TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

POSTGRADUATE REVIEW 2017

Published by the Graduate Students' Union
of the University of Dublin, Trinity College.

Printed in Ireland by the Thesis Centre.

ISSN: 2009-9185

The following article may be cited as:

O'Shea, David. "Liturgy and Music at the Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle: An Exercise in Viceregal Image making." *Trinity Postgraduate Review* 16, (2017): 161-181.

Liturgy and Music at the Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle: An Exercise in Viceregal Image-making

By
David M. O'Shea MMus BMus LTCL ARCO[1]

Abstract

The chapel of Dublin Castle, commonly called the Chapel Royal, was built between 1807 and 1814 as the household chapel of the Lord Lieutenant, the viceroy and chief governor of Ireland. Despite its importance to the viceregal court, the circumstances of its founding, including the origins of its musical establishment and its designation as 'Chapel Royal', are obscure. Historical and musicological research has focussed on the traditions of Christ Church and St Patrick's cathedrals, and so the liturgical and musical history of the chapel has so far been overlooked.

The chapel was unique in the established church in Ireland as it was financed entirely by the state, making it the closest institution in Ireland to a royal peculiar. As a result, music and liturgy at the chapel reflected the tastes of successive Lords Lieutenant. Though the small musical establishment and Sundays-only choral services made the chapel essentially a sideshow to the cathedrals, its choir was not an ad hoc ensemble of singers but a formal independent entity.

By drawing on evidence from contemporary newspapers and archival sources, this article will illustrate the political backdrop to the chapel's founding, how its liturgies reflected the aspirations of the Irish viceroyalty, and how it embodied the relationship between church and state in the turbulent political environment of early nineteenth-century Ireland, and will sketch out the musical establishment in the chapel's early years.

Keywords: Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle, Lord Lieutenant, music, liturgy

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[1] Department of Music, School of Creative Arts, Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland. Email: doshea3@gmail.com.

Dublin and the Union

Dublin at the dawn of the nineteenth century was an important and prosperous city: it was the seat of the Irish Parliament and home to the Lord Lieutenant's palace at Dublin Castle, and its Georgian opulence was typified by the Customs House and other landmarks designed by the celebrated architect James Gandon. When the Act of Union came into effect on 1st January 1801, Dublin ceased to be the second city of the British Empire: without its own parliament it became merely a regional city. Though little changed visibly, an enormous political displacement had been effected. With the abolition of the local legislature the office of Lord Lieutenant, hitherto little more than a ceremonial figurehead, was propelled to political pre-eminence almost overnight: thus pressurised to maintain executive power in a politically turbulent state, successive Lords Lieutenant became concerned with the public image of the office they held.

Dublin Castle, a thirteenth-century fortress that had been expanded and rebuilt over the centuries, was a peculiar mix of splendour and squalor. The lavishly furnished State Apartments had been the setting of many great balls and banquets in the eighteenth century, but the Castle Chapel, erected around 1700 to replace an earlier chapel which had been destroyed by fire, was inadequate and poorly maintained, and was described by a contemporary observer as "little consistent with its attachment to a Royal Palace"[2]

On 19th August 1790, the *Dublin Evening Post* reported that the Castle Chapel was to be replaced with a new building:

> The new Chapel, intended to be built in the Castle garden for the accommodation of the Vice-regal Court, is certainly much wanted—as the present Chapel seems to be in a very tottering state, and is in every respect unbecoming the dignity of the representative of Majesty.

This alleged plan evidently came to nothing in the short term however, and may have been merely hearsay. By 1801 the old Castle Chapel was in an advanced state of disrepair, and this gave the newly appointed

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[2] Hugh Jackson Lawlor, "The chapel of Dublin Castle, with note on the plate of the Chapel Royal," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 13, no. 1 (1923): 34–73 (54).

Lord Lieutenant the Earl of Hardwicke the opportunity to lay plans for the building of a much grander new chapel. *Freeman's Journal* of 15th September 1801 reported: "His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant having given orders that the Castle Chapel should be repaired, Divine Service will not be performed till further notice." Yet, although James Gandon was commissioned to provide a design for a new chapel early in 1802, it was not until early in 1807 in the final days of the viceroyalty of John Russell, Duke of Bedford, that the foundation stone was laid for the new chapel, designed not by Gandon but by Armagh-born Francis Johnston, who had become Board of Works architect in 1805.[3]

No expense was spared in the construction and decoration of the new chapel, and the project vastly exceeded the original budget of £9000 to a sum of over £42,000, almost as much as the sum of nearly £50,000 spent on building the General Post Office, also designed by Johnston and erected in the same period.[4] The first service in the chapel was held on Christmas Day 1814, but the building was not completed until over a year later.[5] The circumstances of the chapel's establishment and the actions of those responsible for shaping its liturgy and music provide an illuminating insight into the self-image of the viceregal court in the years after the Union, and help to shed light on the chapel's obscure beginnings.

