King's Research Portal

DOI:

[10.1080/02666286.2017.1294948](https://doi.org/10.1080/02666286.2017.1294948)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record in King's Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Murray, B. (2017). The Battle for St Peter's Chair: Mediating the Materials of Catholic Antiquity in Nineteenth-Century Britain. *Word and Image*, 33(3), 313-323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02666286.2017.1294948>

Citing this paper

Please note that where the full-text provided on King's Research Portal is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Post-Print version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination, volume/issue, and date of publication details. And where the final published version is provided on the Research Portal, if citing you are again advised to check the publisher's website for any subsequent corrections.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Research Portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

The Battle for St Peter's Chair: Mediating the Materials of Catholic Antiquity in Nineteenth-Century Britain

Brian H. Murray (King's College London)

In Arthur Hugh Clough's *Amours de Voyage* the defeat of the Roman Republic of 1849 and the restoration of the Papal government by French and Neapolitan forces is filtered through the intermittent correspondence of a group of English tourists. In the opening stanza, Claude, a procrastinating aesthete of wavering political commitment, dismisses Rome as 'rubbishy'. The modern city has collected the jetsam of past ages to no discernible end and its muddle of material remains conspire to mock the coherence of today and the comprehension of tomorrow: 'All the incongruous things of past incompatible ages, / Seem to be treasured up here to make fools of present and future'.¹ Almost every British traveller to Rome in the nineteenth century repeated some version of Clough's formula, emphasizing the ability of material objects, ruins, and artworks to connect discrete moments of time and disturb linear chronologies of progress. For many pious Protestant visitors to Rome, the effect was even more dramatic. In her short account of *A Visit to the Catacombs* (1849), the Irish novelist, moralist and Methodist, Selina Bunbury, recalls her first glimpse of papal ceremony at the church S. Maria Maggiore in Rome.

[A] long train of ancient cardinals came slowly moving on to the altar; and then, enveloped in a cloud of incense, and partly screened by two immense fans made of ostrich feathers, came the Pope, in the Papal chair, borne on men's shoulders, to be set in his place; his eyelids, as is customary, closely cast down; his fingers making the sacred sign. A god of man's device appeared to me revealed in the spectacle – one of the ancient gods of old Rome in real human flesh!

Here the horrific return of the material – a ‘god of man’s device’ – is shocking to a Christian whose faith is deeply rooted in the text of the Gospels. ‘I witnessed all this’, Bunbury laments, and ‘thought of the fisherman of Galilee’.² The intense materiality of Italian Catholic ceremony conjures the spirit of pagan antiquity in an affront to the humility of the church of ancient Palestine.

For Charles Dickens, writing several years earlier, the sight of the Pope in his chair at St Peter’s recalled the image of papal effigies carried in procession and set alight to commemorate the foiled conspiracy of Guy Fawkes: ‘I never saw anything, out of November, so like the popular English commemoration of the fifth of that month. A bundle of matches and a lantern, would have made it perfect’.³ Bunbury’s horror and Dickens’s laughter at the rites and rituals of Rome both stem from the same source of Protestant unease. To acknowledge the roots of medieval popery in pagan antiquity meant also to accept Roman Catholicism as part of the genealogy of English Protestantism. In the Anglican Prayer Book, the 5 November was marked as an annual Solemn Day in commemoration of the ‘Gunpowder Treason’.⁴ But even as Anglicans expressed their thanksgiving ‘for the deliverance of our Church and Nation from Popish tyranny and arbitrary power’, they were obliged to present this progressive patriotic narrative through the medium of one of the most durable forms of Catholic devotion: a liturgical calendar of saints and martyrs.

The very public theological disputes between Catholics and Protestants in the nineteenth century frequently hung on the perceived authority of scripture over the claims of tradition and antiquity. While evangelical Protestants defended the independent authority of the biblical text, Anglo- and Roman Catholics emphasized the unbroken apostolic succession from St. Peter and the apostles through the early Roman Church to the authority of the modern episcopate. But although Catholics had a vested interest in

preserving and vindicating the early history of the Roman Church, true Protestants could strike at the heart of the Catholic pretension to antiquity by demonstrating that the earliest Christians practiced a simple and earnest form of worship, anathema to the pomp and ritual of medieval popery. This article explores how the material relics and remains of the ‘primitive church’ provoked religious, moral and political debate in nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland. More specifically, I will focus on how one object – the papal throne of St. Peter in the Vatican – became a battleground for Protestant, Catholic, English and Irish readings of the apostolic past.

Remembering with relics

In Catholic cultures the veneration of relics enforces a powerful affective claim on antiquity and apostolic tradition. Through such acts of devotion, material remains and artefacts – the alienated objects of archaeology – become loci of intimacy.⁵ The ‘contact relic’, an inanimate object touched by a saint during his or her lifetime (like the chair of Peter) offers a zone of haptic overlap, a point of contact between past and present.⁶ In her study of Sikh devotional practice, Anne Murphy has observed how relics function as ‘memorial technologies’ through which the ‘past is experienced and proved, and history narrated and performed’.⁷ But as Alexandra Walsham explains, in the Christian context relics cannot simply be explained as ‘material manifestations of the act of remembrance . . . the feature that marks them out from other kinds of material objects [is] their capacity to operate as a locus and conduit of power’. In this sense, the ‘relic is ontologically different from a representation or image: it is not a mere symbol or indicator of divine presence, it is an actual physical embodiment of it’.⁸ Thus to attack the authenticity of a relic is to attempt to destroy the power that it literally embodies.

Protestant satire aimed to deflate papal pomp by emphasising the garish material basis of its spiritual pretensions. Following a tradition from Calvin’s radical critique of

relics as impious ‘rubbish’ (*ordure*), reformed Protestants recoiled from relics as fraudulent and superstitious survivals of the pagan era.⁹ Yet while Protestants could denigrate Roman Catholicism’s idolatrous worship of mere things, this critique often relied on intense antiquarian scrutiny of material objects. It was by paying even closer attention to the materiality, provenance or social history of relics, that Protestants and other skeptics could puncture their spiritual significance. As Dominic Janes has argued in his work on idolatry within the Church of England, the material always mattered ‘if only as the counterpart to the immaterial’.¹⁰ Even the most explicit acts of anti-materialist renunciation, could paradoxically enforce the significance of religious things, as Daniel Miller has argued, ‘the passion for immateriality puts even greater pressure upon the precise symbolic and efficacious potential of whatever material form remains as the expression of spiritual power’.¹¹ Devotional practices, suggests Colleen MacDannell, are always ‘multimedia events’, and the beliefs of even the most radically reformed Protestants were mediated by material culture.¹² In their own way, both Catholics and anti-Catholics obsessed over and fetishized things – often the same things – whether classed as artifacts, exhibits, relics or rubbish.

