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- ¹ On July 5, 1770, South Carolina raised its first public sculpture. Representing the English statesman William Pitt the Elder in the mode of a classical orator, the marble statue stood on a pedestal at the intersection of Meeting and Broad Streets, in the public heart of Charleston (fig. 1). *The South Carolina Gazette* reported on the fanfare that accompanied the installation, but the joyous crowds needed little reminder of the circumstances that had brought the statue to the city. In 1765, the British Parliament had passed the Stamp Act, one of the first taxes to inspire widespread protest in the colonies, including South Carolina; in 1766, it had revoked the Act following Pitt's impassioned defense of colonial rights. When reports of the Stamp Act's repeal reached Charleston, the South Carolina Assembly moved to erect a statue of Pitt. Upon its delivery from London, the monument was seen as an embodiment of British liberties. A flag above the statue hailed "PITT AND LIBERTY"; below, an inscription on the pedestal heralded Pitt's support of American freedoms. The *Gazette* seized the moment to solicit subscriptions for "Liberty, a Poem, dedicated to the Sons of Liberty in South-Carolina."²

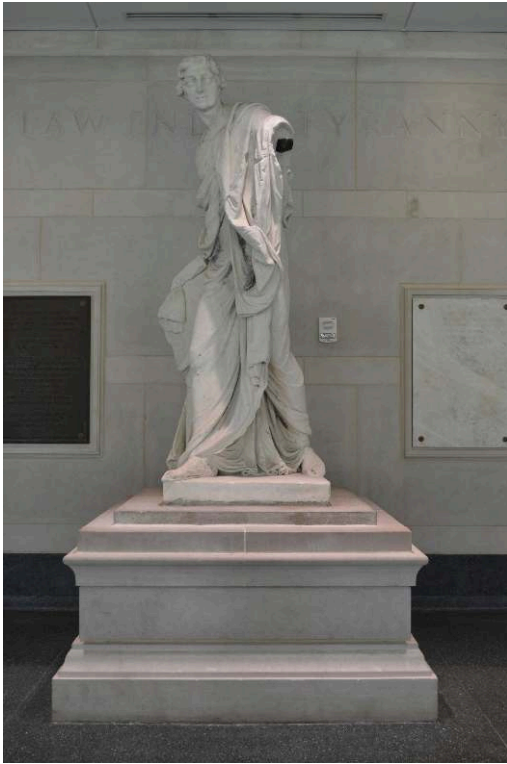


Fig. 1. Joseph Wilton, *William Pitt the Elder*, marble, 1770. Photograph by the author.

- 2 Even as it celebrated this remarkable event, however, the newspaper nonchalantly reported the everyday transactions of chattel slavery in the colony. Slave traders advertised auctions “at the usual place in Charles-Town,” the site so well-known to locals that it did not warrant mention. Storekeepers marketed “Negro Cloth” in various colors to those who sought to clothe their slaves cheaply. Slave owners detailed the appearances of runaways to aid in their recapture. Printers’ ornaments further reinforced the visibility of enslaved bodies, illustrating sales and runaway notices (fig. 2).³

To be SOLD at public Vendue,
At Mr. LEVY'S, near CHARLES-TOWN, on THURSDAY the
Second of AUGUST next, at Eleven o'Clock in the Forenoon,

T W E N T Y - O N E
L I K E L Y P L A N T A T I O N
S L A V E S ;
B E L O N G I N G to **W I L L I A M**
C O A C H M A N , E s q ; deceased, among
 which are, some likely Boys, one Bricklayer, and one Cooper.
And on the 9th of AUGUST following will be sold at the Plan-
tation called COATBAW, in St. JOHN'S-PARISH.

A **P A R C E L** of Household Furniture, Cattle,
 Riding Chairs, one large well-built deck'd Scooner, that
 carries 110 Barrels of Rice; a Parcel of Bricks ready burnt, at
 a good Landing, with a large Quantity of Cart Rings and
 Boxes, old Iron, &c. Credit will be given to the 1st of January
 1771, paying Interest and giving Security. The Property of
 nothing to be altered, till the Conditions are complied with
JAMES COACHMAN, Executor.

Fig. 2. Advertisement, *The South Carolina Gazette*, July 5, 1770. Courtesy, Accessible Archives Inc.[®], *The South Carolina Gazette*, South Carolina Newspapers online database, July 5, 1770 issue, advertisement. © <http://www.accessible-archives.com/>

- 3 Such texts were gruesomely commonplace in the *Gazette*, but perceptions of the Pitt statue as an emblem of liberty drew the cruel paradoxes of Charleston's slave society into relief. Charleston was a mercantile city, built on the profits of rice and indigo farming, and its wealthy white residents styled themselves and their material culture after the English aristocracy. It was also the largest slave-trading port in the Northern colonies. Nearly half of all Africans forcibly brought to the territories that became the United States were sold through Charleston, and half the city's population was enslaved.⁴ The early years of Pitt's statue coincided with a noticeable spike in the trade. In spring 1769, no fewer than seventeen slave ships arrived in the harbor with human cargo.⁵ In 1772, local slave traders reaped their highest profits ever, as planters expanded their crops—and their demand for enslaved labor—into frontier lands.⁶ Within another two years, the city's black population numbered more than six thousand.⁷ White visitors persistently commented on the presence of enslaved and creole Africans—and a small number of free blacks—in the city's markets, streets, churches, and wharves. As tourists observed, and as Maurie D. McInnis has underscored, "the city's visual culture is incomprehensible without also understanding the commitment to slavery as the basis of its social structure."⁸
- 4 The Pitt statue materialized these racial inequities. This essay expands beyond established histories of the sculpture's commission and reception to explore its location and significance in the black-majority city (fig. 3).⁹ Like much scholarship about spectacle and spectatorship, including articles in this special issue of the *European Journal of American Studies*, my arguments build on the formative work of Michel Foucault and a vast literature about vision and power.¹⁰ Analyzing evidence including newspapers, prints, and the statue itself—and engaging critical studies of

empire, race, and urban space—I examine how the Pitt monument functioned in the late eighteenth century as a spectacle of whiteness, reflecting the racial politics of elite Charlestonians. At the same time, I suggest, the statue illuminated the uneasy cultures of surveillance, discipline, and display that linked black and white bodies across the city. From its perch at the symbolic center of the urban landscape, the marble figure of Pitt exposed the implicated nature of neoclassical sculpture and transatlantic slavery. To see how the statue emerged from this system, we must look first to London.