The Castle Chapel and Post-Union Viceregal Public Image

The instigators of the twin Acts of Union passed by the British and Irish parliaments in 1800 considered the union of the established churches of England and Ireland to be fundamentally important to the viability of the political union. This is borne out by the hubristic language of the fifth article of the Acts:

> That the Churches of England and Ireland, as now by Law established, be united into one Protestant Episcopal Church, to

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[3] Judith Hill, "The building of the Chapel Royal, 1807–14," in *The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle: An Architectural History*, ed. Myles Campbell and William Derham (Trim: Office of Public Works, 2015), 39–53 (43).

[4] Hill, "The building of the Chapel Royal," 51. John James McGregor, *Picture of Dublin* (Dublin: C. P. Archer, 1821), 79–80.

[5] Hill, "The building of the Chapel Royal," 39, n. 8.

> be called, The United Church of England and Ireland; and that the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government of the said United Church shall be, and shall remain in full force for ever, as the same are now by Law established for the Church of England; and that the Continuance and Preservation of the said United Church, as the established Church of England and Ireland, shall be deemed and taken to be an essential and fundamental Part of the Union.[6]

From the seventeenth century onwards, a series of Penal Laws had been passed which limited the civil liberties of Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters. Sections 16 and 17 of the Act to Prevent the Further Growth of Popery, passed by the Irish Parliament in 1703, made civil and military office the preserve of members of the established church, and so throughout the eighteenth century, the Protestant Ascendancy had maintained a firm grip on political power in Ireland. The Irish Parliament had long been subservient to the British parliament because of Poynings' Law and similar measures, but the repeal of those laws in 1782 and the ensuing legislative independence had given the Irish Parliament a new self-assurance. However, the increased civil rights granted to Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters with the Relief Act of 1793 (passed reluctantly by the Irish Parliament under pressure from the English Prime Minister William Pitt) combined with the events of 1798 to disturb the security of the Ascendancy.[7] With the abolition of the Irish Parliament, Ireland's political rulers (including those bishops who were peers) attended the Houses of Parliament in Westminster, and the visible power of the Protestant Ascendancy disappeared.

Lord Pelham, Chief Secretary of Ireland from 1793 to 1798 and British Home Secretary from 1801 to 1803, believed that the Union had made the Lord Lieutenancy redundant. Yet, in spite of the abolition of the executive of which the Lords Lieutenant had been the ceremonial head, and owing in part to political absentmindedness, the office was

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[6] "An Act for the Union of Great Britain and Ireland," British Parliament, 2nd July 1800.
[7] Gillian O'Brien, "Revolution, Rebellion and the Viceroyalty 1789–1799," in *The Irish Lord Lieutenancy*, ed. Peter Gray and Olwen Purdue (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2012), 114–131 (118).

retained. Finding himself suddenly the most senior figure of political authority in Ireland, the Lord Lieutenant began to assume the role of "proxy king."[8] The first Lord Lieutenant appointed after the Union, Philip Yorke, Earl of Hardwicke, was evidently keen to prove the worth of his office in the context of Ireland's new political status. It seems he took on board the suggestion of the Bishop of Meath, Thomas O'Beirne, that the Lord Lieutenant should play a role in publicly supporting the Church of Ireland by employing viceregal chaplains and leading the way in the raising of liturgical standards.[9]

The Lord Lieutenancy may well have been abolished soon after the Union had it not been held by a figure as astute as Hardwicke. The reimagining of the Lord Lieutenant's role as both a temporal and spiritual authority figure in the wake of the Union was politically expedient: it provided a justification for the retention of this arguably redundant office, a new and more prominent role for the established church in the business of the state, and, perhaps most importantly, it served to underline the unity of church and state that the instigators of the Union had sought to emphasise. Hardwicke seems to have realised that a new chapel in the viceregal palace in Dublin Castle could be an important tool in the development of this new identity, and he initiated the plan to build a new chapel in 1802, though the project would not be realised until five years later by his successor, the Duke of Bedford.

The ostentatious new Castle Chapel, small in size but lavish in detail, was a potent public symbol of the Lord Lieutenant's authority and his new role as figurehead of the established church. The chapel was funded entirely by the state, and so played a role analogous to English royal peculiars: Westminster Abbey and the chapel of St James's Palace are notable examples of such institutions, which are excluded from the jurisdiction of the local bishop and under the direct control of the monarch.[10] The Castle Chapel was therefore in a unique

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[8] K. Theodore Hoppen, "A Question None Could Answer: 'What Was the Viceroyalty For?' 1800–1921," in *The Irish Lord Lieutenancy*, 132–157 (132).

[9] Hill, "The building of the Chapel Royal," 39–41.

