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Designed and printed by 4word Ltd, Page and Print Production, Bristol,
Baker's Park, Cater Road, Bristol, BS13 7TT. Tel. 0117 9410500.

Front cover: A Troy conduit house seen from the west. See 'The Evidence for an Extant Conduit
House on the Troy Estate, Monmouth', Fig. 2.
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could not blandly consign Herbert to heaven. They had to fulfil their duty to the affinity which Herbert had constructed, but they also needed to keep one eye on Herbert's many enemies, men who might soon be in the ascendant. The tradition, so deeply rooted in Welsh scholarly culture, of ascribing views to 'the poets' as a collective, with all that that implies as regards their professional independence of their patrons, does not adequately convey the complexity and delicacy of their political position. If it is justified for us today to see Lewys Glyn Cothi, Guto'r Glyn and the rest as icons of Welshness in the bleak political landscape of post-Glyndŵr Wales, it should equally be remembered that in their own time they were simply men trying to make their way in a dangerous and unpredictable world.⁶⁴

'FOR THE FARTHER SATISFACTION OF THE CURIOUS': HOW AN ALABASTER CARVING FROM CAERLEON REACHED THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM¹

By Maddy Gray

In about 1660, some labourers digging in a quarry at a place they called Porth Shini Kran, between Caerleon and Christchurch, made a remarkable discovery. In a large freestone coffin they found a skeleton in an elaborate iron frame, the whole encased in lead. Near this was an alabaster statue of a winged figure holding a sword and scales. The discovery was inspected by a Captain Matthew (or Matthias) Bird, a Caerleon ship-builder, who subsequently acquired the alabaster carving and gave it to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

In his extended edition of Camden's *Britannia* in 1695, Edmund Gibson describes the find thus:

About forty years since, some Labourers digging in a Quarry betwixt Kaer Leion Bridge and Christchurch (near a place call'd Porth Sini Krân) discover'd a large coffin of free-stone; which being open'd they found therein a leaden sheet, wrap'd about an iron frame, curiously wrought; and in that frame a skeleton. Near the coffin they found also a gilded Alabaster statue of a person in a coat of mail; holding in the right-hand a short sword, and in the left a pair of scales. In the right scale appear'd a young maiden's head and breasts; and in the left (which was out-weigh'd by the former) a globe. This account of the coffin and statue I receiv'd from the worshipful Captain Matthias Bird who saw both himself; and for the farther satisfaction of the curious, was pleas'd lately to present the statue to the Ashmolean Repository at Oxford.

Regrettably, the carving seems to have suffered some damage either before or since it reached Oxford. The Ashmolean's *Book of Benefactors* (effectively an accessions register) describes it as

Loricatam quandam Statuam, ex Lapide Alabastrite efformatam atque Auro foliato olim obductam, Gladium adhuc integra, gestabat dextrâ: et in sinistrâ bilancem: in dextrâ lance quæ gravior erat, Puellæ facies eminebat; in sinistrâ verò Globus terrestris

(a figure in a coat of mail, sculpted from alabaster, which was once covered in gold leaf, holding a sword, still fully preserved, in its right hand and, in its left, a pair of scales. The right pan of the scales, which is the heavier, shows a girl's face, the left one shows the globe of the Earth ...)²

¹ This short article is a summary of the work of several people. I am particularly grateful to Mark Lewis for drawing the carving to our attention, in the course of a lecture on the University of South Wales's Caerleon campus; to Nigel Young of caerleon.net for much of the background information including the Ashmolean, Camden and Moll references; to Bob Trett for archival and field work and several valuable suggestions; to Julian Litten for his expertise on late medieval burial practices; to Richard Morgan for his help with place-names; to Jeremy Knight for his help and advice and for the suggestion that the find spot might be the chapel of SS Julius and Aaron; to Andy Seabrook for the details of his excavation there.

² <http://www.ashmolean.org/ash/objects/makedetail.php?pmu=571&mu=573>y=asea&sec=&dtm=15&sf=Title,Page%20Number&cpa=1&rpos=0&obj=&mat=&loc=&art=bird#>, with an expandable photograph of the relevant page (accessed 18.11.13).