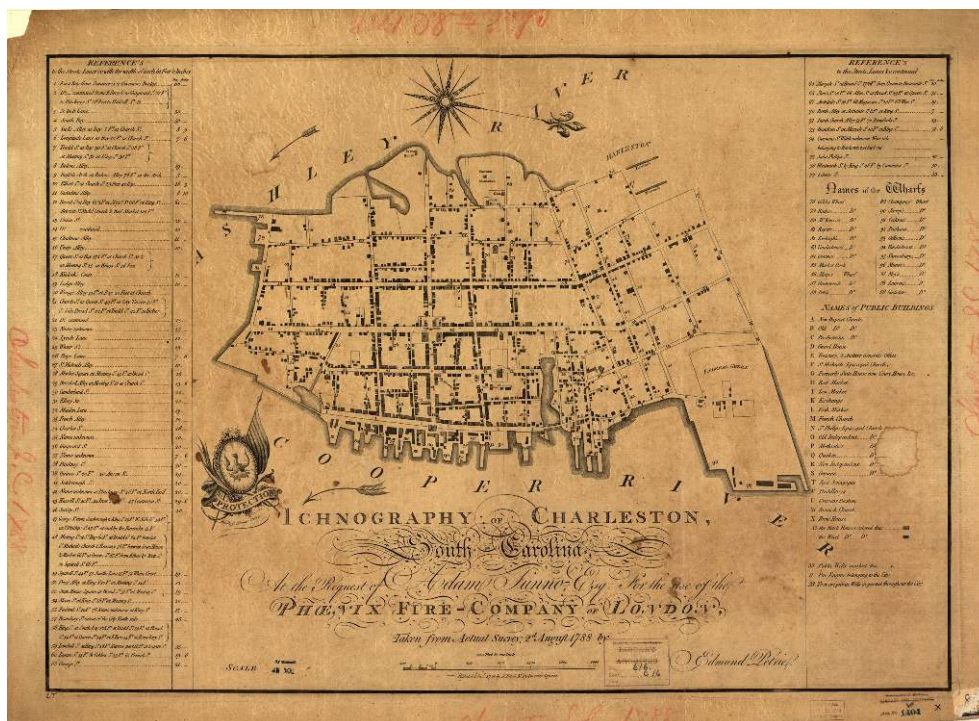


Fig. 3. Edmund Petrie, Adam Tunno, and Phoenix Fire-Company Of London, *Ichnography of Charleston, South-Carolina*: at the request of Adam Tunno, Esq., for the use of the Phoenix Fire-Company of London, taken from actual survey, 2d August. [London: E. Petrie, 1790.] Courtesy, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

1. London

- 5 The Stamp Act's repeal catalyzed South Carolinians to honor Pitt, but their efforts were grounded in a much longer history of the colony's economic and cultural ties to England. Throughout the eighteenth century, Charleston merchants developed commercial relations with major London businesses, exchanging slaves and agricultural exports for the luxury dry goods – textiles, silver, ceramics—that enabled elite planters and city-dwellers to perform a creolized version of British gentility.¹¹ Trade with Britain helped fund and furnish Charleston's major houses of worship: St. Philip's Church was financed by taxes levied on the export of slaves and sugary liquors; St. Michael's Church, designed after London's St. Martin-in-the-Fields, was fitted with an organ, chancel rail, and other ornaments purchased from England.¹² The wealthiest colonists sent their sons to English schools, commissioned portraits from British painters, and maintained houses in London, where they frequented a coffeehouse aptly named the Carolina.¹³

- 6 The Seven Years' War strengthened these connections and encouraged American attachments to the figure of Pitt. In the thick of wartime, Carolinians increased their markets for rice, indigo, and slaves, and, like Britons throughout the empire, they credited Pitt for their growing fortunes.¹⁴ As a cabinet minister from 1757 to 1761, Pitt had superintended the defeat of French forces in the Atlantic theater, thereby expanding Britain's colonial territories and its Atlantic trade. Known as the "Great Commoner" before the war, he became an even greater hero to merchants and the middling classes. His stature surged again during the Stamp Act crisis, when he took to the floor in January 1766 to assert that Britain had "no right to lay a tax upon the colonies."¹⁵ Charleston, which had witnessed intimidating actions against residents suspected of harboring stamped paper, cheered the Act's repeal, and on May 8, 1766, the South Carolina Assembly voted to memorialize Pitt with a statue.¹⁶ Leaders of the backcountry Regulator Movement mocked the costly appropriations for the statue, urging the colony to invest its money in rural courts, schools, and agriculture.¹⁷ But their protests were in vain: Pitt was intractably linked to South Carolina's material fortunes. Even the figurehead of a new vessel named the *Liberty*—its hold designed to transport 1000 barrels of rice harvested by enslaved laborers—portrayed the beloved leader.¹⁸
- 7 In London, by contrast, both the man and his statue became subjects of critical derision. This little-known aspect of the sculpture's early history merits exploration, for it points to a British audience engaged with Carolina politics. It also suggests how differently the statue signified before it reached Charleston.
- 8 The Assembly could not have anticipated the backlash that ensued when reports of the commission reached England in the summer of 1766. Since the previous January, when Pitt had railed against the Stamp Act, writers had been speculating that the colonies would be sending to London for statues. Thomas Hollis, a prominent Whig and Pitt ally, urged British subjects to "erect a Statue to that Man in the Metropolis of your dominions! Place a garland of oak leaves on the Pedestal and grave in it CONCORD."¹⁹ Pitt had many enemies as well as friends, however, and several expressed their disdain in sculptural parodies. One critic sniped that the bust of "a great Commoner" had already been displaced by one of "a northern Earl" (Lord Bute, a loyal advisor to George III) at a famous "Temple of British Worthies."²⁰ Another, reflecting on the violence of American responses to the Stamp Act, lampooned Pitt's wisdom in strengthening colonial militias during the Seven Years' War. "Does not this most excellent regulation deserve a statue?" he sarcastically posed.²¹ In an especially inventive satire, members of a fictitious social club suggested that Pitt himself should be shipped to America. "What, Sir, shall the mother country send representatives to the colonies! It is unconstitutional to the last degree. Let the Gentleman go in person!" The proper medium for representing Pitt also provided comedic fodder: "it cannot be supposed, that the colonists can afford to raise statues of gold and silver, when they can't pay the stamp tax." So did matters of posture. Mr. "Seemore" recommended "the *attitude* in which the honourable Gentleman conquered America, standing with a rhetorical inclination of the body, and his right foot on the floor."²²
- 9 Unfortunately for the eager South Carolinians, news of their desire for a statue of Pitt reached London just as the man's reputation reached its nadir. In July 1766, George III reinstated Pitt as Prime Minister and awarded him a peerage. The Great Commoner became the Earl of Chatham. Public condemnation swiftly ensued, and some critics

used the Carolina commission to channel their attacks. One newspaper predicted that Americans would tear down their ill-advised monuments: “That at Charles-Town will share the fate of the self-murderer; it will be buried in the centre of four cross ways.”²³ Others suggested inscriptions for imagined pedestals pointedly honoring the “late Great Commoner.”²⁴ “A Friend to America” issued an urgent rebuke to Charlestonians: “You idolize a man whom you do not know... After this will your assembly persist in their precipitate vote, to erect a statue to a man who has given up his honour, and is despised[?]” Statues, the writer warned, were “dangerous things, [for] they impress the people’s minds with slavery.”²⁵ In this case, slavery meant the loss of white freemen’s rights in surrender to an idolatrous political force.²⁶

