

University of Galway Research Repository

Fostering an Irish identity through art: A letter from Sylvester O'Halloran (1728-1807) to James Barry (1741-1806) in May 1791

Title	Fostering an Irish identity through art: A letter from Sylvester O'Halloran (1728-1807) to James Barry (1741-1806) in May 1791
Author(s)	Lyons, Claire E.
Publication Date	2010
Publication information	Lyons, C. (2010). Fostering an Irish identity through art: A letter from Sylvester O'Halloran (1728-1807) to James Barry (1741-1806) in May 1791. <i>Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society</i> , vol. 115.
Publisher	Cork Historical & Archaeological Society
Link to publisher's version	http://www.ucc.ie/chas/journal.html
Item record	http://hdl.handle.net/10379/4884

Fostering an Irish Identity Through Art: A Letter from Sylvester O'Halloran (1728-1807) to James Barry (1741-1806) May 1791.¹

In 1843 an article from the secretary of the Cork Art-Union, which had appeared originally in the *Southern Reporter*, was sent to and published on page 12 of *The Nation* on the 2 December 1843. Included with this article was a letter from the surgeon and antiquarian Sylvester O'Halloran to the neo-classical painter James Barry, dated 1791. That correspondence should occur between O'Halloran and Barry is not totally unexpected, although no evidence to support this conjecture had existed until now. Even its appearance in 1843 was by chance, due to a correlation between its contents, the aspirations of the Art-Union and an active campaign by the Repeal Association, and in particular, Thomas Davis (1814-1845) to foster an Irish identity through the medium of art.

It was the received opinion of the Repeal Association that:

if the Repeal Association could induce the people of Ireland universally to use Irish music, to employ a style of architecture suitable to the climate, history, character of Ireland; and if it could lead Irish artists to paint, model, and sculpture subjects connected with the history, manners and scenery of Ireland, it would serve the cause of Ireland and Repeal materially. (*The Nation*, 23 September:14)

To this end painting competitions were organised and sponsored by the Association. The competitions were confined to Irish artists; the subject matter likewise was to be Irish and treated in both a national and patriotic manner. In its selection of recommended subject matter the Association drew on the works of the Irish antiquarians of the seventeenth-, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the manner of a commodity to feed the aims of the Repeal machine. For instance, an example of one of the many subjects suggested by Davis was, 'Ollamh Fodla presenting his Laws' with special reference given to the works of Moore, Keating and O'Halloran's histories as research guides (Davis, 1843:12)

The attempts of the Repeal Association to encourage national art complemented that of the many Art-Unions established throughout the country and they in turn praised the attempts of the Repeal Association in organising and sponsoring painting and sculpture of Irish historical subjects and named the Repeal Association a true ‘patron of nationality in art.’ Within this context of an upsurge in Irish patriotic art, the O’Halloran to Barry letter was published in *The Nation*. The author of the original article in the *Southern Reporter* introduced O’Halloran’s letter as follows:

Our mention of the “Venus” reminds us of a letter addressed to its painter by that most fervid of patriots and enthusiasts, the Historian O’Halloran. We found it in an original collection of Barry’s Correspondence – the autographs lately shown us by its possessor, Mr. Power,

Unfortunately, I have been unable to trace the original of this letter.² It may still remain with the descendents of the Mr. Power mentioned in the above extract and has, perhaps, become misplaced or forgotten with the passage of time. In the absence of which, nonetheless, from the layout and subject continuity, it appears that the letter that appeared in *The Nation*, and which I reproduce here without alteration, is a true copy.

The central focus of this article, therefore, is to reintroduce into the public domain this ‘forgotten’ correspondence from Sylvester O’Halloran to James Barry. It is not my intention here to provide a detail of the lives of either of these major historical figures, a project which could encompass many books, rather I confine myself to highlighting the common ground they both occupied in matters of history and politics in relation to Ireland and which may have formed the basis of a mutual friendship.