Debates about the material and immaterial basis for religious belief often hang on the precise relationship between text, image and object. For many progressive Protestants, archaeology provided the long sought scientific and material vindication of the authority of scripture. But conversely, critical analysis of scripture and historical texts could either authenticate or discredit sacred things.¹³ As Bill Brown has suggested, writing things to ‘make them meaningful’ always requires ‘rhetorical work’.¹⁴ During the nineteenth century, the debunkers and devotees of relics both invoked the validating potential of textual and archaeological evidence. In the case of St Peter’s throne – as we shall see – anti-Catholic antiquarians had little hope of inspecting the chair itself. And so, in decrying its superstitious veneration, critics were forced to appeal to the authority of

scripture rather than science. The relic itself had been confined to Bernini's spectacular chair-shaped baroque reliquary since 1666, and had rarely been seen since by anyone outside of an inner circle of cardinals. Thus the debate surrounding its authenticity was conducted at a high-level of mediation. Even the most doggedly empirical advocates and detractors of the *cathedra* operated at one remove – at the level of word and image – by interrogating engravings, drawings, and antiquarian records, but never the object itself. As scholars of medieval Christianity have noted, reliquaries are 'in their essence a mediation between relics and audience'.¹⁵ And in the case of Bernini's *Cathedra Petri*, where form explicitly echoes content (a chair within a chair), 'likeness and presence' become merged.¹⁶

Of course, St Peter's chair was something more than a mere relic of a popular saint. The source of Petrine authority was both scriptural and self-consciously material: Christ's naming of Peter (*Πέτρος*) as the rock (*πέτρα*) on which he will build his Church (Matt. 16:18). The chair was also a metonym for the authority and jurisdiction of the Church. Yet even this seems insufficient. As the *sedes* or *cathedra* it *was* the Holy See, the source of the dogmatic rulings of the papacy, and the model for all other *cathedra* in the Catholic world. The theological centrality of the chair was further emphasised at the first Vatican Council in 1870, when the infallibility of the pontiff's *ex cathedra* announcements were formally defined as dogma.

And yet despite its considerable temporal and spiritual powers, the crude fact of the chair's materiality – its dimensions, its composition, its decoration – could disrupt these symbolic, metonymic, and theological functions. Sectarian disputes over the authenticity of the papal throne generated two opposing Peters. The Protestant Peter was a preacher and evangelist, the author of two New Testament epistles, and his early biography was reliably narrated by the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. But for Roman Catholics, Peter was also an early Roman martyr, and his apocryphal Italian

career connected the life and lessons of an Eastern Christ with the authority of the Western Church of Rome.¹⁷ As a martyr, Peter was literally the witness [Gk. *μάρτυς*] to an orthodox interpretation of Matthew 16:18. The basilica founded on the tomb of the martyr-bishop had become the central site of the Catholic Church and his throne the symbol of the Pope's spiritual and temporal power over Western Christendom.

Cardinal Wiseman and the 'papal aggression'

The immediate context for this paper is a period of religious revival, debate and conflict in mid-nineteenth century Britain. The early decades of the century saw the dramatic rebirth of the Roman Catholic Church on the island of Britain, encouraged first by Catholic emancipation and then by a dramatic influx of Irish migrants in the 1830s and 40s. The revival was further bolstered by the controversial reinstatement of the Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales in 1850 under Pope Pius IX and the appointment of Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman as Archbishop of Westminster (the so-called 'Papal Aggression'). A Spanish-born Englishman of Irish parentage, Wiseman rose to public prominence as Rector of the English College at Rome and the proprietor and key contributor to the *Dublin Review*, Britain's most important Catholic journal, between 1836 and 1862.¹⁸ At the *Review*, Wiseman promoted a conservative but active Catholic engagement in the key theological debates of the era. While many orthodox Catholics choose to bury their heads in the sand, Wiseman had taken the fight to liberals, evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics. At the English College in the 1820s he had established a reputation as a biblical scholar and textual critic of Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic manuscripts. Under Pope Leo XII he was appointed keeper of the Vatican's Arabic manuscripts and later rose to a Professorship in Hebrew and Syriac at the Roman University.¹⁹ For Wiseman, apologetics and scholarship were always intertwined, and his attacks on Protestant theology – and Protestant caricatures of Catholic theology – were

packed with historical-critical readings of biblical manuscripts and methodical (if highly selective) analyses of historical and archaeological evidence. As he explained in the preface to a volume of his collected essays: 'Reasoning had to be met by reasoning; a mistaken, by a truer, reading of antiquity.'²⁰

The reinstallation of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England was an opportunity for the liberal Protestant nation to come to terms with its largest minority. Unlike the other major milestones on the road to Catholic emancipation, however, this was not a concession granted by the British State, but an authority claimed by the Holy See. The form and tone of the announcement, in Pius IX's papal bull of September 1850, further provoked Protestant discomfort. The Pope, it seemed, had carved England and Wales into twelve dioceses and an archdiocese at Westminster, where Wiseman would sit as Primate of the English Church. The choice of Westminster as Archdiocese and the elevation of the combative Wiseman to Cardinal were widely interpreted as overtures of imperial intent and a challenge to British sovereignty.²¹ The new Cardinal aggravated existing tensions with his first pastoral read from every Catholic pulpit in the land on 7 October 1850. The letter, notoriously addressed from 'out of the Flaminian Gate of Rome', announced that 'Catholic England has been restored to its orbit in the ecclesiastical firmament, from which its light had long vanished'.

How must the Saints of our country, whether Roman or British, Saxon or Norman, look down from their seats of bliss, with beaming glance, upon this new evidence of the faith of the Church . . . as they see the lamp of the temple again enkindled and rebrightening, as they behold the silver links of that chain which has connected their country with the see of Peter in its vicarial government changed into burnished gold; not stronger nor more closely knit, but more beautifully wrought and more brightly arrayed.²²

Despite the overtones of blissful intimacy, many patriotic Protestants were repelled by Wiseman's baroque prose and triumphalist tone. Unsurprisingly, the image of the English nation chained to the chair of St Peter did little to allay anxieties about Roman annexation. The letter was widely reported and reprinted in the press, leading to a flurry of protest and condemnation in print and some isolated outbreaks of rioting and violence. Dissenting voices included the Bishop of London, Benjamin Disraeli and the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell. Unsurprisingly, most of hostility directed towards the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy came from evangelical Anglicans and Dissenters, Protestants whose faith was grounded in the authority of scripture and the radical rejection of Catholic ritual at the Reformation.²³ However, the fact that one of the most highly-publicized attacks on Wiseman came not from an evangelical Protestant, nor even a conservative little Englander, but a liberal Irish patriot and veteran of the campaign for Catholic emancipation demands further attention.