⁶⁴ I am grateful to Professor Dafydd Johnston for reading and commenting on this article before publication.

and says it was dug up in about 1660 and given to the museum in 1693 by Matthew Bird. Writing only two years after this, however, Gibson said that

The feet and right-arm have been broken some years since, as also the scales; but in all other respects, it's tolerably well preserv'd; and some of the gilding still remains in the interstices of the armour.

From Gibson's description of it as having been broken 'some years since', it seems unlikely that the damage had been done since the carving was given to the Ashmolean, but it is difficult to reconcile the full description in the Ashmolean catalogue with Gibson's reference to the damage to the scales.

The carving is still to be seen in the museum; the sword arm and feet are missing, as are the pans of the scales.³ It looks from what survives, though, as though the statue originally had the sword arm raised, in a pose similar to that of a carving in the Victoria and Albert Museum's collection in which Michael is energetically attacking the devil while holding the scales.⁴ The illustration in Gibson's edition of Camden actually shows a little more of the raised arm than now survives.⁵ This illustration was then copied for the marginal decoration of Herman Moll's 1724 map of Monmouthshire, again with the portion of the raised arm, but this seems to have been a straightforward copy of Gibson's illustration and cannot be taken as evidence of the appearance of the carving at that date.⁶

The damage is unfortunate as the missing elements would have added to an appreciation of the carving's iconography. Gibson suggested that

though at first view it might seem to be the Goddess Astræe, yet I cannot satisfie my self as to the device of the Globe and Woman in the scales; and am unwilling to trouble the Reader with too many conjectures.

In fact, as is clear both from the description and from the present state of the carving, it depicts the Archangel Michael with the scales of judgement. There are examples of similar carvings in Francis Cheetham's catalogues of English alabasters, though interestingly most of his illustrations are of either Michael in armour killing the Devil or Michael in ecclesiastical vestments weighing souls.⁷ There is only one of Michael in armour with the scales, the one referred to above. All the dated examples are fifteenth century.

In a report on the caerleon.net web site, Rodney Hudson suggested a date between 1480 and 1530 for the figure, based on the detail of the head-dress and armour.⁸ It is difficult to be that precise about the dating of these carvings because of the degree of stylization. They were produced to a pattern using pricked and pounced parchment templates, though there was always an element of

³ For a photograph and brief description see <http://britisharchaeology.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/highlights/caerleon-figure.html> (accessed 18.11.13).

⁴ Francis Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005 edn), 134.

⁵ Reproduced from a later edition on <http://www.caerleon.net/history/photo/325/index.html> (accessed 18.11.13).

⁶ Herman Moll, *A set of fifty new and correct maps of England and Wales ...* (London: Moll and Bowles, 1724), map 38, reproduced at <http://www.caerleon.net/history/photo/325/index.html> (accessed 18.11.13). The map is listed in D. Parry Michael, *The Mapping of Monmouthshire* (Bristol: Regional Publications, 1985), but not illustrated. I am grateful to Peter Keelan of the Scholar Library in Cardiff University for tracking down a copy of the Moll atlas.

⁷ See, for example, Francis Cheetham, *Alabaster Images of Medieval England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), plates 67–69; *English Medieval Alabasters*, 32–3.

⁸ At <http://www.caerleon.net/history/photo/325/index.html> (accessed 19.11.13).