- 10 It bears noting that these spectacles of Pitt statues were entirely fantastical. Sculptors had produced busts of Pitt for private collections, and he had long been a favorite subject of British printmakers, who variously caricatured him on crutches (Pitt suffered from debilitating gout), as a tyrannical colossus, or alongside allegorical figures of Liberty. But only one period etching represented a public monument to Pitt – and it was a fictional one, at that.²⁷ Rather, in conjuring up specters of formidable statues, Pitt’s critics were seeing forms entirely in the mind’s eye, projecting significance onto sculptures that had not yet been created. This did not mean that such mental images were unimportant; on the contrary, they participated in a transatlantic imaginary, a visual culture that sent both verbal descriptions and engraved likenesses of Pitt as far away as Charleston.²⁸
- 11 Some measure of the effect of such discursive imagery is provided by the South Carolinians’ heated response to the “Friend to America.” Rejecting the “generous and indefatigable pains” that British writers had taken to “vilify and bespatter Lord Chatham,” the Assembly doubled down. The well-meaning cautions of the “Friend” backfired, sending the legislators into a collective brainstorm about the statue’s appearance, and prompting them to issue precise instructions to their London agent, Charles Garth.²⁹
- 12 Surviving correspondence between the Assembly, Garth, and the sculptor he recommended for the job—Joseph Wilton, an enterprising artist who had trained on the Continent and secured the appointment of Sculptor in Ordinary to King George III—demonstrates that the statue’s form and material were priorities from the outset. Garth conveyed iconographical particulars to Wilton: the Assembly wanted a figure “at full length in a Speaking attitude and suitable Dress with a Roll in one Hand, inscribed Magna Carta, and a proper Pedestal for it.”³⁰ It also stipulated that the sculpture should be carved from marble, which, as cultured Charlestonians knew, conveyed associations with classical antiquity. In addition, marble was a decidedly practical material. It had to be “as hard, solid and smoothly polished as possible” in order to withstand “the many sudden and violent showers of Rain that happen here in the summer time” and the “piercing and intense heats of the Sun.” Such weather could exploit “cracks and less solid parts, scale and moulder [sic] them away, and thereby soon spoil the beauty of the statue.”³¹
- 13 The statue’s location was likewise important to patron and sculptor. An interior placement was briefly explored, but Wilton favored “an open place or Square,” providing a sketch indicating how it could help “form a Vista from the avenues of several large Streets.” His enthusiasm for this option was informed by his years of training in Italy: “Public Monuments or Statues, erected judiciously in a City, adds

greatly to it's [sic] Elegance and Dignity... opinion was that by as much as the Statues of the Heroes were increased in their Size, by so much was the merit and abilities of those Heroes, enhanced in the Ideas of the Beholders; and the examples which prove this rational notion of that Great People, are very frequent in Italy."³² Wilton's hopes were confirmed when the Assembly determined to put the statue "in the most public part" of the town, "where two of the broadest and longest of our streets, that run east and west, and north and south, intersect each other at right angles... In the cross-way of these two streets, the statue is proposed to be placed, and will have our new church, our new market, the state-house, and armory (all public buildings) at the several corners next to it."³³

- 14 Wilton also won his case for a larger-than-life monument: the statue measured seven and a half feet tall.³⁴ Its design suggests how Wilton planned for viewpoints near and far, for it skillfully balances general shapes with details carved at eye level. Spiraling upward out of a conical mass, and bestriding the corners of the pedestal, Pitt appeared to be moving vigorously, one arm extended in the oratorical convention of *adlocutio*.³⁵ Swells of drapery around his torso, carved in broadly vertical planes, energized the interplay of polished surfaces and deep shadows in Charleston's sun. A carved tree trunk helped support the figure, but subtle details (now barely visible) worked to distract the eye from this functional purpose: a scroll invited reading, and a medal displayed a figure of Liberty.³⁶ Behind, a cascade of intricate leaves recalled Hollis's wish that statues of Pitt would be ornamented with oak—a traditional emblem of strength in British culture, indeed the national tree of England (fig. 4). In addition to allying Pitt with this venerable symbolism, Wilton cleverly located the oak leaves where spectators could easily see them, drawing viewers close to admire his virtuoso technique.



Fig. 4. Detail of Wilton, *William Pitt*. Photograph by the author.

- 15 By the time the statue was ready to ship, public opinion about Pitt's peerage had mellowed, and Wilton's sculpture attracted kinder notice. In 1769, one admirer complimented the artistry as "equal to anything of the kind hitherto executed in this kingdom," and a printmaker appropriated Wilton's design to champion the populist politician John Wilkes (fig. 5).³⁷ Wilkes, who was engaged in a contentious election, appears in a toga and pose imitating Pitt; he even holds the Magna Carta in his right hand. The pedestal features another telling detail: a palmetto. The tree signified the Carolinas, and its depiction cued the knowledgeable spectator to identify Wilkes with Wilton's statue.³⁸



Fig. 5. *The Patriot—Dedicated to the Freeholders of Middlesex*, etching, 1769. Courtesy, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-45405.

- 16 It was an unwittingly prophetic analogy. Scholars have demonstrated that, when the statue reached Charleston, it was triumphantly received by a city that had become as devoted to Wilkes as it was to Pitt. In 1769, the Assembly pledged a substantial sum from the colonial treasury to a charitable group in London that had formed to help Wilkes relieve his debts. It was an audacious assertion of political sovereignty by the Assembly's radical members, and it precipitated a lengthy standoff with royal authorities that further emboldened local support for Wilkes. To no one's surprise, then, Charleston's Club No. 45—named for the 45th issue of the *North Briton*, Wilkes's seditious publication of 1763—took the lead in welcoming the Pitt statue to the city, elevating the flag inscribed "PITT AND LIBERTY" 45 feet above the monument and raising 45 toasts at a celebratory dinner. The phrase evoked Wilkes in both syntax and sentiment: "Wilkes and Liberty!" was a familiar refrain in British politics. "Obviously," as Joan Coudu has remarked, "the Pitt statue no longer represented solely Pitt's contributions to perpetuating British liberty."³⁹