Sacrilegious curiosity

Westerton's Series of Important Papers connected with the Papal Aggression (1850-51) was one of many pamphlet series published around the time of the crises. Charles Westerton was a London bookseller, printer and churchwarden who devoted much of his time to fighting the rising tide of Catholic ritualism *within* the Anglican Church.²⁴ His series of 'important papers' were twelve in number, priced between a penny and shilling, and were mostly reprints of popular speeches and sermons against 'papal aggression'. Amongst the usual suspects, however, one rather convoluted title stands out: *Lady Morgan's Letter to Cardinal Wiseman, in Answer to His 'Remarks on Lady Morgan's Statements Regarding St. Peter's Chair'* (1850).

The daughter of an Irish Catholic stage actor and a Protestant Englishwoman, Sydney Owenson (the future Lady Morgan) was born into the respectably Bohemian theatre scene of Georgian Dublin in 1783. In her posthumously published *Memoirs* (1862), she describes the Dublin of her youth, somewhat rosily, as a place of religious toleration and ecumenical sociability (although she was herself brought up in the evangelical Anglican tradition of her mother's family). She left her family in 1798 to become a governess to a wealthy Anglo-Irish family and two years later published her first volume of poems. Her collection of *Original Hibernian Melodies* (1805) utilized the researches of folklorists to present 'authentic' Gaelic verse forms in English and had a significant influence on Walter Scott. But her real breakthrough came with her Romantic 'national tale' *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806). The novel's autobiographical heroine, the harp-strumming, Gaelic-speaking Glorvina, became the poster girl of patriotic cultural nationalism in the aftermath of the Act of Union of 1801. The rise of the Irish 'national tale', the genre of which Owenson was the acknowledged pioneer, was intimately connected with the campaign for Catholic emancipation and her novels and poetry were praised and emulated by Shelley, Byron, Scott and her fellow Dubliners, Thomas Moore and Charles Maturin.²⁵ In all of this, she was an unlikely ally of the 'no popery' protesters and pamphleteers.

Her feud with Wiseman had its origin in 1821, three decades before the 'papal aggression' crisis. Her literary output had slowed somewhat after her marriage to the English physician Sir Thomas Morgan in 1812, but a pair of provocative, politicised travelogues, *France* (1817) and *Italy* (1821), brought her renewed attention. Lord Byron praised *Italy* as a 'fearless and excellent' assault on the tyranny of Austrian and Papal government but Morgan's enthusiastic support for Italian Republicanism brought censure from conservative British critics and an outright ban in Austria and the Papal States.²⁶ Her fiction and poetry had presented a romanticised view of the Irish Catholic

peasantry, but in *Italy* the Roman Catholic Church figured as almost entirely malevolent: 'Founded in sacrifice, enforced by persecution, with terror for its spring, and human degradation for its object, dark, despotic, exclusive, and sanguinary'.²⁷ Throughout the travelogue, Morgan laments the false accretions of Italian Catholicism and draws a sharp distinction between the apostolic church of the New Testament and early Church of Rome. Amidst outrage in the reviews, condemnatory pamphlets in Britain, and prohibition and public burnings abroad, it is no surprise that Morgan missed one rather technical and narrow attack on her book. An anonymous essay, signed N.W., 'On Lady Morgan's statements regarding St. Peter's chair at Rome' appeared in Birmingham's *Catholic Magazine and Review* in 1831 – ten years after the publication of Morgan's book. Nicholas Wiseman's critique was aimed not at Morgan's volume as a whole, nor even a chapter, but a single footnote.²⁸ Appended to her description of the annual Feast of St. Peter's Chair is a brief anecdote recording the fate of the chair at the hands of Napoleon's invading troops in 1798.

The sacrilegious curiosity of the French broke through all obstacles to their seeing the chair of St. Peter. They actually removed its superb casket, and discovered the relic. Upon its mouldering and dusty surface were traced carvings, which bore the appearance of letters. The chair was quickly brought into a better light, the dust and cobwebs removed, and the inscription, (for an inscription it was), faithfully copied. The writing is in Arabic characters, and is the well known confession of Mahometan faith. — 'There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet.' It is supposed that this chair had been, among the spoils of the Crusaders, offered to the Church, at a time when a taste for antiquarian lore, and the decyphering of inscriptions were not yet in fashion. This story has been since

hushed up, the chair replaced, and none but the unhallowed remember the fact, and none but the audacious repeat it. Yet such there are, even at Rome.²⁹

The soldiers of the French Republic come baring the light of curiosity and rationalism, brushing away the cobwebs and dust of superstition, they reveal the lie upon which the Roman church is founded: not a rock but a mouldering heathen curio. The cult of the material is shown to be without substance. And yet Morgan's account foregrounds tentative acts of intermediation – moments of translation between word, image and object. Beneath a shroud of cobwebs, the telltale inscription first appears as a sequence of 'traced carvings' with the 'appearance of letters'. This markedly material text must be 'faithfully copied' prior to decipherment. And yet despite the antiquarian rigour of the French, the story lives on not as artifact, image, or text, but rather as gossip. By the close of the passage, the material, visual, and textual record has dissolved into contested memory and ephemeral speech. The chair's Islamic provenance is a fact which only the 'unhallowed' remember, a slander which only the audacious repeat.

Wiseman's critique of this story is presented as a scholarly demolition of Morgan's urban myth in defence of 'the pious tradition of the Church'. His essay mines the Greek fathers, Tertullian and the early acts of the martyrs, explaining that the chair was originally the ceremonial seat of Pudens, a Roman senator and Christian convert who housed the apostle Peter during his time in Rome.³⁰ The story of the Roman senator helped to explain why a humble Galilean fisherman should demand such an extravagant seat – while simultaneously accounting for discommoding reports that the throne was decorated with ivory reliefs depicting the labours of Hercules.³¹ But Wiseman also had a personal connection to the story of Pudens. In 1850 he was formally appointed Cardinal by Pius IX in a ceremony at 'the Church of St. Pudentiana, in which

St. Peter is groundedly believed to have enjoyed the hospitality of the noble and partly British family of the Senator Pudens' (one of the side altars of the church is made from a wooden table at which the apostle is supposed to have performed the Eucharist). Subsequently, Wiseman choose to style himself 'by the title of St. Pudentiana Cardinal Priest, Archbishop of Westminster', after the Roman Saint who was traditionally held to be the daughter of Pudens.³² This was a provocative choice, given that the 'partly British origin' of the Pudens family was an invention of early modern British antiquarians. They had argued that the Pudens and Claudia heralded by St Paul in 2 Timothy were one and the same as the Aulus Pudens and Claudia Rufina mentioned – and described as '*Brittanis*' – in Martial's *Epigrams* (4:13, 11.53). This tenuous connection was later exploited by Protestant scholars keen to connect the origins of the ancient Church of England directly to the apostles, rather than the papally endorsed mission of St. Augustine of Canterbury in 595 CE. In a more extreme version of this eccentric theory – current in the mid-nineteenth century – Claudia returns to evangelize Rome itself.³³ In his 'Flaminian Gate' address Wiseman wryly turns this sectarian Protestant myth on its head by reviving the Roman Catholic Church of England in the guise of Pudentiana *redux*.

