



Fig. 1

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A. (1769-1830)

John Philip Kemble as Cato

seated, full-length, wearing a tunic and holding a scroll, a sword on a table beside him

oil on canvas, in original plaster gilt frame

104in x 70½in. (254 x 177.8 cm.)

Provenance

Commissioned by Charles John Gardiner (1782-1829), 2nd Viscount Mountjoy, later 1st Earl of Blessington, 1811

Acquired from his executors by John Burton Philips (d.1862), c.1830s

Thence by descent

Engravings

Mezzotint, William Ward (1766-1826)

Line engraving, William Greatbatch (b.1802), published in *The Amulet* (1833), opp. p.77

Mezzotint, Samuel William Reynolds, the younger (1794-1872), published Colnaghi, 1841

Exhibited

London, Royal Academy, *Exhibition ... the forty-fourth*, 1812, no. 57

Birmingham, Birmingham Society of Arts, *Modern works of art*, 1829, no. 1

Dublin, Royal Hibernian Academy, *Exhibition ... the fourth*, 1829, no. 112

London, British Institution, *Works of the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.*, 1830, 15, no. 67

London, Royal Academy Royal Opera House, *Retrospective exhibition*, 1983, no. 138

MS Sources

Thomas Lawrence, Russell Square, to Joseph Barber (1788-1838), Birmingham Society of Arts, 21 Aug. 1829¹

National Art Library, MS 86 FF 17, 'Claims of Works of Art, Books &c under the Estate of the late Sir Tho^s. Lawrence [1830-1]', pp. 41-2, no. 200

National Art Library, MS 86 FF 18, 'Receipts for Pictures & Works of Art' addressed to Sir Thomas Lawrence's executor, p.86, No. 200-1-2 (1831)

Printed Sources

The Diary of Joseph Farington, 16 vols. (1978-84), XI, 4078 (8 Feb. 1812)

Newspaper notices of Royal Academy Exhibition, May 1812, in Royal Academy Library, *Royal Academy Critiques*, Vol. II, pp. 103-4

James Boaden, *Memoirs of the life of John Philip Kemble, Esq.*, 2 vols. (1825), II, 529

D. E. Williams, *The life and correspondence of Sir Thomas Lawrence, Kt.*, 2 vols. (1831), I, 322-26, II, 315-17

Marguerite, Countess of Blessington, *Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington* (1834), 113 (reprinted in *The works of Lady Blessington*, 2 vols. (1838), I, 262)

Memoirs of Charles Mathews, comedian, by Mrs. Mathews, 3 vols. (1839), III, 376

Tom Taylor (ed.) *Autobiographical recollections by the late Charles Robert Leslie, R.A.*, 2 vols. (1860), I, 5, 11

John Timbs, 'Sir Thomas Lawrence', in *Anecdote biography; or scenes and events in the lives of distinguished persons, chronologically arranged*' (1860), 242

Lord Ronald Sutherland, *The great artists. Romney and Lawrence* (1882), 54-5, 99 (67), 109

Lord Ronald Sutherland, *Sir Thomas Lawrence* (1900), 104, illus., 140

Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts. A complete dictionary of contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904* (1905), III, 4

G. S. Layard, *Sir Thomas Lawrence's Letterbag* (1906), 90

Sir Walter Armstrong, *Lawrence* (1913), 143

¹ Recorded with bookseller Art Reference Books



Fig. 2.

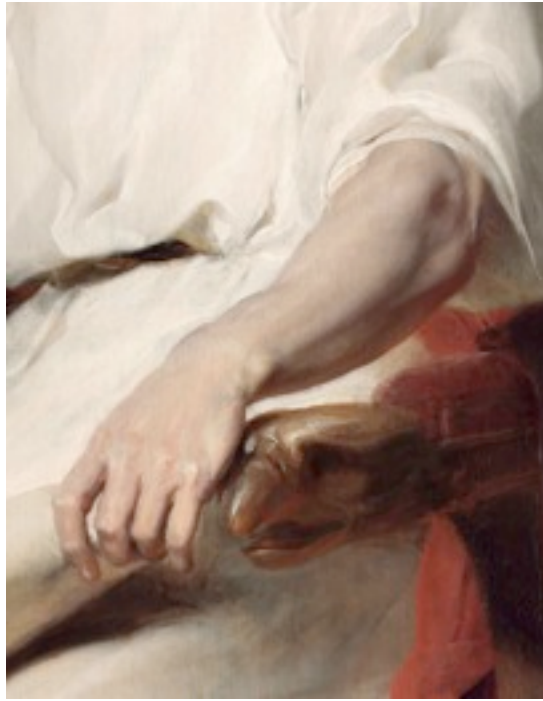


Fig. 3.

- Algernon Graves, *A century of loan exhibitions 1813-1912* (1913), II, 649 (67)
A Catalogue of Pictures in the Garrick Club (1936), 119, Appendix IV, 214
Pictures from the Garrick Club, exh. cat., Tate Gallery (1951), no. 27
Kenneth Garlick, *Sir Thomas Lawrence* (1954), 8, 44, Appendix III, no. 92
John Cornforth, 'The Heath House, Tean, Staffordshire - II', *Country Life* (10 Jan. 1963), 64, fig. 7
Kenneth Garlick, 'A catalogue of the paintings, drawings and pastels of Sir Thomas Lawrence', *Walpole Society*, XXXIX (1964), 117 (7), Appendix IV, 293, no. 200
Anne M. Stewart (ed.), *Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts. Index of exhibitors and their works* (1986), 183
Kenneth Garlick, *Sir Thomas Lawrence. A complete catalogue of the oil paintings* (1989), 216, no. 451f, illus.
Shearer West, 'The half-history portraits of Thomas Lawrence', *Art History* 14 (1991), 225-49
Geoffrey Ashton, *Pictures in the Garrick Club* (1997), 214, no. 385
John Clubbe, *Byron, Sully, and the power of portraiture* (2005), p.80



Fig. 4.

Related works

A reduced copy on board, 43¼ x 29 in. (109.9 x 73.7 cm.), painted by Lawrence for the actor and collector Charles Matthews, is in the Garrick Club².

Another reduced copy, also by Lawrence, was claimed against the artist's estate in February 1830 by a Mr. Knowles³, but is since untraced.

Another copy, of similar dimensions to the original, seemingly by another artist, sold from the estate of S. Hope-Johnstone, Anderson Galleries, New York, 1910, as reported in *New York Times*, 18 Apr. 1910, p.9. This is presumably the same picture sold from the estate of Jacob Wertheim, American Art Association, New York, 10 Jan. 1936, lot 66, illus., and again, anonymously, Parke-Bernet, New York, 8 May 1941, lot 60, and 21-22 Sept. 1945.

