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**Historical Narratives and Subtexts of Identity:
Case studies of Glasgow's public portrait statues**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

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Abstract

Portrait monuments function as public history ‘texts’ that express an audience-specific local history by drawing on the past to inform the present through historical narrative. These narratives are grounded not so much in the biography of a portrait statue’s subject, but rather in group and place identities. Using a narrative theory framework and a place-based, people-centred approach, this thesis will demonstrate how public portrait statues function as historiographical texts, the ways in which those texts are coloured by the contexts in which they were formed, and the ways in which subtexts of identity inform or are shaped by the selection of public figures for commemoration in a given place. The examples of contexts and subtexts described in four Glaswegian case studies are intended to provide historians and policy makers with a deeper means of evaluating the benefit of public monuments in public spaces, particularly around discussions of installing new statues or removing those that are contested, anachronistic, or irrelevant.

The first case study on the nineteenth-century monuments of George Square demonstrates that the primary aim of these portrait statues was to project an image of Glasgow as the exceptional Second City of the Empire, whose social and environmental negativities were blended out by the assemblage of great personages in the city centre. The case study on *La Pasionaria*, erected in 1980, argues that while the monument was meant to honour the Spanish Civil War’s International Brigades, with Dolores Ibárruri as an avatar of their sacrifices and determination, the portrait statue was also an instrument and production of modern concerns relating to political power, deindustrialisation, and collective identity. An examination of the 2018 Mary Barbour monument in Govan describes how a broader understanding of the history on their doorstep reinvigorated pride and self-determination in the community and the district. Finally, the examination of the Duke of Wellington monument contrasts and compares conflicts around identity both at the time of its installation in the nineteenth century and when a traffic cone began to appear on his head in the late twentieth century. Each of these case studies will show that historical narratives imbued in portrait statues tell only a prologue of the subjects they portray and that the thrust of the narrative and its accompanying subtexts are initially formed by monument commissioners, but can be interpreted in a variety of ways by the public.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Table of Contents	3
List of Images.....	6
Acknowledgements.....	7
Author's Declaration.....	8
Definitions	9
1. Introduction	10
Research Questions and Overview of Case Studies	15
2. Monuments as Texts: Relevant Studies and Research Justifications.....	19
Definitions of Western Public History	19
Nationalism, Identity, and Hegemonic Narratives	24
Civic Pride and Identity in the United Kingdom.....	28
Scottish Monuments and Commemoration	31
<i>Lieux de mémoire</i> or <i>noeuds de mémoire</i>	31
Relevant studies of nineteenth-century Scottish monuments.....	33
Counternarratives and identities.....	39
A note on contested monuments	45
Implications.....	47
Research Methodology, Framework, and Rationale	48
Methodology	48
Framework: Key concepts and theories	50
Rationale for the study of Glaswegian portrait statues	53
3. The Monuments of George Square: Subtexts of Exceptionalism	55
The Beginnings of a Civic Identity	56
Glasgow's First Monument for the Public Benefit	59
The Development of George Square	63
The First Portrait Monument, Sir John Moore	64
George Square's Pantheon	76
James Watt	77
Sir Walter Scott	80
Sir Robert Peel	81
James Oswald	83

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert	85
Field Marshall Lord Clyde	87
Thomas Graham, Robert Burns, and Thomas Campbell	89
David Livingstone	94
William Gladstone.....	97
Conclusion.....	99
4. <i>La Pasionaria</i>: Subtext of the Triumphant Oppressed	103
The First Public Portrait Monument in Fifty Years	103
Development of the Historical Narrative and Its Accompanying Subtexts	109
Red Clydeside	109
The International Brigades	111
The Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in	113
Justifications for the Monument, the Sculptor, and the Subject.....	115
The Political Battle in the Glasgow District Council.....	120
The Unveiling.....	123
<i>La Pasionaria</i> ’s Evolving Narrative	127
Conclusion.....	133
5. Mary Barbour: Subtext of Self-Determination	136
Mary Barbour and the 1915 Rent Strike	139
Remember Mary Barbour Association and Govan Reminiscence Group.....	143
Barbour in Academic Versus Public History	148
A Challenge to Glasgow’s Dominant Cultural Narrative	153
Govan’s Renewed Self-determination	155
The Unveiling and Beyond	158
Conclusion.....	162
6. The Duke of Wellington: Death of the Author via Subtext	164
Arthur Wellesley, the 1 st Duke of Wellington.....	168
The Glasgow Monument	169
Controversy over the subject.....	170
Controversy over the artist	172
Installation and reception	178
The Traffic Cone: A New Narrative	180
Conegate.....	183
Public perception of Wellington with his cone	188
Conclusion.....	192

7. Conclusion.....	194
Summary of the Case Studies.....	194
Key Findings	197
Implications for the Future	198
Appendix A: Portrait Monuments Erected in George Square	201
Appendix B: Glasgow and District International Brigade Roll of Honour, Spanish Civil War	206
Bibliography	212
Primary Sources	212
Archives	212
Focus group, interviews, and correspondence	213
Monuments, art works, and images.....	213
News media	215
Official records, reports, and announcements	223
Social media	225
Secondary Sources	229

List of Images

Image 1.1: <i>A Sculpture for Mary Wollstonecraft</i>	12
Image 3.1: Lord Horatio Nelson Monument.....	60
Image 3.2: ‘George Square Glasgow, Scotland’.....	64
Image 3.3: Portrait of Sir John Moore.	64
Image 3.4: Sir John Moore Monument	74
Image 3.5: ‘To Be Let’.....	75
Image 3.6: Plans for the Statues of George Square, c.1900	76
Image 3.7: John Watt Monument.....	78
Image 3.8: Sir Walter Scott Monument	80
Image 3.9: Sir Robert Peel Monument.....	82
Image 3.10: James Oswald Monument	84
Image 3.11: Queen Victoria Monument	86
Image 3.12: Prince Albert Monument.....	86
Image 3.13: Lord Clyde Monument	88
Image 3.14: Thomas Graham Monument	90
Image 3.15: Robert Burns Monument.....	91
Image 3.16: Thomas Campbell Monument.....	93
Image 3.17: David Livingstone Monument	95
Image 3.18: William Gladstone Monument.....	98
Image 3.19: 2024 Schematic of George Square.....	100
Image 4.1: <i>La Pasionaria</i> Monument	108
Image 4.2: Glasgow’s Population from 1801-2011	116
Image 4.3: Portrait of Delores Ibárruri.....	118
Image 4.4: <i>La Pasionaria</i> Unveiling Ceremony	124
Image 5.1: Postcard featuring Mary Barbour’s Army	140
Image 5.2: Magistrate Mary Barbour.....	142
Image 5.3: Mary Barbour Monument	146
Image 5.4: Sculptor Andrew Brown at the Mary Barbour Unveiling.....	159
Image 5.5: School Children at the Mary Barbour Unveiling.....	159
Image 6.1: Duke of Wellington Monument with Traffic Cone	164
Image 6.2: Portrait of Arthur Wellesley, 1 st Duke of Wellington.....	167
Image 6.3: ‘The Cones Fight Back’	186
Image 6.4: Glasgow Council April Fool Tweet.....	189
Image 6.5: <i>The Soldier’s Return</i>	191

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contributions of others, this Thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Erin Burrows, BA, MA, MRes, MSc

Definitions

Allegorical statue:	A statue personifying abstract ideas such as justice or liberty, often through the female form.
Bas relief:	With regard to portrait statues, generally a two-dimensional sculpture cast in bronze and applied to the pedestal.
Bust sculpture:	A form of portraiture featuring a person's head and neck, often including the shoulders and chest.
Carved sculpture:	A sculpture in which the artist has started with a solid mass, e.g. of marble or granite, and removed material to achieve the desired form.
Cast sculpture:	A sculpture formed from a mould into which a liquid, e.g. fibreglass or molten bronze, is poured to harden into the desired form.
Colossal statue:	A portrait statue that is more than twice life-size.
Equestrian statue:	A portrait statue featuring a figure on a horse.
Maquette:	A small-scale model or prototype of a larger sculpture.
Obelisk:	A four-sided pillar terminating in a pyramid.
Pedestrian statue:	A portrait statue feature a standing figure.
Pillar:	A freestanding vertical support, usually a column.
Plinth:	The (oftentimes tall) block on which a statue is placed.
Portrait statue:	A form of portraiture representing a person in three-dimensions, often life-sized.

1. Introduction

In the past decade, activists, academics, and policy makers have given a lot of attention to monuments in public spaces, particularly those that are reminders of a contested or difficult history. In light of this, public bodies and custodians of heritage have been caught up in arguments about the nature of public history, leaving them in need of guidance as to how to appropriately address public statues and other forms of heritage. Several institutions, including the University of Bristol, Historic England, and the UK Government, have produced reports and guidelines regarding how to balance heritage and history against modern social mores and beliefs when and if issues of contestation arise.¹ The official government policy is to ‘retain and explain’, with each of these resources recommending a review of community opinion, the biography and legacy of the subject, changes in perception of the subject over time, the reasons for contemporary contestation, and duties of non-erasure. However, while the Bristol report acknowledges some reviews have additionally considered the contexts of commemorations, it ignores this as a relevant factor and instead recommends the legacy of the individual be the focus of any review.² Yet, contestations of portrait statues are not necessarily about the subjects and their achievements. They are instead about the value judgements the public makes regarding statue subjects and what commemorating such persons in public spaces says about their group and place identities. Ignoring the reasons why a portrait statue was installed in a public space fails to acknowledge the use of historical narrative, i.e. the life and achievements of the subject, in the production of local public history. It also ignores the subtexts of identity – which I define as the implied value judgements which help to define a place or collective – that are incorporated in that narrative. While the following is not an analysis of contested monuments, per se, it is evident in the selected case studies of Glasgow’s portrait

¹ Ben Stephenson, Marie-Annick Gournet, and Joanna Burch-Brown, *Guidance for Public Bodies Reviewing Contested Heritage* (University of Bristol, 2021) <<https://www.basconsultancyhome.co.uk/post/guidance-for-public-bodies-reviewing-contested-heritage>> [accessed 13 January 2024]; ‘Checklist to Help Local Authorities Deal With Contested Heritage Decisions’, *Historic England*, 2021 <<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/planning-system/contested-heritage-listed-building-decisions/>> [accessed 13 January 2024]; Department for Culture, Media and Sport, ‘Guidance for Custodians on How to Deal with Commemorative Heritage Assets That Have Become Contested’, *GOV.UK*, 2023 <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-custodians-on-how-to-deal-with-commemorative-heritage-assets-that-have-become-contested/guidance-for-custodians-on-how-to-deal-with-commemorative-heritage-assets-that-have-become-contested>> [accessed 13 January 2024].

² Stephenson, Gournet, and Burch-Brown, *Guidance for Public Bodies Reviewing Contested Heritage*, p. 14.

statues that monument builders have used and continue to use the historical narrative of a given individual's life to establish and form local collective and place identities through subtext.

Two illustrations of my argument that historical narrative is used in the built environment to establish subtexts of identity are the renaming of St George's Place in Glasgow and the installation of Mary Wollstonecraft's portrait statue in London. To begin, in 1985, the Labour-controlled Glasgow Council proposed an initiative to rename St George's Place to Nelson Mandela Place.³ At a time when Desmond Tutu argued that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher ought to be "backing the right horse" instead of continuing the United Kingdom's complicit policies with regard to apartheid, Mandela was a controversial figure, with some viewing him as a freedom fighter and others as a terrorist.⁴ One's view of Mandela fell seemingly along party lines. Labour Councillor Jean McFadden argued that Labour 'have always supported the cause for freedom' and explicitly characterised the initiative as 'another gesture of the solidarity we feel with Nelson Mandela, who is a freeman of our city.'⁵ Conservative Councillor William Aitken responded that the initiative was a Labour ploy 'to make Glasgow a laughing stock' that would prove to visitors that 'Glasgow [was] in the grip of the looney Left.'⁶ While Aitken's statement reads as polemical and hyperbolic, his argument was not so much about Mandela or South Africa as it was about the implications of collective moral identity that the local voting public and even world leaders might infer. The first is that it was Labour and not the Tories who held the moral high ground in Glasgow and had done so 'always'. The second, in light of the first, was that the Labour-led Council had the moral authority to embarrass the South African consulate, which after the name change would be forced to include Nelson Mandela's name as part of their address on all official correspondence. Understanding these implications, the South African consulate and several of the financial institutions in St George's Place fought for and won the right to continue to use their former addresses for at least a time when Nelson Mandela Place was officially renamed the following year.⁷ The historical narrative of Nelson Mandela as a freedom fighter was useful to those who identified as liberals and damaging to those who identified as conservatives in that it conveyed a subtextual rejection of official authority, i.e.

³ John MacCalman, 'Row over Decision to Name Square after Mandela', *Glasgow Herald*, 3 October 1985, p. 1.

⁴ Qtd. in MacCalman, 'Row over Decision'.

⁵ MacCalman, 'Row over Decision'.

⁶ MacCalman, 'Row over Decision'.

⁷ MacCalman, 'Row over Decision'.

Westminster, and implied that those who did not support the name change must therefore support apartheid.⁸ This subtext was understood by those such as Councillor Aitken, who vituperated that Labour was on a slippery slope to ceding Glasgow's governmental power to the African National Congress and giving over the city's heritage landscape to socialists and terrorists.⁹

As another example, in November 2020 and after ten years of fundraising, what was expected to be a portrait statue of Mary Wollstonecraft was raised in London on Newington Green. (See Image 1.1.)¹⁰ Those who supported the statue not only wished to honour the eighteenth-century author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, but also to fill a gap in a heritage landscape populated by either celebrated white men on plinths or anonymous women as allegories of virtue. Instead what was installed was a tiny and naked figure of the acclaimed Mother of Feminism placed atop a large wave representing the untold women who had come before her life and after. There was an immediate backlash, as the historical narrative of Wollstonecraft was blended into a generic narrative of all women. The subtexts inferred from the statue were that specific women were not worthy of acclaim for specific accomplishments and that a woman's body and not her mind should be the centre of focus. One critic wrote, 'Nameless, nude, and conventionally attractive is the only way women have ever been acceptable in public sculpture. This was a chance to break from those conventions, no?'¹¹ Novelist Jojo Moyes noted, 'You don't see a lot of statues



Image 1.1: Maggi Hambling, *A Sculpture for Mary Wollstonecraft*, 2020, bronze on a granite plinth, London.

⁸ John MacCalman, 'Council Loses Battle of Mandela Place', *Glasgow Herald*, 19 September 1986, p. 3.

⁹ MacCalman, 'Row over Decision'.

¹⁰ Photo: Ioana Marinescu, 2020 <<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/culture/culture-news/a34626813/mary-wollstonecraft-statue/>> [accessed 8 April 2022].

¹¹ Robert Dex, 'Artist behind Mary Wollstonecraft Statue Says Critics Missed the Point', *Evening Standard*, 11 November 2020 <www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/mary-wollstonecraft-naked-sculpture-maggi-hambling-b63158.html> [accessed 30 November 2020].

commemorating male political figures without their pants on.’¹² Members of the public have gone so far as to add clothing to the figure as a gesture of respect. It seems the issue was that the artist Maggi Hambling chose not to create a public portrait statue of Mary Wollstonecraft, but rather a work of public art she titled *A Sculpture for Mary Wollstonecraft*. Hambling was incensed that the public has seemingly ‘missed the point’ of her sculpture, claiming that it was not intended to be a portrait of Wollstonecraft herself and the depiction of any clothing would have been ‘limiting, and she is everywoman.’¹³ In a surprisingly tone-deaf explanation as to why a naked woman should be perfectly acceptable in representing intelligent women such as Wollstonecraft, she quipped, ‘As far as I know, [the figure is] more or less the shape we’d all like to be.’¹⁴ If the monument can be considered a text of historical narrative, Hambling had got the narrative completely wrong. She instead created yet another allegorical depiction using the naked female form, ironically erasing the flesh-and-blood woman whose achievements had likewise been erased by the Victorian society that came after her. *A Sculpture for Mary Wollstonecraft* had become a contested statue from the moment it was unveiled, not because the subject was objectionable, but because it conveys a subtext of sexism rather than giving women a means to identify with a competent and thinking woman represented in the built heritage. There was something of themselves, a piece of their own ambitions and aims relating to the permissible identities of women as a sex that was ignored in favour of Hambling’s ‘complete freedom’ to tell whatever story she wished through her sculpture.¹⁵ The subtext conveyed by depicting a pioneering advocate of women’s rights as merely an allegory, and a nude one at that, is that women and their achievements are not valuable in and of themselves and that the patriarchal norms regarding women and their bodies were still paramount.

Both of the previous examples demonstrates that the built heritage conveys not only historical narrative, but also subtexts of identity. As such, I argue they can be considered public history texts that are capable of being evaluated via narrative theory. In her study of altered, removed, or contested monuments, Juilee Decker likewise stated that monuments function as texts in that the authors’ messages are open to

¹² Dex, ‘Artist’.

¹³ Dex, ‘Artist’.

¹⁴ Dex, ‘Artist’.

¹⁵ Vanessa Thorpe, “‘I Need Complete Freedom’: Maggi Hambling Responds to Statue Critics”, *Guardian*, 14 November 2020 <www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/nov/14/i-need-complete-freedom-maggi-hambling-responds-to-statue-critics> [accessed 21 October 2021].

audience interpretation and that there is ‘no single correct way to read them.’¹⁶ Penny Enslin argued that they

can be considered as a text, a narrative of specific memories and identities, to be read in time and space – in other words, historically but with an eye on the future as well as within the landscapes they occupy in specific public spaces.¹⁷

Unlike academic history texts, it is not so much important that monuments tell an objective truth about the world as it is, but rather that they symbolise a constructed and aspirational reality. According to Jerome Bruner, such narratives ‘are a version of reality whose acceptability is governed by convention and “narrative necessity” rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness’.¹⁸ Monuments are non-textual historiographical sources which do not rely on academic or objective proof to convey a singular understanding of history. Thus, portrait statues provide a narrative agency that abjures a rigorous academic approach in favour of emotion, memory, and identity construction.

Depending on how accounts of the past are structured, an awareness and understanding of history may differ between individuals, among and between groups, or even from nation to nation.¹⁹ Public history often relies on the authority of ‘heritage’, which Ludmilla Jordanova contended provides ‘a sense of value and authenticity deriving from a venerable past that deserves to be preserved and displayed.’²⁰ Monuments as public history imbue this argument, and the exceptionalism of their value and authenticity and their tendency toward hero worship are often what causes difficulties in homogenizing diverse and inclusive interpretations. Public history, by its nature, is often transmitted in generalisations and simple assumptions that are at the same time value-laden, but these values are more deeply manifested in statues that are intended to influence and shape communal, rather than academic, understanding. Those with the power to commission statues – from governments to wealthy elites to grassroots organisations – have specific motivations in selecting subjects of public history that represent their own interests favourably, relying on the past as an authority to show both their subject and thereby themselves as reputable.²¹ The abridged nature of portrait statues as the public’s history potentially

¹⁶ Juilee Decker, ‘Introduction’, in *Fallen Monuments and Contested Memorials*, ed. by Juilee Decker (Routledge, 2023), p. 2.

¹⁷ Penny Enslin, ‘Monuments after Empire? The Educational Value of Imperial Statues’, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 54.5 (2020), pp. 1333–45 (p. 1335).

¹⁸ Jerome Bruner, ‘The Narrative Construction of Reality’, *Critical Inquiry*, 18.1 (1991), pp. 1–21 (p. 4).

¹⁹ Ludmilla J. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, 3rd edn (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), p. 168.

²⁰ Jordanova, *History*, p. 168.

²¹ Jordanova, *History*, p. 185.

contributes more easily than a textbook to notions of how the public identifies itself, what it remembers, and how it feels about the past.²² Moving the arena of historical discourse from academia to the public by way of the narratives, contexts, and subtexts involved in the commissioning of portrait monuments could thereby provide an opportunity to shape historical narrative to more diverse purposes, one that perhaps better explains the present as interpreted by a variety of groups and offers a greater impact on the future.²³ In the case of statues, the academic historian can still play a valuable role in transmitting deeper knowledge to a wider community, especially now when so many monuments are being reevaluated at the demand of the public. It is, indeed, one of the aims of this research, particularly in cases where a portrait statue is not contested, but is celebrated in the community in which it is installed.

Research Questions and Overview of Case Studies

While much of the recent scholarship on monuments has examined controversial subjects, the following is not a study of contested monuments, contested subjects, or contested histories. It is rather an exploration of the ways in which monuments serve as transmitters of complex narratives that include subtexts of collective and place identity. Narratives are an essential component of framing our present through the lens of the past. Public portrait statues function to transmit historical and cultural narratives, yet their accompanying subtexts are often only ostensibly related to the subject represented on the plinth. My research, then, focuses not on the biographical narrative of a monument's subject, but on the context and subtext in which that narrative might be grounded. Rather than debating whether or not a person should have been commemorated on a plinth, I explore the reasons why such portraiture appeared in Glasgow's built landscape and the motivations of those who commissioned them to answer the following research questions:

1. why were public portrait monuments first installed in Glasgow in the nineteenth century and by whom;
2. what changes have occurred from the nineteenth century to the present in terms of monument builders, statue subjects, and historical narrative;
3. how have portrait monuments been used to establish legitimacy and authority not only for dominant groups, but also for those at the margins;
4. how has historical narrative been used by monument builders to convey specific subtexts of Glasgow's identity;

²² Jordanova, *History*, p. 186.

²³ Jordanova, *History*, p. 187.

5. in what ways have portrait statues created or reinforced collective and place identities through subtextual narratives?

To answer these questions, I examined four case studies in Glasgow: the collection of portrait statues in George Square, *La Pasionaria*, the statue of Mary Barbour and her ‘army’, and the Duke of Wellington monument with its traffic cone. The monuments in George Square were chosen because they offer the opportunity to examine the context and subtext of monuments installed over time as a collection, with a dominant historical narrative thread that was both consistent and discernible when the statues are taken together as a whole. In contrast, I have selected three case studies in modern Glasgow that contribute a counternarrative to the prevailing history and identity of the city and its people. While other portrait statues have been installed in Glasgow since 1980 – including the statue of Scotland’s First Minister after devolution Donald Dewar (2002) in front of the Royal Concert Hall, the statue of Buffalo Bill in Dennistoun (2006), and the statue of Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Anderston (2018) – I have specifically selected modern monuments that do not fit so cleanly into a narrative of Glasgow as a city of culture or political influence. The case studies of *La Pasionaria*, Mary Barbour, and the Duke of Wellington and his traffic cone offer the greatest contrast, as well as a good deal of similarity to the monuments raised in the nineteenth century. The case studies presented in the following chapters will examine the different ways narratives have manifested through Glasgow’s portrait monuments, as well as the degree to which the public as the audience has engaged in the interpretation, acceptance, or correction of history. Rather than focusing on a particular subject, my emphasis will be on how portrait statues, their narratives, and subtexts of identity have influenced perceptions of Glasgow and its inhabitants over time.

Beginning in nineteenth-century Glasgow, the case study of George Square, sometimes called the Pantheon of Glasgow, will examine how the powerful and elites of the city used portrait monuments of extraordinary individuals to construct an identity of Glasgow as the Second City of the British Empire. Expressing what Graeme Morton called Unionist-nationalism, discussed more fully in the following chapter, the collection functioned to establish a culturally dominant macro-narrative that explicitly aimed to prove and preserve the greatness of Glasgow as a mercantile city and implicitly aimed to cast the commissioners and funders as patriotic, honourable, and exceptional within the greater empire. Because the case study includes thirteen monuments analysed as a collective, I will first set the century of monument building in George Square in the context of Glasgow at the turn of the nineteenth century, a brief

account of the city's first attempt at public monument building, and a description of the development of George Square before the installation of the first statue to Sir John Moore.

The second case study will examine *La Pasionaria*, erected in 1980 as the first portrait monument to be commissioned in the city since the 1920s. Monument building in the twentieth century was primarily concerned with war memorials; though, the emphasis was no longer on a single great hero, but on the everyday individuals who were lost in the conflicts. This effectively shifted the authorship of monuments from a relatively small elite class to the middle and working classes who arguably experienced the brunt of the traumas of war. *La Pasionaria* is likewise a memorial of the Spanish Civil War volunteers, but its subject Delores Ibárruri, a Spanish rebel and propagandist, functioned as a symbol of the economic and political strife that was endemic in post-industrial Glasgow. Commissioned by the International Brigades Association and funded by the Labour Party and Trades Unions, it provides a fairly monophonic narrative of Glasgow, the Labour Party, the working classes, and even the sculptor as the triumphant oppressed, which tells us not so much about the war volunteers as it does about the class and political conflicts that were playing out in the city at the time. *La Pasionaria* expresses a kind of grievance narrative that, while not necessarily historically or culturally accurate, was deeply believed by the specific groups who commissioned and funded the monument, if not by the whole of Glasgow.

The case study of the monument to Mary Barbour, on the other hand, provides a polyphonic view of similar class and political struggles in Govan. It depicts Mary Barbour not on a plinth, but at eye level, leading her 'army' during the 1915 Rent Strikes. The commissioning of the monument was supported by powerful politicians as well as a substantial portion of the Govan community, which had been significantly impacted by rapid de-industrialisation. At the time of the statue's commissioning, Govan was beginning to undertake massive regeneration efforts and to reestablish its identity as a prospering district that worked together for the betterment of the community. It now represents a rediscovered history of Govan that has restored some of the pride lost during decades of post-industrial poverty, crime, and deterioration. Since its installation in 2018, it has become one of the most celebrated modern monuments in Glasgow, and conveys a subtextual narrative of Govan's self-determination.

The final case study is the Duke of Wellington monument in the Royal Exchange and its iconic traffic cone. While erected in the nineteenth century as a celebration of

British global dominance, the narrative has since experienced what can be argued as the ‘death of the author’ by way of significant changes to its subtextual narratives. Now one of the most recognised icons of Glasgow, the repeated placement, removal, and replacement of the traffic cone on Wellington’s head, which began in the early 1980s, demonstrates a decades-long battle between a Council that wanted to maintain an identity of Glasgow as a dignified and cultured city and the anonymous pranksters who shunned such romanticisms in favour of humour, creativity, and a challenge to authority. With the public finally winning the battle to keep the cone in 2013, the Wellington monument and its traffic cone in many ways embody all of the narratives expressed in the previous case studies, from aspirations of the Second City, to the triumphant oppressed, to grassroots agency in which the public determines its own identity and pride of place.

Each case study will provide the brief historical narrative of the subjects’ lives that was transmitted by each monument, historical context as to what was occurring in Glasgow at the time of each monument’s commissioning, and an analysis of the subtexts of identity both stated and implied imbued through the installation of each portrait statue. First though, I will position my research within the current scholarship through a review of relevant studies on public history, nationalism and national identity, civic pride and civic identity, and relevant Scottish monuments and commemoration. This will be followed by justifications for my research methodology and framework, as well as the rationale for studying public portrait monuments in Glasgow.

2. Monuments as Texts: Relevant Studies and Research Justifications

The following is a thematic review of research that has investigated the connection between public history, monuments, and formations of group and place identity. It is intended to provide precedence for my research approach, as well as perspective on the primary foci of current academic research on monuments in Scotland. First, because public history is a fairly new academic discipline with varying interpretations across the world, I present a brief overview of western public history and how it is defined by those working in the field today. Next, I provide analyses of studies around public monuments, nationalism, and the culturally and politically hegemonic narratives associated with each to provide a starting point for my research on public monuments and local narratives and identities in Glasgow. This will be further narrowed by an overview of definitions and manifestations of civic pride and identity in the United Kingdom to examine how local pride and identity are constructed and by whom. Lastly, I will review case studies of commemorations specifically in Scotland that provide a look at the formations of narratives in the built environment that either reinforced or countered the dominant historical narratives of their time. These will provide a framework for the review of monument subjects, contexts, and subtexts in Glasgow that include both hegemonic and counter narratives.

It should be noted that the current body of study on monuments is vast. While I am aware of global studies of monuments, many of which address representation, decolonisation, contestation, and memorials of war, I instead focus on the overt and covert motivations of those who have installed monuments and the narratives monuments are meant to transmit as a local concern within the context of a single city. This includes the subtexts that are sometimes apparent and sometimes subconsciously understood but which are nevertheless intended to shape and influence the cultural and political identity of Glasgow and its inhabitants. It is this move away from the global or de/post-colonial frameworks prevalent in so many of the modern study of monuments, paired with a more intentional examination of the explicit and implied subtexts that drive the formation of historical narrative that I hope will add to further understanding of monuments and why we produce them in public spaces.

Definitions of Western Public History

In the case studies to follow, I categorise public portrait monuments as artefacts of public history. However, because terms can take on differing definitions depending on

the relevant stakeholders and actors, it was first important to establish how and why portrait monuments in public spaces are indeed artefacts of Glasgow's public history. Sites of commemoration, such as monuments, have been erected for millennia, though generally not by historians or with regard to an academic historical method. Still, it is apparent such sites constitute a form of public history. Because those who research public history as a discipline have to date found it very difficult to define in static terms, for the purpose of this study, public history will be defined as audience-specific local history that draws on constructions of the past – at times both factual and mythical – to inform the present and cultivate a sense of collective identity through the subtexts of historical narrative. This builds on Paul Martin's argument that public history is a means by which individuals and groups better understand themselves through an ability to engage with a built heritage in day-to-day life.¹ Additionally, because of public history's potential to influence the widest possible audience, investigations of historical productions for the public are likewise studies of power regarding what is remembered, what is forgotten, and by what authority.² It is important, then, to understand why the subjects of public monuments are chosen and by whom, what they were or are meant to teach and represent, and in some cases what they were or are meant to obscure. In other words, the distinction I draw between academic history and public history is the necessity of subtexts in the conveyance of the latter. First, though, I will provide a more thorough account of the studies that informed my working definition of public history.

Reinforcing the idea that studies of public history are also studies of power, several definitions of public history – again, there being as yet no single consensus as to what it is – require that social reform and social justice be primary tenets of the historical approach. In *The Oxford Handbook of Public History*, James Gardner and Paula Hamilton indicated the difficulties in defining public history as a discipline or approach, noting its political and social implications and the tensions between elite and amateur, state and community, dominant and marginal.³ In Britain, for example, the British History Workshop movement focused more on a 'people's history', or 'history from below', which to some degree inextricably linked evaluations of the past to moral judgements and which placed historians not as objective scholars but as advocates for

¹ Paul Martin, 'The Past in the Present: Who Is Making History?', in *The Public History Reader*, ed. by Hilda Kean and Paul Martin, Routledge Readers in History (Routledge, 2013), pp. 1–10 (p. 9).

² Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 2015), p. 26.

³ *The Oxford Handbook of Public History*, ed. by James B. Gardner and Paula Hamilton, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 1–4.

non-dominant historical narratives.⁴ While this approach to history has been important in the study of contested histories, the evaluation of grand historical narratives, and in efforts to decolonise historical accounts, I would argue that not all manifestations of public history are intended to provoke social reform and some, in fact, preserve the status quo. The monument honouring the loyal terrier Greyfriars Bobby in Edinburgh seems hardly a call to arms; though, it can be argued to depict an overly sentimental version of Victorian Scotland and is often pointed to when writers note that there are more named statues commemorating animals, particularly dogs, than named women in Scotland's capital city.⁵ What is useful in the approach defined by Martin and the British History Workshop is the fact that there is a perceived potential to change society through public history narratives. Conversely, if monuments can be used to disseminate new perspectives for social change, then surely they can likewise be used to sustain outmoded historical narratives in the built environment.

As will be shown with regard to Glasgow, monuments that promote change and that preserve old narratives of the past can and do exist within the same public sphere and even, in some cases, within the same statue, as will be particularly demonstrated by Wellington and his traffic cone. This is perhaps because, as Jorma Kalela argued, an intended interpretation by a specific audience is essential to the narratives constructed by historians.⁶ Though I would argue public history does not necessarily require mitigations from academic historians, Kalela's definition provides for more subjective interpretations of public historical artefacts and allows for the fact that within a society there can be multiple pasts depending on the populations who lived them. In other words, the interpretations of a monument's narrative can be as varied as the individuals and groups who engage with it, making the audience central rather than ancillary to the transmission of the story meant to be told. Conceivably, it is this lack of an immutable narrative that provides the space for contestations of history with regard to some subjects. Perhaps this is why in her recent evaluation of public and popular history, Liz Covart defined public history as 'the work of translation' with the role of academic historians being to interpret history for the public so that they might 'forge emotional

⁴ Gardner and Hamilton, *The Oxford Handbook of Public History*, p. 5.

⁵ Sara Sheridan, *Where Are the Women? A Guide to an Imagined Scotland* (Historic Environment Scotland, 2019), p. 10; Roisin Kenny, 'Statues of Dogs Are Great but Where Are All the Statues of Women in Edinburgh?', *BBC - The Social*, 8 March 2021
<<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1DjdC2yH42R8ZnggzZYWPmj/statues-of-dogs-are-great-but-where-are-all-the-statues-of-women-in-edinburgh>> [accessed 1 July 2025].

⁶ Jorma Kalela, 'Making History: The Historian and Uses of the Past', in *The Public History Reader*, ed. by Hilda Kean and Paul Martin, Routledge Readers in History (Routledge, 2013), pp. 104–28 (p. 104).

and cognitive connections with the past.’⁷ However, this qualification of public history would seem to limit which narratives are the correct interpretations; it runs counter to the concept that the audience is essential, dynamic, and varied and removes the public from the process of developing public history. If public history were truly constructed in this way, contested monuments and the task of decolonisation would likely be irrelevant: the historian would provide the interpretation and the public would accept it. For Rebecca Conrad, it is in fact the audience that most qualifies history as public history: rather than being written by and for academics, public history accepts that the public as audience necessarily holds space for multiple forms of engagement, interpretation, and transmission.⁸ Still, she also argued that the historian was central to the approach – one that must still align to academic standards – but with the outputs made digestible for an audience of the public rather than for the benefit of other academics. Conrad did acknowledge that history, both public and academic, can be co-created through the practice of oral history, but she did not otherwise insist on the necessity of a discourse between the public historian and the audience.⁹ As will be demonstrated in the case studies of monuments after the mid-twentieth-century, a specific public’s engagement with and discourse about the monuments are fundamental to the continued, if evolving transmission of history, and it is the academics who are somewhat dispensable in the process of cultivating historical archives in the built environment.

Based on these conclusions, the evaluation of public history that most informed the working definition in my study of public portrait monuments in Glasgow comes from John Tosh. In his investigation into the intersection between public history, civic engagement, and professional historians in Britain, Tosh noted that public history in practice ‘is defined by its audience as well as its content; it is sometimes dismissed as irredeemably populist, sometimes as a new form of elitism.’¹⁰ While Tosh does arrive at a fairly satisfying qualification of public history that does not rely on academic historians, he perhaps goes too far in eschewing the importance of evaluating the producers of public history.¹¹ He crystallised his definition by concluding that public history is ‘freely available’ historical knowledge disseminated in ‘the widest possible

⁷ Liz Covart, ‘Popular and Public History’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 25.6 (2021), pp. 547–59 (pp. 548, 552), doi:10.1163/15700658-bja10049.

⁸ Rebecca Conrad, ‘Still Grappling with the Definition Question’, *The Public Historian*, 40.1 (2018), pp. 115–19 (pp. 116–17).

⁹ Conrad, ‘Still Grappling with the Definition Question’, p. 116.

¹⁰ John Tosh, ‘Public History, Civic Engagement and the Historical Profession in Britain: Public History’, *History*, 99.335 (2014), pp. 191–212 (pp. 193–94).

¹¹ Tosh, ‘Public History, Civic Engagement and the Historical Profession in Britain’, p. 191.

terms', but that those who put public history in public spaces are of secondary concern.¹² I would argue, however, the context and subtext essential to the who and why of producers of public history are as equally important as the audience or the subject. For instance, if a large portrait monument were to be installed in the centre of Glasgow for all to see and learn from, who put it there and why would be foundational to how it might be interpreted by differing publics over long periods of time. In the case of public monuments, the commissioners are very rarely, if ever historians, let alone academics, and their motivations will be shown to move beyond simply the preservation of a reconstructed past.

It seems at times that the difficulty in defining public history is really a difficulty in defining it as an academic discipline rather than a civic or community practice.¹³ Nevertheless, in 2019, Paul Ashton and Alex Trapeznik argued that public history provides 'the possibility of a participatory historical culture, one in which people generally [have] a firm hand in the making of their own pasts.'¹⁴ While arguably in the nineteenth century, those with the firm hand in the making of history also had a firm hand in establishing political, economic, and social hegemonies, following the increases in enfranchisement in Britain over successive generations, the case studies provided in subsequent chapters will demonstrate how public history has been much more democratic since the turn of the twentieth century. The practice of public history bound in artefacts such as monuments has existed long before the invention of public history as a discipline, and if the contexts and subtexts of monuments are teased out, they are more likely to be a history of a people by those people that was used as a means to shape the cultural environment and identity of a given group or place. While the authority of monument builders was initially centralised to some degree, as shown with regard to Glasgow's early nineteenth-century monuments, public portrait monuments have more recently become tools for both dominant and marginalised groups, with the public given a greater say in the production of historical narrative.

In many ways, it is then fair to think of Glasgow's collection of portrait statues as a kind of community archive that has seemingly manifested in multiple identities and histories being accommodated at the same time, with no single narrative ascending as the true or only story to be told. Such statues in the heritage landscape do not attempt

¹² Tosh, 'Public History, Civic Engagement and the Historical Profession in Britain', p. 194.

¹³ Tosh, 'Public History, Civic Engagement and the Historical Profession in Britain', p. 191.

¹⁴ Paul Ashton and Alex Trapeznik, 'Introduction The Public Turn: History Today', in *What Is Public History Globally? Working with the Past in the Present*, ed. by Paul Ashton and Alex Trapeznik (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), pp. 1–8 (p. 2).

to provide a balanced reading of the totality of evidence to teach a true history, but are instead a conscious effort to use the past to construct memories that will shape the present and future, bound by emotions and communities of identity. I will juxtapose the nature of such an ‘archive’ as manifested in the dominant historical narratives expressed by the George Square monuments with the more oppositional community archive reflected in the case studies on *La Pasionaria*, Mary Barbour, and even Wellington with his cone, which all embrace a more ostensibly grassroots approach to the making of public history.

Nationalism, Identity, and Hegemonic Narratives

The case studies to follow start in the early nineteenth century, during which time monument building was seen almost as an imperative of cities that wished to tie the past to the present.¹⁵ Essentially, in a time of dramatic change, history in public spaces was used to establish, influence, and support both personal and collective identities as a means of assuming legitimacy and authority. Following a period of revolution, national identity was a concern of many nineteenth-century European nations. Monarchies were superseded by new forms of government, new political boundaries were established; symbols of these new national identities appeared in cities all over Europe in the form of new built environments that included the installation of monuments.¹⁶ As part of the process of understanding how nineteenth-century narratives around identity manifested in public portrait statues, I conducted a review of studies regarding how emerging, yet dominant collective identities were mutually shaped by hegemonic narratives about the past.

According to David Atkinson and Denis Cosgrove, capital cities all over Europe ‘were replanned and reconstructed to express a newly conceived national-imperial identity.’¹⁷ In the case of Glasgow, the early nineteenth-century monuments erected in George Square revealed a desire for Glasgow to be seen not only as Scottish, but also as British. Astrid Swenson argued that these new national-imperial identities were reified through ‘foundation narratives’ that were often interconnected with ‘foundation

¹⁵ Roger A. Mason refers to these as ‘usable pasts’; though, he argues the turmoil around Scottish national identity began soon after the Reformation. See Roger A. Mason, ‘Usable Pasts: History and Identity in Reformation Scotland’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 76.201 (1997), pp. 54–68 (p. 57).

¹⁶ David Atkinson and Denis Cosgrove, ‘Urban Rhetoric and Embodied Identities: City, Nation, and Empire at the Vittorio Emanuele II Monument in Rome, 1870-1945’, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 88.1 (1998), pp. 28–49 (p. 32). N.B. As will be demonstrated in later discussions of monument and commemoration, Atkinson and Cosgrove seem to hold the consensus view as far as the purpose of monuments in the 19th century; though, more research needs to be done on the function of public monuments in recent decades.

¹⁷ Atkinson and Cosgrove, ‘Urban’, p. 32.

myths', with the outcome being a highly curated linear history.¹⁸ In other words, the history transmitted by newly built statues in reimagined cities was necessarily pruned and shaped to provide a direct connection to a mythical – or at least idealised – past in an attempt to legitimise power and identity in any given place. Though many of the narratives around history and identity were formulated by ruling classes, acceptance of this constructed identity by the remainder of the population was essential to their taking root.¹⁹ One can infer from Swenson's argument that public monuments were a means of establishing these identities in the landscape in a way that was most accessible to a variety of publics. Such monuments eventually became so ubiquitous that the narratives around national identity received almost subconscious acceptance over successive generations. This would later be defined by Michael Billig as a kind of banal nationalism, 'where nationhood [was] so deeply and subconsciously taken for granted that it [did] not require coherent articulation'.²⁰ I argue in my analysis of George Square monuments that this passive acceptance of subtextual collective identity was in fact the purpose of placing so many monuments in the built landscape.

With regard to the ways in which nationalism in Scotland was perceived and manifested in the mid-nineteenth century, in 1999, Graeme Morton aimed to articulate the kind of nationalism, which he called Unionist-nationalism, that existed in Scotland from the period of 1830-1860, with the Scottish exhibiting a 'nationalism of the periphery' that was part of and yet distinct from a British nationality.²¹ While his study focuses almost exclusively on Edinburgh, his argument that a sense of nationalism in Scotland after its union with England was not dependent upon a centralised British state is still a useful one.²² Morton explained that, though the Scottish Parliament had been suspended after the Union of 1707, Scotland had still maintained its own legal system, its own Church of Scotland, and its own educational system, which he argued were 'the very backbone of potential Scottish nation-statehood'.²³ Michael Keating contended that it was this degree of autonomy maintained by Scotland and the 'lack of an

¹⁸ Astrid Swenson, *The Rise of Heritage: Preserving the Past in France, Germany and England, 1789-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 25.

¹⁹ Swenson, *The Rise*, p. 65. It should also be noted that those sections of the population that could not identify with newly emerging national identities eventually began to challenge those constructions, perhaps foreshadowing the diversified public histories that are being attempted in the modern era.

²⁰ Colin Kidd, *Union and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500-2000* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 23 <<http://ebooks.cambridge.org/ref/id/CBO9780511756009>> [accessed 17 March 2022].

²¹ Graeme Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830-1860* (Tuckwell Press, 1999), p. 4.

²² Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, p. 22.

²³ Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, p. 11.

assimilating union [that had] left [modern] Scots free to resume the path of independent statehood, but mostly permitted a regular renegotiation of the terms of union.’²⁴ Thus, while Scotland had been a partner in the Union and eventually the United Kingdom, it never fully accepted a subordinate role to the London Parliament. Morton described how this became more pronounced by 1886, there was renewed agitation for a separate Scottish state with the formation of the Scottish Home Rule Association.²⁵ Morton noted that by the twentieth century ‘Westminster’s relationship to Scottish life was a tangential one, lacking real influence in the day-to-day governing of society.’²⁶ This is in no doubt in part due to the fact that enfranchisement had expanded dramatically over the course of the nineteenth century and would continue to do so in the twentieth century. Political and economic power was no longer held exclusively by the bourgeoisie, and with increased power at the local level, so too came an increased interest in home rule, devolution, and a separate Scottish state. The Scottish National Party (SNP) was formed in the 1930s amidst the enfranchisement of women, the aftermath of World War One, and new conflicts arising across Europe. While the middle classes of the nineteenth century would have been reluctant to risk the economic benefits of the Union, the social, economic, and political changes of the latter half of the nineteenth century began to shape Scottish nationalism and civil governance in new ways.

Arguably, any sense of British nationalism in Scotland was tied more to economics than a shared culture and heritage. After the Union of 1707, the bourgeoisie in Scotland, though primarily in Edinburgh, were awarded with positions on newly formed governing boards and commissions, those being what Morton described as ‘a prime source of jobs’.²⁷ For those who could not find jobs in Scotland or London, with ‘[w]ell-born or well-educated Englishmen [having] the pick of jobs in government at home’, Morton argued that ‘the most readily available source of opportunities for educated Scots was in the Empire.’²⁸ Scotland maintained its own heroes, history, and even a general degree of local self-governance as noted by Swenson, Keating, and Morton, even while recognising the Empire as an avenue toward progress and prosperity. Robert Burns in particular facilitated a revival of one of the most tangible

²⁴ Michael Keating, ‘The Strange Death of Unionist Scotland’, *Government and Opposition*, 45.3 (2010), pp. 365–85 (p. 384).

²⁵ Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, pp. 196–97.

²⁶ Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, p. 22.

²⁷ Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, p. 12.

²⁸ Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, p. 14.

forms of Scottish identity, i.e. its language and vernacular, which Morton argued ‘has been regarded as important to the growth of [Scottish] nationalist sentiment’.²⁹ This may explain to some degree why Glasgow’s first public monuments installed in the early nineteenth century were to military heroes of imperial wars and why, as will be discussed in the following chapter, by the early mid-nineteenth century, it was poets and novelists who began to be memorialised in the landscape of George Square.

With regard to the nationalisms, identities, and narratives transmitted by the built landscape, by the time Jonathan Hearn published his study of monuments to Robert Burns, Robert the Bruce, and William Wallace in Scotland’s central belt in the early twenty-first century, it was a commonplace assumption that national identity is shaped through narrative. These particular monuments, Hearn argued, were intended to build civic pride, particularly among the middle and ruling classes who paid for them, while at the same time continuing to reflect a national Scottish identity contingent on its membership in the British Empire.³⁰ However, much as will be demonstrated in my case studies of twentieth- and twenty-first-century portrait statues in Glasgow, Hearn, like Morton, argued that the Scottish nationalist movement after the mid-twentieth century insisted on a ‘distinct cultural identity’ that set it apart from Britishness.³¹ He made a special note of ‘dominant narratives within the historiography of Scotland’ that helped shape and then define a Scottish national identity, particularly with regard to empowerment, disempowerment, and conflicted feelings about agency, which is supported by the context and subtext of historical narratives transmitted by monuments to La Pasionaria, Mary Barbour, and the Duke of Wellington.³²

What is also useful here is Hearn’s demonstration of the ways in which groups rely on history to either redefine or preserve hegemonic narratives. He convincingly demonstrates confirmation bias among groups who follow particular narratives versus others, but it is unclear in his analyses where both identity and narrative originate, which influences which the more, and how the connection plays out in everyday experiences. It may be possible, however, to demonstrate the argument more clearly by examining connections between national and city identities and the ways in which civic pride as expressed in the built landscape both establishes and reinforces historical narratives.

²⁹ Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, p. 18.

³⁰ Jonathan Hearn, ‘Narrative, Agency, and Mood: On the Social Construction of National History in Scotland’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 44.4 (2002), pp. 745–69 (pp. 758–59).

³¹ Hearn, ‘Narrative’, p. 745.

³² Hearn, ‘Narrative’, p. 764.

Civic Pride and Identity in the United Kingdom

As has been established in the previous sections, in the realm of public history, identities that are aligned and those that are opposed are all shaped by the stories we tell about ourselves. The development and then interpretation of historical narratives and their subtexts requires moral judgements and, to some degree, emotional engagement.³³ In other words, those things that shape our understanding of the past are value-laden, requiring a kind of ethical reasoning and interpretation that is manifested in emotions such as pride. Civic pride, in particular, is expressed in the built landscape, whether it be beautiful buildings or works of public art such as portrait statues. Monuments and, as I argue, their subtextual narratives thus reinforce civic pride by drawing on the past to underpin the present status and reputation of a given town or city.

Much like definitions of public history, the concept of civic pride does not have a single definition. Emma Wood defined civic pride as being collective values and beliefs that define a collective image of a city.³⁴ While Hearn might argue that there is an element of national identity in civic pride, Wood maintains that civic pride is purely a local concern that ‘relates the image purely to the feelings of local residents rather than to the opinions of tourists, visitors and the wider world.’³⁵ While I agree that civic pride is intrinsically local, I would argue, as demonstrated principally in the case study of George Square, that civic pride also has an external factor that relies to some degree on how a city is perceived by outsiders and the reputation it holds beyond the city’s boundary. Jon Stobart made a similar argument in his study of town halls in the English town of Burslem, noting that civic pride and identity are influenced by both ‘external/spatial relationships’, or essentially ‘rivalries with neighbouring places’, and ‘internal/social processes’ that emphasised middle-class values and reinforced cultural and political hegemonies in the urban landscape.³⁶ Though not referencing monuments, per se, he provides a strong illustration of the ways in which the built environment, as civic culture, influences a city’s identity. As will be shown, this argument finds some basis in the case studies on George Square and the Duke of Wellington, whereby an element of keeping up with the great cities of Britain, Europe,

³³ Giuseppe Mininni, Amelia Manuti, and Graziana Curigliano, ‘Commemorative Acts as Discursive Resources of Historical Identity’, *Culture & Psychology*, 19.1 (2013), pp. 33–59 (p. 55).

³⁴ Emma H. Wood, ‘Measuring the Social Impacts of Local Authority Events: A Pilot Study for a Civic Pride Scale: Impact of Local Authority Events’, *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 11.3 (2006), pp. 165–79 (p. 169).

³⁵ Wood, ‘Measuring the Social Impacts of Local Authority Events’, p. 169.

³⁶ Jon Stobart, ‘Building an Urban Identity. Cultural Space and Civic Boosterism in a “new” Industrial Town: Burslem, 1761–1911’, *Social History*, 29.4 (2004), pp. 485–98 (pp. 485, 487).

and even the ancient western world was made explicit in the commissioning of those monuments.

As such, Tom Collins noted in 2016 that studies of civic pride offer ‘a basis for thinking about how and why cities promote and defend local identity’.³⁷ The ‘how and why’ are indeed part of the very subtexts that I argue are innate in the historical narratives transmitted by portrait statues. As tools of public history that inform the identity of Glasgow, public portrait statues thus also reflect those groups or individuals wielding the power to shape the history and identity of Glasgow. However, Collins approached civic pride as a concern of specifically local governments, and when he again addressed civic pride in a 2019 case study of Nottingham, he did not include ‘ordinary’ citizens as participants, but rather those ‘who were well placed to comment on local civic issues or were prominent figures in Nottingham and its local communities.’³⁸ Per his approach, civic pride does not seem to be defined by the people, but rather by those in power. While this may have been for the most part true in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Collins did conclude – as I did after speaking to residents of Govan in my case study of the monument to Mary Barbour – that the Nottingham public was mostly proud of the everyday or social values exhibited in the city, rather than one or two extraordinary achievements or celebrated persons.³⁹ I argue, however, that these everyday or social values make up a good deal of the subtext of the celebration and achievements of Mary Barbour, so further study of the ‘ordinary’ citizen with relation to historical narratives, identity, and pride would help to further define civic pride and its implications. Unlike national identity, as argued in Astrid Swenson’s study, civic pride need not solely stem from and be defined by the ruling classes, even if acceptance by the greater population still remains necessary. This dimension is important to the study of monuments and the intent of statue commissioners. If there is no understanding of the everyday citizen, it becomes more difficult to use public history or city identity in the cultivation of a collective civic pride.

Peter Shapley has also studied civic pride in the United Kingdom, again primarily focusing on England, but he defined civic pride as being almost solely a middle-class concern from the nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries and as being almost solely

³⁷ Tom Collins, ‘Urban Civic Pride and the New Localism’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 41.2 (2016), pp. 175–86 (p. 176).

³⁸ Collins, ‘Urban Civic Pride’, pp. 175, 177; Tom Collins, ‘Towards a More Emotional Geography of Civic Pride: A View from an English City’, *Social & Cultural Geography*, 20.3 (2019), pp. 387–406 (p. 393).

³⁹ Collins, ‘Towards a More’, p. 396.

concerned with urban re-development in post-war Britain.⁴⁰ While I find this definition a bit too narrow – civic pride manifested in a variety of ways among the nineteenth-century working classes, while cities such as twentieth-century Edinburgh sustain civic pride through historical preservation – in the case of Glasgow, there does appear to be this kind of shift in the focus of civic pride.⁴¹ The tenor of the subtexts transmitted through nineteenth-century portrait statues was very much centred on prosperity and the potential of the ruling classes, while those installed or altered after the mid-twentieth century spoke more to decline, regeneration, and the self-determination of the non-ruling classes.

Finally, and most relevant to my research as one of the few Scottish studies on civic pride, Miel Groton investigated the ways in which Glasgow's built environment emphasised its identity and civic pride at the end of the nineteenth century through the construction of the City Chambers on the east side of George Square. The impressive edifice was constructed about a block north of the buildings then used for governmental and administrative business once it had become clear that a permanent solution to house the expanding Council was needed.⁴² Similar to the other studies on civic pride, Groton concluded that Glasgow's civic identity was constructed by the city's elite with the town council at the centre.⁴³ Additionally, Groton described how Glasgow saw itself in competition for prestige, particularly as the United Kingdom's Second City, which he classed as 'an enviable supranational position'.⁴⁴ He argued that beyond expressing local identities, symbolism on the Glasgow City Chambers reinforced a nationalist ideology predicated on unionism, transmitting the subtext not just of political identity but of a Glaswegian society that was content to co-exist in 'a harmonious, hierarchic community'.⁴⁵ The intent, Groton contends, was to establish 'a specific image of Glasgow', with the locus of identity and pride being locally governing Glasgow Council.⁴⁶ Groton observed that the 'specific image' built into the City Chambers aligned the city's identity with national identity, which itself aligned with an imperial identity that reflected back to the city's identity.⁴⁷ If such a cycle of

⁴⁰ Peter Shapely, 'Civic Pride and Redevelopment in the Post-War British City', *Urban History*, 39.2 (2012), pp. 310–28 (pp. 310–11).

⁴¹ Shapely, 'Civic Pride and Redevelopment in the Post-War British City', pp. 312, 313.

⁴² Prior to this, the seat of government was the Tolbooth until 1740 and then the Town Hall until 1854. As the Council expanded with the population, governmental offices were moved four times from 1854 until the City Chambers were completed at George Square in 1889.

⁴³ Miel Groten, 'Glasgow's New Town Hall: Imperialism, Nationalism and Civic Pride, 1877–1889', *Urban History*, 48.4 (2021), pp. 644–62 (p. 647).

⁴⁴ Groten, 'Glasgow's New Town Hall', p. 647.

⁴⁵ Groten, 'Glasgow's New Town Hall', p. 644.

⁴⁶ Groten, 'Glasgow's New Town Hall', p. 645.

⁴⁷ Groten, 'Glasgow's New Town Hall', p. 648.

identity formation is true of the City Chambers, then the same can be argued of the monuments in George Square that sit at its doorstep.

Scottish Monuments and Commemoration

The primary focus of my research is to understand the narratives conveyed by public portrait statues in Glasgow, including how those narratives and accompanying subtexts have influenced the public over time. While I have thus far addressed the themes of public history, national identity, and civic pride as they relate to monuments and the study of monuments, I turn now to the current historiography and discourse specific to commemoration and monuments. I will first explain the importance of sites of commemoration and how they function to establish, maintain, change, or erode historical narratives. Next, I will provide a brief survey of research on nineteenth century Scottish monuments and the ways in which they reflected dominant narratives around history and identity.⁴⁸ I will conclude by analysing three case studies of monuments in Scotland that transmit modern narratives and identities that run counter to the dominant historical narratives of great men on plinths. These will demonstrate how the approach to monument building in Scotland has changed over the past two centuries based on the contexts in which they were installed and the stories that they tell.

Lieux de mémoire or noeuds de mémoire

Public monuments are, by design, sites of commemoration. Each serves as a kind of mnemonic device to remind a particular public of the past, whether those memories be celebratory or cautionary. Pierre Nora argued that ‘sites of memory’, or *lieux de mémoire*, such as monuments, became almost necessary in those places where ‘real environments of memory’, or *milieux de mémoire*, had disappeared.⁴⁹ Such sites, for example a tenement house museum, artificially construct collective memory where the authentic environment of memory, e.g. tenement communities, no longer exists. While one might thus argue that such sites are place-specific, Nora came to a different conclusion, In his studies on the establishment of Franco nationalism, he argued that

⁴⁸ While there have been many recent studies on how the history of the transatlantic slave trade is represented in the heritage landscape, these go beyond the focus of my research questions and will not be evaluated here. For further information on the specific studies conducted in Glasgow, see Stephen Mullen and Simon Newman, *Slavery, Abolition, and the University of Glasgow: Report and Recommendations of the University of Glasgow History of Slavery Steering Committee* (University of Glasgow, 2018) and Stephen Mullen, *Glasgow, Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: An Audit of Historic Connections and Modern Legacies* (Glasgow City Council, 2022).

⁴⁹ Pierre Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire’, *Representations*, 26 (1989), pp. 7–24 (p. 7).

rather than reflecting the memories of a specific local place, constructed sites of memory propagated and solidified a history and identity of France as a nation, with each site more or less broadcasting the same narrative – often one of loss and the trauma of discontinuity – as a collective national memory.⁵⁰ While it was no doubt a useful approach in analysing the ways in which the country reconstructed itself after the cataclysm of the French Revolution and the approach continues to be useful in evaluating the ways in which monuments do have political- and power-based subtexts, Nora's assertion limits the degree with which his theories can be applied to sites that are not bound by a traumatic national imperative.

Further, Nora maintained that collective memory and history are not synonymous and that they are more often at odds with each other, with 'true' memory a perpetually evolving synthesis of communally sustained values and ideologies and 'forgetful' history serving as a critical tool to undermine and concretise memory in a particular form.⁵¹ Glasgow's portrait monuments feature historical figures who presumably impacted or influenced the documented pasts of Glasgow, Scotland, or the United Kingdom. However, the memories of those subjects and the histories they have conveyed over generations are not bound by a static collection of facts decided upon by infallible monument builders. In George Square, we can observe the interplay of memory and history when statue after statue was installed to portray a prosperous, protestant Glasgow and to demonstrate its exceptionalism among the cities of the United Kingdom. Such statues cast a specific history and identity in bronze that one could argue intentionally obfuscated the collective and living memories of former crofters impacted by famines and clearances, the newly settled immigrants who provided labour for Glasgow's flourishing mercantile and industrial economy, the working poor who lived in squalor and disease. However, it would be hard to argue that the memory of, for example, newly arrived immigrants either disappeared under the exigencies of public history or that the historical narrative of monuments completely 'forgot' the collective memories of different populations. While history can be argued to be an act of remembering just as much as an act of forgetting and while monuments in public spaces help to confirm and develop a specific collective memory and identity, history and memory are not necessarily at all times and in all cases

⁵⁰ Pierre Nora, 'From Lieux de Mémoire to Realms of Memory', in *Realms of Memory: Conflicts and Divisions*, ed. by Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Columbia University Press, 1996), I, xv–xxiv (p. xv); Michael Rothberg, 'Introduction: Between Memory and Memory: From Lieux de Mémoire to Noeuds de Mémoire', in *Noeuds de Mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture*, ed. by Michael Rothberg, Debarati Sanyal, and Maxim Silverman, Yale French Studies, 118/119 (Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 3–12 (p. 10).

⁵¹ Nora, 'Between Memory and History', pp. 7–12.

oppositional narratives. Perhaps this is more true if one is concerned only with a national identity, but Nora's argument becomes a bit harder to prove when dealing with a local place with its specific publics.

While the four case studies presented in the following chapters do reflect some aspects of memory and history as being at odds, a better analytical framework might be to view these portrait monuments not as *lieux de mémoire*, as defined by Nora, but as *noeuds de mémoire*, or 'knots of memory', as theorised by Michael Rothberg, et al.⁵² Rather than positioning history as a grand narrative acting as the antithesis of memory, it allows one to evaluate sites of commemorations as 'rhizomatic networks of temporality and cultural reference'.⁵³ These sites can be seen as a kind of network of historical roots with no single source of memory or information but which allow for old memories or histories to be supplanted by new and more relevant interpretations. We see this especially in efforts to decolonise heritage sites or in the ways in which contested monuments are addressed by modern societies. The analogy of a rhizomatic network is also apropos in that multiple cities in the United Kingdom or even across the world may have monuments to the same subject in a variety of forms, but each city may also interpret the subject in vastly different ways and for equally different purposes. For example, statues of Robert Burns in the clothing of a wealthy farmer appeared in cities such as Glasgow and Boston, Massachusetts; Edinburgh honoured the poet with a neoclassical temple with all that implies; Burns's farm and home have been preserved as a public history sites. This indicates that if narrative and context can vary among commemorations to the same subject, it also follows that changes to the textual and subtextual narratives relating to the same statue are possible over time, indicating that such historical narratives and subtexts themselves have a history that is dependent on time and place. This is evident in case studies of Scottish monuments that focus on contexts of location and temporality.

