strow, Whilst yet with life his ashes glow.

There was of course precedent for the creation of temples dedicated to Flora in English landscape gardening at Stourhead, Wilts. of 1744, or the example in an eighteenth-century book of garden designs in Oxford (Pl 17). But Stukeley's Temple of Flora was not simply following fashion. Rather, it was an elaborate and highly topical literary allusion in itself. His Gothic Temple, constructed after his second marriage and intended as a gift to his wife for her to keep her plants, is an ingenious reference to Ovid's *Fasti*, a copy of which Stukeley owned. ⁵⁰ Ovid describes Flora's wedding gift from her husband Zephyrus thus:

I have a fertile garden in the lands that are my wedding gift, filled with noble flowers by my husband, who said, 'Be ruler, O goddess





over flowers.' As soon as the dewy frost is shaken from the leaves... the 'Hours' come together clothed in many colors and gather my flowers in lightly woven baskets. Then come the 'Graces', twining flowers into garlands... I was the first to make a flower from the blood of the boy from 'Therapnae' [Hyacinthus]... You too, 'Narcissus', keep your name in my well-tended garden... And need I tell 'Crocus' and 'Attis' and 'Adonis', the son of 'Cynyras', from whose wounds I caused the flowers to spring that honor them?

Ovid, Fasti 5 209-30.

Understood in these terms, Stukeley takes the guise of Zephyrus and his wife that of Flora, who shared his enthusiasm for gardens.

The style of the Temple ('the work is gothic, that suits the place best') cannot be divorced from our understanding of its symbolism, particularly since his Temple appears to have been the first Temple of Flora erected in England in the Gothic style. Stukeley's notebooks contain a handful of preliminary sketches of an austere Doric Temple of Flora and a Palladian Temple of Flora (Pl 18) with foliage growing up its columns both dated to 1746, which he clearly abandoned in

18 *A project for the Temple of Flora* by William Stukeley (1687–1765). Oxford Bodleian Gough Maps 230, f. 398r

19 The Elevation and Plan, of a Druid's Cell, or an Arbour of the Hermitage Kind, purposely designed for a study or philosophical retirement by Thomas Wright (1711–1786), 1755. Thomas Wright, Universal Architecture, London 1755, design E

favor of the Gothic design. On one level, Stukeley's comment relates the gender of the intended user of the Temple to nature and to the Gothic, both of which were gendered as feminine in the years around 1700.⁵¹ On another, Stukeley refers to the appropriateness of the Temple's dedication to Flora – the goddess of nature – to the use of the Gothic, and thus to a perceived relationship between the two. Linking the choice of the style of the building to its setting, Stukeley's thought is consistent with contemporary thinking about 'situation' in garden design and architectural theory, particularly that of Robert Morris.⁵²

The most significant text connecting nature with the Gothic is Raphael's famous Letter to Leo X in which he stated that the Gothic was the architecture of the primitive dwellers of the forest and that its forms - twisted columns and ribbed vaults – replicated the forms of trees. 53 However, the text was not published until 1733 (in Rome) and there is no definitive evidence that the text was known via copies existing in England or that its wisdom had otherwise filtered through travelers on the Grand Tour.54 Stukeley's knowledge of the theory could have derived directly or indirectly from Felibien's influential 1699 account, which also provided a version of the 'forest theory' for the Gothic. But it is not strictly necessary to suggest that Raphael or any foreign source lurked behind a conception of Gothic as an art of nature in England, since there is some evidence to suggest that it had an independent history from the Middle Ages onward.⁵⁵

Whatever the ultimate origin, Stukeley had already mused on the relationship of the Gothic to nature. In his Vetusta Monumenta, he compared the cloister of Gloucester cathedral to the forms of the forest: 'Nothing could have made me so much in love with Gothic architecture (so-called), and I judge for a gallery, library or the like, 'tis the best manner of building, because the idea of it is taken from a walk of trees, whose touching heads are curiously imitated by the roof'.56 The natural origins of Gothic were explored by other authors in the same years: in a letter of 1728, Alexander Pope declared his intention of 'planting an old Gothic cathedral, or rather some old Roman Temple, in trees. Good, large poplars, with their white stems, cleared and brought to a proper height, would serve very well for their columns, and might form the different aisles, or peristilums, by their different distances and heights'.⁵⁷ Pope's 'Gothic cathedral' was never planted, but in concept it anticipates James Hall's experiment linking the Gothic to the forms of nature at the end of the century.⁵⁸