² NAL, MS 86 FF 17, 43-4, no. 214; NAL, MS 86 FF 18, no. 214; *Memoirs of Charles Mathews*, III, 376-79; *Catalogue of Pictures in the Garrick Club*, 119, Appendix IV, 214; *Pictures from the Garrick Club*, no. 27; Garlick 1989, 216, no. 451f; Ashton, *op. cit.*, 214, no. 385

³ NAL, MS 86 FF 17, 41-2, no. 200

C A T O.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL in *Drury-Lane,*

BY

Her MAJESTY'S SERVANTS.

By Mr. *ADDISON*

Ecco Spectaculum dignum, ad quod respiciat, intentus operi suo, Deus! Ecce par Deo dignum, vir fortis cum malâ fortunâ compositus! Non video, inquam, quid habeat in terris Jupiter pulchrius, si convertere animum velit, quam ut spectet Catonem, jam partibus non semel fractis, nihilominus inter ruinas publicas erectum.

Sen. de Divin. Prov.

THE EIGHTH EDITION.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JACOB TONSON, at *Shakespear's*
Head over-against Catherine-Street in the Strand.

M D C C X I I I.

Fig.5. Title page of 1713 edition of Joseph Addison's Cato

Historical Note

The work I am now about is a generalised portrait of Kemble in Cato, or rather, Cato meditating on the Phaedon of Plato, for which I take Kemble as my model ... Perhaps it will be the last picture I shall paint with Kemble for my subject, and I know it will be my best (Thomas Lawrence to William Lawrence, 29 January 1812)⁴

On 26 January 1811 the actor John Philip Kemble took to the stage in Addison's *Cato* at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. It was the opening night, with Kemble in the leading role. Although first performed almost a century earlier (fig. 5), and revived several times since, the play would have had particular resonance for an English audience at this period; for just as the protagonist, at war with Rome, faced an armed invasion under Caesar, so England, at war with France, faced a threatened invasion by forces under Napoleon.

The play reached its climax in the first scene of the final Act V, Scene 1, where Kemble, seated and alone, intoned the famous soliloquy on death and the immortality of the soul. This is the moment captured in this penetrating study of Kemble, England's pre-eminent actor of the early 19th century, by Lawrence, the country's pre-eminent portrait painter of the period.

The composition of the portrait closely mirrors the stage directions published by Kemble himself in a new edition of the play that appeared the same year.

'A Chamber in the Palace. Cato discovered, sitting in a thoughtful Posture:- In his hand Plato's book on the Immortality of the Soul:- A drawn sword on the table by him'⁵ (fig. 7)

The drama and intensity of the actor's gaze are heightened by the stark simplicity of the setting and emphatic use of *chiaroscuro*, and by the powerful contrast between the brilliant white of the tunic and the dark green drapery beyond.

⁴ Printed in Williams, *op. cit.*, II, 316

⁵ Addison's *Cato, a tragedy, adapted to the stage by J. P. Kemble; and now first published as it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden* (1811), 48

Adison's
C A T O,

A TRAGEDY,

ADAPTED TO THE STAGE BY

J. P. KEMBLE;

AND NOW FIRST PUBLISHED AS IT IS ACTED AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL

IN

Covent Garden.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE THEATRE.

1811.

Price Eighteen Pence.

Fig. 6. Title page of 1811 edition of Cato

A C T V.

SCENE,

A Chamber in the Palace.

CATO *discovered, sitting in a thoughtful posture:—In his hand Plato's book on the Immortality of the Soul:—A drawn sword on the table by him.*

Cato. IT must be so;—Plato, thou reasonest well;—
 Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
 This longing after immortality?
 Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
 Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul
 Back on herself and startles at destruction?
 'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us;
 'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
 And intimates eternity to man.
 Eternity!—Thou pleasing, dreadful, thought!—
 Through what variety of untried being,
 Through what new scenes and changes must we pass!
 The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before me;
 But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.—
 Here will I hold: If there's a power above us,—
 And that there is, all nature cries aloud
 Through all her works,—he must delight in virtue;
 And that which he delights in must be happy.—
 But when? or where?—This world was made for
 Caesar.—

I'm weary of conjectures: This must end 'em.

[*Laying his hand on his sword.*]

Thus am I doubly arm'd: my death and life,
 My bane and antidote, are both before me:
 This in a moment brings me to an end;
 But this informs me, I shall never die.
 The soul, secur'd in her existence, smiles
 At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.—
 The stars shall fade away, the sun himself

Fig. 7. Act V, Scene 1, in the 1811 edition: Cato's Soliloquy

The seated pose, though unusual in full-length portraits by the artist, was one with which Lawrence had already successfully experimented, as for instance in his 1789 portrait of Queen Charlotte (National Gallery), and to which he later returned, most notably in his 1819 portrait of Pope Pius VII (Royal Collection), and that of George IV painted in 1822 (Wallace Collection) (Figs. 8-10). Here, uniquely, Lawrence uses the seated pose in a full-length theatrical portrait, and to powerful dramatic effect.

The part of Cato had been played by several of Kemble's most distinguished predecessors, including Booth and Sheridan, but the actor was now at the height of his powers, and his own performance was regarded as one of his finest.

In a review of the actor's career published at the time of his retirement, Cato was singled out as the first of three defining roles (fig. 11). James Boade, in his *Life of Kemble*, published in 1825, recalled that '... From the opening speech to the last there was not a line, which Mr. Kemble did not seem to have studied, as if conscious of that Superior Intelligence, whom Seneca presumed to contemplate, with satisfaction, the acts of the divine Cato'⁶. But it was the soliloquy which drew his particular praise. As Boaden expressed it, 'I may fearlessly produce his opening scene of the 5th act, as the unrivalled wonder of his art – as an effort surpassing the highest-wrought imagination, and carrying the British stage to the summit of its glory'⁷

Kemble's performance captured the imagination of several artists of the day. The sculptor John Flaxman began a statue of Kemble as Cato, which though unfinished at his death, was afterwards completed by Hinchcliffe and installed in Westminster Abbey, having since been transferred to St. Andrew's Chapel, Temple Church. Several prints of the actor in this role were published during his lifetime, based on drawings by Cruikshank, Westall, Wageman, and Lane (figs. 12-16)