Relevant studies of nineteenth-century Scottish monuments

Much as in other countries in Europe at the time, the nineteenth century in Scotland was marked by a burst of statue building. While there were a variety of individuals commemorated in portrait statues, including Covenanter martyrs, Presbyterian leaders such as John Knox, and national heroes such as William Wallace and Robert the Bruce,

⁵² *Noeuds de Mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture*, ed. by Michael Rothberg, Debarati Sanyal, and Maxim Silverman, Yale French Studies, 118/119 (Yale University Press, 2010).

⁵³ Rothberg, 'Introduction: Between Memory and Memory: From *Lieux de Mémoire* to *Noeuds de Mémoire*', p. 7.

the focus of the following section will be studies relating to monuments included in my own case studies.⁵⁴ It is through an evaluation of this literature that the primary gaps in the body of study on monuments in Scottish cities will be discussed, as very little literature exists on the Scottish monuments I have included in my case studies. The few academic studies I have found relate to commemorations of Sir Walter Scott, Queen Victoria, Robert Burns, and the Duke of Wellington.⁵⁵

Ann Rigney, a professor of comparative literature, conducted a study of Sir Walter Scott commemorations as a reflection of an embodied community. However, in the case of statues, she focused solely on the national monument in Edinburgh, despite Glasgow being the first city in the United Kingdom to erect a statue to the author in 1838. She observed that there has been little scholarly attention given to the monument in Scotland's capital city, with many viewing it as a mundane relic of an outdated past in which the aristocratic Scott was highly esteemed by the contemporary public.⁵⁶ Part of Rigney's discussion of the Edinburgh memorial relates to its size, claiming that it was part of a 'bygone monumentalism when cultural value was correlated with physical size and weight.'⁵⁷ She argued that, to some degree, the monument to Scott was a kind of 'secular hagiography', expressing an uncritical esteem for the author, and was installed by 'a now out-dated cult of the Great Man.'⁵⁸ This narrative of the Edinburgh monument, though, seems disconnected from the nature of the statue to Scott in George Square. In both Glasgow and Edinburgh, the mid-nineteenth century marked a time when the two cities were concerned with installing monuments to authors, but I would argue the approach to Glasgow's monuments was not that the subjects were saints but that they were men who exemplified Scottish achievement and exceptionalism. Perhaps, as Rigney argued, Edinburgh felt inclined to build a massive monument to Scott because he so much appealed to the Anglo-Scottish bourgeoisie. However, because of Scott's massive popularity and the various stakeholders eager to honour the

⁵⁴ James Coleman has produced a fairly comprehensive study of commemoration in wider Scotland in the nineteenth century. See James J. Coleman, *Remembering the Past in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Commemoration, Nationality and Memory* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

⁵⁵ To date, I have been unable to find modern academic studies relating to the commemoration of the remaining statues in George Square or of the monuments to La Pasionaria and Mary Barbour.

⁵⁶ Ann Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move* (Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 159.

⁵⁷ Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott*, p. 159. N.B. It is unclear whether or not this refers only to cultural value in Edinburgh, but colossal size was rarely a motivating factor in the construction of monuments in Glasgow. It must be noted, however, that Scott's monument has always been the tallest, if not presently the largest monument in George Square. Though I did not uncover minutes discussing why a colossal statue was chosen for Scott, the George Square statue may indeed support Rigney's argument that the perceived greatness of the author was reflected in the magnitude of his Scottish monuments.

⁵⁸ Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott*, pp. 159, 163.

late author, consensus with regard to the nature and location of a monument to Scott was difficult to arrive at, particularly among the cities of London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. Rigney noted that though ‘the discourse among his Scottish fans was often couched in national terms, it is clear that civic rivalries and competing local claims to be guardians of Scott’s memory were also at work.’⁵⁹ It would have been helpful had there been more information as to why this was the case, i.e. what was at stake for each locality and its population, but this argument demonstrated that there is a starting point from which to probe further into the contexts and subtexts of monument building.

Next, Philip Ward-Jackson conducted a study of monuments to Queen Victoria, and as is particularly relevant to Glasgow, he focused on equestrian portrait monuments to the monarch. He noted nine statues in Britain that featured the queen on a horse, and he argued that this made her ‘the first contemporary woman, let alone a Queen, to be so portrayed.’⁶⁰ Ward-Jackson noted that several contemporary newspapers viewed a woman portrayed on horseback as a novelty, and at least one of the equestrian monuments of the Queen – sculpted by James Wyatt and exhibited in the Crystal Palace – was deemed “‘crude and disagreeable’” by the *Illustrated London News*.⁶¹ The subtexts he draws out about the power of the Queen to be so often portrayed on a horse and how she both reflected and stood apart from gendered norms are not central to my arguments regarding Queen Victoria’s equestrian monument in Glasgow, but they do add a bit more context as to why such a form was chosen. The Queen herself seemed to be quite keen on the idea of being portrayed as an equestrian, which Ward-Jackson attributes to her having taken notice of the work of Princess Marie d’Orléans, daughter of Louis Philippe I and whose death at an early age affected the young Victoria.⁶² This prompted the monarch to learn more about Princess Marie’s sculptural accomplishments, which included two sculptures of women on horseback, one being a depiction of Joan of Arc.⁶³ It was soon after that the Queen began to express her interest in similar depictions of herself.

Ward-Jackson further describes a rivalry that existed between James Wyatt and Baron Carlos Marochetti, the sculptor of Queen Victoria’s equestrian portrait statue in Glasgow. Both had previously created sculptures of the Duke of Wellington; though, Wyatt’s London monument at Hyde Park was considered a catastrophe while

⁵⁹ Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott*, p. 172.

⁶⁰ Philip Ward-Jackson, *Queen Victoria’s Equestrian Portrait Statues* (PMSA Publishing, 2019), p. 13.

⁶¹ Ward-Jackson, *Queen Victoria’s Equestrian Portrait Statues*, pp. 24, 29.

⁶² Ward-Jackson, *Queen Victoria’s Equestrian Portrait Statues*, pp. 15, 21, 26, 33.

⁶³ Ward-Jackson, *Queen Victoria’s Equestrian Portrait Statues*, p. 15.

Marochetti's Glasgow sculpture was seen as a triumph. Queen Victoria herself seemed to prefer the Baron's work, and Ward-Jackson theorises that this along with the artists' rivalry may have been what motivated Marochetti to attempt to outshine Wyatt once again with a new equestrian monument to the Queen.⁶⁴ It was argued that until Marochetti "most if not all similar efforts [to produce an equestrian portrait statues] had proved failures", and Ward-Jackson provided some implications that had Marochetti's dynamic Wellington monument not already existed in Glasgow, an equestrian statue of the Queen might never have been attempted.⁶⁵ (All such other statues of Queen Victoria appear in England, with Glasgow being the site of the only equestrian monument in Scotland.) Notably, artists continued to attempt equestrian portrait statues of Queen Victoria well into her old age.⁶⁶ What still remains unclear, however, is why the monarch sought out and encouraged artists to craft equestrian statues in her honour. Perhaps it is because these monuments were erected during her life and allowed for her to be depicted as a spirited woman while obscuring her diminutive stature.⁶⁷ While the Queen's motivations are not part of my analysis of her monument, further study into her fascination with being represented on horseback could possibly reveal more about how vanity and the challenges of being a woman monarch may have played into other monuments erected in the United Kingdom during her lifetime.

Continuing with Robert Burns, it has been argued that Burns is the most commemorated Scotsman around the world, and as such, there is a bit more literature available on monuments to the poet in Scotland.⁶⁸ Ann Rigney, Murray Pittock, and Christopher A. Whatley all argued that commemorations of Burns were essential to building community, cultural memory, and Scottish identity.⁶⁹ However, their focus was predominantly on the analyses of nineteenth-century festivals, and the implications of these festivals tend to answer the question of *how* Burns was essential to community, memory, and identity rather than *why*. Whatley, however, does take this question on in his in-depth study of the ways in which the Scottish people commemorated the poet.

⁶⁴ Ward-Jackson, *Queen Victoria's Equestrian Portrait Statues*, pp. 41–44.

⁶⁵ Ward-Jackson, *Queen Victoria's Equestrian Portrait Statues*, pp. 41–44, 46.

⁶⁶ Ward-Jackson, *Queen Victoria's Equestrian Portrait Statues*, p. 68.

⁶⁷ Ward-Jackson, *Queen Victoria's Equestrian Portrait Statues*, p. 24.

⁶⁸ Christopher A. Whatley, *Immortal Memory: Burns and the Scottish People* (John Donald, 2016), pp. 2, 5.

⁶⁹ Ann Rigney, 'Embodied Communities: Commemorating Robert Burns, 1859', *Representations*, 115, 1 (2011), pp. 71–101; Murray Pittock and Christopher A. Whatley, 'Poems and Festivals, Art and Artefact and the Commemoration of Robert Burns, c.1844-c.1896', *Scottish Historical Review*, 93, 236 (2014), pp. 56–79; Whatley, *Immortal Memory*.

Additionally, Whatley included a fairly thorough survey of the statues of Burns that appear around Scotland (though he also references the fifty or so life-sized portrait monuments that exist worldwide) and the contexts in which they were erected.⁷⁰ He noted that historians of art and architecture are more and more treating monuments as texts to be read, but he argued that much of the analysis is focused on the sculptor's meaning.⁷¹ What Whatley felt was missing from the narrative are answers to such questions as 'how the statue got there, why and in what ideological or political interest, and [...] what it meant for contemporaries.'⁷² A major question for Whatley was why Burns – a poet from rural Ayrshire who wrote in vernacular Scots – would be so venerated; though, he noted that historians have paid very little attention to the phenomenon.⁷³ One might argue this is because Burns was what one might call a Scottish Scot. At a time when Scottish nationalism was finding an identity within the bounds of unionism and with Burns as a national hero to which the rest of the United Kingdom could stake only the smallest claim, the poet would have appealed to a broad swathe of the Scottish public. His works encouraged a kind of nationalist fervour and pride through the nature of Burns's subjects and the form of his writing.⁷⁴ Whatley engaged predominantly with the political implications of publicly commemorating Burns, with Tories, Chartists, and radicals using Burns as a kind of avatar for their ideologies. He argued the many ways in which Burns was co-opted by a variety of players, noting that the author and his works could mean something very different to a working class person versus someone from the middle or ruling classes. As such, we might read different subtexts in the myriad of Burns monuments erected in Scotland, which with relation to my arguments, indicates that these subtexts of the historical narrative are time, place, and population specific.

Lastly, I turn to a comparative study conducted by J.E. Cookson on the Wellington monuments installed in Glasgow and in Edinburgh, in which he argued that the establishment of monuments to Wellington, who was still alive at the time, was a political project of the Tories to affirm unionist nationalism.⁷⁵ Essentially, Cookson determined that the two largest cities in Scotland chose to raise statues to Wellington in

⁷⁰ Whatley, *Immortal Memory*.

⁷¹ Whatley, *Immortal Memory*, p. 19.

⁷² Whatley, *Immortal Memory*, p. 19.

⁷³ Whatley, *Immortal Memory*, pp. 10, 11.

⁷⁴ Kristen Post Walton, 'Scottish Nationalism before 1789: An Ideology, a Sentiment, or a Creation?', *International Social Science Review*, 81, 3/4 (2006), pp. 111–34 (pp. 128, 129).

⁷⁵ J.E. Cookson, 'The Edinburgh and Glasgow Duke of Wellington Statues: Early Nineteenth-Century Unionist Nationalism as a Tory Project', *Scottish Historical Review*, 83.215 (2004), pp. 23–40.

an effort to establish themselves as on par with the First City of the Empire: London.⁷⁶ He noted that Wellington was one of many monuments in Scotland to the heroes of the Napoleonic Wars, a conflict in which the Scottish participated as citizens of the United Kingdom, rather than of Scotland.⁷⁷ These monuments emphasised Scotland's participation in the Union at a time when a national or civic identity might have been difficult to define after the losses of the Jacobite Rising and the Acts of Union of 1800. Cookson, however, argued that nationalism was the purview of both the aristocracy and the Tories, rendering it 'socially and politically exclusive to a high degree.'⁷⁸ Having conducted a great deal of research on monument building in Glasgow in the early nineteenth century, I was prepared to disagree with this argument until Cookson noted that the population of Glasgow – a town defined by mercantilism and industry rather than its aristocratic lairds – was the exception.⁷⁹ There, he argued, the mercantile classes of Glasgow, which were not politically homogenous, set themselves as equal to the aristocracy, with the people of Glasgow inviting the gentry to support a monument to Wellington rather than the gentry dictating support to the people.⁸⁰ It is clear that the nationalism and sense of identity in Glasgow was not what Cookson called a Tory nationalism that erased the Scottish distinction, but one in which the people accepted the Union as citizens of Scotland and not merely as 'North Britain'.⁸¹ In other words, it was not a nationalism that equated Scotland to England but one that emphasised Scottishness within the context of the United Kingdom. Perhaps due to its growing population of Irish and Highlander migrants whose language and religion were sustained despite the English-speaking, Presbyterian ruling classes in Scotland, Glasgow unlike Edinburgh was able to resist the insistence on an Anglo-Scots identity to establish what perhaps could be better described as a Scots-British identity. Both Wellington monuments transmit a subtext of belonging to and celebrating the British Empire, but some Glaswegians, especially those who were Chartists, interpreted this subtext as an expression of domination and trespass that has perpetuated well into the modern era. This is undoubtedly why engagement with Glasgow's monument to Wellington centred on lampooning the duke by the late twentieth century, while the monument in Edinburgh has remained unscathed over the past two hundred or so years.

⁷⁶ Cookson, 'Edinburgh and Glasgow', p. 23.

⁷⁷ Cookson, 'Edinburgh and Glasgow', p. 23.

⁷⁸ Cookson, 'Edinburgh and Glasgow', pp. 25, 26.

⁷⁹ Cookson, 'Edinburgh and Glasgow', p. 25.

⁸⁰ Cookson, 'Edinburgh and Glasgow', p. 26.

⁸¹ Cookson, 'Edinburgh and Glasgow', p. 37.

Counternarratives and identities

In addition to the study of specific nineteenth-century subjects and how they were commemorated in the built environment, a survey of research on monuments or commemorations in Scotland shows there was a small burst of studies in the 1990s, which was a decade rife with debates over Scottish nationalism capped by the opening of the devolved Scottish Parliament in 1999. These studies featured monuments related to the Radical War of 1820, the second South African War, and the Highland Clearances. Perhaps because they run counter to the assumptions imbedded in nineteenth century cultural hegemonies, they more intentionally address the contexts and subtexts bound up with the narratives of specific commemorations. Each incorporates the establishment of a counternarrative to the dominant historical narratives then being espoused by the ruling classes in Britain, which is an approach that becomes relevant in my case studies of monuments to La Pasionaria, Mary Barbour, and the Duke of Wellington. Evident in these case studies of Scottish commemoration are themes of self-determination, the decentralisation of power, and challenges to prevailing political and cultural identities.

In 2008, Gordan Pentland investigated commemorations and attempted commemorations of the Radical War of 1820 in Scotland, sometimes called the Scottish Insurrection, which involved a week of strikes and social unrest in April 1820. These strikes and disturbances came less than two months after the Cato Street Conspiracy, in which conspirators plotted to assassinate the entire British cabinet and the Prime Minister in London. This is perhaps why the government's response to workers' strikes and agitations for economic and electoral change was to charge eighty-eight men with treason, nineteen of whom were transported to Australia and three of whom, James Wilson, Andrew Hardie, and John Baird, were executed as the ringleaders.⁸² Pentland observed that in relation to the study of commemoration in Britain as a whole, 'there [was] a curious lacuna in exploring the commemorative activities of those not involved in the attempted production of "official" or "national" memory.'⁸³ He described how in 2001 the Scottish National Party (SNP) made a motion in the newly devolved Scottish Parliament to re-commemorate the executions of radical leaders Wilson, Hardie, and Baird and to develop a school curriculum for the

⁸² 'The Radical Rising of 1820', *Scotland's People*, n.d. <<https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/help-and-support/guides/radical-rising-1820>> [accessed 16 September 2023].

⁸³ Gordon Pentland, "'Betrayed by Infamous Spies'? The Commemoration of Scotland's "Radical War" of 1820', *Past & Present*, 201 (2008), pp. 141–73 (p. 143). N.B. This gap is addressed to some degree through my study of twentieth- and twenty-first-century installations in Glasgow, as compared to the "official" installations of George Square

history of the Radical War as a fight for ‘social and economic justice, workers’ rights, and an independent Scottish parliament’.⁸⁴ The subtext here is that the radicals who agitated in the early nineteenth century would have been on the side of an independent Scotland in the late twentieth century. Yet, the motion by the SNP seemed to intentionally ignore the network of radicals, including Chartists and Luddites, that had existed not just across Scotland but throughout Britain. It also patently erases the fact that the Radical War of 1820 emphasised workers’ rights, the rights of common people, and the protection of the monarch in Scotland.⁸⁵ The uprising had not been, as the motion claimed, solely a demonstration of Scottish nationalist prerogatives. The debate was a demonstration of how acts of commemoration often exhibit agendas that extend beyond simply remembering specific individuals and what they did.⁸⁶

Based on Pentland’s research, this practice of redefining the Radical War for a specific use was not new. In the 1830s, the first person to use the martyrs of 1820 for political agitation was Peter Mackenzie, who wished to create a grand narrative of Scottish reform agitation with the Radical War of 1820 as the apotheosis.⁸⁷ He had a monument erected just outside of Glasgow and northeast of today’s city centre at Thrushgrove in 1832. Mackenzie’s monument commemorated not the 1820 martyrs but the 40,000 radicals who had first gathered in 1816 to discuss political reform at that site, which was provided by tobacconist James Turner and was outside the jurisdiction of the Glaswegian magistrates who had previously refused public lands for use by the gathering.⁸⁸ Pentland noted that even in the mid-1800s, there was contention over how the Radical War should be historicised and commemorated, and more than one new means of commemorating the events of 1820 appeared in the built landscape, including the disinterment and reburial of Hardie and Baird in Glasgow under a new monument.⁸⁹ This was apparently due to the fact that the monument installed by Mackenzie in 1832 at Thrushgrove had been neglected, and the process of re-commemoration was covered in the papers at the time not as a matter of politics but of romanticising the past.⁹⁰ Pentland argued that this interpretation of the events disguised the political divisions that were rife at the time, noting that radicals ‘were *literally* picking over the bones of the past both to see themselves through another dark time and to find inspiration for the future.’⁹¹ He specifically notes that

⁸⁴ Pentland, “‘Betrayed’”, pp. 141–42.

⁸⁵ Pentland, “‘Betrayed’”, pp. 146–48.

⁸⁶ Pentland, “‘Betrayed’”, p. 144.

⁸⁷ Pentland, “‘Betrayed’”, p. 151.

⁸⁸ Pentland, “‘Betrayed’”, p. 152.

⁸⁹ Pentland, “‘Betrayed’”, pp. 157, 162.

⁹⁰ Pentland, “‘Betrayed’”, p. 158.

⁹¹ Pentland, “‘Betrayed’”, p. 159.

[a]ll this radical commemorative activity took place in the context of moves by government, by local political elites and by urban middle classes to fix in stone their own versions of national and civic pasts in the centres of Scottish towns and cities.⁹²

This raises the question of exactly what identity was being proposed and by whom in the context of statue building, not only for Glasgow but for Scotland. Pentland concluded that in the modern context of the Radical War, ‘commemoration was an area of contest over how the national past was put to political use’ with the martyrs being ‘imagined and reimagined in a number of different ways and recruited to a range of political narratives’.⁹³ The goal, therefore, was seemingly never to provide an objective accounting of history for the public, but rather to install didactic tools of political discourse on the landscape. By 2001, the history told by those commemorating Radical War of 1820 had clearly shifted from marginal counternarratives to support for the dominant cultural and political narratives being constructed at Holyrood.

Next, E.W. McFarland conducted a study of how the second South African War (1899-1902) was commemorated in Scotland, including a shift from monuments of a more abstract national or martial pride to concretely personal memorials to local men and boys. Much like Pentland, McFarland noted how both official and grassroots forms of commemoration existed at the same time and provided a pluralised view of a specific conflict.⁹⁴ She noted that the Our Dead Heroes Fund, which was founded in 1900 after the catastrophic 1899 Battle of Magersfontein as a means to memorialise the war casualties, focused not on the rightness of the British cause in South Africa but rather on its human cost, the highest toll being paid by the Highland Brigade.⁹⁵ The monuments that would soon be installed were not only of great generals or individual leaders, but were dedicated to the everyday man who took up arms, casting those soldiers not as the nameless dead but as heroes to Scotland.⁹⁶ McFarland described the over 900 monuments to the South African War that appeared not only in the United Kingdom but also across the empire as ‘primary sources’ that were ‘witness to the complex physical expression of public memory’ as the people of the United Kingdom coped with the grief over not only the lives lost but the necessary acceptance that

⁹² Pentland, “‘Betrayed’”, p. 160.

⁹³ Pentland, “‘Betrayed’”, p. 172.

⁹⁴ E. W. McFarland, ‘Commemoration of the South African War in Scotland, 1900–10’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 89.228 (2010), pp. 194–223 (p. 194).

⁹⁵ McFarland, ‘Commemoration’, p. 195.

⁹⁶ McFarland, ‘Commemoration’, p. 195. For example, Glasgow is home to Boer War monuments to both the Highland Light Infantry and to Lord Roberts; though, in the case of the latter, the monument was intended to honour his exploits in a variety of other conflicts as well.

Britain was not invincible.⁹⁷ Perhaps this is the reason these monuments were among the first to include a Roll of Honour which listed each person killed by name, allowing mourners to see casualties of war not just as national losses but as personal losses in which one could still express pride. This new approach to war memorials allowed for towns and cities to mourn collectively and express pride in the martial contributions of their local men, which in turn reflected a kind of civic pride, regardless of the outcomes of battles. This permitted small towns and burghs to honour their fallen while at the same time rejecting a glorification of the war. Civic memorials were no longer so much about the power of the empire, but the sacrifice and heroism of individuals, shaped by the engagement and identity of the locations in which they were erected. It is a dramatic shift from the nineteenth-century landscape of great men on plinths and demonstrated to the public that it was not only the ruling classes who could determine what subjects should be commemorated as part of a city's public built heritage.

Finally, Charles W.J. Withers explored commemorations of land protests in Highland Scotland, including attempts not only to install monuments but to remove one, as well. In their transmission of public history, these monuments likewise memorialised the social and cultural needs of those who installed them. Withers recognised that there were subtexts to the modern monuments in his study that were not so much about the facts of nineteenth-century Scottish history but were instead about how the people have chosen to remember them.⁹⁸ He argued that the values and popular memory sustained by the monuments acted 'as a means to cultural identity in place.'⁹⁹ He focused on local constructions of identity, noting the difference between a dominant or elite memory and identity promulgated by the powerful and oppositional popular memory that tends to drive social and political action.¹⁰⁰ Withers describes several examples of how land protests in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, though a result of complex circumstances, relied upon the concept that those who had the memory of their place on the land also had a right to it.¹⁰¹ Monuments to those who fought or were even killed in these protests, often installed generations after the fact, incorporated not only the history of land fights, with crofters represented as extensions of Gaeldom and moral agitators against the oppression of the powerful, but also an anti-unionist sense that Scots had been fighting to hold onto their ancient and

⁹⁷ McFarland, 'Commemoration', pp. 195, 196.

⁹⁸ Charles W. J. Withers, 'Place, Memory, Monument: Memorializing the Past in Contemporary Highland Scotland', *Ecumene*, 3.3 (1996), pp. 325–44 (p. 325).

⁹⁹ Withers, 'Place', p. 325.

¹⁰⁰ Withers, 'Place', p. 326.

¹⁰¹ Withers, 'Place', p. 328.

natural rights to the land for centuries.¹⁰² Withers focused his argument on three specific monuments wherein those who erected them had to acknowledge dominant historical narratives in order to counter them and to establish the subtext of a place identity defined by loss. This is very much in line with Nora's theory of sites of memory but with a place-based rather than national focus.

The first case study involved the campaign to remove the 1837 monument to the first Duke of Sutherland on Ben Bhraggie, which still stands today but has been vandalised and threatened with destruction since at least the 1990s.¹⁰³ Withers described how crofters under the threat of Sutherland's land 'improvements' had funded the monument's design and installation as a kind of placating bribe due to fear of eviction. They were cleared from the land regardless. In 1994, an official campaign was launched to remove the statue and replace it with a memorial to those who had suffered under the Clearances.¹⁰⁴ The opinions expressed during the debate on whether or not to remove the statue mirror many of those we still hear today with regard to monuments to those involved with transatlantic slavery. There were those who compared removing the statue to the actions of Eastern Europeans who were knocking down statues of former oppressive regimes.¹⁰⁵ Others felt the issue should be left to the people of Sutherland to decide for themselves or that the statue should remain in place as a way to hold the duke accountable for his actions.¹⁰⁶ Withers argued that the modern subtext of Sutherland's portrait statue is that it is fundamentally a memorial to 'a cleared landscape' and that the memories of the lost landscape and the culture it supported were central to contemporary 'local identity and place consciousness'.¹⁰⁷

The second memorial addressed by Withers was the cairn erected in 1993 to commemorate the Knoydart land raid of 1948, when seven crofters attempted to stake a claim on land owned by Nazi sympathiser, Lord Brocket. Brocket had refused to improve his estate for the benefit of the local people, including the growing of produce to supplement rationed foods after World War Two.¹⁰⁸ The crofters' raid failed, however, and had not been widely supported by other Knoydart locals, with some signing a petition against the actions of the seven men involved. Withers noted that the inscription

¹⁰² Withers, 'Place', p. 328.

¹⁰³ Withers, 'Place', p. 330; 'Is This Scotland's Most Controversial Statue?' <<https://www.scotsman.com/whats-on/arts-and-entertainment/scotlands-most-controversial-statue-1441111>> [accessed 23 February 2022].

¹⁰⁴ Withers, 'Place', p. 330.

¹⁰⁵ Withers, 'Place', p. 331.

¹⁰⁶ Withers, 'Place', p. 331.

¹⁰⁷ Withers, 'Place', p. 331.

¹⁰⁸ Withers, 'Place', p. 333.

on the memorial cairn ties the raid to the *longue durée* of Highland land protests, but argues that the event ‘has been memorialized in stone [...] in ways out of all proportion to the complexity of the real circumstances.’¹⁰⁹ The significance of the monument, he argued, ‘rests not just in the way it symbolized opposition to the landlord class, but in its silencing of opposing views from within the crofting population.’¹¹⁰ The narrative and its subtext cannot be fully reconciled, as it was difficult to preserve an identity of Highland crofters as those struggling to maintain rights to the land while acknowledging that some of the Knoydart crofters supported Brocket’s claim to his estate, if not the man himself.

Withers’s final evaluation of identity-based, complex, and even contradictory commemorations of historical events is the 1994 memorial to the 1887 Park Deer Raid.¹¹¹ Withers described how ‘[l]and hunger, economic deprivation, and the persistent annexation of what was held to be *duthaisch ar sinnsear* (lands of our mothers and fathers)’ resulted in locals killing at least one hundred deer while raiding land that had been converted into a shooting estate rather than being returned to tenants to farm.¹¹² While it curiously does not specifically mention the raid, the explicit aims of the organization that erected a cairn to memorialise the event over a century later was

to commemorate the Crofters Struggle for Land Law Reform and to generate an appreciation of our local history and the valuable heritage bequeathed to us by our forebears who sacrificed much to secure the rights we are inclined to take for granted.¹¹³

Each of his studies taken together, Withers concluded that each of his three examples were demonstrations of a local population, rather than the elites of a ruling classes, using the past to inform and define present place identity.¹¹⁴

The case studies above provide precedence and evidence that commissioners of Scottish monuments use the past to address present and future concerns. They show how both culturally or politically hegemonic groups and marginal grassroots groups each use monuments in the same way, though their narratives and subtexts may be at odds. The studies demonstrate a shift from national to local concerns, as well as a shift in who has the authority to commemorate place-based history over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In each of the studies, the argument was rarely about the subject of a

¹⁰⁹ Withers, ‘Place’, p. 335.

¹¹⁰ Withers, ‘Place’, p. 335.

¹¹¹ Withers, ‘Place’, p. 329.

¹¹² Withers, ‘Place’, p. 335.

¹¹³ Qtd. in Withers, ‘Place’, p. 336.

¹¹⁴ Withers, ‘Place’, p. 336.

monument but rather who installed the monuments and why. This approach was fundamental to my analyses of the many monuments and monument builders that have shaped Glasgow's built heritage and public history over the past two centuries.

A note on contested monuments

As demonstrated in the review of literature above, due to the subtexts that are intrinsic to the narratives conveyed by monuments, each might have been, might now be, and potentially could be sites of contestation. While the focus of this study is not on contested monuments, per se, there are a few important points to make.¹¹⁵ The first is that monument building is more likely to occur in times of turmoil or disruption. Particularly for monuments installed during a time of instability, such as *La Pasionaria*, the potential that they will magnify both contemporaneous and future divisions becomes all the greater. David Lowenthal argued that '[t]he urge to preserve is triggered by the pace of evanescence. Amid wholesale change we cling to familiar vestiges [...]. Interest in each remnant mounts as it threatens to disappear'.¹¹⁶ However, Lowenthal argued that those who reconstruct the past without 'eschew[ing] anachronistic judgement' are in fact tampering with history, motivated either by a desire to improve the past, to correct its iniquities, or to 'restore historical stability against malign interference.'¹¹⁷ For Lowenthal, the 'motive for altering the past is to change the present and the future – to make one's own fame or fortune, impose a hegemony, right a wrong'.¹¹⁸ These motives are a piece of the context of a statue's installation and are essential to deciphering subtexts in the historical narrative, especially if the monument-builders are primarily motivated by self-aggrandisement or power or justice or any number of possibilities that may go beyond strictly telling the facts of history. But perhaps this is, in a sense, the

¹¹⁵ There are numerous global studies of monuments, particularly in areas in the midst of conflict or decolonisation such as India, the United States, China, and the former Soviet Bloc; see for example, *Contested Histories in Public Space: Memory, Race, and Nation*, ed. by Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer (Duke University Press, 2009); Lisa Murray and Mark Dunn, 'Public History in Australia: History in Place', in *What Is Public History Globally? Working with the Past in the Present*, ed. by Paul Ashton and Alex Trapeznik (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), pp. 11–22; Indira Chowdhury and Srijan Mandal, 'Public History in India: Towards a People's Past', in *What Is Public History Globally? Working with the Past in the Present*, ed. by Paul Ashton and Alex Trapeznik (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), pp. 79–92; Priya Satia, *Time's Monster: History, Conscience and Britain's Empire* (Allen Lane, 2020); Kwaku Nti, "'Uniting the African Family: Monuments, Tourism, Development, and Neoliberalism in Ghana – Historic African Diaspora Relations', *Journal of Third World Studies*, 31.2 (2014), pp. 113–25; Benjamin Forest and Juliet Johnson, 'Unraveling the Threads of History: Soviet-Era Monuments and Post-Soviet National Identity in Moscow', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 92.3 (2002), pp. 524–47. However, the focus here will be on monuments with greater connections to Scotland and Glasgow.

¹¹⁶ David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country – Revisited* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 28.

¹¹⁷ Lowenthal, *The Past*, p. 69.

¹¹⁸ Lowenthal, *The Past*, p. 71.

function of public monuments if, as I argue, they are narratives imbued with subtexts that construct a particular narrative of a particular place at a particular time.

As a final note, in their analysis of contested histories as represented in Australian monuments, Lisa Murray and Mark Dunn mark the influence of politics on public history, which is reflected in those of my case studies in which politicians were often centrally involved in the commissioning of statues. Describing Australia as a post-colonial nation grappling with a manufactured history of some glorious past, Murray and Dunn argued that ‘we should not be surprised that politicians waded into the telling of history, as the way we remember our past reflects how we see ourselves in the present.’¹¹⁹ As the telling of history became more and more a political tool for that country, ‘a crude polarization of Australian history’ began to emerge, ‘stripping historical critical analysis of its context, pitting historians against each other, and undermining the value of history [...] turning historical research and debate into a “contest of national collective memory”’.¹²⁰ They noted that public statues ‘are a deliberate didactic statement about a society’s history and identity’ and ‘a solid reassurance of the importance of their history and their heroes.’¹²¹ Equally, they establish a sense of historical ownership, one in which not everyone can be or, per some commissioners, should be included. However, Murray and Dunn insist that ‘[r]ebalancing the memorial landscape will not simply be achieved by pulling all the statues down. Memorials by their very role in collective remembering have shifting meanings for the community. Historians are always reinterpreting statues, relics and records to make them more comprehensible.’¹²² While no one would argue that debates around contested public histories are comfortable, discussions around icons in the built environment are important and signal both historical curiosity and a healthy democracy.¹²³

While monuments perhaps do not immediately if ever make sweeping changes to the construct of a society, they do provide a longstanding narrative around which to rally, either in celebration or in condemnation. For monuments with a contested subject, such as La Pasionaria or the Duke of Wellington, it becomes even more important to investigate the motivations for raising such a monument, as well as any subsequent motivations to remove a particular statue or otherwise alter its presumed narrative. These motivations will reveal the subtext we are meant to absorb through the historical narrative and the impact such subtexts might have on different publics.

¹¹⁹ Murray and Dunn, ‘Public History in Australia’, p. 18.

¹²⁰ Murray and Dunn, ‘Public History in Australia’, p. 19.

¹²¹ Murray and Dunn, ‘Public History in Australia’, pp. 19, 20.

¹²² Murray and Dunn, ‘Public History in Australia’, p. 20.

¹²³ Murray and Dunn, ‘Public History in Australia’, p. 20.

Implications

As previously noted, the above review of research has established that there is an unmistakable connection between public history, monuments, and formations of group and place identity. From such, I was able to arrive at a definition of public history as being audience-specific local history that draws on the past to inform the present and cultivate a sense of collective identity, with monuments acting as artefacts of such histories. While more research into how ordinary citizens might construct or engage with civic pride is needed, current studies indicate that civic pride is a place-specific local concern that reflects the exceptionalism of the ruling classes and forms place-based identities, both of which are influenced by comparisons to other localities. Though current definitions indicate that civic pride is a top-down manifestation of pride in the great heroes and contributions of the city, there are indications that the ordinary citizen frames civic pride as a reflection of day-to-day social values. Further investigation of how civic pride manifests among the general public may help further define civic pride and its implications, but my research holds space for both aspects of civic pride to exist at the same time.

Among the most important implications of my review is that the focus of the body of work on monuments has thus far been primarily on national identities and ambitions. With regard to Scotland, what has emerged in analyses of monument building is that participation in and support of the Union in the nineteenth century was important in cities such as Edinburgh as well as Glasgow, but that the mid-nineteenth century revealed a shift from an identity of British to one of Scottishness. While the landed gentry of the early nineteenth century showed a great deal of interest in raising ornaments in their cities of great British heroes, the subjects of monuments moved from military heroes to the achievements and contributions of specifically the Scottish people. As such, the power to install statues became more and more decentralised, resulting in the memorials to everyday citizens and those who challenged the cultural or political hegemony.

The research to follow sits within the current body of scholarship with regard to monuments, but it shifts from constructions of national identities to focus on local ones. It does not seek to examine contestations of monuments, as many studies have done, but rather the historical narratives they tell, the contexts in which they were installed, and the subtexts of identity that are both implied and open to interpretation. Because public history is place-based, with civic pride being a local concern, it is apparent that – though there may be similarities – one cannot generalise that all places and all publics

across all time will promote the same historical narratives. Because context and subtext shade interpretations and engagement, I have elected to focus not on a single subject of commemoration but the ways in which a single city has performed acts of commemoration to specific individuals. The aim is to further understand how the narratives of a singular built environment have influenced a given population's understanding of the past and the ways in which that past is useable in the formations of identity.

Research Methodology, Framework, and Rationale

As shown in the previous literature review, there are gaps in the study of public portrait monuments in that the focus of study has primarily been on a single monument or a single subject commemorated across many monuments and has been mainly concerned with the establishment and promulgation of national identities. However, the approaches and methods used in such studies set a valuable precedence from which to begin a study of a specific genre of monuments (portrait statues) in a specific location (Glasgow) over a long period of monument building.

Methodology

To arrive at the answers to the research questions posed above, I examined archives holding the original documents preserved by monument commissioners when available. Because Corporation or Council minutes in particular may not include any unflattering details regarding disagreements or decisions made, the accounts presented in these are supplemented by contemporaneous articles in local newspapers covering the proceedings of Glasgow's governing body. This methodology was successfully employed by Miel Groton's in his research of Glasgow's City Chambers as a means of 'reveal[ing] the municipality's needs and concerns', while outside observers, i.e. the newspapers, offered a more empirical view of the process, albeit from varying angles.¹²⁴ Both primary sources will provide as close as possible to first-person accounts of the process of commissioning a monument, as well as clues regarding the contextual ethos of Glasgow and its public.

Likewise, contemporaneous newspaper accounts and, specifically with regard to the Mary Barbour and Duke of Wellington monuments, social media posts were reviewed to provide evidence of public reception of statues both at the time of

¹²⁴ Groton, 'Glasgow's New Town Hall', p. 645.

installation and after. As suggested by Jeannette A. Bastian and Stephanie Krauss, the use of social media allows one ‘to learn more about often unknown aspects of history’ and to ‘incorporate personal memory’ into explorations of public history.¹²⁵ Daniel Cohen described these types of online commons as places where the public exchanges emotions and perspectives that in some ways preserve cultural heritage.¹²⁶ While newspapers provided a helpful synthesis of individual accounts, social media proved to be a valuable and direct resource relating public emotion, consensus, and understanding of twenty-first-century concerns with regard to the built heritage.

Finally, though there are limitations with regard to those monuments for which there exists no living eyewitnesses to their commission and installation, I conducted personal interviews with heritage groups and professionals. Much as was described in the studies on civic pride addressed previously, I focused primarily on those individuals with the most specific knowledge of a given monument; though, this does limit the degree to which such knowledge can be applied to the ‘ordinary’ person.¹²⁷ These interviews address memory as a function of identity, and I recognise that there are arguments both opposed to and in favour of memory as a source of evidence for historians. Allan Megill argued against memory as a function of history, calling it a ‘craze’ that manifested in ‘an insecurity about identity’ which then generated ‘an excessive preoccupation with “memory”’.¹²⁸ The problem according to Megill is that identity-based histories informed by memory rather than ‘facts’ do not necessarily produce ‘empirically verifiable statements that can be seen to be unequivocally either true or false.’¹²⁹ His issue with identities seems to be that they are mutable, that at any time ‘one can adopt a self-designation that is significantly different from the way that, up to now, one has seen oneself or has been seen by others.’¹³⁰ He does not adequately explain, though, why such shifts in identity would render histories informed by

¹²⁵ Jeannette A. Bastian and Stephanie Krauss, ‘Archives and Public History: A Developing Partnership’, in *What Is Public History Globally? Working with the Past in the Present*, ed. by Paul Ashton and Alex Trapeznik (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), pp. 199–211 (p. 207).

¹²⁶ Daniel Cohen, ‘The Future of Preserving the Past’, in *The Public History Reader*, ed. by Hilda Kean and Paul Martin, Routledge Readers in History (Routledge, 2013), pp. 214–23 (pp. 220–21).

¹²⁷ While my initial approach included focus groups of ordinary citizens to discuss engagement and interpretation, such information as might have been obtained moved beyond the scope of my research. However, further study of how contemporary citizens of a specific location engage with and interpret their public portrait monuments would help to better inform city planners, policy makers, and monument commissioners as they make decisions regarding the installation or removal of statues.

¹²⁸ Allan Megill, ‘History, Memory, Identity’, *History of the Human Sciences*, 11.3 (1998), pp. 37–62 (p. 37).

¹²⁹ Megill, ‘History’, p. 41.

¹³⁰ Megill, ‘History’, p. 42.

memory as unreliable, and he merely asserts that any ‘identity that solidly exists has little need for an explicit, thematized appeal to memory.’¹³¹ However, while I fundamentally disagree with the majority of Megill’s argument around history and memory, in the case of monuments and contested histories, what Megill calls the ‘selective and discriminative character’ of cultural memory over time is both evident and salient in the exploration of the ways in which cultural memory might influence and be influenced by identity within the historical and cultural context in which it exists. Megill’s argument that the remembering of history is an attempt ‘to promote one or another presumably desirable collective identity in the present’ was not proven by his evidence, but it is a notion central to the research conducted here.¹³²

Offering perhaps a bit more nuance than Megill, Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin compiled a series of essays to investigate the ways in which the meanings and purviews of memory are ‘historically and geographically varied and debatable’ and noted that the inclusions and exclusions folded into the productions of memory ‘constitute a politics of memory discourses.’¹³³ It is such discourses, they argue, that shape ‘historical variations in conception of subjectivity and experience.’¹³⁴ While Megill views memory as a danger to the practice of history, Radstone and Hodgkin argue that memory augments history through its ability ‘to retrieve that which runs against, disrupts or disturbs dominant ways of understanding the past’ and that memory provides history with the ‘capacity to run against universalising, monolithic generalities.’¹³⁵ Rather than a tradition of grand narratives, history that incorporates memory and thus identity then becomes a nuanced construction that allows for multiple legitimate interpretations of history to exist at the same time.

Framework: Key concepts and theories

As my key primary sources, archival records, accounts in contemporaneous media (print and social), and personal interviews will be examined through the framework of narrative theory, as well as theories of cultural hegemony and memetics. In depicting portrait statues as texts with narratives, contexts, and subtexts – i.e. the stated meaning of a text, the background against which the narrative is formed, and the implied meaning of a text – I will be relying on Jerome Bruner’s definition of narrative.

¹³¹ Megill, ‘History’, p. 45.

¹³² Megill, ‘History’, p. 52.

¹³³ Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin, ‘Regimes of Memory: An Introduction’, in *Regimes of Memory*, ed. by Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin (Routledge, 2003), pp. 1–22 (p. 2).

¹³⁴ Radstone and Hodgkin, ‘Regimes of Memory: An Introduction’, p. 2.

¹³⁵ Radstone and Hodgkin, ‘Regimes of Memory: An Introduction’, p. 10.

Bruner's theory of narrative includes ten essential characteristics, which I have glossed below with regard to the historical narratives imbued in monuments:

1. Narrative diachronicity: an account of events that happen over time [such as one's life achievements]
2. Particularity: the ostensive reference to particular, rather than generic, events [in each case, these monuments provide a narrative of the life and achievements of a specific person]
3. Intentional state entailment: the reasons events occur, such as beliefs or desires [this is expressed both in the context of historical narrative and in the implied subtexts of value judgements related to that narrative]
4. Hermeneutic composability: the requirement of interpretation, i.e. expressed meaning versus derived meaning [monument commissioners wish to express an historical narrative, but different publics accept and engage with such narratives in a variety of ways]
5. Canonicity and breach: the story is worth telling, i.e. it breaches the canon, or expected norms, of everyday life [those honoured with statues on plinths, and therefore those who commission them, have done something extraordinary]
6. Referentiality: the narrative is expressed through its verisimilitude rather than its verifiability, i.e. whether or not the narrative *is* true, it must *feel* true to the audience [this is perhaps the most important element in the study of public portrait monuments, whereby the facts of a particular biography as expressed in a monument are secondary to the values and ambitions of monument builders]
7. Genericness: the narrative has a genre, i.e. a general form and function, that is understood by the audience [with regard to monuments, portrait statues on plinths are generally understood to be narratives of greatness]
8. Normativeness: a form that is not historically or culturally terminal but which can change if influenced by time and circumstances [for example, *La Pasionaria* and the Mary Barbour monuments are influenced by the genericness of past forms but are composed for a modern society]
9. Context sensitivity and negotiability: competing versions of the narrative are capable of existing at the same time [this relates to referentiality and is evident in the contestation of monuments, as well as in the commissioning of *La Pasionaria*]
10. Narrative accrual: once a narrative has been interpreted a certain way, similar narratives are interpreted equivalently [this is most apparent in the monuments in George Square; though, much of the subtext of the *La Pasionaria* and Mary Barbour monuments relies on narrative accrual].¹³⁶

Along with the precedence set by some of the studies analysed in the previous sections, it is these characteristics that support my assertion that monuments act as historical

¹³⁶ Bruner, 'The Narrative Construction of Reality', pp. 3–18.

texts with narratives that rely on context and express implied subtexts. It can be assumed that all of the statues addressed in the following chapters demonstrate narrative characteristics of the diachronicity of an individual's achievements that are particular to that person. Furthermore, they all demonstrate canon and breach, or the implications of exceptionality, in the generic form of portrait statues that require interpretation through hermeneutic composability. It is through these interpretations that the narratives and subtexts exhibiting intentional state entailment, referentiality, normativeness, context sensitivity and negotiability, and narrative accrual will be more specifically addressed.

Additionally, many of the contrasts and comparisons of narratives, contexts, and subtexts relate to the nature of power with regard to the formation of historical narrative, and I often attribute dominant narratives to hegemonic authorities. Throughout the four main case studies, the use of the term hegemony will most often refer to Antonio Gramsci's concept of a cultural hegemony. Though Gramsci never explicitly defined the term, I base my use of the term on the following description:

[t]he 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production

[paired with]

[t]he apparatus of state coercive power which 'legally' enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed.¹³⁷

While I am primarily concerned with the imposition of the direction of social life by the ruling classes, particularly with regard to ownership of Glasgow's historical narrative, there are also some examples, particularly in the study of *La Pasionaria*, where coercive power becomes relevant in the circumstances around Red Clydeside and the work-ins of the 1970s.

Along with concepts of cultural hegemonies, each of the following case studies also draw to some degree on Richard Dawkins's theory of memetics; though, I address it explicitly only in the examination of the Duke of Wellington. Dawkins explored the ways in which cultures evolve similarly to biological evolution, and he defined the unit of cultural transmission as the 'meme', analogous to the biological gene, which is

¹³⁷ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (International Publishers, 1973), p. 12.

capable of replication, corruption, and self-preservation.¹³⁸ He argued that memes, such as songs, images, and texts, are the transmitters of ideas that propagate from brain to brain until it becomes part of the ‘meme pool’ of a given cultural environment.¹³⁹ By virtue of their distinctiveness and memorability, statues can be classed as cultural memes that convey large ideas represented by the images of important individuals and which can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Those memes that are most successful at replicating in the minds of individuals, and therefore have a ‘high survival value’ are those that are capable of ‘longevity, fecundity, and copying-fidelity’.¹⁴⁰ Portrait monuments, as the three-dimensional bronze or stone representations of an individual, are intentionally long-lasting. Being seen by many passers-by, generation after generation, the ideas represented by those monuments are capable of widespread transmission, should those ideas be easily accepted, e.g. the greatness of the British Empire in the nineteenth century. However, over time, the copying-fidelity of such ideas may evolve, degrade, or become extinct, with the meme – as will be shown in the case study of the Wellington monument – becoming something either completely new or perhaps losing its place in the meme pool altogether. I argue that deeply imbedded in the theory of memetics is the implication that, while an intended narrative may persist in a given cultural artefact, it will be upheld, changed, or discarded as cultural context and new interpretations of subtext emerge.

Rationale for the study of Glaswegian portrait statues

Supported by the theories listed above, I aim to demonstrate through a place-based and people-centred approach that monuments are historiographical texts that provide not so much a narrative of one person’s biography but of the identity and ethos of a given population. I use the definition of ‘place’ described by the AHRC Place-Based Research Programme as being ‘somewhere with lived and felt as well as geographic and economic dimensions’ with a people-centred approach being one that includes ‘the intimate, everyday, and embedded relationships that people have with their places’ as a primary focus of the research.¹⁴¹ Glasgow, in particular, serves as a useful location as

¹³⁸ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene: 40th Anniversary Edition* (Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 247–49.

¹³⁹ Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, p. 250.

¹⁴⁰ Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, p. 251.

¹⁴¹ Rebecca Madgin and Elizabeth Robson, *Developing a People-Centred, Place-Led Approach: The Value of the Arts and Humanities* (University of Glasgow, 26 June 2023), p. 6. N.B. While my research does not include significant emphasis on intimate or everyday relationships to place, I do attempt to understand the embedded relationships to place that help to shape collective and place identity.

the city does not fit neatly into a narrative of an homogenous hegemony. The city boasted a population of inventors and scientists, scholars and artists, politicians and agitators, migrants and natives, Catholics and Protestants, and a middle class founded on industry and mercantilism that bridged the working classes and the gentry. In the study of the ways in which a variety of publics interpret public history narratives, Glasgow offered a myriad of voices, ambitions, and protestations. Additionally, the four case studies to follow were chosen because they were best suited to a study of place-based narratives whose interpretations are contingent on context and value-laden subtexts. While a comprehensive study of each monument in George Square was not feasible within the scope of my research – and indeed could have been a complete study of its own – taken together, these monuments best encapsulate the historical narratives and social subtexts of portrait statues erected in the context of the nineteenth century. The case studies of *La Pasionaria*, the Mary Barbour monument, and the Duke of Wellington monument with its cone act as foils to the George Square case study, allowing for a comparative examination into how narratives, contexts, and subtexts originate and change over time in a single place with an evolving population.

These narratives of identity are shaped by the contexts in which they were formed and the subtexts which they imply. Through an examination of the commissioning of monuments, more so than their impact, I hope to provide a further basis on which portrait statues in the built environment might be evaluated to determine their benefit to current and future publics. Therefore, the following case studies will argue that

1. George Square's monuments provide a narrative of Scottish-British achievements with subtexts of exceptionalism;
2. *La Pasionaria* expresses a narrative of counter-hegemonic activism expressing a subtext of the triumphant oppressed;
3. the Mary Barbour monument tells the historical narrative a single grassroots movement that reflects subtexts of community self-determination; and
4. the Duke of Wellington with his traffic cone provides an example of a narrative that has been reinterpreted through changes in both context and subtext.

Following on the current research regarding monuments in public spaces, these case studies will serve to answer my research questions regarding how and why portrait monuments were installed in Glasgow and by whom, how they legitimise or counter hegemonic norms, and what changes occurred over time with regard to the groups who constructed these monuments and the nature of their subjects.

3. The Monuments of George Square: Subtexts of Exceptionalism

Glasgow's prominent citizens erected monuments throughout the nineteenth century with the ostensible aim of creating a lasting memory of their accomplished 'countrymen'.¹ While the portrait monuments installed George Square would honour the lives and accomplishments of over a dozen individuals, commissioners repeatedly and explicitly stated that to honour such eminence was to honour both the city and those who had paid for the statues. The subtext of such statements was that only an important city of high stature would have the kinds of exceptional leaders who would have the authority and the ability to establish such sites of memory in public spaces. The monument commissioners of the nineteenth century understood consciously or unconsciously that it was possible for the narratives imbued their compendium of statues to not only reflect and describe social reality but to also constitute and form social reality.² In other words, if they installed portrait statues to great men, that greatness would be reflected onto the city's ruling classes and the city itself. In the commissioning of thirteen portrait statues over the course of one hundred years, a narrative was established through these monuments that Glasgow was a centre of industry, literature, science, and democracy and that its citizens, principally those with wealth and power, were patriotic, honourable, and exceptional. The monuments in George Square functioned both as *lieux de mémoire* and *noeuds de mémoire*. There was initially a nationalist – or at least unionist – imperative to these sites of memory that stemmed from a central authority, primarily the Glasgow Council and ruling classes, that shifted over time to imperatives of local identities and concerns, acting as knots of decentralised memory that incorporated a variety of stakeholders.

The following case study on George Square's monuments will provide the contexts in which each statue was installed, the historical narratives they wished to commemorate, and the subtexts of exceptionalism both implied and stated in the installation of such monuments. Because this is an examination of how several statues as a collective provided some basis for Glasgow's civic identity through its subtextual

¹ While representation is not specifically a focus of this case study, the selection of almost of exclusively white men – Queen Victoria being the exception – does reflect the patriarchal assumptions and mores of the time period, with the subtext being that only white, Protestant men performed the great deeds and made the kind of history the ruling classes of Glasgow would wish to identify with.

² Jerome Bruner, 'The Narrative Construction of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 18.1 (1991), pp. 1–21 (p. 5); Andrew Baker and Duncan Wigan, 'Constructing and Contesting City of London Power: NGOs and the Emergence of Noisier Financial Politics', *Economy and Society*, 46.2 (2017), pp. 185–210 (p. 188); Sadia Nasir, *Extremism and Counter-Extremism Narratives in Pakistan: An Analysis of Narrative Building* (Routledge, 2023), p. 1.

narratives, it is important to first provide context as to the civic identity of Glasgow at the turn of the nineteenth century, particularly with regard to its cultural hegemony. This will be followed by a brief description of the city's first attempt at raising a monument for the public benefit, including influences and motivations, before turning to the development of George Square both before and during the monument rush of the nineteenth century. These discussions are intended to establish that monuments were initially seen primarily as ornaments that soon became representations of the city's clout, positioning Glasgow as equal to or more exceptional than other cities of the empire and of Europe. I will then turn to a discussion of the George Square portrait monuments themselves to explore how their embodied historical narratives and subtexts shifted over time to establish Glasgow not as exceptional only within the context of the British Empire but as a city exceptional unto itself. While these narratives and subtexts required that the messier aspects of the rapidly industrialising city be ignored – e.g. its radical history, the effects of overpopulation, the social disharmony that arises when disparate groups of people are bound by a cultural hegemony that does not reflect a diversity of pasts or contemporaneous ambitions – they reveal the motivations and values of the ruling classes that formed Glasgow's primary civic identity in the nineteenth century.

The Beginnings of a Civic Identity

Since the early years of the nineteenth century, there had been a great deal of interest in the interpretations and narratives of monuments constructed by empires such as Rome and Egypt and the ways in which they imprinted imperial identities onto the landscape. Soon after the Acts of Union 1800, Glasgow – or at least members of its ruling class – was grappling with its own identity, finding its place as a burgeoning Scottish city in a constitutional kingdom that was quickly becoming a global imperial power. Additionally, change was taking place all over Europe, including two major revolutions that had occurred within living memory, the dissolution of long-lived kingdoms, and the formation of new nation-states with tenuously defined identities. Eric Hobsbawm argued that the traditions that buttressed these new identities had to be invented to reflect and teach the principles and cultural norms that linked the present to the authority and stability of the past.³ In a rapidly changing Glasgow, as in many cities of

³ Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; repr. 2013), pp. 1–14 (p. 1).

an evolving Europe, monuments and statues became the focal points of traditions and mythologies which were conceived of by the elite classes and that legitimised and transmitted their civic and national authority.

In his study of Georgian Glasgow, Craig Lamont described how over the long eighteenth century the city had transformed from a culturally religious town to one which helped to manifest and embrace the Scottish Enlightenment, paving the way for the mechanized industries that would place Glasgow centre stage in the economic pursuits of the Empire.⁴ By the turn of the nineteenth century, the economic benefits of the transatlantic trade were apparent, and while tobacco, paper, coal, and lime were prominent industries, Glasgow's working classes were primarily occupied by cotton weaving, with mills operating power looms that had been improved by Archibald Buchanan.⁵ In 1807, the city also became home to The Hunterian, perhaps best known for its scientific and medical artefacts. Steam-powered vessels began transporting Glaswegians to ports at Helensburgh and Greenock in 1812, and in 1834, cotton merchant Kirkman Finlay began trade with China.⁶ John M. MacKenzie contended that, as the Second City of the Empire in the nineteenth century, Glasgow's economy was more closely integrated with imperial commerce than any other city.⁷ He argued that the use of the name Second City, which other cities including Birmingham, Liverpool, and Toronto also sought to lay claim to, demonstrated that the 'desire to compete and categorise seems to have been a vital component of pride in civic growth and success.'⁸ As previously noted, Meil Groton argued that the City Chambers, completed in 1889 on the east side of George Square, was a manifestation of civic pride that was inextricably tied to the economic dominance of the empire.⁹ The City Chambers itself signalled an identity that was 'powerful, loyal, large, and prosperous', and that Glasgow's 'civic elite [...] understood and represented these local qualities as part of, and enabled by, a larger imperial world.'¹⁰ Built during a time when home rule in both Ireland and Scotland had become a test of political allegiances, Morton

⁴ Craig Lamont, *The Cultural Memory of Georgian Glasgow* (Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

⁵ Lamont, *The Cultural Memory of Georgian Glasgow*, p. 24; John M. MacKenzie, "'The Second City of the Empire': Glasgow - Imperial Municipality", in *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity*, ed. by Felix Driver and David Gilbert (Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 215–37 (p. 217).

⁶ Lamont, *The Cultural Memory of Georgian Glasgow*, pp. 24, 26.

⁷ MacKenzie, "'The Second City of the Empire'", p. 216.

⁸ MacKenzie, "'The Second City of the Empire'", pp. 215–16.

⁹ Miel Groten, *The Architecture of Empire in Modern Europe: Space, Place, and the Construction of an Imperial Environment, 1860-1960* (Amsterdam University Press, 2022), pp. 98, 99.

¹⁰ Groten, *The Architecture*, p. 123.

described how the construction and architecture of the City Chambers reinforced Glasgow's identity as an imperial municipality, and he contended that even the calls for home rule still existed with an imperial framework.¹¹

However, in places such as Scotland, Ireland, or other countries and cultures colonised by Britain, there was a tension between a kind of ethnic or cultural nationality and one determined by geography and politics. Colin Kidd noted that, after the Union of 1707, the new British patriotism and a sense of national identity were contingent on the broader tactics and ambitions of the empire as expressed by 'a pantheon of contemporary military and naval heroes'.¹² This type of patriotism was manifestly evident in the monuments to war heroes who were either English or only obliquely Scottish erected in Glasgow during and after the Napoleonic Wars and which were the first public monuments to commemorate subjects such as Lord Horatio Nelson and Sir John Moore in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, Onni Gust argued that

[i]f some Scots were keen and able to configure a sense of Scottishness because of, or in spite of, their participation in a wider British imperial project, others [...] were eager to dispense with the markers of difference or to forge new and hybrid identities.¹³

Again, this is evident in George Square, where ten of the thirteen portrait monuments installed commemorated renowned Scottish men. James Coleman argued that symbols – in this case monuments of eminent Scots who did great deeds – demonstrated a sense of Scotland as being distinct among the countries of the United Kingdom.¹⁴ However, it is important to note that the Scots were not then and are not now monolithic, and how one identified with the 'nation' might differ vastly between and even among the populations of such places as the Highlands, Edinburgh, or Glasgow.¹⁵

Indeed, the drive to install the monuments in George Square reveals a city that sought to manifest its own distinct identity, one that Glasgow's population might even argue was exceptional in nineteenth-century Scotland. It is evident in the portrait monuments erected in Glasgow's first true city square that there was both a desire not only for a connection to but indeed a place of prominence within the empire, alongside

¹¹ Groten, *The Architecture*, pp. 101–02, 124.

¹² Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689 -c. 1830* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 206.

¹³ Onni Gust, 'Remembering and Forgetting the Scottish Highlands: Sir James Mackintosh and the Forging of a British Imperial Identity', *Journal of British Studies*, 52.3 (2013), pp. 615–37 (p. 637), doi:10.1017/jbr.2013.114.

¹⁴ Coleman, *Remembering*, p. 20.

¹⁵ This was evident in the commemoration of the Radical War of 1820, when no monument was permitted within the city centre and had to be installed on private land in Sighthill Cemetery in 1847. City officials also demanded to have the final say on the inscription, which had to be submitted to local authorities for editing. See Pentland, "'Betrayed'".

a pride in what was uniquely Scottish. This is particularly the case with regard to those achievements in Scotland that had propelled the British Empire to its then dominant position in global economics, culture, and advancement. However, the study of George Square must first be placed in context, starting with the motivations and concerns that resulted in Glasgow's first subscriber-funded public monument.