The thrust of Stukeley's commentary on the Gothic related less to appraisals of the Gothic as a contemporary style, and more to a broader, ultimately religious interest in the very origins of architecture, a dominant discourse of eighteenth-century architectural history. One reason that the Gothic may have appealed to Stukeley was a current association of the Gothic with the ancient Druids. Stukeley would have agreed with his friend and close correspondent William Warburton, who not only provided a version of the 'forest theory' on the Gothic within a few years, but also proposed a direct relationship between the forest groves of the Druids with the Gothic in his notes to Alexander Pope's *Epistle to Burlington*: 'For having been accustomed, during the gloom of paganism, to worship

the Deity in Groves (a practice common to all nations), When their new Religion required covered edifices, they ingeniously projected to make them resemble Groves, as nearly as the distance of architecture would permit.'60 Warburton's positive interpretation of the Gothic as Druidic architecture had some precedent in England: in 1726 Francis Hutcheson disparagingly commented on the 'fictitious Deitys' of 'Heathen Priests' that appeared in forests in his brief commentary on the Gothic.⁶¹ The association of Gothic architecture with 'Celtic' or 'Druidic' cultures was also current in France: in 1733 H. Le Blanc suggested that Gothic architecture evoked the Celtic twilight of forest groves, ⁶² and in 1724 Bernard de Montfaucon (whose work Stukeley knew and with whom he corresponded) attributed to the Druids not only the stone circles but also a number of ashlar structures now categorized as 'Romanesque' and 'Gothic'.⁶³

There can be little doubt, however, that the figure of Warburton stands behind Stukeley's implicit argument that the Gothic was an architecture connected to England's Patriarchial Christian tradition. Warburton was a prebend and later bishop of Gloucester, and he shared Stukeley's enthusiasms for the Druids, even providing him new texts on the subject.⁶⁴ Warburton and Stukeley thus modified and nationalized the 'forest theory', considering the Gothic to be a stone-built version of forest groves, the sacred architecture of the Druids. Within a decade, Thomas Wright employed the same wisdom in his Universal Architecture of 1755, which features designs for a 'Druid's Cell, or Arbour of the Hermitage Kind', a building that freely fuses Gothic and Classical forms within a 'natural' structure overgrown with roots (Pl 19), suggesting that 'the wildest face of nature being the proper Accompanyment, as it partakes in some measure both of the Genus of the Cave and Grotto'.65

William Stukeley's garden designs are extraordinarily interesting aspects of his oeuvre. I have been able to cover only a small corner of what is a vast canvas, but I hope I have shown that they cannot be dismissed as frivolous, or isolated from broader discussions of his thought. Both designs under consideration functioned as experiments or validations of existing theories, and they shed light on his interests in and interpretations of architecture, a subject on which he wrote remarkably little. The artistry of Stukeley's designs is evident in the wealth of largely unexplored evidence he left behind; their esotericism, however, is more apparent than actual, since these projects were rationalized contributions to contemporary discourses on theology, history and architecture in the eighteenth century.

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- 2 David Boyd Haycock, William Stukeley: Science, Religion and Archaeology in Eighteenth-Century England, Woodbridge 2002. For the broader antiquarian context, see Rosemary Sweet, Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Hambledon and London 2004.
- The most significant contributions remain the notes by Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, 'Itinerarium Curiosum: iter domesticum. An account of the gardens of William Stukeley', Architectural Review, 190:1130 (1991), 78–83, and Brigid Allen, 'Gardens of an Enquiring Mind. William Stukeley From Hermitage to Mausoleum', Country Life, 174 (3 Nov 1983):1248–50. Recent studies have drawn from Stukeley's published letters to describe his gardens in passing: Michael Charlesworth, 'Sacred landscape: signs of religion

in the eighteenth-century garden', Journal of Garden History, 13.1–2 (Jan–June 1993):56–68, at 58–9; David R Coffin, 'Venus in the Eighteenth-Century English Garden', Garden History, 28.2 (2000):173–93, at 184; David Boyd Haycock, "A Small Journey into the Country": William Stukeley and the Formal Landscapes of Avebury and Stonehenge' in Meagan Aldrich and Robert J. Wallis eds, Antiquaries and Archaists: the Past in the Past and the Past in the Present, Reading 2009, 46–61; John Dixon Hunt, Garden and Grove: The Italian Renaissance Garden in the English Imagination: 1700–1750, Princeton 1986, 81, 107, 121, 141–2, 163, 166–7, 188–9; Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, The London Town Garden 1740–1840, New Haven and London 2001, 115–17.