⁶ Boaden, *op. cit.*, II, 527

⁷ *Ibid.*

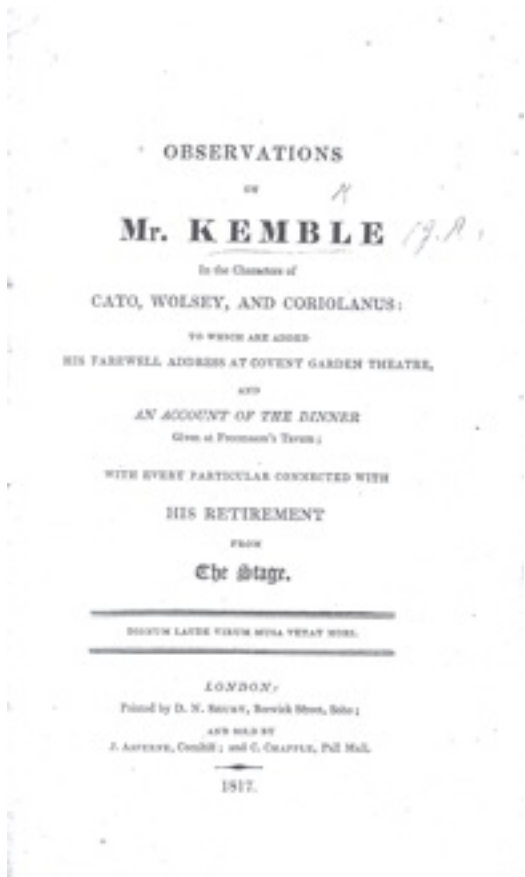


Fig. 11. Kemble's performance as Cato recalled at the time of his retirement



Fig. 12. Kemble as Cato, engraved by Murray after Cruickshank



Fig. 13. Kemble as Cato, engraved by Audinot after Westall



Fig. 14. Kemble as Cato, unattributed engraving (NPG Archives)



Fig. 15. Kemble as Cato, engraved by Rogers after Wageman

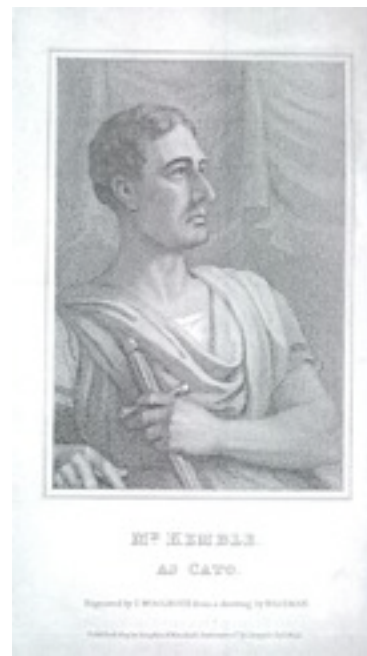


Fig. 16. Kemble as Cato, engraved by Woolnoth after Wageman

But the enduring image of Kemble as Cato was that produced by Lawrence, disseminated again through engravings (figs. 17-18). Like his contemporaries, Lawrence was

captivated by Kemble's performance, which he judged to be the best of his career. Writing to his brother shortly after the play opened, the artist declared that it was 'his finest part', to which he brought 'great penetration' and 'the rich enthusiasm of passion'⁸.



Fig. 17. Kemble as Cato, engraved by Ward after Lawrence

⁸ Thomas Lawrence to William Lawrence, 1811, printed in Williams, *op. cit.*, I, 316-17



Fig. 18. Kemble as Cato, engraved by Greatbatch after Lawrence

By January 1812 the artist was already at work on the portrait. 'The work I am now about', he wrote at this time, 'is a generalised portrait of *Kemble in Cato*, or rather, *Cato meditating on the Phaedon of Plato*, for which I take Kemble as my model'⁹.

From Farington's diary we learn that the portrait had been commissioned by Charles John Gardiner (1782-1829), 2nd Viscount Mountjoy, later 1st Earl of Blessington¹⁰. Evidently a great admirer of the actor, Gardiner

⁹ Thomas Lawrence to William Lawrence, 29 Jan. 1812, printed in Williams 1831, *op. cit.*, 316

¹⁰ *Farington Diary*, XI, 4078 (8 Feb. 1812)



Fig. 19. The first Lady Blessington, by Lawrence



Fig. 20. The second Lady Blessington, by Lawrence

was also one of Lawrence's most important patrons, for whom he was to produce a series of portraits, including the celebrated portrait of Gardiner's second wife, Marguerite, now in the Wallace Collection (fig. 20), another of his first wife (fig. 19), and two of Gardiner himself, one of them painted in the same year as the *Cato*¹¹In February 1812 Farington dined with Lawrence, who confided to him that he was working into the night to complete the portrait, and that perfecting the colouring had been a particular challenge. As Farington recorded in his diary:-

'Lawrence dined with me. He had been much engaged (professionally) of late. He has been much employed in painting a picture of "Kemble in the Character of Cato", which He has been commissioned to do by *Lord Mountjoy*. This picture he has hitherto worked upon only by *Candle-light*, He being so much occupied by *sitters* in the day time as not to be able to give up any of that time for this purpose – He looked worn – not fresh, or as He shd. do and I urged Him to consider the bad effects of over application. / The figure of Cato, He said, is clothed in a white dress, and He has found considerable difficulty in giving sufficient *warmth* to this colour. He wished me to see it'¹²

¹¹ Garlick 1989, 154, nos. 111a-b & 112; 241, no. 581

¹² *Farington Diary, loc. cit.*

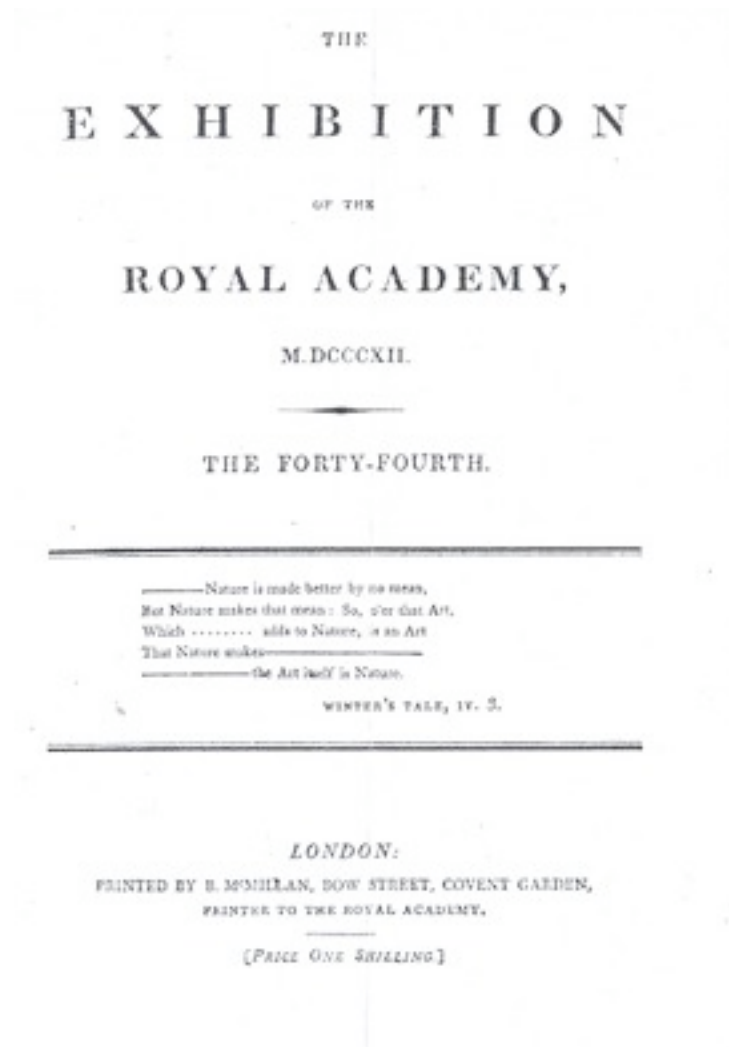


Fig. 21. Title page of 1812 Royal Academy Exhibition catalogue

The portrait was ready in time for the Royal Academy's annual exhibition in May 1812. Several other portraits by the artist were included in the show, but it was the *Cato* which drew most comment.