Glasgow's First Monument for the Public Benefit

The first public monument erected and funded by subscribers in Glasgow was the memorial obelisk dedicated to Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson in 1806.¹⁶ Chaired by Lord Provost John Hamilton, a small group of Glasgow's prominent citizens gathered on 6 December 1805 soon after Lord Nelson's death at Trafalgar to form a Subscription Committee with the aim of a monument that would

transmit to future ages the grateful remembrance of the Citizens of Glasgow for his eminent Services and to rouse the youth of succeeding generations by the view of these lasting honours that are the reward of distinguished professional genius & heroic Spirit.¹⁷

Wishing to emulate the great empires of the past, the commissioners gathered plans and designs from architects of 'ancient models', either a pillar or obelisk, to be rendered in granite in order to withstand the Glaswegian weather for many generations.¹⁸ The Committee felt assured, influenced no doubt by the nineteenth-century fascination with the classical tradition, that ancient forms would 'be best, both to suit the ideas of the Subscribers and for the ornament of the city.'¹⁹ Rather than establish an aesthetic unique to Glasgow, the wealthy and presumably more cultured members of the population showed a great desire to conform to the past and to avoid looking ridiculous when compared to the great cities of Europe. As such, former Lord Provost Gilbert Hamilton recommended an obelisk, which could be produced for relatively low expense.²⁰ The only site for the monument recommended by the Committee was

¹⁶ N.B. The first publicly displayed portrait statue is currently believed to be the 1735 equestrian monument to King William III. This, however, was neither commissioned nor funded by the public, but rather by a single wealthy patron, James Macrae, an impoverished seaman who rose to become the Governor of the Presidency of Madras before eventually becoming a Burgess of Glasgow. It was installed on the Trongate after being gifted to the city as an assertion of Protestant supremacy and was originally accompanied by four cannons purported to have been part of the Battle of the Boyne. Due to growth in the city and a patent lack of public regard, the monument was relocated in 1926 and is now ironically displayed in the Cathedral Square Gardens, despite vociferous opposition from the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland. See Ray McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow*, Public Sculpture of Britain (Liverpool University Press, 2002), V, pp. 67-71.

¹⁷ Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Sederunt Book of the Committee of Subscribers to Lord Nelson's Monument, 1805-1820, MS.2735, p. 1.

¹⁸ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 8, 9-10, 12.

¹⁹ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, p. 12.

²⁰ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, p. 10.



Image 3.1: David Hamilton, *Monument to Lord Nelson*, 1807, sandstone, Glasgow.

Glasgow Green; though, no debate or justification for the location was recorded by the members.²¹ As the only open and somewhat cultivated green space in the city at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Green was likely seen as an appropriate location for the widest possible viewing of Nelson's monument. (See Image 3.1.)²²

Though there was no argument as to using a classical form, the proposal of an obelisk in Glasgow Green did not go unchallenged. While James Watt had recommended that Pompey's Pillar in Egypt be used as the model, with bas-reliefs on the pedestal to represent the Battles of Aboukir, Copenhagen, and Trafalgar, the Committee preferred the obelisk design that had been sent by designer Henry Haworth of the Carron Ironworks in Falkirk to aid the Committee in their decision-making.²³ Thus, Glaswegian architect David Hamilton, who designed what is now known as the Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow, was invited to provide the commissioners with 'six drawings from ancient models of Obelisks' for their meeting on 5 March 1806, with 'the Egyptian Obelisk and the Obelisk in the Piazza del Popolo at Rome [being] the handsomest of those exhibited.'²⁴ However, many of the subscribers, who seemed keen on a monument but were not eager to be inconvenienced by the expense, had indicated they would still prefer a pillar to an obelisk, as it could be easily sculpted from less-expensive freestone rather than granite.²⁵ With no agreed-upon form or material, several subscribers then refused to pay their subscriptions until the Committee had decided on the final design, and, in fact, compensation for the person

²¹ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, p. 13.

²² Photo: David Dixon < <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2033678>. [accessed 14 November 2023]

²³ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 14, 15.

²⁴ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 19, 20.

²⁵ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, p. 22.

engaged to collect the monies had to be increased due to the great difficulty in obtaining the funds from the subscribers.²⁶ The matter was put before a general meeting of the subscribers on 5 May 1806, at which ‘an obelisk of polished freestone’ was decided upon, but they would not approve of the location in Glasgow Green until a site in the ‘Fir Park opposite the High Church’ had also been examined.²⁷ Once again concerned with how an unsuitable monument might reflect on the city and thus themselves, the Committee decided that any monument erected in that location would ‘look paltry and insignificant’ and would be eclipsed by the cathedral.²⁸ Consequently, the subscribers eventually approved the Committee’s application to the local magistrates and the Glasgow Council to erect the monument in the Green.²⁹

By 19 June 1806, the Committee had raised enough funds to hire Andrew Brocket to build the monument from David Hamilton’s designs.³⁰ A Grand Masonic Reception was planned for the laying of the foundation stone on 1 August 1806, both for the gratification of the inhabitants of Glasgow and as a ‘means of increasing the Subscriptions, which at [that time] were inadequate to the expense of the monument.’³¹ Apparently, the monument was not only a matter of ‘the honour of the City’ and the ‘gratification] of the public at large’, but also of the Freemasons of Scotland, which has the oldest masonic lodges in the world.³² Building proceeded without much further complication, except for a late request in July 1806 from ‘many of the inhabitants of Glasgow’ to attach a ship to the top of the obelisk, since ‘a great many of the obelisks at Rome had of late years got such additions to them.’³³ The Committee determined this ‘would be the reverse of ornamental’ and held to the original design.³⁴ Likewise, after the 144-foot-tall obelisk was completed in August 1807, several Glaswegians requested the monument ‘be raised some feet higher as they conceived it to terminate too abruptly’.³⁵ However, due to the expense of such an alteration and its deviation from classical design, this request, too, was denied by the Committee.³⁶

Reflecting the relatively minor complications that had arisen from trying to please all the subscribers, in October 1808 when the Committee was deciding upon

²⁶ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 24, 26.

²⁷ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 36, 37.

²⁸ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, p. 39.

²⁹ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 39–40, 43.

³⁰ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 48, 49.

³¹ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, p. 52.

³² Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, p. 59; David Stevenson, ‘Four Hundred Years of Freemasonry in Scotland’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 90.230 (2011), pp. 280–95 (p. 280).

³³ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 72–73.

³⁴ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, p. 73.

³⁵ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, p. 76.

³⁶ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 76–77.

inscriptions for the monument's base, the minutes recorded that they were 'perfectly aware of the difficulty of this species of composition and of the improbability of writing or fixing upon any thing which [would] not be criticized or condemned' and simply inscribed 'To Horatio Viscount Nelson' on the front west side.³⁷ Rather than bas-reliefs, presumably because of the limited funding, the Committee also decided to inscribe the dates of the Battles of Aboukir, Copenhagen, and Trafalgar on the remaining three sides, with gilt lettering 'fixed upon the stone with clamps in the same manner as is done in the ancient Triumphal arches.'³⁸ This, along with a balustrade to surround the base, meant the Committee had to continue fundraising well into 1808 in order to fully complete the monument.³⁹

Once erected, the obelisk became the first monument to Lord Nelson in the United Kingdom. Considering the issue with funding and the many late requests for changes to the designs, it is unclear why the commissioners of the monument moved with such alacrity as to lay the foundation stone less than a year after Nelson's death. The events occurred not long the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was officially established in 1801 and within living memory of both the final Jacobite rising in 1745 and the iconoclastic revolutions in the American colonies and in France. It is conceivable that rushing to be the first city to erect a monument to Nelson was an attempt to establish Glasgow as a fundamental player among the cities of the kingdom. This argument is further supported by the subsequent installations of monuments – several of which were also the first of their kind – that occurred in George Square throughout the nineteenth century, which reflected not only an homage to the British Empire, but also the effort to establish Glasgow's identity as its Second City.

Soon, the city's public monuments came to be seen not only as a way to honour the empire but also as coveted works of art. The subscribers who funded these projects openly viewed their statues as ornaments signalling the honour of Glasgow and of themselves, and thereby, as with the Nelson obelisk, often provided funding only if their cynical criteria were met. For example, the reliance on classical forms and styles, i.e. monuments from long-gone ancient empires, continued to be a sticking point early

³⁷ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 80–81.

³⁸ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 81–82.

³⁹ Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 84–85. N.B. The Committee had such difficulty procuring funding that when the monument was struck by lightning in 1810 and the top twenty feet were destroyed, no further funds could be raised from the subscribers, presumably because the honour and glory of the monument had already been reflected onto the funders. In 1819, the Committee finally resorted to requesting the surplus funds from the installation of the Sir John Moore monument then recently installed in George Square to complete the repairs. See Sederunt Book..., 1805-1820, MS.2735, pp. 104, 107.

in the nineteenth century. The monument builders of George Square carried on the concern for how the city fit into the long history of empires and great civilizations in their commemorations of not only military heroes and monarchs, but also the politicians, scientists, and authors who reflected Glasgow's aspirations of a cultural identity.

The Development of George Square

Several of the motivations behind the commissioning of Nelson's obelisk were amplified as Glasgow began to install monuments in George Square a decade later. Though the land had entered the nineteenth century as a bounded 'hollow, filled with green-water' that was 'a favourite resort for drowning puppies and cats and dogs' and a 'slaughtering place of horses', by the end of the century, George Square was termed 'the Pantheon of Scotland', with its many monuments and enviable landscaping.⁴⁰ The development of George Square was analogous to that of Glasgow, as well as that of public monuments of the nineteenth century. Still a marshland at the time of the Jacobite Rebellion and adjoined by '[t]he one wretched road which extended through the city from south to north', by 1891, Thomas Somerville argued that George Square had been transformed into a modern and prestigious park, just as Glasgow itself had become a modern and prestigious city.⁴¹ But this, surprisingly, did not happen quickly or with much enthusiasm on the part of the wealthy elite.

The boundary of the square was first laid out in 1781, but nothing much was done with it for at least twenty years. However, as the nineteenth century dawned, Glasgow began to lay out city streets modelled on the grid patterns of new towns in North America and the West Indies.⁴² These provided access to the many mansions, mercantile warehouses, and railway stations that were built as a result of the prosperous, slave-based transatlantic trade and established a true city centre of which George Square was a part. Because the land was for their sole use, maintenance of the public walks around George Square was seen as predominantly the responsibility of the proprietors, who sorely neglected their responsibility. In 1826 when they were finally shamed into levelling the grounds and installing gardens, the proprietors obstinately erected a tall fence that prohibited its use by the public for the next forty years, despite it by then being the location of several public monuments. However, in about 1866, the

⁴⁰ Thomas Somerville, *George Square, Glasgow; and the Lives of Those Whom Its Statues Commemorate* (John N. Mackinlay, 1891), pp. 9, 12.

⁴¹ Somerville, *George Square, Glasgow*, p. 9.

⁴² Somerville, *George Square, Glasgow*, pp. 17, 18, 20.



Image 3.2: Detroit Publishing Company, 'George Square, Glasgow, Scotland', 1905, LOT 13407, no. 088, photochrome print, Library of Congress.

City Architect John Carrick and Councillor J. Leitch Lang discovered that the feuing contracts for the adjacent land did not, in fact, confer *pro indiviso* ownership of George Square, so the Council removed the railing and developed the land for public use as it saw fit.⁴³ James Coleman asserted that once the cultural exigencies of the Victorian era took hold, the landscape soon became tied to 'an imperial arrogance' and 'a collective pride bordering on collective egotism'.⁴⁴ Throughout that time period, the city of Glasgow engaged in designing recreational parks, raising impressive buildings dedicated to commerce, industry, and education, and participated in a kind of one-upmanship with the great cities of the United Kingdom, Europe, and North America. So, while there was initially little enthusiasm from the proprietors of lands adjoining George Square to improve or develop it for public use, from about 1826 onward, a concerted effort was made by the Council to create a city square to rival those of Europe, with the initial steps being the installation of its first monument to Sir John Moore in 1819.

The First Portrait Monument, Sir John Moore



Image 3.3: Sir Thomas Lawrence, *Sir John Moore*, c. 1800-1804, NG 1128, oil on canvas, National Portrait Gallery.

The installation of the first portrait monument in George Square marked a change in the style of Glasgow's public monuments. Rather than imitating the extant forms of ancient empires, the commissioners of a statue to Sir John Moore, who like Nelson was a casualty of the Napoleonic wars, looked to create a work of portrait art that would both ornament and educate the city of Glasgow. Due to its nature as Glasgow's first truly public portrait monument, a somewhat detailed discussion of its commissioning is warranted. This will be followed by briefer examinations of the remaining twelve statues

⁴³ James McFarlane, *George Square: Its History, Statues, and Environs* (Aird and Coghill, 1922), p. 6.

⁴⁴ Coleman, *Remembering*, p. 20.

erected in George Square, with an emphasis on the primary subtexts establishing a civic and cultural identity as defined by the ruling classes of the city.⁴⁵

First, it is important to note why the Council and ruling classes of Glasgow found a commemoration of Sir John Moore to be desirable and appropriate. A native of the city, Sir John Moore had been born into a prestigious family in the Trongate on 13 November 1761. He entered into military service at the age of fourteen and remained in the army until the end of America's War for Independence, at which time he briefly became an MP for Linlithgow.⁴⁶ He returned to active military duty on 16 January 1788 and throughout his career earned a reputation for fairness, compassion, and strong leadership, even as he acted to further the oppressive aims of colonialism.⁴⁷ In 1808, Lord Castlereagh, Secretary for War, sent Moore to Spain to fight against Napoleon in the Peninsular War, and it was there that he embarked on the military campaign for which he was afterwards memorialized.

When given his orders, Moore openly, and perhaps even bravely, criticised the decisions made by the Cabinet around the peninsular expedition, particularly the appointment of the young and inexperienced Sir Arthur Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington) as commander of the entire British force.⁴⁸ As a result, despite decades of exemplary military service, Moore claimed his position in the campaign, if not his title, had been diminished by Parliamentary Ministers, whom he believed had 'endeavour[ed] to mortify me by placing me in a [lesser] station'.⁴⁹ Regardless of his dealings with the Cabinet, Moore was correct in his assessment as to the expedition and wrote upon his arrival that he found 'everything in the greatest confusion, and a very general discontent'.⁵⁰ While in Spain, he had not much good to say about the instructions coming from Castlereagh and the Cabinet, describing the dispatches as 'verbose nonsense' and 'a sort of gibberish which men in office use and fancy themselves military men'.⁵¹ He described Wellesley as being 'unfit [...] for the station in which he was placed' and noted that the Ministers continued to act 'towards me with a want of attention for which I could not account'.⁵² Moore's poor treatment by the

⁴⁵ For quicker reference, summaries of each monument can also be found in Appendix A.

⁴⁶ John Sweetman, 'Moore, Sir John (1761–1809)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19132> [accessed 17 June 2022].

⁴⁷ Sweetman, 'Moore, Sir John (1761–1809)'.

⁴⁸ *The Diary of Sir John Moore*, ed. by J.F. Maurice, 2 vols (Edward Arnold, 1904), II, p. 250.

⁴⁹ Maurice, *The Diary of Sir John Moore*, II, p. 250.

⁵⁰ Maurice, *The Diary of Sir John Moore*, II, p. 257.

⁵¹ Maurice, *The Diary of Sir John Moore*, II, p. 261.

⁵² Maurice, *The Diary of Sir John Moore*, II, p. 265. N.B. It is perhaps a bit of historical irony that the Duke of Wellington monument in Glasgow was installed almost within eyesight of the monument to Moore.

Parliament was not unknown at the time. As a Scotsman who had contributed much to the empire, his reluctance to submit to the whims of the aristocrats at Westminster would have made him an heroic figure not only to fervent unionists but also those maintained a spark of rebellion against English authority. Eventually, though, General Moore was given command of an army of about 40,000 men, including the 42nd Royal Highland Regiment of Foot, now known as The Black Watch and which was one of only three Highland regiments at the time.⁵³

After months of fighting, when it became clear there was no option for his troops other than certain death, Moore began a retreat from Spain to Portugal in December 1808. Though in control of an army ten times as large as Moore's contingent, French officers, including Napoleon himself, were aware of the commander's skill and sacrificed many of their own men in an attempt to pursue and eliminate his forces.⁵⁴ By pulling back his troops and protecting the remainder of the British army, Welsh officer Sir Bartle Frere later noted that 'Moore's march [...] was a movement which, as the event proved, saved the south of Spain, had the most important bearing on the final issue of the great Continental struggle, and won from Napoleon himself the tribute of unqualified approval.'⁵⁵ Sir Moore lost his life on 16 January 1809 after reaching Corunna, where he was hit by cannon shot from Napoleon's army.

Just weeks later on 8 February 1809, Glasgow's Lord Provost James Black called a meeting of 'the Merchants Manufacturers and other inhabitants of the City of Glasgow' for the purpose of establishing a subscription for a monument to Sir John Moore.⁵⁶ Black had made a motion before the Council the day prior, which passed unanimously, for the city to directly contribute one hundred guineas for a monument 'in honor [sic] of the memory of their late Fellow Citizen the highly respected, and ever to be lamented Lieutenant General Sir John Moore'.⁵⁷ This, however, was arguably the last unanimous decision in the commissioning of Moore's monument. While the narrative of Moore as a great Scotsman was generally accepted, the subtexts subscribers wished to be expressed by this narrative were many times at odds.

With the Committee and subscription established, by 18 February it seemed that funds were not flowing in as quickly as had been anticipated, despite the laudatory

⁵³ 'General Sir John Moore', *Caledonian Mercury*, 6 February 1823, p. 4.

⁵⁴ Maurice, *The Diary of Sir John Moore*, II, pp. 292–93.

⁵⁵ 'Defeat of the French, Death of Sir John Moore, &c', *Caledonian Mercury*, 28 January 1809, p. 3; Qtd. in Maurice, II, p. 293.

⁵⁶ Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Sederunt Book of the Committee of Subscribers to Sir John Moore's Monument, 1809–1810, MS.2732, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Corporation Minutes, 1807–1809, C1.1.48, p. 569.

publication of subscriber names for the approbation of fellow citizens in the *Glasgow Courier* and *Glasgow Herald*.⁵⁸ Attempts to expand the subscription campaign to Edinburgh were met with some ambivalence, and the Committee then looked to London for further support, particularly from those who had served under Moore's command.⁵⁹ Mr. Campbell of the London Council refused to assist the Committee, noting that 'collecting subscriptions from persons unconnected with Glasgow is not approved of by Sir John Moore's personal freinds [sic].'⁶⁰ The implication here was that influence from those outside of Glasgow, particularly by London aristocrats, would colour the historical narrative in such a way as to diminish Moore's honour as a Scotsman. Nevertheless, by a 13 June meeting of the Committee, they had managed to secure £3,248.14 in funding, a significant amount at the time.⁶¹

As with the Nelson monument, these subscriptions did not come without their strings, however. For some, erecting the monument as a city adornment was of far greater concern than a monument to honour the deeds and life of Sir John Moore. Several gentlemen had promised and then refused to pay their subscriptions on the grounds that the Committee did not have the authority to receive or discharge funds.⁶² A Mr Forlong refused to pay 'until he saw the monument erected' and even then would still refuse to pay 'if the monument when erected did not please his own taste.'⁶³ Two additional subscribers refused to honour their subscriptions unless 'the monument [was] so placed as to add to the external ornament of the city' and could be viewed by all class of visitor.⁶⁴ The Committee treasurer noted concerns about subscribers who delayed their payments, as well as several others who did not respond at all to any of his requests to settle their subscriptions.⁶⁵ This struggle to secure promised funding was possibly an indication that public historical monuments were still a relatively new concept in the early nineteenth century, seen merely as attractive but not strictly necessary works of city art. What followed demonstrated one of the primary subtexts of the narrative around Moore's portrait monument: that the monument would be a reflection of the city's character.

By 28 June 1809, with £3,558 in hand, the Committee called a general meeting of the subscribers to determine whether to commission an outdoor monument or one to be

⁵⁸ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 5.

⁵⁹ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, pp. 8, 10, 12.

⁶⁰ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 20.

⁶¹ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 23.

⁶² Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 26.

⁶³ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, pp. 26-27.

⁶⁴ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 28. Underlining appears in the original document.

⁶⁵ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 27.

placed in the choir of Glasgow Cathedral.⁶⁶ As Glasgow's first public portrait statue, the committee's concerns regarding form and location underscored their lack of experience in the installation of public monuments. There was as yet no standard form for portrait monuments intended to transmit an historical narrative, and they did not want to appear foolish in the eyes of their peers in Glasgow, London, or any of the other great cities of the Continent. The subscribers agreed that they were not then well-informed enough to decide upon 'the nature and situation of the monument' and directed the members of the Committee to investigate and report on options for both the monument and its location.⁶⁷ Additionally, John Craig, Esq., assisted the group by drafting a report on monumental forms used throughout Europe for the commemoration of important, non-royal subjects.⁶⁸ Craig's letter made it plain that the Committee had not much experience in erecting monuments in outdoor locations for the public benefit, with only the Lord Nelson obelisk in Glasgow Green having been commissioned and that only within the last five years.

Craig summarily dismissed the use of the obelisk form, 'as we already have an obelisk, and any other which we might build would be very similar to it, and probably placed very near it.'⁶⁹ With regard to a portrait statue, anxiety over how such a statue might be dressed soon became the singular preoccupation for the Committee. Craig first voiced concerns that the figure would look stiff if dressed in military uniform, which would be unsuitable for the neo-Classical tastes of the time, but also that it would look ridiculous if 'wrapped in an antique Drapery, still more if naked'.⁷⁰ While he noted that an equestrian statue would be 'grander than any monument that has yet been mentioned', Craig acknowledged that such a monument would require about double the funds raised by the Committee.⁷¹ Additionally, equestrian monuments at that time generally only depicted royalty, but Craig argued that 'there can be no modern practice by which this can be decided, for the number of Equestrian Statues erected in modern Europe is too trifling to be the foundation of any General rule.'⁷² He did observe, though, that placing Moore on a horse would mitigate the – to modern sensibilities, at least – baffling and overemphasised concerns as to whether he be dressed in military uniform or in the style of classical antiquity.⁷³ Neither form would

⁶⁶ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, pp. 31–32, 34, 35.

⁶⁷ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 35.

⁶⁸ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 37.

⁶⁹ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 37.

⁷⁰ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 38.

⁷¹ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 41.

⁷² Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 41.

⁷³ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 42.

change the historical narrative, so the dress clearly implied subtexts of the enviable or elevated cultural sensibilities of the city which the Committee wished to display in the correct fashion. Their concern that a monument should have the weight of authority granted by classical forms while negotiating the dignity of a modern military officer implies that city officials wanted to establish Glasgow's place among the great European cities by conforming to continental sensibilities with regard to art and history.

As such, in terms of practicality, Craig recommended a pedestrian, or standing, statue on a pedestal as the most appropriate form. Demonstrating an earnest regard for the reputation of Glasgow and the influential men who lived there and hoping to avoid 'expos[ing] the City of Glasgow to derision', he advised the Committee to seek counsel from William Lock, Esq., referred to in the *Morning Post* as 'the most zealous protector of the Arts, and [...] their most enlightened and perfect judge'.⁷⁴ He also encouraged the Committee to reach out to James Watt, who had been consulted for the Nelson obelisk and who was by then well-known for his experiments on the strength of materials.⁷⁵ It must be noted that a discussion of Sir John Moore himself, his accomplishments, how these might influence the form or situation of his monument, or why specifically he was worthy of a monument in Glasgow was rarely part of the discussion. There had also not at that point been any mention of installing the monument in the still undeveloped George Square.

At Craig's advisement, the Committee drafted letters to the above-mentioned men and described their two current options for locating the statue, the first being the Choir of Glasgow Cathedral.⁷⁶ Of particular interest is the description of monuments previously installed in that location, giving an indication as to the Committee's developing opinions regarding previous commemorations made by the citizenry and city officials:

Hitherto, indeed, no monuments have been erected in [the Choir], except to Citizens who, however estimable in their private characters, had no title to be considered as public or eminent Men; and though it is the determination of the present Magistrates to reserve it in future for more distinguished characters, this determination, you will be aware, cannot bind their Successors in Office.⁷⁷

In other words, because monuments in the Choir had thus far been dedications of the rich to themselves with no regard to any actual contributions to Glasgow or beyond, it was feared the implication, i.e. the subtext developed through narrative accrual and

⁷⁴ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, pp. 44, 102; 'Mr. Locke', *Morning Post*, 9 October 1810, p. 3.

⁷⁵ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, pp. 44-45.

⁷⁶ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 49.

⁷⁷ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 49.

genericness, of placing a monument to Moore among such monuments would be that he, too, was a self-aggrandising but unaccomplished Scotsman.

It should be noted that while the Cathedral and its grounds were determined to be inappropriate locations for a memorial to Moore as a national hero, it still functioned as a ‘knot’ in Glasgow’s *noeuds de mémoire*, with local elites commissioning memorials in cathedral spaces linking prominent Glaswegians and the city to imperial economic and martial concerns.⁷⁸ A recent survey of the Glasgow Cathedral provides an example of ‘the normative nature of the British Empire in Glasgow’s urban space and society’ as expressed through memorialisation and interior spaces.⁷⁹ Along with the fact that several of the wealthy citizens and families memorialised in the High Kirk, the Lower Church, in the burial grounds, and in the stained-glass windows had deep connections to transatlantic slave trade or suppressive colonial conflicts, the study also found that 42.1% of the monuments, plaques, and standards in the nave also ‘explicitly note colonial or imperial connections.’⁸⁰ Similar to the findings of the Boer War memorials, the study demonstrated that the practice of memorialising ‘ordinary soldiers and whole regiments’ rather than a single heroic figure also extended to the Cathedral over time; though, in this case, the findings were that ‘[t]his evolution in the culture of memorialisation contributed to a crucial process of popularising the Empire and of making it relevant to the a larger percentage of the population.’⁸¹ Still, the Cathedral was not a location that was easily or openly accessible to all Glaswegians, and the statements made by Craig about its contemporaneous memorials foreshadowed a need to establish a discrete location that would be better suited to honour men such as Sir John Moore.

The second location debated by the monument commissioners, an external situation, likewise provided insight into the nascence of public monument building in Glasgow, with the rationale for an outdoor location a being

that a monument of the gratitude and admiration of the City of Glasgow, should be erected in a more conspicuous situation where it would be seen, not only, by strangers, who always visit the High Church, but also daily by the Citizens in general [and that] it ought to be placed in some of the principal streets; in the public walk called the Green, or on some of the eminences in the immediate vicinity of the City.⁸²

⁷⁸ Stephen Mullen, Andrew Mackillop, and Stephen T. Driscoll, *Surveying and Analysing Connections between Properties in Care and the British Empire, C.1600-1997* (Historic Environment Scotland, 19 February 2024), pp. 37–38.

⁷⁹ Mullen, Mackillop, and Driscoll, *Surveying and Analysing*, p. 37.

⁸⁰ Mullen, Mackillop, and Driscoll, *Surveying and Analysing*, pp. 38, 39–44.

⁸¹ Mullen, Mackillop, and Driscoll, *Surveying and Analysing*, p. 38.

⁸² Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 49.

Expressed here is an understanding that any historical narrative of a great city composed of great men that might be transmitted by a monument to Moore would require the widest possible audience to keep Moore's deeds and connection to the city in the public's collective memory.

If the monument was then to be such a focus of public attention, conformity to classical and continental sensibilities was seen as the safest approach to avoid the ridicule of others. Watt responded to the letters of inquiry from the Committee with his recommendations that a bronze monument 'be placed in some conspicuous place where it may serve to ornament the City, as well as commemorate Sir John Moore'.⁸³ He cautioned against obelisks, as they would 'if multiplied diminish in their effect', while 'Statues may be increased in numbers ad infinitum, as they would represent so many different men.'⁸⁴ As the forms of later nineteenth-century commemorations were predominantly portrait statues in public spaces, it seems Watt's advice became the standard for future installations. Nevertheless, the Committee was initially reluctant to accept his guidance. In preparing a report of their findings for the subscribers, the Committee decided on 10 October 1809 that

from a consideration of the numerous difficulties attending every species of external monument, the Choir of the High Church should be preferred. They also unanimously recommend for that situation, a statue of Carrara Marble, placed on a pedestal of the same materials, as the best and most impressive memorial of this illustrious Townsman.⁸⁵

In this, they seemed to fall back on the more common elegiac tradition of commemorative marble statues in churches, eschewing the problems that would arise from making the statue a public ornament of the city.

This decision, however, did not meet with the approval or the ambitions of the subscribers. Dr Andrew Carrick, a prominent Scotsman living in Bristol, felt the Committee should endeavour to raise the necessary funds for an equestrian statue; though, they would have been thousands of pounds short at the time.⁸⁶ Appealing to a sense of civic pride and exceptionalism, he wrote, 'And will the great the enterprising the opulent Glasgow which in everything leaves her rival cities far in shade withhold this small additional sacrifice in her own [and] her favourite heros honor [sic]? A! no – impossible!'⁸⁷ He further explained that

⁸³ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 60.

⁸⁴ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 61.

⁸⁵ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 70.

⁸⁶ Kirkintilloch, East Dunbartonshire Archives, Letter from Dr A Carrick, Bristol to Colin D Donald Esq., Glasgow, 4 November 1809, GD185/2/2, p. 1.

⁸⁷ Letter from Dr A Carrick..., 4 November 1809, GD185/2/2, pp. 1–2.

[a] marble statue in the great Church would no doubt produce a solemn [and] pleasing effect – [and] had Sir John Moore been eminent in any Civil capacity, nothing could have been more suitable. A monument more exposed to public view however seems to be more consistent with his military character; [and] the marble statue independent of the greater difficulty of divesting it of the stiff formality of the modern uniform would have more the air of a private [and] domestic, than of a public or civic erection.⁸⁸

Of particular interest regarding the assumed nature and audience of commemorative monuments in the early nineteenth century, while expressing his support for an outdoor location, James Dennistoun claimed a statue of John Moore would ultimately become invisible to Glaswegians and thus of interest only to tourists whether it was installed in the cathedral or not. He wrote that

[t]he Citizens of Glasgow [...] will soon become familiar and indifferent to any object placed either within or without Doors in the City – so that the object which is meant to perpetuate the Memory of the Hero and Citizen, will soon come to be examined [and] Reflected upon by the passenger only – Of these there are two sorts, the Inquisitive [and] the Indolent traveller [...]. It is my opinion there are 1000 of the later, for one of the former [and] it would seem of necessity to follow, that an external situation, and not the Cathedral, should be chosen for perpetuation, by Monument, the memory of Moore; That all who are not blind may be Compelled to behold [and] admire!⁸⁹

At the general meeting and through subsequent letters, it became clear that most subscribers were of a decidedly different opinion to the Committee who had recommended the marble statue in Glasgow Cathedral. In a vote of 79 to 18, they ultimately decided that the monument would not be situated indoors.⁹⁰

As to a location, undoubtedly giving much weight to Dennistoun's claims, the Committee discarded any previously recommended street locations where Glaswegians would be 'engaged in their ordinary avocations [with] no leisure to admire the Sculpture, or to venerate the Hero.'⁹¹ Glasgow Green was considered too large and open a space to give the monument any impact, and the location would put the statue at risk of being 'a familiar, and, therefore, an unimpressive monument of departed talents, valour, and patriotism.'⁹² Ultimately, the south side of George's Square was deemed ideal, but the Committee knew this 'would be decidedly objected to by some of the Proprietors'.⁹³ They argued, though, that it might be possible to use the southwest corner, but there was

⁸⁸ Letter from Dr A Carrick..., 4 November 1809, GD185/2/2, pp. 1–2.

⁸⁹ Kirkintilloch, East Dunbartonshire Archives, Letter from James Dennistoun Esq., Camis Eskan, to Colin Dunlop Donald Esq., Writer, Glasgow, 4 November 1809, GD185/2/3, pp. 1–2.

⁹⁰ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 72.

⁹¹ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 110.

⁹² Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, pp. 114–15.

⁹³ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 111.

concern that if no other monuments were added to the square, placing Moore's monument in this corner would cause the park to look unbalanced.⁹⁴ Again, none of these concerns are related to the transmission of Moore's history, but were instead further evidence of the implied need to cast Glasgow as a cultured city with a refined population. After presenting on their final findings as to the recommended and preferred form and location at a General Meeting of Subscribers on 28 March 1810, still unable to come to a decision as to a site, the funders postponed voting on where the monument would be at length be placed.⁹⁵ However, the majority of subscribers did vote to erect 'a Pedestrian Statue of Bronze erected upon a Granite Pedestal', with the climate-resistant materials chosen under Watt's advisement affirming their choice of a public location.⁹⁶

Deciding on the sculptor who would create Sir Moore's monument was perhaps less complicated than other decisions to be made by the commissioners, but it was still not as easy a task as might be thought. While the Committee and Watt were in favour of London's John Flaxman, Moore's brother James – who felt that Flaxman's work was 'lamentable', 'ill executed', and 'ludicrous' and that the artist himself was careless and defective in talent – exerted his opinions and influence to such a degree that the choice of an artist was delayed for some time.⁹⁷ However, the Committee considered recommendations from art experts, as well as the public's view of Flaxman 'as a man of Superior taste and abilities', and soon unanimously decided on him as their artist in spite of James Moore's disapproval.⁹⁸ Seeking to equate Glasgow's city identity to empires of the past, the Committee asked the sculptor to produce 'as far as the difference of dress will permit [...] exactly such a statue as the ancients would have erected to a warrior'.⁹⁹ Flaxman accepted the commission, noting he would pay particular attention to the dress and to recreating Sir Moore's 'likeness in face and figure', and he advised the Committee that the statue would transmit an attitude of 'life, perfect health and action' rather than 'faintness and approaching death', as was common with the elegiac statues found in places such as St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.¹⁰⁰ In the end, Flaxman dressed Moore in his uniform, wrapped in a military cloak, just as the General had been dressed when buried in the ramparts of Corunna.¹⁰¹ (See Image 3.4.)¹⁰² Though the

⁹⁴ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 111.

⁹⁵ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, pp. 118, 119.

⁹⁶ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, pp. 118.

⁹⁷ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, pp. 147–50.

⁹⁸ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 158.

⁹⁹ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 161.

¹⁰⁰ Sederunt Book..., 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 168.

¹⁰¹ 'Last Moments of Sir John Moore', *Perthshire Courier*, 3 August 1809, pp. 3–4 (p. 4).

¹⁰² Photo: Media Scotland, n.d. < <https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/descendant-first-statue-george-square-18399092> > [accessed 14 November 2023].



Image 3.4: John Flaxman, *Sir John Moore*, 1819, bronze on a granite plinth, Glasgow. This image includes a cast sword, which has since disappeared.

statue was completed early in 1814, it was five more years before the monument was erected in Glasgow, almost certainly due to arguments over where it should be situated.¹⁰³ At least one chronicler of the time described Glasgow Green, which was used for military exercises and working-class proceedings and where the paling around the Nelson Monument was used to dry clothing, as being considered ‘fit only for the vulgar’.¹⁰⁴ Thus, George Square was finally settled upon as the location for the Moore statue, with Flaxman recommending its near-current location on the southside of the square across from Miller Street.¹⁰⁵ However, a paragraph in the 31 January 1819 issue of *The Scotsman* noted that even up to the last minute at least one proprietor of the houses adjoining George Square raised objections to the installation of Moore’s monument. Though ‘workmen from London were about to proceed with the necessary preparation’, due to this single objection, all work to install the monument was halted.¹⁰⁶ The delay meant that the monument was not unveiled for the public until 18 August 1819.

It is unclear why the proprietors of George Square were so opposed to the installation of Moore’s monument. However, an 1825 lithograph published in the satirical *Glasgow Looking Glass* advertised George Square as being ‘To be Let / For Dungsteads, and all other nuisances Apply to the Proprietors, or at the Police Office’, and depicted women washing laundry and children vandalising Moore’s statue and nearby lampposts in a park surrounded

¹⁰³ ‘Mr Flaxman the Celebrated Artist...’, *Perthshire Courier*, 19 May 1814, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ ‘We Noticed, Some Time Since...’, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 8 September 1813, p. 2; ‘A Number of Weavers Met in Glasgow Green...’, *Perthshire Courier*, 3 June 1819, p. 3; ‘Upon Saturday the 22d Ultimo...’, *Perthshire Courier*, 10 February 1814, p. 3; ‘The Scenery of the Clyde’, *Scots Magazine*, 1 August 1824, p. 144.

¹⁰⁵ ‘At the Late Meeting...’, *The Scotsman*, 31 July 1819, p. 245.

¹⁰⁶ ‘At the Late Meeting...’, p. 245.



Image 3.5: 'To Be Let',
Glasgow Looking Glass, 1825.

by a broken-down railing.¹⁰⁷ (See Image 3.5.) This is often interpreted as being a slight against Moore's monument, as the image is most often reproduced without the text.¹⁰⁸ There is no indication, though, that Sir Moore's monument was ever the focus of widespread public contempt in Glasgow, and the comic is more likely a lampoon of the failure of the wealthy and powerful of the city to properly maintain the public square in a matter the public could take pride in. For example, an 1826 letter to the editor of the *Glasgow Herald* described the square as being unused by any but 'the person whose duty it was to cut the grass', as from its creation in 1787 until the installation of Sir Moore's monument, it was not open to the general public, being reserved for the use of those who owned the adjoining properties.¹⁰⁹ The anonymous writer, called only A Friend to Improvement, commented that the proprietors around George Square had 'subjected themselves to the anathemas of their fellow-citizens [for] what was justly looked on by every stranger as a disgrace to the town', citing their selfishness and their 'very narrow views of improvement when their pockets are concerned.'¹¹⁰ The letter drew specific comparisons to Edinburgh, or 'our friends in the East', who were 'half a century in advance of us' in maintaining 'any of the Squares of the Metropolis of Scotland', and he or she noted that it was the installation of Moore's monument that had given the George Square its first improvement of prestige.¹¹¹ The letter correctly predicted that '[t]he

¹⁰⁷ 'To Be Let' *Glasgow Looking Glass*, 1825, reprinted in Ray McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow*, Public Sculpture of Britain (Liverpool University Press, 2002), v, p. 115.

¹⁰⁸ Glasgow City Council, *George Square Heritage Trail* (Glasgow: Glasgow City Council, n.d.), p. 19 <www.glasgow.gov.uk/heritagetrails> [accessed 5 October 2021]; McKenzie, p. 115; *The Evolution of George Square with Niall Murphy*, online video recording, YouTube, 2020 <https://youtu.be/uWlBX_I0DLE> [accessed 4 August 2020]; Somerville, p. 21; William W. Barr, *Glaswegiana*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Richard Drew Publishing, 1988), p. 6.

¹⁰⁹ A Friend to Improvement, 'George's Square and Its Recent Improvements', *Glasgow Herald*, 7 April 1826, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ A Friend to Improvement, p. 1.

¹¹¹ A Friend to Improvement, p. 1.

erection of such a monument in this place was hailed by the friends of improvement as a happy presage of future ornament.'¹¹² There was an evident wish to establish Glasgow as one of the great cities of Europe, and those Glaswegians in favour of improvement must have been greatly gratified when Charles Nodier described the city in 1822 as having a design and architecture resembling Paris, with the statue of Sir John Moore specifically noted as a 'superb' example.¹¹³

George Square's Pantheon

Over the course of the nineteenth century as one monument after another began to appear in the landscape of George Square, Glasgow concurrently established its identity as the Second City of the Empire. An oft repeated argument for the building of monuments in the city centre was that honouring great men on plinths would bring honour upon Glasgow and the subscribers who paid for them. Each statue was an expression of a cultural hegemony that was formulated not by the more populous working-classes, many of whom might have been classed as radicals and dissidents, but by the city's ruling elite. J.E. Cookson argued that in the early nineteenth century '[t]he triumph of the British state [had been] used over and over again to reaffirm the success of the Union and Scotland's share of the glory.'¹¹⁴ This was undoubtedly apparent in the monuments installed to Nelson and Moore, the first erected in the city. Overtime, monuments to such war heroes gave way to commemorations of icons of science, literature, and civics, and Colin Kidd argued that pride in the cultural and



Image 3.6: Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Plans of Statues in George Square, c.1900, D-TC13/659/1B. The Gladstone statue is included in the plans but would not be installed until 1902.

¹¹² A Friend to Improvement, p. 1.

¹¹³ Charles Nodier, 'Promenade from Dieppe to the Mountains of Scotland', *Perthshire Courier*, 2 April 1822, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ Cookson, 'Edinburgh and Glasgow', pp. 23–24.

intellectual contributions of Scots – beyond demonstrations of military might – was central to a Scottish rather than unionist patriotism.¹¹⁵ Kidd's argument is reflected in the fact that, after the city's first portrait monument to Sir John Moore, the next monument installed in George Square included a subtextual narrative of Scottish rather than British triumph, with James Watt as its venerable subject. Portrait monuments in George Square, initially imbued with subtexts of national identity, had by the mid-nineteenth century become focused on Scotland's heroes, with the accompanying rhetoric being a narrative of Scotland's history and achievements.¹¹⁶ To further emphasise their function as works of public history and as the narrators of Glasgow's uniquely Scottish identity and legitimacy within the empire, the following are examinations of the remaining monuments installed in George Square over the long nineteenth century, including the explicit or perceived motivations of the city elites who commissioned them.

James Watt

As noted, the second monument installed in George Square was the statue of James Watt, the famous Scottish inventor who was born in Greenock in 1736 and died in Birmingham in 1819. (See Image 3.7.)¹¹⁷ Watt spent a good deal of his professional life in Glasgow as a maker of mathematical instruments, and it was there in 1776 that he patented his improved version of the steam engine that was so fundamental to the Industrial Revolution.

In November 1824, a Committee of city leaders, merchants, and aristocrats was formed to erect a public monument in Watt's honour, in 'testimony of the high sense [the commissioners] entertain, of the important benefits, which the Inventive Genius and mechanical discoveries, of that distinguished individual, have conferred upon his Country' and 'the race of man'.¹¹⁸ At this first meeting, there were some who argued that a monument to Watt would be more appropriate for a London location to further emphasise the magnitude and reach of his achievements.¹¹⁹ While this might have conceivably been a feather in Glasgow's cap for a time, the location of a Watt monument in London rather than Glasgow would have undoubtedly implied to future generations that the accomplishments of the Scots could and should be co-opted by the

¹¹⁵ Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past*, p. 213.

¹¹⁶ Cookson, 'Edinburgh and Glasgow', pp. 23–24.

¹¹⁷ Photo: Erin Burrows, 2024.

¹¹⁸ Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Corporation Minutes, July 1823–December 1825, C1.1.55, p. 513; 'Monument to Mr Watt', *Perthshire Courier*, 30 July 1824, p. 2.

¹¹⁹ 'Monument to Mr Watt'.



Image 3.7: Francis Leggatt Chantrey, *James Watt*, 1832 bronze on a granite plinth, Glasgow.

English. Henry Cockburn, Esq., dismissed London as a location, noting it was Scotland's right to erect a monument to one of its own countrymen and that it would be a shame upon Glasgow if any 'stranger [...] who traversed the native land of Watt [which was at] every corner [marked by] his genius [...] found no monument to his memory.'¹²⁰ By arguing that travellers would seek out Watt not in the streets of London but in the lands of Scotland, Cockburn underscored the subtext that a city that produced such great men would be recognised by others far and wide as a place of greatness in itself. Furthermore, the commissioners believed that a monument honouring Watt in Glasgow would likewise 'add to the splendour of our city.'¹²¹ We can infer from these discussions that there was some implied effort to exploit Watt as a symbol of Glasgow's greatness, whether in Scotland or London. In the first case, by designating Watt a national hero who had benefited all of humanity, the commissioners thereby elevated the prestige of Glasgow, where Watt had lived and worked. By arguing that the work of a Scotsman had so benefited mankind as to warrant a monument in the kingdom's national city of London, the commissioners elevated the status of the country and community where he had developed many of his greatest works.

With Glasgow thus determined to be the most appropriate location for a monument, the Committee chose Francis Leggatt Chantrey of London, who had previously sculpted a bust of Watt from life, as the artist.¹²² Rather than using the form of a pedestrian statue, Chantrey chose to depict a contemplative Watt seated in a chair with a compass and a drawing of his steam engine. This reinforced the subtext that Glasgow was not only a

¹²⁰ 'Monument to Mr Watt'.

¹²¹ 'Monument to Mr Watt'.

¹²² 'Statue of James Watt', *Glasgow Herald*, 18 June 1832, p. 2.

progenitor of strong men, but also of thinking men. The Committee permitted Chantrey to select the aforementioned southwest corner of George Square as the site, facing towards what is now Royal Exchange Square; though, by this time, the adjacent proprietors were not as opposed to the additional ornamentation as they had been with regard to the Moore monument.¹²³ The almost six-metre monument of bronze on a granite plinth was installed on 16 June 1832, when those in attendance again designated their former fellow-citizen as a ‘great benefactor of mankind’.¹²⁴

It should be noted, however, that though Watt is still regarded highly for his works, the narrative around his statue and around the ‘rightness’ of the Empire has shifted to some degree in recent years, reinforcing the hermeneutic composability of monuments and how they are interpreted. A recent work by Stephen Mullen has revealed that Watt’s father had been a slave-trader and that Watt himself had been involved with trafficking of an enslaved boy after taking over his father’s business in 1762.¹²⁵ With Watt having interests in both colonial commerce and the Enlightenment and with philosophers in Glasgow having opposed chattel slavery as early as the 1730s, by 1791, he privately opposed plantation slavery, if not the slave trade itself.¹²⁶ In fact, Watt’s business, which was eventually taken over by his sons, profited by selling steam engines to sugar plantations operated by enslaved people.¹²⁷ While no changes have been made to the monument in George Square, the Hunterian Museum, which houses a plaster cast of the monument, has added this context to their interpretive materials.¹²⁸

Sir Walter Scott

Soon after the installation of Watt’s monument, Sir Walter Scott, who had been born in Edinburgh in 1771, died in September 1832. A subscription committee in Glasgow raised a monument to his memory on 2 June 1838. (See Image 3.8.)¹²⁹ At the first meeting of the Committee of Subscribers in October 1832, the motivations and objectives of those gathered were transcribed in the *Glasgow Herald*. Though Scott was not a Glaswegian, the important citizens of the city demonstrated their belief that

¹²³ Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Corporation Minutes, March 1831–September 1833, C1.1.58, p. 191.

¹²⁴ ‘Statue of James Watt’.

¹²⁵ Stephen Mullen, ‘James Watt and Slavery in Scotland’, *History Workshop*, 17 August 2020 <<https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/slavery/james-watt-and-slavery-in-scotland/>> [accessed 27 April 2025].

¹²⁶ Mullen, ‘James Watt and Slavery in Scotland’.

¹²⁷ Mullen, ‘James Watt and Slavery in Scotland’.

¹²⁸ Nicky Reeves, ‘James Watt, Slavery and Statues’, *The Hunterian Blog*, 11 August 2020 <<https://hunterian.blog/james-watt-slavery-and-statues/>>. [accessed 16 June 2025].

¹²⁹ Photo: Kim Traynor, 2012 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scott_Monument,_Glasgow.JPG> [accessed 14 November 2023].



Image 3.8: John Greenshields, *Sir Walter Scott*, 1836, yellow freestone, Glasgow.

the character and prominence of Glasgow made it an appropriate location to honour the widely celebrated Scotsman. Duncan Macfarlan, Principal of Glasgow University, described Scott as being ‘Scottish in his very heart’s core’ and ‘our countryman, the pride, the boast, the ornament of our country.’¹³⁰ Mr. Alexander Graham expressed that a monument to Scott ‘would yet be the means of inspiring others to emulate that great and glorious man who had shed such a lustre on the annals of his country.’¹³¹

In an explicit statement of subtext, Sir Daniel Sanford argued that if Edinburgh, Scotland’s capital and the city where Scott had lived, were to be the only Scottish city to honour the author,

we might have blushed for [Glasgow] – we might have blushed for our intellectual character; we might have continued still to be the rival of the capital in splendour, opulence, and numbers, but never more could we have raised up our heads in the rivalry of taste, or claimed equality with her in the appreciation of mental excellence.¹³²

Lord Provost Robert Dalglish made several comparisons between the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, and he argued that the deed of erecting a monument would ‘exhibit a generous rivalry with our Athenian friends of the metropolis [...] and [would] prove that the glories of Florence, in the times of the Medicis, have dawned on the commerce and irradiated the spires of Glasgow.’¹³³ Drawing on the still wide-spread esteem for ancient empires, Sanford continued that Scott ‘[had] raised our country to a proud equality of fame with the most renowned nations of ancient or modern times’.¹³⁴ He also encouraged a subtextual narrative that was intended to

¹³⁰ ‘Monument to Sir Walter Scott’, *Glasgow Herald*, 19 October 1832, p. 2.

¹³¹ ‘Monument to Sir Walter Scott’.

¹³² ‘Monument to Sir Walter Scott’.

¹³³ ‘Monument to Sir Walter Scott’.

¹³⁴ ‘Monument to Sir Walter Scott’.

link Glasgow not only to the great classical writers but also to the literary icons of England – the implication being that the Greeks and English had heretofore been the pinnacles of literary excellence – by arguing that ‘no writer could be found who united the excellencies of Homer and Shakespeare, but Sir Walter Scott.’¹³⁵

There was an stated desire among these subscribers to establish Glasgow not only as a city of commerce, but also of science and literature, one that rivalled not only neighbouring Edinburgh, but also the ancient centres of learning and culture. So eager were the commissioners to stamp this identity on the landscape that they managed to erect Glasgow’s monument eight years ahead of Edinburgh, making it the first monument to Sir Walter Scott in the world. It features George Square’s only carved pedestrian statue on a colossal 24.4-metre pillar and was placed in the centre of George Square, where it still stands far above any other monument in the pantheon.

Sir Robert Peel

Next to support the cultivation of Glasgow’s civic identity, the fourth portrait monument to be installed in George Square was a celebration not of military, scientific, or literary achievements, but of diplomacy in politics. The mid-nineteenth century in Glasgow marked a time of increased enfranchisement, but also of political strife in light of the famines in Ireland and Scotland, the impacts of colonialism, and the actions of a self-interested gentry, so greater attention to exceptional statesmanship was arguably to be expected.

After the death of Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850), a Committee of Subscribers was formed in October 1852 to raise a monument to the statesman. (See Image 3.9.)¹³⁶ Those attending were acknowledged to hold differing political views, ‘many of them having been constantly in opposition to [Peel]’.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, all conceded that the repeal of the Test Acts, Catholic Emancipation, Free Trade, the establishment of a police force, and the repeal of the Corn Laws under his leadership had benefited a great majority of the United Kingdom regardless of party affiliation.¹³⁸ Furthermore, they asserted that though Peel was neither a ‘citizen of Glasgow or a Scotchman [...]’, he was the most distinguished statesman of his day.¹³⁹ Here, too, the Committee exhibited their desire to align the city’s identity to British triumphs by drawing a connection

¹³⁵ ‘Monument to Sir Walter Scott’.

¹³⁶ Photo: Erin Burrows, 2024.

¹³⁷ ‘Inauguration of the Glasgow Peel Monument’, *Glasgow Courier*, 30 June 1859, p. 1.

¹³⁸ ‘Inauguration of the Glasgow Peel Monument’.

¹³⁹ ‘Inauguration of the Glasgow Peel Monument’.

between the city and the great works of a man who, in spite of having served as Rector of Glasgow University, was almost wholly unconnected to Glasgow.

Regardless of the Committee's zeal, the execution of the monument was delayed – some even accusing Glasgow of being 'tardy' in its expression of appreciation – by the concurrent efforts to raise an equestrian monument of Queen Victoria in the city (to be discussed later), which the subscribers did not wish to impose upon.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, unlike those Committees who might have prided themselves on installing the first monument to Nelson in the United Kingdom or the first to Sir Walter Scott in the world, the Committee felt that there could be some advantage in delaying their work 'as a great many commissions had [already] been given to artists for statues of Sir Robert Peel in several of the larger cities of the empire' and there were those who hoped to first '[ascertain] how far a correct likeness and faithful representation of the late statesman had been secured.'¹⁴¹ In other words, if Glasgow was to have a monument to Peel, a delay might ensure that it would be finer than any of the other monuments erected across the empire.

I argue that this subtext of Glaswegian exceptionalism was also the reason a Glasgow artist, John Mossman, was chosen as the sculptor, making it both the artist's first commission of a bronze statue and the first major public commission given to a Glaswegian.¹⁴² He designed a pedestrian statue depicting Peel holding parliamentary papers and dressed in contemporary clothing. His dress was, in fact, something to be remarked upon, with the *Glasgow Herald* commending Mossman's rendering of 'a plain frock coat, [...] the



Image 3.9: John Mossman, *Sir Robert Peel*, 1859, bronze on a granite plinth, Glasgow.

¹⁴⁰ 'Inauguration of the Glasgow Peel Monument'.

¹⁴¹ 'Inauguration of the Glasgow Peel Monument'.

¹⁴² 'Inauguration of the Glasgow Peel Monument'.

absence of whisker, and the simple cravat round the neck without shirt-collar.’¹⁴³

Though, Peel was not the first to appear atop a Glasgow plinth in modern dress (see James Oswald), the *Herald* applauded the fact that there was ‘nothing of the merely conventional or vulgar’ in the depiction of the statesman.¹⁴⁴ The statue commissioners of Glasgow had clearly moved beyond their preoccupation with classical forms and dress, indicating a shift in the subtext of the city’s identity; the monument builders of ancient empires were no longer the standard by which modern sculptors or commissioners had to be measured.

In March 1859, the proprietors of George Square, who still exerted ownership over the land at that time, consented to the installation of a monument to Sir Robert Peel in the park.¹⁴⁵ The memorial was intended to embody

the sentiments of admiration, gratitude, and esteem of the vast majority of the people of Glasgow and the West of Scotland, for national services which have not been surpassed for their beneficent character by those of any public man of modern times.’¹⁴⁶

At the civic reception that followed the installation of Peel’s monument on 28 June 1859, Glasgow was described as a city ‘rich in monuments to illustrious men’ and was warranted to be classified as one of the ‘principal cities’ of the empire.¹⁴⁷ Peel’s monument thus helped to confirm Glasgow’s identity as the Second City of the Empire, if only gently, as it had given itself the authority to commemorate ‘a monument to the memory of a man whose name would go down in posterity with increasing respect for his great talents and legislative wisdom’.¹⁴⁸ If Peel were to be remembered and venerated for generations to come, so too might the city with the ambition, funding, and legitimacy to erect the English statesman’s statue alongside its growing assemblage of renowned Glaswegians and Scots in its city centre.

James Oswald

It should be noted that in 1856, at about the same time the Peel Committee was moving toward the installation of their statue, a private group installed a monument to James Oswald (1779-1853) off of Sauchiehall Street in Charing Cross. Oswald had been a Whig leader in the movement leading up to the Reform Act of 1832 and was the first Glaswegian elected to Parliament after expanded suffrage. Baron Carlo Marochetti,

¹⁴³ ‘Glasgow Statue of Sir Robert Peel’, *Glasgow Herald*, 4 June 1855, p. 7.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Glasgow Statue of Sir Robert Peel’.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Monument to Sir Robert Peel’, *Glasgow Courier*, 19 March 1859, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Wednesday Morning, June 29’, *Glasgow Herald*, 29 June 1859, p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ ‘Inauguration of the Glasgow Peel Monument’.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Monument to Sir Robert Peel in Glasgow’, *Glasgow Herald*, 3 December 1852, p. 7.

who had recently completed Glasgow's equestrian monument of Queen Victoria and who will be addressed in more detail in the analysis of the Lord Wellington monument, was commissioned to sculpt the statue. Oswald, though a wealthy merchant, was considered a man of the people, and one can imagine that it is for this reason that Marochetti chose to produce the first monument in Glasgow featuring a public figure in contemporary dress and holding a hat in his hand. (See Image 3.10.)¹⁴⁹ The figure was thus rendered so approachable that the statue was sometimes referred to as 'The Man with the Hat', and it was common for members of the public to make a game of tossing stones into the hat's crown.¹⁵⁰



Image 3.10: Carlo Marochetti, *James Oswald*, 1856, bronze on a granite plinth, Glasgow.

However, there was some displeasure among the Liberals and Whigs who had commissioned Oswald's monument upon the subsequent installation of the monument to Peel, founder of the Conservative Party, in George Square. There is no indication the Oswald subscribers had ever attempted to install his monument in the city centre; though, before Peel's statue was erected, it might have been assumed by way of previous narratives and subtexts that only figures with international acclaim or those not representing a political affiliation should appear amongst George Square's growing pantheon. Whatever the reason for initially installing the Oswald monument off Sauchiehall Street, the statue was relocated to George Square on 26 September 1875, both as 'a consequence of building operations' in Charing Cross and as a matter of political balance after two decades of dissatisfaction towards Sir Robert Peel's more prestigious George Square location.¹⁵¹ The subtext here is two-fold. First, it implied that George Square was *the* location to

¹⁴⁹ Photo: Jacqueline Banerjee, n.d. <<https://victorianweb.org/sculpture/marochetti/3.html>. [accessed 14 November 2023]

¹⁵⁰ McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow*, v, p. 131.

¹⁵¹ Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Corporation Minutes, November 1871-October 1877, C1.1.70, p. 511.

establish or reaffirm narratives of Glasgow's identity. Two, it reveals a shift from monuments as sites of memory to knots of memory, decentralising – at least politically – the authority of monument builders to participate in narratives of identity. Though Oswald had served in Westminster, it was as a Glaswegian representing Glasgow. Placing his monument in George Square indicated shifting priorities in reinforcing Glasgow as exceptional, not merely as an important player of the Union or the Conservative hegemony in London. Instead, Glasgow was coming to be seen as a city that was extraordinary unto itself and that was capable of expressing its own distinct, if still interconnected political identity.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert

Similar to Oswald's monument, Glasgow's equestrian portrait statue of Queen Victoria (1819-1901) did not originally appear in George Square, but rather in St Vincent Place. The ruling classes of the city had commissioned the monument to commemorate the royal visit of the Queen and Prince Albert (1819-1861) to the city on 14 August 1849, which was classed as 'an event which must henceforth be linked with the history of Glasgow' and one which excited 'universal gratification [...] among all classes' in the city.¹⁵² The site at St Vincent Place was appropriate both because it marked the path of the tour and because George Square was then still *pro indiviso* property that was closed off to the general public.

The royal couple had expressly requested to view Marochetti's recent monument to the Duke of Wellington as they travelled through the city centre, and both had been deeply impressed by the dynamic figure of the Iron Duke on his charger.¹⁵³ Observing the Queen and Prince's admiration of Wellington's monument, the Committee determined the best form for Victoria's portrait would be an equestrian statue, which as previously noted was a form traditionally used for monarchs.¹⁵⁴ This choice would also perpetuate the narrative of Glasgow's exceptionalism within the empire, with Sheriff Archibald Alison commenting that 'Glasgow would then have the first equestrian statue of the Queen that existed, and such a monument would be an ornament to the city.'¹⁵⁵ The Committee's chairman and Glasgow's Lord Provost Sir James Anderson conferred with Prince Albert regarding a suitable sculptor to take on the work, and it was the Prince who hinted at his desire that the work be taken up by Baron Carlo Marochetti.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² *Visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to the City of Glasgow, on 14th August, 1849* (James Hedderwick & Son, 1849), pp. 3, 4.

¹⁵³ *Visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to the City of Glasgow, on 14th August, 1849*, p. 30.

¹⁵⁴ 'Marochetti's Statue of the Queen', *Illustrated London News*, 16 September 1854, p. 5; *Sederunt Book...*, 1809-1810, MS.2732, p. 41.

¹⁵⁵ 'Memorial of the Queen's Visit', *Glasgow Herald*, 30 August 1850, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ 'Marochetti's Statue of the Queen'.



Image 3.11: Carlo Marochetti, *Queen Victoria*, 1854, bronze on a granite plinth, bronze bas reliefs, Glasgow.



Image 3.12: Carlo Marochetti, *Prince Albert*, 1866, bronze on a granite plinth, bronze bas reliefs, Glasgow.