Wiseman essay also persuasively unpicks the confused narrative that led to Morgan's conspiracy theory. A thirteenth-century stone chair at the Church of S. Pietro in Venice – popularly know as the throne of St Peter – *is* decorated with an Arabic inscription. An accomplished Arabist, Wiseman confirms that this inscription is indeed Islamic and even gives chapter and verse reference to the Koran.³⁴ Although the Vatican chair had not been publicly exhibited since 1666, Wiseman makes use of the descriptions of seventeenth-century antiquaries to date the chair to the reign of the emperor Claudius.³⁵ In this sense Wiseman's pamphlet is not an exercise in antiquarianism as such, but rather a nineteenth-century paraphrase of works of early modern apologetic scholarship. In fact, much of the evidence is recycled from a dissertation compiled by the

Italian prelate Francesco Maria Febei shortly before the chair was confined to Bernini's reliquary in 1666 (figure 1).³⁶ An illustration accompanying Wiseman's article (figure 2) is a clear re-working of the frontispiece to Febei's dissertation. The magazine's artist-engraver even replicated the angle, light source, and botched perspective of the original. Wiseman was himself a skilled draftsman, and he clearly considered the illustration to be an important element of the essay.³⁷ His correspondence with the magazine's editor, John Kirk, includes heated discussions about the accuracy of the engraving.³⁸

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Wiseman's critique is his insistence that materials matter. For Morgan, the scoffing anecdote of the counterfeit chair is an aside. It merely serves to enforce her conviction that all forms of religious despotism are interchangeable, and to ridicule a theological system that relies on the authenticity of obscure trinkets. The point of Wiseman's essay is not simply to demonstrate that Morgan is mistaken, he also insists that what she sees as trivial is in fact central to the truth claims of the Church. By turning her footnote into a dissertation, Wiseman also turns an argument about a symbol of power – the papal *cathedra* – into a debate about an archaeological artefact, a material object, a thing – the chair of Pudens. By making his point in purely archaeological terms, Wiseman refuses to take the theological bait, and instead attempts to out-reason his opponent.

The intended audience for Wiseman's essay is uncertain. And although the essay was initially published in an English Catholic periodical, it quickly found a receptive audience at Rome itself. An Italian translation appeared in the *Gironale Arcadico* in 1831 and Wiseman's '*saggio critico*' (critical essay) was republished in pamphlet form a year later.³⁹ The original essay in English was again published as a pamphlet at Rome in 1833, with a new title-page hyping Wiseman's credentials as 'Rector of the English College, Professor of Oriental Languages in the Roman University'.⁴⁰ Two years later, a Viennese

priest translated Wiseman's article into German.⁴¹ Thus Wiseman's text was circulated widely through an expansive transcontinental Catholic print network. Even if originally intended for an English audience, his 'Remarks' did his reputation as a scholar and apologist at Rome no harm and likely contributed to his rapid ascent of the Vatican's *cursus honorum*.

Morgan's rebuttal did not appear for another twenty years. In her *Letter to Cardinal Wiseman* published at the height of the papal aggression controversy, she claims to have only recently been made aware of Wiseman's article by a letter in the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper. Now in her seventies, Morgan urges the Vatican to silence its critics by submitting St Peter's throne to antiquarian analysis and making 'an honest chair of this calumniated *cathedra*'.⁴² Yet rather than battle Wiseman on his home turf of Roman antiquities, Morgan again focuses on the Church's outdated reliance on the material claims of antiquity in the face of modernity, liberalism and democracy.⁴³ The bulk of the tract consists of large chunks of Wiseman's prose with an acerbic commentary from Morgan, suggesting that part of her intention is to disseminate further examples of Wiseman's dogmatic rhetoric and stoke fears of Romish 'aggression'. Morgan also cites the recent 'Flaminian Gate' letter and sarcastically address her opponent by his full ceremonial title: 'Nicholas, by the Divine Mercy, of the Holy Roman Church, by the title of St. Pudentiana, Cardinal Priest, Archbishop of Westminster, and Administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of Southwark'.

Throughout the pamphlet, Morgan sets up a comic contrast between the biblical account of the apostles and the ostentation of papal tradition, making much of the incongruous image of a lowly apostle enthroned in imperial splendour:

[Is] it probable, my Lord, that St. Peter, the humble fisherman of Galilee, permitted himself to be seated or carried in a gorgeous chair, on the shoulders of

slaves, as his successor Pio Nono does at this day? ... he, to whose Eastern habits such a chair must have been repugnant! who had taught, not *ex cathedrá*, but, like the Master he served, walking, or reclining on the lap of earth.⁴⁴

Here Morgan resorts to a familiar Protestant trope by elevating the authority of scripture over the traditions of the Church, while also indulging in an Orientalist opposition between East and West (though reversing many of the expected tropes). The apostle's 'Eastern habits' tend toward humility, egalitarianism and the rejection of luxury. It is the Western, Roman Church, by contrast, which is debased through opulence and slavery.