Even before the exhibition opened, the picture had become a talking-point. Writing to his sister in April, the artist Charles Robert Leslie conveyed his own keen sense of anticipation. 'In the Exhibition', he reported, 'which will open in a few days, there is to be a picture of Kemble in "Cato", by Lawrence, which he has just finished'¹³

¹³ C. R. Leslie to Miss Leslie, 19 Apr. 1812, printed in Taylor, *op. cit.*, I, 5

42	Portrait of a gentleman	—	R. R. Nicolson
43	Landscape and cattle	—	J. Ward
44	Portrait of Mrs. Colonel Kerrison	—	M. A. Siver, R. A.
45	View in Tabley Park, Cheshire; the seat of Sir J. F. Leicester, Bart.	—	H. Thomson, R. A.
46	A public music meeting	—	C. Croxmer, jun.
47	A view of Bolton Priory, Yorkshire: Twilight	—	T. C. Hoiland

"Now fades the glimmering landscape on the right,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds."

48	The new coat	—	A. Fraser
49	Portrait of Mrs. General Macintyre	—	T. Phillips, R. A.
50	The cottager's relief	—	A. W. Collett, R. A.
51	Portrait of the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor	—	H. Howard, R. A.
52	Portrait of the Rev. Dr. Lindsey	—	J. Hazlitt
53	The favourite kitten	—	J. Ramsay
54	Portrait of a physician	—	W. Thomas
55	Portrait of Captain Hope	—	G. Watson
56	Portrait of himself	—	— Rising
57	Portrait of Mr. Kemble, as Addison's Cato	—	T. Lawrence, R. A.
58	Portrait of J. A. Wilmot, Esq. who adjusted the losses, claims, and compensations of the American loyalists	—	B. West, R. A.
59	Nook-end bridge, near Ambleside, Westmoreland	—	J. Repton
60	Cottage near St. Alban's	—	M. Peacock
61	Landscape	—	R. Cook
62	Reading the Will	—	W. Linn
63	Portraits of a mare and foal	—	J. Bavinger
64	The return from market	—	A. W. Collett, R. A.
65	Portrait of Viscount Mountjoy	—	T. Lawrence, R. A.
66	Portrait of Lord Grenville	—	W. Owen, R. A.
67	Portrait of the infant son of J. Hedrington, Esq.	—	B. Barwell
68	Portrait of Mr. T. Lonsdale	—	J. Lonsdale
69	View of the explosion vessel and fireships conducted by Captain Lord Cochrane to the attack of the French fleet moored in the road of the Ile d'Aix, on the night of the 11th April, 1809	—	N. Peacock
70	Portrait of Mrs. Boehm	—	M. A. Siver, R. A.
71	Colcorton-hall, the seat of Sir G. Beaumont, Bart.	—	G. Arnold, A.
72	Landscape: Evening	—	J. Constable
73	Pheasants	—	W. F. Witherington
74	A landscape and figures: Scene, Shows, near Masham, Yorkshire	—	J. Blicciss

Fig. 22. Entry for Lawrence's portrait in the 1812 Royal Academy Exhibition catalogue (no. 57)

Once the exhibition opened, discussion of the picture only increased, and despite some criticism, the picture was overwhelmingly admired. Writing again to his sister on 12 May, Leslie reported "The Exhibition at Somerset House has just opened ... Lawrence's portrait of Kemble in "Cato", is very fine, and the best likeness I have ever seen of him. He is seated in his study with a scroll in his hand, and his dagger lying on the table. His eyes are raised, and he appears to be just exclaiming, "It must be so – Plato, thou reason'st well"¹⁴

Leslie's comments were echoed by others. As one newspaper reported on the exhibition, "Mr. Lawrence has eight very fine Portraits, and maintains his first place in richness, beauty, and effect. His Portrait of *Kemble* in *Cato*, is an incomparable work"¹⁵. Another

¹⁴ C. R. Leslie to Miss Leslie, 12 May 1812, printed in Taylor, *op. cit.*, I, 11

¹⁵ Unreferenced cutting in *Royal Academy Critiques*, II, 104

observed 'Lawrence, with many other works that do honour to his talents, will obtain increased fame by his portrait of Kemble in *Cato*'¹⁶.

Kemble's biographer, Boaden, declared that Lawrence had produced his finest portrait of the actor in a work that was unsurpassed. 'Sir Thomas Lawrence', he wrote, 'has preserved the most absolute identity in his portrait of Mr. Kemble revolving the profound doctrine of Plato on the immortality of the soul; and I know of no subject, even from his own pencil, which surpasses it either in dignity or truth'¹⁷

Lawrence's own biographer, D. E. Williams, struck a similar note in his own elegiac description of the painting. 'The relaxation of the body, in its inclining forwards, without any loss of solemnity and dignity – the amazingly fine eyes, large and brilliant, but subdued by the soul reflecting on itself – the whole figure, and even the legs in perfect repose, and yet tense to show the unrelaxing severity of Cato, form a conception of the character, and a power of representing it, which give an idea of the artist, different from what he had generally inspired. This is not Lawrence, elegant, refined, and diffident; it is the great artist full of an integral, perfect conception, and with an immense power of embodying it'¹⁸. In common with Reynolds, Lawrence aspired to transcend the limits of portraiture, producing work on a level with history painting. Here again, Williams believed, he had succeeded. To describe the *Cato* as a mere portrait was a manifest injustice, he argued. The picture belonged to 'the highest school of history'¹⁹

Lawrence himself had confidently predicted that of the several portraits he had painted of Kemble, the *Cato* would be his best. A life-long friend of the actor, he had already produced three full-length portraits of Kemble in costume, as Hamlet, Coriolanus, and Rolla in Sheridan's *Pizarro* (Figs. 23-25)²⁰. He had also produced several other portraits in a variety of different formats²¹. But he was convinced that the *Cato*, his final portrait of the actor, would also prove his best. As he wrote to his brother while still at work on the portrait, 'Perhaps it will be the last picture I shall paint with Kemble for my subject, and I know it will be my best'²²

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Boaden, *op. cit.*, II, 529

¹⁸ Williams, *op. cit.*, I, 323

¹⁹ Williams, *op. cit.*, I, 322

²⁰ The *Hamlet* is in the Tate Gallery, the *Coriolanus* in the Guildhall Art Gallery, and the *Rolla*, formerly in the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas, sold Sotheby's, New York, 11 Jan. 1996 (104), and again Christie's, London, 28 Nov. 2001 (15).