[10] Hugh Jackson Lawlor argued at length that the Castle Chapel had been a royal peculiar since time immemorial: Lawlor, "The chapel of Dublin Castle," 59–66. Details of the state allowances for the Castle Chapel, including salaries for clergy, musicians and officials,

position: as an ecclesiastical institution independent of the hierarchy of the Church of Ireland, it had the potential to be an exemplar of liturgical practice for the established church in Ireland, as well as a public venue for state ceremonial and a symbol of the power of the viceregal court. Thus, the founders of the new Castle Chapel carved out for it a role to mirror the English Chapel Royal, which was, in the words of Anglo-Irish ritualist clergyman John Jebb, "the exemplar of divine service to the whole kingdom."[11]

A Private Chapel for Public Show

The Lord Lieutenant's desire to improve public estimation of the viceregal court through the construction of the new chapel appears to have been effective. In a striking yet probably coincidental echo of the comments about the old Castle Chapel that had appeared in 1790 (quoted above), within a decade of the new chapel's completion an Irish clergyman would write that the household of the Lord Lieutenant was "in every respect becoming a representative of Majesty."[12]

Though the Castle Chapel is small in size and functional in layout, its decoration is remarkably elaborate: the carved wooden *trompe-l'oeil* pillars and fan-vaulted ceiling give the observer the impression of an extravagant stone structure and a sense of grandeur that exceeds the building's modest dimensions. The Gothic style, which was evidently a novelty in a city dominated by Georgian architecture, was remarked on by several contemporary newspapers: *Freeman's Journal* speculated somewhat exaggeratedly that on its completion the chapel would "unquestionably present one of the finest examples of the Gothic style of Architecture extant in Europe."[13] The design may have been a deliberate attempt to lend the chapel an antique flavour and so connect it with the long history of the Castle and the viceregal

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can be found in the Parliamentary Accounts and Papers of relevant years, which were published annually by H. M. Stationery Office.

[11] John Jebb, *The Choral Service of the United Church of England and Ireland* (London: J. W. Parker, 1843), 148.

[12] George Newenham Wright, *An Historical Guide to the City of Dublin* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1825), 10.

[13] *Freeman's Journal* (Dublin, Ireland), 30th June 1810.

administration. In addition, the memorialisation of the history of the viceroyalty in the chapel's decoration by the striking feature of the coats of arms of past Lords Lieutenant (with space left for the addition of future coats of arms) made the interior of the building a powerful symbol of the relationship between church and state.

Though it was ostensibly the household chapel of the viceregal court, the Castle Chapel's ostentatious decoration, Gothic design and self-conscious evocation of the history of the Lord Lieutenancy made it the ideal setting for the public playing out of the Lord Lieutenant's new role as proxy king of an Ireland that was English and Protestant. Edward Seymour, nineteenth-century historian of Christ Church Cathedral, bemoaned the Lord Lieutenant's infrequent attendance at Christ Church after the construction of the new 'private Chapel in the Castle': the idea that the chapel was a private institution is repeated frequently both by contemporary writers and modern historians.[14] Though the chapel was private inasmuch as it was paid for by the state and under the Lord Lieutenant's exclusive control (and not the hierarchy of the Church of Ireland), its liturgies were public occasions and became a regular part of the interaction between the viceregal court and the populace, complementing the long-established court entertainments which included levees, balls and banquets.[15] It seems that many members of the public who attended services at the chapel went less for spiritual edification than for the spectacle of the ceremony and the éclat of mixing with members of fashionable society:

> When I entered the church, service had not as yet commenced, and "friendly greetings," and "ogling glances," and "long drawn sighs," circulated as freely as they would in the boxes of a theatre during the performance of an overture to some fashionable opera. I thought the irreverence might cease when worship began; but, no. There was a little calm, to be sure—the buzz of voices was not so high, for the peals of the organ deadened their sound; but still the occasional titter went forth,

[14] Edward Seymour, *Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin* (Dublin: Hodges, Foster and Co., 1869), 64.

[15] Joseph Robins, *Champagne and Silver Buckles: The Viceregal Court at Dublin Castle 1700–1922* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2001), 7.

> and the ready jest and the complaissant smile were as free as before. The occupiers of pews lounged and stretched, and sometimes half suppressed a yawn. ... When the sermon commenced, the greater part of this goodly congregation took their departure...[16]

This observer's apposite comparison of the chapel with a theatre was evident in the building's layout, which was divided into two levels, with box pews and open benches on the ground and pewed galleries on the north and south sides surrounding the imposing central pulpit. The Lord Lieutenant's pew in the south gallery was covered in a canopy like an opera-box, while the rest of the galleries were divided up into closed pews for members of the viceregal household, with seating and standing room for members of the public downstairs.[17] Services at the Castle Chapel had been open to the public since the eighteenth century: a 1769 letter to *Freeman's Journal* from the sexton of the Castle Chapel, Thomas Ridley, stated that "there is not a King's Chapel in his Majesty's Dominions so free to access as the Castle Chapel."[18] This privilege was further extended in 1838 by Charles Vignoles, Dean of the Chapel, who was granted permission by the Lord Lieutenant the Earl of Mulgrave to allow members of the public to sit in pews reserved for "official or aristocratic personages" when not occupied by those for whom they were reserved: this decision was satirised by *Freeman's Journal*, which suggested that earls might have to sit in pews beside tinkers or tailors.[19]

Chapels Royal and Royal Chapels

Historically, the English Chapel Royal was a corporation of clergy and musicians appointed to perform liturgies for the monarch and the royal household: services conducted by members of the Chapel Royal usually

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[16] *Dublin Evening Post* (Dublin, Ireland), 2nd January 1844.