2. The Civic Square

- 17 Arguably, the Pitt statue always represented more than the British savior of colonial interests. From the moment of its conception through its years at Meeting and Broad streets, the statue monumentalized the racial hegemonies that organized the slave city. Although Coutu and other scholars have expertly documented the history of the commission, the statue's origin and locus within South Carolina's slave economy has gone unexamined.⁴⁰
- 18 The statue's arrival in late May 1770 and its elevation in early July occasioned spectacles unlike anything the city had previously experienced. Much of this history is documented in the *South Carolina Gazette*, the colony's longest-running and most widely-circulated newspaper, with readership stretching throughout the Southeast and even to England.⁴¹ The *Gazette* described the excited crowds, numbering "some hundreds," that gathered to carry the sculpture by hand from the wharves to an armory, where it remained while the pedestal was prepared.⁴² Six weeks later, "almost the whole of the inhabitants" watched as the statue was raised on its scaffolding and listened as officials presented speeches, toasts, and cannon salutes.⁴³ White residents of Charleston understood the significance of being seen at such exhibitions. Ann Manigault, a member of the colony's richest family, duly attended the installation: "Mr. Pitte statue raised," she wrote in her journal.⁴⁴ In contrast to this perfunctory note, a ship's captain apologized publicly for being "out of town when Lord Chatham's statue was landed" and therefore not flying flags on his vessel in celebration.⁴⁵
- 19 It is unclear whether enslaved people attended these events, but a more inclusive view of Charleston life during this period reveals how the statue was entangled in the systems of power and money that maintained their bondage. Three weeks before the statue was unloaded, a runaway named Bristol was captured at the Goose Creek plantation of Peter Manigault and brought to Charleston's workhouse, where slaves were routinely detained and punished. The notice in the *Gazette* explicitly described Bristol's body: the "country marks on each side [of] his face and breast, his ears bo'a'd, no beard."⁴⁶ Bristol's very name referenced the English port in which thousands of Africans were sold. A runaway named for another slave trading city—London—had so far evaded capture.⁴⁷ Manigault, for his part, was one of the colony's largest slaveholders—and one of the assemblymen who had voted to commission the statue. So was Charles Elliott, the owner of the plantation at which a runaway named Mary was believed to be hiding on May 29, and Benjamin Waring, who had a plantation near where Scipio, "a negro fellow of the Mondingo country," was found on June 12.⁴⁸ Collectively, the profits derived from the Atlantic networks of these men helped make Charleston the wealthiest city in colonial North America and fattened the treasury that paid for the statue. Manigault also played a prominent role at the statue's dedication: as Speaker of the Assembly, he had the honor of reciting the pedestal's inscription, a text that congratulated the colonial legislature as much as it did Pitt. Meanwhile, nearby at the "usual place" near the bottom of Broad Street, auctioneers prepared for the upcoming sale of "two cooks—two washer-women—one seamstress—a good shoemaker—a valuable porter—and several handy boys and girls."⁴⁹
- 20 Pitt's statue defined an axis connecting these urban landscapes of free and enslaved Charleston. Located, according to the Assembly's plans, at the intersection of Meeting and Broad streets, the statue marked a place at once historical and ideological (fig. 6).

The original city plan—the “Grand Modell” of the 1680s—had designated two acres of land for a Civic Square and public buildings precisely where the statue was installed.⁵⁰ During the early eighteenth century, the area was a liminal crossroads where visitors passed through the city gate and hawked their wares at a market.⁵¹ By the 1760s, it boasted the structures that the city’s founders had intended and that the Assembly wanted the statue to adjoin: the State House, the city’s Guard House, St. Michael’s Church, and a new market. Tourists duly stopped to admire the buildings, some pausing to study the “handsome stone sculpture” at the intersection.⁵²

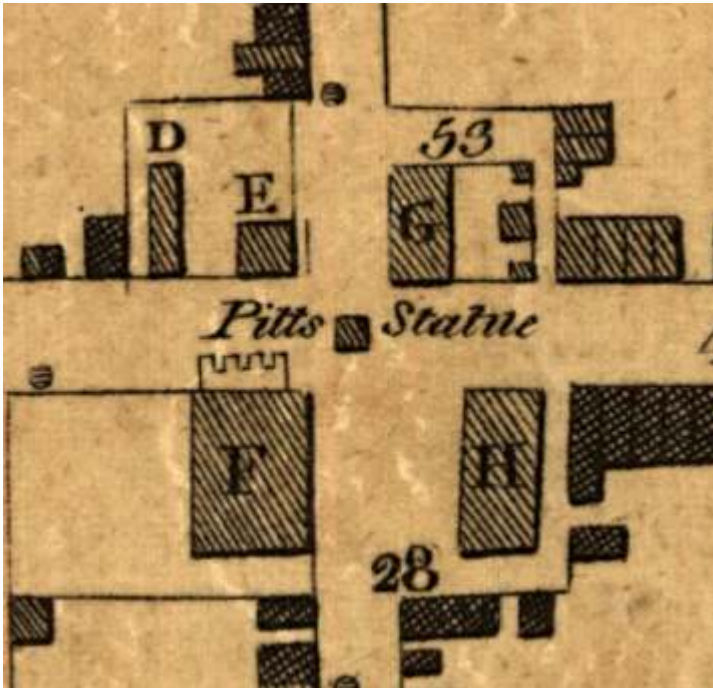


Fig. 6. Detail of *Ichnography of Charleston*. Courtesy, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

- 21 Three of these structures warrant closer consideration, for the statue effectively centered the authority they represented. St. Michael’s Church, completed in the early 1760s, marked the southeast corner. Its neoclassical appearance materialized the wealth of the merchants and attorneys—every one of them an assemblyman in the 1750s—who helped finance its construction.⁵³ From its tall steeple, spectators could see the Lowcountry plantations that helped make these men rich. Sailors aboard trading vessels and slave ships kept a lookout for the bell tower as they approached the harbor; tourists climbed its stairs to take in the vista as well as the people below. Such was the seductive effect of the view that even sharp-eyed critics such as the abolitionist Harriet Martineau, visiting in 1835, experienced “the groups of mulattoes” and “the women with turbaned heads, surmounted with water-pots and baskets of fruit” as specimens of picturesque “wonder.”⁵⁴ Religious beacon and geographical landmark, St. Michael’s steeple also functioned as a panoptic mechanism, framing and containing the sights within its purview.
- 22 An even more explicit instrument of surveillance occupied the southwest corner across Meeting Street: the city’s Guard House. Completed in 1767, as Wilton was beginning his work in London, the formidable building held both white and black suspects awaiting trial, but it existed primarily to control the enslaved population. It housed the City Guard, which patrolled the streets, enforced laws, and sounded nightly curfews that

sent fearful slaves rushing back to their quarters. A visiting Englishman emphasized that its ultimate purpose was “to watch and crush any attempt” of slave insurrection.⁵⁵ White Charlestonians worried continually about the potential for uprisings, especially when slaves dared to imagine, as they had during the Stamp Act crisis and the Revolution, that they could share in colonials’ hopes for political liberty.⁵⁶

- 23 The State House, where legislators had voted to raise Pitt’s statue, commanded the northwest corner of Civic Square. It shared a history with St. Michael’s—a colonial governor had authorized the construction of both buildings on the same day in 1751—and it complemented the neoclassical facades of its neighbors.⁵⁷ This stylistic cohesion was hardly accidental. Rather, as art historians have argued, it served the political interests of the colony’s slaveholders. The public architecture of white columns, capitals, and pediments referenced the classical values of harmony, law, and education that many Charlestonians deliberately cultivated; further, it enabled a defense of slavery, reinforcing popular comparisons between the slaveholding societies of the ancient Roman past and the colonial present. Neoclassicism would remain a politicized aesthetic in the United States through the nineteenth century, visualizing ideologies of beauty, imperialism, and race.⁵⁸
- 24 Staring down at passers-by, costumed in Roman garb, the Pitt statue completed this environment of optical discipline. Its location suggests how sculpture at once alters and is altered by its spatial context. If the statue’s original purpose had been to memorialize a distant statesman, now it gave human form to the institutions of state and civic power that defined the square. From an approach along Meeting Street or Broad Street, the monument pulled the eyes toward the center of governance. In Civic Square, where it faced east, as shown in a watercolor drawing by Charles Fraser (fig. 7), observers at the Statehouse or Guard House saw the back of the finely carved figure: one arm raised in oratorical confidence, the other balanced atop the Magna Carta, it reified their faith in British civil liberties.⁵⁹ The statue’s capacity to energize political feeling was especially well displayed during the Revolution, when tea protests, Palmetto Day celebrations (marking a local victory over British troops), and American soldiers all circled about the base of the pedestal. A year into the war with Britain, the monument had been nicknamed the “statue of Liberty.”⁶⁰ On occasion it provided a site for the denigration of South Carolina’s enemies. In 1774, a stage with effigies of the Pope and the devil was parked temporarily at Pitt’s feet; there, the moveable figures bowed to humiliated Loyalists, rendering their politics dangerously evident to the radicalized onlookers in attendance. In 1794, a pro-French rally at the statue included a figure of the new British prime minister—notably, William Pitt’s son—before it was dragged away to be beaten together with other effigies.⁶¹



Fig. 7. Charles Fraser, “A Scene in the Theater Charleston,” ca. 1793-1796, from the Charles Fraser Sketchbook, p. 38, at the South Carolina Historical Society.