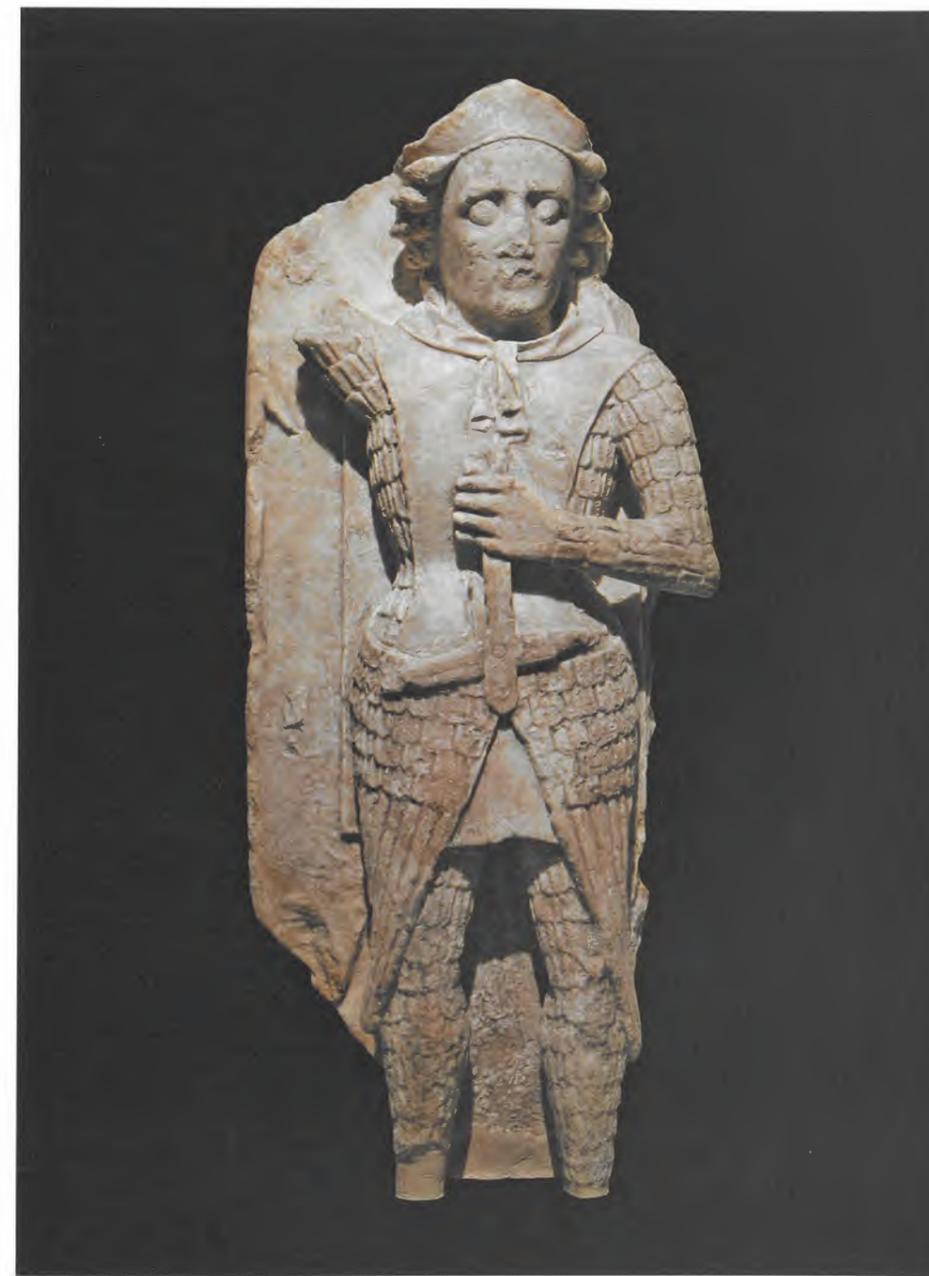


Fig. 1: Sculpture of the archangel St Michael from 'Porth Sini Krân' near Caerleon, 15th or early 16th century.

© Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford (AN1685.639(A28))

variation in detail and in the skill with which the individual carver followed and elaborated on the basic design.⁹ However, a date from the fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries seems the most likely. The armour is made of overlapping plates and could even be interpreted as feathers: this is certainly how the Ashmolean web site describes it. Other depictions of angels (such as the Archangel Gabriel in the stained glass of the Annunciation at Llandyrnog in the Vale of Clwyd) show them with feathered legs, but it is perhaps less likely that an angel would be represented feathered all over and with most of the body exposed.

Cheetham's illustrations of the Weighing of Souls also include depictions of the Virgin Mary. She was often depicted interceding for souls, sometimes placing her rosary on the beam of the scales. This was also how the scene was depicted in medieval wall paintings, such as the one just up river from Caerleon at Llangybi.¹⁰ In the fuller version of the scene painted on the rood screen at Llanelian-yn-Rhos, just south of Colwyn Bay in north Wales, a demon is gripping the other pan of the scales and the soul in that pan is already sprouting horns.¹¹

This was also a popular image in Welsh poetry and drama. Tudur Aled's *marwnad* to Morys ab Ieuan ap Hywel of Llangedwyn, who died in about 1525, includes the lines

Mihangel, pan êl i'w naid,
Bes rhoen i bwys o'r enaid,
Ni allo dim, o'r naill du,
Dal pwys pwys, gyda help Iesu;
Mae ar bwys Mair, a'i basiwn,
Maddeu holl, gamweddau hwn;
Mam i thad, mamaeth ydych,
Mair, saf gyda Morys wych,
Par â bys pur i bwys,
Poed, ar bwys paderau, y bo!