[17] A watercolour by George Petrie (presumably contemporary with Petrie's illustrations for G. N. Wright's *Historical Guide to the City of Dublin*) appears to be the earliest surviving visual depiction of the chapel's interior: it is reproduced on p. 74 of *The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle: An Architectural History*.

[18] *Freeman's Journal* (Dublin, Ireland), 28th November 1769.

[19] *Freeman's Journal* (Dublin, Ireland), 20th April 1838.

took place in royal peculiars which were described as chapels royal.[20] Though the Chapel Royal was a peripatetic body, most of its liturgies since the reign of Queen Anne had taken place at St James's Palace, which remains the effective home of the Chapel Royal.[21] No corporation comparable with the English Chapel Royal ever existed in Ireland, yet the same term has often been used to describe Christ Church Cathedral and the chapel of Dublin Castle.

Proximity to Dublin Castle had made Christ Church Cathedral the obvious venue for the viceregal court to attend church in earlier centuries, and in 1704 it was described by Archbishop Narcissus Marsh as the place "where the State goes to church."[22] In or around 1668 Charles II had presented the cathedral with money for the provision of seating for the Lord Lieutenant, his wife and members of the privy council: this action by the monarch was seen as his blessing on Christ Church as his royal chapel in Ireland. In a letter of June 1672 to the Earl of Essex (then Lord Lieutenant), Charles referred to Christ Church as "our said cathedral church and royal chapel." In subsequent generations, these actions were used to justify the cathedral's claim to the title "chapel royal."[23]

Charles Vignoles, who styled himself publicly as "Dean of the Chapel Royal," seems to have helped to spread the usage of "Chapel Royal" to describe the Castle Chapel, and by the late 1830s this epithet was almost ubiquitous. Though the usage of "Chapel Royal" in this context is semantically questionable, the origin of its usage sheds some light on the chapel's early history and the development of its public image. The inherent direct identification of the chapel with royalty—as opposed to viceroyalty—was not entirely without precedent: the Castle Chapel had occasionally been referred to as the "King's Chapel" from the thirteenth century onwards, but the term "Chapel Royal" is not

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[20] Roger Bowers, "Chapel Royal," in *The Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford Music Online: Oxford University Press), accessed 23rd January 2017, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e1298

[21] David Baldwin, *The Chapel Royal: Ancient & Modern* (London: Duckworth, 1990), 291.

[22] Richard Mant, *History of the Church of Ireland from the Revolution to the Union of the Churches of England and Ireland* (London: J. W. Parker, 1840), 170.

[23] Kenneth Milne, "Restoration and reorganisation, 1660–1830," in *Christ Church Cathedral Dublin: A History*, ed. Milne (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 255–297 (260).

known to have been used until 12th September 1821, when *Freeman's Journal* reported that: "On Saturday last, the Lord Bishop of Cloyne held an ordination in the Chapel Royal, Castle."[24]

The appearance of this term without any further qualification ten days after George IV's visit to the Castle Chapel may well not be coincidental. An unsigned account in the *Dublin University Magazine* in 1846 claimed that the king had been so impressed with the preaching of William Magee, Bishop of Raphoe that he decided to create Magee dean of the chapel, which was thenceforth to be called Chapel Royal.[25] A. H. Kenney's memoir of Magee concurs with this account: "When George IV visited Dublin, in 1821, ... his Majesty appointed [Magee] Dean of the Viceregal Chapel at the Castle."[26] The following report from *Saunders's News-Letter* corroborates this version of events:

> The Bishop of Raphoe has been appointed Royal Dean to the Castle Chapel. We believe this to be a novel appointment in this country. This honour shows the estimation in which the talents of this celebrated Dignitary have been appreciated by his Majesty.[27]

The publication of this news, which appeared five months after the event as alleged in the above accounts, was delayed perhaps because the letters patent for Magee's appointment were not issued until early in 1822: the appearance of the term 'Chapel Royal' in *Freeman's Journal* so soon after the king's visit suggests that the elevation of Magee and the status of the chapel was brought about in the course of the king's

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[24] The term 'King's Chapel' is found in a music book from the chapel, formerly the property of Hugh Jackson Lawlor, which is in the Representative Church Body Library in Dublin (without shelfmark): it contains two services composed by Sir John Stevenson, one 'composed for the occasion of the opening of the King's Chapel, Dublin' (an excerpt of which can be seen at Fig. 1), and another 'composed expressly for the Choir of King's Chapel, Dublin'. Further uses of this term from the 13th century onwards are mentioned throughout Lawlor, "The chapel of Dublin Castle".

