The Art of Union and Disunion in the Houses of Parliament 1834-1928

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the importance of the United Kingdom's composition as a multinational state to the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament, constructed by Sir Charles Barry following the destruction of most of the old Palace of Westminster by fire in 1834. Over seven chapters, it examines the decorative schemes undertaken between the 1840s and 1860s by Barry and the Fine Arts Commission, followed by later, individual programmes, the last of which was completed in 1928.

This study develops the twin notions of the art of union and the art of disunion to analyse the complex relationship between the Union and Parliament's decorative schemes. The art of union is used to identify the elements of the New Palace of Westminster's planned or completed decoration that validated and promoted the Union. Meanwhile, the art of disunion is deployed as a means of analysing the works of art that caused disunity and division.

Examples of the art of union in the Houses of Parliament have led to it being described as a very British building. However, this thesis argues that this is an inadequate description. Though Scotland, Ireland and Wales are represented in the building's decoration, it is England that dominates. Therefore, this study argues that Anglo-British is the most accurate term with which to describe the sense of national identity embodied by the Palace of Westminster. However, the Anglo-Britishness presented over the lengthy period covered in this thesis is not a consistent and homogenous vision, but one that is varied, complex and, at times, contradictory. There is also a clear development in the general form that it takes: beginning with a relatively inclusive Anglo-Britishness that gives some recognition to the UK nations other than England, it becomes increasingly Anglocentric and imperialist over the period examined.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library, London
BLO	Bodleian Library, University of Oxford
CKS	Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone (formerly Centre for Kentish Studies)
FAC	Fine Arts Commission
HMI	Henry Moore Institute, Leeds
ILN	*Illustrated London News*
NAL	National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
NAVSR	National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights
NMW	National Museum Wales, Cardiff
PA	Parliamentary Archives, London
PAC	Parliamentary Art Collection, London
PRA	President of the Royal Academy of Arts
RA	Royal Academy of Arts, London (and Royal Academician)
RHA	Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin
RAW	Royal Archives, Windsor
RSA	Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh
SCAM	Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures
SCFA	Select Committee on Fine Arts
SHRA	Scottish Home Rule Association
TNA	National Archives, Kew
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum, London

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INTRODUCTION

The Houses of Parliament are often regarded as a very British building. In part this is because of the national subject matter of its various forms of decoration, from architectural ornamentation to wall paintings and sculpture. But to what extent are the nations of the Union represented visually in the building, and how and why is this the case? To answer these questions, this thesis explores how the United Kingdom's composition as a multinational state impacted upon the decoration of its legislative building in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It analyses the art and architecture of the Houses of Parliament through the lens of the Union to show that the events and discourses resulting from political union played a key role in the decoration of the UK's most important national building. Furthermore, it argues that the decoration of Parliament played a significant role in the politics of the Union itself. This was art that not only formed the backdrop to political events of the period, but often took centre stage in the 'theatre of state', becoming embroiled in, and sometimes being the cause of, controversy and debate. In other words, the decoration of the Houses of Parliament divided as well as united.

The building that forms the focus of this study owes its existence to a fire that destroyed most of Parliament's former home on 16 October 1834.[1] Designed by Sir Charles Barry, the New Palace of Westminster, as it is also known, was one of the largest and most significant architectural projects in nineteenth-century Britain. The schemes to decorate the building, both externally and internally, were equally ambitious. During the main building period between 1840 and the 1860s, these included a wealth of architectural embellishments and decorative detail overseen by Barry, with the assistance of A.W.N. Pugin, and mural and sculptural programmes under the control of the Fine Arts Commission (FAC), chaired by Prince Albert. Following the demise of the FAC in the mid-1860s, subsequent schemes were the result of individual commissions, with the final major programme – a series of murals in St Stephen's Hall – being completed in 1928.

[1] See Caroline Shenton, *The Day Parliament Burned Down* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

Taking the whole of this period as its focus, this thesis examines the Palace of Westminster in its entirety, from the Gothic Revival ornamentation of the 1840s to the British School at Rome inspired history paintings of the 1920s, via Victorian statuary and frescoes, and Arts and Crafts mosaics. It analyses how the nations of the UK – which during most of the period consisted of England, Scotland, Wales and the whole of Ireland – were represented in these art forms, and how the contemporary political events of the Union, and associated discourses of national identity, affected Parliament's art and vice versa.

This thesis is principally concerned with tracing the relationship between the Houses of Parliament's decoration and the three 'Celtic fringe' nations of the UK. As a result, key events and issues of the period relating to the positions of Scotland, Ireland and Wales within the Union are central to the analysis. The nature of Great Britain and Ireland's relationship formed the major constitutional question during the majority of the period, so much of this thesis is concerned with Irish issues.[2] These include the Repeal movement of the 1840s, calls for Home Rule later in the century, and the creation of the Irish Free State in 1921. By contrast, in Scotland and Wales there was widespread acceptance of, and support for, the status quo of the Union.[3] Only in the final schemes, from the turn of the twentieth century, did issues such as the advance of Welsh cultural nationalism and the Scottish Home Rule movement come to play an important role. Throughout the whole period, however, developments in the complex national identities of each nation form a crucial backdrop to this study, as does the diverse way these combine, or collide, with Englishness to form an overriding Britishness.

This study does not examine in depth how England and Englishness are represented in the Houses of Parliament. To do this justice, given the

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[2] For example, see Nicholas Mansergh, *The Irish Question, 1840-1921* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1965).

[3] On Scotland see Colin Kidd, *Union and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500-2000* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1-24. For Wales see Matthew Cragoe, *Culture, Politics, and National Identity in Wales 1832-1886* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 2. See also D. George Boyce & Alan O'Day eds., *Defenders of the Union: A Survey of British and Irish Unionism since 1801* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

quantity of English subject matter, a separate study would be required. Instead, it aims to understand the interaction of English-dominated Britishness with divergent Celtic national identities. This approach reveals how, at different periods, the various decorative schemes examined in this thesis acted as touchstones for the views of particular individuals and groups – and arguably the state itself – with regards to the Union. Given the building's central role in the governing of the UK, and the level of public scrutiny that came with this, its decoration could be, and often was, a means by which politicians and governing elites could attempt to justify, shore up and promote union. However, these aims often had unintentional results. On a number of occasions they even threatened the Union by injuring national sensitivities, becoming a focus for opponents to the existence of the UK in its present form to articulate wider grievances.

The notion of 'an art of union' is a central framing concept in this thesis. Fintan Cullen has used this to explain how Irish subject matter came to be incorporated into British art during the nineteenth century.[4] He has also employed it to describe the contemporaneous display in Ireland of works of art with British and imperial subjects that acted to reinforce Ireland's place in the Union and wider Empire.[5] Expanding Cullen's concept, this thesis deploys the notion of an art of union to identify works of decorative art, sculpture and painting that, either by their subject matter, or the context in which they were displayed (and often a combination of both), promoted or promulgated the Union. This is conceived of as forming part of a wider visual culture of union that includes the Union Flag, royal coat of arms, maps and other visual signifiers of the UK. A second central framing concept in this thesis, and which develops the notion of an art of union, is the art of disunion. Though this could be conceived as embodying works of art intended to promote disunity, such as that produced by Irish nationalists, in the context of the Houses of Parliament it is used to explore the usually unintentional divisions caused by a lack of regard for national sensitivities. Such examples

[4] Fintan Cullen, *Visual Politics: The Representation of Ireland 1750-1930* (Cork University Press, 1997), 11.

[5] Fintan Cullen, *Ireland on Show: Art, Union and Nationhood* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 29 & 62.

of the art of disunion are characterised by the controversies that are examined in a number of chapters in this study.[6]

Parliament and the Union

The importance of the UK Parliament to the Union is difficult to overstate. Indeed, it was as a result of two parliamentary unions – that of England (and Wales) with Scotland to form Great Britain in 1707, and Great Britain with Ireland to form the UK in 1801 – that the Union came about.[7] In both cases, constitutional instruments were utilised to turn existing dynastic, or personal, unions (in the form of a shared monarchy) into legislative, or parliamentary, unions.[8] As Colin Kidd has argued, the four nations lacked a common history, ethnicity or confessional commitment, yet they were governed during this period by a single legislature.[9] Along with the Crown, the united Parliament therefore forms the principal pillar of the Union, without which there would be no UK.[10]

Prior to the construction of Barry's Palace of Westminster, the two parliamentary unions had minimal impact on the decoration of the united legislature's home. Unlike its replacement, the old Houses of Parliament was an agglomeration of buildings, adapted from a royal palace, which had built up piecemeal over eight centuries.[11] Its decoration was uneven and diverse,

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[6] See chapters 3 (pp. 106-33), 5 (pp. 169-206) & 7 (pp. 242-273) below.

[7] For a recent assessment of both, see Alvin Jackson, *The Two Unions: Ireland, Scotland and the Survival of the United Kingdom, 1707-2007* (Oxford University Press, 2011), Ch. 3 & 4.

[8] Laurence Brockliss, David Eastwood and Michael John, 'From Dynastic Union to Unitary State: The European Experience', in Brockliss and Eastwood eds., *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c.1750-c.1850* (Manchester University Press, 1997), 193.

[9] Colin Kidd, 'Protestantism, constitutionalism and British identity under the later Stuarts', in Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts eds., *British Consciousness and Identity: The Making of Modern Britain, 1533-1707* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 322.

[10] Brockliss and Eastwood, 'Introduction', in Brockliss and Eastwood eds. (1997), 1.

[11] M.H. Port ed., *The Houses of Parliament* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1976), 5-19.

and though there were some important works of art – including thirteenth-century wall paintings in the Painted Chamber, medieval stone statues of English kings on Westminster Hall's northern façade, and seventeenth-century tapestries of the Armada in the Lords[12] – there was little visualisation of the Union in the building. Following the 1707 Acts of Union, Sir Christopher Wren had adapted the House of Commons to accommodate the forty-five new Scottish MPs.[13] It was also suggested at this time that a series of tapestries be commissioned to mark the events of 1707, though this came to nothing.[14] The impact of the 1800 Acts of Union were more widely felt, due to the larger number of new Irish representatives, with the House of Lords moving from their long-standing home in the Queen's Chamber to the Lesser Hall.[15] In terms of Union imagery, the new royal coat of arms of the UK was added to the canopy of the sovereign's throne.[16] In the Commons, James Wyatt created additional room for Irish MP's and elsewhere made much maligned 'Gothick' additions, though these do not appear to have included national symbolism as Barry's building later would.[17] Sir John Soane undertook the most recent architectural work before the fire, adding a Neo-classical Royal Entrance and series of state rooms to the House of Lords.[18] These were decorated with classical details including casts taken from the Arch of Constantine, cornucopia and trophy groups. In terms of national

[12] See Paul Binksy, *The Painted Chamber* (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1986); Malcolm Hay, *Westminster Hall and the Medieval Kings* (London: British Museum Press, 1995); and Phillis Rogers, 'The Armada Tapestries in the House of Lords', *Journal of the Royal Society of the Arts* 136 (1988), 731-5.

[13] Port ed. (1976), 5.

[14] White Kennett (later Bishop of Peterborough) to Arthur Charlett (Master of New College, Oxford), 27 March 1707, Library, University of Oxford (BLO) MS Ballard 7, f.115. My thanks to Clyve Jones and Melanie Unwin for this information.

[15] Port ed. (1976), 7; John Goodall, 'The Medieval Palace of Westminster', in Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding eds., *The Houses of Parliament: History, Art, Architecture* (London: Merrell, 2000), 66.

[16] Christine Riding, 'The Aura of Sacred Mystery: Thrones in the New Palace of Westminster', in Riding and Riding eds. (2000), 181.

[17] Goodall (2000), 64.

[18] Sean Sawyer, 'Sir John Soane and the Late Georgian Origins of the Royal Entrance', in Riding and Riding eds. (2000), 137-47.

imagery, Soane planned to commission two large paintings of the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, and statues of British monarchs. However these were never undertaken.[19]

Long before 1834, many had deemed the Houses of Parliament unsuited to its legislative functions. In the eighteenth century, Wren, William Kent and Soane drew up Neo-classical designs to replace the old buildings.[20] Kent's design was possibly influenced by Sir Edward Lovett Pearce's Irish Houses of Parliament, then still functioning as intended in Dublin.[21] By the 1830s, however, Pearce's now-defunct legislative building was dismissed at Westminster as a model of a purpose-built parliament house on account of 'ideological grounds, not to say outright prejudice'.[22] In Parliament, only the Irish nationalist leader Daniel O'Connell appears to have seen Pearce's building in a positive light, arguing in 1833 that the simple answer to overcrowding in the Houses of Commons was to send the 105 Irish MPs back to Ireland to sit in their own legislature once again.[23]

The 1834 fire provided the opportunity that some had long sought to construct a new, purpose-built home for the UK legislature.[24] However, one of the central questions that now faced the nation was whether it should be Neo-classical or Gothic. The popularity of Gothic, which had been slowly increasing since the late eighteenth century, was closely linked to Romanticism and the medievalism promoted by the writer Sir Walter Scott, among others.[25] Many considered it an English invention, allied in the

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[19] Sawyer (2000), 139-45.

[20] Port ed. (1976), 5-6; Frank Salmon, 'Public Commissions', in Susan Weber ed., *William Kent: Designing Georgian Britain* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013), 325-55.

[21] Sean Kelsey, 'Introduction', in Clyve Jones and Sean Kelsey eds., *Housing Parliament: Dublin, Edinburgh and Westminster* (Edinburgh: Parliamentary History Yearbook Trust, 2002), 14-15.

[22] Kelsey (2002), 15.

[23] HC Deb, 7 March 1833, vol. 16, col. 379.

[24] Port ed. (1976), 5

[25] Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste,* 3rd edition (London: John Murray, 1995), 108-9. For a recent account, see Megan Aldrich, *Gothic Revival* (London: Phaidon, 1994).

popular imagination with notions of Anglo-Saxon liberty as the basis for modern constitutional freedoms.[26] Many also felt it to be the most appropriate style for Westminster given this political symbolism, the survival of Westminster Hall, and proximity of Westminster Abbey.[27] These factors came together in 1835 when a Select Committee formed to determine plans for rebuilding the Houses of Parliament called for designs in what they termed the 'national style' of 'Gothic or Elizabethan' to be entered for competition.[28] The reference to 'Elizabethan' was widely seen as a steer towards Tudor Gothic, and when the entries came in, most, including Barry's winning design, had looked to late English Perpendicular buildings for inspiration.[29] With the national style having been interpreted in English terms, the Anglocentric character of the building was enshrined before the ground had even been broken.

Art, politics and national identity

This thesis is concerned with the multifaceted, shifting and contingent relationships between art and politics in the Houses of Parliament. As such, while positioned as a contribution to art history, it also draws upon, and aims to contribute towards, the wider political and historical literature concerning the building. Of the large and diverse literature that exists on the art and architecture of the New Palace of Westminster, this study is particularly indebted to T.S.R. Boase's detailed 1954 article on the work of the FAC.[30] This was reprinted in 1976 as part of M.H. Port's volume on the Houses of Parliament, itself the authoritative work on the building's architecture and its decoration.[31] In 2000 a volume edited by Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding joined Port's text as an indispensable account of the building,

[26] Port ed. (1976), 5-6.

[27] Clark (1995), 114; Port ed. (1976), 6-7.

[28] Port ed. (1976), 30.

[29] Port ed. (1976), 31.

[30] T.S.R. Boase, 'The Decoration of the New Palace of Westminster', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17/3 (1954), 319-58.

[31] Port ed. (1976).

particularly in terms of the fine arts.[32] To these standard texts can be added David Robertson's seminal 1978 study of Sir Charles Eastlake,[33] among other things secretary to the FAC, and Clare Willsdon's major study of British mural painting (2000). [34] Though unpublished, one of the most valuable art historical resources, and the best starting point for any research into Parliament's art, is Richard Walker's catalogue of the Parliamentary Art Collection.[35] Unsurprisingly, there is a myriad of other books and articles in which the Houses of Parliament's decorative schemes feature, many of which are cited in this study and listed in the Bibliography.[36]

Together, the above works form the foundation of secondary sources on which this thesis is built. In addition, there is a second aspect of the literature that informs much of its approach. These studies emphasise the importance of the political character of the Houses of Parliament's art and architecture, an approach that was first taken by political and constitutional historians. In a 1973 article on the building, W.J. Rorabough asserted that, for historians to understand architecture's symbolic and cultural significance, they must examine the historical context in which the buildings were created.[37] Applying this approach to the Houses of Parliament, he concluded that the 1832 Reform Act resulted in Barry's building standing as a symbol of freedom, order, and the triumph of democracy over monarchy and tyranny.[38] Building on this method, in 1992 Roland Quinault questioned whether the completed building's design and decoration really did reflect the

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[32] Riding and Riding eds. (2000).

[33] David Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World* (Princeton University Press, 1978).

[34] Clare Willsdon, *Mural Painting in Britain, 1840-1940: Image and Meaning* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

[35] R.J.B. Walker, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture and Engravings in the Palace of Westminster,* 4 vols. (typescript, 1988; copies available in the Parliamentary Archives, the London Library, and the libraries of the National Portrait Gallery, London, and Courtauld Institute of Art, London).

[36] See pp. 294-318.

[37] W.J. Rorabough, 'Politics and the Architectural Competition for the Houses of Parliament, 1834-1837', *Victorian Studies* 18 (1973), 155-75.

[38] Rorabough (1973), 156.

constitutional changes brought about by the Reform Act.[39] Whereas Rorabaugh paid scant attention to the final form of the Houses of Parliament, focusing instead on the discussions surrounding the design in Parliament and the press, Quinault examined elements such as the floor plan, the decorative detailing of the architecture, the painting and sculpture overseen by the FAC and the way that the building functioned on a day-to-day basis, but all viewed through a political lens. In doing so, he convincingly showed that, rather than reflecting a democratic constitution, the Houses of Parliament was built as a royal palace that highlights the role of the Crown-in-Parliament.[40]

Quinault's study demonstrated the viability and productivity of analysing the Houses of Parliament within its social, cultural and political contexts while simultaneously ensuring that an element of formal analysis of the building and its art was central. Paul Barlow applied a similar method in a 2000 essay on the balance of aristocratic and democratic values in the building.[41] Like Quinault, Barlow paid great attention to its final design, appearance and how it is used. He argued that there are two intersecting schemes of decoration – one on the royal route through the state apartments in the House of Lords and the other on the public route through the building – that correspond to what he calls the aristocratic and democratic modes of Parliamentary identity.[42]

The importance of Quinault's and Barlow's analyses for this thesis lies not in their interpretations but in the methodologies they adopted. These have informed other recent art historical studies, notably Janice Carlisle's examination of the wider visualisation of political reform in the Victorian period.[43] The work of the FAC plays a central role in Carlisle's analysis, but it

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[39] Roland Quinault, 'Westminster and the Victorian Constitution', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 2 (1992), 79-104.

[40] Quinault (1992), 103.

[41] Paul Barlow, ''Fire, Flatulence and Fog': The Decoration of Westminster Palace and the Aesthetics of Prudence', in Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd eds., *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London,* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2000), 69-82.

[42] Barlow (2000), 81.

[43] Janice Carlisle, *Picturing Reform in Victorian Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

is her adoption of the term 'political work' to describe the role that art can play in the political sphere that is particularly useful.[44] This concept informs the present study as a way of exploring how Parliament's decorative schemes were used to achieve particular political ends, both by their supporters and opponents. In doing so, the understanding of how works of art contributed towards the art of union and the art of disunion is enhanced.

As the works of Quinault, Barlow and Carlisle demonstrate, their approaches are well suited to issues surrounding parliamentary reform. This thesis applies similar methodology to issues relating to the Union and national representation. Of the few examples that exist of scholars addressing these issues, the earliest are superficial. In his study of Eastlake, for example, Robertson states: 'For honour due to the Scots, the Welsh, and the Irish, the [FAC] allocated suitable space'.[45] Notably, Robertson wrote this prior to the developments of 'new British history' that gave additional recognition to the Celtic fringe nations as part of an attempt to create an inclusive approach to these islands' past. Growing out of J.G.A. Pocock's seminal 1975 paper 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', scholars using this methodology have sought to create less Anglocentric narratives by examining history from a 'Britannic' perspective.[46] The resultant 'four nations' literature informs this study to a large degree.[47] Historians working in the field have also laid the groundwork for the approach to the Houses of Parliament that it adopts. In *Britons* (1992) Linda Colley highlighted the Houses of Parliament as 'the building that most enshrines nineteenth-century Britain's national and imperial pretensions'.[48] Colley's influential study gave what this

[44] Carlisle (2012), passim.

[45] Robertson (1978), 69.

[46] See J.G.A. Pocock, 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', *Journal of Modern History* 47/4 (1975), 601-21; David Cannadine, 'British History as a "new subject": Politics, perspectives and prospects', in A. Grant and K.J. Stringer eds., *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London: Routledge, 1995); and Raphael Samuel, *Island Story: Unravelling Britain,* vol. 2 (London: Verso, 1998), Ch. 2.

[47] Hugh Kearney coined this term in *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[48] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), 325.

thesis conceives of as the art and visual culture of union a central role in the creation of an inclusive form of Britishness. However, with the construction of the New Palace of Westminster falling after Colley's period of focus, the building did not benefit from this advance. The main precedent for the approach taken in this study is David Cannadine's wide-ranging essay 'The Palace of Westminster as the Palace of Varieties' (2000).[49] Highlighting the importance of developments in British historiography on interpretations of the Houses of Parliament, this forms the introductory chapter to the Riding and Riding volume mentioned above. Cannadine covers issues extending from the constitution and reform to pageantry and empire. However, it is his useful, if brief, discussion of the 'Britishness' of the building that is most relevant here, simultaneously highlighting the lack of existing scholarship and the potential scope of the subject. As it touches on many areas taken up in this thesis, it is here quoted in full:

> The Palace of Westminster was also a very *British* building – visibly embodying the sense of unitary statehood and national identity that had reached its culmination with the passing of the Act of Union with Ireland in 1801. In a palace festooned with rich ornamentation, great attention was given to all three constituent kingdoms, and some to the Welsh principality. There were coats of arms of the English, Irish and Scottish royal houses, pictures and sculptures of monarchs from all three nations, and insignia of the three great orders of chivalry: the Garter for England, the Thistle for Scotland, and also the Order of St Patrick, the motto of which, *Quis Separabit?*, proclaimed the indissolubility of the Union with Ireland. And the patron saints of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales were designated for the four walls of Central Lobby. When early- and mid-Victorians described the Palace of Westminster as the 'imperial Parliament', they meant it in the sense that it was the 'four kingdoms' legislature.[50]

[49] David Cannadine, 'The Palace of Westminster as Palace of Varieties', in Riding and Riding eds. (2000), 11-29.

[50] Cannadine (2000), 18 (original emphasis).

Cannadine partially fleshes out the claims made by earlier historians, but the lack of detailed analysis suggests this is an area that merits further analysis. Questions left unanswered include: How 'British' really is the Palace of Westminster? How and why does it embody a sense of unitary statehood and national identity, if indeed such a thing existed? What is the relationship between the representation of the different nations, and how does this relate to wider political events? It is these questions that this thesis considers.

Despite the fact that this thesis will argue that issues pertaining to the Union were some of the most consistent and prominent throughout the period of the building's decoration, surprisingly they have received little detailed analysis in existing general accounts. However, this is not to say that individual works of art have not received such attention. Historians of Irish art, for example, have examined the work undertaken by Daniel Maclise at Westminster within the contexts of both his wider career and oeuvre, as well as in studies of nationalism and unionism in Irish art, where he has become a divisive figure.[51] Similarly, the important role Irish politics played in the development and reception of Hamo Thornycroft's 1899 statue of Oliver Cromwell, and vice versa, has been recognised in both historical and art historical accounts.[52] While these analyses are instructive, and many of their conclusions feed into the present study, none place their chosen subjects within the context of the building as a whole looked at through the lens of the Union. Achieving this is the central aim of this thesis.

Three of the chapters of this thesis focus on controversies caused by planned or executed works of art that contribute to the creation of an art of disunion. Recent interdisciplinary studies into such 'art controversies' have provided useful models for approaching these issues. In particular, *Outrage: Art, Controversy and Society* (2012) provides a compelling examination of the anatomy of art controversies since the early nineteenth century.[53] It shows that such controversies are, on the whole, not predominantly about art

[51] For a full discussion of these issues, see Chapter 4 (pp. 134-168) below.

[52] These are assessed in Chapter 5 (pp. 169-206) below.

[53] Richard Howells et al, *Outrage: Art, controversy and society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

at all but about power.[54] *Outrage* argues convincingly that controversies in the arts do not ultimately revolve around questions of creativity or aesthetics, but that artworks act as catalysts in existing 'power dynamics' between interested parties in the wider public sphere.[55] As such, these controversies 'need to be understood not as aesthetically sealed but as the symbolic dramatization of greater social, political, and cultural interests in dispute.'[56] Applying this approach to the controversies examined in this thesis helps to explain how individuals and interest groups attempted to use them to increase their political power. As will be seen, the contested paintings and sculptures themselves played limited roles in the controversies they stirred up, in some cases only existing as titles in proposals for future commissions.

Central to the argument of this thesis is the need to place the decorative schemes in their social, cultural and, in particular, their political contexts. For some of the schemes, detailed analysis of the iconography and content of the final work/s is crucial to the argument. For others, the completed artworks are less important than the debates and controversies around their existence or planned creation. Because of this, schemes that were planned but never commissioned are treated as being just as significant as those that were.

The chapters of this study explore the complex and nuanced issues surrounding the decorative schemes' development and reception, and how they were embedded in wider discourses. The aim is to capture the multiplicity of actors involved and the multifaceted and variegated nature of their perspectives: to highlight not only the conflicts, but also the often unexpected and unnoticed overlap of positions – such as between Irish unionists and nationalists – otherwise seen as antithetical.

The methodology used in this study is enabled by the plethora of primary sources available, principally the surviving official records of various commissions found in the National Archives, as well as supplementary material housed in the Parliamentary Archives, Royal Archives, Victoria and

[54] Howells et al (2012), 4.

[55] Howells et al (2012), 1.

[56] Howells et al (2012), 1.

Albert Museum and elsewhere.[57] Many of these sources are unpublished and here form the basis of the most detailed accounts of a number of the schemes written to date.[58] Alongside manuscript sources, a wealth of primary printed material, from parliamentary records (in the form of Parliamentary Papers and the proceedings of debates in Hansard) to the thousands of column inches devoted to Parliament's art and architecture in the contemporary press, proved invaluable. Additionally, privileged access to the Houses of Parliament as part of the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award that led to this thesis facilitated a close examination of the building and its works of art, resulting in insights unlikely to have been gained from other forms of evidence alone.

Although this thesis is predominantly an empirical exploration of the topic, it has also been informed by a number of conceptual approaches developed in a variety of disciplines, some of which have been mentioned above. This thesis, which is essentially a study of the relationship between art, politics and national identity, employs a number of ideas from studies of nations and nationalism that have emerged since the 1980s in various fields. Benedict Anderson's influential concept of 'imagined communities', first outlined in a 1983 book of the same name, proves particularly useful when considering how the decoration of the Houses of Parliament was used to frame the identity of the imagined political community of the UK.[59] Rogers Smith's related concept of 'constituted identities' also provides a useful model in understanding the role of narratives, accounts and what he terms 'stories of peoplehood' in the construction of political identities.[60]

A number of concepts developed in studies of Scottish national identity appear frequently throughout the thesis. Principal among these is the

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[57] See the Bibliography (pp. 281-304) for a full list of archival material consulted.

[58] Specifically chapters 3 (pp. 106-33), 6 (pp. 207-41) and 7 (pp. 242-73).

[59] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

[60] Rogers M. Smith, 'The principal of constituted identities and the obligation to include', *Ethics & Global Politics* 1/3 (2008); Rogers M. Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood: The Politics and Morals of Political Membership* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

notion of 'unionist-nationalism' coined by Graeme Morton.[61] Further advanced by Murray Pittock and others, unionist-nationalism explains the dominant form of Scottish national identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[62] It posits that Scots saw themselves as both distinctly Scottish and at the same time part of a wider Britishness that was the result of the Union of 1707, in which they held themselves to be equal partners. This form of nationalism was not independence oriented but still emphasised a uniquely Scottish identity. John Morrison successfully applied this concept to Scottish painting between 1800 and 1920.[63] His methods and conclusions form an important model for the present study. Equally important is James Coleman's recent development of unionist-nationalism.[64] Assessing nineteenth-century Scottish statues and monuments, Coleman employs the term 'providential unionism' to describe the historical narrative Scots forged in which events such as the Wars of Independence were understood as having led to eventual union with England. This concept proves crucial to understanding the appearance of certain Scottish subjects in the project to decorate Parliament.

This study also employs the concept of 'Anglo-Britishness'. Popularised by Colin Kidd, this has been used by a number of scholars to describe the Anglocentric nature of British identity throughout the period of the Union.[65] As Kidd has described, 'Britishness, couched predominantly in

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[61] Graeme Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830-1860* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1999).

[62] Murray Pittock, *Scottish Nationality* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 82 & 101. Morton himself further developed the notion in 'Scotland is Britain: The Union and Unionist-Nationalism, 1807–1907', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* 1/2 (2008), 127-41.

[63] John Morrison, *Painting the Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting, 1800-1920* (Edinburgh University Press, 2003).

[64] James J. Coleman, *Remembering the Past in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Commemoration, Nationality, Memory* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

[65] Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British identity* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 272; Kevin Davey, *English Imaginaries: Six Studies in Anglo-British Modernity* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999); Catherine McGlynn and Andrew Mycock, 'Parliamentary Affairs: A Special Edition on Britishness', *Parliamentary Affairs* 63/2 (2010), 223-24; Krishnan Kumar, *The Idea of*

English terms, was … tantamount to Anglo-Britishness.'[66] This insight informs one of the central arguments of this thesis: that rather than being a very British building, the Houses of Parliament is better thought of as a product, and embodiment, of Anglo-Britishness.

Structure

To contextualise events that are at the intersection of so many social, cultural and political spheres over such an extended period, this thesis has seven chapters, each focusing on a separate programme or scheme of decoration. Broadly chronological, it begins with an examination of the architectural and decorative art of the new building designed after the fire of 1834, and ends with the completion of the final painting of the last major mural scheme in 1928. This approach enables each of the schemes to be examined in depth and within their contemporary context, while simultaneously mirroring the way that the decoration of the building as a whole developed, allowing the effects of Union politics on the art of Parliament, and vice versa, to be best understood.

Chapter 1 examines the architectural and decorative art schemes overseen by Barry in his role as architect of the New Palace of Westminster between 1836 and his death in 1860. Through an exploration of the use of heraldry and figurative sculpture, it will be argued that there are a number of contrasting conceptions of the UK presented in Barry's building, ranging from the constitutional vision of the nation as a union of three kingdoms, to the more populist and increasingly widely held view of the UK as union of four nations. Nevertheless, Barry's decorative programmes always project Anglo-Britishness.

The work of the FAC dominates the history of Parliament's mural and sculptural decoration. As such, it is central to this thesis, and the focus of three of the seven chapters. The first of these, Chapter 2, examines a series

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Englishness: English Culture, National Identity and Social Thought (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 103.

[66] Colin Kidd, 'North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-Century British Patriotisms', *Historical Journal* 39/2 (1996), 364.

of exhibitions organised by the FAC in order to promote UK art and identify artists to work on the Palace of Westminster. Adopting a four nations approach, this chapter explores the nationalities of the artists who entered to argue that the exhibitions acted as a barometer of the art world within the United Kingdom. It then looks at the subject matter of the works submitted to assess the extent to which these contributed towards an art of union or disunion.

The second, Chapter 3, examines the FAC's early plans and deliberations to assess the importance it attached to visualising political union in the building. It shows that, while certain Commissioners, such as the historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, exhibited a desire to create decorative schemes that more fully represented the nation, initially the FAC overlooked this issue. This will be explored in relation to the statuary schemes for the building, which resulted in controversy in Ireland because of the inclusion of Oliver Cromwell and exclusion of Henri de Londres, the Archbishop of Dublin who helped negotiate Magna Carta.

The final FAC chapter, Chapter 4, focuses on the Commissioners' subsequent active attempts to use the art of the building to unite, rather than divide, the nation. It will assess the planned schemes for paintings to decorate the building, published in 1847, to show how the FAC developed a more inclusive approach to British history as a direct result of the controversies examined in the preceding chapter. This marked a unique attempt by the British state to forge a sense of Britishness in the first half of the nineteenth century, and as such is a crucial element of the building's contribution to the art of union.

The final three chapters cover the period after the completion of the building's architecture and the demise of the FAC to examine later schemes of decoration. Because of the pre-existing works completed under the FAC, these schemes were conceived and undertaken in isolation rather than as part of a wider vision for the building. Each chapter focuses on an individual decorative programme or sometimes a single work of art.

Chapter Five concludes the story of attempts to erect a monument to Oliver Cromwell at Westminster. By examining the role of Hamo Thornycroft's 1899 bronze statue of the Protector in the downfall of the

Liberal administration of Lord Rosebery, it will argue that this single work of art forms the most significant example of the role played by parliament's decoration in the politics of the Union. As well as being partly responsible for the fall of a government, the statue became an important focus for debates on Irish Home Rule across the political spectrum, highlighting and exacerbating existing fissures within different groups such as the Liberal Party and Irish nationalists.

Chapter 6 focuses on four mosaics of St George, St David, St Andrew and St Patrick that dominate Central Lobby. Though conceived in 1847, they were not completed until 1870, 1899, 1923 and 1924 respectively. As a result, their history spans almost the entire period of this study. Through examining each mosaic within its specific historical context, this chapter explains how the scheme's lengthy gestation period resulted from financial concerns outweighing that of achieving parity across each of the four nations. The tables finally turned, it will be argued, when the Union faced its greatest period of upheaval in the early 1920s: completing the scheme with private funds came to be seen as a way to negotiate the changes brought about by the creation of the Irish Free State and the threat of calls for Scottish Home Rule.

The final chapter revolves around Thomas Monnington's 1928 depiction of the presentation of the Articles of Union to Queen in Anne in 1706, which forms the concluding subject of *The Building of Britain* series in St Stephen's Hall. It argues that, along with other schemes conceived in the early twentieth century, *The Building of Britain* marked a departure from earlier attempts to create an inclusive visualisation of Britishness. Monnington's painting is the only one to refer to a nation other than England and its subject was conceived and couched in imperial, rather than British, terms, mirroring the wider anglicising and imperialising of Britishness during this period. Coinciding with a rise in calls for Scottish Home Rule, the completed painting followed the works discussed in chapters 3 and 5 in becoming the focus of controversy: for Scottish nationalists, the inclusion of the subject was an outrage and insult; for Scottish unionists it symbolised an event that heralded the beginning of what they saw as Britain's unified path

to greatness. As a result, it occupies the unique position of having contributed to both the art of union and the art of disunion.

CHAPTER ONE

Contrasting Conceptions of Britain in Barry's Building

> It appears to have been the design of the Architect, to avail himself to the utmost of this peculiarity of the perpendicular style of pointed architecture, in order he may introduce as many of the national emblems and devices as possible into a building of so truly *national* a character as our Houses of Parliament.[1]

The peculiarity of perpendicular Gothic, referred to above, was the perceived need for it to be profusely adorned with heraldic decoration. Writing barely two years after the laying of the new Houses of Parliament's foundation stone, antiquary Archibald Barrington shows that Charles Barry's intention to use national symbols to indicate the building's national character was already apparent. From the start, the national nature of the building played a central role in the discussions around its rebuilding, manifesting itself early on in the decision to use Tudor Gothic because of its designation as the 'national style'. This conception of the building was also crucial to the final design and construction of the New Palace of Westminster. Much was made of the fact that it was to be built from stone and marble sourced from throughout the UK,[2] while revelations of foreign craftsmen being employed on aspects of its decoration resulted in criticism.[3] However, as Barrington alludes to, it is the decoration's content that makes the greatest contribution to the building's

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[1] Archibald Barrington, *Genealogy Simplified and Applied to the Illustration of British History,* (London: Thomas Varity, 1842), 42-3 (original emphasis).

[2] 'Architect's Report as to Internal Decorations, Addition to building, and local improvements', Appendix 1, *Second Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts*, HC 499 (1843), 7; Alexandra Wedgwood, 'The New Palace of Westminster', in Riding and Riding eds. (2000), 119.

[3] Margaret Belcher, *A.W.N. Pugin: An Annotated Critical Bibliography* (London: Mansell Publishing, 1987), 240; Phoebe B. Stanton, 'Barry and Pugin: A Collaboration', in Port ed. (1976), 135.

national character. But what conception of the nation does it embody, and how is this achieved?

In his brief assessment of the national nature of the Houses of Parliament, Cannadine cites the national symbols that Barry deployed as part of his decorative programmes as contributing towards creating 'a very *British* building'.[4] He argues that, through the use of symbols relating to England, Scotland and Ireland, plus a lesser number to Wales, the building embodies the nation as established by the 1800 Acts of Union.[5] The chapter undertakes a close reading of Barry's decorative schemes to see if Cannadine's conclusions can be borne out. It will examine in detail the architectural statuary and proliferation of ornament that is found on almost every available surface, from carved stone and woodwork, metalwork, floor tiles, decorative painting, stained glass and furnishings. In doing so, it will be argued that Barry's decoration presents a number of contrasting conceptions of the United Kingdom that complicate the simplistic view put forward by Cannadine.

Barry's son Alfred described his father's dual aims for the building's decoration as being, on the one hand, to create 'memorials of the past' and, on the other, to 'declare the date and object of the building'.[6] This duality provides the best model for understanding Barry's programmes and informs the basic structure of this chapter. When it comes to the 'memorials of the past', Barry utilised historical royal heraldry and architectural statues of monarchs to project an almost wholly English vision of the UK's history. By contrast, Barry's use of the decorative schemes to 'declare the date and object of the building' grounds the New Palace of Westminster in the Victorian period and clearly defines its purpose as the home of the four-nations' legislature. Primarily through the use of official national symbols and figures of the UK patron saints, the second conception of the nation is more inclusively British. This is not to say that each nation is treated equally, as a clear hierarchy that places England in the dominant position remains.

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[4] Cannadine (2000), 18.

[5] Cannadine (2000), 18.

[6] Alfred Barry, *The Life and Works of Sir Charles Barry* (London: John Murray, 1867), 25.

Furthermore, this imagining of Britain is further complicated by the position afforded to Wales, which is sometimes included and sometimes not. The result, it will be argued, is that Barry's Houses of Parliament presents a complex, varied and at times contradictory conception of the UK as a political union with an English past and an English-dominated present and future. Far from being 'a very *British* building', its Anglocentric decoration embodies a national character best described as conforming to Anglo-Britishness.

To fully comprehend the architectural elements of the building's decoration it is crucial to emphasise that, until his death in 1860, Barry, as the architect, was in overall control. Unlike the fine art schemes examined in the remainder of this thesis, which involved various levels of direct governmental and parliamentary control, Barry had practically a free hand in terms of the content of the decoration.[7] Successive First Commissioners of Works managed Barry on behalf of governments, but on the whole they restricted their involvement to general design issues, cost and timing rather than aesthetics, believing that decisions of an artistic nature should be left to the professional architect.[8] When there was criticism of Barry's decoration, it came about because of the quantity, opulence, cost and consequent delays rather than the specific content.[9]

Similarly, although a number of other significant artists and architects worked with Barry, he retained the final say on all decorative detail. This is particularly important to highlight in regards to A.W.N. Pugin. Following Pugin's and Barry's deaths, their sons began a public argument over whose father was most responsible for designing the Houses of Parliament.[10] While his contribution to designing Gothic detail – particularly on the building's interiors, furnishings and fittings – cannot be underestimated, it is now widely accepted that Pugin's role was always subservient to Barry's as the architect.[11] This is corroborated by the schemes assessed in this chapter, where Barry repeatedly dictated the elements that Pugin should incorporate

[7] Port ed. (1976), 3.

[8] Port ed. (1976), 3 & 111-15.

[9] Port ed. (1976), 149; Wedgwood (2000), 130.

[10] Stanton (1976), 64 & 71-2.

[11] Stanton (1976), 135; Wedgwood (2000), 122.

into a design, subsequently demanding changes and, on occasion, making them himself with no recourse to his colleague. More or less the same relationship existed with the other principal figure involved in the building's decoration, sculptor John Thomas, who produced designs and models for much of the stone detail and statuary, as well as superintending the carvers who produced it.[12] As various accounts attest, none of these designs were finalised and installed until they had received Barry's approbation.[13]

The architect's ultimate responsibility and unfettered control of the decorative programmes mean that the vision of the nation the building embodies is in essence Barry's. Unlike the other schemes examined in this thesis, this vision cannot be said to represent the direct view of the British state. However, this does not make Barry's work any less important: the lack of complaints suggest widespread endorsement of the view of Britishness that it projected. This is perhaps unsurprising given that, by largely using officially sanctioned national symbols, Barry was in fact reflecting the official and predominant vision of the Union.

A useful concept that helps explain the success of Barry's schemes in this regard is sociologist Michael Billig's notion of 'banal nationalism'.[14] In formulating this approach, Billig argues that in established nations, such as the UK, 'there is a continual 'flagging', or reminding, of nationhood' that provides a constant background to political discourses and the creation of cultural products.[15] These elements are so familiar that they go unnoticed, yet they play a crucial, daily role in the imagining of political communities. The metonymic image of banal nationalism that Billig provides 'is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building.'[16] In this chapter, the flag is joined by other national symbols and the public building is the Houses of Parliament.

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[12] Benedict Read, 'The Architectural Sculpture' in Port ed. (1976), 241-45.

[13] For accounts by those who worked on the building see Barry (1867), 91-92. For discussion of responsibilities see Read (1976), 242.

[14] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

[15] Billig (1995), 6

[16] Billig (1995), 8.

Barry's schemes are important for a number of other reasons that can be illuminated by banal nationalism. As part of its fabric, the New Palace of Westminster's architectural embellishments were completed as the building was constructed. They were therefore largely in place prior to the FAC commissioning paintings and sculpture and certainly long before the latter schemes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a result, they provided the physical and symbolic context in which the fine art was planned and created, the impact of which is seen in a number of works. They are also essential to how the spaces are read and experienced, both literally and metaphorically colouring users' experience and understanding of the building and the works of art within it, even if as a result of banal nationalism they may not be aware that this is taking place.

Decorating a 'great national edifice'

The Houses of Parliament was the first major building of the Gothic Revival to be built in the perpendicular style, though Barry had recently used it for King Edward VI Grammar School in Birmingham, where he had worked with both Pugin and Thomas.[17] Barry's decision to use an abundance of heraldry was perfectly consistent with the style of Gothic architecture and perpendicular Gothic in particular.[18] Citing examples such as the Henry VII Chapel, Barrington explained that such buildings were 'often profusely ornamented with the arms, as well as the badges of the sovereigns or other noble families, by whom they were erected.'[19] Barry himself described heraldry as

> absolutely essential to the character and the full expression of the Tudor style of the design adopted by Parliament, and it is the only means of giving historic interest to it, which, in a great national edifice

[17] Read (1976), 241; Wedgwood (2000), 115.

[18] Port ed. (1976), 1-2.

[19] Barrington (1842), 42-3.

> devoted to the object of the New Palace at Westminster, is most desirable for many reasons.[20]

In his biography of his father, Alfred Barry describes how the architect 'desired to make his building a treasure-house of art and a sculptural memorial of our national history'.[21] His father's 'great idea', he explains, was that: 'Sculpture without, sculpture, painting, and stained glass within, were to preserve the memorials of the past, and declare the date and object of the building.'[22] Thus, as Sean Sawyer argues, Barry conceived of the building's decoration as functioning didactically, with the aim of reflecting, and forging, political and cultural national identity.[23]

The notion that Gothic architecture was particularly suited to working discursively formed a prominent feature of the Gothic Revival and justifies the close reading of the Houses of Parliament that this chapter provides. Relecting Barry's conception of the building, antiquary Charles Boutell called Gothic architecture an essentially 'historical Art' that aspires to become 'stone-inscribed history'.[24] For Boutell, British history could not be written on Classical buildings because heraldry was unsuited to their decoration. Gothic buildings, on the other hand, were uniquely suited to its embodiment as they absolutely required heraldic decoration:

> Without it the style is imperfect. It carries out its ideas. It is the inexhaustible source of its happiest decorations. By it the Gothic realises the peculiarly historical attributes of its own character. And, as the style is itself of universal applicability, free in action, and elastic in the development of principles – so also Heraldry provides for the Gothic

[20] HC Deb*,* 14 April 1851, vol. 116, col. 195.

[21] Barry (1867)*,* 190.

[22] Barry (1867), 25.

[23] Sawyer (2000), 147.

[24] Charles Boutell, *Heraldry, Historical and Popular,* 2nd ed. (London: Richard Bentley, 1863), 372.

> Architect, (and particularly when employed upon public and national works) the most comprehensive and the most plastic of symbolism.[25]

Architectural theorists also highlighted the importance of ornamentation as the main vehicle of architectural expression. During the early Victorian period this became a key topic, not only in architecture but also in relation to design, manufacturing, the economy and taste. Pugin, John Ruskin and Owen Jones were perhaps the most influential theorists, and although they often disagreed on the origins and meaning of ornamentation, they concurred on its importance to the language of architecture.[26] Pugin strongly opposed 'mere ornamentation', believing that 'all ornament should consist of enrichment of the essential construction of the building.'[27] It is also clear that, as Corinna Wagner argues, Pugin measured a building's beauty and cultural power by its ability to act, through elements such as decoration and detailing, in some sense as a text.[28] Barry himself was of the view that 'ornamentation … could not be overdone', though he emphasised that it must be the of 'right kind'.[29] As Phoebe Stanton has noted, in the Houses of Parliament legible heraldic enrichment was meant to be read as a great book of national history that would underscore the purpose of the structure.[30] Driven by his aim to create a building that could function didactically and be read as stone-inscribed history, Barry's approach to ornamentation was therefore careful

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[25] Boutell (1863), 373.

[26] For comparisons of Pugin, Ruskin and Jones see Stuart Durant, 'Architectural Form and Ornament' in Ben Farmer and Henrie J. Louw eds., *Companion to Contemporary Architectural Thought* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), 330 and Anne Bordeleau, *Charles Robert Cockerell, Architect in Times: Reflections Around Anachronistic Drawings* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 128-33.

[27] A.W.N. Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (London: Hughes, 1841), 1.

[28] Corinna M. Wagner, '"Standing Proof of the Degeneracy of Modern Times": Architecture, Society, and Medievalism of A.W.N. Pugin', in Jennifer Palmgren and Lorretta M. Holloway eds., *Beyond Arthurian Romances: The Reach of Victorian Medievalism* (Leicester University Press, 2005), 14.

[29] Barry (1867), 257.

[30] Stanton (1976a), 71.

and considered. There was nothing haphazard in the symbols and figures that he chose to include, or in their arrangement and placing.

In contrast to his deployment of heraldry, Barry's prolific use of figurative sculpture marked a departure from existing forms of Gothic Revival architecture. Benedict Read has noted that, prior to the new Houses of Parliament, Gothic figure work in the UK had received little attention.[31] Read puts this down to a number of factors including cost, Protestant reservations about embellishment, a lack of models from which to copy and the dominance of neo-classicism.[32] Yet for Barry, as his son's comment above indicates, figurative sculpture held a central position in his vision for the building. This was influenced by statuary that decorated late Gothic secular buildings studied by the architect in the Low Countries.[33] Figurative sculpture thus became one of the defining features of Barry's building, particularly on the exterior. It also proved to be hugely influential, with a number of subsequent Gothic Revival public buildings incorporating statue schemes that emulated those of the Palace of Westminster.[34]

As Quinault and Cannadine have argued convincingly, essential to understanding the content of Barry's decorative schemes is the importance he and others placed on the building's position as a royal palace.[35] In fact, having long been known as the Houses of Parliament, it was during the early stages of the new building's construction that the name Palace of Westminster – or at first more commonly Palace *at* Westminster – was resurrected.[36] Furthermore, Barry designed a large part of the building around the State Opening of Parliament. Ultimately, this ceremonial event and the Palace of Westminster's continued royal statues dictated its overall

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[31] Read (1976), 239.

[32] Read (1976), 241.

[33] Read (1976), 248; Benedict Read, 'Sculpture in the New Palace of Westminster', in Riding and Riding eds. (2000), 263.

[34] Examples include E.W. Goodwin's Northampton Guildhall (1861-64), Alfred Waterhouse's Manchester Town Hall (1868-74) and Bradford Town Hall (1873) by Lockwood and Mawson.

[35] Quinault (1992), 80; Cannadine (2000), 15.

[36] The FAC had been using the term 'Palace at Westminster' in their official reports since the first was published in 1842.

layout and appearance, particularly in the Lords' state apartments. Emphasizing the place of monarchy in the British constitution, this ceremonial suite of rooms forms the largest and most lavishly decorated portion of the building, with its climax, the House of Lords' Chamber, the most ornate of all. According to Alfred Barry, his father considered the House of Lords:

> not a mere place of business, not even a mere House of Lords at all, but as the chamber in which the sovereign, surrounded by the court, summoned to the royal presence the three estates of the realm. He thought, therefore, that it should partake of royal magnificence, and lavished upon it all the treasures of decoration.[37]

If the Old Palace of Westminster was a royal palace given over to the use of the legislature, Barry's New Palace of Westminster, while containing all of the necessary advantages of a purpose-built modern senate house, was, in many ways, a legislature in the guise of a royal palace. This was crucial in determining how Barry created 'memorials of the past' and declared 'the date and object of the building.'

Memorials of an English past

The content, as well as the lavishness, of the decoration plays a critical role in establishing the Houses of Parliament's regal flavour. Barry's internal and external figurative sculpture consists of hundreds of statues of kings and queens that decorate a number of the exterior elevations, as well as the walls of St Stephen's Hall and Central Lobby, the two main publicly accessible areas of the new building.[38] Along with much of the carved stonework, these statues were designed and modelled by Thomas, with the final carving executed by a team under his direction (Fig. 1).[39] The sovereigns and

[37] Barry (1867), 248.

[38] Read (2000), 262.

[39] Read (1976), 241-42.

consorts that Barry included, and which he described as 'statues of Her Majesty's ancestors in chronological order', run from the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy to Queen Victoria.[40] Despite Cannadine's claim that they consist of 'sculptures of monarchs from all three nations', as with all of Barry's memorials of the past, the scheme is decidedly Anglocentric.[41] Only English and then British monarchs feature, with no sovereigns of Scotland from before the Union of the Crowns and none from the long-extinguished royal houses of Ireland, let alone Wales.[42]

Like the statuary scheme, the historical heraldry deployed by Barry throughout the building is almost solely drawn from English monarchs. The most prominent single group is that found on the River Front elevation, where large carved stone coats of arms run the entire length of the principal façade (Fig. 2).[43] The royal lineage presented begins with William the Conqueror and ends with Victoria, with only English and then British monarchs in between. A similarly prominent example was the great window in St Stephen's Porch, a high, vaulted space that Barry built to connect the medieval Westminster Hall, which survived the 1834 fire, to his New Palace of Westminster and function as its public entrance. Designed by Pugin and completed in 1851, but destroyed during the Second World War, the vast window illustrated the heraldry of Queen Victoria's English family tree from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards.[44]

Cannadine asserts that Barry uses the 'coats of arms of the English, Irish and Scottish royal houses' throughout the building.[45] In actual fact, there is only one exception to the profusion of historical English royal heraldry. In the Royal Gallery, the arms of Scottish monarchs are included, along with

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[40] *Second Report* (1843), 9; Read (1976), 234-38.

[41] Cannadine (2000), 18.

[42] Further depictions of English sovereigns are in the House of Lords Chamber, where carved busts of English kings surmount pillars in the wooden panelling. See H.G Clarke, *Hand-Book Guide to the House of Lords* (London: H.G. Clarke & Co., 1847b), 20.

[43] Read (1976), 234.

[44] Patrick Feeny, 'The heraldic glasss in the Houses of Parliament', *Journal of the British Society of Master Glass-Painters* 12/2 (1956-7), 147.

[45] Cannadine (2000), 18.

those of English and British monarchs, in the stained glass windows and in a band of shields in the stonework below them (Fig. 3).[46] Undertaken in the 1850s, Barry may have been influenced by the FAC's decision in 1845 to place stained glass windows depicting English and Scottish kings and queens in the Lords Chamber (described in more detail in Chapter 3).[47] This was the only aspect of the decorative arts that the FAC dictated, although ultimately Pugin produced the designs under Barry's guidance.[48] By including the arms of the individuals whose portraits were found in the Lords Chamber windows, Barry linked the two most significant spaces in the state apartments, thus giving the decoration a conceptual unity. As will be shown in chapters 3 and 4, the FAC's approach to national history was more inclusively British than Barry's, and this may have affected the later schemes he initiated, including those in the Royal Gallery.[49]

The need for variety in the decoration of such a large and ornate building resulted in one design that, had it been executed, would have made Barry's 'memorials of the past' more inclusively British than was ultimately the case. Having been asked by Barry to exercise his 'inventive genius' to produce designs for a window in Central Lobby in 1851, Pugin drew up a scheme that consisted of Saxon, Scottish, Irish and Welsh royal figures.[50] The sketchy design does not reveal any identifying details of the figures or their associated coats of arms, and Barry never took it forward.[51] This can probably be explained by Pugin's illness and death the following year and the subsequent decision to reuse glass from the Commons Chamber and Members Lobby in Central Lobby instead.[52] Nevertheless, it indicates some

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[46] The windows were installed in 1856 and remade with slight alterations after Second World War damage. See Feeny (1956-7), 143 & 145.

[47] John Christian, 'Stained Glass' in Port ed. (1976), 246; see below, pp. 123-4.

[48] Christian (1976), 246.

[49] See pp. 106-68 below.

[50] Quoted in E.W. Pugin, *Who was the art architect of the Houses of Parliament?* (London: Longmans & Co., 1867), 47.

[51] The design is held by the Royal Institute of British Architects. See Alexandra Wedgwood, *Catalogue of the Drawings Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects: The Pugin Family* (London: Royal Instutute of British Architects, 1977), 70.

[52] See pp. 60-61 below.

awareness of the potential suitability of these figures for the building, at least on the part of Pugin, who may have been influenced by the FAC's decision in 1847 to place mosaics representing the patron saints of the four UK nations in the same space.[53] Had it been executed, this window would have been Barry's only historical scheme to refer to Ireland and Wales, and only the second to refer to Scotland.

That Barry's memorials of the past should be so overwhelmingly English is unsurprising. Ultimately, his vision reflected the dominant view that equated Britain's royal history with that of England alone. This can be seen in royal genealogies and heraldic treatise such as John Burke's famous *Peerage & Baronetage,* which from its first edition in 1826 included a section on the Royal Family that gave the UK's royal lineage solely through the English line from William the Conqueror to onwards. A separate section on the kings and queens of Scotland, ending at the Union of the Crowns, then followed.[54]

As well as presenting the generally accepted version of British history as told through its monarchs, it seems likely that a number of factors specific to the building itself played a role in its Anglocentric historical decoration. The choice of a Tudor architectural style resulted in Barry using many heraldic symbols linked to the Tudor royal family such as roses, pomegranates and greyhounds, which are all found on the nearby Henry VII Chapel of Westminster Abbey, an exemplar for late Perpendicular Gothic. The portcullis, which originated from the family of Henry VII's wife Margaret Beaufort, is perhaps the best known of these Tudor emblems appropriated by Barry, having subsequently become, through its widespread use in the Palace of Westminster, Parliament's official emblem. [55]

The specific location of the New Palace of Westminster on the site of an old English royal palace also undoubtedly influenced the Englishness of

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[53] See chapters 4 (pp.134-67) and 6 (pp. 207-41).

[54] John Burke, *A General and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire* (London: Henry Colburn, 1826).

[55] Wedgwood (2000), 115.

Barry's memorials of the past.[56] Many of the English monarchs included in his schemes would have resided in the old building and it was intimately associated with English, rather than British, royal history.[57] The old Palace of Westminster had also contained royal heraldry that had been added as the buildings were built or renewed forming a palimpsest of the English past, some of which was a touchstone for Gothic revivalists such as Pugin.[58] With his emphasis on English royal history, Barry may have been trying to replicate this specific sense of stone-inscribed English history in an attempt to link the new building with the old.

That the new building was on the site of what had been the home of the English parliament also played an important role in the Anglocentric nature of its decoration. Whatever the name and territory of the state that it governed after 1707 and 1801, the Westminster Parliament remained a *de facto* continuation of the English Parliament. As Kidd argues, 'this validated the widespread notion that Britain's political heritage resided in the history of English institutions.'[59] By building the new Houses of Parliament on the site of the old, this validation continued. In Barry's decorative schemes, this is evident not only in the English royal symbolism, but in the few non-royal historical schemes. On the underside of the galleries in the Lords Chamber, for example, painted and gilded coats of arms chart the Lord Chancellors of England, Great Britain and United Kingdom since 1377 (Fig. 4).[60] However, with the UK House of Lords to all intents and purposes a continuation of the English institution that existed prior to 1707, no space is allocated to the holders of equivalent offices from the pre-Union kingdoms of Ireland or Scotland.

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[56] For the importance of the Westminster site, see Andrea Fredericksen, 'Parliament's Genius Loci: The Politics of Place after the 1834 Fire', in Riding and Riding eds. (2000), 99-111.

[57] Port ed. (1976), 5-19.

[58] Wagner (2005), 10.

[59] Kidd (1993), 205.

[60] Clarke (1847b), 21. Similar shields of Speakers of the House of Commons were to be painted under the galleries in the Commons Chamber, but were abandoned following concerns about ornate decoration undermining its business-like nature. See Anon., *The New Palace of Westminster* (London: Warrington, 1867), 47.

Patron saints of the Union

The lack of recognition given to Scotland, Ireland and Wales in the historical decoration is placed into sharper relief, though also somewhat tempered, by their inclusion in schemes that fulfil Barry's second aim of declaring the 'date and object of the building.' Here, national symbols, in the form of the UK's patron saints and emblems largely derived from Queen Victoria's armorial bearings, clearly root the building in the Victorian period and emphasise its function as the home of the Union legislature.

National symbols have long been recognised by scholars of nationalism as central to the formation and maintenance of notions of nationhood.[61] Such symbols reinforce national consciousness and build a sense of commonality among national groups.[62] Of the many forms of national symbol from anthems to flags that exist in Europe, patron saints are among the most important. Before the advent of modern nations, embryonic European notions of nationhood were largely intertwined with Christianity. As a result, modern national sentiment is frequently indebted to religious models.[63] A central example of this is the adoption of national patron saints, and their associated feast days and symbols, which often played a key role in the development of national identity.[64] This is the case in the four nations that would come to form the UK.

The various and complex histories of the adoption of saints George, Andrew, Patrick and David by the four UK nations have been sufficiently

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[61] Prominent studies include P. Alter, *Nationalism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989); Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991); and Michael E. Geisler ed., *National Symbols, Fractured Identities: Contesting the Narrative* (Lebanon NH & London: University Press of New England, 2005).

[62] Smith (1991), 16-17.

[63] Adrian Hastings, *The Construction and Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 6 & 185-209.

[64] For a recent study into a non-British example see Katherine Rowe, *Saint and Nation: Santiago, Teresa of Avila, and Plural Identities in Early Modern Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011).

explored elsewhere.[65] The important insight for this study is that, by the mid-nineteenth century, each figure had long been established as the patron saint of his nation and was one of its most significant national symbols. Their positions as religious nationalist symbols remained important to an extent, but they also became part of a modern secular nationalist discourse.[66] This made them particularly suitable for decorating the first great secular building of the Gothic Revival.

For Barry, the deployment of saints George, Andrew, Patrick and David as part of his external programme of statues became one of the principal ways that he emphasised the national nature of the building. Not only were they easily recognisable, largely non-sectarian unifying symbols, but as medieval figures they also fitted in well with the architecture of the building and style of sculpture used to decorate it.[67] In this regard, they act as Gothic equivalents of another form of national symbol, namely personifications such as Britannia and Hibernia. Notably, such national allegories are in fact entirely absent from the building.[68] The use of the four national patron saints appears to be an obvious solution to Barry's desire to incorporate suitable national figures into his sculpture programme, but it was in fact a novel contribution to the creation of an art of union. Though the patron saints had long appeared in a variety of media individually, originally in religious and later in secular contexts, they had rarely been deployed together. Though this had occurred in popular prints, prior to Barry there are no examples of the saints being combined in either painting or sculpture, let

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[65] For St George see Jonathan Good, *The Cult of St George in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009). For St Andrew see M. Ash and D. Broun, 'The Adoption of St Andrew as Patron Saint of Scotland', in J. Higgit ed., *Medieval Art and Architecture in the Diocese of St Andrews* (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 1994). For St Patrick see Mike Cronin and Daryl Adair, *The Wearing of the Green: A History of St. Patrick's Day* (London: Routledge, 2002). For St David see J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding, *Saint David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).

[66] On the roles of patron saints as religious nationalist symbols see Rowe (2011), 226.

[67] Read (1796), 244-45

[68] The only allegorical figures in Barry's programme are statues of Justice and Mercy in Sovereign's Entrance. See Read (1976), 238.

alone as part of the decoration of a significant national building. [69] Subsequently, other than in the Houses of Parliament, such groupings appeared very rarely, an indication of the uniquely national nature of the building.[70]

By drawing on well-established iconography, John Thomas's designs for the statues of George, Andrew and Patrick ensure that the figures are easily recognisable: St George appears as a medieval knight in armour standing over the slain dragon (Fig. 5); St Andrew, bare headed and dressed in a simple robe, stands with the saltire on which he was crucified (Fig. 6); and St Patrick wears ornate bishops' robes and a mitre, while a snake slithers at his feet, in reference to the legend that he drove all of the serpents from Ireland (Fig. 7). St David, on the other hand, is less easily identifiable (Fig. 8). Though shown in bishop's robes and mitre in the act of preaching, as was common, he is without the dove on his shoulder that formed his most readily understood attribute. But, by process of elimination, it is clear who he is meant to be.

All four saints appear together in four separate groups on the exterior of the building (Fig. 9).[71] Their mobilization by Barry as some of the few figures repeated in his iconographic scheme indicates their importance to him as a means of establishing the national character of the Houses of Parliament. Yet while they play a crucial role in visually representing Scotland, Ireland and Wales in addition to England, they also establish a hierarchy between the nations. In each of the four groups, the saints are arranged vertically, with Barry placing them in what he presumably considered to be their descending order of importance. Predictably, St George appears uppermost, followed by St Andrew, St Patrick and St

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[69] For satirical prints of all four saints published in London in 1781 see Cullen (1997), 66 and Peter Lord, *Words with Pictures: Welsh Images and Images of Wales in the Popular Press, 1640-1860* (Aberystwyth: Planet, 1995), 71.