- 25 The bodily contrasts at these street exhibitions—hastily-made scarecrows dangling alongside glistening marble, Pitt the Younger mocked before Pitt the Elder—were among the many incongruities that converged at this site. Even as it refracted the social order of Civic Square, the Pitt statue cycled attention back to the quotidian world of slavery. Following its gaze, one stared down Broad Street to docks crowded with black laborers; to the bayside square where slavers held their vendues; and to the new Exchange House, constructed in 1772 to manage the colony’s imports and exports. If white Charlestonians discerned in this view a reflection of their economic might, they also saw much to unsettle their sense of security. This, too, the Pitt statue made visible.

3. The Landscape of Slavery

- 26 Broad Street was not the only prospect over which the statue looked. A beef market, also known as the Upper Market, occupied the northeast area of Civic Square, and it bustled with enslaved laborers from the city and country. The black presence at the brick structure was typical of market spaces and street corners throughout Charleston. Enslaved butchers dominated sales of meat; cartmen and rivermen transported fish, milk, poultry, and eggs; women peddled fruit, cakes, nuts, and rice, surprising white shoppers by the control they exercised in financial transactions and the favor they demonstrated for other black customers. Glancing up from their work or walking around Civic Square, enslaved individuals formed part of the local audience for the Pitt statue, even as what they thought of it went unmarked in the historical record.⁶²
- 27 The agency that enslaved people exercised in the markets extended to certain other aspects of their lives. Historians have noted that an unusual number of slaves in Charleston hired themselves out as day laborers or vendors, thereby claiming a limited degree of independence.⁶³ Working in the backlots of city mansions, and lodging above kitchens, stores, and carriage houses, they could circumvent the persistent watch of

slave owners. Slaves' privacy in their lived spaces exposed "the vulnerability of elite power at its most intimate point – the house," as Bernard L. Herman has remarked.⁶⁴ Black gatherings in public places likewise stirred unease among white residents. Enslaved and free men gathered to game in the streets; "African-style" funerals progressed through the city; and urban and plantation slaves alike traveled away from their dwellings to attend dances.⁶⁵ Elite Charlestonians occasionally joined these festivities – providing just one example of the proximity of daily life for black and white city-dwellers – although certain activities, such as the comingling of British officers and elegantly dressed enslaved women at an "Ethiopian Ball," tested the bounds of acceptable socialization.⁶⁶

- 28 While there was much about the lived experiences of enslaved people that escaped the notice of newcomers to Charleston, visitors nonetheless registered surprise at the visibility of the black population and shock at the duress endured by enslaved individuals. Johann David Schoepf, a German scientist, noted that "the number of white inhabitants is greatly less than that of the blacks, browns, and yellows to be seen here of all shades"; John Quincy commented, like other observers, on the novelty of slaves' headgear and clothing, but he was startled by black boatmen who "had *nothing on* but their kind of breeches, scarce sufficient for covering."⁶⁷ It is unclear whether Quincy thought their nudity inhumane or merely inappropriate. Others did not suppress their dismay when they saw slaves whipped and families separated for sale. Deploying rhetoric that conveyed the brutal transparency of the slave market—in which people of color were routinely "exposed," "inspected," and "examined"—abolitionists bore witness to the trauma of the auction. For the Scotsman James Stuart, Charleston confounded explanation: "The existence of slavery in its most hideous form, in a country of freedom in most respects, is one of those extraordinary anomalies for which it is impossible to account."⁶⁸
- 29 The Pitt statue functioned as a pivot for the everyday motion of black and white Charlestonians, as well as for the "extraordinary anomalies" of the city's culture. "Fixed in its place," as the *Gazette* reported, it projected the kind of stability and permanence expected of monuments.⁶⁹ This was not an uncommon way of describing a statue's installation, but in Charleston, fixity also connoted the privilege of elite white residents: those who built grand homes to last the ages, cultivated English ancestry, and styled their material life after ancient Roman precedents. Notably, this rhetoric cut a contrast to the continual movements, forcible and autonomous, of enslaved people throughout the colony. The stillness of the monument implied a status quo that the enslaved persistently tried to resist and escape.
- 30 Yet the discursive construction of "fixed" statues also invites us to see how figural monuments and human bodies were ensnared in a common web of visibility. The public focus directed toward the statue's elevation in 1770 was the same vision that was trained on runaways. "All the vessels in the harbor hoisted their colours" when the statue went up on its plinth; at the same time, "two Negro fellows, named Simon and Topsham" remained on the lam, though they had recently been "seen in Town." A "fine branch of laurel" decorated the statue's scaffolding; Topsham looked the part of "a stout well-made fellow, about 30 years of age, 5 feet 5 inches high, and carrie[d] on his back the marks of an old offender" (namely, scars from whippings).⁷⁰ For other runaways, the telltale marks were letters. Bram and June were "said to have exchanged their names," but they could be detected by the brands on their right breasts: "DHE

joined together.”⁷¹ This technology of inscription, which operated to make bodies identifiable, extended through Civic Square, too (if to altogether different ends), where the statue surmounted a pedestal engraved with the names of Pitt and the assemblymen who had fixed it in place.