(When he comes to his judgement, O Michael, let them give it to weigh the soul!
May nothing stop the weights on one side, with Jesu's help,
Because his Passion and Mary's rosary
Can forgive all his sins.
Mother of her father, you are a nurse, Mary;
Stand by fair Morys,
Have him weighed with a faithful finger,
And be it, on a rosary's weight, as may be!)¹²

⁹ Cheetham, *Alabaster Images*, 8–13.

¹⁰ For further wall paintings of this, at Slapton (Northants) and South Leigh (Oxfordshire) see <http://www.paintedchurch.org/slapweig.htm> and <http://www.paintedchurch.org/sleigmic.htm>. The scene also forms part of a sequence in the Commandery at Worcester, a medieval hospital (illustrated at http://www.bbc.co.uk/herefordandworcester/content/image_galleries/commandery_paintings_gallery.shtml?8: accessed 20.11.13).

¹¹ Illustrated in Peter Lord, *Medieval Vision* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 192.

¹² T. Gwyn Jones (ed.), *Gwaith Tudur Aled* (2 vols, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1926), I, 323–4, lines 87–96; translation from Lord, *Medieval Vision*, 192. For further discussion see Andrew Breeze, 'The Virgin's Rosary and St Michael's Scales', *Studia Celtica* 24/25 (1989–90), 91–8.

and in the Last Judgement sequence in the Welsh play *The Dialogue of the Soul and the Body* Mary places her rosary in the scales on the side of the sinner's soul.¹³

Michael also appeared with the scales but without the interceding Virgin on the churchyard cross at Derwen in the Vale of Clwyd: here Lord suggests he may be standing on a globe to represent the world, which has interesting links with the globe in the scales of the Caerleon figure.¹⁴ It is of course possible that the Virgin Mary originally appeared with Michael in the Caerleon carving but that that part of the panel has been lost.

The Caerleon carving almost certainly came from the side panel of a chest tomb. Michael was a particularly appropriate saint for depiction on a tomb. The idea of St Michael weighing the souls of the dead is generally thought to have come from Egyptian iconography. In Christian thinking, though, St Michael represented the conqueror of Satan and the leader of the church militant.¹⁵ We are apt to view medieval religious art through the distorting lens of our post-Reformation inheritance of hell-and-damnation preaching and to see these images in terms of guilt and fear. Depiction of the last judgement was certainly intended to inspire fear, but was also a reminder of hope. Christ was shown in the red robes of a judge but showing his wounds and surrounded by reminders of the Crucifixion, through which the viewer would hope to be saved. Michael, too, was there not to terrify but to defend. His role was to care for the souls of the dead, and the votive Mass of St Michael was the Mass said for the souls of all the dead. In early sixteenth-century Brecon a stipendiary priest was paid 26s 8d a year (roughly equivalent to about £2,500 in 2013 money) to celebrate the Mass of St Michael every week in the town chancel house. This is one of the most striking examples of the medieval tradition that the dead were still in a sense part of the community: even the anonymous and fragmented bones in the chancel house needed and deserved the services of the church.¹⁶

Alabaster chest tombs were produced on an almost industrial scale by the Nottingham and Derbyshire alabaster workshops. They could be ordered virtually in kit form; agreements for the supply of tombs specify 'images of angels bearing shields', 'niches with figures called weepers' and so on.¹⁷ There is therefore nothing identifiably Welsh, let alone local to Caerleon, about the style of carving. Nevertheless, one assumes it was chosen and paid for by someone in the region.