Limerick born Sylvester O’Halloran was one of the most influential Gaelic antiquarians in the latter half of the 18th century.³ By profession he was a surgeon and a leading intellectual in the field of medical science. His publication history spans a period of more than 50 years. Like Barry, he held strong political opinions and again like Barry, as a

Catholic he was denied the usual venue for the expression of these sentiments. In the absence of such a venue O'Halloran expressed his political views through the medium of his histories and Barry found expression for his political opinions through the medium of a visual politics - on canvas.

James Barry was born in Cork and continued his training in Dublin and on the continent under the patronage of Edmund Burke whom he met in 1765.⁴ O'Halloran was also a correspondent and friend of Burke and it is most likely that as part of Burke's social circle Barry and O'Halloran met, some time after 1771, when Barry returned from the continent and set up residence in London.⁵ In 1782 Barry became professor of painting at the Royal Academy, a position he held until 1799 when he was dismissed from the academy.

It is impossible to say from the meagre contents of this letter what the exact nature of the relationship between O'Halloran and Barry may have been, but two points are immediately clear from the initial paragraph. Firstly, that although this appears to be the first time that O'Halloran has written to Barry he is approaching him on the basis of a prior and still existing friendship, and his reason for doing so is twofold; 'a claim on your friendship, and a call on your patriotism.'

The content and purpose of the letter is direct. It is by way of an introductory letter from O'Halloran to Barry on behalf of a Mr. Russell, an aspiring Limerick artist. O'Halloran was a leading social and charismatic figure in Limerick society and his friendship with Barry may have been local knowledge. Based on the content of this letter it seems O'Halloran was approached by the Russell's, who O'Halloran describes as a 'very worthy and amiable couple' to approach Barry on behalf of their son.⁶ The purpose of O'Halloran's letter then, initially, was to provide Mr. Russell with both a reference and an introductory note to Barry to be hand delivered in the assurance that 'from your patriotism and love for the fine arts, *you will fan this generous flame.*'

The grounds upon which O'Halloran endeavours to enlist Barry's support is revealing of a mutually acknowledged awareness of the neglect of the 'Irish' genius in general:

Our country wants not for men of genius in every department of science as well as in the fine arts; but we have not Maecenases, and an English government seems not very forward to call forth the exertions of genius amongst us, since, in the long swell of our pension list, not a single instance can be produced, of the smallest favor bestowed on men of genius and abilities.

The lack of Irish representation on the civil pension list is, for O'Halloran a personal grievance. Elsewhere, as I have attempted to show O'Halloran conducted a persistent but ultimately unsuccessful 11 year campaign to garner for himself a civil pension on the basis of his new method of amputation (Lyons, 2007.) Although his endeavours had met with influential political support in England, O'Halloran felt that his 'Irishness' was the root cause of the refusal by the Irish body of surgeons to acknowledge the contribution to medical science made by his new method of amputation. The following extracts are taken from two letters published in the *Freeman's Journal* and addressed to 'the very respectable Body of Surgeons of the City of Dublin':

Indeed, so sensible was I of the Importance of this new practice, and the extensive Inductions to be drawn from it *Principals* I had Reason to think myself intitled [*sic*] to *national Reward*, for my unwearied Diligence in this Affair: sure I am, that in any other country of Europe, the Author of so useful a Discovery would not be unnoticed! Why will you not to adopt it? Sure you will not think the worst of it by being the Discovery of your Countryman?(Lyons, J.B. ed. 1963, 9:33)

I am persuaded, Gentlemen, ...you would readily adopt any practice that tended to public utility, *even though a native of the kingdom was the author of it.* (Lyons, J.B. ed. 1963, 9:35)

Barry expresses a similar sentiment in his letter to the Dilettanti Society in 1799 which displays a clear affinity in perception with that expressed by O'Halloran, as to the mean

spirited response of which the Irish nation was uniquely capable of in according status to one of its own:

An Irish artist may think himself well off, if his countrymen are not against him, in order to curry favour for themselves; and that he be not sacrificed to their timidity, servility, or convenience, when ever he should attempt high matters, where the success would justify pretension to take any lead or superiority.