As will be described in the commission of Wellington's monument, the foreign-born sculptor was viewed as a controversial choice, and regardless of the fact that Prince Albert had selected Marochetti specifically, several inhabitants disapproved of installing another equestrian monument by the artist in the town centre.¹⁵⁷ Marochetti's sculpture of the Queen drew further condemnation when it was observed that the raised back hoof of the monarch's horse was supported by what 'a jealous member of the Scottish Rights Association may discover to have a suspicious resemblance to a thistle.'¹⁵⁸ While the ruling classes may have been well on their way to cultivating an identity of Glasgow as the empire's Second City, this did not mean that Scotland or its cities were universally viewed as the equal to those of England. Furthermore, by that time, the city had begun to develop a reputation for radicalism with liberal underpinnings, which may have run counter to absolute loyalty to a monarch, especially one depicted poised to crush the national flower of Scotland under her horse.

Nonetheless, when Albert died in 1861 and a commemorative monument was proposed 'in compliance with the wish of many influential citizens' of Glasgow, Marochetti was again commissioned to design an equestrian monument, this time of the Prince and at the Queen's request.¹⁵⁹ Explicitly linking the identity of the city to the

¹⁵⁷ McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow*, v, p. 129.

¹⁵⁸ Qtd in Ward-Jackson, *Queen Victoria's Equestrian Portrait Statues*, p. 49. N.B. The National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights, or the Scottish Rights Association, was a group seeking commensurate representation for Scotland in Parliament and a proportional distribution of public funds to Scottish institutions. See 'National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights', *Caledonian Mercury*, 14 July 1853, p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ 'Inauguration of the Prince Consort Memorial', *Glasgow Herald*, 19 October 1866, p. 4.

monarchy, the monument committee argued that ‘in a great industrial community like [Glasgow], some steps should be taken to commemorate a Prince who had lent his influence in many ways towards the advancement of the national prosperity [of Scotland].’¹⁶⁰ The subtext implied not only the city’s importance with regard to the Union but also that it had equal or greater legitimacy than cities such as Edinburgh to erect such a monument. Upon completion of the work, Queen Victoria’s statue was removed from St Vincent Place and repositioned as a complement to Albert’s monument once it was erected in George Square in 1866. It should also be noted that by this time, George Square had officially become the property of the city rather than of the immediately adjacent and previously negligent proprietors.

In his address at the unveiling of Prince Albert’s equestrian monument on 18 October 1866, Reverend Dr Norman MacLeod expressed his hope that the statue would inspire future generations – I would argue through the historical narratives and subtexts of exceptionalism that Victoria and Albert on horseback embodied – to demonstrate ‘loyalty to the rights of the Crown and the rights of the people and [...] an unselfish desire and constant endeavour to increase the well-being of the whole community’.¹⁶¹ As a final note, both statues were given matching plinths once Prince Albert’s monument was completed. (See Image 3.11 and Image 3.12.)¹⁶² Thus, when Queen Victoria’s monument was moved to George Square some weeks later on 18 December 1866, Marochetti used the opportunity to place her horse’s offensively raised foot firmly on the ground. The people of Glasgow, it seems, were generally comfortable in participating in both the empire and the union, but they would not tolerate the implication that theirs was a city under the hoof, so to speak, of the aristocracy.

Field Marshall Lord Clyde

Just two years after the installation of the Queen and Prince, the second and final statue to a military figure was erected in George Square in 1868. The influential and wealthy of Glasgow selected Field Marshall Lord Clyde, Sir Colin Campbell, for the purpose of honouring the ‘late gallant townsman’ who had been born in Glasgow in 1792 and had been with Sir John Moore and the Duke of Wellington at Corunna.¹⁶³ Born to humble beginnings with little social standing, Lord Clyde became known for his military leadership as the British Empire began to expand during Queen Victoria’s reign. Best

¹⁶⁰ ‘Inauguration of the Prince Consort Memorial’.

¹⁶¹ ‘Inauguration of the Prince Consort Memorial’.

¹⁶² Photos: Erin Burrows, 2024.

¹⁶³ ‘Thursday Morning, September 24’, *Glasgow Herald*, 24 September 1863, p. 2.

known for his achievements in the Crimean War and the India Mutiny, which is now considered to have difficult and competing historical narratives, Clyde died in 1863 and was interred at Westminster Abbey.

When a monument was first proposed in Glasgow, some of the ‘select, but highly influential’ subscribers who had gathered at the Merchants House noted that ‘England had already taken the lead’ on erecting a monument to Lord Clyde, and as such, it was unfitting ‘that Glasgow, his birth-place, should be without a monument to his memory.’¹⁶⁴ Because of his humble connections, these bankers, merchants, noblemen, and gentlemen maintained that commemorating the life and deeds of the man would ‘teach the youth of the middle and lower classes [...] that the road is open to them in all those distinguished professions which are most honourable among us to the highest posts which merit can gain’.¹⁶⁵ This implies a Carlylean preference for a Glaswegian identity distinguished by those with might – whether martial, social, or political – among the upper rather than working classes, and that those who were not yet a part of the ruling classes should strive to be so as a matter of morality.



Image 3.13: John Henry Foley, *Field Marshall Lord Clyde*, 1868, bronze on a granite plinth, Glasgow.

Lord Clyde’s monument was sculpted by John Henry Foley of Dublin and London. (See Image 3.13.)¹⁶⁶ The bronze statue depicts Clyde in military dress and standing next to the base of a palm tree, reflecting his career in the empire’s more tropical territories. After making several comparisons between Lord Clyde and great men of the Roman empire and after arguing that he was ‘the property not only of the City of Glasgow but of

¹⁶⁴ ‘Proposed Monument in Glasgow to Lord Clyde’, *Lanarkshire Upper Ward Examiner*, 24 October 1863, p. 1; ‘Monument in Glasgow to Field Marshall Lord Clyde’, *Glasgow Herald*, 22 October 1863, p. 3.

¹⁶⁵ ‘Monument in Glasgow to Field Marshall Lord Clyde’.

¹⁶⁶ Photo: Axel K, n.d. <https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g186534-d13796950-Reviews-Field_Marshall_Lord_Clyde_Statue-Glasgow_Scotland.html> [accessed 14 November 2023].

every part of this empire', it was suggested early on that the monument to Sir John Moore be moved out of George Square to flank the Wellington monument along with the new Lord Clyde statue as a demonstration of imperial might.¹⁶⁷ However, as Glasgow viewed itself as a mercantile city with a place of economic prominence in the Empire, it was instead decided that Sir John Moore would be shifted slightly to the west from its centre position on the southside of George Square, with the Lord Clyde monument on a plinth 'exactly similar in material and design' to be placed symmetrically just to the east of the south entrance.¹⁶⁸ At the unveiling on 5 August 1868, Glasgow's Lord Provost noted that '[t]here now [stood] side by side the monuments of two distinguished soldiers, whose names must ever occupy a proud place in the history of our country.'¹⁶⁹ The new monument was applauded not only for 'the services it is intended to commemorate' but also 'as a noble effort of art, and as one of the leading ornaments of the city'.¹⁷⁰ It was an indication, once again, that commemorations of great men in George Square were also explicitly intended to increase the status and prestige of the city.

Despite the portrait statues of two military officers then erected in the square, Sheriff Bell reminded those gathered that Glasgow was a 'commercial city' that did not forget 'that peace has her victories as well as war', and he drew attention to the array of important and historical figures represented in George Square's monuments, then featuring eight in all.¹⁷¹ If monuments to war heroes can be viewed to express subtexts of a unionist identity, then Bell's specific reference to the other monuments in George Square further strengthens the argument that monument builders in Glasgow were beginning to focus more on the city's singular exceptionalism. This argument is further supported in the following examinations of monuments to scientist Thomas Graham and poets Robert Burns and Thomas Campbell.

Thomas Graham, Robert Burns, and Thomas Campbell

Notwithstanding the monuments to James Watt and Sir Walter Scott, up until the late 1860s, the monuments in George Square had still been primarily dedicated to overt symbols of the British Empire – be it the military, Parliament, or the monarchy – with Glasgow positioned as merely a player in it, if an important one. It was in the 1870s

¹⁶⁷ McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow*, v, p. 137; *The Evolution of George Square with Niall Murphy*.

¹⁶⁸ 'Inauguration of the Clyde Memorial', *Glasgow Herald*, 6 August 1868, p. 6.

¹⁶⁹ 'Inauguration of the Clyde Memorial'.

¹⁷⁰ 'Inauguration of the Clyde Memorial'.

¹⁷¹ 'Inauguration of the Clyde Memorial'.



Image 3.14: William Brodie, *Thomas Graham*, 1872, bronze on a granite plinth, Glasgow.

that the Council began to more fully exert its ownership of George Square and developed plans to lay it out as a proper park to rival those of England and the Continent.¹⁷²

In line with commemorations of the scientific and literary contributions of Watt and Scott, on 6 June 1872, the city installed a statue to Glaswegian chemist Thomas Graham (1805-1869), who had developed the forerunner of the modern dialysis machine in 1861 and who had served as Master of the Mint, following in the footsteps of men such as Sir Isaac Newton. Unlike previous monuments funded by subscriptions, this statue was a gift commissioned by Glaswegian chemist and philanthropist James Young, a former student of Graham's who had asked that the monument be installed in George Square 'as a fitting memorial of the eminent man'.¹⁷³ The monument was designed by William Brodie of Edinburgh, whose bronze statue of Graham could be said to be an imitation of the Watt monument designed by Chantrey. (See Image 3.14.)¹⁷⁴ The only other monument in George Square depicted seated in a chair, the portrait monument of Graham was intentionally placed in the southwest corner of George Square to 'harmonize' with Watt's position in the southeast corner.¹⁷⁵ The idea to subsequently include two additional literary giants in Glasgow's ever-growing pantheon was actually conceived of during the inauguration of Graham's monument.¹⁷⁶

Half a decade later on 25 January 1877, Glaswegians erected a statue to Scotland's national poet

¹⁷² Corporation Minutes, November 1871-October 1877, C1.1.70, pp. 634, 680, 682, 691; Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Corporation Minutes, November 1877-May 1882, C1.1.71, pp. 548-49.

¹⁷³ Corporation Minutes, November 1871-October 1877, C1.1.70, pp. 98, 99.

¹⁷⁴ Photo: Jacqueline Banerjee, 2009, <https://victorianweb.org/sculpture/brodie/4.html> [accessed 14 November 2023].

¹⁷⁵ Corporation Minutes, November 1871-October 1877, C1.1.70, p. 98.

¹⁷⁶ 'Unveiling the Burns Statue in George Square', *Glasgow Herald*, 26 January 1877, p. 3.

Robert Burns (1759-1796), marking his birth date, which had by then been commemorated with a Burns supper for over seventy years. As opposed to the ruling classes who had previously been assumed to have the right of claim to George Square monuments, the Burns monument was funded by one-shilling subscriptions and was commonly referred to as the People's Statue to Robert Burns. The enthusiasm of the working classes to raise the statue not at the behest of, but in the place of the landed gentry or wealthy merchants was described as a 'demonstration [that would] go forth to the very furthest confines of the globe as a most interesting ratification of the fraternity of Scotchmen in a great literary recollection of a great national name.'¹⁷⁷ The bronze pedestrian statue on a granite plinth features Burns in the clothing of prosperous farmer. (See Image 3.15.)¹⁷⁸ It was sculpted by George Edwin Ewing of Glasgow, the commissioners more and more often choosing local artists to craft their monuments. The unveiling of the statue also marked the commencement of the city's Burns Night festivals that year and was attended by upwards of 30,000 people.

The change in who primarily funded the Burns statue in Glasgow is of note, with Burns being held up as a working man rather than an aristocrat. This is an arguable illustration that the working classes and trades-based middle classes were not quite so attached to Morton's concept of Unionist-nationalism as the upper classes of the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. For example, over a decade after the statue's installation, the Glasgow's Literary and Artistic Club was one of many groups to hold centenary celebrations of Burns's birth in 1859. Their event was attended by sculptor John



Image 3.15: George Edwin Ewing, *Robert Burns*, 1877, bronze on a granite plinth, bronze bas reliefs, Glasgow.

¹⁷⁷ 'Unveiling the Burns Statue in George Square'; 'The Burns Statue', *Glasgow Herald*, 20 January 1877, p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ Photo: Kim Traynor, 2012 < <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2879185>. [accessed 14 November 2023].

Mossman and city architect John Baird, along with two of Burns's grandsons and several other sculptors, artists, and journalists.¹⁷⁹ The Chairman, Hugh Macdonald, expressed that the celebration of Burns was in part because of his genius, but also because

Burns comes amongst us almost as a friend and companion – no matter how humble or how poor we may be, he would meet us over the table, or take our arm in a country walk, and open his heart to us [...]. Yes, Burns was indeed the poet of the poor.¹⁸⁰

Likewise, at the celebration held at the Merchants' Hall, Chairman John McGavin, Esq., noted 'the impartiality with which the inheritance of genius falls to different classes of men. Not to the high and noble alone is the award, but out of all classes the sons of genius have been elected.'¹⁸¹ Perhaps in an attempt to reconcile the realities and benefits of Unionism with a Glaswegian identity – or at the very least, a Scottish identity that was not defined by the bourgeoisie of Edinburgh – George Troupe, Esq., of the *Daily Bulletin*, described Burns as being

taken from following the plough to be the companion of divines and lawyers and judges, the nobles and the literati of Edinburgh[...]. He was too independent – too outspoken – too much a Radical, though ever a constitutional Radical[...]. He could not bow and cringe and bend a supple knee.¹⁸²

Conversely, dignitaries in Glasgow, whose names we would recognise today on the street signs of the city and who were openly supportive of the Union as an almost hereditary imperative for Scotland, gathered at the City Hall and spent a good deal of time praising Queen Victoria. In fact, Sir Archibald Alison, Baronet, as the event chairman, gave her the first toast at the event, proclaiming that the Scottish 'were entitled to hope that she views with peculiar interest the country of her royal ancestors, through whom she has ascended the throne of Britain'.¹⁸³ He then went on to toast Prince Albert, the Royal Family, all the government's ministers, the navy, the army, and recent military conflicts of the British Empire before finally turning to Burns.¹⁸⁴ It is evident that, among the working classes and some of the trades-based bourgeoisie, there remained a sense of separateness from the English that was upheld by Scotland's unique history and contributions, but which was under threat from the tendency toward English homogenisation championed by the aristocracy.

¹⁷⁹ James Ballantine, *Chronicle of the Hundredth Birth Day of Robert Burns* (A. Fullarton & Co., 1859), p. 81.

¹⁸⁰ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, pp. 82, 83.

¹⁸¹ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p. 59.

¹⁸² Ballantine, *Chronicle*, pp. 67–68.

¹⁸³ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p. 40.

¹⁸⁴ Ballantine, *Chronicle*, p. 41.

Moreover, when the Burns statue was first commissioned, there had been some civic rivalry between Edinburgh and Glasgow that played out in *The Building News and Engineering Journal*, where a writer from the *Newcastle Chronicle* was quoted as saying ‘Glasgow is about to put Edinburgh to shame’ and who called that city’s own Grecian-style temple to Burns a ‘miserable monument’.¹⁸⁵ Despite Burns being from the West of Scotland and Glasgow being the ‘largest municipality in the kingdom’, the *Building News* correspondent countered the *Chronicle*, claiming there was no reason for there to be a Burns monument in Glasgow and that the national poet had already been appropriately commemorated in the capital city, perhaps unconsciously demonstrating that the primary narrative subtexts of nineteenth-century monuments were not so much about the subject’s great deeds as they were about the prestige of a city and its inhabitants.¹⁸⁶ The writer went on to argue that, instead of commissioning a monument to Burns, ‘an early, if not a first debt, is due to Thomas Campbell’, the poet not yet having been commemorated anywhere with the exception of a single portrait.¹⁸⁷



Image 3.16: John Mossman, *Thomas Campbell*, 1879, bronze on a granite plinth, Glasgow.

Though perhaps not as quick to honour their fellow townsman as they were to honour authors such as Scott and Burns, later that year to coincide with the centenary of his birth on 29 December 1877, the city did unveil its monument to Glaswegian poet and historian Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), who had been elected three times as Lord Rector of Glasgow University. (See Image 3.16.)¹⁸⁸ Glasgow sculptor John Mossman was again given the large public commission to render the first

¹⁸⁵ ‘Gossip from Glasgow’, *The Building News and Engineering Journal*, 23.938 (1872), pp. 495–96 (p. 496). N.B. No record of this quote was found in the *Newcastle Chronicle*.

¹⁸⁶ ‘Unveiling the Burns Statue in George Square’; ‘Gossip from Glasgow’, p. 496.

¹⁸⁷ ‘Gossip from Glasgow’, p. 496.

¹⁸⁸ Photo: British Listed Buildings, n.d. <<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/200375551-statue-of-thomas-campbell-george-square-glasgow-glasgow>. [accessed 14 November 2023].

monument to Campbell in bronze, which depicts the Glaswegian poet in contemporaneous dress holding a quill and manuscript. The *Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette*, which called Campbell ‘the most marvellously precocious genius that his country has ever produced’ lamented that ‘more than three decades should have been suffered to elapse after his death before this mark of respect was paid to his memory’.¹⁸⁹ Building portrait statues and monuments had arguably come to be an expected duty of the United Kingdom’s prominent cities, and the *Greenock Telegraph* chided Glasgow for its failure to commemorate the city’s eminent poet when it had not previously ‘been slow, generally speaking, to commemorate her distinguished sons.’¹⁹⁰

At the unveiling, Mr James A. Campbell, who though not related to the poet had been born in George Square, also expressed that it had ‘long been a matter of regret [...] even reproach – that there was no public monument in his native city to Thomas Campbell’.¹⁹¹ He continued that Campbell had been placed in George Square along with Scott and Burns, not as a man with ‘the genius of these others’ but ‘as a man of genius and a gifted and brilliant author’ with ‘this superior title to honour from us that he was a native of this city’.¹⁹² The turn here from subtexts of identity bound up with the achievements of the empire to one defined by extraordinary Glaswegian and Scottish intellect was made apparent with the additions of Graham, Burns, and Campbell to George Square. The elite classes of the city defined the greatness of Glasgow, and thereby themselves, through the greatness of those they placed on plinths in the city centre. By weaving the narratives either implied or plainly stated by such monuments into the fundamental fabric of Glasgow’s cultural identity, they could assert prominence over celebrated Scottish cities such as Edinburgh, the epicentre of the Scottish Enlightenment, or industrial English cities such as Manchester or Birmingham by not only highlighting Glasgow’s arguably unrivalled industry and commerce, but also its titans of science and literature.

David Livingstone

The narrative of Glasgow as the empire’s Second City was given even more clarity when, upon the death of the Scottish missionary to Africa, David Livingstone (1813-1873), the Glasgow Council sent a delegation to his 1874 funeral at Westminster

¹⁸⁹ ‘Thomas Campbell’, *Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette*, 29 December 1877, p. 2.

¹⁹⁰ ‘Thomas Campbell’.

¹⁹¹ ‘Inauguration of the Campbell Statue’, *Glasgow Herald*, 29 December 1877, p. 5.

¹⁹² ‘Inauguration of the Campbell Statue’.

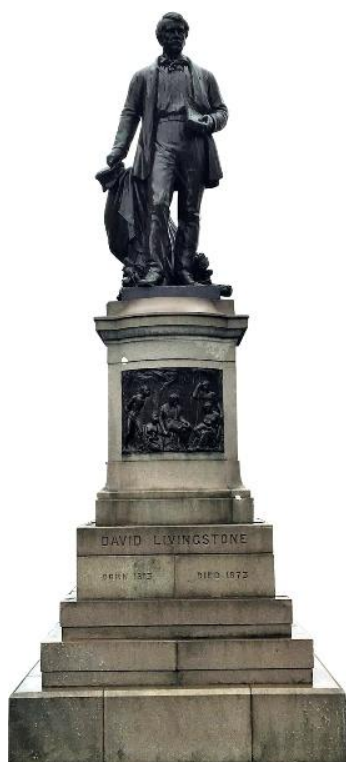


Image 3.17: John Mossman, *David Livingstone*, 1879, bronze on a granite plinth, bronze bas reliefs, Glasgow.

Abbey to honour ‘his ability and patriotism, and the valuable geographical discoveries made by him’.¹⁹³ Livingstone, who was born in Blantyre near Glasgow and studied science at the Andersonian Institute (now Strathclyde University), had been a student of Thomas Graham and had attended classes with the same James Young who had then recently gifted the monument to Graham to the city. In addition to being among the celebrated townsmen of Glasgow, the renowned missionary also represented Scottish Presbyterianism, an essential component of ruling-class identity at a time when famines, clearances, and new opportunities in industrial occupations drove large migrations of Catholics from the Highlands, Islands, and Ireland to Glasgow.

A subscription to honour Livingstone was begun in 1875 with the aim of installing a monument in George Square.¹⁹⁴ The subscribers once more commissioned Glaswegian sculptor John Mossman to complete the work, and his bronze pedestrian statue depicts Livingstone holding a bible wearing modern dress and features symbols representing exploration and abolition. (See Image 3.17.)¹⁹⁵ The monument was erected on 19 March 1879 across from the Merchants House, possibly as an admonishment of or atonement for the fortunes made through the slave trade, and remained in place until the middle of the twentieth century. However, unlike the monuments to Oswald and Queen Victoria, which were relocated to afford a more prominent position in George Square, Livingstone’s monument is the only one yet to have been removed from it.

In 1959, when the Glasgow Council announced its plans to install an information bureau in George Square, it

¹⁹³ Corporation Minutes, November 1871–October 1877, C1.1.70, pp. 348, 349.

¹⁹⁴ Corporation Minutes, November 1871–October 1877, C1.1.70, p. 518.

¹⁹⁵ Photo: British Listed Buildings, n.d., <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/200375510-statue-of-david-livingstone-cathedral-square-glasgow-glasgow>. [accessed 14 November 2023].

was announced that the Livingstone monument would need to be removed to make space.¹⁹⁶ This suggestion was not met with a cacophony of public outcry, reflecting a society that no longer positioned institutions such as the Church of Scotland as central to their lives and that had become more aware of the negative impacts of British colonialism. Taking the matter further and opining that, in fact, none of the nineteenth-century statues continued to reflect the identity and ideals of the modern, post-industrial city, Councillor Joseph Flanagan, head of the Parks Committee, stated his desire that all of the monuments be removed from George Square and re-installed at Bellahouston Park.¹⁹⁷ Flanagan's recommendation was not seriously entertained, as many of the figures featured in George Square were still considered laudable heroes of Glasgow's legitimacy and prestige. On the other hand, the plan to relocate Livingstone's statue was met with vehement objection, though not from the people of Glasgow but from members of the Scottish National Memorial to David Livingstone Trust, chaired by Livingstone's grandson, Dr Hubert F. Wilson. Wilson argued that removing the monument to another location would deny visitors the opportunity to see it and that yearly commemorative services might be affected.¹⁹⁸ It is in no way clear why relocating the monument from George Square would have resulted in these presumed obstacles, but the implication was that a monument in George Square, in the company of other great figures of Glasgow, Scotland, and the empire, was much more prestigious than one placed elsewhere.

In an appeal to repair and retain the Livingstone monument in George Square through private funding, arguably a slippery slope for publicly owned monuments in publicly owned spaces, Wilson allied with the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for a fundraising luncheon in October 1959 at the City Chambers. It was here that Wilson and others made clear what they saw to be Livingstone's value to modern Glasgow, arguing that '[n]o other European country ha[d] achieved as much [as the United Kingdom had] and many would say that it is because they had no Livingstone', whose death had given 'a direction to British policy in Africa that has earned our gratitude.'¹⁹⁹ In rhetoric that would seem objectionable not only to contemporary and modern Glaswegians but perhaps even to the avowed abolitionist himself, they argued that it was Livingstone who had first argued that 'the

¹⁹⁶ Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Corporation Minutes, November 1958-May 1959, C1.3.138, p. 2047; 'Bureau in Place of Statue', *Glasgow Herald*, 24 March 1959, p. 5.

¹⁹⁷ 'Bureau in Place of Statue'.

¹⁹⁸ 'Opposition to Moving of Livingstone Statue', *Glasgow Herald*, 2 April 1959, p. 8.

¹⁹⁹ Ronald Miller, 'Crusader in the Wilderness', *Glasgow Herald*, 27 October 1959, p. 6.

root of the slave trade' had been the 'the fact that Africa had little other than human bodies as the material of commerce' and that though the word 'empire' had taken on negative connotations by the late 1950s, this was due to the fact that 'many in Britain listen[ed] to African nationalists and [gave] their words the credence due to prophets and not the politicians they are.'²⁰⁰

In addition to problematic connections to imperialism, the monument had originally been installed at a time when Scottish churches and religious leaders were losing a great degree of their influence on the day-to-day civic lives of Glaswegians following conflicts such as the Disruption of 1843 and the rise of new secular ideologies such as Marxism, socialism, and communism. The lack of interest Wilson argued had been shown by the Council in upholding Livingstone as an important figure for the citizens of Glasgow is evidence that this move away from a religious society had continued in the decades since the statue's 1879 installation.²⁰¹ Indeed, on the very day the *Glasgow Herald* reported on the Livingstone monument being removed from George Square and reinstalled in Cathedral Square in 1960, the newspaper also featured a study on the growing disbelief of a deity among university students.²⁰² The Glasgow of the nineteenth century, with an identity bounded by patriotism, Protestantism, and prosperity, had clearly established a new narrative of itself by the mid-twentieth century. As a result, the petitions to prevent the Livingstone monument from being moved from the city centre, which lacked any upswell of public support, were ultimately unsuccessful.

William Gladstone

By the turn of the twentieth century, it was apparent that the narratives of Glasgow's exceptionalism as told by the statues in George Square had become so much a part of a rhizomatic network of collective memory as to forge an identity of the city assumed to be true generation after generation. Glasgow was the Second City of the Empire, and there were avatars of memory in George Square to attest to that truth. For two decades after the installation of Livingstone's portrait monument, no further statues were erected in George Square. While no reason has been explicitly stated in either Council or Committee notes or in contemporary newspapers, those decades were a time when the Labour Party had begun to establish its political hegemony in Glasgow and

²⁰⁰ Miller, 'Crusader in the Wilderness'.

²⁰¹ 'Opposition to Moving of Livingstone Statue'.

²⁰² 'Livingstone Statue Leaves George Square', *Glasgow Herald*, 27 January 1960, p. 9; 'Unbelief by Students', *Glasgow Herald*, 27 January 1960, p. 9.



Image 3.18: William Hamo Thornycroft, *William Gladstone*, 1902, bronze on a granite plinth, bronze bas reliefs, Glasgow.

Scotland. The sources of civic pride were no longer so much the great men of empire and enlightenment, but those of industries, trades councils, working classes, and radical agitation who had arguably by then begun to shift the narrative of Glaswegian identity, albeit through different qualifications of exceptionalism. Still, one remaining statue to William Gladstone (1809-1898) was installed in George Square in 1902, and in honouring Gladstone, the city perhaps found an analogous symbol of its own transformation over the previous century. Originally an ultraconservative politician who argued against abolition, Gladstone eventually fought for the rights of working people, Irish Home Rule, and free trade, all of which would have been popular to many of Glasgow's ever-increasing population.

As with the monument to Peel, the commissioning of a Gladstone monument was met with an unusual level of consensus among not only the ruling classes, but a majority of the city's inhabitants.²⁰³ When a Committee was formed in 1899, Lord Provost David Richmond gave his central directive to the subscribers that any decisions made in Glasgow were to be formed 'without any political feeling'.²⁰⁴ Demonstrating Glasgow's by-then-accepted prominence within the United Kingdom, Richmond asserted that 'all the large centres of the country ought to have some memorial to the great statesman'.²⁰⁵ Likewise, Lord Overtoun made clear the subtextual narratives of public portrait monuments meant to reflect the greatness of the city and its inhabitants by stating that 'Glasgow will not be behind in showing their high appreciation of so great a man.'²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Minute Book: Gladstone Statue, Kelvin Statue, Roberts Statue, 1899-1917, G4.1, p. 4.

²⁰⁴ Minute Book..., 1899-1917, G4.1, p. 4.

²⁰⁵ Minute Book..., 1899-1917, G4.1, p. 4.

²⁰⁶ Minute Book..., 1899-1917, G4.1, p. 4.

Sir James Bell furthermore noted that ‘it would be a disgrace to Glasgow if they did not raise a memorial’, and Sir John Neilson Cuthbertson argued that ‘it would be a dereliction of duty on the part of the citizens of the second city of the empire if they did not mark, in some way, their appreciation’ of Gladstone.²⁰⁷

William Hamo Thornycroft of Hawarden, Wales, was commissioned to render Gladstone in bronze. (See Image 3.18.)²⁰⁸ The monument was installed in George Square on 11 October 1902 directly across from the entrance to the City Chambers to encourage the politicians there to aspire to Gladstone’s greatness. As had virtually every Committee that had erected a portrait monument in George Square, Bailie James Dick, Senior Magistrate, concluded that ‘[i]n doing honour to the memory of Gladstone, they were doing honour to themselves.’²⁰⁹ Gladstone is depicted wearing his robes as the Rector of Glasgow University, with a book in his hand and at his feet. Unlike the dozen other monuments in George Square, this final installation was the only one to feature the Glasgow coat of arms. The subtext of this symbolic narrative was that, while Gladstone was a national statesmen who had represented all of the United Kingdom, it was his connection to Glasgow that solidified his greatness among the monuments in George Square.

Conclusion

The monuments in George Square are perhaps the best case studies of narrative accrual, with the collection even being referred to as a pantheon. The assumption even today is that each statue was a memorial to not only individual greatness, but also to the importance of Glasgow to the military, economic, and cultural concerns of the Empire. Throughout the nineteenth century, Glasgow’s ruling classes had aligned themselves with the advantages of imperialism, industry, and intellectualism, reifying the city as the Second City of the Empire. The monuments established in George Square, in close proximity to the Merchants House and the seat of city government, reflected an amalgamation of Scottishness and Britishness that established a subtextual narrative of Glasgow’s exceptionalism, with the dominant civic identity established by the elite and powerful of the city.

²⁰⁷ Minute Book..., 1899-1917, G4.1, p. 4.

²⁰⁸ Photo: British Listed Buildings, n.d. < <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/200375553-statue-of-william-ewart-gladstone-george-square-glasgow-glasgow> > [accessed 14 November 2023].

²⁰⁹ Minute Book..., 1899-1917, G4.1, pp. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6.

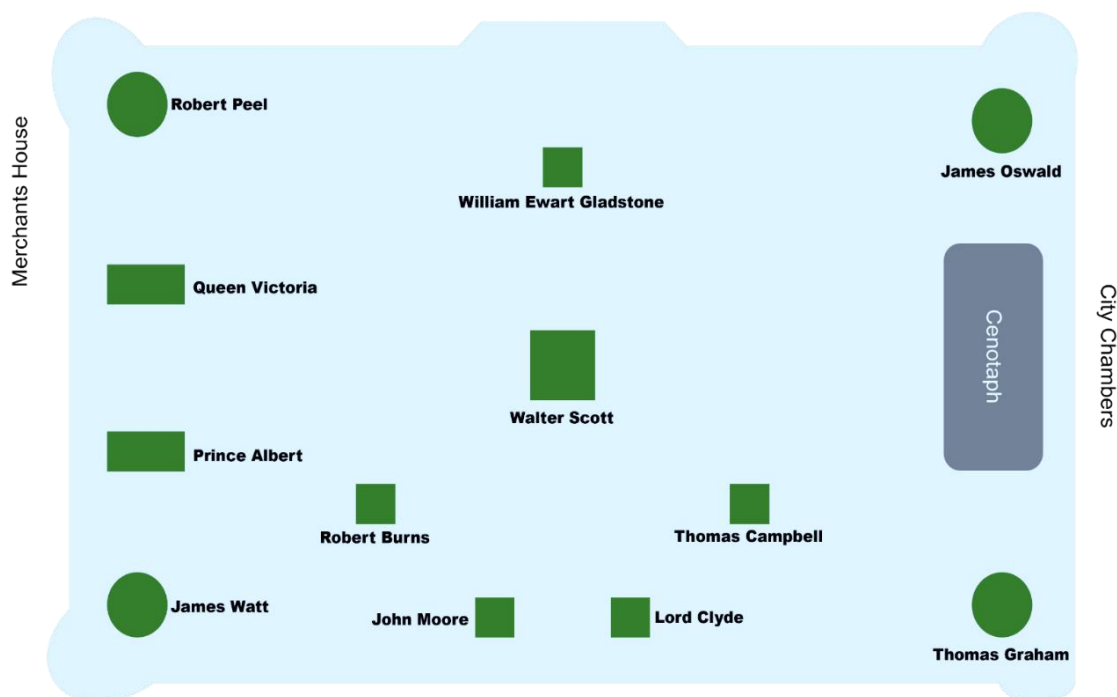


Image 3.19: The layout of George Square as of 2024. The Livingstone monument has been removed to Cathedral Square, and the statues of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and William Ewart Gladstone have been repositioned from their original locations.

The dominant historical narratives of individual life achievements were those that promoted empire, industry, and tourism, as well as art, heritage, and learning, and the sites and knots of memory that shaped and were shaped by Glasgow's nineteenth-century cultural identity are patently represented by the monuments installed in George Square. However, one or two centuries on, narrative referentiality, or what feels to be true to the public, has shifted to some degree. Changes to the degree to which Glaswegians accept the rightness of the Empire are apparent. They demonstrate the context sensitivity and negotiability of the narrative and its subtexts and even a shift in narrative normativeness, where 'great men on plinths' can at times be taken as a pejorative description. Still, in the past decade, when there have been suggestions that the statues might be relocated or, in the case of some of those subjects connected with the slave trade or colonial oppression, torn down completely, there has been unease or even anger at the prospect of their removal.²¹⁰ There is a sense, even today, that these monuments are tied to an identity of an exceptional Glasgow that reflects upon its

²¹⁰ Martyn McLaughlin, 'Amnesia, Denial, and Awakening - Black Lives Matter Stirs Scotland into Confronting Its Ties to Slavery', *The Scotsman*, 2020 <<https://www.scotsman.com/news/uk-news/amnesia-denial-and-awakening-black-lives-matter-stirs-scotland-confronting-its-ties-slavery-2883767>> [accessed 14 March 2022]; 'Black Lives Matter Charter for the UK Heritage Sector', *Culture&* <<https://www.cultureand.org/news/black-lives-matter-charter-for-the-uk-heritage-sector/>> [accessed 17 April 2024]; 'Statues to Get Protection from "Baying Mobs"', *BBC News*, 17 January 2021, section UK <<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-55693020>> [accessed 28 March 2022].

population and its collective identity. The collective memory imbued in George Square's pantheon was reinforced in the landscape and in popular belief generation after generation, and while the acceptance of the British Empire as 'great' has not faded completely, more recent critical evaluations of empiricism and colonialism have themselves propagated as new replicators of culture.²¹¹

It is apparent that Glasgow's identity in the nineteenth century relied in some part on both its Scottishness and Britishness, as well as its standing in an empire that found itself embroiled in military conflicts and wars as it expanded across the globe. Thus, as Glasgow entered into the twentieth century, the aims and ambitions of the Second City again became more and more integrated with the empire's military exigencies, particularly through the manufacture of munitions and warships. It is not surprising, then, that the monuments that appeared in the city and surrounding burghs throughout much of the twentieth century began to transmit evolving narratives of exceptionalism. The degree of the empire's warmaking resulted in a new landscape of monuments. It was no longer only celebrated heroes who were honoured, but rather it was the everyday citizens killed in the conflicts whose names appeared on cenotaphs, memorial plaques, and honour rolls in Glasgow and throughout the empire.²¹²

By the middle of the twentieth century, after Glasgow had witnessed and lived through the Boer War, World War One, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Spanish Civil War, World War Two, and countless other conflicts; after women had won the right to vote and members of all classes could hold a high place in politics; and after Glasgow City had gone through periods of rapid industrialisation, de-industrialisation, and urban diaspora, the practice of monument building, much like the practice of history itself, devolved from a source of elite power to the citizens of Glasgow themselves. In the chapters that follow, I will examine how members of the modern public have used the same tools, e.g. portrait statues as historical 'texts', as did the shapers of Glasgow's

²¹¹ See for example Priya Satia, *Time's Monster: History, Conscience and Britain's Empire* (Allen Lane, 2020); Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, 'Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1.1 (2012), pp. 1–40; Trumpti Rami, 'It's Funeral Time for Colonial Monuments', *Vulture*, 19 June 2020 <<https://www.vulture.com/2020/06/nicholas-galanin-shadow-on-the-land.html>> [accessed 17 April 2024]; Shanti Sumartojo, 'Local Complications', in *Commemorative Spaces of the First World War*, ed. by James Wallis and David C. Harvey (Routledge, 2017), pp. 156–72; Gurinder K Bhambra, 'Postcolonial and Decolonial Dialogues', *Postcolonial Studies*, 17.2 (2014), pp. 115–21; Sumaya Kassim, 'The Museum Will Not Be Decolonised', *Media Diversified*, 15 November 2017 <<https://mediadiversified.org/2017/11/15/the-museum-will-not-be-decolonised/>> [accessed 12 March 2024].

²¹² These monuments are beyond the scope of my research, but they have been analysed in several recent studies, including Jenny Macleod, 'Britishness and Commemoration: National Memorials to the First World War in Britain and Ireland', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 48.4 (2013), pp. 647–65; McFarland, 'Commemoration'; John M. MacKenzie, 'Empire and National Identities the Case of Scotland', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 8 (1998), pp. 215–31.

nineteenth-century cultural hegemony to craft a narrative of legitimacy and supremacy in the built environment. Though the form of such tools has not evolved significantly, changes in the authorship and the function of identity subtexts bound up in the transmission of public history have resulted in a new narrative of identity for the city of Glasgow and its population.

4. *La Pasionaria*: Subtext of the Triumphant Oppressed

The first of my case studies to analyse the narratives and subtexts of modern public portrait monuments in Glasgow is the statue to Spanish propagandist Delores Ibárruri, better known during the Spanish Civil War as *La Pasionaria*, or The Passionflower. *La Pasionaria*, a monument honouring the Scottish volunteers of the Spanish Civil War through the image of Ibárruri, follows on from but also subverts the twentieth-century tradition of honouring the many individual casualties of war rather than a single great leader. As the first public portrait monument to be erected in over fifty years, *La Pasionaria* expressed a narrative of grassroots achievement, with a complicated identity subtext of Glasgow's working classes as what I term the 'triumphant oppressed'. The installation of the portrait statue, which was prompted not by politicians but by the International Brigades Association, demonstrated a shift from the monuments in George Square, both in the subtextual tone and in the locus of authority with regard to public history and monument building.

I will situate the campaign for a statue honouring the volunteers of the Spanish Civil War within the lengthy and multi-generational context of Glasgow's socialist radicalism. The commissioners of Ibárruri's monument used then-prevailing historical narrative of Glasgow's glory days of political and economic agitation to reinforce not only the values and ambitions of the contemporaneous working classes whose livelihoods were facing extinction, but also a local Labour Party that was losing its grip on a generations-long political hegemony in the city. I will then discuss the subtexts of identity implied by the statue's narrative by evaluating the historical use of Ibárruri and the war volunteers the monument was intended to honour. Finally, I will demonstrate that while the subtext of the triumphant oppressed was deeply felt and understood in the 1970s, the narrow impact and acceptance of this subtext had become less identifiable and less minacious by the early twenty-first century as the threat of socialism and the importance of an underdog identity became less significant to the Glaswegian public.

The First Public Portrait Monument in Fifty Years

After the monument to Gladstone was erected as the final portrait statue in George Square in 1902, the citizenry of Glasgow did continue to install some commemorations of men on plinths in the city until the mid-1920s, particularly in the newly redeveloped and prestigious Kelvingrove Park (formerly the West End Park). However, as

previously noted, after the calamitous South African War at the turn of the twentieth century and the trauma of World War One, a shift in focus was soon evident in the city's monumental landscape. Rather than generals or captains being honoured as symbols of British heroism and righteousness, it was the local men lost on the battlefields and in the trenches who were commemorated in grief-stricken communities. While still a matter of civic and national pride, such monuments memorialised a more personal grief for the individuals who were killed, and courage in times of war became the domain of not just commissioned officers but also of the everyday Scots who were called upon to fight.¹ With monument building in the first half of the twentieth century being primarily concerned with war memorials and the everyday individuals lost in the conflicts, this effectively shifted the authorship of monuments from a relatively small elite class to the middle and working classes who experienced the brunt of the traumas of war.

In her study of South African War, E.W. McFarland argued that the honour roll memorials of the conflict that appeared in the Scottish landscape established a new 'form and purpose', both characteristics of Bruner's narrative theory, for war memorials as not only expressions of mourning, but also as political conduits and shapers of a Scottish martial identity.² This new form and purpose is evident in such memorials as the Cenotaph in George Square, the Roll of Honour installed at Glasgow's Central Station, and the community memorials that appeared in locations such as the Pollok House estate and Govan Cross, which either displayed the names of the local men who were killed or housed its Roll of Honour within the monument. With McFarland demonstrating the ways in which these statues helped to shape Scotland's evolving martial identity, one could extrapolate that it is in some part because of the new identification of the 'every man as hero' emphasised in early twentieth-century war memorials that so many men and women from Scotland volunteered to leave their homes and families to take up arms in the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s. This would have been particularly true of those Glaswegians who had grown up amongst the socialist and communist ideologies of Red Clydeside, to be discussed in the following section. As part of what became known as the International Brigades, many wholly unprepared but ideologically driven Scots, including a significant number of Glaswegians, were killed in the conflict. The volunteers of the British Battalion were remembered many decades later through war memorials of their

¹ E. W. McFarland, 'Commemoration of the South African War in Scotland, 1900–10', *Scottish Historical Review*, 89.228 (2010), pp. 194–223 (pp. 195–96).

² McFarland, 'Commemoration', pp. 195–96.

own, though not ones officially recognised in the United Kingdom's War Memorials Register.³ The most arguably well-known of these is *La Pasionaria* in Glasgow.

In 1974, citizens in Glasgow first began discussing the installation of a memorial to the Scottish International Brigade volunteers, both living and dead, who had travelled to Spain in the 1930s to fight in their civil war against fascism. Six years later, *La Pasionaria* was installed on the Clyde River after concerted fundraising by the International Brigades Association (IBA), the Labour Party, and the Trade and Labour Movement. In a decade characterised by burgeoning neoliberal policies in Parliament and economic destabilisation, Jonathan Hearn argued that it had become class, rather than national or civic identity that was central to the dominant historical narratives of the time.⁴ The commissioning of *La Pasionaria* is a demonstration of this shift in emphasis, with its working-class monument builders commissioning working-class sculptor Arthur Dooley, who unilaterally chose the still-living, controversial, and communist Dolores Ibárruri as his subject.

As the first portrait monument to be publicly erected in Glasgow since the monument to Lord Lister had been installed near Kelvingrove Park in 1924, the statue honouring the Spanish Civil War volunteers marked an amalgamation of the many monuments installed in the city over the previous two centuries. For example, following the traditions popularised in the early twentieth century, a Roll of Honour was created for the sixty-five Glaswegians who died as a result of the Spanish Civil War. However, the statue's form and arguably its purpose – that is, to establish an identity of legitimacy and exceptionalism for a given group in a specific place – harken back to the nineteenth century portrait statues commissioned for George Square. The monument, as well as the context and subtext of its commissioning provide a fairly monophonic narrative of Glasgow, the Labour Party, the working classes, and even the sculptor as triumphing for justice against oppressive and morally bankrupt authorities. The use of historical narrative through *La Pasionaria* thus tells us not so much about the war volunteers as it does about the class and political conflicts that were playing out in the city and across the United Kingdom in the 1970s.

As a demonstration of the referentiality of such a narrative, in his study of the grassroots commemorations of Scottish involvement in the Spanish Civil War, historian Fraser Raeburn acknowledged that, just as will be shown on the case study of Mary

³ 'War Memorials Register', *Imperial War Museums*, 2023 <<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials>> [accessed 17 August 2023].

⁴ Jonathan Hearn, 'Narrative, Agency, and Mood: On the Social Construction of National History in Scotland', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 44.4 (2002), pp. 745–69 (pp. 754, 755).

Barbour, much of the history of British engagement has been preserved not by academics, but by the public [I would suggest this included groups such as the International Brigades Association].⁵ He argued that the job of historians and scholars now ‘is not to “fact check” a popular narrative, but to understand the ethos of the times, an ethos that is still to some extent reflected in this community’.⁶ This aligns to Jerome Bruner’s characteristics of a narrative, in that verisimilitude takes precedence over verifiability. One of Glasgow’s few female portrait monuments, *La Pasionaria* conveys a narrative of the longstanding defiance and even hostility toward the United Kingdom’s political and economic structures of power by a nationally marginalised though locally powerful group of Glaswegians: working-class socialists.

Commissioned by the IBA and, as noted, funded in part by the Labour Party and Trades Unions, *La Pasionaria* was ostensibly a memorial to the volunteers of the Spanish Civil War, but Ibárruri as its subject represented a kind of allegory of the economic and political strife that was endemic in a rapidly deindustrialising Glasgow. The source of economic strife will be further discussed in the following section, but politically, there was a concerted right-wing push by Conservatives and the Scottish National Party (SNP) to take control of the Glasgow District Council as early as 1971. The challenge from the right had members of the Labour party assuring Glaswegians that they would ‘recapture their role as the dominant party in the city’; though, it was evident that Labour still held that role in 1971 when SNP Councillor Peter Gemmill expressed his hope for a ‘change [in] direction [...] after 30 years of almost uninterrupted Socialism.’⁷ However, little such change occurred until 1977, when after a period of economic downturn and housing scandals, Labour briefly lost control of the Glasgow District Council in a ‘disaster’ of an election.⁸ In that local election, Labour lost 24 out of 54 seats, while the SNP gained 15 (up from one), Conservatives gained eight, and the Liberals were elected to their only seat.⁹ While Labour still held a majority as a single party with 30 seats, the Conservative and SNP coalition, holding 25

⁵ Fraser Raeburn, ‘Radical Memorialisation: Echoes of the Spanish Civil War in Glasgow’, *History Workshop*, 20 May 2019 <<https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/anti-fascism/radical-history-and-radical-memorialisation-echoes-of-the-spanish-civil-war-in-glasgow/>> [accessed 8 July 2023].

⁶ Raeburn, ‘Radical Memorialisation: Echoes of the Spanish Civil War in Glasgow’.

⁷ Claude Thomson, ‘Labour’s Bid to Regain Control of Glasgow in 1971’, *Glasgow Herald*, 5 January 1971, p. 8.

⁸ Claude Thomson, ‘Labour Take a Beating’, *Glasgow Herald*, 4 May 1977, p. 1. N.B. Labour did maintain control of the higher-tier Strathclyde Regional Council for the entirety of its existence from 1975-1996. See *The Scottish and Local Government Elections 1974* and *The Scottish Regional Elections 1978 - 1994*, by J.M. Bochel and D.T. Denver, archived by the Elections Centre at https://www.electionscentre.co.uk/?page_id=3409.

⁹ Thomson, ‘Labour Take a Beating’.

and 16 seats respectively, had the effect of ‘driving Labour from power in Glasgow.’¹⁰ Nonetheless, this loss of power was brief, as in 1980, just one year after Conservatives won the General Election under Margaret Thatcher, the SNP lost all of the 16 seats it held on the Glasgow District Council and the Conservatives were reduced to 11, with three seats still being held by the Liberals and 44 by Labour.¹¹ Though the unchallenged dominance of the Labour party had clearly been shaken in the 1970s, by 1984, the *Glasgow Herald* proclaimed that ‘Glasgow look[ed] safe for Labour.’¹² This proved true, as Labour led the Glasgow Council until 2017, since which time the SNP has become the dominant party.¹³ So while the political hegemony in Glasgow remained for the most part solid, in its need for both an underdog and a villain, the narrative expressed by the portrait statue of Ibárruri was one of grievance that, while not necessarily historically or culturally accurate, was deeply believed by the specific groups who commissioned and funded the monument, if not by the whole of Glasgow.

Arthur Dooley’s fiberglass monument is colossal, standing a total of about twenty feet, or 6.1 metres, tall including its steel girder-capped pedestal.¹⁴ Unlike George Square with its pedestrian statues most often showing the subjects in a classical *contrapposto* pose with each figure’s weight on its back foot, Ibárruri is depicted with her feet spread wide apart and her arms held high, resembling a stylised X. (See Image 4.1.)¹⁵



Image 4.1: Arthur Dooley, *La Pasionaria*, 1979, fiberglass on a steel plinth, Glasgow.

¹⁰ Thomson, ‘Labour Take a Beating’.

¹¹ Claude Thomson, ‘SNP Are Wiped Out’, *Glasgow Herald*, 2 May 1980, p. 1; John MacCalman, ‘SNP Put a Brave Face on Defeat’, *Glasgow Herald*, 3 May 1980, p. 1.

¹² John MacCalman, ‘Glasgow Looks Safe for Labour’, *Glasgow Herald*, 1 May 1984, p. 9.

¹³ Stewart Paterson, ‘Council Election Results 2017: Labour Loses Control of Glasgow City Council’, *Glasgow Times*, 5 May 2017 <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/15267844.Labour_loses_control_of_Glasgow_City_Council/> [accessed 1 July 2025].

¹⁴ ‘Arthur Dooley: A Portrait of the Artist at 90’, *Confidentials* <<https://confidentials.com/manchester/arthur-dooley-a-portrait-of-the-artist-at-90>> [accessed 18 July 2023]; Stanley Reynolds, ‘Did Arthur’s Idea Work? Not Half!’, *Liverpool Echo*, 29 September 1978, p. 14; McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow*, v, pp. 75, 76.

¹⁵ Photo: Erin Burrows, 2024.

I would argue that her position and the well-defined X across her torso mimic the Scottish Saltire; though, there is no explicit evidence that this was Dooley's intention. The inscription reads 'Better to die on your feet than / live for ever on your knees', and includes a plaque stating

The City of Glasgow /and the British / Labour Movement / pay tribute to the / courage of those / men and women / who went to Spain / to fight Fascism / 1936-1939 / 2,100 volunteers / went from Britain; 534 were killed / 65 of whom came / from Glasgow.¹⁶

From the inscription, one can infer an implied connection between the rebels of the Spanish Civil War, the volunteers from Scotland who chose to go and fight, and the modern workers who were victim to the effects of rapid deindustrialisation. As such, *La Pasionaria* acts as an affirmation and reification of Glasgow and its working classes as the unjustly oppressed. The figure and its motto are each in their own way a hyperbolic representation of the lives of working-class Glaswegians, and this meaning is lost without some great adversary – be it political, economic, or social – against which the working classes could be pitted. This was a somewhat complicated narrative to convey in a city where Labour had maintained a city-wide political hegemony for decades and where the Conservatives, who though better represented in Westminster and the national government, equally claimed political victimhood.

To better understand, then, how the historical narrative – including subtexts of identity – of Glasgow's working classes came to be, I will first provide the context in which the working classes and the Labour Party in Glasgow came to view themselves as both triumphant and oppressed. This will cover a fairly broad period of time from the early 1900s to the 1970s to establish the arguably counterintuitive belief that the political hegemony in Glasgow existed in an oppressed state. I will then discuss the campaign to raise a monument honouring veterans and casualties of the Spanish Civil War, including motivations, the selection of the artist and location, and the political pushback that had not been seen in the City Council since perhaps the Radical War memorial, indicating oppositional yet deeply imbedded and value-laden subtexts of identity. Finally, I will evaluate the impact of *La Pasionaria* on modern Glasgow and whether or not the subtexts imbued in the monument in 1980 are still understood and fittingly interpreted in the twenty-first century.

¹⁶ Arthur Dooley, *La Pasionaria*, 1979.

Development of the Historical Narrative and Its Accompanying Subtexts

At face value, the statue of Ibárruri is meant to convey the selfless bravery of the British volunteers who went to Spain to fight in its civil war, but this is not the only story it tells. Because the documentary archive does not provide explicit reasons for the decision by the International Brigades Association to erect their monument in the 1970s or why Dooley selected Dolores Ibárruri as the subject of Glasgow's memorial, it is necessary to investigate the history of socialist beliefs around culture and identity in the city. To understand the historical narrative and subtexts of identity *La Pasionaria* is meant to convey, I employed Carlo Ginzburg's 'evidential paradigm' approach to historical research, which relies on gathering and analysing clues to arrive at the monument's symbolic or implied meaning.¹⁷ As such, I will first evaluate the political underpinnings of the class divide in the United Kingdom, as well as the pride expressed in the sacrifices of the Spanish Civil War volunteers who acted against the orders of their own nation to prevent acts of injustice from occurring in another. Beginning with the Battle of George Square in 1919 and continuing through the Upper Clydeside Shipbuilders work-ins of 1971-72, the following section will examine how the histories of Red Clydeside and of the International Brigade were used to buttress the aims and identities of marginalised working class and socialist groups in Glasgow starting in the 1970s and continuing through to the modern era.

Red Clydeside

The economic and industrial developments of the nineteenth century had brought about the rise of working-class movements in Scotland, including the expansion of trade unions and councils, voting reforms and expanded enfranchisement for men, and local industrial strike action.¹⁸ These activities, summarised by historian W. Hamish Fraser as 'organising, agitating, and political campaigning', involved not only labour concerns but also political, religious, and social movements.¹⁹ By the start of World War One, socialist ideals were prevalent in several working-class and industrial communities in the River Clyde basin. The political activities, protests, and strikes that occurred from

¹⁷ Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myth, and the Historical Method*, trans. by John Tedeschi and Anne C. Tedeschi (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 96, 102, 123.

¹⁸ W.H. Marwick, 'The Beginnings of the Scottish Working Class Movement in the Nineteenth Century', *International Review for Social History*, 3 (1938), pp. 1-24; W. Hamish Fraser, 'Trade Councils in the Labour Movement in Nineteenth Century Scotland', in *Essays in Scottish Labour History: A Tribute to W.H. Marwick*, ed. by Ian MacDougall (Donald, 1978), pp. 1-28.

¹⁹ Fraser, 'Trade Councils', p. 6; W.W. Knox, 'Religion and the Scottish Labour Movement c. 1900-39', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 23.4 (1988), pp. 609-30; W. Hamish Fraser, 'Trade Unions, Reform, and the Election of 1868 in Scotland', *Scottish Historical Review*, 50.150 (1971), pp. 138-57.

that time until the early 1930s came to be known as Red Clydeside and included not only the men who joined trade unions, Labour and Communist parties, and local Co-operative Guilds, but also the women who were active in political parties, Women's Co-operative Guilds, local housing associations, and suffrage movements. One of the major protests to occur during this period was the Battle for George Square, just after the end of the Great War.

On 31 January 1919, tens of thousands of workers and their families gathered in George Square amongst its avatars of exceptionalism to demonstrate and protest in support of ongoing strikes across many of Glasgow's trades and industries.²⁰ The Edinburgh newspaper *The Socialist* reported that police 'completely lost their faculties [and] clouted girls, women, and small boys', and while others described the reading of the Riot Act by civil authorities.²¹ William Gallacher – who had named 'Mrs Barbour's army', to be discussed in the following chapter – was among the Red Clydesiders charged with inciting the riot.²² Days after what is now known as the Battle of George Square, the people of Glasgow were met by military opposition, and in February 1919, the government sent six tanks into the city 'fully equipped for fighting' Glaswegian civilians.²³ Despite the brutal response from authorities, the majority opinion did not appear to be on the side of the protesting Glaswegians. For example, *The Scotsman* accused the strikers of using '[m]ethods of terrorism', and the *Hull Daily Mail*, which claimed the protestors had 'come so close to bringing civil war to Glasgow', outright supported the military intervention.²⁴ The workers of Glasgow, however, continued their strikes, and the excessive crack-down on the democratic right to protest was widely condemned by left-leaning and labour newspapers, including the *Workers' Dreadnought*, edited by Sylvia Pankhurst.²⁵ The Battle of George Square and the government's use of military might against generally peaceful civilians revealed a sharp break between the ruling classes and the working classes that would continue to perpetuate in the coming decades.

²⁰ 'Another Appeal to the Government', *The Scotsman*, 1 February 1919, p. 7.

²¹ 'The Wolves' Fangs', *Socialist (Edinburgh)*, 6 February 1919, p. 2; 'The Rioting in George Square', *The Scotsman*, 1 February 1919, p. 7; 'Strike Leaders in Court', *Motherwell Times*, 7 February 1919, p. 8.

²² 'The Wolves' Fangs'; 'The Rioting in George Square'; 'Strike Leaders in Court'.

²³ 'Tanks Reinforce the Military in Glasgow', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 4 February 1919, p. 5.

²⁴ 'Glasgow Disorders', *The Scotsman*, 1 February 1919, p. 7; 'Tanks to Stop Bolshevism!', *Hull Daily Mail*, 3 February 1919, p. 4.

²⁵ For example, 'In the Throes of the Class Struggle', *The Call (London)*, 6 February 1919, p. 3; 'Socialist War Points', *Forward*, 15 February 1919, p. 1; 'Tanks at Glasgow - "Not the War"', *Daily Mirror*, 5 February 1919, p. 8; 'The Wolves' Fangs'; E. Sylvia Pankhurst, 'The Revolution', *Workers' Dreadnought*, 5.46 (1919), p. 1216.

Nevertheless, by the summer of 1936, several Red Clydesiders had achieved enough popular support to be elected to Parliament. These included William Gallacher and David Kirkwood, leaders of the 1919 strikes, George Buchanan, a trade union activist representing Gorbals, Reverend Campbell Stephen of Camlachie, and John McGovern of Shettleston, all members of the Independent Labour Party. This did not mean, however, that the Glaswegian socialists at Westminster fit easily into the government as constituents of the ruling class. During a debate on the Unemployment Assistance Act of 1934, which was being redrafted to require that Glaswegians pay higher rates than any other major city in the United Kingdom, Buchanan, Stephen, and McGovern were suspended from the House of Commons.²⁶ Conceivably expressing the overall sentiments of the working-classes of Glasgow, Buchanan described his ‘bitter resentment’ and his distrust, if not contempt of the aristocracy.²⁷ The changes to the law could be seen as a repudiation of Glasgow’s prestige as the Second City, and both the Battle of George Square and the suspension of Glasgow’s MPs would have arguably strengthened the sense that the working classes of Glasgow were not treated with fairness or dignity.

The International Brigades

At the same time Glasgow’s socialist MPs were being suspended from Westminster in July 1936, General Francisco Franco was leading a coup against the Spanish Republican Government, marking the beginning of the Spanish Civil War that raged until 1939. Though Franco’s fascist coup was joined by Italian and German forces, other European nations, namely France and Britain, maintained a non-intervention policy and refused to supply aid or arms.²⁸ As a result, the International Brigades were formed from an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 volunteers from 87 countries, with over 2,000 men and women joining from Britain to support the Spanish Republican Army.²⁹ Of those who joined the British Battalion in Spain, one out of every seven was from Glasgow, with Glaswegians representing more than ten percent of the 543 British

²⁶ ‘Died During Suspension of 3 M.P.s in 34-Hour Debate’, *Daily Mirror*, 24 July 1936, p. 1; House of Commons, *Unemployment Assistance Act, 1934*, (22 July 1936, Vol. 315, Cols. 473-941) (Hansard). N.B. The change in rates came after MPs claimed Glasgow had been ‘deliberately lavish with the [government] funds’ and was therefore required to pay more to make up for the mismanagement through higher rates for benefits to the poor. See cols 476, 481.

²⁷ House of Commons, *House of Commons, Vol. 315, Cols. 473-941*, cols 521, 522, 523, 528, 598, 836.

²⁸ London, Marx Memorial Library, ‘The International Brigade and Spain’s Long Fight for Democracy’, Glasgow, n.d., SC/IBA/4/1/3/9, p. 1.

²⁹ Marx Memorial Library, ‘The International Brigade and Spain’s Long Fight for Democracy’, Glasgow, n.d., SC/IBA/4/1/3/9; London, Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10; London, Marx Memorial Library, Tribute Appeal by William G. McCartney, Glasgow, n.d., SC/IBA/4/1/3/12.

volunteers who were killed.³⁰ One conclusion that could be drawn from these statistics is that there was something of the fight in Spain that more fundamentally mirrored the values and identity of Glasgow's working classes than of those in the other industrial cities of the United Kingdom.

