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**Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and the  
Patronage of Contemporary Sculpture in  
Victorian Britain  
1837-1901**

Two Volumes: Volume 1

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Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

Queen Victoria (1819-1901) and Prince Albert (1819-1861) have long loomed large in Victorian sculpture studies. Numerous scholars have examined the public statues of Victoria and Albert that were erected throughout the United Kingdom and across the British Empire between the 1840s and the 1920s. Yet, to date, the couple's own patronage of sculpture has been largely overlooked. In light of this lacuna in the scholarship, this thesis examines the formation, display and dissemination of Victoria's and Albert's sculpture collection; explores the public sculpture projects with which they were involved; and analyses contemporary responses to their patronage. In so doing, it reveals what sculpture meant to Victoria and Albert personally; what their patronage meant to the contemporary sculpture profession; and what impact they had on the wider history and historiography of Victorian sculpture.

The thesis is organised chronologically and broadly divided into three periods, representing three distinct but interrelated trends in the formation, arrangement, dissemination and reception of Victoria's and Albert's collection and the changing status of royal patronage. The first is the period between Victoria's and Albert's marriage in 1840 and Albert's death in 1861. In this period, the couple's patronage was prolific, varied and widely disseminated. They commissioned and acquired an extensive amount of sculpture for the royal residences and closely involved themselves with numerous public sculpture projects such as the sculpture programme in the New Houses of Parliament. This thesis demonstrates the complex imbrication of the couple's public and private patronage of sculpture by revealing the extent to which their involvement with public projects informed their private patronage and the degree to which this fed into their public image as patrons.

The second part looks at the decade after Albert's death, a period in which Victoria concentrated her patronage almost exclusively on memorial busts and statues of him. Her various memorial commissions have often been treated interchangeably as simple indexes of her legendary grief. This thesis restores specificity to this body of memorial sculpture and uncovers the extent and sophistication of Victoria's patronage in this period. However, it also shows the damage done to her reputation as a patron through her seemingly relentless desire to commission posthumous portraits of Albert.

The third part concentrates on the last three decades of Victoria's life. It reveals the extent to which she remained active as a patron and the degree to which her taste for sculpture evolved in the 1880s and 1890s. Yet, Victoria's patronage was indelibly associated with mid-century sculptors whom Edmund Gosse, chief evangelist of 'The New Sculpture' dismissed as representative of 'the dark age' in the history of British sculpture. At a time when public statues of Victoria by some of the leading sculptors of the age were being erected across the globe, her position as a leading patron of contemporary sculpture was steadily undermined by the perception that she was stuck in the past.

## Abbreviations

HMI	Henry Moore Institute
LGC	Lord Great Chamberlain
NAL	National Art Library
RA	Royal Archives
RAA	Royal Academy Archive

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This thesis is dedicated to my Nana, Annie Dennis, who was never given the opportunities I have been given but has never flinched in the love and devotion she has shown to her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

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- 3.45. Jane and Margaret Davison, 'Medallion portraits of the Princes and Princesses of the Royal Family, forming centres to the upper portions of the tablets in the nave: 1.

H.R.H. The Princess Alice of Hesse 2. H.R.H. The Princess Christian 3. H.R.H. The Princess Beatrice 4. H.R.H. The Princess Louise, Marchioness of Lorne 5. H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh,' in *The Triqueti Marbles in the Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1876), Pl. XLIX, albumen print, 18.1 x 7 cm (each photograph).

3.46. Baron Henry de Triqueti, *Edward VI*, 1856-1857, Windsor Castle, marble, 134.5 x 58 x 53 cm (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).

3.47. Edward Henry Corbould, *Memorial Portrait of the Prince Consort*, 1863, watercolour and mixed media, 75.7 x 61 cm (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).

3.48. William Theed (modelling) and Elkington & Co. (manufacturer), *Prince Albert*, c. 1864-1865, silver (partly gilt) and enamel, 94.7 x 42.5 x 41 cm (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).

3.49. Baron Henry de Triqueti, *Cenotaph of Prince Albert*, c.1864-1872, Albert Memorial Chapel, St. George's Chapel, Windsor, marble (Photograph: Eoin Martin).

3.50. Baron Henry de Triqueti, *Cenotaph of Prince Albert* (detail), c.1864-1872, Albert Memorial Chapel, St. George's Chapel, Windsor, marble (Photograph: Eoin Martin).

3.51. Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm, *Angel of Resurrection, The Entombment and Angel of Death*, c. 1872-1874, Albert Memorial Chapel, St. George's Chapel, Windsor, marble, dimensions unknown (Photograph: Eoin Martin).

3.52. Sir George Gilbert Scott (designer), *Reredos*, c. 1872-1874, Albert Memorial Chapel, St. George's Chapel, Windsor, marble, dimensions unknown (Photograph: Eoin Martin).

- 3.53. Sir George Gilbert Scott (designer), *Reredos*, c. 1872-1874, Albert Memorial Chapel, St. George's Chapel, Windsor, marble, dimensions unknown (Photograph: Eoin Martin).
- 3.54. Baron Henry de Triqueti, *Mourning Royalty* in the base of *Cenotaph of Prince Albert*, c.1864-1872, Albert Memorial Chapel, St. George's Chapel, Windsor, marble, c. 44 x 23 x 25 cm (Photograph: Eoin Martin).
- 3.55. Baron Henry de Triqueti, *Christ in the Tomb*, c.1864-1872, Albert Memorial Chapel, St. George's Chapel, Windsor, inlaid marble, dimensions unknown (Photograph: Eoin Martin).
- 3.56. Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm, *Tomb of Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany*, c. 1884, Albert Memorial Chapel, St. George's Chapel, Windsor, marble, dimensions unknown (Photograph: Eoin Martin).
- 3.57. 'Windsor Castle. Interior of the Albert Memorial Chapel, formerly the Lady Chapel,' in William Henry St John Hope, *Windsor Castle: An Architectural History* 2 vols. (London: Country Life, 1913), vol. I, Pl. LXXIX, dimensions unknown.
- 3.58. 'Gilt bronze grate and monument of Charles, Earl of Worcester, 1526, and his wife Elizabeth,' in William Henry St John Hope, *Windsor Castle: An Architectural History* 2 vols. (London: Country Life, 1913), vol. I, Pl. LXX, dimensions unknown.
- 4.1. John Chancellor, *Four Generations*, 1899, National Portrait Gallery, London, albumen panel card, 28.8 x 23.9 cm.
- 4.2. Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm, *Queen Victoria at Her Spinning Wheel*, 1869, bronze, 43 x 39 cm (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).

- 4.3. Hills & Saunders, *Queen Victoria at a Spinning Wheel*, 1865, albumen carte-de-visite, 10.1 x 6.4 cm (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).
- 4.4. Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm, *Queen Victoria*, 1871, Windsor Castle, marble, 172.5 x 122 x 120 cm (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).
- 4.5. Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm, *Noble*, 1884, Osborne House, Isle of Wight, marble, 90 x 84.5 x 42.5 cm (Photograph: Eoin Martin) (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).
- 4.6. Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm, *Sharp*, 1881, Frogmore, Windsor, bronze, dimensions unknown (Photograph: Eoin Martin) (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).
- 4.7. Matthew Cotes Wyatt, *Bashaw, 'the faithful friend of man'*, c. 1832-1834, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, coloured marbles (figure of dog), topaz (eyes of dog), hardstones, sardonyx and black lava (base), bronze (snake), ruby (eyes of snake), gilt bronze (cushion), 149.5 x 154 x 80 (including base) (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London).
- 4.8. 'Dinah Consoling Hetty in Prison. Engraved from the Sculpture by F.J. Williamson,' *Art Journal* (March 1870), facing p. 90.
- 4.9. 'Hetty and Dinah. By F.J. Williamson. Purchased by Queen Victoria,' *Magazine of Art* (February 1901), p. 252.
- 4.10. Matthew Cotes Wyatt, *Cenotaph to Princess Charlotte*, 1818-1826, St George's Chapel, Windsor, marble, dimensions unknown ([www.wga.hu](http://www.wga.hu)).
- 4.11. Antonio Canova, *Monument to Archduchess Maria Christina*, 1799-1895, Augustinekirche, Vienna, marble, h. 574 cm ([www.artandarchitecture.org.uk](http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk)).

- 4.12. Susan Durant, *Monument to Leopold, King of the Belgians*, 1866-1867, Christ Church, Esher, Surrey, marble, dimensions unknown (Photograph: Jacqueline Banerjee) ([www.victorianweb.org](http://www.victorianweb.org)).
- 4.13. Francis John Williamson, *Monument to Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold*, c. 1870-1880, St George's Church, Esher, Surrey, marble, dimensions unknown (Photograph: Eoin Martin).
- 4.14. Francis John Williamson, *Monument to Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold* (detail), c. 1870-1880, St George's Church, Esher, Surrey, marble, dimensions unknown (Photograph: Eoin Martin).
- 4.15. Francis John Williamson, *Monument to Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold* (detail), c. 1870-1880, St George's Church, Esher, Surrey, marble, dimensions unknown (Photograph: Eoin Martin).
- 4.16. Francis John Williamson, *Monument to Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold* (detail), c. 1870-1880, St George's Church, Esher, Surrey, marble, dimensions unknown (Photograph: Eoin Martin).
- 4.17. 'Sunrise. From the Sculpture by F.J. Williamson,' *Art Journal* (April 1873), facing p. 112.
- 4.18. 'Spring and Autumn. From the Bas-Relief by F.J. Williamson,' *Art Journal* (May 1875), facing p. 156.
- 4.19. 'Her Late Majesty's Private Sculptor,' *Magazine of Art* (February 1901), p. 252.
- 4.20. 'Her Late Majesty's Private Sculptor,' *Magazine of Art* (February 1901), p. 253.
- 4.21. 'Her Late Majesty's Private Sculptor,' *Magazine of Art* (February 1901), p. 254.

- 4.22. 'The Place of Sculpture in Daily Life. II. – Sculpture in the House,' *Magazine of Art* (January 1895), p. 368.
- 4.23. 'The Queen's Sitting Room,' *Art Journal* (June 1887), p. 217.
- 4.24. 'Osborne House from the Grounds,' *Leisure Hour* (September 1888), p. 600.
- 4.25. 'The Corridor,' *Leisure Hour* (September 1888), p. 602.
- 4.26. 'The Queen at Osborne. From the Picture by Sir Edwin Landseer R.A., in the Royal Collection at Buckingham Palace,' *English Illustrated Magazine* (July 1897), p. 461.
- 4.27. 'The Corridor,' *English Illustrated Magazine* (July 1897), p. 463.
- 4.28. 'The Drawing-Room,' *English Illustrated Magazine* (July 1897), p. 464.
- 4.29. 'The Billiard-Room,' *English Illustrated Magazine* (July 1897), p. 465.
- 4.30. 'The Longest Reign in English History: A Glimpse of the Home Life of the Queen,' *Illustrated London News* (19 September 1896), p. 353.
- 4.31. Edward Onslow Ford, *Queen Victoria Memorial*, 1898-1901, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, bronze and marble, 290 x 580 cm (statue) 152 x 990 cm (base) (Photograph: Jacqueline Banerjee) ([www.victorianweb.org](http://www.victorianweb.org)).
- 4.32. Edward Onslow Ford, *Queen Victoria*, 1898, marble, dimensions unknown (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).
- 4.33. Baron Heinrich von Angeli, *Queen Victoria*, 1899, oil on canvas, 120 x 93.5 cm (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).
- 4.34. 'The Royal Pavilion: North View,' in Isidore Spielmann, *Paris International Exhibition 1900: The Royal Pavilion* (London: Royal Commission, 1901), Pl. 3.

- 4.35. 'The Stairway of the Royal Pavilion,' in Isidore Spielmann, *Paris International Exhibition 1900: The Royal Pavilion* (London: Royal Commission, 1901), Pl. 70.
- 4.36. 'Bust of H.M. Queen Victoria,' *Magazine of Art* (February 1901), p. 193.
- 5.1. Anon., *Queen Victoria's Coffin the Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor Castle, 1901*, gelatin silver photographic print, 23.8 x 28.7 cm (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).
- 5.2. W.T. Maud, *Royal Sarcophagus*, watercolour, 35 x 51.8 cm (Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013).
- 5.3. 'The King's Garden-Party at Windsor: His Majesty Passing Through the Ranks of the Guests,' *Illustrated London News* (27 June 1908), p. 925.

## INTRODUCTION

In 1834 the journalist, lawyer and poet Thomas Kibble Hervey published *Illustrations of Modern Sculpture*, a book of eighteen engravings after celebrated pieces of sculpture executed in the previous half century, each accompanied by an 'illustrative' poem.<sup>1</sup> Some of the engravings are after works by Antonio Canova and Bertel Thorvaldsen, the leading sculptors in early nineteenth-century Europe, but most are after works by British sculptors, including John Bacon the Elder, Edward Hodges Baily, Francis Chantrey and John Flaxman. Hervey uses the work of these sculptors to substantiate the claim that the British school of sculpture, which had emerged over the previous half century, had 'produced works whose excellence may undoubtedly [sic] put itself in competition with the excellence of all other lands and ages.'<sup>2</sup> Hervey essentially suggests that modern British sculpture had inherited the mantle of greatness from classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance because individual genius in sculpture is contingent upon moral and intellectual progress in society as a whole, and modern British society has attained a level of moral and intellectual development not seen since ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy.

Paradoxically, Hervey laments that sculpture is underappreciated and poorly supported in Britain. Indeed, he tells us that the publication of his volume was prompted by the need to redress the neglect of British sculptors.<sup>3</sup> Hervey reminds his readers that 'genius must perish, for want of the stimuli which are essential to its existence, which is left to labour by its own unfed and untrimmed light – with no

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Kibble Hervey, *Illustrations of Modern Sculpture. A Series of Engravings, with Descriptive Prose and Illustrative Poetry* (London: Relfe & Fletcher, Charles Tilt, Hodgson Boys & Graves, 1834).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

encouragement but its own unaided impulses, and no reward but its unestimated [sic] productions.’<sup>4</sup> He admits that there have been ‘instances in which individual power has been enabled to soar, upon a more than ordinary strength of wing, above all obstacles, and raise itself, in defiance of all restraints, into an atmosphere, and up to an elevation, where its height could compel the universal gaze.’<sup>5</sup> In other words, some sculptors have managed to attain greatness despite a lack of support, but they are the exceptions that prove the rule. What is needed, Hervey suggests, is leadership from above. Sculpture, he tells us, ‘has attained to excellence, only where the resources of the state, or of the wealthy – the patronage of the distinguished – and the national sympathy (which that patronage is almost sure to lead) have been placed at its disposal.’<sup>6</sup>

The thirty years before the publication of Hervey’s volume saw important developments in the patronage of contemporary sculpture in Britain. In response to the unparalleled mobilisation required by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the state funded a programme of memorial sculpture in St Paul’s Cathedral that was unprecedented in scale.<sup>7</sup> This state-funded patronage was echoed by local and municipal authorities across the United Kingdom, who commissioned memorials to local and national military heroes, most notably Nelson and Wellington.<sup>8</sup> Yet this

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>7</sup> See: Holger Hoock, ‘The British Military Pantheon in St Paul’s Cathedral: the State, cultural patriotism, and the politics of national monuments, c.1790-1820,’ in Matthew Craske & Richard Wrigley (eds.), *Pantheons: Transformations of a Monumental Idea* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 81-106.

<sup>8</sup> See: Alison Yarrington, *The Commemoration of the Hero 1800-1864: Monuments to the British Victors of the Napoleonic Wars* (London & New York: Garland, 1988) and ‘Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830,’ in Penelope Curtis (ed.), *Patronage and Practice: Sculpture on Merseyside* (Liverpool: National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside & Tate Liverpool, 1989), pp. 22-30.

public patronage had largely petered out by the 1830s and, ultimately, state patronage did not provide the systematic leadership that Hervey demanded.<sup>9</sup>

One reason for this apparent want of leadership was the relative lack of royal patronage of contemporary sculpture. The late Hanoverian monarchy's patronage was far from negligible. George III commissioned portrait busts from some of the leading sculptors in late-eighteenth-century Britain, including Louis François Roubiliac, Joseph Wilton, Richard Westmacott II, and Bacon the Elder, whose career he championed.<sup>10</sup> George IV commissioned portrait busts and architectural sculpture from some of the leading sculptors in early-nineteenth-century Britain, including Baily, Chantrey, and Flaxman, as well as a number of ideal works by Canova.<sup>11</sup> Yet, the royal patronage of contemporary sculpture was limited by comparison with leading late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century aristocratic patrons such as the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire, the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Egremont, who formed substantial collections of modern and contemporary sculpture for their seats at Chatsworth, Woburn Abbey and Petworth respectively.<sup>12</sup>

In the thirty years following the publication of Hervey's volume, the royal patronage of contemporary sculpture appeared to offer the solution to his problem. Queen Victoria, who ascended the throne in 1837, and Prince Albert, whom she married in 1840, set themselves apart from their predecessors by the scale and range

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<sup>9</sup> For a survey of sculpture in this period see: Margaret Whinney, *Sculpture in Britain 1530-1830* (London: Penguin, 1988), pp. 361-383.

<sup>10</sup> *George III & Queen Charlotte: Patronage, Collecting and Court Taste* (exhibition catalogue, Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, London, 31 March 2004 – 9 January 2005), ed. Jane Roberts (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2004), pp. 244-249.

<sup>11</sup> Hugh Roberts, *For the King's Pleasure: The Furnishing and Decoration of George IV's Apartments at Windsor Castle* (London: Royal Collection Enterprises, 2001), pp. 235-238.

<sup>12</sup> See: John Kenworthy-Browne, 'A Ducal Patron of Sculptors: The Gallery at Chatsworth,' *Apollo* 96 (October 1972), pp. 321-331 and 'The Third Earl of Egremont and Neo-Classical Sculpture,' *Apollo* 105 (May 1977), pp. 367-373.

of their patronage of sculpture and the extent to which they disseminated it beyond the confines of the Court. In addition, they were closely involved with numerous public sculpture projects, which were consciously designed to improve standards in, and stimulate demand for, contemporary sculpture.

Ultimately though, as we will see, this new departure in the history of royal patronage proved short-lived. Albert died in 1861 and, though Victoria remained an active patron until the end of her life, by commissioning what appeared to some to be an endless stream of memorial busts and statues of him, she courted accusations that she was damaging the health of contemporary British sculpture. The monarchy, which might have provided the leadership demanded by Hervey, became, again, part of the problem. By the turn of the twentieth century, a new generation of critics were reiterating the old complaint: the traditional leaders of society were not providing the leadership necessary to unleash the potential of British sculpture. By the time Victoria died, public statues of her had been erected across the globe and more were to follow. Yet, as a patron, her moment appeared to have passed.

In broad terms then, the royal patronage of contemporary sculpture rose in significance in the 1840s and 1850s but declined from the 1860s onwards. Understanding this overarching trajectory helps us to situate royal patronage in the wider history of sculpture in Victorian Britain, but it also obscures the rich detail of Victoria's and Albert's patronage. Public statues of Victoria and Albert have been addressed by numerous scholars but the royal patronage of sculpture in this period has been largely overlooked.<sup>13</sup> Considering the cultures of commemoration and

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<sup>13</sup> See: Stephen Bayley, *The Albert Memorial: The Monument in its Social and Architectural Context* (London: Scolar Press, 1981); Elizabeth Darby, 'Statues of Queen Victoria and of Prince Albert. A Study in Commemorative and Portrait Statuary, 1837-1924,' (Ph.D. dissertation, The Courtauld

resistance which they might be seen to embody, it is unsurprising that public statues have attracted so much scholarly attention.<sup>14</sup> Yet, by focusing on these statues of the couple and largely ignoring their patronage, sculpture historians have presented us with an incomplete picture of their place in the history of Victorian sculpture.

In light of this lacuna in the scholarship, this thesis examines the formation, display and dissemination of Victoria's and Albert's sculpture collection; explores the public sculpture projects with which they were involved; and analyses contemporary responses to their patronage. In so doing, it reveals what sculpture meant to them personally; what their patronage and support meant to contemporary sculptors; and the impact they had on the wider history of Victorian sculpture.

This thesis emerges from *Displaying Victorian Sculpture* (2010-2013), a collaborative project between the Universities of Warwick and York, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and conceived in conjunction with an international exhibition of Victorian sculpture at the Yale Center for British Art in 2014 and Tate Britain in 2015. The aim of *Displaying Victorian Sculpture* is to return sculpture to centre-stage in discussions of Victorian culture and history and, in so doing, to recover the rich variety of sculpture produced in this period. Working on this project was Claire Jones, a post-doctoral research fellow who was commissioned to write a monograph on sculpture in Victorian Britain. This monograph examines

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Institute of Art, 1983); Elizabeth Darby & Nicola Smith, *The Cult of the Prince Consort* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1983); Christopher Brooks (ed.), *The Albert Memorial: The Prince Consort National Memorial: Its History, Contexts and Conservation* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000); Jennifer Powell, 'The Dissemination of Commemorative Statues of Queen Victoria,' in *Modern British Sculpture* (exhibition catalogue, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 22 January – 7 April 2011), eds. Penelope Curtis & Keith Wilson (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2011), pp. 282-288.

<sup>14</sup> See: Paula Murphy, *Nineteenth-Century Irish Sculpture: Native Genius Reaffirmed* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 225-246; Richard Barnes & Mary Ann Steggles (eds.), *British Sculpture in India: New Views and Old Memories* (Kirstead, Norfolk: Frontier, 2011), pp. 60-78.

various professional and stylistic developments, focusing on the middle decades of the century, and argues that this was a period of intense innovation, when sculptors experimented with new styles and formats in an attempt to forge a consciously modern style of sculpture. Also working on the project were three other PhD students: Gabriel Williams researched the production, display and reception of sculpture between the Great Exhibition in 1851 and the International Exhibition in 1862; Charlotte Drew researched the formation, display and reception of the Italian sculpture collection at the South Kensington Museum; and Desirée de Chaire researched Victoria's and Albert's children as producers and patrons of sculpture, focusing on Victoria, Princess Royal (later the German Empress), Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), and Princess Louise.

*Displaying Victorian Sculpture* was designed to complement the work of two other recent collaborative projects: the *Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain, 1660-1851* and associated database (launched in 2009), and the *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland, 1851-1951* database of sculptors and associated practitioners and businesses (launched in 2011).<sup>15</sup> The latter offers us a wealth of information about the complex professional and practice-based networks connecting some 3,500 sculptors, 2,725 related practitioners and approximately 10,000 associated businesses.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Emma Hardy, Ingrid Roscoe & Greg Sullivan (eds.), *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain, 1660-1851* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009). The dictionary and its associated online database (<http://217.204.55.158/henrymoore/>) were co-funded by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Henry Moore Foundation. The *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland, 1851-1951* database (<http://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/>), co-convened by the University of Glasgow and the Victoria & Albert Museum, was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Both sites accessed on 2 September 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Ann Compton, 'Mapping Sculpture in context: art history in an online environment,' *Sculpture Journal* 21/2 (2012), pp. 87-98, p. 87.

In light of these new research horizons, it might seem regressive to concentrate on the patronage of two individuals. Yet, while this thesis focuses on Victoria and Albert, it encompasses a rich variety of sculptors. Some of these sculptors, such as John Gibson and Pietro Tenerani, were internationally-recognised when they first received royal commissions; others, such as Victor Gleichen and Francis John Williamson relied on them. Some, such as Francis Chantrey and John Francis, had produced work for Victoria's predecessors, or were related to sculptors who had done so; others, such as Guillaume Geefs and Christian Ernst Müller, were recommended by Victoria and Albert's relatives in Berlin, Brussels and Paris. In some cases, Victoria and Albert commissioned or acquired just one example of a sculptor's work, as was the case with Julius Troschel and Josef Engel; other sculptors were regularly employed over a period of thirty years, notably Mary Thornycroft and Josef Edgar Boehm. Victoria and Albert commissioned established close working relationship with some sculptors, including John Thomas and William Theed; in other cases, such as Henry Timbrell, they never met the sculptor whose work they acquired.

The works Victoria and Albert commissioned and acquired were richly varied in material, scale, sentiment and style. They ranged from reproductions after canonical antique statues to statues of the royal children; from a group representing Cupid and Psyche to a group portraying Victoria and Albert in Anglo-Saxon dress; from a marble statue of Albert in the guise of a Greek warrior to his death mask; from bronze portrait busts and statues of the victors of Waterloo to a marble statue of Victoria's favourite dog; from a plaster relief depicting a scene from George Elliot's 1859 novel *Adam Bede* to a marble statue of Victoria enthroned in majesty. This diverse body of work was commissioned for and displayed in a multitude of locations,

ranging from Victoria's dressing room in Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, to the Throne Room in Buckingham Palace; from the facade of Balmoral Castle in Scotland to the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens in South Kensington; from the Houses of Parliament to the Royal Dairy in Windsor; from the quadrangle of Wellington College in Berkshire to the mausoleum where Victoria and Albert are buried.

The rich variety of Victoria and Albert's sculpture collection defies clear-cut categorisation but it is possible to extrapolate three distinct, if interrelated, phases in its formation. Between their marriage in 1840 and Albert's death, the couple's patronage was prolific and wide ranging. They collected extensive quantities of contemporary sculpture and acquired a large number of reproductions after antique sculpture for Osborne and Balmoral. For Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, they commissioned site-specific sculptural programmes for various public and semi-public locations. Between Albert's death and the early 1870s, Victoria concentrated her patronage almost exclusively on perpetuating his memory through a diverse array of funerary and memorial sculpture. Albert's death changed the way she looked at the collection they had formed together. Yet, her relationship with sculpture was not a static entity. She remained an active patron and her tastes continued to evolve into the last decades of her life.

Throughout their marriage, Victoria and Albert were actively involved in public sculpture projects. The couple's involvement with public projects such as the New Houses of Parliament fed into their private patronage of sculpture, while their personal engagement with sculpture, in turn, informed the ways in which their collection was described, discussed, illustrated and imagined by contemporaries.

In the 1840s and 1850s, when Victoria and Albert were closely involved in high profile public sculpture projects, they were represented in the pages of the art press as model patrons. In the decade after Albert's death, the prestige associated with royal patronage began to wane when some critics suggested that, as a private patron in the public eye, Victoria was retarding the progress of British sculpture by commissioning a plethora of inartistic memorial busts and statues of Albert. In the last decades of the century, the sculptors most associated with Victoria's and Albert's patronage in the middle decades of the century were increasingly disparaged by supporters of the 'New Sculpture.'

Edmund Gosse – the critic who coined the term the 'New Sculpture' – described the middle decades of the century as a dark age in the history of British sculpture. Gosse and other late-century critics dismissed the work of mid-century sculptors as a derivative and sterile counterpoint to the modernity and inventiveness of the 'New Sculpture', which they represented as a renaissance in British sculpture. As a leading mid-century patron, Victoria could not be part of this late-century renaissance. During this period, Victoria's and Albert's sculpture collection was subject to an unprecedented level of public exposure thanks to the proliferation in the press of through-the-keyhole articles on the royal residences, but these articles tended to be published in the pages of popular periodicals rather than the art press and they tended to reduce the wealth of sculpture displayed in the royal residences to little more than the clutter with which Victoria surrounded herself in her dotage. This image of the collection endured long after Victoria's death.

## Literature Review

Victoria and Albert have been the subject of numerous biographies and both have been written about extensively by a range of art historians, historians, and literary historians.<sup>17</sup> For the sake of clarity, in this review, I focus firstly on the writings of a number of the biographers, art historians, historians and literary historians who have written about Victoria and Albert and, secondly, on those historians who have written specifically about the couple's patronage of sculpture.

In 1902, Sidney Lee, editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, published what he described as the 'first serious attempt at an exhaustive account of the Queen's long and varied life.'<sup>18</sup> It was, Lee suggested in the preface, and its principal aim was 'to make her personal experiences and opinions intelligible.'<sup>19</sup> Towards this end, he contrasts royal patronage in the 1840s and 1850s, a period characterised by the 'conspicuous encouragement which the Queen and her husband bestowed on art,' with the 1880s and 1890s, when:

The Queen's artistic sense was not strong. In furniture and dress she preferred the fashions of her early married years to any other. She was not a good judge of painting, and she bestowed her main patronage on portrait painters like Winterhalter and Von Angeli, and on sculptors like Boehm, whose German nationality was for her a main recommendation.

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<sup>17</sup> Amongst the most important biographies of Victoria and Albert are: Elizabeth Longford, *Victoria R.I.* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964); Hector Bolitho, *Albert, Prince Consort* (London: Max Parrish, 1964); Cecil Woodham-Smith, *Queen Victoria, Her Life and Times: Vol. I, 1819-1861* (London: H. Hamilton, 1972); Daphne Bennett, *King Without A Crown: Albert, Prince Consort of England, 1819-1861* (London: Heinemann, 1977).

<sup>18</sup> Sidney Lee, *Queen Victoria, A Biography* (London: John Murray, 1904, 2nd edition, first published 1902).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. viii-ix.

'The only studio of a master that she ever visited was that of Sir Frederic (afterwards Lord) Leighton, whose 'Procession of Cimabue' the Prince Consort had bought for her, and whom she thought delightful, though perhaps more as an accomplished and highly agreeable courtier than as a painter.'<sup>20</sup>

This is indicative of the generally dismissive generalisations about Victoria's patronage that emerged in the last decades of her life and persisted after her death. The claim that Leighton's was the only studio Victoria ever visited was untrue but this detail served a clear purpose: it reinforced the impression that Victoria and Albert were active leaders of taste in the middle of the century, but Victoria was incapable of doing anything in the last decades of the century but perpetuating the art of a bygone age. This false dichotomy between purposeful mid-century patronage and insipid late-century patronage was echoed, twenty years later, by Lytton Strachey, standard-bearer of early-twentieth-century anti-Victorianism.

Strachey published a biography of Victoria in 1921.<sup>21</sup> In it, he rails against the sanctification of a monarch who was ill-informed of her constitutional role and ignorant of the industrial, scientific and social advances that characterised the age she reigned in. Strachey infers that Victoria was obsessively resistant to change and he uses her sculpture collection to prove it. He tells us that, when Victoria was seeking guidance, she would 'gaze with deep concentration at her husband's bust,' and that 'for hours at a time, she would sit with Albert's bust in front of her, while the word 'Approved' issued at intervals from her lips.'<sup>22</sup> He also tells us that Victoria

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 195, 569.

<sup>21</sup> Lytton Strachey, *Queen Victoria* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1921).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 279, 303.

was little interested in art for its own sake and collected simply because it allowed her to erect ‘palpable barriers against the outrages of change and time.’ This is reinforced by a vivid picture of an eccentric widow surrounded by reminders of the past:

The dead, in every shape – in miniatures, in porcelain, in porcelain, in enormous life-size oil paintings – were perpetually about her. John Brown stood upon her writing-table in solid gold. Her favourite horses and dogs, endowed with a new durability, crowded round her footsteps. Sharp, in silver gilt, dominated the dinner table; Boy and Boz lay together among unfading flowers, in bronze. And it was not enough that each particle of the past should be given the stability of metal or of marble: the whole collection, in its arrangement, no less than in its entity, should be immutably fixed.<sup>23</sup>

If Strachey’s dismissal of Victoria is indicative of early-twentieth-century disdain for the Victorians, then John Steegman’s *Consort of Taste* (published in 1950 and reissued in 1970 as *Victorian Taste*) is indicative of a post-war thaw.<sup>24</sup> In the introduction to this book, Steegman suggests that, while Victorian taste ‘has long been a subject for ridicule, the tide of opinion is now about due to turn and to begin flowing towards a more serious and sympathetic assessment.’<sup>25</sup> Albert was central to this ‘serious and sympathetic’ reappraisal. Steegman argued that the prince was an influential taste-maker who attempted to reform public taste through projects such as the New Houses of Parliament and the Great Exhibition. Steegman was the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 299-300.

<sup>24</sup> John Steegman, *Victorian Taste* (London: Century Hutchinson, 1970).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

first post-Victorian scholar to take Albert, if not Victoria, seriously as a patron of art, though the absence of sculpture from his analysis is a telling indication of its marginalisation in the emergent field of Victorian Studies.

By contrast, sculpture pervades Winslow Ames' *Prince Albert and Victorian Taste* (1967).<sup>26</sup> Like Steegman, he argues that Albert was a key taste-maker in mid-Victorian Britain, though unlike Steegman, he looks at the royal residences as primary indexes of the prince's taste. In his analysis of Victoria and Albert's various residences, Ames looks briefly at some of the sculpture commissioned and acquired for them, ranging from a statue of *Flora* by Tenerani, bought for Osborne in 1849, to a stone carved relief depicting a scene from the life of *St Eustace*, commissioned from Thomas for Balmoral in the mid-1850s.<sup>27</sup> Ames' analysis of these works is brief but, by including them in his study, he highlighted the degree to which sculpture pervaded Victoria and Albert's various homes, and the extent to which their private patronage informed their public role as taste-makers and advocates of design reform. Yet, he echoed Strachey by using sculpture to posit a dichotomy between Victoria's and Albert's taste and judgement:

An interesting contrast may be useful. Shortly before her marriage the Queen commissioned of the excellent but aged and 'safe' Sir Francis Chantrey, three marble busts for the Corridor at Windsor: herself, William IV, and Wyatville. In 1876 she took rather a bold step into unfamiliar territory by commissioning of Jules Dalou (who had been in England since 1871) an angel with five children; this work (in the private

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<sup>26</sup> Winslow Ames, *Prince Albert and Victorian Taste* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1967).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 209, 220.

chapel at Windsor) is of a remarkably Renaissance spirit and even has a Stevens-like *morbidezza*. The Queen may have been moved by some of Dalou's small mother-and-child terracottas, but she would hardly have made this choice without the experience of the twenty years during which she and Prince Albert were decorating Osborne terraces with replicas of standard classical sculpture, buying occasional classic originals, and commissioning work of almost all the accepted sculptors of their day (Calder Marshall was the only one never employed directly, and even he was represented by 'Parian' porcelain reductions among the figurines in glass cases). Her other late acquisitions were seldom distinguished.<sup>28</sup>

This dismissive summary of Victoria's taste for sculpture is indicative of a tendency for her patronage after Albert's death to be treated as simply a mirror of her morbid obsession with his memory, or as evidence of a taste that was distinctly inferior, for want of his informed judgement and serious purpose. As I demonstrate in Chapter 4, this view emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth century but it belies the extent and sophistication of Victoria's patronage after Albert's death.

The first scholars to take Victoria seriously as a patron of sculpture were the literary historians, Margaret Homans and Adrienne Munich. In *Queen Victoria's Secrets* (1996), Munich argues that, by consciously performing the roles of monarch, wife, mother and widow, Victoria both reflected and actively participated in shaping Victorian society's image of itself.<sup>29</sup> In a chapter that looks at Victoria's performance

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>29</sup> Adrienne Munich, *Queen Victoria's Secrets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 4.

of widowhood, Munich argues that the Queen ‘attempted to assimilate the person of her husband into her own identity’ by fashioning what she calls a ‘statuary ghost.’<sup>30</sup> For Munich, statues and busts of Albert – particularly a bust by Theed, which featured in numerous portraits of the monarch and her family – were a means of allaying societal fears about the political consequences of ‘a single, unattached, autonomous queen,’ which might have disrupted Victorian gender conventions.<sup>31</sup>

Munich’s thesis was developed further by Homans in *Royal Representations: Queen Victoria and British Culture, 1837-1867* (1998).<sup>32</sup> Homans argues that the politically-impotent Victoria depended for her cultural authority on her ability to appear in public as monarch and as a wife and mother, with whom her middle-class subjects could identify.<sup>33</sup> Following Albert’s death, Homans contends, Victoria had to renegotiate her image and sculpture was a crucial part of the process. By commissioning busts and statues of Albert, ‘Victoria is representing not Albert himself – his wishes or even his likeness – but his death and her grief.’<sup>34</sup> Essentially, Homans argues that, by commissioning memorial busts of Albert, publishing images of herself alongside them, and publicly unveiling memorial statues of him, Victoria was attempting to be both absent from public life and present in it.

Homans and Munich’s analysis of Victoria’s relationship with the sculpture she commissioned to commemorate Albert is driven by an attempt to rehabilitate Victoria’s cultural and political agency. It thus assumes that Victoria’s

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 91-94.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>32</sup> Margaret Homans, *Royal Representations: Queen Victoria and British Culture, 1837-1867* (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1998).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 61-62.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

memorialisation of Albert was a politically-orientated and publicly-minded programme of self-representation. As we will see, such an assumption negates the level of Victoria's personal engagement with this body of memorial sculpture, which in turn fed into her public commemoration of him. Nonetheless, Homans's and Munich's work has done much to recover Victoria's reputation as a serious patron of art, rather than simply an eccentric widow. In the introduction to their co-edited collection of essays, *Remaking Queen Victoria* (1997), Homans and Munich argue that 'Queen Victoria has been hidden in plain view for a hundred years.'<sup>35</sup> Sculpture has been an essential part of Homans' and Munich's attempt to bring her out of hiding. Yet, to date, sculpture historians have not expanded considerably upon this.

As previously indicated, public statues of Victoria and Albert have been addressed by numerous sculpture historians but the couple's patronage has been largely ignored. A number of mid-century ideal statues commissioned by Victoria and Albert featured in the 1957 London County Council exhibition *Sculpture 1850 and 1950* but they served simply to demonstrate what Charles Wheeler identified in the preface to the catalogue as the 'stark dissimilarity' between the sculptor of 1850, who 'was surrounded by an atmosphere of well-being, good manners and corseted morality,' and the sculptor of 1950, who 'labours in an atmosphere of greater morality-freedom and carping insecurity.'<sup>36</sup>

The first sculpture historian to take Victoria's and Albert's patronage of contemporary sculpture seriously was Benedict Read in *Victorian Sculpture* (1982), a

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<sup>35</sup> Margaret Homans & Adrienne Munich, 'Introduction,' in Homans & Munich (eds.), *Remaking Queen Victoria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1-12, pp. 1-2.

<sup>36</sup> *Sculpture 1850 and 950* (exhibition catalogue, London County Council at Holland Park, London, May – September 1957), unpaginated.

ground-breaking introduction to sculpture in Britain in the period between 1830 and 1914, with a particular emphasis on the neglected period between the 1830s and the 1870s.<sup>37</sup> This includes a section on mid-century 'Private Patrons,' which provides an overview of several prominent private collections, including those amassed by the 2nd Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl Fitzwilliam, the Rundell and Bridgeheir Joseph Neeld, and Victoria and Albert.<sup>38</sup> Read offers little more than a list of the most important pieces in their collection but, significantly, he suggests that 'in its range and variety it must have been the most substantial in the country as well as an important and prestigious source of patronage.'<sup>39</sup>

In addition to Read's *Victorian Sculpture*, 1982 also saw the publication of *Marble & Bronze: The Art and Life of Hamo Thornycroft* by Elfrida Manning.<sup>40</sup> Manning's focus is on this late-nineteenth-century sculptor's life and work but she situates it in the context of a family of sculptors stretching back to the first decades of the century when Hamo's grandfather, John Francis, trained under Chantrey and established himself as a successful sculptor, who received several royal commissions. Francis's daughter Mary trained under him and married his student, Thomas Thornycroft, and, as Manning details, both received numerous commissions from Victoria and Albert. Expanding upon Read's general assessment of the prestige associated with royal patronage, Manning clearly demonstrates its significance for the Thornycrofts. Indeed, she suggests that it was thanks to an 1844 commission for a portrait statue of Victoria and Albert's daughter Alice that 'the foundations of the

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<sup>37</sup> Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1982).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128-146.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>40</sup> Elfrida Manning, *Marble & Bronze: The Art and Life of Hamo Thornycroft* (London: Trefoil Books, 1982).

Thornycroft family of sculptors were truly laid.<sup>41</sup> By foregrounding her account of Hamo Thornycroft's career with Victoria and Albert's patronage of his parents, Manning offers an illuminating insight into the significance of royal patronage in the middle decades of the century and its reverberations in the last decades of the century, when Hamo applied and developed the lessons he learned from his parents to establish himself as one of the leading sculptors of the age.

Since the publication of Manning's monograph, the sculpture historians Andrea Garrihy and Shannon Hunter-Hurtado have further analysed the Thornycroft family's relationship with royal patronage.<sup>42</sup> However, few sculpture historians have advanced beyond the specific dynamics of the relationship between Victoria and Albert and the Thornycrofts. One notable exception is Elizabeth Darby, who completed a PhD thesis in 1983, which collated and examined freestanding public statues of Victoria and Albert erected between 1837 and 1924, while, in the same year, she and Nicola Smith published *The Cult of the Prince Consort*, which examined a diverse range of public and private tributes to Albert, including Victoria's most important memorial sculpture commissions. However, since the 1980s Victorian sculpture studies have been largely, if not exclusively, dominated by the 'New Sculpture'. The trend began with the publication of Susan Beattie's seminal survey of *The New Sculpture* (1983).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>42</sup> Shannon Hunter-Hurtado, 'Going public: self-promotion strategies employed by 'first wave' Victorian women sculptors,' *Sculpture Journal* 13/1 (2005), pp. 18-31; Andrea Garrihy, 'Falling heads, raised arms and missing persons: Thornycroft studio practice,' *Sculpture Journal* 15/1 (2006), pp. 105-113.

<sup>43</sup> Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1983).

In the introduction to her book, Beattie stated that her goal was to correct 'the consignment to near oblivion of one of the most remarkable developments in English art, the renaissance known, since its first manifestations shortly after 1875, as the New Sculpture.'<sup>44</sup> Echoing the rhetoric of Gosse, Beattie contends that this renaissance in English sculpture was a reaction against the 'faintly ridiculous air of much mid-nineteenth-century figure sculpture.'<sup>45</sup> By foregrounding her analysis in this polar opposition between mid-century sculpture and the 'New Sculpture', Beattie effectively dismisses the sculptors associated with Victoria's and Albert's patronage and though she analyses public statues of Victoria by some of the leading New Sculptors, she does not at any stage indicate that Victoria remained an active patron until the end of the century.

One of the few scholars to have analysed Victoria's patronage of sculpture in the last decades of the nineteenth century is Mark Stocker, with his 1988 monograph *Royalist and Realist: The Life and Work of Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm*.<sup>46</sup> In this survey and catalogue raisonné of Boehm's work, Stocker devotes considerable attention to the numerous commissions he received from Victoria in the 1870s and 1880s. Yet, in his attempt to rehabilitate the career of this 'vastly underrated' sculptor, Stocker echoes Beattie's value judgements: 'Gosse's judgement that he was not a great artist seems fair. Boehm's imagination was limited and his work though competent was sometimes dully pedestrian and was generally unadventurous.'<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Mark Stocker, *Royalist and Realist: The Life and Work of Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm* (London & New York: Garland Publishing, 1988).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. ii. For Boehm's royal commissions see pp. 79-114.

In 1990, Read returned to the subject of royal patronage with an essay on 'Berlin Sculpture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Britain,' in *Ethos und Pathos: Die Berliner Bildhauerschule 1786-1914*.<sup>48</sup> Here, Read analyses the patronage of sculptors associated with the Berlin School, including Christian Daniel Rauch, Rudolf Schadow and Emil Wolff, by mid-century British collectors. Read argues that the patronage of German sculpture in this period is indicative of 'a European outlook almost inevitably present at that period in British society's upper echelons,' but he also suggests that Victoria and Albert's engagement with it was exceptionally rich and that, alongside the 6th Duke of Devonshire's collection, theirs was 'perhaps the most important other collection of contemporary Berlin sculpture' in this period.<sup>49</sup>

Since Stocker's monograph and Read's essay, few sculpture historians have turned their attention to Victoria's and Albert's patronage of contemporary sculpture. Yet, while royal patronage remains a largely neglected field of enquiry in the academy, a number of exhibitions and exhibition catalogues have considerably raised its profile. For example, to mark the centenary of Victoria's death in 2001, the Victoria and Albert Museum published an edited collection of essays, *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain*, to accompany an exhibition of the same name.<sup>50</sup> Amongst the essays on aspects of Victorian art and design in this collection is an essay on 'Royal Patronage and Influence,' by Delia Millar, which focuses on paintings but also includes a brief overview of Victoria's and Albert's patronage of sculpture.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Benedict Read, 'Berlin Sculpture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Britain,' in Peter Bloch, Sybille Einholz & Jutta von Simson (eds.), *Ethos und Pathos: Die Berliner Bildhauerschule 1786-1914* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann; Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 1990), pp. 91-107.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>50</sup> John M. Mackenzie (ed.), *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain* (London: V&A Publications, 2001).

<sup>51</sup> Delia Millar, 'Royal Patronage and Influence,' in Mackenzie (2001), pp. 26-49.

In 2008, an edited collection of essays on Henri de Triqueti's career was published to coincide with exhibitions of his work at the Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Orléans and the Musée Girodet in Montargis.<sup>52</sup> This volume includes an essay by Sylvia Allen and Richard Dagonne examining Triqueti's decorative programme for the Albert Memorial Chapel in St George's Chapel Windsor and an essay by Marie Clarac focusing on representation of royal figures within this programme.<sup>53</sup> These essays constitute the first in-depth analysis of the design and execution of one of Victoria's most ambitious and costly memorial commissions. In Chapter 3 I build upon this scholarship by situating Triqueti's work in the wider context of Victoria's patronage in the 1860s and 1870s.

The 2010 exhibition *Victoria & Albert, Art & Love* at the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, revealed the full extent of Victoria's and Albert's patronage for the first time since Victoria's death. In addition to highlighting the scale of the couple's patronage, the exhibition uncovered the strength of their relationships with a variety of artists, including a wide range of British and European sculptors working in various styles and materials.

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition, edited by Jonathan Marsden, offers a wealth of detail about Victoria's and Albert's collection. In the introductory essay, Marsden argues that the 'Queen and Prince Albert understood and appreciated sculpture more than any of their predecessors at the English court since Charles I, and the collection they formed, which had few rivals in England in their

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<sup>52</sup> *Henry de Triqueti 183-1874: Le sculpteur des princes* (exhibition catalogue, musée des Beaux-Arts d'Orléans and musée Girodet, à Montargis, 3 October 2007 – 6 January 2008), ed. Jean-François Allain (Paris: Hazan 2007).

<sup>53</sup> Sylvia Allen & Richard Dagonne, 'Le décor de la chapelle du prince Albert,' & Marie Clarac, 'Figures royales,' in Allain (2007), pp. 113-144.

time, is now by far the most important to survive from this period.<sup>54</sup> Marsden provides us with a broad overview of the couple's sculpture collection but also offers us an insight into its place in the various royal homes, and the emotional resonance of pieces that the couple exchanged as presents. The exhibition and catalogue were complemented by a symposium at the National Gallery in London. Amongst the speakers at this event was Philip Ward-Jackson, whose paper analysed Victoria's and Albert's patronage of sculpture.<sup>55</sup> In his analysis, Ward-Jackson illuminated some of the diverse personal, political and civic motives behind the couple's patronage.

While Marsden and Ward-Jackson demonstrate a more critical approach to Victoria's and Albert's patronage of sculpture, by focusing exclusively on the 1840s and 1850s, they reinforce a fragmented understanding of royal patronage across the Victorian period. By analysing Victoria's and Albert's joint patronage, Victoria's patronage in the decade after Albert's death and in the last decades of her life, this thesis brings together these hitherto distinct areas of inquiry, without negating the differences between them. This thesis thus allows us to understand what sculpture meant to Victoria and Albert and how this evolved over the course of time; what the couple's patronage meant to contemporaries and how this changed during the Victorian period; and how we might rethink the role of royal patronage in the wider history of sculpture in Victorian Britain.

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<sup>54</sup> *Victoria & Albert, Art & Love* (exhibition catalogue, Queen's Gallery, London, 19 March – 5 December 2010), ed. Jonathan Marsden (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2010), p. 34.

<sup>55</sup> Philip Ward-Jackson, 'Public and private aspects of a royal sculpture collection,' in Susanna Avery-Quash (ed.), *Essays from a Study Day Held at the National Gallery, London on 5 and 6 June 2010* (<http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/exhibitions/victoria-and-albert-art-and-love/contents>) consulted 23 Sep. 13 2013.

## Methodology and Sources

This thesis marries a broad overview of Victoria's and Albert's patronage of contemporary sculpture, and their evolving status as patrons, with a close reading of specific objects commissioned and acquired by the couple. I use archival sources, catalogues, inventories, photographs and other contemporary sources to situate these objects in the particular spaces they were commissioned for or displayed in and investigate how Victoria and Albert interacted with them in these spaces. In so doing, I reveal the depth of their personal engagement with sculpture and how this was manifested in distinct ways at different moments in time. In addition, through an extensive analysis of contemporary publications – facilitated, in part, by the digitisation of many of the most important contemporary newspapers and periodicals – I explore Victoria's and Albert's involvement with a number of public sculpture projects; investigate the ways in which this informed their private patronage of sculpture; and examine the extent to which their personal engagement with sculpture informed public perceptions of their private patronage of it. In so doing, I complicate the straightforward division of public and private patronage in Victorian Britain.

My research into Victoria's and Albert's public and private patronage of sculpture, and the complex overlapping of the two, has been informed by the work of the sculpture historian Malcolm Baker, in particular his essay 'Public Images for Private Spaces?: The Place of Sculpture in the Georgian Domestic Interior' (2007).<sup>56</sup> Here Baker explores the ambiguities surrounding the proliferation of a previously

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<sup>56</sup> Malcolm Baker, 'Public Images for Private Spaces?: The Place of Sculpture in the Georgian Domestic Interior,' *Journal of Design History* 20/4 (2007), pp. 309-323.

'public' art form in 'private' interiors during the eighteenth century using case studies such as the 'Stone Hall' designed by William Kent for Houghton Hall in the 1720s, and the Sculpture Gallery designed by Robert Adams for Newby Hall in the 1760s. Baker argues that changes in the modes of sculptural representation in the eighteenth century, the emergence of the portrait bust chief amongst them, were allied with the increasing ubiquity of sculpture in domestic settings and that this domestication of sculpture informed the ways in which sculpture was displayed and viewed in public settings. I have found Baker's method of balancing the object and its setting, the private and the public, the personal and the political, a useful model for my analysis of Victoria's and Albert's patronage and the ways in which their collection of sculpture was publicly disseminated.

My research has also been informed by the sculpture historian Alison Yarrington's analysis of the formation and display of the 6th Duke of Devonshire's sculpture collection at Chatsworth House. Between 2007 and 2009, Yarrington was Academic Adviser for the restoration of the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke's purpose-built Sculpture Gallery at Chatsworth, originally completed in 1834, and the redisplay of his collection of sculpture and minerals.<sup>57</sup> In her essay 'Under Italian skies,': The 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire, Canova and the Formation of the Sculpture Gallery at Chatsworth House' (2009), Yarrington argues that the formation and arrangement of this, 'the most important collection of contemporary sculpture in the country,' was primarily motivated by the Duke's personal pursuit of intellectual and sensory pleasure.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> See: Charles Noble & Alison Yarrington, 'Like a Poet's Dreams: The Redisplay of the 6th Duke of Devonshire's Sculpture Gallery at Chatsworth,' *Apollo* 170/570 (2009), pp. 46-53.

<sup>58</sup> Alison Yarrington, "Under Italian Skies,': The 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire, Canova and the formation of the Sculpture Gallery at Chatsworth House,' *Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies* 10 (2009), pp. 41-62, p. 41.

The Duke visited Rome in the 1820s and commissioned work from a number of the leading sculptors working in the city, Canova chief amongst them. Subsequently, Yarrington argues, the Chatworth 'sculpture gallery's arrangement and the narratives it evoked were woven around the Duke's memories and experiences' of Rome.<sup>59</sup> Yarrington examines the formation of the Duke's collection and the relationships with sculptors that he forged in the process and maps this onto the arrangement of individual works at Chatsworth. This model has helped me to investigate the memories and experiences evoked by individual objects and to understand how this might be manifested in the arrangement of sculpture in specific locations such as the drawing room at Osborne.

Before conducting an object-focused, site-specific analysis, it was necessary to understand Victoria's and Albert's patronage of sculpture as a whole. I therefore began my research by surveying their collection using photographs in the Conway Library in the Courtauld Institute of Art and the Royal Collection online database. This provided me with a broad picture of the collection, allowed me to identify the sculptors, and to understand the evolution of their patronage over the course of the Victorian period. With this broader picture in mind, I consulted an extensive quantity of archival sources, analysed a large number of contemporary photographs of the interiors of the various royal residences and, where possible, inspected extant objects in the spaces they were commissioned for or displayed in. This allowed me to gauge the significance of particular pieces of sculpture, to understand Victoria's and Albert's engagement with them and to extrapolate representative case studies.

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

As well as extant objects and spaces, the principal sources for my research were the Royal Archives and Royal Photograph Collection in Windsor Castle, and the Royal Collection Library in St James's Palace. Amongst the most important sources in the Royal Archives are the 141 volumes of Queen Victoria's private daily journal, which were edited and transcribed by her daughter Beatrice in the years after her death.<sup>60</sup> These journals are punctuated with brief but often illuminating entries, which helped me to understand what individual sculptures and sculptors meant to Victoria and Albert at different moments in time. In addition, the Royal Archives houses a significant quantity of invoices, receipts and letters between sculptors and officials in the Royal Household, which indicate when particular pieces were commissioned and how much they cost. The Royal Photograph Collection houses numerous albums containing photograph views of the interiors of the royal residences, which, in combination with catalogues and inventories now housed in the Royal Collection Library, allowed me to chart the formation and evolving display of Victoria's and Albert's collection of sculpture.

In my research, I have been alert to Jason Edwards' and Imogen Hart's caution that 'the 'reading' of texts, photographs, illustrations, grounds-plans, elevations and inventories as a methodological paradigm only gets us so far.'<sup>61</sup> I have thus attempted to immerse myself in the spaces in which the sculpture commissioned and acquired by Victoria and Albert was displayed. However, this has not always been

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<sup>60</sup> To mark Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, the Royal Archives and Bodleian Libraries Oxford launched an online database of Queen Victoria's Journals, providing unrestricted and keyword-searchable access to the 141 volumes, comprising 43,765 pages. See: 'About Queen Victoria's Journal' (<http://www.queenvictoriasjournals.org/info/about.do>) last consulted 24 September 2013.

<sup>61</sup> Jason Edwards and Imogen Hart, 'The Victorian Interior: A Collaborative, Eclectic Introduction,' in Edwards & Hart (eds.), *Rethinking the Interior, c. 1867-1896* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 1-24, p. 15.

possible because some of these spaces still function as royal residences. Much of Victoria's and Albert's collection remains on display in Osborne House, which is managed by English Heritage and thus fully accessible, or in relatively accessible parts of Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. However, some of it is located in high-security areas such as the royal family's private apartments, which are completely inaccessible. Yet, these restrictions have been compensated for by the increasing online presence of the Royal Collection, which launched a new online database in 2012 to provide greater access to images of, and data about, objects and artworks in the collection.<sup>62</sup> This offers a wealth of information about pieces of sculpture that are otherwise difficult to access.

Where possible, I supplemented my research in the Royal Archives, Royal Photograph Collection and Royal Collection Library by consulting the archives of sculptors represented in the collection, notably the John Gibson Papers in the Royal Academy Archives, the Theed Papers in the British Library, and the Thornycroft Papers in the Henry Moore Institute. This helped me to gauge the significance of specific commissions for these sculptors and to better understand the dynamics of royal patronage. I also consulted a large number of contemporary press articles, which allowed me to measure the fluctuating currency of royal patronage and to evaluate the relationship between royal patronage and wider developments in contemporary sculpture during the Victorian period.

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<sup>62</sup> *Royal Collection Trust Annual Report 2012-2013*  
([http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/royalcollection.org.uk/files/Annual\\_Report\\_2012\\_2013.pdf](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/royalcollection.org.uk/files/Annual_Report_2012_2013.pdf)  
) consulted 24 September 2013.

## Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 looks at the sculptural programme in the New Houses of Parliament, focusing on statues of Victoria by Gibson and Thomas. These were amongst the first public statues of Victoria and, as Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission – the body charged with implementing the building’s artistic programme – Albert played a crucial role in commissioning, designing and positioning them. I argue that Victoria and Albert established themselves as leading patrons of sculpture through the New Houses of Parliament project, thanks to the constellation of three distinct but interrelated factors: the reactionary conservatism of the post-1832 political establishment, the currency of Victoria’s image in the burgeoning mass media of the 1840s, and Albert’s reputation as an active and informed connoisseur.

Chapter 1 is divided into three parts, which loosely reflect these factors. In the first part I analyse some of the rhetoric generated by the destruction, reconstruction and decoration of the Houses of Parliament and reveal that for some – Albert included – this was an opportunity to reassert the place of the monarchy and the aristocracy at the heart of art patronage. In the second part I focus on two neo-Gothic statues of Victoria, designed and executed by Thomas in collaboration with Charles Barry, the building’s architect. Here, I argue that Barry employed Victoria’s widely recognisable image as a symbol of the Houses of Parliament, a modern building in historic costume. In the final part, I analyse John Gibson’s group *Queen Victoria Between Justice and Clemency* (1849-1856). This group is unmistakably a product of the modern classicism that Gibson championed and, as

such, it stands out from the building's otherwise historicist sculptural programme. This, I suggest, was no accident. Albert and Eastlake commissioned Gibson because they wanted it to reinforce the stylistic pre-eminence of the classical tradition.

Chapter 2 examines the sculpture commissioned and acquired by Victoria and Albert for Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, Osborne House and Balmoral Castle. This reveals the scale and scope of the couple's private patronage in this period but also demonstrates that it was closely imbricated with their public patronage. Site-specific commissions for Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, the official royal residences, indicate an attempt to complement the work of the Fine Arts Commission by setting a standard for the metropolitan and cosmopolitan elite that attended court ceremonies and receptions to follow. By contrast, the primary impetus behind the acquisition of sculpture for Balmoral and Osborne was personal: in these, the most private of the royal residences, sculpture was closely interwoven with the fabric of family life. Yet, while Balmoral and Osborne were off-limits to the public, Victoria and Albert allowed the publication of a small number of images of the residences. These snippets revealed sculpture's central place in Victoria's and Albert's private life and reinforced their public image as active and engaged patrons of sculpture.

Chapter 2 is again divided into three parts, corresponding with three categories: the public, the private and the private-in-public. The first looks at several prominently positioned and heavily publicised site-specific sculpture commissions in Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. The second part reveals sculpture's central place in Victoria's and Albert's private life by examining the formation and display of the collection at Osborne. The final part looks at the ways in which this private

collection was disseminated in the *Art Journal* and the *Illustrated London News* to convey an impression of Victoria and Albert as patrons at home with sculpture.

Chapter 3 examines the memorial sculpture commissioned by Victoria in the decade after Albert's death in December 1861. As demonstrated in the introduction to the chapter, it has long been assumed that Victoria's grief following Albert's death was obsessive and unending and the extensive quantity of memorial sculpture she commissioned has been used to prove this. My analysis offers a more nuanced, object-specific reading of the memorial sculpture that Victoria commissioned and her relationship with it. She began commissioning busts and statues of Albert within days of his death and, while this is a measure of her grief, it also reflects her experience and confidence as a patron. Victoria's relationship with sculpture after Albert's death was thus not an entirely new departure, but it did change, and so did royal patronage. Victoria was deeply invested in the memorial sculpture she commissioned but her relationship with it was not static; it evolved as she adapted to Albert's death.

Chapter 3 is divided into three parts, focusing on the work of Theed, Marochetti and Triquetti respectively. All three sculptors had previously been employed by Victoria and Albert and there are many important parallels between the work they produced before and after Albert's death. Yet there are also important differences. In scale, situation and, to a certain extent style, the memorial sculpture they executed for Victoria was a new body of work. I argue that, as a project and as an object, this memorial sculpture helped Victoria to cope with, and gradually adapt to, Albert's death, and enabled her to renegotiate her public image in his absence.

Chapter 4 examines Victoria's patronage of contemporary sculpture in the last decades of the nineteenth century. From the late 1860s and early 1870s

onwards, Victoria developed a taste for sculpture that was different in style and sentiment from the kind of sculpture she and Albert collected in the 1840s and 1850s. In the 1870s, she continued to commission work from sculptors such as Theed but she also began to commission work from new sculptors, Boehm and Williamson chief amongst them. The qualities associated with their work – a detailed rendering of contemporary costume and detail, combined with an easily accessible and often moving sentiment – are those which set Victoria's patronage apart from her and Albert's joint patronage. However, while the works Victoria commissioned from Boehm and Williamson are indicative of her enduring engagement with contemporary sculpture, the low reputations of both sculptors is a measure of the diminished currency of royal patronage. Paradoxically, at a time when her significance as a subject for contemporary sculptors was growing exponentially, her significance as a patron was steadily dissipated.

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part focuses on the 1860s. Here I argue that public dissatisfaction with Victoria's prolonged mourning, and its manifestation in a seemingly endless stream of memorial busts and statues, fuelled a critical backlash against the royal patronage of contemporary sculpture. Within three years of Albert's death, complaints began to surface in the press that Victoria's grief was damaging the monarchy. This, I contend, gave art critics license to discredit her patronage of contemporary sculpture and proved a catalyst for the diminishing value of royal patronage in the decades that followed. The second and third parts of the chapter look at some of the most important pieces of sculpture that Victoria commissioned from Boehm and Williamson, which I argue are representative of Victoria's taste for intricately modelled sculpture with a homely touch.