Gibson's original assumption (from his reference to the goddess Astraea, personification of justice) seems to have been that the carving and the skeleton dated from the Roman period in Caerleon. There are Roman cemeteries on most of the roads leading out of Caerleon, perhaps the best-known being on the road to the north at Bulmore. The carving is clearly much later in date, but there is no necessary connection between the carving and the skeleton. However, from Gibson's

¹³ Gwenan Jones, *A study of three Welsh religious plays...* (Bala: R. Evans, 1939), 250–1.

¹⁴ Lord, *Medieval Vision*, though in discussing the iconography of the rest of the cross, Lord identifies as a possible Judgement of Solomon a scene which is clearly the Coronation of the Virgin. This in fact strengthens his argument about the depiction of the Virgin on the other faces of the cross.

¹⁵ For an overview of the cult and significance of St Michael see, e.g., F. G. Holweck, 'Michael the Archangel', in C. G. Herbermann et al (eds.), *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, X (New York: Robert Appleton 1911), 275–7; R. F. Johnson, *Saint Michael the Archangel in Medieval English Legend* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005); Graham Jones, 'The Cult of Michael the Archangel in Britain' in P. Bouet, G. Otranto and A. Vauchez (eds.), *Culto e santuari di san Michele nell'Europa medievale-Culte et sanctuaires de saint Michel dans l'Europe médiévale* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2007), 147–82.

¹⁶ The National Archives, E178/3503.

¹⁷ For examples of contracts see Sally Badham and Sophie Oosterwijk, '“Cest Endenture Fait Parentre”: English tomb contracts of the long fourteenth century' in Badham and Oosterwijk (eds.), *Monumental Industry: the production of tomb monuments in England and Wales in the long fourteenth century* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2010), 187–236.

This is intriguing but gets us no nearer to a location for the find. Jeremy Knight has suggested as an alternative the chapel of Sts Julius and Aaron. Like Belmont, this is along the ridge east of Christchurch, at Mount St Albans, hardly 'betwixt' Christchurch and Caerleon. It is a known chapel site, though its status in the later medieval period is uncertain. It appears neither in *Valor Ecclesiasticus* nor in the Monmouthshire chantry certificates, which only mention Capel Gwenog and the chantry in St Cadoc's church.²⁴ Even if it was still in use in the fifteenth century, it would only have been a chapelry, with no rights of burial.

There is however evidence of use of the site as a quarry, and Archdeacon Coxe reported finding burials there. In 2008, Andrew Seaman (then of Cardiff University, subsequently at Canterbury) conducted a small campaign of excavation there as follow-up to a desktop and geophysical survey.²⁵ This located a post-medieval quarry pit, backfilled in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, and some evidence of a structure which may have been a stone-lined cist grave. There is also the fact that the name of the chapel in documents is often abbreviated to 'SS Iun ac Aaron', which could just conceivably be garbled to 'Shini Kran'.

The identification of the site of the finds thus remains at best not proven. It is even more difficult to establish what might have led to the burial of a high-status coffin and fragments of a chest tomb in this location. We have unfortunately no way of identifying the individual whose skeleton was found and then lost. Alabaster chest tombs were generally the preserve of the local elite, people of the rank of Sir William ap Thomas and his wife Gwladus, Sir Richard and Margaret Herbert of Coldbrook and Richard Herbert of Ewyas, all of whose tombs survive at Abergavenny. Fragments of the inscription from the alabaster tomb of Sir William Morgan of Pencoed, which was in Llanmartin church until its destruction in the early nineteenth century, were found in the church at Caerleon and made their way to the museum there.²⁶ They are now in storage in the National Museum of Wales.

The only family of that status with connections in Caerleon and Christchurch were the Herberts of St Julians. Related to the Herberts of Raglan, Coldbrook and Ewyas, their house at St Julians was in the parish of Christchurch. The most likely candidate for the date of the carving and burial would be Sir George Herbert, who died in France in 1504 but could have been brought home (part of the purpose of lead coffins was to deal with the practical problems of arranging elite funerals which could take place some time after the actual death). However, it seems unlikely that he would have been buried in a remote chapel rather than in his parish church: and it is perhaps even more unlikely that his family would have tolerated the desecration of his grave implied in the damage to the alabaster carvings.