The volunteers from Glasgow had little if any military experience and were described as 'workers, teachers, writers, students, intellectuals, professionals and Trades Unionists'.³¹ In 1938, after two years of war, William Gallacher wrote a letter to Glaswegian omnibus driver Alexander Menzies, who was fighting in Spain, to express the pride felt by Glasgow's working classes towards those who had joined the fight. Exemplifying the tension between those with both cultural and political hegemonic power and the citizens of the working classes, Gallacher expressed that

[i]n the face of rank [...] pro-Fascist treachery on the part of the [...] Government [and] the weak hesitating policy of the Labour Leader, our lads, by their heroism [and] sacrifice, have saved the name and the honour of Britain, have written a new great page in the history of the British working class.³²

Though the Civil War was far from won, Gallacher conveyed a sense of triumph through dissent and defiance that was seemingly a central characteristic of Glasgow's evolving working-class identity.

Despite never achieving their aim of defeating Franco's regime, the International Brigades withdrew from Spain in September 1938, at which time Dolores Ibárruri addressed the surviving troops in farewell and again illustrated her belief in the moral if not actual triumph of the working classes against the loci of power:

Podéis marcharos orgullosos. Sois la historia. Sois la leyenda. Sois el ejemplo heroico de la solidaridad y de la universalidad de la democracia, frente al espíritu vil y acomodaticios de los que interpretan los principios democráticos mirando hacia las cajas de caudales o hacia las acciones industriales que quieren salvar de todo riesgo.

[You can leave proudly. You are history. You are legend. You are the heroic example of democracy's solidarity and universality, in the face of the vile and accommodating spirit of those who interpret democratic principles with an eye to the cash boxes or the industrial stocks which they want to preserve from any risk].³³

³⁰ Marx Memorial Library, Tribute Appeal by William G. McCartney, Glasgow, n.d., SC/IBA/4/1/3/12. See also Appendix ____.

³¹ Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10.

³² London, Marx Memorial Library, Letter from William Gallacher to Alex Menzies, Paisley, 2 September 1938, SC/IND/WGA/1, p. 1.

³³ London, Marx Memorial Library, 'Farewell Address by Dolores Ibárruri', Barcelona, September 1938, SC/IBA/5/4/3/3.

Not content to fully give up the fight once home, the surviving volunteers of the Spanish Civil War and others formed the activist International Brigade Association (IBA). The group remained politically active well into the late twentieth century, and they were participants in the Labour and Trades Union movement, which connected the economic and social power of the unions to the political power of the Labour Party.³⁴

The Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in

By the 1970s, however, unions, Labour, and the IBA remained connected not necessarily by a sense of triumph or by the same economic and political goals, but by a sense of diminished influence, authority, and relevance, which had cost the confidence of the working classes they represented as the United Kingdom's governmental priorities began to shift. Glasgow was no longer the Second City of the Empire, and as such I, John M. MacKenzie noted that when decolonisation began in the twentieth century and the imperial economy was necessarily transformed, Glasgow's industrial base collapsed.³⁵ MacKenzie argued that modern Glasgow has some trouble reconciling the imperial enmeshment of the nineteenth century with its more radical and socialist modern identity.³⁶ While the narrative of oppression remained easy to tell, a subtext of triumph in the face of a new reality was becoming more difficult to perpetuate. As illustration, despite strikes still being an important tool for the working classes in trades, in the early 1970s, some workers became more focussed on continuing work than on stopping it. With the policy effects of rapid de-industrialisation and de-population evident in a diminished quality of life for Glaswegians, labourers began to protest by way of the work-in, wherein employees would continue to work despite the threat or actuality of factory or work yard closures. The use of work-ins began in June 1971 when Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (UCS) was £6,000,000 in debt and could no longer afford to pay employee wages.³⁷ Chairman Tony Hepper informed Parliament that it would be required to provide £10,000,000 (about £140,000,000 when adjusted for inflation) in liquid cash to keep the consortium afloat.³⁸ A partial aim of this demand for a bailout was seemingly to include the government in any blame should UCS fail; though, they were unsuccessful in that

³⁴ Marx Memorial Library, 'The International Brigade and Spain's Long Fight for Democracy', Glasgow, n.d, SC/IBA/4/1/3/9; Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10.

³⁵ MacKenzie, "The Second City of the Empire", p. 216.

³⁶ MacKenzie, "The Second City of the Empire", pp. 219–20.

³⁷ Jack McGill, *Crisis on the Clyde* (Davis-Poynter, 1973), p. 84.

³⁸ McGill, *Crisis on the Clyde*, p. 85.

regard.³⁹ The Scottish Trades Union Congress (TUC) urged UCS and the government to do whatever was necessary to avert economic disaster while at the same time reinforcing an unwillingness to accept any cuts to workers' wages.⁴⁰ In response and as opposed to handing over a massive economic bail-out, the government opted for liquidation of the consortium, putting thousands of jobs in Glasgow and on the Clyde at risk.⁴¹

Stemming from disillusionment not only with the Labour Party, but also with the TUC, John Boyd, a Scottish engineering leader, explained the need for work-ins in 1971:

We have tried pleading, negotiations, demonstrations and strikes, but despite all our efforts the cancer of unemployment is still growing. It is little wonder the workers [...] have turned to the work-in as a new weapon for combating this cancer in Scotland.⁴²

In protest of the plan for liquidation and with the goal of preserving jobs in Glasgow, on 30 July 1971, UCS shop stewards, led by James Airlie and Jimmy Reid, both members of the Communist Party, announced they had taken control of the four divisions of the company.⁴³ The former Minister of Technology, Anthony Wedgwood Benn, supported the workers' protests, observing that "[w]e are seeing the birth pangs of industrial democracy – a new concept in industry based on the belief that the only real asset an industry has is the men who work for it."⁴⁴ Arguably, though, this belief that the oppressed would soon triumph had actually been evident as far back as the days of Red Clydeside, and to some degree during the Spanish Civil War, as it was the basis of the socialist culture in Glasgow that had persisted in the decades since. In fact, Benn's words were not dissimilar to those from Gallagher's letter to Menzies when the former minister described the place of the volunteers in working-class history:

The power of the workers has gone from the negative to the positive. This is something to be recorded when the history of the British Labour movement is written. The power which has been awakened in the yards is not going to be snuffed out!⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the effects of the UCS work-in had begun to dissipate by September 1971, and Jack McGill, author of a contemporaneous account of the struggle titled

³⁹ McGill, *Crisis on the Clyde*, p. 85.

⁴⁰ McGill, *Crisis on the Clyde*, pp. 85–86.

⁴¹ McGill, *Crisis on the Clyde*, pp. 88–89.

⁴² Qtd. in Royston Bull, 'Union Leaders Howled Down at TUC Rally', *The Scotsman*, 25 November 1971, p. 1.

⁴³ McGill, *Crisis on the Clyde*, pp. 101, 102.

⁴⁴ Qtd. in Mike Russell, "'Work-in' Backed by Mr Benn', *The Scotsman*, 31 July 1971, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Qtd. in McGill, *Crisis on the Clyde*, p. 103.

Crisis on the Clyde, which gives some insight on perceptions at the time, noted that any work continuance at the shipyards was due more to the government's liquidator and UCS management than to the workers themselves.⁴⁶ That is not to say, however, that the work-in did not have a tremendous impact on beliefs regarding the power of everyday people against institutions and governments. In fact, by 1974, as the IBA was launching its campaign for a Spanish Civil War memorial in Glasgow, work-ins were being staged not only in Glasgow, but across Scotland by labourers in industries ranging from tweed production to airplane and motorcycle manufacturing.⁴⁷ This reinvigoration of support for the fair treatment of working people arguably played a part in the relatively sudden interest in memorialising the working classes who had participated in the Spanish Civil War, with a subtextual connection being drawn between a Red Clydeside past and an equally radical present.

Justifications for the Monument, the Sculptor, and the Subject

Though the campaign for a monument was formally launched by the International Brigades Association in June 1974 with the full support of then Lord Provost Sir William Gray, the IBA archives do not provide specific information as to why they wished to install commemorative monuments to the volunteers of the Spanish Civil War in Glasgow and other areas of Scotland.⁴⁸ However, we may glean some clue from the public indifference noted by *Glasgow Herald* reporter James McKillop, who stated at the time that 'the events of 1936-1939 [were] little more than a memory, or part of history, to people living in this country – except for those who took part'.⁴⁹ Additionally, at a time when the sacrifices of the International Brigade were at risk of being forgotten by the general public, Glasgow was also falling victim to the massive changes in public urban planning that had occurred after World War Two, with whole working-class neighbourhoods being moved from the city to outlying suburbs. From 1961 to 1981, the city lost approximately 350,000 residents, dropping from a population of just over a million in 1961 to 685,143 in 1981 (for comparison, the population in 2024 was just over 600,000).⁵⁰ (See Image 4.2.) Though on a relatively

⁴⁶ McGill, *Crisis on the Clyde*, pp. 109–10.

⁴⁷ 'Islemen to Try Work-in Idea at Tweed Plant', *The Scotsman*, 13 March 1974, p. 11; 'Hawker Siddely Staff Launch Work-In', *The Scotsman*, 22 October 1974, p. 1; 'Benn Backs Triumph Work-in with £4.95m', *The Scotsman*, 27 July 1974, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Marx Memorial Library, Tribute Appeal by William G. McCartney, Glasgow, n.d., SC/IBA/4/1/3/12.

⁴⁹ James McKillop, 'The Glaswegians Who Fought Against Franco', *Glasgow Herald*, 26 June 1974, p. 14.

⁵⁰ GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, 'Glasgow City through Time | Population Statistics | Total Population', *A Vision of Britain through Time*, n.d.

<https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10217751/cube/TOT_POP> [accessed 8 November 2024];

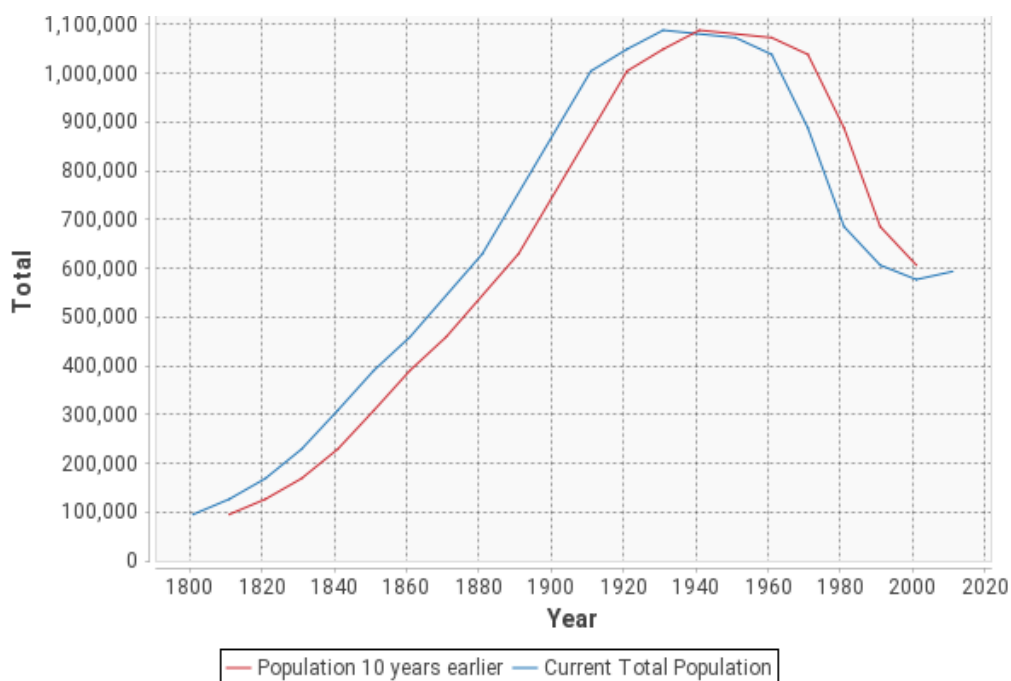


Image 4.2: Glasgow's population from 1801 to 2011, GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth.

small scale as far as geographic dispersal, the working-class diaspora of the post-war era rendered the collective memory of Glasgow's radical history fragile.

It can be argued that the coincidence of the end of fascism in Spain with the dehumanising economic and social policies of Westminster brought the struggle of a romanticised past into the present as an analogy of modern concerns. John M. MacKenzie noted that the title *Second City of the Empire*, which was first used as early as 1825, had been so entrenched in the urban identity that it continued to be used until the mid-twentieth century 'even when decline and contraction had clearly robbed the city of such a status, if indeed it ever had it.'⁵¹ However, he also argued that modern Glasgow has had some trouble reconciling the imperial enmeshment of the past with its more radical and socialist modern identity.⁵² He stated there was now 'a desire to distance socialism from imperialism that would not be recognised by the early leaders and members of socialist movements in the city', including working-class martial involvement in imperial conflicts.⁵³ The later half of the twentieth century revealed a tension between the fact that Glasgow's economic prospects had been historically dependent on imperial and then national imperatives and a generations-old identity of Glasgow and its socialist working classes as being self-determining and independent.

Population UK, 'Glasgow Population 2025' <<https://www.ukpopulation.org/glasgow-population/>> [accessed 6 January 2025].

⁵¹ John M. MacKenzie, "'The Second City of the Empire': Glasgow - Imperial Municipality", in *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity*, ed. by Felix Driver and David Gilbert (Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 215–37 (p. 215).

⁵² MacKenzie, "'The Second City of the Empire'", pp. 219–20.

⁵³ MacKenzie, "'The Second City of the Empire'", p. 219.

By the approaching fortieth anniversary of the start of the Spanish Civil War, a war in which the Empire had not been economically or politically threatened and in which United Kingdom had not officially engaged, an intervention was required to curtail the seeming lack of common knowledge around the volunteers of the International Brigade and the effects of the disruption to working-class neighbourhoods, histories, and heritage. A monument that would encompass both a war memorial and a solely socialist representation of Glasgow's working-class identity may have appeared to be at least one remedy against the encroachment of obscurity.

With the seeming lack of broad public interest, unlike the widespread fundraising appeals for the nineteenth-century portrait monuments in Glasgow, the IBA looked to raise donations from a narrow and targeted audience. In the original appeal for a memorial tribute, the Scottish Secretary Treasurer of the International Brigade Association, William "Garry" McCartney, specifically targeted his request for financial assistance to those previously or currently involved in Labour and Trade Union Movements.⁵⁴ Possibly because the history of the Spanish Civil War volunteers was personally irrelevant to much of the Glasgow public or because to that point so few monuments to figures that countered dominant historical narratives had been allowed to exist in the city's built environment, McCartney stressed to potential donors that the Labour-led Glasgow Corporation had already guaranteed the IBA a still-to-be-determined site for a memorial.⁵⁵ By that time, the commissioners had also selected Liverpudlian Arthur Dooley as the artist. Conceivably, it was due to the limited reach of their memorial and its narrative that there had been none of the competition or selective criteria for the sculptor that had been seen throughout the nineteenth century with regard to statues in George Square. In fact, before the fundraising campaign even got well underway, Dooley – a communist, former shipyard worker, workers' rights advocate, and founder of the Liverpool Workers' Artists' Association, but who had no formal art training and whose work the *Liverpool Echo* described as 'creat[ing] endless controversy' – had been commissioned for the work.⁵⁶ Dooley was certainly a logical choice as the sculptor, considering his support for the working classes and the USC work-ins.

⁵⁴ *Marx Memorial Library, Tribute Appeal by William G. McCartney, Glasgow, n.d., SC/IBA/4/1/3/12; McKillop, 'The Glaswegians Who Fought Against Franco'.*

⁵⁵ *Marx Memorial Library, Tribute Appeal by William G. McCartney, Glasgow, n.d., SC/IBA/4/1/3/12; McKillop, 'The Glaswegians Who Fought Against Franco'.*

⁵⁶ Lisa Rand, 'The Eccentric Legend Behind Liverpool's Famous "Black Christ" Sculpture', *Liverpool Echo*, 2020 <<https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/eccentric-legend-behind-liverpools-famous-17560280>> [accessed 18 July 2023]; 'World-Famous Sculptor Arthur Dooley...', *Liverpool Echo*, 28 March 1973, p. 8.

It is evident that the sculptor's own artistic reflexivity contributed significantly to the subtexts expressed by the monument via his subject and site selections. Arthur Dooley was born in the Dingle, Liverpool, on 17 January 1929. In 1945, he joined the Irish Guards, serving for eight years before deserting from the British forces to fight alongside the Palestine Liberation Army.⁵⁷ Much later, after establishing himself as a sculptor, Dooley wrote a 1973 article for the *Liverpool Echo* in which he decried the economic and social policies that were destroying the working-class cities of the United Kingdom, placing the blame on both Labour and Conservative administrations.⁵⁸ Dooley had taken a keen interest in Glasgow and the impact of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-ins, and he commemorated the workers' crisis in a monument depicting Christ's resurrection against the backdrop of a shipyard crane.⁵⁹ He gifted this sculpture to Jimmy Reid, who was then able to sell it to the Clydebank Town Council for £1,250 to help raise funds for the fight against shipyard closures.⁶⁰ By the time of the IBA commissioned its monument in 1974, Dooley was known for his symbolic artworks that depicted an underlying disenchantment and frustration with both the cultural and political hegemonies of the United Kingdom. As an artist, Dooley was inspired by symbols, and the symbol he drew upon to represent all that was encompassed by Red Clydeside, the International Brigades, and the struggles of the working classes was Dolores Ibárruri.⁶¹



Image 4.3: 'Dolores Ibárruri' in London, Marx Memorial Library, *Farewell Address by Dolores Ibárruri*, Barcelona, September 1938, SC/IBA/5/4/3/3.

Dolores Ibárruri was born 9 December 1895 in Gallarta, Spain, and she first used the pseudonym La

⁵⁷ 'Arthur Dooley'.

⁵⁸ Arthur Dooley, 'My Merseyside', *Liverpool Echo*, 28 March 1973, p. 8.

⁵⁹ Keith Bruce, 'Liverpudlian's Statue Caused Rumpus', *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 20 January 1994, p. 18.

⁶⁰ Bruce, 'Liverpudlian's Statue Caused Rumpus'.

⁶¹ McKillop, 'The Glaswegians Who Fought Against Franco'.

Pasionaria in 1918 when publishing an article in the socialist newspaper *El Minero Vizcaino* [*The Miner from Biscay*].⁶² She joined the Spanish Communist Party in 1920, eventually becoming a deputy in the Republican parliament.⁶³ She was a provocative orator, whose popular rhetoric inspired the rebel militias, including the International Brigades, in their fight against Franco in the Spanish Civil War.⁶⁴ After Franco's victory in 1939, Ibárruri fled to the Soviet Union, where she represented the Spanish Communist Party at the Kremlin until 1960.⁶⁵ Ibárruri returned to Spain on 13 May 1977 after Franco's death and remained the honorary president of the Communist Party until her own death on 12 November 1989 in Madrid.⁶⁶

Ibárruri's rhetoric and Dooley's choice of her as his monument's subject may well have appealed to the socialist working classes in contemporary Glasgow whose lives were often negatively affected by policies over which they had little control. Indeed, Alasdair Gray – author, artist, and muralist of the *Celestial Ceiling* in Glasgow's Òran Mór – noted in 2014 that the inspiration for his illustration *Bella Caledonia*, 'the independent, free-spirited woman of Scotland', was Dolores Ibárruri.⁶⁷ Perhaps, then, out of all the figures of the Spanish Civil War, Ibárruri was chosen as Dooley's subject not only for her own history, but also for what she represented and inspired. If the monument were to represent not only deeds of the British Battalion, but also the plight of working classes around the world, it is conceivable that, as with Gray, Dooley's use of Ibárruri's female form could be seen as a continuation of the tradition of women as allegories for ideals such as liberty or Scottish female empowerment. In a struggle for relevance as the triumphant oppressed in cities such as Glasgow, it would have been important for Dooley, the IBA, the trades unions, and the Labour Party to install a monument that reflected not only the working classes of Glasgow and Scotland, but also their place within a global community.

Additionally, with the working class diaspora beginning to show its effects, that sector of Glasgow's population experienced a decline of what Pierre Nora defined as traditional 'environments of memory (*milieux de mémoire*)' that encapsulated a group's history and culture.⁶⁸ As previously noted, Nora argued that new and even manufactured 'sites of memory' (*lieux de mémoire*) were important to modern

⁶² The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Dolores Ibárruri', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2000 <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dolores-Ibarruri>>.

⁶³ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Dolores Ibárruri'.

⁶⁴ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Dolores Ibárruri'.

⁶⁵ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Dolores Ibárruri'.

⁶⁶ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Dolores Ibárruri'.

⁶⁷ 'Alasdair Gray at 80', *TVEyes* (BBC 2 Scotland, 2014).

⁶⁸ Nora, 'Between Memory and History', pp. 7–8.

populations, such as those Glaswegians who had been relocated from the city to outer areas, as points of collective reference during times of change.⁶⁹ I argue that a permanent and physical monument of *La Pasionaria* could thus have offered a stable site around which the scattered but generally ideologically aligned industrial working classes in the city could gather. Arthur Dooley's original choice for the monument site was pedestrianised Buchanan Street. While visiting Glasgow in 1974, he said of the area, "This is the site. This is where the working class meet. By custom and practice they have established the right to be here."⁷⁰ Dooley was connecting the working class narrative of his monument to what he perceived as a working class point of gathering; its ostensible nature as a war memorial did not seem to be of explicit concern.

However, Buchanan Street and its heavy emphasis on capitalism might not have appealed to either the communist and socialist factions of Glasgow's working classes or the culturally hegemonic ruling classes, who likely preferred not to feature a figure of dissent and defiance so prominently in a commercial location with such high footfall. Ultimately, Dooley selected the monument's current location on the Clyde at Custom House Quay between Jamaica Street and Dixon Street, just across the river from the Trades Union Centre.⁷¹ This move was perhaps in better alignment with the aims of the monument funders, with *La Pasionaria* facing not only the hub of trades union activity but also looking out onto the river which had up until that time provided so much employment for a skilled working classes.

However, even before its completion, the statue's installation had become a battle of subtexts of identity and legitimacy with Labour, Conservatives, and the working classes all making their stakes known. Soon, *La Pasionaria* became not so much about Ibárruri as it was about narratives of power and dominance. The tense and sometimes petty battle over the monument's subject and its positioning in a public space tells a story that has little to do with the volunteers or their sacrifice and much to do with contemporaneous economic and cultural assumptions of who was entitled to define Glasgow and its people through the built environment.

The Political Battle in the Glasgow District Council

Much of the animosity that had been evident in the Westminster debate of July 1936 remained apparent between Labour and opposing Conservative and Scottish National Party (SNP) members in the Glasgow District Council meetings of the late 1970s.

⁶⁹ Nora, 'Between Memory and History', pp. 7–8.

⁷⁰ Qtd. in McKillop, 'The Glaswegians Who Fought Against Franco'.

⁷¹ Bruce, 'Liverpoolian's Statue Caused Rumpus'.

Though superficially showing concern for the people of Glasgow and the quality of life of the working classes and poor, excerpts from the Council's minutes demonstrate a greater concern for petty in-fighting and grasping for power. For example, in May 1979, Conservative Councillor Stewart Taylor accused Labour leader Baillie Jean McFadden of making 'an unjustified slur' on the tenants of Springburn after her remarks that the District Council houses there were in poor condition.⁷² Taylor went on to claim that McFadden's statements were 'a damning indictment [...] of generations of Labour hegemony in Glasgow', as well as 'devious declamations' to obscure the 'socialist maladministration' of Glasgow's housing instead of 'tackl[ing] the problems which Socialism has created'.⁷³ Conservative Bailie Derek Wood then rejoined that McFadden had 'such a closed mind on so many things that it [was] unlikely that she [would] be enlightened by [his] reply', deriding her oversight of Glasgow's 'Socialist empire'.⁷⁴ This gives some form to the nature of Glasgow's political environment in the last half of the 1970s and helps to account for the growing working-class cynicism of all major parties at the time. This and the controversial nature of Dooley's subject resulted in a series of political manoeuvres to both ensure and to prevent the installation of *La Pasionaria* in Glasgow. It was inevitable that this degree of rancour, seemingly founded on ideological differences, would become an obstacle as the Council began to ready the promised site on the Clyde for the installation of Dooley's monument.

While the focus of the struggle was the statue itself, the target of Conservative anger was seemingly the continued existence of political power that ran counter to that of entrenched traditionalists. In a city where *The Scotsman* argued that '[t]rade unions had made themselves so unpopular by tactics of trying to inflict harm on the community', Conservatives pitted themselves against Labour and lamented the loss of income due to lost industry.⁷⁵ While this loss of industry could be argued to be the result of new national economic priorities in Parliament, the perception of the trade unions as troublesome and harmful may very well have helped to contribute to both the perception and the reality of Glasgow as a city in irreparable industrial decline. As argued by social scientist Chik Collins and social and economic historian Ian Levitt, there came to be a 'highly discriminatory policy agenda within Scotland' that focused development and growth in other areas, with Glasgow's policy makers soon supporting

⁷² Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Glasgow District Council Minutes, Glasgow, Print #2 Appendix, 31 May 1979, GDC 1/1/12, p. 3.

⁷³ Glasgow District Council Minutes, Glasgow, Print #2 Appendix, 31 May 1979, GDC 1/1/12, pp. 3, 4.

⁷⁴ Glasgow District Council Minutes, Glasgow, Print #2 Appendix, 31 May 1979, GDC 1/1/12, p. 5.

⁷⁵ 'Paying for Strikes', *The Scotsman*, 15 February 1980, p. 12.

post-industrial service and cultural economies and attempting to ‘work with the parameters of acceptability set by the much more powerful policy makers in Edinburgh.’⁷⁶ These policies not only saw a kind of diasporic shift from traditional neighbourhoods and industries, but also systemic economic deprivation based on the belief that Glaswegians had previously lacked responsibility for their own welfare.⁷⁷ I argue such a universal dismissal of the city and its ambitions would have contributed to the working classes of Glasgow feeling unseen and forgotten.

In August 1979, after the International Brigade had gifted the completed *La Pasionaria* to the city and the Glasgow District Council had prepared the installation site on the Clyde, the Council’s Civic Amenities Committee was scheduled to cast a final vote on its promise to situate the statue.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, at the 12 September 1979 Civic Amenities meeting, Conservative members submitted a petition that the monument ‘be not erected on any site owned by the District Council and that the statue be returned to the International Brigade’.⁷⁹ Councillor Ross McKay, who introduced the petition, called Ibárruri a “poisonous old brute” and claimed the petition’s 200 signatories were “dismayed and disgusted at the proposal to erect a statue of a notorious Communist war criminal”.⁸⁰ At the subsequent Council meeting, members voted thirty-four to twenty-nine in favour of siting *La Pasionaria* at Custom House Quay, where it now stands.⁸¹ Even so, one anonymous councillor commented without much evidence that the “statue won’t last 10 minutes before it is pushed into the river. There are too many people against it.”⁸² Conservative councillors made their entitlement to dominance plain as they positioned themselves as obstacles in any celebration in which the Labour Party and working classes could be seen as winning. For example, when Conservative opposition resulted in the effective denial of a civic reception to celebrate *La Pasionaria*’s imminent unveiling, McCartney called the

⁷⁶ Chik Collins and Ian Levitt, ‘The Policy Discourses That Shaped the “Transformation” of Glasgow in the Later 20th Century: “Overspill”, “Redeployment” and the “Culture of Enterprise”’, in *Transforming Glasgow: Beyond the Post-Industrial City*, ed. by Keith Kintrea and Rebecca Madgin (Policy Press, 2020), pp. 21–38 (p. 22).

⁷⁷ Collins and Levitt, ‘The Policy Discourses That Shaped the “Transformation” of Glasgow in the Later 20th Century: “Overspill”, “Redeployment” and the “Culture of Enterprise”’, pp. 22, 27, 31–33.

⁷⁸ Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Glasgow District Council Minutes, Glasgow, 20 August 1979, GDC 1/1/12, p. 351; John MacCalman, ‘Quay Site Goes to La Pasionaria’, *Glasgow Herald*, 28 September 1979, p. 5.

⁷⁹ Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Glasgow District Council Minutes, Glasgow, 12 September 1979, GDC 1/1/12, p. 448.

⁸⁰ Qtd. in John MacCalman, ‘No Statue on Quay of La Pasionaria’, *Glasgow Herald*, 18 September 1979, p. 3.

⁸¹ Glasgow, Mitchell Library Glasgow City Archives, Glasgow District Council Minutes, Glasgow, 27 September 1979, GDC 1/1/12, p. 514.

⁸² Qtd. in MacCalman, ‘Quay Site Goes to La Pasionaria’.

obstruction “‘extremely shallow’”, with Councillor Michael Kelly calling it “‘a cynical manoeuvre to undermine a democratic decision from being implemented.’”⁸³ At the same time, Labour councillors, particularly after winning back control of the Council in 1980, saw the monument and accompanying celebrations as upholding their sense of specialness and moral superiority while winning battles under the oppressive thumb of conservatism, specifically the obstruction of the *La Pasionaria* monument.

Nevertheless, despite all the political pettiness playing out in the District Council, *La Pasionaria* would become a part of Glasgow’s heritage environment in February 1980. Still, believing a generally apathetic public to be on their side despite losing the fight over the installation of *La Pasionaria* on public lands, Conservatives were not yet done with the war.

The Unveiling

In January 1980, the International Brigades Association’s Honourable Secretary Nan Green announced that the unveiling of *La Pasionaria* would coincide with the forty-third anniversary of the February 1937 Battle of Jarama, and on Saturday, 23 February 1980, the Glasgow branch of the IBA unveiled its monument to Scotland’s International Brigades volunteers.⁸⁴ Sixty-five men from Glasgow were included on the memorial’s Roll of Honour, a majority of those having died at Jarama.⁸⁵ The complete list of Glaswegian casualties, including the dates and locations of their deaths can be found in Appendix B, which also shows that the civilian Scots who died fighting with the International Brigades had been inadequately prepared for battle, as most were killed within one to six months of arriving. Additionally, the complete list shows that not all persons memorialised on the Glasgow Roll of Honour had actually died in Spain, nor that were they all honourable, with evidence of desertion, criminal behaviour, and even traitorous espionage. Regardless, as stated previously, the installation of *La Pasionaria* was not solely about memorialising these men and the Scottish veterans who had returned from the Spanish Civil War, so attention as to whether or not each of the individuals listed was deserving of honour may not have been of the highest priority.

⁸³ Qtd. in ‘Tory Tactics Block Civic Reception’, *The Scotsman*, 8 February 1980, p. 10.

⁸⁴ London, Marx Memorial Library, Letter from Nan Green to IBA Members, London, 17 January 1980, SC/IBA/1/9/12/053; Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10.

⁸⁵ Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10.

A programme for the unveiling event acknowledged the support of three of Glasgow's Labour Lord Provosts: Sir William Gray (Labour, 1972-1975), who had sponsored the original tribute fund appeal; Peter McCann (Labour, 1975-1977); and the presiding Lord Provost David Hodge (Labour, 1977-1980).⁸⁶ Garry McCartney, Scottish Secretary of the IBA, had hoped that Ibárruri herself could be in attendance at the unveiling, but her health ultimately prevented her from travelling to Glasgow.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, upon seeing a photograph of *La Pasionaria* in the *Morning Star*, a publication originally established by the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1930, Ibárruri wrote to the London headquarters of the IBA, expressing her '*honda emoción* [deep emotion]' for the monument and thanking the members '*por la distinción que me hacéis eligiendo mi persona como símbolo de la gran lucha de nuestro pueblo en la cual vosotros fuisteis heroicos participantes* [for the distinction you make to me by choosing me as a symbol of the great struggle of our people in which you were heroic participants].'⁸⁸ She requested and received an original photograph of the memorial from Nan Green shortly after.⁸⁹



Image 4.4: London, Marx Memorial Library, 'Jack Jones Speaking at Glasgow Memorial Unveiling Ceremony', Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/1/9/12/9.

Because Ibárruri could not attend, the ceremony organisers invited Jack Jones, a member of the International Brigades and former general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, as the guest of honour.⁹⁰ As he addressed the crowd, Jones added to the

⁸⁶ Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10; Marx Memorial Library, Tribute Appeal by William G. McCartney, Glasgow, n.d., SC/IBA/4/1/3/12.

⁸⁷ Tom Shields, 'Statue Preview for the Herald', *Glasgow Herald*, 2 May 1978, p. 1.

⁸⁸ London, Marx Memorial Library, Letter from Dolores Ibárruri to the British Volunteers of the International Brigade, Madrid, 26 March 1980, SC/IBA/3/1/1980/1.

⁸⁹ Marx Memorial Library, Letter from Dolores Ibárruri to the British Volunteers of the International Brigade, Madrid, 26 March 1980, SC/IBA/3/1/1980/1; London, Marx Memorial Library, Postcard from Dolores Ibárruri to Nan Green, Madrid, 23 April 1980, SC/IBA/3/1/1980/2.

⁹⁰ Alan Forbes, 'Glaswegians' Sacrifice in Spanish War Remembered', *The Scotsman*, 25 February 1980, p. 5.

subtextual, if at times explicit narrative of the triumphant oppressed, telling those gathered that “the purpose of [the] ceremony [was] not to reflect on the past but to look to the future and defend democracy.”⁹¹ It was a time of economic and political uncertainty, and those in Glasgow opposed to the Conservative government appeared to be reaffirming their role as the morally superior oppressed in an unceasing battle with unjust ruling elites. For example, as trade unions across the country were striking in response to the neoliberal policies of the Conservative government, Labour Chancellor Denis Healy referred to Margaret Thatcher in the House of Commons as the ‘La Pasionaria of privilege’ who led a ‘party of the rich few’.⁹² At the same time, the Labour Party Young Socialists in Scotland were also active in the political sphere. At their annual conference in 1980, among several demands ranging from the nationalisation of football to free public transportation, they passed resolutions that criticised ‘the Government economic policies, their effects on local government services and the selling off of council houses.’⁹³ The Labour Party’s national youth leader, Andy Bevan, acknowledged that public opinion had recently swung against the Government led by Thatcher.⁹⁴ Bevan joked at the conference that one ‘[could] not find Tories these days [...]’. In fact you can’t find people who admit they voted for them.’⁹⁵ It was evident that the labouring classes were not prepared to acquiesce to what they deemed unfair policies in 1980 anymore than they had been willing to since the Radical War of 1820. And as they had so often succeeded through agitation and activism in the past, there was no reason to believe they would not be triumphant in their aims in the present or future.

Nevertheless, in statements that seemed tone deaf to the political angst occurring in Glasgow, Tory councillors continued with their pledge to tear the newly installed *La Pasionaria* down. Bailie Derek Mason told the *Glasgow Herald*, “We don’t want her [...]. There are a lot of other figures – such as Winston Churchill – I would rather see there. I think this statue will offend the feelings of more people than were at the [unveiling] ceremony [...] if it were left up.”⁹⁶ There was seemingly little evidence of any offence to anyone attending the unveiling, other than to Conservative Councillors

⁹¹ Qtd. in ‘Spanish Conflict Commemorated at Glasgow Unveiling’, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 25 February 1980, p. 9.

⁹² House of Commons, *Capital Transfer Tax*, (22 January 1975, Vol. 884, Cols. 1476-1559) (Hansard), col. 1553.

⁹³ ‘Nationalise Football, Say Young Socialists’, *The Scotsman*, 25 February 1980, p. 5.

⁹⁴ ‘Nationalise Football, Say Young Socialists’.

⁹⁵ ‘Govt. “Are Losing Support”’, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 25 February 1980, p. 9.

⁹⁶ Qtd. in Andrew Collier, ‘La Pasionaria May Move, Tories Warn’, *Glasgow Herald*, 25 February 1980, p. 5.

Helen Hodgins and Ross McKay, who stood around holding polemic placards but caused little real disruption.⁹⁷ Even in the months after the unveiling, Conservative councillors continued to rail against the monument, with Councillor John Young describing the work as “an artistic lump of graffiti” and warning that it would be demolished the next time Conservatives took the Council majority.⁹⁸ By way of this statement, Councillor Young tacitly acknowledged that the statue to Ibárruri was intended to give permanence to the authority and narrative of those who had commissioned it, and he was clearly not eager to see this narrative or its subtext of triumph over injustice vandalising the landscape. Emotions were high on all sides of the argument, with subtexts of collective identity at the root of the conflict and few indications that any differences could be reconciled.

I would argue that the conflict itself was an essential element of the identities of both those supportive of and opposed to the monument. It was indeed a central characteristic of the *La Pasionaria* narrative, playing on collective emotions such as fear, anger, and pride. In their study of collective emotions in conflict situations, Daniel Bar-Tal, Eran Halperin, and Joseph de Rivera described ways in which collective emotions play a role in instigating, sustaining, or resolving conflicts.⁹⁹ Fundamental to their argument is the idea that these emotions shape responses by both individuals and collectives, and that they contribute ‘to the evolvement of a social context that maintains the emotional climate and collective emotional orientation that have developed.’¹⁰⁰ Much of their focus relies upon the identifying the context within which collective emotions arise. In the case of *La Pasionaria*, the commissioners were attempting to preserve negative emotions born of negative contexts, while at the same time aligning these negativities to the positive emotions of pride and hope. However, when a negative climate exists or is manufactured and sustained, it may be unfeasible for collectives to shift or transition their emotions, beliefs, and behaviours to achieve a positive outcome and cooperation.¹⁰¹ Bar-Tal, Halperin, and de Rivera suggest that transitions can occur either by moderating negative emotions within a collective or by increasing positive emotions to evoke change within the emotional climate.¹⁰² However, in the context and subtext of *La Pasionaria*, any positive emotions seemed to

⁹⁷ Collier, ‘La Pasionaria May Move, Tories Warn’.

⁹⁸ Qtd. in ‘Move to Reject La Pasionaria’, *Glasgow Herald*, 13 October 1981, p. 10.

⁹⁹ Daniel Bar-Tal, Eran Halperin, and Joseph de Rivera, ‘Collective Emotions in Conflict Situations: Societal Implications’, *Journal of Social Issues*, 63.2 (2007), pp. 441–60.

¹⁰⁰ Bar-Tal, Halperin, and de Rivera, ‘Collective’, p. 441.

¹⁰¹ Bar-Tal, Halperin, and de Rivera, ‘Collective’, p. 451.

¹⁰² Bar-Tal, Halperin, and de Rivera, ‘Collective’, p. 456.

feed directly back into sustaining negative emotions against one or more antagonists. The feeling of pride meant to be transmitted by the monument relied first on emotions of anger and fear against an enemy. Pride could only exist for those standing in opposition to such an enemy, triumphant in simply making the stand if not fully conquering their foe; there would be no perceived benefit to compromise in such a case. For conflict resolution, as which might occur around a contested statues in a public space or in politics centred on identity, all parties must participate in a transition of the emotional climate from enemy to ally.¹⁰³ Unfortunately, the conflict relating to *La Pasionaria* in the late 1970s and early 1980s resulted in an unwillingness to compromise among all parties, each intransigent in their narrative subtexts of identity and power, resulting in negative emotions and their accompanying behaviours becoming more deeply entrenched. At such a point, rational debate and empathetic reasoning would have been difficult if not impossible.

La Pasionaria's Evolving Narrative

Regardless of the entrenched conflict around the installation of *La Pasionaria* at the dawn of the 1980s, the economic and political priorities of the government and the working classes did inevitably evolve under the realities of an industrial Glasgow that would not soon return. As such, tensions over *La Pasionaria* dissipated during the following two decades. There were some who still perpetuated political antagonism, such as Henry Cockburn, a feature writer for *The Sunday Times* in London who in the early 1990s seemed to harbour a particular dislike for the statue's subject. He classed Ibárruri as a 'homicidal Luddite', a 'much-loved mass-murderess', a 'homicidal old harridan', and a 'bloodthirsty old crone' whose Glasgow monument commemorated 'the fantasy that was Communism.'¹⁰⁴ Drawing on the arguments of Collins and Leavitt described previously, I surmise that Cockburn's vitriol seemed equally pitted at Ibárruri, Glasgow, and the working-classes who insisted on their disruption of English

¹⁰³ Bar-Tal, Halperin, and de Rivera, 'Collective', p. 456.

¹⁰⁴ Henry Cockburn, 'A Plague on All the Luddites', *The Sunday Times (London)*, 1 April 1990 <<https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:3TD8-PTC0-0032-434M-00000-00&context=1519360>> [accessed 23 June 2023]; Henry Cockburn, 'Arriba Espana', *The Sunday Times (London)*, 5 August 1990 <<https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:3TD8-P620-0032-425V-00000-00&context=1519360>> [accessed 23 June 2023]; Henry Cockburn, 'Stop Press', *The Sunday Times (London)*, 29 July 1990 <<https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:3TD8-P6T0-0032-4419-00000-00&context=1519360>> [accessed 23 June 2023]; Henry Cockburn, 'Plastic Hats for the Iron Duke', *The Sunday Times (London)*, 6 October 1991 <<https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:3TD8-NXW0-0032-W2WF-00000-00&context=1519360>> [accessed 23 June 2023].

hegemonic norms. However, with concerns centred more and more on devolution and an independent Scotland rather than a battle between a subordinated Glasgow and an oppressive Westminster, *The Herald* noted that the monument had been ‘largely forgotten by the public’ at the turn of the twenty-first century.¹⁰⁵ The narrative was one that had appealed to too narrow a segment of the population to persist in collective memory once those who participated in the Spanish Civil War died and their living memory died along with them. The city, too, had perhaps forgotten about Dooley’s statue, which was repeatedly vandalised and covered with graffiti and required restoration efforts in 2003 and in 2010.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, with some Scottish volunteers of the British Battalion still living, commemorations at the site persisted with each restoration resulting in a rededication of the monument.

On 11 October 2003, after some restoration and repair work, 500 attendees again joined Jack Jones to rededicate the monument and to mark the almost sixty-five years that had passed since the withdrawal of the International Brigades from Spain.¹⁰⁷ Those gathered were to have included the thirty or so veterans from all over the United Kingdom who were by then all in their nineties, but only ten – among them the last surviving Glaswegians: James Maley, Steve Fullerton, and John Dunlop – were able to make the ‘special journey’ to attend.¹⁰⁸ As had been true in 1980, identity and ideology were again prominent as exigencies of the present when connected to reconstructions of the past. The event was organised by the International Brigades Memorial Trust (IBMT), and included Labour leader Charles Gordon and Jane McKay, secretary of the Glasgow Trades Council, as speakers.¹⁰⁹ Ibárruri’s farewell speech was read to those assembled, and the general secretary of the Scottish Trades Union Movement, Bill Spiers, told the crowd that “[w]e have to measure ourselves against [those who died] in the struggles which we still face today against oppression.”¹¹⁰ Marlene Sidaway, secretary of the International Brigade Memorial Trust, said of the volunteers’ involvement in a foreign war that it was “the last great cause when people could make up their own minds to go and fight, rather than being told by a government to go to war

¹⁰⁵ ‘Last of Spain’s British Brigade Plan Tribute to Their Wartime Heroine’, *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 14 August 2003, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Last of Spain’s British Brigade Plan Tribute to Their Wartime Heroine’; ‘£10,000 to Restore La Pasionaria’, *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 30 March 2010, p. 8.

¹⁰⁷ Allan Laing, ‘Spanish Civil War Heroes Still On the March’, *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 11 October 2003, p. 28; ‘International Brigaders Gather at Glasgow Monument’, *Morning Star*, 13 October 2003, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Last of Spain’s British Brigade Plan Tribute to Their Wartime Heroine’, *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 14 August 2003, p. 3; ‘International Brigaders Gather at Glasgow Monument’, *Morning Star*, 13 October 2003, p. 4; Magin McKenna, ‘Spanish Civil War Veterans Gather with Same Passion’, *The Sunday Herald*, 12 October 2003, p. 6; Allan Laing, ‘Spanish Civil War Heroes Still On the March’, *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 11 October 2003, p. 28.

¹⁰⁹ ‘International Brigaders Gather at Glasgow Monument’.

¹¹⁰ Qtd. in ‘International Brigaders Gather at Glasgow Monument’.

for a cause that they may not have believed in.”¹¹¹ Yet, even though the subtext of the triumphant oppressed was still being repeated, the context of the narrative had changed, with either the triumphant or the oppressor apparently fading from the story. For example, during the rededication in 2003 unlike the unveiling in 1980, a civic reception was permitted to be held at the City Chambers with no apparent opposition from any of the political parties that composed the Glasgow Council.¹¹²

This was a marked shift from the infighting of twenty years earlier; though, it is unclear whether this was because the Council simply wished to honour the sacrifices of the Civil War veterans or because the socialist movement was no longer seen as an existential threat to the political hegemony. For instance, the year before the rededication in 2003, London writer Tim Luckhurst reported on new strikes occurring in Glasgow, writing that ‘Scotland’s rose-tinted fondness for raw socialism will lead it into a political cul-de-sac unless properly harnessed.’¹¹³ He found the Scotland of the early twenty-first century to be a ‘place where the antics of the extreme left seem shorn of menace.’¹¹⁴ He described a Scotland ‘nostalgic for the scent of real socialism’, with Socialist Tommy Sheridan at the head of a ‘quasi-revolutionary cabal’.¹¹⁵ He argued the politic ambitions of the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP), which was formed in 1998 and campaigned for Scottish independence, were being undergirded by a string of industrial complaints, with leaders such as Carolyn Leckie ‘playing La Pasionaria at the head of oppressed administrative staff [...] to advance a broader political case.’¹¹⁶ This was allowed, he contended, because ‘[c]ultural elites [were] becoming misty-eyed about Scotland’s history of raw socialism, too.’¹¹⁷ It may well have been a case of political, or even personal, power taking precedence over the aims of the working classes, as evidenced by the downfall of Glasgow’s Sheridan after his own SSP exposed him for perjury in a lurid defamation case.¹¹⁸ With Labour having lost its grip on Glasgow’s political hegemony and the SSP in disarray, Luckhurst revealed that the power of these oppositional groups was no longer the threat it had been in 1980.

Just a few years later in 2007, Glasgow city planners revealed their proposal to rejuvenate the Clyde riverbank, with £200 million planned for the development of

¹¹¹ Qtd. in Magin McKenna, ‘Spanish Civil War Veterans Gather with Same Passion’, *The Sunday Herald*, 12 October 2003, p. 6.

¹¹² Laing, ‘Spanish Civil War Heroes Still On the March’.

¹¹³ Tim Luckhurst, ‘Masses of Discontentment’, *The Sunday Times (London)*, 17 November 2002, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ Luckhurst, ‘Masses of Discontentment’.

¹¹⁵ Luckhurst, ‘Masses of Discontentment’.

¹¹⁶ Luckhurst, ‘Masses of Discontentment’.

¹¹⁷ Luckhurst, ‘Masses of Discontentment’.

¹¹⁸ Lorna Martin, ‘Civil War Intensifies in Sheridan’s Party’, *The Guardian*, 13 August 2006 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2006/aug/13/uk.scotland>> [accessed 14 June 2023].

Custom House Quay, presumably to include additional restoration of *La Pasionaria*.¹¹⁹ By 2009, seventy years after the end of the Spanish Civil War and a year after the death of the last remaining Glaswegian veteran Stevie Fullerton, the monument had deteriorated to a point that could not be ignored. Willy Maley, a Glaswegian academic, playwright, and son of the aforementioned Spanish Civil War volunteer James Maley, worried about the state of the monument and the history it conveyed – not of the volunteers but of Glasgow and its working classes – contending that “[t]his is a door we can’t allow to close. It’s too great a reminder of what the city once stood for. It’s our legacy.”¹²⁰ The Liverpool Academy of Arts also commented on the inherent value of the monument as an example of Arthur Dooley’s work as “a visionary, a great talent and a champion for the common man.”¹²¹ In 2010, the Glasgow City Council, backed by the Glasgow City Heritage Trust, the Scottish Trades Union Council, and the International Brigades Memorial Trust, allotted £10,000 to repaint the monument and resecure it to its steel plinth.¹²² It took five months to restore the statue, and the rededication on 24 August 2010 was attended by the only surviving Scottish volunteer to the Spanish Civil War, Thomas Watters.¹²³ There do not appear to have been any such rededication events at the monument since Watters died in 2012 at the age of 99; though, the IBMT does hold commemoration events at the statue each year.¹²⁴

However, while the nature of engagement has changed in the years since, *La Pasionaria* does still remain a point of identity for a variety of groups and for a variety of reasons. While acknowledging the sometimes not-well-known histories of statues such as *La Pasionaria*, *Herald* reporter Marisa Duffy described the portrait monuments in city landscapes as ‘carving out a lasting place in history’ for the subjects they represent.¹²⁵ My argument, though, is that monuments are not meant to ‘carve out’ the history of a given subject. Instead, I argue that statue commissioners shape or preserve group and place identities through a chosen subject’s historical narrative, which the public is then free to accept, reject, or be indifferent to. Furthermore, while the historical narrative of a given portrait statue may be forgotten, the subtexts interpreted

¹¹⁹ Iain Lundy, ‘Tarnished Jewel in the Heart of Glasgow’, *Glasgow Evening Times*, 16 January 2007.

¹²⁰ Qtd. in Brian Beacom, ‘La Pasionaria: The Fading Icon’, *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 5 December 2009, p. 3.

¹²¹ Qtd. in Beacom, ‘La Pasionaria: The Fading Icon’.

¹²² ‘£10,000 to Restore La Pasionaria’; Russell Leadbetter, ‘Veteran Is Home for Re-Dedication of Spanish Civil War Statue’, *Glasgow Evening Times*, 24 August 2010, p. 12.

¹²³ ‘Passion Rekindled for Veteran of Spanish War’, *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 24 August 2010, p. 2.

¹²⁴ ‘5 September: Annual Glasgow Commemoration At La Pasionaria Statue’, *International Brigade Memorial Trust*, n.d. <<https://international-brigades.org.uk/event/5-september-annual-glasgow-commemoration-at-la-pasionaria-statue/>> [accessed 7 July 2025].

¹²⁵ Marissa Duffy, ‘Carving out a Lasting Place in History’, *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 2 January 2008, p. 15.

by the public may continue to evolve. For the most part, the average Glaswegian still does not know much about Dolores Ibárruri or even the volunteers who participated in the Spanish Civil War, but a subtext of the triumphant oppressed can still be interpreted through the statue regardless of the realities of triumph or oppression.¹²⁶ I argue the nature of such interpretations is almost solely dependent on who is cast as the oppressed and who is cast as the oppressor. Rather than conveying a true or accurate history, public portrait monuments more often and for much longer periods provide a lasting representation of legitimacy and identity for those groups who commissioned or who continue to use these monuments as either sites of memory or gathering places to promote their current causes and ideologies. For example, despite his work around the built heritage environment in the city, Paul Sweeney, the Labour and Co-operative Party's MSP for Glasgow, had until recently assumed *La Pasionaria* was an allegory, a symbol of the struggle of the working classes rather than the portrait of a real person.¹²⁷ He remains reassured, however, by the way Ibárruri's statue reminds the public of Glasgow's 'clear political vibrancy and militancy, which is a part of our heritage', and he is proud to follow in the footsteps of those 'giants' represented in monuments such as *La Pasionaria*.¹²⁸

While the historical narrative the monument of Ibárruri may be unknown to many among the general public, there does remain some fascination with Glasgow's socialist history in place of an imperial one. When George Square was being renovated in 2012, there were talks of changing the line-up of statues to include monuments to Red Clydesider John MacLean and UCS work-in leader Jimmy Reid.¹²⁹ The *Glasgow Evening Times* even recommended moving the newly refurbished *La Pasionaria* to the City Centre to 'bring meaning and freshness and add to the George Square experience.'¹³⁰ Of particular note was the assertion that the nineteenth-century statues (and I argue their subtexts of empire and exceptionalism) did not reflect either the 'proud Socialist traditions' of Glasgow, or indeed Glaswegians themselves.¹³¹ Regardless of the degree to which Ibárruri and the volunteers are remembered, *La Pasionaria* does still hold meaning for those who continue to uphold Glasgow's

¹²⁶ Paul Sweeney, Interview by Erin Burrows, 2023.

¹²⁷ Sweeney, Interview.

¹²⁸ Sweeney, Interview.

¹²⁹ 'Give City Real Square Deal', *Glasgow Evening Times*, 20 July 2012, p. 14. N.B. As of March 2023, the Glasgow City Council is considering a memorial to Maclean as part of regeneration work ongoing in Pollokshaws. See Catherine Hunter, 'Council to Consider Memorial to John Maclean', *Glasgow Times*, 27 March 2023 <<https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/23416278.glasgow-city-council-consider-permanent-memorial-john-maclean/>> [accessed 3 April 2023].

¹³⁰ 'Give City Real Square Deal'.

¹³¹ 'Give City Real Square Deal'.

socialist traditions. For example, in 2017, demonstrators protested in support of Catalonia, which was to soon declare its independence from Spain.¹³² Organised by Radical Independence, a Scottish Nationalist group agitating for independence from the United Kingdom, the group marched from the City Centre to *La Pasionaria* to ‘symbolically link Glasgow with the struggle in Catalonia’.¹³³ For reporter Alison Phipps of *The National*, *La Pasionaria* became a symbol for the modern struggle in the Gaza Strip, and in 2018, she sent the words at the base of the monument to her colleague Nazmi Al-Masri at the Islamic University of Gaza to show her support and bolster his optimism as a Palestinian refugee.¹³⁴ In 2019, in opposition to visits to Scotland by US president Donald Trump, the Labour Party invoked the monument as the ‘heirs of the international brigaders’ at a rally in George Square, quoting the subject’s famous war cry “‘They shall not pass.’”¹³⁵ Irish Republican protestors of the *Cairde na hÉireann* [Friends of Ireland] Calton Republicans set *La Pasionaria* as their destination when they marched out of the Calton in 2019.¹³⁶ On International Women’s Day 2020, hundreds of demonstrators met at *La Pasionaria* before marching to Buchanan Street in a call for increased gender equality.¹³⁷ In 2021, after institutions in the city had begun to publish studies of the impact of slaveholders on the built heritage of Glasgow, *La Pasionaria* was held up as a representation of a less ‘shameful’ history.¹³⁸ Despite being widely disparate groups, all were able to discern and lay claim to the narrative subtext of the triumphant oppressed, with everyday citizens of Glasgow standing on the side of good against a perceived and often external foe.

La Pasionaria became a kind of self-portrait of a radical Glasgow that was more and more fading into history. After decades of strikes and neighbourhood diaspora, the trades and unions aligned themselves to the fiery rhetoric of Dolores Ibárruri and the eventually successful fight against fascism in Spain as a rallying cry for a more and

¹³² Angus Howarth, ‘Hundreds to Show Support for Catalan Independence at Glasgow Protests’, *The Scotsman*, 8 October 2017 <<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/hundreds-to-show-support-for-catalan-independence-at-glasgow-protest-1438200>> [accessed 14 June 2023].

¹³³ Howarth, ‘Hundreds to Show Support for Catalan Independence at Glasgow Protests’.

¹³⁴ Alison Phipps, ‘Let’s Break the Bars of the Cage of Gaza so, Like a Bird, I Can Fly and Sing Songs of Freedom’, *The National*, 15 May 2018 <<https://www.thenational.scot/news/16227734.lets-break-bars-cage-gaza-like-bird-can-fly-sing-songs-freedom/>> [accessed 14 June 2023].

¹³⁵ Richard Leonard, ‘Scotland Stands Against Donald Trump [Press Release]’ (Scottish Labour Party, 14 July 2018).

¹³⁶ Nicola Love, ‘Riot Police Will Monitor Weekend Republican Marches in Glasgow’, *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 5 September 2019, p. 2.

¹³⁷ Victoria Weldon, ‘Women of the World Unit in Show of Solidarity’, *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 9 March 2020, p. 3.

¹³⁸ Mark Brown, ‘Theatre Show Reminds Us of Glasgow’s Shameful Past’, *The National*, 25 April 2021 <<https://www.thenational.scot/news/19257144.ghosts-national-theatre-scotland-show-reveals-glasgows-shameful-past/>> [accessed 14 June 2023].

more decentralised radical labour movement. It presented a subtext that the powerless could only ultimately prevail by standing strong against all forms of oppression, even in the face of momentary defeat. The portrait statue of Ibárruri provided an historical anchor for the lived experiences of working-class Glaswegians, only a small fraction of whom carried memories of the brutal consequences of sending naïve and idealistic citizens to act as warriors in the Spanish Civil War. As such, the narrative of history imbued in *La Pasionaria* has become more and more forgotten as the viewing public becomes less connected to the subtexts of identity it expressed. While the statue was meant to concretise a disappearing identity, the historical narrative of Glasgow's volunteers in the Spanish Civil War now has few if any narrators who can transmit the story and relate it to the present.

Nevertheless, because monuments have historically been accepted as a kind of official narrative of the past, the use of a statue to express a perhaps more marginal subtext of Glaswegian identity and history consequently legitimised the semiotics and narrative conveyed by the *La Pasionaria* monument. This is no doubt why Glasgow's Conservative councillors were so vehemently opposed to its existence in a public space and deemed it 'graffiti', thereby reducing *La Pasionaria* to the work of disruptive vandals who were not to be taken seriously. However, unlike the subtexts of cultural hegemony implied by the monuments in George Square, which were perpetuated by institutional and political power, the subtextual narrative of identity expressed in *La Pasionaria* depended on a sense of subjugation which was difficult to maintain.

Conclusion

The monument honouring volunteers in the Spanish Civil War in Glasgow demonstrates how a generic narrative form can remain the same while the normativeness of the narrative shifts, shifting interpretations of narrative accrual. Unlike the monuments in George Square, the depiction of Dolores Ibárruri was not a narrative representation of the greatness of the Empire, but instead offered a new interpretation with subtexts of Scotland's and particularly Glasgow's renunciation of it. Though its referentiality was limited, with a relatively small sector of the population accepting the 'truth' of subtexts of economic and cultural oppression, it nevertheless *felt* true to those who commissioned and supported the statue. At the time *La Pasionaria* was installed, Glasgow was controlled by a Labour political hegemony that positioned itself as a victim to the national Conservative hegemony, situating the city in a state of political liminality. It was what Agnieszka Cianciara categorises as 'an

awkward position in the field of power' that promotes antagonism when a group feels it has not received its warranted recognition and place of value.¹³⁹ The debates around *La Pasionaria* demonstrate what Cianciara termed a 'disillusioned rebel counter-narrative', in which 'aspirations to higher status, often justified with claims to equality, induce political actors to give up adaptive strategies and respond with contestation' and which is often most dominant during a state of being in-between.¹⁴⁰ Such grievances, whether apodeictic or apparent, often result in a contagion of emotional discourse around a specific narrative that implies a need for conflict, whether political, intellectual, or physical.

There were clearly elements of context sensitivity and negotiability in *La Pasionaria's* narrative, often drawn along party lines, in the commissioning and installation of the statue. For the commissioners of *La Pasionaria*, the monument itself became a source of conflict that expressed a kind of aggressive inferiority complex meant to delegitimise the London hegemony while simultaneously legitimising the radical counter-culture of Glasgow that had been part of the city's identity for a better part of the twentieth century. However, once the contest between the Westminster government and the worker was lost, and along with it the contest between the Labour and Conservative parties, so too was the importance of *La Pasionaria's* subtext of the triumphant oppressed. Narratives and the interpretation of their subtexts require habitualised discourse, as was seen in the nineteenth century, to be remembered and internalised. The commissioners of *La Pasionaria* relied on the past to form an identity concerned with political power, social and economic relevance, and cultural sovereignty. However, as those who could tell these identity-based stories of the past died or simply lost interest, the narrative of *La Pasionaria* became unclear and its subtexts have evolved as a result. Today, it is not the lives of those who died that draw public attention to *La Pasionaria*, nor even the story of its subject Dolores Ibárruri, but rather it is the dramatic figure and widely appealing ideological inscription that make one take notice.¹⁴¹

La Pasionaria, controversial from the beginning, was and remains a guidepost for those marginalised and even counterculture groups that seek a kind of David-versus-Goliath fight against injustice (as they define it). From the powerful protests during

¹³⁹ Agnieszka K. Cianciara, 'Between EU's Aspiring Saint and Disillusioned Rebel: Hegemonic Narrative and Counter-Narrative Production in Poland', *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 30.1 (2022), pp. 84–96 (p. 93).

¹⁴⁰ Cianciara, 'Between EU's Aspiring Saint and Disillusioned Rebel', p. 85.