By analysing critical responses to Boehm's and Williamson's output, I reveal that, while their royal connections helped to sustain their careers, it did little to boost their reputations; indeed, for Williamson, the opposite was the case. This, I suggest, is a measure of Victoria's peripheral position as a patron in the last decades of the century, despite her growing significance as a subject. In the fourth part of the chapter, I analyse a sample of through-the-keyhole articles on the royal residences and argue that these glimpses into the monarch's home life fuelled the impression that, as a patron, she was a relic of a mid-Victorian dark age in the history of British sculpture. This retrospective view contrasts starkly with the hopes invested in royal patronage in the 1840s, as I reveal in Chapter 1 through an examination of statues of Victoria in the New Houses of Parliament and Albert's role, as Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission, in their conception, execution and implementation.

## Chapter 1

### Victoria, Albert and Sculpture in the New Houses of Parliament

The New Houses of Parliament were built after a fire in October 1834 destroyed much of the old Palace of Westminster.<sup>63</sup> Beginning here helps us to understand how and why Victoria and Albert became leading patrons of, and prominent subjects for, contemporary sculptors. Retrospectively, this seems natural. After all, Albert's name is synonymous with the design-reform movement and the international exhibitions which emerged out of it, while Victoria is the iconic figurehead who gave her name to the age in which she reigned. Yet, this retrospective view should not blind us to the unique combination of circumstances that allowed the monarch and her consort to become amongst the most influential patrons of sculpture in mid-Victorian Britain. Broadly speaking, three distinct but interrelated factors combined to foster Victoria's and Albert's pre-eminence in the field of contemporary sculpture.

The first factor was the post-1832 Reform Act political environment. Perhaps unsurprisingly, considering the amount of wealth concentrated in the hands of the landed classes, they continued to dominate parliamentary politics after 1832 despite, or perhaps because of, the sometimes militant opposition of forces such as the Corn Law Repeal League and the Chartists.<sup>64</sup> Hugh Cunningham argues that the 1832 Reform Act was 'interpreted as an indicator of the skill of the British governing

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<sup>63</sup> For the fire that destroyed large parts of the Palace of Westminster on 16 October 1834 see: Caroline Shenton, *The Day Parliament Burned* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>64</sup> See: Francis Michael Longstreth, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* 2nd ed. (London & Toronto: Routledge & Kegan Paul & University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 296-291. William Rubinstein has noted that, as late as the 1870s, 400 peers and peeresses owned 5.7 million acres or 16% of the land in England and Wales, while 1,288 'great landowners' (defined as non-peers owning 3,000 acres or more) owned 8.5 million acres or 25%. William D. Rubinstein, *Britain's Century: A Political and Social History, 1815-1905* (London: Arnold, 1998), p. 281.

classes (in contrast, by implication with the French) in making concessions to popular demands without themselves losing power.<sup>65</sup> In this context, Walter Bagehot argued, in his seminal *The English Constitution* (published in 1867), that the monarchy was a useful smokescreen to disguise the concentration of power in the hands of a small elite. For Bagehot, the disenfranchised majority were happy in the belief that the monarch reigned supreme; if they knew that, in reality, the monarch rules and Parliament reigns, they would want a say in government and that would threaten the stability of the British political system. In short, Bagehot argued, the monarchy distracted the ignorant masses from the reality of a land-based parliamentary system, from which they were excluded:

The excitement of choosing our rulers is prevented by the apparent existence of an unchosen ruler. The poorer and more ignorant classes – those who would most feel excitement, who would most be misled by excitement – really believe the Queen governs. You could not explain to them the recondite difference between ‘reigning’ and ‘governing;’ the words necessary to express it do not exist in their dialect; the idea necessary to comprehend it do not exist in their minds. The separation of principal power from principal station is a refinement which they could not even conceive. They fancy they are governed by an hereditary queen, a queen by the grace of God, when they are really governed by a cabinet and a parliament.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Challenge of Democracy: Britain 1832-1918* (London: Longman, 2001), p. 32.

<sup>66</sup> Bagehot, Walter, *The English Constitution* Miles Taylor ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 27-28.

It is not difficult to find flaws with Bagehot's crude generalisations, written from the perspective of the mid-1860s when the impending 1867 Reform Act threatened to alter the power balance of the post-1832 political order. Bagehot's account of the blind loyalty of the disenfranchised majority does not take account of popular opposition to the monarchy, which, as Antony Taylor argues, was 'a strong feature of nineteenth-century political protest and the British radical tradition.'<sup>67</sup> Yet, there is a parallel between the image of an almost feudal hierarchy evoked by Bagehot and the artistic embellishment of the New Houses of Parliament. As we will see, the building was decorated throughout with statues of monarchs, including three statues of Victoria. This was, at least partially, thanks to a political establishment with a strategic interest in inflating the political importance of the monarchy, or at least sustaining its appearance of political importance.

The second factor was Victoria's pervasive presence in the burgeoning mass media of the 1840s and 1850s. While, in the context of a parliamentary system still largely dominated by a hereditary aristocracy, the monarch was bound to feature prominently in the artistic embellishment of the parliament building, it is hard to imagine Victoria's predecessors, George IV and William IV, taking centre stage in quite the same manner. Frank Prochaska has argued that Victoria departed from her predecessors by actively supporting a blossoming culture of civic-led philanthropy through a crowded calendar of 'charitable engagements,' and by endorsing civic-pride by undertaking periodic visits to new centres of power such as Birmingham,

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<sup>67</sup> Antony Taylor, *'Down with the Crown': British Anti-monarchism and Debates about Royalty Since 1790* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), p. 52.

Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester.<sup>68</sup> In addition, as John Plunkett has convincingly demonstrated, her increased engagement with a geographically and socially diverse cross-section of society carried greater weight thanks to the attention it received in a rapidly expanding media market: 'The (over) importance her contemporaries attached to Victoria's media figure was a direct consequence of the tremendous expansion in the market for newspapers, periodicals and engravings.'<sup>69</sup> In short, the unprecedented levels of publicity generated by Victoria's unparalleled number of public engagements ensured that she, as Plunkett has suggested, 'inhabited her subjects' lives to a remarkable degree,' through their 'appropriation and propagation of her presence.'<sup>70</sup> Charles Barry, the architect of the New Houses of Parliament, exploited the currency of Victoria's media-fashioned image in the decoration of his building by commissioning statues of her and situating them in strategic locations.

The third factor was Albert's position as Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission. Just as it is hard to imagine Victoria's predecessors taking centre stage in the building's iconography, it is equally hard to imagine Albert's predecessors as consort, Queen Caroline and Queen Adelaide, playing such a leading role in the building's artistic embellishment. Albert's appointment as Chairman in November 1841, little more than eighteen months after his arrival in Britain, is a measure of the speed with which he developed a reputation as an active and engaged connoisseur. In March 1840, just a month after Victoria's and Albert's marriage, the Royal Academy formally congratulated the couple. In response, Albert told the Academy

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<sup>68</sup> Frank Prochaska, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 67-99.

<sup>69</sup> John Plunkett, *Queen Victoria, First Media Monarch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

that ‘this mark of attention gratifies me much as coming from a body the object of whose endeavours is to give encouragement to pursuits I cannot but feel myself deeply interested in.’<sup>71</sup> The prince soon proved that he meant what he said. In April 1840, the *Art-Union* reported that Albert had been seen inspecting ‘three public galleries that are now open in the metropolis,’ as well as visiting the premises of the engravers Hodgson & Graves on Pall Mall. It is, the article suggests, ‘cheering to note that His Royal Highness takes especial interest in the Fine Arts of his adopted country; and that he has already encouraged the hope of their receiving patronage from the highest station – the fountain of honour as well as the source of success.’<sup>72</sup>

It is easy to dismiss this as empty rhetoric and yet this kind of thinking informed Albert’s appointment as Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission. When he announced Albert’s appointment, the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, told the House of Commons that it was based on the prince’s ‘knowledge and taste in all matters connected with the promotion of the fine arts.’<sup>73</sup> The scope of Albert’s authority is open to debate, yet, however nominal his role was in practice, in principle he was the leading force behind the project. In short, while Victoria was the face of the New Houses of Parliament, Albert was the force behind it, in the public eye at least.

This chapter is divided into three parts, matching the factors outlined above. In the first part, I analyse some of the rhetoric generated by the construction and decoration of the New Houses of Parliament. This rhetoric suggests that, just as the old order continued to dominate parliamentary politics after 1832, for some at least, the construction and embellishment of a new parliament building was an opportunity

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<sup>71</sup> Answer of Prince Albert, 14 March 1840: RAA/SEC/2/134/1.

<sup>72</sup> ‘Prince Albert and the Fine Arts,’ *Art-Union* (April 1840), p. 57.

<sup>73</sup> HC Debate 30 September 1841, vol. 59, cc. 1013-1015.

to reassert the monarchy and aristocracy's pre-eminence in the patronage of art. By analysing some of the rhetoric surrounding Albert's appointment as Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission, I argue that he consciously participated in this attempt to reclaim the monarchy's leadership of patronage.

In the second part of the chapter, I analyse the sculptural programme that was designed and overseen by Thomas, under the direction of Barry, focusing in particular on a number of statues of Victoria that were planned for the interior but never realised, and two neo-Gothic statues of her that were executed for different parts of the exterior façade. Victoria's pervasive presence in the building's iconography was justified by the political imperatives of the ruling elite but it was also an important part of Barry's vision for the building. I argue that Barry took advantage of Victoria's ostensibly universally recognisable features to employ her as a symbol of the New Houses of Parliament, an emphatically modern building clothed in a historic costume.

The third part of the chapter examines the Fine Arts Commission's sculptural programme, focusing on a statue of *Queen Victorian* by Gibson. This group is unique in Gibson's oeuvre and yet unmistakably a product of the modern classicism associated with the Roman School of sculpture. As such it stands out from the building's otherwise historicist sculptural programme. This, I suggest, was no accident. Albert and Eastlake ensured that Gibson was chosen to execute this, the centrepiece of the Commission's sculptural programme, because they wanted to use it as an opportunity to reinforce the 'style' of sculpture articulated by Eastlake in his writings.

## Part 1: The Fire, its Aftermath and the Patronage of Contemporary Art

David Cannadine has described the New Palace of Westminster as a 'Palace of Varieties,' which has witnessed and reflected various stages in the evolution of British parliamentary democracy since 1832.<sup>74</sup> There were, he tells us, some who saw the fire which largely destroyed the Palace of Westminster on 16 October 1834 as 'timely and opportune, for it swept away the ramshackle and inefficient buildings that were the physical embodiment of the world of 'old corruption', the end of which had already been portended in the legislation passed in 1832.'<sup>75</sup> In reality, as Cannadine argues, the established political classes seized upon the building's reconstruction as an opportunity to reassert the permanence and stability of the established primacy of the Crown and the Lords over the Commons. It is difficult to disagree with Cannadine's thesis. The supremacy of the hereditary elements of the parliamentary system is writ large in the design and the embellishment of Barry's building, which is saturated with images of monarchs and becomes ever more grandiose as one moves from the sparsely decorated Commons to the lavishly decorated Lords and the royal apartments beyond. Yet, rather than start at the end, as Cannadine does, with the finished building, I want to start at the beginning. I want to suggest that the entrenched conservatism of the post-1832 political order fed into debates about the building's design and decoration and, ultimately, the direction and patronage of contemporary art.

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<sup>74</sup> David Cannadine, 'The Palace of Westminster as Palace of Varieties,' in Christine & Jacqueline Riding (eds.), *The Houses of Parliament: History, Art, Architecture* (London: Merrell Publishers, 2000), pp. 11-30.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Barry's design for the New Houses of Parliament was chosen from among ninety-seven submitted to an open and anonymous competition judged by a five-person Parliamentary Commission in February 1836.<sup>76</sup> Considering the significance of the project, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Commission's choice provoked a war of words and, in the months following, a plethora of pamphlets arguing for and against Barry's design was published.<sup>77</sup> For example, in 1836, a pamphlet entitled *The Prospects of Art in the Future Parliament House* was published anonymously. It railed against Barry's design. What, the author asks, would a Parisian, coming from 'le centre de bon goût,' think when he saw Barry's parliament building? 'Could the Frenchman, by any stretch of fancy, guess its destination? Or suppose it other than some vast Propaganda, some India House, or immense bureau?'<sup>78</sup> The author suggests that the problem lies less with the individual architect than with those who chose his design, implying that it was symptomatic of the growing influence exerted over the arts by a financially ascendant but culturally impoverished class of industrialists. With barely disguised disdain, the author points, as evidence of this menace, to the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Arts and their Connexion with Manufacture, which was first convened in 1835 and chaired by William Ewart, the reforming M.P. for Liverpool, whose family fortune came from importing.<sup>79</sup> The pamphlet's author writes:

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<sup>76</sup> *Report of Commissioners Appointed to Consider the Plans for Building the Houses of Parliament* 1836 (66) XXXVI.487.

<sup>77</sup> For an outline of these debates see: Andrea Fredericksen, 'Parliament's Genius Loci: The Politics of Place After the 1834 Fire,' in Christine & Jacqueline Riding (eds.), *The Houses of Parliament: History, Art, Architecture* (London: Merrell Publishers, 2000), pp. 99-112.

<sup>78</sup> Anon., *The Prospects of Art in the Future Parliament House* (Chiswick: Charles Whittingham, 1836), p. 22.

<sup>79</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures* 1835 (598) V.375; *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and their Connexion with Manufacture* 1836 (568) IX.1. For the political import of these committees see: Hoock (2003), pp. 300-306.

Sir Robert Peel well measured their intellectual capacity, when, to obtain a vote for the fine Arts of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, he talked to the Commons of England of the benefit to be calculated to their cottons! The chiaroscuro of Corregio illustrating our calico! The study of Paul il Veronese to be manifested in the brilliancy of our brocades!<sup>80</sup>

Clearly, for this author, the Houses of Parliament was too important for the long-term direction of British art to be held hostage by tasteless *nouveaux-riches*. Rising to a level of hyperbole typical of much contemporary commentary on the Parliament project, the author proclaims this ‘a competition for character with the whole world – a struggle for the immortal soul of our reputation hereafter and forever,’ and that ‘the nation ought not by any rule of Court to be done out of the advantage of all the manifested talent of the country, and that talent unfettered by pretenders of class.’<sup>81</sup>

By contrast with this intemperate language, the antiquarian and diplomat William Richard Hamilton maintained a relatively measured tone in his three letters to the Earl of Elgin on the New Houses of Parliament, published in 1836 and 1837.<sup>82</sup> Yet, Hamilton’s argument, about the propriety of Greek over Gothic architecture was similarly predicated on the efficacy of a traditional hierarchy to make informed decisions and, through their influence, spread a knowledge of what is best in art and architecture. In the second of his letters, Hamilton argues that ‘the youth of our

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<sup>80</sup> Anon. (1836), p. 23.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>82</sup> William Richard Hamilton, *Letter From W.R. Hamilton to the Earl of Elgin on the New Houses of Parliament* (London: W. Nicol, 1836); *Second Letter from W.R. Hamilton, Esq. to the Earl of Elgin on the Propriety of Adopting the Greek Style of Architecture in the Construction of the New Houses of Parliament* (London: John Weale, 1836); *Third Letter from W.R. Hamilton, Esq. to the Earl of Elgin on the propriety of adopting the Greek Style of Architecture in Preference to the Gothic in the Construction of the New Houses of Parliament* (London: John Weale, 1837).

upper classes' ought to be educated in the history of Greek art and architecture, and its rediscovery, from Renaissance Italy to the acquisition of the Parthenon Marbles.

If thus educated, Hamilton suggests, 'we may then hope to see a genuine feeling for beauty in art pervade those classes, which ought to give the tone and perform the part of judges and protectors to others, who look up to them for employment.'<sup>83</sup> Hamilton goes on from this reaffirmation of a paternalist hierarchy of taste to lament its sacrifice at the altar of profit. Utilitarianism, he bemoans, is the order of the day. Everything is gauged by its market value, with the result that 'the fine arts are to be encouraged, that the vulgar, the mechanical arts may prosper, and bring wealth: this is the canon by which every thing [sic] elevated, everything noble, all beauty, all that is excellent is to be measured.'<sup>84</sup>

For Hamilton, the solution to raising the standard of taste, and thus the quality of art and architecture, is clear: 'spread a knowledge of what is good in art amongst your statesmen and legislators and the wealthy portion of the community, and the rest will instantly follow.'<sup>85</sup> This premise governed the establishment of the Fine Arts Commission in 1841. The Commission arose out of a Select Committee convened by the M.P. Benjamin Hawes in April 1841 to consider 'the promotion of the fine arts in this country in connexion with the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament.'<sup>86</sup> In its report, published in June 1841, this Committee suggested that 'so important and national a work as the erection of the Two Houses of Parliament affords an

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<sup>83</sup> Hamilton (1836<sup>2</sup>), pp. 45-46.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>86</sup> David Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 58.

opportunity, which ought not to be neglected, of encouraging not only the higher, but every subordinate branch of Fine Art in this country.’<sup>87</sup>

This conclusion was supported with evidence presented by a host of artists, art administrators and connoisseurs, many of whom pointed to Bavaria as an example of what could be achieved through royal patronage. The artist William Dyce suggested that, in the Munich Residenz, ‘it is obvious that taste has been exercised on every object of furniture in the Palace.’<sup>88</sup> The connoisseur Thomas Bankes – a notable patron of contemporary sculpture – described the Bavarian monarch Ludwig I as an ‘enlightened protector’ of the arts, whose palace would ‘immortalise his reign.’<sup>89</sup> The connoisseur Thomas Wyse was similarly enthusiastic about Ludwig I’s patronage. Referring to fresco paintings commissioned for the Munich palace, Wyse conjured an image of an entire society animated by art: ‘The effect upon the Public at large is equally diversified; the higher class has an opportunity of judging of the propriety of the classic illustrations, while I have seen the peasants of the mountains of Tyrol holding up their children, and explaining to them the scenes of the Bavarian history almost every Sunday.’<sup>90</sup> Comments such as affirm the significance and agency of the Crown in the state patronage of art. Though, as Emma Winter has argued, those advocating state patronage in Britain were generally wary of appearing to ape a Continental autocrat, the positing of Ludwig I as a model patron cannot be divorced from Albert’s appointment as Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on Fine Arts, Together With the Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index 1841 (423) VI.331*, p. iii.

<sup>88</sup> 1841 (423) VI.331, p. 31.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>91</sup> Emma L. Winter, ‘German Fresco painting and the New Houses of Parliament at Westminster, 1834-1851,’ *The Historical Journal* 47/2 (June 2004), pp. 291-329.

Albert's chairmanship of the Fine Arts Commission was orchestrated by the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, who first suggested the idea in September 1841.<sup>92</sup> As previously indicated, Peel raised the subject of the Commission in the House of Commons at the end of September 1841. He told the House that, because the Fine Arts Commission would be non-political and because the New Houses of Parliament would 'comprise a part of her Majesty's ancient palace of Westminster,' it was greatly satisfying to hear that Prince Albert 'had willingly consented to become a member of such a commission, and to add to its labours the advantage, not only of his station and character, but also of his knowledge and taste in all matters connected with the promotion of the fine arts.'<sup>93</sup> Reinforcing the Commission's exclusivity, Peel assured the House that it would be unpaid and that its members 'would find sufficient in their love of the fine arts, to induce them.'<sup>94</sup>

On 3 October, Albert wrote to Peel to tell him that he 'had arrived at the conviction that there had better be no artist by profession on the Committee,' because the presence of an artist on the Commission might discourage it from canvassing the opinions of a fair sample of artistic opinion and because 'discussion upon the various points would not be so free amongst the *laymen* if distinguished professors were present.'<sup>95</sup> The artist, art historian and theorist Charles Eastlake was appointed Secretary but the twenty two original Commissioners were aristocrats and politicians known for their patronage – the 2nd Duke of Sutherland, the 3rd

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<sup>92</sup> Robertson (1978), p. 59.

<sup>93</sup> HC Debate 30 September 1841, vol. 59, cc. 1013-1015.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Theodore Martin, *The Life of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort* 5 vols. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1875-1880), vol. I, p. 107.

Marquess of Lansdowne and Peel prominent amongst them – as well as collectors and connoisseurs such as Thomas Wyse, George Vivian and Samuel Rogers.<sup>96</sup>

Correspondence between Eastlake and Prince Albert over the following twenty years suggests that Eastlake was the Commission's driving force. Yet, irrespective of the extent of his day-to-day involvement, Albert's chairmanship provided him with an opportunity to assert himself and, by extension, the Crown as a vital force in contemporary art. Just as the artistic programme in the New Houses of Parliament provided an opportunity to project an image of the Crown as a pivot of the constitutional order, so too the chairmanship of the body charged with overseeing its artistic embellishment offered a platform from which to proclaim the Crown's pivotal role in the contemporary art world. This traffic between Parliament and patronage lies at the heart of a speech Albert delivered at the Royal Academy's annual dinner in 1851 to mark Eastlake's election as the Academy's President.<sup>97</sup>

Victoria and Albert had endorsed Eastlake's candidacy in the late summer of 1850 and, in his speech, Albert stressed that he was making a point of speaking at the dinner 'in order to assist in what may be considered the inauguration festival of your newly-elected President, at whose election I have heartily rejoiced, not only on account of my high estimate of his qualities, but also on account of my feelings of

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<sup>96</sup> The twenty-two original members were, apart from Albert and Eastlake: John Singleton Copley, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Lyndhurst; George Granville Leveson-Gower, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Sutherland; Henry Petty Fitzmaurice, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquis of Lansdowne; John Talbot, 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shrewsbury; George Hamilton Gordon, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Aberdeen, William Lamb, Viscount Palmerston; Alexander Baring, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Ashburton; Nicholas William Ridley, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Colborne; Charles Shaw Lefevre, Speaker of the Commons and later Viscount Eversley; Henry Pelham Clinton M.P., Earl of Lincoln and later 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Newcastle; Lord John Russell M.P.; Lord Francis Egerton M.P., later Earl of Ellesmere; Henry John Temple, 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount Palmerston M.P.; Sir Robert Peel M.P.; Sir James Graham M.P.; Sir Robert Harry Inglis M.P.; Henry Gally Knight M.P.; Benjamin Hawes M.P.; the collector and poet Samuel Rogers; the historian Henry Hallam; the author and connoisseur Thomas Wyse; the connoisseur George Vivian. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>97</sup> Society of Arts, *The Principal Speeches and Addresses of His Royal Highness The Prince Consort* (London: John Murray, 1862), pp. 126-130.

regard towards him personally.<sup>98</sup> By broadcasting the strength of his relationship with Eastlake, Albert was both echoing and reversing Reynolds' inaugural discourse to the Academy in 1769, in which he praised George III as the 'Prince who has conceived the design of such an Institution, according to its true dignity, and who promotes the Arts, as the head of a great, a learned, a polite, and a commercial nation.'<sup>99</sup> Reynolds' relationship with the King was notoriously hostile but he clearly considered it politic to trumpet the monarch's position as patron of the Academy in order to buttress the institution's position as the representative body of British art.<sup>100</sup>

By so pointedly endorsing Eastlake, Albert was not simply expressing admiration for his deputy on the Fine Arts Commission. He was issuing a proclamation of faith in the trinity of the Crown, the aristocracy and the Royal Academy. Since its foundation in 1768, the Academy had faced accusations that it was an oligarchy, claiming a public role through its association with the Crown but serving only to further the interests of individual artists. In 1836, the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon told the Committee on Arts and Manufactures that the Academy was 'a House of Lords without King or Commons for appeal.'<sup>101</sup> In his speech, Albert used a similar metaphor to defend the Academy. He claimed that art was like a tender plant that needed to be insulated from critics in order to thrive, as it was 'when Madonnas were painted in the seclusion of convents.'<sup>102</sup> He suggested that, because artists were forced to look to the public for their sustenance and

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 126; Robertson (1978), p. 113.

<sup>99</sup> Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses*, ed. Pat Rogers (London: Penguin, 1992, first published 1797), p. 80.

<sup>100</sup> For George III and the Royal Academy see: Hooock (2003), *passim*.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 304.

<sup>102</sup> Society of Arts (1862), p. 128.

because the public, 'for the greater part uneducated in art,' looked to critics for guidance, art works were, 'becoming articles of trade, following as such the unreasoning laws of markets and fashion; and public and even private patronage is swayed by their tyrannical influence.'<sup>103</sup> Such tyranny could not prevail, Albert proclaimed, against the established social and artistic hierarchy. The Academy, he pointed out was often attacked from without, but together with the Crown its position was unassailable:

Of one thing you may rest assured, and that is the continued favour of the Crown. The same feelings which actuated George the Third in founding this institution, still actuate the Crown in continuing to it its patronage and support, recognising in you a constitutional link, as it were, between the Crown and the artistic body. And when I look at the assemblage of guests at this table, I may infer that the Crown does not stand alone in this respect, but that its feelings are shared also by the great and noble in the land.<sup>104</sup>

Marsden argues that this speech attests to Albert's 'deep understanding of the delicacy of the relationship between artist, patron and critics.'<sup>105</sup> This is undoubtedly true. As Marsden has demonstrated, there is evidence to suggest that Albert was an interfering and overbearing patron but he was clearly interested in the material and physical concerns of contemporary artists.<sup>106</sup> Arguably, however, his speech to the

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>105</sup> Marsden (2010), p. 38.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. Albert's working relationships with William Dyce and Daniel Maclise, both of whom were employed by the Fine Arts Commission, are prime examples. See: Marcia Pointon, *William Dyce 1806-1864: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 93-109; Nancy Weston, *Daniel Maclise, Irish Artist in Victorian London* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 221-225.

Academy was about more than defending the artist's cause; it was part of a wider attempt to reassert the landed classes' pre-eminence in the patronage of art and their traditional prerogative to govern the contemporary art world as they de facto governed the parliamentary system. In this, Albert was not without his supporters.

Albert's attempt to claim a role as a leader of patronage did not go unnoticed outside the walls of Parliament and the Academy. His activities as Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission provoked both censure and praise in the press. For example, in July 1842, Henry Cole published a lengthy article entitled 'Prospects of the Fine Arts: Decoration of the Westminster Palace,' in the *Westminster Review*.<sup>107</sup> In it, Cole notes that there are two schools of thought on the prospects for art in Britain. On the one hand, there are those who insist that 'art is feeble and degenerate, notwithstanding patronage unparalleled and expenditure the most lavish.' On the other hand, there are those who say that the 'decoration of the Westminster Palace is to be the commencement of the golden age of pictures in our country.'<sup>108</sup> Cole's diagnosis is that things are '[n]ot so bad as some say, not likely to become so wondrously good as others prophesy.'<sup>109</sup> On the whole, he takes a dim view of the Fine Arts Commission because he considers few of its members qualified to judge art: 'take away the titles and offices of most of the above Commissioners, and what would be their authority as critics?'<sup>110</sup> Yet, he exempts Albert from this judgement:

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<sup>107</sup> H.C.. 'Prospects of the Fine Arts: Decoration of the Westminster Palace,' *The Westminster Review* 38/1 (July 1842), pp. 168-193. H.C. is identified in the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* as Henry Cole. [http://wellesley.chadwyck.co.uk/fullrec/fullrec.do?id=WR-893&resultNum=1&entries=1&area=wellesley&forward=search&queryId=../session/1386962697\\_27218](http://wellesley.chadwyck.co.uk/fullrec/fullrec.do?id=WR-893&resultNum=1&entries=1&area=wellesley&forward=search&queryId=../session/1386962697_27218) (consulted 20 August 2013).

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

Before this Commission had been formed, we had entertained the hope that Prince Albert would have been named chief of a Board, consisting at most of three or five individuals possessing the confidence of artists; or, better still, appointed sole Commissioner. We are persuaded the results would have been far more satisfactory than may now be anticipated. The Sistine Chapel was decorated by direction of Leo X. The great German frescoes are attributable to the King of Bavaria. Why should not Prince Albert alone have directed the decorations of the Westminster Palace? Rank, judgement, knowledge of art, freedom from 'ear-wiggery.' All united to point him out as the fittest choice.<sup>111</sup>

By calling for Albert to be an 'absolute dictator' in the decoration of the New Palace, Cole clearly recognised the Prince's attempt to use the project as an opportunity to establish himself as a leader of patronage, akin to the King of Bavaria. For critics of the Fine Art Commission, such an attempt was either dangerous or ridiculous.<sup>112</sup>

For example, an article entitled 'Royal Patronage of the Fine Arts,' published in the *Surveyor, Engineer & Architect* in January 1842 suggested that, while he might have been 'a prince of genuine taste,' his chairmanship of the Commission only served to expose his impotence as a leader of taste. Though clearly biased – unsurprisingly, the journal took umbrage with what it saw as the Commission's interference in Barry's design – the article offers an interesting perspective on royal patronage, as manifested in the New Houses of Parliament. The article's starting point is the paradox that, in the wealthiest country on earth, the artist is forced to

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>112</sup> See: Janet McLean, 'Prince Albert and the Fine Arts Commission,' in Christine & Jacqueline Riding, *The Houses of Parliament: History, Art, Architecture* (London: Merrell, 2000), pp. 213-224, p. 215.

pander to the dictates of a capricious market, 'as though he were an ordinary tradesman,' because 'there is no centre of encouragement around which the Fine Arts can rally, and depend upon, or be encouraged by.'<sup>113</sup> The author points out that, even when British monarchs possess 'the most refined taste, and the most exquisite feeling, of any or all of the fine arts,' they are powerless to effect change beyond what they can afford to pay for themselves. The Queen and her Consort, 'might as well 'call spirits from the vasty deep,' as order the improvement of the most unseemly thing within the dominions of the former.'<sup>114</sup> The author suggests that, in light of this royal impotence, 'to bring the sovereign forward as the nominal patron of the fine arts, is a cruel mockery.'<sup>115</sup> The appointment of the Fine Arts Commission – the 'Committee of Garnish' as it is referred to – is, the author concludes, symptomatic of 'that most degraded and degrading system of patronage, which keeps the arts under its trammel without discrimination and without feeling.'<sup>116</sup>

Some of the most imaginative and vitriolic criticism of Albert's Chairmanship of the Fine Arts Commission is contained in the pages of *Punch*. For *Punch*, the Fine Arts Commission was a smoke-screen designed to disguise a social reality studiously ignored by both sides of the political divide. This view is evident in a series of six cartoons mocking the six premium-prize-winning cartoons from the exhibition which opened on 1 July 1843 in Westminster Hall – the first of four exhibitions held there under the auspices of the Fine Arts Commission. These cartoons present the viewer

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<sup>113</sup> 'Royal Patronage of the Fine Arts,' *The Surveyor, Engineer & Architect; or, London Monthly Journal of the Physical and Practical Science* 2/24 (January 1842), pp. 265-269, p. 265.

<sup>114</sup> 'Royal Patronage,' (1842), p. 265. 'call spirits from the vasty deep,' is a quotation from Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, Part I, Act 3, Scene 1, in which the self-aggrandising Hotspur boasts: 'I can call spirits from the vasty deep.' Eager to expose Hotspur's impotence, his cousin Glendower mockingly replies: 'Why so can I, or so can any man; but will they come when you do call for them?'

<sup>115</sup> 'Royal Patronage,' (1842), p. 265.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 266.

with a harrowing picture of a society in which the interests of the underprivileged are sacrificed to feed the appetites and whims of a pampered elite. For example, the first cartoon, entitled *Substance and Shadow* (Fig. 1.1), shows a group of emaciated men, women and children standing in a gallery hung with portraits of well-dressed, well-fed men, women and children. The import of this juxtaposition of extreme poverty and vainglorious wealth is elucidated in the accompanying text:

There are many silly, dissatisfied people in this country, who are continually urging upon Ministers the propriety of considering the wants of the pauper population, under the impression that it is laudable to feed men as to shelter horses. To meet the views of such people, the Government would have to put its hand into the Treasury money-box. We would ask how the Chancellor of the Exchequer can be required to commit such an act of folly, knowing, as we do, that the balance of the budget was so triflingly against him, and that he has such righteous and paramount claims upon him as the Duke of Cumberland's income and the Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz's pin money, and the builder's little account for the Royal stables. We conceive that Ministers have adopted the very best means to silence this unwarrantable outcry. They have considerably determined that as they cannot afford to give hungry nakedness the *substance* which it covets, at least it shall have *shadow*. The poor ask for bread, and the philanthropy of the State accords – an exhibition.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> 'Substance and Shadow,' *Punch* (29 July 1843), p. 22.

In April 1844, *Punch* published an article entitled 'Prince Albert's Visit to the Houses of Parliament.'<sup>118</sup> Again attempting to expose the injustices behind the project, the article referenced the treatment of stone masons employed on site by the contractors Grissell & Peto. In 1842, masons affiliated with the Society of Operative Stone Masons staged a strike in response to the company's exploitative practices.<sup>119</sup> *Punch* told its readers that, when Albert inspected the site in the company of 'Mr Grissell, the builder,' he was told that 'free-stone' was used in the construction; he remarked that 'the stone *ought* to be free, which was used in the construction of the Houses of Parliament of a free people.'<sup>120</sup> With a typical blend of sarcasm and sedition, we are then told that:

During the inspection of the lower part of the Victoria Tower it was stated to his Royal Highness that the niches in the wall were to be filled with statues of the Kings and Queens of England, when the Prince expressed considerable anxiety to have some idea that of the effect that would be produced by such an arrangement. After a good deal of joking as to which of the party would best become the niche, one of the masons was pounced upon and hoisted into the space amid much merriment, which was greatly increased by Prince Albert remarking that as the man was in his working dress, which was rather black (it being Saturday) he looked more like King Coal than any other sovereign.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> 'Prince Albert's Visit to the Houses of Parliament,' *Punch* (27 April 1844).

<sup>119</sup> David Goodway, *London Chartism 1838-1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 180.

<sup>120</sup> 'Prince Albert's Visit to the Houses of Parliament,' *Punch* (27 April 1844),

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

The Fine Arts Commission's second Westminster Hall Exhibition, the first to feature sculpture, opened on 28 June 1844. In anticipation, *Punch* reported that 'several cart-loads of masonry' had been conveyed to the hall.<sup>122</sup> A few weeks later, *Punch* published an alternative 'Fine Art Exhibition of Designs for National Statues.' This consisted of ten contemporary subjects farcically rendered as allegorical or canonical statues. Chief among them were 'Victoria Patronising the Fine Arts,' and 'Mars Attired by Prince Albert' (Figs. 1.2 & 1.3). In the accompanying text – written as a review of 'Punch's Fine Art Exhibition' – the reviewer is at a loss to understand why 'Mr Spoker should have represented our Gracious Queen in the character of 'Britannia patronizing the Fine Arts,' considering her preference, 'and with much reason, for French, German and Italian artists.'<sup>123</sup> Nor is General Tom Thumb a Briton, the reviewer points out, [h]ence it is absurd to typify *him* as an exemplification of the Fine Arts.'<sup>124</sup> Yet, when one considers that the Queen pays only one-fifth the price of any artwork, it is lucky 'that the Sovereign does not patronize the Fine Arts *more*.'<sup>125</sup>

The review goes on to suggest that the design by 'Spiller,' representing 'Field Marshal his Royal Highness Prince Albert attiring Mars for battle,' is 'equally reprehensible.'<sup>126</sup> Throughout the 1840s, *Punch* relished attacking Albert as an over-paid and under-worked prince who appeared to do much but, in reality, did nothing at all. When, in 1843, Albert designed a widely-ridiculed and ultimately aborted infantry helmet for the Army, *Punch* described it as 'a decided cross between a muff, a coal-scuttle, and a slop-pail,' and subsequently seized upon it as a metaphor for the

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<sup>122</sup> 'Approaching Exhibition at Westminster Hall,' *Punch* (22 June 1844), p. 262.

<sup>123</sup> 'Punch's Fine Art Exhibition of Designs for National Statues,' *Punch* (20 July 1844), p. 25.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

prince who wore many hats, all equally ineffective and ridiculous.<sup>127</sup> In ‘Spiller’s’ design, the diminutive and childlike Albert is represented placing the ludicrous looking hat on an emasculated Mars. It is, the reviewer suggests, ridiculous to represent Albert attiring Mars with ‘the flower-pot-Albert hat which he never wore: and which is about as fit for a God of war as a gauze turban with a bird of paradise or a tulip to ornament it.’<sup>128</sup>

Richard Altick argues that there was a ‘distinct limit on the liberty’ *Punch* allowed itself when it came to ridiculing Victoria and Albert.<sup>129</sup> This is certainly evident in the ‘Victoria Patronizing the Fine Arts,’ and ‘Mars Attired by Prince Albert’ cartoons, which ridicule the couple’s pretensions as pre-eminent patrons, as expressed through the New Houses of Parliament project, but do so in a light-hearted manner. As Altick points out, this was far from the vicious caricature that Cruikshank and Gilray had levelled at George III and George IV.<sup>130</sup> Yet, however light-hearted they appear, these cartoons bore a serious point. They implicated Victoria and Albert in what *Punch* characterised as the Fine Arts Commission’s attempt to disguise an unjust and cruel society. In doing so, *Punch* both attacked, and attested to, Victoria’s and Albert’s central position in the New Houses of Parliament project. As we will see in the following sections, their centrality was nowhere more apparent than in the building’s sculpture programme.

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<sup>127</sup> Chris Brooks, ‘Representing Albert,’ in Chris Brooks (ed.), *The Albert Memorial: The Prince Consort National Memorial: its History, Contexts and Conservation* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 44-97, pp. 56-59.

<sup>128</sup> ‘Punch’s Fine Art Exhibition of Designs for National Statues,’ *Punch* (20 July 1844), p. 25.

<sup>129</sup> Richard Daniel Altick, *Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution, 1841-1851* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1997), p. 432.

<sup>130</sup> See: Kenneth Baker, *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson), 2005.

## Part 2: John Thomas's Statues of Victoria

On 18 March 1848, *The Illustrated London News* featured an article on 'The New Houses of Parliament.'<sup>131</sup> There was nothing unusual about this – the illustrated-weekly regularly published details on the progress of construction. This particular article is nonetheless striking. It is illustrated with a woodcut engraving of 'Workmen Sculpturing the Bosses on the Groined Roof of the Central Hall,' (Fig. 1.4) an image which could easily be mistaken for a nineteenth-century view of the decoration of a medieval cathedral. It shows a dozen or so workmen on an elaborate wooden scaffold; some of them appear to be simply standing, while others appear to be chiselling, 'sculpturing,' the florid Gothic bosses ornamenting the groined ceiling, the preparatory models for which are deposited around the scaffold. This scene is framed at the top of the page with scrolls bearing the motto 'Domine Salvam Fac Regnam' – God Save Our Queen' – a motto which recurs throughout the New Palace of Westminster, most notably on the tiles in the Central Hall and the lobbies of both Houses.

This image might be read in a number of ways. Firstly, as evidence of A.W.N. Pugin's role in the New Houses of Parliament project – the decoration of the groined ceiling conforms to his principle that 'all ornament should consist of enrichment of the essential construction of the building.'<sup>132</sup> It might also be read in political terms.

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<sup>131</sup> 'The New Houses of Parliament,' *Illustrated London News* (18 March 1848), p.190.

<sup>132</sup> Augustus Welby Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture and An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture*, ed. Roderick O'Donnell (Leominster: Gracewing, 2003), p. 6. For Pugin and the New Palace of Westminster see: Alexandra Wedgwood, 'The New Palace of Westminster,' in *Pugin, A Gothic Passion* (exhibition catalogue, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 15 June – 11 September 1994), ed. Clive Wainwright (New Haven & London: Yale University Press), pp. 219-236; *A.W.N. Pugin, Master of the Gothic Revival* (exhibition catalogue, The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in Decorative Arts, New York, 9 November 1995 – 25 February 1996), ed. Paul Atterbury (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 322-338.

It is hardly coincidental that the image was published less than a month after the July Monarchy had been toppled in Paris, at the point when revolutionary fervour appeared to be spreading and threatening the existence of monarchies across Continental Europe, and with the distinct possibility that it could spread to Britain and, more particularly, Ireland. In this context, the juxtaposition of images entitled 'Behind the Barricades,' and 'Grand Funeral Procession of the Victims of the Revolution,' with a historicised image of stone masons decorating the cradle of British representative government is particularly telling. Yet another way of reading this image is to see it as evidence of Victoria's centrality in the New Houses of Parliament project. This neatly illustrates a point about the synthesis of historicism and modernity in Barry's New Houses of Parliament and the part played by Victoria – a modern woman with an ancient lineage – in personifying this duality. As I will argue here, Victoria was employed as the face of the New Houses of Parliament because Barry saw in her a means of perpetuating his vision for a building that was both a product of the contemporary and a monument to longevity, and nowhere is this more evident than in the programme of figurative architectural sculpture designed and overseen for him by Thomas.

The dual historicism and modernity of Barry's design is conveyed in an article published in the *Athenaeum* in April 1847.<sup>133</sup> In the article, we are told that the author had recently undertaken a pilgrimage to the incomplete Cologne Cathedral, which, after a hiatus of more than three centuries, was being 'urged forward by the contributions of all Germany and the munificence of the Prussian Government.'<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> 'The New Houses of Parliament,' *Athenaeum* 1015 (10 April 1847), pp. 392-393.

<sup>134</sup> 'Houses of Parliament,' *Athenaeum* (1847), p. 392.

Having witnessed this spectacle, the author returned to London and anxiously approached the New Palace of Westminster, ‘a great work of our own country and times, in which the resources of the British Empire have been placed at the disposal of a British architect.’ Fearing that the building would pale in comparison with Cologne Cathedral, the author was reassured to see the scale and sophistication of the project:

Every element of modern science, every material and process of modern architecture and invention that could facilitate the execution or secure the ability of the edifice have been unsparingly used. We have zinc roofing, iron rafters, cast-iron beams, plate glass – all new – introduced in the work as materials and railroads, railroad carriages and travelling cranes, and rectangular combinations of parallel framing, all contributing towards the perfection of a work – so different from use and wont, yet so congruous to the effect produced.<sup>135</sup>

By simultaneously comparing it to a medieval cathedral and marvelling at its modernity, the author conveys an important point about the building: it was a colossal feat of modern engineering, which overtly celebrated its medieval roots. According to a ground-plan published in Henry T. Ryde’s 1849 *Illustrations of the New Palace of Westminster* (Fig. 1.5), Barry’s completed building included: chambers and lobbies for both Houses; a suite of royal apartments; residences for the Speaker of the Commons, Black Rod and a librarian; offices for the Lord Great Chamberlain, the Lord Chancellor and the Clerk of the House of Commons; thirty committee rooms; a

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 393.

three-room library; two dining rooms and a tea room; and a prison. This dizzying array of rooms was arranged along an east-west axis, around fourteen internal courtyards and between the medieval Westminster Hall – which survived the 1834 fire – and the River Thames – which had to be embanked before work could begin. Ryde's ground-plan makes abundantly clear that the New Houses of Parliament was a functional building designed to meet the needs of a modern legislature. Yet, the building was cloaked in a consciously historicist veneer, as illustrated in Ryde's book by numerous woodcut engravings after neo-medieval stone-carved heraldic devices (Fig. 1.6).

From the beginning, Barry's use of sculpture was contingent on a number of factors; not least its cost and the speed with which it could be executed. In February 1836, a Parliamentary oversight committee suggested that one of the principal attractions of Barry's design was its economy of decorative embellishment, while in May of the same year the architect told another committee that £50,000 could be saved by 'the omission of niches, statues.'<sup>136</sup> Yet, Barry was also keenly aware of the potential value of sculpture. In his posthumous memoir of the architect, Barry's son Alfred tells us that his father saw the building's sculptural programme as an opportunity to 'make his building a treasure-house of art and a sculpted memorial of our national history,' and in the process to raise 'a school of decorative art, guided, but not servilely confined, by the example of Gothic antiquity, and bringing to the evolution of Gothic principles all the resources of modern thought and science.'<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> *Report of Commissioners Appointed to Consider the Plans for Building the Houses of Parliament 1836* (66) XXXVI.487 pp. 3-4; *Report from Select Committee on Houses of Parliament 1836* (245) XXI.43, p. 16.

<sup>137</sup> Alfred Barry, *The Life and Works of Sir Charles Barry* (London: John Murray, 1867), pp. 192-193.

The posturing of the son aside, there is clearly some truth in this. Barry saw sculpture as a decorative subsidiary of architecture but an important tool in his drive to forge a hybrid modern-Gothic vocabulary of civil architecture.

Alfred Barry tells us that it was his father's 'good fortune to give direction and stimulus to a crowd of artistic coadjutors.'<sup>138</sup> Foremost amongst them was Pugin – Alfred Barry tells us that the two men 'had perhaps just that amount of sympathy and diversity, which leads to mutual appreciation, co-operation, and friendship.'<sup>139</sup> Behind Pugin, the principal 'artistic coadjutor' named in the memoir is John Thomas. Thomas was a humble stone-cutter turned professional sculptor and interior-designer who had worked, alongside Pugin, on Barry's King Edward VI Grammar School in Birmingham (1834-1837; demolished in 1936).<sup>140</sup> According to his son, when Charles Barry saw Thomas's work on the Birmingham school, he was struck by the sculptor's 'ability, skill and energy and at once resolved to aid in raising him to a position more worthy of his talents.'<sup>141</sup>

Thomas was unofficially appointed Superintendent of Stone Carving at the Palace of Westminster in May 1841, though his appointment was not officially sanctioned until 1846. He and Barry developed a plan for an ambitious programme of figurative sculpture for the building's interior, which he outlined to the Fine Arts Commission in February 1843. The plan envisioned a significant number of statues in Westminster Hall, St Stephens Hall and Central Hall – the public approach to both Houses. In Westminster Hall, he envisioned statues of twenty of 'the most celebrated

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194

<sup>140</sup> 'John Thomas,' *Art Journal* (November 1849), p. 340.

<sup>141</sup> Barry (1867), p. 198.

statesmen,' and twenty-six 'naval and military commanders,' supplemented by twelve statues of 'celebrated statesmen,' and thirty statues of 'eminent men of the naval, military and civil service,' in St Stephen's Hall.<sup>142</sup> This phalanx of statues would culminate in the Central Hall. Here, in the centre of the octagonal space half-way between the Commons and the Lords, Barry envisioned 'a statue of Her present Most Gracious Majesty, upon a rich pedestal of British marble, highly polished and relieved in parts by gold and colour.'<sup>143</sup> Radiating around this statue would be 'statues of Her Majesty's ancestors' in niches and 'sedent statues of some of the great lawgivers of antiquity' in front of the eight clustered pillars in the angles of the hall.<sup>144</sup> In the Victoria Gallery on the other side of the Lords chamber, Barry proposed more statues of Victoria to 'fill the central niches at the ends,' while other niches and pedestals might be occupied by 'statues of Her Majesty's ancestors.' These statues might, it is suggested, 'with good effect be of bronze, either partially or wholly gilt.'<sup>145</sup>

Thomas did execute a series of statues of monarchs and their consorts, from William the Conqueror to William IV and Adelaide, for these spaces.<sup>146</sup> However, neither the projected statue of Victoria at the heart of the Central Hall, nor the statues of her in the Victoria Gallery (now the Royal Gallery), were realized. Indeed, apart from the twelve freestanding, white marble statues of historic parliamentarians in St Stephen's Hall – executed by various sculptors under the

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<sup>142</sup> *Second Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts 1843* (499) XXIX.197, pp. 8-9.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Benedict Read, 'The Architectural Sculpture,' in Michael Harry Port (ed.), *The Houses of Parliament* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 232-245, p. 238. A series of undated drawings of these statues by Thomas is now in the collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects. See: Ian Blatchford, 'John Thomas and his 'wonderful facility of invention': Revisiting a neglected sculptor,' *V&A Online Journal* 3 (Spring 2011), [www.vam.ac.uk/content/journals/research-journal/issue-03](http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/journals/research-journal/issue-03).

auspices of the Fine Arts Commission – very little of Barry’s early plan for sculpture inside the building materialised.<sup>147</sup> Yet, the prominence awarded to statues of Victoria within Barry’s scheme is an indication of the value he attached to her image. This is evident in two statues of Victoria which *were* executed as part of Thomas’s programme of exterior architectural sculpture.

The building’s exterior was where Barry came closest to achieving his dream of ‘a sculpted memorial of our national history,’ but it was an exclusively royal history. As outlined by Read, the building’s principal facades are festooned with an extensive and complex sculptural programme, comprised principally of a series of royal coats-of-arms, from those of William the Conqueror to that of Victoria, and statues of monarchs from the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy to Victoria.<sup>148</sup> This sculpted history of monarchy culminates on the façade of the Victoria Tower in the building’s south-west corner (Fig. 1.7), with statues of Victoria, flanked by her parents – the Duke and Duchess of Kent – and, on either side of them, her Hanoverian uncles – George IV; Frederick, the Duke of York; and William IV to her left; and Ernest I of Hanover; Augustus, the Duke of Sussex; and Adolphus, the Duke of Cambridge, to her right.

Alfred Barry tells us that, in the Victoria Tower, his father, ‘always felt great pride and pleasure, and trusted that it would be the great feature of the building, by which his name would be known hereafter.’<sup>149</sup> In its base, the tower contains the

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<sup>147</sup> The statues of historic parliamentarians were executed between 1848 and 1858. They were: *William Murray, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Mansfield* by Edward Hodges Baily, *John, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Somers* and *Edward Hyde, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Clarendon* by William Calder Marshall, *Lucius Cary, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Falkland* and *Sir Robert Walpole* by John Bell, *John Hampden* and *John Selden* by John Henry Foley, *William Pitt* and *William Pitt the Younger* by Patrick MacDowell, *Edmund Burke* by William Theed, and *Henry Grattan* by John Edward Carew. See: Benedict Read, ‘Sculpture in the New Palace of Westminster,’ in Riding (2000), pp. 253-269, pp. 258-260.

<sup>148</sup> Read (1976), pp. 232-236.

<sup>149</sup> Barry (1867), p. 254.

official Sovereign's Entrance, accessed via a fifty-foot-high arch; above the level of that arch are eleven floors designed to act as a repository for the historic Parliamentary records. Yet, paradoxically, while the structure was designed, at least in part, to act as a repository of the nation's past, it was itself a ground-breaking feat of modern engineering. An 1862 guidebook tells us that, when completed, the Victoria Tower was the largest and highest square tower in the world, measuring seventy five square feet and over 400 feet from base to the top of its colossal flagpole and that its scale 'rendered necessary the utmost care and scientific treatment of the very treacherous ground of its foundation,' which is 'made of solid concrete 9 feet 6 inches in depth with solid brick-work over that, the whole enclosed and strengthened by piling.'<sup>150</sup> An 1865 guidebook tells us that the tower's construction consumed 'about 117,000 cubic feet of stone, 428,000 cubic feet of brickwork, and 1,300 tons of iron; and that it weighs 30,000 tons.'<sup>151</sup>

The Victoria Tower was simply a microcosm of a much larger building campaign but it was clearly designed to be singled out as a defining feature of the building. According to the same 1865 guidebook, it is only possible to appreciate the tower's complexity by seeing inside it, and only possible to appreciate the complexity of the New Palace of Westminster as a whole by ascending the tower's 500 steps: 'From here, the building extending nearly eight acres, can be seen to the greatest advantage and nowhere else can the disposition of its numerous parts be so readily distinguished and comprehended, and its magnitude be so thoroughly appreciated.'<sup>152</sup> The contemporary perception that the construction of the Victoria

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<sup>150</sup> *A Descriptive Account of the Palace of Westminster* (London: Warrington & Co., 1862), p. 16.

<sup>151</sup> *Illustrations of the New Palace of Westminster* (London: Warrington & Co., 1865), unpaginated.

<sup>152</sup> *Illustrations of the New Palace* (1865), unpaginated.

Tower was in itself a spectacle of modernity is graphically illustrated by an article which appeared in the *Illustrated London News* in February 1850, entitled 'Progress of the New Houses of Parliament; Hoisting-Scaffold of the Victoria Tower.'<sup>153</sup> The article is illustrated (Fig. 1.8) with a plan of the tower, diagrams of the 'hoisting-scaffold' – used to hoist masonry – and the 'hoisting-screw' – by which the scaffold is raised, six feet at a time, as construction progresses – and a woodcut illustration of the scaffold in action, populated with the diminutive figures of workmen.

It is no accident that Thomas's sculpted history of the monarchy concludes on the façade of this tower – the modern monarchy adorning the most spectacularly modern part of the building. Yet, this synchronicity is undermined by the relative obscurity of the statues themselves, which are barely distinguishable from the ground. Furthermore, their apparent modernity is undermined by the fact that the statue of Victoria, which is the largest, appears crudely carved and she is portrayed in medieval dress, as if consciously aping a medieval effigy, by contrast with the statues of her relatives, who are portrayed in their contemporary dress and appear more dynamic and individualised. This apparent denial of Victoria's modernity is reinforced by a second, much larger and far more prominent statue of her, situated in the porch at the base of the tower. The arch leading into this porch is flanked by colossal carved stone lions bearing gold burnished pendants adorned with Victoria's cipher (Fig. 1.9), which are emphatically medieval in style. Behind these lions, the frame of the arch is adorned with crowned Tudor roses and culminates with a neo-Gothic set of the royal coat of arms, supported by three winged angels.

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<sup>153</sup> 'Progress of the New Houses of Parliament. Hoisting-Scaffold of the Victoria Tower,' *Illustrated London News* (2 February 1850), p. 68.

The inside of the Victoria Tower's porch houses a rich bounty of carved stonework (Fig. 1.10). On the eastern side of the porch, a monumental oak gateway, which provides access to an internal courtyard, is surmounted by an arched recess, which contains intricately carved, over-life-size statues of the patron saints of the three kingdoms of the United Kingdom – St Andrew for Scotland, St George for England, and St Patrick for Ireland – framed by angels bearing shields adorned with Victoria's cipher. These five statues are each set within Gothic niches. The Sovereign's Entrance is on the north side of the porch. It is surmounted by two arched recesses; the bottom of which contains the royal shield, supported by two angels. The uppermost recess contains five statues set within florid Gothic canopied niches (Fig. 1.11). In the centre is a statue of Victoria portrayed in a medieval style cloak and a robe fastened with a minutely carved belt. To her left, she is flanked by an allegory of Wisdom; to her right by an allegory of Justice. In turn, the allegories are flanked by angels, executed in a similar style to those in the recess opposite.

Arguably, the statue of Victoria above the Sovereign's Entrance was the crowning feature in Thomas's sculptural programme. By contrast with the statues of monarchs which pervade large portions of the external façade and punctuate the principal interior circulation spaces, this statue is intricately carved, carefully differentiated and lusciously framed. Its scale and quality reflect the significance of its location. This is the point at which the monarch arrives in state, in George III's lavish Gold State Coach, to officially open the Parliamentary session, an elaborate pageant, akin in splendour to the Coronation itself.<sup>154</sup> Alighting from the carriage in

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<sup>154</sup> Until 1854 the monarch tended also to ceremonially close the parliamentary session. See: Henry S. Cobb, 'The Staging of Ceremonies of State in the House of Lords,' in Riding (2000), pp. 31-48, pp. 41-43.

the porch, the monarch enters the building through the Sovereign's Entrance and proceeds up a staircase lined with Yeomen of the Guard. At the top of the staircase, the monarch enters the Royal Robing Room and dons the robes of state, before processing through the Royal Gallery and into the House of Lords.

According to a number of contemporary accounts, the splendour of Barry's building was most apparent during this ceremony. One contemporary suggested that 'on such grand occasions as the opening or closing of the Session of Parliament by the Sovereign in person, there is usually a display of pomp and state which make them brilliant scenes,' especially 'when, as at present, the throne is filled by a Queen regnant.'<sup>155</sup> Unsurprisingly, the state opening generated a lot of interest in the press, not least in the *Illustrated London News*. To mark the first state opening to make use of Barry's royal processional route, in February 1852, it published engravings of 'Her Majesty's Arrival at the Victoria Tower' (Fig.1.12) 'The Royal Staircase, Victoria Tower: Her Majesty's Arrival,' and 'Her Majesty Entering the Royal Gallery from the Robing-Room.' The first of these shows the diminutive figures of Victoria and Albert proceeding through the Sovereign's Entrance on the north side of the porch, while the Gold State Coach, itself encrusted with figurative sculpture, is proceeding through the oak gates on the east side of the porch. The whole area is crowded with Beefeaters and soldiers in bearskin caps.<sup>156</sup> Looming over this rich and picturesque scene is Thomas's lavish sculptural programme, both complementing the spectacle below, and benefiting from the attention it generated.

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<sup>155</sup> *London Interiors: A Grand National Exhibition of the Religious, Regal and Civic Solemnities, Public Amusements, Scientific Meetings and Commercial Scenes of the British Capital* 2 vols. (London: Joseph Mead, 1844), vol. I, pp. 25, 26.

<sup>156</sup> For the Gold State Coach, see: David Watkin, *The Architect King: George III and the Culture of the Enlightenment* (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2004), pp. 77-81

This woodcut engraving presents us with a revealing view of Thomas's statue of Victoria. It is revealing, in part, because it captures the symbiotic relationship between Thomas's sculptural programme and the historicist spectacle of the State Opening, but also because it exposes the fact that the historicism of the statue of Victoria is little more than a veneer. The eclectic mix of medieval-style statues, in a monumental Gothic architectural framework; the Beefeaters in their Tudor uniforms; and the Rococo State Coach is supposed to signify a long, unbroken chain of history. Victoria occupies a unique position in this spectacle. She is portrayed in medieval dress above the entrance, situated prominently in the centre of an elaborate mix of Gothic ornament and medieval figures. This over-life-size medieval Victoria looks down upon the real Victoria, who is about to enter the building. The image is captioned 'Her Majesty's Arrival at the Victoria Tower,' while the accompanying text tells us that the arch above the entrance incorporates 'very beautiful niches, containing figures of the Queen, Justice and Mercy [sic].'<sup>157</sup> The medievalising statue of Victoria thus provides us with an image of the real Victoria, whose back is turned to us, while the real Victoria reminds us that the medieval Victoria is a contemporary person dressed in medieval costume.

In designing this statue of Victoria in medieval costume, Barry and Thomas may have been consciously echoing the outfit she wore at a medieval *bal costumé* that she and Albert hosted in May 1842, and for which they dressed as the fourteenth-century King Edward III and his consort Philippa of Hainault.<sup>158</sup> This event

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<sup>157</sup> 'Opening of Parliament,' *Illustrated London News* (7 February 1852), p. 120.

<sup>158</sup> See: James Robinson Planché, *Souvenir of the Bal Costumé Given by her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, at Buckingham Palace, 12 May 1842* (London: P. & D. Colnaghi, 1843); Marsden (2010), pp. 228-229.

was widely reported; it dominated the inaugural issue of the *Illustrated London News*, and Victoria and Albert were subsequently painted in costume by Edwin Landseer (Fig. 1.13). Whether or not the statue above the Sovereign's Entrance was consciously designed to echo Victoria as she appeared in costume, Barry and Thomas were doubtless counting on the fact that, thanks to publications such as the *Illustrated London News*, the modern woman beneath the medieval veneer would be clear to all. The statue thus epitomises the New Palace of Westminster, a modern building clothed in a historic costume. As we will see in the next section, this synthesis of the historic and the contemporary, the allegorical and the real, the personal and the political, is evident in the statue of Victoria executed by Gibson, though it took a very different form.

### **Part 3: John Gibson's *Queen Victoria Between Justice and Clemency***

Gibson's over-life-size marble group of *Queen Victoria Between Justice and Clemency* (Fig. 1.14) was commissioned by the Fine Arts Commission in 1849, complete by 1855 and installed in the Prince's Chamber, an antechamber between the Royal Gallery and the House of Lords, in 1856.<sup>159</sup> The group consists of a pyramidal arrangement of figures. In the centre is Victoria, sitting on a throne, similar in format to the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey. She holds a laurel wreath in one hand and a sceptre in the other, and rests her feet on a footstool adorned with sea horses carved in relief. Her throne is elevated on a large pedestal, itself adorned with bas-relief panels: *Commerce* in the centre, *Science* on the left and *The Useful Arts* on the right.

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<sup>159</sup> The Prince's Chamber was not part of Barry's original design. It was only added in 1844 to satisfy the Lords' demand for an antechamber between the House and the Royal Gallery. See: Wedgwood (2000), p. 121.

To her right, Victoria is flanked by *Justice*, who holds a sword in one hand and a balance in the other; to her left, by *Clemency*, who holds a sword in one hand and an olive branch in the other.<sup>160</sup> Stylistically, this group is far removed from Barry's sculptural programme and, for that matter, from the rest of the Fine Arts Commission's sculptural programme. As we will be seen, this distinction is important. Yet, before examining the ways in which Gibson's group stands out, it is important to recognise the ways in which it fits in.