- 31 The promise of fixity also belied the material vulnerability of the statue. Like humans, sculptures suffered mutilations that could not always be concealed—or, in the case of enslaved people, that slaveholders intended to remain dreadfully evident. In 1780, a cannonball fired from an offshore vessel during a British attack on Charleston destroyed the right arm of the Pitt statue.⁷² Never repaired, the damage mirrored other bodily losses in the city: postwar veterans hobbled by injury, and enslaved individuals bereft of their hands, the monstrous consequence of convictions for theft or perceived affronts to white citizens. A visiting Englishman recounted that, among many slaves “passing and repassing” in the streets, “[I] saw individuals with one hand only.”⁷³ These amputations were meant to serve as warnings to other slaves and as demonstrations of state authority. Marble statues never endured this excruciating physical and mental pain, and the disfigurement of the Pitt statue was merely incidental; however, in its altered appearance, it offered a disturbing reminder of the real violence endured by slaves, evoking, in the manicured space of Civic Square, the horrific practices of maiming elsewhere in the city.
- 32 The statue’s resonance as a surrogate for actual bodies was registered even more obviously in 1794, when it was removed from its pedestal and fell, beheading the figure. A few years earlier, the city council had voted to relocate the monument, bowing to public opinion that it had become an impediment to growing traffic through the intersection of Meeting and Broad Streets. Collective fondness for Pitt, moreover, was not what it had been, for the “Great Commoner” had denounced American independence during the Revolution (he recanted his disapproval shortly before his death in 1778).⁷⁴ Hence, when the statue’s head cracked off, some Charlestonians saw political justice at work. Those inclined to support French Revolutionary politics—possibly the same individuals who debased the effigy of Pitt the Younger at the site—went farther, likening the decapitation to the chop of the guillotine. The “executioners,” mused one writer, “showed no kind of contrition on this melancholy occasion; not even a basket was provided to receive the head; not a single person was observed to dip a handkerchief in the blood, nor will it be at all surprising if the body should remain without interment till the sound of the last trump.”⁷⁵ Tongue-in-cheek, the analogy nonetheless suggests how visual cultures of corporal punishment—ones devised, no less, to sustain political balances of liberty and slavery—linked fleshly and marble bodies around the Atlantic littoral.
- 33 The statue continued to arouse associations with living people even after it was removed to a nearby orphanage and erected, with its head clumsily reattached, on the grounds. In 1835, Harriet Martineau critiqued the lack of industry demonstrated by the orphans (“no employment is attempted which bears any resemblance to what is done by slaves”) as well as the identification badges they wore (“an anti-republican practice which had better be abolished”). “But I wondered the less,” she added, “when I observed the statue of Pitt still standing in the courtyard, with the right arm shot off in the war, however.”⁷⁶ Imperial yet immobile, and in desperate need of work, the battered figure seemed to manifest the contradictions Martineau witnessed inside the building.

- 34 Another account from Martineau—this time, from a slave market—offers a final way to understand the material worlds that connected the bodies of Pitt and those of enslaved people, particularly during the early nineteenth century. Acknowledging the market as “a place which the traveler ought not to avoid to spare his feelings,” Martineau studied a table “on which stood two auctioneers, one with a hammer, the other to display ‘the article’ and count the bids.” Among the people assembled for sale, she was especially moved by the sight of a mother with her children:

I should have thought that her agony of shame and dread would have silenced the tongue of every spectator; but it was not so. A lady chose this moment to turn to me and say, with a cheerful air of complacency, ‘You know my theory, that one race must be subservient to the other. I do not care which; and if the blacks should ever have the upper hand, I should not mind standing on that table, and being sold with two of my children.’ Who could help saying within himself, ‘Would that you were! so that that mother were released!’⁷⁷

- 35 There is much to dissect in Martineau’s troubling report of another white woman imagining an inversion of her familiar racial order: the desiring gaze of the slaveholder, the casual flippancy afforded by freedom, the captivity fantasy stirred by the scene.⁷⁸ Yet it is the image of the woman mounting the auction block, taking the place of the black family, that Martineau compels us to picture, and that holds particular significance for this analysis. In Charleston’s antebellum visual culture, just three sorts of bodies stood on raised platforms with any kind of regularity: white auctioneers, black slaves, and neoclassical statues. Although Pitt’s statue was long gone from Civic Square by the time Martineau visited the city, it remained insistently present atop a pedestal at the orphanage.⁷⁹ And while it had lost its outstretched arm – the gesture that signified public speech – the authority of the orator in Charleston’s slave society remained present and personified in the figure of the auctioneer. Depictions of slave sales showed auctioneers parading above the heads of spectators, their poses uncannily reminiscent of the statue’s configuration: arms aloft, mouths open, feet confidently straddling the space. In Eyre Crowe’s illustration of an outdoor Charleston sale, all lines lead upward to the vertical massing of people on the elevated stand, and the grotesque dynamism of the auctioneer is unmistakably visible within a field of quiet figures closing inward upon themselves (fig. 8).⁸⁰ Like the Pitt statue, the “spectacle” of slave sales, as so many observers put it, reoriented vision within the urban landscape.



Fig. 8. "Slave Sale, Charleston, South Carolina, from a Sketch by Eyre Crowe." From *Illustrated London News*, Nov. 29, 1856. Courtesy, Art and Picture Collection, The New York Public Library.

4. Coda

- 36 By 1770, Charleston had become an Atlantic junction for merchants, traders, sailors, farmers, and consumers—and a gateway for African slaves passing into the Lowcountry and beyond.⁸¹ Given William Pitt's historical role as the architect of Britain's commercial empire, his statue was perversely well placed in the city. Reconstructing the monument's location at Meeting and Broad streets enables a fuller understanding of the many ways in which the statue signified for its divergent audiences: distant critics in London, assemblymen in the State House, and people of African descent who lived and labored throughout Charleston. Yet if slavery had helped raise this monument to liberty, the statue also crystallized the discomfiting mechanisms of a colonial society that deployed vision and visibility as strategies of racial oppression. It laid bare the modalities of sight, correction, exhibition, and evasion that ordered Charleston's slave society, entwining the lives of black and white residents.
- 37 As Martineau's comments at the orphanage indicate, the meanings of statues shift when they move from one location to another. This essay has explored a slice of the Pitt statue's early history, when its elevated position at Civic Square at once reproduced and exposed racial injustices. The statue's later placements invite further study. Over the course of Pitt's long residence at the orphanage, the statue became the subject of nostalgic recollection, remembered—together with the buried foundation of the pedestal, which was rediscovered during street work in 1859—as a sentimental "relic."⁸² In 1881, it was moved to Washington Park, abutting the area of the historic Civic Square, and it remained there for a century, often attracting photographers, until it was temporarily relocated to the Charleston Museum. Today it stands again near its