[70] A prominent example is E.W. Goodwin's Northampton Guildhall (1861-64), which includes exterior statues of saints George, Andrew and Patrick that appear to owe a debt to John Thomas, whose models for the statues were exhibited at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham from 1854 (see Chapter 5, pp. 169-206 below).

[71] Read (1976), 234.

David.[72] This hierarchy within the representation of the UK nations sets the tone for the national decoration throughout the building and ensures that whatever Britishness it ultimately embodies is really never anything more than Anglo-Britishness.

The lack of importance ascribed to Wales in these four schemes is taken one step further where, for reasons of symbolism, lack of space or necessity of design, there was not enough niches for all four saints. In a statuary scheme on the façade of St Stephen's Porch, for example, St Stephen features in the place of St David, presumably in reference to that specific location.[73] St David is likewise excluded from one of the most important statue groupings in Barry's decorative programme. Found in Sovereign's Entrance – a vast, vaulted porch at the base of the Victoria Tower that is used by the monarch to enter the Houses of Parliament during state occasions – the group consists of saints George, Andrew and Patrick arranged with two angels in a triangular formation, with St George given the greatest prominence (Fig. 10).[74]

Architecturally and symbolically, Sovereign's Entrance is one of the most significant locations in the building. It forms the beginning of the royal processional route through to the House of Lords Chamber, a series of apartments that Sawyer highlights as the 'crucible of royal and national identity'.[75] Throughout these spaces, architectural scale is combined with lavish decoration and royal symbolism to emphasise the power and legitimacy of the sovereign, while national symbols forge a sense of national identity.[76] This begins in the Sovereign's Entrance with the statues of saints George, Patrick and Andrew. The importance of this group as national figures, and the need for them to be easily identifiable as such, is emphasised on their pedestals, which are decorated with shields emblazoned with crosses appropriate to each saint and the Latin name of the

[72] These are then followed by St Peter and St Paul in reference to the two principal London churches, Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral. See Read (1976), 234.

[73] Read (1976), 234.

[74] Read (1976), 238.

[75] Sawyer (2000), 138.

[76] Sawyer (2000), 138.

relevant kingdom – *Anglia*, *Scotia* and *Hibernia* – carved in relief. By contrast, the statues of the patron saints found elsewhere bear no identifying national emblems or labels.

The hierarchy among the patron saints that is developed on the building's exterior reaches its conclusion inside the building where, with one exception, St George always appears alone. The most significant example is on the throne canopy in the House of Lords Chamber (Fig. 11). As the culmination of the royal processional route and the symbolic climax of the building, the throne is where the monarch embodies monarchy during the State Opening of Parliament, which is the only occasion when the Lords, Commons and sovereign are brought together.[77] Constructed from carved, gilded and painted wood, the throne's canopy consists of a large central section behind the monarch's throne and smaller wings behind two flanking chairs of state designed for Prince Albert and the Prince of Wales. The product of a complex collaboration between Barry and Pugin, it is the high point of the internal decorations and the most important single feature of the building.[78]

In the centre of the throne's canopy stands a statuette of St George slaying the dragon (Fig. 12). Instead of being accompanied by his fellow patron saints, George is flanked on each side by two knights holding shields with the insignias of the four senior orders of chivalry - the Order of the Bath, the Order of St Patrick, the Order of the Thistle and the Order of the Garter. Early designs for the throne canopy included the lone figure of St George, first mounted and then standing.[79] On later designs, he was replaced by five angels in niches carrying shields with the cross of St George in the centre.[80] However, in a last-minute alteration, Barry decided to bring back St George, this time accompanied by the four other knights.[81] Alexandra Wedgwood has suggested that this change may be indicative of Barry having to alter Pugin's

[77] Riding (2000), 186.

[78] For the evolution of the design see Alexandra Wedgwood, 'The Throne in the House of Lords and its Setting', *Architectural History* 27 (1984), 59-73.

[79] Wedgwood (1984), 64.

[80] Wedgwood (1984), 64.

[81] Wedgwood (1984), 64.

often overtly ecclesiastical designs.[82] This may also explain why Barry decided not to include the other patron saints, though there is evidence he considered doing so.[83] Unlike St George – a Roman soldier reinvented as a chivalric knight – Barry may have seen Andrew, Patrick and David as austere and ascetic figures that were ultimately not in keeping with the chivalric revival so prevalent in this period and in which St George played such a central role.[84]

The chivalric interpretation of St George is emphasised by the similarities between the central statuette and the other knights on the throne canopy. Interestingly, Wedgwood interprets all of the statues as depicting St George,[85] while Parliament's own on-site interpretation labels them as 'St George in different roles'.[86] There are indeed very close similarities between the figures, but they are almost certainly meant to represent idealised knights of the orders of chivalry, the insignia of which they display on their shields and wear around their necks, rather than the English patron saint.[87] Nevertheless, these cases of mistaken identity reveal something of the perception of St George in this guise. Grouped with the other knights from whom he is almost indistinguishable, St George is the embodiment of chivalry not sanctity. Such misreadings also highlight a further possible, though unintentional, message: that the patron saint of England protects not

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[82] Wedgwood (1984), 64. See also Barry (1867), 75-6.

[83] Clarke's guidebook, which appears to have been written in advance of the Chamber's completion with information from Barry's office, states: 'Over the centre of the throne are niches, intended for the reception of the statues of St George, St Patrick, and St David, the patron saints of the three kingdoms [sic].' See Clarke (1847b), 14-15.

[84] For the chivalric revival, see Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1981). For its importance in the new Houses of Parliament, see Debra N. Mancoff, 'Myth and Monarchy: Chivalric Legends for the Victorian Age', in Riding and Riding eds. (2000), 241-51. Curiously, Mancoff does not mention the profilic appearance of St George in the building.

[85] Wedgwood (1984), 65.

[86] This is a framed description of the Lords Chamber displayed in the Prince's Chamber. It is signed by the calligraphist Wendy Westover and dated 1954, although it is not clear who drafted the text.

[87] Clarke (1847b), 14-15.

only his own order, the English Garter, but also those of the other kingdoms – the Thistle and St Patrick – whose patron saints, Andrew and Patrick, are unable to do so themselves.

The exclusion of the patron saints of Ireland, Scotland and Wales from the throne appears to be the result of their perceived unsuitability for this particular scheme, in which chivalric and martial figures are prioritised. Further proof of this is found in the spandrels of the canopy where St George appears again, this time in carved reliefs that push his martial nature to the fore (Fig. 13). Whatever the reason for their exclusion, the fact that saints Andrew, Patrick and David were not included in the single most important element of the new building is extremely significant. The deployment of St George alone undermines the Britishness built up by the use of the other patron saints with him elsewhere and reinforces the Anglocentric nature of Barry's Houses of Parliament. This is further emphasised in the other locations where St George also appears in isolation.[88] Even in the roof bosses of St Stephen's Porch, the one interior programme that does feature all four nations' patron saints, the relative sizes of the carvings ensure that only St George is readily identifiable (Fig. 14).

Emblems of nationhood

Alongside the patron saints themselves, their associated emblems often form another important type of national symbol. Of particular significance in the English, Scottish and Irish context are the three crosses linked to the patrons of the three kingdoms, which became the basis for their national flags.[89] Mirroring the prolific appearance of St George in the Houses of Parliament,

[88] These include in historiated stone bosses in St Stephen's Hall and Central Lobby, and as a supporter on one of the early coats of arms on the River Front. He also appears alongside St Michael on a fireplace in the Robing Room produced under Barry's son Edward Middleton Barry in the 1860s (see Chapter 6, pp. 216-51 below).

[89] For flags as national symbols in Great Britain and Ireland, see G.A. Hayes-McCoy, *A History of the Irish Flags from Earliest Times* (Dublin: Academy Press, 1979) and T.H. Eriksen and R. Jenkins eds., *Flag, Nation and Symbolism in Europe and America* (London: Routledge, 2008).

the English saint's cross was used often in the building, most notably on the Clock Tower (Fig. 15).[90] In the case of St Andrew's cross and St Patrick's Cross, however, those already cited in Sovereign's Entrance are the only examples in Barry's entire decorative programme. The Sovereign's Entrance scheme gains additional prominence as the only place that Barry included perhaps the UK's most recognisable national symbol, the Union Flag.[91] Formed in 1801 as a composite of the flags of the three kingdoms, Barry included it below the two angels that flank the central statues, further emphasising the message of national unity that this important group embodies.[92]

A second set of symbols relating to saints George, Andrew and Patrick that appear in the building are the insignia of the three highest orders of chivalry (Fig. 16). As mentioned above in relation to their appearance on the throne, these orders ostensibly relate to each kingdom: the Garter for England, the Thistle for Scotland and the St Patrick for Ireland.[93] As Cannadine has highlighted, their insignia therefore act as national symbols.[94] They also incorporate existing national symbolism: the Garter displays the cross of St George; the Thistle a depiction of its eponymous plant; and the St Patrick a shamrock with three crowns and a motto, *Quis separabit?* ('Who shall separate?'), intended to reflect the enduring relationship between the

[90] Following repainting in the 1930s, today the St George crosses on the Clock Tower are gold and black. See Inspectorate of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission, 'Clock Tower' (unpublished report, 1984), Parliamentary Archives, London (PA) ARC/VAR/263.

[91] For the history of the Union Flag, see Nick Groom, *The Union Jack: The Story of the British Flag* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007).

[92] Notably, the well-known Union Flag that flies on the Victoria Tower has only done so since the 1890s. See Hansard, HL Deb, 25 July 1893, vol. 15, cols. 428-30 and HC Deb, 12 September 1893, vol. 17, col. 946.

[93] For each order, see Peter Galloway, *The Most Illustrious Order: The Order of St Patrick and its Knights* (London: Unicorn, 1999)*;* Hugh E.L. Collins, *The Order of the Garter, 1348-1461: Chivalry and Politics in Medieval England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); and Peter Galloway, *The Order of the Thistle* (London: Spink & Son, 2009).

[94] Cannadine (2000), 18.

three kingdoms.[95] As on the throne, the insignia of the Order of the Bath sometimes appears alongside the three national orders. It displays three crowns along with the motto *Tria Juncta in Uno* ('Three united in one'), reflecting its status as an all-embracing British order.[96]

For the majority of the national symbols used in decorating the building, however, Barry turned to the group of heraldic emblems used by Queen Victoria as the UK's sovereign. In most European countries, heraldry forms an important source of national symbolism, though this is particularly true with states ruled by a monarchy.[97] Known in the UK as the royal armoury, these emblems are assumed by the monarch on his/her accession to the throne. They are therefore not personal symbols but signifiers of dominion and sovereignty, and are thus regarded as the symbols of the state.[98] Though they drew upon existing national heraldry, those used by Queen Victoria, and which remain in use by the sovereign today, largely came into force on 1 January 1801 as a result of the union between Great Britain and Ireland.[99] Principal among them is the royal coat of arms, which is found in numerous locations and media throughout Barry's decorative programme, though particularly in the stonework (Figs. 17 and 18). Like the contemporaneous Union Flag, the royal arms represents a symbolic union of the three kingdoms by combining pre-existing national emblems – the individual royal arms of England, Scotland and Ireland – into a symbol of nationhood that reflected the component parts of the newly unified polity. Until 1837, it also included a small shield that related to the Kingdom of Hanover. This was removed when Victoria ascended to the throne as, under the Salic Law of Succession, women were ineligible to inherit the Hanoverian

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[95] Cannadine (2000), 18; Galloway (1999), 171.

[96] For a history of the order, see Peter Galloway, *The Order of Bath,* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2006).

[97] Geoffrey Briggs, *National Heraldry of the World* (London: Dent, 1973), 2-5.

[98] Thomas Woodcock and John M. Robinson, *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry,* (Oxford University Press, 1988), 190.

[99] Woodcock and Robinson (1988), 190. A separate royal coat of arms exists for use in Scotland, which differs in a number of ways from that used elsewhere. It does not appear in the decorative schemes of the Palace of Westminster.

crown. As a result, the UK royal arms became an even more potent national symbol.[100] Since then, it has been the most ubiquitous element of the visual culture of the Union, even if banal nationalism ensures that it often goes unnoticed. Found on coins, passports, seals, Acts of Parliament, government buildings and papers, royal warrants, law courts, ships, royal standards and newspaper mastheads, it is certainly the best-known and most-frequently displayed example of heraldry in the UK.[101]

The most significant example of the royal arms in the Houses of Parliament is found on the throne canopy in the Lords Chamber, where it is known as the Cloth of Estate. Surrounding it are other heraldic symbols relating to four nations, namely the heraldic crests of the three kingdoms, their floral badges – the rose, thistle and shamrock – plus the dragon badge of Wales (Fig. 19).[102] Each of these emblems existed prior to the British-Irish Union, but it is as part of the royal armoury set out in 1801 that they appear in Barry's building. The symbolic focus of the Palace, the throne canopy is thus also the focus for symbolism, displaying in one scheme most of the official national emblems employed by the architect throughout the Palace of Westminster. Elsewhere, these contemporary symbols often appear alongside the historical heraldry described above. By contrast, except for the wings given over to Prince Albert and the Prince of Wales, the throne is decorated solely with contemporary royal-national emblems. As such, it presents a particularly powerful image of contemporary nationhood.

The badges of the three kingdoms and the component parts of the royal arms, which retain their individual status like the constituent crosses of the Union Flag, form the basis of the majority of the ornamentation found throughout the Houses of Parliament. Through the skills of Pugin and the craftsmen who worked under him – such as Herbert Minton & Co. (floor tiles), John Hardman & Co. (metalwork and stained glass) and Crace & Son (decorative painting) – as well as Thomas and his stone carvers, these

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[100] Wooddock and Robinson (1988), 191.

[101] Woodcock and Robinson (1988), 187.

[102] A.C. Fox-Davis, *A Complete Guide to Heraldry,* J.P. Brooke-Little rev. edn. (London: Orbis Books, 1985), 349.

symbols were deployed in every medium used in the building.[103] This includes, for example, more or less direct illustrations of the royal arms and floral badges of the three kingdoms in stonework and tiling (Figs. 20, 21 and 22). These are accompanied by subtler interpretations, as part of what Pugin called 'floriated ornament', which appear on a myriad of surfaces in numerous locations.[104] Forming part of this is a further symbol established in 1801 when the national floral badges were combined to form the badge of the UK. Officially set out as 'the Union rose, shamrock, and thistle engrafted on the same stem', this hybridisation appears in a number of locations in the Palace of Westminster – both on shields (Fig. 23) and as foliated ornament (Fig. 24) – providing an evocative emblem of nationhood.[105]

As with the national patron saints, there is an easily discernible symbolic hierarchy between the UK nations in Barry's decorative programme. English symbols are by far the most prolific and conspicuous. They are often repeated whereas the others are not (Fig. 25), or they are given prominence through size or placement. However, in this case Barry is, in part, following the precedent set in the source for some of the symbolism itself. The royal coat of arms establishes a heraldic hierarchy by including the English arms twice, one of which appears in the first quarter, the most important position in heraldic terms.[106] Nevertheless, the same cannot be said for the badges of the three kingdoms, and the overall result remains a further contribution to the Anglocentric character of the building.

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[103] For Pugin and the craftsmen he worked with, see Clive Wainwright and Paul Atterbury eds., *Pugin: A Gothic Passion* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1994) and Wedgwood (2000).

[104] A.W.N. Pugin, *Floriated Ornament: A Series of Thirty-one Designs* (London: Henry Bohn, 1848).

[105] Fox-Davis (1985), 444.

[106] In personal heraldy, when two or more coats of arms are combined, the paternal arms is placed in the first quarter. See Heather Child, *Heraldic Design: A Handbook for Students,* (London: G. Bell and Son, 1976), 113.

Three kingdoms or four nations?

With no representation on the UK flag, coat of arms or badge, no crest, and no order of chivalry, Wales was practically invisible within national symbolism.[107] This reflected its constitutional position as part of the Kingdom of England, which had conquered it in the thirteenth century and annexed it formally as a result of the Laws in Wales Acts 1535 and 1542.[108] Though it did have its own badge, the dragon, set out in 1801, Barry rarely utilised this in the Houses of Parliament, probably because it was not floral and therefore unsuited for floriated ornament. The use of the national symbols of the royal armoury to declare the 'date and object of the building' thus resulted in the dominant conception of the nation reflecting the official or constitutional conception of an English-dominated union of three kingdoms. However, the officially sanctioned heraldic emblems are not the only national symbols in the decorative schemes. By using two additional symbols – the arms of the Principality of Wales and the popular Welsh national plant emblem, the leek – Barry also appears to have actively sought to include the principality in the building's decoration.

The arms of the Principality of Wales occupied an ambiguous position in heraldry during the period the Palace of Westminster was constructed. First used by the rulers of Gwynedd in North Wales, it became the arms of the native Princes of Wales, including Llewellyn the Great and Llewellyn the Last, prior to the conquest of Wales by Edward I in 1282. Subsequently, it largely disappeared from royal heraldry.[109] The use of this symbol to represent contemporary Wales during the nineteenth century was therefore extremely unusual; it certainly did not have official status like the arms of the three kingdoms. Nevertheless, in a number of prominent locations in the Palace of Westminster, it appears alongside the royal arms of England, Scotland and Ireland (Figs. 26 and 27). By including this coat of arms, a somewhat obscure historical symbol was raised to the level of those of the

[107] For twentieth century Welsh attempts to gain greater recognition in UK iconography, see Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain* (London: Macmillan, 2002), 283.

[108] Jackson (2012), 27.

[109] Boutell (1863), 331 & 430-31.

contemporary three kingdoms, even leading the *Illustrated London News* (*ILN*) to mistake one group in the Central Lobby ceiling as the 'shields of the four kingdoms'.[110] As an indication of the general lack of familiarity with this symbol, even among heraldic decorative painters, many interior examples were coloured incorrectly, an error that remains to this day (compare Figs. 26 and 27).

Although the use of arms of the Principality of Wales to represent the contemporary nation was unusual, there were calls in some quarters for it to be adopted to give the principality greater prominence in official heraldry. Writing in 1838, the antiquary James Planché suggested that Victoria's accession the previous year had presented an opportune moment to alter the royal arms: 'the introduction of the arms of the Principality of Wales, instead of the repetition of England, in the fourth quarter,' he wrote, 'would not only have improved the appearance of the shield, but have been a gratifying compliment to a most loyal and deserving nation.'[111] The *Gentleman's Magazine* agreed, adding, 'we think it would be not merely an act of courtesy, but of justice'.[112] To support his argument, Planché cited precedents for the symbol's use as the arms of the Principality of Wales by the Tudors and Stuarts.[113] Its incorporation by Barry, Pugin and Thomas into their designs, which are on the whole notable for their accuracy and authenticity, shows that its inclusion must have been both desirable and heraldically acceptable, if a little unorthodox.[114]

So why did Barry give Wales this additional representation when none need strictly be afforded to it? In line with the lack of government or parliamentary interference with Barry's work, there is no evidence that it was the result of political direction. Therefore, the most compelling explanation for the additional Welsh symbolism is simply that the conception of nationhood that Barry wanted the building to enshrine did not equate with that embodied

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[110] *ILN,* 18 March 1848, 6.

[111] James Planché, *Regal Records, or a Chronicle of the Coronations of the Queens Regnant* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1838), 163.

[112] *Gentleman's Magazine,* June 1838, 612.

[113] Planché (1838), 163.

[114] Woodcock and Robinson (1988), 181.

in the official heraldry. Although it is unclear how widespread Planché's views were, they nevertheless reflected the increasing perception in this period of Wales being distinct from England.[115] This was partly the result of a cultural revival in Wales during the middle decades of the nineteenth century that would lead to a stronger Welsh cultural and political identity as the Victorian period progressed.[116] The UK was thus increasingly seen as being composed of four nations rather than three kingdoms. For many, perhaps Barry included, the vision of the Union embodied in the symbolism established in 1801 would therefore have been insufficient.

In contrast to the arms of the Principality of Wales, the leek is a popular national emblem that has no basis in heraldry as a symbol for Wales.[117] According to one legend, it was adopted as a result of St David suggesting Welsh soldiers wear it to identify themselves on the battlefield, and was subsequently worn in Wales on St David's Day.[118] However, it had never featured in national coats of arms or badges associated with the principality.[119] Its inclusion in the Palace of Westminster is therefore surprising and intriguing, especially as it only appears in a small number of schemes, all of which were completed in the latter phase of the project from the mid-1850s. By this point, the building's most important interiors were complete, resulting in the leek only featuring in internal areas of secondary importance. These include a stained glass programme on the Committee Stairs relating to the Black Prince (Fig. 28), who another account credits with the leek's adoption as a national emblem,[120] and a series of skylights in the

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[115] Brockliss and Eastwood eds. (1997), 2.

[116] Prys Morgan, 'From a Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 80-92.

[117] Wilfrid Scott-Giles, *The Romance of Heraldry* (London: Dent & Sons, 1965), 18-19. Though today it is more popular, the daffofil only began to appear as a Welsh symbol at the beginning of the twentieth century. See Morgan (1983), 90.

[118] *Gentleman's Magazine,* April 1839, 419-20.

[119] Scott-Giles (1965), 18-19.

[120] William Shakespeare gave this account in *Henry V* (c.1599) and it has since been often been repeated. See Alison Chapman, *Patrons and Patron Saints in Early Modern English Literature* (London: Routledge, 2013), 79-80.

ceiling of a corridor off the Prince's Chamber (Fig. 29). Both of these schemes were installed in around 1856.[121]

Two exterior schemes that feature leeks, also completed in the late 1850s, are necessarily more prominent. In three bands of painted cast iron shields that run around the Clock Tower, completed in 1859, the leek appears along with the national plant badges, the hybrid UK badge and historical royal emblems such as the fleur-de-lis and portcullis (Fig. 30).[122] Meanwhile on the West Front elevation, which faces Westminster Abbey across Old Palace Yard, the symbol is repeatedly used in a scheme of carved stone shields (Fig. 31). Crowned and encircled by the words *Ich Dien* ('I serve'), the motto of English Princes of Wales since its adoption by the Black Prince, it forms an entirely invented and heraldically invalid symbol that apes the insignia of the chivalric orders with which it appears. The decision to include the leek in this scheme is illustrated in a surviving elevation from Barry's office which gives insight into the process involved in making decisions regarding decoration (Fig. 32).[123] Drawn in pen, it includes spaces for the addition of heraldic detail. Barry or John Thomas subsequently sketched this in pencil before larger designs, and then models, were produced for the carvers to copy.[124] Once the structure was complete, such detailing could be positioned. The sketch indicates that, at one stage, Barry considered using the crosses of saints George, Andrew and Patrick plus the Prince of Wales' feathers to represent the four nations, but evidently abandoned the idea in favour of the current scheme.

What can be read into the fact that the leek only appears in Barry's decorative schemes in the second half of the 1850s, and even then only as a

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[121] Alexandra Wedgwood, 'Survey of Stained Glass in the Houses of Parliament' (Parliamentary Estates Directorate internal report, 1996), 2-3 & 6. My thanks to Mark Collins for showing me this document.

[122] For records of the decorative painting of the Clock Tower undertaken by Crace & Son under Barry's direction in 1858, see National Archives, Kew (TNA) WORK 11/7/6 & 11/9/7. For a design for the leek shield used on the Clock Tower, see TNA WORK 29/2653.

[123] TNA WORK 29/351.

[124] This process is outlined in E.M. Barry, *The Architect of the New Palace of Westminster. A Reply to the statements of Mr E. Pugin* (London: John Murray, 1868), 45. See also Read (1976), 242.

result of breaking the rules of heraldry that were so closely observed elsewhere? One possible, but purely speculative, explanation is that it may have been an attempt to appeal to a particular individual: Sir Benjamin Hall, later 1st Baron Llanover, the First Commissioner of Works and, along with his wife Augusta, a leading figure in the Welsh national revival, in which the leek was an important symbol.[125] Hall, after whom the bell 'Big Ben' was probably named, was in charge at the Office of Works between 1855 and 1858.[126] A long-term critic of the expense of Barry's building, one of his main tasks was to control the architect and bring the construction, running late and over budget, to completion.[127] Their relationship was tempestuous and it is conceivable that the additional representation of Wales through the leek was an attempt by Barry, adept at flattering clients and politicians, to placate a determined First Commissioner and proud Welshman.

Representing the nation

In addition to the overtly national symbols, Barry deployed others that play a role in declaring the national nature of the building by relating to its legislative function more directly. Both the Commons and Lords included schemes that reflected their individual positions as representative bodies of the UK nations. When the building was first completed, the stained glass windows of the Commons Chamber and Members Lobby consisted of the arms of parliamentary cities and boroughs from throughout the Great Britain and Ireland.[128] These were subsequently removed during the 1850s and placed in Central Lobby and St Stephen's Hall, where in the latter location they

[125] For the Llanovers see Celyn Gurden-Williams, 'Lady Llanover and the Creation of a Welsh Cultural Utopia' (PhD diss., Cardiff University, 2008). See also Morgan (1983), 80-81 and Prys Morgan, 'Early Victorian Wales and its Crisis of Identity' in Brockliss and Eastwood eds., (1997), 95.

[126] Port ed. (1976), 172.

[127] Port ed. (1976), 162-65.

[128] Stanley Shepherd, *The Stained Glass of A.W.N. Pugin* (Reading: Spire Books, 2009), 257-58.

remain.[129] Similarly, in the stained glass windows of Peers Lobby, Barry placed the coats of arms of significant families from each kingdom whose head was entitled to a seat in the UK House of Lords (Fig. 33).[130] Most, including those from Ireland and Scotland, held titles in the UK peerage, though some, such as the Cuffes, were representative Peers, in this case from Ireland.[131]

As well as illustrating Barry's desire that his building mirror in visual terms the political representation of each nation, these schemes possibly suggest that part of the architect's inclusive approach may have been born of a wish not to upset national sensitivities. At Barry's insistence, the shields of the noble families from England, Scotland and Ireland in Peers Lobby were carefully arranged by nationality to prevent, according to Pugin, 'disputes respecting omitted arms.'[132] So the proliferation of national symbols elsewhere, including those representing Wales, may at least in part have been the result of similar concerns. If Barry did intend to appeal to national sentiment, the inclusion of a variety of symbols relating to Scotland, Ireland and Wales only goes some way to counteracting the Anglocentric nature of the architectural decoration. In the final reading, Barry's Houses of Parliament cannot be described satisfactorily as 'very *British*'. There are elements of Britishness certainly, but ultimately it is best thought of as being a very *Anglo-British* building.

Given the Anglocentric vision of the Union embodied in the building, it might be expected that Barry's apparent fear of disputes would have been born out. However, no complaints about the level of national representation are known to have emerged. As will be shown in Chapter 3, in 1845 the FAC

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[129] Feeny (1956-7), 145. For a list of the 150 arms of boroughs, cities and towns illustrated in St Stephen's Hall see PA ARC/VAR/48.

[130] Feeny (1956-7), 146; Margaret Belcher, *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin,* vol. 3 (Oxford University Press, 2009), 133, 220 & 516.

[131] Among the Irish families represented are De Burgh, Nugent, Taylor, Brown, Parsons, Bingham, Crosbie, Pakenham and Cuffe. Among the Scottish are Leslie, Rosebery, Macfarlane, Anderson, Boyle, Campbell, Grant, Crawford, Stewart and Dalrymple. English families include Howard, Dacre, Clifton, Ferrers, and Fernivall.

[132] Quoted in Belcher (2009), 516.

came under attack from Irish nationalists, namely Daniel O'Connell and the *Nation* newspaper, for ignoring Irish national feeling when planning the sculptural programmes for the building.[133] Yet, despite this negative focus on the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament, Barry's English-dominated schemes received no adverse attention whatsoever. This is not because heraldry, and heraldic decoration, did not have the potential to offend. In 1853, Scottish anger over mistakes in the appearance of the version of the royal coat of arms used in Scotland partly led to the formation of the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights (NAVSR), a short-lived organisation that sought greater fairness for Scotland within the Union.[134] Of even greater relevance, the following year Barry himself was forced to have stained glass windows at the Reform Club (which had been completed to his design in 1841) redesigned because what he described as the 'cry of Justice for Ireland' had been raised over the arrangement of badges of the three kingdoms that gave precedence to England and Scotland over Ireland.[135] So why were no similar complaints made about the ornamentation of Barry's New Palace of Westminster?

In Scottish, Welsh and Anglo-Irish contexts, negative reaction was never very likely. The overwhelming majority of these populations were content with the status quo of the Union and their place within it.[136] In fact, these groups contributed to the existence of Anglo-Britishness, just as the English did. As Krishnan Kumar argues, Britishness, whether among Scots, Welsh or Anglo-Irish, always contained 'a core of Englishness'.[137] Nationalism certainly existed, but it was almost always conceived within a Union framework. The nascent Welsh national revival that the Llanovers contributed towards marked the beginning of a growing sense of Welsh

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[133] See pp. 106-33 below.

[134] Morton (1999), 133-54; Colin Kidd, 'Sentiment, race and revival: Scottish identities in the aftermath of the Enlightenment' in Brockliss and Eastwood eds. (1997), 121-23.

[135] Barry to John Hardman, 6 December 1854, Birmingham Archives and Heritage, MS 175/A/11/1/3/9; Louis Fagan, *The Reform Club: Its founders and Architect* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1887), 58.

[136] Kidd (1999), 250-86.

[137] Kumar (2003), 156.

identity, but this was overwhelmingly cultural rather than political.[138] As a result of the long shared history, Welsh identity remained closely aligned with Englishness.[139] Scottish identity, by comparison, had retained a large amount of distinctiveness in certain spheres, such as the law, religion and literature. This contributed towards the unionist-nationalism that saw Scotland as distinct from England and yet an equal partner in the project of the British state.[140] An important part of this was the recognition that union with England had allowed Scotland to benefit from (what Scots saw no shame in considering to be) superior English political institutions.[141] For the Anglo-Irish, though their Irishness was important it was their connection to England and participation in the maintenance of Anglo-Britishness that enabled them to maintain their position as the dominant minority in the country.[142] With the growth of an Irish nationalism largely defined in Catholic and Celtic terms, this only increased as the nineteenth century progressed.[143]

One aspect of the widespread adoption of varying forms of Anglo-Britishness throughout the UK was the acceptance of the symbols of the British state such as the Union Flag and royal coat of arms (notably, the NAVSR's complaints only focused on the version of the royal arms used in Scotland). These thus became part of the banal nationalism of the Union, as did the hierarchy between the four nations that they embodied. Given that Barry's decoration is, in many ways, merely a reflection of this existing symbolism and its concomitant vision of the Union, there is no reason that it should have been opposed when elsewhere it received such widespread acceptance as part of the visual culture of union.

As opponents to the Union who rejected Anglo-Britishness, the situation with Irish nationalists was, however, quite different.[144] But, there are

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[138] Morgan 1983), 92; Cragoe (2004), 2 & 252-5.

[139] Brockliss and Eastwood (2007a), 2; Cragoe (2004), 269.

[140] Morton (1999).

[141] Kidd (1993), 365-6.

[142] Kumar (2003), 141-2.

[143] Kumar (2003), 144.

[144] For Irish nationalism during this period, see D. George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1995), 154-91

a number of likely reasons that explain the lack of complaint. Among these is the impact of the 1845 controversies. As Chapter 3 will outline, these partly backfired on the *Nation,* which came to believe that, instead of making political capital by complaining about the artistic representation of Ireland in the UK Parliament, they had inadvertently validated the institution they opposed.[145] As a result, the *Nation* made no further comments on the decoration of the building. Though O'Connell appears to have been less concerned about this, he died in 1847 before the opening of the House of Lords, the first part of the structure to be completed, thus removing the most significant potential critic.[146]

The subsequent absence of complaints from Irish nationalists in the 1850s and 1860s was also probably not because the vision of the Union embodied in the building was agreed with, but rather that, given its ubiquity and banality within the wider visual culture of the Union, it seems unlikely that it would have been a profitable target for Irish nationalist ire. In other words, little political capital could have been made from attacking decades-old emblems used in a manner consistent with their appearance elsewhere. Given the more important issues at stake, controversy over symbols in a decorative scheme could have been construed as inconsequential. This was certainly the response that met the NAVSR's complaints, which, although they contained other issues of substance, came to be defined, and partly brought down, by what was seen as a petty argument over the appearance of a lion.[147] Meanwhile, the objections to the Reform Club windows, mentioned above, were never made public and did not form part of a controversy with wider political objectives. Instead, it was an attempt by members of a private club, of whom O'Connell had been a founder, to ensure that the institution they supported reflected their beliefs adequately. The same concern was not felt by Irish nationalists in regards to the Anglo-Britishness of the Houses of Parliament.

[145] See pp. 130-31 below.

[146] See pp. 167-68 below.

[147] Morton (1999), 148-54.

CHAPTER TWO

Exhibiting the Nation in Westminster Hall

Parallel to Barry's construction of the building and the completion of its architectural decoration was the work of the FAC. Formed in 1841 and chaired by Prince Albert, this body oversaw the paintings and freestanding sculpture for the building. This is the first of three chapters that examines its work. While the next two chapters assess the decorative schemes that the FAC itself planned or commissioned, this chapter analyses the significant body of art submitted to a series of exhibitions mounted by the Commission throughout the 1840s. Though these works did not permanently adorn the Houses of Parliament, they were instrumental in the development of its decoration, impacting significantly both on the artists employed and subjects chosen.

To spur the development of British art, the FAC exhibitions called for UK artists to submit works to assist the Commissioners in determining who should be employed to decorate the building. Unsurprisingly, given the prestige of the exhibitions and the potential commissions that might follow, this call was widely answered by painters, sculptors and craftsmen from the four nations of the Union, setting a precedent for the eventual commissions for the building. It was also symptomatic of the increasing ease with which artists and their works moved around the UK by this point in the nineteenth century. The exhibitions were a product of the political union embodied in the institution whose home they were organised to help decorate, and they benefited from the established Union-wide artistic milieu that was centred on London.[1] Many of the Scottish, Welsh and Irish artists who entered the exhibitions were based in the metropolis, having moved there to further their

[1] See Peter Funnell, 'The London Art World and its Institutions', in Celina Fox ed., *London: World City 1800-1840* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), 155-66 and Colin Trodd, 'Nineteenth-century Art Institutions and Academies', in Dana Arnold and David Peters Corbett eds., *A Companion to British Art: 1600 to the Present* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 105-30.

careers. Others sent their work from their home countries, where they lived and practiced. In each case, the number of artists and the media in which they worked varied considerably among the four UK nations and was dependent on several important factors, including the state of art education, levels of patronage, comparative wealth levels and quality of communication links to London. When analysed from a four nations perspective, the exhibitions can be read as a barometer of the contemporary UK art world. The patterns evident in the nationality of the entrants and where they were based are indicative of wider developments in the arts in the UK brought about as a result of the Union. This, in turn, reveals much about the nature of the Union itself.

Alongside the nationality of the artists who entered the FAC competitions, this chapter will examine the historical subjects they chose to represent.[2] It will argue that the Scottish, Irish and Welsh subject matter formed part of a corpus that was acceptably national in the Anglo-British context of the project to decorate Parliament. Through the exhibitions of the Royal Academy (RA), Royal Scottish Academy (RSA), Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) and elsewhere, this body of imagery formed an art of union that was well established by the 1840s.[3] Developed since the late eighteenth century, this visualisation of the national past presented an English-dominated view of British history that played down historic conflicts between the UK nations, or presented them in a positive light as necessary steps towards inevitable and peaceable union. The FAC exhibitions not only drew on these subjects, but also played an important role in their development. The exhibitions' high profile and unique connection to the decoration of the new legislative building for the Union led to a number of specific subjects that premiered at them reappearing at venues such as the RA in subsequent years. And, more importantly for this study, a number of subjects directly

[2] Peter Howard has similarly assessed landscapes exhibited at the RA in relation to the location they depict in 'Painters' Preferred Places', *Journal of Historical Geography* 11/2 (1985), 138-54.

[3] Though subjects exhibited at these institutions can be gleaned from their annual catalogues, a detailed study of the development of an art of union in their exhibitions is wanting.

influenced the final scenes chosen by the FAC for the embellishment of the Houses of Parliament itself.

Background to the Fine Arts Commission

By the time the foundation stone of Barry's new building was being laid in May 1840, attention had already begun to focus on the paintings and sculpture that would decorate it. The 1830s had witnessed increasing interest in the potential of art to educate and benefit the masses morally, combined with a growing feeling that UK art and design lagged behind that of Europe, particularly Germany.[4] Throughout the decade, and particularly after the passage of the Great Reform Act in 1832, successive governments were under increasing pressure to support the development of the arts for educational, moral and economic reasons, as well as for national pride. Parliament first showed significant interest in the state's role in encouraging the development of British art with the establishment in 1835 of the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures (SCAM) under the chairmanship of Radical Liverpool MP William Ewart.[5] In part, Ewart's committee considered the roles of the major national institutions including the RA, National Gallery and British Museum. It also made a number of suggestions in its reports that would lead to the rapid institutionalisation of the arts in the late 1830s and

[4] Boase (1954), 319-20; Emma L. Winter, 'German Fresco Painting and the New Houses of Parliament at Westminster, 1834-1851, *Historical Journal* 47/2 (2004), 391-410. Wider studies of these developments include: Peter Mandler, 'Art in a Cool Climate: The Cultural Policy of the British State in European Context, c.1780-c.1850', in T. Blanning and H. Schulze eds., *Unity and Diversity in European Culture c.1800* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 101-120 and Holger Hoock, 'Reforming Culture: National Art Institutions in the Age of Reform', in A. Burns and J. Innes eds., *Rethinking the Age of Reform: Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 254-70.

[5] For a useful overview of parliamentary involvement in the arts, including Ewart's committee, see Celina Fox, 'Education: Fine Arts & Design', in Gillian Sutherland ed., *Government and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain Commentaries on British Parliamentary papers: Education* (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1977), 68-112.

1840s.[6] Principal among these was the establishment of the first Government School of Design in Somerset House in 1837.[7]

Crucially for the history of the FAC, Ewart's committee concluded its 1836 report by expressing the belief that fresco, widely considered the highest form of painting, should receive state patronage.[8] This idea was soon applied to the planned new Houses of Parliament. Edward Edwards was foremost among those pushing for the new building to be the first of many examples of state patronage of the arts. A founder of the London Art Union, itself established in 1836 from recommendations made by Ewart's committee, Edwards called 'for the employment of the genius of our best artists on historical and national subjects' to embellish Parliament.[9] Influenced by such debates, in 1841 Henry Labouchere MP, the President of the Board of Trade, requested funds for technical experiments in fresco painting.[10] A month later, a parliamentary select committee chaired by Benjamin Hawes, who had moved for its creation, was appointed to consider 'the promotion of the fine arts of this Country in connexion with the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament.'[11]

The fourteen-strong Select Committee on Fine Arts (SCFA) included Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel, Labouchere, William Ewart and other members of the SCAM, as well as MPs with knowledge of the arts and connoisseurs from outside Parliament.[12] It interviewed a series of expert witnesses including Barry, Sir Martin Archer Shee, the President of the Royal Academy (PRA), and leading painters including William Dyce, the Director of

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[6] *Report from Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures*, HC 598 (1835); *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and their Connexion with Manufactures*, HC 568 (1836), hereafter *SCAM 2nd Report.*

[7] Quentin Bell, *The Schools of Design* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1963); Stuart Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education,* 2004 reprint (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2004), 67-75.

[8] *SCAM 2nd Report,* 43.

[9] Quoted in Janet McLean, 'Prince Albert and the Fine Arts Commission' in Riding and Riding eds., (2000), 213.

[10] Boase (1954), 320.

[11] Boase (1954), 320.

[12] *Report from the Select Committee on Fine Arts,* HC 423 (1841), hereafter *SCFA Report*, ii.

the Government School of Design, and Charles Eastlake, also considered the country's leading art historical authority.[13] The evidence presented to the committee consistently stressed the suitability of monumental history painting, particularly fresco, for the decoration of public buildings, and the importance of using British artists and subject matter. This was reflected in the committee's recommendations, which were hastily published before the dissolution of Parliament in 1841, and included the suggestion that a royal commission be set up to examine the issue of decorating the new Houses of Parliament in greater detail.[14]

As a result, in November 1841 Peel established the FAC, inviting the young Prince Albert to be its president and Eastlake its secretary.[15] In addition to Albert, the twenty-one-strong commission consisted of a reasonable balance of Whig and Tory MPs, Peers and leading intellectuals, with others appointed over the subsequent two decades including successive Commissioners of Works (Fig. 34).[16] Among the original number was the Speaker of the House of Commons, Charles Shaw-Lefevre MP, and no fewer than five men who held the office of Prime Minister at one time or another. Additionally, some were senior figures in the art world who also sat as trustees of the National Gallery, and several, including Peel, had significant private collections of their own.[17] In terms of historical expertise, the medievalist Henry Hallam (1777-1859) was part of the original Commission, with fellow historians Philip Henry Stanhope, Viscount Mahon MP (1805-75) and Thomas Babington Macaulay MP (1800-59) soon joining him. Other members were also well versed in British history, particularly George Howard, Viscount Morpeth (1802-64), and Sir Robert Harry Inglis MP (1786-1855). The poet Samuel Rogers (1763-1855) provided a literary presence, but visual artists were notably absent. So too was Barry, whose exclusion

[13] *SCFA Report*, 1-73.

[14] *SCFA Report,* HC 423 (1841), iii-iv.

[15] Winter (2004), 313-14; Robertson (1978), 58-61.

[16] The names of those who sat on the FAC over the course of its lifetime can be found in *Thirteenth Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts,* HC 3141 (1863), 3-6.

[17] Robertson (1978), 61.

caused a number of practical problems later on and was said to have been a source of grievance to the architect.[18]

The FAC represented a British, or more accurately Anglo-British, elite that was inherently pro-Union. In terms of nationality, its membership was predominantly English. Crucially, however, it was not wholly English. Though there was no Welsh representation, Thomas Wyse (1791-1862), the Whig MP for Waterford and leading proponent of art and design education reform, did provide a singular Irish presence. An Irish Catholic who supported some of the reforms proposed by Daniel O'Connell and often spoke of the desperate state of parts of Ireland in Parliament, Wyse was nevertheless a lifelong supporter of the idea of the UK and vocal opponent of altering the central tenets of union.[19] Had he not been, it is inconceivable that he would have been selected for a position on the FAC. Scottish noble representation on the Commission consisted of George Hamilton-Gordon, 4th Earl of Aberdeen, George Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, 2nd Duke of Sutherland, and his younger brother Lord Francis Egerton. As was the case with many Scottish and Irish aristocrats, all three grew up and spent most of their lives in England and embodied Anglo-Britishness.[20] Though the same is true of Macaulay, who joined the FAC in 1844, the influence of his proud Highlander father ensured that the historian retained a stronger connection with his Scottish identity.[21] As particularly active and influential members, Wyse and Macaulay gave Ireland and Scotland voices on the FAC out of all proportion to those nations' representation among the Commissioners.

Between 1841 and 1863, when it was wound up following the death of Prince Albert two years earlier, the FAC attempted to fulfil its aim of 'inquiring

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[18] Barry (1867), 183.

[19] J.J. Auchmuty, *Sir Thomas Wyse 1791-1862: The Life and Career of an Educator and Diplomat* (London: P.S. King & Son, 1939), 186-87.

[20] G.C. Boase, 'Egerton, Francis, First Earl of Ellesmere (1800-1857)', rev. H.C.G. Matthew; Eric Richards, 'Gower, George Granville Leveson-, First Duke of Sutherland (1758-1833)'; Muriel E. Chamberlain, 'Gordon, George Hamilton-, Fourth Earl of Aberdeen (1784-1860)': http://www.oxforddnb.com [accessed 3 February 2016].

[21] Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son: Architects of Imperial Britain* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009), 93-138; Robert E. Sullivan, *Macaulay: The Tragedy of Power* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 12.

whether advantage might not be taken of the rebuilding of our Palace of Westminster wherein Your Majesty's Parliament is wont to assemble, for the purpose of promoting and encouraging the Fine Arts in Our United Kingdom, and in what manner an object of so much importance would be most effectually promoted.'[22] Over these two decades, the commissioners published thirteen reports detailing their work, which included conducting research into techniques and subject matter, deciding upon a plan for the decoration of the building and commissioning and overseeing artists to execute it.[23] However, the most distinctive way that the Commissioners sought to achieve their goal was through the adoption of public competitions and exhibitions as a means to assist them in their choice of artists and techniques to employ in the building.

The exhibitions

From 1843 to 1847, the FAC held five public exhibitions of cartoons, frescoes, sculpture and oil paintings in Westminster Hall, and an exhibition of works of decorative art at bazaar in St James's.[24] The adoption of exhibitions as a means to fulfil its two-part brief to encourage British art through the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament was initially borne of British painters' lack of experience with the fresco medium. Though the SCFA ultimately concluded that British artists should be employed to paint in fresco, it and the earlier SCAM had heard a number of experts describe British painters' unfamiliarity with the technique. Some, such as Gustav Waagen, even argued that the British School would struggle to learn fresco due to its perceived over-reliance on colouring at the expense of drawing.[25] Throughout this period, unflattering comparisons were often made on these

[22] *First Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts,* HC 412 (1842), 5.

[23] The reports were published as Parliamentary Papers, as was a financial return in 1854 and a review of the FAC's work in 1864, and are listed in the Bibliography (pp. 294-318).

[24] Boase (1954) remains the best account of the exhibitions.

[25] Winter (2004), 305-11.

grounds between British painters and the German Nazarenes.[26] The latter, most notably Peter Von Cornelius, had successfully taken up fresco in national projects instigated by Ludwig I of Bavaria, which were repeatedly held up as precedents that the decoration of Parliament should follow.[27] Some in Britain even felt that German painters should be employed at Westminster.[28] Asked for his opinion by Eastlake, Cornelius subscribed to this view, believing that British painters were unfit for such a task.[29]

Yet, to many in Britain, part of the appeal of developments in Germany was that they were nationalistic ventures. Ludwig's specifically used German artists to paint German subjects with the aim of educating his citizens in their national history, elevating their taste and morals, and garnering national prestige through the accomplishments of native artists.[30] As has already been shown, the project to build and decorate the Houses of Parliament was consistently spoken of in national terms.[31] As part of this, the FAC was conceived as a way of raising the quality of the nation's art. In his influential evidence to the SCFA, Eastlake made his own views quite clear, stating: 'we should entirely agree with the Germans in concluding that we are as little in want of foreign artists to represent our history and express our feelings as foreign soldiers to defend our liberties.'[32] Despite public fears, and subsequent claims to the contrary, Prince Albert agreed.[33] While he did share his fellow Germans' views on the state of British painting, Albert believed that 'if an encouraging opportunity were afforded [British painters] …I have not

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[26] Winter (2004), 291-309. For the Nazarenes, see William Vaughan, *German Romantic Painting* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1980), 163-92. For their influence on British art, see Vaughan's *German Romanticism in English Art* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1979).

[27] Vaughan (1979), Ch. 6.

[28] For example, see evidence from connoisseur William John Bankes in *SCFA Report,* 54-5.

[29] For the debates over using foreign or native artists, see Winter (2004), 311-15. Winter argues convincingly that Ford Maddox Brown's oft-quoted anecdote about Cornelius recommending Dyce for the project is probably untrue.

[30] Winter (2004), 314.

[31] See pp. 18-19 and 32-33 above.

[32] *SCFA Report,* 74.

[33] Winter (2004), 314-15.

the slightest doubt, that they would produce works equal to the present school of the Germans'. [34] He alighted on the notion of holding public competitions as one means of providing an 'encouraging opportunity'. Crucially, one of the main conditions stipulated that they be 'confined to British artists, including foreigners who may have resided ten years or upwards in the United Kingdom.'[35]

For the first competition (Fig. 35), the FAC invited cartoons for proposed frescoes, with subjects to be selected 'from British History, or from the works of Spenser, Shakespeare, or Milton'.[36] Three prizes each of £300 and £200 plus five of £100 were awarded by the judging panel, which consisted of Lansdowne, Peel and Rogers from the FAC, and three artists in the form of sculptor Richard Westmacott, and painters Richard Cook and William Etty.[37] In total, 140 works were received.[38] The entries were anonymous, though the prize winners were named and many others are known through contemporary accounts and later evidence. Once they had been judged, ten additional prizes of £100 were awarded. Inaugurated by a visit from the Queen, the exhibition received wide press and public attention.[39] The Scottish painter William Bell Scott later recalled: 'It was a surprising scene, new to English art, and in its immense quality and high excellence astonishes every one.'[40] Albert, Eastlake and the FAC were equally happy, with the result that further exhibitions were planned.[41]

The following year, 1844, saw two exhibitions held 'for the purpose of assisting the Commissioners in the selection of persons to be employed in the decoration of portions of the Palace of Westminster.'[42] One was in

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[34] Quoted in Winter (2004), 314-15.

[35] The original notice announcing the first competition did not include the element of this condition regarding foreign artists, which was added on 22 July 1842 and appeared on all subsequent competition notices. See *First Report*, 7-8 & 48.

[36] *First Report*, 7.

[37] *Second Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts,* HC 449 (1843), 66.

[38] F.K. Hunt, *The Book of Art* (London: Jeremiah How, 1846), 83-110.

[39] Boase (1954), 325-30.

[40] Quoted in Boase (1954), 325.

[41] Winter (2004), 315-16

[42] *Second Report*, 68.

Westminster Hall (Fig. 36), for which sculptors had been invited to submit two works of portrait or group statuary. The same exhibition also contained samples of fresco painting, which had been sought the previous year following the success of the cartoon competition and for which painters could submit three specimens along with preparatory material.[43] Unlike the first competition, the choice of subjects was completely left up to the artists. Despite no prizes being offered for either sculpture or frescoes in 1844, 128 artists entered ninety-eight pieces of sculpture and eighty-four frescoes, cartoons and oil paintings.[44] Though they were not awarded prizes, three sculptors were singled out for commendation by the FAC for the quality of their work: Englishman John Bell, Irishman John Henry Foley and Scotsman William Calder Marshall.[45] The following year, these three became the first artists to be commissioned to produce works for the building.[46] That each came from one of the three kingdoms does not appear to have been intentional, nevertheless it neatly encapsulates the UK-wide range of artists that the FAC ultimately employed on the building.

The second 1844 exhibition focused on decorative works and was held at the King Street Bazaar in St James's. Notices for this exhibition had appeared in June and July 1843 inviting entries of metal work, wood carving, mosaic, arabesques and stained glass suitable for use in the New Palace of Westminster.[47] Overall, 103 individuals or companies entered 170 works.[48] No prizes were awarded but a sub-committee put forward a number of names for commendation.[49] Ultimately only one of the competitors found employment as a result of the decorative art exhibition, which the FAC had organised under the misunderstanding, partly caused by the exclusion of Barry from the Commission, that it would be responsible not only for the

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[43] *Second Report*, 70.

[44] Hunt (1846), 114-43.

[45] *Third Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts,* HC 585 (1844), 11.

[46] *Fourth Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts,* HC 671 (1845), 8.

[47] *Second Report,* 69-72.

[48] Hunt (1846), 148-67.

[49] *Third Report,* 19-20.

building's fine art but its decorative art as well.[50] This was not to be the case, with Barry only relinquishing responsibility for the stained glass windows in the House of Lords Chamber, which the commissioners entrusted to the Scottish firm Ballantyne & Allen.[51]

The following year, 1845, saw another competition in Westminster Hall (Fig. 37). On this occasion, painters were given subjects intended for six arched compartments in the Lords Chamber, for which they were to produce full-size cartoons, coloured sketches and sample frescoes. The subjects were chosen to illustrate 'the functions of the House of Lords and the relation in which it stands to the Sovereign'.[52] They consisted of personifications of Religion, Justice and Chivalry, and three historical scenes illustrating these allegories, namely 'The Baptism of Ethelbert', 'Prince Henry, afterwards Henry V, acknowledging the authority of Chief Justice Gascoigne', and 'Edward the Black Prince receiving the Order of the Garter from Edward III'.[53] In the hope of winning one of three prizes of £200 from the same six judges as the first competition, fifty-one competitors entered.[54] A further six artists had been commissioned to do so based on their performance in the 1844 fresco exhibition, though the FAC made no obligation to employ them on the building.[55] The 1845 exhibition of these works also contained twenty-nine sculptures by twenty-two sculptors, a relatively small number that was probably due to the call for entries, prompted by the FAC receiving a number of requests to exhibit, coming close to the deadline.[56]

The FAC held its final exhibition, originally planned for 1846, in Westminster Hall in 1847. In 1844, painters had been invited to submit works in oil. Three prizes each of £500, £300 and £200 were available, with the possibility that the paintings might be purchased for the nation to hang in the

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[50] Christian (1976), 246-47.

[51] See pp. 43 & 129 above.

[52] *Third Report,* 9.

[53] *Third Report,* 9.

[54] Hunt (1846), 173-83 & 188-89.

[55] *Third Report,* 9.

[56] Hunt (1846), 184-87 & 188-89.

Houses of Parliament.[57] Some 118 artists exhibited 120 pictures. Three of them were purchased to hang in committee rooms in the new building.[58]

Native artists - Wales

One of the more notable patterns that emerges from studying the entrants to the FAC's exhibitions is the complete absence of Welsh painters. This situation reflected the fact that there were none of note working at a national level during the 1840s.[59] In fact, Wales produced only a handful of nationally successful painters during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, notably landscapists Richard Wilson and Thomas Jones, and portrait painter William Parry.[60] The country's small population, its largely rural geography, want of an urban centre, relative poverty and lack of patronage were all factors in this, as was the absence of exhibition venues and training in the form of art schools or academies.[61] For example, England, Scotland and Ireland each had national art academies by 1826.[62] By contrast, the Cambrian Academy was not established until 1881.[63]

Although these issues also affected Welsh sculpture, a number of Welsh sculptors worked at a national level in the 1840s.[64] Among them were three who exhibited in 1844 at Westminster: Edward Davis and brothers

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[57] *Third Report,* 10.

[58] H.G. Clarke, *Catalogue of Works of Art sent in … for Exhibition in Westminster Hall* (London: H.G. Clarke, 1847a).

[59] This is not to say there was not an important visual culture in Wales, as Peter Lord and Paul Joyner have comprehensively shown. See Peter Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales: Imaging the Nation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000) and Paul Joyner, *Artists in Wales c.1740-c.1851* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1997).

[60] Lord (2000), 104-15, 151-4 & 124-7.

[61] Peter Lord, *Gwenllian: Essays on Visual Culture* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1994), 13.

[62] For what amounts to a brief four nations approach to art academies in Great Britain and Ireland, see Holger Hoock, *The King's Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture, 1760-1840* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 96-108.

[63] Eric Rowan, *Art in Wales: An Illustrated History 1850-1980* (Cardiff: Welsh Arts Council and University of Wales Press, 1985), 12-13.

[64] Lord (2000), 255-63.

John Evan Thomas and William Meredyth Thomas.[65] Each of them trained and settled in London, where they worked for a variety of patrons and were frequent exhibitors at the RA.[66] The Thomas brothers also produced many works for Welsh patrons and were closely linked to the intellectual circle of Augusta Hall.[67] As a result, they produced some of the first major sculptures with Welsh subject matter, most notably the *The Death of Tewdrig* (1848), which came to play an important role in the Welsh national revival of the period.[68] The FAC commissioned J.E. Thomas, the most accomplished of the pair, to model two statues for the Lords Chamber in 1847.[69]

It is worth noting that the most successful contemporary Welsh sculptor of the period, John Gibson, did not exhibit at Westminster Hall.[70] With an extremely successful career in Rome, it is unlikely that Gibson felt the need to gain British state patronage, or at least may have been unwilling to open himself up to the risk of competing for it. In any case, this proved to be unnecessary when, as a favourite of Prince Albert, Gibson was commissioned in 1854 to produce an over-life size statue of Queen Victoria flanked by Justice and Mercy for the Prince's Chamber in the House of Lords.[71] He thus became one of a small number of artists who had not entered the exhibitions to be employed by the FAC.[72]

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[65] Hunt (1846), 143.

[66] Lord (2000), 255-7.

[67] Lord (2000), 255.

[68] Lord (2000), 256-7.

[69] *Henri de Londres, Archbishop of Dublin* (1852) and *William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke* (1854). See Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 4, 121-5.

[70] For Gibson, see Roberto Ferrari, 'Beyond Polychromy: John Gibson, the Roman School of Sculpture, and the Modern Classical Body' (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2013).

[71] *Tenth Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts,* HC 1829 (1854), 8; Boase (1954), 347; Read (2000), 260-62.

[72] Others include sculptors William Theed and Edward Hodges Baily, and painters Richard Burchett and Edwin Landseer.

The highest-profile Welsh exhibitor at the FAC exhibitions was not a painter or sculptor, but the designer Owen Jones (1809-74).[73] At the 1844 decorative art competition, Jones, already famous for his studies of the Alhambra, entered a complete plan of designs for all the floors in the Houses of Parliament along with specimens of mosaic.[74] Though now lost, Jones' submission to the decorative arts exhibition has been called his most important tile design.[75] Well received, it is quite possible that, had the FAC been responsible for the decorative arts, he would have been employed on the building.

Native artists - Scotland

A large number of Scottish artists entered the FAC exhibitions, reflecting the vitality of Scottish painting and sculpture in the 1840s. Unlike Wales, Scotland had a strong painting tradition, and although the 1707 Act of Union had seen much Scottish wealth and patronage move to London, the country had continued to produce many painters who achieved success at a UK and European level.[76] Throughout the eighteenth century, many of these trained and worked in London, as well as Rome, but also spent significant portions of their careers in Scotland. The number of such artists increased in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as a result of civic development, the leading role that Scotland played in the advent of the picturesque, and the choice by high-profile individuals such as Henry Raeburn to pursue their

[73] On Jones' Welshness, see Lord (2000), 319. For a comprehensive study of Jones, see Carol A. Hrvol Flores, *Owen Jones: Design, Ornament, Architecture and Theory in an Age of Transition* (London: Random House, 2006).

[74] Hunt (1846), 118. For a description of Jones' now lost design, see *Athenaeum,* 4 May 1844, 410.

[75] Michael Darby, *The Islamic Perspective: An Aspects of British Architecture and Design in the 19th Century* (London: Leighton House Museum, 1983), 72.

[76] For the arts in post-1707 Scotland, see Murdo Macdonald ed., *The Arts in Eighteenth Century Scotland* (Chesham: Quadriga, 1993); Murdo Macdonald, *Scottish Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000); and Duncan Macmillan, *Painting in Scotland: The Golden Age* (London: Phaidon Press, 1986).

careers in their native country.[77] In terms of institutions, many Scottish painters trained at the Trustees' Drawing Academy in Edinburgh, established in 1760.[78] From 1826, the Scottish Academy – which became the RSA in 1838 – formed the principal educational institution for art in Scotland, as well as the leading organisation for its exhibition and promotion.[79] At a UK level, the success of Scottish painters can be seen in the catalogues of the annual RA exhibitions, and that two Scottish painters, Allan Ramsay and David Wilkie, held the position of Principal Painter in Ordinary to the monarch during this period.[80] In Scotland itself, the appointment of Henry Raeburn to the position of Royal Painter and Limner in Scotland in 1823 rejuvenated this pre-Union post that had been a sinecure of a single family for a century, affording further state recognition of the increasing importance of Scottish painting.[81]

A number of Scottish painters submitted works to the various FAC exhibitions.[82] Chief among them was the President of the RSA, Sir William Allen, who exhibited *Waterloo, 18th June 1815 – Eight O'Clock PM* at the 1847 oil paintings competition.[83] This was met with great acclaim, though it

[77] For the period immediately prior to and including the FAC, exhibitions see Morrison (2003) and William R. Hardie, *Scottish Painting: 1837 to the Present* (Glasgow: Waverley Books, 2010).

[78] On the Trustees' Academy see Patricia Brookes, 'The Trustees' Academy, Edinburgh, 1769-1801: The Public Patronage of Art and Design in the Scottish Enlightenment' (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1989).

[79] For the importance of the RSA in the development of Scottish art, see Joanna Soden, 'Tradition, Evolution, Opportunism: The Role of the Royal Scottish Academy in Art Education, 1826-1910' (PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 2006).

[80] Ramsay served in the role from 1761 to 1784, and Wilkie from 1830 to 1841.

[81] Duncan Thomson, *Raeburn: The Art of Sir Henry Raeburn, 1756-1823* (Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1997), 212.

[82] John Ballantyne, John Zephaniah Bell, David Scott, William Bell Scott, Andrew Geddes, James Archer, Thomas Davidson, Alexander Christie, Alexander Blaikley, William Dyce, Joseph Noel Paton, J.C. Schetky, Robert Scott Lauder, James Eckford Lauder, Sir William Allan. See Hunt (1846) and Clarke (1847a).

[83] Clarke (1847a), 8.

did not win a prize and was not purchased for the nation.[84] John Zephaniah Bell had made an impact early on in the FAC's work when he was awarded £200 in the 1843 competition for his cartoon *The Cardinal Bouchier urging the Dowager Queen of Edward IV to give up from Sanctuary the Duke of York*.[85] Bell was the only non-English winner in 1843, though there is nothing to suggest that the nationality of the artists had any bearing on the prizes awarded. During the evidence given to the SCFA, and subsequently to the FAC, Bell had been spoken of by a number of people as one of the few British artists versed in fresco.[86] Despite this and winning a prize in 1843, he was never employed on the building.

Considered the leading exponent of fresco in the UK, the only Scottish painter ultimately commissioned by the FAC was William Dyce.[87] Though he did not enter the 1843 competition, Dyce appears to have been invited to submit a sample of fresco in 1844.[88] In 1845, he was one of the artists commissioned to produce a design for one of the six compartments in the Lords Chamber, and he became the first painter to work on the building itself when the Commission tasked him with painting *The Baptism of Ethelbert* in fresco in 1846.[89] The FAC subsequently commissioned Dyce to paint the Queen's Robing Room with Arthurian subjects, a series he had still not completed by his death.[90]

Scottish sculptors were also out in force at the FAC exhibitions.[91] The advancement of native sculpture in Scotland in the early nineteenth century, largely as a result of civic development, was recognised by the creation of

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[84] *Art-Union,* 1 August 1847, 272. The painting is now at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

[85] Hunt (1846)*,* 107; Boase (1954)*,* 329.

[86] Boase (1954)*,* 322 & 329.

[87] The most detailed study of Dyce is Marcia Pointon's, *William Dyce, 1806-1864: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

[88] Boase (1954), 333.

[89] Boase (1954), 338.