In her analysis of Gibson's group, Elizabeth Darby points to a series of ancient and modern Roman works as likely influences. These include Canova's *Empress Marie Louise as the Goddess Concordia* (1811-1814), canonical ancient works such as Polycleitus's *Juno* – itself a likely influence for Canova's *Maria Louise* – and ancient divinities illustrated in Quatremère de Quincy *Le Jupiter Olympien* (1814).<sup>161</sup> Positing such a relationship between Gibson's group, canonical works of modern sculpture, and statues of classical divinities is flattering to Gibson – who consistently positioned himself in the shadow of both Phidias and Canova. It is important, however, to also think about the relationship between Gibson's group and more immediate, local precedents. As Darby argues, the format of a contemporary figure flanked on either side by allegorical figures is reminiscent of Flaxman's *Earl of Mansfield Memorial* in nearby Westminster Abbey (1793-1801) but it is likely that Thomas's statue of Victoria above the Sovereign's Entrance was a more important precedent.

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<sup>160</sup> For a brief summary of the group see: Maurice Bond (ed.), *Works of Art in the House of Lords* (London: H.M.S.O., 1980), p. 67.

<sup>161</sup> Darby (1983), vol. I, pp. 73-74; For de Quincy's *Jupiter Olympien* see: Yvonne Luke, *Quatremère de Quincy's Role in the Revival of Polychromy in Sculpture* (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 1996).

The relationship between Gibson's Victoria and Thomas's Victoria is not alluded to in Gibson's writings, the Fine Arts Commission's correspondence or the scholarship on Gibson, but the fact that both versions of the monarch are flanked by allegorical figures with almost identical titles is hardly an accident. Nor can it be coincidental that, while Thomas's group marks the start point of Victoria's ceremonial procession to the House of Lords during the State Opening of Parliament, Gibson's group marks the end of the procession. Indeed, the group is situated in a recess in the wall separating the Prince's Chamber from the House of Lords. Thus, in practice, Victoria would enter the building through the Sovereign's Entrance – beneath Thomas's statue of her – and proceed from there up the Royal Staircase to the Royal Robing Room, through the Royal Gallery – towards Gibson's statue of her – before entering the House of Lords, where she would sit on a throne, back-to-back, so-to-speak, with Gibson's statue of herself enthroned. Effectively then, Thomas's and Gibson's statues of Victoria book-ended a ceremony in which she was the principal protagonist.

It seems highly likely that Gibson was conscious of Thomas's work when he was designing and executing his own. At the Fine Arts Commission's request, Gibson produced the original clay model for the group in a room at the bottom of the Royal Staircase, almost literally beneath Thomas's group, and he presumably became familiar with the route culminating in the Prince's Chamber.<sup>162</sup> On a practical level, the gilt-diapered recess and gilt-ornaments which frame Gibson's group were designed by Barry, while Thomas was contracted to execute a unitary base for the

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<sup>162</sup> Bond (1980), p. 67.

three figures, supervise their installation and add finishing touches to the group, not least the carved stone lions on the pinnacles of the throne.<sup>163</sup> Yet, despite these practical, performative and iconographic connections between the two versions of Victoria, there is no doubt that Gibson's group stands out stylistically in the context of the New Houses of Parliament, and purposefully so.

Gibson was the only sculptor employed by the Fine Arts Commission who had not sent work to the Westminster Hall exhibition in 1844 and yet his was the largest and most prominent piece in the Commission's sculptural programme. According to an obituary published after the sculptor's death in 1866, it was Albert, 'through whose influence this commission was given to Gibson.'<sup>164</sup> In his memoirs, Gibson tells us that the Fine Arts Commissioners were deliberating over a scaled model of the group, in Albert's absence, when a note was passed around; 'that note was from the Prince expressing his entire approbation of my model. All then voted for the design and that it should be executed by me.'<sup>165</sup> Yet, however much Albert helped it on its way, we can presume that it was Eastlake who orchestrated the commission. He and Gibson had known each other in Rome, where Eastlake lived between 1821 and 1830, and, in her 1870 biography of Gibson, Eastlake's wife, Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, tells us that her husband secured Gibson's successful nomination as a Royal Academician in 1836. At this point, Gibson wrote to Eastlake: 'To be deeply indebted to you is to me happiness, not a burthen [sic] of which I could wish to rid myself.'<sup>166</sup> Yet, as close

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<sup>163</sup> Eastlake to Gibson, 1 January 1857: NAL/ 86/CC/47.

<sup>164</sup> 'John Gibson,' *The Art Journal* (April 1866), pp. 113-115, p. 114.

<sup>165</sup> Quoted in Thomas Matthews, *The Biography of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor, Rome* (London: William Heinemann, 1911), p. 176.

<sup>166</sup> Quoted in Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, *Life of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1870), p. 78.

as they were, it is unlikely that Eastlake secured the commission for Gibson simply on the basis of friendship. It was likely calculated that Gibson would produce a work that would stand out from the rest of the Fine Arts Commission's sculptural programme by its adherence to the 'style' of sculpture associated with the Roman school and outlined in Eastlake's writings.

In order to understand why Eastlake might have gone out of his way to secure the commission for a sculptor associated with the Roman school of modern classicism, it helps to understand his thoughts on sculpture in general.<sup>167</sup> In 1841, Eastlake used the analogy of the British military to argue that the fresco painters employed by the Fine Arts Commission might form the vanguard, or *avant-garde*, of a new departure in British painting. By contrast, in an 1844 paper submitted to the Commission, he effectively argued that the sculptors employed by the Commission ought to form a rear-guard, defending the 'style' of sculpture inherited from classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance.<sup>168</sup> This lengthy and erudite essay focuses on the history and theory of fresco painting but, towards the end, turns to sculpture. Holding up ancient Greek sculpture as a paradigm, Eastlake argues that the principal object of sculpture is the naked human form because it is the purest expression of thought. If anything added to that naked form, such as drapery and accessories, appears more real than the form itself, then the object of sculpture is defeated and the sculptural body is exposed as nothing more than inert matter: 'The flesh is always

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<sup>167</sup> For Gibson's place within this school see: Roberto Ferrari, 'Beyond Polychromy: John Gibson, the Roman School of Sculpture, and the Modern Classical Body,' Ph.D. thesis (City University of New York, 2013).

<sup>168</sup> Charles Eastlake, 'Observations on the Principles which may Regulate the Selection of Subjects for Painting in the Palace of Westminster, Considered with Reference to the Nature and Various Styles of the Formative Arts,' *Third Report of the Commission on the Fine Arts 1844* (585) XXXI.169, pp. 31-44.

the master object of imitation in the antique statues; the other substances, drapery, armour, hair or whatever they may be, are treated as accessories, to give value and truth to the naked.<sup>169</sup>

At the time Eastlake was writing, the Commission was drawing up plans for a large number of statues to commemorate contemporary and historic worthies.<sup>170</sup> Eastlake evidently wanted to ensure that these statues would not compromise what he believed were the principles of sculpture. He makes this clear towards the end of his essay when he writes:

The foregoing remarks on sculpture are chiefly intended to point out the difficulties that must exist in uniting the highest efforts of that art with the subjects which may possibly be required for the decoration of the new building. In addition to the objections to the ordinary costume as materially affecting the specific condition of the art, it may be remarked that, in most cases, the literal imitation of the dress of modern ages presents no difficulties which the merest beginner in modelling could not easily overcome. Hence it will be apparent that, notwithstanding the generous disposition of the Government, no real promotion of sculpture can be looked for, if its style is in danger of being debased.<sup>171</sup>

Essentially, Eastlake argues that sculpture is timeless and to anchor it in a specific point in history is to forego that timelessness.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>170</sup> The Commission's third report includes in its appendices: 'Letter from the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart., respecting Public Monuments to Men distinguished for Civil Services,' 'Mr Barry's Report respecting the Localities in the New Houses of Parliament which may be adapted for the reception of Works in Sculpture,' and 'Extract from the Report of the Committee appointed to examine the Localities in the New House of Parliament, which may be adapted for the Reception of Works in Painting and Sculpture.' 1844 (585) XXXI.169, pp. 12-18.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

For Eastlake, the point was not to imitate the sculptors of classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance, but to learn from their example when representing the human form, particularly in the treatment of drapery. Modern forms endowed with classical drapery would not, he insists, be 'more incongruous with Gothic architecture than costumes of the present day.'<sup>172</sup> However, while he spoke to concerns about the contemporary relevance of sculpture in a classical style, contemporary reactions were not his main concern. For him, it was far better to think about the *longue durée*:

It may be objected to that the force of the example is weakened when the usual dress and appearance are not represented. This can only affect contemporary spectators; for although *they* may look with interest on such resemblance, because the person of the individual is fresh in their recollection, after-ages will have no such associations, but will regret to see the hero or statesman whom they have read, in an undignified costume. The image should rather keep pace with the veneration of posterity; and if the very name of the individual should at last be forgotten, the work of art, as in the instance of many a Greek statue.<sup>173</sup>

In theory, Eastlake was attempting to reconcile the commemoration of specific individuals with the art historical prestige of the classical tradition. In practice, most of the Fine Arts Commission's sculptural programme departed significantly from the conventions of the classical tradition by privileging the details of historical costume over the human form.

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

In his essay, Eastlake quotes the writings of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Giorgio Vasari, Ennio Quirino Visconti and Johann Joachim Winckelmann, and illustrates his points with reference to canonical classical and Italian Renaissance sculpture, but these were not necessarily the sources that informed the Fine Arts Commission's sculptural programme. For example, in 1847, nine sculptors were employed to model statues of eighteen of the signatories of Magna Carta but, before they were commissioned, Henry Hallam consulted Matthew Paris's thirteenth-century *Chronica majora* to ascertain the most appropriate signatories to select.<sup>174</sup> Later, when John Henry Foley was preparing his statue of the seventeenth-century jurist and parliamentarian *John Selden* for St Stephen's Hall, he went to the Bodleian Library in Oxford to study portraits of him and we can presume that, where possible, other sculptors did likewise.<sup>175</sup> Either way, the statues executed for St Stephen's Hall and the House of Lords all betray the careful study of historic costume and can be easily associated with a particular historical epoch.

The stylistic divide between Gibson's *Queen Victoria* and the prevailing historicism of the New Houses of Parliament is plain to see in the Prince's Chamber itself (Fig. 1.15). Gibson's visually arresting and physically dominant group sits

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<sup>174</sup> *Fourth Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts 1845* (671) XXVII.151, pp. 10-12. The statues were: *Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury* and *William, Earl of Salisbury* by John Thomas; *Henri de Londres, Archbishop of Dublin* and *William, Earl of Pembroke* by John Evan Thomas; *Almeric, Master of the Knights Templars* and *Waryn, Earl of Warren* by Patrick MacDowell; *William, Earl of Arundel* and *Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent* by William Frederick Woodington; *Richard, Earl of Clare* and *William, Earl of Aumerle* by Henry Timbrell; *Geoffrey, Earl of Gloucester* and *Saher, Earl of Winchester* by James Sherwood Westmacott; *Henry, Earl of Hereford* and *Roger, Earl of Norfolk* by Thomas Thornycroft; *Robert, Earl of Oxford* and *Robert Fitzwalter* by Frederick Thrupp; and *Eustace de Vesci* and *William de Mowbray* by Alexander Handyside Ritchie. See: *Seventh Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts 1847* (862), XXXIII.267, pp. 17-18. The statues, which were cast in zinc, coated with copper by electrolysis and chemically tinted to assume the patination of dark bronze, in the Birmingham workshop of Elkington & Co., were complete and installed by 1858. See: Read (2000), p. 260.

<sup>175</sup> Eastlake to Dr Bandinel, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 21 July 1852: NAL/86/CC/47.

awkwardly and seems incongruous alongside the rest of the room's decorative scheme. This decorative scheme was likely drawn up by Pugin, or at least influenced by the King's Room, a room he designed for Scarisbrick Hall in Lancashire in the mid-1830s.<sup>176</sup> The walls of the Prince's Chamber are divided into three tiers, set into an elaborate scheme of carved oak panelling: the bottom tier comprises twelve relief panels illustrating scenes from Tudor history, modelled by William Theed; the middle tier consists of twenty eight oil on panel portraits of members of the Tudor dynasty; the top tier was never implemented but was intended to comprise six tapestries illustrating the defeat of the Spanish Armada (an homage to a series of monumental tapestries in the pre-fire House of Lords).<sup>177</sup>

According to the Fine Arts Commission's ninth report, published in 1850, the twelve relief panels were originally supposed to be modelled by John Bell and carved in wood.<sup>178</sup> A letter from Eastlake to the Treasury dated July 1852 indicates that Bell executed three plaster models but, by then, the Commission had decided to employ Theed instead, though it is unclear why.<sup>179</sup> Shortly afterwards, the Commissioners also decided to have the models cast in zinc and electroplated to mimic the appearance of bronze by Elkington's & Co, as was the case with the statues of the Magna Carta signatories.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Rosemary Hill, *God's Architect: Pugin & the Building of Romantic Britain* (London: Penguin, 2007), pp. 183-185.

<sup>177</sup> The twenty eight Tudor portraits were produced by students of the Royal School of Art under Richard Burchett and with the advice of Richard Redgrave. Wedgwood (2000), p. 124.

<sup>178</sup> *Ninth Report of the Commissioners on Fine Arts 1850* (1180) XXIII.329, p. 7.

<sup>179</sup> Eastlake to The Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, 9 July 1852: NAL/86/CC/47.

These panels are not mentioned in Richard Barnes's monograph of Bell, *John Bell: The Sculptor's Life and Work* (Kirstead, Norfolk: Frontier, 1999).

<sup>180</sup> Eastlake to Theed, 24 October 1853: NAL/86/CC/47.

The relief panels modelled by Theed bear a striking resemblance to the carved oak relief panels on the Kenilworth Buffet, manufactured for and exhibited at the Great Exhibition by the Warwick firm of Cookes & Sons (Fig. 1.16).<sup>181</sup> This buffet, now in Warwick Castle, is encrusted with an elaborate array of carved oak sculptural ornament, culminating in three relief panels illustrating scenes from Walter Scott's 1821 novel *Kenilworth*, which centres around Elizabeth I's visit to Kenilworth Castle and the love triangle which played out there between her, her favourite, the Earl of Leicester, and Amy Robsart, the woman he secretly married against the monarch's wishes. According to a pamphlet published to coincide with its exhibition, the buffet's manufacturers were inspired by Warwickshire's rich body of 'historical and poetical reminiscences,' which, they felt, 'would furnish subject matter for developing the skill and ingenuity of British wood carvers.'<sup>182</sup>

Stylistically the buffet's principal panels are heavily indebted to the chivalric-romantic style of carefully researched and intricately modelled figurative sculpture associated with silver centrepieces and racing trophies modelled by Edmund Cotterill, chief designer for the firm of Garrards, who produced several elaborate centrepieces for Victoria and Albert.<sup>183</sup> In 1842 the *Illustrated London* news boasted that 'in no branch of the Fine Arts have the artists of this country made greater progress than in the art of modelling [silver] statuettes.'<sup>184</sup> This rhetoric is echoed in Jones's account of the *Kenilworth Buffet*, which stresses that it is a specimen of

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<sup>181</sup> *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations, 1851: Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue* (London: Spicer Brothers, 1851), p. 827.

<sup>182</sup> William Jones, *An Account of the Kenilworth Buffet, With Elaborately Carved Relievs, Illustrative of Kenilworth Castle, in the Elizabethan Period, Designed and Executed by Messrs Cookes and sons, of Warwick for the Grand Exhibition of Industry of All Nations* (London: J. Masters & Cundall & Addey, 1851), p. 5.

<sup>183</sup> See: Marsden (2010), pp. 270-271, 280-281.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270

indigenous British craftsmanship, inspired by British history and using British materials – the panels were carved from the wood of an oak tree in the grounds of Warwick Castle.

Whether or not Theed or the Commissioners had the Kenilworth Buffet specifically in mind for the design of the panels in the Prince's Chamber, they were similarly motivated to tap into the roots of British – in this case Anglo-Scottish – history, though their decision to have the panels cast in zinc and electroplated suggests a desire to reconcile this revivalism with modern manufacturing practices rather than stimulating traditional wood carving. Like the panels on the *Kenilworth Buffet*, Theed's panels in the Prince's Chamber reveal a carefully researched authenticity and are charged in places with the sentimental force of historical novels such as *Kenilworth*. The panels illustrate a diverse array of scenes from across Tudor history, from *Sebastian Cabot Before Henry VII* to *The Death of Sir Philip Sydney*.<sup>185</sup> *The Murder of Rizzio* is one of the most visually arresting of the series but representative of the whole (Fig. 1.17). It depicts the assassination of the reputed lover of Mary Queen of Scots in 1566. The scene had been painted on a number of occasions, notably by John Opie in 1787 and, with more attention to costume and situation, by the Scottish history painter William Allan in 1833. Whether or not he was aware of these precedents, Theed managed to achieve an equivalent level of action and drama in his relief, which demonstrates his ability, in the series as a whole,

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<sup>185</sup> The panels are, in roughly chronological order: *Sebastian Cabot Before Henry VII*, *The Visit of the Emperor Charles V to King Henry VIII*, *The Field of the Cloth of Gold*, *Catherine of Aragon Pleading*, *Edward VI Granting a Charter to Christ's Hospital*, *Lady Jane Grey at Her Studies*, *Mary Queen of Scots Looking Back on France*, *The Murder of Rizzio*, *The Escape of Mary Queen of Scots*, *Raleigh Spreading his Coat as Carpet for Queen Elizabeth I*, *Queen Elizabeth I Knighting Drake*, *The Death of Sir Philip Sydney*.

to convey a sense of spatial depth within a shallow space by subtly varying the extent of relief in each of the seven figures, all of whom are intricately modelled and carefully positioned. The sculptor evidently paid close attention to the physical features and costumes of each of these figures, making the scene seductively real and thereby heightening its emotional intensity.

On a personal level, Theed and Gibson were close. Theed studied in Gibson's studio in Rome, where he lived and worked between 1826 and 1848.<sup>186</sup> Correspondence between the two suggests that, after he returned to London, Theed acted as Gibson's de facto agent there and in 1852 he named his son Arthur Gibson Theed.<sup>187</sup> In 1865, the year before Gibson died, Theed wrote to him about 'the pleasure it gives me to do anything for you – to whom it is no flattery to say that I owe everything I enjoy.'<sup>188</sup> Yet, however close he remained to Gibson on a personal level, on a professional level Theed's career diverged considerably from Gibson's following his return to Britain. Following his return from Rome, Theed's output consisted largely of portrait busts and statues, many of them of Victoria and Albert, which tended to mimetically reproduce details of dress in a manner consciously eschewed by Gibson.<sup>189</sup> The post-1848 stylistic divergence between the two sculptors is particularly apparent in the Prince's Chamber, where, paradoxically, Gibson's portrait of the living monarch represented in a theoretically timeless style, stands out by contrast with Theed's depictions of her Tudor ancestors, so firmly rooted in the details of a particular time and place.

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<sup>186</sup> Hardy, Roscoe & Sullivan (2009), pp. 1236-1243.

<sup>187</sup> *Census of England and Wales 1881* RG11/831, f.85, p. 9.

<sup>188</sup> RAA/G1/1/332: Theed to Gibson, 29 September 1865.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.1238-1243.

When they chose Gibson to execute the group of Victoria, Albert, Eastlake and the Fine Arts Commissioners can have been in no doubt about the classicising aesthetic of the work he would produce, not simply because he was a well-established sculptor known to work in a classicising style, but also because he had already executed a portrait statue of Victoria (Fig. 1.18). This life-size, free-standing white marble statue was commissioned in 1844, complete by 1847 and installed in Buckingham Palace in January 1849 (a replica was later commissioned for Osborne House).<sup>190</sup> From the neck upwards, there is nothing particularly novel about this statue. Indeed, apart from slight differences in expression and in the diadem she wears on her head, there is little to distinguish the head of Gibson's Victoria from Chantrey's bust of her (Fig. 1.19), commissioned in 1838 and complete by 1840.<sup>191</sup> What is different about Gibson's statue is the treatment of the drapery.

Chantrey's bust is dominated by a band of drapery superimposed with a minutely carved star of the Order of the Garter, which reminds us that this is a portrait of the British monarch. By contrast, Gibson's Victoria is clothed in emphatically neo-classical drapery. This drapery is masterfully rendered and plausibly realistic but, apart from the barely distinguishable rose, shamrock and thistle ornamenting the bottom of the cloak, it gives little hint of the sitter's modernity or her status as monarch of the United Kingdom. One of the only other statues of Victoria which had been executed by this point was by John Graham Lough, which was commissioned for the Royal Exchange in 1844 and complete by 1845 (it was destroyed in 1891). It depicted Victoria in full royal regalia; crown, orb and

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<sup>190</sup> Marsden (2010), pp. 72-73.

<sup>191</sup> For Chantrey's *Queen Victoria* bust, versions of which are in the Royal Collection and the National Portrait Gallery, see: *ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

robes.<sup>192</sup> By contrast – and it is a contrast he likely wanted to be posited – Gibson’s Victoria strives hard to defy simple identification; she holds an antique style laurel wreath in her left hand and a scroll in her right.

The details of Gibson’s first statue of Victoria, and contemporary responses to it, have been meticulously analysed by Darby but they are worth reiterating because they reveal the importance Gibson attached to the commission and the degree to which he courted controversy with it.<sup>193</sup> The statue was commissioned in 1844, when Gibson was in Britain for the unveiling of his *William Huskisson* memorial in Liverpool. As he told his brother, he ‘received an intimation that her Majesty wishes to see me & must have a statue by me.’<sup>194</sup> Lady Eastlake tells us that ‘[t]his announcement at first rather disconcerted the simple sculptor. ‘I don’t know how to behave to Queens,’ he said.’<sup>195</sup> Gibson was also anxious about the mode of dress in which to portray the queen but he was ‘at once relieved by the Prince’s assurances’ that they wished the statue ‘to be like a Greek statue, and the Queen wishes you to execute it in Rome.’<sup>196</sup> Victoria makes no mention of this in her journal that day, writing simply: ‘I sat for a few minutes to Mr Gibson, who is going to make a statue of me.’<sup>197</sup> Victoria sat to Gibson almost daily over the following ten days but she never went farther than writing ‘I sat to Gibson.’<sup>198</sup> On 16 November she wrote: ‘The cast of my bust by Gibson has come & is very pretty, & considered very like.’<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Darby (1983) vol. I, p. 114.

<sup>193</sup> Elizabeth Darby, ‘John Gibson, Queen Victoria and the Idea of Sculptural Polychromy,’ *Art History* 4/1 (March 1981), pp. 37-53.

<sup>194</sup> RAA/G1/1/128: Gibson to Benjamin Gibson, 18 October 1844.

<sup>195</sup> Eastlake (1870), p. 123.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>197</sup> RA/ VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1844: 29 October.

<sup>198</sup> RA/ VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1844: 30 October, 31 October, 1 November, 2 November, 4 November, 5 November, 6 November, 7 November.

<sup>199</sup> RA/ VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1844: 16 November.

Whether Victoria's sittings were as convivial as Gibson suggested they were, he was evidently eager to stress the strength of his relationship with the royal couple, as evidenced by the publication of what can only be described as a 'puff piece' in the *Art-Union* in January 1845:

The Queen and her Royal Consort were highly pleased with the work of the accomplished sculptor; whom they received and treated with marked urbanity and consideration – with a gracious delicacy, indeed, which made the artist at once at ease in 'the presence.' Two or three slight incidents occurred during his visits to Windsor which are worthy of note, as exhibiting her Majesty's generous thought in regard to the pleasures of her subjects. Mr Gibson's attention was directed to the position occupied by a statue, the work of [Richard James] Wyatt [*Penelope*]. Passing into another apartment, a place was pointed out as that originally selected for it. Gibson saw at once that this was a site far more advantageous to the production of his friend; and said so. Her Majesty immediately replied, 'I think with you; but if placed here *the people would not be able to see it.*' During one of the sittings the Prince of Wales was brought into the room. Mr Gibson said, 'Your Majesty, I am a Welshman; will your Majesty allow me to kiss the hand of the Prince of Wales?' The Queen looked pleased – and was pleased; and the sculptor knelt and 'did his devoir as a courtier.'<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> 'Varieties,' *Art-Union* (January 1845), p. 19.

This article, possibly instigated by Gibson himself, was clearly supposed to prove the strength of Victoria and Albert's relationship with the colony of British sculptors working in Rome (Wyatt amongst them) and thus to reinforce his claim, as Jason Edwards argues, that Rome, was the 'Real Academy' of British art, not the Royal Academy.<sup>201</sup> By proving his credentials as a devoted courtier, Gibson was laying the ground work for a bold experiment. According to his own account, he completed a full-scale model of the statue of Victoria in July 1845 and, the following December, tinted the border of the robe with red and blue and the diadem and sandals in gold.<sup>202</sup> As Darby has pointed out, this was 'the sculptor's first essay in painted statuary.'<sup>203</sup>

Gibson evidently saw tinting as an opportunity to prove himself as a modern sculptor communing with the ancients. By testing this practice on a portrait of the living British monarch, he was clearly trying to court controversy but also invoke the royal imprimatur for an experiment which he later developed with his infamous *Tinted Venus*.<sup>204</sup> In his own account, he writes, with barely disguised relish, that 'the English are startled at my having painted Her Majesty. They do not know what to make of it. Some like it, and say that the painting is done with so much delicacy that they cannot help admiring it, but most of them condemn, and some run it down ever before seeing it.'<sup>205</sup> It would, however, be a mistake to assume that contemporaries

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<sup>201</sup> 'By Abstraction Springs Forth Ideal Beauty? The 'Real Academy' and John Gibson's Anglo-Roman Modernity in John Barrell, Mark Hallett & Sarah Monks (eds.), *Living with the Royal Academy: Artistic Ideals and Experiences in England, 1768-1848* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 195-220.

<sup>202</sup> Eastlake (1870), pp. 125-127.

<sup>203</sup> Darby (1981), p. 39.

<sup>204</sup> See: Wolfgang Drost, 'Colour, Sculpture, Mimesis,' in *The Colour of Sculpture, 1840-1910* (exhibition catalogue, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, 26 July – 17 November 1996 and Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 13 December 1996 – 6 April 1997), ed. Andreas Blühm (Zwolle: Waanders, 1996), pp. 61-72; Michael Hatt, 'Thoughts and Things: Sculpture and the Victorian Nude,' in *The Victorian Nude* (exhibition catalogue, Tate Britain, London, 1 November 2001 – 27 January 2002), ed. Alison Smith (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), pp. 37-49; Ferrari (2013), pp. 120-144.

<sup>205</sup> Eastlake (1870), pp. 128-129.

responded unfavourably to the statue solely because it was tinted. Victoria and Albert first saw the completed work when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in the summer of 1847.<sup>206</sup> In her journal, Victoria wrote that they went to look at the statue 'which has just arrived & has been excessively admired in Italy,' and suggested that the 'attitude, drapery & everything is beautiful, like an Antique,' but noted that Albert was 'not quite satisfied with the likeness, though the figure is quite correct, & gives the impression of youth & yet great dignity.'<sup>207</sup>

The surface tinting applied to part of the statue was evidently not a factor in the couple's evaluation of the work, which focused exclusively on physiognomy and style. Similarly, a reviewer, writing in *The Literary Gazette* in July 1847, does not mention colour but does severely disapprove of the portrait's 'Antique' style. The reviewer praises the statue 'as a work of high art, of great beauty,' but issues 'an unqualified protest against its being regarded as a portrait.'<sup>208</sup> Here, it is the treatment of drapery which elicits greatest censure:

If the statue of Queen Victoria were exhibited in any museum or gallery in Europe, without an inscription or explanation, would any spectator fancy it to be a portraiture [sic] of the present amiable sovereign of England? Was her Majesty ever seen, or is she likely to be seen, clothed in such a mantle, with such sandals on her feet, such a diadem upon her head, or such a wreath and scroll in her hands! If not, what can justify the artist who represents such things in marble as appendages to the statue

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<sup>206</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (28 June 1847), p. 5.

<sup>207</sup> RA/ VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1847: 26 June.

<sup>208</sup> 'The Statue of Her Majesty, by Gibson, and the New Crown-Piece, by Wyon,' *The Literary Gazette* (24 July 1847), pp. 538-539, p. 539.

of a female, and affixes the name 'Victoria Regina' to the mass? If the biographer or the historian were to describe our most gracious Queen as appearing at court, in the senate, or on horseback, in such costume, his account would not be tolerated.<sup>209</sup>

Tellingly, the reviewer complains that the statue would not be recognised as a portrait of Victoria if it were exhibited in any 'museum or gallery in Europe.' The author does not admit it but, by implication, she would be recognised in Britain, with or without a label. It is reasonable to assume that Gibson counted on this fact.

Gibson likely calculated that, by making Victoria his prototype, he could adhere to the conventions of modern classical sculpture without neutralising the subject's instant recognisability. Arguably, Eastlake likewise calculated that a portrait of Victoria executed by Gibson for the New Houses of Parliament would meet the standards outlined in his 1844 essay, without aping the descriptiveness of the biographer or the historian, as Theed's relief panels in the Prince's Chamber purported to do.

It is hardly coincidental that Eastlake wrote to Gibson in June 1849 requesting him to prepare designs for the group, just six months after his statue of Victoria was installed in Buckingham Palace.<sup>210</sup> No doubt, Albert and Eastlake saw in the statue a blueprint for the group. In his account, Gibson implies that he was originally commissioned to prepare designs for a single statue of Victoria but that Albert thought the intended recess in the Prince's Chamber too large for a single figure and suggested the addition of two flanking allegories.<sup>211</sup> This is not quite true and

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<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 539.

<sup>210</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/F/30/75: Gibson to Eastlake, 2 August 1849.

<sup>211</sup> Eastlake (1870), p. 205.

suggests, again, that Gibson thought Albert's imprimatur necessary to deflect against critics who complained that the group was too large for the space. In reality, the initial letter to Gibson in June 1849 asked him to supply designs for 'a marble statue of Her Majesty accompanied with figures treated allegorically or otherwise.' In response, Gibson proposed four possible configurations: Victoria flanked by Wisdom and Peace, with a bas-relief of sea horses beneath; Victoria flanked by Wisdom and Marine Victory, with a bas-relief of sea horses beneath; Victoria flanked by Marine Victory and Land Victory, with shields beneath bearing a sea horse and an elephant respectively; or Victoria flanked by Justice and Reward, with a bas-relief of sea horses beneath.<sup>212</sup> These somewhat comically limited alternative formats suggest that the final outcome was largely predetermined. In the end, Gibson decided upon a format of Victoria flanked by allegories of Justice and Wisdom, the exact format of Thomas's group. Wisdom was subsequently replaced with Clemency but Gibson attributed the change to Albert, with no mention of Thomas: 'His Royal Highness suggested that, the Sovereign being a lady, the figure of Wisdom might be exchanged for that of Clemency. I was pleased with this correction, and so were others who were entitled to give an opinion.'<sup>213</sup>

Gibson came to London in the summer of 1850 to inspect the recess in the Prince's Chamber and to consult with Barry about the design. Writing to his brother in Rome, Gibson told him that he had met with the architect, who 'received me in the most friendly manner and said that he would do everything in his power to facilitate my affair with respect to the Queen's statue.'<sup>214</sup> Gibson asked Barry for a

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<sup>212</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/F/30/75: Gibson to Eastlake, 2 August 1849.

<sup>213</sup> Eastlake (1870), p. 206.

<sup>214</sup> RAA/G1/1/130: Gibson to Benjamin Gibson, 29 May 1850.

five-foot high model of the recess so that he could prepare a clay maquette, which, according to his own account, took one month to complete.<sup>215</sup> As previously indicated, the sculptor was given a room at the base of the Victoria Tower in which to prepare the model and there, Gibson tells us, 'Prince Albert watched my progress in the work, coming occasionally with members of the Government, and pointing out to them what he considered its merits.'<sup>216</sup> Over the following five years, the completed maquette was prepared, cast and translated into marble in Gibson's studio in Rome.

No images of Gibson's studio survive but an undated hand drawn ground-plan of its display gallery, a common feature of larger Roman studios, does survive. According to this plan, the gallery's walls were crowded with plaster casts of Gibson's reliefs; at one end, casts of his *Robert Peel Memorial* (1852) and a version of his *William Huskisson Memorial* (1833, 1836, 1847), two of his most important portrait commissions in Britain, and *Hunter and Dog*, one the sculptor's most celebrated ideal works; at the opposite end, casts of *Queen Victoria* flanked by *Justice* and *Clemency*. An account of a visit to Gibson's studio published in 1856 clearly indicates the significance of his royal commissions. We are told that the studio consists of a series of sheds ranged around an internal courtyard, in which workmen are busy working on 'statues in every stage of being, from the shapeless block of marble, to the perfect figure they were now cording in the packing-case which was to go to England tomorrow.'<sup>217</sup> The writer is met by Gibson, 'all courtesy and kindness, as truly all the

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<sup>215</sup> Eastlake (1870), p. 206.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> 'A Morning with the Sculptors at Rome,' *Chambers' Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* (20 December 1856), pp. 385-387, p. 386.

Roman artists are in shewing their work to strangers. Nothing could be more obliging than the way in which he shewed us his beautiful productions, and his explanations and descriptions were particularly valuable, as coming from the acknowledged head of living English [sic] sculptors.<sup>218</sup> The writer is shown Gibson's group for the Prince's Chamber, 'the great work he was then engaged on,' and pronounces it 'exceedingly graceful and dignified, and the face a very good likeness.' True to form, Gibson's account of the group focuses more on his cordial relationship with Victoria and Albert than the qualities of the artwork itself:

While pointing out the most noteworthy things about the statue, he told us much about Her Majesty's sitting to him, describing in an amusing way his trepidation when commanded some years ago to take his first bust, and how soon he was put at his ease; running on for some time on the subject in a racy style shewing a keen and close observer. He mentioned some pleasant little bits of court-life, among several other incidents, proving the strong mutual attachment between the royal pair.<sup>219</sup>

Outside the studio, Gibson was unable to choreograph the viewing experience in the same way but he went to great lengths to preserve the integrity of his vision.

In September 1856, Gibson vehemently objected to a suggestion by Barry that the *Justice* and *Clemency* figures be moved to another room because they were too crowded in the Prince's Chamber. Again, he invoked Albert's imprimatur: 'I as the sculptor object decidedly. As I told you, and also every body at Rome, the idea of the subject is Prince Albert's own. The idea of our Lady Sovereign sitting upon her throne

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid., p. 386. Gibson was Welsh, not English. He was born in Conwy, North Wales, and lived there till the age of nine or ten. For the sculptor's Welsh background, see: Ferrari (2013), pp. 35-40.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., p. 386.

accompanied by Justice and Clemency is an idea that has been admired by all persons at Rome.<sup>220</sup> The allegories remained as intended and Barry later protested that he had warned Gibson 'not to adopt my suggestions unless they entirely accorded with his views.'<sup>221</sup> In January 1857, Eastlake wrote again to Gibson to tell him that the group was finished and in place. He told the sculptor that the diapered gold pattern on the wall behind it was 'magnificent, giving the marble a silvery effect,' and reassured him that 'the statues are quite the right size for the recess & for the room,' though he did suggest that 'when you are in the room you are too much under the chin of the Queen. For this reason large statues where the eye, when intended to be seen chiefly near, should have the face inclined downwards a little like the Olympian Jupiter.'<sup>222</sup>

In concluding the letter, Eastlake asked Gibson for a written description of the group to be used by tour guides. The description Gibson sent was published verbatim in guide books to the building and reads:

In the Prince's Chamber is represented, in marble, Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, sitting upon her throne, holding her sceptre and a laurel crown; that is, governing and rewarding; the laurel crown may be considered an emblem of the honour conferred upon intellect and valour. The back of the throne is surmounted by lions, expressive of British strength and courage; and the footstool is adorned by sea-horses, to signify dominion upon the ocean: the horse is an emblem of war. On the right of the Sovereign stands Justice: on the left Clemency. The

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<sup>220</sup> Gibson to Barry, 19 September 1856: RA/VIC/MAIN/F/31/31.

<sup>221</sup> Eastlake to Gibson, 13 December 1856: NAL/86/CC/47.

<sup>222</sup> Eastlake to Gibson, 7 January 1857: NAL/86/CC/47.

former holds the sword and balance; round her neck is suspended the image of Truth. The expression of Justice is inflexible, while that of Clemency is full of sympathy and sadness – sad for the constant sins which come to her knowledge; but, with lenity, she keeps her sword sheathed, and offers the olive branch, the sign of peace. Upon the front of the pedestal is a bas relief of Commerce. Upon the right side is Science, designated by a youth pondering over geometry; and upon the left a figure denoting the useful arts; in the background are represented the steam engine, the telegraph wires and other useful objects. Plato says, 'All seeing Justice; the eye of Justice penetrates into the darkness which conceals the truth.' In Egypt the judge when pronouncing sentences of death, put on his neck a small image of Truth: it was of gold. Clemency must have the power of punishment, therefore she is represented with a sword.<sup>223</sup>

On the surface, this description, like the group itself, appears divorced from the realities of the present. However, a closer reading suggests that both the group and Gibson's description of it reflect British imperial power. The pyramid of the group of Victoria and the flanking allegories mimics the constitutional framework of Crown, Lords and Commons, by which the monarch governs and rewards and, in doing so, is both supported and kept in check by the hereditary Lords and the elected Commons. It is this equitable balance of power that allowed Britain to master commerce, science and the useful arts and to exert military and naval dominion. As a result,

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<sup>223</sup> *The Palace of Westminster, A Description of the Houses of Lords and Commons. A Hand-Book Guide for Visitors* (London: H.G. Clarke & Co., 1862), p. 22.

justice can penetrate 'into the darkness which conceals the truth,' a justification for imperial expansion that cannot have been unconditioned by the fact that, in the year the description was written, British rule in India was seriously, if temporarily, threatened by the Indian Rebellion.

The telegraph wires and steam engine in the background of the *Useful Arts* relief (Fig. 1.20) are the only explicitly modern symbols in Gibson's oeuvre. In order to understand why he included them, we need to look closely at the contemplative figure of the 'youth pondering over geometry.' It appears to be a self-portrait of the artist. There is no record of Gibson describing the figure as such and none of his contemporaries identified it as such, but the face of the figure is strikingly similar to a later portrait bust of the artist (Fig. 1.21), wearing a similar workman's cap, executed by John Adams Acton, one of his former pupils. If this be the case, then it says a lot about the extent to which Gibson positioned himself as an international sculptor in the service of the British monarchy.

Ironically, neither Victoria nor Albert was particularly impressed by the group when they first saw it. Albert first saw the figure of Victoria, the first of the three figures to be dispatched to London, in November 1855, and was, according to Eastlake, 'much struck with the grandeur of the figure, and the admirable treatment & completion of the drapery,' but thought the chin 'much too full and large for the Queen,' and the drapery 'too much alike under the two sleeves.'<sup>224</sup> The prince also thought that the shoe protruding from beneath the drapery wanted 'delicacy in its outline,' that the buttons of the cloak lacked definition, as did the fleur de lis and

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<sup>224</sup> Eastlake to Gibson, 21 November 1855: NAL/86/CC/47.

crosses in the crown. Summing up, Albert 'remarked generally that when finished ornaments are introduced about or near a figure, as is the case in this instance in the decorated chair and footstool, it is not pleasing to see ornaments on the figure slighted, especially when the careless shapes introduced are not so good as the original heraldic ones.'<sup>225</sup>

Victoria saw the completed group for the first time during a private, rather than a state, visit to Parliament in February 1857. Her reaction was similarly mixed. She wrote in her journal: 'we looked at my colossal statue by Gibson, in the Pce's Chamber, which is very fine. I am seated, 2 fine figures of Justice & Mercy [sic] standing on either side. The conception is fine, but I do not like the likeness.'<sup>226</sup> Victoria and Albert's mixed reaction was echoed by contemporary critics. The group does not appear to have generated much notice when it was installed but it is mentioned in several obituaries of Gibson, who died on 27 January 1866. For example, the *Art Journal* tells us that the Prince Consort, 'through whose influence this commission was given to Gibson, considered that it was the best likeness of the Queen,' but the obituarist does not actually venture an opinion.<sup>227</sup> The obituary in the *Athenaeum* was much more explicit in its criticism: 'Mr Gibson's least fortunate production, not only as regards its idea and execution, but its position, is that now at Westminster, styled 'Her Majesty between Justice and Clemency,' a composition upon which other generations will look with amazement.'<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> RA/ VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1857: 16 February.

<sup>227</sup> 'John Gibson,' *The Art Journal* (April 1866), pp. 113-115, p. 114.

<sup>228</sup> 'John Gibson, R.A.,' *The Athenaeum* (3 February 1866), p. 172.

## Conclusion

In June 1860 Eastlake wrote to the 7th Earl of Carlisle, the Viceroy of Ireland (the British monarch's surrogate in Ireland). Carlisle had recommended two Dublin sculptors, Thomas Farrell and Thomas Kirk, and Eastlake wrote to tell him that the Fine Arts Commission planned to commission statues of thirty seven monarchs, from Edward the Confessor to William IV, and that 'opportunities may be offered for encouraging Irish and Scotch as well as English sculptors.'<sup>229</sup> If this letter from Albert's deputy to Victoria's surrogate is a reminder that politics and the patronage of contemporary sculpture came together in the New Houses of Parliament project, and that the royal couple stood at the intersection of the two, then the fact that only seven of the thirty seven statues mentioned by Eastlake were ever commissioned is an indication of how much changed when Albert died.<sup>230</sup>

The seven statues that were commissioned were: *James I* and *Charles I* by Thomas Thornycroft; *Charles II* by Henry Weekes; *William III* by Thomas Woolner (Fig. 1.22); *Mary II* by Alexander Munro (Fig. 1.23); *George IV* and *William IV* by Theed. Stylistically, these statues reinforced the gulf between Gibson's group and the rest of the sculptural programme in the New Houses of Parliament; the *Art Journal* rejoiced that they had not been commissioned fifty years earlier, when 'nothing would have prevented the sculptors of that day from presenting all our kings as demigods, heroes and Caesars.'<sup>231</sup> The faces of the seven monarchs are clearly supposed to reflect

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<sup>229</sup> Eastlake to the Earl of Carlisle, 23 June 1860: NAL/86/CC/47.

<sup>230</sup> The plan to commission thirty seven statues, to be displayed in the Royal Gallery, Royal Robing Room and Norman Porch, was published in the Fine Arts Commission's 1861 Report: *Twelfth Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts 1861* (2806) XXXI.213, p. 13.

<sup>231</sup> 'The Statues for the Houses of Parliament,' *Art Journal* (October 1861), p. 172.

aspects of their characters; thus Charles I looks mournful, Charles II raffish, Mary II pure and William III cunning. But the focus of the modelling is the detail of costume and accessory. Taken together, the statues are a bold statement about the value of historical specificity over timeless abstraction.

At least they would have been, had they been installed as intended. In fact, when they were finished, in 1867, they proved too large for the niches for which they were intended and all seven were deposited temporarily in Westminster Hall, where they remained until 1915, when they were moved to the Central Criminal Court.<sup>232</sup> This ignominious finale came four years after the Fine Arts Commission itself had been disbanded. The Commission's 1863 Report, its last, reads:

Bearing in mind the warm interest which our late Chairman His Royal Highness the Prince Consort at all times took in the labours of the Commission and the progress of the works undertaken under its direction, we should have deemed it our duty to proceed to the election of another Chairman, difficult, nay impossible, as we should feel it to be to supply in any adequate degree that combination of knowledge in Art, of tried experience in business and of high personal authority by which His Royal Highness was distinguished. But we feel ourselves relieved of the necessity of this most difficult selection, since, in our opinion the term of our prescribed duties has now arrived.<sup>233</sup>

Three years after Barry's death, one year after Thomas's, two years after Albert's, two years before Eastlake's and three years before Gibson's, the grand ambitions for

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<sup>232</sup> Read (2000), p. 262.

<sup>233</sup> *Thirteenth Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts 1863* (3141) XVI.317, p. 7.

the New Houses of Parliament evident in the early 1840s had petered out. Moreover, with Albert's death, Victoria ceased to play any part in the project. She opened Parliament only six times after Albert's death, and when she did so for the first time in 1866, the palace issued strict instructions that the Queen would arrive at the Peers' Entrance rather than the Sovereign's Entrance, would not process in state and would not read the speech from the throne as she had done almost every year during the 1840s and 1850s (it was read out instead by the Lord Chancellor).<sup>234</sup> According to the *Times*, during the ceremony, 'the Queen sat silent and motionless with her eyes fixed upon the ground. She seemed to take no heed of the brilliant assemblage around her, but to be wholly absorbed in melancholy meditation.'<sup>235</sup> This striking description was mirrored by an engraving in the *Illustrated London News* (Fig. 1.24).

The Houses of Parliament provided Victoria and Albert with an opportunity to reclaim the centrality of royal patronage. It is thus fitting that Victoria effectively surrendered that claim, by appearing in Parliament immersed in a pageant she could not see. As will be explained in Chapter Three, the change in circumstances so neatly illustrated here had a profound effect on the royal patronage of contemporary sculpture. Yet, before we examine this period, we need to return again to the 1840s, when the possibilities engendered by the New Houses of Parliament project fed into Victoria's and Albert's private patronage of contemporary sculpture.

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<sup>234</sup> Parliamentary Archive: General Grey to the Lord Great Chamberlain, 1 February 1866: LGC/5/6/59/2.

<sup>235</sup> 'Opening of Parliament,' *Times* (7 February 1866), p. 5.

## Chapter 2

### Sculpture in the Royal Residences, 1840-1861

Albert & I took a walk & then went over our dear new house, where his statue is now uncovered & in its place. It looks beautiful in that niche on the 2<sup>nd</sup> staircase. It was Albert's gift to me in 41, & is by Wolfe [sic] but Albert thinking the Greek armour with bare legs & feet, looked too undressed to place in a room, has ordered another statue to be a pendant to mine by Gibson.<sup>236</sup>

This extract from Victoria's journal offers a revealing insight into the multifaceted domestic context of her and Albert's patronage of contemporary sculpture. The 'dear new house' she refers to is Osborne House; the statues are two versions of a full-length white marble portrait of Albert by Emil Wolff, the first of which was commissioned in 1841 and complete by 1844 (Fig. 2.1).<sup>237</sup> Wolff portrayed Albert dressed as an ancient Greek Hoplite warrior but, as Jonathan Marsden has indicated, the portrait was not based on an antique precedent and it overtly registers Albert's status as consort of the Queen of the United Kingdom.<sup>238</sup> The prince rests his left hand on the handle of a sword and his right hand on a shield (Fig. 2.2) adorned with a relief of St George and a series of dolphins, a common motif in this period, as we have seen, to suggest Britain's combined military and naval prowess, further emphasised by the figure of Neptune carved in relief on the shoulder strap over his

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<sup>236</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1846: 1 September.

<sup>237</sup> For Wolff see: Bernhard Maaz (ed.), *Nationalgalerie Berlin: Das XIX. Jahrhundert Bestandskatalog der Skulpturen* 2 vols. (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2006), Vol. II, pp. 894-896.

<sup>238</sup> Marsden (2010), p. 71.

right shoulder. The prince is wearing a breast plate embellished with an allegory of Victory, from beneath which protrude plates emblazoned with the heraldic devices of England, Ireland and Scotland, as well as his native Saxony. Albert wears a cloak draped over his left shoulder, which rests gently on a Hoplite helmet lying on the ground between his legs. These details lend an air of accuracy to the portrait's ancient-Greek roots but also accentuate the unmistakable sensuousness of his body. The mass of drapery over the prince's left shoulder reinforces the bulging muscle of his left arm, mirrored by his almost completely exposed right arm, while the intricately carved helmet draws our attention to his bare feet, taut calves and suggestively exposed thighs. The sensuousness of the statue is further amplified by the figure hugging breastplate, bearing a half-nude figure of Victory and a completely nude, and provocatively posed, figure of Neptune. As indicated in Victoria's journal entry this original, 'undressed' version of the statue was located in Osborne, specifically on the second floor landing of the wing that housed the royal family's private apartments. A second version, which was commissioned in 1844 and complete by 1846 (Fig. 2.3), was installed opposite Gibson's statue of Victoria in a vestibule at the entrance to the State Apartments in Buckingham Palace. Its general features are the same but it is generally more 'dressed,' with considerably more of Albert's thighs and right arm covered and his feet clad in sandals.<sup>239</sup>

Wolff's portraits of Albert, like Gibson's portraits of Victoria, are early examples of the couple's patronage of the generation of sculptors who trained under Thorvaldsen in the 1820s and 1830s. Thorvaldsen's influence over this generation is

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<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

reflected in the similarities in style and pose between his memorial statue of *Eugène de Beauharnais, Duke of Leuchtenberg* (1827) (Fig. 2.4) and Wolff's statue of Albert.<sup>240</sup> In addition to work by Gibson and Wolff, Victoria and Albert commissioned and acquired works by many of their contemporaries working in Rome, including Wolf von Hoyer, Lawrence Macdonald, Pietro Tenerani, William Theed, Henry Timbrell and Richard James Wyatt. By commissioning considerable quantities of sculpture from these leading lights of the Roman school, Victoria and Albert followed in the footsteps of other European royals such as Frederick William III of Prussia, Frederick VI of Denmark and Nicholas I of Russia, as well as leading British patrons such as the 6th Duke of Bedford and the 6th Duke of Devonshire, who formed considerable collections of modern Roman sculpture to be displayed in purpose-built galleries in their country seats, Chatsworth and Woburn Abbey, which Victoria and Albert visited in 1841 and 1843 respectively.<sup>241</sup>

Wolff's portraits of Albert are thus representative of Victoria's and Albert's place in a pan-European arc of patronage. Yet, the different forms and locations of the two portraits are also indicative of the degree to which Victoria's and Albert's patronage of sculpture was woven into the idiosyncratic fabric of their domestic life. The decision to locate the original version of Wolff's statue at Osborne House and the second version in Buckingham Palace reflects an important distinction between

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<sup>240</sup> For Thorvaldsen's statue of Eugène de Beauharnais, Duke of Leuchtenberg and stepson of Napoleon, see: Bjarne Jørnaes, *The Sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen* (Copenhagen: Thorvaldsens Museum, 2011), pp. 177-180.'

<sup>241</sup> The pan-European scope of the patronage of Roman sculpture in this period is indicated in Count Hawkes Le Grice's *Walks Through the Studii of the Sculptors at Rome With a Brief Historical and Critical Sketch of Sculpture* 2 vols. (Rome: Crispino Puccinello, 1844). For the sculpture collection at Woburn Abbey see: John Kenworthy-Browne, 'The Sculpture Gallery at Woburn Abbey and the Architecture of the Temple of the Graces,' in Timothy Clifford (ed.), *The Three Graces Antonio Canova* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 1995), pp. 61-72; for Chatsworth see Yarrington (2009).

the official royal residences – used for large-scale and semi-public court functions and social events – and the private royal residences – shielded from the public eye and intended as places of retreat and relative solitude.<sup>242</sup> The distinction between the Royal family’s official residences and their private residences had an important bearing on Victoria and Albert’s patronage of, and relationship with, sculpture.

The primary function of sculpture in Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle was to reinforce the majesty of monarchy but Albert made a virtue out of this necessity. He used the decoration of highly-visible spaces such as the façade of Buckingham Palace as an opportunity to demonstrate the value of contemporary sculpture in private interiors. This complemented attempts by the Fine Art Commission to stimulate British art by bringing it into the homes of Britain’s elite. No such agenda governed the acquisition and arrangement of sculpture at Osborne. It was Victoria’s and Albert’s private property, bought in 1844 with their own money and conceived as a retreat from metropolitan court life.<sup>243</sup> Of course, Osborne was not completely isolated or private, but it was secluded by comparison with Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. In March 1845, Victoria described it as ‘a place of one’s own, quiet and retired, and free from all Woods and Forests, and other charming [government] Departments who really are the plague of one’s life.’<sup>244</sup> As we will see, Victoria and Albert commissioned and acquired a significant quantity of sculpture for this ‘quiet and retired’ retreat during the course of their marriage. It is

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<sup>242</sup> The residences occupied by the monarch and the royal family are separated into ‘Official Royal Residences’ and ‘Private Estates.’ <http://www.royal.gov.uk/TheRoyalResidences/Overview.aspx> (consulted 27 August 2013). For the legal and financial arrangements governing this separation see: Vernon Bogdanor, *The Monarchy and the Constitution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 183-196.

<sup>243</sup> Sarah Ferguson & Benita Stoney, *Victoria and Albert: Life at Osborne House* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991), pp. 22-26.

<sup>244</sup> Quoted in Marsden (2010), p. 22.

difficult not to see this conglomeration of sculpture as a statement about royal patronage and the taste and munificence informing it, but the formation and arrangement of the collection suggests that it was, first and foremost, an object of personal stimulation and private entertainment.

This chapter is divided into three parts, which correspond roughly with three categories: the public, the private and the private-in-public. The first part looks at various architectural and decorative sculpture schemes that Victoria and Albert commissioned for semi-public areas in Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle in the 1840s and 1850s. Collectively, these projects indicate a sustained attempt to use the decoration of the official royal residences as an opportunity to prove the decorative-functional value of contemporary figurative sculpture. The second part of the chapter looks at sculpture in Osborne, beginning with a general survey of the collection, which demonstrates the scope and scale of Victoria's and Albert's patronage. However, the focus of this section is on a number of the most prominent pieces commissioned for or displayed in the residence's principal reception rooms and circulation spaces. Looking closely at these works in their spatial contexts helps us to understand the ways in which Victoria, Albert and their family engaged with sculpture in the private domestic surroundings of Osborne. The third part of the chapter looks at the ways in which sculpture commissioned for or displayed in Osborne was disseminated from its private base. This section focuses on the serial publication of engravings after prominent pieces from Osborne and Windsor in the pages of the *Art Journal*. A detailed analysis of these engravings and the texts that accompanied them reveals the ways in which they conveyed an impression of Victoria and Albert as patrons who were at home with contemporary sculpture.

## Part 1: Sculpture in Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle

The decoration of the new Houses of Parliament was, as we have seen, partially inspired by the interiors of public buildings in Bavaria such as the Munich Residenz, the Bavarian monarchy's principal seat. According to Thomas Wyse, Ludwig of Bavaria had personally raised the standard of contemporary art in Germany by commissioning artists to decorate this: 'The example thus set of employing the Fine Arts in the decoration of the King's Palace, has already extended to the decoration of private houses.'<sup>245</sup> Victoria and Albert were never in a position to mimic the influence exerted by the Bavarian monarch through the decoration of the royal residences. Nor could they commission large scale, self-aggrandising projects such as the *Musée de l'histoire de France* in the palace of Versailles, which was commissioned by King Louis-Philippe in 1833, or the *Musée des souverains* in the Louvre, which was commissioned by the Emperor Napoléon III in 1852.<sup>246</sup>

Victoria and Albert were limited in what they could commission, in part because the cost of the extensions to Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle that George IV commissioned in 1820s. These extensions, which were designed by John Nash and Jeffrey Wyattville respectively, were lavishly decorated and furnished at a cost to the public purse of roughly £1,600,000.<sup>247</sup> This cost fuelled a backlash against royal extravagance, which lingered into the early years of Victoria's reign, as evidenced by Parliament's decision to grant Albert a Civil List income of £30,000 per

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<sup>245</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on Fine Arts* 1841 Session 1 (423) VI.331, p. vii.

<sup>246</sup> For the *Musée des souverains*, see: Catherine Granger, *L'Empereur et les Arts: La liste civile de Napoléon III* (Paris: École de Chartres, 2005), pp. 334-335.

<sup>247</sup> William Henry St John Hope, *Windsor Castle, An Architectural History* 2 vols. (London: Country Life, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 359-360.

annum, rather than the £50,000 previously granted to male consorts.<sup>248</sup> When he heard the news of this decision, Albert is said to have responded that 'his only regret was to find that his ability to help artists and men of learning and science, to which he had been looking forward with delight, would be necessarily more restricted than he had hoped.'<sup>249</sup> Yet, while they were not able to lavish money on the arts in the way that other European royals were, Victoria and Albert did commission a number of relatively large scale projects in Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle.<sup>250</sup> The Garden Pavilion in the grounds of Buckingham Palace was one of the earliest.

The Garden Pavilion was a three-room summer house built on a man-made mound. It was originally commissioned in 1842 as a pleasure retreat but, in 1844 Albert decided to use its decoration as a testing ground for fresco painting, in advance of those executed for the new Houses of Parliament. He commissioned eight artists to paint frescoes after scenes from Milton's *Comus* in lunette compartments in the octagonal central room (Fig. 2.5), which was richly decorated with frescoes, arabesque panels and decorative sculpture in the style of Raphael's Loggia in the Pontifical Palace in the Vatican. This central room was flanked to the right by a room decorated in the Pompeian style (Fig. 2.6) and, to the left, a room decorated in 'the Romantic style' with scenes from Walter Scott's novels and poems (Fig. 2.7).<sup>251</sup> The

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<sup>248</sup> Hobhouse (1983), p. 23.

<sup>249</sup> Martin (1875-1880), vol. I, p. 60-61.

<sup>250</sup> For a comparative analysis of Victoria's and Albert's purchasing power as patrons see: Marsden (2010), pp. 42-43.

<sup>251</sup> The artists chosen were, apart from Eastlake: Edwin Landseer, Charles Robert Leslie, Daniel Maclise, William Ross, Clarkson Stanfield, Thomas Uwins and William Etty, who was later replaced by William Dyce. See: Lady Eastlake (ed.), *Contributions to the Literature of the Fine Arts, Second Series* (London: John Murray, 1870), pp. 179-180; Ames (1967), pp. 51-54; Robertson (1978), pp. 74-75; Marsden (2010), pp. 21-22, 388.

<sup>251</sup> 'The Garden Pavilion at Buckingham-Palace,' *Illustrated London News* (7 March 1846), pp. 163-164.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

pavilion fell into disrepair during the First World War and was demolished in 1928, when it was judged 'damaged and derelict beyond repair.'<sup>252</sup> Yet we know what its interior looked like because it was highly publicised at the time. This publicity indicates that, however genuinely Albert wanted the space to function as an incubator for artistic experimentation, he also wanted it to be visible.

A number of illustrated accounts of the building were published in the *Illustrated London News*.<sup>253</sup> The texts of these articles focus on the *Comus* frescoes but they also make the importance of sculpture within the interior clear. An article published in March 1846 tells us that, in the Milton Room, the pilasters of the white marble chimneypiece are adorned with bas-relief figures representing 'the Lady and the Attendant Spirit,' by S. Stephens and that the pilasters which frame the room are decorated with bas-relief medallions containing 'figures and groups from a variety of Milton's poems.'<sup>254</sup> From the Milton Room, 'richly-carved and gilt doors' open into the Pompeii and Scott rooms. The latter, we are told, is richly ornamented with painting and sculpture, including a suite of 'heads of heroines, in stucco, by Pistrucci,' and statues of children in the spandrels of the coved ceiling.<sup>255</sup>

The pavilion was further publicised in 1846 with the publication of a book of engravings and chromolithographs of the interior and its contents, with an introductory essay by the art critic and historian Anna Brownell Jameson.<sup>256</sup> In it she

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<sup>252</sup> This is according to Queen Mary, wife of George V. See: Steegman (1970), p. 205.

<sup>253</sup> 'The Chinese Summer House, Buckingham Palace Gardens' (11 May 1844), p. 305; 'Her Majesty's Pavilion, in Buckingham Palace Gardens' (7 February 1846), p. 96; 'The Garden Pavilion,' (7 March 1846), pp. 163-164; 'The Garden Pavilion of Buckingham Palace' (6 June 1846), p. 376.

<sup>254</sup> 'The Garden Pavilion at Buckingham Palace,' (7 March 1846), p. 163.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163. For Pistrucci see: Hardy, Roscoe & Sullivan, *Dictionary* (2009), pp. 996-998, though his work for the Garden Pavilion is not included in the accompanying list of known works.

<sup>256</sup> *The Decorations of the Garden Pavilion in the Grounds of Buckingham Palace* (London: John Murray, 1846).

explains that the project arose out of the pressing need for British artists to test the feasibility and practice the application of fresco painting and that ‘it occurred to Her Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Albert, that it would be well to have the experiment made on a small scale, yet under circumstances which might lend it a more common interest.’<sup>257</sup> Yet, Jameson’s account makes clear that the pavilion was more than simply a testing ground for fresco painting. It was also an opportunity for painters and sculptors to work together on a project that demanded ‘the harmonious combination of many minds, working under the direction of one mind, to one purpose.’<sup>258</sup> She points to Stephens’ bas-relief figures representing ‘the Lady and the attendant spirit’ in the pilasters of the white marble chimneypiece but also expands upon the *Illustrated London News* by telling us that the bas-relief medallions incorporated into the pilasters framing the space were, ‘like the rest of the stucchi in the room,’ designed and modelled by William Grinsell Nicholl.<sup>259</sup> In the Scott room, she tells us, John Bell and Henry Timbrell modelled bas-reliefs after scenes from *Marmion*, *Lord of the Isles*, *Lay of the Minstrel* and *Lady of the Lake*; each one was flanked by small statues of children, though Jameson does not attribute them to a particular sculptor.<sup>260</sup>

Jameson’s essay includes a list of the ‘Names of the Artists, Manufacturers, and others, who have been Employed in the Decorative painting, Stuccoes, Modelling, Carving, Pavements & c. &c. in her Majesty’s Pavilion.’ It includes Nicholl

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., p. 9. Nicholl, best known for his architectural sculpture, sculpted a relief of *The Muses*, according to designs by Eastlake, for the pediment of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge in 1838. See Hardy, Roscoe & Sullivan, *Dictionary* (2009), pp. 881-883. Nicholl’s work for the Garden Pavilion is not included in the accompanying list of known works.