(Barry, 1809, 2:571)

The emotions expressed here are similar, a mutual recognition of the existence of a ‘begrudgery’ directed by the Irish at themselves. Although it could be argued that Barry’s experience has been amplified by his sense of victim hood, and indeed it may be, nonetheless, his comment acquires further substance in light of O’Halloran’s similar response (Murray, 2005:29-30).

Drawing then, on the sense of neglect by their countrymen that both men obviously feel, O’Halloran appeals to Barry’s sense of the underdog. ‘See, then, the necessity of encouraging the fire of genius in each other.’

The concern may have been misplaced in this instance, however, as the budding aspirations of this artist, young Mr. Russell, seem to have come to naught. He does not appear to have registered at the Royal Academy. There is no mention of a Mr. Russell from Limerick in the School Register of the Royal Academy for 1791.⁷ There is no evidence to suggest that Barry may have taken private students. Aside from these considerations no evidence, in the form of paintings, exists to suggest that Mr. Russell did ultimately pursue a career in painting.

Of Barry’s artistic works O’Halloran only comments here on two: ‘Venus rising from the sea’ (Pressly, 2005:86) and secondly, his mural cycle ‘The Progress of Human Culture’, a project which Barry undertook at his own expense to decorate the Great Room of The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce (Pressly, 2005:60-117). This was a remarkable project which as William Presley comments gave Barry ‘the

opportunity to create in a prominent London venue the most important series of history paintings in eighteenth-century British art, a series with a message of his own choosing.’ (Pressly, 2005:46-55; Gibbons, 1991:112). This work was exhibited twice in 1783 and again in 1784.

However, from O’Halloran’s comment here it seems that he had never personally viewed this series, although clearly he was aware of its success:

After I left London I heard with great pleasure that you were appointed to paint the rise and progress of the arts, this surely was paying the highest compliment to your genius, abilities, and execution, and your employers were not disappointed.

With regards to Barry’s ‘Venus’, mentioned here by O’Halloran and praised for the ‘bold and masterly’ execution of the work, also has the questionable distinction of being removed from the founding exhibition of Barry’s work in Cork in 1816 due to ‘protests of indecency’ (Cullen, 2005:43). In fact the notoriety of Barry’s Venus may be partially responsible for rescuing this O’Halloran to Barry letter from obscurity. Barry’s Venus was familiar to its Cork audience and the author of the article from the Cork Art-Union informs that ‘It lay in one of the Committee Rooms of the Royal Cork Institution until within the last year.’

Having fulfilled his obligations to Russell and complemented Barry’s genius as an artist O’Halloran turns in the second paragraph to deal with a subject closer to his own sphere of expertise – Irish history:

Shall I fondly attempt, my dear sir, to beseech you to bestow some part of your talents on your native history. May I hope to see Irish heroes glow on canvas? I know of no history more replete with noble and generous deeds;

In an attempt to encourage Barry in this direction O’Halloran suggests two emotive events from Irish history that he feels would translate well on to canvas. There is also, clearly, a personal agenda to his selection. Both pieces here recommended by

O'Halloran emphasise his own presentation of early Gaelic society as civilised and chivalrous, a presentation which stood in stark contrast to that of the barbaric and lesser identity disseminated in the British and Anglo-Irish tradition. The first relates the tale of how Cenedi, on the very point of being crowned king of 'Munster-Cenedi', acceded to the supplications of his mother not to infringe the laws of alternate succession and relinquished his victory to the rightful successor. The second provides a detail of the only instance in Irish history of a voluntary abdication of the crown of Ireland. In the eleventh century when the High King Malachy failed to raise sufficient troops to oppose Brian Boru's challenge to his high kingship, Malachy voluntarily and peaceably abdicated the crown to Brian Boru on the plains of Dublin. In other words, O'Halloran is attempting to engage Barry to join with him and supplement his own textual assertions of ancient Gaelic grandeur with a visual translation of events on to canvas.