²¹ Lawrence also painted Kemble's mother, Mrs Roger Kemble; his sister Sarah Siddons; and her two daughters, Sally and Maria

²² Thomas Lawrence to William Lawrence, 29 Jan. 1812, printed in Williams, *op. cit.*, II, 316

The picture was not only a critical success, but a popular success as well. According to Lawrence's biographer, the *Cato* was '... decidedly the most popular work that had appeared at the Royal Academy for many years'²³

Another contemporary who saw and admired the portrait was the actor and collector Charles Matthews. After the exhibition ended the picture was transferred to the Earl of Blessington's town house, No. 11 St. James's Square, where Matthews, a friend of the Earl, frequently cast an envious eye on the picture. As his widow later wrote, 'Sir Thomas Lawrence's magnificent portrait of Kemble in *Cato*, was painted for the Earl of Blessington; and after it had been exhibited at Somerset House, it was hung up in St. James's Square, where, whenever my husband's eye rested upon it, Lord Blessington smiled, and made some good-humoured observation upon his evident admiration and longing for it'²⁴. Eventually, she reported, Lord Blessington offered to have a copy of the portrait made for Matthews, smaller in size than the original, to hang in Matthews' celebrated gallery of theatrical portraits at his house in Highgate, Ivy Cottage. The choice of artist was left to Matthews, who selected Lawrence.

The portrait was therefore transferred to Lawrence's house at No. 65 Russell Square. Aside from his own pictures, Lawrence had gathered together one of the greatest private collections of old master drawings in England, as well as other treasures. As one visitor recalled, the house was '... a museum of choice specimens of painting, sculpture, architecture, and engraving; his pictures, drawings, and studies of the great masters of modern art ... arranged by his own hand'²⁵. Something of the atmosphere

²³ Williams, *op. cit.*, I, 322

²⁴ *Memoirs of Charles Matthews*, III, 376

²⁵ Timbs, *op. cit.*, 250



Fig. 26. The Drawing Room, Sir Thomas Lawrence's house, 65 Russell Square

is conveyed by a contemporary engraving of the Drawing Room (fig. 26).

It is some indication of the importance Lawrence attached to the *Cato* that he chose a particularly conspicuous position in which to display it. As he reported to Farington in January 1814, 'My Front Room is my Show-Room, over the Chimney of which is already plac'd my *Cato*'²⁶. It is a further indication of his attachment to the picture that he never in fact returned it to its owner. Fifteen years later, in 1829, when the Earl of Blessington died, the *Cato* was still hanging in the artist's house.

In that year the picture was twice exhibited, first at the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin (Figs. 27-28)²⁷, and afterwards at the Birmingham Society of Artists (Figs. 29-30). When first approached by the organisers of the Dublin exhibition, Lawrence expressed misgivings, chiefly on account of the picture's great size²⁸. But he was eventually persuaded to lend when prevailed upon to do so by a friend of the Chief Justice of

²⁶ Lawrence to Farington, 5 Jan. 1814, printed in Layard, *op. cit.*, 90

²⁷ Royal Hibernian Society 1829, 5 (112)

²⁸ Lawrence to T. J. Mulvany, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, 11 Apr. 1829, printed in Williams, *op. cit.*, II, 315-16