[25] "Gallery of Illustrious Irishmen No. XV: William Magee, Archbishop of Dublin," *Dublin University Magazine* 28 (1846): 750–767 (755).

[26] Arthur Henry Kenney, *The Works of the Most Reverend William Magee D.D., Lord Archbishop of Dublin* vol. i (London: T. Cadell, 1842), p. xlviii.

[27] *Saunders's News-Letter* (Dublin, Ireland), 29th January 1822.

visit to Ireland, even though the official appointment may have taken place subsequently.[28]

The vision of a new Castle Chapel modelled on the London royal chapels was realised with the king's recognition of the chapel's pre-eminence in the appointment of one of his favoured clerics as Dean of the Chapel Royal in Dublin.[29] Magee's subsequent appointment as Archbishop of Dublin created an obvious parallel with the Bishop of London's position as ex officio Dean of the English Chapel Royal. Though Magee was the only cleric ever to hold these appointments simultaneously, the king may have been conscious of this convenient pluralism when he made the appointment: according to Kenney's memoir, Magee had protested his unsuitability for the position at the Castle Chapel on account of the distance of his episcopal see at Raphoe from Dublin, but the king answered 'we can bring you nearer', a promise fulfilled with Magee's translation to Dublin only a few months later.[30]

The Musical Foundation

Even before the new Castle Chapel was completed, its custodians began to plan the establishment of a musical foundation along the lines of the English Chapel Royal. That this was a deliberate attempt to create an institution in Dublin to mirror the royal court in London is proved by a letter in the National Archives of Ireland (hitherto seemingly unnoticed) postmarked 14th October 1814, addressed to "Rev'd Mr Slade, at the Castle, Dublin" and signed "W. London."[31] In his succession list of the clergy of the Castle Chapel, Hugh Jackson Lawlor identified Samuel Slade as Dean of the Chapel from 1814 until 1817,

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[28] *Dublin Evening Mail* of 27th July 1846 refers to 'the foundation of the Castle Chapel as a Royal Chapelry by George the Fourth'.

[29] It seems that Magee was the only such cleric chosen by the monarch and not by the Lord Lieutenant: this may explain the conspicuous absence of his name from the list of clergy of the chapel in Lawlor, "The chapel of Dublin Castle". For a brief discussion of the patronage of the chapel see John Crawford, *The Church of Ireland in Victorian Dublin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 115.

[30] Kenney, *The Works of the Most Reverend William Magee*, p. xlviii.

[31] National Archives of Ireland, OP/405/5.

and it was Slade who presided at the first service in the chapel.[32] "W. London" was the signature of William Howley, Bishop of London and ex officio Dean of the English Chapel Royal from 1813 to 1828.

Enclosed with this letter is an account written by William Holmes, Sub-Dean of the English Chapel Royal, of the manner in which choral service was performed at the chapel of St James's Palace, along with his view of how a similar, albeit more modest, choral service might be instituted in the chapel of Dublin Castle. Having given an account of the Chapel Royal personnel (which comprised sixteen gentlemen of the choir, ten choristers and a choir master, two composers and two organists), the times of services and the duties of various officials, Holmes made the following recommendations:

> As 'the Chapel of Dublin Castle is on a much smaller scale than the Chapel Royal,' the Choir might be reduced to one Organist, 2 Contra Tenors, 2 Tenors, and 2 Basses, with 6 or 8 Choristers.

The quotation marks suggest that the description of the Castle Chapel had been quoted from Slade's original letter, and this along with the wording of the rest of Holmes' reply suggests that Slade had written to solicit advice on how to replicate the English institution in the new Castle Chapel. Evidently, Slade took these suggestions on board and passed them on to other officials at the Castle, as Howley's and Holmes's letters are accompanied by a further document, dated 30th November 1814, detailing the "Propos'd Establishment of the Castle Chapel:"

> Organist and Composer: Sir John Stephenson [sic.][33]
> Organist: Mr Duncan
> 2 Tenors: Messrs Spray and Jager
> 2 Contra Tenors: Messrs Smith and Hamerton
> 2 Basses: Sir John Stephenson and Mr Hooper
> 6 Boys
> 1 Clerk of the Closet for the Ld Lieutenant (1 side)
> 1 for the opposite side of the Gallery

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[32] Lawlor, "The chapel of Dublin Castle," 68; *Saunders's News-Letter* (Dublin, Ireland), 24th December 1814.

[33] After 1800 Sir John's surname was usually spelled as 'Stevenson', the spelling used unanimously by subsequent writers.