[90] For Dyce's work in the Robing Room, see Mancoff (2000), 247-51.

[91] John Henning Jnr, Patrick Park, Hamilton and Carleton McCarthy, William Calder Marshall, William Scouler, Alexander Handyside Ritchie, David Dunbar Jnr and Peter Slater. See Hunt (1846).

the position of Sculptor in Ordinary for Scotland in 1838.[92] The first holder of this post was Sir John Steell, whose father and brother were among the six Scottish entrants to the FAC's decorative art competition in 1844.[93] Steell himself did not enter any of the FAC exhibitions, but the leading Scottish sculptors who followed in his wake – Alexander Handyside Richie, William Calder Marshall and Patrick Park – each did.[94] Having been singled out for commendation, Marshall received high-profile commissions for marble statues of two parliamentarians for St Stephen's Hall.[95] Meanwhile, the FAC tasked Richie with producing models for two figures in the Lords Chamber.[96]

Other than English artists, those from Scotland were the most likely to have sent their entries for the FAC competitions while residing in their home nation. In addition to the six Scottish entrants to the decorative art exhibition, thirteen submitted entries while living north of the border.[97] Following earlier Scottish artists who had moved back and forth between London and Scotland, a number of these had lived, trained and worked in England, or would do so later. Likewise, some of those Scottish artists based in England at the time of the exhibitions, including Robert Scott Lauder and Patrick Park,

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[92] Fiona Pearson, ed., *Virtue and Vision: Sculpture in Scotland 1540-1990* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 1991), 73-7.

[93] Pearson ed. (1991), 73-4. John Steell Snr. and his son William Steell entered designs for the main door to the House of Lords along with samples of related carved woodwork. The other Scottish exhibitors, all from Edinburgh, were William Allen (an employee of carver Charles Macfarlene), Paterson & Son, Alexander Sinclair of Shott's Foundry, and Ballantine & Allan. See Hunt (1846), 166-67.

[94] Hunt (1846), 143.

[95] *Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon* (1847) and *John, 1st Baron Somers* (1855). See Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 4, 22 & 78.

[96] *Eustace de Vescy* (1854) and *William de Mowbray* (1854). See Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 4, 56 & 81-2.

[97] Archer, J.Z. Bell, Christie, Davidson, David Scott, Ballantyne, Paton, Johnston, J.E. Lauder, Allen, Ritchie and Slater. See Hunt (1846), 142-43, 166-67 & 188-89. For those known to have exhibited in the anonymous 1843 exhibition and in the 1847 exhibition not covered in Hunt (1846), addresses are found in Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904* (London: H. Graves and Co., 1905-6) and Charles Baile de Laperrie ed., *Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors, 1826-1990,* 4 vols. (Calne: Hilmarton Manor Press, 1991).

would subsequently return to Scotland. Furthermore, like the Thomas brothers from Wales, nearly all of these artists took commissions in their home nation, as well as elsewhere, regardless of where they were based. [98] Most also continued to exhibit at Scottish exhibitions in addition to those in England, with some also sending works to Ireland.[99] English and Irish artists exhibited in Scotland too and, while a number travelled to paint the scenery, some also spent longer periods of time living there. In 1844, for example, the English painter Thomas Jones Barker submitted his entry to the Westminster Hall fresco exhibition while resident on the Island of Islay.[100]

Native artists - Ireland

A particularly good example of artistic movement within the Union is the Irish painter Henry MacManus. In 1843, MacManus submitted a cartoon while living in London as head teacher at the Government School of Design at Somerset House.[101] By the time he sent in an oil painting in 1847, he had become the headmaster at the new Glasgow School of Design.[102] A year later, he was back in his home city of Dublin as headmaster of the Dublin School of Design.[103] As MacManus's career indicates, those artists involved in education were especially mobile, a situation that was amplified by the establishment of centrally controlled Government Schools of Design from

[98] For biographies, see relevant entries in Paul Harris and Julian Halsby, *The Dictionary of Scottish Painters, 1600 to the Present* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1998) and Ingrid Roscoe et al, *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660-1851* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009).

[99] Graves (1905-6); De Laperrie ed., (1991); Ann M. Stewart, *Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts: Index of Exhibitors and their Works, 1826-1979,* 3 vols. (Dublin: Manton, 1986).

[100] Hunt (1846), 142.

[101] Walter G. Strickland, *A Dictionary of Irish Artists,* 1989 reprint, 2 vols (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), 2: 79.

[102] Strickland (1989), 2: 79.

[103] Strickland (1989), 2: 79. For the Dublin School of Design, see John Turpin, *A School of Art in Dublin since the Eighteenth Century: A History of the National College of Art and Design* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1995).

1842, which a decade later had led to twenty-one such institutions throughout the UK.[104]

Like Scottish artists, it was not uncommon during the Victorian period for those Irish artists living in London to visit their home nation and to send works back to be exhibited.[105] However, MacManus was relatively unusual in returning permanently. As had happened with Scotland a century earlier, the removal of the Irish Parliament in 1801 created, and exacerbated, absenteeism in the country, leading to a dearth of patrons.[106] Its relative poverty and history of colonialism had not made Ireland as conducive to the development of the arts as England and, before the 1800 Acts of Union, London already proved an irresistible draw for many aspiring artists. The Royal Academicians Nathanial Hone and James Barry are perhaps the best examples, though there were many others who were not as successful.[107] Among the latter was Lawrence Gahagan, who founded a sculptural dynasty in England and whose grandsons Charles and Edwin Gahagan entered the 1844 Westminster Hall exhibition.[108] Post-1801, London became even more attractive for ambitious painters and sculptors. A number of Irish figures also became firmly ensconced at the height of the British art establishment.[109] Of no one was this more true of than Shee, who, as PRA since 1830, had given evidence to the FAC.

Many of the Irish artists who took part in the FAC exhibitions had early training in Ireland, where, mirroring the developments elsewhere in the UK, the number of institutions for teaching and promoting art expanded from the 1820s. For example, Daniel Maclise was one of the first students to enrol at the Cork School of Art when it was established in 1819 following the arrival in

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[104] For overviews of the development of the Government Schools of Design, see Bell (1963), 99-141 and Macdonald (2004), 73-115. Though these touch on Scottish and Irish Schools of Design, as well as English provincial examples, a detailed comparative study is wanting.

[105] See entries in Stewart (1985).

[106] Cyril Barrett and Jeanne Sheehy, 'Visual Arts and Society, 1850-1900', in W.E. Vaughan ed., *A New History of Ireland: Ireland Under the Union, II: 1870-1921* (Oxford University Press, 1989), 436; Cullen (2012), 1.

[107] Cullen (1997), 14-41.

[108] Hunt (1846), 143; Strickland (1989), 1: 391-3; Roscoe et al (2009), 489-97.

[109] Cullen (1997), 41-9.

Cork of a group of plaster casts of sculpture in the Vatican, gifted to the city by the Prince Regent.[110] In 1823, the RHA was established, three years earlier than its opposite number in Scotland and with a royal charter from the outset.[111] Yet, despite increased encouragement of the arts in Ireland by these and other organisations, including from the 1840s a number of Art Unions, the country remained largely unattractive for its most talented artists.[112] Despite many differences between the Irish artists mentioned above, one thing they shared in common was that, unlike many of their Scottish counterparts, once they left their home nation they did not move back. This pattern is evident in the Irish entrants to the Westminster Hall competitions. With the exception of MacManus, all of the London-based Irish exhibitors remained in England for the rest of their careers, forming part of a large Irish community that played a significant role in metropolitan life through fields including journalism and the theatre, as well as the visual arts.[113]

Of the Irish entrants to the FAC competitions, Maclise was the most notable of the small number of painters.[114] Richard Ormond, John Turpin and Peter Murray have claimed that Maclise first exhibited at the 1843 cartoon competition.[115] The source of this claim is a record of a cartoon, long thought lost, titled *Alfred in the Danish Camp* sold at Maclise's posthumous studio sale in 1870, and the fact that two cartoons exhibited in 1843 depicted this

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[110] Peter Murray ed., *Daniel Maclise, 1806-1870: Romancing the Past* (Cork: Crawford Art Gallery, 2008a), 23-4. Maclise's central role in the decoration of the Houses of Parliament is discussed fully in Chapter 4 (pp. 140-175) below.

[111] Strickland (1989), 2: 609.

[112] Eileen Black, 'Practical Patriots and True Irishmen: The Royal Irish Art Union, 1839-59', *Irish Arts Review* 14 (1998), 140-46.

[113] For the Irish presence in Victorian England, see Fintan Cullen and R.F. Foster, *Conquering England: Ireland in Victorian London* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2005).

[114] The others were Henry MacManus, Nicholas Joseph Crowley and James Harwood. See Hunt (1846).

[115] Richard Ormond and John Turpin, *Daniel Maclise, 1806-1870* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1972), 97; Murray ed. (2008), 217.

same subject.[116] However, during research for the present study, the missing Maclise cartoon has been rediscovered (Fig. 38).[117] Its format and dimensions alone rule it out from having been exhibited in Westminster Hall. Maclise's first foray into a FAC exhibition was therefore at the 1844 fresco exhibition.[118] The following year he was commissioned, like Dyce, to design a fresco for the House of Lords Chamber (Fig. 39).[119] And, again like Dyce, he subsequently painted the design in fresco, the first of four major paintings for the building that would dominate the next two decades of his life.[120]

While Maclise may have been the only Irish painter of significance to enter the FAC's exhibitions, there were a number of important Irish sculptors.[121] This highlights the success of Irish sculptors working in Britain during this period that would lead the *ILN* to state in 1874: 'Let us do justice to Ireland in acknowledging that this art of sculpture, if not that of painting, has been proved to be one for which Irishmen have a decided native genius.'[122] Chief among those represented at Westminster was John Henry Foley, who came to be seen as one of the greatest *British* sculptors of the day.[123] Patrick MacDowell also achieved great success in England, as did John Edward Carew, while Henry Timbrell showed early promise before his untimely death in Rome in 1849.[124] All four were given prominent

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[116] Christie, Mason & Wood, 'Remaining Works of … D. Maclise, RA' (London: Christie, Mason & Wood, 1871), 16, lot 254; Hunt (1846), 101 & 104.

[117] The cartoon is at Stamford High School, Lincolnshire.

[118] Hunt (1846), 131.

[119] *Sixth Report of the Commission on the Fine Arts,* HC 749 (1846), 9.

[120] Maclise subsequently painted *The Spirit of Religion* (1847) for Lords Chamber and representations of the battles of Waterloo (1861) and Trafalgar (1865) for the Royal Gallery (see pp. 162-8 below).

[121] John Henry Foley, Edward Arlington Foley, Henry Timbrell, John Edward Carew, Patrick MacDowell and Peter Lawrence Crowley. See Hunt (1846). For discussion of the Irish entrants, see Paula Murphy, *Nineteenth-Century Irish Sculpture: Native Genius Reaffirmed* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 138-39.

[122] *ILN,* 12 September 1874, 254.

[123] On J.H. Foley see John Turpin, 'The Career and Achievement of John Henry Foley, Sculptor (1818-1874)', *Dublin Historical Record* 32/2 (1979), 42-53 and Murphy (2010), particularly 78-9 & 106-136.

[124] See Murphy (2010), 69-76, 78, 88-90, 138-39 and 177-78.

commissions in Parliament that would play important roles in the development of their respective careers.[125]

There were, however, a number of other successful Irish sculptors who did not enter the 1844 FAC exhibition. Thomas Kirk (1781-1845) and Terence Farrell (1798-1876) both founded sculptural dynasties in Ireland that dominated native sculpture during the Victorian period.[126] Yet no member of either family sent work to Westminster Hall. It is likely that the cost and difficulty of transporting works put such Ireland-based artists at a disadvantage. Along with the fact that most of the best Irish artists left the country, this may explain why, out of all of the exhibitions, only three entrants – Richard Barrington Boyle, Phineas Franklin and Constantino Panormo – sent objects across the Irish Sea, and two of these were to the decorative arts competition.[127] Such difficulties may account for Panormo's statue, *The Liberation of Caractacus,* arriving too late to be included in the catalogue and main display in Westminster Hall in 1844, instead having to be placed in the vestibule.[128] Unlike the London-based Irish sculptors, Panormo was not ultimately employed at Parliament. While this was, no doubt, partly due to the mixed reception his work received, it is nevertheless interesting to consider what his fate would have been had his statue arrived on time or had he been better known as a result of living in England, where he had in fact trained during the late 1820s and early 1830s.[129]

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[125] For St Stephen's Hall, J.H. Foley sculpted *John Hampden* (1847) and *John Selden* (1855), MacDowell produced *William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham* (1856) and *William Pitt the Younger* (1857), and Carew carved *Henry Grattan* (1857). For the Lords Chamber, MacDowell modelled *William de Warenne, Earl of Surrey* (1853) and *Almeric*, *Master of the Knights Templar* (1853), and Trimbrell designed *Richard de Clare, Earl of Hertford* (1854). See Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 4: 2, 40-44, 48, 64-65 & 80

[126] For the Kirk and Farrell families, see Murphy (2010), 3, 57-60, 69 & 159-70.

[127] Hunt (1846), 155 & 163. For Boyle, a Dublin wood carver, see Strickland (1989) 1: 74-75. For Franklin's Quarries, see Mr and Mrs Samuel Carter Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character etc,* vol. 3 (London: Jeremiah How, 1843), 461-66.

[128] *Art-Union,* 1 August 1844, 218.

[129] Murphy (2010), 96-7 & 138 For a negative review see *Literary Gazette,* 27 July 1844, 483.

Ultimately, no artists based in Ireland were commissioned to produce work for the Houses of Parliament. Even an attempt in 1860 by the Earl of Carlisle, FAC member and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to gain commissions for Thomas Farrell and Joseph Kirk was unsuccessful.[130] The appeal to Carlisle for assistance in securing work at Westminster for Ireland-based artists was by no means unique. Irish Catholic artists, in particular, repeatedly lobbied Thomas Wyse to secure them work on Parliament.[131] Often, candidates obtained letters of recommendation from influential figures, including in one instance from Cardinal Wiseman.[132] Wyse maintained that the quality of work was all that mattered and was not swayed by calls for solidarity with his countrymen and co-religionists. This, as his biographer J.J. Auchmuty has argued, was 'a magnificent standard to maintain, but to his cost he discovered it was not the standard by which one maintained one's stature as an Irish representative.'[133]

One of those whose case may have been put to Wyse was John Hogan, who, as one of Ireland's leading nineteenth-century sculptors, is notably absent from the list of artists to exhibit or work at Westminster.[134] Though Hogan spent much time in Rome, he was considered, on both sides of the Irish Sea, as *the* Irish sculptor, on account of the subject matter of his work, but also because it was executed principally for Ireland.[135] As the first Irish sculptor to deal with significant Irish national themes, Hogan's Catholicism and Irish national identity were extremely important in his work.[136] He was also a supporter of Daniel O'Connell and an advocate of repeal of the 1800 Act of Union.[137] As early as 1842, and even before the

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[130] Eastlake to Earl of Carlisle, 3 March 1860, 'Official Correspondence of Sir Charles L. Eastlake, Secretary of Her Majesty's Commission on the Fine Arts', National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (NAL) MSL/1913/2765; Murphy (2010), 159.

[131] Auchmuty (1939), 183.

[132] Auchmuty (1939), 183.

[133] Auchmuty (1939), 183.

[134] For Hogan, see John Turpin, *John Hogan: Irish Neoclassical Sculptor in Rome* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1982) and Murphy (2010), 61-9.

[135] Turpin (1982), 113.

[136] Turpin (1982), 65-6.

[137] Murphy (2010), 66.

plans for the first FAC exhibition had been announced, Sir Tomas Deane, a leading figure in the development of the arts in Hogan's home town of Cork, claimed that he had obtained the FAC's agreement that Hogan would be employed at Westminster.[138] The Attorney-General for Ireland, James Whiteside MP, was also said to have unsuccessfully suggested Hogan to the Commissioners.[139] In each case, it is unclear if Hogan himself had any part in the lobbying. According to an obituary in the *Cork Constitution,* and possibly in reference to Thomas Wyse, the sculptor 'thought his influential countrymen overlooked his claims to illustrate Irish genius in the Palace of Westminster.'[140] However, it seems unlikely that Hogan sought work at Parliament. Unlike his countrymen, such as Foley, he was not drawn to the metropolis, instead spending his career largely in Rome, until returning to Ireland in 1848. He did not exhibit in Westminster Hall and, during the course of his career, had limited contact with the London art world, only exhibiting at the RA twice. More importantly, as John Turpin argues, the ideology behind the FAC's schemes was alien to Hogan's Catholicism and nationalism.[141]

Hogan's fellow Irish artist MacManus appears to have been less concerned about possible conflicts between his nationalism and the ideology that the Westminster Hall exhibitions represented. Playing an important artistic role in O'Connell's Repeal Association, the painter's contributions included designing a 'Repeal cap' that he and Hogan crowned the Liberator with in 1843.[142] His presence at the Westminster Hall exhibitions in 1843 and 1847 therefore stands in contrast to his apparent views regarding the Union. Yet, unlike Hogan, who had success enough in Rome, for the art teacher MacManus, the high profile opportunities offered by the FAC competitions were evidently too good to overlook.

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[138] *Cork Examiner*, 30 March 1842, 1.

[139] Turpin (1982), 114 (n. 44).

[140] Turpin (1982), 114.

[141] Turpin (1982), 114.

[142] Jeanne Sheehy, *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival* 1830-1930 (London: Thames & Hudson, 1980), 36; Fergus O'Ferrall, 'Daniel O'Connell, The 'Liberator', 1775-1847: Changing Images', in Raymond Gillespie and Brian P Kennedy eds., *Ireland: Art into History* (Dublin: Town House, 1994), 99.

National subjects

It is worth emphasising that, in terms of subjects, it was only the first FAC exhibition that specifically demanded scenes from 'British History'. Nevertheless, given the consistent emphasis placed on British subjects, the implication was that, on the whole, this is what was also expected for the subsequent exhibitions. Though the lack of explicit direction did result in some ideal, classical and Biblical works, the majority remained focused on events from the four UK nations' pasts. Of these, the vast majority focused on English subjects, with thirteen identifiable as Scottish, seven as Welsh and three as Irish.[143] As will be seen, even these subjects often depict events that take place within a context that relates to England or includes English figures. This indicates both the interrelated pasts of the four nations and the disproportionate impact of the largest nation on the others, whose histories since at least the twelfth century have, in many ways, been defined by their relationships, both antagonistic and cooperative, with England. It may also reflect that the works in question were often produced by English artists. Indeed, though it may seem self-evident, it is important to highlight that artists did not restrict themselves to their own nation's history, unless of course that nation is defined as the UK. This further contributes to the Britishness of the exhibitions but it also raises questions about the impact of an artist's nationality (English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish) on their choice and interpretation of subjects. For example, what conclusions can be drawn from the observation that, despite the large numbers of Irish entrants, none of them chose to depict an Irish subject? Or, can distinctions be made between English and Scottish painters' approaches to depicting Scottish subjects, as Morrison argues is the case regarding contemporary paintings of the Highlands?[144]

In addition to the works that can be relatively easily divided among the four nations, others fall into the category of 'British' in the sense that they related to post-1707 Great Britain or the post-1801 United Kingdom as a

[143] Figures based on details in Hunt (1846) and Clarke (1847a).

[144] Morrison (2003), 2.

whole. These included depictions of events such as the Battle of La Hogue and Battle of Waterloo, as well as allegorical representations of the British state. Personifications of Britannia featured particularly prominently in the first Westminster Hall exhibition. In case anyone should have been in doubt that the exhibition was devoted to British art and subject matter, the FAC's arrangements of these works – which remain anonymous and are today untraced – made this very clear. Greeting visitors was *The Birth of Britannia*, in which 'Britannia nursed by Liberty, and supported by Valour and Wisdom, receives from Neptune the dominion of the Seas. Asia, Africa, and America are conducted by Time to render homage to her.'[145] Meanwhile, the final work was *Britannia Victrix*, inspired by the phrase 'This sceptr'd Isle' from Shakespeare's *King Richard II*.[146]

The 1844 sculpture competition also contained a symbolic illustration of the United Kingdom in the form of Charles Gahagan's *An allegorical representation of the Union of the three Kingdoms,* a choice of subject that may have some relation to the sculptor's English and Irish heritage.[147] Though it is unclear what this work looked like, the *Literary Gazette* gives some idea of its overall qualities with the acerbic comment: 'If the union conferred as little benefit upon the kingdoms as this gentleman upon the arts, the dissolution were most devoutly to be wished.'[148] Despite these examples, such British subjects were relatively unusual, with the majority of the historical works focusing on figures or scenes from prior to the creation of the Union. Symbolic representations of the Union did, however, abound in the decorative arts exhibition, where the same logic that lay behind Barry's use of national emblems drawn from heraldry no doubt resulted in their proliferation.[149]

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[145] Hunt (1846), 83.

[146] Hunt (1846), 110.

[147] Hunt (1846), 140.

[148] *Literary Gazette,* 27 July 1844, 483.

[149] Hunt (1846), 148-167.

Picturing Scotland

Forming the largest group of non-English entries to the exhibitions, the Scottish subjects all fitted easily with an Anglo-British conception of UK history. Submitted by English and Irish as well as Scottish artists, they indicate the appeal that Scottish subjects exerted on artists from the other nations during the nineteenth century, and how specific historical figures and events came to be seen as relevant for the whole UK and thus form part of the art of union. Key to understanding the subject matter of the many Scottish subjects entered into the FAC exhibitions is the concept of unionist-nationalism, the concentric Scottish-British identity that enabled Scots to see themselves as both proudly distinct from England yet equal partners in the project of British statehood. Morrison has shown that unionist-nationalism was central to the development of nineteenth-century Scottish painting.[150] The FAC exhibitions indicate that it was also key to the representation of Scotland, whether by Scottish or non-Scottish artists, as part of the visualisation of the Union exemplified at Westminster.

The impact of unionist-nationalism on the FAC competitions is most evident in the cartoons and paintings that were exhibited between 1843 and 1847. Even though the earliest subjects relating to Scotland actually date to long before the creation of the modern nations of what later became the UK, they are still the product of the unionist-nationalist mind-set. Two cartoons entered into the 1843 exhibition depicted scenes of Ancient Britons in what became Scotland resisting the Roman rule of Great Britain. The first, by an anonymous artist, was titled *A Skirmish between the Picts and Romans,* while the second, by Scottish painter William Bell Scott, depicted *The Free Northern Britons surprising the Roman Wall between the Tyne and the Solway*.[151] As is the case with the majority of entries in 1843, neither cartoon survives, though W.B. Scott's is known through a woodcut published in the *ILN* (Fig. 40). W.B. Scott's cartoon presents the 'Free Northern Britons' as patriotic heroes fighting a foreign power to protect British freedom and liberty.

[150] Morrison (2003).

[151] Morrison (2003), 101; Boase (1954), 326.

As Sam Smiles has shown, from the middle of the eighteenth century, such Ancient Britons played a crucial role in defining British national identity.[152] W.B. Scott's cartoon sits as a Scottish variant on the theme of Ancient Britons resisting Rome typified by images of Boadicea and Caractacus, who each featured in five cartoons exhibited in 1843.[153] These were joined by four others that depicted Britons repelling Caesar's invasion.[154] Historical distance and a lack of detailed information enabled various groups to use Ancient Britons to construct what Smiles terms 'a patriotic genealogy' for the country.[155] Representing a proto-pan-British civilisation, Ancient Britons such as those deployed at the Westminster Hall competitions gave modern Britons from Wales, Scotland and England an 'historical self-consciousness' as a nation and as a people.[156] However, by emphasising the fact that his Ancient Britons were 'Free Northern Britons', a term linked to the contemporaneous use of 'North Britain' and 'North Britons' to describe Scotland and its inhabitants, W.B. Scott projected a sense of national identity that was both British and Scottish, thus reflecting the principal way that Scots understood their nation's place within the Union.[157]

A key aspect in the creation of unionist-nationalist Scottish identity was the development of a vision of Scotland's past that reconciled centuries of warfare against England with eventual political union and Scotland's modern place within the United Kingdom. The result was a national narrative that placed great emphasis on a number of key historical events and figures. Of particular importance were the roles played in the fourteenth-century Scottish Wars of Independence by Sir William Wallace and King Robert I, or Robert the Bruce. In line with Coleman's notion of the narrative of 'providential unionism', these figures were cast as unionist-nationalist heroes

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[152] Sam Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britain and the Romantic Imagination* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1994).

[153] See Smiles (1994), 44-5.

[154] Smiles (1994), 44-5. For the general theme of Celtic resistance to Rome, see Smiles (1994), 137-9.

[155] Smiles (1994), 38-9.

[156] Smiles (1994), 40.

[157] See Kidd (1996).

who, by maintaining Scotland's independence during the Edwardian wars of conquest, had enabled the modern nation of Scotland to join with its oldest enemy as an equal partner in 1707.[158] Thus cast as romantic and heroic proto-unionists, Wallace and Bruce were accepted in England as suitable figures for the British pantheon. Though earlier English thought had maintained that Wallace and Bruce had, in fact, negatively affected Scotland, by holding it back from benefiting from the more enlightened and superior constitution of England, during the nineteenth century the unionist-nationalist view prevailed.[159]

The acceptance of Wallace and Bruce as figures suitable for celebration as part of the art of union is illustrated by their appearance in the Westminster Hall exhibitions. In 1843, David Scott, William Bell Scott's brother, submitted a scene titled *The Battle of Stirling* that had been drawn some years before as a design for the central panel of a triptych titled *Wallace, The Defender of Scotland,* eventually exhibited at the RSA in 1844 (Fig. 41).[160] The composition shows a victorious Wallace staying the progress of Edward I, and planting the shield of Scotland on the slain Hugh de Cressingham, while Scottish and English standard bearers hold flags that billow around the main figures.[161] Today such an image might be interpreted as an anti-English rallying cry for separatist nationalism but this was not the artist's intention, nor was it the way it was understood at the time. Certainly, like many contemporary invocations of Bruce and Wallace, it is overtly nationalistic in character, yet that nationalism was not independence oriented. While it asserts a powerful sense of Scottishness it does not question the role of the country as a partner in the modern British state.

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[158] Coleman (2014), 41. Coleman's argument builds on those made in T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation, 1700-2000* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), 241-5 & 292-5; Morton (2003), 155-88; and Kidd (1993), 263-7.

[159] Coleman (2014), 41-2.

[160] Hunt (1846), 107; William Bell Scott, *Memoir of David Scott* (Edinburgh: A & C Black, 1850), 271. See also Mungo Campbell, *David Scott*, *1806-1849* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 1990), 15, 36. The cartoon is lost but the painting is today in the Paisley Art Gallery.

[161] Hunt (1846), 106; William Bell Scott, *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott,* vol. 1 (London: Harper & Brothers, 1892), 168 & 169.

Instead, as a result of the narrative of providential unionism, it justifies Scotland's part in the Union.

That the unionist-nationalist vision of Wallace enabled him to be celebrated as a Scottish hero on a British level is further highlighted by a cartoon submitted in 1843 by the English brothers James and George Foggo.[162] Though no image of the work, titled simply *Sir William Wallace,* is known, the accompanying catalogue text suggests that it was a scene of his trial in Westminster Hall in 1305.[163] Emphasising that the event occurred in 'the place of the present exhibition', the text paints 'the noble Wallace' as the 'Scottish hero' and 'undaunted warrior' who had remained 'faithful to his native king' and had 'fought for the rights of his country'.[164] By comparison, Edward I is made out to be the petty and vindictive villain of the piece. As this illustrates, the recognition of Wallace within the British pantheon required the English to perceive Edward I's actions against the Scots in a negative light. This was reflected in the *Literary Gazette*'s review of the Foggos' cartoon, which praised the work as a 'national' image but noted that the subject was not an honourable event from England's history.[165] Such an approach to depicting Wallace was evidently acceptable to Scots too, with William Bell Scott painting his own version of the trial in 1850.[166]

Like Wallace, Robert the Bruce was also represented in the work of an English artist at the 1843 Westminster Hall exhibition. Frank Howard's cartoon *Bruce's Escape on Retreat from Dalry* depicted an event in which Bruce defeated three warriors single-handedly while retreating after losses against the English and their Scottish allies.[167] Alongside its appearance at Westminster, the acceptability of such a scene in an Anglo-British context is further highlighted by the fact that it was based on Howard's design for the 1845 Royal Hunt Cup (Fig. 42), one of the premier horse races at Royal

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[162] *Art-Union*, 1 August 1844, 212; Hunt (1846), 106.

[163] Hunt (1846), 106.

[164] Hunt (1846), 106.

[165] *Literary Gazette,* 8 July 1843, 451.

[166] Exhibited at the RA in 1851, W.B. Scott's *The Trial of William Wallace in Westminster Hall* is now in the Guildhall Art Gallery.

[167] *Art-Union,* 1 August 1844, 212; Hunt (1846), 106.

Ascot, an event intrinsically linked to the British monarchy and one of the English society highlights of the year.[168]

Another central tenet of nineteenth-century unionist-nationalist identity is what has been termed 'Highlandism'.[169] Developed in the early decades of the century, this was a vision of Scotland that used Highland identity as a means of differentiating the country from England, while still emphasising its loyalty to the United Kingdom. A key figure in the invention of Highlandism, and the creation of a sense of unionist-nationalist identity more generally, was Walter Scott. Through his novels and the stage management of George IV's historic visit to Scotland in 1822, Scott represented the country in a Highland guise of tartan, romance, valour, conservatism and loyalty to the British state that came to define the nation's image.[170] The 'Kings Jaunt' of 1822 also marked the beginning of a close association of the British monarchy with the Highlands that accelerated under Victoria and Albert, symbolised by their well-known acquisition of Balmoral in 1853.[171] This, in turn, spurred the popularity of Highlandism, which in painting came to be largely defined by depictions of the Highland landscape developed by Scottish artists like John Knox and Horatio McCulloch, and exemplified by the work of royal favourite, English painter Edwin Landseer.[172]

In the 1847 Westminster Hall exhibition, all of these elements of Highlandism came together in two paintings by the English artist Jacob Thompson.[173] The appearance of the first, *Sketch of the Queen reviewing the Drummond Clan (Highlanders) in the Courtyard of Drummond Castle, Perthshire (the Seat of Lord William d'Eresby), during her Majesty's first Visit to Scotland, 1842,* is unknown.[174] However, the title and critical responses

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[168] *Art-Union,* 1 August 1845, 271.

[169] Morrison (2003), 47-110. See also Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland', in Hobsbawm and Ranger eds., (1983), 28-41.

[170] Morrison (2003), 47-52.

[171] Pittock (2001), 85-87; Murray Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester University Press, 1999), 42-3.

[172] Morrison (2003), 77-110.

[173] For Thompson, see Llewellyn Frederick William Jewitt, *The Life and Works of Jacob Thompson* (London: J.S. Virtue & Co., 1882).

[174] *Athenaeum,* 17 July 1847, 765; *Art-Union,* 1 August 1847, 270.

suggest that it tapped into a number of themes associated with Highlandism. These include emphasising the royal connection with Scotland, the loyalty of the Highlanders in the British Army, and the topography of the Highlands. Thompson's second work, *The Highlands,* was subsequently engraved and published as *The Highland Ferry-Boat* in 1850 (Fig. 43), becoming a well-known image of Scotland.[175] It too incorporates a recognisably Highland landscape along with figures and animals, including dead game, that were common in such Scottish scenes. Though the royal connection is less apparent, the *Art-Union* presumed the painting included Prince Albert 'as the prominent figure in the boat seems to represent his Royal Highness.'[176] Whether or not this is the case is unclear, though given Albert's role on the FAC it is not inconceivable that Thompson was attempting to ingratiate himself with the Prince.

Visualising Wales

Whereas the Scottish subject matter entered into the FAC's exhibitions developed from Scots' own sense of national identity, even if it became modified by non-Scottish artists, the same cannot be said for those works relating to Wales. The Welsh identity that existed in the 1840s, and which was subsequently developed as a result of the efforts of figures such as the Llanovers, was focused on the Welsh language, eisteddfod and the bardic tradition.[177] There was, as yet, no widely established narrative of historical events, or pantheon of heroic figures, comparable with that in Scotland that the Welsh deployed to inform their national identity. As a result, by the mid-nineteenth century only a few Welsh subjects, such as landscapes and figures of bards, had occupied an accepted place as part of the art of

[175] *The Highlands* was sold to Leggatt, Hayward and Leggatt for 200 guineas, who employed J.T. Willmore ARA to engrave it. See Jewitt (1882), 21-2.

[176] *Art-Union,* 1 August 1847, 270.

[177] Morgan (1993), 80-92; Morgan (1997), 93-109. For the development of what has become known as 'bardic nationalism', see Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton University Press, 1997).

union.[178] In keeping with this, it is notable that the Welsh artists who entered the FAC competitions did not submit Welsh subjects. Those that were submitted thus form an entirely foreign vision of Welsh history. Consisting of scenes that illustrate the expansion of English rule into Wales, this is a history which is presented as ending as a result of the country's conquest by England in 1282. However, this was not a wholly jingoistic vision of the acquisition of England's first colony, but a complex imagining informed by contemporary events that showed some awareness of the existence of Welsh national feeling.

As with the Scottish subjects, the thirteenth-century Edwardian wars of conquest proved a prime source of subject matter for the Welsh-themed works. No fewer than four took precisely the same event as their focus, namely Edward I presenting the first English Prince of Wales to the Welsh. These consisted of an anonymous cartoon exhibited in 1843, two statue groups in 1844 – one by the Irish sculptor Peter Lawrence Crowley and the other by English sculptor Thomas Earle – and an oil painting by the English painter John Philip Davis exhibited in 1847.[179] Of the four, only the appearance of Crowley's sculpture is known (Fig. 44). The subject, now considered apocryphal, relates that, having conquered Wales in 1382, Edward I promised to give the Welsh chiefs a new Welsh-born Prince that could not speak a word of English. He then proceeded to present his new-born son, Edward of Caernarfon, as the first English Prince of Wales.[180]

The popularity of this subject at the FAC exhibitions was most likely due to the birth of Victoria and Albert's first son in November 1841. As heir to the throne, Albert Edward (later Edward VII) was invested as Prince of Wales in December 1841, the first holder of the title since George IV ascended to the throne in 1820, and the nineteenth since Edward of Caernarfon, who had in fact been invested in 1301. The birth of Albert Edward similarly prompted Robert Folkestone Williams to publish *Lives of the Princes of Wales* in 1843,

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[178] Smiles (1994) Ch. 4; Cullen, *Visual Politics,* 14-16.

[179] Hunt (1846), 102, 141 & 149; Clarke (1847a), 3. All of these works are untraced.

[180] See Hilda Johnstone, *Edward of Carnarvon, 1284-1307* (Manchester University Press, 1946), 7 (n.1).

which Earle quoted from in the catalogue text for his sculpture.[181] Given Albert's chairmanship of the FAC, it is also likely that the artists were attempting to appeal to him directly. This is emphasised by the fact that the subject seems to have been deemed especially relevant to Westminster, with no versions of it exhibited elsewhere until the 1870s.[182]

While the subject of Edward I holding up the first English Prince of Wales inherently celebrates the annexation of the principality, this does not appear to have been the main reason behind its popularity. Furthermore, it does not focus on the defeat of the Welsh in battle or on specific examples of subjugation or humiliation. Standing in contrast to this magnanimity is a design for a stained glass window submitted to the 1844 decorative arts exhibition by the English artist Edward Corbould. Titled *Edward I entering Westminster after having vanquished the Welch in 1282,* the design was for a three-light window, though only images of the smaller outer panels are known (Fig. 45).[183] Despite also relating to the English conquest of Wales, Corbould's design met with a very different response. In contrast to the other Welsh scenes, which had received no negative comments in the press regarding their subject, the overtly chauvinistic tone of Corbould's brought condemnation from a number of English periodicals. Reviewing the exhibition, the *Athenaeum* wrote:

> The design in the present exhibition most notable for being in an entirely wrong direction is No. 71, by Mr Edward Corbould. It is a sketch of a picture intended to exhibit "Edward the First entering Westminster after having vanquished the Welch in 1282" – a happy subject, calculated to extinguish national prejudices, and pleasant for the contemplation of Peers and Commoners having Welch blood in the veins![184]

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[181] Hunt (1846), 139; Robert Folkestone Williams, *Lives of Edward the Black Prince, Edward of Caernarvon and Edward of Windsor* (London: H. Colburn, 1843), ix.

[182] This was John Gilbert's *Edward I Presents the First Prince of Wales to the Welsh Chieftains at Carnarvon, A.D. 1284* in 1873.

[183] Hunt (1846), 159.

[184] *Athenaeum,* 4 May 1845, 409.

Similar sentiments were expressed in *The Mirror of Literature,* which remarked: 'A better subject might have been selected. A triumph over our brethren is, at the best, but "a fearful joy".'[185] These responses indicate the fine line between what could pass as an acceptable subject, as part of the art of union, and what strayed into forming part of the art of disunion instead. They also highlight the ambiguity that characterised the Anglo-British view of the Edwardian Wars of Conquest. The English defeat by Wallace at Stirling Bridge could be celebrated in an overtly nationalistic manner by David Scott because it was seen as having eventually resulted in peaceable Union between two equals. By contrast, with Wales having been successfully annexed and colonized in the thirteenth century, it had not gone on to enjoy the same level of recognition or parity within the Union as Scotland. It was, therefore, only appropriate to play down the Welsh defeat itself and focus attention instead on its positive outcomes for both nations; namely, the investiture of a new Prince of Wales that could be conveniently linked to the recent birth of the latest holder of the title.

A further subject indicates that, while the celebration of English victories over the Welsh were rejected as part of the art of union, Welsh defiance of English domination was perfectly admissible. Entered into the 1847 oil painting exhibition by Frank Howard, its subject was *The Night Surprise of Cardiff Castle by Ivor Bach.*[186] Recorded by twelfth-century cleric and historian Giraldus Cambrensis, this event took place in 1158 when the Welsh Lord of Senghenydd, Ivor Bach, scaled the walls of Cardiff Castle and took the Anglo-Norman William Fitz Robert, 2nd Earl of Gloucester and ruler of Glamorgan and Gwynllwg, prisoner in order to recover land that had been seized.[187] The only known account of the painting's composition describes Ivor

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[185] *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction,* 18 May 1844, 306. Despite this, the journal noted that Corbould's design was 'rich in noble animation'.

[186] *Art-Union,* 1 August 1847, 268; *Athenaeum*, 10 July 1847, 736.

[187] John Dorney Harding, 'Historical Account of the Castles of Glamorgan and Monmouth', in *Transactions of Cymmrodorion* 2 (1828), 285.

> sword in hand, dictating to Earl William the terms of peace, which are said to have been, 1st – Re-granting the right of the Welsh to be governed according to their old Laws and Customs; and 2nd, Renouncing certain territory which Ivor considered himself unjustly deprived of. The Earl and Countess and child appear struck with terror in the foreground, while an aged figure on the right, supposed to represent Robert Curthose, the eldest son of William the Conqueror, who was imprisoned here, is seen leaning on a harp.[188]

Howard outlined his reasons for choosing this scene in a letter to the Reverend Thomas Price, a leading Welsh scholar and close friend of Augusta Hall, in February 1847. Asking Price for information on the event, Howard explained it had been suggested to him 'as furnishing a fine subject for a large historical picture suitable for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament'.[189] The precise reason he gives for the scene's suitability for Westminster is that it was 'in fact the cession of South Wales by treaty, an important fact generally over-looked.'[190] This appears to refer to terms of peace referred to above, which some believed had been confirmed by King Henry II himself.[191]

The example of Welsh defiance exhibited by Howard in Westminster Hall held little, if any, lasting significance for Welsh resistance to English rule, as illustrated by the proximate display of scenes of Edward I presenting the first English Prince of Wales. Yet, it was the noble futility of the subject that made it acceptable. But acceptability did not confer popularity. The *Art-Union* criticised Howard's painting as 'by no means of sufficient importance for an exhibition of this kind' and, despite the paucity of works with Welsh subjects

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[188] Cardiff Town Council Minutes, 9 July 1888, published in John Hobson Mathews ed., *Cardiff Records: Being Materials for a History of the County Borough from the Earliest Times,* vol. 5 (Cardiff Corporation, 1905), 131.

[189] Jane Williams ed., *The Literary Remains of the Rev Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc,* vol. 2 (Llandovery: William Rees, 1855), 331.

[190] Williams (1855), 331.

[191] Harding (1828), 285.

generally, he was unable to sell it.[192] Eventually, in 1853, through his friendship with the Radical Mayor of Cardiff, John Batchelor, Howard presented it to the town's Corporation for display in the new Town Hall.[193] This was said to have harmed Batchelor's reputation, probably because the scene angered the then occupier of Cardiff Castle, the Marquis of Bute, an Anglo-Scottish Tory aristocrat who, no doubt, felt that it was an attack on his position.[194] Furthermore, despite its prominence in Cardiff, the painting did not herald an increase in Welsh subject matter. In their account of South Wales published in 1860, Samuel Carter and Anna Maria Hall expressed their regret that Howard's painting seemed to be the only work of art in the principality that celebrated the 'gallant ancestors' of the Welsh.[195]

Imaging Ireland

Even in comparison to the handful of works relating to the far smaller nation of Wales, there was an abject dearth of Irish subject matter entered into the FAC exhibitions. Of the hundreds of examples of painting, sculpture and decorative art displayed at the five exhibitions, a mere three works related to Ireland. Furthermore, despite the fact that a relatively large number of Irish artists submitted works, none of their entries related to their home nation. To a large extent this is hardly surprising. As Cyril Barrett has described, even in Irish exhibitions, most notably those of the RHA, few works on Irish subjects were submitted.[196] On the one hand, this was because the Anglo-British taste of the Protestant Ascendancy dominated the market, but it was also because, in an era of increasing nationalist agitation, Irish subjects were

[192] *Art-Union,* 1 August 1847, 268.

[193] Cardiff Town Council Minutes, 3 October 1853, in Matthews ed. (1903), 437-8. Today the painting is untraced.

[194] K.B. Batchelor, *John Batchelor: The Friend of Freedom* (Holt: Holt Magazine, 1975), 42.

[195] Mr and Mrs Samuel Carter Hall, *The Book of South Wales, the Wye, and the Coast* (London: Hall, Virtue & Co, 1861), 211.

[196] Cyril Barrett, 'Irish Nationalism and Art 1800-1921', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 64/256 (1975), 404-9.

potentially risky.[197] Arguably, in the metropolis these circumstances were amplified, particularly in the context of decorating the UK Houses of Parliament. As a result, Irish artists turned to tried and tested Anglo-British subjects that were most likely to obtain for them a commission to work at Westminster. This was even the case with MacManus, whose politics and nationality otherwise largely pushed him towards Irish subject matter.[198]

Having said that, Irish meaning was projected onto Panormo's *The Liberation of Caractacus* (Fig. 46) in the years after its exhibition at Westminster Hall. As Leon Litvack, Paula Murphy and Louise Purbrick have shown, when exhibited among works of Irish manufacture at the Great Exhibition in 1851, some interpreted the chained figure as emblematical of the true relationship between England and Ireland.[199] Nevertheless, despite the change in context providing a new reading, it is important to emphasise that, as originally conceived by the artist, it almost certainly contained no such message and nor was it understood as doing so at the time.

Turning to the works at Westminster that did relate to Ireland, the first two drew on subjects that were easily acceptable in an Anglo-British context. In the 1844 decorative art exhibition, Scottish carver William Allen entered a design for the principal door of the House of Lords Chamber that included carved work illustrating St Patrick summoned before the king and princes of Tara for lighting the paschal fire, one of the central stories in the saint's life.[200] This formed part of an inclusively unionist, though typically Anglocentric, design alongside images of King David I of Scotland administering justice, portraits of English monarchs and a central figure of Britannia.[201] The same year, Welsh sculptor John Evan Thomas exhibited a

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[197] Barrett (1975), 407.

[198] Strickland (1989), 2: 79-81.

[199] Leon Litvack, 'Exhibiting Ireland, 1851-3: Colonial Mimicry in London, Cork and Dublin', in Leon Litvack and Glenn Hooper eds., *Ireland in the Nineteenth Century: Regional Identity* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 28-31; Louise Pubrick, 'Defining Nation: Ireland at the Great Exhibition of 1851', in Jeffrey A. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg eds., *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 47-50; Murphy (2010), 137-8 & 142-43.

[200] Hunt (1846), 154.

[201] Hunt (1846), 154.

statue of the Irish politician Robert Stewart, 2nd Marquis of Londonderry destined for the statesman's monument in Westminster Abbey.[202] Better known as Lord Castlereagh, Stewart played a central role in bringing about the Union of 1800 and, as such, was a particularly fitting Irish subject for display in the Union legislature.[203]

The third work on an Irish subject, an oil painting titled *Ireland in the Year 1847,* is by far the most significant.[204] Its painter, German artist Siegfried Detlev Bendixen, was not only not Irish, but fell under the designation of 'foreigners who may have resided ten years or upwards in the United Kingdom.'[205] Unfortunately, the painting is now lost and no images of it are known. However, the *Art-Union* did provide a description in its review of the exhibition:

> This is an allegory showing Hibernia, who, attended by the National bard, at the call of her distressed children, earnestly points to Heaven and to the spade and pickaxe, on which are inscribed "Ora et Labora", thus urging them to exert themselves. And rely on Heaven for a blessing on their labours.[206]

The subject, then, was the Great Famine in Ireland, which reached its height in 1847. This was a strange and potentially inflammatory choice of subject to submit to a competition designed to find works to decorate the Houses of Parliament. Why Bendixen entered it is unclear, though it seems unlikely that a British artist, let alone an Irish one, would have even contemplated doing the same. Nevertheless, the fact that the FAC allowed it to be hung illustrates that it was indeed acceptable. The reasons for this are suggested by the *Art-Union*'s description and other reviews of the work. Judging by these, there was no implicit or explicit criticism of the British state's role in the famine

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[202] Hunt (1846), 139.

[203] For a recent study of Castlereagh, see John Bew, *Castlereagh: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

[204] *Art-Union,* 1 August 1847, 267; *Athenaeum*, 10 July 1847, 736

[205] Hunt (1846)*,* 118 & 121.

[206] *Art-Union,* 1 August 1847, 267.

contained within the painting. If anything, the onus on resolving the situation is placed with the starving Irish themselves, who are urged to '*Ora et Labora*' ('pray and labour').[207] This was in line with one current of contemporary British thought on the famine, which denied government culpability and blamed the Irish themselves.[208]

Bendixen's approach may have made the subject acceptable to the FAC, but it did draw wider criticism for not encouraging enough sympathy with the plight of the Irish. Indeed, Metropolitan audiences were no strangers to images of the famine. Since the previous year, the *ILN* had been publishing harrowing scenes of starvation by James Mahony[209] and, as Bendixen's canvas hung in Westminster Hall, a painting by Cork-born artist Daniel MacDonald titled *An Irish Peasant Family Discovering the Blight of their Store* was being exhibited at the British Institution.[210] Evidently, with these realistic portrayals of the famine in mind, the *Athenaeum* described Bendixen's work as an allegory of Ireland whose

> subject being the miseries with which that country has been visited by the failure of the food for the culture of which she is renowned. Though one in which our sympathies are so deeply engaged, the painter has not succeeded in imparting to it the quality of true pathos. It excites no feeling of commiseration; and is wanting in that individuality of physiognomy which marks the Irish race – and might have been conveyed without caricature. Allegories, if not rendered by a master hand and intelligible at a glance, are at best but hieroglyphics which the world will not take the time to decipher.[211]

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[207] *Art-Union,* 1 August 1847, 267; *Athenaeum*, 10 July 1847, 736.

[208] For an assessment of the range of British public opinion regarding the famine, see Michael de Nie, *The Great Irish Famine and British Public Opinion* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

[209] Noel Kissane, *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History* (Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995), 114.

[210] *Art Union,* 1 March 1847, 82; Barrett (1975), 401.

[211] *Athenaeum*, 10 July 1847, 736.

Thus, far from being criticised for bringing such a topic within Parliament's walls, Bendixen was castigated for using an inferior mode of representation to illustrate it. Nevertheless, whether a non-allegorical realist image of the famine would have been accepted for display in Westminster Hall, as part of the Anglo-British project to decoration the UK Houses of Parliament, remains to be seen. As it was, unsurprisingly, Bendixen's canvas won no prize and was not among those purchased for the nation. Furthermore, unlike many of the other scenes discussed above, its subject did not feature in the development of the FAC's own plans to decorate the Palace of Westminster.

CHAPTER THREE

Courting Controversy:
Subjects, Statues and National Sensitivities

The first two chapters of this study have outlined two very different contributions to the creation of an art of union made by the project to rebuild the Houses of Parliament. By contrast, this chapter introduces the first major controversies relating to the Union to engulf the decoration of the New Palace of Westminster.

During the FAC's first couple of years, the Commissioners gave little attention to the subject matter of paintings and sculpture for the Houses of Parliament, being occupied instead with the use of fresco and the organisation of the first competitions. Where subjects did feature in discussions, little further elaboration was given other than references to 'British history'.[1] The specified subjects for the first Westminster Hall exhibition, 'British history or from the works of Shakespeare, Spencer or Milton', was the only concrete indication of the FAC's intended direction. However, with the success of the 1843 cartoon competition and the decision to pursue fresco, the FAC began to turn its attention to suitable events and individuals to commemorate. With the exception of the frescoes in the Lords Chamber mentioned in the previous chapter, the first subjects outlined in detail were for sculptural schemes. These will form the focus of this chapter, while the development of the FAC's approach to subjects for paintings, which was directly affected by the results of the sculptural schemes, will be discussed in the next.[2]

The first aim of this chapter is to assess the degree to which a consideration of the need to represent the Union and appreciation of national sensitivities featured in the statuary schemes outlined by the FAC in their *Fourth Report* in 1845. This included two reports of a subcommittee established to determine the approach to the sculptural decoration. The first

[1] For example, see *SCFA Report*, 11-21 and *Second Report*, 9.

[2] See pp. 134-68 below.

contained a list of 121 figures for which statues might be erected in the building. From this, the FAC selected twelve individuals to commemorate in St Stephen's Hall. The second proposed the names of eighteen barons and prelates who enforced Magna Carta for a series of statues in the Houses of Lords Chamber. In assessing the development and composition of these schemes, it will be argued that they reflect the Anglo-British nature of both the FAC and the overall project to decorate Parliament.

It will also be argued that, despite the overall approach of the Commission, there were hints during this period of an awareness among some of its members of the need not to upset national feelings. However, this chapter's second aim is to examine in detail the outcome of this awareness not being shared by all of the Commission. The result of this was that the FAC's *Fourth Report* caused the first two controversies to be examined in this thesis. Both erupted in Ireland and were closely connected and concurrent, though distinct. The first concerned the inclusion of Oliver Cromwell, a detested figure in much of Ireland, on the list of 'distinguished persons'. The second focused on the exclusion of Henry de Londres, Archbishop of Dublin, from the proposed series of Magna Carta statues. These two elements of the 1845 report were highlighted by Irish nationalists such as Daniel O'Connell and the writers of the *Nation* newspaper as just the latest example of the British state's mistreatment of Ireland, and indicative of underlying prejudices and lack of concern for the country.

The response to the 1845 report marked the first time that the project to decorate the home of the primary unifying institution of the Union became a focus for disunion and division. This was particularly important in the case of the de Londres controversy. What set it apart was that it was not just Irish nationalists who complained, but a unionist figure too. The public complaints of the prominent unionist lawyer and poet Samuel Ferguson had far greater impact on the FAC and its approach to the decoration of Parliament than nationalist objections. The FAC's response was to make, what today would be hailed as, a 'U-turn', with a statue of de Londres by John Evan Thomas ultimately taking its place in the Lords Chamber in 1852 (Fig. 47). This volte face is a unique example in the building's history of a scheme being significantly altered as a result of public outcry.

Given the profile of the protagonists, it is somewhat surprising that the controversies surrounding the 1845 statue schemes have gone largely unnoticed, both in wider histories of Irish events in the period and more focused studies of the individuals involved.[3] Furthermore, although accounts of the decoration of the Houses of Parliament have noted that the Magna Carta scheme was altered, art historians have been unaware of the precise details and debates that lay behind the alteration.[4] In providing a detailed account of this hitherto forgotten controversy, it will be argued that the reaction in Ireland, particularly that of Ferguson, alerted the FAC to the sensitive nature of its task to decorate the Houses of Parliament. The result was that, alongside the eventual decision to include the Archbishop of Dublin, subsequent schemes would attempt to create an overtly inclusive version of British history; a version that not only addressed English themes, but Scottish, Welsh and Irish ones too.

Distinguished persons of the United Kingdom

During a debate in the House of Commons, in early August 1843, on the commissioning of three statues for the Naval Gallery at Greenwich Hospital, the Fine Arts Commissioner Benjamin Hawes suggested that 'these public honours should be extended to persons who had rendered memorable services to the country in other departments, beside those of the naval and military professions.'[5] He proposed giving the task to the FAC. Peel agreed that men other than military heroes should be commemorated but observed that the FAC was set up with a single objective, namely 'to consider the

[3] The only known reference to Irish nationalist opposition to a Cromwell statue in the 1840s occurs briefly in Roger Howell Jnr, ''Who needs another Cromwell?': The nineteenth-century image of Oliver Cromwell' in R.C. Richardson ed., *Images of Oliver Cromwell: Essays for and by Roger Howell, Jnr* (Manchester University Press, 1993), 103. Similarly, Samuel Ferguson's involvement in the de Londres furore has only been noted in Lady Ferguson, *Samuel Ferguson in the Ireland of his Day* (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1892), 112 & 167 and Arthur Deering, *Sir Samuel Ferguson, Poet and Antiquarian* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1931), 64.

[4] Boase (1954), 340; Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 4: 53 & 121-5.

[5] *HC Deb,* 7 August 1843, vol. 71, col. 355.

proper mode of decorating the new Houses of Parliament.'[6] He believed that, if their responsibilities were extended beyond that point, it 'might become a general roving commission upon the fine arts of the country.'[7] He conceded, however, that if there was reason to believe that the new Houses of Parliament would afford space for such statues, then the FAC might become engaged in the inquiry.[8] Ten days later, Peel wrote to Eastlake stating that the Queen had given her authority for the FAC to 'inquire into the best means of doing honour by Public Monuments, in Sculpture or Painting, to be erected at the public charge to the memory of men entitled to the gratitude of their country by eminent civil, literary, or scientific services.'[9] This marked the first recognition of the task that would come to dominate the FAC's work: commissioning works of art for the building.

Earlier in 1843, Barry had been asked to report on the potential for internal decoration of the building.[10] Giving a room-by-room account as it was then planned, Barry outlined the compartments for paintings and the niches to receive statuary. Following Peel's letter to the Commission, Barry was asked to provide further details, specifically 'respecting the localities in the New Houses of Parliament which may be adapted for the reception of Sculpture', which were submitted to the FAC in March 1844.[11] A subcommittee led by Prince Albert then examined the locations for paintings and sculpture identified by Barry. Reporting in May 1844, Albert's subcommittee expressed some disappointment in the building's potential to

[6] *HC Deb,* 7 August 1843, vol. 71 cols. 355-6.

[7] *HC Deb,* 7 August 1843, vol. 71 col. 356.

[8] *HC Deb,* 7 August 1843, vol. 71 col. 357.

[9] Peel to Eastlake, 17 August 1843, Appendix 4, *Third Report,* 12.

[10] 'Architect's Report as to Internal Decorations, addition to Building, and Local Improvements', 22 February 1843, Appendix 1, *Second Report,* 7-14.

[11] 'Mr Barry's Report respecting the localities in the New Houses of Parliament which may be adapted for the reception of works in Sculpture', 6 March 1844, Appendix 5, *Third Report,* 13-15.

display works of art, particularly paintings.[12] But, having established the available locations, the FAC turned to the subjects to be chosen.[13]

The appointment to the Commission of Mahon and Macaulay on 4 May 1844 – only a day after the subcommittee's report –was central to the FAC's approach to selecting subjects.[14] These two eminent historians headed the list of appointees to a new subcommittee charged with preparing 'a general list of distinguished persons of the United Kingdom, to whose memory statues might with propriety be erected in or adjoining the New Houses of Parliament, such list being unrestricted as to the number of such distinguished persons, and as to the time in which they lived'.[15] In addition to Mahon (in the chair) and Macaulay, the subcommittee included Hallam, Inglis, Rogers, Wyse and Hawes.[16] In addition to Albert, who did not sit on this subcommittee, these comprised the most active and influential members of the Commission.

Mahon's subcommittee ultimately drew up two lists: 'A', which contained sixty-two names on which they agreed unanimously; and 'B', fifty-nine agreed by a majority.[17] These 121 names were given to 'afford scope, not indiscriminate adoption but rather for choice and selection on the part of the Commission at large.'[18] In explaining its choices in a report to the rest of the Commission, the subcommittee was keen to point out that it did not advise 'an attempt to execute any great number of these statues simultaneously' as this 'would not be conducive to the interests of Art.'[19] The lists must, therefore, be taken as a longlist: a large selection from which to choose a smaller number for the final schemes, with no expectation that all

[12] 'Extract from the Report of the Committee appointed to examine the localities in the New Houses of Parliament which may be adapted for the reception of Works in Painting and Sculpture', 3 May 1844, Appendix 6, *Third Report*, 16-18.

[13] Appendix 6, *Third Report*, 17.

[14] Appendix 6, *Third Report*, 16.

[15] 'Report of Committee, with list of distinguished persons to whose memory statues might be erected', 11 March 1845, Appendix 1, *Fourth Report,* 9.

[16] Appendix 1, *Fourth Report,* 9.

[17] For both lists see Appendix 1, *Fourth Report,* 9-10.

[18] Appendix 1, *Fourth Report,* 9.

[19] Appendix 1, *Fourth Report,* 9.

would be included. Furthermore, the creation of lists 'A' and 'B' appears to have been a way of highlighting which figures the subcommittee as a whole thought most important.

There is no evidence to suggest that the nationalities of those chosen were taken into account. Unconstrained by attempts at inclusivity, the lists reflected the members' collective view of the most significant figures in British history. Assessing the lists, it is soon apparent that the majority – ninety-two of the 121 – are English. Of the others, nineteen are Scottish, seven are Anglo-Irish and two are Anglo-Welsh.

Looking in further detail, some instructive patterns emerge. Nine of the twelve non-English figures on list 'A' are Scottish. Among them are Robert the Bruce and William Wallace, providing further evidence of their suitability as British figures. Others include important British politicians and soldiers during the century after 1707, as well as Walter Scott and the inventor James Watt, who in their very different ways both greatly affected British life in the nineteenth century.[20] By contrast, only two Irish names are included on list 'A': statesman Edmund Burke and scientist Robert Boyle, both of whom were Anglo-Irish Protestants who made their names in England prior to 1801.[21] The one figure with Welsh connections is architect Inigo Jones (1573-1652), though he was born and worked in London and is rarely thought of as Welsh.[22]

Like Inigo Jones, the philologist Sir William Jones (1746-94), who was chosen by a majority of the subcommittee, was born in London to Welsh parents. Today he is described as Anglo-Welsh, though it is likely that the subcommittee saw him simply as British. Of the other sixteen non-English

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[20] For Scott, see chapters 2 and 4 above (pp. 67-109 & 140-75). For Watt, see Ben Russell, *James Watt: Making the World Anew* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014). The other Scottish names are the Earl of Mansfield, Lord Erskine, Lord Heathfield, Lord Duncan, and John Napier

[21] For Burke's complex identity, see Seán Patrick Donlan, *Edmund Burke's Irish Identities* (Sallins: Irish Academic Press, 2007). For Boyle's see Thomas Duddy, *A History of Irish Thought* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), xiii & 50-53.

[22] For example, Inigo Jones does not feature in the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography.*

names on list 'B', ten are Scottish.[23] Compared with those on list 'A', they generally had more of an impact in Scotland than Britain, which might account for them not being voted for unanimously. Macaulay may have suggested these figures but, as the minutes of the subcommittee's meetings do not survive, it is impossible to say with any certainty. Joining them are five Irish names.[24] As with Burke and Boyle, each is an Anglo-Irish Protestant. Of particular interest is the inclusion of Henry Grattan. An MP in the Irish House of Commons, Grattan played a leading role in Ireland achieving legislative independence in 1782 and was one of the foremost opponents of the 1800 Acts of Union.[25] For nineteenth-century Irish nationalists, Grattan was a hero, with 'Grattan's parliament', as they christened the period between 1782 and 1800, occupying an almost mythic status.[26] So why was he included by the subcommittee in their list of distinguished persons?

Though he opposed the Acts of Union, Grattan sat in the UK House of Commons from 1805 until his death in 1820. His almost sole aim was to advance Catholic emancipation, which he believed to be the best way forward for Ireland.[27] Though he spoke infrequently, the oratorical skills for which he had become known in Ireland continued to make him a formidable parliamentarian.[28] He succeeded in transferring from Irish politics in Dublin to imperial politics at Westminster to the extent that, by 1810, he appears to have become content with the Union continuing, and after his death he was interred in Westminster Abbey alongside Charles James Fox.[29] It was for these reasons, generally downplayed by Irish nationalists of the period, that he probably featured on the subcommittee's list, most likely having been suggested by fellow Irishman Thomas Wyse.

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[23] John Knox, Archbishop Leighton, Marquis of Montrose, Ralph Abercromby, John Moore, Burns, Robertson, Hume, John Hunter and Adam Smith

[24] Henry Grattan, Archbishop Ussher, Eyre Coote, Jonathan Swift and Oliver Goldsmith.

[25] James Kelly, *Henry Grattan* (Dublin: Historical Association of Ireland, 1993), 8-38.

[26] Gerard O'Brien, 'The Grattan Mystique', *Eighteenth–Century Ireland* 1 (1986), 177-94.

[27] Kelly (1993), 38-46.

[28] Kelly (1993), 39.

[29] Kelly (1993), 46 & 50.