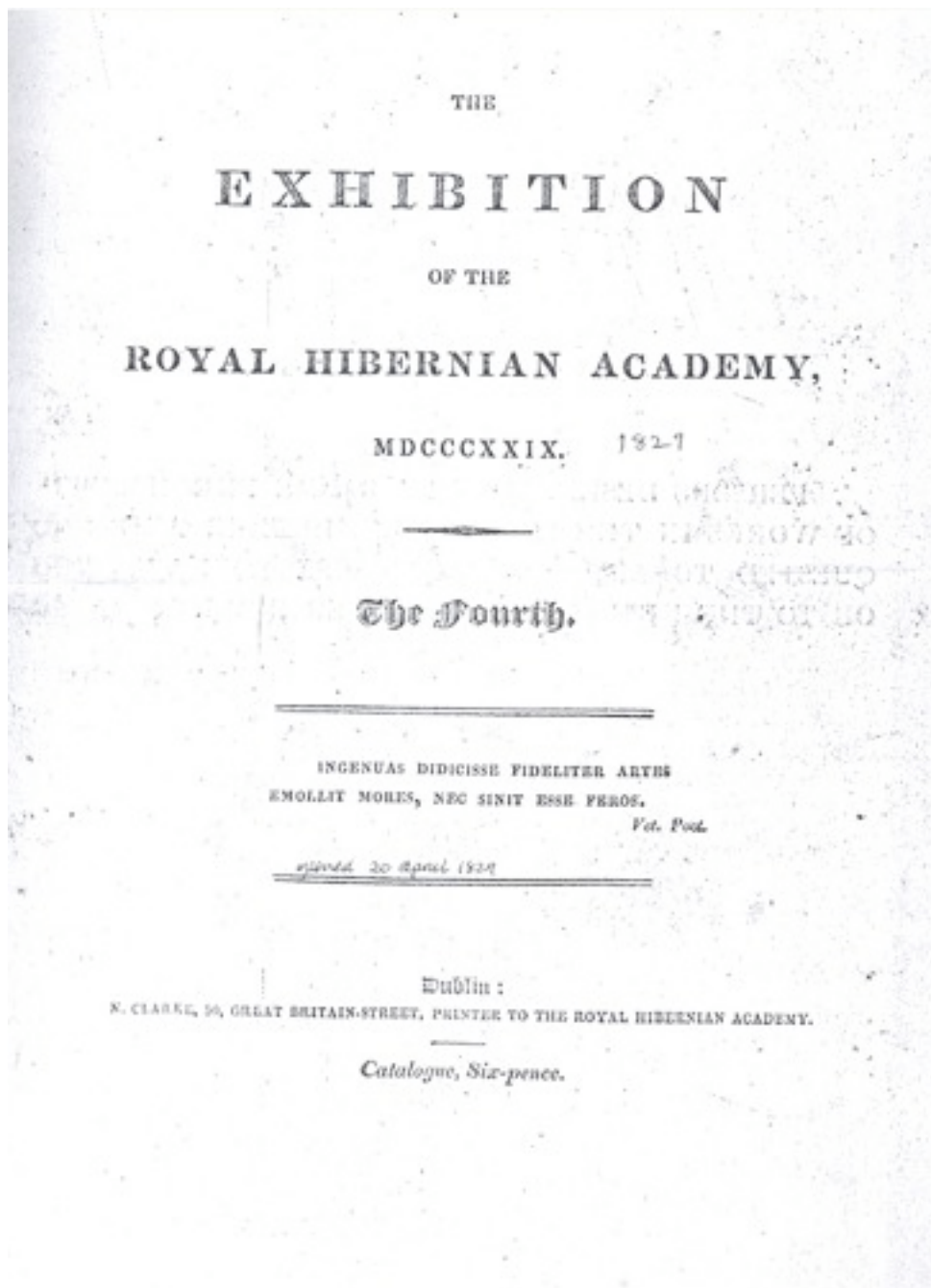


Fig. 27. Title page of Royal Hibernian Academy exhibition, 1829

Ireland, who argued that the 'popularity' of the picture would be a significant draw²⁹. Having returned to London, the picture was then shipped to Birmingham by canal, the artist suggesting a new coat of varnish to guard against damp³⁰.

²⁹ Lawrence to T. J. Mulvany, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, 15 Apr. 1829, printed in Williams, *op. cit.*, II, 316-17

³⁰ Lawrence to Joseph Barber, 21 Aug. 1829 (recorded with Art Reference Books)

- 108* "Cead mille Fealtha,"—(unfinished) .. *G. F. Armstrong*
 109 Portrait of a Lady, ... *Richard Rothwell, R H A*
 110 Portrait of A. C. Bloomfield Spalding, Esq. Professor of Rhetorical delivery, *Charles Skottowe*
 111* Ideal Portrait of Mary Queen of Scots, .. *Mrs. Leckie*
 112 Historical Portrait of Kemble in the character of Cato, ... *Sir Thomas Lawrence, P R A*
 113* Carman's Inn, .. *John G. Mulvany, R H A*
 114 Portrait of Henry Samuel Close, Esq. .. *T. C. Thompson, R H A*
 115* The Miser, .. *G. F. Armstrong*

* *Populus me sibilat, at tuihi plaudo ipse domi simul nummos ac contempior in arca.*"

Horace Lib. 1. Sat. 1.

- 116* Gossips, .. *Miss Sharples*
 117 A Portrait, .. *T. C. Thompson, R H A*
 118 The Monk, a study, .. *W. J. Thompson*
 119 Portrait of Bernard Browne, Esq. of Mount Bernard, County Galway, *Nicholas Brennan*
 120 Portrait of a Clergyman, .. *R. L. West, R H A*
 121 Portrait of Miss Emma Ashe, .. *Martin Cregan, R H A*
 122 Lough Mask Castle .. *A Lady,—H*
 123* Sea Coast, with Smugglers, .. *H. Kirchhoffer, R H A*
 124 Portrait of Captain Talbot, late of 1st Regiment of Grenadier Guards, *Martin Cregan, R H A*
 125 Portrait of Mrs. Browne, of Mount Hazel, Co. Galway, .. *Nicholas Brennan*
 126* The Young Soldier, .. *George F. Mulvany*

" And now the Infant Soldier feels
 Within his breast the martial ray,
 As o'er his opening mind first steals
 The dawning of the coming day.

" With joyous thoughts his bright eye beams,
 As proud his mimic sword he wields;
 Sweet innocent, he nothing dreams,
 Of deadly strife or tented fields!"

- 127 Portrait of Himself, - - *Wm. Howis*
 128 An old Brood Mare with a "five years old," the property of the Right Hon.
 Lord Clonbrock, - - *G. Nairn, A*
 129 A Portrait, - - *T. Bridgford*
 130 Portrait of a Young Lady, - - *Wm. Huston*
 131 Portrait of the late Mr. Keary, of Clontarf,—painted after his death, *Wm. Huston*
 132 Portrait of David Thompson, Esq. - *T. C. Thompson, R H A*
 133* Hermenverville, a country seat in the environs of Paris, which was inha-
 bited by the celebrated Writer Jean Jaques Rousseau, for the honor
 of whom was built the temple which is seen on the hill, painted from
 a study by - - *M. Pierre Mejanet*

Fig. 28. Entry for Lawrence's Kemble as Cato in the 1829 Royal Hibernian Academy exhibition catalogue (no. 112)

BIRMINGHAM
SOCIETY OF ARTS.

ESTABLISHED 1821.

EXHIBITION,
1829.

MODERN WORKS OF ART.

OPEN FROM NINE IN THE MORNING UNTIL DUSK.

ADMITTANCE ONE SHILLING.—CATALOGUE ONE SHILLING.

SEASON TICKETS FIVE SHILLINGS.

BIRMINGHAM:

THOMAS KNOTT, JUN. PRINTER.



Fig. 29. Title page of the Birmingham Society of Arts exhibition catalogue, 1829

CATALOGUE.

GREAT ROOM.

No.		PAINTERS-	
	1 CATO	<i>Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.</i>	
2	Christ Walking on the Waters ..	<i>F. Danby, R.A.</i>	20.
3	Landscape	<i>T. Wright</i>	
4	Portrait of Sir John Franklin, R. N.	<i>T. Phillips, R.A.</i>	70.
5	Storm on the Coast of Newfoundland	<i>S. Williamson</i>	
6	Scene from a German Drama ..	<i>H. Fuseli, R.A.</i>	
7	Dead Game	<i>J. Sillett</i>	25.
8	Martha and Mary	<i>M. Williams</i>	20.
9	Portrait of the late Hon. and Right Rev. Edward Legge, Bishop of Oxford, begun by the late <i>T. Oscew, R.A.</i> finished by <i>J. Partridge</i>		
10	Dancing Bear	<i>W. F. Witherington</i>	100.
11	Crossing the Brook	<i>J. J. Chalon, A.R.A.</i>	100.
12	Landscape	<i>P. Reinagle, R.A.</i>	
13	View at Moseley	<i>T. Creswick</i>	
14	Dunrobin Castle, Sutherlandshire	<i>W. Daniell, R.A.</i>	
15	The Market Girl	<i>J. F. Poole</i>	7.
16	A Study of Rams' Heads	<i>Edwin Landseer, A.R.A.</i>	
17	Dutch Boats on the Thames	<i>A. W. Callcott, R.A.</i>	
18	The Trial of King Charles the First in West- minster Hall	<i>J. Ramsay</i>	

When Cooke, the Solicitor-General, opened the pleadings, the King gently tapped him on the shoulder with his cane, saying, "Hold, hold!" At the same moment the silver bowl of the case fell off and rolled on the floor.—*See Lloyd's History of England.*

Fig. 30. Entry for Lawrence's Kemble as Cato in the 1829 Birmingham Society of Arts exhibition catalogue (no. 1)

The *Cato* was still in Lawrence's possession at the time of the artist's death in 1830; and in the major retrospective exhibition of his work staged the same year at the British Institution, it was prominently displayed alongside other celebrated portraits from the Royal and other notable collections (Figs. 31-33)³¹.