Morgan's scriptural line was picked up by the *Daily News*, who strongly objected to the idea that the apostle Peter could ever have coveted an item of antique furniture: 'Leo X., and his successor Clement, were as arrant collectors of pretty nick-nacks as Horace Walpole himself, but we nowhere read that St. Peter had any taste in that way'.⁴⁵ Contrasts between the ascetic Galilean apostle and his decadent Italian successors abound in the coverage of the debate. Despite Morgan's positive slant on the 'Eastern' asceticism of the apostolic generation, the idea of the Pope pontificating from an Islamic throne proved too much to resist for *Punch*. They obligingly depicted Pius IX as a rotund, hookah-smoking Sultan, 'with compliments to Lady Morgan' (figure 3).⁴⁶ The conflation of Islamic and Catholic signifiers – a turbaned tiara decorated with cross and crescent – aligns popery with Oriental extravagance and enforces the connection between spiritual and political despotism. The image clearly relies on stock Orientalist clichés, but Leech was also drawing on a more recent anti-Catholic imagery, an iconographic arsenal that *Punch* had helped to codify.⁴⁷ Throughout 1850 and 1851, the magazine continually portrayed both the Italian Pope and the Spanish-born Wiseman as flabby, effeminate, conspiratorial and foreign. The extravagant costume and smoky atmosphere in Leech's cartoon echo contemporary depictions of Roman Catholics and High-Anglican

'Puseyites'. Both were usually depicted emerging from billowing clouds of incense and draped in baroque swathes of crinoline and lace. It seems likely that Leech's cartoon informed his colleague John Tenniel's later depiction of the inquisitorial hookah-smoking caterpillar in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).⁴⁸

For alarmed British Protestants the papal aggression represented not just the spectre of Roman imperialism but the prospect of revolt in its neighbouring Catholic colony.⁴⁹ A few years later in 1862, for example, Tenniel responded to the Catholic anti-Garibaldi riots in Hyde Park and Birkenhead with a *Punch* cartoon depicting 'Cardinal Wiseman's Lambs'. Here the archbishop was depicted as piper to a rabble of simian Irishmen riotously engaged in cracking each other's skulls with shillelaghs.⁵⁰ Morgan herself was, however, careful to distinguish what she saw as a political intervention from the contemporary attacks of sectarian bigots. To this end, she begins her pamphlet by alluding to her contributions to the cause of Irish Catholic emancipation some forty years earlier.

[My Novels] were written *for* and *in* the great cause of Catholic Emancipation – the theme and inspiration of my early authorship, and conviction of my after-life. The titles of these books were Irish and Catholic . . . My heroes were Irish Patriots; my models of pastoral piety were Irish Priests.⁵¹

Significantly, she also addresses Wiseman as an Irishman – an identity he never claimed for himself – and marks his credulous reading of the lives of the martyrs down to his 'Celtic imagination'.⁵² Turning the tables on the Archbishop, she suggests that it is the ultramontane Catholic hierarchy who have most shamefully neglected the needs of the Irish Catholic masses.

Could you but consent ‘for the nonce’ to leave behind you ‘your consecrated Chairs and immovable Tables,’ the fittest furniture for catacombs and caverns, to leave your fallible Pope under the protection of 12,000 French bayonets . . . would you but turn *your* steps to the beautiful land of your race, Ireland! – There, my Lord, *there* is much to do, that might be best done, by one who, like yourself, shares the religion and idiosyncrasy of the people.⁵³

The *Morning Chronicle*, which claimed the credit for ‘resuscitating’ the debate between Morgan and Wiseman, explicitly presented the altercation as an ‘Irish controversy’ – a scuffle between two ‘genuine Hibernians’.⁵⁴ If Wiseman had hoped to renegotiate the status of English Catholics in the Protestant nation, his detractors were just as determined to cast him as dangerous foreign interloper.

Unseating authority

The insistence of Wiseman and other Roman Catholics on the importance of relics from remote antiquity made them easy targets for caricature and polemical attack. Things were more easily illustrated and mocked than ideas, and the relentless *Punch* duly recast the controversy as a battle between ‘Lady Fan and Cardinal Crozier’.⁵⁵ According to the *Daily News*, Wiseman’s fatal flaw lay in his entirely materialist theology: ‘the episcopal chair or throne appears to be the foundation of the Cardinal’s theological system. Take the chair from beneath it, and that system tumbles to the ground’.⁵⁶ Although Morgan’s pamphlet of 1851 was largely an *ad hominem* attack, the editors of Westerton’s pamphlet series seem to have preempted this weakness by simultaneously publishing a more sober and scholarly critique of Wiseman’s essay: *The Legend of St. Peter’s Chair* by Anthony Rich (author of *The Illustrated Companion to the Latin Dictionary and Greek Lexicon*). Rich’s 30-page tract offers a robust empirical attack on the throne, dating the chair to the Byzantine

period with as much assurance as Wiseman had dated it to the Claudian era. Unlike Morgan, Rich closely scrutinizes Wiseman's use (and abuse) of both literary sources and material evidence, and supports his argument 'with three woodcuts, representing the so-called St. Peter's Chair in the Vatican, that at Venice, and an original Curule Chair from Herculaneum'. Rich challenges the empirical basis of Wiseman's argument by carefully critiquing the chain of recycled illustrations and descriptions which lead back to his opponents eighteenth- and seventeenth-century Latin sources. This critical intervention is framed in the context of good and bad antiquarian practice, a distinction that Rich explains in the xenophobic terms of contemporary *Punch* cartoons. The bad antiquarian is 'a Jew broker or curiosity dealer', a 'pest to society', and a 'dangerous agent of an effete system of superstition, which no longer accords with the character of the age we live in'. By contrast:

when the results of an intelligent observation, and patient study of ancient monuments and customs, are reduced into active operation, and practically applied as *subordinate to, or confirmatory of*, the evidence extracted from *written texts*, they afford the best, because the most striking, aids towards the discovery of historical truths.⁵⁷

[my italics]

Rich's move to subordinate the 'study of ancient monuments' to more reliable information extracted from 'written texts' can be seen as a characteristically Protestant recourse to the authority of Scripture (the rhetoric has parallels in some of the pieties of contemporary biblical archaeologists). But it also highlights the extent to which the battle over Peter's chair was conducted in the realm of the textual and the visual rather than the

material. In spite of thick descriptions and lavish engravings, the object under investigation is always an absent presence.

Punch also picked up on the irony of Wiseman's attempt to defend a 'relic of upholstery divine' which even he was not allowed to see.

. . . his Eminence describes

This hallowed Chair – though he has never seen it:

One would have thought the way to stop all gibes

Would have been simply to un-screen it.

No matter; Wiseman makes the said Chair out

A seat, whereon, at Rome, the higher classes

In ancient times by slaves were borne about,

Using their brother-men as mules or asses.

How like the apostolic pride!