It is worth noting that, in 1845, the FAC chose Grattan, despite being on list 'B', to be among the first twelve figures allotted positions in the Houses of Parliament.[30] Destined for St Stephen's Hall, the space built on the footprint of the old House of Commons Chamber, the twelve were selected for being 'men who rose to eminence by the eloquence and abilities which they displayed in that House'.[31] In a possible attempt at further validating the choice of Grattan, the FAC commissioned Irish sculptor Carew to produce the statue in 1856 (Fig. 48).[32]

The FAC published the lists and resolution regarding St Stephen's Hall in its *Fourth Report* in mid-October 1845. A plan for statues of English and British monarchs from the Anglo-Saxon period to Victoria destined for the House of Lords state apartments joined them.[33] Subsequently, the details of the report were circulated either wholly or in part in national and regional newspapers, appearing in London papers such as the *Times* on 15 October and the *Freeman's Journal* in Dublin two days later.[34] Irish nationalists criticised the inclusion of Grattan in the FAC's statuary scheme. The *Nation* newspaper, mouthpiece of the Young Ireland movement, prayed that there was a 'respectable minority' against Grattan, not at all happy their Irish hero had been appropriated to decorate the home of the institution that they so strongly opposed.[35]

The *Nation* made these comments in a wide-ranging critique of the FAC's report, in which it drew attention to the small number of Irishmen that had been put forward for 'Imperial fame' despite the fact, they exclaimed, that the list was meant to represent 'distinguished persons of the *United Kingdom,* of which … this island purports, for the present to form a part.'[36] The paper put this lack of Irish representation partly down to the makeup of

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[30] *Fourth Report,* 8.

[31] *Eleventh Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts,* HC 2425 (1857-58), 7.

[32] Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 4: 40-42.

[33] 'Memorandum Respecting Places for Statues in the Palace at Westminster', 26 April 1845, Appendix 4, *Fourth Report,* 12-13.

[34] *Times,* 16 October 1845, 5; *Freeman's Journal,* 28 October 1845, 4.

[35] *Nation,* 25 October 1845, 9.

[36] *Nation,* 25 October 1845, 9 (original emphasis).

the subcommittee, which it noted consisted of five Englishmen, one 'half Scotchman' (Macaulay) and one Irishman (Wyse). It also highlighted the fact that most of the Irish figures that did receive the 'doubtful honour' were not voted for unanimously, but only 'narrowly escaped rejection' at the ballot. To further highlight the lack of concern for Ireland shown by the subcommittee, the *Nation* listed a number of Irish historical figures who are ignored on the lists – including Lorcan O'Tuathail, Brian Boru, Duns Scotus, Johannes Scotus Erugena, Ossian, Celestrius, Sir James Ware, James Barry, Sheridan and Curran – while those it considered far less important or suitable English figures – such as Speaker Onslow and Warren Hastings – were included.[37]

The *Nation* also pointed out that Scottish independence leaders Wallace and Bruce featured on the list, but those it considered to be the Irish equivalents, Hugh O'Neill and Patrick Sarsfield, did not. On this issue, the paper asked: 'If this liberal committee award honours to the two Scottish patriots, although they earned their glory in fighting against English aggression, why exclude the great O'Neill?'[38] This further highlights what has been argued above: that Scottish patriotic heroes had been subsumed into a British narrative as a result of unionist-nationalism. In comparison, similar Irish figures had not. Unlike Bruce and Wallace, they were too redolent of the continuing agitation against British rule in Ireland to be safe figures in a British context. In contrast to the heroes of the Scottish Wars of Independence, Irish rebels were not seen as part of a justified battle for national self-determination that resulted in the modern Union being a strong partnership of equals. Instead, they represented the long and continuing defiance of English/British rule in Ireland that still marked an existential threat to the Union. The very same things that made them iconic figures for the nationalists meant they could not be acceptable heroes in the Anglo-British pantheon. This was true to an even greater extent of more recent Irish agitators that the *Nation* noted were also not included, such as Roger O'More, Theobald Wolfe Tone or Lord Edward Fitzgerald.[39]

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[37] *Nation,* 25 October 1845, 9.

[38] *Nation,* 25 October 1845, 9.

[39] *Nation,* 25 October 1845, 9.

At a meeting of the Repeal Association in Dublin a few days after the report was published, its leader Daniel O'Connell turned his attention to the FAC, describing the latest report as a 'curious lubrication…curious in its omissions, and yet more curious for the names that are inserted in it'.[40] Like the *Nation,* O'Connell attacked the commissioners for excluding certain figures while including others, particularly focusing on a number of anti-Catholic Protestant reformers on the list including Wickliffe, Knox and Wesley.[41] What most incensed O'Connell, however, was the inclusion of one individual in particular: Oliver Cromwell, a figure detested in much of Ireland for his brutal conquest and rule of the country.

'Should Cromwell have a statue?'

Controversy surrounding a possible statue of Cromwell in the new building had, in fact, begun even before the *Fourth Report* became public knowledge. At the end of July 1845, a vote was put forward in the Commons to fund the commissioning of statues of Hampden, Falkland and Clarendon for St Stephen's Hall.[42] While debating the issue, Welsh-born Nonconformist Radical MP William Williams (1788-1865) stated that he 'hoped that amongst the illustrious rulers of this country to whom statues were to be erected, Cromwell would not be forgotten.'[43] Despite having no connection to the FAC, so presumably basing his facts on hearsay, Sir William Hutt MP answered that Cromwell was going to be included.[44] By the end of the following month, the issue had captured the British public's imagination. The national debate that ensued in the letters pages, editorials and cartoons of

[40] Quoted in the *Nation,* 25 October 1845, 3.

[41] *Nation,* 25 October 1845, 3.

[42] *HC Deb, 30 July 1845, vol. 82, col. 1256.*

[43] *HC Deb, 30 July 1845, vol. 82, col. 1256.*

[44] *HC Deb, 30 July 1845, vol. 82, col. 1256.*

periodicals of all political persuasions focused around one central question: 'Should Cromwell have a statue?'[45]

At this stage, with the detail of the FAC's discussions unknown, the debate centred on whether Cromwell should be included among British sovereigns in the building. The arguments put forward by both sides boiled down to the constitutional and moral issues raised by commemorating Cromwell's record as a ruler. His detractors argued that Cromwell was never a king as the constitution recognizes it, citing the fact that Acts of Parliament under Charles II date his reign from beginning on the death of his father.[46] To his many supporters, however, Cromwell was a great leader and a 'king in all but name'.[47] To exclude him on the basis of legitimacy, they argued, would be to falsify history and call into question the position of William the Conqueror, Henry VII and even Queen Victoria herself.[48] On the moral side, opposers cited some of Cromwell's severe actions as ruler as well as the part he played in the death of Charles I.[49] Yet for Cromwellians, to omit him on moral grounds, as a result of acts he perpetrated, would be to ignore the actions of monarchs such as Richard III or Henry VIII.[50]

When the long-awaited *Fourth Report* was published, some were unhappy that Cromwell was only included among 'celebrities of the land' and not in the line of sovereigns.[51] For many supporters of Cromwell's place among Britain's monarchs, this was an unsatisfactory compromise: a conclusion that ignored the fact that the decision had been made prior to the controversy erupting.[52] Despite the issue having seemingly been settled, with

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[45] Periodicals that took part included the *Times; ILN*; *Morning Chronicle; John Bull; Punch; Standard; Daily News; Bristol Mercury; Bell's Life; Yorkshire Advertiser; Dundee Courier; Spectator; Eclectic Review; Liverpool Mercury; Manchester Times;* and *Penny Satirist.*

[46] *Times,* 13 September 1845, 7; *John Bull,* 27 September 1845, 614.

[47] *Times,* 29 August 1845, 5.

[48] *Punch,* 6 September 1845, 5; *Morning Chronicle,* 19 September 1845, 6; and *Morning Chronicle,* 18 October 1845, 5.

[49] *Times,* 17 September 1845, 5.

[50] *Times,* 29 August 1845, 5; *Times*, 9 September 1845, 8; *Morning Chronicle,* 19 September 1845, 3.

[51] *ILN*, 18 October 1845, 246.

[52] *ILN*, 18 October 1845, 246. See also *Morning Chronicle,* 18 October 1845, 5.

many people opposing Cromwell's inclusion in the building in any form, the acrimonious public debate continued. This mainstream Cromwell controversy in Great Britain has received some scholarly attention.[53] However, at the same time as it was taking place, the second, little-known version was raging on both the metaphorical and literal periphery.

In Ireland, O'Connell was outraged at the Protector's inclusion in the FAC's list. In a series of typically rousing speeches to the Repeal Association in Dublin that swung between invective and humour, he outlined the brutal manner in which Cromwell had conquered the country, focusing in particular on the massacres of women, children and unarmed men at Drogheda and Wexford.[54] He also railed against the heavy-handed rule under Cromwell, which saw increasing suppression of Ireland's native religion and the persecution of those who practiced it. For O'Connell, and many other mainly Catholic Irish, Cromwell was the single most hated figure connected with English/British rule.[55] O'Connell called Cromwell a 'monster' whose cruelties in Ireland 'disentitled him to be ranked amongst the human race at all'.[56] Referring to the fact that General George Monck was also on the FAC's list, he sardonically noted, 'they only wanted a third to make up a trio complete – they should have added a statue of the Devil. The group would then have been completed by the presence of their master.'[57]

Despite his opposition to Ireland being ruled from Westminster, O'Connell nevertheless recognised that it was 'a great reward to have a man's statue perpetually in that legislative palace.'[58] To the nationalist leader, the official recognition given to Cromwell by placing him on the list of distinguished persons was therefore nothing short of an insult to Ireland that

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[53] See Blair Worden, *Roundhead Reputations: The English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posterity* (London: Allen Lane, 2002), 296-304.

[54] These were quoted at length in the *Nation,* 25 October 1845, 3; *Freeman's Journal,* 28 October 1845, 3; and *Freeman's Journal*, 2 December 1845, 3.

[55] For Irish views of Cromwell, see Toby Barnard, 'Irish Images of Oliver Cromwell' in Richardson ed. (1993), 180-206.

[56] *Freeman's Journal,* 28 October 1845, 3; *Freeman's Journal*, 2 December 1845, 3.

[57] *Nation,* 25 October, 1845, 3.

[58] *Freeman's Journal,* 28 October 1845, 3.

added to, and compounded, the historical injustices meted out to the country by the British state. O'Connell was resigned to the fact that his protests would have little effect. But, at the same time, he was keen to make Irish nationalist opinions on the subject known, so that he and his fellow repealers could 'escape the odium of being in any respect partners in so iniquitous a proceeding.'[59] Linking this issue directly to his central cause of repealing the Act of Union, O'Connell expressed his 'hope [that] the day is not far distant when we will have a parliament house of our own, which will not be desecrated by the presence of any such statues'.[60]

One notable aspect of O'Connell's rhetoric against a Cromwell statue was his hypothetical use of art as a means of counteracting the proposal. He threatened that, if Cromwell was given a statue in the Houses of Parliament, the Repeal Association would commission three paintings:

> the first representing the massacre by Cromwell of Sir Arthur Aston, Sir Edward Breuey, and the two thousand five hundred soldiers who constituted the garrison; the second, representing the slaughter, in cold blood, by Cromwell of the men, women and children who sought refuge in the church of Drogheda; and the third, depicting the butchering, by the same monster, of three hundred women round the cross of Wexford.[61]

The aim of these pictures would be to illustrate what O'Connell considered to be the actual 'achievements' that had led the FAC to choosing Cromwell, namely 'none in the world except the slaughter of the Irish.'[62] They would therefore not act as a celebration or commemoration but a protest, providing a corrective history to counterbalance the official, state-sanctioned version that the FAC represented. In a possible allusion to the FAC's exhibitions, O'Connell even promised that the paintings would be hung 'at some spot

[59] *Freeman's Journal,* 28 October 1845, 3.

[60] *Freeman's Journal,* 28 October 1845, 3.

[61] *Nation,* 25 October, 1845, 3.

[62] *Nation,* 25 October, 1845, 3.

near Westminster Hall'.[63] Not content with keeping the protest against Cromwell on the periphery, O'Connell threatened to take his own, as yet imaginary, contribution to the art of disunion to the very heart of the British state.

Indicating the wider lack of British concern with Irish national feeling, the issue of the Protector's conduct in Ireland was notably absent from the general debate, prior to O'Connell's intervention. Even the statue's most vociferous English opponents ignored the topic. After the speeches to the Repeal Association, it took greater prominence, mostly in the form of denials of O'Connell's claims amid vehemently anti-Repeal, and often anti-Irish, sentiment.[64] Adopting ethnic stereotypes, the Whig *Morning Chronicle*, the most vocal pro-Cromwell statue newspaper, stated that O'Connell's claims regarding Cromwell's actions at Drogheda and Wexford were simply 'inventions, artifices allowable in the Milesian rhetoric with which he moves the minds of his hearers, and elicits from them tears, or hatred, or rage, or laughter.'[65] Similarly, the *Times* called O'Connell's claims one of his 'old farces'.[66] Meanwhile, the *Standard* - notably hostile to a statue because all the blood Cromwell shed was 'of Englishmen, Scotchmen, or Irishmen … [and] we would avoid the terrible effect of exalting into heroes the champions of civil war'[67] - used O'Connell's opposition as an excuse to embark on an anti-nationalist tirade. In a decidedly patronising tone, it reported that the 'learned historian of Mullaghmast', as it termed O'Connell, had delighted 'his intelligent audience' with falsehoods about Cromwell.[68] It claimed that at Drogheda, and Wexford, Cromwell had only taken 'signal vengeance' on those responsible for the massacre of English Protestants during the 1641 Irish Rebellion, and that there was no history or local tradition to suggest

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[63] *Nation,* 25 October, 1845, 3.

[64] For coverage of Irish issues in the press during this period, see Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), Ch. 2.

[65] *Morning Chronicle,* 21 November 1845, 4.

[66] *Times,* 3 December 1845, 6.

[67] *Standard,* 16 September 1845, 8.

[68] *Standard,* 29 October 1845, 4.

otherwise.[69] In an attempt to undermine the whole of the nationalist position, the *Standard* highlighted this as a typical example of the type of untruth on which sympathy was demanded for the Irish people.[70]

While no sympathy for O'Connell's position came from the British press, there were examples among members of the general public. In a letter to *John Bull,* for instance, a correspondent going by the name of 'Anti-Regicide Alter' called Cromwell's acts shameful, specifically highlighting his 'iron rule of Ireland, which made the name of Englishman stink in the land, and the consequences of which we still feel'.[71] Writing from Scotland where, like England, the press reaction had been mixed, the author also noted that, because of Cromwell's conduct north of the border, 'one of the heaviest curses that can be imprecated is, "May the curse of Cromwell light upon you!"'[72] However, this missive prompted a response from Ireland that indicates how O'Connell's view was by no means universal. A correspondent going by the name of 'An Enniskillener, Whose ancestor stood in the gap in 1641' argued that Cromwell only drew his sword against those who took up arms against him, and did not follow 'the example set him by the massacre of hundred thousand Protestants in the north of Ireland'.[73] Indeed, for many Irish Protestants, located predominantly in Ulster, Cromwell was a hero who had preserved them from popery and what this writer described as 'its concomitant slavery'.[74] Though this view played a relatively minor role in the 1845 Cromwell controversy, with the rise in Ulster Unionism towards the end of the nineteenth century it became one of the central elements of the second Cromwell controversy of the 1890s.[75]

The wider rehabilitation of Cromwell seen by the end of the Victorian period, in Great Britain at least, was in large part influenced by Thomas

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[69] *Standard,* 29 October 1845, 4.

[70] *Standard,* 29 October 1845, 4.

[71] *John Bull,* 8 November 1845, 722.

[72] *John Bull,* 8 November 1845, 722.

[73] *John Bull,* 3 January 1846, 1308.

[74] *John Bull,* 3 January 1846, 1308. For the Protestant Irish view of Cromwell see Barnard (1993), 192-95.

[75] See Chapter 5, pp. 176-215 below.

Carlyle's monumental revisionist life of the Protector, published just as the Cromwell statue controversy was dying down at the end of 1845.[76] Carlisle himself was ambivalent about a statue of Cromwell at Westminster, on the one hand keen that his hero should be recognised, but on the other believing 'it may be as well for him *not* to be seen among such company as he is like to find there.'[77] Despite the reassessment of Cromwell promoted by Carlisle, the Protector never did feature in one of the FAC's finalised statue schemes for the Houses of Parliament. Whether this was the result of the 1845 controversies surrounding the proposed statue is unclear. As Melanie Unwin points out, the majority of those named on the list of distinguished individuals are similarly absent.[78] However, Cromwell was also excluded from the planned paintings for the building, most notably the scheme in Peers Corridor relating to the Civil War.[79] This was drawn up by Macaulay, who elsewhere called Cromwell 'the greatest prince that has ever ruled England'.[80] It seems probable, therefore, that the Protector's absence from the building did, at least in part, stem from the FAC's desire to avoid arousing the division he inspired. Given the vocal opposition to a Cromwell statue elsewhere, though, it is likely that, if the Irish complaints played a role in this, it was a small one. As the controversy over the Henri de Londres statue will show, Irish nationalist opinion held as little sway with the FAC, as it did with significant portions of the British press and wider public.

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[76] Thomas Carlyle, *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* 3 vols (London: Chapman and Hall, 1845).

[77] Quoted in Clyde de L. Ryals, 'Thomas Carlyle and John Childs: A Forgotten Friendship', *Prose Studies* 10 (1987), 297.

[78] Melanie Unwin, '"*J'y Suis, J'y Reste"*: The Parliamentary Statue of Oliver Cromwell by Hamo Thornycroft', *Parliamentary History* 28/3 (2009), 419.

[79] Worden (2001: 299) argues that a figure in one of the paintings, Charles West Cope's *Charles I Arresting the Five Members,* appears to be Cromwell. However, there is no documentary evidence to support this.

[80] Thomas Babington Macaulay, *History of England,* 4 vols, Everyman edn (London: Everyman's Library, 1972), 1: 115-7.

The House of Lords Magna Carta scheme

In addition to the list of distinguished persons, the FAC's *Fourth Report* also included plans for a series of statues for the House of Lords Chamber depicting eighteen of the barons and prelates who sealed Magna Carta.[81] This had been drawn up by Mahon's subcommittee in May 1845. The FAC discussed statues in the Lords Chamber as early as 1843, where it resolved that they should be of the sovereigns of England cast in bronze.[82] At a meeting of Mahon's subcommittee on 14 March 1845, however, a resolution was passed to place statues of celebrated peers in the Lords Chamber instead of sovereigns.[83] The following day, Macaulay wrote to Mahon with suggestions.[84] These comprised of Peers of the Blood Royal, Lords Spiritual and Lords Temporal. Macaulay explained:

> I have introduced all the noblemen who have governed England as protectors during a minority, and this I think is rather an advantage. It is also an advantage, I think, that the list includes the lineal ancestors of the two first Dukes, Norfolk and Somerset, of the premier Marquess, Winchester, and of the first Earl who signs the roll as an Earl, Lord Shrewsbury. It includes also the ancestors of one of the noblest Scottish families. No Irish names occur to me. For as to Strongbow and De Burgh, the mention of their names would be offensive to one Irish colleague.[85]

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[81] 'Report of Committee respecting selection of Persons whose effigies might be places in the Niches of the House of Lords', 15 May 1845, Appendix 2, *Fourth Report,* 10-11.

[82] 'FAC Minutes', 12 April 1843, 'Fine Arts Commission 1841-1844, Vol. 1', Royal Archives, Windsor (RAW) VIC/MAIN/F/29/31.

[83] 'FAC Minutes', 14 March 1845, 'Fine Arts Commission 1845-1850, Vol. 2', RAW VIC/MAIN/F/30/2.

[84] Macaulay to Mahon, 15 March 1845, Stanhope Papers, Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone (CKS) U1590/C348/7/1 & 2.

[85] CKS U1590/C348/7/1 & 2.

The last two sentences show Macaulay's awareness of the need to include figures that relate to the different nations, or at least kingdoms, of the UK. The reference to two early Anglo-Norman conquerors of Ireland also indicates his awareness of the potential of the FAC's choice of subjects to upset national sensitivities. In this instance, this appears only to extend to the FAC and not to the peoples of the UK as a whole, with Thomas Wyse being the 'one Irish colleague' to whom Macaulay presumably referred. Despite Macaulay's consideration, it is perhaps unlikely that Wyse would have found the choices offensive as his family descended from an old Anglo-Norman family who had been given land by Strongbow (Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke) for assisting in his Irish campaigns in the 1160s.[86]

Given his Scottish background, Macaulay appears to have been more aware of the national sensitivities of the Celtic fringe nations than most of the other Commissioners. At the same time as the FAC was undertaking the majority of its work in the 1840s, he was in fact writing his seminal *History of England,* which, despite its name, gives consideration to the histories of Scotland, Wales and Ireland.[87]

Macaulay's awareness of a need to represent each nation in some way was mirrored in the scheme for the Lords Chamber windows, which was also entrusted to Mahon's subcommittee and which it tackled at more or less the same period in 1845. The task was to select subjects for twelve windows, each with eight compartments. In its report submitted in May 1845, the subcommittee states that 'the first and most obvious idea' was to select 'distinguished persons, classed in each window, either according to their several walks of life or modes of eminence, or according to their birth-place – England, Scotland, Ireland, or Wales.' [88] This was not taken any further, as they believed that 'however eminent, and however deserving of a place in the series', private individuals would not be recognised in the medium of stained

[86] Auchmuty (1939), 189. This is borne out by the inclusion of Strongbow in the later list of subjects for paintings in the building, as explored in the next chapter, pp. 168-75.

[87] For this aspect of Macaulay's writing, see Kearney (1989), 2-3.

[88] 'Report of Committee on subjects for stained glass windows in House of Lords', Appendix 1, *Fifth Report of the Commission on the Fine Arts,* HC 685 (1846), 9.

glass.[89] Only sovereigns, they concluded, 'whose faces, figures, attributes were familiar to the observer from their coins, seals, or other records of their personal appearance' would be suitable.[90] Nevertheless, this initial idea is significant, as it marks the first time that the FAC overtly refers to all four UK nations as a framing concept for their selection of subjects and figures. Although lacking detail and swiftly dropped, it indicates an awareness of the need to represent the histories of Scotland, Ireland and Wales, plus a willingness to do so. The ultimate scheme chosen further reflects this desire, although it is limited by the choice of 'a series of the royal line' to England and Scotland, thus forming one of the few examples of Scotland's pre-1603 monarchy being recognised in the building.[91]

The belief in the need to include the other nations soon disappeared from the plan for the statues in the Lords Chamber. At the suggestion of Prince Albert, the subcommittee instead developed a scheme to fill the eighteen niches with figures of the barons and prelates who enforced Magna Carta. The list of figures was outlined in a report submitted to the Commission dated 15 May 1845.[92] In the report, the subcommittee notes how the 'very narrow size of the niches, and their gothic form' limited its choice 'to characters drawn from the feudal age, and, as usual with effigies of that period, presenting little or no variety of attitude.'[93] Referring to the planned stained glass windows, it further explained that

> the difference of character as laymen, or as prelates, would afford a picturesque variety of attire, and that the historical analogy would be most suitably attained by placing side by side in the same House of the

[89] Appendix 1, *Fifth Report, 9*

[90] Appendix 1, *Fifth Report, 9.*

[91] The windows were destroyed by bomb blasts during the Second World War and replaced with different designs. See Wedgwood (2000), 127. For the Scottish monarchy in the decorative schemes, see Chapter 1, pp. 43-4 above.

[92] Appendix 2, *Fourth Report,* 10-11. A draft of this report is in CKS U1590/0170.

[93] Appendix 2, *Fourth Report,* 10.

> Legislature, in windows or in niches, the successive holders of Sovereign power, and the first founders of constitutional freedom.[94]

At a meeting of the Commission on 16 May 1845, Prince Albert requested that an explanation of the grounds for choosing the names be supplied by the subcommittee.[95] As the country's leading medievalist, this task fell to Hallam, who submitted the answer in the form of a letter addressed to Eastlake dated 17 May 1845.[96] In this letter, Hallam explains that there were far more individuals involved in Magna Carta than eighteen, and the most senior of those by rank were not necessarily the most important in terms of obtaining the charter. The subcommittee therefore decided to choose eighteen names that 'appeared most worthy of being commemorated on this occasion.'[97] One by one, Hallam provides explanations for their inclusion. Having discussed Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Hallam explains the presence of the other prelate on the list, William, Bishop of London:

> The next in station is the Archbishop of Dublin. But, as he did not hold an English see, it seemed more desirable to select William, Bishop of London, whose see is next in dignity among those who were present and whose name may be found in history.[98]

The rest of the FAC accepted Hallam's reasoning, apparently having no inkling that, what they presumably took as a perfectly rational argument for the exclusion of the Archbishop of Dublin, would cause consternation and outrage in Ireland.[99] As a result, the two sentences above formed the genesis

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[94] Appendix 2, *Fourth Report,* 10.

[95] Appendix 2, *Fourth Report*, 11.

[96] Appendix 3, *Fourth Report*, 11-12. Hallam also played an important role in fashioning the nineteenth-century view of Magna Carta with his account in *View of the State of Europe in the Middle Ages* (1818).

[97] Appendix 3, *Fourth Report,* 11.

[98] Appendix 3, *Fourth Report,* 11-12.

[99] The FAC resolved to adopt the subcommittee's report and Hallam's explanatory letter in early June 1845. See 'FAC Minutes', 6 June 1845, RAW VIC/MAIN/F/30/13.

of a controversy that became a central event in the development of the FAC's approach to decorating the Houses of Parliament, yet which hitherto has almost wholly been forgotten.

Nationalist and unionist 'dissention and bitterness'

The first sign of potential trouble surrounding the exclusion of de Londres came shortly after the *Fourth Report* was published. On 16 October 1845, the *Times* gave its assessment. While supporting the idea of placing the Magna Carta statues in the Lords Chamber, the writer warned:

> The exclusion of the Archbishop of Dublin from among the prelates, and the substitution of William Bishop of London, may perhaps be taken hold of as a grievance by the Irish agitators, who will declare that Ireland has not her fair share of stone representatives in the new Houses of Parliament.[100]

The mocking tone of the *Times*'s prediction was consistent with its general position regarding Ireland.[101] However, the writer also shows an awareness of the potentially controversial nature of the decisions the FAC was making; an awareness the Commissioners themselves evidently lacked.

At the meeting of the Repeal Association at which he first discussed the Cromwell statue, O'Connell used the exclusion of de Londres to further support his argument about British disdain for Ireland.[102] Drawing laughter from the crowd, he focused on Hallam's explanation and described why the Archbishop had been overlooked:

> He was only an Irish bishop, and, consequently, had no right to have a statue! They accord the distinction to an English bishop, merely because he was an Englishman – they refused it to an Irish bishop

[100] *Times,* 16 October 1845, 5.

[101] De Nie (2004), 98-9, 112 & 138.

[102] *Nation,* 25 October 1845, 3.

> merely because he was an Irishman, and yet there are people (heaven help their sense!) who say the countries are *united* and virtually the same.[103]

The *Nation* echoed these sentiments, highlighting the crucial phrase 'as he did not hold an English see' for particular criticism, and sardonically agreeing that the Bishop of London was 'clearly more desirable – an English Bishop before an Irish Archbishop.'[104]

Although these initial instances of complaint by Irish nationalists are important, they took place alongside the complaints about Cromwell outlined above and were, in that sense, not unique. The debate entered a new phase, however, when the lawyer, poet and prominent Irish unionist Samuel Ferguson joined the fray. In the November 1845 volume of the Tory *Dublin University Magazine,* Ferguson published an open letter to Henry Hallam.[105] Over six pages, he laid out a series of arguments to refute Hallam's conclusion and persuade him to reinstate the Archbishop of Dublin. Ferguson began by expressing his regret that

> another seeming slight to the people of this part of the United Kingdom should be added to those pernicious distinctions (as unfounded generally as they are invidious), which have so long excited dissention and bitterness between the two most numerous and powerful sections of her majesty's subjects. The evil of such contempt, real or seeming, is greatly enhanced by the eminence in rank and reputation of those at whose hands it is experienced…[106]

Ferguson evidently struggled to reconcile the event and the other slights he alludes to with his unionism. Noting his hopes that the decision was the result of 'some technical mistake', he writes that he would only believe the

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[103] *Nation,* 25 October 1845, 3.

[104] *Nation,* 25 October 1845, 9.

[105] Samuel Ferguson, 'Letter to Mr Hallam: Henri de Londres', *Dublin University Magazine*, November 1845, 628-34.

[106] Ferguson (1845), 628.

alternative 'with extreme and painful reluctance'.[107] Setting out this alternative, he argues

> that, in this postponement of an Irish to an English prelate, by reason only of the locality of the see of the former, a portion of the United Kingdom has been vilipended by a committee, whose duty it was to consult the proper pride and just national recollections of all those whose representatives are to assemble in the new Houses of Parliament.[108]

As Eve Patten has shown, for Ferguson the 1840s marked a period of increasing disaffection with British rule.[109] Though Patten does not discuss the Henri de Londres issue, Ferguson's complaint should be seen as part of what she describes as a 'decade of insecurity and flux' regarding his support of the Union.[110] During this period, he also became close to some of the Young Irelanders, particularly fellow lawyer and poet Thomas Davis, who co-founded the *Nation* and was a leading contributor. While Ferguson did not support the political end to which they worked, in Davis and the *Nation* he found like-minded cultural nationalists who seemed to promise an inclusive Irish national identity that Ferguson could subscribe to with pride in the face of Anglo-British caricature and ignorance.[111]

Seeing the political capital that could be made from Ferguson's intervention in the de Londres controversy, the *Nation* produced a second, more detailed assessment of the issue.[112] Praising Ferguson for setting out his case 'in a most scholarly way', the article repeated and expanded upon his arguments.[113] However, the *Nation* deviated from Ferguson's opinion in

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[107] Ferguson (1845), 629.

[108] Ferguson (1845), 629.

[109] Eve Patten, *Samuel Ferguson and the Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 99-130.

[110] Patten (2004), 99.

[111] Patten (2004), 99.

[112] *Nation,* 1 November 1845, 12.

[113] *Nation,* 1 November 1845, 12.

one crucial respect that illustrates the differences between their positions on the Union. Unlike Ferguson, the paper was keen to emphasize that it felt no outrage at the exclusion of the Archbishop of Dublin from the Houses of Parliament. Justifying why so much space had been given to this 'comparatively unimportant subject', the paper claimed that it was not

> because we care one fig that injustice has been done … but because we are delighted to find, in a gentleman of such great ability, and, at the same time, such marked Conservative politics as Mr Ferguson is known to possess, so thoroughly national a spirit as breaks forth in every line of his letter.[114]

Ferguson's letter marked a turning point in the controversy which even the *Times* did not predict. The open criticism of the FAC from an influential member of the Protestant Ascendancy hinted that disaffection in Ireland might become more widespread than the existing nationalist agitation, which itself posed the greatest threat to British rule in Ireland since the 1800 Acts of Union.[115] Its importance was indicated when Hallam penned a reply to Ferguson that was published at the historian's request in the December issue of the *Dublin University Magazine.*[116] Recognizing Ferguson's complaint, Hallam expressed his regret about the situation:

> It would give me very great pain, as I am sure would be felt also by every member of the commission to which I have the honour to belong, to be supposed capable of casting the least slight on the Irish nation, or on eminent men of past times, in whose glory their country is

[114] *Nation,* 1 November 1845, 12.

[115] For Irish nationalism's threat to the British state from 1800 to 1850, see Brian Jenkins, *Irish Nationalism and the British State: From Repeal to Revolutionary Nationalism* (Montréal & London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 3-102.

[116] Henry Hallam, 'Letter from Henry Hallam Esq', *Dublin University Magazine,* December 1845, 728-29.

interested.[117]

After attempting to explain his thinking behind what he termed 'the unlucky question about the Archbishop of Dublin', Hallam acknowledged that taking into account the distinguished character of the prelate, his role in Magna Carta, and 'considering also still more the wishes which many, in common with yourself, probably entertain', it would give him 'great pleasure' to see him installed in his niche.[118]

Hallam's conciliatory note was tempered, however, when he drew a distinction between those 'in common' with Ferguson and the nationalist complainants. Presumably in a reference to the article published only six days previously in the *Nation*, Hallam described how he could not understand 'why those whose chief business it has been to represent the connection of Ireland with the English crown as one of mere oppression and bondage, should pretend to care about the admission or exclusion of an Anglo-Norman prelate'. However, 'the case is very different', he continued, 'with the truly loyal Irish' such as Ferguson.[119]

Unsurprisingly, these comments drew a vitriolic response in the pages of the *Nation* in which the paper attempted to justify its decision to wade into the debate.[120] In answer to Hallam, the paper asserted its lack of awareness that those who opposed the Union 'ever did care, or pretend to care, about the admission or exclusion of the Archbishop of Dublin'. The *Nation* accepted that Hallam 'would feel pain to be supposed capable of casting a slight upon the Irish nation', but highlighted the accidental nature of the insult as being part of the problem. Returning once again to Hallam's initial reasoning, the author stated that 'it was the plain unconsciousness of a wish to offend, the instinctive, unintentional insolence of the committee, and the naïf simplicity' of the reason given to exclude the Archbishop that led the *Nation* to notice the matter at all. Presumably as a result of Hallam's attempt to drive a wedge between Ferguson and the Young Irelanders, the *Nation* writer also

[117] Hallam (1845), 728.

[118] Hallam (1845), 728.

[119] Hallam (1845), 728.

[120] *Nation,* 6 December 1845, 10.

distanced the paper from Ferguson, stating: 'if Mr Ferguson and his clients, the "truly loyal Irish," imagine that the country has gained anything by the discussion, we heartily wish them joy.' Evidently concerned that, by commenting on the decoration of the Houses of Parliament they had inadvertently validated the institution it embodied, the *Nation* pledged not to involve itself in such things again.[121]

A further notable voice who joined the debate at this point was Henry Grattan Jnr., a Repeal MP and son of the great Irish Patriot discussed above.[122] Speaking at a meeting of the Repeal Association, Grattan Jnr noted that Hallam had questioned why the Irish should interfere in the statues to be placed in the new Houses of Parliament when they were Repealers.[123] In an important development in the controversy, Grattan Jnr. argued that Irish nationalists were no less loyal to the Crown than unionists, but that they sought 'restitution of their rights, for something else besides the reports of commissioners were necessary when the people were dying in ditches and starving.[124] This was a reference to the starvation beginning to grip parts of Ireland that marked the beginning of the Great Famine.

To 'purchase union thus cheaply'

At a meeting of the FAC in early 1846, a resolution was passed, at the suggestion of Hallam, to substitute the Archbishop of Dublin for the Bishop of London.[125] No reason was given for this alteration, which would have received unanimous support were it not for Inglis, a member of the original subcommittee that drew up the Magna Carta scheme. To register his dissent,

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[121] *Nation,* 6 December 1845, 10.

[122] Stephen Farrell, 'Grattan, Henry II (?1797-1859)' in D.R. Fisher ed., *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1820-1832* (2009): http://www.histparl.ac.uk [accessed 10 January 2016].

[123] *Nation,* 20 December 1845, 3.

[124] *Nation,* 20 December 1845, 3.

[125] 'Alteration in the selection, before made, of personages whose Effigies might be placed in the House of Lords', Appendix 2.1, *Seventh Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts,* HC 862 (1847), 16. As a result of the resolution being published, this is the only widely documented aspect of the controversy. For example, see Boase (1954), 340.

Inglis submitted a written explanation that made a number of reasoned historical arguments to justify why the original plan should stand.[126] His account of the controversy makes his view plain, but it also indicates something of the Commission's reasoning behind their change of heart. Summarising the case against which he is arguing, Inglis wrote:

> It is said … that de Londres' introduction, however tardily, would even now give pleasure, and that when there is so easy a mode of removing jealousy and anger, and of substituting a kindly and grateful feeling, the members of the Committee ought at once to abandon their own previous recommendations in such a matter and to yield to such a wish, and to purchase union thus cheaply.[127]

While, for Inglis, the inclusion of the Archbishop of Dublin may have been a cheap means of preventing disaffection in Ireland, the other Commissioners evidently believed that it was a necessary diplomatic move to prevent further disunion. As Hallam had earlier made clear, however, this appeasement was not aimed at the likes of O'Connell and the *Nation.* Had opposition only come from nationalist quarters, as the *Times* initially expected, it seems unlikely that any attention would have been paid to their complaints. However, the very public involvement of a prominent Irish unionist in the debate had made the stakes markedly higher. With the allegiance of the 'truly loyal Irish', such as Ferguson, necessary for the Union's continuation, it was their 'jealously and anger' that the Commission was attempting to replace with 'a kindly and grateful feeling'.[128] Nationalists, by comparison, were considered unworthy of such treatment.

The FAC's change of heart over de Londres successfully placated Ferguson on the issue. Writing to his mother from Paris three months after

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[126] 'Statement by Sir Robert H. Inglis, explaining his reasons for not agreeing as to the expediency of such alteration', Appendix 2.2, *Seventh Report,* 16.

[127] Appendix 2.2, *Seventh Report,* 16.

[128] For unionism in Ireland during the first half of the nineteenth century, see D. George Boyce, 'Weary Patriots: Ireland and the Making of Unionism' in Boyce and O'Day eds. (2001), 15-38.

Hallam agreed to the substitution, he noted he had visited the tomb of Lawrence O'Toole at Eu in order to examine the costume so 'that we may know how to dress his successor in the See of Dublin, Archbishop de Londres, for whom, you probably have heard, I have obtained a niche in the new House of Lords.'[129] In the same letter, he described Hallam as having had 'the manliness to acknowledge that he had been wrong'.[130] In her biography of her husband, Lady Ferguson wrote that this 'was a triumph of which Ferguson was proud, the more so that Sir Robert Peel, in an autograph letter, had stated that there were "great difficulties in the way of carrying the suggestion into effect."'[131] However, the U-turn cannot be said to have purchased Ferguson's undying support for the Union, at least not in the short term. The poet's disillusionment with British rule continued to grow, as his resentment at the slights of which he had earlier spoken turned to indignation at the government response to the Great Famine. Ferguson even briefly flirted with repeal, becoming in 1848 a founder member of the Protestant Repeal Association. Even then, though, he did not oppose the Union in principle, just the way that it operated in practice. His agitation for repeal ended after only a few months, largely as a result of the failed Young Ireland Rebellion of 1848 and its aftermath.[132] Subsequently, his support for the Union returned and he became so strongly associated with unionism that his brief period as a Repealer was almost entirely forgotten.[133]

[129] Quoted in Ferguson (1892), 166-67. There is no evidence to support Ferguson's claim to have a role in the statue's design.

[130] Quoted in Ferguson (1892), 167.

[131] Quoted in Ferguson (1892), 112.

[132] Patten (2004), 125. For the 1848 Irish Rebellion, see Christine Kinealy, *Repeal and Revolution: 1848 in Ireland* (Manchester University Press, 2009).

[133] Patten (2004), 11 & 128-9.

CHAPTER FOUR

Visualising the Union

The controversies examined in the previous chapter resulted in the FAC, or at least some of its most influential members, becoming far more mindful of the need to consider national sensitivities in the course of their work. As this chapter will show, this had a considerable impact on the new schemes drawn up by the FAC after 1845. Published in 1847, these were conceived and presented as a single, unified programme of decoration that encompassed the whole building. With sculpture largely having been attended to, this scheme consisted mainly of historical subjects for paintings, plus some for mosaics and bas-reliefs. Numbering some 113 individual scenes, the 1847 plan forms the largest and most coherent expression of the FAC's vision of the nation's history. Influenced by the sculpture controversies and the examples provided by the Westminster Hall exhibitions, this vision attempted an unprecedented level of inclusivity by consciously embracing subjects that related to all four UK nations. As such, it forms the most significant contribution to the creation of an art of union to have emerged from the various projects to decorate Parliament. However, inclusivity did not mean equality. In purely numerical terms, the vision of the Union presented in 1847 remained overwhelmingly Anglocentric. Similarly, where the histories of the UK nations other than England were included, it was done in a way that supported the status quo of the Union and the dominant identity of Anglo-Britishness.

This chapter examines the 1847 programme of decoration to show how the FAC created this inclusive, yet qualified, vision of the Union. Quoting Colley, Tom Dunne has identified this as representing 'the most remarkable and sustained attempt at "the invention of Britishness" in the nineteenth century'.[1] Taking this claim a step further, it will be argued that the 1847 plan, in fact, forms a unique attempt by the state to forge a sense of British

[1] Tom Dunne, 'Chivalry, the Harp and Maclise's Contribution to the Creation of National Identity' in Murray ed. (2008), 42.

identity during this period. By actively combining events from the histories of the four UK nations, the FAC aimed to invent a shared ideal of the story of the British state. This constituted history was intended to articulate a sense of British nationality that normalised and neutralised national difference, and promoted the Union as a benign force for good that was not just politically viable but inevitable.

Many of the works set out in 1847 were never commissioned and only exist on paper as titles with unrealised potential. In the main, therefore, this chapter is an examination of plans and intentions rather than completed works of art. But this should not detract from their importance. The Commissioners fully expected that their programme would be completed, and, though they were mindful that this might not happen within the FAC's lifetime, their plans were a serious undertaking and need to be examined in their entirety. One scheme left unrealised by the FAC, but which forms its most literal attempt to visualise the Union, was destined for Central Lobby, where it decided to place mosaics of each of the four nations' patron saints. Because this was completed by subsequent generations, it is examined separately in Chapter 6.[2] Where schemes were realised by the FAC, the following analysis will examine, when relevant, how the artists interpreted the chosen subjects. One such work is Daniel Maclise's important wall painting *The Meeting of Wellington and Blücher after the Battle of Waterloo* (1861), which forms one of the building's most significant contributions to the creation of an art of union.

Of 'universal or national interest'

The first foray into attempting to outline an approach to the selection of subjects for paintings was made by Henry Hallam in a report submitted to the rest of the FAC in March 1844.[3] At that point the only professional historian on the Commission, Hallam made the surprising suggestion that the subjects

[2] See pp. 207-41 below.

[3] Henry Hallam, 'Observations on the principles which may regulate the selection of subjects for Painting in the Palace at Westminster', 29 March 1844, Appendix 8, *Third Report*, 21-24.

for the historical paintings should 'not be confined to our own British history'.[4] For Hallam, the reason to look to a wider field for subject matter was not a lack of interesting and important subjects in British history, but the small number of these that would make good monumental paintings. He argued that, to achieve this, subjects needed to be selected that gave the artist the 'most scope for the beauties of his art', which Hallam conceived as including the uncovered human form, the intermingling of female beauty, flowing drapery, and the impression of movement.[5] British history, Hallam contended, does not supply many subjects that meet these requirements.[6] Scenes should therefore be chosen, he asserted, that are of either 'universal or national interest.'[7]

Hallam's views evidently caused some concern among his fellow Commissioners, particularly Peel, who forwarded Hallam's paper to Mahon. Though Mahon was not on the FAC at this stage, Peel clearly wanted a historian of standing to counter Hallam's argument, or at least provide a second learned opinion that was more consistent with his own views and those that the Commission had already broadly expressed. This Mahon duly did in a letter to Peel, arguing that British history contained plenty of examples of events that would make suitable subjects.[8] Hallam's partial-rejection of British subjects, with its vague implication that foreign history should be admissible, even led Mahon to state: 'I would no more consent to admit foreign scenes to decorate a British House of Parliament, than I would an alien to sit among its members.'[9] In fairness to Hallam, he was not necessarily proposing that the recent history of contemporary foreign nations be included, but rather that subjects taken from classical and biblical history and mythology were needed for artists working in fresco to show the best of

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[4] Appendix 8, *Third Report,* 22.

[5] Appendix 8, *Third Report,* 22.

[6] Appendix 8, *Third Report,* 22.

[7] Henry Hallam, 'Letter on the same subject, from Mr Hallam', 25 May 1844, Appendix 11, *Third Report,* 29.

[8] Viscount Mahon, 'Letter on the same subject, from the Right Hon. Viscount Mahon', 25 April 1844, Appendix 10, *Third Report,* 26-28.

[9] Appendix 10, *Third Report*, 28.

their ability.[10] Nevertheless, his unclear argument about the suitability of 'universal' subjects prompted the affirmation that it was to 'national' scenes that the Commissioners would predominantly look.

Whereas Hallam had provided few specific examples of suitable subjects, Mahon, in his reply to Peel, went into detail in an attempt to show that British history was rich in events that conformed to Hallam's list of requirements. Mahon's paper is important, because it contains the first overt recognition that the view of British history embodied in the building should incorporate more than just English subjects. It also significantly influenced the final selection of subjects put forward in 1847. Mahon paid particular attention to the issue of female figures, of which Hallam had only given examples from the English female royal line. Stating that he saw 'no reason for either limitation', Mahon proposed two scenes with Jacobite heroines the Countess of Nithsdale and Flora MacDonald, and suggested that 'bygone differences' should not prevent such subjects being chosen'[11] He further argued that Scottish history before the Union was equally rich 'in deeds of female heroism', putting forward as an example when Catharine Douglas, attempting to protect James I of Scotland from assassins, 'thrust her arm, instead of bolt, into the staple of the door'.[12] Further scenes that Mahon proposed had reference to the pre-Union relationship between England and Scotland, namely 'Mary Queen of Scotland, heiress presumptive of England, on her landing from France' and 'Queen Mary the Second receiving the news of the battle of the Boyne', a scene with additional Irish connections.[13] He even suggested the most literal illustration of political union to feature in any of the discussions undertaken by the FAC with his proposed subject of 'Queen Anne giving her assent to the Act of Union with Scotland'.[14] Such a straightforward representation of political union would not find a place in the

[10] Appendix 8, *Third Report* 23.

[11] Appendix 10, *Third Report*, 27.

[12] Appendix 10, *Third Report*, 27.

[13] Appendix 10, *Third Report*, 27.

[14] Appendix 10, *Third Report*, 27.

final 1847 schemes, though it is notable that the subject would resurface in the 1920s, as examined in Chapter 7.[15]

On forwarding Mahon's reply to Prince Albert, Peel noted that it was 'an able commentary on the letter of Mr Hallam, and is much more encouraging with respect to the selection of subjects from the range of British History'.[16] His letter then having been placed before the Commissioners, Mahon was appointed to the FAC less than two weeks later.[17] In order to add additional historical expertise, and perhaps further dilute Hallam's influence, Macaulay was added at the same time.[18] Mahon and Macaulay became two of the FAC's leading figures. Mahon chaired the two principal subcommittees tasked with selecting subjects for statuary and paintings in the building, while Macaulay made significant contributions on both of those committees.

A 'complete scheme for the future decoration of the Palace'

Despite the groundwork having been laid in 1844, it was not until 1846 that the FAC fully focused its attention on painted schemes for the building. In the midst of the Henry de Londres and Cromwell controversies in late 1845, Prince Albert began drafting a memorandum suggesting subjects for specific locations.[19] Following comments by Peel,[20] a final version was laid before the FAC and read by Albert at a meeting on 6 February 1846.[21] Albert described the task of selecting topics for paintings as 'the most difficult subject perhaps, which this Commission has to consider.'[22] Though he explained the subjects chosen should be 'the chief events of British History', Albert's room-by-room plan is notable for the fact that it includes no events from the pre-Union

[15] See pp. 242-73 below.

[16] Sir Robert Peel to Prince Albert, 26 April 1844, RAW VIC/MAIN/F/29/47.

[17] Mahon to Peel, 3 May 1844, RAW VIC/MAIN/F/29/50.

[18] Macaulay to Peel, 3 May 1844, RAW VIC/MAIN/F/29/49.

[19] Albert, untitled draft memorandum on subjects for paintings in the New Houses of Parliament, n.d. (c.November 1845), RAW VIC/MAIN/F/30/32.

[20] Peel to Albert, 21 November 1845, RAW VIC/MAIN/F/30/33 & 34.

[21] Albert, 'Memorandum (Private)', n.d. (c.6 February 1846), CKS U1590/O170.

[22] Albert, 'Memorandum (Private)', CKS U1590/O170.

history of Scotland, Ireland or Wales. His version of British history was essentially pre-1707 English history plus certain events in the recent history of the British state, most importantly the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo. In this regard, he appears to have taken little on board from either the diversity of entries to the Westminster Hall competitions, the various Scottish subjects suggested by Mahon or, perhaps most surprisingly, the controversy surrounding the exclusion of de Londres.

The Prince's wholly Anglocentric viewpoint can probably be put down to a want of knowledge about Scottish, Irish and Welsh history combined with a lack of concern regarding the wider issues of national representation and sensitivities that the Cromwell and de Londres controversies highlighted. Though he was well versed in British history as a result of his princely upbringing, and in order to make him an appropriate suitor for Victoria, it is unlikely that his education went beyond a narrative of English history writ large.[23] However, his subjects were not set in stone. Albert's plan was that a committee should be established to draw up a final scheme. He had therefore made his suggestions 'not with the view of fettering in the slightest degree its deliberations, but in the hope of assisting them by bringing before the Committee something definite, something which may serve at least as the general outline of a plan of decoration to which its attention may be directed.'[24] Nevertheless, reflecting Albert's status and domination of the Commission, many of his suggestions appear in its final recommendations.

Mahon took the chair of the new painting subcommittee which, except for the addition of Lord John Russell, Viscount Canning and Lord Lansdowne, was identical in make-up to the sculpture subcommittee.[25] It first met on 1 May 1846 when, at the suggestion of Hallam, who appeared keen to emphasise he now supported the majority view outlined by Mahon, it resolved that 'a selection of certain conspicuous events in British history should be made, to be the subjects of paintings by native artists.'[26] The

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[23] Robert Rhodes James, *Prince Albert: A Biography* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1983), Ch. 2.

[24] Albert, 'Memorandum (Private)', CKS U1590/O170.

[25] 'Minutes of a Committee of the FAC', 1 May 1846, CKS U1590/O170.

[26] 'Minutes of a Committee of the FAC', 1 May 1846, CKS U1590/O170.

committee concluded their meeting by agreeing to Sir Robert Harry Inglis's proposal that each member be invited to submit a list of subjects selected either from Albert's paper or from the general range of British history, keeping in mind the historic importance of the subjects and their suitability for reproduction in painting.[27]

The previously unknown lists drawn up by Inglis, Mahon and Hallam survive.[28] Inglis solely chose English subjects, as did Mahon, despite his earlier emphasis of suitability of many Scottish figures and events. Hallam, on the other hand, is the only one of the three that made any attempt to include scenes from the histories of the UK nations other than England. Of the fifteen he suggested, the final three relate to Scotland and Ireland. One, 'the Battle of Culloden', concerns the final confrontation of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion. Another, 'Columba surrounded by the monks of Iona', links Scotland and Ireland through the Irish missionary monk Saint Columba. However, it is Hallam's third suggestion that is particularly important. While each of the other fourteen events are specifically titled, the fifteenth merely reads: 'Any conspicuous event in early Irish history.' This conscious inclusion of an Irish scene was almost certainly a further conciliatory gesture resulting from the Archbishop of Dublin furore. Yet, despite Hallam's pre-eminence as a historian, his imprecise, tentative description hints at his unease about proposing a suitable subject, no doubt born of his earlier experience.

None of Hallam's specific suggestions regarding Irish and Scottish history were included in the committee's final recommendations, drawn up on 8 May.[29] Nevertheless, out of the twelve subjects they suggested, there were three relevant scenes. From Scottish history came 'Sir James the Good, of Douglas, receiving the heart of Robert Bruce for conveyance to the Holy Land.' Conforming to Hallam's desire for a 'conspicuous event in early Irish history' was 'The Marriage of Strongbow, Earl of Stugul, with Eva, daughter of Dermot, King of Leinster'. And new ground was even broken with the inclusion of a Welsh scene in the form of 'Edward 1st holding up his infant

[27] 'Minutes of a Committee of the FAC', 1 May 1846, CKS-U1590/O170.

[28] All three are untitled but dated 8 May 1846, CKS U1590/O170.

[29] 'Minutes of a Committee of the FAC', 8 May 1846, RAW VIC/MAIN/F/30/41.

son, the Prince of Wales, to the Welsh Chiefs at Carnarvon Castle'.[30] As will be shown, the Irish and Welsh scenes made it into the ultimate plan unaltered, while the partially included figure in the Scottish subject, King Robert Bruce, was to feature in another event. Influenced by Hallam's suggestions, which themselves were the result of his previous lack of mindfulness of national sensitivities, the list drawn up by Mahon's painting subcommittee marks a crucial stage in the development of an art of union in the building.

However, a simple list of twelve subjects does not appear to be what Albert had in mind when he provided his detailed, room-by-room list of suggestions as a guide. As a result, he took a more active role by stepping in to chair the subcommittee himself.[31] In their *Sixth Report,* dated 4 August 1846, the Commissioners outlined that 'for the better guidance of present and future artists, and in order to maintain a character of harmony and unity worthy of such a building' they planned to 'determine a complete scheme for the future decoration of the Palace.'[32] Over the next year, the subcommittee produced a number of drafts before they adopted a final report on 9 July 1847.[33] Following Albert's lead, this took each space in turn and proposed specific subjects for particular positions within them.

The 'complete scheme' set out by the FAC in 1847 marks a key moment in the decoration of the Houses of Parliament. It was the first, and would be the only, time that an overarching idea of what the building should represent through its fine art was set out. Up to that point, as has been shown, only the longlist of distinguished persons who might be commemorated in sculpture, and individual schemes such as in the Lords Chamber, had been finalised. Furthermore, each of these had largely been

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[30] RAW VIC/MAIN/F/30/41.

[31] Newly added Commissioner George Howard, Viscount Morpeth (later 7th Earl of Carlisle), also joined the committee. See 'Report of the Committee appointed to select subjects in painting and sculpture with a view to the future decoration of the Palace at Westminster', 9 July 1847, Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 15.

[32] *Sixth Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts,* HC 749 (1846), 8.

[33] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 9-15. For drafts dated c. 28 June 1846 and early July 1847 see RAW VIC/MAIN/F/30/46 & 48.

conceived in isolation. Similarly, following the demise of the FAC, later schemes would also be planned and executed individually, as subsequent chapters will describe.[34] In contrast to these, the 1847 programme is a complete blueprint for the entire building.

With a largely blank canvas on which to project their visualisation of Britishness, the 1847 plan is nothing less than the FAC's conceptualisation of the nation through its past. In this respect, it is significant in a wider context than just the Houses of Parliament's history. Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood argue that there 'was no consistent attempt by different governments to strengthen Britishness in the first half of the nineteenth century.'[35] Overall, this was certainly true. However, the FAC's creation in 1847 of a constituted history of the UK as part of the overtly nationalistic project to decorate Parliament stands as an exception to that rule. Furthermore, the FAC's *Seventh Report* forms a unique example during this period of the British state setting out a selection of individuals and events taken from the whole of the nation's past, amounting to an official, state-sponsored version of Britain's history.

In terms of the composition of the FAC's final visualisation of Britishness, predictably the scenes chosen are largely from English history or from British history after the 1707 Act of Union. Of the 113 historical subjects suggested in the 1847 report, thirteen relate to the post-Union history of the British State, seventy-four are from the pre-1707 history of England, while only twenty-four relate to the pre-Union histories of Wales, Scotland and Ireland combined. Of these, the majority are Scottish, two are Irish and only one is Welsh. While this certainly does not amount to equal representation, it does indicate that, following the developments made by Mahon's committee, there was an active attempt to include events from the histories of Ireland, Scotland and Wales as well as England. The 1847 programme may not be equally weighted to the four UK nations, but it is a long way from Prince Albert's initial suggestions, devoid as they were of non-English subject matter.

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[34] See pp. 169-273 below.

[35] Brockliss and Eastwood eds., (1997a), 3

Walter Scott at Westminster

Key to understanding the representation of Scottish history in the FAC's 1847 programme is the influence of Walter Scott. As discussed in Chapter 2, through his historical fiction and non-fiction writing, as well as through his involvement in events such as George IV's visit to Scotland in 1821, Scott played a central role in laying, reinforcing and expanding many of the foundations of nineteenth-century Scottish unionist-nationalist identity.[36] Central to the creation of this identity was a series of historical figures that Scott helped to achieve mythic status. [37] Because of Scott's popularity throughout the UK, and the essentially unionist message of his work, this phenomenon was not restricted to Scotland. These Scottish heroes and heroines became acceptable British figures in the Anglo-British context of the Union, and were widely celebrated as such.[38] Thus, Scott's historical vision did not just inform Scots own sense of identity but also how they were perceived by the other British nations, as well as further afield, and how Scottishness was conceived as fitting into a wider sense of Britishness.

In Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century, Scott was virtually the only contemporary author whose work was continuously used as a source for acceptable and popular subjects for paintings.[39] As Catherine Gordon has highlighted, between 1805 and 1870 over three-hundred painters and sculptors exhibited more than a thousand works based on Scott's writing at the RA and British Institution.[40] The overall project to rebuild and decorate Parliament was imbued with both indirect and direct Scott influences. The popularity of Gothic Revival architecture was partly the result of the historicist obsession with the medieval past that Scott had helped

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[36] See pp. 99-100 above.

[37] Morrison (2003), 115.

[38] Theodore Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination: Nineteenth-Century Visions of a Greater Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 31-55.

[39] Catherine Gordon, 'The Illustration of Sir Walter Scott: Nineteenth-Century Enthusiasm and Adaptation', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 34 (1971), 300.

[40] Gordon (2011), 297 & 300.

foster, as was the chivalric revival, which, as Deborah Mancoff has shown, played an important role at Westminster.[41] But it was through his subjects that Scott had the greatest impact. As part of Prince Albert's desire to encourage fresco painting among artists who might be employed in Parliament, between 1844 and 1846 he commissioned five painters to decorate the Garden Pavilion of Buckingham Palace with designs from Scott.[42] This fondness for Scott-inspired subjects carried over to the final schemes outlined for the building. Chosen as one of the eight poets to be illustrated in 'Poet's Hall', or Upper Waiting Hall, he is represented by Edward Armitage's *The Death of Marmion* (1854, Fig. 49).[43] Taken from Scott's novel *Marmion*, a fictional tale that takes place against the backdrop of the Battle of Flodden, it is a suitably unionist-nationalist subject that breaks down the borders between England and Scotland while emphasising each countries' uniqueness.[44] The Highlandism instigated by Scott also made itself felt in the FAC's commissions, with Edwin Landseer's famous painting *The Monarch of the Glen* (Fig. 50) originally created to hang in the Peers' Refreshment Room.[45] However, it is in the scenes from Scottish history chosen for the building that Scott's hand is most widely felt. These were not in the narrative mode of *Marmion* as they were meant to represent actual events. Though they were not direct illustrations of Scott as such, they undoubtedly took their inspiration from his works and his vision of Scotland.

An event selected from Scott by the FAC based was Catherine Douglas 'barring the Door with her Arm to protect James I of Scotland'.[46] The principal popular source for this subject was *Tales of a Grandfather,* Scott's

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[41] Cannadine (2000), 16; Mancoff (2000), 242.

[42] Boase (1954), 334-35.

[43] Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 4, 182-7. See also Catherine Gordon, 'Scott's Impact on Art', *Apollo* 98 (1973), 37.

[44] Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 187-95.

[45] The FAC commissioned Landseer to paint three pictures of 'subjects relating to the chase' in 1849. These were cancelled in 1850 when the Commons refused to vote the necessary funds. See Boase (1954), 344 and Richard Ormond, *Sir Edwin Landseer* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 174.

[46] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 14. The report mistakenly gives the subject as 'Isabella Douglas [sic] barring the Door with her Arm to protect James I of Scotland'.

anecdotal history of Scotland first published in 1828.[47] During the nineteenth century, Catherine Douglas, or 'Kate Barlass' as she was often known, became one of the Scottish heroic figures that Scott helped achieve a place in the British pantheon. As described above, the particular scene had first been suggested as a suitable subject for the Houses of Parliament by Mahon in 1844.[48] That same year, the English painter Richard Redgrave illustrated the event in a fresco entered into the second Westminster Hall exhibition (Fig. 51).[49] Ultimately, the FAC chose to include the scene in a room in the Victoria Tower then known as the Guard Room. Along with the other subject chosen for the space, 'Young Talbot defending his Father in Battle', it reflected the defensive function of the location.[50] Though never commissioned for Parliament, a number of later artists did tackle the scene, and it became a popular subject in illustrated editions of Scott and other Scottish histories.[51] Nevertheless, Catherine Douglas was something of a minor player in the cast of Scottish characters found in Scott. Of far greater importance was another female figure who played a central role in both Scottish history and the decoration of the Houses of Parliament: Mary Queen of Scots.

The cult of Mary Queen of Scots

Mary Queen of Scots is the most prominent Scottish figure in the Palace of Westminster's planned, and completed, decorative schemes. For the Prince's Chamber, an ante-room to the House of Lords Chamber that sits between it and the Royal Gallery, the FAC chose subjects from Tudor history (Fig. 52). Among them were twenty-eight portraits 'relating to the Tudor

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[47] Walter Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather: Being Stories from Scottish History,* vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Cadell & Co, 1828), 105.

[48] Appendix 10, *Third Report*, 27.

[49] Hunt (1846)*,* 123.

[50] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 14.

[51] Examples exhibited at the RA include paintings by Laslett John Pott (1880) and William A. Menzies (1898).

family', which included eight figures linked to Scotland.[52] These were eventually carried out by students of the Government School of Design under the direction of its headmaster, the English painter Richard Burchett (1815-75).[53] Though present in this series (Fig. 53), it was in a sequence of panels below these portraits that Mary was given a leading role. Of twelve subjects suggested to be produced in 'carved work' (i.e. bas-relief), three were dedicated to the Scottish queen: 'The escape of Mary, Queen of Scots', 'The Murder of Rizzio' and 'Mary looking back on France'.[54] These were ultimately produced in bronze to designs by the English sculptor William Theed (Figs. 54, 55 & 56).[55]

The choice of Mary as a suitable subject for the decoration of Parliament was part of a much wider British obsession with the Queen of Scots. Since her execution on the orders of Elizabeth I in 1587, Mary had repeatedly captured the British public's imagination.[56] During the nineteenth century, Walter Scott's novel *The Abbot* probably contributed most to popular impressions of Mary, though his account in *Tales of a Grandfather* was no doubt also extremely influential.[57] By the 1840s, Mary occupied a position as one of the most popular British historical figures, featuring in history texts, novels, prints, journals, tableaux vivants, operas and theatre.[58] There were also many artistic interpretations of Scott and other accounts of her life, which combined to form what Helen Smailes and Duncan Thomson call the

[52] These were Queen Margaret of Scotland; James VI; Douglas, Earl Angus; James V; Mary of Guise; Mary Queen of Scots; Francis II; and Lord Darnley. See Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 12.

[53] Boase (1954), 347.

[54] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 12.

[55] Boase (1954), 347; Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 4: 129-31.

[56] See Jayne Lewis, *Mary Queen of Scots: Romance and Nation* (London: Routledge, 1998).

[57] Helen Smailes and Duncan Thomson, *The Queen's Image: A Celebration of Mary, Queen of Scots* (Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1987), 75; Roy Strong, *And when did you last see your father?: The Victorian Painter and British History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 131; Morrison (2003), 115;

[58] For her appeal outside Britain, see Coleman (2014), 165.