original location, inside a lobby at the old State House, now the Charleston County Judicial Center. An inscription on an adjacent wall reads, “Where Law Ends, Tyranny Begins.”⁸³ Decades of weathering have worn down the contours of Wilton’s surfaces; an ungainly slice across the neck remains apparent; and both arms are gone. Perhaps most strikingly, the iron armature that once pieced together the torso and limbs protrudes from the statue’s left shoulder (fig. 1). It seems apt that this once-hidden framework is now glaringly noticeable, for, in a wholly inadvertent and richly metaphorical way, it helps to disclose the structures—material, economic, social—that brought the sculpture into being centuries ago.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Natalie Zacek, Jennifer Van Horn, and the anonymous EJAS reviewers for their helpful suggestions on this essay.
2. “Previous notice having been given” and “This day is published,” *The South Carolina Gazette*, July 5, 1770.
3. “To be sold by public outcry,” one of three advertisements for slave sales in this issue in *ibid.*; see also “Brian Cape, has just imported in the ship Liberty”; and “Run away from the subscriber living in Georgia.”
4. Gregory E. O’Malley, “Slavery’s Converging Ground: Charleston’s Slave Trade as the Black Heart of the Lowcountry,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (April 2017), 273; Emma Hart, *Building Charleston: Town and Society in the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2010), 1-2.
5. O’Malley, “Slavery’s Converging Ground,” 271.
6. Kenneth Morgan, “Slave Sales in Colonial Charleston,” *English Historical Review* 113, issue 453 (Sept. 1998), 922-923.
7. Philip D. Morgan, “Black Life in Eighteenth-Century Charleston,” *Perspectives in American History*, new series, I (1984), 188.
8. Maurie D. McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 14.
9. On the statue’s history, see D.E. Huger Smith, “Wilton’s Statue of Pitt,” *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 15, no. 1 (Jan. 1914): 18-38; Jonathan H. Poston, “Statue of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham,” in Maurie D. McInnis, *In Pursuit of Refinement: Charlestonians Abroad, 1740-1860* (Columbia: Gibbes Museum of Art and University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 219-221; Joan Coutu, *Persuasion and Propaganda: Monuments and the Eighteenth-Century British Empire* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006), 195-234, 334-343.
10. Michel Foucault, trans. Alan Sheridan, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).
11. Jennifer L. Goloboy, *Charleston and the Emergence of Middle-Class Culture in the Revolutionary Era* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016), 12-28; Martha A. Zierden and Elizabeth J. Reitz, *Charleston: An Archeology of Life in a Coastal Community* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 159.
12. Louis P. Nelson, *The Beauty of Holiness: Anglicanism and Architecture in Colonial South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 40-41; J. Thomas Savage and Robert A.

Leith, "Buying British: Merchants, Taste, and the Charleston Commission," in McInnis, *In Pursuit*, 56-57.

13. Angela D. Mack and J. Thomas Savage, "Reflections of Refinement: Portraits of Charlestonians at Home and Abroad," in McInnis, *In Pursuit*, 23-38; Jennifer Van Horn, "The Mask of Civility: Portraits of Colonial Women and the Transatlantic Masquerade," *American Art* 23, no. 2 (2009): 8-35; Julie Flavell, *When London Was Capital of America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 175-176.

14. George C. Rogers, Jr., *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 42.

15. Edmund S. Morgan and Helen M. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 136; Jeremy Black, *Pitt the Elder: The Great Commoner*, rev. ed. (Stroud, U.K.: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1999).

16. Goloboy, *Charleston*, 29; Coutu, *Persuasion and Propaganda*, 205.

17. Richard J. Hooker, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 204, 233, 254.

18. "Charlestown, April 24," *The South Carolina and American General Gazette*, April 24, 1767.

19. "March XVIII, MDCCLXVI," *London Chronicle*, Mar. 18-20, 1766.

20. "For the Public Advertiser, Intelligence Extraordinary," *The Public Advertiser* (London), Mar. 10, 1766.

21. "Thalestris declares," *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (London), Mar. 31, 1766.

22. "To the Printer," *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 30, 1766.

23. Timothy Gape, "To the Printer of the Gazetteer," *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, Apr. 22, 1767.

24. "New Society is forming to the Memory of the late great Commoner," in *A Genuine Collection of the Several Pieces of Political Intelligence Extraordinary, Epigrams, Poetry &c. that have appeared before the public in detached pieces; now carefully selected together in one view, by an impartial hand* (London: T. Butcher, 1766), 53-55 (emphasis added).

25. "To the Printer at C—T, in S—Clondon," *The South Carolina Gazette*, Dec. 1, 1766.

26. On concepts of liberty in the late eighteenth-century British world, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Republic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 232-246.

27. Artist unknown, *Goody Bull, or the Second Part of the Repeal*, etching, 1766 (British Museum no. 1868,0808.4379). On this and other images of Pitt, see Wendy Bellion, *Iconoclasm in New York: Revolution to Reenactment* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).

28. On this point, see W.J.T. Mitchell, "What is an Image?" *New Literary History* 15, no. 3 Image/Imago/Imagination (spring 1984): 503-537.

29. "To the Printer at Charles-Town, in South Carolina" and "One of the Gentlemen, of the Committee of Correspondence," *The South Carolina Gazette*, Dec. 1, 1766.

30. Charles Garth to the Committee of Correspondence, July 9, 1766, in Coutu, *Persuasion and Propaganda*, 335.

31. Committee of Correspondence to Charles Garth, November 20, 1776, in *ibid.*, 338.

32. Joseph Wilton to Charles Garth, July 24, 1766, in *ibid.*, 337. The sketch, together with busts sent by Garth to demonstrate Wilton's workmanship, is lost.

33. Committee of Correspondence to Charles Garth, November 20, 1776, in *ibid.*, 338.

34. Wilton was acquainted with Pitt and executed a number of busts and two additional full-size marble sculptures of him: one for a merchants' exchange in Cork, and a smaller-scale version of the Charleston statue for Manhattan. See Bellion, *Iconoclasm*. An American soldier who had been stationed in New York in 1776 thought the two sculptures "exactly alike" when he visited

Charleston two years later. H. Roy Merrens, "A View of South Carolina in 1778: The Journal of Ebenezer Hazard," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 73, no. 4 (Oct. 1972), 184.

35. On this classical iconography and its frequent reappearance in neoclassical art, see Bellion, *Iconoclasm*. Arthur S. Marks connects Wilton's *adlocutio* pose and Charles Willson Peale's representation of Pitt in an engraving of the late 1760s; see "The Statue of King George III in New York and the Iconology of Regicide," *American Art Journal* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1981): 61-82.

36. As was customary for life peers, Pitt may have received a medal when he was awarded his peerage; Wilton's detail may reference the award.

37. "London," *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, Mar. 3, 1769.

38. Donald H. Cresswell, *The American Revolution in Drawings and Prints: A Checklist of 1765-1790 Graphics in the Library of Congress* (Mansfield Centre, Conn.: Martino Publishing, 2006), 257.

39. Coutu, *Persuasion and Propaganda*, 221-223; see also Smith, "Wilton's Statue of Pitt"; Jack P. Greene, "Bridge to Revolution: The Wilkes Fund Controversy in South Carolina, 1769-1775," *Journal of Southern History* 29, no. 1 (Feb. 1963): 19-52.

40. For details of the commission, see Coutu, *Persuasion and Propaganda*, 205-206; Smith, "Wilton's Statue of Pitt."

41. Hennig Cohen, *The South Carolina Gazette, 1732-1775* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1953).

42. "Charles-town, May 29," *The South Carolina Gazette*, May 29, 1770.

43. "Previous notice having been given," *The South Carolina Gazette*, July 5, 1770.

44. Ann Ashby Manigault, *Extracts from the Journal of Mrs. Ann Manigault, 1754-1781*, edited by Mabel J. Weber (Charleston: South Carolina Historical Society, 1920), 71.

45. "Charles-town, June 7," *The South Carolina Gazette*, June 7, 1770.

46. "Brought to the Work-house," *The South Carolina Gazette*, May 8, 1770. "Ears boa'd" may have signified ears pierced or mutilated through punishment.

47. "Run-away from the subscriber," *The South Carolina Gazette*, May 22, 1770.

48. "Run-away the 14th of March last" and "B[r]ought to the Work-house," *The South Carolina Gazette*, May 29 and June 12, 1770.