³¹ British Institution 1830, 15 (67)

British Institution

FOR PROMOTING THE

FINE ARTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

FOUNDED, JUNE 4, 1805,

OPENED, JANUARY 18, 1806.

THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY,

PATRON.

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN, K. T.

PRESIDENT.

THE LORD FARNBOROUGH, G. C. B.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM NICOL, CLEVELAND-ROW, ST. JAMES'S.

1830.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

OLD MASTERS -
LAWRENCE

Fig. 31. Title page of the catalogue of the Lawrence exhibition at the British Institution, 1830

CATALOGUE
 OF THE
 WORKS
 OF THE LATE
SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE,
 P. R. A.

North Room.
North End.

The whole of the Pictures in this Room were painted by Order of HIS MAJESTY for
THE WATERLOO GALLERY AT WINDSOR.

The Numbers on the Pictures commence at the Upper End of the North Room; and in the Middle and
 South Rooms, at the North End, on the left hand.

No.		Proprietor.
1	HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY GEORGE THE FOURTH	HIS MAJESTY.
2	SMALL PORTRAIT OF HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY GEORGE THE FOURTH	HIS MAJESTY.
3	The Prince Metternich — — — —	HIS MAJESTY.
4	General Tchernicheff — — — —	HIS MAJESTY.
5	General Overoff — — — —	HIS MAJESTY.
6	The Earl Bathurst, K. G. — — — —	HIS MAJESTY.

Fig. 32. Catalogue of the Lawrence exhibition at the British Institution, 1830F

No.					Proprietors.
56	Right Hon. George Canning	—	—	—	<i>Rt. Hon. Sir R. Peel, Bt.M.P.</i>
57	Right Hon. John Wilson Croker, M. P.				<i>Rt. Hon. J. W. Croker, M. P.</i>
58	Miss Croker	—	—	—	<i>Rt. Hon. J. W. Croker, M. P.</i>
59	Miss Murray	—	—	—	<i>Rt. Hon. Sir G. Murray, M. P.</i>
60	The Duke of Bedford	—	—	—	<i>The Duke of Bedford.</i>
61	The late Sir Thomas Lawrence, P. R. A.				HIS MAJESTY.

DRAWINGS.

62	Mrs. Wolfe	—	—	—	<i>Miss Croft.</i>
63	The Hon. Miss Upton	—	—	—	<i>Viscount Templetown.</i>
64	The Countess Rosalie	—	—	—	<i>John Meredith, Esq.</i>
65	The late Duchess of Devonshire	—	—	—	<i>The Duke of Devonshire.</i>
66	The Cardinal Gonsalvi	—	—	—	<i>The Marquess of Bristol.</i>

South Room.

North End.

67	The late John Kemble in the character of Cato				<i>A. Keightley, Esq.</i>
68	Lady Wigram	—	—	—	<i>Sir Robert Wigram, Bart.</i>
69	The Lord Seaham	—	—	—	<i>Marquess of Londonderry.</i>

Fig. 33. Entry for Lawrence's Kemble as Cato in the catalogue of the 1830 Lawrence exhibition at the British Institution

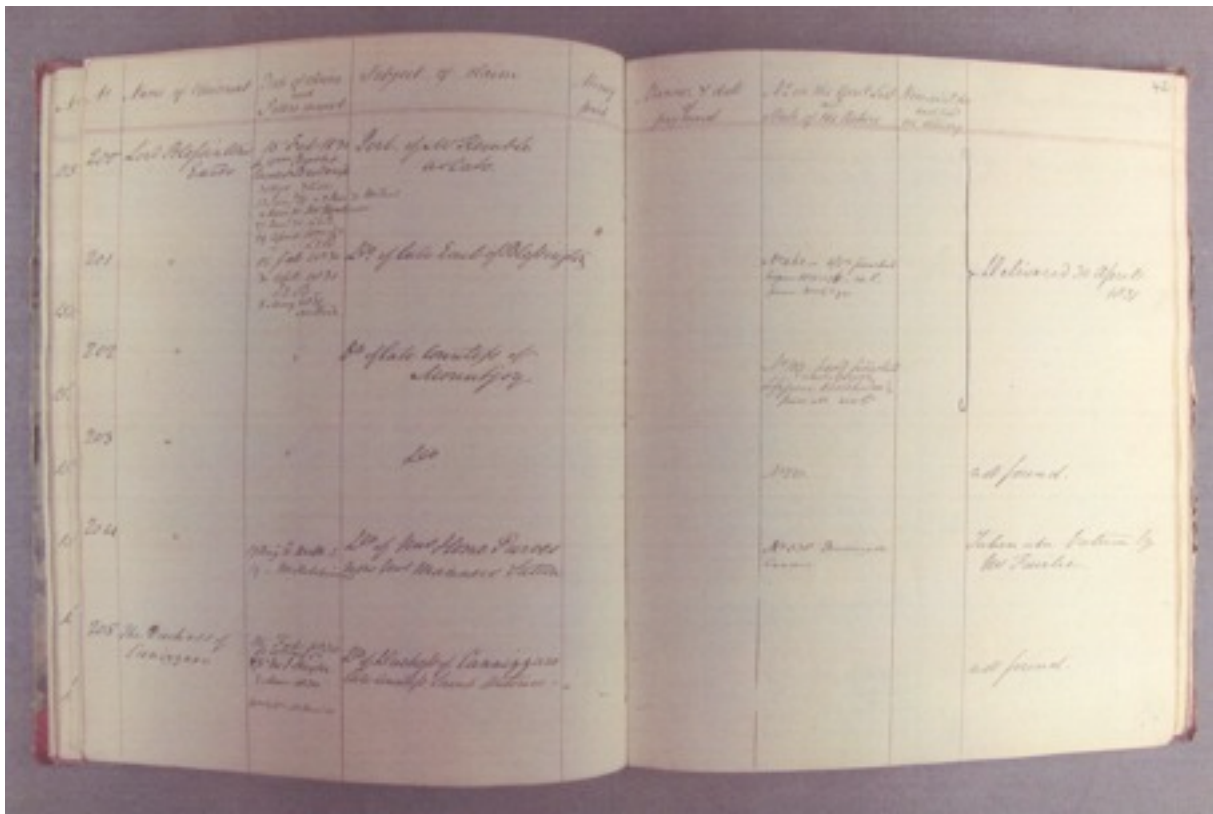


Fig. 34. Account book of Sir Thomas Lawrence's executor showing claim by Lord Blessington's executors for the Kemble portrait and other works (National Art Library)

Following the exhibition the picture was reclaimed by the executors of Lord Blessington's estate, along with other works belonging to the late Earl³². The papers of Lawrence's executor, Archibald Keightly, preserved in the National Art Library, reveal that the *Cato* was claimed by Lord Blessington's executors on 15 February 1830, and that it was returned on 30 April 1831 (Figs. 34-35)³³.