'pictorial cult' of Mary Queen of Scots in Britain.[59] Though Smailes and Thomson ignore the parliamentary examples in their study of this imagery, the influence of the earlier works they discuss is clearly evident in the FAC's selection of subjects, as well as Theed's interpretation of them.[60]

Like Catherine Douglas, Mary Queen of Scots had first been suggested as a subject for Parliament by Mahon in 1844, though she was curiously absent from the Westminster Hall exhibitions.[61] Yet there is something puzzling about the hold she took on the British imagination, as evidenced in her prominence in the FAC's Prince's Chamber scheme. As Jayne Lewis notes, on the face of it Mary's traits do not make her an obvious choice for British celebration.[62] She was devoutly Roman Catholic, half-French, and even briefly Queen of France as a result of her marriage to Francis II. She had a strong claim to the English throne through her paternal grandmother Margaret Tudor, which was a constant source of disquiet among English Protestants, notably Elizabeth I. As a result, from her birth until her death Mary inspired little but opposition among English, and most Scottish, Protestants. Yet it would be precisely this group – whose views and tastes would come to dominate modern British history, politics and culture – that would elevate Mary to the exalted position she enjoyed by the nineteenth century.[63] So why was this the case?

Unlike most popular historical figures, Mary's appeal did not stem from approval of what she believed in or attempted to achieve. She did not arouse loyalty or even admiration, and in that sense was not a heroic figure in the mould of individuals like Catherine Douglas. Instead, she inspired pity and sympathy, with her life seen as almost uniquely replete with drama and tragedy.[64] The romantic nature of her dramatic existence partly accounts for

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[59] Smailes and Thompson (1987), 57. See also Strong (1978), 128-35 and Morrison (2003), 111-19. With their focus on paintings, these works also ignore Theed's bas-reliefs.

[60] A particularly good example is the influence of Sir William Allan's *Murder of Rizzio* (1833) on Theed's treatment of the same subject.

[61] Appendix 10, *Third Report,* 27.

[62] Lewis (1998), 1.

[63] Lewis (1998), 1.

[64] Strong (1978), 130; Lewis, (1998), 2; Coleman (2014), 169.

her appeal. But what enabled her popularity was the fact that her life, and the anachronistic cause she represented, was ultimately doomed to failure.[65]

The result in Scotland, as James Coleman argues, was that, in contrast to other figures of similar standing such as William Wallace, Mary was not looked upon to inform the needs of Scottish identity in the nineteenth century.[66] In line with unionist-nationalist thought, William Wallace, Robert the Bruce, John Knox and others were conceived as having forged and maintained Scottish national, civil and religious liberties. They were heroes to follow, while Mary was seen as an 'unfortunate' figure whose legacy was a moral warning. Though she was not conceived of as a proto-unionist like the others, her actions were nevertheless seen as having led to eventual union, though in her case through their failure rather than success. She thus represented something that had to be lost rather than gained as part of the narrative of providential unionism.[67]

Similarly, in England, as Jayne Lewis argues, from the moment of her death, Mary Queen of Scots was understood as a sacrifice to the imagined coherence of the English nation-state that had developed under Elizabeth I.[68] Her death removed the strongest Catholic claim to the English throne and enabled Elizabeth to name Mary's Protestant son James VI as her successor, thereby laying the foundations for the creation of Great Britain and eventually the United Kingdom. What would become the Anglo-British dominion of these islands thus began with Mary's death, and the tragic events of her life became a necessary part of what Lewis terms the nascent 'fiction of Britain' that would lead to the collective identity that became Britishness.[69] Combined with the unionist-nationalist view, and seen through the lens of Romanticism, by the second quarter of the nineteenth century Mary Queen of Scots was thus able to occupy the position ascribed to her by Roy Strong as *the* heroine from the British past.[70]

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[65] Strong (1978), 129.

[66] Coleman (2014), 166

[67] Coleman (2014), 172.

[68] Lewis (1998), 10.

[69] Lewis, (1998), 2.

[70] Strong (1978), 131.

Robert the Bruce's heroism and humanity

One of the central Scottish figures whose life was conceived of as having a positive contemporary legacy in the nineteenth century was King Robert Bruce. Previous chapters have shown how, in the nineteenth century, the Scottish king was seen as a proto-unionist figure.[71] As a result of unionist-nationalism, Bruce featured in a number of works in the Westminster Hall exhibitions, was unanimously chosen by Mahon's statuary subcommittee in 1845, and was partially included in a scene proposed by Mahon's painting subcommittee in 1846. In 1847, Bruce was selected as the central figure in a subject for the Royal Gallery. The specific scene was titled 'Bruce, during a retreat before the English, protecting a woman borne on a litter, and checking the pursuers'. [72] It formed one of eighteen subjects chosen to 'illustrate the military history and glory of the country', and was one of sixteen of these never to be completed.[73]

The subject was another taken from Walter Scott. In both *Tales of a Grandfather* and his poem *The Lord of Isles* (1815), Scott recounts this incident in the life of Robert the Bruce. The story relates that, while Bruce's army was retreating from the English in Ireland, an accompanying laundress, who had just given birth, was unable to continue. Bruce decided to stay and fight rather than leave the woman and new-born infant behind.[74] In addition to the direct literary source, an immediate artistic precedent for the subject was William Allan's version of the same event, *Heroism and Humanity: An Incident in the Life of Robert the Bruce* (Fig. 57). Exhibited at the RSA in 1840, a long extract from *Tales of a Grandfather* accompanied it.[75]

As with the other non-English subjects in the 1847 programme, the Bruce scene had developed during the discussions of 1846-47. Intriguingly, a surviving draft of the final scheme drawn up by the subcommittee chaired by

[71] See pp. 92-95, 111 & 114 above.

[72] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 13.

[73] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 13.

[74] Scott (1828), 1: 187-89.

[75] Morrison (2003), 120.

Albert includes in its place another Scottish subject, 'Wallace on the Bridge of Stirling'.[76] This was to be in the exact position subsequently given to Bruce, indicating that the compartment had been put aside for a Scottish event and lending further support to the argument that the FAC was making a conscious attempt at inclusivity by this point. But what was the reason for choosing Bruce over Wallace?

One explanation is that the FAC appears to have been attempting to group the subjects in the Royal Gallery according to general themes. The Scottish panel was planned to go alongside a scene titled 'Philippa interceding for the lives of the citizens of Calais'.[77] When paired with the Bruce subject, the two works relate to the theme of royal protection and mercy during times of war. A further reason might be varied perceptions of Wallace and Bruce themselves. Though on the whole they were seen in very similar terms, there were some minor differences.[78] Scott, for example, found Wallace something of a problematic figure, while in England there was arguably more latent animosity towards him than Bruce.[79]

A further compelling explanation, however, concerns the wider messages of the two scenes. One of the principal strengths of the Bruce subject is that it allowed a crucial Scottish hero of the Wars of Independence to be included, while playing down the wider context of conflict between Scotland and England. Despite the narrative of providential unionism enabling the successes of Wallace and Bruce to be cast as necessary for eventual union, including a depiction of Scotland defeating England in the UK Houses of Parliament, as in the Wallace scene, may have been a step too far. As will be shown later in this chapter, elsewhere in the building the FAC strived to avoid representing direct conflict between the UK nations.[80] This allowed the wider context to feature covertly, while a different aspect of the subject provides the overt message. In this case, Bruce exemplifies the traits

[76] RAW VIC/MAIN/F/30/46.

[77] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 13.

[78] Coleman (2014), 55-6.

[79] Pittock (1999), 97.

[80] See pp. 160-67 below.

summed up in Allen's title, and the heroism and humanity of this proto-unionist figure are presented by the FAC as shared British virtues.

Brian Boru as British patriot hero

One argument identified by Coleman as forming part of the narrative of providential unionism compared Scotland's place in the Union with that of Ireland.[81] Had Ireland had a Wallace or a Bruce, the reasoning went, then it would not have been conquered, and its ancient culture and nationality not eroded through centuries of subjugation. This would have allowed it to join the Union as a proud nation on equal terms with England and Scotland, thus preventing the continued disquiet in Ireland that posed a threat to the unity of the nation and Empire.[82] Whatever the flaws of this argument, it was certainly true that Ireland had no historical figure who could command the status of Bruce and Wallace, in terms of having ensured independence from the English. But, there were historical Irish figures who held not dissimilar positions as heroes who had liberated the country from foreign occupation. Principal among these was the eleventh-century Irish High King, Brian Boru.

Along with Bruce, in 1847 the FAC gave Boru a compartment in the Royal Gallery. Titled 'Brian Boroimhe overcoming the Danes at the Bridge of Clontarff' [*sic*], the subject focused on the Battle of Clontarf, which took place in 1014.[83] The popular account records that an Irish army led by Boru defeated an ostensibly Viking force, resulting in Ireland being freed from Norse occupation. This event, which conforms with Hallam's earlier stipulation of a 'conspicuous event in early Irish history', was almost certainly suggested by Wyse as it first appears on a draft of the 1847 schemes drawn up by him, Eastlake and Prince Albert.[84] The undoubted aim was to include an Irish subject that represented Ireland's contribution 'to the military history and glory' of the United Kingdom. Central to achieving this would have been

[81] Coleman (2014), 78-79

[82] Coleman (2014), 78-79

[83] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 13.

[84] RAW VIC/MAIN/F/30/46. This manuscript is inscribed: 'First Report. Agreed upon & drawn up by the Prince, Mr Wyse & Mr Eastlake'.

two other subjects illustrating the theme of resistance to foreign rule with which the painting would have been displayed: 'Boadicea inciting her army' and 'Alfred in the camp of the Danes'.[85] Both Boadicea and Alfred were established figures in the British pantheon, and by adding Boru a triumvirate of patriot heroes who had staunchly defended these islands against external evils would have been created.[86] However, unlike Alfred and Boadicea, Boru was a problematic figure. Not only was he unfamiliar as a British hero, but when he was invoked it was usually in support of Irish nationalism, an ideology with aims completely at odds with the unionism of the FAC.

The Battle of Clontarf itself has long been seen as a defining moment in Irish history, and Boru a central Irish hero for his defeat of a foreign invader. As Clare O'Halloran has charted, during the eighteenth century a number of histories of Ireland were published in which Boru and Clontarf were afforded important positions.[87] Boru was largely represented as the archetype of the heroic king, with his traits as a ruler, and his defeat of the Vikings, often provoking comparisons with Alfred. [88]

Some eighteenth-century Irish historians used narratives of the Viking rule in Ireland as a means of critiquing contemporary events, particularly the treatment of Catholics under various penal laws that were introduced from the Glorious Revolution onwards.[89] O'Halloran argues convincingly that Boru came to hold the position of what she terms 'an avatar of liberty' during this period, as a native Irish hero who reclaimed native rights from foreign invaders.[90] By the 1840s, Irish nationalists had taken on Boru as an avatar of liberty envisaged in terms of political independence.[91] In the nationalist

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[85] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 13.

[86] For Boadicea as a British hero, see Smiles (1994), 137 & 148-164. For Alfred, see Joanne Parker, *'England's Darling': The Victorian Cult of Alfred the Great* (Manchester University Press, 2007).

[87] Clare O'Halloran, 'The Triumph of "Virtuous Liberty": Representations of the Vikings and Brian Boru in Eighteenth-Century Histories', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 22 (2007), 151-163.

[88] O'Halloran (2007), 159.

[89] O'Halloran (2007), 162-63.

[90] O'Halloran (2007), 163.

[91] Though O'Halloran identifies this as taking place by the late nineteenth century, it certainly seems to have been well established during the 1840s.

narrative, the Vikings came to stand for the English, while Boru was placed at the head of a succession of Irish heroes who sought, and fought for, national independence. Likewise, Clontarf took on a powerful position in the Irish nationalist imagination. Even the modern-day location of the battle came to be associated with opposition to British rule, and would have been the location of O'Connell's largest 'monster meeting' in 1843 had the protest not been banned by the government.[92]

Images of Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf formed a particularly important part of nationalist iconography in the 1840s.[93] Among a number of important images was a series of lithographs produced under the direction of Young Ireland. Titled *The Pictorial History of Ireland*, the series began in 1843, with its subjects including *Memoir of Brian Boru, Monarch of Ireland* and *The Battle of Clontarf, April 23rd, 1014* (Fig. 58). Each image in the series was lithographed by William Henry Holbrooke (fl. 1821-1848) after drawings by Henry MacManus, who also entered the FAC's Westminster Hall exhibitions at this time.[94]

Given the deployment by Irish nationalists of Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf as a way of inspiring opposition to British rule in Ireland during the 1840s, why did the FAC choose the subject as part of its constituted history of the United Kingdom? The simple answer is that, like many historical figures and events, Boru and Clontarf were open to multiple interpretations that could serve different, even antithetical, political purposes. As well as encouraging a nationalist interpretation, the eighteenth century histories had established Boru as central hero in popular, romantic accounts of Ireland.[95] Accounts and images of Boru and Clontarf were produced in both Britain and Ireland during the first half of the nineteenth century with no intended, or

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[92] Leslie Williams, *Daniel O'Connell, the British Press, and the Irish Famine: Killing Remarks* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2003), 62.

[93] For example, Boru featured on the membership card of the Repeal Association along with nine other nationalist heroes including Grattan. See Sheehy (1980), 28.

[94] Charles Gavan Duffy, *Thomas Davis: The Memoirs of an Irish Patriot, 1840-46* (London: Kegan Paul, 1890), 195. On MacManus's entries to the FAC's exhibitions, see pp. 86 & 92 above.

[95] O'Halloran (2007), 151.

inferred, messages regarding the present state of the United Kingdom.[96] Of particular relevance is Thomas Moore's poem 'Remember the Glories of Brien the Brave' (1808), which Maclise, who would later be given the Royal Gallery commission, illustrated in 1846 (Fig. 59).[97] This mutability of meaning meant that, in the context of the Houses of Parliament, what otherwise might be understood as a pro-Repeal subject could be presented in support of the Union.

Nevertheless, it remains the case that, prior to the FAC choosing the subject for the Royal Gallery, Brian Boru had never been presented as a British, rather than solely Irish, patriot hero. It is notable, for example, that the FAC did not include him among the list of distinguished figures to whom statues might be erected in 1845. As Sam Smiles has argued, however, the fate of national heroes is often to add 'a spurious credibility or historical lustre to any expedient invocation of patriotism'.[98] In this instance, spurred on by the controversies in Ireland examined in the previous chapter, the FAC appropriated Boru to add credibility to their visualisation of the UK as a union of four nations and invoke Irish patriotism in support of Ireland's continued place within it. Presented alongside Alfred and Boadicea, Boru was perfectly reconcilable with Britishness. As conceived by the FAC, his victory at Clontarf was part of a greater British history, an event, like the others that were planned to surround it, both necessary for the present existence of the Union and which highlighted shared traits that later contributed to the success of the British state.

Defending the Union at the Battle of Waterloo

As envisioned by the FAC, Boru's victory at Clontarf formed an exemplar of the UK's opposition to foreign powers. The logic of this message reached its conclusion in the more recent scenes chosen to 'illustrate the military history

[96] Examples include John Rogers after Henry Warren, 'Death of Brian Boru', in Thomas Wright, *The History of Ireland,* vol. 1 (London: John Tallis, 1849), 5 and C.F. Sargent, 'Brian Boru, at the Battle of Clontarf'*, Pictorial Times,* 14 June 1845, 338.

[97] Thomas Moore, *Moore's Irish Melodies: The Illustrated 1846 Edition* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1846), 8.

[98] Smiles (1994), 139

and glory of the country', which were truly British in the sense that they related to events that occurred after the 1707 or 1800 Acts of Union. The two most up-to-date events focused on the Battle of Trafalgar (1805) and the Battle of Waterloo (1815). Having taken place during the Napoleonic Wars, they represented the most recent major conflict in which Britain had fought. The importance of these two scenes to the FAC is indicated by their being given the largest and most prominent compartments in the Royal Gallery.[99] Their primary significance to this study comes from the fact that they became the only two of the eighteen planned paintings ultimately completed, thereby bringing into play another agent, the artist (Fig. 60).

The specific Napoleonic War subjects set out by the FAC in 1847 were 'Trafalgar; the Death of Nelson' and 'Waterloo; the meeting of Wellington and Blucher [sic]'.[100] They headed five subjects of the eighteen chosen for the Royal Gallery that related to the military history of the post-1707 British state.[101] Allotted two vast compartments measuring 14 x 3.5 metres that faced each other across the room, Trafalgar and Waterloo are the largest works in the FAC's entire decorative programme. The two battles' positions as central subjects in the Commission's visualisation of British history seems to have been something of a given from early in their deliberations.[102] But it was Prince Albert's memorandum that sealed their positions. Though the specific subjects would be chosen later, Albert placed Trafalgar and Waterloo in the central compartments they would ultimately occupy in the Royal Gallery, explaining that they represented 'the most memorable of the naval and military achievements of the last war; the one terminating the struggle at sea, the other laying the foundations of that peace which Europe has ever since enjoyed.'[103]

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[99] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 13.

[100] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 13.

[101] The others were 'The Death of Wolfe', 'The Death of Abercrombie' and 'Lord Cornwallis receiving the Sons of Tippoo as hostages'. See Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 13.

[102] For example, see Appendix 8, *Third Report,* 22.

[103] Albert, 'Memorandum (Private)', CKS U1590/O170. There is no evidence that Albert and the FAC were aware of Soane's earlier plan to include similar scenes in his Royal Gallery (see pp. 17-18 above).

Albert's explanation sums up the significance accorded to both battles and reflects the hold that the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars had on the nineteenth century British imagination. As Colley has argued, the wars with France were a central aspect of the development of British national identity during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[104] Memorialising those wars, in particular the Battle of Waterloo, became a central part of the project of maintaining Britishness in the peacetime that they ushered in. From Wilkie's *The Chelsea Pensioners reading the Waterloo Dispatch* (1822) to Allan's entry to the 1847 FAC exhibition, Waterloo was a recurrent subject in painting that reignited some of the feelings that had forged Britishness and thus acted to perpetuate it.[105]

Despite their significance to the FAC, the fact that the Trafalgar and Waterloo subjects were ultimately the only paintings completed in the Royal Gallery had more to do with chance than design. As touched on in Chapter 1, the architectural decoration of the space itself was still being completed well into the 1850s.[106] Though it was first used by Victoria during the State Opening of Parliament in 1852, it was not until 1857 that the FAC turned its attention to the fresco scheme. Even then, this was only prompted by Maclise's proposal to undertake the work. Since completing his frescoes in the House of Lords Chamber, Maclise had been linked with the planned schemes for both the Painted Chamber and Stephen's Hall, but nothing had come of either.[107] Rejecting the commissioners' offer of St Stephen's Hall in a letter to Eastlake in July 1857, Maclise instead suggested that he was willing to devote himself to the frescoes required for the Royal Gallery as the 'subjects embraced in this particular series are those which I might hope to execute more worthily than any other still unappropriated'.[108] In keeping with Maclise's central role in the forging of the British historical imagination in this

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[104] Colley (1992).

[105] Colley (1992), 364-67; Dunne (2008), 50.

[106] See p. 43 above.

[107] Maclise to Eastlake, 8 May 1854, 'Fine Arts Commission 1851-1863, Vol. 3', RAW VIC/MAIN/F/31/18.

[108] Quoted in W. Justin O'Driscoll, *A Memoir of Daniel Maclise, RA* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1871), 134-35.

period, as identified by Tom Dunne, the subject that captured his attention most was Waterloo.[109]

On confirming the Royal Gallery commission in February 1858, the FAC asked that Maclise begin with one of the smaller compartments.[110] However, he was adamant that *Waterloo* and *Trafalgar* should be undertaken first.[111] He had, in fact, already begun the cartoon for *Waterloo* and so the FAC decided that he should be allowed to complete the drawing before embarking on one of the other subjects in fresco.[112] However, this never came to pass. Once the finished *Waterloo* cartoon was hung in the compartment intended for the painting in the Royal Gallery, it was deemed to be such a success that Maclise was immediately commissioned to begin painting it in fresco.[113] After experiencing trouble reproducing his detailed drawing in the exacting fresco technique, Maclise moved to the more flexible German waterglass method and completed *The Meeting of Wellington and Blücher after the Battle of Waterloo* in 1861 (Fig. 61).[114]

The death of Prince Albert shortly afterwards marked the beginning of the end for the FAC. The following year, Maclise was commissioned to paint *The Death of Nelson,* but in 1863 the Commission disbanded.[115] A royal commission established to finalise the works already in progress confirmed Maclise's commission to complete *Trafalgar* but mothballed the remaining sixteen subjects in the programme.[116] *Trafalgar* was completed in 1865, but the other subjects were never undertaken.[117]

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[109] Dunne (2008), 50.

[110] Eastlake to Maclise, 24 February 1858, NAL MSL/1913/2765.

[111] Eastlake to Benjamin Hawes, 24 February 1858, NAL MSL/1913/2765.

[112] Eastlake to Hawes, 24 February 1858, NAL MSL/1913/2765.

[113] Nancy Weston, *Daniel Maclise: Irish Artist in Victorian London* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 226-35. For a detailed study of the cartoon, see Annette Wickham and Mark Murray-Flutter, *Maclise: The Waterloo Cartoon* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2015).

[114] Weston (2001), 236-8.

[115] Weston (2001), 242.

[116] *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Consider the Agreements made by the Fine Arts Commission with Artists in Respect to Wall-Paintings for the Palace of Westminster,* HC 3410 (1864), 2.

[117] For *Trafalgar,* see Weston (2001), 242-9.

Maclise's background partly explains his eagerness to take on the Waterloo painting. Of Scottish Presbyterian decent, both his father and grandfather had served in the British army, a fact that Maclise was particularly proud of.[118] After leaving the army, Maclise's father became a shoemaker in Cork working on army contracts, with the result that the young Maclise grew up around soldiers, many of whom gave him his first commissions as a portrait-sketch artist.[119] Maclise's brother William had also served as a soldier-surgeon, until his death shortly after the Crimean War.[120] As Dunne notes, this background meant that Maclise revered the British army all of his life.[121] The artist, therefore, seems to have been particularly drawn to memorialising its greatest victory in the Houses of Parliament. Maclise's background and the particular dual Irish-British identity that it gave him impacted in crucial ways on his finished painting, turning an established event of great British significance into a celebration of the Union and the contribution that each kingdom made towards its continuing success. As an Irish Protestant with Scottish ancestry making a successful career in London, Maclise was a true product of the Union. Though various claims have been made for his sympathies with Irish nationalism, his approach to depicting the Battle of Waterloo clearly illustrates his strong support for the idea of the United Kingdom.[122] In fact, the potential that the subject afforded to create a strong message of British unity may well have been one of the principal factors that drove his desire to tackle it first.

Unsurprisingly, Maclise made a particular effort to include soldiers from Ireland in his depiction of the British army. Among the Irish soldiers identified by contemporaries are two Connaught Rangers cheering and waving their caps (Fig. 62).[123] For some, these soldiers served to remind viewers that Wellington himself was also Irish.[124] Poet and critic William

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[118] Murray (2008), 14; Dunne (2008), 39-40.

[119] Dunne (2008), 39-40.

[120] Dunne (2008), 40.

[121] Dunne (2008), 40.

[122] For a detailed discussion of this issue, see pp. 164-67 below.

[123] Weston (2001), 231.

[124] Quoted in Weston (2001), 233.

Michael Rossetti noted this, while at the same time highlighting the connection to Maclise's own nationality:

> they are cheering the Duke with the frantic pride of victory and nationality combined. Nothing in the picture is finer than the head of the foremost of these shattered, pain-contemplating, triumphant Irishmen; one sympathizes with the zest of Mr Maclise in giving them their heroic prominence.[125]

Another heroic Irish figure illustrates the complex loyalties and identities that many such as Maclise held under the Union. In the foreground near the Connaught Rangers lies an injured piper from a Scottish regiment. Wearing a kilt, carrying bagpipes and with his broad sword beside him, at first glance he appears to be Scottish. However, a tattoo on his arm reveals his true identity and thus Maclise's message, which reflects the artist's complex background (Fig. 63). Placed below a musket ball wound, the tattoo consists of a laurelled crown, a shamrock, George III's royal cipher and a pair of crossed Union flags.[126] It thus identifies the piper as an Irish soldier fighting in a Scottish regiment, loyal to both Ireland and the UK. More than any other element of the painting, the tattoo perfectly captures in one symbolic image the concentric loyalties to nation, state and monarchy that many like Maclise embodied.

Through these figures, Maclise was evidently keen to highlight the Irish contribution to the allied victory at Waterloo, and by extension his fellow countrymen's positive impact on the ongoing success of the Union. However, the unionist approach that Maclise took to the painting also extended to highlighting the role of English and Scottish soldiers alongside their Irish comrades.[127] One specific group neatly express Maclise's vision of an inclusive Britishness and must have been particularly pleasing to the FAC.

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[125] Quoted in Weston (2001), 231.

[126] Weston (2001: 231-33) first identified this important feature of the painting.

[127] This mirrors Wilkie's earlier inclusion of soldiers from the different nations in *The Chelsea Pensioners* as part of what Cullen (1997: 11) identifies as 'the military representation of union'. See also Morrison (2003), 134-5 and Colley (1992), 364-67.

The most nationally symbolic part of the entire composition, it focuses on three soldiers carrying the body of Major Frederick Howard (Fig. 64).[128] In 1862, Rossetti identified the three as 'soldiers of the three nations – one of the 42 Highlanders, an English Foot Guard, and an Irish Fusilier.'[129] Maclise's clear message is one of national unity. With the three kingdoms – though notably not Wales – pulling together in common cause, this group is nothing less than a paradigm of the Union itself.[130]

As a subject, Waterloo held an inherent unionist message, which was no doubt one of the reasons that it was chosen by the FAC. But Maclise's approach, which the Commissioners did not impose on him, was the unique product of his background and sense of national identity. Maclise's natural response to the subject matter was to indicate the complex and concentric identities prevalent under the Union, and represent its constituent parts rallying together. The result is that Maclise's *Waterloo* forms the most significant individual contribution to the art of union produced under the FAC. More than any other single painting or sculpture in the building, it successfully embodies the view of Britain and Britishness that the Commissioners sought to represent.

Conquest, acquisition and union

The Royal Gallery subjects highlighted shared characteristics of the nations of these islands that led to individual and later combined military glory. At all times, the message was one of commonalities and cooperation rather than differences and division. Furthermore, while the Bruce subject took place in the context of inter-UK conflict, it focused not on battle but another element of the narrative altogether. A not dissimilar approach was taken in what, at the time, was called the Painted Chamber or 'Hall of Conference between the

[128] This was 'young, gallant Howard' from Canto IV of Lord Byron's *Child Harold's Pilgrimage* (1818) and uncle of Fine Arts Commissioner, the 7th Earl of Carlisle.

[129] Weston (2001), 234-5.

[130] Dunne (2008), 49.

two Houses' (Fig. 65).[131] Here, a number of subjects were chosen that highlighted historical conflicts between the UK nations. Yet, at the same time, these conflicts were played down by the specific choice of events. Instead of focusing on division, these subjects emphasised union.

The Painted Chamber subjects were selected to reference 'the acquisition of the countries, colonies, and important places constituting the British Empire'.[132] Of the thirteen subjects, the three destined for the largest and most prominent compartments are the most significant in terms of the Union: 'The Marriage of Strongbow and Eva, daughter of Dermot, King of Leinster', 'Edward I presenting his infant Son to the Welsh as their Prince' and 'James VI of Scotland receiving the news of the Death of Queen Elizabeth; or, Setting out for England as James I'.[133] These subjects set out key events in the creation of the British state. The first two relate to the expansion of English rule into Ireland and Wales respectively as a result of the medieval wars of conquest, while the others refer to the Union of the Crowns in 1604. With no specific scenes illustrating the unions of 1707 or 1801 featuring in the FAC's plans, these three proto-union subjects served to symbolise the later events. Presented in an imperial context, they were conceived of as the genesis of eventual political union and the beginning of what would become the British Empire.

The use of the Union of the Crowns to symbolise Scotland and England's eventual political union requires little in the way of elucidation. The principal step prior to legislative union a century later, which would have happened far earlier had James VI/I been successful in achieving his aims, it is an obvious choice as an illustration of one origin of the modern, unified British state. The fact that an earlier subject was not chosen is indicative of William Wallace's and Robert Bruce's success in forging Scottish independence. If, as the narrative of providential unionism held, their struggles kept Scotland free so that it could later join with England in a union of equals, then the taking of the English throne by a Scottish king five

[131] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 14. Sitting between the Commons and Lords on the River Front, today this space is known as Members' Dining Room.

[132] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 14.

[133] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 14-15.

centuries later without a drop of blood being shed was a significant stage in the proof of that theory.

However, unlike with Scotland, the FAC did choose to commemorate the origins of Wales's and Ireland's incorporation into the United Kingdom in the medieval wars of conquest. As Tom Dunne has pointed out, this fact is 'a remarkable example of the ambivalence that often characterized the new Union'.[134] Chapter 2 explored how this ambivalence led to the subject of Edward I presenting the Prince of Wales to the Welsh chiefs becoming an accepted British subject during the 1840s, particularly through the FAC exhibitions.[135] No doubt inspired by this, the subject was first suggested as a possible scene for the building by Mahon's subcommittee and later assigned to the Painted Chamber.[136] As described in Chapter 2, the subject's acceptability came from the fact that it did not directly seek to illustrate or celebrate Welsh subjugation, despite this being precisely the event that it commemorated. Instead, it focused on a positive event, the birth of a child, which, shorn of its original, patronising message regarding Edward I tricking the Welsh chiefs, was given new meaning through the recent birth of Prince Albert's own son.

Similar reasoning explains the inclusion of 'The Marriage of Strongbow and Eva, daughter of Dermot, King of Leinster', though in this case union is symbolised by marriage rather than birth. The event took place in 1171 when Richard de Clare, 2nd Earl of Pembroke (known as Strongbow) assisted the deposed King of Leinster to retake his crown on the agreement that the Anglo-Norman Earl would marry the Irish king's daughter Eva, and so eventually succeed to the throne.[137] This marked the beginning of the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland and led to the English subjugation of the country over the subsequent centuries. For many in Ireland, such as Thomas Davis, Strongbow was a despised figure who occupied a position as almost

[134] Dunne (2008), 68.

[135] See pp. 101-4 above.

[136] RAW VIC/MAIN/F/30/41.

[137] Weston (2001), 210.

the polar opposite of Brian Boru.[138] It was this that had caused Macaulay to fear unnecessarily that Wyse might be insulted by the choice of Strongbow as a figure in the stained glass in the Lords Chamber in 1845.[139] In fact, it may well have been Wyse who first suggested the subject of 'The Marriage of Strongbow and Eva', just as he likely did with that 'other early event in Irish history', the Battle of Clontarf.

Like the Edward I subject, 'The Marriage of Strongbow and Eva' appeared in the list drawn up by Mahon's committee in 1846.[140] Unlike the Welsh scene, however, it had not featured in the FAC exhibitions. Neither did it have a history of being depicted by artists, either in Great Britain or Ireland. The story originated in a contemporaneous account of the Anglo-Norman invasion by Geraldus Cambrensis, and had subsequently featured in a number of histories of Ireland.[141] The choice of the subject by the FAC was probably based on knowledge of one or more of these texts. Keen to avoid focusing directly on the invasion itself, they sought a subject that took place in the context of Anglo-Norman conquest yet also worked, like 'Edward I presenting his son', on a symbolic level. By focusing on the positive event of the marriage of Strongbow and Eva, rather than the wider context of the Anglo-Norman defeat of the Irish, the matrimonial union of an Irish princess and an English earl became symbolic of the later political union of Ireland and England.

The ambivalence exhibited in choosing to emphasise that Wales and Ireland's place in the UK originated in their conquest by England is further highlighted by the artistic interpretations of the subjects that could have adorned the walls of the Painted Chamber. Apparently inspired by the FAC's 1847 report, Maclise independently worked on designs for the two subjects.

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[138] Davis contrasted the men as 'a hero who freed [and] an invader who subdued'. Quoted in D.J. O'Donoghue ed., *Essays of Thomas Davis* (New York: Lemma Publishing Corporation, 1974), 197.

[139] See p. 128 above.

[140] RAW VIC/MAIN/F/30/41.

[141] One of the most influential was Desmond O'Connor's English translation of Geoffrey Keating's c.1634 *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* ('Foundation of Knowledge on Ireland'), first published in 1723 and frequently reprinted, for example by James Duffy in Dublin in 1841.

The first, *Edward I presenting his infant son (the first Prince of Wales) to the Welsh people* (c.1848-52), did not make it past the initial drawing stage and was never seen by the FAC.[142] However the second, a huge canvas titled *The Marriage of Strongbow and Eva* (1854, Fig. 66), did receive the Commissioners approbation, so much so in fact that they attempted, unsuccessfully, to persuade Maclise to reproduce it in fresco in the Painted Chamber.[143]

While the specific subject chosen by the FAC may have placed no emphasis on the context of violent conquest, Maclise's interpretation of the marriage scene is redolent with death, destruction and suffering. The marriage takes place in the ruins of the still-smouldering city of Waterford, with dead Irish warriors and a woman grief-stricken over her dead child lying in the left foreground. Dunne has argued that Maclise's immediate inspiration was probably the third volume of Thomas Moore's *History of Ireland* (1840), which includes the sentence: 'The still reeking horrors, therefore of the sacked and ruined city were made to give place to a scene of nuptial festivity.'[144] Maclise's emphasis on the brutality of the Irish defeat, and the inclusion of details such as Strongbow trampling on a fallen cross, has led many to interpret the painting as an attempt to invoke sympathy with the twelfth-century fallen Irish as part of a critique of nineteenth-century British rule in Ireland. According to this argument, put forward by art historians led by Nancy Weston and Sighle Breathnach-Lynch, the painting is essentially a nationalist image created by an artist with nationalist leanings.[145]

Far more persuasive, however, is the conclusion arrived at by scholars such as Barrett, Cullen, Murray and Dunne, who position the painting as a unionist image produced by a painter who, as illustrated in *The*

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[142] Dunne (2008), 68. The sketch is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (V&A).

[143] Dunne (2008), 70.

[144] Dunne (2008), 72.

[145] Weston (2001), 214-15; Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch, 'Imagining the Past: "The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife"', *Irish Review* 29 (2002), 95-105. As indicated by the latter reference, even the spelling of Eva in the work's title has become politicised as part of the disagreement over the painting's meaning, with those who claim it as a nationalist work altering Maclise's given title to the Irish form.

Meeting of Wellington and Blücher, was unionist to his core.[146] Making the case for this interpretation, Murray argues convincingly that Maclise's invocation of sympathy for the defeated Irish should be seen as relating to a more general Romantic view that the Norman age in Western Europe resulted in the suppression of ancient cultures.[147] In addition, Maclise probably included death and destruction to add drama and spectacle to the composition, common elements in much of his work.[148] Further evidence in support of the unionist reading of the work includes Maclise's depiction of the Anglo-Normans. Instead of being depicted as the rapacious villains, Strongbow and his men are shown as dignified victors who, with their armour, dress and accoutrements, appear advanced in comparison with the 'primitive' Irish.[149] As Dunne argues, the painting neither heroicises victory or sentimentalises defeat, but celebrates the view of Britishness outlined by Matthew Arnold a decade later as the 'commingling … [of] the steady-going Saxon temperament, and the sentimental Celtic temperament', facilitated by 'the Norman genius, talent for affairs'.[150] Maclise thus simultaneously valorises the lost glories of the Celtic past and the progressiveness of the Anglo-Normans in a symbolic scene of Anglo-Irish union.

Alongside the visual evidence in *The Marriage of Strongbow and Eva*, even a cursory examination of Maclise's biography and *oeuvre* proves he had little sympathy with those who sought to repeal a political union from which he had benefitted so much.[151] Though not particularly active politically, Maclise was an ambitious, Romantic Tory who through his art played a central role in defining British national identity during the middle decades of the nineteenth century.[152] Maclise's enthusiastic participation in the decoration of the UK Houses of Parliament provides further evidence of his support for the Union. When he exhibited *The Marriage of Strongbow and*

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[146] Barrett (1989), 408; Cullen (1997), 47; Murray (2008), 15; Dunne (2008), 70-75.

[147] Murray (2008), 15.

[148] Dunne (2008), 70.

[149] Dunne (2008), 73-4.

[150] Dunne (2008), 74.

[151] Murray (2008), 10-37; Dunne (2008), 39-51

[152] Dunne (2008), 68.

Eva at the RA in 1854, he even mirrored the FAC's reason for choosing the scene by quoting the English historian John Steed, who wrote that Strongbow not only celebrated his wedding 'but the indissoluble knot of the Irish allegiance to the English sovereignty, with the same ring which circled his wife's finger affiancing that island to this our country'.[153] Maclise's decision to emphasise the brutality of war and the tragedy of the defeated certainly reflects the artist's complex historical imagination.[154] Yet, whatever the complexity of his interpretation, Maclise's overall message is clearly one of national unity.

The FAC's endorsement of Maclise's treatment of the *The Marriage of Strongbow and Eva* shows that its unionist message was quite clear to contemporary viewers. When it was exhibited at the RA, the Commissioners highly admired the 'conception and general execution of the picture' and asked Maclise to reproduce it in fresco in the Painted Chamber for £1,500, with the possibility that the commission for the whole room would follow.[155] Having produced a large watercolour of the subject as well as the vast oil, Maclise was reluctant to tackle the scene a third time. Instead, he suggested that the FAC should buy the oil painting, which he had created to be almost precisely the same size as the compartment set aside for the subject.[156] While the FAC hesitated over what to do, Maclise sold the painting to Lord Northwick for the large sum of £4,000.[157] When Northwick refused to lend it back in 1856, the notion of it being reproduced in the Painted Chamber was finally abandoned.[158] As this makes clear, the reason for *The Marriage of Strongbow and Eva* never appearing in the Palace of Westminster had nothing to do with Maclise's treatment of the subject, which was evidently perfectly in tune with the FAC's motivation for choosing it. Though he had chosen to emphasise the context of conquest, he did so in a way that did not

[153] Dunne (2008), 48.

[154] Dunne (2008), 68.

[155] Eastlake to Maclise, 6 May 1854, NAL MSL/1913/2765.

[156] Maclise to Eastlake, 8 May 1854, RAW VIC/MAIN/F/31/18.

[157] Dunne (2008), 70.

[158] Eastlake to Maclise, 15 May 1856, NAL MSL/1913/2765.

challenge the central message of symbolic union. In fact, through his even-handed depiction of both sides, if anything this message was strengthened.

An acceptable vision of Britishness?

Unlike the publication of the FAC's *Fourth Report* in 1845, its *Seventh Report* did not result in controversy. Not only was this true in Scotland and Wales - where continued support for the status quo of the Union meant that any complaint, regardless of the report's content, remained unlikely - but in Ireland too. Likewise, the subsequent appearance of the completed works drew no adverse comments on grounds relating to the representation of the Union or issues of national identity. But should this be interpreted as indicating that the FAC had successfully learned from the events of 1845 and created a vision of Britishness that everyone could subscribe to?

In part the answer appears to be yes, at least in regards to Anglo-Irish unionists. Despite the fact that in 1847 Samuel Ferugson was still moving further towards supporting repeal, he made no complaint about the level of Irish representation in the FAC's plan. Surmising the de Londres controversy in later life, he concluded that it highlighted the 'feeling towards Ireland embodied in that first form of the aesthetic movement initiated amongst us under [the FAC's] auspices'.[159] This implies that the later forms of the FAC's work, such as the 1847 report, embodied an improved approach towards the sensitivities of Ferguson's homeland. What Irish nationalists thought of the later work of the FAC is, though, impossible to say. True to its word, the *Nation* never published another sentence regarding the decoration of the Houses of Parliament. Meanwhile O'Connell, who unlike the *Nation* had recognised the importance of the FAC's task, died before publication of the *Seventh Report*. Subsequent generations of Irish nationalists appear to have either followed the *Nation*'s lead or decided themselves that it would be unprofitable to attack the decoration of the home of the institution they opposed. This remained the case when many of the FAC's programmes, including those relating to Ireland, were left unrealised at its demise. As a result, the Cromwell and de Londres controversies examined in the previous

[159] Quoted in Ferguson (1892), 111.

chapter stand as the only examples of the art of disunion to emerge from this period in the Palace of Westminster's decoration.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Continuing Curse of Cromwell

> The idea was that the British Parliament was to be a united Parliament, desiring to consider and consult the feelings of all parts of the countries represented in it, and thus promote union amongst them. No surer way, however, of bringing about disunion and dissension could be suggested than to propose to erect a statue to [Oliver Cromwell], and whether they paid for it or not it would be felt to be an insult to the Irish people.[1]

Speaking in the Commons in 1895, Alfred Webb MP (1834-1908) neatly encapsulated the potential for the Houses of Parliament's decorative schemes to both unite and divide the nations of the United Kingdom. His comment was made during one of a number of heated debates during the 1890s concerning the erection of a statue to Oliver Cromwell in Parliament's precincts. This second Cromwell statue controversy, which forms the focus of this chapter, mirrored some aspects of the first that took place in 1840s.[2] However, as will be shown, it took place on a much larger scale and had far greater political ramifications. It also failed to prevent the creation of a statue of the Protector, which was completed in 1899 by sculptor William Hamo Thornycroft (1850-1925) and placed on a site between Westminster Hall and Parliament Square subsequently known as Cromwell Green (Fig. 67).

This chapter is concerned with the most significant example of the art of disunion in the Houses of Parliament's history. In the 1890s, Irish opposition to the statue was even more vociferous than in the 1840s, precipitating the fall of the Liberal government which had proposed it and playing a significant role in ending the frontline political career of that government's leader, Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery (1847-1929). If, as this thesis in part argues, the decoration of Parliament is more than just the stage setting of the 'theatre of state' but has, on occasion, played a

[1] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1184.

[2] See pp. 115-21 above.

central role in political events themselves, then the Cromwell controversy of the 1890s is the headline act.

There are a number of existing accounts of Thornycroft's Cromwell. These include useful art historical outlines of the statue's development and subsequent history provided by Walker, Unwin and Philip Ward-Jackson.[3] In addition to these, Stuart James Birch has provided an in-depth analysis of the work within the wider context of the sculpture in Parliament Square, of which he conceives it to be an important part.[4] A number of historians have, likewise, paid close attention to Thornycroft's statue. Among them are Roger Howell Jnr. and Blair Worden, who have placed it within a wider history of Cromwellian commemorations as part of the large literature on Cromwell and his legacy.[5] Because of its political ramifications, some scholars of this period in Irish history, such as Nicholas Mansergh, have also given the Westminster Cromwell due attention.[6] The same is true of studies of Rosebery himself, where the events surrounding the commission have featured prominently.[7] To a greater or lesser degree, all of these accounts note the significance of the Irish reaction to the Cromwell statue. However, in addition to placing the statue controversy within the wider context of the art of union and disunion in the Houses of Parliament for the first time, where this chapter breaks new ground is in the level of detail provided and the nuance of the conclusions that are put forward. This is particularly important regarding the internal disunion that the events highlight among the different political groups involved; events that have hitherto largely been overlooked as a result of the controversy's over simplification.

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[3] Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 4, 27-30; Unwin (2009), 413-25; Philip Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture of Historic Westminster* (Liverpool University Press, 2012), 172-77.

[4] Stuart James Birch, 'On Stage at the Theatre of State: The Monuments and Memorials in Parliament Square, London' (PhD diss., Nottingham Trent University, 2002), 233-95.

[5] Worden (2002), 309-14; Howell Jnr. (1993), 103-4.

[6] Mansergh (1965), 172; Kearney (1989), 233.

[7] Robert Rhodes James, *Rosebery: A biography of Archibald Philip, Fifth Earl of Rosebery* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1963), 381-82; Leo McKinstry, *Rosebery: Statesman in Turmoil* (London: John Murray, 2005), 376.

'Should Cromwell have a statue?' 1845-94

Before looking at the events of the 1890s, it is worth examining the Cromwell statue question during the period between the two Westminster controversies, when the question 'Should Cromwell have a statue?' continued to rear its head. This stage is important, as it sees the first public statues to Cromwell erected throughout the country as part of his Victorian reassessment which was prompted, in part, by Carlyle. These extra-parliamentary monuments are almost always linked in one way or another to the question of placing a statue of the Protector in Parliament's precincts. They also show some of the developments in the public view of Cromwell that would play a role at Westminster at the end of the nineteenth century; namely, his increasing importance to influential Nonconformists and his continued detestation by Irish Catholics.

In 1857, the year before the bicentenary of Cromwell's death, William Williams MP, who had first broached the Cromwell statue question in Parliament in 1845, made another unsuccessful appeal, this time to First Commissioner of Works and Fine Arts Commissioner Sir Benjamin Hall.[8] In 1860 and 1861, Williams similarly entreated William Cowper (1811-88), then in charge at the Office of Works.[9] These latter attempts were prompted by the FAC's recent commencement of the series of British sovereigns for the Royal Gallery first outlined in 1845, in which Williams wanted Cromwell included. [10] Beginning with statues of Stuart and Hanoverian monarchs in the Royal Gallery, in 1860 marble figures of William IV and George IV were commissioned from Theed while Thomas Thornycroft, an English sculptor and the father of Hamo, was given James I and Charles I.[11] By 1863, English sculptor Thomas Woolner had received the commission for William III, and

[8] HC Deb, 22 June 1857, vol. 146, col. 160.

[9] HC Deb, 3 August 1860, vol. 160, cols. 628-30; HC Deb, 1 July 1861, vol. 164, cols., 165-7.

[10] See Appendix 4, *Fourth Report,* 12-13 and 'Report of the committee appointed to decide on the places for statues of British sovereigns', Appendix 1, *Twelfth Report,* 13.

[11] Appendix 1, *Twelfth Report,* 13.

Alexander Munro, a Scottish sculptor who had earlier worked under Thomas on the building's architectural sculpture, that for Mary II.[12]

The demise of the FAC resulted in only the six above-mentioned statues being produced for the series of sovereigns.[13] Despite Cromwell being excluded from this scheme, it prompted further questions regarding his position in Parliament when, proving too large for the pedestals in the Royal Gallery, the statues were placed in Westminster Hall in 1868.[14] In the Commons, Liberal MP John Candlish, a Baptist, asked Tory First Commission of Works Lord John Manners whether a statue of the Protector could be added between Charles I and Charles II.[15] As Manners was not prepared to propose a vote to alter the existing plans, Candlish asked if: 'In the event of the public or of private persons executing a statue of Oliver Cromwell, would the Government allow it to be placed in Westminster Hall?'.[16] Although Manners refused to answer the question because he had not been given notice of it, his Liberal successor as First Commissioner, Acton Smee Ayrton (1816-86), proved far more amenable to the idea.

In 1871, Ayrton took Parliament to the closest point yet of erecting a statue to Cromwell, when he temporarily placed a plaster model of an over life-sized figure of the Protector by Matthew Noble on a wooden plinth in Parliament Square, directly facing the House of Commons (Fig. 68).[17] When asked his intentions in the Commons, Ayrton explained that he had done this merely so that the effect of a statue on the site intended for figures of Palmerston and Derby could be judged.[18] As Stephen Porter points out, the choice of subject, site and timing appear to have been carefully orchestrated by Ayrton: other statues would certainly have been available for his

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[12] Appendix 1, *Thirteenth Report,* 12; Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 4, 140.

[13] *Thirteenth Report,* 12.

[14] A seventh statue, Charles II by Henry Weekes, joined them in 1870. All were subsequently moved to the Old Bailey in 1915. Read (2000), 265.

[15] HC Deb, 12 March 1868, vol. 190, cols. 1450-1.

[16] HC Deb, 12 March 1868, vol. 190, cols. 1450-1.

[17] Stephen Porter, 'A Political Sculpture? The first appearance of Matthew Noble's "Oliver Cromwell"', *Cromwelliana: The Journal of the Cromwell Association* (2001), 39-50.

[18] HC Deb, 11 August 1871, vol. 208, cols. 1433-5; Porter (2001), 42.

experiment; the site chosen was not in fact intended for either Palmerston or Derby; and had he waited two weeks Parliament would have been prorogued.[19] The erection of the statue, therefore, appears to have been conceived to achieve maximum effect and enable the Cromwell statue question to be brought to the fore once more. In the Commons, Ayrton's motivations were illuminated when he informed the House that he had received a petition signed by twelve Peers and 110 MPs supporting a permanent statue of Cromwell, and that if supporters raised the necessary funds then the proposal would be considered.[20] However, nothing more came of this and, a few days later, the statue was removed.[21]

Noble's Cromwell was destined for Manchester, where it was unveiled in 1875.[22] Although it became the first major public statue to the Protector, a growing number of sculptural representations of Cromwell had been appearing in publicly accessible locations since the Cromwell statue question was first asked in 1845.

Although the Great Exhibition of 1851 included a statue of Cromwell by James Philip Papera, the rebuilt Crystal Palace at Sydenham housed a far more significant Cromwell sculpture.[23] In a display which consisted of a number of Thomas's models for the statues of sovereigns and saints that decorated the Houses of Parliament stood a plaster statue of Cromwell (Figs. 69 & 70).[24] Although the 1840s' Cromwell controversy had centred on the work of the FAC, the divisive figure was also excluded from the series of monarchs that decorated the building's exterior, Central Lobby and St Stephen's Hall.[25] Given Barry's emphasis on the building's position as a royal

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[19] Porter (2001), 42-43

[20] HC Deb, 11 August 1871, vol. 208, cols. 1433-5.

[21] *The Times* 10 August 1871, 7; *John Bull,* 12 August 1871, 553.

[22] Steve Cunniffe and Terry Wyke, 'Memorializing its Hero: Liberal Manchester's Statue of Oliver Cromwell', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 89/1 (2012), 194-5.

[23] Anon., *Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations, 1851* (London: Spicer Brothers, 1851), 148.

[24] For an account of the plaster casts at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, including those from the Palace of Westminster, see John Kenworthy-Browne, 'Plaster casts for the Crystal Palace, Sydenham', *Sculpture Journal* 15/2 (2006), 173-98.

[25] See pp. 40-41 above.

palace, this is hardly surprising. However, when it came to lending the models for the statues to the Crystal Palace Fine Art Company in 1854, Radical First Commissioner of Works Sir William Molesworth MP (1810-55) suggested that they 'ought to perfect the list by procuring a statue of Cromwell, which to the disgrace of the country has not been placed in the Palace of Westminster.'[26] Molesworth's 'liberal sentiments' had been anticipated by Matthew Digby Wyatt (1820-77), the architect overseeing the sculpture sections of the new attraction, and Thomas had agreed to make a 'bran new Oliver' as a 'generous donation to the [Crystal] Palace on his part'.[27] In 1855, the statue was installed in a structure specially designed by Wyatt, along with ninety-three other models that Thomas had repaired and which had then been painted and gilded.[28] Cromwell may not have been included in the series of statues erected at Westminster, but he did now take his place among their models in Sydenham. Along with the *ILN* mistakenly implying that the Protector had found a niche in Central Lobby (Fig. 71), for the time being this was the best that his supporters could hope for.[29]

The rest of the 1850s saw little in the way of Cromwellian sculptural commemoration. The bicentenary of his death in 1858 came and went without any works being produced, though what was claimed to be Cromwell's actual, rather than sculpted, head was exhibited in Beckenham, Kent.[30] From 1860, however, things began to change. That year the newly enlarged Mudie's Library on London's New Oxford Street included a statue of Cromwell by Henry Stormonth Leifchild (1823-84).[31] The following year, a terracotta bust based on a work by Edward Pierce (c.1635-95) was

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[26] Molesworth to unknown recipient, 17 April 1854, Willis Papers, PA WLS/2/257.

[27] Wyatt to T.W. Philips (Office of Works), 18 April 1854, PA WLS/2/258.

[28] The statues were lost along with the rest of the contents of the Crystal Palace when it was destroyed by fire in 1936. For the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, see Jan Piggott, *Palace of the People: The Crystal Palace at Sydenham, 1856-1936* (London: Hurst, 2004).

[29] *ILN,* 10 February 1855, 136.

[30] Ian Campbell et al eds., *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle,* vol. 34 July-December 1858 (Durham NC & London: Duke University Press, 2006), 247-8. It is now accepted that this head, subsequently buried at Sidney College, Cambridge, probably is Cromwell's. See Jonathan Fitzgibbons, *Cromwell's Head* (Kew: National Archives, 2008).

[31] *ILN,* 29 December 1860, 618.

presented to the recently formed National Portrait Gallery, and Madame Tussaud's displayed a bust of Cromwell in a gallery of royal portraits.[32] Of greater significance, however, was the inclusion in the 1861 RA exhibition of a bust of Cromwell by Noble, the first sculpture of the Protector shown there since Thomas Banks' bust was removed at the request of Acting PRA James Wyatt as 'an improper object' in 1803.[33]

In 1862, Noble's bust, or a version of it, was exhibited at the International Exhibition, as was a 14ft statue of Cromwell by John Bell (1811-95).[34] Bell had been one of the sculptors commended by the FAC at the 1844 Westminster Hall competition, receiving commissions for statues of Viscount Falkland (1847) and Robert Walpole (1855) in St Stephen's Hall as a result.[35] His Cromwell statue formed part of the Coalbrookdale Company's 1862 exhibit, representing one of a number of designs he did for them in this period.[36] Cast in metal (probably iron), it formed part of an eight-metre-tall wall fountain, with Cromwell accompanied by two allegorical figures of War and Peace (Fig. 72).[37] Bell's original plaster model for the statue was also on display.[38] To help the sculptor achieve an accurate likeness of Cromwell, Henry William Field, assay master at the Royal Mint and Cromwell descendent, had lent Bell a death mask previously used by Henry Weigall (c.1800-82) for a bust of the Protector he was said to have unsuccessfully offered to the FAC for the Houses of Parliament in 1846.[39] Bell's sculpture was well received, with Whig politician Lord Ebury (1801-93), no doubt spurred on by the contemporary Westminster debates, calling for its erection

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[32] *Reynold's Newspaper,* 9 June 1862, 4.

[33] Julius Bryant, *Thomas Banks, 1735-1805: Britain's First Modern Sculptor* (London: Soane Museum, 2005), 41-2; Cunniffe and Wyke (2012), 10.

[34] *ILN,* 20 July 1861, 58.

[35] Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 4, 32-3 & 57-8; Boase (1954), 331.

[36] Steve Cunniffe and Terry Wyke, 'The Curse of Cromwell: Warrington's Statue of Oliver Cromwell', *Northern History* 46/2 (2009), 249-51; Paul Dobraszczyk, *Iron, Ornament and Architecture in Victorian Britain: Myth, Modernity, Excess and Enchantment* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 121-22.

[37] Cunniffe and Wyke (2009), 249.

[38] Cunniffe and Wyke (2009), 249.

[39] Cunniffe and Wyke (2009), 249.

in London.[40] This did not happen and it was not until 1899 that Bell's metal Cromwell found a permanent home in Warrington.[41]

Other sculptors too were keeping an eye on the developments in Parliament with a view to obtaining any commission for a statue of Cromwell that might be forthcoming. In 1860 or 1861, as the discussions over Cromwell's possible inclusion in the Royal Gallery series were taking place, Woolner tried to use his contacts with the influential Trevelyan family to secure the, as yet non-existent, commission. Writing to Lady Walter Trevelyan, Woolner asked if she or her husband could give him 'a push forward' in the matter of Cromwell's statue.[42] At the time, Woolner was working on the decoration of Alfred Waterhouse's now-destroyed Assizes Courts in Manchester (1859-64).[43] Probably not coincidentally, Woolner modelled a depiction of Cromwell as one of forty-four window bosses of monarchs from Alfred to Victoria.[44] Though his hopes of producing a Cromwell statue came to nothing, Woolner's appeals to the Trevelyans may well have led to the commission to sculpt the figure of William III for the Royal Gallery mentioned above.[45]

The early 1860s also marked the genesis of Matthew Noble's Manchester Cromwell, which was first conceived in 1860 by a group of largely Liberal Nonconformist politicians and businessmen.[46] However, nothing came of the project until the late 1860s, when Noble was commissioned privately to produce a marble statue, ostensibly for Waterhouse's Town Hall, then in the early stages of construction.[47] The commission came from Elizabeth Goadsby (1821-87), the widow of one of the main proponents of the original scheme, who presumably consented for

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[40] *Times,* 14 November 1862, 7.

[41] Cunniffe and Wyke (2009), 245-59.

[42] Quoted in Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1982), 79.

[43] Read (1982), 237-38.

[44] Read (1982), 237-8; Terry Wyke and Harry Cocks*, Public Sculpture of Greater Manchester* (Liverpool University Press, 2004), 75-6.

[45] See pp. 179-80.

[46] Cunniffe and Wyke (2012), 183.

[47] Cunniffe and Wyke (2012), 190-91.

the model's temporary erection in Parliament Square in 1871.[48] Waterhouse's opposition to the proposed statue, on the grounds of size not subject, ultimately led to it being cast in bronze and erected at an outdoor city centre site (Fig. 73).[49] At the unveiling ceremony on 1 December 1875, Nonconformist Liberal MP Thomas Bayley Potter (1817-98) spoke of his hope that Parliament would take notice and commission their own statue and thus end the long-running Cromwell debate at Westminster.[50]

The Manchester Cromwell was not erected without controversy. Opposition largely came from local Tory politicians and the conservative press and was particularly tinged with present-day fears of republicanism.[51] However, there was one element of the public reaction to the city's statue of Cromwell that had been conspicuously absent from the Cromwell question since the 1840s: the Irish response. Though this was not at all large, particularly given the size of Manchester's Irish population, it nevertheless indicates the continuation of opposition to Cromwell as a result of his actions in Ireland.[52] Such opposition may have been foreshadowed in Bradford two years earlier, where it is said that a group of Irish workers due to install a statue of Cromwell (Fig. 74) on the new Town Hall were planning to fake an accident in order to damage it.[53] Whether they were or not is uncertain, yet it is notable that apparent Irish opposition to the Bradford and Manchester statues looms large in the popular accounts of their erection.[54] However, no exaggeration or mythologizing is needed when assessing the Cromwell

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[48] Cunniffe and Wyke (2012), 190-91.

[49] The statue was moved in 1968 to Wythenshawe Park on the outskirts of the city due to changes in the city centre road layout. See Cunniffe and Wyke (2012), 194 & 206.

[50] Cunniffe and Wyke (2012), 196.

[51] Cunniffe and Wyke (2012), 195-9; Wyke and Cocks (2004), 154.

[52] Cunniffe and Wyke (2012), 199.

[53] Alan Hall, *The Story of Bradford* (Stroud: History Press, 2013), 75.

[54] For examples see 'Cromwell's New Stand: Plan for Statue to move to Manchester's new "Medieval Quarter"', *Manchester Evening News*: http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/cromwells-new-stand-plan-for-statue-865843 [accessed 10 January 2016]; 'Cromwell online exhibition', Cromwell Association: http://www.olivercromwell.org/exhibition/ex10.htm [accessed 10 January 2016].

statue question at Westminster, which came to be defined by the Irish response.[55]

The Westminster Cromwell

The final iteration of the Cromwell question began in July 1894 when Nonconformist Liberal MP Robert Lacey Everett reignited the fifty-year old debate about a statue to Cromwell within Parliament's precincts.[56] In response to Everett's request that the Liberal government erect such a statue, Herbert Gladstone MP (1854-1930), First Commissioner of Works in Rosebery's administration and son of former Liberal Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, stated that he did not have the necessary funds at the present but was 'glad to consider the matter.'[57] The following month Gladstone, who expressed his support for the statue, was able to confirm that he had secured sanction from Chancellor of the Exchequer William Harcourt (1827-1904) for making the necessary provision in the Estimates for the following year.[58]

The rejuvenation of the Westminster Cromwell question prompted the eighty-three-year-old John Bell to write to Gladstone at the Office of Works. The ageing sculptor informed Gladstone that, in the course of producing his Cromwell model in 1862, which he had subsequently presented to the South Kensington Museum and was now displayed inside the main entrance, 'a number of data came into my possession, which are now at your service'.[59] This included a cast of the death mask lent to Bell by Henry William Field in the 1860s. From this Bell made a second cast, which he lent to the Office of

[55] As Cunniffe and Wyke (2009: 252-59) have shown, the same is true of Bell's Warrington Cromwell, which did result in a significant outcry among the town's large Irish population when it was installed in 1899.

[56] HC Deb, 12 July 1894, cols. 1483-84.

[57] Henceforth, Herbert Gladstone will be referred to as Gladstone and William Ewart Gladstone as W.E. Gladstone.

[58] HC Deb, 20 August 1894, vol. 29, col. 21.

[59] Bell to Gladstone, 3 October 1894, TNA WORK 20/100. Bell's plaster model has not survived.

Works.[60] Bell subsequently attempted to obtain the commission for himself, and though Gladstone and Rosebery do not appear to have ever seriously considered the offer, the sculptor's death in March 1895 certainly put paid to it.

Thornycroft was first mentioned in connection with the Cromwell project in December 1894, when Gladstone recommended him and Alfred Gilbert (1854-1934), both leading figures in 'the New Sculpture' movement, as the two most suitable sculptors.[61] Gladstone preferred Gilbert but thought that he would be too busy to take the job on and so approached Thornycroft.[62] By this stage in his career, the sculptor had already gained a number of commissions for major public monuments, notably the statue of General Gordon (1888) in Trafalgar Square. At the time of the Cromwell commission, which he is said to have accepted in March 1895,[63] he was already working on his first parliamentary statue, a figure of George Leveson-Gower, 2nd Earl Granville (1895), commissioned for Central Lobby in 1891.[64]

The month prior to Thornycroft's acceptance of the commission, Gladstone had informed the Commons that £500 was included in the 1895-96 Estimates 'with the view to the early erection of the statue.'[65] A number of reasons explain the ease and willingness with which the Rosebery government agreed to propose and fund the monument. It certainly helped that Rosebery himself was an enthusiastic Cromwellian. As Blair Worden argues, this was not born from shared Puritanism or sympathy with the Roundhead cause, but admiration of the effectiveness of Cromwell's regime.[66] Rosebery also saw the Protector as a model for modern Liberal

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[60] Bell to Henry Primrose (Office of Works), 25 October and 28 November 1894, TNA WORK 20/100. This cast is probably that now in the Parliamentary Art Collection (PAC).

[61] For Thornycroft, see Elfrida Manning, *Marble & Bronze: The Art and Life of Hamo Thornycroft* (London: Trefoil Books, 1982). On the New Sculpture, see Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1983).

[62] Ward-Jackson (2012), 175.

[63] Ward-Jackson (2012), 175.

[64] This was unveiled in 1896. See Manning (1982), 203.

[65] HC Deb, 14 February 1895, vol. 30, col. 744.

[66] Worden (2002), 309; Ward-Jackson (2012), 174.