¹⁴¹ Duffy, 'Carving out a Lasting Place in History'; Heather Greenaway, 'We See Them Every Day, but Who on Earth Are They?', *Daily Record and Sunday Mail*, 10 February 2013, pp. 26–27 (p. 27).

Red Clydeside and the UCS work-in, to the zeal and idealism displayed in the fight against Franco, to the political legitimacy garnered by obtaining positions of governmental power, the monument to Ibárruri on the Clyde reflects and sustains Glasgow's working-class and socialist history, if only among a relatively small segment of the population. Though the history told and interpreted through *La Pasionaria* may in fact be 'rose-tinted', it nevertheless affects the groups who engage with the monument in so far as the way they define not only Glasgow's identity but the collective identities of those who have and continue to use it as a commemorative site. It is a reflection of never-ending struggle which runs in some ways counter to the elevated civic and urban identities that have recently emerged with Glasgow as a place of art, culture, education, and tourism, while the deprivation and decline of the past has been obscured from public history.

Ibárruri's portrait statue also offers a contrast to the narratives of Mary Barbour's monument. Both monuments feature women, two of only four who exist in Glasgow's public landscape, and both relate to the history and aims of socialist, working-class Glaswegians. However, rather than the monophonic narrative of *La Pasionaria*, Mary Barbour's monument, as discussed in the following chapter, provides a polyphonic narrative of similar class and political struggles in Govan. Unlike the conflict and rancour that underwrote the commissioning and installation of *La Pasionaria*, the Mary Barbour statue in Govan Cross tells a story of triumph through self-determination rather than presupposed oppression. Installed only recently, the bronze representation of Mary Barbour's army transmits a narrative that has thus far proven much more in line with the collective identity of Glasgow both in Barbour's time and today.

5. Mary Barbour: Subtext of Self-Determination

*Mrs. Barbour's Army spread through Glesga like the plague
The maisters got the message and the message wisnae vague
While oor menfolk fight the Kaiser we'll stay hame and fight the war
Against the greedy bastards who keep grindin' doon the poor¹*

The nineteenth century saw the rise of working-class movements in Scotland, including the expansion of trade unions and councils, voting reforms and increased enfranchisement for men, and local industrial strikes.² By the start of World War One, socialist ideals were prevalent among the working classes, both skilled and unskilled, in Govan. The former burgh, annexed by Glasgow in 1912, was arguably an epicentre of the Red Clydeside movement, and as noted in the previous chapter, its grassroots agitators included not only working men, but also the women who were active in political parties, Women's Co-operative Guilds, local housing associations, and suffrage movements. Among these women was Mary Barbour, a political activist and advocate for the struggling working classes of Glasgow. The monument to Mary Barbour represents an historical narrative of Govan that its modern commissioners hoped would challenge the then generations-old identity of Govan as a broken, undesirable, and ahistorical community.

The following chapter examines the early twenty-first century campaign to install a monument to Barbour in the prominent location of Govan Cross. The new statue was commissioned to mark the centenary of her leadership of the 1915 Rent Strike, perhaps offering a much-needed change in representation from the great men on plinths that are so prevalent in Glasgow. The idea of a Mary Barbour monument in Govan was supported by powerful politicians, as well as a substantial portion of the Govan community, which had been significantly impacted by de-industrialisation during the previous decades. Just as academics today are moving away from grand narratives in favour of micro-, hidden, or counter-narratives, I argue that so too are the commissioners of monuments, focusing on local, rather than national or international figures. As the Govan public had by then been in the process of rediscovering the

¹ Alistair Hulett, *Mrs. Barbour's Army* (Red Rattler, 2002).

² W.H. Marwick, 'The Beginnings of the Scottish Working Class Movement in the Nineteenth Century', *International Review for Social History*, 3 (1938), pp. 1–24; W. Hamish Fraser, 'Trade Councils in the Labour Movement in Nineteenth Century Scotland', in *Essays in Scottish Labour History: A Tribute to W.H. Marwick*, ed. by Ian MacDougall (Donald, 1978), pp. 1–28.

remarkable history of their place for at least a generation, commemoration of a local hero was not to be unexpected. However, the community did not select a famous English politician nor a grand example of Scottish exceptionalism, nor did they even select one of the leaders of Red Clydeside or the more recent work-ins. They instead chose an unequivocally local hero whose deeds had benefited the whole of Govan and Glasgow in spite of the fact that she was a housewife with two children. As evidence of the ways in which any person with self-determination can effect real change, regardless of class, profession, or gender, Mary Barbour was seen as an appropriate figure to convey a new narrative of Govan and its residents, one that challenged acquiescence to present-day adversities by drawing on a time when the unfairly exploited had worked together to overcome. Lynn Harter described the potential of narratives as ‘symbolic resources used by individuals to size up circumstances and envision otherwise’.³ The narrative of Mary Barbour’s history and the subtexts of local and collective identities revealed through the words of Barbour’s monument commissioners and modern residents are those of a self-determined community, this being defined as one aspiring to autonomy, competence, and connectedness in the daily lives of individuals.⁴

The monument draws upon the same historical reflexivity that was present with *La Pasionaria*, with the commissioners and community reflecting their own lives and ambitions on to Mary Barbour, who was then reflected back as a mirror to the public, but I argue it does so more effectively. This is in part because of the positive changes that have occurred through the regeneration efforts that had slowly been rebuilding Govan for over a decade. More so, though, this was because Mary Barbour’s fight against injustice and the subtexts conveyed through the commemoration of that fight were more relatable in the context of the everyday lives of Govanites and Glaswegians than the grievance-driven narratives of *La Pasionaria*. While the Mary Barbour monument thus offered a narrative that ran counter to the prevailing story told about Govan, it did so with a convivial defiance that allowed for a greater section of the population to participate in its narrative and history and to interpret its subtexts through a lens of civic and personal pride. In a way, it aims to forget to the hard times of

³ Lynn M. Harter, ‘Engaging Narrative Theory to Disrupt and Reimagine Organizing Processes’, *Management Communication Quarterly*, 31.2 (2017), pp. 297–99 (p. 297).

⁴ Richard M. Ryan and Maarten Vansteenkiste, ‘Self-Determination Theory: Metatheory, Methods, and Meaning’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Self-Determination Theory*, ed. by Richard M. Ryan (Oxford University Press, 2023), p. 30 (p. 8); Harry T. Reis and others, ‘Daily Well-Being: The Role of Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness’, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26.4 (2000), pp. 405–516 (p. 433).

deindustrialisation, degradation, and crime, while telling a more rosy story of a past in which the community worked together against those with more power.

It can be argued that the former identity of Govan as a community willing to stand together to effect grassroots change had become so distant by the closing of the twentieth century as to exist only in historical memory. After the work-ins and shipyard closures of the 1970s, Glasgow went on to become the European City of Culture in 1990, while Govan and its people were viewed as a community lacking in esteem and potential. This inevitably affected the self-perception of Govanites whose accession to this belief over successive generations had become a kind of self-affirming cycle. Rather than catalysing community cohesion as they had in the past, stressors such as the loss of industry or the ability to support one's family had resulted in crime and a low quality of life, which those living outside of Govan took as proof that the community had little to offer to the rest of Glasgow. As the twenty-first century dawned, stories of Mary Barbour and other heroes of the Red Clydeside, though still known, had become seemingly irrelevant to the lives of modern Govanites, who were in what could be argued to be a state of trauma, a kind of refugee of the past, with their collective memories primarily concerned with the conditions that had caused their current circumstances.⁵ Conversely, as new investments began to regenerate community, the historical narrative of the past was likewise regenerated, and stories its inhabitants could be proud of began to circulate again in public discourse.

The Mary Barbour monument is a case study of a working-class community striving to recover from rapid post-industrial decline by drawing on a past of strong social cohesion and bringing it forward to a period of regeneration and renewed pride. The long-held respect for Barbour among the residents of Govan had resulted in her history being kept alive – if barely – through generations of collective memory in a way that academic history has arguably not managed to do. As such, the following chapter places Mary Barbour's portrait statue in the historical and contemporary contexts of the radical social movements that allowed Barbour to thrive as a leader, the reasons why she was chosen as a subject of a monument, and the campaign to have it installed. I describe Govan's community identity and how it has changed over time, as well as the tensions between academic and public history. I argue that the substance of Mary Barbour as a person of and for the people of Govan along with her demonstrated ability to rally others against injustices inflicted upon the powerless by the powerful drove the

⁵ Marco Gemignani, 'The Past If Past: The Use of Memories and Self-Healing Narratives in Refugees from the Former Yugoslavia', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 24.1 (2011), pp. 132–56 (p. 140).

enthusiasm for her monument both before and after its installation and has contributed to a remarkable and increasing engagement with the statue by the public.

Mary Barbour and the 1915 Rent Strike

Mary Barbour was born in Kilbarchan in 1875, and soon after her marriage in 1896, she relocated to Govan. While her husband David worked as an engineer at Fairfield Shipbuilding, Barbour herself joined the burgeoning Independent Labour Party (ILP). She also participated in the activities of the Kinning Park Women's Co-Operative Guild (KPWCG) – part of a network of women's guilds established as what General Secretary Margaret Llewelyn Davies deemed a 'trade union for working women' – as well as the Socialist Sunday School, a national secular movement founded in Glasgow with the aim of reorganising society 'on a basis of love and justice'.⁶ According to Sue Innes and Jane Rendell,

[m]any working-class organisations [in Scotland] supported women's political participation [...]. The co-operative movement, a number of leftwing groups and parties [including] the ILP [which] was the most influential and the most encouraging of women [...] all attempted to create an effective form of 'cultural politics'.⁷

Barbour may have been particularly influenced by the KPWCG, where working-class women discussed politics, recognising their capabilities in the public sphere and that their rights as citizens extended beyond the home.⁸

After a century of rapid industrialisation and population growth, by the early twentieth century, Glasgow housing was among the worst in the UK, with families crammed into cramped tenements that lacked adequate light and sanitation.⁹ Conditions were made worse at the outset of World War One in 1914, when about 20,000 people arrived in the city to work in Glasgow's shipbuilding yards and munitions factories, with most settling in Govan, Parkhead, and Clydebank.¹⁰ The official, but unpublished *History of the Ministry of Munitions* notes concern over the 'discomfort' of male workers, primarily from England, who now had to endure 'housing, food, and climate [...] worse than they had grown used to at home.'¹¹ The

⁶ Qtd. in Gillian Scott, *Feminism and the Politics of Working Women: The Women's Co-Operative Guild, 1880s to the Second World War* (UCL Press, 1998); Audrey Canning, 'Mary Barbour', ed. by Elizabeth Ewan and others, *The New Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), p. 33; 'Socialist Sunday Schools', *WCML* <<https://www.wcml.org.uk/our-collections/creativity-and-culture/leisure/socialist-sunday-schools/>> [accessed 5 December 2022].

⁷ Sue Innes and Jane Rendall, 'Women, Gender and Politics', in *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700*, ed. by Lynn Abrams and Eleanor Gordon (Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 43–83 (p. 64).

⁸ Scott, *Feminism*, p. 56.

⁹ Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (Donald, 1983), p. 18.

¹⁰ Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (Pimlico, 1992), p. 424.

¹¹ Qtd. in McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside*, p. 18.

government account does not address or sympathise with the realities of the families who had lived in Govan prior to the war and who were then being squeezed out of their homes with the arrival of these same ‘discomforted’ workers. With many of Glasgow’s men enlisted in the war effort and the influx of workers causing a housing shortage, profiteering landlords implemented rent increases of between 8% and 23%, perhaps assuming that any complaints from disenfranchised women could be ignored.¹²

At about that time, the Labour Party established the Glasgow Women’s Housing Authority, and by 1915, Mary Barbour was leading the South Govan branch.¹³ She and many women like her were faced with choosing between feeding their families or paying the rent, and discussions of a rent strike soon emerged. Councillor Stephan Dornan of Govan, a leader of regeneration efforts in the community, described how Barbour’s nieces had recounted the story of their aunt initially approaching John Maclean – a respected Red Clydesider known as the ‘great mass agitator’ of the industrial strikes then occurring in the war munitions factories and shipyards – to lend his clout to the rent strike.¹⁴ However, Maclean, as the story was told, felt Barbour should lead the strike because it was women who held the least power against unscrupulous landlords while their husbands were away at war.¹⁵ While tenancies were generally in a husband’s name, women acted as household managers and were responsible for the physical act of paying rent; though, they had little actual recourse against landlords or rent



Image 5.1: Fundraising postcard featuring Mary Barbour’s Army, Remember Mary Barbour Association.

¹² Lynch, *Scotland*, p. 424.

¹³ Canning, ‘Mary Barbour’.

¹⁴ Stephen Dornan, Interview by Erin Burrows (Glasgow, 14 November 2022); ‘Biography of John Maclean’, *University of Glasgow Story*, n.d. <<https://universitystory.gla.ac.uk/biography/?id=WH0727&type=P>> [accessed 13 January 2023]; William Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde: An Autobiography* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936), p. 21.

¹⁵ Dornan, Interview.

increases.¹⁶ Perhaps Maclean was simply uninterested in helping the women or maybe he treated it as he would a workplace strike, in that if a woman's only power was vested in her ability to withhold the rent as the household manager, then another household manager should lead them in exercising that power.

Under Barbour's leadership, the first rent strike occurred in May 1915, and by November of that year, over 25,000 tenants were involved in the protest.¹⁷ While the rent strike was clearly well-supported by these thousands of tenants, withholding rents was not without its consequences; many women and their families faced eviction, and working householders faced wage garnishment.¹⁸ Catriona Burness described how Barbour and others avoided being thrown out of their homes:

[O]ne woman with a bell would sit in the tenement close, watching while the other women living in the tenement went on with their household duties. Whenever the Bailiff's Officer appeared to evict a tenant, the woman in the passage immediately rang the bell, and the other women put down whatever work they were doing and hurried to where the alarm was being raised. They would hurl flour bombs and other missiles at the bailiff, forcing him to make a hasty retreat. It is said they even pulled down his trousers to humiliate him!¹⁹

Led by Barbour and fellow activists Helen Crawford, a well-known suffragette; Agnes Dollan, whose husband Patrick later became Glasgow's Lord Provost; and Mary Burns Laird, the first president of the Glasgow Women's Housing Association, the housewives of Glasgow were a force to be reckoned with as the rent strike spread throughout the city. It came to a head in November 1915 after eighteen Partick residents were hauled in to the Sheriff Court for failure to pay rent. Barbour and what Paisley Red Clydesider (and later MP) Willie Gallacher referred to as 'Mrs. Barbour's army' marched on the court, with the women joined by men from workshops and shipyards all over Glasgow.²⁰ Alarmed by the size of the peaceful protest, Glasgow officials sought intervention from Lloyd George, then the Minister of Munitions, almost immediately resulting in the *Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act 1915*, which capped both rent and mortgage rates at the August 1914 level.²¹

¹⁶ June Hannam and Karen Hunt, *Socialist Women: Britain, 1880s to 1920s* (Routledge, 2002), p. 149.

¹⁷ Lynch, *Scotland*, p. 424.

¹⁸ Olivier Esteves, 'Les Glasgow Rent Strikes de 1915 ou Quand la Désobéissance Civile Des Femmes Contraint le Législateur', *Revue LISA*, 4 (2008), paras 11–16 <<https://journals.openedition.org/lisa/970>> [accessed 28 November 2022]; Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde*, pp. 53–54.

¹⁹ Catriona Burness, 'Mary Barbour - a Dangerous Woman?', *Dangerous Women Project*, 2017 <<https://dangerouswomenproject.org/2017/03/02/mary-barbour-dangerous-woman/>> [accessed 6 January 2023].

²⁰ Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde*, p. 55.

²¹ Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde*, p. 57; Wendy Wilson, 'A Short History of Rent Control', 2023 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06747/>> [accessed 5 December 2022].



Image 5.2: Glasgow City Council, *Baillie and Magistrate Mary Barbour*, c. 1924, photograph, Glasgow.

In addition to her leading and winning the rent strike, Burness noted that Barbour was ‘very modern’ in her interest in working class families and ensuring they had access to good food.²² For example, during the war years, she worked with mongers to collect the fish being discarded in the markets as being too small to sell and arranged to have them distributed at Govan Cross, where in ‘a state of pandemonium, all the pieces went.’²³ Barbour also advocated for green spaces for children to play in, and she wanted to reform domestic life to prevent women from living in drudgery. Burness described Barbour’s interests as being linked to the idea of the ‘people’s home’, or the principle that the community should operate as a kind of family in which everyone contributes, and this impacted her political activities and social aims.²⁴ Mary Barbour went on to achieve many ‘firsts’, forming the Women’s Peace Crusade with Helen Crawford and Agnes Dollan in 1916; becoming the first female councillor for Govan’s Fairfield Ward in 1920 soon after the enfranchisement of women; becoming Glasgow’s first female magistrate and first female bailie representing Govan in 1924; and founding the woman-staffed Women’s Welfare and Advisory Clinic, Glasgow’s first family-planning clinic for married women, in 1926. After a life of service to the working classes of Glasgow, Mary Barbour died in Govan in 1958, by which time she had come to be revered as the community’s Granny Barbour.²⁵ She was incontrovertibly a remarkable woman, and while her history has not been taken up to a great degree by academics, it is perhaps unsurprising that the community in which she lived wished to commemorate her life and works in their built heritage.

²² Catriona Burness, Interview by Erin Burrows, (Glasgow, 9 March 2023).

²³ Burness, Interview.

²⁴ Burness, Interview.

²⁵ ‘Mary Stood Up for Everyone’, *Paisley Daily Express*, 10 June 2021.

Remember Mary Barbour Association and Govan Reminiscence Group

In 2013, a group of local residents, MPs, and Councillors formed the Remember Mary Barbour Association (RMBA) with the goal of raising a memorial to Barbour in celebration of the 1915 Rent Strike centenary. Chaired by Maria Fyfe, a women's rights advocate and former Labour MP for Maryhill, the RMBA organised as a formal Scottish charity in 2014 with the following stated objectives:

To advance education for public benefit in the life, works and importance of Mary Barbour as an iconic figure in the history of Govan, Glasgow, Scotland, and the UK.

To advance the arts, heritage and culture through the erection of a statue in a public place to commemorate Mary Barbour.²⁶

The group aimed to raise £110,000 to install a statue 'in Govan, her home and the focus of her campaign activity as a leader of the 1915 Rent Strike, community activist and pioneering female councillor representing the Fairfield Ward of Govan.'²⁷ While the monument explicitly commemorates both Mary Barbour and the rent strike that occurred all across Glasgow in 1915, the proposed statue and the woman herself clearly represented much more to the founding committee of the RMBA. Embedded in their aims, along with raising awareness of Mary Barbour's significance as an agitator, women's rights advocate, and politician, were deeper subtexts regarding the identity of Govan in relation to Glasgow, Scotland, and the UK and the belief that the public would benefit from learning Barbour's story.

The effort to commemorate Barbour in the built environment, however, actually began somewhat earlier. Catriona Burness, historian for the RMBA, had worked for Maria Fyfe starting in 1987, whom she noted was the only woman among 50 Labour MPs elected that year and one of only three women among the 72 MPs from Scotland.²⁸ Burness recalled that there was a long period of discussion regarding Mary Barbour and how she might be remembered before the Remember Mary Barbour Association was formed. She was first approached about the campaign in 2012, and soon a series of meetings were held in Glasgow and Govan, with Govan's then-councillor James Adams being instrumental in drawing people together to form the organisation.²⁹ By mid-2013, Burness was fully involved and began to collect documents, conduct archival research on Mary Barbour, and speak with members of

²⁶ John A. McKechnie, *Remember Mary Barbour Association Trustee's Report for Financial Year 2014/2015* (Jobs and Business Glasgow, 2015), p. 2.

²⁷ McKechnie, *RMBA*, p. 2.

²⁸ Burness, Interview.

²⁹ Burness, Interview.

the Govan Reminiscence Group, valuable keepers of Govan's collective memory for 'the younger ones', researchers, and students.³⁰

I met with members of the Govan Reminiscence Group (GRG) to discuss the aims of their work, their involvement with raising Barbour's monument, and its importance to the people of Govan.³¹ Treasurer James McDonald, who was among the founding members, described how the GRG, originally called All Things of Govan, was formed at the time of the Glasgow Garden Festival in 1988 by a small group of locals who wanted to come together and talk about 'the good old days'.³² He explained that in the infancy of the GRG, two of Barbour's granddaughters were members, but because the group was so 'history unaware' at the time, they did not recognise them for who they were and the memories they might have helped preserve.³³ The Govan Reminiscence Group have since become important curators of Govan's social history, working with local community and heritage groups to preserve and highlight Govan's past, as well as current issues impacting the community.³⁴

It was, in fact, the GRG who had made the first attempt to commemorate Mary Barbour in the public built environment. While redevelopment work was underway in Linthouse in the early 2010s, the group's Secretary Esmé Clark had written to the Glasgow City Council on behalf of the GRG to request that one of the new roads be named after Mary Barbour, who had lived in that area. Clark exclaimed that she received 'the cheekiest letter' in response, which claimed that it was the Council's policy that nothing in the public built environment be named for a twentieth-century figure. After enquiries to councillors, no evidence of this rule could be found, and there was some confusion as to why a square in the city centre could be named after Nelson Mandela, but a street in Govan could not be named after Mary Barbour.³⁵ Since

³⁰ Burness, Interview.

³¹ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group by Erin Burrows, (Glasgow, 14 February 2023). Though not all are named as speakers, members of the focus group included Esmé Clark, Sandra Kane, James McDonald, David Megahy, Catriona Preston, Robert Preston, William Pritchard, Annie Quigley, Colin Quigley, and Dena Sinclair.

³² Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

³³ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

³⁴ For instance, for the centenary of the World War I memorial in Govan, the GRG worked to recover the 1,122 names listed on a water-damaged Roll of Honour scroll that had been stored in the monument's time capsule. While the memorial was being refurbished in 2019, the GRG, believing no other copy of the honour roll existed, asked to remove the scroll and copy it for historical reference. When it was discovered that the scroll was too damaged to read, GRG Chair Colin Quigley, after much difficult research and a bit of luck, learned another copy of the honour roll did indeed exist and was being stored in the loft of a barn on the Isle of Skye. The group recreated this copy and were able to add another 1,000 names, including women who died in the munitions factories, which Quigley noted had not been recognised on any rolls of honour. This new list was resealed in the refurbished memorial on Remembrance Day 2019 for future generations to discover.

³⁵ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

the city of Glasgow would not consider commemorating Barbour, it remained to the community to do it for themselves, and Clark noted that the idea of honouring Mary Barbour in a public way continued to ‘simmer’.³⁶ When asked why, of all the women involved in the rent strikes the focus had been on Mary Barbour, the group’s Chair Colin Quigley explained that Barbour was ‘just a regular working-class woman’, whereas women such as Helen Crawford were ‘very upper middle class’.³⁷ He noted that it was often the case that activism, for example participating in the suffragette movement, ‘was a luxury Govan women couldn’t afford, and Mary Barbour broke that mould.’³⁸

In 2013, as a member of the Govan Community Council, Clark received a letter from Maria Fyfe inviting community members to develop ‘a plan to raise wider awareness of the tremendous contribution that Mary Barbour made not only to Linthouse, Govan and the wider Glasgow area but also to working people across the UK.’³⁹ The Remember Mary Barbour Association grew from Fyfe’s invitation and the groundwork laid by Councillor Adams, and it was they who determined that a statue would be the best way to commemorate Barbour. The RMBA’s website was officially launched in 2013 as a means of connecting their campaign to the public. Fyfe brought together people of diverse talents, including politicians, artists, community organisers, and academics to begin the fundraising push. The public expressed support in comments on the RMBA website, and Govan football legend Sir Alex Ferguson was a major donor to the campaign.⁴⁰ Councillor Dornan described people ‘handing in five pounds, a pound, weans giving their pocket money [...]. Everybody [...] was supportive of it’.⁴¹ As word began to spread, Clark recalled that enthusiastic Govanites would hand her money on the street so often that she had to start carrying small envelopes around with her to ensure these impromptu donations were properly documented and accounted for.⁴²

Over the next two years, the RMBA raised sufficient funds – mainly through donations, crowd sourcing, GRG bake sales, and the sale of merchandise and event

³⁶ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

³⁷ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

³⁸ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

³⁹ Maria Fyfe, letter to Esmé Clark, 18 January 2013.

⁴⁰ ‘About the Campaign’, *Remember Mary Barbour*, 2013 <<https://remembermarybarbour.wordpress.com/about-the-campaign/>> [accessed 9 August 2022]; Kirsteen Paterson, ‘November Date for Mary Barbour Statue Confirmed’, *The National*, 25 August 2017 <<https://www.thenational.scot/news/15494825.november-date-for-mary-barbour-statue-confirmed/>> [accessed 17 September 2022].

⁴¹ Dornan, Interview.

⁴² Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

tickets – to release a call for tender, to which twenty-two sculptors responded.⁴³ With the help of experts from the Glasgow School of Art, the Committee shortlisted five of the responding twenty-two artists to produce maquettes, which then went on display in November 2015, one hundred years after Barbour’s successful rent strike. Three of the shortlisted maquettes by Mark Longworth, Kenny Mackay, and Roddy McDowall were fairly traditional portrait monuments. The remaining two were fairly similar, depicting both Barbour and her ‘army’; though, the design by Morag McLean was placed high on blocks while the winning model by Andrew Brown placed all the figures effectively at street level. (See Image 5.3.)⁴⁴ In an effort to involve the public in voting on the final form, the maquettes appeared first at Govan’s Pearce Institute before moving on to locations such as the Elder Park Library, Fairfield Heritage Centre, Glasgow City Chambers, the People’s Palace, Glasgow Women’s Library, Riverside Museum, and the Scottish Parliament.⁴⁵ The Committee also posted the maquettes online for additional votes from those who could not view the miniature sculptures in person.⁴⁶ While most of the emphasis was on Govan exhibitions, the fact that the maquettes were displayed across Glasgow and Scotland provides an indication of Mary Barbour’s growing importance as an historical figure more than half a century after her death.



Image 5.3: Andrew Brown, *Mary Barbour*, 2018, bronze on a concrete plinth, Glasgow.

When expressing pride that two of Glasgow’s four monuments to women were in Govan, one of nineteenth-century philanthropist Isabella Elder and now one of Mary Barbour, Quigley drew a stark comparison between the

⁴³ Natalya Macholla, *Remember Mary Barbour Association Trustee’s Report for Financial Year 2015/2016* (Natalya Macholla, 2015), pp. 2, 7; Burness, Interview.

⁴⁴ Photo: Erin Burrows, 2024.

⁴⁵ ‘Tour’, *Remember Mary Barbour*, 2015 <<https://remembermarybarbour.wordpress.com/tour/>> [accessed 9 August 2022].

⁴⁶ ‘The Shortlist’, *Remember Mary Barbour*, 2015 <<https://remembermarybarbour.wordpress.com/the-shortlist/>> [accessed 6 January 2023].

forms of the two statues. He explained that Elder appears in robes representing her honorary degree from the University of Glasgow and looks down on the people of Govan from a plinth. He noted that even though there is a famous portrait of Mary Barbour in her magistrate robes, the RMBA wanted her to appear in everyday clothes.⁴⁷ In fact, in the original Call for Tender to potential sculptors, the group asked for ‘a life-size figurative statue that reflects [Barbour’s] grassroots campaigning and down-to-earth nature’, but noted that it was up to the artist to decide if she were placed at street level or on a plinth.⁴⁸ With regard to the winning form, Burness believes Andrew Brown’s model was chosen by the community because it represented working people coming together to achieve a goal, with Barbour as the leader but not separate from the group.⁴⁹

After thousands of votes were cast, Brown’s winning design was announced at a gala concert on 21 February 2016.⁵⁰ At that time, Maria Fyfe noted that

[Brown’s] intention was to present Mary Barbour, for now and for generations to come, in a way that captures the achievement for which she is best known. The day in November 1915, when she led a 20-thousand-strong protest through the streets of Glasgow to the Sheriff Court and won the victory.⁵¹

The statue was unveiled on 8 March 2018, International Women’s Day. Measuring 0.8 metres wide, 2.2 metres long, and 2.2 metres high, Barbour’s monument was cast in bronze and sits on a sandstone base.⁵² In order to install the council-approved monument in the preferred location at Govan Cross just outside the Govan subway entrance, the RMBA, in conjunction with the Glasgow City Council, first had to secure a licensing agreement with the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport. The agreement covered both the installation itself and also continued occupation on the site.⁵³ This joint agreement not only ensured the location of the monument, but also guaranteed that it would be ‘properly maintained and repaired in the future’ by all parties involved.⁵⁴ Members of the GRG described the selection made by the community as ‘unique’ and ‘striking’ in comparison to other portrait statues in Glasgow and argued that its singularity draws the attention and curiosity of those traveling through Govan Cross.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

⁴⁸ Remember Mary Barbour Association, ‘Call for Tender for a Lasting Memorial to Mary Barbour’, 2015, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Burness, Interview.

⁵⁰ Macholla, *RMBA*, p. 4.

⁵¹ ‘Remember Mary Barbour’, *Remember Mary Barbour* <<https://remembermarybarbour.wordpress.com/>> [accessed 6 January 2023].

⁵² Andrew Shields, ‘RE: PhD Research on Mary Barbour Monument’, 9 January 2023.

⁵³ Valerie Davidson and Gordon Maclellan, *Committee Report: Mary Barbour Statue* (SPT, 25 February 2018), p. 1 <https://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/ch250218_agenda2.pdf> [accessed 10 January 2023].

⁵⁴ Davidson and Maclellan, *Committee Report: Mary Barbour Statue*, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

Barbour in Academic Versus Public History

It should be noted that, despite the large role played by women like Mary Barbour in the Red Clydeside movement, the relative bulk of contemporaneous writing and subsequent historiography has focused on industrial strikes and the interests and experiences of men. For example, in his book *The Legend of Red Clydeside*, Iain McLean claimed that the Glasgow rent strikes were really ‘a matter of munitions policy, not housing policy’.⁵⁶ His chapter on the rent strikes focused almost exclusively on the concerns of male industrial labourers, incorrectly attributed the rent strikes to John Maclean, and dismissed the women-led strikes, namely Barbour’s, as a kind of spontaneous movement that succeeded only because it was supported by men.⁵⁷ While Michael Fry does dedicate a chapter in his history of Glasgow to the progress of women from the mid-nineteenth century on, he afforded the rent strike exactly one sentence, and that relied not on Barbour’s account but on William Gallacher’s, who again was primarily concerned with industrial action and the activities of men.⁵⁸ In his memoir, Gallacher himself spared only six pages in his sixteen-page chapter on the rent strike to Mary Barbour and her ‘army of furious women’.⁵⁹

This narrow historical view of the 1915 Rent Strike has perhaps been influenced by the strict division, even among the working classes at the time, between what was considered public, or masculine, and domestic, or feminine.⁶⁰ Gillian Scott notes that ‘any initiative that took women outside their “proper sphere” required some radical version of their rights and responsibilities’.⁶¹ When speaking about the monument in the *Glasgow Evening Times*, Colin Quigley asserted that ‘there were a lot of women who were political [prior to World War One] but they were mostly from the middle classes. Things like the Suffragettes was a movement that most working-class women couldn’t afford. Mary Barbour stepped out of that.’⁶² In 1914, Edith M. Watson wrote that women, having ‘had political sense knocked into them, willy nilly, at the hands of Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour men, [and having learned] to distrust them all profoundly, and [...] all equally’, had ‘learned the rules of the political game fairly thoroughly, and have decided to play their own game in their own way.’⁶³ This is perhaps why the women-led rent strikes in Glasgow were among the first to be

⁵⁶ McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside*, p. 17.

⁵⁷ McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside*, pp. 26, 27.

⁵⁸ Michael Fry, *Glasgow: A History of the City* (Head of Zeus, 2017), p. 208.

⁵⁹ Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde*, pp. 52–58, 50–66, 53.

⁶⁰ Scott, *Feminism*, p. 20; Fry, *Glasgow*, pp. 190, 194, 207.

⁶¹ Scott, *Feminism*, p. 52.

⁶² Stuart Sandler, ‘Strike Hero Celebrated’, *Glasgow Evening Times*, 9 March 2020, p. 3.

⁶³ Edith M. Watson, ‘Women and Labour’, *Daily Herald*, 19 February 1914, p. 9.

successful, more so even than the industrial strikes led by working-class men.⁶⁴ This achievement by women for women was recognised at the time by the *Daily Herald*, which noted that ‘Glasgow women are certainly roused as never before, and once they have tackled the “rent robbers” they intend to deal with the food and fuel profiteers. Confronted by such determined women the houseowners and the authorities are impotent.’⁶⁵ However, while Red Clydesiders such as John Maclean, William Gallacher, and Patrick Dollan wrote or had several books written about their lives and activities, very little of the kind exists for equally powerful and important women such as Mary Barbour.

Lynn Abrams noted in *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700* that ‘women's historians aimed first to achieve visibility for women in the past, but today in the developed world their aim is to identify women as historical subjects or as social actors and to integrate their stories into the historical landscape.’⁶⁶ But beyond a mention in a sentence or two – and almost always as part of a list of other women who participated in Red Clydeside – Mary Barbour seems to be fundamentally absent in modern historiography. There are no extensive Mary Barbour biographies, she left no memoirs, and the bits and pieces of her scattered in contemporaneous sources have not been collected or analysed. Arguably, the first real manifestations of women's history in academia began in the 1970s, focusing primarily on women who had eschewed domesticity in favour of the public sphere. Since then, research in women's history and gender studies has moved past a domestic/public dichotomy, but it remains unclear why a housewife such as Mary Barbour, with all her extraordinary public achievements, would not have been at the forefront of the women studied by burgeoning writers of women's history. The one exception that gave Barbour more than a brief mention and placed her at the centre of the rent strike in 1915 was Joseph Melling's *Rent Strikes: Peoples' Struggle for Housing in West Scotland, 1890-1916*.⁶⁷ Richard Bryant, in his review of Melling's book, lamented that, too often, the history of the strike had been ‘witnessed through the eyes of the leaders of the “Red Clyde”, or [...] interpreted through the experiences and ideological filters of one of the left movements of the day’.⁶⁸ Barbour's story, on the other hand, illuminated ‘[t]he day-to-day hardships of

⁶⁴ Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde*, p. 58.

⁶⁵ ‘Clyde Workers' Victory’, *Daily Herald*, 6 November 1915, p. 2.

⁶⁶ Lynn Abrams, ‘Introduction: Gendering the Agenda’, in *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700*, ed. by Lynn Abrams and Eleanor Gordon (Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 1–16 (p. 2).

⁶⁷ Joseph Melling, *Rent Strikes: Peoples' Struggle for Housing in West Scotland, 1890-1916* (Polygon Books, 1983).

⁶⁸ Richard Bryant, ‘Review: Rent Strikes: People's Struggle for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916 by Joseph Melling’, *Community Development Journal*, 19.4 (1984), pp. 273–74 (p. 273).

Glasgow tenement life, the abrasive confrontations with exploitative landlords, the tenant associations, the eviction defence Committees, and above all, the women and their organisations.⁶⁹ Bryant applauded Melling for elevating women like Barbour to her earned place in history rather than relegating her to a footnote in the histories of men and Red Clydeside.

In the course of her own research, Burness noted there had been several attempts to reference Mary Barbour's history in plays, poems, and songs – though not always accurately.⁷⁰ Most recently, Barbour has been commemorated in the 1984 documentary *Red Skirts on the Clydeside*, in Alistair Hulett's 2002 song *Mrs. Barbour's Army*, and the 2007 Channel Four docuseries *Not Forgotten*. She has been memorialised in Govan via the Pearce Institute's 'Mary Barbour Suite', and she has been celebrated both at the National Museum of Scotland, which includes artefacts of the rent strike, and at the Glasgow Women's Library during a 2011-2012 multi-media art project led by future RMBA member and artist, Sharon Thomas.⁷¹ Barbour's home village of Kilbarchan installed a cairn in Barbour's memory in 2015, and Maria Fyfe and a number of Barbour's descendants were invited to participate in the unveiling.⁷² In 2016, the Parkhead Housing Association and Wheatley Group launched the Mary Barbour Award 'to recognise the unique campaigning role of women working in the voluntary sector across Glasgow.'⁷³ Nevertheless, while conducting research on behalf of the RMBA, Burness found very few comprehensive academic sources that focused on Barbour and her work, though she did uncover some of Barbour's history in Helen Crawford's unpublished memoir.⁷⁴

It is unsurprising, then, that for members of the GRG, the Mary Barbour monument helps to remind visitors that there is history in Govan.⁷⁵ This is conceivably a true necessity, as Quigley noted that when the people of Govan resisted being annexed by Glasgow in the early twentieth century, citing a millennia of their singular history, the response in Westminster was that the only thing ancient in Govan was the

⁶⁹ Bryant, 'Review: Rent Strikes: People's Struggle for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916 by Joseph Melling', p. 273.

⁷⁰ Burness, Interview.

⁷¹ 'About the Campaign'.

⁷² Brian McGuire, 'Pioneering Social Activist Mary Barbour Honoured in Her Home Village', *Paisley Scotland*, 2015 <<https://www.paisley.org.uk/2015/11/pioneering-social-activist-mary-barbour-honoured-in-her-home-village/>> [accessed 17 November 2022].

⁷³ 'First Mary Barbour Award Presented to Veteran Campaigner', *Glasgow City Council* (1619, 2016) <<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/19934/First-Mary-Barbour-Award-presented-to-veteran-campaigner>> [accessed 17 November 2022].

⁷⁴ Burness, Interview.

⁷⁵ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

dirt, asserting that Govan had no history worthy of note.⁷⁶ The still-lopsided historiography of Mary Barbour is the very reason Women's History Scotland deemed the work of the RMBA as 'so important in raising [Barbour's] profile' among the general public.⁷⁷ For Labour MSP Hugh Henry, a monument to Barbour could function as a catalyst for further learning. He implied the very subtext that I argue is now conveyed by the statue:

The worst thing that we could do is to say that all we need to do to commemorate Mary Barbour is to stick up a statue and the job will be done. Actually, the significant thing is what she stood for. She stood against injustice and exploitation.⁷⁸

Councillor Dornan also cited the need to remember Barbour and the rent strike, which were a 'massive' part of Govan's history, as a reason he supported the installation of a monument.⁷⁹ In fact, he believes lessons about 'strong women of that time' should be part of the school curriculum, 'because quite clearly, everything was dominated by men.'⁸⁰ For him, it seems the goal was not just to raise a monument to a woman, but to a strong woman who changed Govan and Scottish history and improved the lives of others at a time when women had very little political or social power. Sara Sheridan, in her imagined landscape of monuments to women in Scotland, noted that 'only 15 per cent of statues [in the UK] are raised to women and most of those to Queen Victoria.'⁸¹ She further cited a survey conducted by English Heritage in 2016, in which '40 per cent of respondents thought women did not impact history as much as men.'⁸² Additionally, Burness explained that she had been aware that there were not many statues of women in Glasgow, but she was still surprised to find just how few there are.⁸³ Creating a public portrait statue of Mary Barbour, then would permit a subtextual narrative that women and men are equally capable of making history and are equally worthy to be represented in the built environment.

With the lack of academic interest, it is not surprising then that in 2013 when the Remember the Mary Barbour Association was formed, there was essentially nothing in

⁷⁶ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group. N.B. I could not find evidence of this statement in the Parliamentary records, but it nevertheless remains in the collective memory of some Govan residents.

⁷⁷ Valerie Wright, 'Centenary of Glasgow Women's Rent Strikes', *Women's History Scotland* <<http://womenshistoryscotland.org/2015/12/24/centenary-of-glasgow-womens-rent-strikes/>> [accessed 11 October 2022].

⁷⁸ Scottish Parliament, *Mary Barbour Commemoration*, (23 May 2013, Sess. 4, Cols. 20238-20250) (Scottish Parliament), col. 20247.

⁷⁹ Dornan, Interview.

⁸⁰ Dornan, Interview.

⁸¹ Sara Sheridan, *Where Are the Women? A Guide to an Imagined Scotland* (Historic Environment Scotland, 2019), p. 9.

⁸² Sheridan, *Where*, p. 8.

⁸³ Burness, Interview.

the public built environment beyond a plaque or two in Govan to keep Barbour's memory alive. Christopher Whatley argued that '[c]ultural memory is not neutral, uniform or static. It is worked, as an orator [...] works a crowd.'⁸⁴ Yet, unless preserved, that active cultural memory is lost. Coming from the Maryhill area of Glasgow, Maria Fyfe herself was in her seventies before she learned who Barbour was and then only learned of her through Hulett's song, quoted at the beginning of this chapter.⁸⁵ As she explained:

It's appalling I'd never heard of her. I came from a Labour-voting family and spent all my adult life in the Labour Party. I was aware of John Maclean and all the men from Red Clydeside. I used to think there were no women's names because they were too tied down with domestic demands.⁸⁶

Her feeling on discovering Barbour, a housewife and mother of two children who still managed to lead a major public movement, was that she had been cheated out of an essential piece of history.⁸⁷ Fyfe concluded that the statue would help other women, other Govanites, Glaswegians, and Scots 'to take pride in what their predecessors did.'⁸⁸ So while Mary Barbour has thus far been ignored to some degree by academic historians, she was still very much part of the cultural memory and identity of Govan, and its residents set about preserving her achievements very literally in the public landscape.

Throughout the campaign for a Mary Barbour monument and what it represented, public and political support for the grassroots project was clear. In the House of Commons, SNP member Chris Stephens tabled an Early Day Motion in support of the monument, signed by twenty-four members, which would 'allow people in Govan to celebrate the life and work of an exceptional person in Glasgow's history.'⁸⁹ Anne McTaggart, Glasgow MSP for Labour, introduced S4M-05921 at Holyrood, which was a motion to support the Mary Barbour Commemoration in Glasgow. As she explained,

The case for a permanent monument to commemorate Mary Barbour's achievements is compelling [...]. We must remember the campaign's significance not only for Govan, Glasgow and Mary Barbour's legacy but in highlighting the wider absence of memorials to historically significant women.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ Whatley, *Immortal Memory*, p. 13.

⁸⁵ Anna Burnside, 'Pride of Clydeside: International Women's Day Rent Rebel Mary Barbour', *Daily Record and Sunday Mail*, 8 March 2018, pp. 16–17 (p. 16).

⁸⁶ Burnside, 'Pride of the Clydeside', p. 16.

⁸⁷ Burnside, 'Pride of the Clydeside', p. 16.

⁸⁸ Burnside, 'Pride of the Clydeside', p. 17.

⁸⁹ Chris Stephens, *Mary Barbour Statue* (27 February 2018, EDM 989) (London: House of Commons).

⁹⁰ Scottish Parliament, *Mary Barbour Commemoration* (23 May 2013, sess. 4, cols. 20238–20250) (Edinburgh: Scottish Parliament), cols. 20239–20240.

Glasgow Conservative MSP Ruth Davidson likewise supported the monument, but hoped it would ‘find a place in George Square with some of Glasgow’s other notable monuments.’⁹¹ It is unclear, however, why Davidson believed the statue should be in George Square rather than the chosen location of Govan. Perhaps it was due to George Square’s pantheon-like nature, with Davidson’s view of Barbour being unconnected to what Doreen Massey describes as the particularism, exclusivity, and essentialism of a local place, but rather was connected to some ‘supposedly greater good of some [...] supposed universal.’⁹² For Davidson, the monument was important for its representation of women in the built environment rather than as an expression of Govan history, noting that ‘Glasgow has rather neglected its famous women, but a statue of Mary Barbour is a starting point for remedying that neglect [...]. Glasgow celebrates plenty of its famous sons. It is time that we celebrated the accomplishment of our daughters, too.’⁹³ Burness noted that she believes public statues do reflect history, but that they have often been seen as reflecting those in power in a society.⁹⁴ She referenced the monuments in George Square, and how they demonstrated respect for ‘dignitaries on podiums’ but that ‘there isn’t a great deal that reflects the buoyancy of Glasgow [and of] Glaswegians.’⁹⁵ If such is the case, then the Mary Barbour monument represents a specific identity and industrial heritage unique to Govan that is arguably difficult to locate in the dominant civic identity of Glasgow at large.

A Challenge to Glasgow’s Dominant Cultural Narrative

When asked what the Mary Barbour monument teaches to the public, Quigley noted that it represents activism and grassroots organising.⁹⁶ I argue further that it is also a portrait of self-reliance grounded in a sense of worth and pride. In his study of the legacy of Red Clydeside, Arthur McIvor noted that, with regard to community museums on Glaswegian working classes and industrial heritage, it is grassroots campaigns that have worked to create ‘lasting memorials of lives spent meaningfully in [industrial] spaces where work had significance beyond the wage packet and where relationships were developed and class (and other) identities were forged.’⁹⁷ The more

⁹¹ Scottish Parliament, *Scottish Parliament, Sess. 4, Cols. 20238-20250*, col. 20240.

⁹² Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 119.

⁹³ Scottish Parliament, cols. 20240, 20241–20242.

⁹⁴ Burness, Interview.

⁹⁵ Burness, Interview.

⁹⁶ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

⁹⁷ Arthur McIvor, ‘Where Is “Red Clydeside”?’ in *Constructing Industrial Pasts: Heritage, Historical Culture and Identity in Regions Undergoing Structural Economic Transformation*, ed. by Stefan Berger (Berghahn Books, 2019), pp. 47–67 (p. 59).

official, or perhaps more academic consensus put forth by Historic Scotland in their draft report *An Industrial Heritage Strategy for Scotland*, however, is that ‘[t]he familiarity and apparent normality of recent industrial historic environments has led to dismissal, invisibility and even contempt.’⁹⁸ It is unclear who has dismissed or holds these sites in contempt, but the report recognised that industrial working-class heritage has little media or political interest and lacks high-profile advocates in marginalised communities.⁹⁹ McIvor further argued that in neoliberal, post-industrial Glasgow, the focus has been on an urban renewal that required a rebranding ‘of the city as a prospering, safe, welcoming, stylish place of hedonistic consumption, great architecture [...] and with a vibrant nightlife’; however, by erasing the realities of Glasgow’s industrial past, ‘working-class culture and social life, industrial heritage, the ravages of deindustrialization and the struggles of “Red Clydeside” have been marginalized.’¹⁰⁰ Despite the official narrative of history now tied to Glasgow’s cultural identity, according to McIvor, working-class heritage continues to be kept alive by communities seeking to assert their own local identities through public history.¹⁰¹ Examples of this can be found in the former William Gallacher Library; the former Springburn Museum on industrial heritage, the first independent community museum in Glasgow; the People’s Palace up until about the 1990s, when its exhibits began to fall more in line with the rebranded version of the post-industrial city; the Glasgow Women’s Library; and the Mary Barbour monument in Govan.

When asked why Govan had been chosen as the location of Mary Barbour’s monument, Quigley noted that no one even entertained the idea of raising the statue anywhere else.¹⁰² Despite the suggestion Ruth Davidson had made at Holyrood, GRG members noted that had the Barbour monument been placed in a location such as George Square, they would have had to put her on a plinth, which would have removed her from the people in a way that would not properly represent Barbour or her life’s work.¹⁰³ Burness described

very vigorous views being expressed in meetings in the Pearce Institute in Govan that she couldn’t go anywhere else [...]. It was the natural place for her to be: it was the site of her political activity, it was the centre point of the rent strikes, and it was an appropriate place for her.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Historic Scotland, *An Industrial Heritage Strategy for Scotland* (2015), p. 19
<https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/IH_Strategy_2nd_draft.pdf> [accessed 14 February 2023].

⁹⁹ Historic Scotland, *An Industrial Heritage Strategy for Scotland*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁰ McIvor, ‘Where Is “Red Clydeside”?’ p. 47.

¹⁰¹ McIvor, ‘Where Is “Red Clydeside”?’ p. 47.

¹⁰² Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

¹⁰³ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

¹⁰⁴ Burness, Interview.

Councillor Dornan expressed several times that the rent strike included the community, and so too did the campaign to create a monument to its most famous leader. He concluded that ‘if people pay for it, then that statue belongs there. And we paid for Mary Barbour to be [in Govan Cross]; that’s where it belongs.’¹⁰⁵ As a reflection of their own local history and identity, members of the RMBA and GRG saw no need to include Barbour in the culturally dominant narrative expressed by monuments in locations such as George Square.

Statues are transmissions of a constructed history intended to convey a specific identity, generally one that is to be celebrated as a source of pride. The Mary Barbour monument helps to codify and express an ideal collective identity of community solidarity engendered in a female leader whose activism resulted in justice and respect for the united working classes of Govan and Glasgow. Despite the fact that Govan had been annexed into Glasgow seemingly against its will, the people of Govan, as expressed here by members of the RMBA and the GRG, viewed Mary Barbour as a representation of proud, autonomous, working-class Govan capable of defining and supporting itself.

Govan’s Renewed Self-determination

When asked if the Mary Barbour monument, as a subject of Govan pride, was a part of the regeneration efforts that have been occurring in community for the past several years, Councillor Dornan expressed that the statue was not specifically part of the regeneration, but that it was not necessarily separate from it.¹⁰⁶ He spoke about his work around regeneration, including improved housing, the remediation of poverty, and a reduction in crime, which I would argue could be said to be an echo of Mary Barbour’s aims for Govan.¹⁰⁷ With a focus on community-led regeneration and the goal of making ‘Govan a more attractive, vibrant and prosperous place’, a collaboration of public agencies, organisations, elected representatives including Councillor Dornan, and Govan residents launched the Central Govan Action Plan (CGAP) in 2006.¹⁰⁸

It is described as a ‘grass roots approach that married local residents’ knowledge with professional expertise’.¹⁰⁹ Today, CGAP, through a framework of ‘governance, partnership, and investment’, manages Township Heritage Initiative funds of about

¹⁰⁵ Dornan, Interview.

¹⁰⁶ Dornan, Interview.

¹⁰⁷ Dornan, Interview.

¹⁰⁸ ‘About CGAP’, *Get Into Govan*, n.d. <<https://getintogovan.com/cgap/about-cgap/>> [accessed 10 November 2022].

¹⁰⁹ ‘About CGAP’.

£4 million and has secured investments of more than £90 million in the Govan town centre.¹¹⁰ The group commissioned a strategy and action plan in 2017 entitled *Imagine Govan: A Manifesto*, laying out aspirations for Govan over the subsequent ten years.¹¹¹ The report noted that the work done by CGAP since its inception in 2006 ‘has made Govan a better place to live, work and visit, and helped to restore the confidence of the community.’¹¹² In fact, the group was awarded the Royal Town Planning Institute Silver Jubilee Cup in 2014, with the judges acknowledging that investments in the community had ‘rais[ed] the quality of life and instill[ed] a sense of positive change in a community and place that had been in decline for the last 60 years or more.’¹¹³ While the Mary Barbour monument was not directly a result of CGAP’s work, part of the funding secured through the Govan Cross Townscape Heritage Initiative was focused on preserving the area’s heritage, helping to refurbish several buildings, the William Pearce statue, and the Aitken Memorial Fountain.¹¹⁴ This indicates, from an official and actionable standpoint, that the (perhaps selective) preservation of heritage is an essential part of regeneration, and the people of Govan are proud of what has been achieved to date and strongly supporting further efforts.¹¹⁵

Stakeholders and residents were quoted as saying ‘[t]hese changes really matter – they give everyone a lift’ and ‘[i]t’s a fantastic place to live, far removed from what it used to be’.¹¹⁶ Even in 2017, however, Govan was impacted by ‘intense concentrations of poverty and deprivation’.¹¹⁷ Citing the ‘lasting damage’ caused in the post-industrial era, CGAP has made a concerted effort to rehabilitate not only the physical landscape but also Govan’s reputation as an area known ‘for urban decline, environmental degradation, poverty and social ills.’¹¹⁸ RMBA Secretary Esmé Clark, too, noted that while the shipyards had helped make Govan what it was in Mary Barbour’s time and provided work for generations of working-class families, the community’s almost sole reliance on and perhaps inability to define Govan without them was also the source of its decline.¹¹⁹ In relation to Govan’s townscape and heritage, the 2017 manifesto noted

¹¹⁰ ‘Govan Cross Townscape Heritage Initiative’, *Glasgow City Council*, 2015
 <<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/18300/Govan-Cross-Townscape-Heritage>> [accessed 10 November 2022]; Yellow Book, *Imagine Govan: A Manifesto* (Glasgow City Council, June 2017), p. 3.

¹¹¹ Yellow Book, *Imagine Govan: A Manifesto*, p. 1.

¹¹² Yellow Book, *Imagine Govan: A Manifesto*, p. 1.

¹¹³ Qtd. in Yellow Book, *Imagine Govan: A Manifesto*, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ ‘GCTHI’.

¹¹⁵ Town Centre Planning Pilots Programme TCPPPP, *Central Govan Action Plan Case Study* (Scottish Government, November 2015), pp. 12, 14.

¹¹⁶ TCPPPP, *CGAP Case Study*, p. 15.

¹¹⁷ Yellow Book, *Imagine Govan: A Manifesto*, p. 8.

¹¹⁸ Yellow Book, *Imagine Govan: A Manifesto*, p. 8.

¹¹⁹ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

that ‘work undertaken [...] to celebrate Govan’s remarkable history and restore its rich architectural heritage’ was a key feature of the town centre’s ‘renaissance’.¹²⁰ Regeneration efforts – past, present, and future – intentionally ‘capitalise on [Govan’s] heritage’ as an ‘appealing historic quarter with a distinct sense of community and identity.’¹²¹ The town centre experience is seen as vital to encouraging social and economic revitalisation, and for the members of the Govan Reminiscence Group, the Mary Barbour monument is now part of the positive changes that are returning vibrancy to the community.¹²² The group agreed that one would be hard pressed to find such a pleasant situation as can be seen from Govan Cross while exiting any of the other stops on the subway.¹²³

Colin Quigly argued that heritage is not only valuable for the purpose of regeneration, but that it also cultivates a sense of pride and shapes local identity, stating that ‘[w]hen people care about their history, they look after their community.’¹²⁴ For example, the makers of the 2017 film *Govan Young* explored how students at the Pirie Park Primary School, one of whom was coincidentally Quigley’s daughter, formed a more positive understanding of Govan and of their own identities through the acquisition of local history and the development of historical consciousness.¹²⁵ Director David Archibald noted that the students in his film ‘viewed where they lived as a place of no importance’, yet after learning of Govan’s history, they not only felt Govan was important but were able to recount what they had learned about the past.¹²⁶ Rather than viewing Govan as an unpleasant place marked by ‘litter, dogs’ excrement, and alcoholism’, the students demonstrated a sense of community and pride in Govan, chanting ‘We’re from Govan, we’re from Govan’ while out together on a field trip.¹²⁷

In 1994, Doreen Massey described debates around the importance of local place, with some fearing a focus on the local tempts the public into ‘relapsing into past traditions, of sinking back into (what was interpreted as) the comfort of Being instead of forging ahead with the (assumed progressive) project of Becoming.’¹²⁸ Conversely, *An Industrial Heritage Strategy for Scotland* noted recently closed industrial premises are what local communities have wanted to forget, the assumption being that they can

¹²⁰ Yellow Book, *Imagine Govan: A Manifesto*, p. 13.

¹²¹ Yellow Book, *Imagine Govan: A Manifesto*, pp. 13–14.

¹²² ‘Govan Cross Townscape Heritage Initiative’; Yellow Book, *Imagine Govan: A Manifesto*, p. 29.

¹²³ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

¹²⁴ Sandler, ‘Strike Hero Celebrated’.

¹²⁵ David Archibald and others, ‘Dossier on Govan Young’, *Film Education Journal*, 1.2 (2018), pp. 193–208 (pp. 193, 194).

¹²⁶ Archibald and others, ‘Dossier’, pp. 196–97.

¹²⁷ Archibald and others, ‘Dossier’, pp. 196, 198.

¹²⁸ Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, p. 119.

move on into a bright new future with a clean break, severing links with difficult memories of decay and decline.¹²⁹ Govan seemingly reflects both sides of the debate by drawing on a local history that reached farther into the past to forget the decline and decay of the present and to renew past social constructions. The Historic Scotland report argued for ways in which public history and the regeneration of heritage can be used to help bring a place out of stagnation and decay and propel the community forward with a new sense of personal and civic pride.¹³⁰ In their collection *Heritage, Labour, and the Working-classes*, Laurajane Smith, et al, argued that many working-class communities construct their modern identities by drawing on the past, tradition, and a sense of place, particularly in times of change that weaken community bonds.¹³¹ Quigley felt that the timing of Mary Barbour's statue and the recovery of her history was key in the regeneration of Govan and has been an important part of restoring pride in the community. He noted that there was

a wee pride in Govan that was kind of lost for decades [...]. It was kind of dismal, you know, neglected, rundown, lots of brownfield sites [...]. It was quite hard to feel pride in [the area], but with the work that's been going on in the last fifteen years, [we're] walking though Govan with a sense of pride again.'¹³²

He believes the Govan community is 'quite proud' that the 1915 rent strikes 'kicked off in Govan', with Barbour's monument being a visible reminder of the benefits of self-determination.¹³³ Today, the GRG takes pride in the fact that they have played an instrumental role in ensuring Mary Barbour continues to be remembered in Govan and beyond.¹³⁴

The Unveiling and Beyond

As previously mentioned, the RMBA chose to unveil the Mary Barbour monument on International Women's Day in 2018 to much public fanfare. Unlike the majority of statues discussed thus far, rather than being unveiled by a Lord Provost, Barbour's statue was unveiled by Govan school children, demonstrating once again that the monument was about the community and its future, with the past demonstrating the

¹²⁹ Historic Scotland, *An Industrial Heritage Strategy for Scotland*, p. 19.

¹³⁰ Historic Scotland, *An Industrial Heritage Strategy for Scotland*, p. 19.

¹³¹ Laurajane Smith, Paul A. Shackle, and Gary Campbell, 'Introduction: Class Still Matters', in *Heritage, Labour, and the Working Classes*, ed. by Laurajane Smith, Paul A. Shackel, and Gary Campbell, Key Issues in Cultural Heritage (Routledge, 2011), pp. 1–16 (p. 1).

¹³² Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

¹³³ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

¹³⁴ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.



Image 5.4: Eddie Middleton, *Andrew Brown + Statue*, 2018, photograph, Northumberland.



Image 5.5: Eddie Middleton, *Govan School Children*, 2018, photograph, Northumberland.

possibility of renewed self-determination.¹³⁵ Since its presentation to the public, the monument has become a rallying place for local and national groups seeking to encapsulate their own sense of autonomy, competence, and connectedness. For example, housing advocate Alison Watson, Director of Shelter Scotland, expressed her hope in *The National* that the monument would help ‘keep the story of her achievements alive and [act] as an inspiration to future generations to take action against housing injustice in their communities.’¹³⁶ Scotland’s Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPIScotland) drew women together from all over the country in 2019 to hear the results of a High Court ruling on unfair government pensions for women born in the 1950s. Though the court ruled against the women, coordinator Rosie Dickson explained to the *Glasgow Evening Times* that the monument was chosen as their meeting site because Barbour remains an “icon” and “figurehead” for what grassroots campaigning can achieve.¹³⁷ Former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon tweeted from the statue in 2021 that she was ‘with one of my heroes, Mary Barbour’.¹³⁸ Labour and Co-op MSP, Paul Sweeney, used an image of the statue in a tweet celebrating the National Health Service’s 73rd birthday, comparing the ongoing struggle for fair wages to the struggle for fair rents.¹³⁹ Working Class History marked the third anniversary of the monument, championing Barbour as a ‘peace campaigner and a pioneering

¹³⁵ ‘Mary Barbour Statue Unveiling to Coincide with International Women’s Day’, *Glasgow City Council*, 2018 <<https://glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=22063>> [accessed 13 October 2022].

¹³⁶ Kirsteen Paterson, ‘Statue of Glasgow Rent Strike Campaigner Mary Barbour Revealed’, *The National*, 9 March 2018 <<https://www.thenational.scot/news/16075005.statue-glasgow-rent-strike-campaigner-mary-barbour-revealed/>> [accessed 17 September 2022].

¹³⁷ Qtd. in Heather Graham, ‘Activism Is Key’, *Glasgow Evening Times*, 30 September 2022, p. 18.