O'Halloran's desire here to see Irish heroes 'glow' on canvas is in tune with the general upsurge of interest in fostering an Irish subject centred painting project. The previous year, 1790, Joseph Cooper Walker had published what Luke Gibbons (1991:124) called 'a pioneering pamphlet 'entitled, *Outlines of a Plan for Promoting the Art of Painting in Ireland: with a List of subjects for Painters drawn from the Romantic and Genuine Histories of Ireland*, and this publication, with its urging for a total restructuring and expansion of the then current art facilities, may also have influenced O'Halloran to avail of the opportunity here to add his own mite and draw Barry into the enterprise.

However, as an aside here, it is interesting to note that only works with a Protestant authorship are here recommend by Walker. He refers to the works of Thomas Leland (1773) Fernando Warner (1763) and Charlotte Brooke (1789), and of course his own work, as suitable sources of inspirational themes from which an 'Irish' painting tradition can be established. Walker's omission of O'Halloran's work here is reflective of a body politic that had grown less favourable to the Gaelic antiquarian as Catholic issues occupied the foreground in the 1780's and '90s and polarised Protestant opinion. In contrast, only four years previously, reference to O'Halloran had been liberally strewn

throughout the pages and footnotes in Walker's *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*, (1786).⁸

With regard to O'Halloran's observations here on suitable painting topics and his desire to see Irish heroes 'glow' on canvas, there is no evidence that Barry ever entertained either of these two suggestions. Barry's artistic forays into the area of Irish history are sparse, consisting of only two works and both treating of the same subject - Patrick's baptism of the pagan king of Cashel. The first presented in 1763 drew public attention to the young painter and as Luke Gibbon's comments, 'can lay claim to be the earliest recorded painting on an Irish historical subject.' (Gibbons, 1991:120). The second, a treatment of the same theme, 'The Baptism of the King of Cashel', was painted during the period c.1799-1801.

This is the only known correspondence that occurred between O'Halloran and Barry. If further correspondence did occur it would not be totally unexpected as they had a deal of common ground upon which a friendship could be forged. For instance, in matters of Irish history, as William Pressly has pointed out, Barry drew his inspiration from and favoured the accounts of the Gaelic antiquarian rather than the prejudiced and negative viewpoint of Ireland and the Irish disseminated in the English and Anglo-Irish historiography (Pressly, 1976:n.26). Barry was certainly familiar with O'Halloran's work, in particular O'Halloran's *A General History of Ireland 1778* from which he copied out particular sections into his Commonplace Book.⁹ These sections: pp. 62-64, 66, 68-69 are taken from the early chapters of volume one of O'Halloran's *A General History of Ireland* and are central to O'Halloran's grand narrative of the civilizing influence of the early Gael in the Mediterranean region prior to arriving in Ireland.

In general O'Halloran's thesis rests on the premise that the echoes of the migrations of the early ancestors of the Gael had been retained in the histories of the countries they passed through on their journey to Ireland, and therefore, functioned to confirm the traditional accounts recorded in the native annals. And, coincidentally, in the fragmented histories of the countries of the Mediterranean, there is recorded a memory of a once

great maritime people which parallels that of the early history of the Gael. They were the improvers and colonizers of Africa and Greece. Their exploits provided Homer with source material for his *Odyssey* and Orpheus in the *Argonauts*. Ultimately, this race settled in the Hyborean Island according to the Greeks, and in the Atlantic Isle according to the Egyptians. O'Halloran submits that a comparison of these fragmented histories with those of the native annals of Ireland confirms that this race of people were the Gael and Ireland their final destination.