<sup>260</sup> *Garden Pavilion* (1846), p. 9.

and Stephens, as well as G.B. Lovati, for 'the carving of the doors in the Octagon Room,' the London Marble and Stone Working Company, for 'the marble pavement of the Octagon, and the small passages leading from it into the Pompeian and Scott-room,' and 'Noakes and Pierce, Statuaries and Masons,' for the 'architectural work in marble of the chimney-piece &c. &c.'<sup>261</sup> The volume concludes with an outline engraving of 'The Furniture of the Three Rooms' (Fig. 2.8). The makers and manufacturers of this assortment of benches, chairs, lighting fixtures and tables, many of them highly enriched with sculptural ornament, are not listed, though a copy of the twelve light chandelier, listed in the contents of the Milton room, was subsequently exhibited at the 1849 Exposition of Arts and Manufacturers in Birmingham. It was designed by Ludwig Grüner, Victoria and Albert's art advisor, and manufactured by the Birmingham firm Messengers and Sons. An account of the 'extremely elegant' chandelier published in the *Illustrated London News* tells us that the 'vine branches to support the candles, the group of young satyrs at the base, and the crouching panthers in the vine branches, are all emblematic of the poem whence the decorations of the summer-house are drawn.'<sup>262</sup>

Mrs Jameson was one of a number of writers in the middle decades of the nineteenth century to publish lengthy accounts of public and private art collections in Britain.<sup>263</sup> Her *Handbook to the Public Galleries in and Near London* (1842) and *Companion to the Most Celebrated Private Galleries of Art in London* (1844) rank

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>262</sup> 'The Birmingham Exposition of Arts and Manufactures,' *Illustrated London News* 392 (29 September 1849), pp. 213-214.

<sup>263</sup> For Jameson's life and career see: Geraldine Macpherson, *Memoirs of the Late Anna Jameson* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1878); Mrs Erskine Steuart (ed.), *Anna Jameson, Letters and Friendships (1812-1860)* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1915); Judith Johnston, *Anna Jameson, Victorian Feminist, Woman of Letters* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997).

alongside Johann David Passavant's *Tour of a German Artist in England* (1836) and Gustav Friedrich Waagen's *Treasures of Art in Great Britain* (1854), both translated from German by Lady Eastlake, as amongst the most substantial.<sup>264</sup> Jameson's *Public Galleries* was supposed to facilitate access to, and direct the viewing experience in, spaces freely accessible to the public at large. In *Private Galleries* she makes it clear that the collections she discusses are not easily accessed by the public, even if they are not entirely off limits. Her point with this catalogue seems to have been to offer readers an insight into the mind-set of a small circle of almost exclusively aristocratic collectors, whose families had, in some cases, been collecting for centuries. In the introductory essay she charts the history of the patronage of painting in Britain. She tells us that, in the seventeenth century, collectors such as Charles I and the Duke of Buckingham were driven by the pursuit of taste, magnificence and science but in the eighteenth century collecting became 'a *fashion*, subject to the freaks of vanity, the errors and absurdities of ignorance, the impositions of pretension and coxcombry.'<sup>265</sup>

For Jameson there is 'an immeasurable difference between the mere liking for pretty pictures, the love of novelty, and the feeling and comprehension of the fine arts, their true aim and high significance.'<sup>266</sup> Clearly referring to Robert Peel, whose collection of Dutch masters is amongst those catalogued and to whom the

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<sup>264</sup> Jameson, *Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and Near London* (London: John Murray, 1842), *Companion to the Most Celebrated Private Galleries of Art in London* (London: Saunders & Otley, 1844); Published originally as *Kunstreise durch England und Belgien* (Frankfurt am Main: Siegmund Schmerber, 1833), Passavant was republished as *Tour of a German Artist in England* 2 vols. (London: Saunders & Otley, 1836). Waagen's *Kunstwerke und Künstler in England und Paris* 3 vols. (Berlin: Nicolaischen Buccandlung, 1837-1839), was republished firstly as *Works of Art and Artists in England* 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1838) and later, in a revised and expanded edition, as *Treasures of Art in Great Britain: Being an account of the chief collection of paintings, drawings, sculptures, illuminated mss. &c &c.* 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1854).

<sup>265</sup> Jameson (1844), p. xxiv.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xxxix-xl.

book is dedicated, Jameson relates the story of ‘a most distinguished statesman of the present day,’ who, while speaking to her ‘in the quiet tone of a weary man,’ turned to a forest scene by Ruysdael and gazed at it in silence ‘as if its cool, dewy verdure, its deep seclusion, its transparent waters stealing through the glades had sent refreshment into his very soul!’<sup>267</sup>

The mid-nineteenth century was a period when the collecting and patronage of contemporary art was being heavily, if not entirely, driven by new money.<sup>268</sup> In *Private Galleries*, Jameson essentially attempted to reinforce a traditional hierarchy of value within this expanded field of patronage. If, in *Public Galleries*, she was offering the uninitiated a lesson in what to see and where to see it, in *Private Galleries* she reminded them whom they should look to as exemplars. The book centres around the collections of Old Master paintings owned by several of the most prestigious aristocrats in Britain, including the 2nd Duke of Sutherland, the 3rd Marquess of Lansdowne, the 1st Earl of Ellesmere and, not least, Victoria and Albert. In her accounts of these collections, Jameson emphasises the continuity of collecting, and the long gestation of taste that informed it. She opens with a list of the paintings in ‘The Private Gallery of Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace.’ She informs us that the pictures in this gallery ‘were principally collected by George IV, whose exclusive predilection for pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools is well known,’ but notes that ‘her present Majesty has made, since her accession, many valuable additions,’ and ‘others have been added by Prince Albert.’<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid., p. xx.

<sup>268</sup> See: Dianne Sachko Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the making of cultural identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>269</sup> Jameson (1844), p. 3.

The Picture Gallery Jameson describes was the centre of a suite of State Apartments on the palace's ground floor and first floor designed by John Nash for George IV.<sup>270</sup> Victoria and Albert intervened little in these lavishly decorated rooms. One of the few instances in which they did so was the installation of Gibson's original statue of *Victoria* and Wolff's second statue of *Albert* in the Guard Room at the beginning of an enfilade of rooms culminating in the Throne Room. On the ground floor, in a space that Nash referred to as a 'statue gallery,' they installed two recumbent ideal nudes, *The Sea Nymph* (1841) by Wolff and *The Siren* (1841) by Carl Johann Steinhäuser, who, like Wolff, trained under Rauch in Berlin and Thorvaldsen in Rome.<sup>271</sup> This pair of recumbent figures was commissioned as a pendant to two recumbent nudes, *Fountain Nymph* (1815-1817) and *Dirce* (1822-1824), and an over life-size freestanding group, *Mars and Venus* (1816-1822), by Canova, three of George IV's most prestigious fine art sculpture commissions.<sup>272</sup>

The juxtaposition of Canova's works with Steinhäuser's and Wolff's in the ground floor gallery is indicative of the degree to which Victoria's and Albert's additions to Buckingham Palace complemented rather than competed with George IV's extensive decorative scheme. This is further suggested by the addition of a new wing to the palace in the mid-1840s. Nash's Buckingham Palace consisted of three principal wings forming a *cour d'honneur* (Fig. 2.9), the entrance to which was

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<sup>270</sup> For George IV's State Rooms in Buckingham Palace see: John Martin Robinson, 'The Nash State Rooms: Opulence, Ingenuity and Originality,' *Apollo* 137/378 (August 1993), pp. 125-130.

<sup>271</sup> Wolff's *Sea Nymph, or Nereide with Triton*, is a version of a similar statue executed in 1839 and now in the collection of the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin. See: Maaz (2006), p. 895.

<sup>272</sup> The recumbent figure of *Dirce*, commissioned early in 1820, was completed, following Canova's death in 1822, by his studio assistant Cincinnato Baruzzi. See: Christopher M.S. Johns, *Antonio Canova and the Politics of Patronage in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe* (Berkeley, London & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 159-169; Jane Roberts (ed.), *Treasures: The Royal Collection* (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2008), pp. 74-75.

marked by the Marble Arch. Both the arch and the façade of the palace itself were festooned with neo-classical free-standing and relief figurative sculpture, centred around a relief representing *Britannia Triumphant*, in the pediment of the building's central block.<sup>273</sup> Much of this extensive sculptural programme was designed by Flaxman but, following his death in December 1826, most of it was executed by Edward Hodges Baily, William Behnes, John Edward Carew and John Charles Felix Rossi.<sup>274</sup> In 1846, the architect Edward Blore was commissioned to design a fourth wing to enclose Nash's *cour d'honneur*.<sup>275</sup> George IV's Royal Pavilion in Brighton was sold to defray the cost of building this new wing, which was constructed by the building contractor Thomas Cubitt and designed to provide guest accommodation as well as apartments for Victoria and Albert's growing family.<sup>276</sup> Yet, if selling the Brighton Pavilion indicated a desire to repudiate George IV's extravagant legacy, then the recycling of much of its furniture and fixtures in the interiors of the new wing of Buckingham Palace suggested otherwise.<sup>277</sup>

The construction of Blore's new wing necessitated the removal of the Marble Arch and the destruction of the architectural sculpture on the wings flanking the original *cour d'honneur* (Fig. 2.10). It also obscured the remaining sculptural programme in the central block. Yet, this loss was compensated by a programme of architectural sculpture adorning the new wing. This consisted principally of figures of

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<sup>273</sup> Nash's original plans for Marble Arch included an ambitious programme of relief and free-standing figurative sculpture, relatively little of which was completed. An allegory of *Britannia* designed by Flaxman but incomplete at his death was recycled on the façade of William Wilkins National Gallery on Trafalgar Square. See: Whinney (1988), pp. 374-376.

<sup>274</sup> For a breakdown of this sculptural programme see: Joseph Mordaunt Crook & Michael Harry Port, *The History of the King's Words: Volume VI, 1782-1851* (London: H.M.S.O., 1973), pp. 301-302.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297.

<sup>276</sup> Hermione Hobhouse, *Thomas Cubitt, Master Builder* (London: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 400-422.

<sup>277</sup> See: Christopher Maxwell, 'Chinoiserie at Buckingham Palace in the Nineteenth Century,' *Burlington Magazine* CXLIX (June 2007), pp. 383-392.

*Britannia and the Lion* and *St George and the Dragon* by John Ternouth, and allegorical groups of *The Hours*, surmounting a space intended for a wind-dial, and *Night and Day*, surmounting a space intended for a clock face, by John Thomas. These sculptural groups were destroyed when the façade was refaced as part of Aston Webb's redevelopment of the Mall in 1911. However, they were illustrated through woodcut engravings in an article published in the *Illustrated London News* in March 1850 to mark the façade's completion (Fig. 2.11).<sup>278</sup> Despite their classicised style and allegorical subject matter, the article suggests that Ternouth's and Thomas's groups 'partake of that national character which has been regarded as the distinctive recommendation of the other portions of the Palace sculptures.'<sup>279</sup>

The article goes on to explain that the new wing was necessary because of 'the extreme inconvenience to which her Majesty personally, the juvenile members of the Royal family, and the whole of the Royal establishment, had been subjected in consequence of the insufficiency of Buckingham Palace in point of accommodation.'<sup>280</sup> By juxtaposing the new wing's functional necessity with images of the sculpture that adorned it, the *Illustrated London News* article reflected the basic decorative function of this sculptural commission. Yet, by awarding it such a prominent place on the printed page and endowing it with 'national' import, presumably because of its subject matter but also because it adorned the façade of the monarch's official residence, the article suggests that Ternouth's and Thomas's sculptural groups were more than simply decorative embellishments.

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<sup>278</sup> 'Sculpture of the New Front of Buckingham Palace,' *Illustrated London News* (9 March 1850), p. 168.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

A further wing was added to Buckingham Palace between 1852 and 1855. This wing, to the south-west of the palace, was designed by James Pennethorne and similarly built by Cubitt.<sup>281</sup> Its principal purpose was to house a ballroom, supper room and linking promenade gallery, the kind of large-scale entertainment spaces that Victoria claimed were necessary to accommodate ‘those persons whom the Queen has to invite in the course of the season to balls, concerts &c.’<sup>282</sup> These rooms were completely redecorated after Victoria’s death but contemporary accounts and images of them provide us with a detailed picture. They were characterised by rich combinations of cinquecento-style painted surfaces, furniture and fixtures highly enriched with sculptural ornament and a programme of freestanding and integrated figurative sculpture executed by William Theed.

The first room approached by visitors in this new suite was the Promenade Gallery, seen in an 1873 albumen print by the firm of Hill and Saunders (Fig. 2.12). This space was described in the *Art Journal* as a gallery ‘decorated in the Italian manner of the cinque-cento, the walls being painted to imitate an open arcade, looking out upon the sky, birds hovering over the flower-vases which occupy the centre of each opening.’<sup>283</sup> As in the Garden Pavilion, references to the cinquecento were coupled with those to classical antiquity. Flanking the room on both sides were a series of long sofas and, punctuating the spaces between them, six over-life-size white marble busts on tall polished marble pedestals of various colours. The busts were executed by Theed, who described them in a January 1856 memorandum as

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<sup>281</sup> For Victoria’s and Albert’s additions to Buckingham Palace in general see: John Martin Robinson, *Buckingham Palace: The Official Illustrated History* (London: Royal Collection Enterprises, 2000), pp. 96-123.

<sup>282</sup> Victoria to Peel, quoted in Marsden (2010), p. 26.

<sup>283</sup> ‘The New State Rooms at Buckingham Palace,’ *Art Journal* (June 1856), p. 192.

‘copies from the Antique ... partly colossal and partly heroic in size – intended for the embellishment of the promenade gallery at Buckingham Palace.’<sup>284</sup> To the left of the gallery in the 1873 photograph is *Achilles*, nearest to the viewer, followed by *Aesculapius* and *Roma*; to the right is the *Capitoline Alexander*, nearest to the viewer, followed by the *Ludovisi Juno* and the *Venus d’Arles*. For this commission, Grüner sourced plaster casts of antique busts in Paris and Rome in 1855, as well as marble pedestals in Paris.<sup>285</sup> The plaster models were translated into marble in Theed’s studio in Belgravia and signed and dated by him in 1856.<sup>286</sup>

The Promenade Gallery led to the Ballroom, described by the *Art Journal* as the ‘crowning point’ of Pennethorne’s new wing (Fig. 2.13).<sup>287</sup> A detailed account of the room published in the *Illustrated London News* in June 1856 gives us a vivid impression of its rich décor (Fig. 2.14).<sup>288</sup> The polished parquet floor was composed of mahogany, satin and wainscot wood, which was presumably designed to reflect the light of twenty one glass chandeliers, designed by the Birmingham firm Osler & Co., inset into rich gilded and painted ceiling compartments. The walls on each side were divided into two parts: the bottom part was covered with a ‘rich silk bearing the national devices in flowers,’ while the top part was separated into thirteen compartments, six of which contained painted allegories of *The Hours* designed by the Roman artist Nicolà Consoni in imitation of what were then thought to be lost

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<sup>284</sup> Theed to Biddulph: 1 January 1856, RA/PPTO/PP/QV/ADD/62/53.

<sup>285</sup> Grüner to Biddulph: 25 November 1855, RA/PPTO/PP/QV/ADD/62/49; 1 December 1855, RA/PPTO/PP/QV/ADD/62/50; 21 February 1856, RA/PPTO/PP/QV/ADD/62/60.

<sup>286</sup> Biddulph to Phipps: 24 January 1855, RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/10/5165; Grüner to Biddulph, 25 November 1855, RA/PPTO/PP/QV/ADD/62/49.

<sup>287</sup> ‘The New State Rooms at Buckingham Palace,’ *Art Journal* (June 1856), p. 192.

<sup>288</sup> ‘The New State Ball-Room, Buckingham Palace,’ *Illustrated London News* (21 June 1856), pp. 682-683.

frescoes painted by Raphael in the Vatican.<sup>289</sup> Tiered benches covered in red silk flanked three sides of the room; the fourth was occupied by a lavish recessed dais, 'entirely set apart for her Majesty and her Court.' In addition to Osler ceiling lamps, the room was lit with a suite of ten freestanding gilt bronze candelabra produced by the Parisian furniture manufacturer and bronze foundry of Ferdinand Barbedienne (Fig. 2.15).

These candelabra exemplify a quality of craftsmanship for which the Parisian foundry was renowned and Victoria and Albert paid nearly £250 for each of them, more than twice the price of each of Theed's busts after the antique. According to Grüner, who acted as an intermediary between the foundry and the palace, forty artists were involved in casting, chasing and assembling the complex structures.<sup>290</sup> Each of the candelabra consists of a triangular base with panels embellished with low relief chased floral motifs, supporting a fluted column incorporating chased acanthus leaves. Surmounting this rich but relatively restrained column is a fantastical ensemble of thirty-one lights, the arms of which appear to sprout from a rich bounty of delicately articulated intertwining foliage.<sup>291</sup> The expense and scale of the Barbedienne candelabra reflects the international pre-eminence of the French luxury furniture trade in the middle decades of the century and the potential for such furniture to incorporate significant sculptural elements.<sup>292</sup> Yet, in purely sculptural terms, Theed was chiefly responsible for the Ballroom's embellishment. A memorandum written by the sculptor in May 1856 provides us with a general

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<sup>289</sup> For Consoni see: Marsden (2010), pp. 28-29.

<sup>290</sup> Grüner to Biddulph, 19 November 1855, RA/PPTO/PP/QV/ADD/62/47.

<sup>291</sup> See: Marsden (2010), p. 259.

<sup>292</sup> See: Claire Jones, 'Between Art and Design: Sculptors and Design Reform in France, 1848-1895' Ph.D. thesis 2 vols., (University of York, 2010), vol. I, pp. 97-118.

impression of this programme of plaster sculpture painted in a white finish, enriched with gilt detail.<sup>293</sup> Over the doors leading from the Promenade Gallery and to the Supper Room were bas-relief panels, on one side 'The Triumph of Bacchus,' on the other side 'The Triumph of Flora.' Surmounting an arch over the royal dais at one end of the room was a 'Medallion of the Queen and His Royal Highness the Prince Albert, supported by statues of Fame and History,' flanked, to the left by 'the Muse Euterpe, sacred to Music,' and to the right by 'the Muse Calliope, sacred to Poetry.' These allegorical figures were, in turn, flanked by what Theed describes in his account simply as '2 sphynx [sic].' A similarly styled ensemble consisting of 'amorini with festoons of flowers' and 'Sappho & Orpheus,' surmounted a monumental organ at the other end of the room.

The arresting visual impact of Theed's sculptural programme in the Ballroom is evident in Louis Haghe's watercolour *The Ballroom, Buckingham Palace, 17 June 1856* (Fig. 2.16). The painting, which shows the lusciously decorated room densely populated with women in sparkling white dresses and men in blue, red and gold uniforms, echoes an account by Lady Eastlake of the inaugural ball held in the room, in May 1856: 'The decorations of the ball-room are exquisite, the lighting most original and beautiful, and the raised crimson seats (three deep) round three sides of the vast apartment, all that can be desired both to look at, when filled with gorgeously dressed figures, and to look from.'<sup>294</sup> As is clear from Haghe's painting, the basic function of Theed's sculptural programme, along with the other features of

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<sup>293</sup> All quotes from Theed's 'slight account' are taken from a letter he wrote to Biddulph on 7 May 1856, RA/PPTO/PP/QV/ADD/62/85.

<sup>294</sup> Charles Eastlake Smith (ed.), *The Journals and Correspondence of Lady Eastlake* 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1895), Vol. II, p. 85.

the room's décor, was to provide a rich framework for this dazzling scene. Yet, in its account of the recently inaugurated room, the *Art Journal* suggested that Theed's sculptural programme was more than simply a supporting feature of a lavish entertainment space.<sup>295</sup> The article praises the new Ballroom as a shining example of the use of painting and sculpture in a space devoted to 'the elegant refinements of life':

We should naturally expect the home of our sovereign to exhibit the refinement which characterises modern taste, and that adaption of sculpture and painting to in-door life which is now recognised as an addition to its *agremens*. It is therefore found in these new rooms, and we gladly hail its recognition where it can be so well appreciated, and aid in spreading such taste elsewhere: the court naturally giving the tone to fashionable life.<sup>296</sup>

The article goes on to describe the new suite of rooms in some detail and concludes by proclaiming them a shining example of what 'English Art-manufactures' could do. In characteristically obsequious terms, the article suggests that the rooms testify to Victoria and Albert's educated and refined taste. Yet, the rooms also offer an imitable example of the treatment of sculpture as a decorative adjunct:

The great beauty of the present suite of rooms is its successful display of modern educated tastes – tastes which result from the study of various styles, and the happy adaption of the best parts of all. The air of repose, as well as richness of fancy, which reigns over all, is the great charm of

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<sup>295</sup> 'The New State Rooms at Buckingham Palace,' *Art Journal* (June 1856), p. 192.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

the *ensemble*, but we think its general elevation in no small degree results from the happy character of Mr Theed's statuary and *bassi-relievi*; these, by their purity of form and graceful contour, give boldness and vigour to the general design of the apartments, which no flat painting could effect. We should rejoice greatly if our sovereign be enabled to aid the somewhat neglected art of the sculptor, by thus exhibiting its applicability as a tasteful adjunct to the noble homes of England. So far from its being 'cold' 'monumental,' it is here proved to be the reverse and we hope to see the happy example followed. The good taste of the Queen and her august consort has never been more fully displayed than in these additions to their home – so happy a guide to every house in her dominions.<sup>297</sup>

This description suggests the way in which sculpture commissioned for the official royal residences could be seen to benefit the British sculpture profession as a whole by setting a standard for the elite to follow by commissioning sculpture for their own homes. The sculptural programme in the Royal Dairy in the grounds of Windsor Castle was similarly endowed with special significance.

The Royal Dairy stands in the grounds of Frogmore House near Windsor Castle. It was originally built during the reign of George III but, when it proved inefficient, Albert commissioned the architect J.R. Turnbull to design a replacement in 1858.<sup>298</sup> This was part of a campaign by Albert to modernise and rationalise the extensive agricultural holdings on the various royal estates, both as a means of maximising

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>298</sup> John Chalmers-Morton, *The Prince Consort's Farms: An Agricultural Memoir* (London: Longman, Green, Longman Roberts & Green, 1863), p. 104.

profits accruing to the Crown and to act as a lesson in sound management for other. For this he was lauded by the agricultural community. In 1863 John Chalmers-Morton published *The Prince Consort's Farms: An Agricultural Memoir*, which eulogised the prince who 'heartily and constantly,' 'laboured in the field of agricultural progress.'<sup>299</sup> A review of the book, published in the *Athenaeum* in January 1863, corroborated this assessment by suggesting that Albert was more valuable as a farmer than he was as a patron of the arts:

That he was a discerning patron of painters and sculptors, was known to the studios, and those comparatively few persons who were allowed to witness the immediate results of his exercise of taste. That he was an appreciative student and enthusiastic admirer of the best authors of ancient and modern literature, was a fact known to a yet more limited circle. But that he was a farmer, delighting in the theory and eminently successful in the practice of agriculture, was known to every breeder and ploughman in the kingdom. Apart from those moral effects of example on those who were next to him in rank, the beneficial consequences of his literary and artistic tastes were in a great degree limited to those whose appointed task is to elevate mankind by the chisel, the pencil or the pen; but there is scarcely a hamlet in the country where the poor are not in some way better cared for than they would have been had Albert the Good deemed rural concerns too lowly for his notice.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>300</sup> '*The Prince Consort's Farms: An Agricultural Memoir*. By John Chalmers Morton. (Longman & Co.),' *Athenaeum* (24 January 1863), pp. 117-118, p. 117.

According to Chalmers-Morton, when Albert had plans drawn up for the dairy, he stipulated that while he 'wished to have an ornamental dairy, no beauty of ornament would compensate for want of every-day usefulness.'<sup>301</sup> Yet, its interior design was entrusted entirely to a sculptor, John Thomas. This apparent incongruity is no coincidence. Albert clearly wanted to demonstrate the versatility and decorative functionality of sculpture and John Thomas was an eminently suitable sculptor to do so. The previously-quoted retrospective of the sculptor's career, published in the *Art Journal* in 1849, suggested that Thomas demonstrated 'a remarkable adeptness for adaption: sculpture, carving, designing, drawing, painting and architecture – he is equally at home in them all.'<sup>302</sup> The Royal Dairy evidences his versatility as an architect, interior designer and project manager and the ease with which, as a sculptor, he adapted his oeuvre to a variety of media. It was presumably this versatility and ability to blend figurative sculpture with interior design that recommended Thomas for the decoration of the Royal Dairy.

A surviving preparatory pen, ink and watercolour cross-section of the dairy, dated 1858 (Fig. 2.17), vividly evokes the jewel-like mixture of colours and materials that characterised Thomas's design for the interior. Chalmers-Morton tells us that the floor is laid with 'tiles of an incised pattern, with a rich majolica border, presenting the appearance of a Turkey carpet,' and that the walls are covered with white tiles adorned with mauve stars and bordered by tiles bearing a running pattern in green and white.<sup>303</sup> The sloping part of the ceiling is painted and enamelled, 'with a pattern of extreme beauty and delicacy,' while the flat part is filled with perforated

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<sup>301</sup> Chalmers-Morton (1863), p. 106.

<sup>302</sup> 'John Thomas,' *Art Journal* (November 1849), p. 340.

<sup>303</sup> Chalmers-Morton (1863), p. 107.

majolica panels; the whole is supported by six painted and enamelled pillars.<sup>304</sup> Various figurative sculpture elements are embedded within this rich panorama of abstract ornament. Medallion profile portraits of Victoria, Albert and their children, each one flanked by white sea-horses, are incorporated into a blue and white cornice beneath the ceiling; Victoria's and Albert's portraits can be seen in the cross-section.<sup>305</sup> In the space between the ten stained glass windows beneath the cornice are fourteen majolica bas-relief panels representing *The Four Seasons*, with white figures on an orange ground, two of which can be seen in the 1858 cross-section.<sup>306</sup> At either end of the room is a majolica fountain emitting from a shell borne by a triton resting in a shell borne by a heron, one of which is visible in the cross-section, while on one side is a third fountain emitting from a jug cradled by a white marble water nymph.<sup>307</sup>

Victoria and Albert were not unique in commissioning a dairy richly ornamented with sculpture. In the 1840s, the 13th Duke of Norfolk commissioned an elaborately ornamented dairy for the grounds of Arundel Castle, which Victoria and Albert inspected during a visit in December 1846.<sup>308</sup> Yet, while the Arundel dairy may have inspired the dairy at Frogmore, the fact that it was the product of Victoria's and Albert's patronage endowed it with a special significance. Though the dairy was (and is) closed to the public, a cross-section of its interior was published in the *Illustrated*

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<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>308</sup> *A Visit to Arundel Castle* (Arundel: Mitchel & Son, 1851), p. 93; 'Visit of Her Majesty and Prince Albert to Arundel Castle,' *Illustrated London News* (5 December 1846), pp. 356-358.

*London News* in July 1861 before it was fully operational (Fig. 2.18).<sup>309</sup> The engraving shows a small group of men and women walking around the room, individually and in groups, analysing various aspects of the interior. The accompanying text illuminates this black and white scene. It describes the interior as ‘a perfect gem of taste and art,’ and, though it explains that ‘[t]he whole was designed by Mr John Thomas,’ suggests that it ‘affords another proof of the delicate taste and refined judgement of the Queen and her Royal consort.’<sup>310</sup>

The following month, the *Illustrated London News* published an engraving after Thomas’s water nymph fountain in the dairy’s interior (Fig. 2.19). The full-length illustration endows the decorative figure of the nymph with the presence of a piece of fine art sculpture and, in the accompanying text, we are told that the ‘extremely beautiful’ figure is ‘light and symmetrical in form, the attitude being eminently graceful,’ and that its ‘workmanship is of the highest and most careful finish.’<sup>311</sup> These engravings, with their glowing accounts of Victoria and Albert’s taste, were, we are told, published ‘by gracious permission.’ This suggests that Victoria and Albert consciously used the decoration of the publicly visible areas of the official royal residences to prove themselves as patrons and that contemporary sculptors like Thomas benefited by association. As will be seen in the next section, the formation and arrangement of the sculpture collection in Osborne House was governed by a very different agenda.

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<sup>309</sup> *Taylor & Son’s Photographic Illustrated Guide to Windsor Castle And Its Neighbourhood* (Windsor: W.F. Taylor & Sons, 1868), p. 28; ‘The Royal Dairy at Frogmore, Near Windsor,’ *Illustrated London News* (27 July 1861), p. 75.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>311</sup> ‘Figure of a Nymph in the Royal Dairy, Windsor, by J. Thomas,’ *Illustrated London News* (3 August 1861), p. 106.

## Part 2: Sculpture in Osborne House

Much of the sculpture amassed by Victoria and Albert over the course of their marriage was displayed in Osborne House. An inventory of the artworks in the house, printed privately in 1876, allows us to categorise this sculpture by date, material, type and nationality of sculptor.<sup>312</sup> This offers an illuminating insight into the scope and scale of Victoria's and Albert's patronage. For example, the catalogue lists forty-five bronze statuettes, acquired between 1843 and 1855. Three of these were original works, twelve were copies after modern works and thirty were reduced copies after antique or Renaissance works. Of the latter, twelve were a birthday present from Albert to Victoria in 1847, while six were Christmas presents to her later that year.

The catalogue lists thirty free-standing marble statues and groups, commissioned and acquired between 1840 and 1862. Of these, two were antique and twenty-eight were contemporary. Of the latter, twelve were portraits, sixteen were ideal or poetic. There were also thirty-four marble busts, commissioned and acquired between 1847 and 1861. Of these, three were antique, six were copies after the antique, eight were contemporary portraits and seventeen were contemporary ideal or poetic busts. In addition to bronze and marble busts, statues and statuettes, the catalogue also lists works in plaster, Parian ware, terracotta and alabaster,

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<sup>312</sup> *Catalogue of the Principal Paintings, Sculptures and Other Works of Art at Osborne* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1876). This unpublished catalogue is housed in the Royal Collection Library in St James's Palace.

produced by artists from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Italy and across the United Kingdom, most of whom were based either in London or Rome.

Osborne, which is Italianate in style, was designed by Albert and Grüner in conjunction with Cubitt, who built it. The residence was comprised of three wings: the Pavilion wing housed the royal family's apartments and the principal reception rooms; the Main Wing housed guest suites; the Household Wing housed accommodation for senior courtiers.<sup>313</sup> Most of the sculpture listed in the 1876 catalogue was located on the ground floor, in an L-shaped corridor connecting these wings and in a billiard/drawing room suite in the Pavilion Wing. These spaces were far from palatial in scale or level of decoration but, by the time Albert died, they were densely packed with the choicest fruits of the royal couple's patronage of sculpture.

A series of tinted photographs taken by the French photographer André Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri in 1867 reveals how imposing and impressive this collection of sculpture looked in this domestic context. For example, a photograph of the corridor (Fig. 2.20) shows a number of white marble bodies of various poses and sizes arranged along one side, punctuated by ebonized cabinets. These glass-fronted, red-velvet lined cabinets, which are crowned by slabs of caramel coloured marble, are surmounted by a plethora of bronze statuettes and white marble busts. This phalanx of black and white sculpted bodies stands in rich contrast to the riotous colour of the tiled floor, the cool blue tones of the wall and ceiling and the luscious greens of the garden, visible through the door at the end of the corridor. Even allowing for the exaggerated colour of Disdéri's hand-tinted photograph, this was clearly an

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<sup>313</sup> Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 143-153.

impressive sight. Yet, at least until the last decades of Victoria's reign, very few people were allowed to see it. Though Victoria and Albert were always accompanied by a retinue of equerries, ladies-in-waiting and pages when at Osborne, and occasionally received prestigious international visitors there – notably the Emperor and Empress of the French, in 1857 – the residence was a private retreat, not a platform for the majesty of monarchy.<sup>314</sup> It was comparatively small and relatively isolated and not designed to host the lavish court ceremonies and receptions staged in Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. Yet, it was this rather than their palatial official residences that the couple chose as the principal repository for their collection of sculpture. However impressive this collection looked in situ, its primary intention was not to impress the outside world. It was, rather, the product of Victoria's and Albert's personal engagement with and enjoyment of sculpture. Nowhere is this more evident than in the corridor photographed by Disdéri.

Though there is no evidence to suggest that the sculpture in this corridor was arranged according to a master-plan, it was undoubtedly carefully considered. Reduced plaster cast panels after parts of the Parthenon frieze, executed by John Henning, were inserted into the upper reaches of the walls, which complemented the bronze statuettes after canonical antique works that were displayed on the cabinets dispersed along the corridor. These reproductions were clearly supposed to reflect the influence of the antique on the modern and to act as a touchstone for the collection of modern sculpture that populated the corridor. Gibson was instrumental

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<sup>314</sup> Catherine Granger, 'Napoléon III et Victoria, visites croisées,' in *Napoléon III et la reine Victoria* (exhibition catalogue, Musée national du château de Compiègne, 4 October 2008 – 19 January 2009), ed. Emmanuel Starcky et al (Paris : Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2008), pp. 36-58.

in the formation of this collection. In January 1845, he wrote to George Anson, Albert's Private Secretary, asking him to tell the prince that he had 'obtained drawings from some of the works of a few of the best sculptors here with the prices & dimensions & that shortly they will be forwarded. I have also written to Carrara for the prices of their best copies from the antique statues.'<sup>315</sup> Two months later he wrote to say that he had sent drawings of ideal works by a number of contemporary sculptors and enclosed a price list of copies in Carrara marble of a number of antique statues.<sup>316</sup> Tellingly, Victoria and Albert chose the former.

By commissioning Gibson to produce a full-length portrait of Victoria and using him as their Roman agent, the royal couple effectively endorsed his status as the leading contemporary sculptor working in Rome in the wake of Thorvaldsen. This is reflected in the installation of the 1849 version of Gibson's statue of Victoria in a lavish gold-leaf painted niche flanked by plaster casts after Thorvaldsen's *Night and Day* reliefs (Fig. 2.21). This niche is situated in an alcove half way along the principal corridor. Gibson's statue thus formed the epicentre of the collection of mainly Roman sculpture that came to dominate the corridor, as seen in Disdéri's photograph. This shows four free-standing, white marble statues, all produced by prominent sculptors working in Rome and, though we cannot be certain, all likely recommended to Victoria and Albert by Gibson. At the end is Wolf Von Hoyer's *Psyche Holding a Lamp* (1851), preceded by Lawrence Macdonald's *Hyacinthus* (1852), and, just before the alcove, Theed's *Narcissus* (1847). The statue in the

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<sup>315</sup> Gibson to Anson, 22 January 1845: RAA/G1/1/6. These drawings are currently untraced in the Royal Collection.

<sup>316</sup> Gibson to Anson, 21 March 1845: RAA/G1/1/7.

immediate foreground is *Indian Girl* (1849) by Henry Timbrell (Fig. 2.22), which Victoria gave to Albert as a birthday present in 1848.

Gibson originally brought *Indian Girl* to Victoria's attention in February 1848, when he wrote to Marianne Skerrett – Victoria's personal dresser and her intermediary with Gibson – to inform her that he would be sending more drawings after pieces of sculpture on display in the principal Roman studios.<sup>317</sup> He particularly recommended Timbrell's figure for 'its character, beauty & chaste centiment [sic],' and reminded Skerrett that he had modelled two bas reliefs for the Garden Pavilion in Buckingham Palace.<sup>318</sup> Timbrell was commissioned and two months later Gibson told Skerrett that he 'had much gratification to be the bearer of commands to Mr Timbrell who felt delighted & very grateful,' and that he would send a plaster model of the work and begin working on the marble of it.<sup>319</sup> We can presume that Victoria presented Albert with this model for his birthday in 1848 because Gibson later told Skerrett that the statue was 'much advanced in marble,' and that Timbrell would be 'most happy to attend to the remark which His Royal Highness has been pleased to suggest with respect to the size of the head.'<sup>320</sup> Timbrell died in 1849 before his statue was finished.<sup>321</sup> It was completed in the studio of Richard James Wyatt.<sup>322</sup>

Timbrell's *Indian Girl* represents a scene from *Lalla Rookh*, the Irish poet Thomas Moore's 'oriental romance,' about the journey of Lalla Rookh, daughter of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, from Delhi to Kashmir to meet her fiancée, the King

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<sup>317</sup> Marianne Skerrett served as Victoria's dresser between June 1837 and July 1862. See: Marsden (2010), p. 44.

<sup>318</sup> Gibson to Miss Skerrett, 20 February 1848, RA/VIC/ADDC4/40.

<sup>319</sup> Gibson to Miss Skerrett, 14 April 1848, RA/VIC/ADDC4/57.

<sup>320</sup> Gibson to Miss Skerrett, 25 September 1848, RA/VIC/ADDC4/93.

<sup>321</sup> Hardy, Roscoe & Sullivan (2009), pp. 1272-1273.

<sup>322</sup> Gibson to Miss Skerrett, 27 July 1849, RA/VIC/ADDC4/138.

of Bukhara. Her entourage includes a poet named Feramorz, with whom she falls in love and who turns out to be her betrothed in disguise – a marriage conceived as an alliance become a marriage of love. The book consists of four epic poems, which Feramorz recites to Lalla Rookh, interwoven with a prose account of their journey.<sup>323</sup> Timbrell's statue represents the moment in the narrative when Lalla Rookh's entourage happens upon a woman at a river bank lighting a lamp:

As they passed along a sequestered river after sun-set, they saw a young Hindoo [sic] girl upon the bank, whose employment seemed to them so strange, that they stopped their palankeens to observe her. She had lighted a small lamp, filled with oil of cocoa, and placing it in an earthen dish, adorned with a wreath of flowers, had committed it with a trembling hand to the stream, and was now anxiously watching its progress down the current, heedless of the gay cavalcade which had drawn up beside her. Lalla Rookh was all curiosity; when one of her attendants ... informed the Princess that it was the usual way in which the friends of those who had gone on dangerous voyages offered up vows for their safe return. If the lamp sunk immediately, the omen was disastrous; but if it went shining down the stream, and continued to burn till entirely out of sight, the return of the beloved object was considered as certain.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Wallace Cable Brown, 'Thomas Moore and English Interest in the East,' *Studies in Philology* 34/4 (October 1937), pp. 576-588, pp. 577-578.

<sup>324</sup> *The Works of Thomas Moore, Comprehending All His Melodies, Ballads Etc.* (Paris: A. & W. Galignani, 1832), pp. 85-86.

Timbrell's statue depicts a woman kneeling and pouring oil from a small jug into the kind of lamp described in Moore's tale. Yet, apart from the lamp, with its minutely carved floral wreath, and the woman's faintly eastern necklace and set of earrings, there is little to suggest that this is the work of a contemporary Irish sculptor, depicting a scene from a contemporary Irish poet's orientalist epic, set in seventeenth-century India. Timbrell's figure is an idealised woman, whose smooth, pristine white skin and taut body is partially enveloped in, and partially framed by, delicately rendered drapery.

On the surface there is little to distinguish *Indian Girl* from the other ideal female forms dispersed along the corridor. For example, the white marble bust of *Psyche* by Macdonald (Fig. 2.23), which can be seen on the cabinet to the left of Timbrell's statue in Disdéri's photograph of the corridor. It was commissioned by Albert as a Christmas present for Victoria in 1849.<sup>325</sup> With her muted expression, passive pose, pristinely smooth face, neck and chest and schematically treated hair, *Psyche* is similar to Timbrell's *Lalla Rookh*. Indeed, it is only possible to distinguish the two figures by their different attributes – *Lalla Rookh*'s lamp and the minutely carved butterfly in the base of the bust of *Psyche*. The resemblance between the two figures reflects the degree to which sculptors like Timbrell and Macdonald consciously echoed the idealised beauty of canonical sculptures such as the *Capitoline Venus*, the *Venus d'Arles* and the *Venus de Milo*, bronze reductions of which were dispersed along the corridor. Yet, however similar they appear on the surface, each of the works embodies a distinct narrative, in Timbrell's case, a scene from Moore's epic.

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<sup>325</sup> *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), p. 174.

We know from her journal that Victoria read *Lalla Rookh* in 1837 and that she saw a tableaux vivant enactment of it in 1842.<sup>326</sup> Victoria does not mention Timbrell's statue in her journal but it is reasonable to presume that, when Gibson sent a drawing of it in February 1848, it evoked memories of this earlier engagement with Moore's book. Whether it did or not, *Lalla Rookh* exemplifies the way in which a particular piece of ideal sculpture could resonate with Victoria.

With the exception of Timbrell's *Lalla Rookh*, most of the busts and statues that were displayed in the corridor during the 1840s and 1850s represented figures from ancient history and mythology rather than contemporary literature. Many of the antique and contemporary busts and statues in the corridor were anniversary, birthday and Christmas presents from Victoria to Albert and were presumably meant to indulge his interest in classical sculpture and its modern reincarnation. As was the case for many members of the elite in this period, Albert's interest in the antique and its modern incarnation was fostered by a tour of Italy. Between December 1838 and March 1839, he travelled to Florence, Rome and Naples. According to an early biographer the trip was a formative experience for Albert, who wrote: 'My range of observation has been doubled, and my power of forming a right judgement will be much increased by having seen for myself.'<sup>327</sup> In Rome Albert visited archaeological sites and sculpture collections and was granted an audience with Pope Gregory XVI, with whom he 'conversed in Italian on the influence the Egyptians had on Greek art, and that again on Roman art. The Pope asserted that the Greeks had taken their models from the Etruscans. In spite of his infallibility, I ventured to assert that they

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<sup>326</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1837: 1 March; RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1837: 9 March; RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1837: 6 May; RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1842: 30 June.

<sup>327</sup> Martin(1875-1880), vol. I, p. 37.

had derived their lessons in art from the Egyptians.’<sup>328</sup> In addition to studying and discussing classical sculpture, Albert, like many tourists in Rome in this period, visited the studios of a number of contemporary sculptors.

The legacy of Albert’s Roman sojourn is evident in the striking juxtaposition of antique and modern sculpture in the corridor at Osborne. This is exemplified by the triangulation, at the right angle of the corridor, of an allegory of *Victory* by the Berlin sculptor Christian Daniel Rauch (Fig. 2.24), a 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. *Venus Anadyomene* (Fig. 2.25) and a statue described in the 1876 catalogue as *The Egyptian Antinous* (Fig. 2.26). Rauch’s *Victory* is a replica of one of six winged victories commissioned between 1834 and 1841 by Ludwig of Bavaria for the Valhalla he built near Regensburg to celebrate Germany’s liberation from Napoleon.<sup>329</sup> As detailed by Marsden, this replica was commissioned in 1843 by Frederick William IV of Prussia as a present for Victoria to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo, but was never paid for. Rauch exhibited it at the Great Exhibition in 1851, where Victoria bought it.<sup>330</sup>

The *Venus Anadyomene* to the right of Rauch’s statue was excavated in Rome in a dig sponsored by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Buckingham. Victoria and Albert saw it when they visited Stowe, the Duke’s Buckinghamshire seat, in 1845 and purchased it when the contents of the residence were sold in 1848, following the Duke’s bankruptcy.<sup>331</sup> It was installed in a niche crowned with a gilt sea-shell motif and hung with red velvet. According to the 1876 catalogue, the polished grey marble *Egyptian Antinous* situated opposite it originally belonged to Napoleon’s brother, Jerome, but was

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<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> For Rauch’s work for the Regensburg Valhall see: Maaz (2006), vol. II, pp. 522-531.

<sup>330</sup> Marsden (2010), pp. 154.

<sup>331</sup> Henry Rumsey Forster, *The Stowe Catalogue Priced and Annotated* (London: David Bogue, 1848), p. 44.

seized from a French frigate captured in the Mediterranean in 1806. The statue, incorrectly thought to be an antique, was given to an Isle of Wight landowner and Victoria bought it from his heir in 1850.<sup>332</sup> The juxtaposition of an 'Egyptian' statue seized from Napoleon's brother and a statue by a German sculptor, which celebrates Anglo-German victory over France in the Napoleonic Wars, can hardly be coincidental, not least because the figure of *Victory* looks through a pair of French doors towards the sea and beyond to France. However, even allowing for such a militaristic reading, the triangulation of Rauch's *Victory* with the *Egyptian Antinous* and the *Venus Anadyomene* doubtless also reflects Albert's engagement with modern Roman sculpture, the ancient Greek paradigms it echoed, and the Egyptian roots of the classical tradition.

If the corridor was the principal circulation space in Osborne, then the interconnected billiard and drawing rooms in the Pavilion wing was its social heart. The sculpture in this space gives a strong indication of Victoria's and Albert's patronage of contemporary sculptors in Rome and in Britain and the degree to which the patronage of both was interwoven with the royal family's life at Osborne. The Billiard Room was, as Disdéri's photograph of reveals (Fig. 2.27), an intimate but lavishly decorated space, dominated by a billiard table. The ceiling was stuccoed with sumptuous gilt and painted detail. One wall was punctuated with three large windows framed with luscious yellow silk curtains and matching pelmets, while the other two were covered with large oil paintings: Charles West Cope's *Cardinal Wolsey at the Gate of Leicester Abbey* (1847) and *The Gathering of the Harvest* (1853) by the

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<sup>332</sup> *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), p. 199.

Belgian painter Charles Philogène Tschaggeny.<sup>333</sup> Around the perimeter of a billiard table were four white marble statues: at the end of the room, between the columns are *A Nymph of Diana* by Richard James Wyatt and *Flora* by Pietro Tenerani; between the windows to the right are *Glycera* and *The Huntress* by Wyatt.

Wyatt, like Gibson, trained in Canova's studio in Rome and established an independent studio in the city following the latter's death in 1822. He was well-established by the 1840s, having produced work for a range of British patrons, including the 6th Duke of Devonshire.<sup>334</sup> Victoria's and Albert's first commissioned work from him was the group *Penelope with the Bow of Ulysses*, which was commissioned in 1841 and complete by 1844.<sup>335</sup> In November 1844, Victoria related in her journal that she, Albert and Gibson had walked through the Semi-State Apartments in Windsor looking for a place to put the statue, 'which will not do in the niche intended for it.'<sup>336</sup> In December 1847, Gibson told Skerrett that Wyatt was 'very grateful & highly honoured,' by Victoria's 'gracious approbation' of his work, presumably in reference to the statue of *Glycera*, which, according to the 1876 catalogue, was purchased in 1848.<sup>337</sup> The following February, Gibson recommended to Skerrett a statue by Wyatt entitled *The Huntress*, which he described as 'truly beautiful,' and, in January 1849, told her that he was sending a drawing of the statue.<sup>338</sup> According to the 1876 catalogue, Victoria gave Albert the latter as a birthday present in 1850 and the former as a Christmas present later that year.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> *Works of Art* (1876), p. 36.

<sup>334</sup> Hardy, Roscoe & Sullivan (2009), pp. 1424-1428.

<sup>335</sup> Marsden (2010), p. 149.

<sup>336</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1844: 2 November.

<sup>337</sup> Gibson to Skerrett, 24 December 1847, RA/VIC/ADDC4/21; *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), p. 37.

<sup>338</sup> Gibson to Skerrett, 20 February 1848, RA/VIC/ADDC4/40; Gibson to Skerrett, 19 January 1849, RA/VIC/ADDC4/170.

<sup>339</sup> *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), pp. 37-38.

Each of Wyatt's three figures in the billiard room adheres to the conventions of ideal sculpture: the mythological women are all represented with smooth skin, perfectly proportioned bodies and serene expressions. Each echoes antique paradigms yet each retains considerable variety of treatment. For example, Wyatt's *Nymph of Diana* (Fig. 2.28) resembles the *Diana the Huntress* statue in the Louvre, a 2nd-century A.D. Roman copy of a lost Greek original.<sup>340</sup> The statue is, nonetheless, distinguished by an intricate surface treatment, which rewards close inspection. The surface of the drapery is enlivened by incised striations, suggestive of a coarse fabric appropriate for a hunter figure. Equally, the surface of the tree stump, which supports the figure, the body of the hare in her left hand and the arrows protruding from behind her left shoulder are intricately rendered to suggest the look and texture of bark, fur and feather.

In the foreground of Disdéri's photograph of the billiard room there are three statues within the boundary of the adjacent drawing room. The statue on the multi-layered marble pedestal in the centre is *La Filatrice Addormentata* (Fig. 2.29) by the Berlin-born, Rome-based sculptor Julius Troschel. In October 1848 one of Victoria's ladies-in-waiting, Lady Mount-Edgcumbe, mentioned him in a letter from Rome. In the letter, Lady Mount Edgcumbe deplores the privations of sculptors in the city, whose commissions had dried up when the string of revolutions that had swept across Europe since February of that year impeded the regular flow of tourists and the normal functioning of the art market. She singles Troschel out, telling Victoria that he had lately 'been reduced to the lowest ebb,' and 'would have been too glad

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<sup>340</sup> See: Francis Haskell & Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500-1900* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 196-198; for Schadow, see: Maaz (2006), Vol. II, pp. 715-718.

to sell his works at half their value, in order to get rid of his studio, the rent of which he had not wherewithal to pay.<sup>341</sup> Troschel is not, Lady Mount Edgcombe suggests, 'one of the first rate artists,' but 'he has made some beautiful things – a very pretty Filatrice Addormentata which he would sell for half its original price, as he can get no tidings of the Russian Princess who ordered it.'<sup>342</sup> Whether out of pity or simply because he recognised a bargain, Albert acquired the statue and gave it to Victoria for her birthday in 1849.

Troschel's statue represents Clotho, youngest of the Three Fates and spinner of the thread of life, sitting languorously asleep on a Greek *klismos* chair, with a spindle and ball of thread lying idle at her feet. Compositionally, it bears a striking resemblance to the antique *Sleeping Ariadne* in the Vatican, while, in terms of subject-matter it echoes a statue of *Die Spinnerin* (1816) by Rudolf Schadow, who, like Troschel, was born in Berlin but spent most of his working life in Rome.<sup>343</sup> Schadow's *Filatrice* holds her left hand aloft and dangles a spindle of thread, with the implication that, by doing so, she is causing time to stand still. Troschel achieved the same conceptual end but portraying his *Filatrice* asleep allowed him to take a very different approach to the representation of the goddess. Her eyes are closed and her head is lapsed to the right, disrupting her otherwise schematic hair, which drapes loosely and indecorously on her right shoulder. The contorted position of the head makes it appear natural that the figure's collar bone protrudes visibly, her chest is taut, her breasts sag and her left arm hangs limply over the back of the chair.

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<sup>341</sup> Caroline Augusta, Lady Mount Edgcombe to Queen Victoria, 23 October 1848: RA/VIC/MAIN/M/50/64.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>343</sup> For the *Sleeping Ariadne*, long identified as a portrait of Cleopatra, see: Haskell & Penny (1981), pp. 184-187.

Troschel's *Filatrice Addormentata* was one of the gifts Victoria received for her thirtieth birthday in May 1849. The others included a portrait of her mother and a double portrait of her and Albert's children, Alfred and Helena – both by the couple's favourite portrait painter, Franz Xaver Winterhalter – and a ruby and diamond locket.<sup>344</sup> As was custom on such occasions, these and Victoria's other gifts were arranged together on and around a 'birthday table.'<sup>345</sup> This bounty of presents was recorded for posterity by the watercolour painter William Corden the Younger (Fig. 2.30). Corden's picture shows Troschel's statue displayed at one end of a festively decorated room, nestled between two gift-laden tables and beneath Winterhalter's two portraits. We know, from the 1876 catalogue, that these are electrotype bronzed reproductions after antique busts in the Vatican of *Corinna*, *Demosthenes* and *Pericles*.<sup>346</sup> They were produced in Rome by Dr Emil Braun, who worked with Elkingtons on the reproduction of antique sculpture and acted as an art agent for Albert.<sup>347</sup> The juxtaposition of these modern reproductions after antique works with a contemporary statue inspired by an antique original reflects Albert's engagement with this imbrication of antique and modern sculpture. Their place in the 'birthday table' ritual reflects the prominence of sculpture in Victoria's and Albert's domestic life at Osborne.

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<sup>344</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1849: 24 May.

<sup>345</sup> Leah Kharibian, *Passionate Patrons: Victoria & Albert and the Arts* (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2010), pp. 54-55.

<sup>346</sup> *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), pp. 262, 429, 430.

<sup>347</sup> Braun was Secretary of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Rome. He guided Albert through the city's antique sculpture collections when the prince visited in 1839. See: Jonathan Marsden, 'Mr Green and Mr Brown: Ludwig Grüner and Emil Braun in the Service of Prince Albert,' in Susanna Avery-Quash (ed.), *Essays From a Study Day Held at the National Gallery, London, on 5 and 6 July 2010*

[http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20\(Marsden\).pdf](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20(Marsden).pdf) consulted 26 October 2013.

The domestication of sculpture at Osborne is exemplified by allegorical portraits of Victoria's and Albert's nine children, executed between 1844 and 1860 by Mary Thornycroft and displayed around the perimeter of the drawing room. Two of them – *Prince Leopold as a Fisher Boy* and *Prince Arthur as a Hunter* – can be seen flanking Troschel's statue in Disdéri's photograph of the billiard room. Some of the remaining seven are visible in his photograph of the drawing room (Fig. 2.31). These series emerged from a portrait of Princess Alice (Fig. 2.32), which was commissioned by Albert as a birthday present for Victoria in 1845. This statue was originally conceived as a portrait of the three-year old offering her mother a nosegay, another family ritual. It was initially placed in the Queen's Sitting Room in Windsor Castle and can be seen in the foreground of an 1844 watercolour of the room by Joseph Nash (Fig. 2.33). In 1846, the portrait was reconstituted, as attested in a letter Thomas Thornycroft wrote to a friend:

Prince Albert has commissioned Mrs Thornycroft to make statues in marble of the four Royal Children. Mrs Thornycroft models the bust and I make the statues. Each of the four statues is to refer to a season in the year. The Princess Royal must represent Summer in the character of a gleaner. The Prince Alfred will carry grapes on his shoulder and preside over the autumnal period. The Prince of Wales wrapt in the shepherd's cloak must watch with his faithful dog his flock during the perils of winter. The statue of the Princess Alice, with some modifications, is to be called Spring.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> HMI/TIIC/TT: 138.

The statues of *The Prince of Wales as Winter* (Fig. 2.34), *The Princess Royal as Summer* (Fig. 2.35) and *Prince Alfred as Autumn* (Fig. 2.36) are all signed by Mary Thornycroft and dated 1846. Albert gave them to Victoria as birthday presents in 1847 and 1848.<sup>349</sup> They were supplemented by statues of *Princess Helena as Peace* (Fig. 2.37) and *Princess Louise as Plenty* (Fig. 2.38), which were modelled in 1856 and given to Victoria by Albert as Christmas presents that year.<sup>350</sup> The *Princess Beatrice in a Nautilus Shell* (Fig. 2.39), was modelled in 1858 and given to Victoria as a Christmas present that year, while the last two, *Prince Arthur as a Hunter* (Fig. 2.40) and *Prince Leopold as a Fisher* (Fig. 2.41), were modelled in 1859 and given to Victoria as Christmas presents in 1859 and 1860 respectively.<sup>351</sup>

A possible precedent for these portraits of Victoria's and Albert's children is a pair of portraits, *Lady Georgiana Russell* and *Lady Louisa Russell*, by Thorvaldsen and Chantrey, commissioned by the 6th Duke of Bedford in 1815 and 1817 respectively (Figs. 2.42-2.43). There are significant stylistic differences between these portraits of the Duke's daughters. Chantrey's portrait of Lady Louisa epitomises what Yarrington has identified as 'a distinctively British form of sculptural neoclassicism, where overt allegory was rejected in favour of a natural simplicity that was seen to be particularly suited to its subject: youthful feminine innocence.'<sup>352</sup> This evocation of natural simplicity is apparent in the portrait of Lady Louisa, who stands on tip-toe, cradling a dove in her hands. This is, the Duke wrote, a portrait of his daughter 'at

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<sup>349</sup> *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), pp. 13-14.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>352</sup> Alison Yarrington, 'The Poetics of Sculpture: Pedestal, Verse and Inscription,' in Alexandra Gerstein (ed.), *Display and Displacement: Sculpture and the Pedestal from Renaissance to Post-Modern* (London: Courtauld Institute of Art Research Forum, 2007), pp. 73-97, p. 73.

the moment when she has taken up her favourite dove, and is pressing it to her bosom: with that natural and pleasing expression of character, which gives to this sculptor's statues of children, a charm and interest, that such subjects never before possessed.<sup>353</sup> By contrast, Thorvaldsen's portrait of Lady Georgiana echoes the pose of a *Venus Pudica*. Yet, regardless of the stylistic differences between Chantrey's embodiment of English innocence and Thorvaldsen's reincarnation of an antique paradigm, both portraits were displayed together in the Sculpture Gallery at Woburn Abbey. There, they were installed in the vestibule of the 'Temple of the Graces,' which the Duke of Bedford had built to house the version of *The Three Graces* that he commissioned from Canova in 1814.<sup>354</sup> When Victoria and Albert visited Woburn in 1841, Victoria wrote about the sculpture gallery, 'which is beautifully arranged, & contains the original group of Canova's 'Three Graces.'"<sup>355</sup> She does not mention the portraits of the Russell daughters but it is probable that she and Albert saw them and it is possible that they inspired the commission for the Thornycroft portraits of the royal children, which are similarly juxtaposed with ideal sculpture, in this case the statues by Tenerani, Troschel and Wyatt displayed in the billiard room.

Whether the arrangement of the Woburn portraits directly influenced the portraits of the royal children in the drawing room at Osborne, there are striking similarities between Chantrey's portrait of *Lady Louisa Russell* and the Thornycroft portrait of *The Princess Alice as Spring*. As we have seen, this statue represented the

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<sup>353</sup> Quoted in *Sir Francis Chantrey 1781-1841: Sculptor of the Great* (exhibition catalogue, National Portrait Gallery, London, 16 January – 15 March 1981, Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield, 4 April 1981 – 17 May 1981), ed. Alex Potts (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1981), p. 31.

<sup>354</sup> John Docwra Parry, *History and Description of Woburn and its Abbey etc. etc.* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green, 1831), p. 248.

<sup>355</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ: 27 July 1841.

three-year old Alice offering a nosegay to her mother before it was altered and reconstituted as an allegory of Spring. This superimposed allegory appears to be a betrayal of the Chantreyan tradition yet it is unlikely that anybody viewing this and the statues of the other royal children in the drawing room would have been fooled by this veil of allegory. The purpose of attributes in allegorical artworks such as these is generally to allow the viewer to identify the subject of the object but, in this case, the attributes borne by each of the children seem to act as a reminder that they are enacting an identity other than their own. Essentially, the children are dressing up.

Dressing up was an important activity in a family that embraced home theatricals.<sup>356</sup> For example, in 1854, the royal children dressed in elaborate costumes and recited lines adapted from James Thomson's epic poem *The Four Seasons* in honour of their parent's wedding anniversary.<sup>357</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that the Thornycroft portraits of the eldest children as the four seasons related to Thomson's poem or that the 1854 recital was related to the statues but it is telling that the four eldest children enacted roles equivalent to their respective statues.<sup>358</sup> It is equally telling that the statues were displayed around the perimeter of the drawing room at Osborne, the social heart of the most domestic of the royal residences. This clearly indicates that sculpture was an integral part of the fabric of the royal family's domestic life and that their patronage of it was, first and foremost, a personal and private expression. Yet, as will be seen in the next section, this private patronage informed Victoria's and Albert's public image.

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<sup>356</sup> See: Marsden (2010), p. 41.

<sup>357</sup> See: Marsden (2010), p. 239.

<sup>358</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1854: 10 February ; for Corbould, see: Marsden (2010), pp. 136-137.

### Part 3: The Public Face of Private Patronage

The sculpture that Victoria and Albert displayed in Osborne was clearly not intended for public consumption. Yet certain aspects of the collection were publicised. For example, the *Venus Anadyomene* that was so elaborately framed in the corridor. Nobody outside the immediate confines of the royal family and the court could see this statue in situ but it was common knowledge that it was bought for Osborne. As previously indicated, Victoria and Albert first saw it when they visited Stowe in 1845. On that occasion, Victoria wrote in her journal: 'Everywhere there are quantities of 'objects d'art,' & some of great value. In one Drawingroom, the walls are decorated in the Pompeian style & there are 2 very fine antiques, which the Duke himself saw dug up, one of which is a beautiful small statue of Venus.'<sup>359</sup>

Three years later, Victoria acquired the statue at the sale of the contents of Stowe and gave it to Albert as a present for his twenty-ninth birthday. That day, she wrote in her journal: 'When we came home another gift of mine had arrived, an antique Venus which Albert had admired so much when we were at Stowe, & which I was fortunate enough to secure in the sale that is taking place.'<sup>360</sup> As we have seen, this typified the formation of the sculpture collection at Osborne. What is exceptional is the way in which this particular acquisition was reported. On 22 August a dozen newspapers reported that Lot 697, 'Venus arranging her hair,' excited great competition in the saleroom and was eventually secured for 157 guineas by Mr Grüner, 'a German connoisseur, who is generally understood to be in the confidence of his Royal Highness the Prince Consort, for whom, it was reported, the purchase

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<sup>359</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1845: 16 January.