¹³⁸ Nicola Sturgeon (@NicolaSturgeon, 22 April 2021), ‘Sunny Govan more than living up to the name today. Good Southside campaign session with Cllr @Bell45 (with one of my heroes, Mary Barbour, watching over us)’ (tweet), <<https://t.co/tQg3c0TOOY>> [accessed 25 November 2022].

¹³⁹ Paul Sweeney (@PaulJSweeney, 3 July 2021), ‘73rd birthday of our National Health Service this Monday. It was founded 33 years after Mary Barbour’s Army fought for fair rents in Glasgow. Struggles for fair pay for all healthcare workers, and free through-life care at the point of need for all citizens continues. Solidarity.’ (tweet), <<https://t.co/TC6DmHNjz4>> [accessed 28 November 2022].

advocate of family planning services'.¹⁴⁰ The newly formed Alba Party '[i]nvok[ed] the spirit of Mary Barbour' in a tweet as they rallied at the statue for their Govan candidate in 2022.¹⁴¹ Mary Barbour and her history clearly strike a chord not only with women, not only with Govan, and not only with those of her same political bent, but with a variety of disparate groups who believe in self-reliance and in community-led fights for fairness.

This remarkable public involvement goes beyond photos and gatherings and has taken various forms. Within a week of its unveiling, Mrs. Barbour was given the famous Glasgow cone treatment, which will be discussed further in the following chapter on Wellington's monument.¹⁴² On the coldest night of the year, anonymous knitters dressed Mary Barbour's army in hats and scarfs, much to the delight of local residents.¹⁴³ The Paisley Housing Association, which had contributed to the RMBA campaign, has held rallies for equality at the statue in recognition of the 'time and abilities [women have devoted] to advancing the cause of housing.'¹⁴⁴ During the pandemic, artist Tara S. Beall dressed the statues in nursing uniforms and PPE in tribute to women carers.¹⁴⁵ Beall also leads the Strong Women of the Clyde research group, which is looking more deeply into Barbour's story in an attempt to uncover some of the unnamed women who fought as part of Mary Barbour's army. The group has so far discovered housewives who were 'articulate women of words as well as deeds, who inspired their community with rousing rhetoric on the need not only for decent housing, but for women to be treated as equal to men.'¹⁴⁶ To Maria Fyfe, this was evidence that 'Govanites had taken Barbour into their hearts.'¹⁴⁷ Engagement with

¹⁴⁰ Working Class History (@wrkclasshistory, 8 March 2021), '#OtD 8 Mar 1918, a monument to Mary Barbour was unveiled in Glasgow. Barbour Was a peace campaigner and a pioneering advocate of family planning services, and a leader during the great Glasgow rent strike of 1915.' (tweet), <<https://t.co/kwvT4ioSoM>> [accessed 28 November 2022].

¹⁴¹ Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh (@TasminaSheikh, 3 May 2022), 'Invoking the spirit of Mary Barbour with @AlbaParty Govan candidate, Uche Gladys Emordi #AlbaWomen #AlbaStandsForScotland #ALBAforIndependence Vote ALBA#1' (tweet), <<https://t.co/AVI0uVpHi9>> [accessed 28 November 2022].

¹⁴² Aftab Ali, 'Mary Barbour Statue in Govan Gets "Glasgow Cone Treatment" One Week After Unveiling', *Glasgow Evening Times*, 14 March 2018 <<https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/16085594.mary-barbour-statue-govan-gets-glasgow-cone-treatment-one-week-unveiling/>> [accessed 17 August 2022].

¹⁴³ Niall Christie, 'Famous Mary Barbour Statue Covered in Woolies on Freezing Night of the Year', *Glasgow Evening Times*, 5 December 2018, p. 3.

¹⁴⁴ Kenneth Speirs, 'Sign Equals How Far We've Come in Fight for Fairness', *Paisley Daily Express*, 6 March 2020, p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ Martin Williams, 'The Govan Tribute to Women Carers in the Pandemic - Through Art', *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 6 September 2021 <<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/homenews/19560201.govan-tribute-women-carers-pandemic---art/>> [accessed 19 December 2022].

¹⁴⁶ Karin Goodwin, 'New Discoveries as Strong Women Follow in the Footsteps of a Feminist Rebel', *The National*, 3 March 2019 <<https://www.thenational.scot/news/17472165.new-discoveries-strong-women-follow-footsteps-feminist-rebel/>> [accessed 17 December 2022].

¹⁴⁷ Goodwin, 'New Discoveries as Strong Women Follow in the Footsteps of a Feminist Rebel'.

the monument and its subtext of self-determination demonstratively instils a sense of pride, legitimacy, and power among those who gather there for their specific cause.

When asked what the statue means to Govan as a community now that it has been in place since 2018, Clark noted the Barbour monument has, in a way, been adopted by the people of Govan, and Quigley explained that more young people now know about her and that the rent strikes have become part of the school curriculum since the RMBA campaign.¹⁴⁸ Quigley noted he has never heard a bad word about the statue nor does he know of any occasion when it has been spoken of in a negative context.¹⁴⁹ It seems evident that, after the installation of her monument, Mary Barbour is much more in the historical consciousness of residents as a person to respect and celebrate, not only in Govan, but also in Glasgow and Scotland. In 2019, when the *Glasgow Evening Times* went on the ‘hunt for the greatest Glaswegian of all time’, Mary Barbour was included in the one hundred individuals under consideration.¹⁵⁰ When Maria Fyfe died in 2020, Mary Barbour was very much a part of the tributes to the former Labour MP, with both being described as women ‘who fought injustice and won’, ‘took people with [them]’, and ‘lived a life of public service.’¹⁵¹ The GRG is pleased and proud to see the number of groups coming to demonstrate, celebrate, and photograph themselves in front of the monument, with Quigley observing that most of the groups are promoting ‘good causes, fitting for what Mary Barbour herself did.’¹⁵² They noted with a bit of surprise that ‘all the kids respect it’ and though vandalism is always a concern, no one has ever damaged Barbour’s monument.¹⁵³ In fact, Clark recalled an incident when two inebriated football supporters were throwing chips at the monument. Yet, when another local reprimanded them and reminded them that it was Mary Barbour, one of the men apologised and immediately picked up the lobbed chips and took them away.¹⁵⁴ Apparently, if honouring Barbour brings honour to Govan and its residents, then dishonouring her monument would likewise dishonour the community.

¹⁴⁸ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

¹⁴⁹ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

¹⁵⁰ Ann Fortheringham, ‘Greatest Glaswegian’, *Glasgow Evening Times*, 6 August 2019, p. 8.

¹⁵¹ Johann Lamont, “‘A Woman Who Fought Injustice and Won’: A Tribute to Maria Fyfe”, *Daily Record and Sunday Mail*, 4 December 2020 <<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/a-woman-who-fought-injustice-23117040>> [accessed 19 December 2022].

¹⁵² Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

¹⁵³ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

¹⁵⁴ Govan Reminiscence Group, Focus Group.

Conclusion

The Mary Barbour monument can be argued to act not only as an artefact of public history but also as an allegory of the spirit of Govan, which both inspired Barbour and is re-inspired by her in turn. It is part of a new narrative accrual, with a referentiality that directly refutes decades of a community identity bounded by decay. It was the community, not academics, who preserved the memory of Mary Barbour.

Regeneration was not the effort of the Council, per se, but of neighbourhood leaders. Honouring Barbour and her achievements reflects the intentional state entailment of the narrative, with her lifelong work toward a thriving Govan bolstering modern desires and beliefs that Govan is not and never was a lost cause. The monument to Mary Barbour now stands in Govan Cross not because the political and cultural elites of Glasgow unilaterally determined this would be a good thing, but because a grassroots effort by the people of Govan put it there. Resident David Patterson explained, 'We have a radical tradition, but it's not because we've got a statue of Mary Barbour. It's always been here [...]. We can't rely on anybody else to do it for us.'¹⁵⁵ This sentiment was reinforced by Heather Graham who looked back to Barbour as part of 'a long and proud tradition' and concluded that 'standing in [collective] solidarity with our neighbours against oppression and those who hold the levers of power is second nature to us.'¹⁵⁶ Despite not occupying a place among the grand academic narratives of Scottish history, Mary Barbour has been remembered and respected by the citizens of Govan who aspire to her ideals of self-reliance and community cohesion. The unique nature of the socialist and industrial community in Mary Barbour's time helped shape her as a leader, activist, and politician, and she used her influence not to benefit herself but to improve the lives of Glasgow's working classes, particularly in Govan. Rather than being imposed upon the people, the Mary Barbour monument was enthusiastically contributed to and welcomed as a reminder of what Govan was and still could be. It is unknown whether or not the monument would have inspired the levels of public engagement seen today had the significant rejuvenation efforts of CGAP not been well underway at the time it was installed, but there seems little doubt that those residents who learn about Mary Barbour and her history are proud that she was a member of the Govan community.

Mary Barbour's monument is a prime example of a portrait statue that places pride not just in a single person but in the community from which she came. Though

¹⁵⁵ Anna Burnside, 'The Clyde Divide; What People Living on the Other Side of the River Think of the Climate Summit', *Daily Record and Sunday Mail*, 31 October 2021, pp. 8–9 (p. 9).

¹⁵⁶ Graham, 'Activism Is Key'.

having come through some dark years with little to hope for or be proud of, the community of Govan ignited within itself a renewed sense of self-determination. The rejuvenation currently underway both inspired and reflects Govan's sense of its potential, despite what more culturally dominant narratives might have expressed. Much like the Lord Wellington monument and its traffic cone that will be examined in the following chapter, the Mary Barbour monument transmits the narrative of a people who are both powerful and resilient, creating a subtext of their own identity for themselves.

6. The Duke of Wellington: Death of the Author via Subtext



Image 6.1: Carlo Marochetti, *The Duke of Wellington*, 1844, bronze on a granite plinth, bronze bas-reliefs, Glasgow.

As *La Pasionaria* was being installed at Custom House Quay in 1980 and as industry was collapsing up and down the River Clyde, the people of Glasgow still managed to maintain what can only be described as a resilient, if perverse sense of humour. At some point in the early 1980s, the almost 150-year-old Duke of Wellington monument became the focus of a light-hearted prank in the midst of dramatic changes to the social and cultural systems of Glasgow. The final case study of the context and subtext of the narratives of Glasgow's public portrait monuments tells the story of the Duke of Wellington monument and its now iconic traffic cone. (See Image 6.1.)¹ The be-coned 'Iron Duke' in many ways weaves together each of the subtexts expressed in the previous case studies, from aspirations of exceptionalism to the triumphant oppressed to grassroots self-determination.

While erected in the nineteenth century as a celebration of British dominance, the monument's subtextual narrative has since experienced a kind of death of the author. Juilee Decker argued that, in the case of statues, the audience 'project[s] the present onto the past' with viewers as 'part of [an] ongoing narrative form.'² She contended that modern publics understand the impact of monuments in the built landscape and the ways in which they might 'operate in opposition to [and I would also argue in support of] ideals of citizenship, identity, and belonging.'³ By obstinately placing a traffic cone on the venerable Duke's head for decades, countless anonymous mischief-makers fundamentally changed the

¹ Photo: Erin Burrows, 2024.

² Juilee Decker, 'Introduction', in *Fallen Monuments and Contested Memorials*, ed. by Juilee Decker (Routledge, 2023), p. 4.

³ Juilee Decker, 'Introduction', p. 3.

subtextual narrative of the Wellington monument from one of vanity and British imperial power to that of a nameless public deciding for itself what is worthy of pride and habitual remembrance. Unbeknownst to the traffic cone conspirators who first began placing the cone on Wellington's head was that their actions would soon create arguably the world's most well-known meme of Glasgow, as defined by Dawkins. The mischievous prank very clearly illustrated a shift from the nineteenth-century values and beliefs regarding Glasgow as a city of the empire. What was instead conveyed was a decentralised and perhaps more accurate expression of Glasgow's civic identity as a city of radicals and grassroots agitators that lampooned the anachronistic insistence on exceptionalism within the context of an English political hegemony. The meme of Wellington with his traffic cone has endured for generations, transmitted from the living memories of contemporary Glaswegians into the city's collective memory. Now one of the defining icons of Glasgow, Wellington with his cone demonstrates a decades-long battle between those who desired to maintain the identity of Glasgow as dignified and cultured city and the anonymous pranksters who eschewed such romanticisms in favour of humour, creativity, and a challenge to authority.

The monument itself, designed by Baron Carlo Marochetti, depicts a life-sized bronze sculpture of Wellington in military dress on his war horse Copenhagen. The granite pedestal, designed by architect James Smith, features four bronze relief panels relating to war and peace on each side. These include two depictions of Wellington's first and last military victories at the Battle of Assaye and the Battle of Waterloo respectively, a vignette of a soldier returning home, and finally a tableau of a former soldier at work ploughing his fields. It is a consolidation of the sources of nineteenth-century British pride. Nevertheless, despite the base featuring Scottish soldiers, the symbolism of the statue and its reliefs has overall very little to do with Glasgow's citizens or its history and instead folds the identity of the city into that of the empire. Discussing the use of monuments to concretise identity, Caitlin White argued that monuments 'aim to cultivate imagined, collective identities among citizens of the community [as well as to serve] as tangible territorial markers for an identity group.'⁴ In the 1840s, the Duke of Wellington monument in Glasgow was intended as a display of Britain's global power, with Glasgow asserting its identity as its Second City. Placed in the city centre in the Royal Exchange, the monument then served as a territorial marker

⁴ Caitlin White, 'The Role of the Public in Shaping New Collective Memory(ies)', in *Public in Public History*, ed. by Joanna Wojdon and Dorota Wiśniewska (Routledge, 2022), pp. 126–41 (p. 130).

for the merchants, industrialists, and the ruling classes who, by ignoring the existence of Glasgow's radicals and working classes, attempted to signpost the true identity of the city. However, by the late twentieth century, the homage to imperialism represented by the Duke of Wellington when it was installed in 1842 clearly failed to represent the modern nature of the city and the resiliency of its people. It would be hard to argue that there was some profound political or identity-based motivation behind the first coning of the monument, but the same cannot be said for the fact that the cone has been consistently and stubbornly replaced each time it was removed by the Glasgow City Council. As such, the statue has since become the territorial marker for an entirely new segment of the population and disrupted the dominant narrative being shaped by a modern bourgeoisie around Glasgow's post-industrial identity.⁵

The prank began at a time when Scottish nationalism and a will for self-governance began to take hold; the cone represented figuratively and soon literally a challenge to political power and governing institutions. With neoliberalism and Thatcherism on the rise, the coning of the Duke was a repudiation of the supremacy of empire and capitalism. The repeated act seemed an intentional antagonisation of a governing power that was neither vested in the working classes nor the young people meant to take up the new social and cultural mores that would regenerate Glasgow. Keith Lowe has argued that

[m]onuments reflect our values, and every society deceives itself that its values are eternal: it is for this reason that we cast those values in stone and set them upon a pedestal. But when the world changes, our monuments – and the values they represent – remain frozen in time.⁶

I would counter, though, that this is demonstrably untrue in such cases where the public actively engages to reframe a monument's original narrative as a farce and superimposes a new narrative with new subtexts in its place. The interpretation of a monument still rests with the viewer and may be reconstructed by a group to represent a repudiation of old values and an embracing of the new.

The decades long battle over Wellington's cone demonstrates how a statue can be completely co-opted to define a new urban identity, one that can be argued is at odds

⁵ For example, the Glasgow's Miles Better campaign was launched in 1983 to draw in tourism and combat Glasgow's negative image as a city in decline; the Glasgow Garden Festival was held in 1988 as part of a national effort to regenerate land left disused after deindustrialisation; and the city was chosen as the European City of Culture in 1990 in part because of its post-industrial regeneration efforts and shift to a service-based economy centred on the arts and heritage.

⁶ Keith Lowe, *Prisoners of History* (London: William Collins, 2020), p. xvii.

with the original intent of the commissioners. Though focusing their research on public art in the Gorbals in Glasgow, Venda Lousie Pollock and Ronan Paddison contend that the formation of collective emotion around artefacts such as monuments can foster a sense of community, with ‘public participation [...] evoked as important in the production process or as part of the artwork itself.’⁷ Likewise, White determined that ‘[t]hrough the alteration, removal or destruction of [...] monuments, we are reminded that the publics in the present are as much receptors and effectors of their collective social identities as the publics who campaigned, fundraised, lobbied and erected them.’⁸ As noted in the chapter on George Square’s monuments, at the time the Duke of Wellington statue was first installed, the narratives expressed by such statues often imposed subtexts of white, male greatness or class supremacy or of the ‘rightness’ of political ideologies on contemporaneous publics. However, the new narrative represented by Wellington and his cone was not developed by authorities or elites, but by those who effectively discredited the original subtext of self-evident exceptionalism the commissioners wished to transmit with one that better represented the city and its population.



Image 6.2: William Say, *Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington*, 1814, mezzotint, 22.2 cm x 18.9 cm, NPG D11325, National Portrait Gallery.

The Wellington case study is a demonstration of how a defined group with a defined agenda first erected a monument in the centre of Glasgow and how an anonymous, amorphous, and persistent group changed the nature of the statue over decades to reinterpret and eschew long-established histories and identities. To understand the original narrative and how it

⁷ Venda Louise Pollock and Ronan Paddison, ‘On Place-Making, Participation and Public Art: The Gorbals, Glasgow’, *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, 7, 1 (2014), pp. 85–105 (pp. 85, 86).

⁸ White, ‘The Role of the Public in Shaping New Collective Memory(ies)’, p. 138.

fundamentally changed over time, I will first explain who Arthur Wellesley was and why a man wholly unconnected to Glasgow was chosen as the subject of a portrait monument in the city. I then provide a more extensive examination of the original commissioners and their aims before concluding with the modern battle over Wellington's cone which pitted random, everyday Glaswegians against the ruling authority of the Glasgow City Council.

Arthur Wellesley, the 1st Duke of Wellington

Arthur Wellesley was a British army officer and prime minister who was born into an aristocratic family in Dublin in 1769.⁹ Though Wellesley was triumphant at the Battle of Waterloo that ended the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, as noted in the discussion of George Square, Sir John Moore had described him as inexperienced and out of his depth shortly before he was killed in 1809 while under Wellesley's command. Even so, in 1814, the Prince Regent requested the government establish the Dukedom of Wellington, with Wellesley as the first Duke, to reward his military service, which the Chancellor described as 'glorious and beneficial [...] to this country and Europe at large' and which 'raised the military renown of this country.'¹⁰ Of note, however, is the Chancellor's reluctance to commission a public monument for the new and still living Duke, with English MP Samuel Whitbread noting 'that the merit of men was seldom allowed in their own day; and that they must trust to posterity for that fame which their contemporaries denied them'.¹¹ However, after Wellington's victory at Waterloo and his subsequent terms as a cabinet minister (1818-1827) and then Prime Minister (1828-1830), there were those who eventually deemed it appropriate to honour the Duke's achievements while he still lived.

Perhaps prompted by rumours of the Duke's serious ill health, a Glasgow Committee was formed in 1840 to erect 'a statue or some testimonial' to Wellington in the city.¹² Upon learning that Glasgow intended to produce a public statue in his honour, the Duke called the commemoration of "the public services in which I have

⁹ Norman Gash, 'Wellesley [Formerly Wesley], Arthur, First Duke of Wellington (1769–1852), Army Officer and Prime Minister', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2011
<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-29001>> [accessed 31 August 2023].

¹⁰ House of Commons, Duke of Wellington, (12 May 1814, Vol. 27, Cols. 825-832) (Hansard), cols 825, 826.

¹¹ House of Commons, Duke of Wellington, cols 827–832.

¹² 'Duke of Wellington's Health', *Fife Herald*, 27 February 1840, p. 2; 'Glasgow Wellington Testimonial', *Fife Herald*, 27 February 1840, p. 2. N.B. A statue was also being proposed in Edinburgh at about the same time, with their Committee justifying their efforts by claiming that 'the fame of the Duke of Wellington [was] national property'. See W. Horne and James Gregg, 'To the Landowners, Tenants, and Others of the County of Caithness', *John O'Groat Journal*, 7 February 1840; James Forrest, 'Wellington Testimonial', *Fife Herald*, 16 January 1840, p. 1.

been engaged [...] one of the highest compliments which I have ever received, coming as it does altogether unexpectedly, from a city of such rank and importance”, laterally confirming Glasgow’s success in establishing its identity as the Second City.¹³ With a nod to his own greatness, Wellington immodestly exclaimed that

[t]he true and noble end of public monuments [was] to enforce the conviction, that the example of duties faithfully discharged is always highly beneficial – that there is no duty, however trifling, that can be neglected with impunity – and that there are few services, however difficult, which, by patience and perseverance, may not be successfully performed.¹⁴

At a time when ‘duty’ for the common person often meant drudge labour, subservience to land owners, and stamping down one’s own struggles for self-determination, these words may have been interpreted much differently by the everyday people of Glasgow versus the city’s ruling classes. This, however, would be just a small part of the dissonance that plagued the commissioners of Wellington’s monument.

The Glasgow Monument

The first general meeting to discuss erecting a monument to Wellington in the city was held on 18 February 1840, and its attendees included the Lord Provost Henry Dunlop, the Sheriff of Lanarkshire Archibald Alison, and several Dukes, Earls, Viscounts, MPs, and Esquires.¹⁵ Their resolution stated

[t]hat the eminent services of his Grace the Duke of Wellington deserve the gratitude of his Country, and ought to be commemorated by a suitable Memorial erected in this city by the Inhabitants of Glasgow and the West of Scotland.¹⁶

The group of eminent men decided upon an equestrian statue as ‘the most suitable mode of perpetuating [their] sentiments’.¹⁷ The Lord Provost was elected as the Committee chair, with Andrew Dalglish selected as the convenor and Robert Lamond selected as the secretary.¹⁸ However, though the Committee seemed initially to be collegial and focused on the same outcome, both the subject of the monument and the choice of artist were soon highly contested.

¹³ Qtd. in ‘Erection of the Glasgow Equestrian Statue in Honour of His Grace the Duke of Wellington’, *Glasgow Citizen*, 12 October 1844, p. 1.

¹⁴ Qtd. in ‘Erection of the Glasgow...’

¹⁵ Glasgow, University of Glasgow Special Collections, ‘Appendix: Wellington Memorial Committee Meeting Minutes, No.1’, in *Glasgow Wellington Memorial*, Sp Coll Mu Add. q19 (Glasgow University Press, 1841), pp. 1–2.

¹⁶ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. 1’, p. 1.

¹⁷ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. 1’, p. 1.

¹⁸ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. 1’, p. 1.

Controversy over the subject

The first official General Meeting of the Committee of the Subscribers met on 20 February 1840, where the main topic of discussion was fundraising.¹⁹ The meeting was well attended, with most of the speeches given being complimentary towards Wellington. The *Fife Herald* noted, however, that there were Chartists in attendance who ‘gave the managers of the meeting some trouble’.²⁰ One proposed that, rather than form a subscription committee for a monument to Wellington, monies instead be raised to establish a school in atonement for the “the evils this country has perpetuated and suffered” through the former general and prime minister.²¹ The speaker apparently went a step too far, however, when he called not only Wellington but also Lord Nelson “cut-throats immortal”, at which time he was shouted down by others in attendance.²² Opposition by Chartists to the Wellington statue were expressed not only at the public meeting in 1840, but also later in the *Chartist Circular*. In May 1841, the paper described Wellington as a ‘cold-blooded, unfeeling monster’.²³ It cited a letter he had written in August 1800 while serving in India, in which he described being responsible for the drowning deaths of 5,000 rebels, with his own troops having ‘pockets full of money, the produce of plunder’.²⁴ He openly celebrated the army’s beating, burning, plundering, and destruction ‘in all parts of the country’ in their efforts to put down the Indian rebellion.²⁵ The *Chartist Circular* concluded that in a Britain governed by such as Wellington, ‘[f]reedom will have fled and left a land of slaves as base as the monster who penned the horrid words above.’²⁶ The protests by the Chartists seemed to have limited effect, however, as the Committee secured £3,500 in funding from a relatively small group of people in just its first meeting, a marked contrast to the struggle to secure funds for the monument to Sir John Moore a generation before.²⁷ The Committee eventually secured subscriptions totalled a staggering £10,000, more than triple what the average monument cost at the time and about £850,000 today, with the funds ‘being paid up with much cheerfulness’.²⁸ Those with income to spare seemed eager to give it to the

¹⁹ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. II’, pp. 3–4.

²⁰ ‘Glasgow Wellington Testimonial’.

²¹ Qtd. in ‘Glasgow Wellington Testimonial’.

²² Qtd. in ‘Glasgow Wellington Testimonial’.

²³ “‘Duke’ of Wellington’, *Chartist Circular*, 22 May 1841, p. 4.

²⁴ “‘Duke’ of Wellington’.

²⁵ “‘Duke’ of Wellington’.

²⁶ “‘Duke’ of Wellington’.

²⁷ ‘Glasgow Wellington Testimonial’.

²⁸ ‘The Glasgow Wellington Testimonial’, *Inverness Courier*, 29 April 1840, p. 3. See Appendix A for the average cost of monuments at the time.

Wellington committee; though, it is doubtful that this cheerfulness was exhibited as uniformly or at all by Chartists and other marginalised groups in Glasgow. There was clearly something more at stake for the wealthy who poured money into the monument than simply honouring Arthur Wellesley.

Controversy over the artist

While the opposition to Wellington as a subject was apparent if unsuccessful, the controversy over the artist was much more heated and demonstrated the underlying motivations of several of the commissioners in erecting a portrait statue of the Duke in Glasgow. The squabbling went so far as to require legal redress by the end, and though the back-and-forth might appear petty or even duplicitous at times, it revealed subtextual intent that went beyond just winning the argument. One faction seemed to view Glasgow as an analogue of England – or more generously Britain – that should behave as such, while others wished to establish Glasgow not only as a great British city but a great European centre of cultural and economic achievement in its own right. In either case, as great men in a great city, these subtexts of Glasgow's identity would reflect directly onto and thus raise the status of the statue's commissioners.

On 30 April 1840, the Committee began to discuss who might be employed as the monument sculptor, with a subcommittee appointed to 'procure information regarding the most eminent Sculptors in Europe'.²⁹ By September, the subcommittee had sent invitations to 'six of the most eminent Artists in the British school of sculpture [four English sculptors: Edward Hodges Baily, Francis Leggatt Chantrey, Richard Westmacott, and Richard James Wyatt; and two Scottish sculptors: Thomas Campbell and John Steell]' along with 'three foreign Artists [Carlo Marochetti from France and Christian Daniel Rauch and Ludwig Michael Schwanthaler from Germany] to participate in the selection process'.³⁰ All of the artists responded affirmatively to the invitation with the exception of Rauch and Westmacott.³¹ Several months later on 20 October, the subcommittee met to discuss its criteria for the monument and to determine those artists who might be capable of meeting them. Archibald McLellan, who had previously been the president of the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, which advocated for improving the taste for and knowledge of the fine arts, made a motion to

²⁹ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. III', p. 4.

³⁰ Glasgow, University of Glasgow Special Collections, Archibald McClellan, 'Letter to Archibald Alison from Archibald M'Lellan on Mr Alison's Motion That a Foreign Artist Be Employed to Execute the Equestrian Statue of His Grade The Duke of Wellington, To Be Erected in This City, 20 October 1840', in *Glasgow Wellington Memorial*, Sp Coll Mu Add. q19 (Glasgow University Press, 1841), p. 2.

³¹ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. V and IX', pp. 5, 13.

select an artist from ‘the English school of Sculpture’.³² He recommended Sir Frances Chantrey, who had recently produced the Watt statue in George Square; however, this recommendation was ignored when Sheriff Alison and the Lord Provost instead moved to contract with Baron Marochetti, based on his skill in producing the *Equestrian Statue of Emanuel Duke of Savoy* at Turin.³³ The subcommittee voted in favour of Marochetti; though, McLellan dissented.³⁴

Nevertheless, McLellan continued his protestations in an October 1840 letter to Sheriff Alison, incensed at Alison’s argument that a foreigner, who had ‘had advantages in studying the magnificent remains of Grecian art’, would produce ‘a foreign work of Art worthy of [Glaswegians] study and imitation’, and would ‘[stimulate] the energies of our native Artists’.³⁵ It is through McLellan’s letter that the core of the resulting battle became apparent, and very little of it had to do with how to properly commemorate the Duke of Wellington. McLellan contended that erecting a monument by a foreign artist would result in ‘the imputation of a national inferiority in the walks of fancy and imagination.’³⁶ He chided that if Alison was

resolved upon having an abstract work of art, in which the British character of the horse and its rider shall be merged in the abstract and ideal, why not at once go to the fountain-head, and take a horse and his rider [...] from the frieze of the Parthenon.³⁷

He lamented that ‘[t]he instances of neglect of our own most precious flowers of genius for flaunting exotics, are, unfortunately for the character of the nation, too numerous’ and he asked how Alison and the Committee could justify sending ‘£10,000 out of the kingdom.’³⁸ McLellan provided a lengthy argument based on art history and the contemporary condition of both British and Continental art, insisting that he was not compelled by ‘silly vanity’ but ‘by a desire to vindicate the arts and artists of [his] native land’.³⁹ It became apparent, though, that McLellan prioritised the arts and artists of England, rather than the United Kingdom as a whole; though any artist from Britain were preferable to those from elsewhere.

Soon, there were concerted battles over which artists should be considered, often using capricious standards to narrow the Committee’s options. At the next General Meeting on 30 October, where the selection of the artist was to have been debated,

³² ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. VI’, p. 6.

³³ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. VI’, pp. 6, 7.

³⁴ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. VI’, p. 7.

³⁵ McClellan, ‘Letter to Archibald Alison’, pp. 3–4.

³⁶ McClellan, ‘Letter to Archibald Alison’, p. 5.

³⁷ McClellan, ‘Letter to Archibald Alison’, p. 21.

³⁸ McClellan, ‘Letter to Archibald Alison’, p. 27.

³⁹ McClellan, ‘Letter to Archibald Alison’, p. 29.

McLellan successfully argued to publish a report for circulation among the Committee regarding all of the information collected about and responses received from the artists before any further discussion of the sculptor occurred.⁴⁰ Furthermore, in the following month, William Stirling and Archibald McLellan again attempted to limit the selection sculptor to an English or British artist, but failed to do so.⁴¹ Perhaps seeing a protracted conflict on the horizon, the Lord Provost moved to confer the power to select an artist solely to the subcommittee as a means to limit the number of committee members with the authority to provide input.⁴² McLellan was opposed to this motion, but his amendment to leave the power of selection with the full Committee of Subscribers was not successful.⁴³ When the subcommittee met again on 16 December 1840, they declared the list of artists complete after adding August Kiss of Berlin; Welsh sculptor John Gibson and Scottish sculptor Lawrence McDonald, both then living in Rome; and Benedetto Pistrucci, an Italian engraver and medallist in London famous for crafting the Waterloo Medal.⁴⁴ Changing tack, William Stirling, seconded by McLellan, moved to limit the selection of artists to those who had ‘already executed a likeness of his Grace’, which would narrow the selection to only the English sculptor Chantrey.⁴⁵ McLellan insisted that the English school of sculpture had an ‘admitted pre-eminence in portraiture that [gave] it a decided advantage over the Continental schools in the execution of a truly national and characteristic statue of His Grace’.⁴⁶ The motion by Stirling was withdrawn after Sheriff Alison argued, supported by the Lord Provost, that Wellington expressly wished to have the Committee employ the best artist, ‘without reference to his having already executed a likeness of the Duke or not, or to his being a foreign or British artist’.⁴⁷ Setting aside the debate, the subcommittee moved on to detail its specifications for the commission to all of the invited artists, including that Wellington be depicted in the prime of his life on a horse, that a model of the proposed statue be submitted ahead of any decision, and that a life-sized bust of the Duke’s likeness be completed along with the model.⁴⁸

The subcommittee next met on 14 April 1841, when Sheriff Alison again motioned for the subcommittee to select Marochetti as the only ‘Artist to whom the

⁴⁰ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. VII’, p. 9.

⁴¹ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. VIII’, p. 11.

⁴² ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. VIII’, p. 11.

⁴³ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. VIII’, p. 11.

⁴⁴ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. IX’, p. 12.

⁴⁵ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. IX’, p. 13.

⁴⁶ McClellan, ‘Letter to Archibald Alison’, pp. 2, 3.

⁴⁷ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. IX’, p. 13.

⁴⁸ ‘Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. IX’, p. 13.

preparing of a Model [...] be entrusted', which was agreed upon by the subcommittee and precluded all opportunities for the other artists to participate.⁴⁹ McLellan and George Macintosh futilely motioned that another report be created to explain several issues, including why no British artist was deemed competent enough to compete due to his perceived inferiority to Continental artists and why no correspondence or other materials sent by any of the artists had been provided to the subcommittee.⁵⁰ A week later, after Alison renewed his motion to select Marochetti outright, McLellan and Macintosh countered to allow 'any Member of this Committee [...] to place on the table [...] a Model of the statue of the Duke of Wellington from any of the artists on the Committee's lists.'⁵¹ For reasons not explained in the minutes, this seemingly reasonable request was denied, prompting George Houston, MP, to attempt to replace Marochetti's name with that of Welsh sculptor John Gibson, with McLellan and Macintosh suggesting an amendment to Alison's motion to permit both Marochetti and Francis Chantrey the opportunity to provide a model to the Committee.⁵² These amendments, too, were deemed unnecessary by the subcommittee, and the new Lord Provost, James Campbell, finally moved to proceed on voting on Alison's motion to select Marochetti to produce the only model to be evaluated by the Committee.⁵³ This motion passed under protest from McLellan, with a written dissent from Stirling supported by Macintosh and Leckie Ewing.⁵⁴

The intransigence of the majority of the committee to consider any sculptor but Marochetti must have seemed frustratingly prejudicial to the likes of McLellan, Stirling, Macintosh, and Ewing, but what was unknown to any of the opposing gentlemen at the time was that the artist had already been informed that he had been chosen to complete the monument and was even then making preparations to travel to London. Though at the time Marochetti was working on a monument to Napoleon Bonaparte in Paris, members of the subcommittee had extended an invitation for him to meet with the Duke in May 1841, both to make his acquaintance and to allow the artist an opportunity to sketch or sculpt a model during a sitting.⁵⁵ When the Duke refused the introduction until he had been given notice from Glasgow that Marochetti had been

⁴⁹ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. X', p. 15.

⁵⁰ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. X', pp. 15–16.

⁵¹ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. XI', p. 17.

⁵² 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. XI', p. 17.

⁵³ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. XI', p. 17.

⁵⁴ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. XI', p. 17.

⁵⁵ McClellan, p. 24; Glasgow, University of Glasgow Special Collections, 'A Statement of Facts and a Narrative of the Proceedings of the Sub-Committee on the Glasgow Wellington Memorial, Since the Last Meeting of the General Committee', in *Glasgow Wellington Memorial*, Sp Coll Mu Add. q19 (Glasgow University Press, 1841), pp. 12, 13.

selected as the artist, the Committee Secretary Robert Lamond wrote to Wellington 'to intimate' that he had been officially selected by a vote of the subcommittee, which was clearly not then the case.⁵⁶ It was from this May meeting that Marochetti created his model bust, which he brought with him to Glasgow along with his model in June 1841, where he was received by only a fraction of the monument subcommittee.⁵⁷

Within a fortnight at the next full meeting of the subcommittee on 18 June 1841, Marochetti was formally selected as the sculptor, with the subcommittee having reviewed no models from the many other artists invited to participate.⁵⁸ Unsurprisingly, there was justifiable outrage that not all members of the subcommittee had been given adequate time to attend the viewing with Marochetti or to participate in the selection decision made behind the scenes months prior.⁵⁹ Notwithstanding, Sheriff Alison pushed the Committee to officially select Marochetti, which was vehemently opposed by McLellan, who amended Alison's motion to state that the Committee '[did] not approve of the Model produced by Baron Marochetti, because it [did] not fulfil the instructions' and failed to demonstrate the required level of competency.⁶⁰ In spite of McLellan's continued protests, the subcommittee did finally vote to select Marochetti.⁶¹ The subcommittee's minutes, including all the dissenting arguments, were forwarded to Marochetti on 28 June 1841 with the notice that he would be contracted as the artist.⁶² It should be noted that Glasgow papers did later inform the public that Marochetti had refused several times to compete with British artists for the statue commission.⁶³ Furthermore, there is no evidence that Marochetti was aware of the subterfuge of certain subcommittee members, even owing to the fact that five members – Charles Hutcheson, William Stirling, William Leckie Ewing, George Mackintosh, and Archibald McLellan – had voted to send a letter to the Duke of Wellington to inform him of the deceit, with eleven members understandably voting against such a potentially humiliating communication.⁶⁴ When Marochetti was at last persuaded to take up the commission, he was affluent enough to do so free of charge except for expenses, as he was eager to "inscrib[e] his name on a public monument in this great country."⁶⁵ Even so, the fight to prevent Marochetti from taking up the commission continued.

⁵⁶ 'A Statement of Facts', pp. 12, 15.

⁵⁷ 'A Statement of Facts', pp. 18–19, 20.

⁵⁸ 'A Statement of Facts', p. 20.

⁵⁹ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. XIII', p. 19.

⁶⁰ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. XIII', pp. 19–20.

⁶¹ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. XIII', p. 20.

⁶² 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. XIII', p. 20.

⁶³ 'Erection of the Glasgow...'

⁶⁴ 'A Statement of Facts', p. 29.

⁶⁵ Qtd. in 'Erection of the Glasgow...'

By September 1841, a formal requisition was sent to convenor Andrew Dalglish to call a meeting of the full Committee to discuss the choice of artist, claiming that Marochetti's model and bust had failed to meet the criteria established by the subscribers.⁶⁶ However, because he was aware that an interdict had been requested before the court and because Dalglish maintained that the right to select the artist had been granted solely to the subcommittee, no meeting was held.⁶⁷ The interdict Dalglish referred to was a formal petition submitted by McLellan, McIntosh, Leckie Ewing, and Sterling on 2 October 1841 seeking court intervention to prevent Marochetti's 'defenders' from proceeding any further in contracting with the artist.⁶⁸ This was adjudicated by Henry Glassford Bell, who on 8 October 1841 prevented the so-called defenders from taking any further action for one month; though those men denied nearly all of the accusations levied before them in the official petition.⁶⁹ These denials were rebutted by the original petitioners, citing proof from correspondence and the minutes of both the subcommittee and full Committee meetings.⁷⁰ The five men argued that Marochetti's supporters had demonstrated an immovable partiality toward the sculptor that was not warranted based on the model and bust he had submitted.⁷¹ Lawyers for the petitioners noted that Alison, Dalglish, and others had pushed through Marochetti's submission, even after acknowledging that they themselves 'approve[d] generally of the model, but [...] disapprove[d] of it in all its particulars' and that '[i]n so far as it [was] the work of a particular artist [they] approve[d] of it; but in so far as it is a work of art, it require[d] numerous and endless emendations.'⁷² The matter was eventually settled at a General Meeting of the Subscribers, rendering any further court action unnecessary.⁷³

⁶⁶ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. XVI', pp. 23–24.

⁶⁷ 'Appendix: WMC Meeting Minutes, No. XVI', pp. 23–24.

⁶⁸ Glasgow, University of Glasgow Special Collections, Andrew Macgeorge, 'Petition of William Stirling, George M'Intosh, William Leckie Ewing, and Archibald M'Lellan to the Sheriff of Lanarkshire, 2 October 1841', in *Glasgow Wellington Memorial*, Sp Coll Mu Add. q19 (Glasgow University Press, 1841).

⁶⁹ Glasgow, University of Glasgow Special Collections, Robert Lamond, 'Answers to the Petition of William Stirling, George M'Intosh, William Leckie Ewing, and Archibald M'Lellan to the Sheriff of Lanarkshire, 8 October 1841', in *Glasgow Wellington Memorial*, Sp Coll Mu Add. Q19 (Glasgow University Press, 1841), pp. 1, 2.

⁷⁰ Glasgow, University of Glasgow Special Collections, Duncan McNeill and Charles Neaves, 'Replies for William Stirling, George M'Intosh, William Leckie Ewing, and Archibald M'Lellan to the Answers for Rowand, Alison, Findlay, Dalglish, et al', in *Glasgow Wellington Memorial*, Sp Coll Mu Add. q19 (Glasgow University Press, 1841), p. 11.

⁷¹ McNeill and Neaves, 'Replies', p. 11.

⁷² McNeill and Neaves, 'Replies', p. 11.

⁷³ Glasgow, University of Glasgow Special Collections, 'Compiled Newspaper Clippings (Pasted In)', in *Glasgow Wellington Memorial*, Sp Coll Mu Add. q19 (Glasgow University Press, 1841), p. 8.

This General Meeting was held on 27 October 1841 and was heavily reported on in Glasgow newspapers once it was understood that ‘the model and bust which the Committee [had] procured from Signor Marochetti, and which [had] been approved of by certain Members of the Sub-Committee, were not in terms [of the General Committee’s criteria], and therefore ought not to have been approved of’.⁷⁴ However, Robert Findlay expressed his belief that McLellan was driven not by justice but by ‘a jealousy which had been working month after month’.⁷⁵ Ignoring the fact that Wellington had agreed to sit for Marochetti for the purpose of completing a model, Findlay argued somewhat weakly that while the statue itself must be a strong likeness of Wellington, none of the subcommittee’s criteria stated that the model itself had to likewise bear a strong resemblance to the Duke, especially since, as he falsely claimed, Marochetti had never yet met the Duke nor apparently seen an English war horse.⁷⁶ Findlay noted that Marochetti’s intention in providing his model, including bas reliefs for the pedestal, had been to simply provide a ‘sketch’ of what ‘he intended to work out’, with the Duke as ‘the conqueror of peace for the world’ and his portrait statue as an emblem ‘of the pursuits of peace, of commerce, of agriculture, and the return of the soldier to his home.’⁷⁷ It became clear, however, as McLellan responded, that much of the correspondence between the Duke of Wellington, Marochetti, and his so-called defenders had never been provided or read aloud to the full subcommittee. Furthermore, the ‘sketch’ provided by Marochetti had been fully cast in bronze and after inspection by subcommittee members had to be corrected to some degree with cobbler’s wax.⁷⁸ McLellan further argued that the General Committee had resolved to represent the Duke ‘both as a warrior and a statesman’ and that it was ‘audacity on the part of this foreigner to offer to tamper with these elements’ by portraying Wellington as solely a ‘pacificator’.⁷⁹ He then claimed somewhat ungenerously that ‘it would be exceedingly convenient [for the artist working in France] to get quit of the idea of Wellington chasing Napoleon from the field of Waterloo, [that] this would be a matter of exceeding convenience for Marochetti, and very like the finesse and cunning of his clime.’⁸⁰ Sheriff Alison, however, ‘declared that his only object in this matter was to get a work of art which would adorn Glasgow, and make it what Turin, and other

⁷⁴ Glasgow, University of Glasgow Special Collections, Archibald Edmiston, et al, ‘Letter to Archibald McLellan, September 1841’, in *Glasgow Wellington Memorial*, Sp Coll Mu Add. q19 (Glasgow University Press, 1841); ‘Compiled Newspaper Clippings’.

⁷⁵ ‘Compiled Newspaper Clippings’, pp. 3–4.

⁷⁶ ‘Compiled Newspaper Clippings’, p. 4.

⁷⁷ ‘Compiled Newspaper Clippings’, p. 4.

⁷⁸ ‘Compiled Newspaper Clippings’, p. 5.

⁷⁹ ‘Compiled Newspaper Clippings’, p. 6.

⁸⁰ ‘Compiled Newspaper Clippings’, p. 6.

places on the continent now were, an object of attraction to strangers.’⁸¹ In the end, after all the squabbling and legal challenges, only ten members of the General Committee voted with McLellan, while twenty-four voted to allow Marochetti to proceed with erecting the monument.⁸²

Installation and reception

As news of Marochetti’s commission spread, newspapers in Glasgow kept a keen eye on the arrival of the monument, which reached Glasgow on 27 September 1844, with the artist on hand to supervise its installation.⁸³ The *Glasgow Citizen* argued that

whatever the difference of opinion may exist with regard to the political character of his Grace, or with reference to particular acts of his life, everyone must acknowledge his claims to public gratitude as a successful defender of his country, and to public admiration, as, in many respects, one of the brightest ornaments of his age.⁸⁴

There seemed to be a great deal of anticipation with regard to its arrival and installation, with newspapers prematurely announcing inauguration dates not authorised by the commissioners.⁸⁵ The statue was at last unveiled on 8 October 1844 in front of the Royal Exchange, which was deemed the most appropriate site as the city’s commerce centre, linking it to the far reaches of the empire.⁸⁶ On the day of the inauguration, several thousand people were said to have attended, rendering the streets impassable, with ‘house-tops and windows, as far as the eye could reach [...] filled with spectators’.⁸⁷ Several military regiments were also in attendance, with flags seen on adjoining roofs and ensigns depicting twenty of Wellington’s victories installed around the monument.⁸⁸ Sheriff Alison congratulated Glasgow for being the first Scottish city to produce a Wellington monument, with only one other having been erected in London in June 1844 in front of that city’s Royal Exchange. The Sheriff made the claim that Wellington’s career was “‘unstained by cruelty’”, which in light of the agitations by Chartists seems to indicate that there were two very different views of empire in the city.⁸⁹ The Duke of Wellington himself was not in attendance, as he was at that time welcoming the King of France alongside Prince Albert in Portsmouth.⁹⁰

⁸¹ ‘Compiled Newspaper Clippings’, p. 7.

⁸² ‘Compiled Newspaper Clippings’, p. 7.

⁸³ ‘Wellington Statue’, *Glasgow Citizen*, 21 September 1844, p. 2; ‘The Wellington Statue’, *Glasgow Citizen*, 28 September 1844, p. 2.

⁸⁴ ‘The Wellington Statue’, *Glasgow Citizen*, 12 October 1844, p. 2.

⁸⁵ ‘The Wellington Memorial’, *Glasgow Courier*, 28 September 1844, p. 2.

⁸⁶ ‘Erection of the Glasgow...’

⁸⁷ ‘Erection of the Glasgow...’

⁸⁸ ‘Erection of the Glasgow...’

⁸⁹ Qtd. in ‘Erection of the Glasgow...’

⁹⁰ ‘Summary of Week’s News’, *Glasgow Citizen*, 12 October 1844, p. 2.

Perhaps not unexpectedly considering the dissenting protests of the Chartists, ‘disorderly and riotous conduct’ broke out immediately following the inauguration.⁹¹ Several young men pulled down the ropes and posts that had made up the ceremony enclosure, causing mayhem and damage as they charged towards Glasgow Green and formed their loot into a massive bonfire.⁹² While the Green was quickly becoming associated with the working classes of Glasgow who might have sided with the Chartists in their sentiments towards Wellington, it is not completely clear whether or not the act was politically motivated. Furthermore, despite the fact that several officers and the entire Police Board were in attendance, it was left to the Committee to control the streets after the Board had refused to use tax payer money for security, claiming that ‘the Wellington Statue was altogether disconnected with the business of the police.’⁹³ Though the Police Commissioners were known to have been drinking after the celebrations rather than quelling the riotous youth, the blame for the ineffectual police was placed on the Committee’s poor management.⁹⁴ Whether or not the police refusal to secure the area or quell the rioting was a coordinated protest of the monument, their actions do imply that raising the staggeringly expensive portrait statue to Wellington in the city centre was of little concern to the working classes of Glasgow.

Regardless, the statue itself was applauded by several speakers as a new and beautiful adornment of which the city could be proud.⁹⁵ The cheers for Baron Marochetti were full-throated, with the sculptor appearing ‘much affected [as he] repeatedly bowed in acknowledgment’.⁹⁶ The Committee also placed a time capsule in the pedestal, including coins and documents held in two crystal bottles, with the *Glasgow Chronicle* noting these would ‘prove interesting in four or five thousand years hence, should the statue be opened up, and removed to decorate some young city, when Glasgow is in ruins – like all its old ancestors!’⁹⁷ While it was no doubt optimistic to assume the monument would last thousands of years, one can infer that the monument was primarily intended as an ornament of the Second City and that it was Glasgow and not the subject that gave the monument relevance. Upon the statue’s installation and in spite of ‘a good deal of carping criticism in reference to it,’ the monument was judged

⁹¹ ‘Disorderly and Riotous Conduct’, *Glasgow Citizen*, 12 October 1844, p. 4.

⁹² ‘Disorderly and Riotous Conduct’.

⁹³ ‘Disorderly and Riotous Conduct’; ‘Glasgow Police Board’, *Glasgow Citizen*, 12 October 1844, p. 2; ‘Glasgow Police Board’, *Glasgow Citizen*, 19 October 1844, p. 2.

⁹⁴ ‘Glasgow Police Board’. N.B. The same article notes that an investigation was later called to determine exactly why the police had not been employed to handle the mob, with a new police Committee then formed to address riots in the city generally.

⁹⁵ ‘Erection of the Glasgow...’

⁹⁶ ‘Erection of the Glasgow...’

⁹⁷ ‘The Wellington Statue’, *Glasgow Chronicle*, 11 October 1844, p. 2.

as one of the most excellent examples of an equestrian monument in the United Kingdom.⁹⁸ Notwithstanding the generally positive reception of the monument as an artistic achievement, the dissenting Committee members had warned that selecting Marochetti's sculpture would cause 'the compliment which the Subscribers intended to pay to the Duke of Wellington [to] be frustrated, and their money worse than thrown away upon a work of Art which the present and succeeding generations [would] hold in scorn.'⁹⁹ They were eventually correct with regard to the latter; though, not for the reasons they might have anticipated. Regardless of the controversies around the subject or the artist, the Wellington monument endured through the next 140 or so years in good condition, suffering only mild vandalism until the early 1980s when its iconic traffic cone appeared.

The Traffic Cone: A New Narrative

Sometime in the early 1980s on a date that has never been pinpointed, the Wellington monument received a new adornment when a traffic cone appeared on the Duke's head. While the original person or group behind what some might call the vandalism of the statue remains unknown, by the 1990s, it was very rare to see the monument without its new accessory.¹⁰⁰ The historical narrative of power and prestige around the Duke of Wellington, Glasgow, and the monument commissioners was being doggedly superseded by a new narrative for the city. This spoke to the power of the unmighty, those who had not seen their circumstances flourish under recent governmental policies and who openly challenged manifestations of governmental power with humour and levity. It was a narrative that demanded Glasgow be seen as it is, not only as a former Second City in a state of post-industrial decline or a newly crowned City of Culture, but as a city filled with working class people aspiring to a bit of fun despite the effects of policy-driven neighbourhood diaspora and the ruling governments that had left them behind. In 1998, when United States travel reporter Aron Solomon made a tour of Scotland, he came away from the be-coned statue observing that 'Edinburgh has spitting; Glasgow has this. Same idea, different strokes,' after asking a newsvendor across the street how the cone had gotten onto the Duke.¹⁰¹ The insistence of the

⁹⁸ 'The Wellington Statue', *Glasgow Citizen*.

⁹⁹ 'A Statement of Facts', p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ Lee Dalgetty, 'How Glasgow's Wellington Statue Got Its Iconic Traffic Cone Hat and Has Kept It on Ever Since', *GlasgowLive*, 2022 <<https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/history/how-glasgows-wellington-statue-iconic-23637421>> [accessed 30 June 2023].

¹⁰¹ Alan Solomon, 'A Swing through Scotland', *The Spokesman-Review* (11 January 1998), section Travel, pp. G4–5 (p. G4). N.B. Modern Edinburghers spit on the Heart of Midlothian emblem – named after Sir Walter Scott's reference to the Old Tolbooth as the Heart of Midlothian in his 1818 novel of the same name – for good luck. However, the mosaic outside of St Giles' Cathedral on the

public, inebriated though they may have been, to place the traffic cone on the Duke of Wellington monument was by the end of the millennium commonly viewed by Glaswegians as an act of good-natured defiance.

As David Atkinson and Denis Cosgrove argued in their work around the identities embodied in public monuments and the public's willingness to accept such identities, '[i]t is apparent that any intention to express a fixed and discrete set of collective meanings in the material landscape is inevitably altered, rendered mobile and open to alternative and even contradictory readings.'¹⁰² Caitlin White likewise reasoned that '[i]t is evident that the life of a monument is not static; they are public expressions of collective identity, which is fluid and can undergo huge transformations within a short space of time.'¹⁰³ In other words, placing a traffic cone on Wellington's head, an act sustained over multiple decades and generations, was not simply a matter of malicious or mindless vandalism. It was a part of the natural evolution of historical narratives and subtexts of identity embodied in public monuments during times of significant economic and social change. After periods of rapid industrialisation, de-industrialisation, two world wars, and the breaking apart of neighbourhoods in Glasgow, the population no longer ascribed to the values embodied in the nineteenth-century Wellington monument by the 1980s. Nor did they feel, as Atkinson and Cosgrove described, '[t]he heady combination of national pride and imperial confidence' that permeated nineteenth century discourse and resulted in public monuments such as the Duke of Wellington's equestrian statue.¹⁰⁴ After decades of the statue rarely being seen without its cone, *The Scotsman* noted that the monument's significance in the modern era had moved 'beyond the celebration of Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington' to become a symbol of Glasgow as a city.¹⁰⁵ If the portrait statue could formerly be said to have been a meme of the British Empire, then Wellington with its cone was almost certainly a meme of Glasgow that said something very specific about its identity and its values.

Royal Mile marks the entrance to the Old Tolbooth, which had stood on the location for over 400 years. The act of spitting on the Heart of Midlothian is therefore believed to have begun as an act of defiance against the injustices that had occurred within the building. Though the scope of my research did not include further investigations as to whether or not Scott's literary depiction of the Old Tolbooth and then later commemorations of Scott influenced a change in perception of the Heart of Midlothian as a site of contempt versus a site of luck, such a study may be of interest to those conducting place-based or people-oriented studies of public heritage.

¹⁰² Atkinson and Cosgrove, 'Urban', p. 30.

¹⁰³ White, 'The Role of the Public in Shaping New Collective Memory(ies)', p. 136.

¹⁰⁴ Atkinson and Cosgrove, 'Urban', p. 32.

¹⁰⁵ 'Scots Monuments: Glasgow Duke of Wellington Statue', *The Scotsman*, 15 October 2013 <<https://www.scotsman.com/arts-and-culture/scots-monuments-glasgow-duke-of-wellington-statue-1557896>> [accessed 15 July 2023].

Each time the council removed the cone, it was almost immediately replaced, and the conflict over the form Wellington's monument would take and the narrative it would tell eventually culminated in a 2013 battle now known as Conegate. This conflict resulted after the Council took steps to remove the cone permanently, and it ballooned on social media after, for example, one tongue-in-cheek post announced that 'The Duke of Wellington is currently coneless, I repeat, coneless.'¹⁰⁶ The resulting collective outrage at the Council's attempt to take from the public something that gave them representation in city's built heritage soon resulted in social coordination in the form of petitions and protests. Eventually, news of Conegate and the eventual success of the coordinated effort to stop the permanent removal of the cone went viral on social media platforms and was picked up by news outlets all over the United Kingdom in support of the David-versus-Goliath battle. For instance, *GlasgowLive* reporter Lee Dalgetty noted that the people of 'Glasgow refused to take historic icons, authority figures, or themselves too seriously. What they [did take] seriously was their campaign to keep the cone.'¹⁰⁷ At first glance, it might appear somewhat trivial for the people of Glasgow to engage in conflict with the City Council over a traffic cone on an old monument. However, Charles Landry has observed that it is the failure to recognise the emotional intelligence related to, for example, changes in the historic environment that results in a 'detachment from the way city-makers, decision-makers and citizens communicate with each other.'¹⁰⁸ The Council vastly underestimated the public's attachment to Wellington's cone or perhaps took issue with the way it communicated the public's impression of the competence and power of councillors, and thus their attempts to return the monument to a nineteenth-century status quo failed unequivocally. Thus, because this is a story of a city identity constructed by the people of Glasgow and not its ruling classes, the following account of Conegate makes significant use of social media as an historical archive. More so than newspapers, documentary archives, or interviews, which in this case could now only be conducted ten years after the fact, social media posts captured real-time reactions to Conegate, the Glasgow City Council's brief attempt to permanently remove Wellington's cone in 2013, and the subsequent responses by Glaswegians and visitors to seeing the monument with the cone and without.

¹⁰⁶ Obi Jim Kenobi [@ObiJimKenobi], 'Can Confirm The Duke of Wellington Is Currently Coneless, I Repeat, Coneless. #conegate #coneynodaethat', *Twitter*, 2013
<<https://twitter.com/ObiJimKenobi/status/400249450201104384>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹⁰⁷ Dalgetty, 'How Glasgow's Wellington Statue Got Its Iconic Traffic Cone Hat and Has Kept It on Ever Since'.

¹⁰⁸ Claire Martin and Charles Landry, 'Charles Landry: Applying Emotional Intelligence', *Landscape Architecture Australia*, 151, 2016, pp. 40–43 (p. 42).

Conegate

Conegate began in October 2013 after plans were submitted to the Glasgow City Council to refurbish the Wellington monument and just months after the city almost presciently unveiled its new slogan that ‘People Make Glasgow’.¹⁰⁹ The plans listed the proposed works as restoration and repagination of the bronze sculpture, replacing the missing sabre, and raising the granite plinth ‘to prevent/reduce vandalism’, an obvious effort to prevent locals from reinstalling the traffic cone each time it was removed.¹¹⁰ The cost of the restoration was valued at £65,000, with a grant of £10,000 having already been secured from Historic Scotland.¹¹¹ A business proposal drafted by Glasgow Council’s Land and Environmental Services (LES) was posted along with the application but was soon after removed from the Council’s website.¹¹² It was this controversial business proposal that almost instantly ignited public outrage. In the proposal, several important restoration needs were addressed, such as the weakened bronze, missing elements of the sculpture such as stirrups and a sabre that had likely been stolen at some point, the warped bronze plinth, as well as cracks, corrosion, and a layer of poorly applied paint.¹¹³ All of these seem reasonable for a city wishing to keep its monuments in good repair, but it was not these elements of the report that had citizens of Glasgow stirring to action.

Of primary concern was the fact that the drafters of the business proposal had fundamentally missed the point of what delights visitors about Glasgow’s Wellington statue in the twenty-first century. The LES report referred to the monument as ‘one of the most fondly regarded works of public art in Glasgow’, and yet goes on to say that the ‘monument ha[d] been defaced by traffic cones’ for over thirty years, with ‘[t]his depressing image of Glasgow [...] sadly featured in posters and postcards depicting the City.’¹¹⁴ One user in the public r/Glasgow forum on Reddit took

¹⁰⁹ Rachel Smith, ‘Application for Listed Building/Conservation Area Consent’ (Glasgow City Council, 2013), p. 1 <<https://publicaccess.glasgow.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=MVJ4NDEX0WY00>> [accessed 11 February 2023]; ‘“People Make Glasgow” Unveiled as New City Brand’, *BBC News*, 28 June 2013, section Glasgow & West Scotland <<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-23084390>> [accessed 14 February 2024].

¹¹⁰ Smith, ‘Application for Listed Building/Conservation Area Consent’, p. 1.

¹¹¹ Smith, ‘Application for Listed Building/Conservation Area Consent’, p. 2.

¹¹² Scottish Information Commissioner, Decision 136/2014 Mr Gavin Doig and Glasgow City Council, 19 June 2014 <<https://www.itspublicknowledge.info/sites/default/files/Decision136-2014.pdf>> [accessed 13 February 2023]. N.B. Andy Wightman, former MSP for Lothian and author of *Who Owns Scotland*, has preserved this document online at www.andywightman.com.

¹¹³ Land and Environmental Services, ‘Business Case and Proposals for Restoration of the Equestrian Bronze Monument to the Duke of Wellington in Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow’ (Glasgow City Council, 2013), p. 3 <http://www.andywightman.com/docs/13_02572_DC-DEIGN_BUSUNESS-3032322.pdf> [accessed 13 February 2023].