Imperialism, an ideology he espoused.[67] Though Rosebery's Cromwellianism was no doubt important, the statue was largely given the go ahead for political reasons. Unlike his predecessor, W.E. Gladstone, Rosebery was unpopular with Nonconformists. This is often put down to Rosebery's personal style and his ownership of racehorses, which Nonconformists, who opposed gambling, found unpalatable.[68] Nonconformists had played a small role in the Cromwell controversy in the 1840s, but as the subsequent Parliamentary debates and other schemes discussed above indicate, by the 1890s they had become the Protector's most ardent, vociferous and powerful supporters. By erecting a statue to Cromwell, Rosebery hoped to shore up his government's appeal among Liberal Free Churchmen in the Commons such as Everett, as well as in the wider party and voting population at large.[69]

Rosebery, the Liberals and the Irish nationalists

The Prime Minister's belief in the need for Nonconformist support reflected the perilous state of his administration. In the Commons, the government's slim majority often consisted of fewer than twenty votes.[70] Nevertheless, in his attempt to woo Nonconformists, Rosebery appears to have forgotten, or wilfully ignored, the crucial fact that this majority was only possible through the support of Irish nationalist MPs.[71] Rosebery's relationship with the Irish nationalists was troubled from the very start of his administration. In his first speech as Prime Minister, he announced that he concurred with an observation made by Tory leader Lord Salisbury to the effect that 'before Irish Home Rule is concluded by the Imperial Parliament, England as the predominant partner of the Three Kingdoms will have to be convinced of its

[67] On Liberal Imperialism, including Rosebery's role, see H.C.G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists: The Ideas and Politics of a Post-Gladstonian Elite* (Oxford University Press, 1973).

[68] Worden (2002), 310.

[69] Worden (2002), 309-12.

[70] Rhodes James (1963), 319-82.

[71] Rhodes James (1963), 327

justice and equity.'[72] When admonished for this self-destructive admission by John Morley MP (1838-1923), the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Rosebery explained that he had 'blurted it out'. 'For Heaven's sake', replied Morley, 'blurt out what you please about any country in the world, civilized or barbarous, except Ireland. Irish affairs are the very last field for the practice.'[73]

Rosebery's 'predominant partner' speech, as it became known, highlighted the lack of mindfulness regarding Irish issues and national sensitivities that would later bring down his administration. However, despite essentially announcing his opposition to Home Rule, Rosebery came to rely on votes from Irish nationalist MPs, specifically the anti-Parnellites.[74] This group, numbering seventy-one MPs, had abandoned the Irish Parliamentary Party leader Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-91) under pressure from W.E. Gladstone in 1890 and continued to support the Liberals in the hope of gaining Home Rule.[75] Adopting a policy of restraint in criticising the Liberals, they did not denounce Rosebery's speech, and their leader, John Dillon (1851-1927), described the Prime Minister's subsequent attempts to backtrack as 'entirely satisfactory'.[76] By comparison, the Parnellites, of whom there were nine, had continued to support Parnell until his death in 1891, after which under John Redmond (1856-1918) they had declared themselves to be 'independent' rather than allied to the Liberals like the anti-Parnellites.[77] With no policy of restraint, it is notable that the Irish charge against the Liberal plans for the Cromwell statue was led by Parnellite MPs.

The first significant involvement of Irish MPs in the Cromwell statue affair followed the announcement of Thornycroft's commission in the press

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[72] Rhodes James (1963), 337-8.

[73] John Morley, *Recollections,* vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1917), 21. See also Rhodes James, (1963), 338 and Mansergh (1965), 172.

[74] F.S.L. Lyons, *The Irish Parliamentary Party, 1890-1910* (London: Faber & Faber, 1951), 30.

[75] Lyons (1951), 15-17.

[76] Lyons (1951), 47-9. For more on Dillon, see F.S.L. Lyons, *John Dillon: A Biography* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).

[77] Lyons (1951), 29.

on 7 May 1895.[78] In the Commons, Luke Patrick Hayden (1850-97), Parnellite MP for Roscommon South, demanded to learn from Gladstone if the government had entered into a contract for the statue, how much the entire commission would cost, and when Parliament's authority was obtained for the expenditure.[79] The main aim of Hayden's intervention, however, was to establish if the cost of the statue would be coming from Irish as well as English taxes and, if so, whether or not any steps had been taken to obtain the views of Irish MPs on the subject.[80] This issue of Irish tax payers having to fund the statue became the main nationalist concern during the first phase of the controversy. Gladstone avoided the subject, however, merely assuring the House that, as yet, no contract had been entered into and that all MPs would get to discuss the matter when the Estimates were debated.[81]

This debate also saw the first involvement of Irish MPs who held the opposite view to Hayden. To roars of laughter, William Johnston (1829-1902), Unionist MP for Belfast South, asked Gladstone if tenders for the statue had been invited from Ireland.[82] Whereas Hayden would become one of the statue's leading opponents, Johnston, a committed unionist and member of the Orange Order who was described by one newspaper as the 'arch-priest of Orangism', proved to be one of its most vociferous supporters.[83] As with English Nonconformists, Irish Protestant reverence for Cromwell as a pan-Protestant hero had increased markedly since the 1840s.[84] In his speeches and writing, Johnston was one of the Protector's greatest Irish advocates, often linking Cromwell with the main Irish Protestant champion William of Orange as part of the struggle against popery.[85] As the

[78] Ward-Jackson (2012), 175.

[79] HC Deb, 14 May 1895, vol. 33, col. 1168.

[80] HC Deb, 14 May 1895, vol. 33, col. 1168.

[81] HC Deb, 14 May 1895, vol. 33, col. 1168.

[82] HC Deb, 14 May 1895, vol. 33, col. 1168. For Johnston, see Aiken McClelland, *William Johnston of Ballykilbeg* (Belfast: Ulster Society, 1990).

[83] *Dundee Courier & Argus*, 26 April 1899, 5.

[84] Howell Jnr. (1993), 103; Barnard (1993), 192-7.

[85] For example, see Johnston's book *Under which King?* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872), 6 and a speech published in the *Belfast Newsletter*, 19 July 1871, 9.

first ruler to unite England, Scotland and Ireland, others hailed him as a proto-unionist.[86]

Disagreement over the Cromwell statue was not restricted to Irish MPs and even extended to the heart of Rosebery's administration, with the issue occupying most of a Cabinet meeting on 23 May.[87] Lord Herschell, the Lord Chancellor, and Henry Campbell-Bannerman (1836-1908), the Secretary of State for War, were against there being any statue at all, though their reasons for taking this position are unclear. Other members of the Cabinet supported the statue proposal but feared a division on the issue, predicting the Irish nationalists would vote against them. Rosebery, however, actually hoped the House would divide because he had 'promised himself the treat' of listening to William Harcourt's speech in defence of the proposal.[88] This comment shows one aspect of the internal disunity within Rosebery's government that would come to play an important part in the ensuing events. As a Peer, Rosebery sat in the Lords, while in the Commons the Chancellor, William Harcourt, led the government. Harcourt had unsuccessfully vied with Rosebery to succeed W.E. Gladstone and had only subsequently joined the government on a set of strict conditions.[89] These ensured that Harcourt could act with near autonomy in the Commons, resulting in the country appearing to have not one but two Prime Ministers. The government was further weakened by the position taken by John Morley.[90] Morley had also been Chief Secretary for Ireland under W.E. Gladstone and had hoped to leave the Irish Office, which he called his 'back kitchen', when he supported Rosebery's bid for the premiership.[91] Disappointed not to go to the Foreign Office, and antagonistic towards Rosebery, Morley was unwilling to play an

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[86] Barnard (1993), 192.

[87] Journal of Lewis Harcourt, 23 May 1895, Harcourt Papers, BLO MS Harcourt Dep. 418, f.73.

[88] BLO MS Harcourt Dep. 418, f.73.

[89] Rhodes James (1963), 332.

[90] For Morley, see Patrick Jackson, *Morley of Blackburn: A Literary and Political Biography of John Morley* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012).

[91] Rhodes James (1963), 320.

active part in the government. He too only joined on a set of conditions, limiting his responsibility almost solely to Irish affairs. [92]

Combined with his anti-Home Rule and borderline anti-Irish stance, Rosebery's desire to see Harcourt put in a difficult position in the Commons appears to have further blinded him to the likely pitfalls of pursuing the Cromwell statue proposal. These were clearly evident to many of his cabinet colleagues. Thornycroft recorded, that at a meeting between himself, Rosebery and Gladstone at 10 Downing Street on 13 June 1895, where the location for the statue was decided, the First Commissioner predicted that 'the Irish, except Ulster, were going to fight hard against the erection of the Cromwell statue.'[93] Despite such warnings, however, Rosebery remained unmoved.

Disunion and Dissension

Gladstone's fears were confirmed when a vote on the estimates for government expenditure for 1895-96 came before the Supply Committee on 14 June 1895. Luke Hayden again led the Irish charge against the Cromwell statue, by moving to reduce the amount on the vote by £500.[94] As Hayden's previous intervention in the debate had indicated, he believed 'Oliver Cromwell deserved nothing at the hands of Irishmen' and opposed the statue being paid for out of public funds that included Irish taxes.[95] To explain Irish hostility to Cromwell, Hayden quoted extensively from accounts of the Drogheda massacre just as O'Connell had done in the 1840s.[96] Again mirroring the first Cromwell controversy, he also used the proposed statue to highlight wider grievances such as the imbalance of funding and focus shown towards Ireland, noting that when Irish MPs asked for small sums for 'useful Irish purposes' they were told there was no money in the Treasury, yet it

[92] Rhodes James (1963), 333-35.

[93] Quoted in Manning (1982), 129.

[94] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1181.

[95] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1181.

[96] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1181.

seemed easy enough to find money for a purpose which even many in England disapproved of.[97]

Hayden's motion was seconded by fellow Parnellite MP, Willie Redmond (1861-1917). Redmond found it 'incomprehensible' that a Liberal government which under W.E. Gladstone had expressed so much sympathy with the Irish people should want to erect a statue to a man 'who was regarded by nine-tenths of the Irish people not only as a murderer, but as a canting hypocritical murderer as well.'[98] Where Hayden had concentrated on Drogheda to highlight Cromwell's actions in Ireland, Redmond focused on his own former constituency of Wexford, maintaining that 'to this day the worst imprecation, the foulest and most dishonouring that one could hurl at the head of another was: "The curse of Cromwell on you!"'[99] Redmond asked the House how there could be 'a single Englishman or Scotchman who could wonder at the feeling towards [Cromwell] entertained by the Irish people?' If the statue must be commissioned, he suggested that it be paid for from English and Scottish sources alone.[100]

It was during this debate that Alfred Webb, anti-Parnellite MP for Waterford West, made the speech quoted from at the start of this chapter where he warned of 'disunion and dissension'. Like Redmond, Webb was amazed that a Liberal ministry, 'especially one who was actuated with friendly feelings towards Ireland to an extent never known on the part of any previous Administration', could make a proposal to commemorate Cromwell.[101] Unlike the two previous speakers, Webb was not an Irish Catholic, but a Quaker.[102] Nevertheless, he was keen to emphasise that, though he was opposed to Catholics on religious matters, he was still an Irishman, something 'he felt this just as keenly as his Catholic fellow-

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[97] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1181-82.

[98] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1182.

[99] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1183.

[100] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1183-84.

[101] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1185.

[102] For Webb, see Marie-Louise Legg ed., *Alfred Webb: The Autobiography of a Quaker Nationalist* (Cork University Press, 1999).

countrymen.'[103] Placing his nationality above his religion, he argued that, although his Quaker ancestors had been well treated by Cromwell, the fate of the majority of his fellow-countrymen was far more important to him.[104] Webb's contribution is important as it indicates the varied and complex responses to the issue, and how they went beyond simplistic divisions of Protestant and Catholic.

Alongside Irish complaints, opposition to the statue also came from Tory quarters when, in an opportunistic move, the party's leader in the Commons, Arthur Balfour MP (1848-1930), attacked the government's position. In a clever piece of politicking, Balfour, nephew of Lord Salisbury, managed to come across as pro-Cromwell but anti-Cromwell statue, or at least one paid for from public funds.[105] To achieve this, the future Prime Minister argued that he could not countenance the state paying for the monument, as the Protector could hardly be described as being 'honourably connected with Parliamentary Government'.[106] At the same time, Balfour maintained that Cromwell was a great ruler, stating that had a private subscription been proposed, he would very likely have given money.[107] In terms of Irish complaints, Balfour's response was similarly double-edged. Though he maintained that 'ancient quarrels and controversies' should not be sufficient to prevent Parliamentary generosity celebrating the virtues of the departed, he noted 'the hatred which Cromwell succeeded in inspiring in one great section of our population' should have at least given the government reason to pause before proposing to erect the statue.[108] Coming from a staunch opponent of Home Rule who, as Chief Secretary to Ireland between 1887 and 1891, had earned the nickname 'Bloody Balfour' for his enforcement of draconian legislation, Balfour's critique proved to be a cynical

[103] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1185.

[104] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1185.

[105] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1189-90.

[106] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1190.

[107] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1191.

[108] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1191.

attempt to further divide the Liberals and Irish nationalists in order to strengthen his own position.[109]

Harcourt's subsequent speech in defence of the government's proposal was pedestrian and unconvincing. Regarding his own views, the Chancellor noted that he was not 'a blind worshipper of Cromwell after the fashion of Carlyle', but he did think the Protector, as one of the country's greatest rulers, merited memorialisation.[110] Playing on his fellow English MPs sense of national pride, he also made a weakly framed argument about how strange it would seem to foreigners that one of the most important figures in English history was not commemorated in Parliament.[111] On the matter of Irish grievances, Harcourt joined with Hayden, Redmond and Webb in condemning Cromwell's policies in Ireland, but appealed to MPs not to consider the specifics of Cromwell's actions and whether or not they agreed with them, but to look instead at his importance as a historical figure.[112] In a poorly judged move, he also reminded the Irish that a statue of William III, 'a character who is not much more favourably regarded by the great portion of the Irish people', stood in Dublin.[113] This matter was quickly dealt with by John Gordon Swift MacNeill (1849-1926), Parnellite MP for Donegal South, who interjected that despite nationalist views of William of Orange, he was 'a gentleman' compared to Cromwell.[114]

For Rosebery, the 'treat' of watching his bitter rival attacked by the Irish must have been undermined by Harcourt's lacklustre attempt at defending the government's position. As the debate came to a close, with the Tories and Irish nationalists supporting Hayden's motion, many thought that the

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[109] For Balfour's period as Chief Secretary, see David R. Hudson, *The Ireland that We Made: Arthur & Gerald Balfour's Contribution to the Origins of Modern Ireland* (University of Akron Press, 2003), Ch. 4.

[110] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1187.

[111] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1188-89.

[112] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1187.

[113] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1188. For this now-destroyed 1701 bronze equestrian statue by Grinling Gibbons, see Philip McEvansoneya, 'Royal Monuments and Civic Ritual in Eighteenth-Century Dublin', in Charlotte Chastel-Rousseau ed., *Reading the Royal Monument in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 173-94.

[114] HC Deb, 14 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1188.

government would lose the vote. However, this outcome was narrowly avoided, with the motion being defeated by 156 votes to 137 as a result of what the *Liverpool Mercury* called the 'curious cross-voting' that had taken place.[115] With their positive view of Cromwell, Ulster Unionists, and some Liberal Unionists, had split with the Tories to side with the Liberal government. But with only fifteen votes saving the government from defeat, some Unionists were said to regret that 'their anti-Irish rancour had led them to compass such an undesirable result.'[116] Making the most of the disunity among the Unionists, the *Freeman's Journal* reported that

> ordinary English Tories were objurgating their Irish colleagues in uncompromising terms on their unmentionable stupidity and there were many heated arguments between them in the lobby whether the convinced Tory should absolve Cromwell for his regicidal performances in consideration of his success in massacring the mere Irish.[117]

Despite traditional Tory opposition to Cromwell, the position taken by Balfour came as a surprise to many, given the Protector's supposed rehabilitation in the preceding decades. The *Pall Mall Gazette* had long been prepared for what it disparagingly called the 'childishness of the Irish members', but was shocked to see the Tories as their allies.[118] In a notable development since the 1840s, the *Daily News,* like much of the British press, felt that the Irish response was 'intelligible enough' given Cromwell's 'abominably cruel' policy in Ireland, but thought what they saw as the Tories lack of patriotism 'disgraceful'.[119] The *Freeman's Journal* was similarly astonished, particularly given its belief that the Tories saw Cromwell as 'the only man … who ever knew how to deal with the Irish question.'[120] The paper put Balfour's stance down to him having 'scented the possibility of defeating the Government in

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[115] *Liverpool Mercury*, 15 June 1895, 5.

[116] *Freeman's Journal,* 15 June 1895, 5.

[117] *Freeman's Journal,* 15 June 1895, 5.

[118] *Pall Mall Gazette,* 15 June 1895, 2.

[119] *Daily News,* 15 June 1895, 5.

[120] *Freeman's Journal,* 15 June 1895, 5.

conjunction with the Nationalist Party', which, given the Tory's subsequent acquiescence and participation in the statue's erection, seems certain.[121] However, the unexpected nature of Balfour's position had partly led to its failure; some Irish nationalist MPs had paired with Conservatives, thereby losing two votes against the statue.[122]

'Nationalist wrath … aided by Unionist satire'

The government victory in the Supply Committee merely meant that the amount for the statue was placed on the Estimates, which still had to go before the whole House of Commons. This took place on the evening of Monday 17 June, three days after the first debate.[123] Hayden had given notice that he would again move to reduce the vote by £500, which he duly attempted to do.[124] However, representatives of the other two opposition factions, Arthur Balfour and leading anti-Parnellite MP Justin McCarthy (1830-1912), also stood up in an attempt to 'catch the Speaker's eye' and so be given the first word in the debate.[125] Balfour gave way, and although there were loud calls for both Irish nationalists, it was McCarthy who was given the chance to speak.[126] At this example of one-upmanship by one Irish nationalist group over the other, Willie Redmond rose to order, arguing that as Hayden had moved the reduction in the vote in committee and given his intention to do so again that night, he should be allowed to speak first and propose the motion.[127] The Speaker was unaffected by these pleas, and McCarthy was permitted to move to reduce the vote by the £500 set aside for the statue.[128] Hayden seconded the motion, dryly noting that he felt no need to complain about being usurped, as he had first brought the topic up months

[121] *Freeman's Journal,* 15 June 1895, 5.

[122] *Daily News,* 15 June 1895, 5.

[123] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1339-61.

[124] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1339.

[125] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1339.

[126] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1340.

[127] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1340.

[128] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1340-42.

earlier and was responsible for bringing the House together for the second time that night to vote on it.[129]

This time it was John Morley who answered for the government. As chief secretary for Ireland, Morley professed to have taken a particular interest in the events surrounding the Cromwell statue.[130] He confessed that 'though I have done my best to make myself at home with the sympathies, sentiments, and yearnings of Irishmen, I myself did not suppose that the fires of two-and-a-half centuries ago still burn with intense heat.'[131] Expanding this *mea culpa* to encompass his government colleagues, Morley recognised that they had made an error of judgement in proposing the statue and announced that the government would not oppose McCarthy's motion.[132]

This volte-face had come about as a result of a meeting held by the Liberal cabinet members in the Commons prior to the debate, where they had agreed to withdraw the government's support for its own proposal as a result of what Morley later described as 'Nationalist wrath … aided by Unionist satire'.[133] Rosebery himself was not consulted and, when the chief whip Thomas Edward Ellis, casually informed him of his colleagues' course of action the Prime Minister replied presciently: 'This Government is not strong enough to do so weak a thing'.[134] However, Rosebery made no attempt to intervene, and after a long debate in the Commons, at 1.15am William Harcourt confirmed that the government would not oppose the Cromwell statue being removed from the Estimates.[135] Completing the metaphor with which Morley had begun his speech, the Chancellor conceded: 'I was not aware we were treading on the smouldering ashes of these treacherous fires. Now they have burst forth it seems to me that the best thing that we can do in the interests of the House is to extinguish them

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[129] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1342-43.

[130] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1343-46. For an account of Morley's role in the Cromwell statue controversy, see Jackson (2012), 280.

[131] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1343.

[132] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1346; Morley (1917), 48.

[133] Morley (1917), 48.

[134] Rhodes James (1963), 381.

[135] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1354-55.

as soon as we can.'[136] When the House divided shortly afterwards, McCarthy's motion was passed by 220 votes to 83.[137]

Division, discord and defeat

The debate that took place prior to the vote brought forth a number of speakers with varying views on the issue, further illustrating the spectrum of opinions that the Cromwell controversy engendered. Morley, for example, was an avowed Home Ruler who had played a central role in drafting both of W.E. Gladstone's Home Rule Bills.[138] Yet, although he was as far from the Balfour mould of Chief Secretary as it was possible to find in the two main parties, he was also a confirmed Cromwellian.[139] Following his announcement of the government U-turn, Morley made it plain that he had little sympathy with the Irish point of view regarding the Protector. Though he claimed to regard Cromwell's Irish policy as a 'crime' and 'the greatest blot upon his illustrious name', he was more critical of it as a 'political blunder'.[140] For Morley, the end that Cromwell had in sight – 'the incorporation of Ireland in the United Kingdom' – was justified, he just 'went the wrong way about it.'[141] In what must have been an alarming phrase to hear from the lips of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, he summed up Cromwell's error thus: 'He either confiscated too much, or he exterminated too little.'[142]

In his speech, Morley was also keen to make a party political point about the Tory opposition to the statue. Despite his pro-Cromwell comments, he emphasised that the Liberals were still the natural allies of the Irish nationalists.[143] Highlighting that Tory opposition to the statue did not come from sympathy with Ireland, he argued that 'the policy of Cromwell [in Ireland]

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[136] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1355.

[137] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1361.

[138] Jackson (2012), 133-244.

[139] Jackson (2012), 280. Morley went on to publish a biography of Cromwell in 1900.

[140] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1344.

[141] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1344.

[142] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1344.

[143] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1343-44.

… is in effect the policy of hon. gentlemen opposite' and that, having closed the doors of the Irish Parliament, the Protector was 'the first great Unionist'.[144] This claim was inadvertently supported by Tory MP Richard Webster, who argued that the Irish probably objected to Cromwell because, when he allowed Parliament to sit at Westminster, it included representatives from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.[145]

In response to Morley, Balfour continued to press his earlier criticism of how little the Liberals understood Ireland. In typically patronising tone, he explained:

> Anyone who has not realised that the whole history of Ireland consists of memories, not only of 250 years old, but of 500 years old, has not yet begun, I venture to say, to understand Irish history. The Irish question does not deal with present realities—it deals with memories; it is based on memories, stimulated on memories, and fed on memories—and unless we realise that, whether we agree or do not agree, we fail to understand the position they occupy.[146]

As in the earlier debate, a number of Irish Unionists had voted against the Tories over the statue. Among them was Colonel Edward James Saunderson (1837-1906), who expressed his continuing support for the proposal and criticised the government for its abandonment of the project.[147] Unsurprisingly, Saunderson, MP for North Armagh, was an Orangeman and leading Unionist politician who led the Irish Unionists in the Commons during this period.[148] As 'an Irishman', Saunderson said he admired Cromwell, though he did not admire the severity the Protector used in Ireland.[149] Nevertheless, Saunderson attempted to excuse it by using the argument of

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[144] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1360.

[145] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1360.

[146] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1347.

[147] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1355-57.

[148] On Saunderson, see Alvin Jackson, *Colonel Edward Saunderson: Land and Loyalty in Victorian Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

[149] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1357.

Cromwell apologists since at least the 1840s, namely that Drogheda and Wexford were revenge for the massacre of Protestants during the 1641 rebellion.[150]

Other supporters of the statue criticised the Irish nationalist position as well as that of the government. One line of argument put forward by some British MPs maintained that, by voting against the statue, the Irish were undermining their own wider cause. Liberal Unionist MP Austen Chamberlain, for example, mocked the Irish position as an abandonment of the 'Union of Hearts' doctrine, a reference to a slogan used by proponents of Home Rule to signify how it would engender age-old animosity between Ireland and Great Britain to be replaced by 'a Union of heart and soul between two Sister Nations.'[151] Similar sentiments were expressed by sections of the press in the aftermath of the debate. The *Daily News* called the Irish move 'ill-advised', because it risked alienating those supporters of their cause in English, Scottish and Welsh constituencies who also hold Cromwell in high esteem.[152] In the paper's view, the events were 'one more serious blow inflicted on the Irish cause by Irishmen themselves.'[153] In a similar vein, the *Daily Chronicle* even attempted to argue that Ireland was unworthy of Home Rule, because the country's MPs had opposed the statue.[154]

One important voice that came out in support of the Irish nationalist position was the 'Grand Old Man' himself, W.E. Gladstone. Parliamentary sketch-writer Henry Lucy recorded that W.E. Gladstone doubted if he would have supported his own son's proposal had he been in the House.[155] For the former Prime Minister, Cromwell's massacres at Drogheda and Wexford could never be forgiven and McCarthy's protest against the proposed statue was perfectly justified. According to Lucy, W.E. Gladstone expressed his

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[150] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, col. 1357.

[151] HC Deb, 17 June 1895, vol. 34, cols. 1349-51. On the 'Union of Hearts', see Boyce and O'Day (2001), 104-5.

[152] Quoted in *Leeds Mercury*, 18 June 1895, 5.

[153] *Leeds Mercury*, 18 June 1895, 5.

[154] Reported in *Freeman's Journal,* 21 June 1895, 4.

[155] Henry Lucy, *The Diary of a Journalist,* vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1920), 337-8.

satisfaction with the result of the fiasco, reportedly saying 'I drink to the health of Justin McCarthy.'[156]

As these remarks indicate, many gave credit for the government's U-turn to McCarthy and the anti-Parnellites alone. Though both Irish nationalist factions successfully opposed the statue, the debates and the manner of the victory only acted to deepen the fissures between the two camps further. Sections of the Parnellite press argued that McCarthy's involvement in the debate was the first word heard on the issue from a leading anti-Parnellite, even though the vote had been on the Estimates for a number of months. Dillon's party were essentially accused of colluding with the Liberals over the issue, by ignoring the subject because it was a free vote rather than a government measure.[157] The *Westmeath Examiner* reported rumours that senior anti-Parnellites, including Thomas Power O'Connor (1848-1929), had even arranged with the government for McCarthy to be called first during the second debate instead of Hayden, the implication being that, once the government had decided to withdraw support for the vote, they were keen to do so in a way that benefited their anti-Parnellite allies.[158]

The policy of restraint practised by Dillon's anti-Parnellites may explain their lack of early involvement in the Cromwell issue, although it should be remembered that Alfred Webb did make a significant contribution in the Supply Committee debate. A further explanation may be found in the upheaval that the anti-Parnellites were experiencing in this period as Dillon and Timothy Healy (1855-1931) fought for control of the party.[159] Distracted by internal disputes, they may simply have been caught unawares and only prompted to act when it became clear that the Cromwell statue issue was spiralling out of control. As for McCarthy being called to speak first, the conspiracy alleged in the *Westmeath Examiner* would have required the collusion of the Speaker, William Court Gully. On balance, though not implausible, the accusation should be seen as part of the ongoing Parnellite

[156] Lucy (1920), 338.

[157] *Daily Irish Independent,* 20 June 1895, 2; *Westmeath Examiner,* 22 June 1895, 3.

[158] *Westmeath Examiner,* 22 June 1895, 3.

[159] Lyons (1951), 47-8.

attempt to paint their fellow nationalists as merely a section of the Liberal party in contrast to their own 'independence' from it.[160]

The fallout from the Cromwell debate continued to be felt in the struggle among the Irish nationalists for some months. At the August 1895 General Election, Dillon unsuccessfully stood against Hayden in South Roscommon despite also standing in his own safe seat of East Mayo.[161] During the campaign, he had what the *Westmeath Examiner* called the 'audacious effrontery' to give credit for the Cromwell vote victory to McCarthy.[162] The paper presented this as yet another example of the work of the nine independent MPs being claimed by the larger Irish nationalist faction.

Some in Ireland stood above the partisan politics to argue that the Cromwell controversy highlighted the negative effects on the nationalist cause of the ongoing split between the two Irish nationalist camps and within the anti-Parnellites. Castigating the statue proposal as 'proof of the feelings of indifference and contempt entertained for their Irish slaves by Lord Rosebery and his colleagues', the *Dundalk Democrat* argued that, had Parnell been alive, 'with a united party at his back', the government would not have dreamt of offering such an insult to the Irish people.[163] While all of this is debateable, the split between the Irish nationalists, on top of the lack of a single, charismatic leader like Parnell, certainly gave the movement a ramshackle appearance. Yet, as Jeremy Smith argues, despite this factionalism, the number of overall seats held by Irish nationalists remained fairly constant.[164] They also largely continued to vote together at Westminster to provide an effective parliamentary opposition, something illustrated in the Cromwell debates.[165] Furthermore, as has been shown, Rosebery's

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[160] Lyons (1951), 29.

[161] *Westmeath Examiner,* 17 August 1895, 4.

[162] *Westmeath Examiner,* 17 August 1895, 4.

[163] *Dundalk Democrat,* 15 June 1895, 4.

[164] Jeremy Smith, *Britain and Ireland: From Home Rule to Independence* (Harlow: Pearson, 2000), 44-5.

[165] Smith (2000), 44-5.

indifference or contempt for Irish sensitivities appears to have been unshakable.

By far the greatest impact of the Cromwell controversy was on Rosebery's administration itself, with the debacle heralding a sustained attack on the Liberal government. In the days following the second vote, the government was defeated on an important amendment to one Bill and only won by the slightest majority on an amendment to another.[166] On the Thursday of the same week, a snap vote on Campbell-Bannerman's salary was called when it was revealed that he had failed to obtain enough cordite for the army.[167] Under normal circumstances this would have been nothing but a nuisance. However the Cabinet, as Rosebery's biographer Robert Rhodes James has noted, 'were, to a man, sick of office'.[168] Treating defeat over the cordite issue as a vote of no confidence, they eagerly took the opportunity to be liberated from an impossible and humiliating situation.[169] On 21 June, just four days after the U-turn over the Cromwell statue, the government resigned and Queen Victoria summoned Salisbury to form a new Conservative administration.[170] Rosebery stepped down as Liberal leader the following year and never held high office again.

Though Rosebery was against Home Rule, while the Liberals were in power it had at least been on the political agenda. With the Liberals out of office for a decade from 1895, and Salisbury and Balfour's Tories in government, Home Rule was not even a possibility.[171] In this respect at least, the arguments that the Irish nationalists had harmed their own cause held some water. Ironically, by opposing the Cromwell statue, they had precipitated the removal of the only party likely to help them achieve their

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[166] These were the Factory Bill on 18 June and the Welsh Disestablishment Bill on 19 June, which the Liberals won by seven votes. See Rhodes James (1963), 382.

[167] Rhodes James (1963), 382.

[168] Rhodes James (1963), 382.

[169] Rhodes James (1963), 382-3

[170] Rhodes James (1963), 383.

[171] On the Tory approach to Ireland during this period, often known as 'constructive Unionism' or 'killing Home Rule with kindness', see Hudson (2003), 134-54.

principal aim. This outcome was compounded by the fact that the statue proposal's defeat did not sound the death knell of the monument itself.

An anonymous donor

During the day following the government withdrawal of support for the statue vote, Gladstone wrote to Thornycroft to assure him that the commission would go ahead. The soon to be ex-First Commissioner informed the sculptor that 'within a few days the necessary money will be promised', the Commons vote ultimately making 'little appreciable difference'.[172] The next day, Rosebery told Gladstone that 'a gentleman whose solvency and good faith I can guarantee' had agreed to provide the necessary funds.[173] In one of his last acts as First Commissioner, Gladstone accepted the proposed statue on behalf of the government.[174] The offer and acceptance of the donation were rushed through in the seventy-two hours after the statue vote. Rosebery, only too aware of the administration's untenable position, was evidently keen to give government commitment to what had become a pet project before it was too late. Few were surprised when it later emerged that the anonymous donor was none other than Rosebery himself.

Out of office by 6 July, Gladstone wrote to Thornycroft from the Reform Club 'on behalf of the donor of the money' to set out in writing the agreed terms for the commission.[175] Though the late first commissioner had accepted the proposed statue while in government, he was careful to emphasize that 'To prevent misconception I have to say that this commission is given on behalf of a private individual and not by the Government.'[176] Happy that the commission was secured, Thornycroft began working on his Cromwell. Like Bell and others before him, the sculptor sought out likenesses

[172] Gladstone to Thornycroft, 18 June 1895, Thornycroft Papers, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds (HMI) C284.

[173] Rosebery to Gladstone, 19 June 1895, quoted in Ward-Jackson (2012), 175.

[174] Gladstone, 'Cromwell Statue' (an account of the commission written by the First Commissioner for his as yet unnamed successor), 24 June 1895, TNA WORK 20/100.

[175] Gladstone to Thornycroft, 6 July 1895, HMI C284A.

[176] HMI C284A.

of the Lord Protector. Alongside paintings, sculptures and the obligatory death masks, he may even have examined Cromwell's skull.[177] Once started, the statue progressed quickly.[178] By January 1896, Thornycroft was working on a quarter-size model, and by July the statue was 'up in clay'.[179] In September the following year, the full-size maquette was almost finished.[180]

Art mixed with politics

In Parliament and among the public the Cromwell statue had all but been forgotten after 1895. The same was true in Salisbury's government, until in May 1898 Thornycroft wrote to Aretas Akers-Douglas (1851-1926), who had succeeded Gladstone at the Office of Works in July 1895.[181] Thornycroft informed Akers-Douglas that his statue – 'that Lord Rosebery has expressed an opinion of … which is very gratifying to me' – was now being cast at the foundry and asked for confirmation that the site had definitely been agreed on.[182] Having consulted the relevant Office of Works file, Akers-Douglas concluded that, as the previous government had accepted the statue and a 'pledge' given for the site, it would be dishonourable not to fulfil the agreement.[183] Though Akers-Douglas would later say that Salisbury's government agreed to adhere to their predecessor's commitment in 1895, it appears that this was in fact the first time that the issue of the statue had been considered since the fall of Rosebery's administration.[184]

On 25 April 1899, the 300th anniversary of Cromwell's birth, the subject of the Westminster statue was publicly revitalized and, as the

[177] For Thornycroft's research into Cromwell's likeness, see Birch (2002), 271 and Ward-Jackson (2012), 175.

[178] For the development of Thornycroft's design, see Manning (1982), 129-31; Birch, (2002), 270-71; Unwin (2009), 241-42; and Ward-Jackson (2012), 175-76.

[179] Manning (1982), 199; Ward-Jackson (2012), 175.

[180] *Dundee Courier,* 30 September 1897, 5.

[181] Thornycroft to Akers-Douglas, 24 May 1898, TNA WORK 20/100.

[182] Thornycroft to Akers-Douglas, 24 May 1898, TNA WORK 20/100.

[183] Akers-Douglas, 'Memorandum', n.d. (c.25 May 1898), TNA WORK 20/100; HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 956.

[184] HC Deb, 3 August 1899, vol. 75, cols. 1296-7

Morning Post put it, 'art mixed with politics' once more.[185] William Johnston again took up the mantle of lead agitator and 'celebrated the Cromwell Tercentenary in his own way' by asking Akers-Douglas to explain the present situation with regards to the statue.[186] Luke Patrick Hayden had died in 1897, so Willie Redmond took up the position of leading Irish nationalist defender.[187] With no public money now being spent, as a result of Rosebery's donation, the arguments taken up by the statue's opponents rested on the lack of parliamentary sanction, particularly given the opposition expressed by the Commons in 1895. With what became the standard government line on the issue, Akers-Douglas informed the House that the site selected by his predecessor would be adhered to.[188] Defending his government's course of action in the Lords, Salisbury expressed his reluctance to meddle in 'fait accompli'.[189] On the matter of the donor, all the prime minister would divulge was that the previous government had 'summoned from the "vast deep" some mysterious donor … who was not afraid of the wrath of the Irish Members'.[190]

Construction of the pedestal began on site in June 1899, prompting opposition to the statue to gain momentum.[191] At the beginning of August and the end of October, a number of petitions opposing the erection of the statue on public land were placed before the Commons.[192] On 27 October, the Earl of Hardwicke (1867-1904) laid a similar petition before the Lords, signed by around 500 people from around the UK.[193] Their case against the

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[185] *Morning Post*, August 4, 1899, 2.

[186] *Leeds Mercury*, 26 April 1899, 5; HC Deb, 25 April 1899, vol. 70, col. 515.

[187] Hayden's role in defeating the Cromwell statue proposal was considered one of his many achievements in the Irish cause. See his obituary in the *Westmeath Examiner,* 26 June 1897, 2-3.

[188] HC Deb, 25 April 1899, vol. 70, col. 515; *Dundalk Democrat,* 29 April 1899, 5; HC Deb, 1 May 1899, vol. 70, col. 956.

[189] HL Deb, 28 April 1899, vol. 70, col. 811.

[190] HL Deb, 28 April 1899, vol. 70, cols. 810-11.

[191] Office of Works to Thornycroft, 20 June 1899, TNA WORK 20/100.

[192] HC Deb, 2 August 1899, vol. 75, col. 1150; HC Deb, 24 October 1899, vol. 77, col. 569.

[193] 'Petition against the erection of a statue of Oliver Cromwell on Public land', Records of the House of Lords, PA HL/PO/6/14/19.

statue placed significant emphasis on Cromwell's actions in Ireland:

> Oliver Cromwell deprived the people of this Realm of their Parliamentary institution, compassed the death of their King, persecuted & sought to destroy their Church & set up that most hateful form of government, a military despotism & whereas the said Oliver Cromwell by his butcheries in that portion of the United Kingdom called Ireland caused terrible sufferings among its people & created evils that are not yet obliterated; we, your Petitioners, consider him unworthy of the honour of a statue erected on public land, by which a large section of the nation would be offended & a deliberate insult offered to the people of Ireland.[194]

Having laid the petition, in a thinly attended House of Lords on the day prior to prorogation, Hardwicke moved to resolve: 'That it is inexpedient that memorial statues should be erected within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster without the sanction of Parliament.'[195] The Earl of Wemyss seconded the motion, not because he opposed the statue per se, but because he disapproved of the 'absurd' location.[196] Admitting to being a Cromwellian, Wemyss criticised the site as a 'ditch' and noted that he had observed 'that the Irish, who were very hostile to the erection of a statue of Oliver Cromwell, are now silent, and I cannot help thinking that this silence is due to the fact that Cromwell is to be placed in a hole, which must be very satisfactory to them.'[197] Despite there only being ten Peers in the Chamber, Hardwicke forced a division and his motion was carried by six votes to four.[198]

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[194] PA HL/PO/6/14/19.

[195] HL Deb, 27 October 1899, vol. 77, col. 749.

[196] HL Deb, 27 October 1899, vol. 77, col. 753.

[197] HL Deb, 27 October 1899, vol. 77, cols. 753-4. For a full discussion of the location, see Birch, (2002), 272-74.

[198] HL Deb, 27 October 1899, vol. 77, col. 760.

Despite this last-minute attempt to halt proceedings, on 31 October the statue was lifted into position.[199] Two days later, the bronze 'British lion' that lies on the pedestal joined it.[200] However, it was not until 10 November that the Office of Works decided that the statue was to be 'uncovered without any ceremony' the following Tuesday (14 November 1899).[201] Salisbury's government were evidently keen to avoid further unwanted attention, as this was only made public on the very day it was due to happen, and no time was given in the announcement.[202] As Hardwicke would later recount, at 7.30am on that 'dark November morning' the Cromwell statue 'was stealthily unveiled by a workman... without one word of panegyric.'[203] The only other people present were a duty policeman and an official from the Office of Works.[204]

It was only after the statue had safely been installed that Rosebery spoke for the first time about the Irish opposition. On the evening of the unveiling, a 'national meeting' of the statue's supporters was held in the Queen's Hall, Marylebone, during which Rosebery gave a long speech.[205] The former Prime Minister began in a conciliatory tone, conceding that 'I am one of those who feel that were I an Irishman I, at any rate, should not be a contributor to a statue to Oliver Cromwell. I am not sure that even as a Scotsman I may not have to bear some little censure for being present on this occasion.'[206] However, his true colours began to show when he turned to Cromwell's Irish policy. Though he admitted that it was 'ruthless and cruel in the extreme', he stopped far short of condemning it.[207] In fact, he attempted to excuse it by claiming that it was the result of a 'great provocation', that the Puritans were against Roman Catholics in general and not specifically the

[199] Ward-Jackson (2012), 175.

[200] Ward-Jackson (2012), 175.

[201] Anon. (Office of Works), 'Memoranda', 10 November 1899, TNA WORK 20/100.

[202] *Standard*, 14 November 1899, 4; *Daily News*, 14 November 1899, 4; *Times,* 14 November 1899, 10.

[203] HL Deb, 21 June 1900, vol. 84, col. 590; *Times,* 16 November 1899, 12.

[204] *Manchester Guardian,* 15 November 1899, 9; Unwin (2009), 421.

[205] Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery, *Oliver Cromwell. A Eulogy and an Appreciation*. (London: A. Melrose, 1900); *Times*, 15 November 1899, 7.

[206] Rosebery (1900), 6.

[207] Rosebery (1900), 6.

Irish, and that the people in the garrison at Drogheda were mainly English.[208] Though Rosebery emphasised that these explanations were not meant to be 'by way of palliation', that is nevertheless exactly what they appear to have been.[209]

Last ditch efforts

The completion of the statue did not mark the end of the long-running saga. Early in the next parliamentary session, on 23 February 1900, Irish nationalist MPs took up criticism of the statue again.[210] The Irish Parliamentary Party had recently reunited and, unlike the debates in 1895, the statue provided a useful issue on which to present a unified front.[211] Swift MacNeill, who the following month exposed Rosebery as the donor,[212] complained that Irish MPs coming to Parliament 'to defend the rights of our country … should not be insulted by the eyesore of a man who murdered our people.'[213] Though he and his fellow nationalists wanted a parliament of their own, MacNeill warned that, as long as they were at Westminster, the rest of the Commons 'will respect us'.[214] Dillon, by contrast, chose a typically less confrontational tack. Focusing on the unsuitability of the site, given Cromwell's actions towards Parliament, Dillon argued that if neither Parliament nor the public were willing to fund the statue then it should not have been erected solely on the wishes of a single anonymous donor.[215] Dillon also emphasized the volte face performed by the Tories on the issue, noting that, in 1895, numerous Tory MPs had encouraged him and his fellow Irish MPs to 'stick to our guns' in opposing the statue.[216]

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[208] Rosebery (1900), 6.

[209] Rosebery (1900), 6-7.

[210] HC Deb, 30 March 1900, vol. 81, cols. 905-16.

[211] Lyons (1951), 67-109

[212] HC Deb, 30 March 1900, vol. 81, cols. 915-16.

[213] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 951.

[214] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 951.

[215] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, cols. 952-54.

[216] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 952.

In an attempt to answer the accusations of inconsistency, Balfour entered the debate again publicly for the first time since 1895. As no public money had been spent on the statue, the explanation he gave for originally having opposed it, he saw no reason why the government should refuse the 'anonymous donor's' gift.[217] Without the imperative of damaging the Liberals, Balfour deployed far more critical language than he had used in 1895 when siding with the Irish nationalists. Putting their opposition to Cromwell down to 'rooted weaknesses of the Irish character', he argued: 'They never will forgive an injury; though it is an injury 200 or 300 years old, it seems to them as fresh as if committed yesterday.'[218] By way of comparison, Balfour noted that the Battle of Dunbar – 'where Cromwell defeated my countrymen' – was fought near his home, yet his fellow Scots maintained no 'blood feud with Cromwell' like the Irish.[219] T.P. O'Connor pounced on this comment, highlighting that Cromwell was not despised in Ireland because he beat the Irish in battle, but because he committed cold-blooded massacres once the battle was over.[220] Willie Redmond was also quick to attack Balfour's criticism of the Irish character. He observed that injuries caused by Cromwell in Ireland were not just historical, but that there still remained much in the government of the country instituted by him and there were many injustices still to be remedied.[221]

This latter phase of the debate highlighted fissures in the Irish unionist camp over the issue. Unionist opposition came from Edward Carson (1854-1935), MP for Dublin University, a future Irish Unionist Party leader who would play a pivotal role in events in Ireland that would lead to the partition of the country in 1922.[222] Pulling no punches, Carson denounced Cromwell as a murderer, an accusation that caused his fellow Unionist William Johnston

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[217] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 970.

[218] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 969.

[219] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 969.

[220] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 972.

[221] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 974-77.

[222] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 954 & 960-61. For Carson's role in Irish politics, see Geoffrey Lewis, *Carson: The Man Who Divided Ireland* (London: Hambledon & London, 2005) and Alvin Jackson, *Sir Edward Carson* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1993).

to exclaim, 'I utterly repudiate it.'[223] As well as being an insult to Ireland, Carson felt that the statue was 'a slight to this House' and argued that, as all the Parliamentary action on the subject had been hostile, Akers-Douglas should never have allowed it to be erected.[224] Carson's position was almost unique among Irish unionist MPs but was consistent with his own wider views.[225] Unlike Johnston, Saunderson and most other unionists at Westminster, Carson was from Dublin not Ulster.[226] His Ulster affiliations resulted from his unionism and wider British and imperial patriotism, but his southern upbringing gave him a different outlook on many issues, Cromwell being one of them.[227] Reflecting Carson's particular identity as both a proud unionist and avowed Irish patriot, Dillon lauded his response as 'the opinion of an Irishman.'[228]

Despite this ongoing hostility, with the statue in position and no public money having been spent on it, Swift, Dillon, Redmond and Carson were reduced to token gestures of opposition. Introducing an unsuccessful motion to reduce the vote for the maintenance of the Houses of Parliament by £100, MacNeill noted: 'I for one object to voting a single penny even to whitewash Oliver Cromwell.'[229] A similar move to reduce Akers-Douglas' salary in protest at his actions likewise resulted in failure.[230] In the Lords, Hardwicke criticized the Irish MPs for proposing, and losing, motions that could be interpreted as the Commons expressing its opinion on the statue issue as a whole.[231] However, Hardwicke was unable to do anything of greater consequence himself. Even with the high-profile figure of Lord Morris (1826-1901), a former Lord Chief Justice of Ireland and no nationalist, adding his

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[223] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 954.

[224] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 954.

[225] For Carson's intervention, see *Irish Times,* 24 February 1900, 5 and Ian Colvin, *The Life of Lord Carson* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 277.

[226] Lewis (2005), 1-12.

[227] For a recent overview of Carson's unionism, see Iain E. Johnston, 'Edward Carson: Ulster Unionist or Irish Patriot?' *History Ireland* 20/3 (2012), 38-42.

[228] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol. 79, col. 954.

[229] HC Deb, 23 February 1900, vol 79 cols. 950-52. The motion was defeated by 221 to 53.

[230] HC Deb, 3 August 1900, vol. 87, cols. 710-11. This motion was defeated by 150 to 10.

[231] HL Deb, 21 June 1900, vol. 84, col. 590.

opposition 'as an Irishman', the complaints fell on deaf ears.[232]

Rosebery as the modern 'curse of Cromwell'

For over half a century, the cry had been 'Should Cromwell have a statue?' By June 1900, the *Morning Post* was asking its readers, 'Shall we ever hear the last of that memorial in stone to the Lord Protector which faces Parliament-square?'[233] With the statue erected, many hours having been devoted to discussion of the issue in Parliament and hundreds of column inches in the press, not to mention what was seen as the embarrassing vote in the House of Lords, everyone finally seems to have tired of the issue. The statue's opponents, including the Irish, seeing that they were getting nowhere and with few options left open to them, abandoned the cause.

However, the events surrounding the statue continued to haunt Rosebery, particularly in the Irish press. In 1900, he made what was later described as 'an attack of extraordinary violence and bitterness' over Hardwicke's appointment as Undersecretary of State for India, accusing him of having a conflict of interest because of his involvement with the London Stock Exchange.[234] The *Freeman's Journal* suspected that the real reason for Rosebery's assault was Hardwicke's opposition to the Cromwell statue.[235] Rosebery's continuing and 'virulent animosity' to Home Rule was also put down, by some, to Irish nationalist opposition to the Cromwell statue and its role in bringing down his ministry.[236] Although Rosebery himself had claimed not to 'associate the two facts in the slightest degree', and his views on Home Rule had been apparent since the start of his premiership, it is difficult to imagine that the Cromwell controversy had not gone some way to hardening his position.[237] In this respect, he was moving further from the new

[232] HL Deb, 21 June 1900, vol. 84, cols. 588-98.

[233] *Morning Post*, 22 June 1900, 2.

[234] *Times*, 30 Nov 1904, 6; HL Deb 6, December 1900, vol. 88, cols. 47-9; HL Deb, 14 December 1900, vol. 88 cols. 801-11; *Freeman's Journal,* 6 December 1904, 9.

[235] *Freeman's Journal,* 6 December 1904, 9.

[236] *Freeman's Journal,* 6 December 1904, 9; *Irish Independent,* 29 November 1905, 4.

[237] Rosebery (1900), 4.

Liberal leader, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who, it should be remembered, had opposed the Cromwell statue from the start.[238] Campbell-Bannerman was determined to retain Home Rule as a major plank of the Liberal platform and, in November 1905, with Balfour's government looking likely to fall, announced that 'the opportunity of making a great advance on this question of Irish Government will not be long delayed'.[239] In a speech two days later, Rosebery came out decisively against Home Rule.[240] According to the *Irish Independent,* the former prime minister was 'avenging himself by playing the part of a modern "curse of Cromwell" on Ireland.'[241] When the Liberals returned to power the following month, Rosebery was left out of the government and pointedly began sitting on the cross benches.[242] His anti-Home Rule agenda, born of the same lack of concern for Irish national feeling that resulted in the Cromwell statue, had led him, as one Irish newspaper described, 'to political disgrace and extinction'.[243]

[238] For Rosebery's relationship with Campbell-Bannerman, see Rhodes James (1963), 453-58.

[239] Rhodes James (1963), 453.

[240] Rhodes James (1963), 453.

[241] *Irish Independent,* 29 November 1905, 4.

[242] Rhodes James (1963), 457-58.

[243] *Donegal News,* 6 October 1906, 6.

CHAPTER SIX

United under one roof?
Representing the Union in Central Lobby

An anecdote told by some MPs, Peers and parliamentary staff members alike explains the placement of the mosaics of the UK patron saints in Central Lobby (Fig. 75) using national stereotypes relating to England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. According to this popular explanation, St George is over the entrance to the House of Lords because the English like to lord it over the other nations. St David stands above the Commons' entrance because the Welsh like the sound of their own voice. Meanwhile, St Andrew is above the East Corridor that leads to the bars, reflecting Scot's love of a drink. Finally, St Patrick appears above the public exit because of Ireland wanting to leave the Union.[1] Unsurprisingly, there is no truth in this as an explanation of the mosaics' arrangement, but in some ways that is beside the point. Its importance lies in its indication of the scheme's interpretation at a popular level, and how issues of national identity and the politics of the Union are seen to be inherent within it. It is surprising, then, that the few formal accounts of the mosaics pay little or no attention to issues relating to the Union that, as this chapter will show, play a central role in the scheme's development and reception.[2]

As touched upon in Chapter 4,[3] in 1847 the FAC suggested that, in Central Lobby, 'the nationality of the component parts of the United Kingdom should be the idea here illustrated, and would be appropriately expressed by representations of the four patron saints, St George, St Andrew, St Patrick,

[1] For recent versions of this anecdote, see Robert Dale, *How to be a Parliamentary Researcher* (London: Biteback, 2015), 213-14 and 'Lifting the Lid', *Inside the Commons* episode 1 (BBC1, 2015).

[2] These accounts are: Thomas Wilson, *Historical Note on the Mosaics at the Palace of Westminster* (London: Privately Printed, 1926); Robyn Asleson, *Albert Moore* (London: Phaidon, 2000), 71-5; and Alice Eden, 'Robert Anning Bell (1863-1933) and the Mosaics in the House of Parliament', *British Art Journal* 10/2 (2009), 22-31.

[3] See p. 135 above.

and St David'.[4] These images, it felt, 'might be advantageously executed in Mosaic … thus giving an opportunity for the introduction into England of an art highly valued in other times and countries.'[5] As has been argued, this planned scheme formed the most even-handed attempt by the FAC at including the four UK nations in Parliament's decorations. It was both literally and conceptually central to its visualisation of the UK and its unique attempt to create an art of union. Yet, as with many of the FAC's plans, the Central Lobby programme was left unrealised at the winding up of the Commission in the mid-1860s. What sets it apart from the other abandoned schemes, however, is that it was, until recently, the only one to be completed by subsequent generations.[6]

With mosaics of the patron saints of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales today dominating Central Lobby, the complete appearance of the scheme belies the fragmented nature of its realisation. However, the style of the four mosaics gives some clues to this. Those of St George (1869) and St David (1899) were designed by Sir Edward Poynter (1836-1919) and reflect his classical leanings. Prefabricated in sections by a Venetian mosaic firm, they appear flat, like paintings reproduced in mosaic. By contrast, St Andrew (1923) and St Patrick (1924), designed by Robert Anning Bell (1863-1933) and created in situ, show a development towards a more stylised approach influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, with an uneven surface that reflects the light at various angles. But why was the scheme completed in such a fragmented way? How did the completion of each mosaic relate to contemporary events within the Union? And did their design, and reception, reflect political as well as artistic developments? In answering these questions, this chapter will argue that, although each mosaic came to be undertaken in unique circumstances and for different reasons, their

[4] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 10.

[5] Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 15.

[6] In 2010, a series of paintings reproducing six of the Armada tapestries destroyed in 1834 were installed in the Prince's Chamber in line with the FAC's 1847 programme. See Malcolm Hay, 'The Armada Paintings in the New Palace of Westminster', *Parliamentary History* 29/3 (2010), 441-51.

completion and/or reception was directly connected to the politics of the Union to a greater or lesser degree.

Reviving mosaic in Central Lobby

The late-1860s revival of the scheme to decorate Central Lobby with mosaics was led by two men: Edward Middleton Barry and Austen Henry Layard. E.M. Barry (1830-80) had taken over as architect of the Palace of Westminster on Charles Barry's death in 1860.[7] For a decade, under successive First Commissioners of Works, he was responsible for completing various aspects of the building left unfinished by his father.[8] Following the demise of the FAC, he also took on oversight of the fine art, commissioning statuary, bas reliefs and wall paintings.[9] Layard was the penultimate First Commissioner under whom E.M. Barry worked, though it is as the archaeologist who excavated Nimrod and Nineveh, rather than as a politician, that he is best remembered.[10] Given the Office of Works when Gladstone first came to power at the beginning of December 1868, Layard quickly came on board with E.M. Barry's plans to alter Central Lobby, which they, and others, considered a dark and gloomy space.[11] The architect's prime objective was to introduce more light and colour by altering the windows and adding mosaic decoration to the roof and behind John Thomas's statues, as well as by replacing the stone columns with marble. Crucially, however, E.M. Barry also proposed to complete the four vacant wall compartments in mosaic.[12]

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[7] Henceforth, Edward Middleton Barry is referred to as E.M. Barry to distinguish him from his father.

[8] Port ed. (1976), 173-94.

[9] Boase (1954), 350 & 352; Port ed. (1976), 173-94; Read (1976), 233-4.

[10] For Layard see Gordon Waterfield, *Layard of Nineveh* (London: John Murray, 1963).

[11] Port ed. (1976), 180.

[12] HC Deb, 28 June 1869, vol. 197, col. 682; HC Deb, 8 July 1869, vol. 197, cols. 1431-34.

Mosaic was said to have been chosen because, following the work overseen by the FAC, fresco had been deemed a failure.[13] Despite the fact that E.M. Barry intended to follow the FAC's original 1847 plan to depict the four UK patron saints, he appears to have been unaware that the FAC had intended to use mosaic all along. Regardless of whether or not this was the case, Layard was the ideal First Commissioner to whom to make such a proposal. A leading proponent of the revival of the medium and its introduction into Britain, four years earlier he had helped raise capital for Antonio Salviati (1816-90), the leading Venetian mosaic revivalist, to establish Salviati and Company.[14] This firm, who would be given the early parliamentary commissions, was instrumental in popularising the technique in the UK from the mid-1860s, working on prominent commissions such as Prince Albert's mausoleum at Frogmore (1862), the Albert memorial (1866-8) and the 'Kensington Valhalla' (1864-75).[15] With this background, Layard readily accepted the proposed use of mosaic and, while E.M. Barry retained control over the more architectural decorative work, the First Commissioner took personal responsibility for the mosaic panels.[16]

To obtain designs for the mosaics, in early January 1869, Layard approached four young painters whom he knew, or with whose work he was familiar: Poynter, Frederic Leighton, Albert Moore and Val Prinsep.[17] That all four artists were English stands in contrast to the diverse backgrounds of those employed by the FAC. Just as the FAC's inclusivity does not appear to have been intentional, Layard's lack of it can be put down to factors other

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[13] HC Deb 8 July 1869, vol.197, cols.1432-33. Notably, the possibility of using waterglass does not appear to have been considered.

[14] Port ed. (1976), 180; Reino Leifkes, 'Antonio Salviati and the Nineteenth-Century Renaissance of Venetian Glass', *Burlington Magazine* 136 (1994), 286; Sheldon Barr, *Venetian Glass Mosaics, 1860-1917* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 2008), 26.

[15] Barr (2008), 16-24.

[16] HC Deb, 22 July 1869, vol. 198, col. 448; HC Deb, 26 July 1869, vol. 198, cols. 717-18.

[17] James Ferguson (Office of Works) to Poynter, Prinsep and Moore, 6 January 1869 and Ferguson to Leighton, 12 January 1869, TNA WORK/11/64. Layard knew Leighton, Poynter and Prinsep personally, and was familiar with Moore's work from the RA. HC Deb, 8 July 1869, vol.197, col.1433; Leonée and Richard Ormond, *Lord Leighton* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press), 63 & 86.

than bias or prejudice. Particularly keen to employ young artists, his personal taste led him to a new generation of painters who were inspired by the classical world of ancient Greece and Rome.[18] Later known as the Victorian Olympians, this movement consisted almost solely of English artists.[19] Leighton and Poynter became two of its leading figures, while Moore and Prinsep also played important roles.[20]

To assist Layard's chosen artists, and ensure a certain amount of uniformity, E.M. Barry produced his own sketch for the St George panel (Fig. 76) based on a series of rules he established for the artists to follow.[21] The choice of which saint to depict appears to have been left to the painters to work out among themselves, and by mid-June, Leighton had submitted an initial design for St George, Poynter for St David and Moore for St Patrick, all of which survive.[22] The whereabouts of Prinsep's sketch is not known, however it can safely be assumed that it was for the St Andrew mosaic. While largely conforming to E.M. Barry's written conditions, the four classicists' designs appear quite different from the architect's, which is decidedly Gothic in appearance and follows the medievalising approach seen in the architectural decoration of the building.

Leighton's design for the St George mosaic (Fig. 77), newly identified as such during the research for this thesis, consists of a mounted figure of the saint above classical personifications of Conquest, Britannia enthroned and Commerce.[23] Meanwhile, Moore depicts a young, beardless St Patrick wearing a tight fitting sheepskin tunic and drape with a bare leg exposed

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[18] HC Deb, 8 July 1869, vol. 197, col. 1433; HC Deb, 26 July 1869, vol. 198, cols. 713-14.

[19] For the Victorian Olympians, see Christopher Wood, *Olympian Dreamers: Victorian Classical Painters, 1860-1914* (London: Constable, 1983).

[20] For Leighton, Poynter, Moore and Prinsep respectively, see Wood (1983), 34-80, 131-153, 157-177 & 205-7.

[21] E.M. Barry to Layard, 4 January 1869, TNA WORK/11/64.

[22] Poynter submitted his design on 7 May, Moore on 2 June and Leighton on 3 June. See letters to Office of Works with relevant dates, TNA WORK/11/6.

[23] Leighton to Layard, 3 June 1869, TNA WORK/11/64. Leighton's design is in the Leighton House Museum.

(Fig. 78).[24] The saint is flanked by allegories of *Caritas* (Charity) and *Fides* (Faith), while in a lower section is a classical grouping of two sleeping women with children. Poynter's design (Fig. 79) is the most Gothic, with St David, who stands on a hill preaching with a dove on his shoulder, and what the artist called two 'little angelic acolytes', framed by a pierced Gothic structure.[25] A lower section, consisting of two putti supporting a shield bearing a seemingly invented coat of arms for the Principality of Wales, was subsequently cut out by Poynter and pasted onto a later version of the design (see Fig. 83).

When submitting his sketch, Poynter raised concerns about not having seen the other designs and the likelihood that they would not be consistent with one another.[26] This fear was borne out, with the result that Layard rejected Leighton's and Prinsep's sketches, terminated their commissions, and gave St George and St Patrick to Poynter and Moore instead.[27] With Poynter's and Moore's compositions sharing some formal similarities, Layard encouraged them to work together to bring all their designs into harmony.[28]

Moore initially appears to have produced a detailed design for St Andrew following the format of his existing design for St Patrick (Fig. 80).[29] It consists of St Andrew with another representation of *Fides* on the right, while on the left stands *Fortitudo* (Fortitude). Below, St Rule kneels with an open

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[24] The catalogue entry for the work from a 1972 exhibition states that it is inscribed verso: 'Sketch for a Mosaic for the Central Hall, Houses of Parliament, submitted to the Commissioners of H.M. Works by Mr A. Moore, 2 June 1869 – lent to S.K. Museum by the Commissioners 16 May 1893' (see Richard Green, *Albert Moore and His Contemporaries* (Newcastle: Laing Gallery, 1972), 18). The appearance of these now-lost designs is known through reproductions in Alfred Lys Baldry, *Albert Moore: His Life and Works* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1894), 38.

[25] Poynter to Ferguson, 7 May 1869, TNA WORK/11/64. Poynter's sketch is in the National Museum Wales (NMW) along with other preparatory works relating to his parliamentary mosaics. For a selection of these, see Bethany McIntyre, *Victorian Visions: Pre-Raphaelite Drawings and Watercolours from the National Museums and Galleries Wales* (Washington DC: International Arts & Artists, 2003), 58-69.

[26] Poynter to Ferguson, 7 May 1869, TNA WORK/11/64.

[27] Ferguson to Poynter and Moore, 17 June 1869, TNA WORK/11/64.

[28] Ferguson to Poynter and Moore, 17 June 1869, TNA WORK/11/64.