<sup>360</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1848: 26 August.

has been made.<sup>361</sup> Subsequently, the *Venus Anadyomene* received special attention in Henry Rumsey Forster's priced and annotated catalogue of the sale. This is perhaps unsurprising, considering the amount of attention it had generated in the media, but the tone of Forster's account of the statue is surprising:

The present Duke of Buckingham, when Marquis of Chandos, during a somewhat lengthened *séjour* in Italy, devoted much time and money to an exploration of the ruins of many of the great temples of antiquity, and brought to light several very remarkable works of art. The above exquisite statue was one of the most beautiful relics thus restored, and its possession was so highly prized by the Duke, that upon arriving in England, after having had the injuries it had sustained by the lapse of ages carefully repaired, it was placed in an alcove prepared for it in the Music-room, where it has since formed one of the most graceful ornaments it is possible to conceive. Her Majesty the Queen, when visiting Stowe, in January, 1845, expressed her admiration of its beauties in very warm terms; indeed, the impression it made upon the mind of the Queen, may be gathered from the fact that, when the melancholy news of the fall of Stowe became known, Her Majesty commissioned Mr Grüner, the well-known German connoisseur, to purchase the statue for her Royal Consort. The lot was put up at 100 guineas, from which sum it rapidly

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<sup>361</sup> 'The Sale at Stowe,' *Morning Post* (22 August 1848), p. 5. See also: 'The Sale at Stowe,' *Morning Chronicle* (22 August 1848), p. 6; 'The Sale at Stowe,' *Times* (22 August 1848), p. 5; 'The Sale at Stowe,' *Glasgow Herald* (25 August 1848), p. 4; 'The Sale at Stowe,' *Examiner* (26 August 1848), p. 6; 'The Sale at Stowe,' *Illustrated London News* (26 August 1848), p. 125; 'The Sale at Stowe,' *Ipswich Journal* (26 August 1848), p. 3; 'The Sale at Stowe,' *Jackson's Oxford Journal* (26 August 1848), p. 3; *The Era* (27 August 1848), p. 12; 'The Sale at Stowe,' *London Journal* (16 September 1848), pp. 18-19, p. 19.

advanced to 150 guineas. The bidding was then confined to Mr Grüner, Mr Norton, Mr Russell, and two or three other gentlemen. At length, the others giving way, the lot was knocked down to Mr Grüner at 157 guineas. A curious story is told of the manner in which the Prince first became acquainted with his possession of the statue. In the *Morning Post* of the day succeeding the sale, the lot was described as purchased by Mr Grüner for Prince Albert. The announcement being observed by the Queen, Her Majesty handed the newspaper to the Prince, and congratulated him on having made so valuable an addition to his collection. His Royal Highness, having taken no step in the matter, expressed his entire ignorance of the affair; upon which the Queen, with great *naïveté*, declared her knowledge of the circumstances, and requested her Royal Consort to accept the work as a birthday present from herself.<sup>362</sup>

The following page of the catalogue is devoted entirely to a woodcut engraving of the statue set within what appears to be a marble niche, with a caption beneath that reads: 'Presented by her Majesty to H.R.H. Prince Albert' (Fig. 2.44).

Forster evidently knew enough to correct previous accounts, which suggested that Grüner had acquired the statue on Albert's behalf rather than Victoria's, but he clearly invented the scene in which Victoria surprises Albert with the acquisition of the statue. Yet, in some ways, Forster's account was surprisingly accurate, not simply because he ascertained that Victoria gave the statue to Albert on his birthday, which

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<sup>362</sup> Forster (1848), p. 44.

she did four days after the sale, but also because he captured some of the domestic intimacy that underpinned the formation of the sculpture collection at Osborne.

It is reasonable to assume that Victoria and Albert did not sanction Forster's vignette of their private life but it is likely that they did approve the dissemination of images in publications such as the *Illustrated London News*. As we have seen, the weekly newspaper regularly published images of the official royal residences, but it rarely published images of Balmoral or Osborne. Those it did publish tended to emphasise their privacy. For example, in October 1855 it published an image of the Balmoral taken from the public road on the opposite side of the River Dee to the residence (Fig. 2.45).<sup>363</sup> It is a measure of the important role sculpture played in the formation of the public image of Victoria's and Albert's private life that the only occasion on which readers were offered a closer look at Balmoral in this period was an article entitled 'Sculptures at Balmoral Palace,' published in September 1856 (Fig. 2.46).<sup>364</sup> This article looks at the marble relief sculpture designed by John Thomas to adorn the residence's granite façade. Balmoral was conceived as a hunting lodge and this is reflected in the central engraving – a foundation stone flanked by hunting dogs, stag horns and spears – and the relief beneath it, representing St Hubert, patron saint of hunters. The inference of intra-national harmony is hard to miss in the figures of St. Andrew and St. George and, more particularly, in the panel above it. It represents the royal family, wearing Highland dress and observing the Stone Put at the annual Highland Games at Braemar.

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<sup>363</sup> For a history of Balmoral, see: Ivor Brown, *Balmoral: The History of a Home* (London: Collins, 1955); David Duff (ed.), *Queen Victoria's Highland Journals* (Exeter: Webb & Bower, 1980), pp. 6-15.

<sup>364</sup> 'Sculptures at Balmoral Palace,' *Illustrated London News* (20 September 1856), p. 306.

As we have seen, Osborne was similarly conceived as a private retreat, where the royal family could live free of the cares of state and trappings of court, and this is how it was represented in the *Illustrated London News*. In the late 1840s and 1850s, the newspaper occasionally published views of Osborne and its grounds. Several of these views are populated with the figures of a couple whom we are clearly supposed to identify as Victoria and Albert (Fig. 2.47) and yet the texts accompanying them repeatedly emphasise that they value Osborne because it allows them to escape from sight. For example, an article published in December 1845 describes it as a 'beautiful and quiet retreat from the cares and toils of State,' while another, published in September 1849, tells us that a private pier near the residence allows the family to avoid 'the crowds of gazers, who are ever on the alert to catch a glimpse of Royalty.'<sup>365</sup> This paradox suggests that Victoria and Albert saw such articles as a means of appeasing and controlling public demand for information about their life at Osborne. It is telling then that, as was the case with Balmoral, those articles which offered readers a closer view of the residence tended to emphasise the place of sculpture within it. For example, illustrations of the *Fountain of Venus* and *Fountain of Andromeda* in the grounds adjacent to the residence were published in August 1853 (Fig. 2.48). The accompanying text tells us that they have just been added to Osborne's 'sculptural embellishment' and that the bronze cast dolphins and *Venus Accroupie* incorporated into the former are the work of Barbedienne, while the bronze statue of *Andromeda* incorporated into the latter are the work of John Bell.<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> 'Osborne House,' *Illustrated London News* (13 December 1845), pp. 376, 381; 'Osborne, Isle of Wight,' *Illustrated London News* (29 September 1849), p. 216.

<sup>366</sup> 'Fountains at Osborne, Isle of Wight,' *Illustrated London News* (27 August 1853), p. 174.

In June 1859, the *Illustrated London News* published a full-page engraving (Fig.2.49) after Leonida Caldesi's photograph, *The Royal Family on the Terrace at Osborne* (Fig. 2.50). The photograph was originally taken on 26 May 1857. That day, Victoria wrote in her journal: 'Were occupied for 2 hours being all photographed, (we & the 9 children) on the Terrace, by Caldissi [sic].'<sup>367</sup> She emphasised the 'all' because the photograph was taken just six weeks after the birth of the couple's youngest child, Beatrice, and six months before their eldest, Victoria, married Prince Frederick William of Prussia and moved to Berlin. Yet, while this family portrait was exceptional, it was clearly supposed to appear ordinary.

A well-known portrait painted by Winterhalter in 1846 and exhibited in public in 1847 (Fig. 2.51) is set in a fictitious majestic setting and portrays the royal family in extravagant outfits. By contrast, Caldesi's portrait shows the family together on an unassuming part of the terrace at Osborne, wearing relatively plain outfits. The import is clear: however extraordinary they are, Osborne is where the family can live an ordinary life. The text accompanying the engraving in the *Illustrated London News* reinforces this by explaining that '[t]hese illustrious persons are represented *en famille*, just as they have been accustomed to assemble on the terraces of her Majesty's delightful marine residence.'<sup>368</sup> It is hardly accidental that this vision of the extraordinary ordinariness of Osborne is staged in front of a zinc bronzed reproduction, manufactured in the Geiss foundry, of a statue of the muse *Urania*.<sup>369</sup> Looming over the carefully staged scene, the statue effectively registers the importance of sculpture in the royal family's life at Osborne.

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<sup>367</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1857: 26 May.

<sup>368</sup> 'The Royal Family at Osborne,' *Illustrated London News* (4 June 1859), pp. 539-540.

<sup>369</sup> *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), p. 426.

While the publication and republication of Caldesi's photograph suggests that Victoria and Albert were willing to appease public demand for details about their life at Osborne, it is telling that the portrait was staged in the grounds. This indicates that the residence itself was out of bounds. Indeed, as we will see later in the thesis, images of Osborne's principal interiors were not published until the last decades of the century. Equally, the family's private apartments in Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle were not exposed to public view until much later in the century. Yet Victoria and Albert did allow some of the sculpture displayed in these interiors to be reproduced as full-page engravings in the *Art Journal*.

This monthly periodical was first published in February 1839 as the *Art-Union* (its title until 1848) under the editorship of the journalist Samuel Carter Hall. Hall has been extensively written about.<sup>370</sup> Yet, to date, his advocacy of contemporary British sculpture has been largely overlooked, despite the fact that sculptors are included in the mission he outlined in the inaugural issue, to 'seek out and place in advantageous lights, Artists who are contending for that reputation, to the achievement of which, circumstances may have placed a barrier not easily over-passed without assistance.'<sup>371</sup> Indeed, in his memoirs, Hall reflects that the state of contemporary British sculpture was particularly deplorable when the *Art-Union* was founded and that there is 'nothing in my past, connected with Art, from which I derive so much happiness as I do from this – that I have been the means of aiding British sculpture.'<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> See: Debra Mancoff, 'Samuel Carter Hall: Publisher as Promoter of the High Arts,' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 24/1 (Spring 1991), pp. 11-21; Hazel Morris, *Hand, Head and Heart: Samuel Carter Hall and the Art Journal* (Norwich: Michael Russell, 2002); Katherine Haskins, *The Art Journal and Fine Art Publishing in Victorian England, 1850-1880* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2012).

<sup>371</sup> 'Introduction,' *Art-Union* (February 1839), p. 1.

<sup>372</sup> Samuel Carter Hall, *Retrospect of a Long Life, From 1815 to 1883* 2 vols. (London: Bentley & Sons, 1883), vol. I, p. 195.

The publication of engravings after pieces of sculpture – generally one in each issue, from February 1847 onwards – was an important part of Hall’s attempt to promote British sculpture and raise the prospects of living British sculptors. In his memoirs, he tells us that this was one of the journal’s greatest successes but that it initially provoked opposition: ‘when I ventured on the issue of ‘statue plates,’ I had numerous warnings that I was ruining the publication; and not once, but several times, a plate of a semi-nude figure, torn through, was sent to me by post, with protests against such attempts to introduce ‘indecentcies’ into families.’<sup>373</sup> Hall does not mention any particular ‘statue plates’ but it is likely that he was referring to one of the six that were published in the journal between February and December 1847. A number of these engravings, which Hall acquired from the publishers of Hervey’s *Illustrations of Modern Sculpture*, were of nude allegorical or mythical figures. For example, the version of Canova’s *Venus Italica* acquired by the Marquis of Lansdowne in 1819 (Fig. 2.52). The engraving of this statue represents it as if it was lit from the right so that the figure’s exposed right breast and the entire right side of her body is illuminated. The sensuousness of the half-nude figure is reinforced in the text accompanying the engraving, which tells us that Canova treated the drapery so artfully that it ‘seems scarcely to conceal the limbs.’<sup>374</sup> In light of accusations that figures such as this were unsuitable for family-viewing, it is hardly coincidental that the next engravings published in the journal were the Thornycroft portraits of the four eldest royal children as *The Four Seasons*, which were published between March and June 1848, beginning with *The Princess Royal as Summer* (Fig. 2.53).

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<sup>373</sup> Ibid., pp. 195-196.

<sup>374</sup> ‘Venus. Canova.’ *Art-Union* (December 1847), pp. 410-411, p. 410.

In some ways, this engraving is typical of the 'statue plates' published in the *Art-Union/Journal* in this period. It occupies an entire page, with an accompanying text in the bottom right-hand corner of the facing page. The engraved image of the statue itself is equally typical. The statue, which we view frontally, is heavily cast in shadow in a manner that animates its otherwise monochrome surface and suggests spatial depth, an illusion reinforced by the niche-shaped frame around the statue. At the bottom right and left of this frame are the names W. Roffe and E. Corbould, which a footnote to the accompanying text tells us are the names, respectively, of the artists who drew the original statue and made an engraving after the drawing. Again, this is typical. However, in other ways, the engraving is treated exceptionally. Its production is attributed to Corbould and Roffe but it is presented, first and foremost, as a product of royal patronage. The statue's base is inscribed 'Summer,' but a caption beneath reads 'The Princess Royal.' The text beneath reads: 'Engraved by gracious permission of the Queen/ From the statue by Mary Thornycroft/ Executed for Her Majesty/ Published exclusively in the Art-Union.' The accompanying text suggests the statue is significant as an artwork and as a royal portrait:

If the print was that of a young country girl, whose name was unimportant, and in whose fate there could be neither sympathy nor interest, it might still be welcomed as a valuable acquisition, for the happy character it portrays [sic], and its excellence as a work of Art; but its worth cannot fail to be largely increased – considered as a portrait of one who is inexpressibly dear to millions.<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> 'Summer. Her Royal Highness, Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa, Princess Royal. From a Statue by Mary Thornycroft.' *Art Journal* (March 1848), p. 72.

It was a wild exaggeration to prophecy that *The Princess Royal as Summer* would be 'dear to millions,' considering the journal had a monthly circulation in the region of 14,000.<sup>376</sup> Rhetoric aside, this suggests that Hall expected the Thornycroft portraits of the royal children to appeal to a broader audience than the previous 'statue plates.' His vision for them is further elucidated in a letter he wrote to William Copeland, co-partner in the Parian ware manufacturer Copeland & Garrett, in September 1847. Hall advised Copeland that the Thornycroft statues of the eldest royal children as *The Four Seasons* would make 'a charming set of statuettes,' and that Mary Thornycroft was considering 'making small copies of them – for sale.' Hall urged Copeland 'to purchase the copyright before she goes any further, for I am sure they will be eagerly grasped at the moment they are seen.'<sup>377</sup> Copeland evidently acted quickly because, the following day, Mary Thornycroft wrote to tell him that she would furnish him 'with a half size model of each of the four statues, and liberty to make porcelain copies of the same: for the sum of two hundred pounds.'<sup>378</sup>

In April 1848, in the issue in which *The Prince of Wales as Winter* (Fig. 2.54) was published, *Art-Union* readers were informed that *The Four Seasons* were 'in the process of reproduction, on a reduced scale, in the statuary porcelain of Mr Copeland.'<sup>379</sup> Again it is suggested that the reproductions will be exceptionally popular because of their dual interest: 'As portraits of lovely and healthy children, they are not to be surpassed; but they are portraits also of children especially dear to millions.' Previous to the publication of the statuettes, we are told, Albert had

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<sup>376</sup> Haskins (2012), p. 69.

<sup>377</sup> Quoted in Robert Copeland, *Parian: Copeland's Statuary Porcelain* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 2007), p. 239.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>379</sup> 'Statuettes of the Royal Children,' *Art-Union* (April 1848), p. 129.

received Copeland at Buckingham Palace; he had 'entered very minutely into the topics which naturally arose out of the manufacture,' and suggested some desirable improvements; expressing his exceeding gratification at the general results.' The article concludes that the statuettes would enjoy 'a popularity so extensive, as to increase the taste for works of the class.'<sup>380</sup>

The August 1848 issue of the *Art-Union* featured an article entitled 'Engravings from Sculptures.'<sup>381</sup> From the earliest times, the article tells us, 'the universal consent of all whose judgement may be considered unquestionable, has assigned the pre-eminence in Art to sculpture.' Sculpture is more susceptible to criticism than painting, because flaws are impossible to hide and easy to see: 'The statue stands before us, naked and unadorned, appealing to our thoughts and sensibilities by that very simplicity which is at once its glory and the test of its truthfulness.'<sup>382</sup> If, as Hall later claimed in his memoirs, the publication of 'statue plates' initially provoked opposition, then it is telling that this strongly-worded defence of sculpture, and the 'statue plate,' was published just two months after an engraving of *Prince Alfred as Autumn* (Fig. 2.55), the last of Thornycroft's *Four Seasons*, was published. This de facto royal endorsement clearly gave Hall license to defy accusations of indecency. In conclusion, the 'Engravings from Sculptures' article informs readers that the *Art-Union* will continue to publish 'statue plates,' in the belief 'that we can present to our readers no more acceptable offering than these beautiful gems of Art,' and that, in time, 'illustrations of all the best modern sculptures may be extensively circulated.'<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

<sup>381</sup> 'Engravings from Sculptures,' *Art Union* (August 1848), p. 249

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

Four years after they were published in the *Art-Union*, a set of engravings after Thornycroft's *Four Seasons* were republished in *The Drawing Room Table-Book*. This volume of engravings after contemporary artworks, each one paired with a poem, was published by Virtue, Hall & Virtue, the firm that published the *Art Journal*.<sup>384</sup> The engravings after the *Four Seasons* are identical to those published in the *Art-Union* four years earlier but here they are paired with poems replete with pastoral imagery. For example, *Princess Alice as Spring* (Fig. 2.56) is paired with a poem that reads:

Sport about her, play and sing,

Let her feel how sweet is Spring.

Bring her garlands wet with dew,

Pansy, periwinkle blue,

Cherry blossom, snowy white,

Wallflower sweet and cowslip bright.

Search with looks intent around,

If a strawberry may be found

Halpy 'neath some hedge to th' south,

Rosy red as her sweet mouth.

Royal Alice in a ring,

Tiny Goddess of the Spring

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<sup>384</sup> *The Drawing Room Table-Book, by the Author of Mary Powell* (London: Virtue, Hall & Virtue, 1852).

The playful tone of the poem belies a serious point. It suggests an alternative, family-friendly, way of viewing sculpture; one characterised by playful recital rather than quiet introspection. Furthermore, this mode of viewing is endorsed by the Queen, who has given her permission for these portraits of her children to be published as engravings and paired with Manning's poems. By implication, Victoria and her family are doing the same with the original statues. Sculpture is thus brought into the drawing room, and it is a drawing room in which your family and the royal family bring Thornycroft's statues to life through recital.

Gibson's statue of *Victoria*, which was published in May 1849 (Fig. 2.57), was one of thirteen pieces of sculpture from the royal couple's collection that was published in the rechristened *Art Journal* between 1849 and 1864.<sup>385</sup> As engravings these pieces are divorced from their specific physical and familial contexts but, collectively, they, and the texts accompanying them, make clear that the royal family are at home with sculpture and that their advocacy of it is of significant import for the sculpture profession. For example, in the article accompanying Gibson's statue, we are told that Victoria commanded the sculptor to produce a portrait 'such as her children should recognise, and calculated for a room in the palace, not for any public institution.'<sup>386</sup> Apart from this stipulation, everything else 'the Queen with excellent sense and taste left to the sculptor, as best understanding the capabilities of his own art.'<sup>387</sup> A footnote reinforces the sense of a harmonious and fruitful relationship between the sculptor and his exalted patron:

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<sup>385</sup> 'John Gibson,' *Art Journal* (May 1849), pp. 139-141.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

Mr Gibson has favoured us with the following remarks respecting his statue of the Queen. 'After an absence of twenty-eight years, I visited England in the summer of 1844. During my stay in London I had the honour of receiving a notice to attend at Windsor, by command of Her Majesty the Queen. His Royal Highness Prince Albert received me most graciously and made known to me that the Queen wished to have her statue executed by me. The bust was modelled at Windsor, and Her Majesty sat every day for ten days. The statue was executed at Rome,' – and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1847. A duplicate of the work is now in progress for the Queen.<sup>388</sup>

The implication here is that Victoria and Albert are personally invested in sculpture and that this is evidenced by its place in their home. This is reiterated in the text accompanying an engraving after Wyatt's *Penelope*, which was published in the *Art Journal* in June 1849.<sup>389</sup> We know from an entry in Victoria's journal that, when Gibson was at Windsor modelling the bust of her portrait statue in 1844, he helped to find an appropriate place for the statue, which was eventually displayed 'before the Drawing room & outside the corridor.'<sup>390</sup> This was within the royal apartments and thus completely off limits to the public. While the *Art Journal* was therefore unable to reveal the statue's specific location, the accompanying text informs us that '[t]he statue of Penelope, which is one of the most graceful works of the sculptor, belongs to her Majesty, and is placed in the private apartments of Windsor Castle.'<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>388</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>389</sup> See: Marsden (2010), p. 149.

<sup>390</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1844: 2 November.

<sup>391</sup> 'Penelope. From the Statue by R.J. Wyatt,' *Art Journal* (June 1849), pp. 184-185, p. 184.

This correlation between the value of a particular piece of sculpture and its location in the royal family's private apartments is echoed in the texts accompanying engravings after Theed's *Psyche* and *Sappho*, which were published in December 1851 and January 1855 respectively. The former of the two texts gently, if obliquely, criticises *Psyche* as 'deficient perhaps in the elegant severity of composition that marks the character of Greek sculpture,' but explicitly suggests that the work is vouchsafed by its location: 'The work is in the possession of the Queen, at Osborne House, a sufficient testimony to its merits.'<sup>392</sup> The text accompanying *Sappho* equates the statue's aesthetic value with its place in the drawing room at Osborne. This statue, we are told, 'stands, with others, in the principal drawing room at Osborne, of which it forms one of the most attractive ornaments amid a number of beautiful pictures and sculptures. The figure is exquisitely modelled, graceful in its posture, the limbs are well rounded and 'fleshy,' yet delicate.'<sup>393</sup> The text goes on to reiterate the journal's indebtedness to its royal endorsement and to relate such endorsement to the prosperity of the sculpture profession as a whole:

Having had the honour of receiving the permission of Her Majesty and Prince Albert to engrave such of the sculptured works in their possession as we consider adapted to our Journal, it will be our duty to let our readers see what royal patronage is doing for this branch of Art. Sculpture has been too long neglected in this country; but, fostered as it is by the highest personages in the realm, we shall expect to see it exalting itself, *pari passu* [on an equal footing] with the Art of Painting.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> 'Psyche. From the Statue, by W. Theed,' *Art Journal* (December 1851), pp. 304-305, p. 304.

<sup>393</sup> 'Sappho. From the Statue by W. Theed,' *Art Journal* (January 1855), pp. 30-31, p. 30.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, considering its explicitly indigenous bias, the *Art Journal* was not so respectful when it came to sculpture commissioned or acquired by the royal couple from foreign sculptors. For example, whereas the position of Theed's *Psyche* in the royal home was posited as sufficient testament to its artistic value, Wolf von Hoyer's *Psyche*, which was situated prominently in the corridor at Osborne, is denied a place in this gallery of greats. The text accompanying an engraving after the statue, which was published in November 1857, reads: 'How or when this statue came into the possession of the Queen, we know not; nor have we been able to get any information concerning the sculptor.'<sup>395</sup> The author evidently had a strategically short memory because von Hoyer, Sculptor-in-Ordinary to the King of Saxony, features in Hawks Le Grice's *Walks Through the Studii of Rome*, which was reviewed in the *Art-Union* in 1846.<sup>396</sup>

By contrast with this disdainful attitude towards Von Hoyer and other foreign sculptors, the *Art Journal* was again fulsome in its praise for works commissioned by the royal couple from Mary Thornycroft. The text accompanying the engraving after *The Princess Helena as Peace*, which was published in November 1861, opens with the suggestion that, were there such a title as 'Sculptor to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty,' Mrs Thornycroft would undoubtedly 'be in possession of 'letters patent' confirmatory of such appointment,' because, while she is not endowed with such a title 'she certainly enjoys all its privileges, inasmuch as the largest portion of the private patronage of royalty seems to fall to her share.'<sup>397</sup> These comments might be

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<sup>395</sup> 'Psyche. From the Statue by W. Von Höyer [sic]. In the Possession of the Queen,' *Art Journal* (November 1857), pp. 334-335, p. 334

<sup>396</sup> 'Art in Continental States,' *Art-Union* (November 1846), p. 307.

<sup>397</sup> 'Peace. (The Princess Helena.) From the Statue by Mrs Thornycroft,' *Art Journal* (November 1861), pp. 344-345, p. 344.

read as facetious but the text goes on to explain that the statue 'is what the representation of a young girl, whether of high or low position, ought to be – an embodiment of the purity and modesty of nature with the purity and modesty of Art-treatment.'<sup>398</sup>

The text accompanying the engraving after *Princess Louise as Plenty*, which was published in December 1861, reiterates the point made with the publication of *The Princess Royal as Summer* thirteen years earlier, that, '[i]ndependently of the interest these works cannot fail to excite as pleasing examples of the sculptured Art, they must be welcome as portraits, and faithful ones too, of children of the most gracious monarch in Christendom.'<sup>399</sup> The last Thornycroft portraits to be published as engravings were *Prince Leopold as a Fisher* and *Prince Arthur as a Hunter*, which were published respectively in April and May 1864. By this time, the picture of domesticity encapsulated in Caldesi's photograph had long been torn apart by Albert's death in December 1861. This change in circumstances is registered in the text accompanying the latter of the two. It repeats the old mantra that, independently of its royal association, the statue 'has a highly pleasing character,' but as a 'faithful portrait of a scion of our royal house, it commends itself to the loyal feelings of a people whose attachment to the throne is no less sincere than it is universal.'<sup>400</sup> The article goes on to suggest that this statue and its companion piece ought to be published on a reduced scale in Parian because 'they could not fail to be highly popular.' Yet, if this appears to harken back to the optimism surrounding the

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> 'Plenty. (The Princess Louise.) From the Statue by Mrs Thornycroft,' *Art Journal* (December 1861), pp. 368-369, p. 368.

<sup>400</sup> 'The Hunter. (H.R.H. Prince Arthur). From the Statue by Mrs Thornycroft,' *Art Journal* (May 1864), pp. 150-151, p. 150.

publication of *The Four Seasons*, then the article concludes on a darker note by reminding readers that portraits of the living eventually accrue value as reminders of the dead: 'Sculptures being more enduring than paintings are so far preferable to the latter, especially when employed as memorials of those occupying a high position: it is, in fact, only through the former art we know the features of those who lived many centuries ago.'<sup>401</sup> This appropriately poignant end to a sequence that had commenced sixteen years earlier, effectively registered that circumstances had changed in the royal home and, as we will see in the next chapter, so too had the royal patronage of contemporary sculpture.

### Conclusion

If the extensive collection at Osborne is, as a whole, indicative of Victoria's and Albert's personal investment in and private enjoyment of contemporary sculpture, then two pieces in it exemplify what happened to the collection after Albert's death. One of these pieces was commissioned by Albert; another for him, but neither was completed when he died. They are: *Psyche* (Fig. 2.58) and *Innocence in Danger* (Fig. 2.59) by Ernst Müller. Müller's father worked for Albert's father in Coburg and it was doubtless thanks to this connection that he secured a place in the schools of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp in 1849 and, two years later, established a studio in Brussels, where Victoria's and Albert's Coburg-born uncle Leopold reigned as King of the Belgians.<sup>402</sup> Albert nurtured Müller's career from an early stage. He purchased a bust, *La Pensive*, signed 'Eduard Müller, aus Coburg,' in 1853 and another, *L'Allegra*, in 1856. Both were, according to the 1876 catalogue, displayed on

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<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

<sup>402</sup> See: Maaz (2006), Vol. I, pp. 409-410.

the first-floor of the Main Wing at Osborne.<sup>403</sup> Albert was evidently impressed with the busts because in 1858 he commissioned the more ambitious statue of *Psyche*.

Like many of the ideal nudes in Osborne, Müller's statue embodies a melodramatic subject from classical mythology. We see Psyche standing, with her right knee resting on a cushioned stool, holding an oil lamp in her left hand and a knife in her right. This is the moment when Psyche attempts to see Cupid, whose face she has never seen, and to kill him, because she believes him to be a hideous monster. When the light reveals Cupid's beauty, Psyche is startled, accidentally wounds herself with one of Cupid's arrows and spills oil from the lamp on his sleeping body. He is woken and when he discovers that she has violated her vow never to see him, he abandons her. Müller's next royal commission, *Innocence in Danger*, is similarly melodramatic. The contorted poses and fleshiness of the two figures evokes Agnolo Bronzino's *Allegory with Venus and Cupid* (c.1540-1550), but, when the group was exhibited at the International Exhibition in 1862, Müller described it as:

A girl kneeling before a little boy, caresses him and kisses him ardently. In her innocence she adores in him only the attractive loveliness of early childhood, and, with open eyes, is insensible to the danger which impends. He, the heart-wakening rogue, treacherously smiling upon her, allows himself to be caressed, while, with the left hand, he loosens the band of pearls which binds her hair, to complete her confidence in him, and conceals, with the right, the dangerous weapon which is to rob her of her peace and rest.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), p. 198.

<sup>404</sup> John Burley Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition, 1862* 3 Vols. (London: Day & Son, 1863), Vol. I, p. 8.

The subjects of the statue and the group – love without trust and the perils of infatuation respectively – were unintentionally appropriate for the tragic circumstances attached to them.

The statue of *Psyche* is signed and dated 1861 but Albert did not see it before he died. On 7 January 1862, just over three weeks after his death, the grief-stricken Victoria wrote in her journal: ‘Went to look at my precious Albert’s Xmas gifts, a beautiful statue of Psyche by Müller ordered some years ago, which is really lovely & a lovely watercolour picture of a girl in an antique dress.’<sup>405</sup> The statue was installed, as we can see in Disdéri’s photograph, in the drawing room at Osborne, next to Troschel’s *Filatrice Addormentata* and Thornycroft’s portraits of *Prince Leopold as a Fisher* and *Prince Arthur as a Hunter*. It was inscribed on the base: ‘Christmas present for the Queen, from the Prince Consort, 1861.’<sup>406</sup> The group of *Innocence in Danger* was completed by 1862 and, as previously indicated, shown at the International Exhibition that summer. At some point thereafter it was installed in the corridor at Osborne. It can be seen in Disdéri’s photograph of the corridor; on the left, second from the end (Fig. 2.20). Unlike the statue of *Psyche*, *Innocence in Danger* is simply inscribed ‘Edward Müller, Roma, 1862,’ but the poignant circumstances attached to it are registered in the 1876 catalogue: ‘Present intended by the Queen for the Prince Consort’s Birthday, 26<sup>th</sup> August 1862, who only saw the photograph of it.’<sup>407</sup>

Müller’s statue and group were the last pieces of modern Roman sculpture to enter the collection at Osborne. This might be seen as evidence that Albert was instrumental in the formation of the collection, that Victoria merely indulged him

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<sup>405</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 7 January.

<sup>406</sup> *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), p. 13.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

while he was alive and lost interest when he died. Yet, the example of Müller's two works – one a gift from Albert to Victoria, the other a gift from Victoria to Albert – indicates that the couple were mutually invested in the collection, that theirs was, as Jonathan Marsden argues, 'a partnership of patronage.'<sup>408</sup> Furthermore, the way in which Albert's death was registered on the surface of *Psyche* and in the catalogue entry for *Innocence in Danger* suggests that, following his death, they were indelibly associated in Victoria's mind with his absence. In short, as a widow, she could not look at the sculpture they had commissioned as a couple in the same way. Yet, as will be seen in the next chapter, while this body of sculpture reminded Victoria of his absence, another body of sculpture helped her to cope with it.

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<sup>408</sup> Marsden (2010), p. 50.

## Chapter 3

### Victoria & the Memorialisation of Albert, 1861-1874

Whitehall, Dec. 15: On Saturday night, the 14<sup>th</sup> inst., at 10 minutes before 11 o'clock, his Royal Highness the Prince Consort departed this life at Windsor Castle, to the inexpressible grief of Her Majesty and of all the Royal family.<sup>409</sup>

Victoria's memorialisation of Albert is legendary but generally little understood. She has long been characterised as the widow who was pathologically incapable of coming to terms with her husband's death. In his biography of Victoria, Strachey tells us that '[s]he herself felt that her true life had ceased with her husband's, and that the remainder of her days upon earth was of a twilight nature – an epilogue to a drama that was done.'<sup>410</sup> Strachey paints a picture of a woman frozen in time by the force of her grief. At Windsor, he tells us, Victoria preserved Albert's rooms as a 'holy shrine,' by commanding that nothing be changed or moved and that 'her husband's clothing should be laid fresh, each evening, upon the bed, and that, each evening, the water should be set ready in the basin, as if he were still alive.'<sup>411</sup>

It is unclear whether this 'incredible rite,' as Strachey calls it, was religiously enacted on a daily basis; his source is described simply as 'Private information.' Yet, whether it is true or not, it has since become a defining image of the widow Victoria. For example, in 1965 the anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer illustrated a type of

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<sup>409</sup> *London Gazette Extraordinary* (15 December 1861).

<sup>410</sup> Strachey (1921), p. 222.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

‘unlimited mourning,’ which he labelled ‘mummification,’ by referring to Victoria, ‘who not only preserved every object as Prince Albert had arranged them, but continued the daily ritual of having his clothes laid and his shaving water brought.’<sup>412</sup> Since then, anthropologists and bereavement psychologists have similarly pointed to the ‘incredible ritual’ as proof of Victoria’s chronic grief, while the historian of Victorian cultures of mourning Pat Jalland uses it to substantiate her claim that Victoria was ‘quite literally crippled with grief.’<sup>413</sup>

Whatever the validity of Strachey’s claim, the image of the ‘incredible ritual’ has since been accepted as proof of Victoria’s inability to move beyond bereavement. This has conditioned scholarly perceptions of Victoria’s relationship with the memorial sculpture she commissioned. This is exemplified in Darby’s and Smith’s analysis of Victoria’s principal commissions. The memorialisation of Albert, they argue, became ‘a sort of religion’ for Victoria, who ‘buried herself amidst memorials of him – some simple and touching, some breathtakingly extravagant.’<sup>414</sup> To suggest that Victoria’s memorialisation of Albert was not simply self-denial, but suicide – that she was buried alive in memorials to her dead husband – implies that her relationship with the memorial sculpture she commissioned was aberrant and static, a view echoed more recently by the historian Helen Rappaport, who describes Victoria as ‘the chief votary’ of the cult of the Prince Consort.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> Geoffrey Gorer, *Death, Grief and Mourning in Contemporary Britain* (Salem NH: Ayer, 1965)

<sup>413</sup> Colin Murray Parkes & Robert Weiss, *Recovery From Bereavement* (New York: Basic, 1983), pp. 129-130; Esther Schor, *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 232; Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 319-320; John Archer, *The Nature of Grief: The Evolution and Psychology of Reaction to Loss* (London & New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 169-170.

<sup>414</sup> Darby & Smith (1983), p. 1, 20.

<sup>415</sup> Helen Rappaport, *Magnificent Obsession: Victoria, Albert and the Death that Changed the Monarchy* (London: Hutchinson, 2011), p. 145.

This chapter examines Victoria's principal memorial sculpture commissions, not in order to re-diagnose her grief but to form a clearer picture of her relationship with particular pieces of sculpture and how this evolved in the decade after Albert's death. This allows us to clearly understand the relationship between the sculpture Victoria and Albert commissioned in the 1840s and 1850s, Victoria's memorial sculpture commissions in the 1860s, and the sculpture she commissioned from the 1870s onwards. Victoria's memorialisation of Albert represented a new phase in the royal patronage of contemporary sculpture but it was not a complete departure. Albert's death may have changed the way Victoria looked at the sculpture they had collected together but, when she began formulating plans to memorialise him in the days and weeks after his death, she turned to sculptors whom they had employed as a couple. In doing so, she drew upon her lengthy experience of interacting with sculptors and living with sculpture. A letter from Victoria to her daughter in Berlin, written on 23 December 1861, less than ten days after Albert's death, reveals Victoria's confidence as a patron:

You have his mind & therefore I long so to have you by & by with me to help me in all my gt plans for a Mausoleum (wh I have chosen the place for at Frogmore), for Statues, for Monuments &c – Mr Grüner is sent for – to help and advise – Winterhalter is here; Marochetti is here & is to do a sleeping statue – There is a group of us together & also one in Highland dress for Balmoral.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Victoria to the Crown Princess of Prussia, 23 December 1861: RA/VIC/ADDU32/23 Dec 1861.

Victoria implored her daughter's aid and summoned Grüner to help and yet she was clearly able to act independently and decisively to formulate various projects. These included three of her most ambitious memorial sculpture commissions: recumbent statues of her and Albert, by Marochetti, to surmount the joint tomb in the mausoleum she commissioned specially for them; a life-size marble group of them together by Theed; and a statue of Albert in Highland dress, also by Theed, versions of which were commissioned in marble and bronze for Balmoral.

Victoria's relationship with sculpture after Albert's death was not a completely new departure, but it did change. The language she used in the letter to her daughter, written on the day of Albert's funeral, is an early indication of her heightened emotional investment in sculpture.<sup>417</sup> Though not without foundation, this intense engagement was different. Her brief journal entries often make it difficult to know how much she was involved with the sculpture that she and Albert commissioned together. With these memorial sculpture commissions there is no doubt. As will be seen, Victoria was actively involved in the production of a significant quantity and variety of memorial sculpture and formed an intense attachment to much of it. Yet it is important to recognise that the initial fervour of her relationship with these pieces of memorial sculpture abated, though it was never entirely extinguished. Her investment in these works endured long beyond the initial period of bereavement but her relationship with them evolved over time. Far from using them as a means of escaping the reality of Albert's death, she used them to confront and negotiate it on a personal and on a political level.

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<sup>417</sup> For Albert's funeral, which, according to royal protocol, Victoria did not attend, see: John Wolffe, *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 200-202.

This chapter is divided into three parts, which focus on the work of Theed, Marochetti and Triqueti respectively. All three had previously been employed by Victoria and Albert and there are many important parallels between the work they produced before and after Albert's death. Yet there are also important differences. In scale, situation and, to a certain extent style, the memorial sculpture they executed for Victoria was a new body of work. As a project and as an object, this new body of memorial sculpture helped Victoria to cope with the trauma of Albert's unexpected and premature death and to gradually adapt to his loss. It also helped her to renegotiate her public image in his absence.

In Theed's case, the sculpture he produced in the period immediately after Albert's death, beginning with the prince's death mask, helped Victoria to confront the traumatic suddenness of her husband's demise. In the longer term, Theed's memorial sculpture works, including the 'group of us together' and the 'one of Albert in Highland dress,' became an important part of the public face of Victoria's monarchy. Similarly, the 'sleeping statue' by Marochetti, which Victoria referred to in her letter, helped her to cope and adapt in private and, in turn, informed the way she represented herself and was perceived in public. By comparison with Theed and Marochetti, Triqueti had not been extensively employed by Victoria and Albert and it was not until 1864 that Victoria commissioned him to design a sculpture programme for the Albert Memorial Chapel in St George's Chapel Windsor. This, the jewel in Victoria's memorialisation of Albert, was supposed to allow the public to mourn him as she did in private, but by the time it was complete, in 1874, there was little public interest in it. By then, the lustre of Victoria's patronage of sculpture had been irreparably tarnished.

## Part 1: Theed

Mr Theed has been honoured with sittings by Her Majesty the Queen, to complete the model of his historical group of the Queen and Prince Consort for Windsor Castle.<sup>418</sup>

In a letter to one of Victoria's ladies-in-waiting, written in January 1863, Theed reminisced about 'having during a long period enjoyed the great privilege of receiving the condescending commands of His Royal Highness, and during the progress of many important works experienced his profound knowledge of the beautiful in sculpture and the refined taste that accompanied his most useful remarks.'<sup>419</sup> The tone of this letter is typical of Theed's correspondence with officials in the Royal Household, in which he frequently emphasised Albert's role in the design and execution of various sculptural commissions. Ultimately, it is difficult to know how much Theed actually valued Albert's input and advice but, even allowing for the courtesies of the courtier, the sculptor does appear to have established a genuinely fruitful working relationship with the prince.

Victoria and Albert first acquired Theed's work in 1847 when, on Gibson's recommendation, they purchased his life-size white marble statues *Psyche* and *Narcissus*, which were displayed in the ground floor corridor at Osborne.<sup>420</sup> Over the course of the following fifteen years, Theed played a role in the general care and management of the royal couple's sculpture collection. In March 1857, he was paid

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<sup>418</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (29 April 1863), p. 9.

<sup>419</sup> Theed to Katherine Bruce, 6 January 1863: RA/VIC/MAIN/R/4/4.

<sup>420</sup> *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), pp. 173, 186.

£66 to clean and varnish sculpture at Osborne, including Henning's bas-reliefs after the Parthenon friezes.<sup>421</sup> In May 1860 he was paid £70 to take a mould, produce a cast and execute a replacement marble copy of a discoloured bust of *Queen Anne* by Michael Rysbrack (c.1738) for Windsor.<sup>422</sup> In February 1862, he was paid £12 to reduce the plinth of Wyatt's *Nymph of Diana* in the Billiard Room at Osborne, which he described in a letter to the Keeper of the Privy Purse as 'certainly the most nervous undertaking I ever attempted.'<sup>423</sup> In addition to these largely mechanical tasks, Theed was also entrusted with a number of ambitious commissions.

As already noted, Theed was commissioned to execute relief panels in the Prince's Chamber of the House of Lords and a programme of figurative sculpture for the new State Rooms in Buckingham Palace. In 1858, he was commissioned to execute an extensive sculptural programme for the grounds of Wellington College in Berkshire. This school had been established under Albert's auspices as a memorial to the Duke of Wellington, after his death in 1852, to educate the sons of officers killed in action. Theed's sculptural programme consisted of nine statues and twenty seven busts, modelled by Theed and electrocast by Elkingtons, of some of the most prominent allied commanders and statesmen of the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>424</sup> Also in 1858, Theed was commissioned to execute four bas-reliefs, representing *The Acts of Mercy*, for a memorial in St George's Chapel Windsor to Victoria's aunt Mary, Duchess of Gloucester.<sup>425</sup> Theed's most substantial memorial commission before

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<sup>421</sup> Theed to Phipps, 20 March 1857: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/21/7423.

<sup>422</sup> Theed to Phipps, 23 May 1860: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/43/625.

<sup>423</sup> Theed to Phipps, 19 October 1861: RA/ RA/PPTO/PP/QV2/58/3061.

<sup>424</sup> See: Mark Baker, *So Noble a Work: The Story of the Statues and Busts Made for Wellington College (1858-1862)* (Crowthorne, Berks.: Wellington College, 1979).

<sup>425</sup> Shelagh M. Bond (ed.), *The Monuments of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle* (Windsor: Oxley, 1958), pp. 137-138.

Albert's death was a life-size, freestanding white marble portrait statue of the Duchess of Kent, Victoria's mother, who died on 16 March 1861. By this time it had become an established tradition that members of the royal family were interred in a vault beneath St George's Chapel, designed by James Wyatt for George III in the first decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>426</sup> The Duchess of Kent broke with this tradition. In 1859, she commissioned the architect Albert Jenkins Humbert to design a mausoleum for her in the grounds of Frogmore House, her home on the Windsor estate (Fig. 3.1).<sup>427</sup> The mausoleum Humbert designed for the Duchess of Kent is spread over two levels. The lower level, housing the Duchess's remains, consists of a heavily rusticated chamber built into the sides of a man-made mound, while the upper level consists of a circular, domed Doric pavilion, with Theed's statue of the Duchess as its centrepiece.

Theed's portrait of the Duchess is chiefly characterised by a precise rendering of costume and accessories (Fig. 3.2) and it was likely based on a full-length oil portrait of her that was painted by Winterhalter in 1843. Like Winterhalter, Theed portrayed the Duchess wearing what appears to be a silk dress elaborately fringed with lace, which frames her chest and accentuates her intricately modelled jewellery – a diamond and pearl brooch, a two-string pearl necklace, and a Royal Family Order on her right breast.<sup>428</sup> The Duchess stands holding a rose in her left hand and leaning against a half-column adorned with bas-relief profile portraits and the heraldic

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<sup>426</sup> St John Hope (1913), Vol. II, p. 485.

<sup>427</sup> *The Royal Windsor Guide: A Comprehensive History and Description of the Castle, St George's Chapel, Eton College, Virginia Water, the Royal Parks and Every Object of Interest in the Town and Neighbourhood* (Windsor: S. Collier, 1868), p. 70.

<sup>428</sup> The Family Order is a portrait of the monarch set in diamonds and suspended from a ribbon. It is traditionally awarded by the sovereign to members of the royal family.

devices of her first and second husbands, the Duke of Leiningen and the Duke of Kent, Victoria's father (Fig. 3.3). The near mimetic realism of these details accentuates the fleshy corporeality of the Duchess's face, which was based on a bust that Theed began working on just five days after her death (Fig. 3.4).<sup>429</sup> The sculptor presumably worked from this bust when he modelled a reduced size clay model of the statue, which he asked Albert to inspect in June 1861.<sup>430</sup> That October Theed reported great progress on the plaster model but the statue itself was not finally completed and installed until 1864.<sup>431</sup> A report in the *Times* indicates that on 16 March 1864, the third anniversary of the Duchess's death, Victoria visited the mausoleum 'where the statue of her Royal Highness (a cast shortly to be replaced in marble) was uncovered.'<sup>432</sup> Though not completed until long after Albert's death, this commission clearly established Theed in Victoria's eyes as a reliable memorial sculptor, which explains why he was summoned to Windsor on the evening of Albert's death to cast his death mask and take casts of his hands (both untraced in the Royal Collection).<sup>433</sup>

Albert's doctors had only belatedly become aware of the severity of his condition and, as late as the day before his death, told Victoria that there was hope for a recovery. Yet, the effects of the bowel condition that killed him were evidently apparent for a number of weeks beforehand.<sup>434</sup> During this period, Victoria described the steady deterioration of Albert's body in daily letters to her daughter in Berlin. Six days before he died, Victoria wrote: 'it is all like a bad dream! To see him prostrate &

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<sup>429</sup> 'Items of Expenses incurred by command of Her Majesty the Queen and HRH The Prince Consort': RA/PPTO/PP/QV2/58/3061.

<sup>430</sup> Theed to Phipps, 6 June 1861. RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/51/1992.

<sup>431</sup> Theed to Phipps, 10 October 1861: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/58/3061.

<sup>432</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (18 March 1864), p. 12.

<sup>433</sup> Theed later submitted an expenses claim for himself and two assistants to travel to Windsor on 14 December 1861: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/58/3061.

<sup>434</sup> For information on Albert's condition see: Rappaport (2011), pp. 249-60.

worn & weak, & unable to do anything & never smiling hardly – it is terrible.<sup>435</sup> Three days later, she wrote: ‘he gets sadly thin. It is a dreadful trial to witness this.’<sup>436</sup> Four days after Albert died, Victoria described the sight of his corpse: ‘I saw him twice on Sunday – beautiful as marble – & the features so perfect tho’ grown very thin. He was surrounded with flowers. I did not go again. I felt I rather (as I knew He wished) keep the impression given of life & health than have this one sad tho’ lovely image imprinted too strongly on my mind!’<sup>437</sup>

Victoria’s desire to remember Albert’s healthy body and her fear that it would be supplanted in her mind by the memory of his corpse was echoed in an article entitled ‘Mask of the Prince,’ published in the *Art Journal* in February 1862:

It is understood that Mr Theed was permitted to take a mask after the death of the Prince Consort. We hope it will be in no way multiplied. There are so many admirable likenesses of his Royal Highness – portraits and busts – which preserve remembrance of him in his manly grace and strength, that we should be sorry to be made familiar with his features after a lingering illness. Masks are desirable only when there has been no other opportunity of aiding our memory of the dead.<sup>438</sup>

This echoes a view held by Albert, as told to Victoria by her daughter a week after the Prince’s death: ‘I will think of you and of what Papa said to me when I spoke to him, and of the form left to us when the soul fled; he said, ‘this is not the human

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<sup>435</sup> Victoria to the Crown Princess of Prussia, 8 December 1861: RA/VIC/ADDU32/8 Dec 1861.

<sup>436</sup> Victoria to the Crown Princess of Prussia, 11 December 1861: RA/VIC/ADDU32/11 Dec 1861.

<sup>437</sup> Victoria to the Crown Princess of Prussia, 18 December 1861: RA/VIC/ADDU32/18 Dec 1861.

<sup>438</sup> ‘Mask of the Prince,’ *Art Journal* (February 1862), p. 61.

being.<sup>439</sup> Victoria evidently wanted to follow this maxim and yet she clung jealously to the death mask. Six weeks after Albert died, she wrote to her daughter: 'Baron Marochetti has made a sketch for the monument in the Mausoleum, & is now modelling the Head here, as I won't allow that sacred Cast (wh I never have seen, & dare not look at, as I know beloved Papa disliked it) to go out of the House.'<sup>440</sup> Victoria's desire to see the corpse but remember the healthy body, and to guard the death mask but not see it, reflects her conflicting emotions in the weeks and months immediately following Albert's death. As she repeatedly and vehemently stressed in her journal and in letters to her daughter, she took comfort in the knowledge that Albert's suffering was at an end and that he was in a peaceful afterlife, and yet she was traumatised by the reality of his physical absence.<sup>441</sup> It is telling that, in this early stage of bereavement, Victoria found solace in a bust by Theed that was based on the form of the death mask but bore no traces of death .

Three days after Albert's death, Lady Eastlake wrote in her journal: 'Theed has been here to-day; he was summoned to Windsor to take a cast. He says the face was peaceful, all but lines of suffering around the mouth.'<sup>442</sup> Like most practicing sculptors, Theed was likely familiar with casting death masks but casting the death mask of his principal patron, whose death at the age of forty two was unexpected, must have been an exceptional experience. The night of Albert's death was the beginning of an intense period of production for Theed. Just over two weeks after

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<sup>439</sup> Roger Fulford (ed.), *Dearest Mama: Letters Between Queen Victoria and the Crown Princess of Prussia, 1861-1864* (London: Evans Bros., 1968), pp. 24-26.

<sup>440</sup> Victoria to the Crown Princess of Prussia, 27 January 1861: RA/VIC/ADDU32/27 Jan 1862.

<sup>441</sup> Darby & Smith (1983), p. 3.

<sup>442</sup> Charles Eastlake Smith (ed.), *The Journals and Correspondence of Lady Eastlake* 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1895), Vol. II, p. 164.

Albert's death, he claimed expenses for travelling to Osborne, with three assistants, 'to submit sketches and model bust of the Prince Consort' presumably based on the death mask.<sup>443</sup> On 23 January 1862 he charged £16, 16s for eight pair of the casts of Albert's hands and, on 1 February, £3, 3s for an initial cast of his first posthumous bust of the prince.<sup>444</sup> On 19 March he was paid £70 for '[o]ne of the marble busts of the Prince Consort,' another £70 for a bust intended as a present for the Prince of Wales, £9, 9s for three plaster casts of the bust, and a further £12, 12s for four casts of the bust, intended as presents for unspecified recipients. He was also paid £37 16s for two pairs of Albert's hands in marble, and £6, 6s for three pairs in plaster.<sup>445</sup> A bill dated June 1862, indicates that he was still making alterations to a version of the bust in April 1862; while he was paid for a marble bust in March 1862, in the same month he was paid 9s, 6d to travel to Windsor 'to submit [a] plaster bust' and £1, 7s, 4d to make 'alterations in the bust,' and, in the following month he was paid £13, 19s, 3d to travel to Osborne with two assistants 'to remodel and mould portions of the bust.'<sup>446</sup>

To some extent, Theed's first posthumous bust of Albert was a composite of earlier portraits (Fig. 3.5). The sculptor had executed a bust of Albert in 1858 (Fig. 3.6), which Victoria described to her daughter as 'a beautiful bust of dear Papa – the best done yet.'<sup>447</sup> This bust, chiefly characterised by an arrangement of drapery over the right shoulder, is itself similar to a bust of the prince by Marochetti (Fig. 3.7),

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<sup>443</sup> 'Items of Expenses incurred by command of Her Majesty the Queen and HRH The Prince Consort': RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/58/3061.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>445</sup> 'Analysis of Mr Theed's bill paid March 19<sup>th</sup> 1862': RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/58/3061.

<sup>446</sup> 'Works executed by Command of Her Majesty the Queen,' 10 June 1862: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/61/3577.

<sup>447</sup> Victoria to the Crown Princess of Prussia, 18 December 1858: RA/VIC/ADDU32: 18 Dec 1858.

completed in 1849, and a bust of him by Wolff (Fig. 3.8), which Victoria presented to the King of the French in 1845. In terms of the treatment of Albert's face, there are some subtle differences between these earlier busts and Theed's posthumous bust: Albert looks straight ahead, by contrast with the 1858 bust, in which his head is inclined slightly to the right, and the definition of the facial muscles and the jawbone is less defined in the posthumous bust than it is in the earlier portraits. Otherwise, there is little difference between the features of the posthumous bust and the earlier portraits, apart from the fact that Albert is represented bare-chested. The only other bare-chested portrait of him is Wolff's 1839 bust (Fig. 3.9).

Wolff's bust was an engagement present from Albert to Victoria in October 1839. At the time, she had only met Albert twice but she was entranced by him. She described him in a letter as 'excessively handsome,' and when they were engaged, three days later, she wrote in her journal: 'he is perfection; perfection in every way – in beauty – in everything!'<sup>448</sup> Albert spent the period between their engagement and their marriage in Germany. During this time, Wolff's bust seems to have helped satisfy Victoria's desire for her fiancé's physical presence. In December 1839 she wrote: 'The bust by Wolfe [sic] is already mine, & on its road; Albert kindly promised I shd have it, & gave orders for its being sent to him, more than a month ago.'<sup>449</sup> At the time of Albert's death, the bust was displayed in Victoria's private sitting room in Windsor, not far from the room where he died. Theed may have consulted it when designing his posthumous bust. Whether he did or not, the bust he produced functioned similarly as a physical surrogate for the absent Albert.

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<sup>448</sup> Quoted in Marsden (2010), p. 5; RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1839: 15 October.

<sup>449</sup> Victoria to Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Victoria paid close attention to the progress of Theed's posthumous bust. Like Marochetti, he was required to model the bust at Osborne, where Victoria visited the space where he was working on a daily basis. On 4 January 1862, she reported that Theed was 'making a beautiful bust of my beloved Albert, which will be very like.'<sup>450</sup> On 8 January she described the work-in-progress as 'quite beautiful.'<sup>451</sup> Her journal entry on 9 January suggests how distraught she was and how much comfort the steadily progressing bust provided her: 'Not a good night & so wretched on waking. Still always breakfast in bed, & see Dr Jenner when dressed. Impossible to get out. Went down to see the bust which is a perfection [sic], really a 'chef d'oeuvre.' The expression is admirable.'<sup>452</sup> The following day she 'Saw the bust finished' and several weeks later, she wrote to her daughter:

Theed's bust is life itself. I have a cast in my room & when I go to my Dressing room at night, I go first to kiss it, & it feels so like all we loved & love! The dear hand too, I have put near my bedside & when I can't rest - & the agony of desolation is at its height I lay hold of it, & clasp it, & it soothes me.<sup>453</sup>

This candid account of Victoria's interaction with the bust in the privacy of her dressing room clearly indicates the degree to which it helped her to negotiate the reality of Albert's death, without fixating on the memory of his corpse, in the early stages of her bereavement.

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<sup>450</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 4 Jan.

<sup>451</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 8 Jan.

<sup>453</sup> Victoria to the Crown Princess of Prussia, 27 January 1862: RA/VIC/ADDU32/27 Jan 1862.

As time moved on, Victoria's relationship with Theed's bust evolved, as indicated by its installation in the Blue Room in Windsor Castle, the room in which Albert died. Victoria left Windsor for Osborne five days after Albert's death.<sup>454</sup> Four days later, she told her daughter that she intended to 'dedicate the [Blue] room to him not as a Sterbe Zimmer [death chamber] – but as a living, beautiful monument.'<sup>455</sup> She returned to the subject again four days later: 'The sacred room is to be dedicated to Him – & I wish it to be very beautiful & put some Raphaels on China perhaps into it – & Busts &c.'<sup>456</sup>

According to her journal, the day after Victoria returned to Windsor in March 1862, she went to the Blue Room and found her eldest daughters, covering the two beds which stood in the centre of the room with flowers.<sup>457</sup> The following day she wrote: 'I go constantly to the dear Blue Room, which soothes me [...]. The beautiful marble bust has been placed in the Blue Room, between the 2 beds.'<sup>458</sup> We can see the bust in a watercolour view of the room painted by William Corden in 1864 (Fig. 3.10). It stands, nestled in a floral wreath, on a polished marble pedestal, between the two beds. The beds are decorated with crosses covered with flowers and palm branches, which traditionally symbolise the victory, in death, of spirit over flesh. The import is clear: the bust that was modelled after Albert's death mask not only represents him as he was when he was alive but also embodies his enduring spirit in death. In short, it signifies the presence of the absent Albert.

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<sup>454</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (21 December 1861), p. 9.

<sup>455</sup> Victoria to the Crown Princess of Prussia, 23 December 1861: RA/VIC/ADDU32/23 Dec 1861.

<sup>456</sup> Victoria to the Crown Princess of Prussia, 27 December 1861: RA/VIC/ADDU32/27 Dec 1861.

<sup>457</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 7 Mar.

<sup>458</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 8 Mar.

From March 1862 onwards, Theed's posthumous busts of Albert began to feature prominently in private and public images of Victoria and her family. In that month Victoria's son, Alfred, took five photographs of her and her daughter, Alice, sitting in front of Theed's 1859 bust of Albert (Fig. 3.11). The bleak winter landscape in the background and the severe mourning clothes worn by both women make this one of the most sombre images of Victoria's widowhood. One photograph in particular stands out (Fig. 3.12). It shows Alice sitting staring at the camera with Victoria sitting beside her, staring at the bust. This photograph, which was never published in Victoria's lifetime, has since featured in numerous accounts of her mourning.<sup>459</sup> For example, Roger Taylor describes it as 'perhaps the most poignant of these memorial photographs, and there were a great many.'<sup>460</sup> Homans describes Victoria's pose as one 'of extravagant, upward-turning devotion,' while James Stevens Curl is doubtless referring to the photograph when he writes: 'Victoria's long seclusion, mourning and the historic poses she adopted in photographs taken of her gazing adoringly at images of the dead Prince were not normal.'<sup>461</sup>

Alfred's photograph seems to epitomise what has been described as Victoria's excessive and aberrant grief. Yet, none of those who have used or discussed the image have acknowledged its singularity. Theed's busts of Albert featured in numerous portraits of Victoria in the 1860s but this is the only one in which she actually looks at one of them.

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<sup>459</sup> It appears, though it is not referred to, in: Elizabeth Longford, *Victoria R.I.* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964), fig. 32; Darby & Smith (1983), fig. 7; Christopher Hibbert, *Queen Victoria: A Personal History* (London: Harper Collins, 2000), pp. 222-223; Kharibian (2010), fig. 32.

<sup>460</sup> Roger Taylor, 'Introduction: Royal Patronage and Photography, 1842-1910,' in Frances Dimond & Roger Taylor (eds.), *Crown and Camera: The Royal Family and Photography, 1842-1910* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 25.

<sup>461</sup> Homans (1998), p. 172; James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2000), p. 229.

This apparent reluctance to look at busts of Albert, or to be seen doing so, is equally evident in the first official image of Victoria published after his death, a photograph of her with Alfred and Alice taken by the Windsor photographer William Bambridge in March 1862 (Fig. 3.13). The photograph shows Victoria sitting, staring at a photograph of Albert, while Alice kneels at her feet and Alfred stands behind her. Theed's posthumous bust, again nestled in flowers, stands on a white pedestal to the right of them. The pristine white bust on its matching pedestal is an imposing presence in the space and yet it is turned away from the mournful trio and none of them are actually looking at it. This implies that Albert is absent in body, which is why Victoria and her children are mourning him and looking at a photograph of him, but present in spirit and that his spirit is, as it was in the Blue Room, embodied by Theed's bust. The publication of this photograph is an indication of the way in which Victoria used Theed's bust of Albert to signify her loss. Albert's present absence was similarly represented in two more portraits from this period but here it was signified by a second version of Theed's posthumous bust (Fig. 3.14).

It is unclear exactly when this second version was commissioned; it is described in a July 1862 letter from Theed simply as the 'bust of HRH the Prince Consort with shoulder.'<sup>462</sup> Essentially, it was a composite of the 1859 bust and the first posthumous bust. The features are similar to those of the latter but the chest is draped over one shoulder in a manner similar to the 1859 bust. This drapery is fastened on the right shoulder with a brooch decorated with a cameo of Victoria and ornamented with a fringe bearing the heraldic device of Albert's native Saxony.