49. "Previous notice having been given" and "To be sold by public outcry," *The South Carolina Gazette*, July 5, 1770.

50. Jonathan H. Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 155.

51. Zierden and Reitz, *Charleston*, 63, 182.

52. John Bennett, "Charleston in 1774 as Described by an English Traveler," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 47, no. 3 (July 1946), 179. Not everyone was a fan: "The merit of the sculpting is not great," complained Francisco de Miranda, a Spanish officer. "It is life size, in a Roman costume (strange idea)!" J. Fred Rippy, "A View of the Carolinas in 1783," *North Carolina Historical Review* 6, no. 4 (Oct. 1929), 368. Years later, residents would refer to the site as the "Four Corners of the Law," and an antebellum mayor even proposed moving the slave market to the site. Zierden and Reitz, *Charleston*, 118; Maurie D. McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale: Abolitionist Art and the American Slave Trade* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 125.

53. Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness*, 40.

54. Johann David Schoepf, "After the Revolution," in Fant, *Travelers' Charleston*, 41; Harriet Martineau, "Many Mansions There Are in This Hell," in *ibid.*, 210-211.

55. J.S. Buckingham, quoted in McInnis, *Politics of Taste*, 82; on the intentional visibility of the Guard House, see *ibid.*, 71, 82-85. Elsewhere in the Greater Caribbean, as Marisa J. Fuentes demonstrates in her study of Bridgetown, Barbados, similar mechanisms linked "enslaved bodies

in urban space and architectures of control”; see *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), esp. 13-45.

56. Morgan, “Black Life,” 220; Benjamin L. Carp, “Changing our Habitation: Henry Laurens, Rattray Green, and the Revolutionary Movement in Charleston’s Domestic Spaces,” in *Material Culture in Anglo-America: Regional Identity and Urbanity in the Tidewater, Lowcountry, and Caribbean*, edited by David S. Shields (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 299.

57. Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness*, 43.

58. On these points, see McInnis, *Politics of Taste*, esp. 34-36, 65; Christopher M.S. Johns, “Proslavery Politics and Classical Authority: Antonio Canova’s ‘George Washington,’” *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 47 (2002): 119-150; Charmaine A. Nelson, *The Color of Stone: Sculpting the Black Female Subject in Nineteenth-Century America* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

59. On the Fraser sketch, which had connections to a theatrical backdrop, see Julia Curtis, “From the Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society: Redating ‘Sketches from Nature by A. Fraser and C. Fraser,’” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 93, no. 1 (Jan. 1992), 57-58.

60. For “statue of liberty” and Palmetto day events, see Elmer Douglas Johnson, trans., “A Frenchman Visits Charleston in 1777,” *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 52, no. 2 (Apr. 1951), 90. On Palmetto Day, see also Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 44-48. For tea protests at the statue, see Marguerite Steedman, “Charleston’s Forgotten Tea Party,” *The Georgia Review* 21, no. 2 (summer 1967), esp. 251, 253-254. When South Carolina troops returned to Charleston in 1782, they paraded past the statue with colonial officials; Smith, “Wilton’s Statue of Pitt,” 31.

61. “At a Meeting of a number of Citizens of South-Carolina” (1794), reprinted in *American Historical Record* 3, no. 29 (May 1874): 224.

62. Zierden and Reitz, *Charleston*, 116-122; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 250-251; Hart, *Building Charleston*, 56-57. On absence and the archive, see Stephen Best, “Neither Lost nor Found: Slavery and the Visual Archive,” *Representations* 113, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 150-163.

63. P. Morgan, “Black Life,” 191-192; McInnis, *Politics of Taste*, 68-70.

64. Bernard L. Herman, *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 154.

65. Carp, “Changing our Habitation,” 298-299; P. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 461.

66. McInnis, *Politics of Taste*, 68; P. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 408, 419.

67. Schoepf, “After the Revolution,” and John Quincy Jr., “Society of Charleston,” in Fant, *Travelers’ Charleston*, 41, 37. See also P. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 600.

68. James Stuart, “Devil in Petticoats,” in Fant, *Travelers’ Charleston*, 197-202, quote from p. 202. On public punishments of slaves, see also Goloboy, *Charleston*, 25; P. Morgan, “Black Life,” 221. On visual inspections of bodies at sales, see McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, 125.

69. “Previous notice having been given,” *The South Carolina Gazette*, July 5, 1770.

70. *Ibid.*, and in the same issue, “Run away from the subscriber living in Georgia.”

71. “Run away about eighteen months ago,” *The South Carolina Gazette*, May 17, 1770.

72. Smith, “Wilton’s Statue of Pitt,” 31.

73. John Bennett, “July the 4th,” in Fant, *The Travelers’ Charleston*, 227.

74. Bellion, *Iconoclasm*; Smith, “Wilton’s Statue of Pitt,” 31.

75. Smith, “Wilton’s Statue of Pitt,” 37-38; D.L. Corbitt, “William Pitt and the American Colonies,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 3, no. 4 (Oct. 1926): 639.

76. Martineau, “Many Mansions,” in Fant, *The Travelers’ Charleston*, 215-216.

77. *Ibid.*, 216-217.

78. White women responded to the exhibition of Hiram Powers's popular sculpture *The Greek Slave* (1844) in ways that evoke this spectator's words, imagining themselves captured and sold into slavery. See Joy S. Kasson, "Narratives of the Female Body: *The Greek Slave*," in *Reading American Art*, edited by Marianne Doezema and Elizabeth Milroy (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 163-189.

79. For a photograph of the statue in this location, see the glass plate negatives and stereograph preserved in the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division: "Orphan Asylum, Calhoun St., Charleston, S.C., Statue of Wm. Pitt in foreground" (1865), <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018671209/>.

80. On this illustration and other prints representing auctions, see McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, esp. 115-144; Martha J. Cutter, *The Illustrated Slave: Empathy, Graphic Narrative, and the Visual Culture of the Transatlantic Abolition Movement, 1800-1852* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017), 101-102.

81. O'Malley, "Slavery's Converging Ground," 275-276.

82. "A relic of the last century," *The Charleston Mercury*, Mar. 15, 1859.

83. Poston, "Statue of William Pitt," in McInnis, *In Pursuit*, 219-221.

ABSTRACTS

On July 5, 1770, South Carolina raised its first public sculpture. Representing the English statesman William Pitt the Elder in the mode of a classical orator, the marble statue stood on a pedestal at the intersection of Meeting and Broad Streets, in Charleston's historic Civic Square. This essay reconstructs the significance of its location and its competing meanings within the colonial slave city. It examines how the statue functioned to reflect the racial politics of elite Charlestonians while illuminating the cultures of surveillance, discipline, and display that linked black and white bodies. At the symbolic center of the urban landscape, the figure of Pitt exposed the implicated nature of neoclassical sculpture and transatlantic slavery.

INDEX

Keywords: statue; sculpture; neoclassicism; slavery; enslaved; race; Charleston; South Carolina; Civic Square; London; colonial; empire; place; location; site-specificity; built environment; William Pitt the Elder; Joseph Wilton; spectacle; spectator; Atlantic world

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