[29] Baldry (1984), 38; Green (1972), 18.

casket as two women pray, a reference to the legend of St Andrew's relics arriving in Scotland in the 4th century. A second set of designs by Moore indicate that he and Poynter subsequently began to work together in an attempt to comply with Layard's hope to bring the designs more into line with one another (Figs. 81 & 82). Moore would later state that he made considerable changes to his first designs to meet Layard's wish.[30] But, looking at the second, far sketchier pair, there is little evidence of this. Alongside changing some of the colouring, Moore's main alteration is the division of the upper compartment into two sections, a feature also found in Poynter's second design for St David and his new composition for St George.[31]

Poynter's designs show many attempts to conform with Moore's. In his redesigned St David (Fig. 83), the Gothic structure is replaced by two slender trees very similar to those in Moore's sketches, between the canopies of which Poynter includes a leek in a roundel that mirrors the use of symbols in this position by Moore. In addition, the two flanking figures are far taller than previously, with one becoming a female allegory identifiable by a sign affixed to the tree next to her inscribed 'LEARNING GIVETH LIGHT'. That the other figure remained an angel accompanied by a blank label indicates that Poynter struggled to identify a second appropriate personification. He had no such problems with his entirely new St George (Fig. 84).[32] Standing over the defeated dragon, St George is flanked by Purity on the right, holding the saint's helmet and a lily. The figure is identified by the label 'PURITY GIVETH VALOUR' on one of two trees later identifiable as English oaks. On the left stands Courage, with a lion's skin and a club, labelled 'COURAGE MAKETH STRONG'. She holds a pennant bearing the St George Cross, which forms the emblem that occupies the apex of the arch. In the lower section, two putti hold a garland of roses, the English national flower, and a

[30] Moore to Layard, 14 August 1869, TNA WORK/11/64.

[31] The colouring of the first set of designs can be determined by the description in Baldry (1894), 38.

[32] Poynter's St George design and related sketches are in the NMW. See McIntyre (2003), 58-69. Other preparatory material is in the V&A.

garter in reference to the national order of chivalry. The shield between them is emblazoned with the royal coat of arms of the UK.

Moore's unwillingness to compromise on his designs led to Layard rejecting them as he had done with Leighton and Prinsep. Though Layard fully appreciated their 'extreme beauty and elegance', he believed it would be impossible to assimilate them further with Poynter's, which he felt were 'more appropriate' for reproduction in mosaic.[33] It is also likely that the emphatic classicism of Moore's sketches played a role in their rejection.[34]

Prioritising St George

Despite Layard originally commissioning Poynter to produce a design for St David, the First Commissioner proceeded with creating St George in mosaic first. Following Layard's approval of the sketch, Poynter began working up the full-size cartoon in sections that, as they were completed, he sent to Venice.[35] The precise reason for completing St George first is not clear. With some aspects of the St David design not finalised, one possibility is that Layard felt it expedient to complete the more advanced design first. However, given the advanced nature of the Welsh saint's composition, plus the fact that Poynter altered the St George design as he worked it up, a more compelling explanation is that Layard considered the English saint the most important to complete first. Had the initial plan to employ all four artists been followed, it seems likely that the four saints would have been undertaken more or less at the same time. With only one artist now working on the project and only two designs existing, the choice had to be made between whether St David or St George took priority. This decision may have been

[33] Letter from Office of Works to Moore, 10 August 1869, TNA WORK/11/64.

[34] *Art Journal,* 1 June 1870, 171.

[35] Poynter began working on the cartoon in early September and the final section was received by Salviati on 22 December 1869. See Poynter to Layard, 23 September 1869, British Library, London (BL) Add MS 38996, f.403, and E.J. Edwards (Salviati & Co.) to Office of Works, 22 December 1869, TNA WORK/11/64. For the prefabrication technique employed, see Barr (2008), 12-13. Poynter exhibited the cartoon at the RA in 1870.

made more pressing by unease in the Commons over the expense of the new decorations, which raised the threat of the project being halted.[36]

That no records discussing that St George should be completed first survive indicates that, far from being a difficult decision, it was simply the obvious course of action to take. If the mosaics could not be completed at the same time then surely England, as the most important member of the Union, should receive attention first? This Anglocentric line of thinking was espoused in the *Architect,* which called the St George mosaic 'the first, and (we suppose we must add) the most important, of the four panels'.[37] During the mosaic's installation in January 1870, the *Times* also drew attention to the fact that St George was to appear before the other patron saints, expressing a hope that 'his priority may pass, but perhaps it would be well if his three companions could be placed simultaneously.'[38] The paper thus endorsed England's precedence, while at the same time showing an awareness of Scottish, Irish and Welsh national feeling.

Completed in early February 1870, the mosaic differs a little from the sketch approved by Layard (Fig. 85).[39] The one major alteration was to the lower section where the putti were removed, probably for being too classical, and an enlarged title added along with heraldic symbols reflecting those used in the architectural decoration.[40] At the suggestion of E.M. Barry, this included changing the UK royal arms to those of England, in order to 'obviate any objection to them'.[41] The fact that Poynter used the UK royal arms on the English panel in the first place – suggesting, perhaps, that St George is the UK patron saint with all that implies – indicates a certain lack of awareness regarding national symbolism, something E.M. Barry would have been far more in tune with.

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[36] HC Deb, 8 July 1869, vol. 197, cols. 1429-45.

[37] *Architect,* 12 February 1870, 86.

[38] *Times,* 28 January 1870, 6.

[39] *Times,* 5 February 1870, 8.

[40] Poynter to Office of Works, 9 November 1869, TNA WORK/11/64.

[41] E.M. Barry to Layard, 12 November 1869, TNA WORK/11/64.

Once installed, many considered the mosaic unsuccessful.[42] Poynter felt that during the day it generally had the desired effect, but at night the gas light fell on it 'rather awkwardly, [so] that the effect is too dazzling.'[43] Representatives from Salviati were also unhappy with its appearance. When one of their senior figures visited from Venice in May 1870, he was so 'mortified' at the location of the mosaic that he offered to move it to somewhere more suitable at the company's cost.[44] MPs also voiced criticism. Colonel Sykes, for example, felt that its obscure position made it worthless and informed the Commons that a police officer had told him that the dragon looked more like a pig.[45]

Layard was no longer at the Office of Works when the mosaic was installed. In a ministerial reshuffle on 26 October 1869, he had been replaced by Acton Smee Ayrton.[46] This was part of Gladstone's wider economising drive, with the *Times* describing Ayrton as a man 'with a lukewarm zeal for art, but with very strong instincts for economy and a very decided distrust of the artistic race'.[47] Many people, including Leighton and E.M. Barry, expressed their regret that the 'Minister for Art' was being replaced by someone like Ayrton.[48] Their fears were well placed. Within months, E.M. Barry had been removed from his position as architect, and it was largely down to Ayrton that the mosaic scheme foundered, leaving only St George completed.[49]

Though Poynter had been given the commission for all four designs after Moore's rejection, the perceived failure of the St George mosaic gave Ayrton the opportunity to pause the Central Lobby scheme.[50] For the following two years, he instigated various projects, ostensibly with a view to

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[42] *Times,* 5 February 1870, 8; *Graphic,* 11 February 1870, 3.

[43] Poynter to Office of Works, 17 Feb 1870, TNA WORK/11/64.

[44] Ayrton, 'Memorandum', 18 May 1870, TNA WORK/11/64.

[45] HC Deb, 25 March 1870, vol. 200, col. 640.

[46] Port ed. (1976), 181.

[47] *Times,* 28 June 1871, 9.

[48] E.M. Barry to Layard, 25 October 1869 and Leighton to Layard, n.d. (October 1869), BL Add. MS 38997, f.39 & f.167.

[49] Port ed. (1976), 187-88.

[50] Ayrton, 'Memorandum', 18 May 1870, TNA WORK/11/64.

determining the best way forward. These included convening a committee of artists who had worked on the building, which produced a report suggesting mosaic should be abandoned and fresco adopted again.[51] Discounting their advice, Ayrton encouraged Minton in their development of a form of ceramic painting with a view to using it in Central Lobby.[52] He also maintained contact with Salviati, asking them to produce their own proposal for the remaining patron saint mosaics.[53] As a result of Ayrton's delays and obfuscation, by the time he left the Office of Works in August 1873, there had been no material progress with the decoration of Central Lobby since he had taken office. This, as Port notes, was no doubt his intention.[54]

These events indicate that the St George mosaic was, in all likelihood, completed first because it related to England's patron saint. As such, it was prioritised over the other mosaics. These then suffered under the exigencies of economy. The desire to create a symbolic paradigm of union, thus fulfilling the FAC's original intention, was abandoned in favour of budgetary savings. What on paper had been the FAC's most equal attempt at representing the UK as part of its contribution to the art of union was thus turned into yet another artistic statement about England's dominance of the British state.

Such national considerations do not appear to have featured in Ayrton's decision to halt the mosaic programme. Yet it is worthwhile considering whether his approach would have differed if one of the other mosaics had been completed first. Would English MPs, the press or the public have countenanced anyone other than St George singularly dominating one of the principal spaces in the Houses of Parliament? It seems unlikely, and, although it is impossible to know for certain, it is

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[51] *House of Commons (Fresco Painting): Copy of Reports to the First Commissioner of Her Majesty's Works and Public Buildings respecting Fresco Painting in the Houses of Parliament,* HC 19 (1872).

[52] See Willis to Minton & Co, 22 Feb 1870 and Minton to George Russell (Office of Works), 24 February 1870, TNA WORK/11/64.

[53] See Ayrton, 'Memorandum', 4 July 1872 and G. Salviati to Lord Lennox (First Commissioner), 11 July 1874, TNA WORK/11/64.

[54] Port ed. (1976), 182. Layard and Poynter came to the same conclusion. See *Times,* 2 April 1883, 8 and Poynter to F.G. Stephens, 20 April 1896, Letters to F.G. Stephens, BLO MS Don.e.85, ff.193-4.

conceivable that there would have been a far greater imperative to complete the scheme had, for example, only St David been installed in 1870. As things stood, however, St George remained alone for three decades, during which there were no Scottish, Welsh or Irish complaints at being excluded.

Titular representations of the 'nationality of our component parts'

Paradoxically, it was English MPs who highlighted the lack of Scottish, Welsh and Irish lobbying for the completion of their patron saints' mosaics. In 1881, Tory MP Charles Schreiber (1826-84) proposed a resolution to complete the three remaining panels, describing the unfinished state of Central Lobby as 'not creditable either to Parliament or the nation.'[55] A classics scholar and art collector, Schreiber's motivation appears to have been born largely out of aesthetic sensibility and British national pride. He was convinced that, with the support of Irish and Scottish MPs, the St Patrick mosaic would be commissioned, which would then lead to St Andrew and St David being undertaken.[56] In the Commons, Schreiber threatened that, if the government did not commit to completing the scheme, he would 'ask the Irish Members, and also those Scotch Members who claimed St Patrick as a Scotchman, to give him their assistance.'[57] But his demands fell on deaf ears. The issue was clearly not one of importance to most MPs, with few present in the Commons to listen to Schreiber's speech and none supporting his resolution.[58]

Two years later, Schreiber tabled his motion again. Expressing surprise 'that it has been left for an English Member to raise this discussion', he encouraged Scottish, Welsh and Irish MPs to support him and 'atone for their neglect in past years.'[59] Targeting Scottish MPs, he argued that the short-lived NAVSR had seen fit to complain about Scottish heraldry in the 1850s, yet when 'the patron saint of Scotland is "left out in the cold" for a

[55] HC Deb, 16 August 1881, vol. 265, col. 42.

[56] HC Deb, 16 August 1881, vol. 265, cols. 43-4.

[57] HC Deb, 16 August 1881, vol. 265, col. 44.

[58] HC Deb, 16 August 1881, vol. 265, cols. 44-6

[59] HC Deb, 29 March 1883, vol. 277, col. 1035.

dozen years and more', there was no Scottish support for his inclusion.[60] Once again, though, no backing was forthcoming. The First Commissioner, George Shaw-Lefevre MP, noted that: 'Even the Scotchmen, and Irishmen, and Welshmen to whom [Schreiber] had appealed did not think it necessary to say a word in favour of the Motion'.[61] There was so little support that, this time, it was not even put forward to a vote.

The absence of Scottish, Welsh and Irish complaint about the mosaics after 1870 continued the precedent set by the lack of reaction to the FAC's 1847 decorative schemes and their eventual abandonment. Irish nationalists evidently felt that there was no political capital to be made by causing a controversy about St Patrick being overlooked, and perhaps continued to be wary of inadvertently validating the institution they opposed. Meanwhile, the want of Scottish, Welsh and Anglo-Irish interest, in part, reflects the continued general acceptance of the Anglocentric nature of the British state. In addition to this, there was a wider disaffection with the Houses of Parliament project. Having taken thirty years to complete, at three times the estimated cost - plus that spent on the completed FAC schemes, many of which were deemed a failure on account of the problems with fresco - there was simply little support in Parliament or among the public for any additional expenditure.[62]

The general lack of interest in the project, the desire to support savings, and the failure of Poynter's mosaic, meant that the Central Lobby programme lost the national symbolic importance with which it had earlier been imbued by the FAC. Despite this, given how the decoration of Parliament had been used by the FAC to promote national unity, it is noteworthy that successive British governments did not see the mosaic scheme's completion as a way of promoting the Union. This is particularly significant from the mid-1880s when Home Rule for Ireland and what was termed 'Home Rule all round' became dominant constitutional questions, and both the Tories/Unionists and Liberals

[60] HC Deb, 29 March 1883, vol. 277, col. 1035.

[61] HC Deb, 29 March 1883, vol. 277, col. 1036.

[62] In addition to the debates already cited, see *Times,* 2 April 1883, 8 and HC Deb, 16 August 1887, vol. 319, cols. 661-2.

sought to argue the validity of their different visions of the Union's future.[63] The possibility that the Central Lobby programme could represent both sides' visions was in fact put forward by Schreiber's successor as the scheme's greatest advocate, his fellow English Tory MP Edwin de Lisle (1842-1920).[64] Like Schreiber, De Lisle was mainly concerned with completing the scheme to maintain what he termed the 'dignity of Parliament'.[65] However, having received no support in the Commons in 1887 on aesthetic grounds, he wrote in the *Times*:

> If truly we are to remain one United Kingdom, as both political parties now stoutly maintain, both parties might be satisfied; for the titular representations of the "nationality of our component parts" will be united under one roof, though separated by different arches and mouldings.[66]

Though Schreiber had discussed the NAVSR, this was the first time that the scheme was overtly linked to the current politics of the Union. Using the architecture of Central Lobby as his metaphor, De Lisle argued that the mosaic scheme need not be partisan, because all four nations, whether under Liberal proposals of Home Rule all round or not, would still find representation in Westminster. Both parties could, therefore, support the scheme because it contained the flexibility to reflect both their views of what the Union should be. Despite this rather ingenious attempt to garner support for completing the mosaics from across the House, De Lisle was no more successful than Schreiber had been. For the reasons outlined above, there was simply no appetite for further decoration, regardless of the political uses to which it could be put. The fact that no other schemes were undertaken

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[63] For Irish Home Rule, see Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule, 1867-1921* (Manchester University Press, 1998), Ch. 3-6. For Home Rule all round, see John Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal Solution: The Debate over the United Kingdom Constitution, 1870-1921* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), Ch. 2 & 3.

[64] HC Deb, 16 August 1887, vol. 319, cols. 661-2; HC Deb, 20 March 1889, vol. 334, cols. 263-65; HC Deb, 29 March 1889, vol. 334, cols. 1151-2.

[65] HC Deb, 16 August 1887, vol. 319, col. 662.

[66] *Times,* 23 August 1887, 6.

between the completion of St George and the early 1890s further indicates this general feeling.

St David and the Welsh national revival

The Welsh Home Rule movement that began in the 1880s was short lived. However, it was just one part of a cultural and political revival at the end of the nineteenth century, during which a new sense of Welsh nationality was created.[67] This built on the foundations laid earlier in the century by the Llanovers, amongst others, and led to the passage of specifically Welsh legislation for the first time since 1542. Following this came the creation of Welsh national institutions such as the Royal Cambrian Academy (1881), the University of Wales (1893), and the National Library and National Museum (1907).[68] Welsh MPs and issues became more prominent in Parliament during this period, particularly following the appearance in 1886 of a small proto-nationalist movement called Cymru fydd (Young Wales), among whose number could be counted David Lloyd George.[69] Cymru fydd unsuccessfully sought a weak form of assembly for Wales but, after its collapse in 1896, Welsh nationalism became largely cultural.[70] Yet, despite this cultural and political context, the Welsh national revival, and those involved in it, played no role whatsoever in the completion of the St David mosaic in Central Lobby between 1896 and 1899 (Fig. 86). However, Poynter's image itself did come to play an important role in the Welsh national revival.

The resumption of the mosaic scheme was partly due to a Scottish Liberal MP, Dr Robert Farquharson, who, like De Lisle and Schreiber, sought to have it completed so as to improve Central Lobby's unfinished

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[67] See Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales, 1880-1980* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1981), 90-122.

[68] Morgan (1981), 36-7.

[69] Prys Morgan, 'The Creation of the National Museum and National Library', in *Myths, Memories and Futures: The National Library and National Museum in the Story of Wales* (Cardiff: Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2007), 14.

[70] Morgan (2007), 19.

appearance.[71] Having first raised the subject unsuccessfully in 1889, in 1896 Farquharson found support from other MPs as well as First Commissioner Akers-Douglas, who, to cheers from the House, pledged to approach the Treasury for the necessary funds.[72] The importance of an amenable First Commissioner had been highlighted by the difference between Layard's and Ayrton's periods in office. With Akers-Douglas at the Office of Works, the Tories had carried on with the Liberals' statue of Cromwell. The same administration took the next step in the mosaic scheme too.

In 1897, Parliament voted £750 towards the completion of the mosaics and Poynter, now the PRA, was approached about producing the cartoon for St David based on his existing sketch.[73] Akers-Douglas thought that Poynter should also complete all the remaining panels.[74] However, officials at the Office of Works felt that this would not be a popular move and were concerned that the cost would far exceed the amount voted for the scheme.[75] As a result, largely by chance rather than design, only the St David mosaic was commissioned.[76] Crucially for this study, no Welsh MPs played a part in the process, nor did any notion of the need to appeal to Welsh national feeling.

At Poynter's suggestion, the Venice and Murano Glass Company, as Salviati & Co. had become, were again employed to create the final mosaic.[77] For reasons of symmetry, this was fixed in position above the entrance to the Commons, and therefore opposite St George, in February 1899.[78] Though the final design retains many of the features of the second sketch that Poynter had submitted to Layard in 1869, it also contains some

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[71] *Times,* 18 June 1889, 16.

[72] HC Deb, 10 April 1896, vol. 39, cols. 710-30.

[73] HC Deb, 9 April 1897, vol. 48, cols. 890-92; Office of Works, 'Memorandum', 13 October 1897, TNA WORK/11/64.

[74] HC Deb, 18 April 1898, vol. 56, col. 364; Office of Works, 'Memorandum', 21 August 1897, TNA WORK/11/64.

[75] Office of Works, 'Memorandum', 13 October 1897, TNA WORK/11/64.

[76] Reginald Brett (Office of Works) to Poynter, 18 October 1897, and reply, 5 November 1897, TNA WORK/11/64.

[77] Poynter to Akers-Douglas, 11 August 1898, TNA WORK/11/64.

[78] *Times,* 23 February, 1899, 10.

important developments. The principal alteration is the replacement of the remaining angel on the left with another female allegory to match Learning on the right. The new figure stands with one hand on a Welsh harp, a bunch of mistletoe in the other and a wreath on her head. These symbols indicate that she represents the Welsh bardic tradition, an interpretation that is supported by the *Times*'s description of her as 'the Spirit of Ancient Welsh Poetry'.[79] Other changes include the addition of red fruit to the trees behind the figures identifying them as rowans, a prominent tree in British folklore that was particularly sacred in Wales.[80] The lower compartment's design resembles that of the St George mosaic. The two shields display the arms of the Principality of Wales, this time correctly emblazoned on the left, and the personal arms of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, the last native Prince of Wales, on the right. Two leeks flank the central panel containing the title.

As well as there being no Welsh involvement in the St David mosaic's completion, there also appears to have been little Welsh interest once it was installed. It was a full decade later before Poynter's image received recognition in Wales and begin to play a role in the Welsh national revival. This was almost solely down to the actions of one man, Alfred Thomas Davies (1861-1949). Born in Liverpool to Welsh parents, Davies studied at University College Wales, Aberystwyth. While subsequently practicing as a solicitor in Liverpool, he served on various Welsh education committees and trusts, making him the ideal candidate for the post of the first Permanent Secretary to the Welsh Department of the Board of Education when it was established in 1907. [81] As Leslie Wynne Evans argues, the Welsh Department was central to the creation of a specifically Welsh approach to education in the Principality during this period.[82] Davies introduced various

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[79] *Times,* 23 February, 1899, 10.

[80] Anon., 'Fairies, Witches and Witchcraft in Wales', *Bye-gones, Relating to Wales and the Border Counties* 7 (1896), 260-1.

[81] Robert Thomas Jenkins, 'Davies, Sir Alfred Thomas, C.B. (1861-1949)', in R.T. Jenkins, E.D. Jones and Brynley F. Roberts eds., *Dictionary of Welsh Biography,* 1941-1970 (London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 2001), 27.

[82] Leslie Wynne Evans, *Studies in Welsh Education: Welsh Educational Structure and Administration, 1880-1925* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1974), 1.

measures, including the recognition of the Welsh language in the Education Code, the appointment of Welsh-speaking inspectors for schools, and the publication of separate statistics for Welsh schools.[83] Among his policies was the publication of what Davies termed 'reproductions of good pictures especially suitable for Welsh schools'.[84] The central image that Davies identified to use as part of this policy was Poynter's St David mosaic.[85]

The Welsh Department's reproduction of Poynter's St David was not taken directly from the mosaic but from a painted copy of Poynter's cartoon that Davies placed at the centre of his most idiosyncratic contribution to the Welsh national revival, the Ceiriog Memorial Institute (Fig. 87).[86] Located in the village of Glyn Ceiriog in the Ceiriog Valley of North Wales, the institute is dedicated to the prominent Welsh poet John 'Ceiriog' Hughes (1832-87).[87] Davies founded the Institute in 1909 through a gift of land and an endowment fund that attracted donations from prominent Welsh figures, including Lloyd George.[88] Designed by Liverpool-based Welsh architect Thomas Taliesin Rees (1865-1943), the building opened in 1911 as a well-equipped social and civic centre that functioned, among other things, as a village hall, courthouse, meeting place for local societies and organisations, library, museum and art gallery.[89]

Davies designed the institute not only to meet local needs but also, as he later described, 'to provide an object lesson for the rest of Wales as to how Love of Country and Service to the Community may be fostered by recalling to the present and future generations some of the achievements of the men … who are commemorated within its walls.'[90] Lloyd George said of

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[83] Evans (1974), 323-4.

[84] Quoted in Evans (1974), 323-4.

[85] Evans (1974), 323-4.

[86] Today in storage at the V&A, during this period the cartoon was on public display along with that for the St George mosaic.

[87] Alfred T. Davies, *Glain y Glyn: The Story of the Ceiriog Memorial Institute* (Wrexham: Hughes & Son, 1933), 4.

[88] Davies (1933), 10 & 60.

[89] Davies (1933), 4 & 10; Edward Hubbard, *The Buildings of Wales: Clwyd* (London: Penguin, 1986), 168.

[90] Davies (1933), 3.

the collection: 'It is true to say that not a little of the history of Wales is enshrined in the memorials which, with praiseworthy zeal and rare discrimination, have been gathered together in this Village Institute – the best of its kind that I know anywhere.'[91] Objects displayed include paintings, sculpture (including works by leading Welsh sculptor William Goscombe John), carved coats of arms, stained glass, clocks, furniture, bibles and manuscripts.[92]

A 1933 volume by Davies charting the history of the Institute includes what amounts to a catalogue of the collection.[93] The first item described is the copy of Poynter's cartoon, further indicating the importance that Davies attached to it.[94] Painted in oil on panel, the copy is a quarter of the original mosaic's size and dominates the west wall of the main hall (Fig. 88).[95] Having obtained permission from Poynter and the Office of Works, Davies commissioned the painting in 1910 from Frederick Charles Richards (1878-1932), a Welsh painter and etcher who later became an Associate of the Royal Cambrian Academy.[96]

The year that the Institute opened, the Fine Arts Publishing Company produced a mezzogravure of Richards' copy of Poynter's cartoon.[97] A limited number of artist's proofs, notably signed by Poynter not Richards, were placed on sale to raise funds for the Institute, while Davies and the Welsh Department made unsigned versions available to educational institutions throughout the principality.[98] One of the most important uses Davies found for the image was as the frontispiece for a booklet that his department produced for schools and universities in Wales in 1914. Written in both Welsh and English, it gave advice on how St David's Day could be

[91] Quoted in Davies (1933), 5.

[92] Davies (1933), 21.

[93] Davies (1933), 14-60.

[94] Davies (1933), 14

[95] Davies (1933), 14.

[96] Davies (1933), 10 & 60.

[97] An example in the NMW was donated, in 1922, along with the other works relating to Poynter's mosaics, by Goscombe John, no doubt because of their perceived importance to Wales.

[98] Davies (1933), 13.

celebrated.[99] As William Gareth Evans has argued, the booklet 'epitomised official support for the advancement of the nation' and the encouragement among Wales's youth of what, in the booklet, Davies calls the 'higher ideals of patriotism'.[100] For Davies, Poynter's image of St David evidently played a central role in achieving this aim.

Davies's decision to use Poynter's St David as a tool to encourage the development of Welsh nationality, both through his official position at the Welsh Department and his more personal project of the Ceiriog Memorial Institute, was likely influenced by a variety of factors. Chief among these was the fact that, although there had been significant developments in Welsh art since the mid-nineteenth century, important depictions of Welsh historical figures, including its patron saint, were still relatively rare.[101] Moreover, having been designed by the PRA for the Houses of Parliament, Poynter's image was arguably the most important example to have been produced to date. In addition to this were the qualities of the design itself. By combining numerous emblems relating to Wales, Poynter had created a single potent symbol that compressed various elements of Welsh history and identity into one image, thus peculiarly lending itself to the uses to which Davies ultimately put it.

The appropriation of Poynter's image of St David as part of the Welsh national revival is an important example of the Houses of Parliament's contribution to the art of union. It is, in fact, a unique case of a parliamentary work of art being adopted as a national image in the nation it represents.[102] Central to its significance is that the form of nationalism Poynter's image was

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[99] Welsh Department, Board of Education, *Dydd Gwyl Dewi-St (St David's day)* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1914).

[100] William Gareth Evans, 'The British State and Welsh-Language Education, 1914-1991', in Geraint Jenkins and Mari Williams eds., *Let's do our best for the Ancient Tongue* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 343.

[101] For the continued lack of Welsh national imagery in this period, see Peter Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales: Industrial Society* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), 109.

[102] Though it never hung in the Houses of Parliament, Maclise's *Marriage of Strongbow and Eva* bears some comparison. However, its adoption as an Irish national image was inextricably linked with Maclise being Irish, something that was not the case with Poynter's mosaic in Wales.

used to promote was not focused on separatism or even Home Rule, but creating a strong sense of Welsh identity within the Union. This is highlighted by the emphasis Davies placed on the fact that it had originally been created for the Houses of Parliament.[103] The vision of Wales that Davies used Poynter's St David to endorse was thus one of a proud, distinct and vibrant nation that took a central place at Westminster. That at the heart of this vision was a visualisation of Wales produced by an Englishman speaks volumes about the nature of Welsh national identity during this period.

St Andrew and Scottish unionism

While Welsh involvement in the completion of the St David mosaic was non-existent, Scottish parliamentarians were certainly instrumental in the addition of St Andrew to Central Lobby (Fig. 89). Commissioned in 1922, and installed the following year, the creation of the St Andrew mosaic took place during a turbulent period in the Union that saw the creation of the Irish Free State and the rise of calls for Scottish Home Rule. It is against this backdrop that it and the St Patrick mosaic (Fig. 90), completed a year later, need to be understood. Cannadine has noted that 'At the very time when the four nations decorative scheme … was completed … the United Kingdom was itself being divided up again.'[104] However, far from being simply coincidental or ironic, as Cannadine implies, the very fact that the Union was undergoing such fundamental change was instrumental in the Central Lobby scheme's completion. In the case of the St Patrick mosaic in particular, it also played a crucial role in the mosaics' design and reception.

A central aspect of the completion of the St Andrew and St Patrick mosaics is that they were paid for through private patronage rather than public money. As has been shown, the idea that the public purse would bear the cost of decorating Parliament's walls was barely contemplated from the

[103] Davies (1933), 14; Welsh Department (1914), frontispiece. This information also features on the contemporaneous label in the Ceiriog Memorial Institute. My thanks to Bryn Hughes, Ceiriog Memorial Institute Committee, for this information.

[104] David Cannadine, *In Churchill's Shadow: Confronting the Past in Modern Britain* (London: Penguin, 2003), 18.

time of Ayrton onwards. Following the completion of the St David mosaic, the possibility all but disappeared. Repeated calls for the completion of the mosaics was met with the familiar line that there was no government money available, but it was now followed by recognition that private generosity would be accepted.[105] The move towards private funding, either from an individual or through subscriptions, was first seen with statues for the building in the late nineteenth century, including Thornycroft's Cromwell. This was extended to murals in 1909, when each work in a series of oil paintings on Tudor themes commissioned for the East Corridor were donated by individual Peers, thus marking a sea change in the way the Houses of Parliament's decoration was financed.[106]

The possibility of privately funding the two remaining mosaics still did not guarantee that they would be completed. It also resulted in complaints from Scottish MPs, showing a nationalistic interest in their patron saint for the first time. In 1913, Scottish-born Liberal MP Charles Henry Lyell protested that a distinction had been drawn between the patron saints of England and Wales, who had been put up at public expense, and those of Scotland and Ireland, who would only be honoured through private generosity.[107] It is probably no coincidence that 1913 also witnessed a high-profile Scottish Home Rule Bill, of which Lyell was in favour, passing its first reading.[108]

In the end, it took over twenty years from the installation of the St David panel before any progress was made. Prompted by one of many discussions about the mosaics in the Commons, the wealthy industrialist Sir Samuel Waring (1860-1940) wrote to First Commissioner Alfred Mond MP in March 1921. Noting that his 'native town' was Waringstown, County Down, Waring expressed a wish to donate the St Patrick mosaic 'if the expense is

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[105] HC Deb, 15 May 1902, vol.108, col. 430-31; HC Deb, 28 April 1904, vol. 133, cols. 1469-70; HC Deb, 24 April 1913, vol. 52, cols. 524-5.

[106] For this scheme, see p. 244 below.

[107] HC Deb, 24 April 1913, vol. 52, cols. 524-5.

[108] HC Deb, 30 May 1913, vol. 53 cols. 471-551; H.J. Hanham, 'Mid-Century Scottish Nationalism: Romantic and Radical', in R. Robson ed., *Ideas and institutions of Victorian Britain* (New York: Barnes & Noble 1967), 98.

not too high'.[109] Before a response could be sent, David Lindsay, 27th Earl of Crawford, replaced Mond as First Commissioner. On assuming office at the start of April, Lord Crawford wrote to Waring to express his 'cordial appreciation' of the 'generous proposal', and promised to look further into the matter.[110] Having established the potential cost as being around £1,700, Crawford wrote to inform Waring in November 1921.[111] No record of a response from Waring survives and his donation never came to fruition.

It is not clear why Waring backed down from his offer. While the high cost is one possible explanation, events in Ireland during 1921 certainly provide another. In May, following the Government of Ireland Act 1920, the island was partitioned and, in July, a ceasefire called in the Irish War of Independence, which had raged since January 1919.[112] This led to the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations, which were still ongoing when Crawford wrote to Waring for the second time.[113] The political context had therefore changed radically since Waring first approached Mond earlier in the year. A unified Ireland that was part of the UK, though in a desperately uncertain state, had been divided, and it was a very real possibility that a portion of it might leave the Union altogether. This would be confirmed on 6 December with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which established that the Irish Free State would come into existence exactly a year later as an effectively independent dominion of the British Empire. Northern Ireland, meanwhile, would remain part of the Union but with a Home Rule parliament in Belfast.

Despite Waring's withdrawal from the scheme, Crawford's interest in completing it had been sparked. A noted collector and connoisseur, Crawford came from the Layard mould of First Commissioners.[114] Like Layard,

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[109] Samuel Waring to Alfred Mond, 28 March 1921, TNA WORK/11/248.

[110] Crawford to Waring, 5 April 1921, TNA WORK/11/248.

[111] Crawford to Waring, 9 November 1921, TNA WORK/11/248.

[112] On the Irish War of Independence, see Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2002).

[113] For the treaty negotiations, see Kevin Matthews, *Fatal Influence: The Impact of Ireland on British Politics, 1920-1925* (University College Dublin Press, 2004), Ch. 2.

[114] For Crawford's role in the British art world, see Andrea Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art: Contested Cultural Authority, 1890-1939* (University of Toronto Press, 2010), particularly 20 & 167-70.

Crawford's desire to complete Central Lobby came in large part from his passion for art. Crucially, however, Crawford was also a Tory and the holder of one of the most senior Scottish peerages. To complete the scheme, he therefore turned to those of the same political hue and nationality, and with the help of his friend Sir John Gilmour MP, a Scottish Unionist whip who would later become the first Secretary of State for Scotland since 1746, Crawford appears to have sought out Scottish Unionist MPs to donate the mosaics.[115]

As Kidd has stressed, it should be remembered that the union referred to in the name of the Scottish Unionist Party was not 1707 but 1801, with the party originating in the Liberal split over Gladstone's plans for Irish Home Rule in the 1880s.[116] Though unionists throughout the UK had opposed Home Rule for the whole of Ireland, they generally accepted the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty as the best means of enabling Ulster to remain part of the Union without further conflict.[117] Nevertheless, the events of 1921 shook the foundations of the Union and its supporters. This was exacerbated by renewed calls for Scottish Home Rule as a result of the growth of the Scottish nationalist movement after the First World War, particularly following the electoral breakthrough of the Labour Party in 1922.[118] Within this context, the completion of the Central Lobby mosaics seems to have offered Crawford and others a symbolic means to reaffirm the Union and to strengthen what remained after the Irish Free State's secession.

Sir William Raeburn (1850-1924), Scottish Unionist MP for Dunbartonshire since 1918, agreed to fund the St Andrew panel in June 1922.[119] Writing to Raeburn, Crawford expressed his gratitude to hear of 'so public-spirited a proposal on your part…which will cause much satisfaction in

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[115] Gilmour to Crawford, n.d. (c.20 June 1922) and Crawford, Minute Sheet, 28 June 1922, TNA WORK/11/248.

[116] Kidd (2008), 5.

[117] Kidd (2008), 15.

[118] Hanham (1967), 108-17.

[119] Gilmour to Crawford, n.d. (c.20 June 1922); Crawford to Raeburn, 21 June 1922; and Crawford, Minute Sheet, 28 1922, TNA WORK/11/248.

Scotland and amongst our compatriots who foregather at Westminster.'[120] At the end of that month, Crawford, Gilmour and Raeburn met to discuss the project and examine the Central Lobby location along with Speaker John Henry Whitley (1866-1935), Liberal MP for Halifax. This marked the beginning of Whitley's central involvement in the decoration of Parliament during the 1920s.[121] Bell, the artist chosen at Raeburn's suggestion to produce the mosaic, was also present.[122] A prominent English painter and illustrator, since the turn of the century Bell had carved out a position as one of the country's leading mosaic designers.[123] Inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, his approach to the medium deviated from Salviati's by employing British craftspeople to execute his designs using traditional methods and techniques.[124]

By the end of August 1922, Bell had produced a sketch for the design that Crawford felt, other than one or two minor changes, was 'dignified and becoming'.[125] Crawford's connoisseurial reputation is indicated by the fact that Raeburn himself had not seen the design but was prepared to endorse 'anything' approved by the First Commissioner.[126] Bell's design follows the general format of Poynter's, with an upper section containing three standing figures and a lower one with Scottish symbols. St Andrew, a fisherman, stands carrying a staff and net. Behind him is the saltire on which he was crucified. Unlike Poynter's designs, the accompanying figures are not

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[120] Crawford to Raeburn, 21 June 1922, TNA WORK/11/248.

[121] Though Raeburn later claimed that it was the Speaker who first approached him about donating a mosaic, the Office of Works records confirm that this was not the case. For Raeburn's claims, see *Scotsman,* 28 June 1923, 9, and an extract from an unpublished autobiography, n.d., held in the PAC object file.

[122] Gilmour to Crawford, n.d. (c.20 June 1922) and Crawford, Minute Sheet, 28 June 1922, TNA WORK/11/248.

[123] For Bell, see Eden (2009) and John McIntyre, 'Robert Anning Bell (1863-1933): A Quintessential Illustrator of his Time', *IBIS Journal* 4 (2011), 6-61.

[124] Bell outlines his approach in 'Notes on the Practice of Pictorial Mosaic', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 8 (1901), 38. See also Eden (2009), 22.

[125] Crawford to Secretary (Office of Works), 5 September 1922, TNA WORK/11/248. A second sketch, exhibited at the RA in 1924, is reproduced in Eden (2009), 25.

[126] Crawford to Secretary, 5 September 1922, TNA WORK/11/248.

allegories but other national saints, calling to mind E.M. Barry's design for the St George mosaic. On the right is St Margaret, Queen of Scotland, with a royal crown below her feet and carrying a Bible and the Black Rood of Scotland, a relic of the True Cross.[127] On the left stands St Mungo, the founder and patron saint of Glasgow, with a salmon at his feet that alludes to one of his miracles.[128] Above the group is the monogram of Christ and the alpha and omega. Below them are three symbols of Scotland: the saltire, the thistle and the Scottish royal coat of arms. A Dr Cooper – most likely Dr James Cooper (1846-1922), an eminent minister in the Church of Scotland and Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Glasgow[129] – approved Bell's approach to the symbolism used throughout the design.[130]

Crawford and Raeburn agreed that the mosaic should be placed above the entrance to the East Corridor, where it would be the first to be seen by people entering Central Lobby through the public entrance via St Stephen's Hall.[131] Unlike the earlier mosaics prefabricated in Venice, Bell's were completed in situ by leading mosaicist Gertrude Martin (1911-52) and her assistants.[132] The mosaic was unveiled at the end of June 1923, during a brief ceremony presided over by Whitley, Crawford having left the Office of Works in October 1922 when Lloyd George's coalition government fell.[133] To reveal the mosaic, Lady Raeburn cut a cord releasing a Scottish Royal Standard that had covered the panel since its completion.[134]

Completed at a time when the Union was being divided, the St Andrew mosaic reaffirmed Scotland's place at Westminster and in the Union.

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[127] Wilson (1926), 7.

[128] Wilson (1926), 7.

[129] For Cooper, see H.J. Wotherspoon, *James Cooper: A Memoir* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1926).

[130] Bell to Crawford, 29 August 1922, TNA WORK/11/248.

[131] Frank Baines (Office of Works), 'Memorandum', 28 June 1922, TNA WORK/11/248; *Scotsman,* 28 June 1923, 9.

[132] Crawford to Secretary, 5 September 1922, TNA WORK/11/248; Wilson (1926), 13.

[133] *Scotsman,* 28 June 1923, 9; *Times,* 28 June 1923, 18. It is notable that unveiling ceremonies were not held for the two earlier mosaics, probably on account of them having been funded by the state rather than private individuals.

[134] *Scotsman,* 23 June 1923, 8; *Scotsman,* 28 June 1923, 9.

Paid for by a Scottish Unionist MP and organized and promoted by a Scottish Tory First Commissioner with help from other leading figures within the party, it represents an attempt to use art to present an image of stability and continuity amid turbulent political events. It was not the result of any great controversy, complaint or outcry, and it did not answer demands that had long been made. Rather, it was a quiet piece of patronage encouraged by politicians who had an interest in seeing it completed and were in a position to enable that to happen.

St Patrick and Partition

The relationship between the three nations represented in Central Lobby after the completion of the St Andrew mosaic had not altered enough since the 1840s to make the scheme incoherent. As De Lisle had pointed out in the 1880s, even calls for Home Rule did not detract from its central message, as all four nations would have continued to be representated at Westminster. The eventual situation with Ireland, however, was quite different. The flexibility of the scheme could have stretched to reflecting Home Rule, but how could it incorporate partial secession? How could a programme that was meant to represent the four nations of the UK be completed when the remaining nation had been partitioned, with the majority of it no longer part of the Union? The attempt to answer this conundrum came again from Scottish Unionists, who used the St Patrick mosaic as a means to negotiate, in visual terms, the new political reality of the Union in light of their own beliefs. The resulting attempt to square the circle of partitioned Ireland was inevitably something of a political ‘fudge’, with the mosaic defined by tensions between Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State’s relationship with one another, the remainder of the UK and the wider Empire.

After Crawford’s departure from the Office of Works, Whitley became the leading champion of Parliament’s decoration. Following Crawford’s lead in Central Lobby, the Speaker made plans to decorate St Stephen’s Hall, as

well as accepting gifts of works of art and funds for other commissions.[135] By February 1923, while the Martin sisters were working on the Scottish panel, Whitley had received an offer to fund the St Patrick mosaic from Patrick Johnstone Ford (1880-1945), Scottish Unionist MP for Edinburgh North since a by-election in 1920.[136]

From the start, the issue of Partition was central to the mosaic's development. Ford had no significant connections with Ireland. His reason for donating the mosaic, as reported by the *Irish Independent,* was that in his three years in Parliament

> he formed several warm relationships amongst the limited number of Irish members who have attended at Westminster in his time. Realising that a delicate question might arise as to whether Irishmen from the Free State or the Six-County corner should make themselves responsible for installing a panel of St Patrick … he generously determined to supply the panel himself in commemoration of his friendships with Irish MPs.

With Sinn Fein MPs refusing to take their seats, the Irish Parliamentary Party having virtually been eliminated in 1918, the limited number of Irish MPs referred to would have been Ulster Unionists.[137] Although the Anglo-Irish Treaty had resulted in Scottish Unionists moving away from a preoccupation with Irish issues, an overtone of sectarianism remained.[138] Alongside their shared unionism, many Scottish Unionists had deep abiding sympathy for those in Ulster, particularly following the waves of Irish Catholic migration into Scotland, which in the 1920s was still the cause of much division.[139] As an example of the close ties between Ulster and Scottish Unionists, John

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[135] Whitley to First Commissioner Sir John Baird MP, 18 December 1923, TNA WORK/11/248.

[136] *Irish Independent,* 21 February 1923, 4; Office of Works, 'Memorandum', 18 June 1923, TNA WORK/11/248.

[137] Nick Pelling, *Anglo-Irish Relations, 1798-1922* (London: Routledge, 2003), 107.

[138] Kidd (2008), 15.

[139] Kidd (2008), 12-15.

Gilmour, who probably encouraged Ford's donation as he had with Raeburn's, was a Grand Master of the Orange Order in Scotland.[140] Given these connections between Scottish and Ulster Unionists, by donating the mosaic Ford could ensure that his Northern Irish counterparts were given significant representation within it. Furthermore, the mosaic could be used to promote and cement the unionist view of partitioned Ireland. There remained hope among Irish nationalists and British Liberals that re-unification was still possible, partly because this had been left open by the Treaty which, as Kevin Matthews argues, had also been engineered by Lloyd George to make Northern Ireland unviable.[141] By contrast, Conservative-Unionist governments under Andrew Bonar Law and Stanley Baldwin wanted to ensure that Northern Ireland remained a Unionist statelet within the Union, leading them to nullify those aspects of the Treaty that threatened this.[142]

It is clear that, from early on, Ford was keen for the mosaic to appeal to Ulster Unionist sentiment. Unlike Raeburn, Ford took a leading role in his mosaic's design, while Whitley and Crawford's successor, English MP Sir John Baird, had little involvement.[143] This ensured that the Unionist thrust of the scheme remained. Early in the commissioning process, the *Irish Independent* reported that Ford wanted to include St Patrick's disciple St Brigid alongside the patron saint as well as 'something which would render the mosaic of interest to the Unionists of "Northern" Ireland.'[144] Following a meeting between Ford and Bell, who had been chosen to complete the scheme, in February 1923, the *Independent* reported that, though the final design was not decided, St Patrick would be joined on one side by St Brigid amid shamrocks. On the other, the paper noted that 'the idea is to appeal to the sentiment of the majority of the population of the Six-County State' with a representation of Somerled, a twelfth-century Norse-Gaelic warlord who had

[140] Kidd (2008), 15.

[141] Matthews (2004), 56.

[142] Matthews (2004), 110.

[143] Ford had an interest in art and co-authored a volume with Patrick W. Adam titled *Interior Paintings* (1920).

[144] *Irish Independent,* 21 February 1923, 4.

seized control of the Kingdom of the Isles.[145] According to the *Independent,* Somerled was chosen because of the 'fondness of Ulster Unionists for his memory', on account of his adoption of the Red Hand, a symbol that later featured in the Ulster coat of arms. He was also selected, the *Independent* caustically argued, because 'there is no patron saint of Partition.'[146]

Given that he was not a saint, like the others in Bell's designs, it is unclear if Somerled was ever seriously considered as the appropriate figure to represent Ulster Unionists. In the only known preparatory sketch, it is St Columba who features alongside Patrick and Brigid, as it would be in the final mosaic.[147] Considered the most senior of Ireland's saints, the grouping of Brigit, Columba and Patrick is unsurprising. The official description of the final mosaic written by Thomas Wilson, Clerk of Works at the Houses of Parliament, described Columba, born in Ulster and the patron saint of Derry, as representing 'the North of Ireland'.[148] To emphasise this point, at Columba's feet is the Ulster coat of arms, including the Red Hand. Meanwhile, St Brigid was identified by Wilson as representing 'Southern Ireland'.[149] She stands above a shield emblazoned with the royal coat of arms of Ireland. St Patrick himself stands above shamrocks and below what was described as the ancient Erse name for Ireland, *Banba*.[150] Behind him is the Rock of Cashel and 'a suggestion of the emerald green fields and the brown bogland of Ireland'.[151]

The completed mosaic was unveiled during a ceremony held on St Patrick's Day 1924.[152] Whitley arranged for T.P. O'Connor, as Father of the House, to preside.[153] O'Connor assumed, probably correctly, that his position

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[145] *Irish Independent,* 23 February 1923, 4.

[146] *Irish Independent,* 28 February 1923, 4.

[147] Reproduced in Eden (2009), 25. Bell exhibited this design at the RA in 1924 alongside that for St Andrew. Its current whereabouts is unknown

[148] Wilson (1926)*,* 9.

[149] Wilson (1926)*,* 9.

[150] Wilson erroniously transcribed this as 'Omba' (1926: 9).

[151] Wilson (1926)*,* 9.

[152] *Times,* 17 March 1924, 13.

[153] Office of Works, 'Memorandum', 8 March 1924, TNA WORK/11/248; *Times* 17 March 1924, 13.

as ‘practically the last survivor of the great Irish Party’ also lay behind the decision and it is likely that it was hoped his presence would give the occasion, and the mosaic itself, a validity that it might otherwise have lacked, in terms of its claims to represent the whole of Ireland.[154] In stark contrast to his interventions a quarter of a century earlier during the Cromwell statue controversy, O’Connor’s speech was light-hearted and optimistic, even if at times a little forced. Given Patrick Ford’s nationality, O’Connor placed particular emphasis on Ireland and its patron saint’s connections with Scotland. He joked that the Irish had given Scotland their religion ‘and in return the Scots stole their name’, and that ‘in spite of all his other dazzling virtues, St Patrick was not an Irishman’ but a Scot, and now a Scotsman had given the Irish a mosaic of the saint.[155]

Of greater significance, however, was O’Connor’s approach to discussing the contemporary position of Ireland in relation to the mosaic and its location. Given his politics, it is notable that he studiously avoided overtly referring to partition, which like most nationalists he hoped would be temporary, or Ireland’s long and fraught relationship with Britain, which he had spent much of his career critiquing with the aim of gaining Home Rule.[156] Although he did hint at these ever-present issues when he hailed St Patrick as ‘the greatest unifying force in Ireland’ and claimed that, during the unveiling, ‘questions of great rival nationalities were forgotten’, the complex position of partitioned Ireland’s relationship with the Union led him to ignore the topic in detail.[157] Instead, O’Connor presented the mosaic, and the overall Central Lobby scheme, in imperial rather than national terms. To cheers from the assembled group, he proclaimed:

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[154] *Times,* 18 March 1924, 9.

[155] *Times,* 18 March 1924, 9.

[156] L.W. Brady, *T.P. O’Connor and the Liverpool Irish* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1983), 250. On wider Irish nationalist reaction to partition, see Clare O’Halloran, *Partition and the Limits of Irish Nationalism: An Ideology Under Stress* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1987).

[157] *Times,* 18 March 1924, 9.

> From that sacred spot [Central Lobby], the centre of the British Empire, there went forth a message of reconciliation and peace between all parts of the great Commonwealth – none higher than the other, all coequal, and all, he hoped, to be joined in the bonds of commons weal and common loyalty.[158]

This marked an important shift in the conception of the scheme from the FAC's emphasis on it being at the heart of the building and the nation to it being at the centre of the Empire. With the Free State still part of the Empire, such a change in focus evidently enabled some, such as O'Connor, an imperialist and Home Rule nationalist, to overcome the inherent tensions that the St Patrick mosaic highlighted. Yet, for all its even-handedness and magnanimity, O'Connor's speech gives the unmistakable impression of attempting to avoid the many contradictions that the St Patrick mosaic embodied.

In his speech at the unveiling, Patrick Ford, who had lost his seat at the recent General Election, discussed the mosaic in both national and imperial terms. Echoing O'Connor's imperial sentiments, Ford stated his hope that the mosaic 'would be a sign and symbol of the ever-growing unity' of the whole of the British Empire.[159] However, as a supporter of Partition, he also tackled head-on the national issues that O'Connor had avoided. Calling the creation of the Irish Free State 'the great settlement', Ford expressed his hope that it would be a 'permanent settlement of the Irish question'.[160] As his speech made clear, for Ford the mosaic represented an attempt to give physical permanence in glass and mortar to this positive view of the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

While O'Connor and Ford chose to emphasise different aspects of the national and imperial context of the mosaic, they both focused on messages of unity. This was in sharp contrast to David Douglas Reid MP, leader of the Ulster Unionists at Westminster, who was present at the ceremony. The *Irish*

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[158] *Times,* 18 March 1924, 9.

[159] *Times,* 18 March 1924, 9.

[160] *Times,* 18 March 1924, 9.

Independent reported that, after the unveiling, Reid provocatively informed O'Connor that, if St Patrick were now alive, he would be one Reid's constituents.[161] Reid also told the reporter who witnessed this of an old Latin phrase popular in his constituency which loosely translated as: 'In Down three Saints one grave do fill. Brigid and Patrick and Columkille.'[162] Reid attributed this to John de Courcy, one of the early Normans in Ireland who claimed to have brought the remains of saints Brigid and Columba to rest with those of Patrick in Downpatrick.[163] Going against the general message of unity and peace, Reid was audaciously claiming the three principal Irish saints, as depicted in the mosaic, for Northern Ireland alone.

O'Connor's response to Reid's comment is not known, but the *Irish Independent* attempted to undermine the Ulster Unionist's proprietorial claims to Irishness by noting that, unlike the others present, he did not wear a shamrock at the unveiling.[164] Reid's assertions also caused the Irish nationalist writer Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha, writing under his pen name *An Seabhac* ('The Hawk'), to lambast the 'gratuitous claim' that St Patrick would have been one of the Ulster Unionist's constituents.[165] Criticising Unionist support for partition, Ó Siochfhradha sardonically noted that Reid did not say whether he would have been 'honoured by St Patrick's vote at the last elections', but that St Patrick 'voting for the mutilation of the island he helped to unite and evangelise' was hard to imagine.[166] Turning to the mosaic, the poet highlighted its pro-partition message by noting mockingly that even the portrayal of the saint without a beard or moustache 'harmonises with the partitionist mentality'.[167]

Reid's attempt to claim the mosaic as only representing Northern Ireland further highlights the paradox of representing the whole of Ireland visually in a legislative building in which the majority of the country was no

[161] *Irish Independent,* 18 March 1924, 4

[162] *Irish Independent,* 18 March 1924, 4

[163] *Irish Independent,* 18 March 1924, 4

[164] *Irish Independent,* 18 March 1924, 4

[165] *Irish Independent,* 21 March 1924, 7.

[166] *Irish Independent,* 21 March 1924, 7.

[167] *Irish Independent,* 21 March 1924, 7.

longer represented politically. Despite the apparent contradiction in doing this, the option of attempting only to represent Northern Ireland never appears to have been considered.[168] For many, such as Ford and O'Connor, the Free State's continued place in the British Empire enabled the whole of Ireland to be included in the Imperial Parliament.[169] Additionally, for supporters of partition, including Scottish Unionists like Ford, the mosaic reflected their political aim of ensuring that the Irish question remained settled, and in doing so gave Ulster Unionists significant representation and recognition while cementing the existence of Northern Ireland.

For Irish nationalists, the fact that the whole of Ireland was included in the home of the institution repudiated by the majority of the country does not appear to have been a concern. Critics such as Ó Siochfhradha opposed the acknowledgement and validation of partition in the mosaic, and others criticised stylistic aspects of the depictions of St Patrick and St Columba, but none are recorded as having found issue with the implicit representation of the independent Free State in the UK Houses of Parliament.[170] One reason for this is that, in Ireland, the mosaic was interpreted as being representative of the past rather than symbolic of the present. The *Freeman's Journal,* for example, reported that the mosaic would stand 'as a monument to Ireland's historic association with Westminster for generations to come.'[171] Thus conceived, it formed a memorial to the Union as an historical entity rather than, as the FAC had originally intended, a celebration of it as a current, and permanent, reality

[168] It is notable, however, that today Parliament appears unsure whether to describe the mosaic as representing the whole of Ireland or just Northern Ireland: http://www.parliament.uk/about /living-heritage /building/palace/architecture/palace-s-interiors/central-lobby/ [accessed 8 March 2016].

[169] *Times,* 17 March 1924, 13.

[170] For criticism of the appearance of the figures, see *Irish Independent,* 18 March 1924, 4.

[171] *Freeman's Journal,* 18 March 1924, 4.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Depicting the Anglo-Scottish Union in St Stephen's Hall: A 'compliment' or 'national humiliation'?

Completed in 1928, Thomas Monnington's large canvas *The English and Scottish Commissioners present to Queen Anne at St James's Palace the Articles of Agreement for the Parliamentary Union of the two countries, 1707* (Fig. 91) is the final painting of the final mural series to be undertaken in the Houses of Parliament during the twentieth century. It is a particularly fitting subject on which to end this thesis as it uniquely combines the two principal concepts that have framed the analysis of the decorative schemes throughout: the art of union and the art of disunion.

In terms of the art of union, Monnington's painting is the most literal depiction of political union to have either been planned or executed for the building. The culminating scene in a series titled *The Building of Britain,* it celebrated the 1707 Act of Union between England and Scotland as one of the central events that led to Britain's later prominence, particularly as an imperial power. Furthermore, many in Scotland interpreted it as a compliment for highlighting their nation's central involvement in this process. However, others in Scotland, principally Scottish Home Rulers, saw the events of 1707 as a disgraceful episode in Scottish history, the negative effects of which continued to be felt in the twentieth century. For this group, Monnington's canvas was nothing short of a national humiliation, becoming a focus for further disunion and dissension.

The issues examined in this chapter have hitherto received scant attention from scholars. Despite providing the most detailed account of the St Stephen's programme yet published, Willsdon does not mention the reaction to Monnington's painting.[1] In *English Art,* Dennis Farr gives a brief account of *The Building of Britain* programme, in which he notes, somewhat dismissively, that the picture 'predictably [met with] Scottish Nationalists'

[1] Willsdon (2000), 130-41.

vigorous protests about the inclusion of the Act of Union of 1707.'[2] Walker's catalogue entry provides some further detail, though it is necessarily succinct.[3] The same is true of the two short studies of Monnington produced to date, which both briefly discuss the controversy but do not provide any in-depth analysis.[4] Turning to the historical literature on the period, examinations of the controversy are even thinner on the ground. Completely ignored in studies of the Scottish Home Rule movement, it features only briefly in biographies of Henry Newbolt, who chose the subjects for *The Building of Britain,* and John Buchan MP, the principal Scottish Unionist defender of the painting.[5]

The reasons for this neglect are varied. In common with Parliament's other twentieth century decorative schemes, the St Stephen's programme has received a lack of scholarly attention, particularly when compared with the building's Victorian mural programmes.[6] The same is true of Monnington himself, who is a largely overlooked figure.[7] Furthermore, the controversy had few long-term political ramifications and did not, for example, play a role in bringing down a government. But, to recognise that it is not as significant as the 1890s Cromwell statue furore is not to say that it is insignificant. Like the controversies examined in Chapter 3, it forms an important part of the Houses of Parliament's history that has largely gone unrecognised.[8] In the

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[2] Dennis Farr, *English Art: 1870-1940* (Oxford University Press, 1978), 332.

[3] Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 5, 117-19.

[4] Judy Egerton, *Drawings and Paintings by Sir Thomas Monnington PRA, 1902-1976* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1977), 8-9; Paul Liss, 'St Stephen's Hall, Westminster' in Paul Liss ed., *Sir Thomas Monnington, 1902-1976* (London: Fine Arts Society, 1997), 42-3.

[5] Susan Chitty, *Playing the Game: A biography of Sir Henry Newbolt* (London: Quartet Books, 1997), 270; Janet Adam Smith, *John Buchan: A Biography* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1965), 309; Andrew Lownie, *John Buchan: The Presbyterian Cavalier* (London: Random House, 1995), 210.

[6] Further accounts include Alan Powers, 'History in Paint: The Twentieth-Century Murals', *Apollo* 135/363 (1992), 317-21 and William Vaughan '"God Help the Minister who meddles in Art": History Painting in the New Palace of Westminster', in Riding and Riding eds. (2000), 236-9.

[7] A recent exception is the recognition afforded him in Alan Powers ed., *British Murals & Decorative Paintings, 1920-1960* (Bristol: Sansom & Co., 2013).

[8] See pp. 106-33 above.

context of this study, Monnington's canvas marks the widening of the art of disunion beyond Irish issues, allowing instructive comparisons to be made between it and the other controversies examined, and certain patterns and themes relating to this phenomenon to emerge. Like the earlier controversies, an in-depth analysis highlights the nuances of views held by individuals regarding the Union and their nation's place within it. What emerges in the Scottish context is the fine line that often separates unionists and nationalists in this period.

Creating *The Building of Britain*

During early discussions about the St Andrew mosaic in 1922, Speaker Whitley mentioned to Lord Crawford, then First Commissioner, that he wished to find donors among retiring MPs to fund a series of historical paintings for St Stephen's Hall (Fig. 92).[9] In 1923, with the St Andrew mosaic nearing completion and the St Patrick mosaic already commissioned, the Speaker outlined for Crawford his future plans for the decoration of St Stephen's. This would start with two more mosaics, of St Stephen and Edward III, commissioned from Bell in late 1923, and proceed with paintings to fill the eight compartments.[10]

Barry provided the FAC with ten compartments in St Stephen's Hall for paintings, four on each long wall and one above each of the two main entrances.[11] In their 1847 plan for the decoration of the building the FAC outlined a scheme of English subjects 'illustrating some of the greatest epochs in our constitutional, social, and ecclesiastical history'.[12] At the winding up of the FAC in the 1860s, St Stephen's Hall was one of the areas where no progress had been made with regard to the planned paintings, although Maclise had been briefly tied to the commission in 1857 prior to

[9] Crawford, Minute Sheet, 28 June 1922, TNA WORK/11/248.

[10] Crawford to Lionel Earle (Office of Works), 11 October 1923, TNA WORK/11/277. For the St Stephen's mosaics, see Eden (2009), 25-6.

[11] Appendix 1, 'Report of the Commitee', *Seventh Report,* 9.

[12] For the list of subjects, see Appendix 1, *Seventh Report,* 9-10.

taking on the Royal Gallery.[13] It was not until 1909 that attention turned to its completion, when First Commissioner Lewis Harcourt MP sought titles for a series of 'historico-political' pictures.[14] Since 1907, Harcourt had been overseeing the East Corridor mural scheme illustrating scenes from the Tudor period of English history.[15] Completed in 1910, these were painted by six English artists from the group dubbed the Neo-Pre-Raphaelites, under the direction of American painter Edwin Abbey (1852-1911).[16] Partly because of problems experienced with fresco and waterglass in the nineteenth century, these were painted in oil on canvas and fixed into the compartments, an approach also adopted in St Stephen's Hall. Harcourt also placed Abbey in charge of the planned St Stephen's scheme, the theme of which was to be 'The growth of privileges at Parliament from the Middle Ages to Modern Times', with the subjects chosen consisting of English scenes and events from post-1707 British history.[17] On Abbey's death in 1911, artistic direction passed to an RA committee, which donated one panel to launch the series in 1912, Andrew Carrick Gow's *The House of Commons, 2 March 1629 (Holles and Valentine holding the Speaker in the Chair)*.[18] A second painting, *The Flight of the Members* by Seymour Lucas, was commissioned before the outbreak of war and completed in 1915.[19] In 1918 a third scene, *The Burial of the Unknown Warrior* by Frank Salisbury, was added.[20]

By January 1925, with the St Stephen's mosaics designed by Bell underway, Whitley's attention turned to plans for the new mural scheme. Harcourt's unfinished series was abandoned and the three existing paintings

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[13] See Chapter 4, pp. 134-68 above.

[14] Willsdon (2000), 105. Lewis Harcourt was the son of William Harcourt, Chancellor during Rosebery's administration; see pp. 192-7 above.

[15] This resulted from recommendations made by a Select Committee established in 1906 'to enquire and report with respect to the unfinished condition of the rooms of the Palace of Westminster'. See Willsdon (2000), 94-5.

[16] For an account of this programme see Willsdon (2000), 94-105.

[17] Willsdon (2000), 105 & 108. For the list of subjects see Lewis Harcourt to RA Secretary 6 April 1910, TNA WORK/11/197.

[18] Willsdon (2000), 108.

[19] Willsdon (2000), 108.