³² NAL, MS 86 FF 17, 41-2, No. 200. The other pictures claimed by the executors were a portrait of Lord Blessington, another of his first wife, the late Lady Mountjoy, another of the same sitter, and an unfinished portrait of Mrs Home Purves

³³ NAL, MS 86 FF 17, 41-2, No. 200; NAL, MS 86 FF 18, 86, No. 200-1-2. Receipt was acknowledged by, among others, the comte d'Orsay

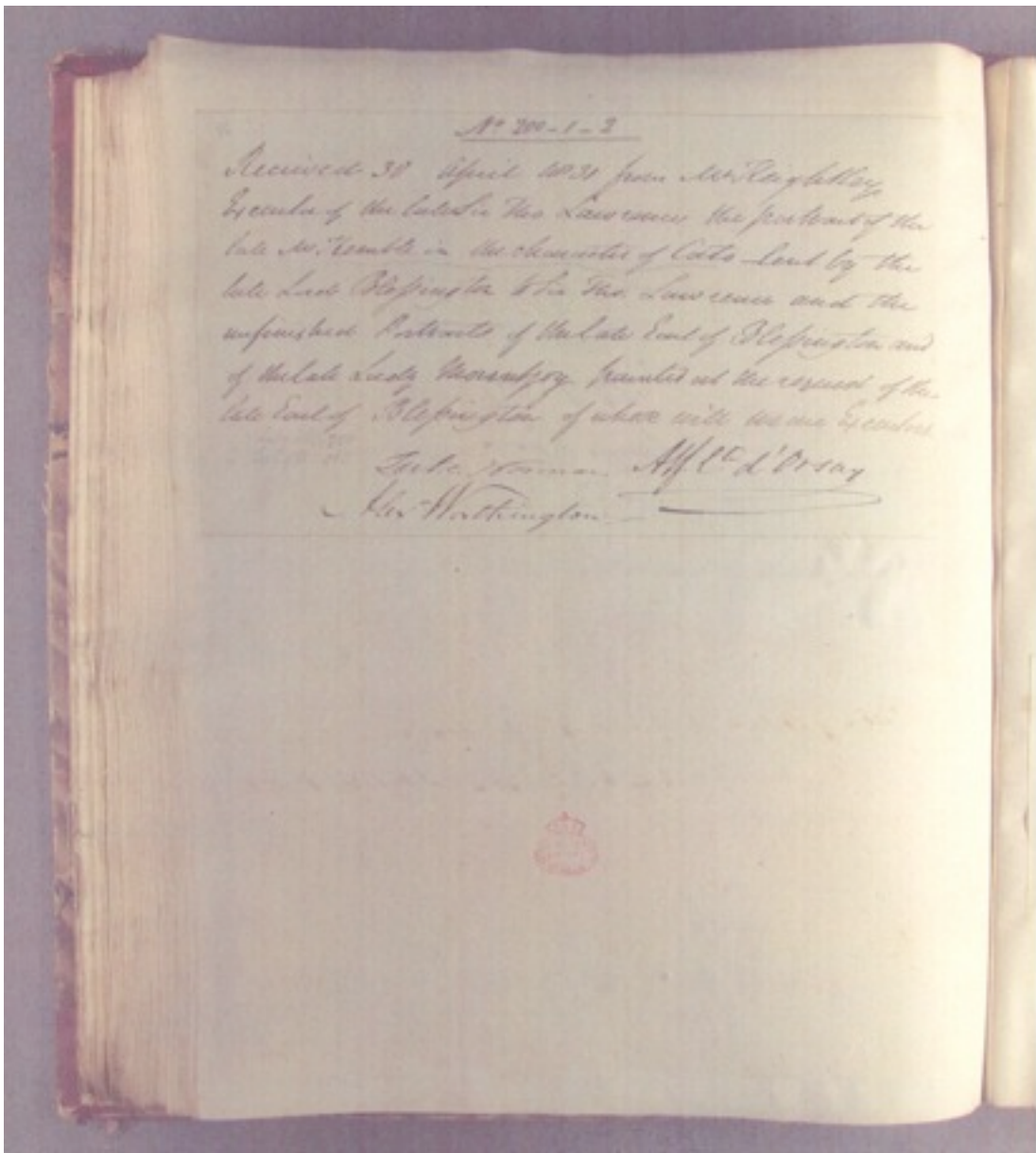


Fig. 35. Receipt book of Sir Thomas Lawrence's executor recording delivery of the Kemble portrait to Lord Blessington's executors (National Art Library)



Fig. 36. John Burton Philips, by George Richmond

Some time afterwards the picture was sold to John Burton Philips, of the Heath House, Staffordshire, heir to a considerable textile fortune and a keen patron and collector. The transaction almost certainly took place shortly after 1831. Certainly the picture was not among those sold at auction from the Blessington collection in 1838 and 1849³⁴.

³⁴ Rainy, London, 6 Mar. 1838; Phillips, London, 7-26 May 1849



Fig. 37. The Heath House, Staffordshire, from a contemporary print of the house begun in 1836

At the Heath House, Staffordshire, the portrait took its place among a distinguished collection of early Victorian paintings acquired by John Burton Philips at Royal Academy and other exhibitions, as well as Old Master paintings which he purchased on the Grand Tour. The setting for the picture was a house of Tudor design by Thomas Johnson of Lichfield, which Philips built on the site of an earlier family seat in 1836-40.

The portrait was placed in the Dining Room, where it is recorded in a photograph of 1902 (fig. 38) , preserved among the Philips family's private archives, and again in a photograph published in *Country Life* in 1963 (fig. 39).

Exhibited at the Royal Opera House in 1983, the portrait has otherwise remained on private view at the Heath House since its acquisition in the 1830s.



Fig. 38. The Dining Room, The Heath House, Staffordshire, 1902, showing the Lawrence portrait in situ



Fig. 39. The Dining Room, The Heath House, Staffordshire, 1963, showing the Lawrence portrait in situ



Photo © The National Gallery, London.

Fig. 8. Queen Charlotte, by Lawrence (National Gallery)



Fig. 9. George IV, by Lawrence (Wallace Collection)



Fig. 10. Pope Pius VII, by Lawrence (Royal Collection)



*Fig. 23. Kemble as Hamlet, by Lawrence
(Tate Gallery)*



*Fig. 24. Kemble as Coriolanus, by
Lawrence (Guildhall Art Gallery)*



Fig. 25. Kemble as Rolla in Sheridan's Pizarro (formerly Nelson-Rockhill Gallery, Kansas)