- These have been considered in Longstaffe-Gowan 1991, op cit n3.
- For useful overviews, see Tim Mowl, Gentlemen and Players: Gardeners of the English Landscape, Sutton 2004; Max. F Schultz, Paradise Preserved: Recreations of Eden in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England, Cambridge 1985, 9–37.
- 6 William Stukeley, *Itinerarium Curiosum*, London 1724, 44. Oxford, Bodleian MS Top Gen d. 14 f. 38v.
- 7 Oxford, Bodleian MS Top Gen d. 14 46v, 47r, 49r. A model of Stukeley's gothic bridge still survives at Boughton.
- I am grateful to Bernard Nurse for discussing this with me. The most telling parallel is with his 'Orangerie' (see below, n12) which can be loosely paralleled with the portrait's landscape. However, aside the circular form of the orangerie and the common form of the classical garden gate, neither the architecture of the house nor aspects of the garden (such as the fountain and the mature trees) can be paralleled at Grantham. See most recently David Gaimster, Sarah McCarthy and Bernard Nurse, eds, Making History: Antiquaries in Britain 1707–2007, London 2007, no. 33, 62.
- 9 Some of the carvings and tablets from Barnhill are still extant. My thanks to John FH Smith for discussing this with me.
- William Stukeley and Roger Gale, The Family Memoirs of The Rev. William Stukeley And The Antiquarian And Other Correspondence (Surtees Society 1882), 1, 77; William Stukeley, The Commentaries, Diary and Commonplace book, London 1980, 68–9. This episode has been explored recently in Boyd Haycock, op cit n2, 189ff.
- 11 Francesca Scoones, 'Dr William Stukeley's House at Grantham', Georgian Group Journal, 9 (1999):158–65. Scoones, drawing from Oxford, Bodleian MS Gough Maps 16, was apparently aware of only a fraction of the evidence for the house and garden. Further evidence for the Grantham house, its purchase, interiors and gardens can be found in Oxford, Bodleian MS ENG Misc c. 538; MS Top Gen d. 14; and British Museum 1928, 0426.1.1–24. Other aspects of Stukeley's cultural life in Lincolnshire have been discussed recently by John Harris, 'Designs for the Museum and Library of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society', Georgian Group Journal, 19 (2011):39–49.
- 12 Oxford, Bodleian MS Gough Maps f. 412r published in Charlesworth, op cit n3; and Longstaffe-Gowan 1991, op cit n3. In all likelihood this was the placement of fragments of the Eleanor Cross at Grantham. See David Start and David Stocker, eds, *The Making of Grantham: the Medieval Toun*, Sleaford 2011, 4, 183–96; John FH Smith, 'A Fragment of the Stamford Eleanor Cross', *Antiquaries Journal*, 74 (1994):301–11. For the Orangerie dated 19 Dec 1728, see Oxford, Bodleian MS Top Gen d. 14, and a second image in London, British Museum MS 1928, 0426.1.1–24, f. 24.
- 13 Oxford, Bodleian MS Eng Misc c. 538, f. 9, reprinted in Stukeley and Gale, op cit n10, 208–9.
- Oxford, Bodleian MS Eng Misc c. 538 f. 5.
- 15 Stukeley's Druid name was borrowed from Jean Guenebauld, *Le reveil de Chyndonax*, *prince des Vacies, druydes celtiques diionois, auec la sanctete, religion, & diversite des ceremonies obseruees aux anciennes sepultures*, Paris 1623, a copy of which he owned. For discussion, see Stuart Piggott, *The Druids*, London 1975, 125–7. Stukeley also owned a profile bust of himself as Chyndonax 'carved by Dilworth' which was set in his hall at Stamford. Oxford, Bodleian MS Eng misc d. 719/7 f. 130.
- 16 The image not reproduced here is... London, British Museum MS 1928, 0426.1.1–24 f. 15.
- 17 This change in Stukeley's life has been carefully studied by Ronald Hutton, 'The Religion of William Stukeley', The Antiquaries Journal, 85 (2005):381–94, and subsequently in his Blood and Mistletoe: The History of the Druids in Britain, New Haven and London 2009, ch 3. Aubry Burl and Neil Mortimer have characterized this transition in Stukeley's thought as a departure from being a 'dispassionate archaeologist' to a 'religious polemicist'. See Stukeley's Stonehenge: An Unpublished Manuscript, 1721–1724, New Haven and London 2005, 13. Stuart Piggott, William Stukeley: An Eighteenth-Century Antiquary, 2nd ed. London 1985, 107–9 and Rosemary Hill, Stonehenge, London 2008, 40.
- 18 Stukeley and Gale, op cit n10, 216.
- 19 'Patriarchial Christianity, or a Chronological and Historical Enquiry into the Origin and Progress of the True Religion', now Yale University, Lewis Walpole Library, MS Vol. 43, 3 vols, 3 f. 57–60. MS is dated 1731. For the development of these ideas in Stukeley's thought, see Hutton 2009, op cit n17, ch 3.
- 20 These ideas have been sensitively treated in Boyd Haycock, op cit n2. See recently Claire Brisby, 'Druids at Drayton: Dipping into antiquarianism before the Society of Antiquaries (1717)', British Art Journal, 10.2 (2009):2–8, and Philip C. Almond, 'Druids, Patriarchs, and the Primordial Religion', Journal of Contemporary Religion, 15.3 (2000):379–94.