How likely that St. Peter thus would ride,

Instead of talking quiet walks,

Chaired through the streets on people's shoulders,

A sight to edify beholders;

In short, paraded like Guy Fawkes!⁵⁸

As in Dickens earlier account, this comic burlesque of the intense materiality of papal tradition transforms the apostle into effigy. In November 1850, the coincidence of the papal aggression crisis with the annual commemorations of the Gunpowder Treason made Wiseman an easy target. On 9 November, Leech offered another full-page cartoon: 'The Guy Fawkes of 1850: Preparing to Blow up All England!' (figure 4). In this depiction, a stuffed likeness of the Pope is depicted cramming the crypt of Parliament

with incendiary Bishop's mitres emblazoned with (incorrect) names of new Catholic dioceses. A pudgy-faced Pius and bespectacled Wiseman lurk conspiratorially in the background.⁵⁹ Leech here reimagines a potent symbol of Protestant triumph, the flaming effigy of the pope, as an instrument of Catholic terror. *Punch's* rather anxious iconoclasm echoed widespread national unease. On the night of 5 November 1850, effigies of Wiseman and Pius IX were paraded and set alight across England.⁶⁰ And at Bethnal Green in East London all thirteen new Catholic bishops were torched amidst raucous festivities culminating in a 'splendid display of fireworks' and a performance of the National Anthem.⁶¹

Morgan died in 1859 and Wiseman in 1865. So neither was present when the chair was finally exposed to the veneration of the faithful and the scrutiny of scholars in 1867.⁶² The throne was much as Wiseman had described it, and almost identical to the illustration which accompanied his essay (figure 1). However, a quick inspection by two of the Vatican's most respected scholars, the Vatican archaeologist Giovanni Battista de Rossi (a friend and correspondent of Wiseman) and the Jesuit historian Raffaele Garrucci, was enough to date the decorative ivory work to the Carolingian period. The interpretation was confirmed by an inlaid relief portrait of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles the Bald (823-877).⁶³ The chair could now be securely dated to the ninth century CE.⁶⁴

Yet despite the predictions of Wiseman's critics, the exposure of the chair's origin had little or no effect on either the cult of St Peter or the authority of the Holy See. And although its archaeological credentials had dramatically evaporated, the spiritual authority of the *cathedra* continued to be viewed as a potential threat to British sovereignty. In 1870 the decree on papal infallibility again caused disquiet in Britain and

the controversy even elicited a bestselling pamphlet from William Gladstone. ‘Will it, then, be said’, asked the Liberal opposition leader, ‘that the infallibility of the Pope accrues only when he speaks *ex cathedra*? No doubt this is a very material consideration for those who have been told that the private conscience is to derive comfort and assurance from the emanations of the Papal Chair’.⁶⁵

By the 1860s the Vatican was increasingly willing to submit its treasures and relics to scholarly and scientific investigation. Discouragingly for anti-Catholic antiquaries, however, the supposedly ‘materialist’ dogmas emanating from these objects now appeared to transcend questions of archaeological authenticity. Images of the discredited chair continued to appear in Catholic publications, despite its relegation from apostolic relic to Carolingian antique. In a further layer of self-conscious mediation, a lavish illustrated edition of Wiseman’s popular novel *Fabiola: or, the Church of the Catacombs* published after the author’s death in 1886, incorporated an engraving based on an 1867 photograph of the *Cathedra Petri* (figure 5). A modern photograph of nineteenth-century object illustrating a novel set in the fourth century! Despite the gleeful predictions of Protestant antiquaries that the unveiling of St Peter’s chair would irrevocably undermine the authority of the Holy See, the Feast of the Chair of Peter continues today, with some slight rhetorical adjustments. In 2006, for example, Benedict XVI referred in his homily to Bernini’s sculpture as a ‘monument to the Chair of the Apostle’ – rather than a reliquary containing the apostolic *sede*. Protestant critics had long regarded the material basis of papal power as a point of weakness, but Catholic faith and ritual were made of stronger stuff.

In an essay on Roman antiquities written for the *Dublin Review* in July 1838, Wiseman had argued that the Roman Forum as it exists in modern historical consciousness is not a stable entity, but a shifting and ephemeral space of conjecture and

theory. The identification of individual ruins is in constant flux: what was called the Temple of the Jupiter ten years ago is now proven to be the Temple of Saturn in the latest excavation report. The 'buildings of the Roman Forum' can be compared 'to a country dance, in which temples change sides, monuments cross hands, and columns lead down the middle'.⁶⁶ The materials of antiquity are as much a product of modern print culture as ancient civilization and 'it is as difficult to keep pace with the discoveries of Roman [archaeology], as with the improvements in the steam-engine'.⁶⁷ The ontological status of the material traces of antiquity were always dependent on the shifting interpretations of scholarship and science. Even the most venerable – and venerated – objects were themselves transformed through processes of representation, remediation and dissemination in text and image.

The survival of ancient rites, rituals and relics presented problems for Protestants, who were often trapped between the desire to claim and impulse to reject these objects. As Wiseman himself pointed out, in the parish church of Lutterworth, Leicestershire, sincere evangelicals could themselves venerate the chair of John Wycliffe.⁶⁸ The annual feast of St. Peter's chair emphasised continuity, repetition and recurrence, diachronic forces that still had the power to disrupt teleologies of progress and enlightenment. In the superimposition of the Islamic upon the Christian upon the pagan in the battle over Peter's Chair we have potent illustrations of why objects from the past were points of vociferous contention in the Christian present. The persistence of the material traces of the past, and the capacity of things to survive historical ruptures, revolutions, and reformations, posed a threat to the primacy of scripture and presented opportunities for Catholic apologists. Yet the authority of material antiquity was itself continually challenged by the competing claims of the text and the mediated image. The stories told by things were inherently unstable and ultimately independent of their authors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge the valuable contributions of his colleagues on ‘The Bible and Antiquity in Nineteenth-Century Culture’, a European Research Council-funded project based at CRASSH, Cambridge. This article also benefitted immensely from the generous comments of Vicky Mills, Katharina Boehm, Gareth Atkins, Michael Ledger-Lomas, Simon Goldhill, Alison Knight, Kate Nichols, Scott Mandelbrote, Owen Boynton, Nadia Marx, Rosanna Da Costa, and Helen Walasek.

THE
CATHOLIC MAGAZINE,
AND REVIEW.

VOL. I.

MAY, 1831.

No. 4.

St. Peter's Chair at Rome.

Figure 1. From N.W., 'On Lady Morgan's statements regarding St. Peter's chair at Rome', *Catholic Magazine and Review*, 1.4 (May 1831), 193. © British Library Board. P.P.205.

Figure 2. Frontispiece to Franciscus Maria Phoebeus [Francesco Maria Febei], *De identitate cathedrae in qua Sanctus Petrus, Romae* (Rome: Gregorij, & Ioannis de Andreolis, 1666). © British Library Board. 4606.aa.8.

Figure 3. 'The Pope in his Chair. With Mr. Punch's Compliments to Lady Morgan',
Punch, 25 Jan. 1851. Author's own collection.

Figure 4. 'The Guy Fawkes of 1850: Preparing to Blow up All England', *Punch*, 9 Nov.