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<sup>462</sup> Theed to Biddulph, 18 July 1862: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/63/3934.

This second version of Theed's posthumous bust of Albert featured in an unfinished oil painting, *In Memoriam*, by Joseph Noel Paton (Fig. 3.15), which was commissioned in February 1863 but abandoned the following March.<sup>463</sup> The unfinished work portrays Victoria and five of her children. Victoria is sitting at her desk, while Beatrice kneels at her feet, staring up at her. Louise and Helena, somewhat awkwardly posed, stand behind Victoria while, in front of her desk, Arthur stands with his arms draped around a green marble pedestal surmounted by the second version of Theed's posthumous bust of Albert. Alice and Leopold are crouched on the other side of the pedestal. The bust towers over the family group but here, as in the Bambridge photograph, none of them are actually looking at it. Even Arthur, with his arms draped around its base, looks at his mother rather than at the bust. We know, from an 1867 photograph by Disdéri, that a version of Theed's bust was situated to the right of Victoria's desk in her sitting room in Windsor, which suggests that Paton intended to depict the room as it really was. This realism is clearly important in a painting that was supposed to demonstrate that, while she had disappeared from public life, Victoria was balancing the duties of motherhood and monarchy and that she was guided by, but not fixated upon, Albert's enduring presence.

A similar import is evident in an oil portrait of Victoria by Alfred Graefle (Fig. 3.16), which was completed in 1864 and published as an engraving in the same year.<sup>464</sup> It portrays Victoria wearing her by-then hallmark widows' weeds and white bonnet. Her regal station is hinted at by the ermine draped on the chair behind her

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<sup>463</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1863: 25 Feb; Fulford (1968), p. 315.

<sup>464</sup> Oliver Millar (ed.), *The Victorian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 81.

and her ribbon and diamond-encrusted badge of the Garter but, otherwise, the portrait is melancholic rather than majestic. Victoria rests her head on one hand, holds a cloth handkerchief in the other, and looks meditative and sombre. By contrast with Paton's realistic setting, Graefle portrays her in front of a nondescript, stage-like background. Yet the implications are equally real. Sitting on a table behind her are a red ministerial box and Theed's second posthumous bust of Albert. Again the import is clear: Victoria continues to mourn but the business of monarchy continues and in this she is guided by but not obsessed with Albert's absent presence.

The centrality of the two posthumous busts in these portraits is a measure of the degree to which Victoria's public image was informed by her personal relationship with Theed's memorial sculpture, at a time when she appeared in public as little as possible. This is further evinced in a number of Theed's other works.<sup>465</sup> For example, the statue of Albert in Highland dress that was originally commissioned in marble within weeks of his death (Fig. 3.17). This statue portrays Albert wearing a kilt, sporran and an evening jacket accompanied by the sash and star of the Order of the Thistle. He is standing, with one hand resting on the barrel of a rifle, the other petting a dog, which is kneeling at his feet. Both in terms of the particularities of costume and the general air of masculine strength it conveys, the statue was likely inspired by a watercolour, *Evening at Balmoral* (1854), by Carl Haag, in which Albert proudly displays the gruesome fruits of a day's hunting – the bodies of three stags – to Victoria and the Prince of Wales (Fig. 3.18).<sup>466</sup> In a measure of Theed's productivity

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<sup>465</sup> For a full list of Theed's busts and statues of Albert see Hardy, Roscoe & Sullivan (2009), pp. 1238-1243, nos. 32, 68, 71, 72, 76, 147, 148.

<sup>466</sup> See: Marsden (2010), pp. 210-211.

in this period, he showed Victoria a sketch of the statue as early as 1 January 1862.<sup>467</sup> Just over a month later she saw a more advanced sketch and wrote: 'Saw Mr Theed's sketch of the statue of Albert in Highland dress, which requires a good deal of alteration.'<sup>468</sup> The following day she wrote: 'Went to see Mr Theed at work on the statue. Alice & I helped him in improving the figure.'<sup>469</sup> In August 1862 a plaster model of the statue was unveiled at the foot of the principal staircase in Balmoral. Victoria wrote:

I watched for some time the unpacking of beloved Albert's fine statue, which reached here quite safely, under Mr Theed's personal supervision. We tried many places, to see which would be the best, but decided to place the statue at the foot of the staircase facing the drawingroom, where I always wished it to be. It took nearly 2 hours to place it in position & I returned when it had been done. The statue looked most beautiful & so lifelike. – Drove out with Lenchen & Mrs Bruce. After dinner we went down again to look at the statue, the Ladies & Gentlemen [of the Household] also coming & they were in the greatest admiration of it.<sup>470</sup>

According to a letter Theed wrote to an official in the Royal Household, the plaster model was returned to the sculptor's studio shortly afterwards to be translated into marble.<sup>471</sup> The finished marble was unveiled on 17 October 1863 in a private ceremony replete with a veneer of Scottish tradition, typical of Balmoral. Victoria wrote in her journal: 'This morning the beloved statue was uncovered in my presence

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<sup>467</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 1 January.

<sup>468</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 3 February.

<sup>469</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 4 February.

<sup>470</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 15 August.

<sup>471</sup> Theed to Charles Harrison, 19 August 1862: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/63/4035.

& that of all the children, Ladies & Gentlemen, servants, Keepers & Gillies, Ross playing a Lament on the pipes. It is a wonderful likeness.<sup>472</sup> Details of this private ceremony were subsequently published in several newspapers.<sup>473</sup>

In August 1864, the marble statue was published as a full-page image in the *Illustrated London News* (Fig. 3.19). The article accompanying the illustration informs us of Albert's 'attachment to the Scottish Highlands, and his predilection for the sports of deer-stalking and grouse-shooting,' and tells us that the statue, 'lately placed in the corridor of Balmoral Castle,' was designed to commemorate these pursuits.<sup>474</sup> The publication of this illustrated article exemplifies the public dissemination of the memorial sculpture displayed in the private interiors of the royal residences. So too does a bronze version of the statue, which was commissioned by Victoria in September 1864 for a site near Balmoral and intended as a gift for the tenants of the estate.<sup>475</sup>

In June 1865, Victoria recorded in her journal that Theed had brought a cast of the statue, painted to imitate the patina of bronze, but she considered it too small and decided to commission a colossal statue, 'which can be well seen from everywhere.'<sup>476</sup> That November, she saw a model of the statue in Theed's studio but

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<sup>472</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1863: 17 October.

<sup>473</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (21 October 1863), p. 9; 'Queen and Court,' *Examiner* (24 October 1863), p. 682; 'Art Notes,' *The Reader* (24 October 1863), p. 485.

<sup>474</sup> 'Statue of the Late Prince Consort at Balmoral,' *Illustrated London News* (17 August 1864), p. 216.

<sup>475</sup> The erection of a colossal statue of Albert as a gift for the tenants of the Balmoral estate echoes the erection of colossal monuments to the 1st Duke of Sutherland at Golspie in Sutherland and Trentham Gardens in Staffordshire in 1837. These monuments, which consisted of colossal columns surmounted by over-life-size statues of the Duke modelled by Chantrey and carved by his studio assistant Joseph Theakston, were ostensibly gifts of the tenants of the two estates. See: George Noszlopy & Fiona Waterhouse, *Public Sculpture of Staffordshire and the Black Country* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), pp. 163-164. I am grateful to Alison Yarrington for bringing this parallel to my attention.

<sup>476</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1865: 6 June.

was 'not quite satisfied' with it.<sup>477</sup> Its faults presumably remedied, the statue was cast in bronze by Elkingtons, installed on a colossal granite base and unveiled on 15 October 1867 in a ceremony attended by the tenants of the estate. Though private, this ceremony was reported in the 'Court Circular' and subsequently in other periodicals, including the *Illustrated London News* (Fig. 3.20).<sup>478</sup> During the course of the ceremony, a representative of the tenants presented an address to Victoria, which effectively expressed the significance of the statue, both as a memorial to Albert's life and an embodiment of his enduring spirit:

As we look upon that statue it will recall to our minds the love of truth, the love of all that was good, the love of being useful to our fellow-men; it will also, I hope, impress upon our minds the hatred of vice, the hatred of everything selfish, mean or dishonourable that characterised the living original. The great admonition to each and all of us, I hope, will be, 'Go ye and do likewise.'<sup>479</sup>

Shortly before this colossal incarnation of Theed's statue of Albert in Highland dress was unveiled, a life-size marble group of *Victoria and Albert in Anglo-Saxon Dress* was privately unveiled in the Semi-State Apartments in Windsor (Fig. 3.21).

This 'group of us together,' which Victoria had referred to in her letter on 23 December 1861, was not the last of Theed's memorial commissions but it was the climax of his memorialisation of Albert. The sculptor evidently began working on the group soon after Albert's death because, in March 1862, Victoria wrote in her journal:

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<sup>477</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1865: 28 November.

<sup>478</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (18 October 1867), p. 7; 'Balmoral,' *Art Journal* (November 1867), p. 250; 'The Queen Unveiling the Statue of the Late Prince Consort at Balmoral,' *Illustrated London News* (2 November 1867), p. 480.

<sup>479</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (18 October 1867), p. 7.

‘Went to look at Mr Theed’s new sketch, for the group of us together, Vicky’s idea, & in which she has helped him much. It is lovely.’<sup>480</sup> In March 1863, she went to Theed’s studio twice. On the first occasion, she saw the group ‘only in clay, & in process of making’ and predicted it would be ‘very fine’; on the second visit she went ‘to superintend the head of my beloved one, for the group of us together.’<sup>481</sup> She returned in April to sit for her own portrait for the group.<sup>482</sup>

*Victoria and Albert in Anglo-Saxon Dress* took nearly five years to execute because, as Theed told Biddulph, it was a difficult and delicate work, ‘owing chiefly to the position of the figures, which rendered the necessary undercuttings, most laborious, but especially in the statue of His Royal Highness. The pedestal was wrought in Rome out of an antique fragment of very precious marble called “Marino Africano”’.<sup>483</sup> This rare admission of the labours involved in the process of sculpting reflects the group’s complex composition and high level of finish. The two figures are clothed in complicated, multi-layered costumes, which consist of folds of drapery superimposed with an array of intricate ornament, such as the V/A motif repeated in the fringe of Albert’s tunic and the chain mail coat protruding from beneath it (Fig. 3.22) and the floral motifs on Victoria’s cloak, which are incised to look like embroidery (Fig. 3.23). Yet, these intricate details do little to detract from the central focus of the group: the couple’s hands and eyes (Fig. 3.24).

*Victoria and Albert in Anglo-Saxon Dress* echoes an earlier of Theed’s groups, *The Prodigal Son* (c.1847) (Fig. 3.25). This work was exhibited at the Great Exhibition

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<sup>480</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 17 March.

<sup>481</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1863: 4 March.

<sup>482</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1863: 23 April; ‘Court Circular,’ *Times* (29 April 1863), p. 9.

<sup>483</sup> Theed to Biddulph, 11 November 1867: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/PP2/116/13137.

in 1851, published as an engraving in the *Art Journal* and as a Parian ware statuette by Copeland.<sup>484</sup> The composition of the figures, and the pathos they evoke, is echoed in Theed's group of Victoria and Albert. Yet, while this earlier work may have provided a prototype for the group of Victoria and Albert, the latter is unique, both in terms of Theed's oeuvre and Victoria's memorial commissions. For all its intricate detail, the basic import of the group is clear: Victoria's and Albert's is the perfect union, the marriage of the Anglo and the Saxon. However, it is an unequal union. Contrary to the protocol that nobody stands higher than the monarch, and by contrast with earlier portraits of the couple, notably Landseer's (Fig. 1.15), here Albert towers over Victoria. Furthermore, his pose resembles that of the *Apollo Belvedere*, while an inscription in the pedestal, 'Allured to brighter worlds and led the way,' equates him with the saintly character of a village preacher in Oliver Goldsmith's poem *The Deserted Village* (1770), of whom it is said 'even his failings leaned to virtue's side.'<sup>485</sup> Albert, then, was a paragon of beauty and virtue and, as monarch of the united-kingdoms of England, Ireland and Scotland, represented on her cloak, Victoria continues to depend upon his guidance. While this message is implicit in Paton's and Graefle's portraits, it is made explicit in the group and conveyed with intense poignancy.

Perhaps for this reason, illustrations of the group were not disseminated until later in the century, unlike Theed's other memorial commissions. Yet, a written account of it was published in the 'Court Circular' in May 1867:

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<sup>484</sup> 'The Prodigal Son. From the Group in Marble, by W. Theed,' *Art Journal* (August 1851), p. 218; Copeland (2007), pp. 114-115.

<sup>485</sup> Oliver Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village, A Poem* (London: W. Griffin, 1770), p. 10.

The group of statuary by Mr William Theed, representing the Queen and Prince Consort, which had been placed in the principal corridor at Windsor Castle, was uncovered on Monday, the 20<sup>th</sup> inst., in the presence of her Majesty, who was pleased to express her entire approval and admiration of it. The group consists of figures of her Majesty and the Prince Consort, the size of life, in the Saxon costume of the ninth century, which lends itself favourably to the conditions of sculpture. Her Majesty wears a light and graceful diadem and a rich mantle. The Prince has also a mantle, and his dress, in which reminiscences of the antique are discernible, displays his figure to great advantage. The position of the two figures readily tells the tale of deep affection and present earthly separation. They stand side by side, her Majesty looking up at her husband with an expression in which grief and hope are combined, her right hand over his left shoulder, her left hand grasped in his left. The Prince is looking down at the Queen with tender solemnity, his right hand raised and pointing upwards. The heads and hands are portraits conceived with admirable feeling. Round the left arm of the Queen is an armband inscribed with the name of 'Albert.' Round the right arm of the Prince is one inscribed 'Victoria.' The details and ornaments of the costume are very rich and elaborate. The flat embroidery of her Majesty's mantle, consisting of bunches of rose, shamrock and thistle, is of a peculiarly rich and graceful description. The execution of all these objects is a model of the most delicate and finished workmanship, well

accounting for the five years which Mr Theed has devoted to this remarkable work.<sup>486</sup>

This lengthy description effectively conveys the rich complexity of the group. Appropriately, considering it was one of the last of Theed's Albert memorials to be completed, it pays tribute to his value as Victoria's memorial sculptor. By describing the complex group in vivid detail, it implicitly refutes accusations which had, as we will see, begun to surface by this time, that Victoria was commissioning an endless stream of interchangeable and inartistic posthumous portraits of her husband.

## **Part 2: Marochetti**

Victoria and Albert are buried in a mausoleum in the grounds of Frogmore House (Fig. 3.26). It is located 100 yards from the Duchess of Kent's mausoleum and it was designed by the same architect, Alfred Jenkins Humbert. The mausoleum he designed to house Victoria's and Albert's remains is cruciform in shape and Romanesque in style and consists of a domed octagonal core, flanked on four sides by side-chapels or recesses, each connected by a circular corridor.<sup>487</sup> The scale of the building is vividly illustrated in two albums in the Royal Photograph Collection labelled 'Progress of the Mausoleum,' which together consist of more than 160 photographs, painstakingly recording the progress of construction.

The first are dated 4 April 1862 and show the beginnings of an extensive foundation. From it an internal structure, enveloped in a forest of scaffolding, gradually emerges so that, by October 1862, the structure of the octagonal core is

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<sup>486</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (29 May 1867), p. 9.

<sup>487</sup> Marsden (2010), p. 437.

visible. This structure begins to shed its layer of scaffolding in 1864 and is, externally, complete by the end of the year. A memorandum written by Humbert in April 1873 testifies to the building's material richness. The document details five varieties of granite used in the exterior structure of the building, along with Portland stone; thirty-four polished granite columns used in various parts of the interior and exterior; two types of granite used in the flight of steps approaching the entrance and four types of marble inlaid into the pavement of the entrance porch and the interior of the mausoleum.<sup>488</sup>

With the exception of the Victoria's and Albert's tomb, the building's interior was designed by Grüner. Like Humbert, Grüner compiled a memorandum in 1873. His lists a bewildering array of paintings and sculpture, much of it derived from Raphael's oeuvre.<sup>489</sup> There are, Grüner tells us, white marble statues of the Prophets Daniel, David, Solomon and Zechariah in niches flanking the sarcophagus and eight painted plaster bas-reliefs after Scriptural passages, mainly modelled after paintings by Raphael, in the recesses. There are large paintings on the walls of three of the recesses by Consoni: *The Nativity* after a tapestry by Raphael, *The Crucifixion*, an original design, and *The Resurrection*, also after a Raphael tapestry. In addition, there are paintings of *St Peter and St Paul*, again after compositions by Raphael, on either side of the entrance, and *The Four Evangelists* on the spandrels beneath the dome, all by Consoni. In addition, the altar is faced with a terracotta *Deposition of Christ*

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<sup>488</sup> 'Memoranda respecting the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore, prepared by command of Her Majesty the Queen, April 1873': RA/VIC/MAIN/R/18/83.

<sup>489</sup> 'Memoranda respecting the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore, prepared by command of Her Majesty the Queen, April 1873': RA/VIC/MAIN/R/18/83. One of Albert's pet-projects was to form a photographic archive of Raphael's entire oeuvre, as a resource for artists and scholars. See: Hobhouse (1983), pp. 75-76.

panel modelled after a design by Raphael and flanked on either side by gilt-bronze decorative panels by Barbedienne. To cap it all, the domed ceiling is painted to look like a sky full of golden stars, while its ribs are adorned with the gilded figures of angels modelled in carton-pierre (similar to paper mache). Victoria and Albert's tomb by Marochetti (Fig.3.27) was the centrepiece of this lavish interior.

Like Theed, Marochetti received numerous royal commissions in the years before Albert's death.<sup>490</sup> As we have seen, he produced a bust of Albert in 1849. He also executed a portrait statue of the young Prince Arthur (1853), a portrait bust of Victoria (1855), and portrait busts of the deposed Indian royals Princess Gauramma of Coorg (1855) and the Maharaja Dulip Singh (1857).<sup>491</sup> One of Marochetti's most important royal commissions in the 1850s was a recumbent effigy of Princess Elizabeth Stuart, daughter of Charles I who died in captivity on the Isle of Wight in 1650 and whose remains were deposited in St Thomas's Church.<sup>492</sup> Its vicinity to Osborne presumably prompted Victoria and Albert to commission Marochetti to execute a recumbent effigy of the princess in 1854 (Fig. 3.28).<sup>493</sup>

Marochetti portrayed the fourteen-year-old Stuart princess in a simple dress, lying with her head resting on the pages of a Bible, upon which are inscribed the words: 'Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' The effigy, which was completed and installed by 1856, surmounts a tomb-chest in a niche faced with what are supposed to look like prison bars. Originally Marochetti wanted to

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<sup>490</sup> For a full list of Marochetti's known works see: Hardy, Roscoe & Sullivan (2009), pp. 803-807.

<sup>491</sup> Marsden (2010), pp. 91, 162, 163.

<sup>492</sup> William Henry Davenport-Adams, *Nelson's Hand-Book to the Isle of Wight; Its History, Topography, and Antiquities* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1862), pp. 59-66.

<sup>493</sup> See: Philip-Ward Jackson, 'Expiatory Monuments by Carlo Marochetti in Dorset and the Isle of Wight,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 53 (1990), pp. 266-280.

include 'the dagger which killed her grandfather Henry IV, the axe which beheaded Charles 1<sup>st</sup> and some chains or fetters.'<sup>494</sup> Even without these additional dramatic devices, the completed effigy is clearly designed to elicit sympathy for the virtuous young princess. Lest this remain unclear, an inscription on the tomb chest beneath informs viewers that the memorial was 'erected as a token of respect for her virtues and of sympathy for her sufferings, by Victoria R., 1856.' Victoria first saw the completed memorial 'to the memory of Charles I's poor daughter,' in December 1856 and wrote about it in her journal in a rare amount of detail:

Marochetti has made the monument, which is really beautiful, & is placed in a niche. It is a life size, recumbent figure in marble, the head turned to the left, reclining on her Bible, in which manner she was really found dead, her left arm extended next her & her right hand resting on her waist. The face is beautiful, with long curls, & the whole is very touching. Poor young thing, I rejoice to think that I can pay a tardy tribute to her birth, youth, virtues & misfortunes!<sup>495</sup>

The combination of realistic detail and sentimental resonance in the *Princess Elizabeth Stuart* evidently appealed to Victoria and explains why she turned to Marochetti so soon after Albert's death to execute a joint tomb for them.

Victoria's and Albert's tomb consists of recumbent statues of the couple, executed in marble, surmounting a dark grey polished granite sarcophagus, which, in turn, rests on a bed of polished Belgian black marble. The statues were designed as a pair and both completed by 1867, though Albert's was installed in 1868, while

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<sup>494</sup> Marochetti to Phipps, 8 November 1853: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/MAIN/1854/2408.

<sup>495</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1856: 15 December.

Victoria's was not installed until after Victoria's death in 1901.<sup>496</sup> Philip Ward-Jackson has argued insightfully that, with this pair of statues, Marochetti managed 'to produce an image which was both authoritative and moving, one in which the clear-cut but characterful portrait figures seem to float in their generously disposed robes.'<sup>497</sup> Both figures are represented lying on an ermine covered bed. Albert (Fig. 3.29) is portrayed in a Field Marshal's uniform and the mantle of the Order of the Garter, while Victoria is portrayed in what appears to be a medieval costume. A letter from the sculptor to Victoria's personal dresser, Miss Skerrett, dated 8 February 1862, suggests that copies of the robe and uniform were sent to his studio in order for him to model the figure of Albert.<sup>498</sup> The result is evident in Albert's highly finished and intricately rendered uniform, robe and regalia. His robe is a subtly varied mass of luscious folds, embellished with the badge of the Garter picked out in relief.

The crowning feature of the statue of Albert is the succession of precisely modelled ceremonial chains, of the Garter, the Thistle and St Patrick, which adorn the prince's chest. Victoria's figure (Fig. 3.30) is less heavily embellished but it is similarly characterised by a visually arresting combination of luscious drapery and intricately rendered accessory, in particular the accurately modelled Sovereign's Sceptre, part of the Coronation Regalia, which she holds in her right hand, whilst on her head she wears the Regal Circlet, commissioned from Garrards in 1853.<sup>499</sup> These intricate details frame the heads of the two figures. We know that Marochetti was at Osborne early in 1862 modelling the head of Albert from the death mask and yet, like

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<sup>496</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (16 December 1868), p. 7; 'Court Circular,' *Times* (23 January 1902), p. 4.

<sup>497</sup> Philip Ward-Jackson, 'Carlo Marochetti: Maintaining Distinction in an International Sculpture Market,' in Sicca & Yarrington (2000), pp. 174-190, p. 187.

<sup>498</sup> Marochetti to Miss Skerrett, 8 February 1862: RA/VIC/MAIN/R/18/12.

<sup>499</sup> Marsden (2010), p. 310.

Theed's posthumous bust, the head of the statue of Albert is far from corporeal. His face is smooth and, with his eyes closed, his expression appears serene. It is likely that Victoria sat to Marochetti for her portrait but this is not documented. Hers is similarly smooth in surface and serene in expression.

The sarcophagus, surmounted by recumbent statues of Victoria and Albert, is flanked at each corner by bronze statues of angels kneeling in prayer (Fig. 3.31). Marochetti previously executed similar angels for the *Crimean War Memorial* at Scutari (1856-1857), but while they were carved in stone and restricted by the dimensions of the obelisk they adorn, the angels in the mausoleum are dramatic in scale, allowing greater scope for the treatment of figure and drapery.<sup>500</sup> Marochetti's skill in working with bronze – he established a foundry in his studio in 1853 – is evident in the theatrical treatment of the angels' tunics, in the dramatic way in which their wings unfurl behind them, and in the way in which their hands are clasped together in front of them (Fig. 3.32).<sup>501</sup> Like the effigies, the angels are highly finished throughout, as evidenced by the feather-like texture of their wings and the delicate inscription in the collars of their tunics of excerpts from the Beatitudes: 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,' 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,' 'Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God,' and 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

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<sup>500</sup> For the Scutari monument in the Haydar Pasa cemetery overlooking the Bosphorus, see: Ward-Jackson (2000), p. 186.

<sup>501</sup> For Marochetti's foundry see: Ward-Jackson, 'Is the Pedestal to be the Capital part of it?': Pictorialism and the Pedestal of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square,' in Alexandra Gerstein (ed.), *Display and Displacement: Sculpture and the Pedestal from Renaissance to Post-Modern* (London: Courtauld Research Fourm, 2007), pp. 98-113, p. 108.

The four angels add greatly to the tomb's dramatic effect. With their hands clasped in prayer, they suggest a perpetual litany of prayer, yet the sweep of their wings implies a pregnant moment of ascension. This reinforces the relationship between the tomb, theoretically a temporary repository for the couple's remains, and the images of resurrection that surround it. These iconographic references to resurrection begin in the mausoleum's entrance porch (Figs. 3.33-3.34), which is approached by steps flanked by life-size bronze statues, *The Angel of Resurrection* and *The Angel of Judgement*, the former holding a palm leaf and a trumpet, the latter the Book of Judgement and a sword. These statues, executed by the Brunswick-born sculptor Adolf Braymann, anticipate the style of the angels flanking the tomb. Both are represented in simple but carefully rendered robes, with dramatically unfurled wings. Inserted into the wall above the porch is a *Head of Christ* designed by the Crown Princess of Prussia. The porch itself is embellished with decorative sculpture, including the heraldic shields of Victoria and Albert and the monographs VA and AV, and a luscious mosaic frieze featuring angels in white robes with golden wings, each bearing a palm leaf. Above the doors leading into the mausoleum, is an inscription:

All that was subject to death of Prince Albert  
His mourning widow Queen Victoria  
Desired to be deposited in the sepulchre AD 1862  
Adieu, missed and regretted one!  
Here may I at length with thee repose  
In Christ with thee arise.<sup>502</sup>

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<sup>502</sup> Alberto Principis Quod Mortale Erat/ Hoc in Sepulchro Deponi Volvuit Vidua/ Moerens Victoria Regina AD MDCCLXII/ Vale Desideratissime!/ Hic Denum Conquiescam Tecum/ Tecum in Christo Consurgam.

This inscription spells out the mausoleum's dual significance for Victoria. For the present, it is the repository of Albert's physical remains. Beyond that, as suggested by the change in register in the second half of the inscription, the mausoleum is where Victoria and Albert's physical separation will eventually be resolved, when they lie together in death and rise together in Christ. This ideal of a future reunion at the moment of resurrection is dramatically illustrated in the mausoleum's interior by the alignment of the tomb on an axis with the altar and the painting of *The Resurrection* above it (Fig. 3.31). Aligned thus, the Saviour appears to reach out to Victoria and Albert, summoning them to rise. Until then, they will lie together.

The mausoleum's dual significance for Victoria, as the place where she could be physically closest to Albert while she was alive and the site of their eventual reunion in death, is vividly illustrated in a watercolour cross-section of the interior painted by Arthur Croft in 1863 (Fig. 3.35).<sup>503</sup> The 'Progress of the Mausoleum' albums indicate that, by the end of 1863, the mausoleum's external structure was still largely unfinished, which suggests that Croft's highly finished watercolour was intended to give Victoria an impression of the visual effect of the completed interior. Included in the cross-section are the figures of three women dressed entirely in mourning: one, clearly supposed to be Victoria, is kneeling at the base of the tomb, while the others, presumably two of her daughters or ladies-in-waiting, stand behind her. The inclusion of this mournful trio was evidently intended to allow Victoria to envision what it would be like to enter the completed interior and pray beside the tomb. Yet, the cross-section goes further than that. From this angle it is strikingly

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<sup>503</sup> See: Marsden (2010), pp. 438-439.

apparent that the space to the right of the recumbent statue of Albert is empty, thus clearly demonstrating that the interior would not really be complete until Victoria died. She does not mention the cross-section in her correspondence or in her journals, so it impossible to know whether or not she picked up on the absence at the heart of the image. If she did, she likely found solace in it.

Victoria's journal entries suggest she was convinced that she and Albert would be reunited in death, but they also indicate that she was initially traumatised by his physical absence. In the face of this painful reality, Marochetti's statue of Albert appears to have functioned in her eyes as a transition object, an intermediary between the body she missed and the body she would be reunited with. As we have seen, on 27 January 1862 Victoria told her daughter that she kissed Theed's posthumous bust of Albert every night and clasped the cast of his hand when 'the agony of desolation is at its height.' Tellingly, she goes on to proclaim: 'There is to be but one Sarcophagus, & we shall lie together,' and, recalling a conversation with her sister-in-law: 'Yes, she was right & the 2 shall rest side by side, as they slept in life.'<sup>504</sup> Several months later, she wrote: 'Alice went to see the statue at Marochetti's which is finished and which she says is most beautiful and so like now. It overcame all who saw it. How I long for it to be in its place! It will be such an object and such a comfort to go and sit by!'<sup>505</sup> The following month she reported in her journal that she had 'looked again at the beautiful monument by Marochetti of my beloved Albert, which is now completed & full of comfort to me – of peace, blessedness and beauty.'<sup>506</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

<sup>505</sup> Fulford (1968), pp. 72-73.

<sup>506</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 22 July.

There is nothing in Victoria's written accounts of visiting the mausoleum to suggest that she was much concerned with the statue's particularities as an artwork. She says nothing about the rendering of costume and accessory, the qualities of its surface treatment, or its relationship to the interior's artistic programme in general. Yet, she clearly thought it was a beautiful object and wanted to be close to it. On 18 December 1862, Albert's body was exhumed from the vault beneath St George's Chapel where it had been temporarily deposited after his funeral in December 1861, and reinterred in the mausoleum in a temporary sarcophagus. This temporary sarcophagus was surmounted by a plaster model of Marochetti's statue.<sup>507</sup> That day, Victoria wrote in her journal that she gazed at 'the great beauty & peace of the beautiful statue. What a comfort it will be to have that near me!'<sup>508</sup>

Victoria returned to the mausoleum the following day, accompanied by some of her ladies-in-waiting. Again, her journal provides us with a vivid insight into the way in which the effigy was animated in her eyes: 'The gas light shone softly on the beloved features, as we gazed on them.'<sup>509</sup> The following March she visited Marochetti's studio to inspect a scaled model of the tomb. She wrote in her journal: 'we saw our monument, with my statue as well as my Darling's & the 4 angels (unfinished) supporting it. The only fault is it being too high & the statues look too far apart, both of which must be rectified.'<sup>510</sup> Into the second half of the 1860s, the effigy continued to be a potent source of comfort for her. In June 1866, she wrote: 'Visited the hallowed peaceful Mausoleum & envied the peace so wonderfully

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<sup>507</sup> 'The Late Prince Consort,' *Times* (18 December 1862), p. 7.

<sup>508</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 18 December.

<sup>509</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 19 December.

<sup>510</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1863: 4 March.

depicted on the beloved face in the beautiful statue.’<sup>511</sup> A lengthy account of a visit to the mausoleum two years later reinforces the sense that Victoria was deeply conscious of the effigy as a source of present comfort and future promise:

Drove down with Louise to the Mausoleum, the decoration of which is greatly advanced & looks beautiful. Almost everywhere the marble floor has been laid down. The 4 splendid bronze kneeling angels are placed at the corners of the sarcophagus & the painting of the Resurrection over the altar is up. The whole building is beautiful, peaceful & cheerful, fit to be the resting place of one so noble & good & one day for my poor bones too. Placed some flowers near the beloved statue & then walked to Frogmore.<sup>512</sup>

The recumbent statues of Victoria and Albert remained unfinished when Marochetti died at the end of December 1867 and were completed by Robert Glassby, one of his studio assistants.<sup>513</sup> On 10 December 1868, Victoria wrote: ‘Walked down to the Mausoleum, where I found Mr Theed with Mr Humbert, superintending the placing of the beloved statue.’<sup>514</sup> The following December, the eighth anniversary of Albert’s death was marked, as it always was, by a sermon preached in the mausoleum. Victoria’s account of the occasion clearly suggests that she continued to be mesmerised by the sight of the statue of Albert: ‘The sun shone brightly & the dear statue looked so peaceful & like my beloved one.’<sup>515</sup>

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<sup>511</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1866: 26 June.

<sup>512</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1868: 12 September.

<sup>513</sup> Roscoe (2009), p. 802.

<sup>514</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1868: 10 December.

<sup>515</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1869: 14 December.

Victoria's intense attachment to the statue of Albert is also evidenced by the presence in her bedroom at Osborne of a plaster cast of the head, painted the colour of bronze and mounted on a carved-wood octagonal pedestal (Fig. 3.36).<sup>516</sup> This might suggest that, fifteen years after his death, Victoria still missed his presence when she was in bed and still used memorial sculpture as a surrogate. Yet, unlike the casts of Albert's hands that she kept by her bedside early in 1862, this is unmistakably a cast taken from his statue rather than his actual body, which suggests that, rather than allowing her to imagine him in her bed at Osborne, it helped her to imagine herself lying beside him in the mausoleum at Frogmore.

This cast gives an indication of Victoria's relationship with Marochetti's statue of Albert. Yet, a number of contemporary responses reveal that her interaction with the statue was not unique. For example, in December 1870, Victoria took Eugénie, the exiled Empress of the French, to see it. According to Victoria, the Empress 'knelt before the tomb, then went up the steps to look at the dear reclining statue, which she thought very like, & said of the whole 'c'est bien beau, c'est chaud et clair, et cependant [sic] sérieux.'<sup>517</sup> Of course, as a peer of Victoria, the Empress Eugénie was in a relatively unique position, which allowed her to interact with the effigy in an intimate manner that both echoed and amplified Victoria's accounts of interacting with it. Such a privileged viewing experience was denied to most. In general, the Royal Mausoleum was closed to visitors but the daily report of the Queen's movements published in the 'Court Circular' meant that her daily visits to the building, when in residence at Windsor, was a matter of public knowledge.

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<sup>516</sup> *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), p. 51.

<sup>517</sup> 'It is beautiful, it is warm and clear, yet serious.' RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1870: 5 December.

Once the mausoleum was complete, the press was allowed limited access. A number of articles were published, which emphasised the mausoleum's significance for Victoria and empathised with her devotion to the effigy within it. For example, in January 1872, an article was published in the *London Journal*.<sup>518</sup> It informs us that most of England's monarchs are buried in Westminster Abbey or St George's Chapel but that, when Albert died, Victoria 'resolved that she would build for him a royal mausoleum, in which, when the inevitable time comes, her own remains should repose by his in cold but loving contiguity.'<sup>519</sup> Later we are told that:

The monument in the centre of the mausoleum is from the design of the late Baron Marochetti, and the recumbent figure which occupies the left hand space (when standing at the foot of the monument) was the last work of the sculptor. The space to the right is left vacant, and that it may very long continue to be so is the earnest prayer of every Englishman.<sup>520</sup>

The article is illustrated by an engraving of the interior, viewed from the east recess or Chapel of the Nativity (Fig. 3.37). The engraving features two women clad in black, one of whom is presumably supposed to be Victoria, standing at the foot of the tomb. It is hardly coincidental that this is the position from which the text directs the reader to look at Albert's effigy and appreciate the significance of the vacant space beside it. The import is clear: when she looks at the tomb, Victoria is remembering Albert's death and contemplating her own, and we should identify with her.

One of the most substantial contemporary accounts of the Frogmore mausoleum was a two-part article written by Elizabeth Harriot Hudson and published

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<sup>518</sup> 'The Royal Mausoleum, Frogmore, Windsor,' *London Journal* (27 January 1872), pp. 60-62.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>520</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 60-62, p. 62.

in the monthly periodical *The Argosy* in August and September 1878.<sup>521</sup> The level of detail contained in this article suggests that Hudson spent a considerable amount of time examining the building's artistic programme, the tomb in particular. The article is prefaced with a ground-plan of the mausoleum, which graphically illustrates the significance of the empty space on the tomb beside Albert's effigy, labelled simply 'Vacant' (Fig. 3.38). In the article itself, Hudson encourages us to empathise with Victoria's devotion to the mausoleum by providing us with an atmospheric account of viewing Albert's effigy, using language strikingly similar to Victoria's, which makes it seem palpably present. Hudson tells us that, 'when gazing upon it we forget the mausoleum and the tomb. For the moment we are with Albert the Good, and he is with us,' and that:

The effect produced by lighting the lamps is solemnizing. A new radiant light beams out over everything, but centres on the recumbent figure, giving an almost life-like expression to the pale face, though no created light, no flame that man came kindle, nothing than can intervene to cast either a glow or a shadow, can disturb the beautiful tranquillity which speaks to us of perfect peace.<sup>522</sup>

By the time this article was published, Victoria's memorial sculpture commissions had long since been discredited, as we will see in Chapter 4. Yet, Hudson's article suggests that there were some people at least, who were willing to empathise with Victoria's devotion to this body of memorial sculpture.

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<sup>521</sup> Elizabeth Harriot Hudson, 'The Royal Mausoleum, Frogmore,' *The Argosy* (August 1878), pp. 128-139; 'The Royal Mausoleum, Frogmore,' *The Argosy* (September 1878), pp. 204-215

<sup>522</sup> Hudson (September 1878), pp. 208, 209.

### Part 3: Triqueti

A number of artists from the Paris *atelier* of Baron Triqueti have arrived at Windsor Castle for the purpose of superintending the placing of the memorial tomb to the late Prince Consort. The place assigned for this rich and very beautiful piece of sculpture fronts the east end of the chapel.<sup>523</sup>

The Albert Memorial Chapel in St George's Chapel, Windsor, was one of the most costly and ambitious memorial projects commissioned by Victoria in the decade after Albert's death. The chapel is dominated by an extensive and multifaceted sculptural programme (Fig. 3.39), which consists principally of fourteen tarsia, or engraved marble, panels illustrating scenes from the Old Testament (each one illustrative of one of Albert's virtues) as well as scenes from the Passion of Christ. These tarsia panels of various dimensions are framed by an elaborate confection of inlaid coloured marbles, precious stones and a significant quantity of figurative and decorative relief sculpture. This provides a luscious backdrop to a cenotaph consisting of a tomb-chest incorporating freestanding, relief and ornamental sculpture surmounted by a recumbent statue of Albert in medieval armour. The visual impact of this wealth of sculpture is, in turn, heightened by the dark tones of the chapel's multifaceted marble floor and, conversely, by the luminous splendour the gold glass mosaic which covers the vaulted ceiling and most of the western wall, produced in the Venice workshop of Antonio Salviati (Fig. 3.40), and stained glass windows by Richard Clayton and Alfred Bell, which cover most of the upper portions of the north, south and east sides of the chapel.

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<sup>523</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (22 October 1872), p. 7.

As previously indicated, the evolution of Triqueti's sculptural programme for the Albert Memorial Chapel is comprehensively documented in the essays accompanying the catalogue to the exhibition *Henry de Triqueti 1803-1874: Le sculpteur des princes*. Sylvia Allen's and Richard Dagonne's essay in the catalogue, 'Le décor de la chapelle du prince Albert,' provides us with an invaluable insight into the complex history of the sculptural programme while the nine other essays in the catalogue allow us to understand the project in the wider context of Triqueti's œuvre.<sup>524</sup> It is, however, worth recapitulating the history of the project, not simply because, to date, English-language scholarship on Triqueti and the Albert Memorial Chapel remains limited, but also because the evolution of the chapel's sculptural programme offers clear evidence of Victoria's enduring commitment to the patronage of contemporary sculpture into the late 1860s and early 1870s, even if her aim ultimately remained the memorialisation of Albert.<sup>525</sup>

The Albert Memorial Chapel has been dominated, since the mid-1890s, by Alfred Gilbert's monumental masterpiece, the tomb of Victoria's grandson Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, who died in 1892.<sup>526</sup> The scale of Gilbert's work makes it difficult to form an impression of the space and its sculptural programme as it was when it was first completed in 1874. Yet, the breadth and richness of Triqueti's original scheme is succinctly captured in a photographic survey of the chapel

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<sup>524</sup> Sylvia Allen & Richard Dagonne, 'Le décor de la chapelle du prince Albert,' in Allain (2007), pp. 113-144.

<sup>525</sup> For English-language scholarship on Triqueti and the Albert Memorial Chapel see: Darby & Smith (1983), pp. 29-40; Philip Ward-Jackson, 'The French Background of Royal Monuments at Windsor and Frogmore,' *Journal of the Church Monuments Society* 8 (1993), pp. 63-83; Alan Coldwells & Jean Cram, *The Albert Chapel & Frogmore Mausoleum* (Norwich: Jarrold Publishing, 1993).

<sup>526</sup> For the *Clarence Tomb* see: Isabel McAllister, *Alfred Gilbert* (London: A & C Black, 1929), pp. 129-141; Richard Dormant, *Alfred Gilbert* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 147-190; Jason Edwards, *Alfred Gilbert's Aestheticism: Gilbert Amongst Whistler, Wilde, Leighton, Pater & Burne-Jones* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 159-200.

published in 1876 by Jane and Margaret Davison, friends of the sculptor's daughter, Blanche Lee Childe.<sup>527</sup> In the preface to this volume, Jane Davison provides us with a perfunctory outline of the early history of the chapel, which, she tells us, was founded by Henry III in 1240, intended but never used as a tomb house for Henry VII, granted to Cardinal Wolsey by Henry VIII (which is why it is often called the Wolsey Chapel in pre-1876 accounts) and appropriated but similarly never used as a tomb house by Henry VIII.<sup>528</sup>

The focus of Davison's introduction is Triqueti's programme of tarsia panels. Tarsia, she tells us, was the name applied to the old art of 'engraving marble, inlaid in large pieces, with lines which were afterwards filled with permanent cement.'<sup>529</sup> It was common in Renaissance Italy but its revival in France and Britain in the 1840s was, she claims, thanks entirely to Triqueti, whose panels in the Albert Memorial Chapel are 'the finest existing specimens,' of the medium. Continuing in this vein, Davison concludes with an avowal of the genius of the recently-deceased Triqueti:

It is hoped that these reproductions of a great work, which Baron de Triqueti only lived to complete, will help to spread an acquaintance with his genius, and will give inexhaustible pleasure to those who have a feeling for power and breadth of conception, purity of sentiment, and grace and delicacy of execution in art.<sup>530</sup>

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<sup>527</sup> Jane & Margaret Davison, *The Triqueti Marble in the Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor. A Series of Photographs Executed by the Misses Davison* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1876).

<sup>528</sup> See: Francesco Caglioti, 'Benedetto da Rovezzabo in England: New Light on the Cardinal Wolsey-Henry VIII Tomb,' in Cinzia Maria Sicca & Louis A Waldman (eds.), *The Anglo-Florentine Renaissance: Art for the Early Tudors* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 177-202.

<sup>529</sup> Davison (1876), p. i.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*, p. iv.

The Davison sisters' survey of the chapel's sculptural programme starts with general photographs of the interior (Fig. 3.41), each of which gives a striking impression of the visual impact of the interrelated tarsia panels, framing bas-reliefs, the cenotaph and the dramatic *Resurrection* reredos facing it. The tarsia panels, which run like a discontinuous, two-dimensional frieze around the perimeter of the chapel, are nestled between what looks like a wall of stained glass windows floating above the space and the highly polished marble floor, which reflects the windows above. Viewed from the western end of the chapel, the cenotaph appears simultaneously isolated from and immersed in this rich interior.

These general photographs of the interior are followed by detailed photographs of individual elements of the chapel's sculptural programme, each one superimposed against a black background. There are twelve photographs of the cenotaph, comprising two of the structure as a whole (Fig. 3.42), two of the recumbent statue of Albert on its own, and one each of the eight small-scale statues incorporated in niches in the base of the structure, representing various allegories.<sup>531</sup> These images of the cenotaph are followed by photographs of each of the fourteen tarsia panels (Fig. 3.43) and individual photographs of eighty bas-reliefs panels (Fig. 3.44), including medallion portraits of Victoria's and Albert's nine children and eldest daughter-in-law in the walls above the tarsia panels (Fig. 3.45).<sup>532</sup> The latter were executed by Susan Durant, a pupil of Triqueti.<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> These small-scale statues are: *Truth*, *Mourning Science*, *Mourning Royalty*, *Justice*, *Charity*, *Angel with Sword*, *Angel with Wreath*, and *Hope*.

<sup>532</sup> The tarsia panels are: *Nathaniel (Sincerity)*, *Daniel (Fortitude)*, *Moses (Steadfastness and Truth)*, *Abraham (Duty and Obedience)*, *Joseph (Purity and Prudence)*, *Jacob (Love and Piety)*, *David (Eloquence and Harmony)*, *Solomon (Wisdom and Science)*, *Jehoshaphat (Education)*, *Jeremiah (Lamentations)*, *Gethsemane*, *Ecce Homo*, *Calvary*, *The Entombment*.

<sup>533</sup> For Susan Durant see: Hunter-Hurtado (2005)

The extensive sculptural programme surveyed by the Davison sisters was not originally conceived on such an ambitious scale. Initial plans for turning the chapel into an Albert memorial chapel entailed the restoration of the fabric of the pre-existing structure and replacing the flat plaster ceiling, which had been installed by Jeffrey Wyattville in the early-nineteenth century, with a vaulted ceiling with carved stone ribs. As previously indicated, this vaulted ceiling was decorated with a programme of gilt-embellished glass-mosaic was designed by Clayton and Bell and featured angels bearing the heraldic devices of Albert's ancestors. This was complemented by a suite of false windows in the west wall, decorated with images of monarchs and ecclesiastics associated with the chapel's history, similarly executed in gilt-embellished glass mosaic. Clayton and Bell's stained glass windows are incorporated into the upper levels of the three other walls.<sup>534</sup> This initial phase was carried out under the direction of George Gilbert Scott.<sup>535</sup>

A March 1862 entry in Victoria's journal emphasises the limited scale of this programme of renovation and decoration: 'Vicky showed me a beautiful design of Mr Scott's, the Architect, for the decoration of the Wolsey Chapel, as a memorial to my beloved Albert, & the expense of it is really small.'<sup>536</sup> The earliest indication that the restoration and limited embellishment of the chapel was to be expanded is a February 1863 entry in Victoria's journal, in which she recounts meeting Triqueti to discuss plans for the planned National Prince Consort Memorial. At this point, debates raged in the press about the appropriate form for this national memorial,

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<sup>534</sup> St John Hope (1913), Vol. II, pp. 486-487.

<sup>535</sup> George Gilbert Scott (ed.), *Personal and Professional Recollections by the Late Sir George Gilbert Scott, R.A.* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1879), pp. 272-273.

<sup>536</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 29 March.

with some calling for a functional edifice to be supplemented by a simple memorial statue.<sup>537</sup> According to Victoria, Triqueti dismissed this idea:

After resting, had a long conversation with the eminent French sculptor Triqueti [sic], whom Augusta B[ruce] brought to me. Talked at some length with him about the designs for the Memorial & he is of the same opinion, that there should be only 1, not 2 separate Memorials, about which Mr Gladstone feels very strongly, but is not for a large statue out of doors. He would propose a very fine simple Hall, dedicated to the memory of dearest Albert, which he wishes should become 'un lieu de pèlerinage for all England.<sup>538</sup>

In this account, Victoria gives no indication of having met Triqueti previously, but she and Albert had previously acquired two works by him: an ivory statuette, *Sappho and Cupid*, displayed at the Great Exhibition in 1851 and purchased in 1852, and a marble statue of *Edward VI* (1856) (Fig. 3.46), which was acquired by Victoria and Albert in 1858 and exhibited at the International Exhibition in London in 1862.<sup>539</sup> Triqueti was a leading member of the Reformed Church in France and some of his evangelical zeal can be detected in his statue of the Tudor monarch, who is portrayed as the paradigm of a Protestant prince, pointing to a passage from the Book of Kings that reads 'Josiah ... did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.'<sup>540</sup> Ironically, Triqueti likely secured

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<sup>537</sup> See: Benedict Read, 'The Sculpture,' in Chris Brooks (ed.), *The Albert Memorial: The Prince Consort National Memorial: Its History, Contexts and Conservation* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 160-206, pp. 162-164.

<sup>538</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1863: 21 February.

<sup>539</sup> Isabelle Saint-Martin, 'L'inspiration chrétienne d'Henry de Triqueti,' in Allain (2007), pp. 60-85, pp. 84-85; John Beavington Atkinson, 'The Sculpture of the Exhibition,' *Art Journal* (December 1862), pp. 313-324, p. 318; Marsden (2010), p. 158.

<sup>540</sup> As a Protestant evangelist, Triqueti was known for his book *Les Premiers jours du Protestantisme en France, depuis son origine jusqu'au Premier Synode national de 1559, etc.* (Paris, 1859).

the Albert Memorial Chapel commission because he had made a name as a funerary sculptor working for the Catholic King of the French. When Triqueti raised the idea of a hall dedicated to Albert and functioning as a site of pilgrimage, he was doubtless alluding to the chapel commissioned by Louis-Phillipe in 1842, following the death of his heir, Ferdinand-Philippe, duc d'Orléans. The young heir was buried elsewhere, in the Orléans family mausoleum, but the site where he was killed in a carriage accident was marked by a chapel, Notre-Dame-des-Compassions, for which Triqueti executed a cenotaph surmounted by a recumbent statue of the prince.<sup>541</sup>

In April 1864, the Crown Princess of Prussia, who likely secured the commission for Triqueti, wrote to her mother: 'Triqueti is here and has brought most beautiful designs for the Wolsey Chapel, if he carries them out I am sure they will be splendid.'<sup>542</sup> Less than a month later, Victoria reported in her journal that she had visited St George's, 'where Baron Triqueti [sic] showed me his beautiful designs for the marble mosaics he is to make for the Albert Chapel. The subjects are chosen from Scripture, illustrating the virtues of my beloved one.'<sup>543</sup> Shortly afterwards, Triqueti sent a memorandum to the Queen detailing the projected cost of the sculpture. It would be difficult, the sculptor wrote, 'to find another example of an artistic decoration as considerable, presenting conditions of such great duration, executed with such fine materials, and as much art research.'<sup>544</sup> The sculptural programme would consist of:

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<sup>541</sup> For Louis-Philippe's memorial sculpture commissions, see: Suzanne Lindsay, *Funerary Arts and Tomb Cult: Living with the Dead in France, 1750-1850* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 119-150.

<sup>542</sup> Crown Princess of Prussia to Victoria, 26 April 1864: RA/VIC/MAIN/Z/16/41. For Triqueti's relationship with the Crown Princess of Prussia, see: Richard Dagonne & Nerina Santorius, 'À la cour de Prusse,' in Allain (2007), pp. 167-175.

<sup>543</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1864:10 May.

<sup>544</sup> 'il serait difficile de trouver un autre exemple d'une décoration artistique aussi considérable présentant des conditions de durée aussi grandes exécutée avec des matières aussi belles, et autant

- 1) 6 bas-reliefs 6 ½ high, consisting of symbolic figures.
- 2) 4 panels of ornament, equally 6 ½ feet high, placed in the 4 angles of the nave.
- 3) 80 sculpted medallions of little figures and placed in the borders.
- 4) 10 medallions representing H.M. the Queen and her children. Each of these medallions 1 ½ feet squared.<sup>545</sup>

The memorandum goes on to state that the tarsia panels would be executed in Triqueti's studio in Paris, packaged and transported via the Port of London and would cost an estimated £40 per square yard; the rest of the sculpture would cost double that. The total price of the programme would thus come to between £9,000 and £10,000, would take between seven and eight years to complete and would be Triqueti's 'sole and constant occupation during that time.'<sup>546</sup> Victoria's secretary, Charles Phipps, recommended that she accept the estimate, despite admitting 'no exact knowledge of the work to be executed.'<sup>547</sup> Victoria evidently did approve because, in the autumn of 1864, Triqueti presented her with a detailed plan of the tarsia programme, largely as it was to materialise.<sup>548</sup> Over the following decade, the tarsia panels were produced in Triqueti's studio in Paris, according to his designs but under the direction of his principal assistant, Jules Constant Destreez.<sup>549</sup> Four of them

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de recherches d'art.' RA/VIC/MAIN/R/40/31. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the author.

<sup>545</sup> 'Le travail de sculpture comprends:1) 6 bas-reliefs de 6 ½ de hauteur, contenant des figures symboliques. 2) 4 panneaux d'ornement, également de 6 pieds ½ de hauteur, placés dans les 4 angles de la nef. 3) 80 médaillons sculptés à petites figures et placés dans les bordures. 4) 10 médaillons représentant S.M. la Reine et ses enfants. Tous ces médaillons de 1 pied ½ en carré. RA/VIC/MAIN/R/40/31.

<sup>546</sup> 'Il doit être mon unique et constante occupation pendant ce laps de temps.' RA/VIC/MAIN/R/40/31.

<sup>547</sup> Phipps to Victoria, 21 May 1864: RA/VIC/MAIN/R/40/30.

<sup>548</sup> Allen & Dagorne (2007), p. 117.

<sup>549</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

– *Daniel Amidst the Lions*, *Nathaniel Beneath the Fig Tree*, *Moses’s Last Benediction* and *David Dictating the Psalms* – were exhibited at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris and arrived in London in December 1867.<sup>550</sup> Two more – *Pharaoh Creating Joseph Viceroy of Egypt* and *Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph* – were installed in November 1868. The last to be installed – *The Descent from the Cross* and *The Entombment* – were marooned in the sculptor’s studio during the Franco-Prussian War and did not arrive at Windsor until October 1871.<sup>551</sup>

It is likely that the cenotaph was commissioned soon after the tarsia panels. Though it does not appear in Triqueti’s original plan, it does appear in a ground plan dated November 1864.<sup>552</sup> Yet, from the beginning, the cenotaph occupied an ambiguous place in Triqueti’s scheme. A number of contemporary articles on the progress of the chapel suggested that the chapel’s centrepiece would be a freestanding statue of Albert: in May 1863 *The London Journal* reported that a statue of Albert in the uniform of a field marshal was to be situated beneath a canopy at the east end of the chapel, while in January 1866, the *Art Journal* reported that a ‘[m]onumental statue of the Prince,’ was ‘in the hands of Baron Marochetti, who also has been instructed to cover the walls below the windows with commemorative compositions.’<sup>553</sup> This suggest that the cenotaph was not a matter of public knowledge until late in the process but they also reflect a degree of confusion about its place in the chapel’s wider sculptural programme.

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<sup>550</sup> The Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor Castle,’ *Times* (18 December 1867), p. 9.

<sup>551</sup> ‘The Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor Castle,’ *Times* (26 October 1871), p. 12.

<sup>552</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/R/40/44.

<sup>553</sup> ‘Albert Chapel, St George’s Windsor,’ *The London Journal and Weekly Record of Literature, Science and Art* (9 May 1863), p. 296; Charles Boutell, ‘The Albert Chapel in Windsor Castle,’ *Art Journal* (January 1866), pp. 10-11.

Triqueti was deeply impressed by Italian-Renaissance sculpture, as evidenced by the publication of several lengthy reviews in the short-lived *Fine Arts Quarterly Review* in the 1860s.<sup>554</sup> Inspired by sculptors such as Lucca della Robbia and Donatello, Triqueti saw his tarsia panels as a means of synthesising the painterly and the sculptural, the decorative and the fine art. The sculptor clashed repeatedly with Gilbert Scott, whose Gothic inspired framework he felt infringed upon his Italian-Renaissance inspired sculptural programme. For the same reason, he struggled to accommodate a neo-Gothic cenotaph surmounted by what he felt to be an anachronistic medieval-style recumbent statue.<sup>555</sup> According to an undated memorandum on the cenotaph, which appears to have been written by Triqueti, the Crown Princess of Prussia dictated the conditions for the work by specifying:

On a marble monument, in the Gothic style, she wanted a recumbent statue of the Prince Consort, the statue would have to be in bronze, clothed in an armour of the middle ages, enriched with the utmost care with ornaments executed in inlaid gold and silver, in a manner equalling, if it were possible, the best work known from the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>556</sup>

Having carefully studied the project, Triqueti was 'embarrassed by the difficulty presented by the costume and the anachronism which it seemed to contain.'<sup>557</sup>

Eventually, he resolved to turn the problem to his advantage by anchoring the

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<sup>554</sup> 'The Italian Sculpture at the South Kensington Museum,' (May 1863), pp. 97-113; 'Recent Additions to the National Art Collections,' (May 1864), pp. 265-272; 'Tuscan Sculptors,' (October 1866), pp. 271-284.

<sup>555</sup> Gilbert Scott (1879), pp. 272-273; Allen & Dagorne (2007), pp. 135-138.

<sup>556</sup> 'Sur un monument de marbre, de style gothique, elle demandait une statue couchée de Prince Consort, la statue devait être de bronze, revêtue d'une armure du moyen âge, enrichie avec le plus grand soin d'ornements exécutés en damasquines d'or et d'argent, de manière à égaliser, s'il était possible, les plus beaux travaux connus du 15<sup>eme</sup> siècle.' RA/VIC/MAIN/R/40/42.

<sup>557</sup> 'Ayant longuement réfléchi à ce programme, j'ai longtemps été embarrassé de la difficulté que présentait le costume et l'anachronisme qu'il semblait contenir.' RA/VIC/MAIN/R/40/42.

apparently anachronistic image of the prince as a medieval knight to the words: 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course.'<sup>558</sup> With this extract from St Paul's Epistle to Timothy, the figure of Albert would be 'a Christian allegory as nice and poetic as it is just and worthy of the Prince Consort.'<sup>559</sup>

Triqueti's account of independently striking upon the idea of associating the armour-clad figure of Albert with a complementary piece of Scripture was disingenuous. He did not mention the fact that, in 1863, Victoria had commissioned Corbould to produce a watercolour of Albert clad in medieval armour, set within an elaborate grisaille altarpiece (Fig. 3.47). In the base of this grisaille altarpiece is an extended extract from Paul's epistle to Timothy, which reads (in German): 'I have fought a good fight/ I have finished my course. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.'<sup>560</sup> This painting, which was inspired by an 1840 miniature portrait of Albert in armour by Robert Thorburn – reputed to be Victoria's favourite portrait of Albert – in turn inspired a silver and gilt statuette of Albert incorporated into an elaborate silver, gilt and enamel christening gift commissioned in February 1864 for Victoria's grandchild Albert Victor and complete by December 1865, long before work on the cenotaph had begun (Fig. 3.48).<sup>561</sup> Designed by Corbould, modelled by Theed and cast by Elkingtons, this christening gift consists of a large pedestal with allegorical figures of *Charity*, *Faith* and *Hope* incorporated into it,

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<sup>558</sup> 'Mais cette difficulté s'est évanouie et a été au contraire tournée en avantage, lorsque j'ai songé à placer sur le monument cette inscription prise dans les Saintes Ecritures, 'I have fought the good fight/ I have finished my course.' RA/VIC/MAIN/R/40/42.

<sup>559</sup> 'J'ai vu que des lors l'armure du prince deviendrait symbolique, aurait rapport au grand Combat de la vie, et serait une allégorie chrétienne aussi belle aussi poétique, que juste, que digne du prince Consort.' RA/VIC/MAIN/R/40/42.

<sup>560</sup> 'Ich have einen guten Kampf gekämpft/ ich have den Lauf vollendet. Hinfort ist mir/ beigelegt eine Krone der Gerechtigkeit.' Translation from: Marsden (2010), p. 444.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid., pp. 442-443.

supporting a silver and partially gilt figure of Albert in medieval armour, with the words 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course,' inscribed in its base. Though Triqueti's recumbent statue of Albert was executed in white marble rather than bronze adorned with silver and gold inlay, as specified by the Crown Princess, its form was clearly conditioned by the earlier portraits of Albert as a Christian knight. Yet, Triqueti's portrait of Albert as a Christian knight stands apart from its predecessors by virtue of its scale and the calibre of its execution (Fig. 3.49). Even in the rich interior of the chapel, the cenotaph is a visually arresting presence.

The cenotaph's base is, as previously indicated, heavily enriched. Incorporated into a suite of rich neo-Gothic niches are eight finely carved, freestanding allegorical figures: *Truth, Justice, Charity, Angel with Sword, Angel with Wreath, Hope, Mourning Science* and *Mourning Royalty*. The spandrels between the arches are, in turn, ornamented with a series of angels carved in relief, while each corner of the cenotaph is occupied by the figures of mournful looking angels, which appear to physically support the structure above. The recumbent statue itself is masterfully modelled and carved (Fig. 3.50). It combines intricately carved detail such as Albert's ornamental suit of armour, chain mail coat and sword with an expressive and plausible, if relatively standard, rendering of Albert's physical features; the face and hands were likely modelled after the death mask cast by Theed. Albert's head rests on a cushion, the smooth surface of which appears to belie the substance of marble. The cushion is supported by two diminutive, but delicately rendered, angels. At Albert's feet is the recumbent figure of his favourite greyhound, Eos, its surface intricately carved to suggest the texture of a dog's coat, and its eyes open and alert, as if poised for Albert's imminent resurrection.

