

= Statue of James II , Trafalgar Square =

The statue of James II is an outdoor bronze sculpture located in the front garden of the National Gallery at Trafalgar Square in London , United Kingdom . Probably inspired by French statues of the same period , it depicts James II of England as a Roman emperor , wearing Roman armour and a laurel wreath ( traditionally awarded to a victorious Roman commander ) . It originally also depicted him holding a baton . It was produced by the workshop of Grinling Gibbons , though probably not by Gibbons himself . The statue has been relocated several times since it was first erected in the grounds of the old Palace of Whitehall in 1686 , only two years before James II was deposed .

= = Description = =

The statue is executed in bronze and depicts James II as a Roman emperor . He is shown standing in a contrapposto pose and pointing downwards in " great ease of attitude and a certain serenity of air " , as Allan Cunningham described it . It formerly held a baton in its right hand , though this is now missing . The face is said to be an excellent depiction of the king . Unusually for the time , Gibbons sought a degree of fidelity to original classical styles ; James is depicted wearing a laurel wreath on top of short hair , whereas other imperial @-@ style statues of both Charles II and James II depicted the two kings with an anachronistic combination of Roman armour and a 17th @-@ century periwig . The statue was probably inspired by similar imperial portrayals of Louis XIV of France . One in particular , a colossal statue by Martin Desjardins of Louis XIV wearing Roman armour with a laurel wreath and baton , is so similar in type to the figures of Charles II and James II that it may have been their direct inspiration .

The plinth is inscribed with the legend JACOBUS SECUNDUS / DEI GRATIA / ANGLIÆ SCOTIÆ / FRANCIÆ ET / HIBERNIÆ / REX / FIDEI DEFENSOR / ANNO M.D.C.LXXXVI , which translates to : " James II , by the grace of God , King of England , Scotland , France and Ireland . Defender of the Faith . 1686 . "

= = History = =

The statue of James II is one of three of the Stuart monarchs commissioned by the royal servant Tobias Rustat from Grinling Gibbons 's workshop in the 1670s and ' 80s , the others being of James 's brother and predecessor Charles II : an equestrian statue in Windsor Castle and a standing figure at the Royal Hospital in Chelsea . The statue of James II was commissioned for the Palace of Whitehall , apparently at the same time as the standing Charles II , and the two works might have been intended as pendent pieces . It was produced in the workshop of Grinling Gibbons at a reported cost of £ 300 ( equivalent to about £ 42 @,@ 000 at 2014 prices ) . Although long attributed to Gibbons himself , large @-@ scale sculptures were not his forté and it is probable that the statue 's principal originator was the Dutch sculptor Artus Quellinus III ( also known as Arnold Quellan ) , who was working at Gibbons ' workshop at the time .

The James II was erected at the Palace of Whitehall on 24 March 1686 , as recorded by a contemporary , Sir John Bramston the Younger . George Vertue , who found an agreement and a receipt of payment for the work , wrote that it was " modelled & made by Lawrence [ Vandermeulen ] ( of Brussels ) ... & Devoot [ i.e. Peter Van Dievoet ] ( of Mechlin ) who was imployed by ... Gibbons " , and that Thomas Benniere was involved in the casting . A series of five drawings in the British Museum , which might be for either the standing Charles II or the James II , is attributed variously to Gibbons or to Peter Van Dievoet . Its artistic qualities were praised by J.P. Malcolm in his 1803 history , London Redivivum , in which he wrote :

There is but one fault in the figure , and that is the attitude . The King seems to point with a baton at the earth , to which his eyes are directed ; but why ? Surely this is an egregious error . However , perhaps the artist may have been commanded to model the statue thus ; and if not , his mistake is more than counter @-@ balanced by the beautiful turns of the muscles , the excellence of the features , and the true folds of the drapery .

James II 's statue has stood in several locations since it was first erected . It originally stood in the Palace of Whitehall 's Pebble Court , where it was installed on New Year 's Day , 1686 . It was situated behind the Banqueting House and faced the river , a position which attracted much satirical comment after James ' flight from London during the Glorious Revolution of 1688 ; it was said that the statue 's location indicated his method of escape .

It was taken down after the Glorious Revolution but was replaced by order of William III . In 1898 it was moved to a location in the garden of Gwydyr House but was taken down four years later to make room for the stands for the coronation of Edward VII . It lay on its back amid grass and weeds in a state of total neglect until it was re @-@ erected in 1903 outside the New Admiralty building , but was displaced again when the Admiralty Citadel was built in 1940 . During the Second World War it was put into storage at Aldwych tube station . It was relocated to its present site in 1947 . The statue is listed by Historic England as a Grade I listed building , a status which it was granted in 1970 .