1850. Author's own collection.

with the crowd ; and the gentle slave feared she might have hurt her feelings by her reserve, before their last interview.

The hall was still shrouded in the dusk of a winter's twilight, although the glowing east, without, foretold a bright December day. On the altar burned perfumed tapers of large dimensions, and round it were gold and silver lamps

Chair of St. Peter.

of great value, throwing an atmosphere of mild radiance upon the sanctuary. In front of the altar was placed the chair no less venerable than itself, now enshrined in the Vatican, the chair of Peter. On this was seated the venerable Pontiff, with staff in hand, and crown on head, and round him stood his ministers, scarcely less worshipful than himself.

From the gloom of the chapel, there came forth first the sound of sweet voices, like those of angels, chanting in soft

Figure 5. From Nicholas Wiseman, *Fabiola*. Illustrated Edition (New York: Benziger Brother, 1886). Author's own collection.

¹ Arthur Hugh Clough, 'Amours de Voyage' (I, i). *Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1885), 211.

² Selina Bunbury, *A Visit to the Catacombs, or the First Christian Cemeteries at Rome: and a Midnight Visit to Mount Vesuvius* (London: W.W. Robinson, 1849), iv-v.

³ Charles Dickens, *Pictures from Italy* [1846], ed. Kate Flint (London: Penguin, 1998), 121.

⁴ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 20–22.

⁵ '[As] archaeologists, we are trained to distance ourselves from what we study - the alienation of our subject lies at the heart of archaeological methodology'. Victor Buchli and Gavin Lucas, 'The Absent Presence: Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past', *Archaeologies of the Contemporary Present* (London: Routledge, 2001), 3-18, here 10.

⁶ See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 136–39.

⁷ Anne Murphy, *The Materiality of the Past: History and Representation in Sikh Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5.

⁸ Alexandra Walsham, 'Introduction: Relics and Remains', *Past and Present* (2010), supplement 5, 9-36, here 12-13.

⁹ See John Calvin, *A Treatise on Relics* [1543], trans. Valerian Krasinski, (Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter & Co., 1870). Article XXII of the Anglican prayer condemns 'Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relics' as a 'fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God'.

¹⁰ Dominic Janes, *Victorian Reformation: the Fight over Idolatry in the Church of England, 1840-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 13.

¹¹ Daniel Miller, 'Materiality: An Introduction', *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 1-50, here 1, 22. See also Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 68-78.

¹² Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 14.

¹³ See David Gange and Michael Ledger-Lomas, ed., *Cities of God: The Bible and Archaeology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

¹⁴ Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003), 85.

¹⁵ Cynthia Hahn, 'What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?', *Numen* 57 (2010): 284-316, here 291.

¹⁶ Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 127.

¹⁷ See Devon Fisher, *Roman Catholic Saints and Early Victorian Literature: Conservatism, Liberalism, and the Emergence of Secular Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 39.

¹⁸ For a comprehensive account of Wiseman see Richard J. Schiefen, *Nicholas Wiseman and the Transformation of English Catholicism* (Shepherdstown: Patmos Press, 1984) and Brian Fothergill, *Nicholas Wiseman* (London: Faber, 1993).

¹⁹ On Wiseman's significant contribution to biblical scholarship in the period see Timothy Larsen, *A People of One Book: The Bible and the Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), Ch. 2.

²⁰ Wiseman, *Essays*, II, viii.

²¹ For a lucid overview see Gerald Parsons, 'Victorian Roman Catholicism: Emancipation, Expansion and Achievement' and Walter Ralls, 'The Papal Aggression of 1850: A Study in Victorian Anti-Catholicism' in *Religion in Victorian Britain*, ed. Gerald Parsons (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), vol. I, 146-183; vol. IV, 115-

134. Saho Matsumato-Best, *Britain and the Papacy in the Age of Revolution* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003) provides a broader context. Michael Wheeler's *The Old Enemies: Catholic and Protestant in Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) is particularly strong on contemporary literary and visual responses to the theological and ecclesiastical debates.

²²Cardinal Wiseman's "Out of the Flaminian Gate" (October 1850)', in *English Historical Documents: 1833-1874*, vol. 12, part I, ed. G.M. Young and W.D. Handcock (London: Eyre and Spottiswode, 1956), 364-67.

²³ Matsumato-Best, *Britain and the Papacy*, 155.

²⁴ Janes, *Victorian Reformation*, 74 ff.

²⁵ Ina Ferris, *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²⁶ Byron, cited in Donatella Abbate Badin, *Lady Morgan's Italy: Anglo-Irish Sensibilities and Italian Realities* (Bethesda MD: Academia Press, 2007), 241. On the composition and reception of Morgan's travelogues see Badin, *Lady Morgan's Italy*; Kathryn Walchester, *Our Own Fair Italy: Nineteenth Century Women's Travel Writing and Italy 1800-1844* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 137-170; Jeanne Moskal, 'Gender, Nationality, and Textual Authority in Lady Morgan's Travel Books', in *Romantic Women Writers: Voices and Countervoices*, ed. Paula R. Feldman and Theresa M. Kelley (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1995), 171-93

²⁷ Lady Morgan, *Italy*. Third Edition (London: Henry Colburn, 1821), vol. I, 5.

²⁸ N.W., 'On Lady Morgan's statements regarding St. Peter's chair at Rome', *Catholic Magazine and Review* 1, no. 4 (May 1831): 193-207. The controversy is also briefly covered in Janes, *Victorian Reformation*, 174-75 and Fisher, *Roman Catholic Saints and Early Victorian Literature*, 39-40.

²⁹ Morgan, *Italy*, vol. III, 81.

³⁰ Wiseman cites the Bollandist ‘Acts of St Pudentiana’, *Acta Sanctorum*, 19 May (1668), 297.

³¹ Nicholas Wiseman, ‘Remarks on Lady Morgan's Statements regarding St. Peter's Chair’ [1831], *Essays on Various Subjects by his Eminence Cardinal Wiseman* (London: Charles Dolmen, 1853), 302–28.

³² Wiseman, ‘Out of the Flaminian Gate’, 364–67.

³³ The convoluted line of antiquarian reasoning that lead to this extravagant claim is explained by Martha Vandrei, ‘Claudia Rufina’, *Making and Remaking Saints in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Gareth Atkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016). And in Simon Goldhill, *The Buried Life of Things: How Objects Made History in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 38–41.

³⁴ Wiseman, ‘Remarks on Lady Morgan’, 320.