Triqueti appears to have begun working on the cenotaph and its associated sculptural components towards the end of the 1860s. In September 1870, at the height of the Franco-Prussian War, he wrote to one of Victoria's secretaries from the Château de Perthuis near Montargis in the Loiret, where he had fled from the advancing German armies, to update her on the state of the chapel's sculptural programme, much of which he had been forced to abandon in his studio in Paris. The cenotaph, with its delicate carvings, and the twelve statues intended for its base, were largely finished. They remained in his studio, he wrote, in the care of God.<sup>562</sup> Triqueti concluded his letter in a characteristically evangelical tone: 'If you have the time, dear Sir, be good enough to testify to Her Majesty that nothing can distract me from my task, and that, in the accomplishment of my endeavour, I have found the only consolation from the anxieties of our present life.'<sup>563</sup>

Triqueti wrote again in July 1871 to inform the Queen that the cenotaph was nearly complete and would be in place by the following spring, and that he was about to begin work on the recumbent statue of Albert, having taken Victoria's orders on this point.<sup>564</sup> The cenotaph and the statue would, he estimated, cost between £4,000 and £5,000, a price which, he was sure would not be thought excessive when it was considered that, apart from the statue, the cenotaph itself contains twelve statues and ornament of the greatest delicacy.<sup>565</sup> As indicated above, in October 1872, the

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<sup>562</sup> Triqueti [to Biddulph], 27 September 1870: RA/PPTO/PP/WC/MAIN/OS/740.

<sup>563</sup> Si vous en avez l'occasion, cher Monsieur, soyez assez bon pour témoigner à Sa Majesté que rien ne peut me détourner de ma tâche, et que dans l'accomplissement de mon devoir j'ai trouvé les seules consolations aux anxiétés de notre vie présente. Triqueti to Biddulph, 27 September 1870: RA/PPTO/PP/WC/MAIN/OS/740.

<sup>564</sup> Le Cénotaphe est presque achevé ; il sera à coup sûr mis en place en printemps prochain. Je vais commencer la statue du Prince Consort, j'ai pris les ordres de Sa Majesté à cet égard. Triqueti to Biddulph, 6 July 1871: RA/PPTO/PP/WC/MAIN/OS/790.

<sup>565</sup> Il faut prévoir pour le cénotaphe (et la statue du Prince) une dépense de quatre à cinq mille livres stg. Vous ne la trouverez point élevée quand vous pourrez juger cette grande œuvre. Outre la statue

*Times* reported that ‘artists from the Paris *atelier* of Baron Triqueti’ had arrived at Windsor to superintend the installation of the cenotaph and that the statue of Albert was expected to arrive by the following April.<sup>566</sup> The following June, it was reported that the effigy had arrived.<sup>567</sup>

As with the Marochetti’s statues of Victoria and Albert in the mausoleum at Frogmore, Triqueti’s statue of Albert is aligned on an axis between statues of *The Angels of Death and Resurrection*, which flank the main entrance (Fig. 3.51), and *The Resurrection* relief triptych above the altar (Fig. 3.52). These were the final elements of the sculpture programme to be completed and installed. The triptych was designed by Gilbert Scott and executed in the workshop of a London stonemason company.<sup>568</sup> The triptych is the sculptural equivalent of the monumental painting of *Christ Emerging from the Tomb* in the mausoleum at Frogmore. The left and right panels are occupied by the figures of angels in profile. They flank the central figure of Christ, protruding dramatically into the space with his right hand held aloft in the direction of the cenotaph (Fig. 3.53). The triptych, surmounted by an elaborate gilt-wood Gothic canopy and framed by an extravagant, multi-layered border composed of various coloured marbles and precious stones, was installed in November 1873.<sup>569</sup>

The *Angel of Death* and the *Angel of Resurrection* and a relief of *The Entombment* in the tympanum above the entrance were produced by Boehm rather than Triqueti, whose health had begun to deteriorate by the end of 1872. That

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du Prince, le cénotaphe contient douze statues, plus petite et un une ornementation de la plus grande délicatesse.’ Ibid.

<sup>566</sup> ‘The Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor Castle,’ *Times* (22 October 1872), p. 7.

<sup>567</sup> ‘The Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor Castle,’ *Times* (11 June 1873), p. 14.

<sup>568</sup> Allen & Dagorne (2007), p. 138.

<sup>569</sup> ‘The Albert Memorial Chapel,’ *Times* (7 November 1873), p. 12.

November, he wrote to Victoria's secretary to update him on the project's progress. Triqueti told the official that he had been taken ill as a result of the scale of the work he had undertaken and had been 'between life and death, in a state of great anguish at not being able to show H.M. the Queen the cenotaph which has for eight years been the constant object of my preoccupation.'<sup>570</sup> Triqueti promised that the statue of Albert was advancing rapidly and that, from his bed, he was directing his assistants on a daily basis and praying that '[i]f God gives me life and health, I will go in April to bring the last of my work.'<sup>571</sup> He died in May 1874, six months before the project was complete.<sup>572</sup> His daughter, Blanche, wrote to the Dean of Windsor:

Almost the last clear words that he said to me, in the midst of the delirium which hardly left him during the 6 days after the operation were: did the Queen like the statues. His mind was constantly returning to that noble work on which the last twelve years of his life had been entirely spent. His devotion to the Queen was very great and to ~~that of~~ the Memory of the late Prince Consort. 'The greatest & best man he had ever known' he would often say to me – and though prepared by such a rare life of goodness & charity to appear before his Saviour, if in his last moments he had one bitter thought, it was that he has not been able to show his beloved work completed to the Queen.<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>570</sup> 'Depuis lors je suis resté 6 semaines entre la vie et la mort, ayant au cœur la grande angoisse de ne point mettre mon menu emplacement, et de ne point montrer à S.M. la Reine le cenotaphe qui a été 8 ans l'objet de ma préoccupation constant.' Triqueti to Biddulph, 5 November 1872. RA/PPTO/PP/WC/MAIN/OS/828

<sup>571</sup> 'Si Dieu me rend la vie et la santé, j'irai au mois d'avril porter la fin de mon travail.' Triqueti to Biddulph, 5 November 1872. RA/PPTO/PP/WC/MAIN/OS/828.

<sup>572</sup> 'The Albert Memorial Chapel,' *Art Journal* (December 1874), p. 368.

<sup>573</sup> Blanche Lee Childe to Dean Wellesley, 17 May 1874: RA/VIC/MAIN/R/40/75.

Three months later the 'Court Circular' reported that Triqueti's daughter 'had the honour of an interview with Her Majesty' in the Albert Memorial Chapel and that Victoria had been 'pleased to accept a series of photographs, executed by the Misses Davison, from the marbles and mosaics in the Chapel.'<sup>574</sup>

When he viewed Triqueti's tarsia panels at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1867, the art critic Hippolyte Gautier described them as "une bizarrerie sur marbre": is it bas relief, is it mosaic, is it drawing? A bit of each is what it is: it is an invention of the Baron Triqueti. These tablets are entitled: in tarsia marble.'<sup>575</sup> Gautier's précis effectively conveys the complex iconography and unusual appearance of the tarsia panels in the Albert Memorial Chapel. When coupled with the various three-dimensional figurative elements in dialogue with them there, the sheer scale and complexity of the chapel's sculptural programme is potentially overwhelming. Yet, for all its complexity, the overall intention of Triqueti's sculptural programme is abundantly clear: to memorialise Albert the Good. The tarsia panels illustrate Biblical scenes and are flanked by large diamond-shaped relief panels which illustrate yet more Biblical scenes. Each one of these reliefs is associated with a virtue, inscribed into the wall: inspiration, prudence, resignation, submission, justice and charity. The implication is clear. Essentially, the complex iconography of the tarsia panels can be distilled into these virtues. Lest it remain unclear to the viewer that this Biblical panorama is a veiled portrait of Albert, the point is reinforced by the statue of him as a Christian knight.

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<sup>574</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (13 July 1874), p. 7.

<sup>575</sup> La mêmes carré contient une bizarrerie de travail sur marbre, est-ce bas-relief, est-ce mosaïque, est-ce gravure? Un peu de tout cela 'c'est une invention du baron de Triqueti.' Hippolyte Gautier, *Les Curiosités de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867* (Paris : Ch. Delagarve et Cie, 1867), p. 143.

While this sculptural sermon on Albert's virtues was clearly a cause close to Victoria's heart, she does not appear to have been heavily involved in the chapel's conception and design. By comparison with her devoted and vigilant interest in the progress of work on the mausoleum at Frogmore, there is relatively little in Victoria's journal and correspondence to suggest that she was particularly invested in the Albert Memorial Chapel's sculptural programme. In November 1864, she wrote in her journal: 'met Baron Triquetti [sic] who showed us his sketches & selections of subjects and texts for the mosaics in the Albert Chapel – all most admirable.'<sup>576</sup> Nearly four years later, she wrote: 'saw ½ of the beautiful inlaid & engraved marble works of Baron Triquetti [sic], which I will try & describe at some future time.'<sup>577</sup> There is nothing in her journal to suggest that she ever did describe them. The lengthiest account by Victoria of the chapel's sculptural programme was written in July 1873 and focuses exclusively on the recumbent statue of Albert:

In the afternoon, before going down to Frogmore, went to the Deanery & from there with the Dean [of Windsor] to the Wolsey Chapel to see the reclining statue of my dearest Albert, which is quite beautiful, the face being the same as the one at the Mausoleum. My dear one is in armour, holding a sword, his feet resting against a dog. Two small angels support the cushion on which the head rests. It is quite in the style of the old Monuments.<sup>578</sup>

Victoria was clearly touched by the sight of the effigy. She equates the head of Triqueti's effigy with the head of Marochetti's and yet the vocabulary she uses to

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<sup>576</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1864: 23 November.

<sup>577</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1868: 14 March.

<sup>578</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1873: 4 July.

describe it is muted by comparison with her vivid and atmospheric descriptions of the effigy in the mausoleum at Frogmore, suggesting that she was not as emotionally invested in the cenotaph as she was in the tomb.

Victoria was not simply emotionally distant from the memorial chapel; she was also conspicuously absent from its iconography. As previously indicated, portraits of each of her children and one of her daughters-in-law were executed by Durant and inserted above each of the principal tarsia panels in the chapel's nave. She executed similar medallion profile portraits of Victoria and Albert, which, according to an early memorandum on the sculptural programme were to be inserted above the panels flanking the main entrance. Yet, they did not feature in the final programme. The closest thing to an image of Victoria in the chapel is the figure of *Mourning Royalty* (Fig. 3.54) in the base of the cenotaph. It is veiled in allegory but it is plainly supposed to be an image of Victoria. The figure is that of a woman in medieval costume, wearing a diadem and kneeling in prayer at a prie-dieu emblazoned with the royal coat of arms. The woman's face is hidden behind her hands in an attitude of intense grief. Arguably, it is no accident that Victoria is depicted in medieval costume, nor that this veiled image of her is in a relatively obscure position, at the end of the cenotaph furthest from the main entrance. The medieval costume is appropriate in this neo-Gothic space but it also specifically echoes Marochetti's recumbent statue of her in the mausoleum at Frogmore.

Rather than facing straight ahead, towards the altar and the dramatic figure of Christ emerging from the tomb, the *Mourning Royalty* figure is inclined to the right, towards the tarsia panel depicting *Christ in the Tomb* (Fig. 3.55). This shows Christ's corpse lying on a slab within the dark depths of a tomb, with the claustrophobic force

of Holbein's *Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb* (1520-1522).<sup>579</sup> Towering above the recumbent body of Christ is the figure of an angel with her hands held in prayer in front of her face, effectively mirroring the pose of the *Mourning Royalty* figure diagonally opposite. This suggests a dialogue between the two figures, the significance of which appears to lie in the words inscribed above the *Mourning Royalty* figure. The inscription tells us that Albert's body is not in the cenotaph and that it is 'buried in the royal mausoleum at Frogmore' (Fig. 3.50). By gesturing towards image of Christ in the tomb, the *Mourning Royalty* figure implies that Victoria's attention is focused on the true repository of Albert's body at Frogmore. This might thus be understood as a public expression of the private mausoleum's personal value for Victoria. If it was intended as such, then it went unnoticed. This is understandable, considering the small scale of the *Mourning Royalty* figure and the subtlety of its gesture towards the tomb, yet it is also an indication that Victoria's contemporaries simply did not spend much time examining the Albert Memorial Chapel's sculptural programme.

Following its completion, the Chapel does not appear to have generated much interest in the contemporary art press. Much more so than the mausoleum at Frogmore, the Albert Memorial Chapel – which, unlike the mausoleum, was freely accessible to public and press alike – demonstrated the scale of Victoria's patronage of contemporary sculpture. Yet, most contemporary published accounts of it were fleeting. There is certainly nothing in the periodical press to suggest that the project generated a level of interest commensurate with its lavish scale. The limited

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<sup>579</sup> See: Kim M. Woods, 'Holbein and the reform of images,' in Angeliki Lymberopoulou, Carol M. Richardson & Kim M. Woods (eds.), *Viewing Renaissance Art* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 249-286, p. 264.

attention the chapel received may have reflected the fact that the sculptural programme was almost entirely imported from France. Sculptors like Marochetti were routinely attacked in the art press because they dared to compete with British sculptors on their own soil.<sup>580</sup> Yet, for the most part, Triqueti was received favourably in Britain, in part no doubt because he was known as an evangelist of French Protestantism but also because he was recognised as an innovative sculptor with an extensive grounding in the history of art. It is more likely that the relative lack of interest in the Albert Memorial Chapel was conditioned by a sense of fatigue with what, to some of Victoria's contemporaries, appeared to be her unending mission to memorialise Albert, which, as will be seen in the next chapter, undermined Victoria's credibility as a leading patron of contemporary sculpture. The muted response to the completed chapel was symptomatic of the diminished currency of royal patronage.

### Conclusion

In the last decades of the century, the Albert Memorial Chapel's sculptural programme was supplemented by two further tombs, one commissioned from Boehm to house the remains of Victoria and Albert's youngest son Leopold, Duke of Albany, who died in 1884 (Fig. 3.56); the other, as previously indicated, commissioned from Gilbert to house the remains of their grandchild, the Duke of Clarence, who died in 1892 (Fig. 3.57). The chapel thus offers us a valuable, if limited, insight into the royal patronage of contemporary sculpture in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>580</sup> For example, Marochetti's first major commission in Britain, an equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington for Glasgow, ignited a torrent of xenophobic abuse in the press. See: Philip Ward-Jackson, 'Carlo Marochetti and the Glasgow Wellington Memorial,' *The Burlington Magazine* 132/1052 (December 1990), pp. 851-862.

There are important links between Triqueti's sculptural programme and Boehm's *Albany Tomb*. For example, by the 1880s, Boehm had been firmly established as the favourite Court sculptor; he was appointed Sculptor-in-Ordinary to the Queen in 1880 and he had, as previously indicated, completed the final features of Triqueti's sculptural programme, *The Angel of Death*, *The Angel of Resurrection* and *The Entombment* flanking the main entrance. Yet, while Boehm's commission was natural in terms of the networks of royal patronage, it was strikingly different in terms of style. Whereas Triqueti's effigy of Albert is historicist and stoical, Boehm's effigy of Leopold is, as his other royal effigial commissions are, contemporary, realistic – if not realist – and sentimental; the prince with a finger marking a page in a Bible, a favourite device of Boehm's.<sup>581</sup> The next chapter will explore how this is indicative of the direction royal patronage took in the last decades of the century towards realistic portraiture imbued with a moving sentiment.

Gilbert too was, in some senses, a natural choice. He was Boehm's student and, through Victoria's and Albert's daughter Louise, another of Boehm's students, close to the Court. He was ideally situated to inherit the mantle of principal Court sculptor from Boehm, who died in 1890. Yet, even more so than Boehm's *Albany Tomb*, Gilbert's *Clarence Tomb* stands out against Triqueti's sculptural programme. Gilbert was inspired by the chapel's Gothic architecture but lamented that Triqueti's tarsia panels were 'not at all Gothic either in feeling or imitation,' and resolved to 'treat the whole work in such a way that its general appearance should be that of Gothic, yet devoid of the slightest evidence of imitation.'<sup>582</sup> The result echoes the

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<sup>581</sup> For Boehm's tomb of the Duke of Albany see: Mark Stocker, *Royalist and Realist: The Life and Work of Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm* (London & New York: Garland Publishing, 1988), pp. 95-96.

<sup>582</sup> McAllister (1929), p. 130.

tomb of the Earl of Worcester in the main body of St George's Chapel (c. 1526) (Fig. 3.58) but it does so, as Jason Edwards has argued, through the lens of a Pre-Raphaelite and Art Nouveau stylistic synthesis deeply embedded in Aestheticism.<sup>583</sup> The *Clarence Tomb* also stands out physically. Richard Dorment might be exaggerating when he suggests that the tomb 'utterly overwhelms the surrounding monuments in the Albert Memorial Chapel, filling the space with a grossly overscaled extravaganza' and that 'the eye can take in little of the surrounding architecture,' but the *Clarence Tomb* does overshadow Triqueti's earlier sculptural programme.<sup>584</sup>

The towering presence of Gilbert's work can be seen as a metaphor for the way in which the 'New Sculpture' eclipsed the work of sculptors like Triqueti and Boehm. There may have been creative and professional links between Triqueti, Boehm and Gilbert, but such connections were written out of the rhetoric that surrounded the 'New Sculpture.' As the muted critical response to Triqueti's sculptural programme indicates, the lustre of Victoria's patronage was tarnished before sculptors such as Gilbert rose to prominence in the early 1880s, but their emergence and increasing critical success undoubtedly accentuated this trend. As will be argued in the following chapter, Victoria remained an active patron of sculpture into the last decades of the century. Yet, her status as a patron suffered as a result of the perceived glut of Albert memorials that were erected in the 1860s and it never fully recovered. This tussle between Victoria's on-going engagement with sculpture and her relative marginalisation as a patron is central to an understanding of her patronage of contemporary sculpture in the last decades of her life.

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<sup>583</sup> Edwards (2007), pp. 159-200.

<sup>584</sup> Dorment (1985), p. 160.

## Chapter 4

### Victoria's Patronage of Sculpture, 1870-1901

In 1899 the photographer John Chancellor published a group portrait (Fig. 4.1) with the title *Four Generations*. It features: the eighty-year-old Victoria; her son, the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VII); her grandson, the Duke of York (the future George V); and her five-year-old great-grandson, Edward Albert (the future Edward VIII). This image is representative of Victoria's public image in the last decades of the century. It is clearly designed to convey the security of the royal succession in the likely event of Victoria's death. Yet it also conveys the familial face of Victoria's monarchy. Her image had softened considerably since the 1860s. She never stopped dressing in mourning but, in the last decades of her life, she was increasingly portrayed, as she is here, as the matriarch of a large and growing family. The publication of portraits like this was matched by an increasing willingness on Victoria's part to allow the publication of images of her domestic life, at Osborne and elsewhere. Such images exposed hitherto unseen interiors, heavily populated with sculpture such as Gibson's statue of *Victoria* (just visible in the background of Chancellor's photograph), which lingered, like ghostly reminders of a former age.

Chancellor's portrait of Victoria as a matriarch encapsulates the evolution of her image in the last decades of the century. It also epitomises the extent to which, as a patron of sculpture, she was associated with a generation of mid-century sculptors whose reputations had sunk low by the last decades of the century. In reality, Victoria's patronage of contemporary sculpture continued to evolve through

the last decades of her life. In the 1870s, she continued to commission works from favourites such as Mary Thornycroft, who executed a portrait statue of Victoria's granddaughters *Princess Louise of Wales* and *The Princesses Victoria and Maud of Wales* (both 1877); and Theed, who was commissioned to produce portrait busts of Victoria's half-sister, *Feodora of Hohenlohe-Langenburg* (1874) and her uncle, *Augusts, Duke of Sussex* (1879). Yet, Victoria also began to commission work from a new generation of sculptors, which included several members of her family.

Victoria's and Albert's fourth daughter, Louise was taught modelling by Mary Thornycroft in the 1850s, attended classes at the National Art Training School in the 1860s and trained under Boehm in the 1870s and 1880s. Working from a studio in Kensington Palace, Louise exhibited work at the Royal Academy and the Grosvenor Gallery, mainly portrait busts of the royal family, and attained a degree of notoriety as a practicing sculptor, most notably with a seated portrait statue of *Queen Victoria* (1893) in front of Kensington Palace.<sup>585</sup> In addition to Louise, Victoria's half-nephew Victor Gleichen, who trained under Theed, and his daughter Feodora, who trained under Alphonse Legros, established themselves as prominent society sculptors in the last three decades of the century. Victoria provided studio spaces for both of them in the precincts of St James's Palace, commissioned work from them and assisted them in securing commissions for public sculpture.<sup>586</sup>

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<sup>585</sup> For Louise's career as a sculptor see: Desiree de Chaire, 'Queen Victoria's Children and Sculpture: Collecting, Making, Mediating,' forthcoming Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 2014. For Louise's Kensington Palace studio see: Louise Campbell, 'Questions of identity: women, architecture and the Aesthetic Movement,' in Brenda Martin & Penny Sparke (eds.), *Women's Places: Architecture and Design 1860-1960* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 1-21.

<sup>586</sup> For Gleichen's studio (subsequently inherited by his daughter) see: 'A Sculptor Prince: A Visit to the Studio of Prince Victor of Hohenlohe,' *The Pall Mall Gazette* (31 December 1890).

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Victoria's own patronage of sculpture was principally associated with two artists: Boehm and Williamson. The quantity of sculpture Victoria commissioned and acquired from both artists clearly distinguishes them as the Queen's favourite sculptors in this period, while the qualities associated with their output – a detailed rendering of costume and detail, combined with an easily accessible sentiment – are those which set Victoria's patronage in this period apart from her and Albert's patronage in the 1840s and 1850s. It was through Boehm's and Williamson's work that Victoria developed a taste for sculpture that was distinct, if not divorced, from Albert; in short, it was thanks to them that she came into her own as a patron of contemporary sculpture. Yet, as the pleasure Victoria derived from contemporary sculpture increased in this period, her reputation as a leading patron of it diminished.

As previously indicated, Victoria's currency as a leading patron of sculpture began to be devalued in the 1860s, when public patience with her memorialisation of Albert wore thin. Victoria's popularity as monarch rebounded in the early 1870s but she did not recover her status as a leading patron of sculpture. While, Gilbert received several important commissions from the Queen and she was memorialised by nearly all of the leading lights of the 'New Sculpture,' the proliferation of through-the-keyhole articles on the royal residences in the last decades of the century exposed the extent of Victoria's engagement with sculptors such as Gibson, Marochetti and Theed. These articles implicated Victoria in accusations made by Edmund Gosse and other evangelists of the 'New Sculpture' that the work of the leading mid-century sculptors was derivative and sterile, by contrast with the creativeness and originality of the New Sculptors. These articles also emphasised the

homeliness of Victoria's domestic surroundings and her eccentric, if endearing, resistance to innovation and change. It was hard to take Victoria's sculpture collection seriously when it was consistently reduced to the mere clutter of an elderly woman's domestic environment and, as will be argued here, few did.

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part focuses on the 1860s. Here it is argued that public dissatisfaction with Victoria's prolonged grief and mourning, and its manifestation in a seemingly endless stream of memorial busts and statues, fuelled a critical backlash against the royal patronage of contemporary sculpture. Within three years of Albert's death, complaints began to surface in the press that Victoria's grief was damaging the monarchy and gave critics license to discredit her patronage of contemporary sculpture. I contend that this critical reaction proved a catalyst for the diminishing value of royal patronage in the decades that followed. The second and third parts look at some of the most important pieces of sculpture Victoria commissioned and acquired from Boehm and Williamson. By looking closely at these works in context, I argue that they are representative of Victoria's taste for sculpture with a homely touch. By analysing critical responses to Boehm's and Williamson's output, I further argue that their reputations as Victoria's favourites was a double-edged sword for the sculptors, garnering them prominence, as well as critical disdain. This, I suggest, is a measure of Victoria's weakened position as a patron in the last decades of the century, despite her growing significance as a subject. In the fourth part of the chapter, a sample of through-the-keyhole articles on the royal residences is analysed. I argue that these articles reinforced Victoria's image as a patron of mid-Victorian sculpture who was stuck in the past and incapable of advancing with the times.

## Part 1: Attitudes to Royal patronage in the 1860s

Towards the end of his life, Albert was involved in a number of large-scale public sculpture projects. While continuing to serve as Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission, in the late 1850s, as we have seen, he commissioned a programme of busts and statues from Theed for the grounds of Wellington College. At roughly the same time, he became actively involved in the formation and display of a programme of historic and contemporary sculpture for the grounds of the Royal Horticultural Society's Garden in South Kensington, which he officially inaugurated in June 1861. Albert was elected President of the Society in 1858 and soon set about bringing it within the fold of the Royal Commission for the Great Exhibition's estate in South Kensington by securing the lease on a site in the vicinity of what was to be the 1862 International Exhibition building.<sup>587</sup>

According to *The Book of the Royal Horticultural Society 1862-1863*, Albert closely involved himself in the conception and design of the garden, not least in terms of its sculptural embellishment. He secured the purchase of copies after two versions of Rauch's *Victory* and donated copies of casts after *Juno* and *Ceres* in the gardens at Osborne, as well as a marble statue, *Venus*, and a marble group, *Nymph & Satyr*, by the Renaissance Florentine sculptor Pietro Francavilla, which had been purchased by George IV in the 1820s, lost in Windsor Great Park, recovered in 1860 and restored by Thomas Thornycroft.<sup>588</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> For the Royal Horticultural Society Garden and its relationship with Henry Cole and the South Kensington Museum, see: Christopher Whitehead, 'Enjoyment for the Thousands': Sculpture as Fine and Ornamental Art at South Kensington, 1852-1862,' in Sicca & Yarrington (2000), pp. 222-239.

<sup>588</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Book of the Royal Horticultural Society* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1863), pp. 52, 66. For Thornycroft's restoration of the now-untraced works by Francavilla see: 'Discovery of Marble Statues in Windsor Forest,' *Art Journal* (January 1853), p. 35.

In the preface to *The Book of the Royal Horticultural Society 1862-1863*, the author, Andrew Murray, tells us that Albert's Presidency was the 'climax' of the Society's history and that his death was the end of an era: 'a broad and well-defined chasm, marked by his loss, separates the past History of the Society from the future.'<sup>589</sup> It is difficult not to see this hyperbolic language as an attempt to ingratiate the Society with Victoria – the book was dedicated 'by permission of Her Majesty the Queen to the Illustrious Memory of the Prince Consort.' Murray may have been exaggerating the extent of Albert's involvement but, whether he was or not, by emphasising his involvement with the formation and display of the garden's sculptural programme, he was helping to memorialise the prince as a proactive and informed patron of sculpture.

In his speech at the inauguration of the Royal Horticultural Society Garden in June 1861, Albert described the venture as an opportunity to 'reunite the science and art of gardening to the sister arts of architecture, sculpture and painting,' and for 'the erection of monuments as tributes to great men,' alluding to the first monument which would grace the grounds, Joseph Durham's *Memorial of the Great Exhibition*.<sup>590</sup> Funds for this memorial were initially raised by public subscription in 1853 but, due to wrangling about its form and location, it was not commissioned until 1856 and not complete until 1861, when it was determined to situate it in the Horticultural Society Garden.<sup>591</sup> The memorial originally consisted of a polished granite drum flanked by bronze allegories of *Africa, America, Asia* and *Europe* and

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<sup>589</sup> Murray (1863), p. vii.

<sup>590</sup> 'Opening of the New Horticultural Gardens at South Kensington,' *The Morning Post* (6 June 1861), p. 5.

<sup>591</sup> For the complicated history of Durham's *Memorial to the Great Exhibition* see: Darby (1983), vol. I, pp. 149-193.

surmounted by a bronze statue of Victoria. However, Albert died before it was installed and, within weeks of his death, Victoria intervened to have the statue of her be replaced with a statue of him. By substituting Albert's statue for her own, Victoria publicly signalled her divergence from his intentions and effectively inaugurated a new phase in the royal patronage of sculpture.

Victoria's intervention in the *Memorial to the Great Exhibition* is alluded to in a letter that Richard Westmacott wrote, from London, to Gibson, in Rome, in July 1862. Most of the letter is concerned with the sculpture displays in the recently-opened International Exhibition, housed in Francis Fowke's exhibition building, fronting onto the Horticultural Society garden, but towards the end of the letter, Westmacott writes: 'I need hardly tell you that the death of the Prince Consort has thrown a gloom over anything & everything but all are 'working with a will,' in the best proof of their wish to carry out all that H.R.H. was known to feel an interest in.'<sup>592</sup> Westmacott's attention then turns to Durham's *Memorial of the Great Exhibition*. He tells Gibson that Victoria had 'determined that the Prince's Statue may be substituted for her own in the /51 Memorial,' that Durham was to execute the replacement statue and that Westmacott, Foley and Marochetti were to sit on a Committee to see it to completion.<sup>593</sup> Westmacott was unsurprised by Victoria's decision. It was hardly revolutionary to replace one royal, cast in the role of national figure-head, with another royal, cast in the role of figure-head of the Great Exhibition and instigator of the South Kensington estate that was supposed to be its enduring legacy. Yet, as unsurprising as Victoria's intervention was, it is worth reflecting upon.

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<sup>592</sup> Richard Westmacott III to John Gibson, 7 June 1862: RAA/G1/1/351.

<sup>593</sup> Ibid.

On the one hand, it is a measure of her increased engagement with sculpture in the wake of Albert's death; on the other hand, it indicates that her sole intention was to choreograph Albert's posthumous reputation.

Victoria made it clear that she saw the *Memorial to the Great Exhibition* as a memorial to Albert. On 28 December 1861, the Prince of Wales told the Council of the Horticultural Society that, in her grief, his mother's one object was: 'doing honour to the memory of Him, whose good and glorious character the whole Nation in its sorrow so justly appreciates.'<sup>594</sup> The prince alludes to his father's refusal to have a statue of himself surmount the *Memorial to the Great Exhibition* but makes clear that things had changed: 'It would however now, Her Majesty directs me to say, be most hurtful to her feelings were any other Statue to surmount this Memorial, but that of the great, good Prince, my dearly beloved Father, to whose honour it is in reality raised.'<sup>595</sup> The Council duly agreed and the design was altered. Soon afterwards, Marochetti wrote to the Queen about the attire in which to portray Albert:

I have no hesitation to say that I think [for] the statue of the great good Prince being [sic] to be placed on a pedestal prepared for a statue of Her Majesty, Mr Durham will feel more at ease if he has to represent His Royal Highness in robes than in any other costume; that in this case the civil costume is not to be thought of, that this is not an occasion for a military uniform, and that the choice being, I suppose, between the robes of the Garter and the order of the Bath or the Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, I would choose the robes of the Bath.<sup>596</sup>

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<sup>594</sup> Murray (1863), p. 86.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid.

<sup>596</sup> Marochetti to Grey, 6 January 1862: RA/ VIC/MAIN/F/27/120.

Marochetti's suggestion was adopted and, on 17 November 1862, Victoria went to Durham's studio to see a model of what she described as his 'colossal statue of Albert in the robes of the Order of the Bath.' She described it as 'good in many ways' but suggested that 'the throat is too thin & the shoulders not quite right.'<sup>597</sup>

Victoria visited the Horticultural Society Gardens in June 1863 to inspect the memorial, two days before it was inaugurated by the Prince of Wales.<sup>598</sup> In her journal she described the visit as 'very trying' but she was evidently pleased with the completed statue, which she suggested was 'indeed most successful & very like, looking touching & imposing.'<sup>599</sup> She goes on to reiterate the circumstances behind its gestation:

The proposal had been to have his dear statue erected as a memorial to the Great Exhibition of 51, but this he had declined, insisting that mine should be placed on top of the Memorial. But after the dreadful calamity of December 14<sup>th</sup>, I desired that dearest Albert's statue should surmount it & Mr Durham seemed much gratified by my suggestion.<sup>600</sup>

Victoria's account offers a revealing insight into her emotional investment in statues of her husband. She appears to have fixated solely on Durham's statue of Albert, without noticing the groups flanking the drum. Evidently, for her, the memorial commemorated Albert's role in the Great Exhibition rather than the Exhibition itself, as originally intended. This change in emphasis is registered in the inscription in the base of the memorial:

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<sup>597</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1862: 17 November.

<sup>598</sup> 'Inauguration of the Prince Consort Memorial,' *Times* (11 June 1863), p. 11.

<sup>599</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1863: 9 June.

<sup>600</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1863: 9 June.

Erected  
By Public Subscription  
Originally Intended Only to Commemorate  
The International Exhibition  
Of 1851,  
Now  
Dedicated Also to the Memory of  
The Great Author of that Undertaking,  
The Good Prince,  
To Whose Far-Seeking and Comprehensive Philanthropy  
Its First Conception was Due:  
And to Whose Clear Judgement and Untiring Exertions  
In Directing its Execution  
The World is Indebted for  
Its Unprecedented Success.  
Albert Francis Augustus Charles Emanuel.  
The Prince Consort.  
Born August 26<sup>th</sup> 1819. Died December 14<sup>th</sup> 1861.  
'He was a man – take him for all in all –  
We shall not look upon his like again.'<sup>601</sup>

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<sup>601</sup> The lines 'He was a man – take him for all in all – We shall not look upon his like again,' are taken from *Hamlet* Act 1, Scene 2, in which Hamlet speaks to Horatio about his recently deceased father, whose funeral was quickly followed by his mother, Gertrude's, marriage to Claudius, the new King of Denmark.

Although the *Memorial to the Great Exhibition* was unique among Albert memorials, in that it was not originally intended as such, it is representative of Victoria's active involvement in the design of, and choice of sculptors for, Albert memorials across Britain and its Empire. For example, Victoria expressed a strong preference for the Albert memorial in Glasgow to take the form of an equestrian statue and suggested that the commission be awarded to Marochetti. Victoria was deferred to on both counts.<sup>602</sup> As Benedict Read reveals, the Queen was heavily involved in the design of the National Memorial to the Prince Consort in Hyde Park and frequently expressed opinions on aspects of its multifaceted sculptural programme.<sup>603</sup> Victoria paid for the seated statue of Albert at the centre of the memorial out of her own funds and, as in Glasgow, secured the commission for Marochetti, despite the reservations of the Memorial's Executive Committee.<sup>604</sup> The National Memorial, like many other Albert memorials, was a public subscription opened within weeks or months of the prince's death. This is testament to the public's genuinely felt regret and the sympathy it felt for the widowed Queen. Yet, by the time these memorials were completed, public sympathy for Victoria's grief had worn thin.

Within two years of Albert's death, Victoria's devotion to his memory was causing unease, to the point that a statement was published in the 'Court Circular' on 6 April 1864: 'An erroneous idea seems generally to prevail, and has latterly found frequent expression in the newspapers, that the Queen is about to resume the place in society which she occupied before her great affliction.' The statement goes on to

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<sup>602</sup> Ray McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), p. 134.

<sup>603</sup> Read (2000), *passim*.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

deny that this might be the case and concludes that Victoria would do what she could 'in the manner least trying to her health, strength and spirits – to meet the loyal wishes of her subjects, to afford that support and countenance to society, and to give that encouragement to trade which is desired of her.'<sup>605</sup>

An article entitled 'Sculpture and Society,' published in the *Saturday Review* four days before this statement was released indicates that the lustre of royal patronage was, by extension, being tarnished by Victoria's apparently unabated veneration of Albert.<sup>606</sup> The article was published anonymously by the art critic and poet Francis Turner Palgrave, but reissued in his 1866 *Essays on Art*.<sup>607</sup> Palgrave was a notoriously outspoken art critic, prone to adopt an intemperate tone in his writing. In 1862, he had been commissioned to write a *Handbook to the Fine Art Collections in the International Exhibition*, which was subsequently withdrawn because of its vitriolic criticism of a number of artists, including Gibson, Marochetti and Theed.<sup>608</sup> Palgrave adopted a similar tone in his 'Sculpture and Society,' article. He begins by contrasting contemporary literature, which he claims had been freed from a dependency on patrons, with sculpture, still in thrall to them. What follows is effectively a sermon on the ill-effects of patronage on modern sculpture: 'Sculpture in England remains mainly an affair not of publicly recognised ability, but of polite patronage. The sculptor is commonly discovered and brought out, not by the public voice, as is the painter or musician, but by the patron's.'<sup>609</sup>

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<sup>605</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (6 April 1864), p. 9.

<sup>606</sup> 'Sculpture and Society,' *Saturday Review* (2 April 1864), p. 412-413.

<sup>607</sup> Francis Turner Palgrave, *Essays on Art* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1866); 'Sculpture and Society,' appears within the essay 'The Royal Academy of 1864,' pp. 45-88.

<sup>608</sup> Francis Turner Palgrave, *Handbook to the Fine Art Collections at the International Exhibition of 1862* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1862).

<sup>609</sup> 'Sculpture and Society,' (1864), p. 413.

Palgrave admits that in situations where 'real knowledge has happened to co-exist with the proper *status* of the patron of plastic art, the results have of course been serviceable,' but Lord Egremont and Thomas Hope, both prominent Regency collectors, are his sole exemplars. He makes clear that royal patronage was symptomatic of a pervasive and degenerative disconnect between the status and ability of the patron classes, even if he does not say so explicitly:

We have no doubt that those well-meaning patrons who think, for example, Mr Theed's figure of a Royal Duchess in her full dress charming, or who speak of Marochetti's Melbourne Monument in St Paul's as *ravissant*, will consider our remarks highly indecorous. We can only plead that to give full-dress in marble requires the violation of every natural law of the material, as well as of every long-recognised law of style.<sup>610</sup>

Palgrave goes on to suggest that, because royal patronage generated so much attention, it was damaging the reputation and hampering the prospects of British sculpture. He suggests that patronage 'when its fruits are the disfigurement of private houses, does indeed, a certain general injury to the art by consuming what we have called the limited available fund,' but when the influence of deficient patronage spreads beyond the private home, 'the influence of society on sculpture becomes a serious nuisance.'<sup>611</sup>

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<sup>610</sup> Ibid., p. 413. Theed's 'figure of a Royal Duchess,' is presumably the statue of the *Duchess of Kent* commissioned in 1861; Marochetti's 'Melbourne Monument in St Paul's' is his *Memorial of William and Frederick, Viscounts Melbourne* (1853) in the north aisle.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid.

Palgrave leaves the reader in no doubt that the glut of Albert memorials commissioned by or associated with Victoria was a prime example of the ill effects of patronage on contemporary sculpture:

It is lamentable, in its way, that the memory of the Prince Consort should be weighed down by such figures as those which have, hitherto at least, been modelled by Messrs Theed and Marochetti. Even the natural wish to look with favour on the results of Court patronage has not been sufficient to prevent some explosion of vexation, or even more significant silence, amongst our contemporaries, in regard to their incompetent performances. We cannot but believe that the distinguished person thus commemorated would have raised his protest against this additional 'terror of death,' if he had anticipated it. He is gone, and in days when his loss is particularly felt.<sup>612</sup>

It is unlikely that many people erupted in an 'explosion of vexation' in response to Victoria's memorialisation of Albert, but public criticism of her prolonged seclusion clearly gave Palgrave license to attack her patronage in terms that would have been difficult previously. By 1864, public patience with Victoria's grief, and her apparent proclivity to people the landscape with statues of Albert, was wearing thin.<sup>613</sup> This impatience was pithily summed up by Dickens in September 1864, when he wrote to a friend: 'If you should meet with an inaccessible cave anywhere, to which a hermit could retire from the memory of Prince Albert and testimonials to the same, pray let me know. We have nothing solitary and deep enough in this part of England.'<sup>614</sup>

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<sup>612</sup> Ibid.

<sup>613</sup> Wolffe (2000), p. 194.

<sup>614</sup> Quoted in Homans (1998), p. 160.

Dickens was writing privately but similar sentiments were expressed publicly. In the same month, the *St James's Magazine* published an article entitled 'Where the Queen Lives.'<sup>615</sup> It begins with a meditation on the monuments in St George's Chapel and asks: 'Can royal munificence do nothing more to perpetuate the memory of the beloved one?' The answer is a resounding no: 'Death is death, and life is life.' Lest the import remains unclear, the author drives the point home with a revealing invective against Victoria's memorialisation of Albert:

All that can be done has been done, or is being done, to perpetuate in a material form the memory of the late Prince Consort. A magnificent memorial window has been completed in St George's Chapel. Italian workmen are busily engaged in putting a splendid coloured ceiling to the neighbouring chapel of Wolsey, or Royal Tomb House, as it is perhaps more appropriately called. A noble mausoleum has been erected in the park for the last resting-place of the Prince's remains [...]. In that mausoleum, the Royal Mourner, whom we all love, has spent, and still spends, when she is at Windsor, many hours almost daily, sometimes twice in the day. There the widowed sovereign weeps and prays. Who does not feel for her in her great affliction? And yet who cannot but acknowledge that the duties of life are paramount, and that this extreme sorrow is unavailing?<sup>616</sup>

It is difficult to gauge the extent to which attitudes to royal patronage were conditioned by sentiments such as these, but it is reasonable to assume that the

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<sup>615</sup> 'Where the Queen Lives,' *St James's Magazine* (September 1864), pp. 194-204.

<sup>616</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

plethora of busts and statues of Albert that Victoria commissioned or was associated with after his death precipitated the corrosion of the prestige of royal patronage of sculpture. By the time the monarchy's popularity rebounded in the 1870s, this was irreparable. As we will see, Victoria's apparent mania for Albert memorials abated in the 1870s and she began to forge a relationship with sculpture that was distinct, if not divorced, from Albert's memory. Yet, though she continued to be active as a patron into the last decades of the century, by relentlessly pursuing the memorialisation of Albert in the 1860s, Victoria effectively surrendered her position as a leading patron of contemporary sculpture.

### **Part 2: Boehm**

Boehm is one of the few sculptors associated with Victoria's patronage in the last decades of the century to have been the subject of sustained scholarly analysis. Stocker's monograph on the sculptor provides us with a comprehensive account of his life and career. In light of this, there is little to be gained from retelling the story of Boehm's early life in Vienna, where he was born in 1834, his training and formative development as a sculptor there and in Paris, London and Rome, and his permanent move to Britain in 1862, three years before he became a naturalised British subject. It is, however, important to register one fundamental fact: Boehm was the youngest child of the Hungarian-born sculptor Josef Daniel Böhm, who, from 1831 onwards held the post of Court Medallist at the Hapsburg Court and, from 1836 until his death in 1865, was Director of the Drawing Academy at the Royal and Imperial Mint.<sup>617</sup>

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<sup>617</sup> Stocker (1988), p. 3.

It would be misleading to suggest, on the basis of his childhood at the Imperial court, that Boehm was predisposed to seek royal patronage and that he came to Britain with the intention of being a sculptor at Queen Victoria's court. Stocker's monograph clearly demonstrates that he was a well-established and successful sculptor before he came to Victoria's attention in the late 1860s and that his output independent of her patronage was extensive. Yet, his Viennese upbringing presumably attuned him to the exceptional value of the royal imprimatur and trained him to respond effectively to the needs of royal patrons. Ultimately, whether or not Boehm's formative years determined the course of his career in Britain, royal patronage was a crucial factor in the career he built in his adopted country. Just as importantly, he was instrumental in taking Victoria's patronage of contemporary sculpture in a new direction in the 1870s and 1880s.

According to Stocker, Boehm first came to Victoria's attention when one of her ladies-in-waiting showed her two equestrian statuettes by him.<sup>618</sup> Victoria first mentioned Boehm in her journal in January 1869, describing him as 'a Hungarian sculptor (established & naturalized in England) who makes the most beautiful & clever statuettes of horses, also other animals & figures.'<sup>619</sup> The following day, she wrote: 'sat to Mr Boehm for a little statuette of me spinning. He was so quick working in the clay & kept me only a short while.'<sup>620</sup> In these brief remarks Victoria encapsulated the two roles she called upon Boehm to fulfil over the next twenty years: portrait sculptor and animalier. Victoria commissioned numerous pieces from Boehm during this period. In addition, his position at court helped him to secure

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<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>619</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1869: 21 January.

<sup>620</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1869: 22 January.

commissions for public statues of Victoria in cities across the British Empire. Rather than revisiting each of these commissions, I want to focus here on three representative works: a statuette of *Queen Victoria at her Spinning Wheel* (1869), a life-size portrait of *Victoria* (1871), and a life-size portrait of one of her favourite dogs, *Noble* (1884). All three works indicate how Victoria's taste evolved in the last decades of the century in a manner that simultaneously complemented and differed from her and Albert's patronage in the middle decades of the century.

It is no coincidence that Boehm began to produce work for the royal family soon after Marochetti's death in 1867. He effectively replaced Marochetti as Victoria's principal memorial sculptor, producing recumbent effigies of her father, *The Duke of Kent* (1874); her daughter, *Princess Alice* (1879); her uncle, *Leopold, King of the Belgians* (1879); her infamous Highland servant, *John Brown* (1883); her son-in-law, *The Emperor Frederick III* (1890); and, as we have seen, her son, *Prince Leopold* (1884).<sup>621</sup> Yet, while, to a certain extent, Boehm filled Marochetti's shoes, he also charted new territory with the works he executed for Victoria. His statuette of *Queen Victoria at Her Spinning Wheel* exemplifies this (Fig. 4.2). This is the work that Victoria first sat for on 22 January 1869, the day after she was introduced to Boehm. In her journal, she records that she sat to the sculptor on a further six occasions over the following two weeks and that, on 12 February, the statuette had been 'successfully cast by a clever Italian.'<sup>622</sup> Victoria gave no hint of it in her journal, but *Queen Victoria at Her Spinning Wheel* was unprecedented in terms of sculpted portraits of the monarch.

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<sup>621</sup> Bond (1958), pp. 67-68, 81, 129.

<sup>622</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1869: 12 February.

As its title suggests, Boehm's bronze statuette portrays Victoria sitting, somewhat awkwardly, at a spinning wheel, wearing what appears to be simple, everyday attire. One of her favourite collies, Sharp, sits at her side staring up at her adoringly. Of course, it was not unprecedented for sculptors to attempt to marry the majesty of the monarch with the humanity of the woman. In his 1840 bust of Victoria, Chantrey tried to balance her regal status with her youthful vitality and sexual appeal, by simultaneously emphasising and disguising her chest with the intricately-modelled and carefully positioned robe, sash and star of the Garter.

By contrast, Boehm's statuette is devoid of regalia. Victoria is portrayed wearing a simple bracelet and unornamented crucifix rather than a chivalric order. It would be foolish to exaggerate the significance of this emphatic domesticity, however tempting it is to read it as a statement about Victoria's matriarchal monarchy. Arguably, however, the statuette warrants our attention precisely because it should not be taken too seriously, because it seems likely that it was intended less as a statement about Victoria's monarchy and more as a souvenir of her home life. It is likely that the idea for the statuette arose out of a series of carte-de-visite portraits of Victoria and her daughter Louise posed beside similar spinning wheels, which were taken by the firm of Hills & Saunders in 1865 (Fig. 4.3). Thus, whether or not Victoria and her daughter genuinely enjoyed spinning thread, Boehm's statuette was clearly designed to evoke a shared mother-daughter pastime. Understood as such, *Queen Victoria at Her Spinning Wheel* helps us to understand Boehm's value for Victoria: his ability to effectively capture likeness and the details and texture of drapery combined with his ability to imbue his sculpture with a sense of homespun domesticity.

*Queen Victoria at Her Spinning Wheel* was exhibited at the Academy's annual exhibition in 1870 but does not seem to have caused much of a stir. One of the few publications to mention the piece in its review of the sculpture in the exhibition was the *Saturday Review*, which implied that Victoria's patronage was deficient in taste and debilitating in effect because it carried undue significance:

Mr Boehm's productions [...] exhibit this year, in our judgement, the very lowest point (and it is a low point indeed) reached in the department of sculpture. Of one, a statuette of Her Majesty with a spinning-wheel (Central Hall, 1,125), it is enough to remark that it is 'exhibited by *command*' – a significant phrase, about the sense of which those who look at this figure, and at the Royal portraits by Mr Weigall and Mr Bauerle elsewhere, can entertain no hesitation.<sup>623</sup>

This is an early example of what would become a common response to Victoria's patronage in the last decades of the century: that it was, quite simply, in poor taste. This judgement has endured in scholarly analysis. For example, Stocker suggests that many of the works Victoria commissioned from Boehm were 'trivial' in nature and he leaves no doubt who was to blame: 'Unfortunately there was no Prince Consort to restrain the Queen's tastes or to point them in a more artistically imaginative direction.'<sup>624</sup>

Personal judgement aside, there was clearly something in either Boehm's character or the character of his work, or both, which encouraged Victoria to express herself personally, without departing radically from the boundaries of royal decorum.

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<sup>623</sup> 'Sculpture in the Academy,' *Saturday Review* (28 May 1870), pp. 706-707, p. 706.

<sup>624</sup> Stocker (1988), p. 88.

This is evident in Boehm's first full-length, free-standing portrait-statue of the Queen, begun in 1869, alongside the *Spinning Wheel* statuette, and complete by 1872 (Fig. 4.4). By contrast with the statuette, this is unmistakably a formal portrait. Victoria's pose is regal and she is enthroned in splendour, attired in a lusciously rendered silk dress and bodice, which is framed by a delicately textured ermine robe, and a carefully differentiated and plausibly animated sash and star of the Garter. Completing this confection of textures and details is a small crown on her head and a sceptre in her right hand. Yet, for all its formality, here too Boehm introduced a personal note. Sharp, the collie, which had featured in the *Queen Victoria at Her Spinning Wheel* statuette, features here too, lying at Victoria's feet gazing up at her with suitable adoration. Of course, there is a long tradition of dogs appearing in royal portraiture. They are supposed to signify faithful loyalty. This is clearly the symbolic function of the dog in Boehm's portrait of Victoria. The dog's upward turned adoring gaze is meant to exemplify a fidelity to the figure of the monarch that all her subjects should share in, but its carefully carved coat, animated expression and enigmatic pose imbue the figure with a feeling of genuine warmth, which suggests that it is a real household pet.

Boehm's statue of Victoria was exhibited at the 1872 International Exhibition in South Kensington, which was staged in the buildings surrounding the Royal Horticultural Society's Garden, by then connected to the recently inaugurated Royal Albert Hall. Roughly 300 pieces of sculpture were exhibited, though according to the *Art Journal*, the collection 'had but few features of attraction.'<sup>625</sup> Boehm's statue was

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<sup>625</sup> 'The International Exhibition: The Sculpture,' *Art Journal* (October 1872), p. 249.

exhibited at the intersection of the Royal Albert Hall, the Horticultural Society's conservatory and the two quadrants that housed most of the exhibits. In this position, the statue was distinct from the rest of the sculpture in the exhibition and subject to maximum exposure. According to the *Times*, the statue had 'the honour it well deserves of a fine site between the stairways of the conservatory,' because it is a figure 'with Royal dignity yet natural ease' and because 'Boehm has given us no classical and conventional Empress, but something which posterity may take for a portrait, true and faithful in face, in figure and in dress, of the Lady who ruled England for so long and so well in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.'<sup>626</sup>

The *Times* critic's emphasis on Boehm's faithful and truthful portrayal of Victoria offers a revealing point of contrast with earlier accusations that Gibson's first portrait of her was commendable as an artwork but unrecognisable as a likeness. This distinction between the abstract artfulness of Gibson's style of modern classicism and the homeliness of Boehm's style of late-century realism is further evident in the setting of Boehm's portrait of *Noble* (Fig. 4.5) in the principal corridor at Osborne.

As we have seen, Victoria appreciated Boehm's skill as an animalier from the beginning. While he integrated the figure of Sharp into his portrait statue and statuette of the Queen, he also executed a number of what were effectively individual portrait statues of her favourite pets. For example, in 1879 he executed a bronze memorial statue of *Sharp*, who died that year aged fifteen (Fig. 4.6). The statue was complete by 1881 and located, on a polished granite pedestal, above the animal's remains in the grounds of the Frogmore mausoleum. Its charm is neatly

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<sup>626</sup> 'Sculpture at South Kensington,' *Times* (26 July 1872), p. 4.

conveyed in Victoria's written account of it: 'Saw Boehm's most successful statue of dear old 'Sharp,' in bronze – most lifelike.'<sup>627</sup> Victoria does not mention the statue of *Noble* in her journal but its value for her is registered in its prominent location in the corridor. The statue's appeal is easily appreciated. As is the case with the figure of Sharp incorporated into the *Queen Victoria* statue, Noble's coat is delicately carved and carefully differentiated and looks tantalisingly soft to touch, despite the fact that it is composed of white Carrara marble. The dog's wide open eyes, slightly erect ears, enigmatically thoughtful expression and pose suggestive of imminent movement make this an endearing and vivacious portrait.

*Noble* is elevated on a polished marble pedestal and in a manner that echoes the display of Matthew Cotes Wyatt's life-size polychrome portrait of the Newfoundland dog *Bashaw* (Fig. 4.7), commissioned by the Earl of Dudley in 1832.<sup>628</sup> The polished granite base of Boehm's *Noble* is simple by comparison with the black marble and pietra dura base of Wyatt's *Bashaw*, but it was evidently similarly motivated by an owner's fondness for a favourite pet. There is an inscription at the base of the statue which reads: 'Noble, Queen Victoria's Favourite Collie, Aged 14.' This personal memento was located in the vestibule at the right angle of the corridor opposite a console table on which were displayed a pair of bronze equestrian statuettes, by Boehm, of Victoria's sons *Prince Arthur* (1870) and *The Prince of Wales* (1872). The 1876 catalogue reveals that these were the first pieces of sculpture unrelated to Albert to be situated in the corridor. Their triangulation with the portrait of *Noble* suggests that it was through Boehm's work that Victoria first began to

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<sup>627</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1881: 29 June.

<sup>628</sup> Diane Bilbey & Marjorie Trusted, *British Sculpture 1470 to 2000: A Concise Catalogue of the Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 2002), pp. 437-438.

engage with contemporary sculpture independently of Albert. There is no reason to believe that Victoria considered the integration of a realistically rendered and sentimentally evocative portrait of her favourite collie into a space otherwise dominated by idealised classical and modern classical figures to be in any way provocative but it certainly suggests that she had gained enough confidence in her own taste to stamp her mark on the space.

Boehm's relationship with Victoria strengthened throughout the 1880s. In 1880, she conferred on him the honorific title 'Sculptor in Ordinary to the Queen,' which had not been used since the death of William Behnes in 1864. Victoria had awarded Behnes the title when she ascended the throne in 1837, presumably on the basis of a bust he had executed of her aged ten (1829) as well as busts of her father, *The Duke of Kent* (1826); her uncle, *The Duke of Cumberland* (1828); and other members of the royal family.<sup>629</sup> Yet, according to the artist's obituary in *The Art Journal*, 'the distinction was so purely honorary that it did not produce a single commission.'<sup>630</sup> By contrast, Boehm was, by 1880, firmly established as one of Victoria's favourite artists, as reflected in the knighthood he received in 1889, which, according to Victoria 'he well deserves.'<sup>631</sup>

Victoria appears to have genuinely grieved Boehm's death on 12 December 1890. She wrote in her journal:

Terribly shocked at the news, that good, excellent talented Sir Edgar Boehm had died suddenly yesterday & that poor Louise had found him dead, which latter turns out not to be true from what I have learnt from

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<sup>629</sup> Hardy, Roscoe & Sullivan (2009), pp. 92-94.

<sup>630</sup> 'Obituary. William Behnes,' *Art Journal* (March 1864), pp. 83-84.

<sup>631</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1889: 25 May.

her. But what a dreadful irreparable loss! He was a delicate man, suffering much from asthma & bronchitis & had often to go abroad for rest & change of air. How many of his beautiful works do I not possess, & how kind & obliging he always was. In my opinion he was one of the greatest sculptors of the day.<sup>632</sup>

Victoria's emotional response to Boehm's death was doubtless conditioned by his close relationship with Louise – his one-time pupil, rumoured to be his lover – and the peculiar circumstances surrounding his death, but there is no reason to believe that she was being insincere when she expressed her fondness for the sculptor and admiration for his work. Arguably, however, it is a measure of her distance from the mainstream of contemporary sculpture that she considered him 'one of the greatest sculptors of the day,' – a distinction few of his contemporaries awarded him. In the numerous obituaries published in the months after his death, Boehm was treated favourably but generally awarded faint praise for his work. In general, his obituarists implied that he was admirably able to meet the needs of his prominent patrons but that, in doing so, he rarely rose above the level of the respectable.<sup>633</sup> Marion Harry Spielmann, then editor of the *Magazine of Art*, wrote: 'Successful beyond any of his fellow craftsmen from the social and worldly point of view, Sir Edgar Boehm was always, in old-world phraseology, a 'respectable' sculptor.'<sup>634</sup>

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<sup>632</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1890: 13 December.

<sup>633</sup> 'The Late Sir Edgar Boehm, R.A.,' *British Architect* (19 December 1890), p. 461; 'Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm, Bart., R.A.,' *Athenaeum* (20 December 1890), p. 861; 'The Late Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm, R.A.,' *Art Journal* (February 1891), pp. 62-63; Constance Eaglestone, 'A Memoir of Sir Edgar Boehm,' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (March 1891), pp. 345-351.

<sup>634</sup> M.H.S., 'The Late Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm, Bart., R.A., Sculptor,' *Magazine of Art* (January 1891), pp. 132-135.

Few of Boehm's obituarists focused on his royal commissions. Most praised his seated portrait statue of *Thomas Carlyle* (1882) but none did more than list his royal commissions.<sup>635</sup> By contrast, Williamson, the sculptor who effectively replaced Boehm as Victoria's favourite, came to be defined by his royal commissions and, as we will see, such characterisation was not necessarily to his advantage.

### **Part 3: Williamson**

Very little was written about Francis John Williamson during his lifetime (1833-1920). What little was written tended to focus on one point: that he was one of Victoria's favourite sculptors in the last decades of her life. According to his obituary in the *Times*, Victoria first encountered Williamson in the studio of John Henry Foley.<sup>636</sup> Having been taught modelling at Somerset House by Bell, Williamson was apprenticed to Foley for seven years in the 1850s and remained as an assistant in his studio until the early 1870s. The obituary tells us that Victoria paid an unannounced visit to Foley's studio but Foley was not there to greet her and the duty of guiding her through the studio devolved to his assistant, Williamson.<sup>637</sup>

We know that Victoria and Albert visited Foley's studio in February 1854 to inspect his critically acclaimed equestrian *Monument to Viscount Hardinge* (1858) and that Victoria visited again in December 1867 and July 1869 to inspect the model of his statue of Albert, which formed the centrepiece of the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park. We can presume that she became familiar with Williamson during the course

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<sup>635</sup> 'Sir Edgar Boehm,' *Saturday Review* (20 December 1890), p. 704.

<sup>636</sup> 'Mr F.J. Williamson,' *The Times* (13 March 1920), p. 18.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.*

of these visits.<sup>638</sup> In 1869, Victoria acquired a work by the little-known sculptor, a relief entitled *Dinah Consoling Hetty in Prison*, which was exhibited in plaster that year at Royal Academy, though it went unnoticed in reviews of the exhibition.<sup>639</sup> While Williamson was connected with Foley and Foley was connected with Albert, this purchase represented a new departure for Victoria.

*Dinah Consoling Hetty* depicts a scene from George Eliot's novel *Adam Bede* (first published in 1859). Williamson represents the scene in which Dinah, the virtuous Wesleyan preacher, consoles her cousin Hetty, the self-centred milkmaid with sights above her station, who is about to be hanged for murdering her baby, born out of wedlock. Williamson's relief is now untraced and known only by an engraving in the *Art Journal* (Fig. 4.8) and a photograph in the *Magazine of Art* (Fig. 4.9) but these images suggest that it was a skilfully executed work, which offered a touching and thought-provoking rendering of a gripping and poignant scene in chapter forty five, 'In Prison':

Slowly, while Dinah was speaking, Hetty rose, took a step forward, and was clasped in Dinah's arms. They stood so a long while, for neither of them felt the impulse to move apart again. Hetty, without any distinct thought of it, hung on this something that was come to clasp her now, while she was sinking helpless in a dark gulf; and Dinah felt a deep joy in the first sign that her love was welcomed by the wretched lost one.<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>638</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (21 February 1854), p. 10; 'Court Circular,' *Times* (6 December 1867), p. 7; 'Court Circular,' *Times* (2 July 1869), p. 7. For the seated figure of Albert at the centre of the Albert Memorial, which was begun by Marochetti, taken over by Foley after Marochetti's death and completed by Brock after Foley's death, see: Read (2000), pp. 188-198.

<sup>639</sup> Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work From its Foundation in 1769 to 1904* 4 vols. (Wakefield: S.R. Publishers, 1970, first published 1905), Vol. IV, p. 296.

<sup>640</sup> George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), p. 413.

Victoria read the novel when it was first published; she described it in her journal on 17 October that year as an 'intensely interesting novel' and, on 29 October, recorded that it had made 'a deep impression' upon her.<sup>641</sup> Indeed, she rated the novel so highly that, in 1860, she commissioned Corbould to paint two scenes from it.<sup>642</sup>

Victoria's appreciation of Elliot's novel was clearly resurrected when she saw Williamson's relief at the Academy, which she visited in May 1869.<sup>643</sup> Of course, this was not the first time she had acquired a piece of sculpture representing a scene from contemporary literature. As previously indicated, Timbrell's *Lalla Rookh* represented a scene in Moore's 'oriental romance.' Yet, stylistically, *Dinah Consoling Hetty* is far removed from Timbrell's idealised representation of *Lalla Rookh*. Williamson's is pictorial in style and far removed from the aesthetic embodied by Timbrell's work. Williamson's failure to adhere to the conventions of ideal sculpture is suggested in the defensive tone of the text accompanying an engraving after his relief that was published in the *Art Journal* in March 1870:

Without in the least degree ignoring the higher claims of what is called 'classic' sculpture, we see no valid reason why ordinary scenes of domestic life – those which the painter generally claims as his peculiar province – should not be represented in the sister Art, so long as the sculptor fulfils the conditions of its recognised laws, and limits himself to the human figure without any adjoints or accessories that find no place, legitimately, in the Art.<sup>644</sup>

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<sup>641</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1859: 17 October; RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1859: 29 October.