Following this line of argument O'Halloran argued that the story of Agenor and Belus preserved in Greek pseudo-history was in fact a mutilated memory of the story of Neanuil and Niul, who had been born in Phoenicia to Fenius Farsaidh the eponymous ancestor of the Irish race. O'Halloran further argued that the Phoenician Cademus, a figure acknowledged in Greek pseudo-history to have brought 'letters' to Greece was in fact high priest and brother to Heber-Scot great- great- grandson to the aforementioned Niul and leader of the expedition into Greece. For instance O'Halloran opines that 'It appears from history, that not only the Greeks, but most European nations, borrowed from us their alphabet.' or 'The early Britons and Cornish adopted our letters, and after them the Saxons.' (1778,1:66).

It was this section relating to the Gael as the early civilisers of Greece that had captured Barry's artistic interest and he had copied into his *Commonplace Book*. It is easy to imagine how O'Halloran's flamboyant and romantic style would have appealed to what Murray describes as Barry's 'extravagant imagination' and 'his love of 'classical mythology,' (Murray, 2005:25.) Therefore, an interest in Ireland's ancient past was common to O'Halloran and Barry and may have formed the basis of their friendship.

There are further grounds of commonality between Barry and O'Halloran in their interpretation of the Irish past. For instance, Tom Dunne has pointed out that the inclusion of an image of Stonehenge in Barry's painting of *'King Lear Weeping over the Body of Cordelia'*, which draws attention to the common Celtic origins of the ancient Britons and the Irish by its linkage in the public perception of Stonehenge as a druidic monument and ancient burial place of British kings (Dunne, 2005:130).¹⁰ O'Halloran also argued for a commonality of origin between Britain and Ireland, and furthermore that the

aboriginal inhabitants of Britain came from Ireland. For instance, ‘the old British and old Irish were from one common stock;(1778,1:27) ‘the British and Irish are the descendants of Magog,’(1778,1:34) ‘that colonies from Ireland first inhabited, and even gave the name to Britain’(1778,1:37). In addition to which O’Halloran argued that Ireland was the metropolitan seat of druidism from whence she spread her druidical tenants all over Europe. In consequence of which, O’Halloran argued that she earned the title *Insula Sacra* or Holy Island, long before the advent of Christianity (1778,1:41;1772:6-39). Indeed in light of the reappearance of this letter from O’Halloran to Barry a revisiting of the sources which informed Barry’s visual politics might prove fruitful

There are other shared life experiences that may have forged a friendship between Barry and O’Halloran. They were both Irish and Catholic living in a society and at a time when Catholics were legitimately oppressed. Unlike Burke, Barry had chosen the Catholicism of his mother and in this respect he may have felt closer to fellow Catholic O’Halloran who shared with him the ‘lived’ experience of being Catholic in a society that discriminated against Catholicism.

However, Barry’s Catholicism was complex. Tom Dunne points out that what ‘most distinguished him [Barry] from contemporary radicals – [was the belief] that Catholicism had long been in the forefront of the fight for liberty and justice,’(Dunne, 2005:120). This inter-linkage of liberty and Catholicism is embodied, for Barry, in the founders of Maryland, the first and second Lord Baltimore, George Calvert (1580?-1632) who converted to Catholicism in 1625, and his son Cecil Calvert (1606-1675). Cecil Calvert issued an ‘Act concerning Religion’ 1649, the framework of which foreshadowed and laid the foundations for the framework of toleration which would be pursued at a later time in the United states (Noll, 1992:26-9.) As Luke Gibbons further points out, with the insertion of Lord Baltimore in place of William Penn in Barry’s ‘*Elysium*’ in 1793, ‘the Catholic cause was moved to the forefront of the struggle for universal liberty.’ (Gibbons,1991:127).