1 for below

This list of personnel constitutes the most detailed evidence available regarding the composition of the Castle Chapel choir in its early years, and is the only known record of the musicians who may have been involved. Whether this was a "wish-list" or an account of actual appointments is uncertain, as the association of some of the named singers with the chapel choir at its inception is difficult to confirm. The date of the document is nonetheless revealing when compared with another piece of contemporary evidence. The poet Thomas Moore, with whom Sir John Stevenson collaborated on his famous collection of *Irish Melodies*, wrote to his music publisher on 12th November 1814 making excuses on Stevenson's behalf: "Stevenson, I suppose you know, has been appointed to the new Castle chapel, and is continually busy with the Viceroy making arrangements about it."[34] If Stevenson's appointment had already been confirmed and publicised some weeks before 30th November, it is possible that the other musicians listed had also been approached by the time the list was compiled, though it is also possible that Stevenson's chief billing indicated that he might have had a role in choosing the other musicians.

James Duncan's name first appears in connexion with the chapel in a Board of Works letter book from 25th April 1814 written by a Mr Robinson (presumably an official of the Board of Works) to Francis Johnston regarding ten proposals received for the building of an organ for the chapel, and suggesting that Johnston contact "Mr Duncan (the Organist)" regarding the suitability of the proposals. Duncan played at the first service in the chapel after the organ's completion, on Sunday 13th August 1815.[35] John Finlayson's list of organists of the Castle Chapel implies that Duncan was organist from 1814 until 1833, but a contemporary press notice states that he died on 14th October 1831.[36] This notice also states that he had been "for 16

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[34] John Russell, ed., *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore: Letters 1814–1818*, vol. 2 (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1853), 52.

[35] *Freeman's Journal* (Dublin, Ireland), 15th August 1815.

[36] John Finlayson, *A Collection of Anthems as Sung in the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity ...*, (Dublin: George Herbert, 1852), p. xxxi; *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent* (Dublin, Ireland, 20th October 1831.

years Organist to the Castle Chapel," but it is unclear if he remained in the post at his death.[37] Finlayson also asserted that even though Duncan was appointed organist in 1814, choral service did not take place in the Castle Chapel until early in 1824.[38] He arrived at this conclusion because there was no record of payments made to singers until this date, though there is evidence to contradict this assertion.[39]

Although Stevenson produced several works for the chapel choir in fulfilment of his duties as composer, his position as organist seems to have been effectively a sinecure, as the duties of playing the organ and directing the choir were apparently carried out entirely by Duncan.[40] He was presumably chosen as composer to the chapel because of his pre-eminence as a composer in Dublin at the time: in 1801 the Earl of Hardwicke had knighted him after hearing one of his compositions.[41] A number of Stevenson's works were written for ceremonial occasions, including the anthem "Blessed be the Lord my strength" and a Service in E-flat for the installation of the Knights of St Patrick in 1808.[42] His appointment as composer to the Castle Chapel

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[37] Duncan was still organist of the chapel in early 1829, as he placed an advertisement in *Saunders's News-Letter* on 4th March of that year: see n. 40.

[38] Finlayson, *A Collection of Anthems*, p. xxxiv.

[39] *Freeman's Journal* on 5th January 1815 reported 'a Choir has already begun its formation at the Castle Chapel'. A letter from 1818 from a former chorister of the Castle Chapel, David Hastings, is preserved in the National Archives of Ireland (CSO/RP/1818/322). Two service settings composed by Sir John Stevenson for the chapel choir in 1814 and 1819 can be found in a manuscript book of Stevenson's services for use in the Castle Chapel in the Representative Church Body Library (see n. 24).

[40] The designation given to Stevenson in this document confirms the nature of his duties as composer to the chapel as I speculated previously, based only on circumstantial evidence: David O'Shea, "Music and liturgy at the Chapel Royal," in *The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle: An Architectural History*, 95–105 (96–97). In addition to the letter mentioned in n. 39, which concerns David Hastings, 'chosen by Mr Duncan' to be a chorister in the chapel choir, Duncan advertised in the press for new boy choristers (*Saunders's News-Letter*, 16th December 1819) and singing men (*Saunders's News-Letter*, 4th March 1829).

[41] Patrick M. Geoghegan, "Stevenson, Sir John Andrew" in *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, ed. James McGuire and James Quinn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Stevenson had been a half vicar choral at St Patrick's Cathedral since 1783, a vicar choral at Christ Church cathedral since 1800, and in 1814 had been appointed a full vicar at St Patrick's. Lawlor, *Fasti of St Patrick's, Dublin* (Dundalk: W. Tempest, 1930).