<sup>642</sup> Marsden (2010), pp. 142-143.

<sup>643</sup> 'Court Circular,' *Times* (13 May 1869), p. 9.

<sup>644</sup> 'Dinah Consoling Hetty in Prison. Engraved from the Sculpture by F.J. Williamson,' *Art Journal* (March 1870), pp. 90-91, p. 90.

Though *Dinah Consoling Hetty* represents a scene in which the fatal consequences of class-transgression and immorality are savagely exposed, there is something tender and moving about the way in which the two women embrace. The configuration of the figures echoes Theed's *Victoria & Albert in Anglo-Saxon Dress*, but Williamson's work is less monumental and more domestic than Theed's. As we will see, Williamson went on to produce a number of monumental portrait busts and statues of Victoria, which were dispatched to cities across the British Empire, but *Dinah Consoling Hetty* suggests that it was, first and foremost, the sculptor's ability to effectively evoke poignancy, combined with his ability to vividly render drapery and costume that appealed to Victoria. This combination is evident in the *Memorial to the Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold*, which Victoria commissioned from Williamson in 1870.

For very different, though inter-related, reasons, Charlotte and Leopold both played an important part in Victoria's life. Charlotte was the only child of Victoria's paternal uncle, the Prince of Wales and Prince Regent, later King George IV. In 1816 Charlotte married Victoria's maternal uncle, Leopold but she died in childbirth in 1817.<sup>645</sup> Following her death, George IV, by then long-estranged from his wife, ordered his brothers – who had fathered numerous illegitimate children – to marry and produce heirs to the throne.<sup>646</sup> In 1818 George's second brother, Augustus-Edward, Duke of Kent, married the widowed Leopold's sister, Victoria, who gave birth to Alexandrina Victoria, the future Queen Victoria, in 1819. Victoria's father died less than a year later and, in his absence, her maternal uncle, Leopold, Charlotte's

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<sup>645</sup> For the public outburst of mourning following the death of this popular young heir to the throne, see: Stephen C. Behrendt, *Royal Mourning and Regency Culture: Elegies and Memorials of Princess Charlotte* (London: Macmillan, 1997).

<sup>646</sup> See: Roger Fulford, *Royal Dukes; The Father and Uncles of Queen Victoria* (London: Penguin, 2000).

widower and, from 1831 onwards, King of the Belgians, effectively acted as a surrogate father to Victoria. Leopold's death in 1865, almost exactly four years after Albert's, was a serious blow for her. She wrote: 'I can hardly believe what I write & am stupefied & stunned. Dearly beloved Uncle Leopold is no more, that dear loving Uncle, who has ever been to me as a Father.'<sup>647</sup>

Charlotte and Leopold were commemorated separately in St George's Chapel, Windsor. Charlotte was buried in the royal vault beneath the chapel and commemorated, at the western end of the nave, with a cenotaph designed by Matthew Cotes Wyatt (Fig. 4.10). This cenotaph, which was complete by 1820 but not installed until 1826, consists of a theatrical arrangement of figures spread over three stepped levels. On the bottom level, two mourning figures, entirely shrouded in drapery, kneel on a slab of stone; on the level above the princess's body lies completely shrouded in drapery, apart from her right hand, which protrudes limply from beneath the drapery; on the level above the figure of the princess ascends, with her face turned and her right hand pointing upwards. She is flanked by two angels, one of whom holds Charlotte's stillborn son in her arms. The whole ensemble is framed from behind by a carved wall of drapery.

Wyatt's monument echoes the architectural illusion of Canova's *Tomb of Maria Christina* (1799-1805) (Fig. 4.11) but it is, as Hardy, Roscoe and Sullivan have suggested, 'a startling image, which has no real precursor in English funerary art.'<sup>648</sup> By contrast, the memorial to Leopold, which Victoria commissioned from Susan Durant in 1866 to be placed alongside Wyatt's Charlotte memorial (Fig. 4.12), is

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<sup>647</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1865: 10 December.

<sup>648</sup> Hardy, Roscoe & Sullivan (2009), p. 1421; For Canova's *Tomb of Maria Christina* see: Johns (1998), pp. 123-144.

relatively conventional. It consists of a recumbent statue of Leopold, wearing military uniform, lying on a Gothicised tomb-chest. Echoing the right-hand-focus of Wyatt's Charlotte memorial, Leopold's right hand rests on the back of an intricately-carved lion, representing Belgium, which lies at the base of the tomb-chest. A relief behind the statue depicts two angels bearing the shields of the British and Belgian royal houses respectively. Inscribed into the base of the relief on either side of these angels is the inscription: 'Absent in body//but present in spirit.'<sup>649</sup>

When she saw Durant's completed Leopold memorial in July 1867, Victoria wrote simply: 'The likeness is remarkably good.'<sup>650</sup> However, four years later she wrote to the Dean of Windsor to suggest that the 'unsuccessful memorial to King Leopold' be moved from St George's to the parish church in Esher, the village adjacent to Claremont, Charlotte and Leopold's residence in Surrey.<sup>651</sup> Predictably, Victoria's wish was followed. Durant's monument was removed and replaced by a free-standing portrait statue of Leopold in the robes of the Garter, by Boehm. It is unclear why Victoria considered Durant's work unsuccessful but it may have been because it sat uncomfortably beside Wyatt's Charlotte memorial. It might be argued that the angels floating above Durant's recumbent figure of Leopold echo the angels flanking Wyatt's ascending figure of Charlotte and that the intricately-carved lion at the base of Leopold's effigy resonates, as Wyatt's memorial appears to, with Canova's *Tomb of Maria Christina*. However, in general Durant's comparatively

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<sup>649</sup> 'Art in Scotland and the Provinces – Windsor,' *Art Journal* (September 1866), p. 285.

<sup>650</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1867: 12 July.

<sup>651</sup> Quoted in Philip Ward-Jackson, 'Public and private aspects of a royal sculpture collection,' in Susanna Avery-Quash (ed.), *Victoria & Albert: Art & Love, Essays from a Study Day Held at the National Gallery London on 5 and 6 June 2010* ([http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20\(Ward-Jackson\).pdf](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20(Ward-Jackson).pdf)) consulted 21 July 2013.

simple and subdued *Leopold* memorial appears incompatible as a pendant with Wyatt's theatrical *Charlotte* memorial. It is reasonable to believe that, based on his *Dinah Consoling Hetty* relief, Victoria trusted Williamson to produce a work that would effectively bridge the stylistic and temporal gulf separating Durant's *Leopold* and Wyatt's *Charlotte* by marrying the naturalistic modelling of the former with the poignancy evoked by the latter.

The earliest documentary trace of Williamson's *Charlotte & Leopold Memorial* (Fig. 4.13) is a letter from Henry Ponsonby, Victoria's Private Secretary, to the sculptor, dated 31 March 1870.<sup>652</sup> This letter suggests that Williamson was initially commissioned to execute reliefs of Life and Death to be placed either side of a bust of Charlotte in a mausoleum which Leopold had constructed in the grounds of Claremont House in 1818.<sup>653</sup> Further correspondence indicates that, by May 1870, it had been determined to erect the memorial in the interior of Claremont House rather than in the mausoleum but, as late as July 1870 the final form of the memorial remained in doubt. In a letter dated 12 July 1870, Williamson told Ponsonby that he had completed a sketch model, which 'introduced the death of the late King of the Belgians in accordance with Her Majesty's wish.'<sup>654</sup> The completed memorial, which is signed and dated 1880, does not include an image of Leopold's death. Rather, it consists of a triptych of relief panels. The central panel (Fig. 4.14) depicts Charlotte and Leopold flanked, on one side, by an elderly man and a young child, to whom Charlotte is giving a coin, and, on the other side, by a woman kneeling to embrace a

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<sup>652</sup> Memorandum by Ponsonby, 31 March 1870: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/MAIN/1870/8135/1.

<sup>653</sup> 'Mausoleum of the Princess Charlotte, at Claremont,' *The Literary Journal and General Miscellany of Politics, Science, Arts, Morals and Manners* (June 1818), p. 189.

<sup>654</sup> Williamson to Ponsonby, 12 July 1870: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/MAIN/1870/8135/7.

young child. Rising behind them is an angel, carved in low relief, while beneath them inscriptions read: 'In Memoriam Charlotte and Leopold,' 'They visited the fatherless and widows in their affliction,' and '2 May 1816,' the date of their wedding.<sup>655</sup> This central panel is flanked, to our left, (Fig. 4.15) by a panel depicting the death of Charlotte, with Leopold kneeling at her death bed and an angel standing above them pointing to the deceased princess's ascendant spirit. An inscription beneath reads: 'Sorrow not as a man without hope for her who sleeps in Jesus,' and '6 November 1817,' the day the princess died.<sup>656</sup> To our right (Fig. 4.16) is a panel depicting Britannia offering the Belgian crown to Leopold, with an inscription beneath, which reads: 'The Kingdom of God and all these shall be added unto you,' and '1831,' the year in which Leopold ascended the Belgian throne.<sup>657</sup>

Nicholas Penny argues that Williamson's *Charlotte and Leopold Memorial* is an anomaly among the church monuments of Romantic England, closest in 'the detailed treatment of the slightly medieval costume' to Raffaele Monti's *Lady de Mauley* monument (1848)<sup>658</sup> Penny is correct not to overemphasise the comparison but it raises an important point about Victoria's taste for sculpture in this period. She never commissioned work from Monti or his equally popular compatriot and contemporary Pietro Magni, but she was clearly drawn to the precise rendering of detail and saccharine tone which characterised much of their work, and for which they were generally applauded by the public but vilified by critics.<sup>659</sup> In the absence

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<sup>655</sup> 'The Royal Nuptials,' *The Times* (6 May 1816), p. 3.

<sup>656</sup> 'London, Friday, November 7, 1817,' *The Times* (7 November 1817), p. 2.

<sup>657</sup> 'Express from Brussels,' *The Times* (23 July 1831), p. 5.

<sup>658</sup> For Williamson's *Charlotte and Leopold Memorial* see Nicholas Penny, *Church Monuments in Romantic England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 166-168.

<sup>659</sup> For Monti's work in Britain see: Gabriel Williams, 'Italian Tricks for London Shows: Rafaele Monti at the Royal Panopticon,' *Sculpture Journal* 23/2 (2014).

of documentary evidence, we do not know what Victoria thought of Williamson's triptych when it was finished and installed, but we can presume that she was pleased with it. Like Theed's *Victoria and Albert in Anglo-Saxon Dress* and Williamson's own *Dinah Consoling Hetty*, the *Charlotte and Leopold Memorial* effectively combines a tender and poignant sentiment with the bold modelling of figures and the intricate carving of details.

By contrast with the ideal sculpture commissioned by Victoria and Albert in the 1840s and 1850s, Williamson's triptych does not demand that we extrapolate its intellectual essence. Rather, it invites us to look closely and rewards our sustained viewing by gradually revealing intricate details such as the beard of the elderly man, Charlotte's ermine cloak and the coat of the dog protruding behind and being petted by Leopold. The range of textures represented in these scenes, and the various degrees of relief in which they are carved, courts our touch and allows for a rewardingly haptic viewing experience. As with the *Dinah Consoling Hetty* relief and Theed's *Victoria and Albert in Anglo-Saxon Dress*, there is something moving about the interaction between the various figures: in the panel to our left, the forlorn expression on Leopold's face as he looks up at Charlotte's ascendant spirit; in the central panel, the way in which the elderly man appears to gently nudge the fatherless young boy forward to accept the coin from the princess, the sheepish look on the boy's face as he accepts it, the intimate way in which Charlotte drapes her left hand over Leopold's right shoulder, while he fondly pets the dog behind him, and the particularly affective way in which the widow to our right kneels to embrace her daughter, while both look towards the benevolent couple, whose charitableness appears to promise them salvation.

A letter from Williamson to Ponsonby, dated 11 August 1870 suggests that, early on in the gestation of the *Charlotte and Leopold Memorial* project, there was some disagreement about the price. The letter is worth quoting in full because it offers a rare insight into the exacting nature of royal patronage as well as the benefits which sculptors expected to reap in return:

I duly received your letter, for which many thanks, and I will proceede [sic] to answer it categorically. First then the £500 you mention had to do with the Mausoleum where the work was to consist only of two alto reliefs in Sicilian marble half the original size proposed whereas by the Queen's especial desire the present design has three groups and in Statuary marble, now according to the old estimate in Sicilian marble this would be £750. Secondly the sum I named to you on Sunday week was 850 guineas or nearly £900 and was mentioned on the spur of the moment without having gone through any of the estimates. Thirdly with regard to the comparison of the expense of my work with that of the Albert Memorial I can only say that there is no comparison between them inasmuch as all the materials are found for the artists engaged on it and their work is some considerable distance from the observer and in the open air and would consequently not require such a delicate finish as I must impart to my work which is for an interior and will be placed close to the eye of the observer. Lastly I have been through every estimate again most carefully and I most conscientiously assure you that considering I have already been at more than £100 expense in preparing the sketches and have now another one to prepare I shall not cover my

expenses at the price I mentioned on Sunday viz 850 guineas. Nevertheless and this I beg you to consider quite confidential, the commission with which the Queen has honoured me will aid me so materially in bringing my name before the public that I will complete the work for the prices named.<sup>660</sup>

Four days later, Ponsonby replied to confirm that the sculptor would be paid 850 guineas for the triptych.<sup>661</sup> Williamson was clearly aware that the commission would entail a loss but expected to be compensated by the prestige it would garner. He was proven correct, but not necessarily in the manner he predicted.

As previously indicated, the *Charlotte and Leopold Memorial* was not completed until 1880. In the meantime, Williamson emerged from the shadow of Foley, who died in 1874, and established himself firmly in the metropolitan exhibition circuit. In 1871, a year after he began working on the memorial, he exhibited a relief panel entitled *Sunrise* at the Royal Academy. The often-caustic *Saturday Review* suggested that the relief of 'a child looking through a curtain is clever; but the execution lacks thoroughness,' before concluding that the work showed promise 'if the artist be young.'<sup>662</sup> An engraving after the relief was published in the *Art Journal* two years later (Fig. 4.17). The accompanying text suggested that the work's sentimental tone and illusionistic treatment of perspective hovered on the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable, though, in the end, it came down in favour of Williamson:

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<sup>660</sup> Williamson to Ponsonby, 11 August 1870: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/MAIN/1870/8135/10.

<sup>661</sup> Ponsonby to Williamson, 15 August 1870: RA/PPTO/PP/QV/MAIN/1870/8135/11.

<sup>662</sup> 'Sculpture in the Academy,' *Saturday Review* (17 June 1871), pp. 767-768.

Novelty of any kind has a certain power in drawing attention, and if kept within proper bounds, is generally successful. As a rule, the sculptor is far more restricted in the means at his command for such purpose than the painter, and cannot, therefore, pass far beyond the recognised conditions of his art. Yet we see in Mr Williamson's *alto-relievo* of 'Sunrise' that an original idea may be lawfully, and pleasantly too, carried out with the chisel as with the pencil.<sup>663</sup>

Over the following decade, four more of Williamson's works were published as engravings in the *Art Journal*.

The first was another relief, *Spring and Autumn* (Fig. 4.18), which was exhibited in plaster at the Academy in 1873.<sup>664</sup> In the text accompanying the engraving, we are told that this was a commission from a 'Mr R.B. Sheridan, of Frampton Court, near Dorchester,' where it was situated above the entrance to the conservatory, alongside a companion piece entitled *Welcome and Farewell*.<sup>665</sup> We are also told that this relief was being replicated in marble for Mr Sheridan's hallway, but that the faces of the two female allegories would be replaced by portraits of the patron's wife and daughter.<sup>666</sup> If this is an indication of the domestic charms of Williamson's work, then the lack of critical engagement in the accompanying text is an early indication that he found it difficult to be taken seriously as a sculptor, however attractive his work was to the patrons who commissioned it from him. The

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<sup>663</sup> 'Sunrise. From the Sculpture by Mr F.J. Williamson,' *Art Journal* (April 1873), pp. 112-113.

<sup>664</sup> Graves (1970), Vol. IV, p. 296.

<sup>665</sup> 'Spring and Autumn. From the Bas-Relief by F.J. Williamson,' *Art Journal* (May 1875), pp. 156-157.

<sup>666</sup> R.B. Sheridan was the M.P. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, grandson of the playwright. The contents of Frampton Court were dispersed in a sale in 1931; the house was demolished some time after 1932: 'The Estate Market,' *Times* (3 August 1931); 'Estate Market,' *Times* (8 April 1932), p. 24.

second engraving, published in February 1877, was after a marble portrait statue of the chemist Joseph Priestley in Birmingham, which was unveiled in 1874.<sup>667</sup> The third engraving, published in October 1877, was after a statue of *Elaine*, from Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.<sup>668</sup> In an indication of the degree to which Williamson's reputation was conditioned by his royal patronage the accompanying text informs us that:

The sculptor has been successful in obtaining royal patronage, which certainly ought to 'lead on to fortune' in every way. In the late Academy exhibition were three designs by him, models to be executed in marble for Claremont, the English home of the late King of the Belgians, Leopold I, and his wife the Princess Charlotte: he has now almost completed marble statues, for the Queen, of her Majesty's grandchildren, the sons of the Prince of Wales.<sup>669</sup>

If this commentary suggests that Williamson's reputation was boosted as a result of the financially unprofitable *Charlotte and Leopold* commission, just as he had anticipated, then a letter in the archives of the Royal Academy suggests that, by this point, he was not simply benefiting from the royal imprimatur; he was fundamentally dependent upon it.

In April 1877, Ponsonby wrote to the Royal Academy's Secretary: 'The Queen would be sorry to discourage Mr Williamson, whose bas-relief [the *Charlotte and Leopold Memorial*] was marked doubtful.'<sup>670</sup> It is perhaps unsurprising that the royal

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<sup>667</sup> 'Joseph Priestley, L.L.D.,' *Art Journal* (February 1877), pp. 40-41. The statue was originally executed in marble but was replaced with a bronze reproduction in 1951. See: Jeremy Beach & George T. Noszlopy, *Public Sculpture of Birmingham Including Sutton Coldfield* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998), pp. 33-34.

<sup>668</sup> 'Elaine,' *Art Journal* (October 1877), pp. 316-317.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>670</sup> RAA/SEC/5/3/1.

suggestion was followed and the triptych was exhibited. Yet, it received almost no critical attention. The only leading journal to mention it in its review was the *Art Journal*, which noted simply that '[m]emorial sculpture is further illustrated by F.J. Williamson in his various compositions relating to 'The late Princess Charlotte.'<sup>671</sup> In the same year, Leighton's ground-breaking *Athlete Wrestling with a Python* and Lord Ronald Gower's *Marie Antoinette leaving the Prison of the Conciergerie on the Day of her Execution* were exhibited to critical acclaim. By contrast, when an engraving after Williamson's triptych was published in the *Art Journal* in July 1883 – the last of Williamson's works to be so published – the accompanying text described it simply as a 'fine piece of sculpture.'<sup>672</sup>

Williamson's position as a sculptor of royalty was cemented through the 1880s and 1890s. In 1887, Victoria commissioned a bust of herself to commemorate her Golden Jubilee, and liked it so much that she ordered nine copies.<sup>673</sup> In May of that year, the sculptor was commissioned to execute a full-length, free-standing white marble portrait statue of her for the Examination Hall of the Royal College of Physicians, which was unveiled in May 1889.<sup>674</sup> Yet, further letters from the Royal Household to the Royal Academy indicate that these ostensibly prestigious commissions did little to raise Williamson's critical profile.

In April 1892, Ponsonby wrote to the Academy to inform it that the 'Queen has no commands to give on the rejected & doubtful except 2. – viz. Williamson's

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<sup>671</sup> 'The Royal Academy Exhibition,' *Art Journal* (September 1877), pp. 269-272.

<sup>672</sup> 'The Queen's Memorial to the Princess Charlotte and Leopold, King of the Belgians,' *Art Journal* (July 1883), pp. 216-217.

<sup>673</sup> Darby (1983), vol. I, p. 319.

<sup>674</sup> Darby (1983) vol. I, p. 319; 'Statue of the Queen, Medical Examination Hall,' *Illustrated London News* (1 June 1889), p. 691.

statuette, which he has done under her supervision & Countess Gleichen's portrait of her father, a marble bust.<sup>675</sup> The following year, he sent a letter indicating that Victoria had 'marked two of Bambridge's pictures which she wishes should be admitted. And also [Williamson's] bust of Princess Victoria Eugenie.'<sup>676</sup> While Williamson's critical position may have been precarious, his association with Victoria continued to secure him commissions until the end of his working life. Between 1898 and 1905, he was commissioned to execute nine near-exact replicas of his Royal College of Physicians portrait of Victoria for cities across Britain and its Empire, as well as two seated statues of Victoria: one in Croydon; the other was replicated for three different cities in the North-West Province of British India.<sup>677</sup> The by-then seventy-four year old sculptor appears to have retired with the completion of the last of these Victoria memorials.

In March 1901, just two months after Victoria's death, the art critic Arthur Fish published a brief retrospective of Williamson's career in the *Magazine of Art* under the title: 'Her Late Majesty's Private Sculptor: Mr F.J. Williamson.'<sup>678</sup> The three-page article is illustrated with photographs of several of the sculptor's works, including the *Dinah Consoling Hetty* relief and a portrait of *Prince Edward of York*,

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<sup>675</sup> RAA/SEC/12/24/2.

<sup>676</sup> RAA/SEC/12/24/4. Williamson's bust of Victoria Eugenie, Victoria's granddaughter, was exhibited alongside a bust of the recently deceased Duke of Clarence, which Victoria commissioned for the stairwell at Osborne. See: *Royal Academy Pictures, 1893* (London: Cassell & Co., 1893), p. 170.

<sup>677</sup> The Royal College of Physicians statue was replicated, with slight modifications, and dispatched to: Derry (1898), King William's Town, South Africa (1899), Auckland, New Zealand (1899), Hastings (1902), Paisley (1901), Perth, Western Australia (1903), Christchurch, New Zealand (1903), Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh, India (1905) and Wakefield (1905). All nine of the statues were executed in bronze, apart from the version in the Guildhall at Derry, which was, like the original, executed in marble. The three seated statues of Victoria commissioned for the North-West Province were located in Bulandshahr, Etah and present-day Mathura. See Darby (1983), vol. I, pp. 354-357.

<sup>678</sup> Arthur Fish, 'Her Late Majesty's Private Sculptor: Mr F.J. Williamson,' *The Magazine of Art* (March 1901), pp. 252-254.

Victoria's great-grandson (Fig. 4.19); an ideal nude, *Hypatia*, a bronze statue of *Robert Burns* and the Birmingham statue of *Priestly* (Fig. 4.20); and, finally, the marble version of the statue of *Victoria*, in the guildhall in Derry (Fig. 4.21). In the text, Fish tells us that Williamson was instructed by Bell and Foley and that it is therefore 'natural that he tends towards the classic, although he realises that the ideas of his master belong to a bygone age.'<sup>679</sup> Williamson, we are told, 'sympathises with the modern decorative treatment of sculpture,' but objects to the combination of metal and marble, because 'the combination detracts from the dignity of sculpture.'<sup>680</sup> The implication is that, rather than moving with the times, Williamson simply perpetuated the work of his long-dead masters. Lest it remain unclear that Williamson is devoid of originality, we are told that the resemblance between his statue of *Hypatia* (1891) and Charles William Mitchell's painting of the same subject (1885), 'will strike every observer, although, of course, it is no more than a coincidence.'<sup>681</sup>

If Williamson comes off badly from this account, then so too does Victoria, who is clearly cast as his protector. Fish tells us that Williamson 'modelled all the members of the Royal Family,' and that, by royal command, space was reserved in the Royal Academy's exhibition in 1884 for a 'small figure of the young Princess of Albany.'<sup>682</sup> This reciprocal relationship between a patron of deficient taste and a sculptor with derivative instincts was further emphasised in *British Sculpture and*

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<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252

<sup>680</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>682</sup> *Ibid.*

*Sculptors of Today*, a survey of contemporary British sculpture that was published in the same year by Marion Harry Spielmann, the editor of the *Magazine of Art*.<sup>683</sup>

In the prefatory essay to this book, Spielmann castigates the mid-nineteenth century as the nadir of British sculpture and proclaims that, since 1875, 'a radical change has cover over British sculpture, a change so revolutionary that it has given a new direction to the aims and ambitions of the artist and raised the British school to a height unhoped for, or at least wholly unexpected, thirty years ago.'<sup>684</sup> Spielmann is, unsurprisingly perhaps, critical of patronage. To back up his claim he paraphrases Palgrave's 'Sculpture and Society' article of nearly forty years previously: 'It remains, said the critic, mainly an affair not of publicly recognised ability, but of polite patronage; so that it is now on the status of poetry and scholarship under Queen Anne – a thing not generally diffused.'<sup>685</sup> However, forty years after Palgrave wrote despairingly, Spielmann pointed optimistically to a new, more enlightened and informed commercial class of patron, in whose hands modern British sculpture was prospering and would continue to do so.<sup>686</sup>

Tellingly, Williamson is the only living sculptor whom Spielmann identifies in terms of Victoria's patronage but he makes clear that the sculptor's reputation rested on Victoria's imprimatur, with the implication that, following her death, he would disappear from view: 'The fact that Mr Williamson was the private sculptor to her late Majesty Queen Victoria is known to all who take an interest in the art, and has

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<sup>683</sup> Marion Harry Spielmann, *British Sculpture and Sculptors of Today* (London: Cassell and Co., 1901). For Spielmann see: Julie F. Codell, 'The Artist's Cause at Heart: Marion Harry Spielmann and the Late Victorian Art World,' *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 71/1 (1989), pp. 139-163.

<sup>684</sup> Spielmann (1901), p. 1.

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>686</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

served to keep his name before the public.’<sup>687</sup> In the event that we are unable to read between the lines, he repeats the sequence of biographical information contained in Fish’s article: that Williamson was a pupil of Bell and an apprentice of Foley; that he modelled portraits of nearly every member of the royal family; and that his portrait of the Princess of Albany was exhibited ‘by Command.’ It is, he suggests, an example of ‘a treatment much favoured by her late Majesty.’<sup>688</sup> In concluding, Spielmann posits Williamson as a cautionary example for contemporary sculptors, who ought to learn from the mistakes of their forefathers:

Mr Williamson’s work, even though it be cold, is unusually well carved from well-chosen blocks, and the drapery, lace-work, and so forth, are very dexterously worked. Modelling must never be lacking in decision, or design in strength, otherwise the whole is apt to become unsympathetic in character and the result tends to the side of feebleness. While Mr Williamson cannot be said to add greatly to the strength of the British school, he has well understood a certain side of what is liked in semi-official work.<sup>689</sup>

#### **Part 4: The Public Face of Private Patronage, 1880-1901**

In August 1880, the *Cornhill Magazine* published an article entitled ‘English Sculpture in 1880.’<sup>690</sup> The article’s anonymous author was Edmund Gosse.<sup>691</sup> In his evaluation of the state of the field, Gosse, still a relative novice in terms of sculpture criticism,

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<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>688</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>689</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>690</sup> ‘English Sculpture in 1880,’ *Cornhill Magazine* (August 1880), pp. 173-186.

<sup>691</sup> For a general account of Gosse’s writings on sculpture see: Mark Stocker, ‘Edmund Gosse on Sculpture,’ *Leeds University Review* 28 (1985), pp. 283-311.

took as his starting point what he saw as a discrepancy between a sculpture profession 'gradually but surely increasing in merit year by year,' and the constant refrain that 'sculpture is dead in England.'<sup>692</sup> He attributes this discrepancy to three factors: an uninformed body of art critics, a Royal Academy unwilling to devote sufficient space for sculpture at its annual exhibition and an unappreciative public. Gosse suggests that one way in which the latter problem could be dealt with was by aligning contemporary sculpture with 'the recent movement in favour of beautifying the dwelling-house.'<sup>693</sup>

Gosse was very particular about the kind of domestic environment he thought sculpture ought to be a part of:

In corners where there now stands a gorgeous Indian vase or Japanese pot, space might be found for figures that would be intellectually more worthy of attention, and no less, decorative in character. The conventional clock on the mantelpiece of a rich room might very advantageously be exchanged for one of those vigorous little figures in bronze for which one or two of the younger sculptors show a special aptitude, and indeed, the deep and picturesque colour of fine bronze makes it perhaps more thoroughly in harmony with the tone of a modern artistic house than marble, which requires considerable brightness of surrounding, and a tone not sinking below grisaille to escape a certain glaring whiteness.<sup>694</sup>

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<sup>692</sup> 'English Sculpture in 1880,' p. 173.

<sup>693</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>694</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

Gosse goes on to suggest that ‘those who deny or disregard the value of fine sculpture in a dwelling-house,’ ought to ‘inspect the drawing-room at Osborne, where the presence of at least a dozen statues, arranged in different parts of the room, gives an air of dignity and serenity which is wholly pleasurable.’<sup>695</sup>

This reference to Osborne suggests that Gosse wanted to exploit Victoria’s imprimatur by positing her home as a model, which, if followed, would correct what he saw as an imbalance between the quality of contemporary sculpture and the support available for it. Yet, Gosse’s vague description of a drawing-room with ‘at least a dozen statues’ suggests that he had not actually been there; in fact, at the time, there were ten freestanding statues in the room.<sup>696</sup> If Gosse’s un-illustrated article had included an image of the drawing room at Osborne, it would have exposed the fact that it was the antithesis of the kind of ‘modern artistic house’ he referred to, not least because it was populated with works by a generation of sculptors whose passing he, later in the article, hails as the salvation of modern British sculpture:

We look back to the sculpture of twenty years ago with a sense of extreme relief. The deadly smoothness of Chantrey, the awkwardness of Behnes, the pedantry of Gibson, the whole evil genius of the dark age can be traced only in the work of two or three artists who no longer assert an influence over public taste. The errors that led astray the most opposite talents of the last generation have lost their fascination for the new race of sculptors, and the signs of revival are clearly to be seen by any eyes that are open to perceive them.<sup>697</sup>

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<sup>695</sup> Ibid.

<sup>696</sup> *Works of Art at Osborne* (1876), pp. 13-15.

<sup>697</sup> ‘English Sculpture in 1880,’ p. 180.

It would be foolish to exaggerate the significance of Gosse's early foray into sculptural criticism. Yet, it is fair to say that it typifies a tendency among late-century art critics to posit an oppositional antagonism between a 'new race' of sculptors and the mid-century sculptors whom they apparently broke away from. This is evident in the writings on sculpture of Walter Armstrong, an equally prolific and influential critic in the 1880s and early 1890s. In June 1887, Armstrong published an article on sculpture in the Jubilee issue of the *Art Journal*. In the preface to this special issue, the art critic Marcus Bourne Huish promised that it would 'testify to the continuous advance which has to be chronicled in every branch of the Arts,' since Victoria's accession and suggested that this progress was 'largely due to the beneficent, intelligent and healthy patronage bestowed upon them by Her Majesty, the Royal family, and notably the late Prince Consort.'<sup>698</sup>

Ironically, considering Huish's trumpeting of the Royal family's impact on the arts, Armstrong dismissed many of the sculptors associated with Victoria and Albert's patronage, whom he classified as 'the early Victorian school' – Chantrey, Gibson and Marochetti prominent amongst them – characterising their work in terms of '[f]orms without character, modelling without research, heads without vitality, draperies without style,' and judging them against 'those young artists who form the rising hope of English sculpture.'<sup>699</sup>

Gosse took this notion of inter-generational antagonism forward in a series of articles on the history of 'The New Sculpture,' published in the *Art Journal* between May and October 1894. Here he characterised the work of a new generation of

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<sup>698</sup> Marcus Bourne Huish, 'Our Jubilee Number,' *Art Journal* (June 1887), pp. 160-162.

<sup>699</sup> Walter Armstrong, 'Sculpture,' *The Art Journal* (June 1887), pp. 177-180, pp. 178, 179.

sculptors – Harry Bates, Alfred Gilbert, Edward Onslow Ford and Hamo Thornycroft chief amongst them – in terms of a modern rendering of classical forms that was informed by contemporary French sculpture and fostered by Frederic Leighton.<sup>700</sup> Gosse strove hard to cultivate an aura of intellectual superiority around the work of this new sculpture, while simultaneously preaching its consciously decorative qualities and its aptitude as a feature of the modern domestic interior. In 1895 and 1896 he published four articles on ‘The Place of Sculpture in Daily Life,’ in the *Magazine of Art*.<sup>701</sup> In the second of these, which looked at ‘Sculpture in the House,’ Gosse elaborated upon the principles of interior design he had first outlined in his 1880 article.

Gosse presented his readers with a guide to the integration of sculpture into the fabric of ‘one of the dark harmonious drawing-rooms or libraries which are now in vogue.’<sup>702</sup> As he had done in his earlier article, he suggested that white marble was inappropriate in this context because ‘[i]n one of these coloured modern rooms, anything glaringly white distresses the eye directly.’<sup>703</sup> The ideal solution, he argued, was the harmonious tones and domestic scale of bronze statuettes, through which a ‘great air of distinction and refinement is given to a room.’<sup>704</sup> By contrast with the 1880 article, this 1895 article was illustrated. It incorporated photographs of what the reader was clearly supposed to identify as fashionable interiors (Fig. 4.22), with bronze statuettes by some of the leading lights of the ‘New Sculpture’ displayed in

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<sup>700</sup> Edmund Gosse, ‘The New Sculpture, 1879-1894,’ *Art Journal* (1894), pp. 138-142, 199-203, 277-282, 306-311.

<sup>701</sup> Edmund Gosse, ‘The Place of Sculpture in Daily Life,’ *Magazine of Art* (1895), pp. 326-329, 368-372, 407-410; 19 (1896), pp. 9-12.

<sup>702</sup> ‘The Place of Sculpture in Daily Life II – Sculpture in the House,’ *Magazine of Art* (1895), pp. 368-372, p. 369.

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 371.

them. Here image was in harmony with text to a degree that would have been impossible if the article had been illustrated with an image of the drawing room in Osborne, which was populated by exactly the kind of sculpture that Gosse worked so hard to discredit.

There is nothing to suggest that either Victoria or her collection were the specific object of Gosse's censure, not least because the Prince of Wales was an important patron of some of the sculptors Gosse promoted and many of them received commissions to execute public statues of Victoria in the 1880s and 1890s. Yet, while Osborne did not come under Gosse's fire directly, its absence from his 1895 article was symptomatic of Victoria's relative absence, as a patron, if not as a subject, from the pages of the mainstream art press in the 1880s and 1890s. The proliferation in this period of through-the-keyhole articles on the royal residences indicates a willingness on her part to allow the public to see inside her home. For the first time, these articles revealed the extent to which private interiors in the royal residences were crowded with sculpture. Yet, while they allowed the public to see Victoria's sculpture collection in its domestic context, these articles gave little impression that her private patronage of sculpture had evolved beyond the memorialisation of Albert.

For example, the June 1887 Jubilee issue of the *Art Journal* also featured an article on Balmoral. In it, Victoria is portrayed as a melancholic figure stuck in the past in a house haunted by the memory of the dead. We are told that there are three memorials to Albert in the grounds; that, in the entrance hall, 'the eye is arrested by a beautiful marble statue of the Prince Consort in Highland dress, executed by

Theed'; and that the rooms 'which the late Prince Consort used to occupy are sacredly preserved in the same condition.'<sup>705</sup> The article is illustrated with several engravings, including one showing 'The Queen's Sitting Room' (Fig. 4.23). The latter is particularly striking: every surface in the room is crowded with framed pictures, a portrait of Albert stands prominently on an easel in the centre, and a pair of portrait busts flanks the fireplace. Standing to the left is Victoria, in her widows' weeds.

The accompanying text tells us that:

The sitting-room is especially interesting, as its contents indicate the kind of indoor life which Her Majesty leads when at Balmoral. The writing-table is laden with books and papers and photographs of all her relatives; and on a smaller table on the right are a number of dispatch boxes. A large painting of the Prince Consort stands conspicuously on an easel before her as she writes; and a fine photograph of the Duchess of Kent is near at hand. These two portraits invariably accompany her wherever she goes. On either side of the fire-place is a marble bust of the Prince Consort and of Princess Alice.<sup>706</sup>

For the most part, the through-the-keyhole articles on the royal residences that proliferated in this period were published in popular periodicals rather than the mainstream art press. Such articles gave readers an unprecedented insight into Victoria and Albert's sculpture collection in its domestic context. Yet, while the collection featured prominently in the illustrations accompanying them, it tended to be glossed over in the text.

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<sup>705</sup> Hugh MacMillan, 'Balmoral,' *Art Journal* (June 1887), pp. 215-220, p. 215.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

For example, in September 1888, *Leisure Hour* published an article on Osborne, which was illustrated with engravings of the residence's exterior front, the principal corridor and the drawing room (Figs. 4.24-4.25).<sup>707</sup> Though crude, these images allow the informed reader to identify prominent pieces from Victoria and Albert's sculpture collection. Yet, the text suggests that the author had little interest in, or understanding of, the collection, except as an index of times past:

It would be impossible to name or describe in detail the numerous fine pieces of sculpture which delighted us as we passed from room to room. These stand in the hall and main and lesser corridor, and comprise examples of the best known modern masters – Gibson, Theed. Weeks [sic], Thorneycroft [sic], Boehm and Calder Marshall. Doubtless most of them were exhibited at the Royal Academy in times past, including the busts of the Queen's children, of which there are several; the most noticeable examples being grouped next the Queen's entrance, bearing, if our memory serves us, the name of Thorneycroft.<sup>708</sup>

A number of articles published in the 1890s conveyed an image of Victoria not simply as a widow rooted in the past, but as an obsessive, unconditionally resistant to progress and change. For example, the first issue of the *Windsor Magazine*, a self-declared 'home magazine' published between January 1895 and November 1900, featured an article entitled 'Windsor Castle: House and Home.'<sup>709</sup> Though not illustrated with images of the royal family's private apartments, the article mentions

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<sup>707</sup> Charles Eyre Pascoe, 'The Queen's Homes: Osborne,' *The Leisure Hour* (September 1888), pp. 598-604.

<sup>708</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 601.

<sup>709</sup> 'Windsor Castle: House and Home,' *Windsor Magazine: An Illustrated Monthly for Men and Women* (January 1895), pp. 483-492.

some of pieces of sculpture located in them, including Theed's 'pathetic memorial sculpture of the Queen and the Prince Consort,' and Triqueti's 'beautiful marble statue of Edward VI.'<sup>710</sup> Yet the author gives no impression that Victoria's taste had evolved since then. On the contrary, we are explicitly told that 'the Queen's tastes still favour the fashions which prevailed in the lifetime of her Consort,' and that, when the Master of the Household 'proposed to refurnish these apartments in more modern style,' Victoria 'at once refused to hear anything of such a change.'<sup>711</sup>

This image of Victoria as a Miss Havisham figure, trying to stop the hands of time, was further perpetuated in an article on Osborne published in the *English Illustrated Magazine* in July 1897.<sup>712</sup> The article is prefaced with a photograph of Landseer's painting *Queen Victoria at Osborne* (Fig. 4.26), which was completed in 1867 and exhibited at the Royal Academy that year as 'Her Majesty at Osborne in 1866.'<sup>713</sup> The visually arresting painting centres around Victoria sitting on a black horse, dressed in deep mourning. She is attending to state papers (strewn on the ground in the vicinity of a dispatch box) and attended by John Brown, two of her favourite dogs and two of her daughters. Behind her is the garden front of Osborne. In the mid-to-late 1860s, when Victoria faced mounting criticism for her apparent refusal to return to public life, the import of this painting is clear: the Queen's enduring grief may compel her to avoid the public gaze, but the serious business of monarchy continues behind the scenes. As the frontispiece to an article published thirty years later, the painting suggests that Victoria is still a reclusive widow and that

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<sup>710</sup> Ibid., pp. 489, 490.

<sup>711</sup> Ibid.

<sup>712</sup> 'The Queen's Homes,' *English Illustrated Magazine* (July 1897), pp. 357-362, 416-420, 439-444, 460-466.

<sup>713</sup> Graves (1970), Vol. II, p. 372.

to see inside the residence is to look past the widow on the horse. The main body of the article is illustrated with photographs of Osborne's exterior and the principal corridor, drawing room and billiard room respectively (Figs. 4.27.-4.29). Readers were thus offered clear evidence of the visually arresting wealth of sculpture on display in the residence, but it is rendered all but invisible in the text. We are told that the interior is 'rare and costly in its decoration and contents,' and that 'some of the most beautiful of artistic treasures anywhere to be seen are here in abundance, comprising miniatures, costly china, fine frescoes, portraits, sculpture etc.,' yet not a single sculptor or piece of sculpture is named.<sup>714</sup>

While sculpture disappeared in plain sight in these articles, the pre-Victorian artworks and objets d'art housed within the royal residences were brought into the open in this period. In 1898, the *Magazine of Art* published a ten part series entitled 'The Queen's Treasures of Art, Decorative Art at Windsor Castle' by Frederick Robinson, author of *The Connoisseur: Essays on the Romantic and Picturesque Associations of Art and Artists*.<sup>715</sup> These lavishly illustrated articles, which looked at object categories such as Boule cabinets, porcelain and Renaissance bronzes offered readers an unprecedented insight into the material richness of one of the monarchy's principal residences.<sup>716</sup> Victoria is characterised as the titular proprietor of this connoisseur's paradise but she does not feature in the texts of the articles, which focus exclusively on works acquired by her predecessors, mainly George IV.

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<sup>714</sup> 'The Queen's Homes,' *The English Illustrated Magazine* 166 (July 1897), pp. 460-466, p. 462.

<sup>715</sup> Frederick S. Robinson, *The Connoisseur: Essays on the Romantic and Picturesque Associations of Art and Artists* (London: G. Redway, 1897).

<sup>716</sup> Frederick S. Robinson, 'The Queen's Treasures of Art, Decorative Art at Windsor,' *The Magazine of Art* 21 (1898), pp. 26-32, 89-96, 149-156, 203-210, 245-252, 318-323, 349-355, 408-413, 470-476, 541-547.

By contrast, when contemporary artworks featured in articles on the royal residences, they tended to be treated as little more than Victoria's domestic clutter. For example, an article on Osborne, published in the *Windsor Magazine* in December 1896, is illustrated with a photograph of the principal corridor, yet the artistic value of the sculpture displayed along it is undermined by Osborne's apparent homeliness:

The statuary is a feature of the house; the cabinets, lacquer work and bronzes are very good; yet the house is not a palace but a home, not a show place but comfortable, and nothing impressed me more than the sight of needlework, knitting, toys, balls, rocking-horses and magazines left lying about in this most homely and comfortable of the residences of the beloved sovereign.<sup>717</sup>

A similar impression is conveyed in an article on Victoria's private apartments in Windsor, published in the *Pall Mall Magazine* in 1898.<sup>718</sup> It tells us that Victoria likes to be surrounded by reminders of the past: 'Much as the Queen appreciates photographs – and no one possesses a larger collection of photographs – still we find on every side evidences of a desire on her part to acquire less perishable mementoes of favourites. Throughout the Private Apartments are busts and groups and statuettes in all possible materials such as marble, bronze, silver or china.'<sup>719</sup> Again we are reminded about Victoria's resistance to change. Indeed, we are told, 'all innovations are strictly forbidden,' as illustrated by an anecdote regarding 'the Queen's objection to smartness':

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<sup>717</sup> Owen Conway, 'Osborne, The Queen's Southern Home,' *Windsor Magazine: An Illustrated Monthly for Men and Women* (December 1896), pp. 8-13, p. 13.

<sup>718</sup> 'The Queen's Private Apartments at Windsor Castle,' *The Pall Mall Magazine* (August 1899), 436-449.

<sup>719</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 438.

On one occasion during the absence of Her Majesty some railings in view of her private apartments required repainting, and it occurred to the responsible official that a somewhat brighter tone and gilded tops might improve their appearance. The work was duly done; the Queen returned; an hour or so afterwards an order was issued to return the railings to their original colour before the Queen came down in the morning.<sup>720</sup>

This image of an elderly woman set in her ways and demanding to be surrounded by objects of familiarity rather than artistic merit, corresponds with a photograph entitled *Queen Victoria and Princess Beatrice in the Queen's Sitting Room, Windsor*, which was taken by Mary Steen in May 1896 and published in the *Illustrated London News* that September (Fig. 4.30).<sup>721</sup> It shows Victoria knitting while her daughter Beatrice sits opposite her reading from a newspaper. Around them, the walls are covered with paintings and every surface is crowded with flower vases, framed photographs, statuettes and miniature busts. Tellingly, it is virtually impossible to identify individual pieces of sculpture, apart from a silver-gilt equestrian statuette of *Princess Louise* (1869) by Boehm, on the table behind Beatrice, and a bronze statuette of *Prince Alfred* (1870) by Victor Gleichen, on the mantelpiece.

Steen's photograph suggests that Victoria was comfortable with her domesticity and consciously made it part of her public image. Yet, such 'through-the-keyhole' images did little to redeem Victoria's reputation as a long-time patron of sculpture and laid the groundwork for the politely dismissive final word on her patronage that was penned by Spielmann shortly after her death.

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<sup>720</sup> Ibid., pp. 440-441.

<sup>721</sup> Dimond & Taylor (1987), p. 94.

## Conclusion

The last portrait Victoria sat for was a bust by Edward Onslow Ford, to be used in the modelling of a seated bronze statue of the Queen that was commissioned for Manchester in 1897 from the city's Jubilee Commemoration Fund (Fig. 4.31).<sup>722</sup> In February 1898, Victoria wrote in her journal: 'Sat to a Mr Ford, a clever sculptor for a statue he is doing of me for Manchester.'<sup>723</sup> The following March, she recorded that she had seen the bust finished in marble, as well as a model of the Manchester statue. She described both as 'very fine.'<sup>724</sup>

Victoria's characteristically brief judgement belies the visually arresting appearance of Ford's bust (Fig. 4.32). Her face is framed from below by a roughly truncated mass of drapery and from above by a minutely detailed gilt metal crown, a blending of metal and marble that was common among the New Sculptors. Ford's skilful treatment of drapery and use of mixed materials enhances the strikingly realistic face. In the year Ford began working on the bust, Heinrich von Angeli finished painting an oil portrait of Victoria (Fig. 4.33), in which, apart from her white hair and somewhat fatigued pose, the monarch is endowed with the smooth skin, plump figure and healthy glow of a much younger woman. By comparison, Ford's portrait exposes the figure for what it is: that of an eighty-year old woman in declining health.

In the summer of 1900, Victoria allowed Ford to exhibit the bust in plaster in the Royal Pavilion at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris.<sup>725</sup> One of twenty three

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<sup>722</sup> Terry Wyke & Harry Cocks, *Public Sculpture of Greater Manchester* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), pp. 119-121.

<sup>723</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1898: 1 February.

<sup>724</sup> RA/VIC/MAIN/QVJ/1899: 6 March.

<sup>725</sup> *Paris Exhibition, 1900: British Official Catalogue* (London & Paris: Royal Commission for the Paris Exhibition), p. 164.

national pavilions, this building was designed by Edwin Lutyens and modelled after The Hall, a Jacobean manor house in Bradford-upon-Avon (Fig. 4.34).<sup>726</sup> According to the souvenir guide, it was intended 'to provide an example of the most characteristic style of English domestic architecture, fitted in such a way as to give, as far as possible, an idea of a well-appointed English house.'<sup>727</sup> This pastoral vision was echoed inside the building with a loan collection consisting chiefly of paintings by Gainsborough, Hoppner, Raeburn and Reynolds.

Ford's bust was one of the most contemporary artworks in a building that was clearly designed to evoke a nostalgic vision of English domesticity in times past. Yet, nestled in a bank of flowers at the foot of the Grand Staircase (Fig. 4.35), the bust appears to signify that Victoria's time has already passed. According to Isidore Spielmann, Victoria recognised this herself. In the souvenir guide to the Royal Pavilion, he tells us that Ford originally modelled the bust simply as an aid for the Manchester statue but Victoria liked it so much that she commissioned a version for Windsor Castle and 'as recently as a fortnight before her death, presented replicas in marble or bronze to various friends and members of the Royal Family.'<sup>728</sup>

Victoria died at Osborne on 22 January 1901. The following month, the *Magazine of Art* published an article entitled 'Her Late Majesty Queen Victoria and the Fine Arts,' written by Marion Harry Spielmann, Isidore Spielmann's brother.<sup>729</sup> The article's frontispiece is a black-bordered photograph of Ford's bust (Fig. 4.36). In

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<sup>726</sup> Isidore Spielmann, *Paris International Exhibition 1900: The Royal Pavilion* (London: Royal Commission, 1901).

<sup>727</sup> Spielmann (1901<sup>3</sup>), pp. 4, 5.

<sup>728</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>729</sup> Marion Harry Spielmann, 'Her Late Majesty Queen Victoria and the Fine Arts,' *The Magazine of Art* (February 1901), pp. 193-196.

the article, Spielmann tells us that she had ascended the throne when British art was at a low ebb and presided over a renaissance in architecture and ‘the birth of a school of Sculpture such as had not been seen in Britain before.’ The author does not exaggerate Victoria’s role in this artistic leap forward but he does acknowledge the extent of her patronage and her value as the ‘head of the Fine Arts.’<sup>730</sup> Towards the end of the article Spielmann asks: ‘Could the Queen have effected more for art than she did?’<sup>731</sup> It is not, he suggests, an occasion to properly answer the question but, on the whole, Victoria did her part.

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<sup>730</sup> Spielmann (1901<sup>2</sup>), pp. 193, 196.

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

## **Conclusion: Victorian Sculpture at the Edwardian Garden Party**

Spielmann's polite dismissal of Victoria as a patron, quoted in the conclusion to the last chapter, illustrates the boom and bust cycle with which I framed the royal patronage of contemporary sculpture in the introduction to this thesis. By reiterating Palgrave's tirade, in the 1860s, about the ill effects of private patronage in the public eye, Spielmann was echoing Hervey's complaint, in the 1830s, about the lack of a system of patronage capable of supporting British sculpture as Britain's place in the world demanded it ought to be. By dismissing Victoria, Spielmann was simply doing what he had to. In order for the 'New Sculpture' to gain traction as the long-anticipated renaissance, it needed to be new. In order to be convincing, it had to be presented as a vital antidote to the sculpture that came before it. As a patron who engaged with sculpture over the course of sixty years, Victoria needed to be on one side or the other of this reductive divide. For Spielmann and others like him, the easiest solution was to cast her as an outdated partisan of the old school, while claiming her image as fertile ground for the new school in the form of portrait bust and statues like Ford's.

Of course, Victoria's patronage, and the wider history of Victorian sculpture, was not as simple as the picture Spielmann and others painted of it, even if it is important to understand why they did so. In concluding this thesis, I briefly examine the Edwardian afterlife of Victoria and Albert's patronage. In doing so, I suggest that we need to rethink the inter-generational antagonism upon which the image of the 'New Sculpture' was founded and mid-Victorian sculpture derided.

Ten days after Victoria's death, her coffin was moved, with sombre ceremony, to Windsor, where it was deposited temporarily in the Albert Memorial Chapel, before her funeral on 4 February 1901.<sup>732</sup> In a photograph of the coffin in the chapel (Fig. 5.1), we can see the end of Triqueti's cenotaph of Albert and, in the distance, the *Entombment* tarsia panel. This was appropriate because, the day after it was deposited in the chapel, the Queen's coffin was removed to the mausoleum at Frogmore and interred in the sarcophagus which she had commissioned forty years earlier.<sup>733</sup> Marochetti's effigy of Victoria was finally to take its place alongside his effigy of Albert (Fig. 5.2). The problem was that nobody could find it. The recumbent statue of Victoria had, according to Elizabeth Longford, 'been inadvertently locked up in a cavity of the Castle walls awaiting the day of resurrection, and was with difficulty located by the Office of Works.'<sup>734</sup>

Longford does not cite the source of this information but, whether it is true or not, the story appears to neatly illustrate the interrelationship between Victoria, a patron who was stuck in the past, and a generation of mid-Victorian sculptors who had been incapable of progressing with the forward movement of modern sculpture. Yet, while Marochetti's reputation was long buried, his rediscovered effigy of Victoria retained its visual force. On 22 January 1902, the anniversary of Victoria's death, a memorial service was held in the mausoleum. According to one reporter, the effigy, 'executed by Marochetti many years ago,' was 'the central object to which the eyes of all who visited the Mausoleum to-day were instantly directed, and which seemed like the visible fulfilment of her expressed desire to rest beside her beloved husband

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<sup>732</sup> Wolfe (2000), pp. 232-242.

<sup>733</sup> 'Funeral of the Queen: Burial at Frogmore,' *Times* (5 February 1901), p. 8.

<sup>734</sup> Longford (1964), p. 564.

when death should reunite them.<sup>735</sup> Even in death, then, Victoria's personal relationship with sculpture conditioned public perceptions of her and even at the turn of the twentieth century, the sculpture she had commissioned forty years earlier was not without its appeal, for some people at least.

The longevity, range and scale of Victoria's patronage complicates the straightforward division of the history of Victorian sculpture into a classicising mid-century generation and a modernising late-century generation that repudiated its inheritance. As we have seen, Victoria commissioned work from both Williamson, a sculptor closely associated with mid-century classicism, and Onslow Ford, a sculptor at the heart of the 'New Sculpture'. The two were not mutually exclusive and their interrelationship through a single patron suggests that we need to rethink the history of Victorian sculpture in more holistic terms. Yet, ironically, the image of that patron which emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth century demonstrates that the clear-cut separation of the classicising mid-Victorian from the modernising late-Victorian is not simply a product of post-Victorian scholarship. Despite the persistent pace and breadth of her patronage in the last decades of her life, Victoria was stereotyped as a patron of old-fashioned sculptors such as Gibson, Marochetti and Theed and their body of sculpture was supposed to be safely hidden away and forgotten about. Yet the affective appeal of Marochetti's effigy of Victoria suggests that mid-Victorian sculpture was not buried as deeply as Spielmann and others might have hoped.

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<sup>735</sup> 'The Late Queen Victoria: Memorial Service at Frogmore,' *Times* (23 January 1902), p. 4.

The fate of Victoria's and Albert's sculpture collection after Victoria's death further disrupts and reinforces the division of Victorian sculpture into two distinct and mutually antagonistic periods. Contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of Victoria's will, her son, Edward VII donated Osborne to the nation as a convalescent home for officers and a training school for naval cadets, with the stipulation that Victoria and Albert's apartments remain sealed and the reception rooms on the ground floor of the Pavilion wing remain intact and open to the public.<sup>736</sup> The King's art advisor, Lionel Cust, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, was sent to Osborne to select artworks that might be considered 'desirable for use in any one of the other Palaces.'<sup>737</sup> Among the works chosen were the *Egyptian Antinous*; Macdonald's *Hyacinthus*; Tenerani's *Flora*; Theed's *Narcissus* and *Psyche Lamenting the Loss of Cupid*; Von Hoyer's *Psyche Holding a Lamp*; and Wyatt's *Glycera, Nymph of Diana* and *The Huntress*. They were removed to Windsor Castle.<sup>738</sup>

Following Victoria's death, the royal apartments in Windsor were extensively redecorated and modernised, with the installation of central heating and electric lighting. Chief among the changes was the complete redecoration of the Blue Room, Albert's death room. Victoria had preserved it as a memorial to Albert; Edward VII made it his study.<sup>739</sup> If Edward's de-sanctification of his father's death room appears

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<sup>736</sup> Guy Laking, *Illustrated Guide to Osborne With a Catalogue of the Pictures, Porcelain and Furniture in the State Apartments* (London: H.M.S.O., 1937, first published 1919), pp. 8-9.

<sup>737</sup> Lionel Cust, *King Edward VII and His Court, Some Reminiscences* (London: John Murray, 1930), p. 181.

<sup>738</sup> *Inventory of the Contents of the Orangery at Windsor Castle, December 1908*. This unpublished inventory is housed in the Royal Collection Library in St James's Palace. *The Egyptian Antinous* and *Flora* have been returned to Osborne; *Psyche Holding a Lamp*, *Psyche Lamenting the Loss of Cupid*, *Nymph of Diana*, *The Huntress* and *Flora* are currently displayed in the State Apartments at Buckingham Palace.

<sup>739</sup> *Condensed Report of Alterations Carried Out at Windsor Castle During the Reign of King Edward VII*. This undated and unpublished report is housed in the Royal Collection Library in St James's Palace.

to epitomise Edwardian attempts to repudiate the Victorian, then his recycling of Victoria's and Albert's sculpture collection suggests otherwise. The various statues Cust had removed from Osborne were redisplayed in the Orangery overlooking Windsor's East Terrace. During his brief reign, Edward VII hosted several large garden parties here, with refreshments served in the Orangery.

One such garden party in 1908 was illustrated in the *Illustrated London News* (Fig. 5.3) and extensively reported in the *Times*.<sup>740</sup> Some of those attending travelled to Windsor in royal trains and were warned not to repeat the mistake of the previous year, when guests had boarded trains bound for Ascot and become 'mixed up with the "undesirables" of the racing fraternity.'<sup>741</sup> Other attendees motored to the party; 'such a number, in fact, as occasioned a block in the traffic.'<sup>742</sup> When they eventually made it to the East Terrace, guests were rewarded with a scene 'of extraordinary brilliance.' Indeed, '[n]othing was wanting to complete the magnificence, thanks to the foresight and thoughtfulness of the King, who had personally supervised the arrangements.'<sup>743</sup> If the mixture of sumptuous dresses, motor cars, class tension, and the attentiveness of the playboy king, epitomises the Edwardian age, then the presence of a large body of mid-Victorian sculpture in the refreshment room is a reminder that the break between one generation and the next was not clear cut. The sight of these statues might have reinforced the correlation between the recently-deceased Victoria and an aesthetic that had long predeceased

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<sup>740</sup> 'Their Majesties' Garden Party,' *Times* (22 June 1908), p. 10.

<sup>741</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>742</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.*

her. Whether it did or not, there it was; a body of classicising mid-Victorian sculpture amidst a spectacle of Edwardian opulence.

Edward VII grew up surrounded by his parents' collection of sculpture. At the age of eighteen, he visited Rome, where Gibson guided him through its ancient sculpture collections and introduced him to the leading contemporary sculptors working in the city. As Desiree de Chaire's research reveals, this immersion in the heartland of neoclassicism informed the prince's early patronage of sculpture, as reflected by the works he commissioned and acquired from Gibson, Macdonald, Theed, and Gibson's student, Harriet Hosmer.<sup>744</sup> De Chaire's analysis of the prince's patronage further reveals that his taste evolved as he grew older and that he forged a close connection with Leighton and became an important patron of sculptors associated with the 'New Sculpture', including Bertram Mackennal, Frederick Pomeroy and Gilbert, whom he commissioned to execute the *Clarence Tomb*.<sup>745</sup> Yet, the fact that, as King, Edward prominently displayed his parents' collection suggests that his early relationship with mid-Victorian classicism and his later engagement with the 'New Sculpture' were again not mutually exclusive.

The presence of Victoria's and Albert's collection at Edward's garden party suggests the harmonious co-existence, if not coherence, of one generation of sculptors and patrons and the next. However, in retrospect, the two were simply incompatible. Cust, who had brought Victoria's and Albert's collection from Osborne to Windsor, reminisced about the move in his memoirs, written in the late 1920s:

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<sup>744</sup> De Chaire (2014).

<sup>745</sup> Ibid.

Prince Albert had entered very much into the spirit which animated the sculpture of his early days, as represented by John Gibson at Rome, and by Thorwaldsen at Florence. He had filled Osborne with marble statues and bronzes, almost too many. Queen Victoria and the Prince also encouraged family portraiture in marble and bronze, employing capable though not exciting artists, such as Messrs. Thornycroft, William Theed, and J.E. Boehm. Here again was a period of which the merits were hardly recognised in the twentieth century, when prettiness was derided as insipid, and highly finished work blamed for the very quality which it possessed. I knew, however, that at Buckingham Palace especially there was room for a certain amount of decorative sculpture, so I selected a few of the more important groups in marble.<sup>746</sup>

It seems unlikely that Cust did not know that Thorwaldsen spent most of his working life in Rome. Yet, whether or not this mistake was genuine, it served to collapse nineteenth-century sculpture into a single, decorative and best forgotten entity.

At the start of this thesis, I suggested that Victoria's and Albert's patronage defies clear-cut categorisation and yet it is perhaps appropriate to finish with Cust's reductive summary of it. As I have demonstrated, Victoria's and Albert's collection was extensive in scale and broad in scope, intricately woven into the fabric of their private lives, and imbricated in complex ways with their public patronage of sculpture. Yet, it is perhaps because they were such committed and complicated patrons, that their patronage has been categorised so reductively for so long.

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<sup>746</sup> Cust (193), p. 185.

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*Manners*

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