- 21 Inigo Jones, The Most Notable Antiquity of Great Britain, Vulgarly Called Stone-Heng on Salisbury Plain, Restored, London 1655. See most recently Caroline Van Eck, Inigo Jones on Stonebenge: Architectural Representation, Memory and Narrative, Amsterdam 2009.
- 22 Stukeley's unpublished materials outside England have often been overlooked: these issues are explored Yale University, Lewis Walpole Library MS vol 43.
- 23 Yale University, Lewis Walpole Library MS Vol 3 f. 68.
- 24 William Stukeley, Stonebenge: A Temple Restor'd to the British Druids, London 1740, Preface.
- 25 Oxford, Bodleian MS Top Gen b53 f. 36v–37r contain Stukeley's imaginative reconstructions of the seasons of the Druid 'liturgical year': vernal equinox, mid-summer sacrifice, autumnal equinox, and 'The Druid sacrifice of Yule-Tide'.
- 26 Cardiff, Central Library MS 4.253, f. 111. Cited in Boyd Haycock, op cit n2, 147.
- 27 Oxford, Bodleian MS ENG c. 538 f. 11r.
- 28 Charlesworth, op cit n3, 59-61.
- 29 Stephen Switzer, Ichnographia Rustica, 2 vols, London 1718, 2:221–24.
- 30 Oxford, Bodleian MS ENG Misc d. 719/14, f. 29r. See in general Piggott, op cit n15, and Hutton 2009, op cit n17.
- 31 Boyd Haycock, op cit n3, 46-61; Hill, op cit n17, 44.
- 32 Yale University Lewis Walpole Library MS Vol. 43 (3 vols), 3:59–60, 63 for the influence of the grove on subsequent religious architecture and on the Druids: 'Hercules would not want to be slack in following this practice after his old acquaintance Abraham and carried it with him into all his colonys'.
- 33 Oxford, Bodleian MS ENG Misc d. 719/14 f. 20 ff. See also Almond, op cit n20, 385–7.
- 34 Twentieth-century archaeology has gone some way in confirming this hypothesis by discovering original wooden posts that preceded the stone rings at Stonehenge. For a recent overview, see Hill, op cit n17.
- 35 Stukeley's contemporary and rival scholar of Stonehenge, John Wood the Elder, employed Stonehenge as a model for Bath Circus, since Bath had been understood by Wood as the Metropolitan seat of the Druids. Piggott, op cit n15, 143–6, Timothy Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, John Wood: Architect of Obsession, Bath 1988, esp 179–205; Haycock, op cit n2, 220–2. Carol Watts, 'A 'Rarie-shew System of Architecture': Bath and the cultural scenography of Palladianism', in Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar eds., Articulating British Classicism: New approaches to eighteenth-century architecture, Aldershot 2004, 119–42.
- 36 Sir James Hall, Essay on the Origin and Principles of Gothic Architecture, Edinburgh 1797.
- 37 Piggott, op cit n17, 98.