[20] Willsdon (2000), 130.

by Gow, Lucas and Salisbury moved, with some controversy, to committee rooms.[21] An informal committee consisting of the Whitley, First Commissioner Lord Peel (1867-1937) and Crawford, in his role as the chairman of the newly formed Royal Fine Art Commission, oversaw the commissioning of eight new paintings for St Stephen's Hall.[22] Following the example of the recent mosaic schemes, and the East Corridor murals before them, the paintings were paid for by private individuals rather than the state.[23] The central idea was that the works would form a continuous narrative, which Whitley identified as 'the Story of our Liberties' or 'How we came to be what we are.'[24] This concept was linked to the location of St Stephen's Hall on the former site of the House of Commons Chamber, on the floor of which 'took place many of the struggles that gained our present Liberties'.[25] Because the Hall was now the public entrance to the building, the panels were intended to have a specifically democratic and educative purpose, speaking to 'the ordinary citizen and to the schoolchildren' who visited Parliament.[26]

Unity of subject and treatment were identified as being essential.[27] To achieve this, the selection of subjects was entrusted to the English poet, novelist and historian Sir Henry Newbolt (1862-1938), who agreed to be the official historical advisor to the scheme and to write a booklet to accompany it.[28] The choice of Newbolt was crucial in determining the imperial direction the St Stephen's series would ultimately take. Firmly associated with the

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[21] Willsdon (2000), 130.

[22] Whitley to Earle, 15 December 1925, TNA WORK/11/197. The Royal Fine Art Commission (in existence between 1924 and 1999) was not set up to oversee Parliament's decoration but to advise on matters of artistic importance referred to it by the government.

[23] Whitley to Earle, 31 January 1925 and response, 3 February 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[24] Whitley to Peel, 25 January 1925, and Whitley to Earle, 21 December 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[25] Whitley to Earle, 31 January 1925 and response, 3 February 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[26] Whitley, Untitled notes on the St Stephen's Hall scheme, 21 December 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[27] 'Suggested Terms of Reference for a Scheme for Decorating the Eight Panels in St Stephen's Hall with Pictures', n.d. (c. 3 February 1925), TNA WORK/11/197.

[28] Whitely to Peel, 25 January 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

Edwardian heyday of empire and the expression of a certain sort of English-dominated Britishness, Newbolt is best known for works such as 'Drakes Drum' and 'Vitaï lampada', with its famous phrase 'Play up, play up, and play the game'.[29]

To ensure unity of appearance, oversight of the scheme was placed in the hands of the Scottish painter and etcher Sir David Young Cameron (1865-1945).[30] Cameron was not employed to contribute a canvas himself, but as 'Master-Painter' he oversaw eight other artists who he selected to create 'a team working together in the closest and most sympathetic fellowship'.[31] This included, for example, ensuring that the artists used the same horizon height, scale of figures, perspective distance from the picture plane and colours.[32] Cameron's appointment was due to his friend and fellow Scot, Lord Crawford, who had advised the Speaker that 'Cameron is the man, if you can get him'.[33] Cameron had been elected a Royal Academician in 1920. However, it was not to the RA that he turned when choosing the artists for the St Stephen's Hall scheme but to the British School at Rome, the style of which came to define *The Building of Britain.*

Cameron had been appointed to the Rome School's faculties of engraving and painting in 1919 and the artists he chose for St Stephen's were predominantly either fellow tutors or recent scholars.[34] By the summer of 1925, seven of the eight final artists had been selected: William Rothenstein (1872-1945), Charles Sims (1873-1928), Alfred Kingsley Lawrence (1893-1975), George Clausen (1852-1944), Colin Gill (1892-1940),

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[29] For Newbolt, see Chitty (1997) and Vanessa Furse Jackson, *The Poetry of Henry Newbolt: Patriotism is Not Enough* (Greensboro: ELT Press, 1994).

[30] For Cameron, see Bill Smith, *D.Y. Cameron: The Vision of the Hills* (Edinburgh: Atelier, 1992).

[31] 'Suggested Terms of Reference', TNA WORK/11/197; Henry Newbolt, *The Building of Britain: A Series of Historical Paintings in St Stephen's Hall, Westminster* (London: T. Nelson, 1927), 2.

[32] See correspondence between Cameron and the artists in Sir D.Y. Cameron Papers, PA HC/LB/1/106.

[33] Whitely to Cameron, 9 February 1925 and 20 June 1927, PA HC/LB/1/106.

[34] Willsdon (2000), 131-2.

Vivian Forbes (1891-1937) and Glyn Philpot (1884-1937).[35] At this stage, Monnington was not yet connected with the project and the eighth artist was described optimistically as 'probably' being the Irish painter William Orpen (1878-1931).[36] As with the artists connected with the Central Lobby mosaics, and the East Corridor programme, all of these painters, with the exception of Orpen, were English. Like those schemes, this does not appear to have been the result of bias against Scottish, Welsh and Irish artists, but rather a reflection of the artistic schools and styles favoured. Though Cameron was Scottish, the British School at Rome was a very English institution. The members of the School's faculties had strong connections to the Royal College of Art and the Slade, and it was from these organisations, along with the RA Schools, that the vast majority of Rome Scholars were chosen.[37] One undoubted effect of this was that all of the painting scholars between the scholarship's inception in 1913 and the commissioning of the St Stephen's scheme were English.[38]

The Anglo-Scottish Union as the 'origins of our present Empire'

While the original intention had been to assign each artist with a subject chosen by Newbolt, Cameron found that they 'did not like to have commissions for specific illustrations – they did not want to be charged with specific costume pieces.'[39] So it was decided to 'humour' the painters by giving them more general subjects within which a specific scene could be chosen.[40] Two lists were produced, each with scenes chosen under eight general subjects: 'the Monarchy'; 'the Barons'; 'the House of Commons'; 'the English People'; 'the Church'; 'Influence Overseas'; 'Naval Defence' and the

[35] 'List of artists to be employed for panels in St Stephen's Hall', n.d. (July 1925), TNA WORK/11/197.

[36] 'List of artists', TNA WORK/11/197.

[37] Alistair Crawford, 'The Artist Scholars' in Andrew Wallace-Hadrill ed., *The British School at Rome* (London: British School at Rome, 2001), 154-55.

[38] For lists of Rome scholars, see Crawford (2001), 210.

[39] Crawford to Earle, 17 July 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[40] Crawford to Earle, 17 July 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

'City of London (Commerce and Finance)'.[41] In July 1925, Cameron and Newbolt submitted a single, revised list of specific subjects, chosen in consultation with the painters, the Speaker, Peel and Crawford.[42] To all intents and purposes, these became the final subjects, each of which related to English history: 'King Alfred's Fleet defeating the Danish invaders in a storm off Swanage, AD 877'; 'Richard Coeur de Lion leaving England for the Crusade, 11th December, 1198'; 'The Barons and King John signing Magna Carta at Runnymede, 1215'; 'The Wycliffe Bible read in secret meeting, c.1384'; 'The Speaker (Sir Thomas More) in the House, refusing Cardinal Wolsey a royal subsidy without due debate, 1523'; 'Queen Elizabeth commissioning Sir Walter Raleigh for the "discovery of unknown countries", 1584'; and 'Sir Thomas Roe, as envoy from King James I of England, before Jahangir the Mogul Emperor of Hindustan, at Ajinee, 1616'.[43]

This list did not contain the Act of Union subject, with the eighth and final scene instead being 'Samuel Pepys in talk with London Merchants at Lloyd's coffeehouse, 1673.'[44] However, Whitley, Peel and Crawford all felt that this subject was inadequate and Newbolt was asked to make an alternative suggestion.[45] He proposed two events: 'The offer of the Crowns to William and Mary in the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall' and 'Queen Anne giving Royal Assent to the Act of Union.'[46] Newbolt himself strongly favoured the Act of Union being chosen.[47] By the Act, he explained, 'Great Britain came into existence, a single people with one Parliament, one coinage, and one flag – the Union Jack.'[48] Newbolt felt that this made it the predominant event in the 'origins of our present Empire', marking 'the union of the two first elements neither of which would be what it now is, without the other'.[49] As

[41] 'Panels for St Stephen's Hall', n.d, (c.July 1925), TNA WORK/11/197.

[42] 'List of subjects chosen by the Painters', 20 July 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[43] 'List of subjects', TNA WORK/11/197.

[44] 'List of subjects', TNA WORK/11/197.

[45] Newbolt to Cameron, 24 July 1925, PA HC/LB/1/106.

[46] Whitley to Peel, 29 July 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[47] Whitley to Peel, 29 July 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[48] Newbolt, untitled notes on Act of Union subject, n.d. (c.29 July 1925), TNA WORK/11/197.

[49] Whitley to Peel, 29 July 1925, and Newbolt, untitled notes, TNA WORK/11/197.

such, he argued that it would be a fitting event to close a series that he described as 'illustrating the formation of the British Empire'.[50] Peel and Crawford agreed and gave it their consent, but Whitley expressed doubts about the subject's appropriateness, noting that, whilst it would make a 'fine scene', this would only be the case as long as 'the Scots see no objection'.[51] Writing to Lord Peel he presciently asked: 'Would the Scottish Home Rulers take offence?'[52] In partial answer to his own question, Whitley joked that 'Perhaps Cameron's instinct could answer! But it is to be noticed, that the Scottish Home Rule Bills do not propose to repeal the Act – only to amend it.'[53] Whitley's concerns were soon assuaged by Lord Crawford, who 'pooh-poohed the idea of any suggestion of trouble from Scottish Home Rulers.'[54] Given his unionism, Crawford was probably particularly pleased with the addition of the Act of Union subject which, like the St Andrew mosaic, reaffirmed Scotland's place at the heart of the Union. Scottish Unionist support for the subject was further emphasised when leading party figure George Younger, 1st Viscount Younger of Leckie (1851-1929), agreed to fund it.[55]

The addition of the Act of Union scene led Newbolt to coin the ultimate title for the series. In the press release that announced the scheme's details he wrote:

> What was desired was not to produce a few literal illustrations to the vast volumes of our annals, but to symbolize the inner meaning of certain events, to show them as typical and fateful stages in our

[50] Newbolt, untitled notes, TNA WORK/11/197.

[51] Whitley to Earle, 21 December 1925, TNA WORK/11/197. Whitley opposed selecting the coronation of William and Mary, because a painting on the subject by E.M. Ward already graced the Commons Corridor. See Whitley to Peel, 29 July 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[52] Whitley to Peel, 29 July 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[53] Whitley to Peel, 29 July 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[54] Earle to Whitley, 29 July 1925, TNA WORK/11/197. See also Newbolt to Cameron, 30 July 1925, PA HC/LB/1/106.

[55] Younger had been Unionist MP for Ayr Burghs (1906-22) and Chairman of the Unionist Party Organisation (1916-23).

> national growth, our evolution from a tribal state to a worldwide Commonwealth.
>
> The theme, then, must be the Building of Britain…[56]

As the language used in discussing the subject indicates, the scheme had become decidedly imperial in its message. The story of the development of British liberties, as initially envisaged by the Speaker, had developed under Newbolt into a series illustrating the formation of the British Empire. In this context, the 1707 Act of Union was conceived primarily in imperial terms. As Willsdon argues, the subject typifies how the series embodies 'values of conciliation, consensus, and pastoral idealism in the maintenance of imperial stability.'[57] In the booklet that accompanied the completed scheme, Newbolt even described the event as having been enacted 'to hold the Empire together.'[58] This concept of union between UK nations forming the basis of the Empire is reminiscent of the FAC's proposed paintings for the Painted Chamber, discussed in Chapter 4.[59] However, unlike the FAC's scheme, it is clear that the inclusion of the Anglo-Scottish Act of Union in the St Stephen's Hall series was not an attempt to create an inclusive national narrative by incorporating a Scottish subject in an otherwise wholly English history. Furthermore, any suggestion that Wales or Ireland had contributed towards the building of Britain or its Empire was completely absent.

Newbolt's vision was consistent with the dominant form of Britishness that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Cannadine has suggested, by the end of Victoria's reign the early nineteenth century's inclusive sense of British identity, as identified by Colley, was being replaced by a vision of Britain as England alone.[60] At the same time, the Empire

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[56] Newbolt, draft press release, 14 January 1926, TNA WORK/11/197; *Times,* 16 January 1926, 7.

[57] Willsdon (2000), 139.

[58] Newbolt (1927), 22.

[59] See pp. 160-67 above.

[60] Cannadine (1995), 16.

played an ever more central role in British identity.[61] These developments are seen in the East Corridor series, with the Tudor subjects including early explorers John Cabot and Sir Walter Raleigh, but are best embodied in St Stephen's Hall with Newbolt's elision of 'the Building of Britain' with the 'formation of the British Empire'. Following the latter's completion, its imperial message was further highlighted when large colour prints of the paintings were produced that the Speaker hoped would soon be 'on the walls of every school in the Empire, telling the story of the Building of Britain'.[62]

Depicting the Act of Union 1707

When plans for *The Building of Britain* were first made public in the Commons in December 1925, Orpen was still connected with the project.[63] By the time of the official press release a month later, English painter Monnington had replaced him.[64] Monnington was just twenty-four at the time of the commission, making him the youngest artist in the group by nine years. Initially trained by Henry Tonks at the Slade, he won a British School at Rome scholarship in 1922, where he came to Cameron's notice.[65] Partly as a result of his work at Westminster, Monnington would go on to have an extremely successful career, eventually becoming PRA in 1966.[66]

The 'young untried' Rome Scholar, as William Rothenstein would later describe Monnington, began work on his St Stephen's design in January 1926, at least six months behind the others artists, who had already submitted initial studies that same month.[67] Monnington began by undertaking a large amount of research into his subject, turning to

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[61] Cannadine (2000), 21-23; Paul Ward, *Britishness Since 1870* (London: Routledge, 2004), 13-46.

[62] Quoted in Willsdon (2000), 131.

[63] HC Deb, 17 December 1925, vol. 189, cols. 1622-4.

[64] Newbolt, draft press release, 14 January 1926, TNA WORK/11/197.

[65] Egerton (1977), 8; Crawford (2001), 210.

[66] For accounts of Monnington, see Egerton (1977) and Liss ed. (1997).

[67] Whitley to Earle, 7 January 1926, TNA WORK/11/197; William Rothenstein, *Since Fifty: Men and Memories, 1922-1938* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939), 40.

contemporary sources and modern histories of the events of the 1707 Union and the reign of Queen Anne.[68] He also took pains to look for portraits of the key figures involved in bringing about the Union.[69] One volume he paid particular attention to was Herbert Woodfield Paul's illustrated *Queen Anne* (1906).[70] Alongside portraits, this contains reproductions of two scenes from the reign of Queen Anne that had a profound influence on Monnington's final composition: Peter Angelis's *Queen Anne and the Knights of the Garter* (c.1720s, Fig. 93) and Peter Tillemans's *Queen Anne in the House of Lords* (c.1708-14, Fig. 94). Monnington produced an annotated schematic sketch of the Tillemans (Fig. 95). Though the precise subject of Tillemans's painting is unknown, Monnington seemingly believed it to depict Queen Anne giving Royal Assent to the Act of Union in the House of Lords in 1707, labelling a group to the right of Queen Anne: 'What appears to be 9 or more Scotch Commissioners.'[71] Monnington also sought later images of the event, a number of which were illustrations in volumes such as Agnes Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of England* (Fig. 96).[72]

A further image that had an important impact on Monnington is a mezzotint by Valentine Green titled *The Articles of the Union, Presented by the Commissioners, to Queen Anne. A.D.1706* (1786, Fig. 97), which the painter came across in the illustrated catalogue to the 1911 Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry held in Glasgow.[73] Throughout the development of the scheme, the wording of the title of Monnington's subject had varied, but it was always essentially Queen Anne giving Royal Assent to the Act of Union in the House of Lords in 1707. His research into the Tillemans and Strickland images indicates his initial intention to depict this subject. However, Monnington subsequently decided to focus on the

[68] For Monnington's surviving research notes and sketches, see PAC WOA 6381.

[69] For Monnington's research into portraits, see PAC WOA/6381.6-7 &10-11.

[70] PAC WOA/6381.3 & 6.

[71] PAC WOA/6381.14. On the Tillemans, see Alasdair Hawkyard, 'Inigo Jones, the Surveyors of the Works and the "Parliament House"', *Parliamentary History* 32/1 (2013), 38 & 39.

[72] The visual sources Monnington consulted are listed on PAC WOA/6381.6.

[73] PAC WOA/6381.6.

presentation of the Articles of Union instead, which took in place 1706. Given that Green's mezzotint is the only other known depiction of this event, in all likelihood it greatly influenced this change in direction. Quite why Monnington preferred the earlier subject is unclear. It may be that the more intimate occasion gave better scope for including those involved, while complying with the various rules set down for the artists.

Despite the change in the focus, it is notable that, on the painting's contemporaneous label and in Newbolt's booklet, the date of the presentation of the Articles of Union is mistakenly given as 1707 rather than 1706.[74] Also, due to its unwieldy title, the painting is more often known simply as *The Parliamentary Union of England and Scotland, 1707*.[75] Whatever the reasons for the change in subject, this confusion of dates and titles indicates that, to many people, the two events are ultimately synonymous.[76] As further proof of this, it is worth noting that the change in subject received no attention at the time, while the dating mistake itself has stood unnoticed for nearly a century. Not even the Scottish Home Rulers observed the error, though they were keen to point out others.[77]

Once the final subject had been chosen, preparatory sketches indicate that Monnington formed the general composition at an early stage and, by February 1927, he was working on the full-size cartoon.[78] However, having started later than the other artists, he had not yet finished when, towards the

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[74] Newbolt (1927), 20. William Rothenstein's scene of Sir Thomas Roe at the court of Ajmir is also given the incorrect date of 1614, at least a year prior to the Elizabethan diplomat's arrival in India.

[75] Walker (1988), vol. 3, pt. 5, 117; Farr, *English Art,* 332.

[76] Green's mezzotint suffered a similar fate, with the 1911 Scottish Exhibition catalogue titling it *The Articles of Union Presented to Queen Anne, March 6th, 1707* and Walker giving it as *The Articles of Union, 1707.* See Anon., *Palace of History: Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art & Industry,* vol. 2 (Glasgow: Dalross, 1911), 377 and Walker (1988), vol. 2, pt. 2, 24.

[77] These included a Scottish commissioner given as signing the treaty in Newbolt's booklet in fact having refused to do so, a claim that was corrected in subsequent editions. HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209 col. 304.

[78] Joseph Hone, *The Life of Henry Tonks* (London: Heinemann, 1939), 134; Egerton (1977), 9.

end of June 1927, all eight paintings were hung in St Stephen's Hall for inspection by King George V and Queen Mary.[79] Following a press view on 27 June, the *Times* hailed *The Building of Britain* as 'the most important scheme of mural decoration in our time',[80] while the *Manchester Guardian* called it 'the most important public effort of the kind that has ever been made in London' and 'a very notable new treasure to the not very many beautiful things in our Palace of Westminster.'[81] A photograph of Monnington's cartoon represented his picture, the painting itself having been removed from the hall to enable the artist to continue working on it.[82] The official unveiling of the series took place the next day, with Monnington's still-unfinished canvas back in place.[83] Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin made a speech praising the paintings and all those involved in their creation, from the artists to the Speaker. Referring to Monnington's painting, Baldwin drew laughter from the guests when he explained that Viscount Younger 'most appropriately chose the Union of Scotland and England for his picture'.[84] He described the subject itself as the event 'which brought together England and Scotland after years of friction and warfare into a union indissoluble for all time', and then pulled a cord that simultaneously released Union Flags covering each work in the series.[85]

When he had first set out the subject, Newbolt envisioned the Union Flag as the symbol of the Act of Union and hoped that it would be prominent in the painting.[86] In the end, however, being temporarily draped over the picture was the closest it came to playing a part. Monnington's symbolic allusion to the Union is in fact far subtler, consisting of Queen Anne's crowned cypher entwined with a rose and thistle on each curtain pediment.

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[79] Rothenstein (1939), 40; Egerton (1977), 9; Chitty (1997), 270.

[80] *Times,* 28 June 1927, 11.

[81] *Manchester Guardian,* 28 June 1927, 11.

[82] *Times,* 28 June 1927, 11

[82] *Times,* 29 June 1927, 9.

[83] *Times,* 29 June 1927, 9.

[84] *Times,* 29 June 1927, 9.

[85] *Times,* 29 June 1927, 9.

[86] Newbolt to Cameron, 24 July 1925, PA HC/LB/1/106.

Indeed, in many ways, the painting is a remarkably dispassionate interpretation of what, on paper, Newbolt had spoken of in such emotive terms. Set in a presence chamber in St James's Palace overlooking the Mall, Queen Anne – for whom Monnington's wife and fellow Rome Scholar Winifred Knights served as the model – sits on a canopied throne surrounded by her ladies-in-waiting.[87] English and Scottish commissioners occupy the rest of the picture, while the Lord Chancellor of Scotland, James Earl of Seafield, and the Lord Keeper of England, William Cowper, present the Articles of Union to the Queen. While on the one hand its simplicity and solemnity could be seen as reflecting the magnitude of the event it represents, on the other, there is little in it to suggest the importance attributed to the occasion as the 'origins of our present Empire'. Though there is no evidence that those overseeing the scheme were unhappy with Monnington's work, with its lack of overt English, Scottish or Union symbolism, it hardly conforms to the didactic aim of the series, which Whitley had wanted to be 'direct, so that he who runs may read.'[88] Neither does it 'symbolize the inner meaning' of the event as one of the 'typical and fateful stages' of Britain's national growth, as Newbolt had intended, instead conforming far more closely to the 'literal illustrations' that he wished to avoid.[89] However, the fact that the same can be said for a number of the other paintings probably suggests more about Whitley and Newbolt's unrealistic aims for the series than Monnington's inability to meet them.[90]

Nevertheless, though Monnington worked hard to research and develop the subject, there is nothing in the surviving records or the painting itself to suggest that he felt any great affinity for it. Half a century earlier, Maclise's particular form of identity greatly impacted his approach to *The Meeting of Wellington and Blücher after the Battle of Waterloo.* In the case of the Act of Union*,* would a Scottish artist have produced something radically different from Monnington's painting? Though impossible to know, it is worth

[87] A study of Knights posing as Queen Anne is in the PAC.

[88] 'Draft Terms of Reference for St Stephen's Hall Scheme of Paintings', 3 February 1925, TNA WORK/11/197.

[89] Newbolt, draft press release, 14 January 1926, TNA WORK/11/197.

[90] That Newbolt needed to write his explanatory booklet is a further indication of this.

considering what a painter with greater ideological investment in the events of 1707 would have made of the subject.

Regardless of Monnington's particular interpretation of the event, even as a literal depiction of the presentation of the Articles of Union, the painting stands as a unique contribution to the creation of an art of union. Though prints and book illustrations relating the Act of Union had been produced, Monnington's is the only painted version of the subject produced to date. Given its size, medium and location, it is unrivalled as a commemoration of the events that led to the creation of Great Britain. However, it was the subject of Monnington's painting, rather than his specific version of it, which resulted in the work contributing towards an art of disunion too.

The Act of Union as an 'act of national humiliation'

Two days after the unveiling of Monnington's painting, the first rumbles of discontent among Scottish Home Rulers became apparent. Opposition was led by Thomas Johnston (1881-1965), MP for Dundee, who in the Commons attacked Monnington's scene as representing 'an act of national humiliation'.[91] Over the following two weeks, a number of lively debates took place during which Johnston and a number of other MPs attempted, unsuccessfully, to have the painting removed from St Stephen's.

Johnston was a prominent Scottish Labour MP, long-term member of the Independent Labour Party and editor of the influential socialist newspaper *Forward.*[92] In 1918, he had played a leading role in reviving the Scottish Home Rule Association (SHRA) and, in 1922, was part of the group of 'Red Clydeside' MPs whose election to Parliament led to increasing agitation for Home Rule.[93] A Scottish Home Rule Bill, resembling the Government of Ireland Act 1914, followed in 1924.[94] Put forward by George Buchanan, Labour MP for Glasgow Gorbals, it was seconded by Johnston

[91] HC Deb, 30 June 1927, vol. 208 cols. 574-5.

[92] Graham Walker, *Thomas Johnston* (Manchester University Press, 1988), 1-4.

[93] Walker, *Johnston,* 70. For the Red Clydesiders, see Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1983).

[94] Walker (1988), 70-71.

but talked out.[95] The Dundee MP likewise seconded the Reverend James Barr's 1927 Bill, which had been drawn up by the SHRA.[96] Like Buchanan's before it, Barr's Bill never made it past the second reading.[97]

Though the rhetoric used by some of his colleagues, particularly Glasgow Bridgeton MP James Maxton, bordered on the inflammatory, Johnston provided measured and reasoned arguments that focused on the socialist benefits of Home Rule.[98] This approach is readily apparent in his criticism of *The Presentation of the Articles of Union*. Over the course of three separate debates in the summer of 1927, Johnston and his fellow Home Rule MPs, supported mainly by other Labour Members, made their case against the painting.[99] Broadly speaking, their opposition revolved around three main points: firstly, that the Act of Union was a national humiliation largely brought about by English bribery of the Scottish commissioners; secondly, that it was unpopular throughout Scotland and was still thought of as a shameful event; and thirdly, that it was not worthy to be the only subject representing Scotland in the scheme, when far more important episodes could have been chosen on par with those selected for England.

Johnston saw the Act of Union as a national humiliation in large part because it had been enabled by Scots themselves in exchange for what he termed 'backsheesh'.[100] Though he recognised that this had occurred under a certain amount of English duress, as a result of the failed Darian Expedition, for Johnston, Monnington's painting was nothing more than a 'picture of gentlemen with fee tickets in their pockets, after selling their national Parliament, presenting their dockets to Queen Anne.'[101] On what he

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[95] HC Deb, 9 May 1924, vol. 173, cols. 789-874,

[96] Walker (1988), 71.

[97] HC Deb, 13 May 1927, vol 206, cols. 865-78.

[98] Walker (1988), 70.

[99] HC Deb, 30 June 1927, vol. 208, cols. 574-5; HC Deb, 5 July 1927, vol. 208, cols. 1087-9; HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, cols. 300-37.

[100] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, cols. 303.

[101] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, cols. 308.

saw as the demeaning nature of the painting, Johnston explained to the House that there had

> been seared into [the Scottish people] as with a branding iron a hatred of two episodes in our history, two great humiliations, one the betrayal of Sir William Wallace by the fause Monteith, and the other the sale, for monetary bribes, of our national Parliament into an incorporating Union. Thank God, we have been spared a representation of the former episode in St Stephen's Hall…[102]

Notably, this was not the first time that Wallace's name had been mentioned in relation to the decoration of St Stephen's Hall. Fifteen years previously, the Oxford historian Herbert Fisher was asked to suggest subjects for the Hall, as part of the earlier Lewis Harcourt scheme.[103] One of Fisher's proposals had been 'The execution of William Wallace (the first Home Ruler!)'.[104] Though this comment was probably made in jest, and the subject was not taken forward, it further reveals that the disregard shown towards nationalists, whether Irish or Scottish, was a perennial feature in terms of the decoration of the Houses of Parliament.

Though evidently unaware of Fisher's earlier Wallace proposal, Johnston's comparison of the Act of Union with Wallace's fate further highlights how he and others saw the events of 1707 as having been brought about by the treachery of the Scottish nobility. In addition, they saw it as a humiliation because of the terms that Scotland had agreed to, with national sovereignty and self-determination having been exchanged for a proportion of the English national debt, bribes for the Scottish elite, and the same number of seats in the House of Commons as Cornwall.[105] The Scottish commissioners, Johnston argued, had initially sought a federal union, just as

[102] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, cols. 301.

[103] Herbert Fisher to Lord Carlisle, 14 December 1910, TNA WORK/11/197.

[104] Fisher to Carlisle, 14 December 1910, TNA WORK/11/197.

[105] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 303.

Home Rulers did two centuries later, but greed and English underhandedness had led them to sell their country short.[106]

Though he was utterly scathing of the nature of the Act and its creation, Johnston recognised that the results of the Union were not an 'unmixed evil'.[107] However, he argued strongly that they were certainly not an 'unmixed blessing' either.[108] Accepting that certain benefits had arisen, such as free trade with England and her colonies, Johnston nevertheless maintained that there had been particular negative consequences, including the decimation of nascent Scottish industry.[109] Relating this to contemporary calls for Home Rule, he argued that the Act resulted in ongoing problems for Scotland, including an imbalance of public expenditure compared with England and a lack of concern for its urban and rural labouring classes.[110]

On the unpopularity of the Act of the Union, Johnston referred to it being greeted by riots in Scotland and copies of the Act being burned in the street.[111] To highlight that this ill-feeling was far from momentary, he quoted Robert Burns's allusions to the shame the Act brought, and noted that even Walter Scott made references to the humiliating circumstances under which it was secured.[112] Today, Johnston argued, these feelings combined with the negative effects of the Act to ensure that its unpopularity continued.

Despite their opposition to Monnington's canvas, it is important to emphasise that Johnston and his fellow complainants were not against Scotland being represented in St Stephen's Hall per se. As Whitley had correctly highlighted, they were, on the whole, not separatists who sought repeal of the Act of Union or the breakup of the UK, and they were proud of Scotland's contribution to the creation of modern Britain and the Empire. As Johnston described, the Home Rulers' protest was against the Act of Union 'being used as an illustration of all we have had to give towards the building

[106] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, cols. 302-3.

[107] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 306.

[108] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 306.

[109] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 306-7.

[110] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 307.

[111] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 303.

[112] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 305.

of Britain.'[113] The issue was that an 'act of humiliation [was] the sole subject of Scottish history represented in St Stephen's Hall'.[114] Johnston therefore made a number of alternative suggestions. If the subject had to relate to the Union, he argued that 'the tariff barriers being swept away on the border' would have made a better choice.[115] Looking further back to the 'dawn of history', Johnston proposed Galgachus at Mons, Grampius addressing the Caledonian soldiers, or a representation of Saint Columba.[116] However, in making this argument, the Dundee MP appears to have missed or wilfully ignored the fact that the Act of Union subject was not chosen because it represented Scotland. Nevertheless, as his comments indicate, it was widely interpreted as doing so.

As well as opposing the painting itself, Johnston used the controversy as a means to talk more generally about why it was important that Scots stand up for their nationality. Claiming that the Scottish nation was 'bleeding to death', he argued that 'if we were to accept without protest a glorification of the incorporated union, engineered as we believe under a cloud of corruption, it would mean that we acquiesce in race suicide.'[117] Crucially, Johnston's particular brand of Scottish nationalism led him to believe that a strong Scottish national identity was not only good for Scotland but for Britain as a whole. Following this tack he stated:

> I am fully aware that national sentiment fills no empty bellies, but if we lose pride and honour in our kith and our kin we shall become nothing but an empty belly, and then we shall die. I am a Scotsman, and I am proud of it, and I feel a better Briton and better internationalist for the fact.[118]

[113] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 301.

[114] HC Deb, 30 June 1927, vol. 208, col. 574.

[115] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 307-8.

[116] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 308.

[117] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 307.

[118] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 308.

As these comments indicate, Johnston supported a strong sense of Scottish national identity but also happily accepted an overarching Britishness.[119] He disavowed separatism, but felt that centralisation was eroding the national distinctiveness that was crucial to ensuring the success of not just Britain but the Empire as a whole.[120] Indeed, like many advocates of Home Rule, Johnston sought wider imperial federation as a way of giving people greater control of their lives by turning back the tide of centralisation, as well as for its socialist benefits.[121] For Johnston, Home Rule schemes were the only way of preserving the Empire.[122]

Johnston's internationalist approach to imperial federation was shared by the majority of the Labour Party.[123] Yet, despite Ramsay MacDonald's keen support for Scottish Home Rule, he avoided committing himself in public to introducing a Bill as an official party measure.[124] Instead, the party kept the issue alive by allowing its backbenchers regular debates on opposition days.[125] Indeed, the main debate about Monnington's painting only took place because Labour set aside half a supply day for the issue.[126] Nevertheless, Johnston used the opportunity to attack his own party's approach to devolution, noting that it supported Home Rule 'for India, Egypt, Kenya, Timbuctoo, everywhere and anywhere but Scotland.'[127]

Among those joining Johnston to oppose Monnington's painting was Andrew MacLaren, the Independent Labour MP for Burslem, and an artist himself. Though born in Glasgow, MacLaren felt he could speak objectively on the issue, because he came from Irish parentage.[128] He thought it was 'unfortunate that this little arrangement between Scotland and England' was chosen as the painting's subject and claimed that it was not just MPs who

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[119] Walker (1988), 90.

[120] Walker (1988), 44 & 71.

[121] Walker (1988), 44 & 71.

[122] Walker (1988), 71.

[123] Hanham (1967), 115.

[124] Hanham (1967), 115.

[125] Hanham (1967), 115.

[126] *Times,* 8 July 1927, 14.

[127] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 308.

[128] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 326.

took offence, noting that, on more than one occasion, he had heard visitors to the building complaining about it.[129] His suggestion was to 'put it somewhere else where fewer Scotsmen will pass it', though quite where that might be remained unclear, and replace it with 'a painting showing the little altercation that took place at Bannockburn' between Robert the Bruce and Henry de Bohun.[130] The use of Bruce in this context, along with both Fisher's and Johnston's references to Wallace described above, indicates how far some the heroes of the Wars of Independence were beginning to develop from proto-unionist into proto-nationalist figures.[131]

A particularly notable contribution to the debate was made by James Brown, Labour MP for South Ayrshire, who compared the issue with the Cromwell statue controversy of the 1890s. Brown argued, incorrectly, that Thornycroft's Cromwell was outside rather than inside the Houses of Parliament because there had been a strong Irish presence in the Commons at the time 'and they were united and determined on the matter'.[132] He called on Scottish Unionists and Scottish Liberals to unite similarly so that Monnington's picture could be 'blotted out', asking:

> Why should we sit quietly under a picture of that kind? Every time we come up St Stephen's Hall our eyes are drawn to it. They are always drawn to it. One cannot help seeing this Judas thing there. Why should we allow a thing like that to stand there if we can possibly get it removed?[133]

However, with the painting funded privately, rather than by the Treasury, Johnston, MacLaren, Brown and others were left in a similar position to the opponents of the Cromwell statue once Rosebery had decided to pay for it. Other than arguing against its inclusion, all that Johnston could do was to put

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[129] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 326.

[130] HC Deb, 30 June 1927, vol. 208, col. 575; HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 326.

[131] For the evolution of views of Wallace in the twentieth century, see Graeme Morton, *William Wallace: A National Tale* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014), Ch. 11.

[132] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 319.

[133] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 319-20.

forward a protest motion to reduce Peel's salary, just as Swift MacNeill had done with respect to Akers-Douglas.[134] When the vote went before the Committee of Supply it was similarly unsuccessful, being defeated by 239 votes to 71.[135]

Positions on the painting generally followed party lines, with Labour MPs and some Scottish Liberals opposing it, and Tories and Unionists supporting it. However, as with the previous controversies examined in this thesis, there were individuals who sided with what would otherwise be the opposition, further indicating that responses to these contentious works of art was rarely a black and white issue. For example, James Brown Couper (1870-1946), the Unionist MP for Glasgow Maryhill, supported Johnston and favoured reducing his own government minister's salary.[136] Couper later expressed his wish that a subject 'more agreeable to Scottish national sentiment' had been chosen for the painting.[137]

A 'great compliment' to Scotland

During the debates, the principal target of the painting's opponents was Captain Douglas Hacking (1884-1950), Conservative MP for the Chorley Division of Lancashire, who represented Lord Peel in the Commons. Hacking's contribution to the discussions show that the Conservative-Unionist administration had little sympathy with Johnston's position. On the question of the subject being demeaning to Scotland, Hacking argued that it had been chosen by an eminent historian and approved by the First Commissioner, 'who considers that the Act of Union, so far from implying any humiliation, was a striking exhibition of the good sense of both countries.'[138] Hacking maintained that the event's importance lay in what it had produced, not how it was brought about, which he recognised was not entirely above

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[134] *Times,* 8 July 1927, 14; HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 301. For MacNeill and Akers-Douglas, see pp. 211-14 above.

[135] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, cols. 336-7.

[136] *Times,* 8 July 1927, 14

[137] HC Deb, 17 November 1927, vol. 210, cols. 1142-3.

[138] HC Deb, 30 June 1927, vol. 208, col. 574.

reproach. He contended that the subjects chosen for the series were not meant merely to illustrate a single event but symbolise something much larger, in this case something 'of unquestionable value to both countries':

> This Union between Scotland and England may have started badly, but it has produced enormous results, and I venture to suggest that it would have been actually an insult to Scotland if she had been left out of the great episodes representing the building of Britain. So far from its being a great humiliation that this picture should stand in its present position, it is in fact a great compliment to Scotland that it should be there.[139]

To further emphasise his point that the Act of Union was not the humiliation that some made it out to be, Hacking noted that not all Scots felt the same about the event as Johnston. He was keen to remind the House that three Scots –Younger, Cameron and Crawford – had played leading roles in creating the St Stephen's scheme, maintaining that they were 'as patriotic as the hon. Member for Dundee.'[140] Reporting on the controversy, the Press Association put forward a similar view, noting that because Younger was 'himself a good Scot it might have been imagined that the gift would be above suspicion.'[141]

Hacking also sought to undermine critics of the painting by highlighting the timing of their opposition. Drawing attention to the fact that the intention to depict the Act of Union had been made public over eighteen months before Johnston had decided to attack it, he argued that, if it really was an act of humiliation, 'it should have been noticed before this.'[142] Indeed, from the moment that plans for the scheme were made public until the unveiling, there was no indication that the concern expressed by Whitley regarding Scottish reactions would be borne out. Barr's Home Rule Bill had received its second reading in the month prior to *The Building of Britain* scheme's unveiling and, though that debate contained plenty of criticism of the Act of

[139] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, cols. 332-3.

[140] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 330.

[141] Published in *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 11 July 1927, 5.

[142] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 330.

Union itself, no one appears to have been aware of Monnington's ongoing work to commemorate it.[143]

The government position received valuable support from John Buchan, recently-elected Unionist MP for the Scottish Universities, who provided a measured assessment of the topic that, in some respects, resembled Johnston's, albeit with a different conclusion. A passionate Scottish patriot, Tory, anglophile and successful author, Buchan professed to be a Scottish nationalist, later stating that 'every Scotsman should be a Scottish nationalist'.[144] However, he fell into, what today is recognised as, the unionist-nationalist camp.[145] His form of Scottish nationalism may not have meant devolution, let alone sovereign independence, but he was nevertheless on friendly terms with prominent Home Rule MPs such as Johnston, as well as other leading figures in the movement such as the poet Hugh MacDiarmid.[146] Buchan's brand of unionist-nationalism thus led him to approve of the spirit of Johnston's stance against the painting, but disagree on the particular points at issue.

Buchan used what was only his second Commons speech to defend Monnington's painting and to set out his position regarding the Act of Union and Scotland's place within the UK and Empire.[147] In contrast to the detractors, he argued that anyone looking at the Act of Union with an unbiased mind would conclude that it was anything but discreditable.[148] He admitted that a little money may have changed hands, but claimed that anything more was an exaggeration.[149] Furthermore, he refuted the notion that the Union was unpopular, stating that it received support from all the chief leaders of the Church of Scotland, the great bulk of the middle classes

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[143] HC Deb, 13 May 1927, vol 206, cols. 865-78.

[144] Quoted in Lownie (1995), 210.

[145] For Buchan's dual identity, see David Goldie, '"Twin Loyalties": John Buchan's England' in Kate Macdonald ed., *Reassessing John Buchan: Beyond the Thirty-Nine Steps* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 29-40. Lownie (1995: 210) calls Buchan an 'enlightened Unionist'.

[146] Smith (1965), 317-18.

[147] Smith (1965), 309; Lownie (1995), 210.

[148] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 310.

[149] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 311.

and even considerable elements of the population. As for lasting opposition, he claimed that any bitterness died away within fifty years.[150]

On the issue of the results of the Act of Union, Buchan took the position that Scotland had benefited greatly from losing its independence, with 1707 making possible everything the country had achieved since.[151] Because of the positive effects of the Union, Buchan felt that it was a deservedly chosen subject for *The Building of Britain*, explaining:

> The pictures in St Stephen's Hall are supposed to represent the high lights of our Constitution, and the most important, the culminating one, is the Union of the ancient enemies. I should regard that as a compliment. If you portrayed some such subject as the coronation of Robert Bruce, you would have a memorial to the winning of Scottish independence. If you portrayed the events in the reign of James I, you would have a memorial of the Union of the Crown. But in this picture you commemorate something far greater, the Union of two people – a Union under which the little nation of Scotland, having made its peace with its foes and won its own salvation, was able to play a great part in the history of modern Britain. … The events of 1707, to my mind, did far more to unite Scotland and England. They united Scotland and the world at large.[152]

Here, Buchan neatly encapsulates the main points of the unionist-nationalist narrative of Scottish history that culminated, as a result of providential-unionism, in the events of 1707. It was this conception of the Act of Union that no doubt led to Crawford and Cameron supporting its inclusion in *The Building of Britain,* and to Younger agreeing to finance it. Despite the rise of Scottish nationalism putting an alternative spin on this narrative, variations of it remained the dominant view well into the twentieth century.[153]

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[150] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, cols. 310-12.

[151] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, cols. 312-13,

[152] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, cols. 312-13.

[153] Colin Kidd and James Coleman, 'Mythical Scotland' in T.M. Devine and Jenny Wormald, *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 76-7.

The one area where Buchan departed from the government line put forward by Hacking was on the issue of maintaining national differences. Like many in England, Hacking sought to play down differences between the UK nations, focusing instead on a homogenous Anglo-Britishness forged from the shared enterprise of Empire. Specifically addressing 'the Scottish, and, indeed, … the Irish and the Welsh and the English Members of this House', he asked them 'to forget that they belong to any particular part of this country, but to remember that we all hold an equal heritage in a great and mighty and far flung Empire.'[154] Given that a central tenet of unionist-nationalism was that Scottishness was distinct from Englishness but both contributed to Britishness, Buchan's position was far closer to the Home Rulers on this issue. He even began his defence of Monnington's painting by appealing to his English colleagues that it was in their interest 'to be patient with our national fervour', repeating Walter Scott's warning that 'If you unscotch us you make us damned mischievous Englishmen.'[155] Building on Johnston's notion that being a proud Scotsman made him a better Briton, Buchan expanded the concept in imperial terms to encompass the rest of the United Kingdom:

> Just as no man would be a good citizen of the Empire who is not first of all a good Briton or a good Australian or Canadian, so no man can be or will be a good Briton unless he is first of all a good Englishman or a good Welshman or a good Scotsman.[156]

This view of the Union and Empire was echoed by English Liberal MP for Spen Valley, Sir John Simon, who took heart from the debate that Monnington's painting had stimulated, because it showed that 'it is possible to reconcile an intense racial pride with the greater unity which ought to be part of the composition of every man who glories in calling himself a Briton.'[157] Reflecting both Johnston's and Buchan's statements, Simon

[154] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 333.

[155] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 309.

[156] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 309.

[157] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, cols. 315-16.

argued that this 'pride in the things which attach to one's own race, and tradition and folk and literature, combined with the willingness to join in sharing citizenship with a people of a somewhat different origin', were essential to the success of Britain and the Empire.[158]

Buchan's complex brand of unionist-nationalism led to perhaps the most interesting argument for the painting's inclusion in *The Building of Britain.* Though no supporter of Home Rule, Buchan nevertheless believed that it would be necessary, if a substantial majority of Scottish people desired it, or if the existing parliamentary system became too 'top heavy' and the Union of 1707 unworkable.[159] He recognised some of the Home Rulers' complaints about centralisation and understood that, if the situation demanded it, devolution might be the only way to preserve both the Union and the Empire. Combining this with his pride in the achievements made as a result of the Act of Union, Buchan argued that, if a Scottish parliament once again sat in Edinburgh, then Monnington's painting would 'acquire a very special significance and value':

> …for it will be a memorial of the events which inaugurated the Parliamentary Union which has lasted for more than 200 years, during which the two allies have played a great part in the world's story. In these two and a-half centuries, Scotland and England in a single Parliament have between them created the British Empire as we know it to-day; they have fought the greatest of all wars; and they have given us the greatest democracy of the world. Let no hon. Member grudge them to the Palace of Westminster a memento of an event so illustrious and so fruitful.[160]

This conception of the painting as a memorial to the Union should Home Rulers achieve their aims reflects how some Irish nationalists interpreted the creation of the St Patrick mosaic discussed in the previous chapter.[161] By encouraging the painting's opponents to imagine how their interpretation of

[158] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 316.

[159] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 313.

[160] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 313.

[161] See p. 240 above.

the work might change in an altered political context, and simultaneously appealing to their pride in Scottish achievements, Buchan was attempting to elicit the same response among Scottish nationalists but in advance of achieving their political aims. His argument speaks volumes about his own views on the future of the Union, but it made little impact on those he was attempting to persuade.

A 'serio-comic battle'

Regardless of the stance they took, many Scottish MPs, and some others such as Simon, saw the debate about Monnington's painting as a serious issue that touched on topics of national significance. However, others did not, indicating the general level of concern with the Scottish Home Rule movement, as well as the widespread English lack of sensitivity towards Scottish issues. Most notably, the government line put forward by Hacking did not just dismiss the complaints, but did so in a way that mocked those making them and cast aspersions on the whole of Scotland. On the issue of bribery, for example, Hacking claimed that he could 'speak with a perfectly open mind' about the subject because:

> My father was an Englishman, my mother was a Scotswoman, and that union of England and Scotland, as far as I am concerned, was perfectly satisfactory. May I say that less than twenty years ago I have seen money pass between my father and my mother, and I never dared to call it bribery.[162]

At an earlier stage, he had noted that the painting did not make any suggestion that bribery took place, but that had money 'been given to Scotsmen, I am quite certain they would have availed themselves of it.'[163]

In addition to Hacking's jocular comments, other English MPs took advantage of the discussion to raise anti-Scottish sentiment over what they saw as the disproportionate success of Scots in London political and

[162] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 330.

[163] HC Deb, 30 June 1927, vol. 208, cols. 574-5.

intellectual life. In this vein, the inappropriately named Sir Henry Brittain asked: 'Is it not the fact that even this picture will not keep Scots away from London?'[164] Tinged with Scotophobia and redolent of the resentment seen in the later notion of the 'Scottish mafia', such views underpinned elements of the debate about the Act of Union picture.[165] Reporting on the exchange in the Commons under the headline 'A Scottish Humiliation', for instance, the *Manchester Guardian* used terms such as 'conquering Scot' and 'invaders from the canny North', thus tying in to the perceptions of excessive Scottish influence expressed by Brittain and others.[166]

The general press response to the controversy was light-hearted. The Press Association reported on it and the vote against Peel's salary under the title '"Terrible Crime" – Canny Scots MPs Annoyed at a Picture – A Serio-Comic Battle'.[167] Its correspondent wrote that Johnston was 'leading his fellow countrymen into battle against the daring Sassenach'[168] and that Scots in all parties felt slighted and 'will not rest until they have punished the Minister, who they regard as being responsible, in the best way they can devise – through his purse.'[169] The journalist also noted that MPs as a body were said to be 'amused at the controversy', even though 'the Scottish members are in deadly earnest': 'Their national pride has been touched, and it must, they say, be avenged.'[170]

Even the Scottish press largely dismissed the controversy, with the *Scotsman* describing it as 'semi-serious'.[171] In an accurate assessment of the situation, the paper argued that 'the movement is ill-conceived, and more likely to excite ridicule than sympathy.' It further asserted that Johnston and his fellow complainants 'mistake parochialism for patriotism' and that 'it is a

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[164] HC Deb, 30 June 1927, vol. 208, col. 575.

[165] On the 'Scottish mafia', see T.M. Devine, *Scotland and the Union, 1707-2007*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 229.

[166] *Manchester Guardian,* 1 July 1927, 10

[167] *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 11 July 1927, 5.

[168] A Gaelic term for Saxons often used as a derogatory name for someone from England.

[169] *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 11 July 1927, 5.

[170] *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 11 July 1927, 5.

[171] *Scotsman,* 8 July 1927, 8.

new reading of history to regard the Union as discreditable to Scotland in its origin or unfortunate in its results.' Echoing the language used by Hacking and Buchan, in the *Scotsman's* view, rather than insulting Scotland by selecting the Act of Union, Newbolt had 'paid her the highest compliment of regarding her legislative union with England as comparable in historical importance and significance' with events such as the signing of Magna Carta.[172]

Completing *The Building of Britain*

Despite the Scottish nationalist failure to force the government to abandon Monnington's painting, the work continued to trigger opposition after the main controversy in 1927. The *Telegraph* reported during that year's Summer Recess that, as Monnington continued working on his picture in situ, 'groups of scowling Scots stand in front of it and occasionally mutter', though whether this is a factual report or another example of the mockery of the English press is unclear.[173] When Parliament returned in the autumn, the still-unfinished painting was removed to a makeshift studio behind a screen in Westminster Hall for the artist to complete.[174] With Monnington's canvas absent, in the Commons Northern Irish Unionist MP Sir Malcolm Martin Macnaghten asked whether a picture representing Northern Ireland could be put in its place.[175] Although it is not clear how widespread Macnaghten's views were, there were evidently some who felt that Northern Ireland had been unfairly left out of this important scheme and had, therefore, been denied recognition of its role as part of the UK and Empire. One English MP's suggestion, in response to Macnaghten, that a suitable subject might be 'a representation of the recent discovery in Northern Ireland of an ammunition dump and an armoury' highlights, perhaps, the ongoing issues that Newbolt

[172] *Scotsman,* 8 July 1927, 8.

[173] Quoted in Egerton (1977), 9.

[174] *Scotsman,* 2 February, 8.

[175] HC Deb, 12 December 1927, vol. 21, col. 1835.

may have had in mind when he avoided British history from 1707 onwards for *The Building of Britain*.[176]

Scottish Home Rulers may have missed the opportunity to make significant political capital out of the painting before the series was unveiled but, after the main controversy of 1927, it continued to be referred to in debates relating to Home Rule.[177] Perhaps most significantly, a month after the final installation of Monnington's canvas, in February 1928, Barr's Home Rule Bill was reintroduced.[178] In an attempt to turn the failed opposition to the painting to his advantage, Barr stated:

> I need not say that in Scotland our whole literature pulsates with the passion for Scottish freedom and Scottish nationality. A protest was made in regard to this matter in connection with the panel, 'The Building of Britain', [*sic*] in St Stephen's Hall. I was not here to take part, but I will tell the House of the conclusion to which I have come. I am quite willing that that panel should remain, on condition that we realise that the building of Britain is not complete, and that we have another panel in which the grant of self-government, which was surrendered then, will be restored.[179]

Barr's use of a hypothetical work of art as a counterpoint to that which he opposed is reminiscent of O'Connell's 1845 threat to create paintings showing Cromwell's actions in Ireland to hang near Parliament.[180] Though a useful rhetorical tool, Barr's allusion to superseding Monnington's painting with another illustrating the granting of Home Rule made no impact on the success of his Bill, which was yet again talked out.[181] From the early 1930s, Monnington's painting ceased to feature in discussions of Scottish Home

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[176] HC Deb, 12 December 1927, vol. 21, col. 1836.

[177] HC Deb, 24 November 1932, vol. 272 cols. 235-360; HC Deb, 25 April 1929, vol. 227 cols. 1158-95.

[178] *Scotsman,* 7 February 1928, 8; HC Deb, 27 March 1928, vol. 215, cols. 996-8.

[179] HC Deb, 27 March 1928, vol. 215, col. 998.

[180] See pp. 123-5 above.

[181] McLean (1983), 208.

Rule and largely functioned as intended: an illustration of the Union's inception rather than a focus for debates about its future.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has demonstrated the importance of the Union to the creation and reception of the Houses of Parliament's decoration between the 1840s and 1920s. By analysing the art and architecture of the Palace of Westminster through the lens of political union, it has shown how the UK's composition as a multinational state directly impacted upon the building's architectural ornamentation, mural paintings, mosaics and sculpture. It has also established the role that the decoration of Parliament sometimes played in the politics of the Union itself.

Crucial to understanding the relationship between the Union and Parliament's decorative schemes are the twin notions of the art of union and the art of disunion. Forming the framing concepts of much of the analysis, these have been developed throughout this study and examples of each have appeared at various points in the seven chapters. While this thesis has favoured a broadly chronological structure, rather than a thematic approach, this conclusion synthesises these examples thematically. It aims to elicit additional conclusions and further emphasise the importance of the art of union and the art of disunion to the development of the Houses of Parliament's decoration. The conclusion ends with proposed avenues for further research.

The art of union

This study has used the concept of the art of union to identify the elements of the New Palace of Westminster's planned or completed decoration that validated and promoted the Union. Over the eighty years or so examined, a number of examples have emerged that combine to illustrate the building's unique contribution to the creation of the art of union during this period. Uniting these examples is the incorporation of subject matter relating to one or more of the UK nations in addition to England.

Examples of the art of union include relatively straightforward symbolic representations of the Union, namely national emblems largely derived from

royal heraldry, as found in Barry's architectural ornamentation.[1] This embellishment is augmented by figures of the patron saints of the four nations in Barry's architectural statuary, which form further readily identifiable national symbols.[2] The suitability of the patron saints as part of the art of union is further highlighted in their adoption by the FAC in its 1847 blueprint for Houses of Parliament's decoration, where they form the core of a unique attempt to visualise the imagined community of the UK.[3]

Consisting of a complex constituted history of the UK nations, the FAC's vision of an inclusive British past mirrors, and sometimes repeats, the varied national subjects entered into the exhibitions it organised throughout the 1840s.[4] One important contribution to the art of union is the unrealised scheme for the Painted Chamber, in which pre-Union events are cast as paradigms for the eventual unions of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.[5] This symbolically complex scheme stands in contrast to the building's most literal contribution to the art of union, Monnington's *The Presentation of the Articles of Union* (1928) in St Stephen's Hall.[6]

It is the examples of the art of union in the Houses of Parliament that led to it being described as a very British building by Cannadine.[7] However, the detailed analyses of these schemes presented in this thesis suggest that this is an inadequate description. Though Scotland, Ireland and Wales are represented in the building's decoration, from Barry's ornamentation to *The Building of Britain* series, it is England that dominates. Moreover, where the other nations are included, it is usually in a way that supports, and certainly never undermines, the status quo of England's dominance. For this reason, Anglo-British is the most accurate term with which to describe the sense of national identity embodied by the Palace of Westminster. However, the Anglo-Britishness presented over the lengthy period covered in this study is

[1] See pp. 51-5 above.

[2] See pp. 45-51 above.

[3] See p. 135 above.

[4] See pp. 89-105 above.

[5] See pp. 160-67 above.

[6] See pp. 255-56 above..

[7] Cannadine (2000), 18.

not a consistent and homogenous vision, but one that is varied, complex and, at times, contradictory. There is also a clear development in the general form that it takes: beginning with a relatively inclusive Anglo-Britishness, that gives some recognition to the UK nations other than England, it becomes increasingly Anglocentric and imperialist over the period examined. As such, it reflects wider developments in British national identity, as outlined by Colley, Cannadine and others.[8]

The increasing Anglicisation of the schemes to decorate the Houses of Parliament is also evident in the nationalities of the artists employed on the building. While there is no evidence that the FAC employed particular painters or sculptors as a result of their nationality, rather than their ability or reputation, it did look at the whole field of British art and seek to encourage artists from around the UK. The FAC's schemes are, therefore, notable for the number of Scottish, Irish and Welsh artists that were chosen to complete them. This contributes further to the art of union embodied in the building during this period. One notable result is Maclise's incorporation of pro-Union imagery in *The Meeting of Wellington and Blücher* (1861).[9] By contrast, the artists who worked on the post-FAC schemes were all English. From the Victorian Olympians via the Neo-Pre-Raphaelites to the British School at Rome, this was the result of particular artistic styles or movements being chosen.[10] While there was no intentional exclusion of artists from the Celtic fringe, the narrow approach taken indicates a lack of interest in employing a nationally diverse range of artists; something that mirrors the attitude taken to subject matter during the same period.

The art of disunion

The art of disunion has been used in this thesis to describe planned and completed works of art that caused disunity and division. In each of the four principal examples, a work of art became the focus of public controversy

[8] Colley (1992); Cannadine (1995), 16; Cannadine (2000), 21-23; Ward (2004), 13-46.

[9] See pp. 154-60 above.

[10] See pp. 210-11 & 246-47 above.

because of the lack of awareness shown towards national sensitivities that it embodied, largely due to the Anglocentric unionism of those responsible for the relevant schemes.

The examples of the art of disunion share various similarities and conform to art controversies as a type.[11] Among these is the fact that they focus on subject matter rather than artistic or aesthetic concerns. In the case of the 1845 furore, it was the planned inclusion of one figure, Cromwell, and the exclusion of another, de Londres, which resulted in a public outcry in Ireland.[12] Similarly, in the 1890s, the majority of the second Cromwell controversy occurred prior to Thornycroft beginning his sculpture.[13] Even after it was installed in 1899, the continuing Irish opposition made no reference to the qualities of the statue as a work of art.[14] By contrast, the uproar among some Scots regarding Monnington's canvas in 1927 was triggered by the work nearing completion.[15] But again it was the subject matter, rather than the artist's interpretation of it, that was at issue, with the painting's leading critic, Thomas Johnston MP, carefully avoiding impugning Monnington himself.[16]

The planned or realised works of art therefore acted as catalysts in ongoing disputes. For most of their opponents, they became a useful focus for the articulation of existing grievances as part of achieving wider political aims: Repeal and, later, Irish and Scottish Home Rule. No doubt genuine insult was felt in each case, but the firestorms that followed were also the product of the wider contexts in which they occurred and the potential political capital that could be made by fanning the flames.

Although the majority of opponents to the works of art that caused disunion were nationalists who already opposed the Union in its current form, unionists also played an important role. These individuals were certainly in the minority, but their unionism gave their opposition more weight. This is

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[11] Howells et al (2012).

[12] See Chapter 3, pp. 106-3 above.

[13] See pp. 178-200 above.

[14] See pp. 201-6 above.

[15] See p. 256 above.

[16] HC Deb, 19 July 1927, vol. 209, col. 301.

seen in the FAC's response to Ferguson in 1845 and the subsequent impact his opposition had on its vision of Britishness.[17] Ferguson's ready adoption by the *Nation* as a fellow defender of Irish nationality provides further evidence of this, as does John Dillon's praise of Edward Carson in 1899.[18]

The importance attached by the FAC to Ferguson's views is mirrored by the disregard the Anglo-British elite showed to nationalists during the period covered in this thesis. In 1845, the opposition mounted by O'Connell and the *Nation* was discounted in favour of 'the truly loyal Irish' like Ferguson.[19] In the 1890s, Rosebery and the Liberals, followed by the Tories, belligerently ignored the Irish nationalist opposition.[20] Likewise, in the 1920s, Crawford dismissed the likelihood of potential Scottish nationalist opposition to depicting the 1707 Union, while Hacking subsequently ridiculed it when it emerged.[21] The cumulative effect of these responses highlights a dominant element of Anglo-British unionism: the indifference, often bordering on contempt, for those who held opposing views on the Union and its future.

The controversies examined in this thesis are indicative of wider trends within the politics of the Union. That three of the four examples of the art of disunion concern Ireland reflects that Ireland's place in the UK formed the dominant constitutional question in the UK throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Similarly, the lack of Scottish and Welsh complaint during most of the period illustrates the widespread acceptance of the status quo and close affinity with Anglo-Britishness. In Scotland, it was only when unionist-nationalism came to be replaced, among some, by demands for Home Rule that this came to be challenged, resulting in the controversy surrounding Monnington's canvas in 1927. In Wales, however, this was never the case, with the nationalist movement remaining largely cultural rather than political. The adoption of Poynter's St David mosaic, as part of the Welsh national movement,[22] indicates the difference between the aims

[17] See pp.129-168 above.

[18] See pp. 128-29 & 203-4 above.

[19] See p. 130 above.

[20] See pp. 184-206 above.

[21] See pp. 249 & 269 above.

[22] See pp. 221-27 above.

and methods of Welsh nationalism when compared to the Irish and Scottish movements in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Further research

One limitation of this study is its restricted engagement with purely English subject matter, because of the high volume of works of art in this category. Though analysis of a number of such works, including the St George mosaic in Central Lobby, has been undertaken where it sheds light on the approach to representing Scotland, Ireland and Wales in the building, many others with English subjects have not been examined. In line with a recent increase in scholarly interest in the development of English national identity,[23] a detailed investigation into the Englishness of the Houses of Parliament would prove fruitful and provide a valuable addition to the literature on the building. It would also enable a more detailed understanding of the Anglo-Britishness embodied in the Houses of Parliament, as identified in this thesis, to emerge.

There are a number of other avenues for further research that lead from this thesis. Following the example of Chapter 2, a four nations approach to the wider UK art world could productively examine and compare a variety of art institutions found throughout Great Britain and Ireland to determine, for example, the national makeup of exhibitors at the RA, RHA and RSA.[24] Similarly, comparative examinations of the levels and forms of patronage and training found throughout England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, and how these were affected by political events such as the 1707 and 1800 Acts of Union, and the creation of the Irish Free State, could be undertaken.[25]

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[23] For example, see Kumar (2003); Robert Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford University Press, 2004); Arthur Aughey and Christine Berberich eds., *These England's: A Conversation on National Identity* (Manchester University Press, 2011); and Kumar (2015).

[24] For a useful example, see Arnold ed. (2004).

[25] For a recent call for a four nations approach to British and Irish art history, see Dr Kathryn Milligan, 'Exploring a Four Nations Art History': https://fournationshistory.wordpress.com/2015/08/24/exploring-a-four-nations-art-history-an-irish-perspective/#_edn1 [accessed 12 February 2016].

As a framing concept for analysing art, the art of union is applicable outside of the Houses of Parliament. In recent years, historians have become increasingly interested in the longevity of the Union, given its composition of disparate peoples with divergent cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.[26] Art historians have, to date, made a limited contribution to this literature. Building on Colley's work, and that of scholars such as Cullen and Morrison, there remains great scope for detailed study of the development of the art and visual culture of union and its contribution to the UK's maintenance and survival.[27] By contrast, with the exception of Ireland, there appears to be little potential for the deployment of the art of disunion in a wider UK context during this period. This is a further indication of the widespread support for the Union found throughout Great Britain. It also reflects the unrivalled position that the Houses of Parliament occupied as a focus for disunion, given its unique role as the home of the four nations' legislature.

The unique situation of the Houses of Parliament in the UK is mirrored by other countries' legislative buildings, particularly those that govern a political union of one form or another. Initial research into the decoration of the United States Capitol in Washington DC suggests that the methodology used in this thesis would transfer productively to a similarly detailed study of that building.[28] Applying the concepts of the art of union and the art of disunion to the US Capitol, and other similar buildings, would provide further insights into these phenomena and the important role played by the decoration of national legislatures in the creation and maintenance of national identities

[26] Kidd (2008); Jackson (2011).

[27] Colley (1993); Morrison (2003); Cullen and Morrison eds. (2005); Cullen (2012).

[28] This research was undertaken at the Library of Congress in 2013, thanks to the AHRC International Placement Scheme.

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