One even more tenuous suggestion relates to the problems of iconoclastic damage to tombs after the Reformation. Tombs in monastic locations were of course especially vulnerable: and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries monastic churches were still very much preferred locations for elite burial. Phillip Lindley has discussed the damage to monuments in the wake of the Dissolution

²⁴ *Valor Ecclesiasticus temp. Henr. VIII ...* (London: Eyre and Strahan, 1810–34), vol. 4, 375; TNA, E301/74 f.20, transcribed in M. Gray, 'The last days of the chantries and shrines of Monmouthshire', *Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History* 8 (1991), 21–40, pp. 33–4, available online at <http://welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/browse/viewpage/llgc-id:1127665/llgc-id:1128385/llgc-id:1128411/get650> (accessed 2.12.13).

²⁵ Excavation report at <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/share/resources/Trial%20Excavation%20at%20Mount%20St%20Albans%20near%20Caerleon.pdf> (accessed 20.11.13); see also Andrew Seaman, 'The Roman to Early Medieval Transition in South-East Wales: Settlement, Landscape and Religion' (unpublished Cardiff Ph D thesis, 2010), esp. ch. 5 and appendix 4; idem, 'Julius and Aaron, Martyrs of Caerleon', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, forthcoming. Dr Seaman is planning a follow-up excavation at the site in 2014.

²⁶ Caerleon museum catalogue, typescript, 1909, now in the library of the Legionary Museum, Caerleon.

THE EVIDENCE FOR AN EXTANT CONDUIT HOUSE ON THE TROY ESTATE, MONMOUTH

By Ann C. Benson

Introduction

This article is based on an investigation of the history of the Troy House Estate which lies one mile south of Monmouth and borders the south bank of the River Trothy.¹ It was conducted for an MA in Garden and Landscape History awarded in 2013 by the University of Bristol.²

The Estate consists of three main components: the house and its gardens, a walled garden, and a farm with surrounding parkland. Currently, these are under separate ownership. The Estate is important as it was the home of the influential Welsh families, the Herberts followed by the Somersets, the latter being advanced to the title of duke of Beaufort in 1682. During the seventeenth century the Somerset occupants moved in the highest English court circles and travelled throughout Europe.³ From 1682 Troy served as the administrative centre for the Somersets' extensive Welsh estates and Badminton became their main family seat. However, on the death of the first duke of Beaufort's son in a coaching accident near Llanrothal in 1698, Troy became largely unoccupied by family members and was left in the care of resident stewards. The Estate was auctioned in 1901 leading to a succession of owners of its different parts, including nuns who ran the house as a girls' school until the early 1970s. The house was sold in 1977 to the current owner and initially was managed by two teachers as an approved school for boys, but this also closed in the mid-1980s. Unoccupied since this time, the house is the subject of a planning application for conversion and extension to form a complex of residential units. Overall, the house, farm and walled garden are in poor condition with many historically important features under threat of further deterioration.

Given the status of its owners across centuries, the Estate appears under-researched and represented in the literature.⁴ The information provided separately by Cadw and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) also contains few cross-references to its different components. The research upon which this article is based investigates these, first individually, and then cross-references the findings to extend current understanding of them as discreet entities. This provides a unique, holistic view of how they interrelated within the estate across time.⁵ A multi-method approach incorporates aerial, ground and geophysical reconnaissance, documentary searches, map regression and overlays. The architectural history of the house is also positioned at the centre of the research to support a consideration of how the surrounding land has been refashioned across time.

This article focuses on a ruined building within the parkland component of the Estate (Fig. 1). The parkland lies south and south-east of the house and farm buildings and slopes up to a ridge some 200 m high, topped by deciduous woodland. From north to south this woodland consists of

¹ See OS Sheet No. SO51SW.

² Dr. Ann Benson, 'Troy House Estate: a Forgotten Landscape' (unpublished master's dissertation, University of Bristol, 2013).

³ See accounts in the following works: Horatia Durant, *The Somerset Sequence* (London: Newman Neame, 1951); *The Travel Diary (1611–1612) of an English Catholic Sir Charles Somerset*, ed. by Michael G. Brennan (Leeds: Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society Ltd., 1993); Charles Somerset, Lord Herbert, 'A short account of my voyage into France', May 1673–April 1674. Badminton Muniments: FmG 4/1.

⁴ Benson, 6–11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 126–9.