- 38 Sam Smiles, The Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britain and the Romantic Imagination, New Haven and London 1994, 194–217. Druidic follies are treated satirically in William Mason, The English Garden: A Poem. In Four Books, Dublin 1782, 123.
- 39 Stukeley, Abury, A Temple of the British Druids, London 1743, Dedication. Emily J. Turner, ed, Passages from the Diaries of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys of Hardwick House, Oxon, London 1899, 53. Haycock, op cit n3, 60; Hill, op cit n17, 44. Kimerly Rorschach, The Early Georgian Landscape Garden, New Haven 1983, 48. Stukeley also owned a model of Stonehenge he had made and which he displayed in 1751 in his Bloomsbury house. See Clive Wainwright, The Romantic Interior, New Haven and London 1989, 14–15. Smiles, Image of Antiquity, 203, attributes Pembroke's garden to Stukeley's own hand, but I am not aware of any documentary evidence for this suggestion.
- Wilmarth S Lewis, ed, The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence, 48 vols, New Haven and London 1937-83, 39:459-61. Walpole often commented on this episode in his letters. The other references have been conveniently collected and reprinted in Bruce Redford, The Converse of the Pen: acts of intimacy in the 18th-century familiar letter, Chicago 1986, 138-40. A model of 'Little Master Stonehenge' was built and is now in the Society of Antiquaries of London. See Gaimster, McCarthy and Nurse, Making History, no. 87. James Hibbs, 'Little Master Stonehenge: A Study of the Megalithic Monument from Le Mont de la Ville, Saint Helier', Annual Bulletin Société Jersiaise, 24.1 (1985):49-74. A second model of the 'Druid's Temple' was displayed at Strawberry Hill. See Walpole's own 'extra illustrated Description', now Yale University, Lewis Walpole Library MS 30 30 Copy 11, f. 253. On the display of megalithic monuments in contemporary houses and museums, see Christopher Evans, 'Megalithic Follies: Soane's "Druidic Remains" and the Display of Monuments', Journal of Material Culture, 5.3 (2000):347-366.
- 41 Oxford, Bodleian MS Eng misc d.719/7 f. 3v, 40v, 41v. On Richmond, see Judith Colton, 'Merlin's Cave and Queen Caroline: Garden Art as Political Propaganda', Eighteenth-Century Studies, 10.1 (1976):1–20.
- 42 Stukeley regularly commented on this phenomenon in his letters. See Wainwright, *Romantic Interior*, esp. 54, 65–6; Piggott, op cit n17, 115. Stukeley also purchased old glass from 'a glazier's shop': Oxford, Bodleian MS Eng Misc e. 196, f. 33.
- 43 Oxford, Bodleian MS Eng. Misc e.196, f. 63-4.
- 44 Oxford, Bodleian MS Eng. Misc e.196. f. 63v, 64v, f. 98r.
- 45 Stukeley and Gale, op cit n10, 390–2
- 46 Yale University, British Art Centre B1981.25.360. John Harris, 'William Kent's Drawings at Yale and Some Imperfect Ideas upon the Subject of His