¹¹⁴ Land and Environmental Services, ‘Business Case and Proposals for Restoration of the Equestrian Bronze Monument to the Duke of Wellington in Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow’, pp. 1, 6.

particular exception to the planners' depiction of the cone as a 'depressing image' and provided anecdotal evidence of the importance of Wellington's cone as meme of Glasgow's identity, commenting

Depressing?! I brought a bunch of foreign Asian students around Glasgow city centre once and they said the coolest thing was the Wellington statue. They spent about 15 minutes at the statue taking selfies with it. If that's not an indication of how iconic it is, I don't know what is.¹¹⁵

The report went on to decry what only the writers seemed to have viewed as 'this unfortunate impression of the City' which '[i]ronically' had 'been supported by former Lord Provosts and Chief Executives and even [...] the City Marketing Bureau.'¹¹⁶ Rather than viewing the Wellington monument and its cone as a civic benefit and novelty that would draw visitors to Glasgow – a fact that evidently had not been missed by other city leaders – LES instead claimed it was a blight which shamed the city. Without providing names or approximate numbers, the report claimed that '[t]hese cones have been the subject of numerous complaints from elected officials and the public who find them offensive', and then estimated that it costs the city £10,000 a year to remove the cone every time it is replaced by the public.¹¹⁷ The planners claimed that the only 'permanent solution [...] to deter these cones' was to raise the plinth by 0.86 metres.¹¹⁸ The Land and Environmental Services' own report acknowledged the iconic nature of Wellington with his cone and the interest in it that presumably extended well beyond Glasgow, and yet the department insisted on eliminating what was by then a beloved thirty-year-old tradition.

The backlash was swift, with LES quickly deleting the business proposal from the planning website, and the subsequent campaign to keep the cone offered equal parts humour and determination. In twenty-four hours, over 10,000 people signed a Change.org petition launched by Donna Yates and Gavin Doig to keep the cone in place.¹¹⁹ It argued that '[t]he cone on Wellington's head is an iconic part of

¹¹⁵ liverman, 'Petition | Glasgow City Council: Save Wellington's Cone!', *R/Glasgow*, 2013 <https://www.reddit.com/r/glasgow/comments/1qdt18/petition_glasgow_city_council_save_wellingtons/cdbvw10/> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹¹⁶ Land and Environmental Services, 'Business Case and Proposals for Restoration of the Equestrian Bronze Monument to the Duke of Wellington in Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow', p. 6.

¹¹⁷ Land and Environmental Services, 'Business Case and Proposals for Restoration of the Equestrian Bronze Monument to the Duke of Wellington in Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow', p. 6.

¹¹⁸ Land and Environmental Services, 'Business Case and Proposals for Restoration of the Equestrian Bronze Monument to the Duke of Wellington in Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow', p. 6.

¹¹⁹ Donna Yates and Gavin Doig, 'Save Wellington's Cone!', *Change.Org* <<https://www.change.org/p/glasgow-city-council-save-wellington-s-cone>> [accessed 13 February 2023].

Glasgow's heritage, and means far more to the people of Glasgow and to visitors than Wellington himself ever has.'¹²⁰ Several of the signees left public comments about their reasons for signing the petition. Jennie Kermode, 'a regular writer of tourist brochures' explained that 'much of what attracts visitors to Glasgow is the humour of its people. This is not something the council should be ashamed of.'¹²¹ Likewise, signee Lara Davis explained that '[t]he cone is more a symbol of the defiant, fun spirit which Glasgow has always embodied and for which it's renowned throughout the world.'¹²² Ross Delaney argued that raising the plinth

would be tantamount to vandalism -more so than the placement of the cone on the statue is. It would reduce tourist footfall in the queen street/Ingram street area of the city, arguably costing the city more than the council's (manipulated) figures, and given the repeated placement of the cone, is arguably tantamount to the council ignoring a de facto democratic decision by its voters to have the statue in such a way.¹²³

Commenting on the statue subject himself, Catherine Stewart, who as a member of Historic Scotland objected to their 'humbug' restoration grant, stated that 'wellington was an ENGLISH general who mainly got involved in foreign wars (so what's new) and by all accounts was a cantankerous old git. He DESERVES to have a cone on his head.'¹²⁴ Glaswegians on Twitter (now known as X) also made their thoughts known. One member tweeted that the cone '[m]ust be kept, it's part of Glasgow.'¹²⁵ The New Glasgow Society expressed its support for the cone by claiming 'Glasgow is blessed with a monument, an icon'¹²⁶ Jacquie Johnstone offered her sardonic 'answer to #conegate remove the statue and put cone on a plinth'.¹²⁷ In the face of such intensive opposition, LES verbally withdrew the application on 12 November 2013, followed by a formal

¹²⁰ Yates and Doig, 'Save Wellington's Cone!'

¹²¹ Jennie Kermode, 'Save Wellington's Cone!', *Change.Org* <<https://www.change.org/p/glasgow-city-council-save-wellington-s-cone>> [accessed 13 February 2023].

¹²² Lara Davis, 'Save Wellington's Cone!', *Change.Org* <<https://www.change.org/p/glasgow-city-council-save-wellington-s-cone>> [accessed 13 February 2023].

¹²³ Ross Delaney, 'Save Wellington's Cone!', *Change.Org* <<https://www.change.org/p/glasgow-city-council-save-wellington-s-cone>> [accessed 13 February 2023].

¹²⁴ Catherine Stewart, 'Save Wellington's Cone!', *Change.Org* <<https://www.change.org/p/glasgow-city-council-save-wellington-s-cone>> [accessed 13 February 2023].

¹²⁵ Derek [@aioderek], 'Cone Gate... Must Be Kept, It's Part of Glasgow @GlasgowCC @Tumsh41', *Twitter*, 2013 <<https://twitter.com/aioderek/status/399967215715622912>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹²⁶ New Glasgow Society [@newglasgowsoc], '#savethecone #conegate #wearealltheglasgowcone: Glasgow Is Blessed with a Monument, an Icon, Which Few Other ...', *Twitter*, 2013 <<https://twitter.com/newglasgowsoc/status/400269454006710272>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹²⁷ jacquie johnstone [@YES2ForScotland], 'My Answer to #conegate Remove Statue and Put Cone on a Plinth', *Twitter*, 2013 <<https://twitter.com/YES2ForScotland/status/400308627409346560>> [accessed 11 February 2023].



Image 6.3: ‘The cones fight back!’ Revellers dressed as traffic cones celebrating their Conegate victory.

written confirmation two days later.¹²⁸ After the city relented in its attempts to remove the cone, ‘pro-cone campaigners’ gathered in front of the statue to celebrate.¹²⁹ One group of merry-makers was even spotted dressed in full-body traffic cone costumes.¹³⁰ (See Image 6.3.) With the announcement that the cone would stay, Tweeter @inetbampot opined that ‘[o]nly in Glasgow would a traffic cone warrant a satellite truck, 2 camera crews and about 15 paparazzi.’¹³¹ Conegate had been a serious matter for many in Glasgow, as demonstrated by the concerted interest shown by the media.

A search of planning applications on the Glasgow City Council website shows that, as of 2023, no further applications to restore the elements in actual need of repair on the monument have been made.¹³² It is unclear whether this was because funding could not be raised – in spite of the fact that the Council is now presumably saving £10,000 per year in cone-removal costs – or because the restoration work would have been perceived as futile in light of the continued cone ‘vandalism’.¹³³ In either case, it seems apparent that the real goal of the original application to restore the monument and raise the plinth was to ‘deter all but the most determined vandals’

¹²⁸ Stevie Scott, ‘Letter to Richard Brown, Executive Director, Development & Regeneration Services’, 14 November 2013 <<https://publicaccess.glasgow.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=MVJ4NDEX0WY00>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹²⁹ Fiona Chautard [@FionaChautard], ‘The Cone Will Stay! @RadioClydeNews: Pro-Cone Campaigners at Duke of Wellington Statue Celebrate End of #conegate.’, *Twitter*, 2013 <<https://twitter.com/FionaChautard/status/400535014066384896>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹³⁰ CruiseControl [@CruiseCtrlSco], ‘The Cones Fight Back! @ScotlandTonight #conegate #scotnight @wellingtoncone @GlasgowCC’, *Twitter*, 2013 <<https://twitter.com/CruiseCtrlSco/status/400033521944637441>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹³¹ THE Internet Bampot [@inetbampot45], ‘Only in Glasgow Would a Traffic Cone Warrant a Satellite Truck, 2 Camera Crews and about 15 Paparazzi. #conegate’, *Twitter*, 2013 <<https://twitter.com/inetbampot45/status/400356689318514688>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹³² ‘Applications Search’, *Glasgow City Council*, n.d. <<https://publicaccess.glasgow.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=advanced>> [accessed 12 September 2023].

¹³³ ‘Grants Awarded’, *Historic Environment Scotland*, n.d. <<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/grants-and-funding/grants-awarded/>> [accessed 12 September 2023]. N.B. No further restoration grants have been published by Historic Environment Scotland, formerly Historic Scotland.

from placing a cone on the Duke's head.¹³⁴ At least one Glaswegian felt Conegate was intentional, calling it 'a work of genius' and 'a fantastic PR stunt' to '[raise] awareness of the cone'; though, this seems unlikely, given the scepticism and lack of good will the application fostered among the public.¹³⁵

Furthermore, because the Council had so swiftly removed the document that was the focus of the public's outrage, Gavin Doig, one of the creators of the successful petition to keep the cone, requested the original text of the Business Case and Proposal. He did so under the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations (EIRs), under which public authorities have a '[d]uty to make available environmental information [...] when requested to do so by any applicant.'¹³⁶ Doig submitted his request for information to the Council on 15 November 2013, just after the application for restoration work was withdrawn.¹³⁷ In a move reminiscent of the monument's original commissioners, who were more concerned with assumptions of 'rightness' than with proper procedure, the Council refused to comply with the request, claiming on 3 December 2013 that the document had only ever been intended as 'an internal communication and had been published in error.'¹³⁸ Doig requested that the Council's decision be reviewed, but on 9 January 2014, the Council upheld its refusal to comply with the EIRs, claiming 'that the report in question did not form part of the planning application'.¹³⁹ Not satisfied with this response, Doig appealed to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner in March 2014, and after an investigation, Margaret Keyse, Head of Enforcement, found that it was 'apparent [...] that this report was published on the Council's website as part of the planning application' and that the claim that it had been published in error was 'irrelevant'.¹⁴⁰ Keyse concluded that the Glasgow City Council had been in breach of the EIRs and finally required that the report be provided to Doig.¹⁴¹

¹³⁴ Land and Environmental Services, 'Business Case and Proposals for Restoration of the Equestrian Bronze Monument to the Duke of Wellington in Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow', p. 6.

¹³⁵ Ryan Irvine [@RyanIrvine_adpr], 'This Whole Cone Fiasco Is a Work of Genius! Well Done to @GlasgowCC on a Fantastic PR Stunt! Raising Awareness of the Cone! #frontpagenews', *Twitter*, 2013 <https://twitter.com/RyanIrvine_adpr/status/401370489861726208> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹³⁶ Keyse, *Decision 136/2014*, p. 6.

¹³⁷ Land and Environmental Services, 'Business Case and Proposals for Restoration of the Equestrian Bronze Monument to the Duke of Wellington in Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow', p. 2.

¹³⁸ Keyse, *Decision 136/2014*, p. 2.

¹³⁹ Keyse, *Decision 136/2014*, p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ Keyse, *Decision 136/2014*, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ Keyse, *Decision 136/2014*, pp. 3, 4.

Public perception of Wellington with his cone

Even after the Council's decision to leave the Wellington monument as it was and give up its fight over the cone, there was still mistrust that the city would do away the iconic addition to Wellington's monument. In 2014 during the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, after Twitter users called out a briefly coneless Wellington as a 'scandal' and argued that 'visitors want to see the cone', the Glasgow Council had to issue a public denial that it had removed the cone for the opening ceremony of the games.¹⁴² In 2022, Glaswegians were still convinced that it was the Council who occasionally removed Wellington's cone, noting that '[t]he weirdness of Glasgow City Council's attempts to remove cones is eclipsed only be [sic] the determination of Glasgow citizens to ensure there's always a traffic cone on the head of the Duke of Wellington statue.'¹⁴³

However, it seems likely, then, that – just as when the cone first started to appear – it is a minority of the general public who are knocking the cone off, as there are some who see the cone as a prank that has gone on too long or that shows blatant disrespect to Arthur Wellesley, as well as the Scottish soldiers who died in the war with Napoleon.¹⁴⁴ The Council itself has seems to have finally embraced the cone as an icon of Glasgow and has started to participate in the fun. In an April Fool's Day tweet in 2021, they posted an image of the Wellington monument from 1895, complete with traffic cone.¹⁴⁵ (See Image 6.4.) Though this embrace is welcome by cone enthusiasts,

¹⁴² Allan Price [@AllanGPrice], 'SCANDAL: The Day of the Opening Ceremony of @glasgow2014, and There Is NO CONE on Wellington's Statue. Why?? #ConeGate', *Twitter*, 2014 <<https://twitter.com/AllanGPrice/status/491971034510557184>> [accessed 11 February 2023]; Karen Campbell [@MrsKazzieC], 'They've Removed the Duke's Cone! WTF? What Are You on @GlasgowCC? Our Visitors Want to See the Cone! #Glasgow2014', *Twitter*, 2014 <<https://twitter.com/MrsKazzieC/status/492010088623009792>> [accessed 11 February 2023]; Glasgow City Council [@GlasgowCC], 'We Didn't Take the Cone Down', *Twitter*, 2014 <<https://twitter.com/GlasgowCC/status/492010301177741312>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹⁴³ Ampelmann [@gripitnsmashit], 'It's Hilarious! 🤔 But Also 100% True! The Weirdness of Glasgow City Council's Attempts to Remove Cones Is Eclipsed Only Be the Determination of Glasgow Citizens to Ensure There's Always a Traffic Cone on the Head of the Duke Of Wellington Statue. 🚧', *Twitter*, 2022 <<https://twitter.com/gripitnsmashit/status/1541169523730141194>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹⁴⁴ (((Edwin Moore))) [@GlasgowAlbum], 'Hm That Wellington Prank Has Acquired a Life Thanks to Glasgow PR Thinking It Enhances Glasgow's Reputation as a Gallus City. Stick Some CCTV on, Fine the Pranksters £500 and It Will Stop.', *Twitter*, 2020 <<https://twitter.com/GlasgowAlbum/status/1221565315806650369>> [accessed 11 February 2023]; Group Captain Cheese [@Haggisontoast], 'It Was Funny the First Few Times, but Now It's the Equivalent of Some Sad Old Uncle That Tells the Same Joke Overtime You See Him, Several Times, and Laughs at It Too as If It's Still Hilarious.', *Twitter*, 2020 <<https://twitter.com/Haggisontoast/status/1221566337182502912>> [accessed 11 February 2023]; maresa mcl [@MaresaMcl], 'Not Just a Cone but One of the Reins Left Hand Side Sitting on It, Also Stirrup by the Look of It. Is It Not Also a Memorial to Soldiers That Died in the Scottish Army of That Period', *Twitter*, 2023 <<https://twitter.com/MaresaMcl/status/1611094175780601856>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹⁴⁵ Glasgow City Council [@GlasgowCC], 'Many Building & Icons Remain the Same, but the City Has Really Transformed over Time... as We Can See in This #ThrowBackThursday Image of Queen



Image 6.4: Image from the Glasgow City Council's April Fools' Day tweet, 2021.

I would argue that acceptance by the Council could result in shifts to subtextual narratives. Should the Council move to officially and actively ensure the Wellington monument is always topped with a traffic cone – for example, by affixing a permanent bronze cone – the monument risks becoming a tourist gimmick rather than an expression of the people. The current subtext of identity stems from the fact that the cone is a symbol of good-natured rebellion, and the intransigence of the people is the source of its humour. If this is subsumed by official acts of the Council, it would indicate a change either in the identity of the city and its people or in the identity of the Council itself.

Irrespective of the minority that still wishes to see the cone removed, most Glaswegians seem to understand and enjoy the playful addition to the stately monument. In June 2018, for instance, some locals seem to have taken the cone icon a bit far, adding a cone to the horse and piling not one, but eight cones on top of the Duke. Jamie McGown jokingly suggested on Twitter that the Council give a 'tax break to each person who successfully adds another cone. Anyone who vandalises this national treasure by knocking down the cone tower is fined £300. Basically jenga à la glesga.'¹⁴⁶ In July 2022, when the cone had again gone missing, Alan Dapre tweeted an '[e]mergency at the Duke of Wellington Statue' to the Glasgow City Council, announcing that 'THE ORANGE CONE IS GONE! This is worse than ravens leaving the Tower of London.'¹⁴⁷ Early in 2023, Niall Murphy,

Street from Royal Exchange Square in 1895 🤖 📷 Thanks @GC_Archives', *Twitter*, 2021 <<https://twitter.com/GlasgowCC/status/1377547567811207170>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹⁴⁶ Jamie McGowan [@SGMacGobhainn], 'New Policy Idea: @GlasgowCC Should Give a Council Tax Break to Each Person Who Successfully Adds Another Cone. Anyone Who Vandalises This National Treasure by Knocking down the Cone Tower Is Fined £300. Basically Jenga à La Glesga.', *Twitter*, 2018 <<https://twitter.com/SGMacGobhainn/status/1013163372496506880>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹⁴⁷ Alan Dapre [@AlanDapre], 'Emergency at the Duke of Wellington Statue, Royal Exchange Square! @GlasgowCC THE ORANGE CONE IS GONE! This Is Worse than Ravens Leaving the Tower of

director of the Glasgow City Heritage Trust, tweeted that he had ‘popped into the city centre on a mission to be greeted by a shocking scene’ when he photographed a coneless Wellington.¹⁴⁸ The cone treatment has been applied to other monuments since it became a fixture on the Wellington statue, but the Iron Duke with his cone has become so iconic that even these are seen as a nod to Glasgow. When a cone appeared on the Queen Victoria monument in Paisley, it was linked to the ‘Duke with a cone hat’ in Glasgow.¹⁴⁹ In August 2022, when a cone appeared on a giraffe sculpture in Edinburgh’s Waverly Station, they joked in a tweet with Glasgow Central Station, asking ‘Anything to say for yourself, @NetworkRailGLC?’¹⁵⁰ Even the current Duke of Wellington recognises the importance of the monument’s cone, stating that ‘[i]t has become [...] an iconic image of Glasgow’ that is ‘amusing in a way and bizarre in another way.’¹⁵¹ The addition of the cone to the Wellington’s portrait statue goes against an argument made by Simon Schama that ‘[s]tatues are not history [...]. The whole honour of history lies in its contrarian irrepressibility’ whereas monuments in civic spaces ‘shut off debate through their invitation to reverence. It is only when they are threatened that they are noticed.’¹⁵² Schama allows for only a very limited view of statues as artefacts of public history, and his characterisation does not account for the kind of public engagement and rejection of reverence the people of Glasgow have shown with regard to the Wellington monument.

Billy Connolly, the preeminent exemplar of Glaswegian humour, spoke to STV News in 2020 and provided his thoughts and memories of the Wellington monument. He spoke of his pride not only of the cone, but also of another tradition that is perhaps known more to locals than those who visit. He discusses how

London.’, *Twitter*, 2022 <<https://twitter.com/AlanDapre/status/1553730863447347201>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹⁴⁸ Niall Murphy [@MurphyNiallGLA], ‘#MomentsofBeauty in #Glasgow: #HappyNewYear2023 Everyone. Still on My Hols but Popped into the City Centre on a Mission to Be Greeted by a Shocking Scene #WotNoCone 🤖🚗!?', *Twitter*, 2023 <<https://twitter.com/MurphyNiallGLA/status/1610999584318275584>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹⁴⁹ Claire Casey- Writer [@CCaseyWriter], ‘#paisley2021 Glasgow Has a Duke with a Cone Hat. Paisley Has a Queen & Empress with a Cone Hat @Paisley2021 @GlasgowLiving @GlasgowCC’, *Twitter*, 2017 <<https://twitter.com/CCaseyWriter/status/887397306584231936>>.

¹⁵⁰ Edinburgh Waverley [@NetworkRailEDB], ‘Anything to Say for Yourself, @NetworkRailGLC? #ConeGate @NetworkRailSCOT’, *Twitter*, 2022 <<https://twitter.com/NetworkRailEDB/status/1560631021497774080>> [accessed 11 February 2023].

¹⁵¹ Stuart Hodge, ‘Duke of Wellington Says Cone on His Ancestor’s Glasgow Statue Is “Bizarre”’, *Daily Record*, 16 June 2019, section Weird News <<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/weird-news/duke-wellington-says-cone-top-16527131>> [accessed 30 June 2023].

¹⁵² Simon Schama, ‘History Is Better Served by Putting the Men in Stone in Museums’, *Financial Times*, 12 June 2020 <<https://www.ft.com/content/1117dfb6-8e51-46ec-a74b-59973a96a85a>> [accessed 18 August 2023].



Image 6.5: Carlo Marochetti, *The Soldier's Return*, 1844, bronze bas relief, Glasgow.

around the plinth, there are sculptures of historical Scottish events. And there's one of a boy leaving home [this was actually a soldier returning], and he's waving to his mother in the cottage as he goes out the door [...]. When I was a child, there was always [a cigarette] in his hand and usually it was burning [...]. And when I pass, I check to see that he's got a cigarette, and when he hasn't I find one in the street and put it in. That's Glasgow to me. That's the rebelliousness of Glasgow. Give him a cigarette and shut up. Put a cone on his head; that'll do you.¹⁵³ (See Image 6.5.)¹⁵⁴

The persistent and determined actions of the cone installers – who arguably would not have been as successful in more 'serious' cities such as Edinburgh or London – stand apart from what Frank Furedi described as the casual vandalism of venerated subjects such as might be associated with the usual defacement of monuments.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, the cone's first installation, assumed to be 'the result of a beer-hazed night out in the early 80s', may very well have been a spontaneous jest, but nothing about almost half a century of perpetually placing a traffic cone on the Wellington statue can be construed as casual.¹⁵⁶ It has been a very deliberate act by the people of Glasgow to establish their own narrative of the city with its own subtexts of identity rather than those represented by the nineteenth-century Duke. Very few who speak of the Wellington monument today do so in the context of a centuries-old historical narrative. Instead, the cone has come to be a symbol of both Glasgow's humour and its defiance of those authorities or subtexts of identity that fail to represent the modern population.

¹⁵³ *Sir Billy on Art, Independence and the Duke of Wellington*, Online Video Recording, YouTube, 2020 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOzmsn9iqyw>> [accessed 18 February 2023].

¹⁵⁴ Photo: Erin Burrows, 2024.

¹⁵⁵ Frank Furedi, 'Foreword', in *Iconoclasm, Identity Politics and the Erasure of History*, by Alexander Adams (Exeter: Imprint Academic Ltd, 2020), p. i.

¹⁵⁶ Dalgetty, 'How Glasgow's Wellington Statue Got Its Iconic Traffic Cone Hat and Has Kept It on Ever Since'.

Conclusion

Wellington and his cone, beyond being a beloved icon in Glasgow and around the world, continues to benefit Glasgow via its new embodied identity. It demonstrates a marked shift in the acceptance, or referentiality, of the original narrative expressed by the commissioners, conflicted as that narrative might have been even in the nineteenth century. The act of literally changing the monument's normative form showed that not only had there been competing versions of the narratives and subtexts of Wellington's statue, but that a completely new narrative had superseded the old. The anonymous street artist Banksy, whose works include a portrait of the Churchill monument in London after a grass mohawk had been affixed to its head, selected Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) for his first exhibition in fourteen years specifically because of the Wellington monument and its cone situated at the gallery's doorstep.¹⁵⁷ Though the former Director of GoMA Julian Spalding had at one time wanted the statue removed as irrelevant to the purpose of the museum located behind it, the current manager Gareth James was pleased that Banksy had 'picked up on that spirit of Glasgow of being a wee bit reckless and just getting on with it.'¹⁵⁸ Christopher Marshall, a senior art history lecturer at Melbourne University, argued that 'the audience [of public artworks] has the right and a responsibility to engage with work in new ways,' especially when works such as monuments and portrait statues fail to 'reflect a city's culture'.¹⁵⁹ This is exactly what has occurred with the addition of a traffic cone to the head of the Duke of Wellington in Glasgow's city centre.

By abjuring the complex identity debate as expressed by the original nineteenth century commissioners, the people of Glasgow have used humorous, though gentle mockery of the monument to provide a new narrative of a city and a public that has come into its own. Though the pranksters were not centrally organised, the placement and replacement of the cone was persistent, intentional, and unyielding, with the result being an amended historical identity that is now evident in the built environment. As such, the placement of the traffic cone is a gentle act of iconoclasm which is neither thoughtless nor unintentional. It was an insistence on a new intentional state entailment that lasted for decades, with the reasons for the cone being placed never explicitly

¹⁵⁷ Katy Scott, 'Duke of Wellington: The Traffic-Coned Glasgow Statue That Inspired Banksy', *BBC News*, 15 June 2023, section Glasgow & West Scotland <<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-65914456>> [accessed 30 June 2023].

¹⁵⁸ McKenzie, p. 339; Katy Scott.

¹⁵⁹ Olivia Lambert, 'People Often Hate Public Artworks Erected in Cities', *News.Com.Au*, 3 February 2016 <<https://news.com.au/national/people-often-hate-public-artworks-erected-in-cities/news-story/4d18b05f1adf27de951f779f240b6f78>> [accessed 30 June 2023].

being stated but being understood by the Glasgow public nonetheless. The placement of the traffic cone has taken an object of history that was intended to identify Glasgow's place as a great European city in the great British Empire and transformed it into an object of identity for the Glaswegian people themselves, whose aspirations are perhaps content with greatness in their own patch.

7. Conclusion

The case studies of Glasgow's portrait statues presented in the previous chapters have demonstrated that those who commission monuments construct historical narratives of the lives and accomplishments of their commemorated subjects that, whether intentionally or unintentionally, convey subtexts of collective and place identities. Each case study draws on the current scholarship around public history, national identity, and civic pride, as well as studies of commemorations in Scotland to make further evaluations of the monuments through a framework of narrative theory. I have aimed to focus my analyses not on monuments of a national identity, but on monuments that reflect the civic identity of a single location and its public over time. Such an approach was useful in the formation of specific rather than general conclusions regarding the relationships between portrait statues, the value judgements made by the commissioners and the public about those statues, and the resulting interpretations of identity. While a given individual may be the focal point of commemoration and celebration (or in some cases condemnation), portrait statues act to a greater extent as avatars of the values and ambitions of the communities in which they are installed. The fact that nineteenth-century statue commissioners determined public spaces rather than kirkyards or cathedral choirs to be the most appropriate location for the installation of portrait monuments, a practice that has endured ever since, indicates that the selection of the subjects was a matter of civic pride intended to express a specific identity of Glasgow to both the local public and visitors alike. Portrait monuments thus function as public history 'texts' that express an audience-specific local history by drawing on the past to inform the present through historical narrative. These narratives of the subject intrinsically include subtexts requiring interpretation on the part of individuals through judgements of merit and inferences of value. These are transmitted first by the act of commemoration itself and subsequently through public engagement as the historical narrative and its subtexts form or sustain the identity of a place or collective.

Summary of the Case Studies

In the study of the monuments of George Square, I explained the concerns that preoccupied statue commissioners as Glasgow first began to produce statues in the built heritage, which chiefly centred on the adornment and aggrandisement of the city, as well as the self-glorification of the aristocratic and ruling classes. While each subject

commemorated in George Square is arguably worthy of remembrance, it was the subsequent debates around Glasgow's reputation, prestige, and place among the great cities of the United Kingdom and Europe that revealed both the aspirations and the vulnerabilities of the ruling classes of nineteenth century Glasgow. Though we are given some indication of the reception of the George Square portrait statues by the working classes, the primary aim of these monuments was to project an image of Glasgow as exceptional, as the Second City of the Empire, whose social and environmental woes were obscured by the assemblage of great personages in the city centre. While these monuments may no longer reflect the current aims and ambitions of the Glaswegian public, there nevertheless remains a general reverence, or at least a respect for the individuals commemorated in Glasgow's pantheon.

As the twentieth century progressed, the prerogative of statue building shifted from culturally hegemonic groups to those who existed or were perceived to exist more at the margins of Glaswegian society. As the first portrait statue erected in Glasgow in over half a century, *La Pasionaria* demonstrated the conflicted identity of the ruling Labour Party as an oppressed entity, alongside those workers and tradespeople who were losing their neighbourhoods, jobs, and quality of life to the pressures of neoliberalism and a changing post-industrial economy. The monument was installed as a means to honour the International Brigades, with Dolores Ibárruri as a symbol of their sacrifices and determination. However, its commissioning was deeply influenced by contemporaneous concerns relating to the decline in Labour's control of the Glasgow Council, the fading importance of the city's radicals and socialists, and the loss of Glasgow's identity as a city of industry and mercantilism populated by skilled working classes. Though Labour politicians, trade unions, and members of the working classes positioned themselves as underdogs within a Conservative hegemony, each nevertheless believed (or wanted others to believe) they would eventually rise in triumph. Because the narrative was principally monophonic with limited relatability, *La Pasionaria* has now become one of the least understood statues in Glasgow's built heritage; though, many still intuit the subtext of triumph over oppression.

Conversely, the monument to Mary Barbour in Govan featured a polyphonic narrative that closely aligned to the context in which the monument was installed and the subtexts that were implied. The high public engagement with the monument, not only by Glaswegians but also visitors to the city, demonstrates its relatability for multiple political and social movements, gender identities, and economic classes. Mary Barbour and her army reconstructs a time in Govan's history when shipbuilding and

other industries provided the opportunity for its residents to prosper and where, in times of strife, a community that banded together could overcome injustice through grassroots activism. The figure of Mary Barbour with her army reflects not only the aspirations of past and current Govanites, but also the local pride that has stimulated the rejuvenation projects now underway to achieve those aspirations. Despite decades of decline, impoverishment, and degradation, the people of Govan have rallied around its regeneration since the twenty-first century, with a new understanding of the history on their doorstep reinvigorating or even creating a pride in the community and the district.

Finally, the examination of the Duke of Wellington monument revealed a growing divide in how the ruling classes and the general public wanted Glasgow and thus themselves to be identified, not only when the statue was first commissioned but again in the twenty-first century. At the time of its nineteenth-century installation, while the Chartists and some segments of the working classes wanted Glasgow to have nothing to do with a Wellington statue, there were those among the elites who wished to express the exceptionalism of the British Empire and Glasgow as its prestigious Second City, and those who wished to express the exceptionalism of Glasgow itself among the great cities of the Continent. While the in-fighting of the Committee of Subscribers may appear at first glance to have been over petty concerns, the fact that the matter made it to court proceedings gives an indication of how important the matter of identity was to some of its members. A comparable fight over Glasgow's identity occurred once the iconic traffic cone began to appear on the Iron Duke's head. While civic leaders in the city were attempting to rebrand Glasgow as a city of culture and leisure after rapid deindustrialisation and the policy-driven removal of its working classes to the outskirts of the city, decades of anonymous pranksters poked holes in both the modern aspirational narrative and its subtexts of class supremacy, as well as that of the nineteenth century. By doggedly capping the Duke with a bright orange cone in a demonstration of democratic power and self-determination, the Glaswegian public expressed a perverse sense of humour over dominant historical narratives that is arguably not found in any other city in the United Kingdom. The Council ultimately embraced the cone in 2013, giving credence to the city's newly announced official slogan that 'People Make Glasgow'. It was an acknowledgement, at least to some degree, that the city's governing bodies no longer had the same influence over Glasgow's identity and the public's sense of civic pride as it had almost two centuries or even two decades prior.

Key Findings

Returning to the research questions, the following are the key findings of my analyses of the monuments in George Square, *La Pasionaria*, the Mary Barbour monument, and the Duke of Wellington monument with its iconic traffic cone. As previously noted, my aim was to answer the following questions:

1. why were public portrait monuments first installed in Glasgow in the nineteenth century and by whom;
2. what changes have occurred from the nineteenth century to the present in terms of monument builders, statue subjects, and historical narrative;
3. how have portrait monuments been used to establish legitimacy and authority not only for dominant groups, but also for those at the margins;
4. how has historical narrative been used by monument builders to convey specific subtexts of Glasgow's identity;
5. in what ways have portrait statues created or reinforced collective identities through subtextual narratives?

With regard to the reasons why public portrait statues were first installed in Glasgow in the nineteenth century and by whom, in general these monuments were initially raised soon after the Acts of Union to indicate participation in the British imperial project and to position Glasgow as one of Scotland's great cities against Edinburgh as the capital. The installation of the monuments by the city's aristocracy and ruling elites demonstrated that Glasgow, as the Second City of the Empire, had the authority as an illustrious metropolis to erect statues to illustrious men in the city centre. As to the changes that have occurred from the nineteenth century to the present, particularly with regard to those who commissioned statues, the subjects selected, and the narratives they communicated, the collection in George Square shows that even during a century of monument building there had been a shift. While the focus in the first half of the nineteenth century was primarily related to the glorification of unionist concerns and achievements, as the population of enfranchised citizens in Glasgow expanded, the pride expressed through the figures chosen related more to being both Scottish and Glaswegian. As described in Chapter 2, what began as a demonstrative interplay between Swenson's foundation myths and Morton's Unionist-nationalism shifted over time to reflect identities that had grown cynical of imperialism and governmental policies that stifled Glasgow's prosperity and progress. Over the course of the twentieth century and into the early twenty-first century, there was a marked shift from narratives that promoted subtexts of aristocratic or culturally hegemonic identities to

those that upheld the everyday person and challenged the legitimacy of the ruling classes. The comparison between the statue builders of the nineteenth century and those of modern Glasgow demonstrates that on some level the public intuitively understood the power of representation through monuments in the built landscape. I would go so far as to argue these intuitive assumptions of legitimacy are central to the debates around contested monuments today. The very fact that marginalised groups in modern Glasgow – or at least those with less politically or culturally hegemonic power – chose to stake their claim to authority and legitimacy through portrait statues is the reason there has been so much division over *La Pasionaria* and Wellington with his cone and yet so much cooperation with regard to Mary Barbour. Finally, each monument is imbued with its own historical narrative that implies value judgements as to interpretations of the subtexts of Glasgow's identity. For example, Sir John Moore conveys a subtext of Scotland as a proud participant in the Union, supportive of its concerns and forgetful of its transgressions. James Oswald expresses an identity of enfranchised working classes exercising political power that was at times at odds with the political hegemony in the United Kingdom. Mary Barbour has reinvigorated pride in Govan and is one of the few statues in Glasgow to transmit a subtext of powerful and accomplished women in its expression of grassroots authority. These subtexts are not cast in bronze and are malleable, as demonstrated by Wellington with his cone, depending on the contexts in which they are created and by which portion of a given public.

Implications for the Future

While I was able to glean a great deal from archives, contemporaneous newspapers, and social media, the greatest limitation in my research was my inability to fully investigate modern perceptions among the general public of the portrait monuments included in this study; though, my interviews with the Govan Reminiscence Group did greatly enrich my understanding of what the Mary Barbour monument currently means to Govanites. Social media has been helpful in this regard, but posts on sites such as Reddit or Twitter (now known as X) are authored by those members of the public who already actively engage with Glasgow's portrait monuments. Further opportunities to conduct focus groups with the aim of understanding these modern perceptions could benefit public bodies as they make decisions not only with regard to portrait statues but any element of the built heritage that has the potential to influence identity and shape the present through the use of the past. Constructing focus groups from members of the

general public could also help fill the gap in scholarship on the ways in which the everyday individual develops and expresses national and civic pride.

It would be helpful to explore differences in perception among those who engage with and understand the historical narratives conveyed by monuments, those who may have a distorted or mythological view of the past, and those who are completely indifferent. It could also be useful to investigate the ways interpretations of subtextual narratives might change if the public is provided with further information on the statue subjects, their commissioners, and the intended impact. Additionally, while it is regrettably impossible to conduct focus groups with the contemporaneous publics of the nineteenth and twentieth century monuments, conducting such research as new portrait statues are or have recently been commissioned and including the findings in the historical record could only benefit future historians and city planners if and when it becomes necessary to review the impact of these new monuments. For example, there is currently an opportunity to investigate the public's perceptions and their interpretations of subtexts of identity in statues such as the 2018 Charles Rennie Macintosh monument in Anderston or the statue of Nelson Mandela that will soon be installed in Nelson Mandela Place. Not only would this inform the commissioners of statues as to the public value of their monuments, but it might also help to uncover any intentional or unintentional subtexts of identity such statues convey. The examples of contexts and subtexts described in the four case studies I have presented here will, it is hoped, provide historians, policy makers, and heritage custodians with an additional method for evaluating the benefit of portrait statues, particularly around discussions of the installation of new statues or the removal or alteration of others.

Ultimately, the conclusion one can draw from these case studies is that historical narratives imbued in portrait statues tell only a prologue of the subjects they portray, with the thrust of the narrative and its accompanying subtexts being formed by monument commissioners, which are in turn interpreted in a variety of ways by the public. Rather than focusing on arguments around contested monuments, I have endeavoured to draw out the reasons behind the installation of portrait monuments in the past alongside the reignited interest in installing such monuments in recent decades. Particularly now, as communities and cultures grapple more and more with issues of identity, representation, and legitimacy, it is no surprise that portrait statues that help construct and reinforce specific identities are again becoming an important part of the local public history archive constructed in the built environment. Despite the recommendation in *Guidance for Public Bodies Reviewing Contested Heritage* that the

legacy of the individual being commemorated be the primary focus in evaluations of portrait statues, I maintain that the answers to the question ‘why?’ are equally, if not more, important to custodians of all public monuments past and present. By evaluating public perceptions of the subtexts of identity intrinsic to the historical narrative of portrait statues and by investigating the ways in which these subtexts have and do impact those publics for which the historical ‘text’ was created, the public bodies and custodians invested in the preservation of heritage and the transmission of public history would thus gain a deeper understanding of the value and impact of their work.

Appendix A: Portrait Monuments Erected in George Square

Sir John Moore, Pedestrian Portrait Statue (Military)	
Sculptor	John Flaxman, London
Year, Location	1819, George Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription (with 100 guineas donated by the Council), £3,589/≈£263,000 in 2024
Motivation	‘[To honour] the memory of [Glaswegian’s] late Fellow Citizen the highly respected, and ever to be lamented Lieutenant General Sir John Moore’. ¹
Notable Information	First public portrait statue in Glasgow paid for by public subscription; installed on the then-private lands of George Square with permission of the proprietors.

James Watt, Seated Portrait Statue (Science)	
Sculptor	Francis Leggatt Chantrey, London
Year, Location	1832, George Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription (with 100 guineas donated by both the Council and the Glasgow Water Company), £3,589/≈£336,000 in 2024
Motivation	In ‘testimony of the high sense [the commissioners] entertain, of the important benefits, which the Inventive Genius and mechanical discoveries, of that distinguished individual, have conferred upon his Country.’ ²
Notable Information	Installed on the then-private lands of George Square with permission of the proprietors.

Sir Walter Scott, Colossal Pedestrian Portrait Statue (Literature)	
Sculptors	John Greenshields, Milton (modeller); John Ritchie, Edinburgh (carver); and William Mossman, Glasgow (inscription)
Year, Location	1838, George Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription, £1,710/≈£158,000 in 2024
Motivation	To ‘exhibit a generous rivalry with our Athenian friends of the metropolis [and to] prove that the glories of Florence, in the times of the Medicis, have dawned on the commerce and irradiated the spires of Glasgow’, to inspire ‘others to emulate that great and glorious man who had shed such a lustre on the annals of his country’, and that ‘every act of homage to the greatest genius of our age and country is an honour to our city and ourselves.’ ³
Notable Information	First public monument to Scott in the world; installed on the then-private lands of George Square with permission of the proprietors.

¹ Corporation Minutes, 1807-1809, C1.1.48, p. 569.

² Corporation Minutes, July 1823-December 1825, C1.1.55, p. 513.

³ ‘Monument to Sir Walter Scott’.

Queen Victoria, Equestrian Portrait Statue (Monarchy)	
Sculptor	Baron Carlo Marochetti, Paris
Year, Location	1854, St Vincent Place / Re-erected 1866, George Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription, £2,240/≈£207,000 in 2024
Motivation	To commemorate the Royal visit to the city in 1849.
Notable Information	First public female equestrian statue in the world, inspired by Marochetti's Wellington monument in Glasgow. Relocated to George Square upon the completion of Prince Albert's equestrian monument.

James Oswald, Pedestrian Portrait Statue (Politics)	
Sculptor	Baron Carol Marochetti, Paris
Year, Location	1856, Charring Cross / Re-erected 1875, George Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription, total cost unknown
Motivation	The pedestal notes the statue was erected by 'many personal friends and admirers', the monument commemorated one of the first MPs for Glasgow after the Reform Act of 1832. ⁴
Notable Information	The first monument in Glasgow to represent a public figure in contemporary dress. It is sometimes referred to as 'The Man with the Hat', and it used to be common for members of the public to make a game of tossing stones into the hat's crown. ⁵

Sir Robert Peel, Pedestrian Portrait Statue (Politics)	
Sculptor	John Mossman, Glasgow
Year, Location	1859, George Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription, £2,300/≈£241,000 in 2024
Motivation	To embody 'the sentiments of admiration, gratitude, and esteem of the vast majority of the people of Glasgow and the West of Scotland, for national services which have not been surpassed for their beneficent character by those of any public man of modern times.' ⁶
Notable Information	Mossman's first public statue in bronze; Glasgow's first major public commission of a sculptor from western Scotland. ⁷ The pedestal was designed by Alexander 'Greek' Thomson.

Prince Albert, Equestrian Portrait Statue (Monarchy)	
Sculptor	Baron Carlo Marochetti, Paris
Year, Location	1866, George Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription, £6,000/≈£597,000 in 2024
Motivation	To 'commemorate a Prince who had lent his influence in many ways towards the advancement of the national prosperity' and to encourage future generations 'to follow the

⁴ Somerville, *George Square, Glasgow*, p. 208.

⁵ McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow*, v, p. 131.

⁶ 'Wednesday Morning, June 29'.

⁷ McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow*, v, p. 133.

	example[...]of fidelity, purity, and affection in domestic life; of loyalty to the rights of the Crown and the rights of the people; of strictest truth and highest honour in every word and deed; of an unselfish desire and constant endeavour to increase the well-being of the whole community'. ⁸
Notable Information	Originally intended to be erected in West End Park (now Kelvingrove Park). ⁹ Inaugurated by his Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Alfred, on behalf of Queen Victoria. ¹⁰

Colin Campbell, Field Marshall Lord Clyde, Pedestrian Portrait Statue (Military)	
Sculptor	John Henry Foley, Dublin/London
Year, Location	1868, George Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription, £2,350/≈£222,000 in 2024
Motivation	To honour the military services of the native Glaswegian, most notably the Battle of Balaclava in 1854 and the Indian Mutiny in 1857.
Notable Information	Field Marshall Lord Clyde fought under Sir John Moore during the Peninsular War. It was proposed that the monument, along with that of the Lieutenant-General, be erected alongside the Wellington monument in Exchange Square, but this proposal was deemed not to reflect the mercantile nature of Glasgow. ¹¹

Thomas Graham, Seated Portrait Statue (Science)	
Sculptor	William Brodie, Edinburgh
Year, Location	1872, George Square
Funding / Cost	Private gift from James Young, Esq. to the City of Glasgow, £2,350/≈£222,000 in 2024
Motivation	James Young was a personal friend and student of Thomas Graham at the Andersonian University. ¹² He wished to honour Graham's contributions to science with this gift for the public benefit. ¹³
Notable Information	Graham's monument was designed as a complement to the seated statue of Watt. ¹⁴ Per Young's request, the monument was installed without a public ceremony.

⁸ 'Inauguration of the Prince Consort Memorial'.

⁹ McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow*, v, p. 134.

¹⁰ 'Inauguration of the Prince Consort Memorial'.

¹¹ *The Evolution of George Square with Niall Murphy*.

¹² 'Anderson's University - Mr James Young', *Glasgow Herald*, 30 September 1868, p. 4.

¹³ Corporation Minutes, November 1871-October 1877, C1.1.70, p. 98.

¹⁴ Corporation Minutes, November 1871-October 1877, C1.1.70, p. 98.

Robert Burns, Pedestrian Portrait Statue (Literature)	
Sculptors	George Edwin Ewing, Glasgow (sculptor); Francis Leslie, Glasgow (sculptor); James Alexander Ewing, Glasgow (reliefs)
Year, Location	1877, George Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription, £2,000/≈£195,000 in 2024
Motivation	To erect the first portrait monument to Scotland's national poet paid for 'by the voluntary offerings of the greatest number of his fellow countrymen of all classes.' ¹⁵ This was deemed 'a most interesting ratification of the fraternity of Scotchmen in a great literary recollection of a great national name.' ¹⁶
Notable Information	The monument was the first freestanding portrait monument of Burns in Scotland. ¹⁷ Burns is the only figure dressed in the clothing of the working classes, albeit a 'well-to-do farmer of his time'. ¹⁸

Thomas Campbell, Pedestrian Portrait Statue (Literature)	
Sculptor	John Mossman, Glasgow (sculptor); James Pittendrigh Macgillivray, Glasgow (assistant)
Year, Location	1877, George Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription, £2,000/≈£195,000 in 2024
Motivation	To mark the centenary of Campbell's birth and to erect the first monument to Thomas Campbell in Scotland.
Notable Information	Though one of three authors commemorated, Campbell is the only Glaswegian writer featured in George Square.

David Livingstone, Pedestrian Portrait Monument (Religion)	
Sculptors	John Mossman, Glasgow (sculptor); Francis Leslie, Glasgow (assistant); and James Pittendrigh Macgillivray, Glasgow (assistant)
Year, Location	1879, George Square / Re-erected 1960, Cathedral Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription, £2,000 (£500 from surplus funds raised by the London Geographical Society to search for Livingstone in Africa, £350 by subscription, and the remainder likely donated by James Young, Esq.) ¹⁹ /≈£208,000 in 2024
Motivation	To serve as 'an heirloom [of] the citizens of Glasgow', as 'an acknowledgment of the sense [...] of the services which Livingstone has rendered', and to induce future generations 'to follow in the footsteps of a man who [...] lived not for himself but for his fellow men.' ²⁰
Notable Information	The statue was removed from George Square to allow for the

¹⁵ 'Unveiling the Burns Statue in George Square'.

¹⁶ 'Unveiling the Burns Statue in George Square'.

¹⁷ Somerville, *George Square, Glasgow*, p. 245; Whatley, *Immortal Memory*, p. 91.

¹⁸ 'Unveiling the Burns Statue in George Square'.

¹⁹ McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow*, v, p. 63.

²⁰ 'Unveiling of the Livingstone Memorial Statue', *Glasgow Herald*, 20 March 1879, p. 3.

	building of a since demolished information bureau. The Livingstone monument is currently the only statue to have been removed from George Square.
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William Ewart Gladstone, Pedestrian Portrait Monument (Politics)	
Sculptor	William Hamo Thornycroft, Hawarden
Year, Location	1902, George Square
Funding / Cost	Subscription, £3,754/≈£385,000 in 2024
Motivation	To raise an apolitical memorial so that ‘the rising generation and the generations who came after might know that there was the semblance of one who did great work for his country.’ ²¹
Notable Information	Gladstone’s monument was the last and only portrait statue installed in George Square in the twentieth century.

²¹ Minute Book..., 1899-1917, G4.1, p. 4.

Appendix B: Glasgow and District International Brigade Roll of Honour, Spanish Civil War¹

Where possible, specific burghs/neighbourhoods are listed for birthplace and residence. N.B. Not all towns are still a part of incorporated Glasgow.

Key for Coloured Cells		Total out of 72 names
	Not listed on the Honour Roll on the programme for the unveiling of <i>La Pasionaria</i> .	8
	May not have died during the war, was a deserter, or was executed as a traitor by the International Brigade	3
	Died after the war, but as a result of wounds	2
	Listed on the unveiling programme, but could not be verified as a Glaswegian in the IBA database	13

Name	Birthplace	Born	Residence	Occupation	Arrived in Spain	Died	Location
Francis Ash ²	County Down, Ireland	1908	Blackhill	Tunnel Worker	January 1938	March 1938	Caspe
John William Beaton	Glasgow, Scotland	1915	Glasgow	Swimming Instructor	February 1938	March 1938	Aragon
John Gartshore Black	Shettleston, Scotland	1916	Tollcross	Iron Worker	December 1936	February 1937	Jarama
Henry Bonar	Dublin, Ireland	1897	Glasgow	Gardener	December 1936	February 1937	Jarama
Alexander Bonnar	Unknown	1901	Glasgow	Butcher	January 1937	February 1937	Jarama
Thomas Burke	Dundalk, Ireland	1901	Springburn	Unknown	January 1937	July 1937	Brunete
Donald Cameron	Unknown	1899	Maryhill	Labourer	January 1937	February 1937	Jarama
Francis Casey	Unknown	1893	Glasgow	Steel Erector	December 1936	February 1937	Jarama ³
James Cassidy	Unknown	1906	Cowcaddens	Iron Moulder /	January 1937	February 1937	Jarama ⁴

¹ London, Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10; Jim Carmody and Richard Baxell, 'The Volunteers', *International Brigade Memorial Trust*, 2016 <<https://international-brigades.org.uk/uncategorized/the-volunteers/>> [accessed 8 August 2023].

² Not listed on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria* and could have potentially deserted the war. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10 and Carmody and Baxell.

³ Though originally appearing on the Roll of Honour for the Battle of Jarama, Francis Casey was later found to have deserted in March 1937. See Carmody and Baxell.

⁴ The MI5 reported Cassidy as a deserter in March 1937; though, it is strongly believed that he indeed died at Jarama and that MI5 had the wrong name. See Carmody and Baxell, 'The Volunteers'.

				Labourer			
Joseph Clarke	Dundee, Scotland	1913	Gorbals	Docker	October 1937	May 1943	In Gibraltar hospital
John Connolly	Glasgow, Scotland	1915	Glasgow	Sawmiller	December 1936	February 1937	Jarama
Allan Craig	Dundee, Scotland	1904	Glasgow	Unknown	December 1936	February 1937	Jarama
William Crawford	Glasgow, Scotland	1896	Glasgow	Pipe Fitter	January 1937	February 1937	Jarama
Robert Cruickshank	Glasgow, Scotland	1905	Glasgow	Steel Worker / Seaman	January 1937	April 1938	Gandesa
James Cunningham	Dumbarton, Scotland	1908	Glasgow	Boilermaker / Ships Plater	March 1938	July 1938	Gandesa
Adam Davie	Unknown	1910	Glasgow	Unknown	January 1937	February 1937	Jarama
Cde. William Dinnen	Unknown	1897	Cowcaddens	Riveter	August 1937	Unknown ⁵	Unknown
Francis Docherty	Unknown	1906	Glasgow	Labourer	May 1938	July 1938	Gandesa
John Dolan	Derry, Ireland	1897	Glasgow	Plasterer	February 1937	February 1937	Jarama
William Donaldson	Glasgow, Scotland	1910	Glasgow	Millwright	July 1937	January 1938	Teruel
James Donnelly	Glasgow, Scotland	1912	Bridgeton	Woodworker	July 1937	August 1939 ⁶	London
John Douglas	Unknown	1907	Maryhill	Labourer	December 1936	February 1937	Jarama
James Duffy	Shettleston, Scotland	1915	Shettleston	Ostler	January 1938	April 1938	Aragon
Arnold Edwin Evans	Glasgow, Scotland	1900	Springburn	Miner / Bookkeeper	January 1938	March 1938	In hospital after Caspe
Thomas F. Flynn	Glasgow, Scotland	1910	Glasgow	Armaments Worker	December 1936	April 1937	Chimorra

⁵ Though listed on the Honour Roll, it appears Dinnen departed Spain on 15 September 1937 after only a month of service. He appears to have resided sometime in Moscow, where he was accused of having a history of being a hard drinker, gangster, and criminal while in England. See Carmody and Baxell, 'The Volunteers'.

⁶ Donnelly did not die as a result of military conflict; though, sadly it was likely that he was a casualty of the war. Perhaps because he deserted in December 1937, returning to London rather than his home in Glasgow, he committed suicide in 1939. He was listed as C Donnelly on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. See Carmody and Baxell and Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10.

John Ferguson ⁷	Unknown	1892	Glasgow	Miner	March 1937	August 1938	El Perelló
Peter Garland ⁸	Glasgow, Scotland	1904	Glasgow	Unknown	May 1937	January 1938	Teruel
William Gauntlett	Camlachie, Scotland	1919	Glasgow	Driller Engineer	April 1938	July 1938	Sierra Pandols
Patrick Glacken ⁹	Moville, Ireland	1913	Greenock	Labourer	October 1937	January 1938	Teruel
David Grossart	South Leith, Scotland	1901	Maryhill	Labourer	December 1936	April 1937	In hospital after Jarama
John Hall	Rutherglen, Scotland	1915	Rutherglen	Shop Assistant	September 1937	March 1938	Belchite
David Halloran ¹⁰	Govan, Scotland	1897	North Ormesby, England	Bricklayer	February 1937	February 1937	Jarama
Thomas Hamill	Glasgow, Scotland	1914	Glasgow	Commercial Artist	December 1936	February 1937	Jarama
Joseph Harkins	Clydebank, Scotland	1906	Clydebank	Sewing Machine Mechanic	November 1937	July 1938	Gandesa
Alex G. Harvey	Unknown	1905	Glasgow	Driver	January 1937	February 1937	Jarama
David Henderson	Unknown	1894	Glasgow	Loco Fireman	January 1937	February 1937	Jarama
William Hunter ¹¹	Maybole, Scotland	1913	Glasgow	Carpenter	January 1938	March 1938	Aragon
Charles Hyman	Unknown	1912	Glasgow	Street Trader	December 1936	March 1937	In hospital after Jarama
James Hyndman	Unknown	1912	Glasgow	Unknown	December 1936	January 1937	Las Rozas

⁷ Not listed on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*; though a memorial plaque was unveiled to him on 23 September 2018 in El Perelló. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10 and Carmody and Baxell.

⁸ Listed as J. Garland on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10.

⁹ Not listed on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. He was arrested along with Alan Kemp as a traitor, but his execution was commuted before he was killed in action. See Carmody and Baxell.

¹⁰ Not listed on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*, perhaps because he had relocated to England before joining the war. See Carmody and Baxell.

¹¹ Listed as J. Hunter on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10.

William Keegan	Baillieston, Scotland	1909	Baillieston	Miner	December 1936	July 1927	Villanueva de la Canada
George Kelly	Glasgow, Scotland	1910	Greenock	Steel Erector	March 1938	July 1938	Ebro
William Kelter	Glasgow, Scotland	1915	Glasgow	Unknown	November 1937	March 1938	Gandesa
Alan Kemp ¹²	Belfast, Northern Ireland	1908	Port Glasgow	Marine Engineer	August 1937	January 1938 (executed, traitor)	Unknown
James Kermode	Kilsyth, Scotland	1903	Milngavie	Quarryman	December 1936	January 1937	Las Rozas
James Lyons	Unknown	1910	Anderston	Marine Engineer	December 1936	February 1937	Jarama
Frederick McCulloch	Glasgow, Scotland	1910	Glasgow	Labourer	Unknown	October 1937	Fuentes de Ebro
Alex McDade ¹³	Unknown	1904	Glasgow	Unknown	December 1936	July 1937	Brunete
Robert McDonald ¹⁴	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	May 1937	Drowned at sea
David McKay	Govan, Scotland	1915	Glasgow	Butcher	January 1938	April 1938	Gandesa
Andrew McKeown	Unknown	1904	Unknown	Unknown	February 1937	July 1937	Brunete
James McKissock	Scotland	1903	Unknown	Unknown	December 1936	April 1937 ¹⁵	Alcala de Henares
John McLennagan	Glasgow	1902	Glasgow	Unknown	February 1938	September 1938	Died in hospital
Cde James McMorro	Glasgow	1903	Glasgow	Labourer	January 1938	March 1938	Aragon
Cde John	Scotland	1907	Unknown	Truck Driver	February 1938	Unknown	Unknown

¹² Had several aliases, including the first names Donald and Alan and the surnames Morris, Kemp, and Buchanan. Jailed in Scotland in 1935 and 1936 for deserting his wife and children. Was shot as a traitor after deserting the army with the intention of carrying plans of the International Brigade Lines to Franco's forces. See Carmody and Baxell.

¹³ Reported to have written the song 'Jarama Valley', which was later popularised by Woodie Guthrie and Pete Seger. See Carmody and Baxell.

¹⁴ The record is very sparse, but he was listed as a friend of Robert Martin, who survived the sinking of the S.S. Ciudad de Barcelona, and was born in Ayrshire. See Carmody and Baxell.

¹⁵ It is believed McKissock 'either fell out of window or out of a lorry whilst drunk'. See Carmody and Baxell.

MacPherson ¹⁶							
Thomas McWhirter	Maybole, Scotland	1905	Unknown	Woodworker	January 1937	March 1938	Caspe
James Spy Marshall	Unknown	1908	Clydebank	Slater	January 1938	March 1938	Aragon
William Meridith ¹⁷	Stockton-on Tees, England	1911	Glasgow	Labourer	January 1937	July 1937	Villanueva de la Canada
Martin Messer	Glasgow	1911	Glasgow	Student	November 1936	December 1936	Boadilla del Monte
William Murray	Unknown	1909	Unknown	Unknown	December 1936	July 1937	Brunete
Alexander Park	Glasgow	1899	Glasgow	Engineer	January 1938	March 1938	Aragon
James Rae	Unknown	1909	Unknown	Labourer	December 1937	February 1937	Jarama
J. Redhill ¹⁸	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
John Riddell	Unknown	1902	Unknown	Midshipman	January 1937	September 1937	In hospital after Brunete
John Riley	Glasgow	1917	Glasgow	Labourer	July 1937	January 1938	Teruel
Robert Shields ¹⁹	Glasgow	1912	Glasgow	Rubberwear Checkweigherman	December 1937	September 1938	Seirra Caballs
Joseph Shields	Unknown	1905	Unknown	Unknown	January 1937	February 1937	Jarama

¹⁶ Listed as J. McPherson on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. The only person listed in the IBA database was a John MacPherson of Scotland, who was not killed in Spain and departed in July 1938. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10 and Carmody and Baxell.

¹⁷ Also known as Joseph “Ron” Dennison and Ronald Meredith. See Carmody and Baxell.

¹⁸ Not found in the IBA database. See Carmody and Baxell.

¹⁹ Listed as B. Shields on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10.

David(?) Smith ²⁰	Unknown	1910	Unknown	Unknown	January 1937	February 1937	Jarama
Fred Ernest(?) Smith ²¹	Unknown	1915	Unknown	Tailorcutter	December 1937	March 1938	Aragon
James Sullivan ²²	Unknown	1913	Unknown	Unknown	May 1937	July 1938	Gandesa
William Watson ²³	Unknown	1904	Unknown	Labourer	May 1938	July 1938	Gandesa
Andrew Winter ²⁴	Unknown	1914	Unknown	Unknown	May 1937	July 1937	Brunete
Anthony Yates ²⁵	Unknown	1914	Unknown	Labourer	December 1936	February 1937	Jarama

²⁰ Listed as D. Smith on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. Only a David Smith could be found in the IBA database as having died in Spain; though, it was not confirmed he was from Glasgow. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10 and Carmody and Baxell.

²¹ Listed as E. Smith on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. Only a Fred Ernest Smith could be found in the IBA database (as well as an Edward Smith from London, who survived the war); though, it was not confirmed he was from Glasgow. He was also listed as a deserter from Aragon, but neither a date of departure or a date of death is listed. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10 and Carmody and Baxell.

²² Listed as J. Sullivan on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. Only a James Smith could be found in the IBA database as having died in Spain; though, it was not confirmed he was from Glasgow. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10 and Carmody and Baxell.

²³ Listed as W. Watson on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. Only a William Watson could be found in the IBA database as having died in Spain; though, it was not confirmed he was from Glasgow. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10 and Carmody and Baxell.

²⁴ Listed as A. Winter on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. Only an Andrew Winter could be found in the IBA database as having died in Spain; though, it was not confirmed he was from Glasgow. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10 and Carmody and Baxell.

²⁵ Listed as A. Yates on the programme for the unveiling of *La Pasionaria*. Only an Anthony Yates could be found in the IBA database as having died in Spain; though, it was not confirmed he was from Glasgow. See Marx Memorial Library, Programme for the Unveiling of the Glasgow Memorial, Glasgow, 23 February 1980, SC/IBA/4/1/3/10 and Carmody and Baxell.

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