

No date

Wren, Christopher

CU5417/34.69

NOTES FROM BOOKS

MICROGRAPHIA: Or some Physiological Description of Minute Bodies  
Made by Magnifying Glasses with Observations and Inquiries thereupon  
By R. Hooke, Fellow of the Royal Society Lond: MDCLXVII

Letter (Script) from E. Heaton Smith  
To W. O.

Fairholme,  
Beaumont Rd.  
Windsor. Feb. 15.

Dear Professor Osler,

I am sorry to say I can give you no very definite information about the Wren drawings. We certainly have none at Windsor Castle; nor does the man whose has been assistant there for many years know anything of such drawings.

The Librarian is away just now, but this morning I saw Sir Richard Holmes who was Librarian until 2 years ago, and asked him for information.

He has no personal knowledge of the drawings, but thought that if ever they had been in the possession of the royal family, they were very probably included in the King's Library which George III gave to the nation, and which is now at the British Museum. If they are not there he said they might be at South Kensington, but he thought the Museum the more likely place.

Among the books which I looked through this morning, in my search for information, was Hooke's "Micrographia". The Library edition of 1665 is illustrated with engravings of microscopic objects evidently made from drawings such as you want to find. The D.N.B. says that Hooke and Wren worked together at one time in their scientific experiments; and in his preface Hooke acknowledges his indebtedness to Dr. Wren, and speaks of the wonderful drawings made by the latter which he says are among "the rareties of the King's Closet". Do you think it possible that these engravings might be made, at least in some cases, from drawings by Wren? Hooke seems to acknowledge him and a certain Dr. Wilkins as among the first to make drawings of objects seen under a microscope? I am so sorry I cannot tell you anything more sure, and I expect all this information is old news to you, but I thought it might possibly be of some use and so include it.

Faithfully yours,

Evelyn Heaton Smith.

P.S. Hooke's drawings are principally of insects, or parts of insects.