- Drawing Style', in John Wilmerding ed., Essays in Honor of Paul Mellon: Collector and Benefactor, Washington 1986, 137–53, at 152.
- 47 For example, the statue of Flora is recorded on 15 April 1745 'I set up the marble statue of Flora, which the Duke of Montagu gave me in my garden, with the inscription: W. STVKELEY DONAVIT MAGNIFICENTISSIMUS PRINCEPS JOHES DUX DE MONTAGV MDCCXLIV.' Oxford, Bodleian MS Eng Misc e. 196, £59.
- 48 Haycock, op cit n3, 48.
- 49 Spectator DLI, 2 December 1712.
- 50 Stuart Piggott ed, Sale Catalogue of Libraries of Eminent Persons, vol. 10, London 1974, 427.
- 51 Karen Lang, 'The Body in the Garden', *Landscapes of Memory and Experience*, London 2000, 107–27, and Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England*, New Haven and London 2009, ch 10.
- 52 David Leatherbarrow, 'Architecture and Situation: A Study of the Architectural Writings of Robert Morris', *ISAH*, 44 (1985):48–59.
- 53 On the influence of this text on the Gothic see for example Paul Crossley, 'The Return to the Forest: Natural Architecture, The German Past in the Age of Durer', Kunstlerischer Austausch: Artistic Exchange. Akten des XXVIII Kongress für Kunstgeschichte, 3 vols, Berlin 1993, 2:71–80 and Ethan Matt Kavaler, 'Nature and the Chapel Vaults at Ingolstadt: Structuralist and Other Perspectives', The Art Bulletin, 87 (2005):230–48 with earlier literature cited therein.
- 54 Francesco Di Teodoro, *Ritratto Di Leone X Di Raffaello*, Rome 1998. I am grateful to Francesco di Teodoro and Vaughan Hart for discussing this with me.
- Paul Binski, Becket's Crown: Art and Imagination in Gothic England 1170-1300, New Haven and London 2004, 87-102. The relationship of Gothic architecture to nature was well established in English medieval architecture, and it was continued in architectural discourses in the following centuries. In the sixteenth century Shakespeare's 73rd Sonnet famously compares leafless autumn trees to 'bare ruined choirs'. In the seventeenth century, Henry Spelman's Chronica (1639) illustrated what was considered the first church in Christendom - the wattle and daub church at Glastonbury built by Joseph of Arimathea in 39 AD - as a small Gothic parish church formed from reeds and branches. See Graham Parry, Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century, Oxford 2007, 196–71, fig. 7. 'Queen Mary's bower' at Hampton Court in the seventeenth century was a Gothic structure created out of 'the perplexed twining of the Trees', as noted by John Evelyn in 1662. See Bamber Gascoigne and Jonathan Ditchburn, Images of Twickenham, Richmond 1981, 107. Arboreal metaphors for gothic ornament were prominent in the eighteenth century. See for example Isaac Ware, A Complete Body of Architecture, London 1756, 1768, 10, where 'Branches' is defined as 'A term used by some to express the arches of Gothic vaults'.
- William Stukeley, *Itinerarium Curiosum*, 2nd ed. London 1776. Still of great value on these issues is Arthur O Lovejoy's classic paper, 'The First Gothic Revival and the Return to Nature', *Modern Language Notes*, 47.7 (1932):419–46. Notably, Stukeley's house at Stamford displayed an image of the Gloucester cloister: Oxford, Bodleian MS ENG Misc e. 196 f. 107r. The appropriateness of the Gothic to a gallery or library could possibly have been suggested to Stukeley by the 1725 design competition to build a site for the Spalding Gentlemen's Society, which notably featured a Gothic design by William Sands. See Harris, op cit n11, 41–2.
- Morris R Brownell, Alexander Pope and the Arts of Georgian England, Oxford 1978, 253–4. See also Georg Germann, Gothic Revival in Europe and Britain: Sources, Influences and Ideas, Cambridge, MA 1973, 27–37. On Pope's work in particular, see Leatherbarrow, op cit n52, esp. 56–7.
- 58 Alexander Pope, The Works of Alexander Pope, 3 vols., London 1751, 3:268. See also Brownell, op cit n57, 253 n11.
- 59 The classic study of these issues remains Joseph Rykwert, On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History, 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA 1981.
- 60 Pope, op cit n58, 3:266–68. On Stukeley's relationship with Warburton, see Stukeley and Gale, op cit n10, 127–30, which recounts their early friendship and estrangement in later life. This wisdom was reprised in the notes of Captain Grose's 'Essay', in Thomas Warton, John Bentham, Capt. Grose and John Milner, Essays on Gotbic Architecture, London 1802, 121. This idea, or versions of it, were commonly enough expressed in the later years of the 18th century. See for example the origins of Gothic in 'the groves of the heathens' in James Anderson, Constitutions of the antient fraternity of free and accepted masons, containing their bistory, charges, regulations, &c., London 1784, 67–8, 90. See also Brownell, op cit n57, 253 n11.
- 61 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, ed W Leidhold, Indianapolis 2004, 67–8.
- 62 Architecture des eglises anciennes et nouvelles, Paris 1733, 14.
- 63 Robert A Maxwell, 'Misadventures of a Style: Romanesque Art and the Druids in eighteenth-century France', Art History 26.5 (2003):609–37, esp. 611–19.
- 64 Piggott, op cit n17, 84.
- Thomas Wright (of Durham), Universal Architecture, London 1755, I, Design E.