³⁵ Although the chair was withdrawn from publicly display in the late seventeenth-century, it had been inspected at various points in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the *Fabbrica di San Pietro*, the committee of clergy responsible for maintaining the basilica. The *Fabbrica* had even commissioned a replica of the throne in 1705. See Michele Maccrone, ‘La Storia Della Cattedra’ in M. Maccarone, A. Ferrua, P. Rommanelli, and P.E. Schramm, *La cattedra lignea di S. Pietro in Vaticano*, Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia, Serie III, Vol. X (Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1971), 3-70 (57-66).

³⁶ Franciscus Maria Phoebeus [Francesco Maria Febei], *De identitate cathedrae in qua Sanctus Petrus, Romae* (Rome: Gregorij, & Ioannis de Andreolis, 1666).

³⁷ Wiseman provided some of his own illustrations and architectural drawings for his historical novel *Fabiola* (1854). See draft manuscript of *Fabiola*. Wiseman papers, Ushaw College, University of Durham. XVIII.D.5.34

³⁸ In a letter to Wiseman, Kirk admitted that ‘the rings were not sufficiently explained to the artist, and at first view will not be well understood’. John Kirk to Nicholas Wiseman. 30 April 1831. Wiseman papers, Ushaw College, University of Durham.

UC/P7/1/169. These metal rings were central to Wiseman’s argument that a Roman senator had once owned the chair. As he explains, Roman senators of the period were borne aloft ‘by means of rings placed at their sides through which poles were passed; and thus the chair was carried by slaves upon their shoulders. At each side of St. Peter’s chair are two rings, manifestly intended for this purpose’. Wiseman, ‘Remarks on Lady Morgan’, 306.

³⁹ *Sul ragguaglio di Lady Morgan rispetto alla cattedra di S. Pietro, saggio critico del rev. Nicola Wiseman, tradotto dall’inglese per A. De Luca* (Roma: A. Boulzaber, 1832). See Maccarrone, ‘La storia della cattedra’, 64.

⁴⁰ N. Wiseman, *Remarks on Lady Morgan’s Statements regarding St. Peter’s Chair preserved in the Vatican Basilic* (Rome: Joseph Salviucci and Son, 1833).

⁴¹ Joseph Pletz (Vienna) to Nicholas Wiseman. 21 August 1835. Wiseman papers, Ushaw College, University of Durham. UC/P7/1/224.

⁴² Sydney Lady Morgan, *Letter to Cardinal Wiseman in answer to his “Remarks on Lady Morgan’s Statements Regarding St. Peter’s Chair”*, Fourth Edition. (London: Charles Westerton, 1851), 8. Morgan also alleges that Wiseman has plagiarised much of his material from an earlier work by the Italian cardinal Gregorio Cortese, *De Romano Itinere Gestique Principis Apostolorum* (1522; Roma: Generosus Salomonius, 1770). On Cortese’s defense of Petrine authority in its counter-reformation context see Marvin Anderson,

‘Gregorio Cortese and Roman Catholic Reform’, *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies* 1 (1970): 75-106, here 83-85.

⁴³ Extraordinarily, however, she cites a mysterious private conversation with the great French Egyptologists Vivant Denon (1747-1825) and Jean-François Champollion (1790-1832) as her source for the Arabic inscription story. On Morgan’s relationship with Denon see Moskal, ‘Gender, Nationality, and Textual Authority’, 187-88.

⁴⁴ Morgan, *Letter to Cardinal Wiseman*, 13-14.

⁴⁵ ‘Lady Morgan, Cardinal Wiseman, and St. Peter’s Chair’, *Daily News*, 7 Jan. 1851.

⁴⁶ The level of detail in Leech’s image suggests that he paid close attention to the debate. For example, Wiseman and his opponents had debated the function of the projecting metal rings and whether a Roman ‘curule’ chair would have had straight or curved legs.

⁴⁷ Leech’s cartoon is one of many in *Punch*’s tireless campaign against ‘Papal Aggression’. The magazine’s obsession with the Catholic threat had prompted Richard Doyle (an artist of Irish-Catholic descent) to resign in protest in December 1850. M.H. Spielmann, *The History of ‘Punch’* (New York: Cassell, 1895), 456.

⁴⁸ In Carroll’s story, Alice is initially disarmed by the ‘languid, sleepy voice’ of the caterpillar, only to be lured into an aggressively catechistic interrogation. In another *Punch* cartoon from 1855, Tenniel had depicted Cardinal Wiseman sitting on a mushroom. Michael Hancher, *The Tenniel illustrations to the “Alice” books* (Ohio State University Press, 1985), 11–13.

⁴⁹ Wheeler, *Old Enemies*, 28; Matsumato-Best, *Britain and the Papacy*, 174.

⁵⁰ [John Tenniel], ‘Cardinal Wiseman’s Lambs’, *Punch*, 25 October 1862: 170.

⁵¹ Morgan, *Letter to Cardinal Wiseman*, 5.

⁵² Morgan, *Letter to Cardinal Wiseman*, 9. On Wiseman’s self-conscious Englishness see Larsen, *A People of One Book*, 45-47.

⁵³ Morgan, *Letter to Cardinal Wiseman*, 33-34.

⁵⁴ ‘Lady Morgan and Cardinal Wiseman’, *Morning Chronicle*, 30 December 1850: 5.

⁵⁵ *Punch*, 25 Jan. 1851: 31.

⁵⁶ ‘Lady Morgan, Cardinal Wiseman, and St. Peter’s Chair’, *Daily News*, 7 Jan. 1851.

⁵⁷ Anthony Rich, *The Legend of Saint Peter's Chair* (London: Charles Westerton, 1851), 31.

⁵⁸ 'Holy Chairs to Mend', *Punch*, 25 Jan. 1851: 33.

⁵⁹ 'The Guy Fawkes of 1850: Preparing to Blow up All England', *Punch*, 9 Nov. 1850, 197.

⁶⁰ J.A. Sharpe, *Remember, Remember: A Cultural History of Guy Fawkes Day* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 152.

⁶¹ 'The Fifth of November', *Dublin Evening Mail*, 8 Nov. 1850: 4

⁶² The year was celebrated as the eighteenth centenary of the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul in 67 CE.

⁶³ Maccarrone, 'La Storia Della Cattedra', 69.

⁶⁴ For an exhaustive modern archaeological account of the chair see M. Maccarrone *et al.*, *La cattedra lignea di S. Pietro in Vaticano*.

⁶⁵ W. E. Gladstone, *The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on Civil Allegiance: A Political Expostulation* (London: John Murray. 1874), 34. The pamphlet sold 150,000 copies in 1874.

⁶⁶ Nicholas Wiseman, 'The Roman Forum' [1838], *Essays*, vol. III, 329-354 (332).

⁶⁷ Wiseman, 'Roman Forum', 334.

⁶⁸ Wiseman, 'Remarks on Lady Morgan', 307.