[42] Elaine Sherwin, "An Edition of the Cathedral Works of Sir John Andrew Stevenson" (PhD diss., National University of Ireland Maynooth, 2012), vol. 3, 3 (n. 2).

was an extension of viceregal patronage to musical art, confirming the centrality of music to the new chapel's liturgies. His service in E major, composed for the opening service at the Castle Chapel on Christmas Day 1814 (see Fig. 1), is in places more challenging than his other services, suggesting that the choir for which he wrote it was quite proficient.[43]

Of the other singers mentioned in the November 1814 document, Robert Hooper and John Spray were long-standing vicars choral at St Patrick's Cathedral, Hooper having been appointed in 1785 and Spray in 1795.[44] Robert Jager had come to Dublin in 1810 and was a stipendiary singer at Christ Church Cathedral, and William Hamerton was a former Christ Church chorister who was appointed master of the choristers there in December 1814, but appears not to have joined the Castle Chapel choir until 1823 (presumably on account of his appointment to Christ Church).[45] The identity of "Mr Smith" is more difficult to ascertain, and though he seems unlikely to have been the John Smith who was later composer to the chapel, and did not settle in Dublin until the following year, it is possible that young Smith had been recommended for this position before his arrival in Dublin, perhaps by John Spray, a close friend of Stevensons', who is alleged to have been Smith's uncle.[46] The six boys provided for the choir were fewer in number than those of the Chapel Royal in London, but greater, apparently, than those of the choir of Christ Church Cathedral in this

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[43] O'Shea, "Music and liturgy at the Chapel Royal," 97.

[44] Lawlor, *Fasti of St Patrick's*.

[45] Roy Johnston, *Bunting's Messiah* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2003), 80; Barra Boydell, *A History of Music at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2004), 194; William H. Husk, "Hamerton, William Henry," in *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. George Grove (London: Macmillan and Company, 1900). Though the November 1814 document refers to Jager as a tenor, he is recorded elsewhere as singing as a countertenor and a bass but never as a tenor. It is possible that the compiler of this document transcribed the voice parts of the singers incorrectly.

[46] Sinéad Sturgeon, "Smith, John" in *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. Some sources describe Spray as Smith's uncle and others his father-in-law: it is possible that he may have been both.

period.[47] In addition, the provision of six singing men equalled the number of vicars choral at St Patrick's and Christ Church.[48]

By employing a body of professional musicians for the Castle Chapel, the viceroyalty created not only a small-scale Dublin equivalent of the English Chapel Royal but also a new professional liturgical choir for the performance of choral service to a high standard. Together with the choirs of the two cathedrals and Trinity College, the Castle Chapel choir was one of the four principal Anglican liturgical choirs in Dublin in the nineteenth century, and, far from being an ad hoc ensemble, it was a choir established with forethought and purpose. The maintaining of such a choir represented a significant financial investment by the viceregal court, reflecting the determination of successive Lords Lieutenant to make the chapel an attractive place of worship in which music played a central role.

Disestablishment and Demise

The importance of the liturgies of the Castle Chapel in the relationship between the viceregal court and the public in the nineteenth century seems in some respects entirely removed from the eighteenth-century courtly life of Dublin Castle, in which the grand halls were the stages upon which the tableaux of fashionable society were acted. The foundation of the new chapel was an action of political expediency in the quest for viceregal reinvention and self-preservation, and contemporary evidence shows that the Castle Chapel was a fashionable place of worship, many people attending services there because it was a place in which to be seen. By 1845 around 500 people attended the weekly Sunday morning service, a number to which such a small space can have been only barely equal.[49]

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[47] John C. Erck, *The Ecclesiastical Register* (Dublin: J. J. Nolan, 1817) lists only four choristers for Christ Church Cathedral but eight for St Patrick's. The 1820 edition of Erck's directory gives four choristers for each cathedral.

[48] John C. Erck, *The Ecclesiastical Register* (Dublin: J. J. Nolan, 1820), 42–44. In practice, one of the vicarships at St Patrick's was usually divided into two half vicarships, meaning that there were usually seven singing men instead of six, and Christ Church also employed six stipendiary singers in addition to the six vicars choral.

[49] *The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland* vol. 2, (Dublin: A. Fullarton & Co., 1846), 105.

The government's continued investment in the chapel was imperative for the maintenance of the public image of the viceregal court. Several attempts to abolish the Lord Lieutenancy were made by the Westminster parliament from the 1830s onwards, and the office was further threatened by the growth of genteel nationalism following the foundation of the Home Government Association by Isaac Butt in 1870 and William Gladstone's conversion to the cause of Irish Home Rule in the 1880s. The preservation of the Lord Lieutenancy depended on the support of the middle classes, both Catholic and Protestant, nationalist and Unionist.[50] Because of this, the chapel's role in providing regular interaction between the viceregal court and the general public became increasingly important towards the end of the century, and the improvement of the standards of music at the chapel from the 1880s onwards may be seen as a reflection of this.[51]

The Castle Chapel occupied an anomalous position after the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1871, as the continued existence of a church paid for by the state violated the principles of disestablishment. A newspaper report discussing the future of the chapel under the Roman Catholic Lord Lieutenant Viscount FitzAlan said that:

