

Pomeroy, Frederick William (1856–1924), sculptor, came from a family of artists and craftsmen. He was apprenticed to a London firm of architectural carvers—possibly Farmer and Brindley—and from c.1877 to 1880 studied at the South London Technical Art School, Lambeth. He was taught there by the French émigré sculptor Jules Dalou, whose lively naturalism and modelling skills were a formative influence. Another of Pomeroy's teachers, W. S. Frith, later collaborated with him on the terracotta Victoria fountain (1888; Glasgow Green), commissioned by Doulton & Co. In late 1880 Pomeroy entered the Royal Academy Schools, where he won several prizes, culminating with a gold medal travelling scholarship in 1885.

Pomeroy visited Paris, where he studied with Antonin Mercié, and then Italy. This experience inspired him to combine the technical proficiency of **contemporary French practice with what he called 'ideas of character, of mind, of individuality' found in the early Italian Renaissance (Beattie, 62)**. On his return to London in 1887, Pomeroy exhibited a bronze statuette of the youthful Giotto at the Royal Academy. The theme and execution appealed to Frederic Leighton, who delegated the carving in marble of his *Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (1888–90; Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, Copenhagen) to Pomeroy. Another important professional association, also formed in 1887, was with the architect J. D. Sedding. In line with Sedding's arts and crafts ideals, Pomeroy was employed in several ambitious architectural carving and decoration schemes. The best-known example is Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street, Chelsea, where he designed the chancel stalls and screen (1890). Pomeroy was one of several leading artists (others included Henry Armstead, Harry Bates, Edward Onslow Ford, and William Reynolds-**Stephens**) who made **Sedding's church 'a museum of 1890s design' (Pevsner, *London: North-West*, 559)**. He also worked for the architects Arthur Blomfield, Alfred Waterhouse, John Belcher, Henry Wilson, and E. W. Mountford.

Pomeroy's collaboration with Mountford was particularly successful. His architectural sculptures include friezes and interior lunettes at Sheffield town hall (c.1892–5); reliefs at Booth's distillery, City of London (c.1902), which explore the gin-making process; and charmingly stylized bronze lamp standards for Liverpool Museum and Technical College (c.1902). At the Old Bailey, City of London (1900–07), Pomeroy's gilt-bronze *Justice* statue makes a fitting climax to Mountford's neo-baroque architecture. His other sculptures for the building include pediment figures at the entrance and carved reliefs of

Virtues beneath the dome of the great hall. The latter are described by **Benedict Read as 'excellent groups ... ably designed to fit well into their allotted spans' (Read, 333).**

Pomeroy's architectural sculpture, exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, was complemented by more academic works, shown at the Royal Academy. *Dionysius* (1890; Tate collection), an ebullient variation on Leighton's *The Sluggard* (1886; Tate collection), was described by **Edmund Gosse, champion of the New Sculpture, as 'exquisite' (Gosse, 308).** The over-life-sized bronze *Perseus* (1898; National Museum and Gallery of Wales, Cardiff) is his best-known work in this genre. The lithe body and sharp silhouette are a spirited answer to Benvenuto Cellini's classic mannerist sculpture of the same theme (1545–54; Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence). Pomeroy's historical portrait statues include monuments to Robert Burns (1896; Fountain Gardens, Paisley; versions in Sydney and Auckland); Oliver Cromwell (1901; Market Place, St Ives, Cambridgeshire); and Francis Bacon (1912; Gray's Inn, London). With the decline of the arts and crafts movement, Pomeroy relied increasingly on commissions for conventional portrait busts and monuments to politicians and churchmen, for example, the Curzon memorial, Calcutta (1912–15). While he never compromised his technical qualities, his later work lost something of its spark.

Pomeroy was described by C. R. Ashbee as showing 'easy-going and indolent grace of movement' and was nicknamed 'the beautiful Pom' by the girls at the 1899 Art-Workers' Guild masked ball (Beattie, 122). He married Patricia Morrison Coughlan in 1913; they had two sons. He was elected master of the Art-Workers' Guild in 1908 and to associate and full membership of the Royal Academy (1906; 1917). Pomeroy died in Cliftonville, Kent, on 26 May 1924, survived by his wife and sons. He was buried in Boscombe cemetery, Hampshire.

Unlike several other leading figures of the New Sculpture, Pomeroy has received little art-historical attention, with no recent exhibitions or even monograph articles on him. This is surprising, particularly in view of his intelligent espousal of arts and crafts precepts. He stressed the significance of a craftsman's training, examined the relationship between nature and design, **and called for the sculptor's work to be 'bound up with that of the architect'** (Beattie, 61). While Pomeroy was not a socialist, he endorsed the populist **message of William Morris and celebrated 'the remarkable way in which art in its many branches has ... become the fashion with people of all types'** (Baldry,

77). In his work, he did much to encourage this trend.

Mark Stocker

Sources

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Likenesses

photograph, c.1897–1898, repro. in Baldry, 'The work of F. W. Pomeroy' · photograph, c.1900, repro. in Beattie, *The New Sculpture*, 192 · F. H. D'Arcis, photograph, [NPG](#) [see *illus.*]

Wealth at death

£12,696 16s. 8d.: resworn probate, 10 July 1924, [CGPLA Eng. & Wales](#)
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