> [The chapel] is the only relic of Establishment that has survived Mr Gladstone's measure of 1869, and it has so far only survived because the Protestantism of the Viceroy which survived both the Emancipation and Disestablishment was still rendered obligatory by an Act of Parliament.[52]

It seems the Castle Chapel survived disestablishment because of the same laissez-faire attitude that preserved the office of Lord Lieutenant after the Union. The chapel remained the closest thing to an Irish royal peculiar, as even after disestablishment, its clergy and officers were appointed and paid by the government and not by the Church of

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[50] Peter Gray and Olwen Purdue, introduction to *The Irish Lord Lieutenancy*, 1–14 (7).
[51] O'Shea, "Music and liturgy at the Chapel Royal," 104–105.
[52] *Freeman's Journal* (Dublin, Ireland), 28th April 1921. The appointment of Viscount FitzAlan was made possible by a provision in section 37 of the Government of Ireland Act 1920 which stated that 'no subject of His Majesty shall be disqualified for holding the office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on account of his religious belief'.

Ireland. Because of this, the chapel existed outside the Church of Ireland, and as the introduction of some measure of Irish independence became an ever more likely prospect, the chapel's future became increasingly uncertain. In the midst of the Home Rule crisis, some members of the Church of Ireland demonstrated a degree of hostility to the chapel's possession of the silver communion plate of King William III, one commentator referring to it as "the wretched apartment called a Domestic Chapel."[53]

The long battle for viceregal self-preservation came to an abrupt end on 6th December 1922 with the abolition of the Lord Lieutenancy and the foundation of the Irish Free State. Though the Provisional Government gave Sub-Dean Hugh Jackson Lawlor permission to continue holding services in the chapel, with no state patronage and no clerical leadership (the last Dean, Charles O'Hara Mease, had died some months previously), the Castle Chapel had no provision or purpose for its continued existence. It is a peculiar irony that the chapel, an institution established as part of an attempt to reinvigorate and preserve the viceregal court, should have outlived the Lord Lieutenancy itself, albeit briefly: the musical and liturgical tradition that had been sustained by generations of Lords Lieutenant and their chaplains and musicians came to an end 108 years to the day after the chapel's first service, when Dr. Lawlor conducted the final service on Christmas Day 1922.

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[53] Roy Byrne, "The Chapel Royal, Christ Church Cathedral and the silver-gilt altar plate," in *The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle: An Architectural History*, 107–121 (109–115); *The Irish Times* (Dublin, Ireland), 30th December 1913.

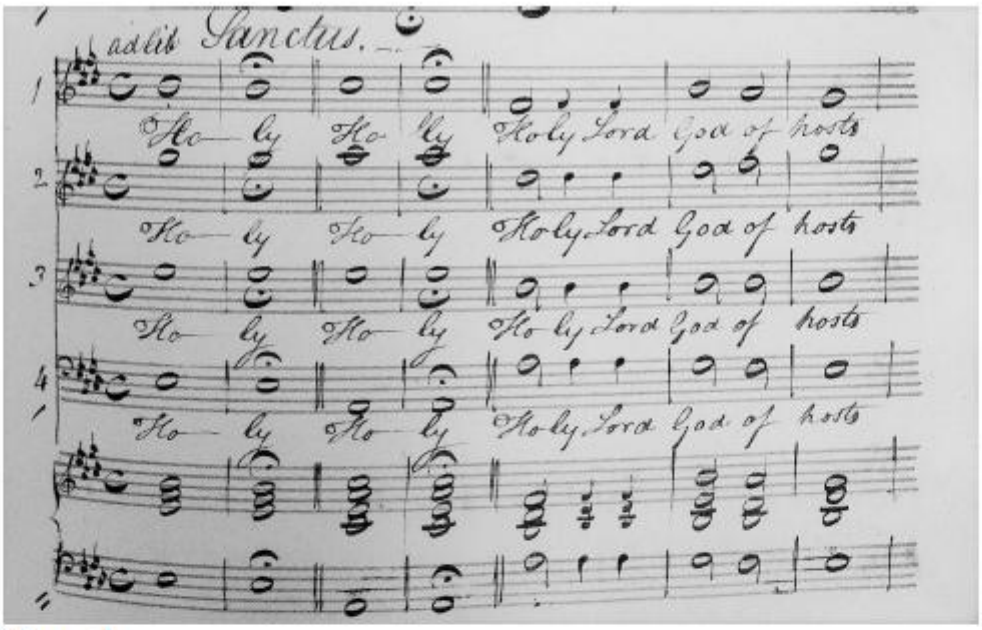

Figure 1.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to Judith Hill, Myles Campbell, William Derham and Christopher Wentworth-Stanley for alerting me to the existence of some of the primary documents cited in this article. I am also indebted to my supervisor Andrew Johnstone for his wisdom, guidance and continued support.

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Legends to Figures

Fig. 1: MS of bars 1–7 of *Sanctus* from Sir John Stevenson's service in E major, written for the opening service of the Castle Chapel.