This equation of liberty and Catholicism is not evident in O’Halloran’s work. In fact the introduction of Papal power into Ireland is portrayed by O’Halloran as the work of a

manipulative English king and an opportunistic English Pope between whom lay the fallow ground of Ireland (1778, 1:336-79). In matters of religious toleration, O'Halloran looks to the ancient past and holds up for emulation the spirit of toleration exercised by Druidism in the face of Christianity; 'when Christianity took the lead of Druidism, ... though Druidical tenets were kept up for above three centuries after the landing of Patrick, yet were its professors unmolested.' (1772:xix).

In his histories when dealing with matters of religion, O'Halloran employs a rhetoric of impartiality arguing for a secular society and a position of 'universal toleration' provided that a man's '*religious tenets are neither injurious to the state, or to individuals.*' (1778, 2:166). In fact, references to Catholicism *per se* are suspiciously lacking from O'Halloran's works. I have found only one specific reference by O'Halloran to his Catholicism and that is in a letter to fellow antiquarian Charles O'Conor, 6 April 1774. Here O'Halloran uses the term superficially in the same way that he uses the term 'Milesian', - a handy label to denote a commonality (Lyons, ed.1961, 8:176).

Nonetheless, in general, on key issues surrounding the Catholic question and the civilising influence of early Gaelic society, Barry and O'Halloran were in agreement and this would have supplied the basis for a cordial friendship. What the true nature of that friendship might have been is more difficult to quantify in the absence of further evidence.

There may be other letters that have not, as yet, come to light, but for now the letter here below is the only one extant.

Claire E. Lyons

Centre for Irish Studies

National University of Ireland, Galway.

A Letter from Sylvester O'Halloran to James Barry 1791.

Limerick, May 27 1791

Dear Sir – I have long proposed to myself the pleasure of addressing a letter to you. I avail myself of the present opportunity to put it in execution. It is a twofold nature – a claim on your friendship, and a call on your patriotism. Young Mr. Russell, who will deliver you this letter, is the son of a wealthy and amiable couple, and from the little attempts he made here, aided by his own genius *only*, his friends form great expectations. He must be known, and not improbably, a pupil of yours. Your scientific and penetrating eyes will soon see whether he has the talents necessary to become a master, and, if so, I persuade myself, from your patriotism and love for the fine arts, *you will fan this generous flame*. Our country wants not for men of genius in every department of science as well as in the fine arts; but we have not Maecenases, and an English government seems not very forward to call forth the exertions of genius amongst us, since, in the long swell of our pension list, not a single instance can be produced, of the smallest favor bestowed on men of genius and abilities. See, then, the necessity of encouraging the fire of genius in each other.

Your Venus rising from the sea I greatly admired; the thought was happy, and the execution bold and masterly; when presented at Gloucester-house,¹¹ I was shown one purchased at a high expense at Rome, but by no means equal to yours. After I left London I heard with great pleasure that you were appointed to paint the rise and progress of the arts, this surely was paying the highest compliment to your genius, abilities, and execution, and your employers were not disappointed. Shall I fondly attempt, my dear sir, to beseech you to bestow some part of your talents on your native history. May I hope to see *Irish heroes* glow on canvas? I cannot suppose that you – tho' it is too much the case with our countrymen – can be unacquainted with your native history. I shall therefore, without further prefacing, enter on the business.

AN HISTORY PIECE

About the middle of the 10th century two competitors appeared for the crown of Munster-Cenedi of the house of Thomond, and Callachan of that of Desmond, from which the present O'Callachan is descended. The power of Cenedi prevailed. The estates of Munster met at Cashel to salute him King. In the midst of their deliberations the mother of Callachan appeared: respect and silence immediately succeeded; animated by maternal love and the glory of her race, she addressed Cenedi in a speech replete with dignity, boldness, and truth; she remonstrated against infringement of the laws of alternate succession; she acknowledged the force of his power, and then pointed out the glory he would acquire by giving up to justice what could not be wrested from him by force. The *Feis*, or assembly, were astonished - all eyes were directed to Cenedi. He paused for a couple of minutes, relinquished his claim, and declared Callachan King of the province. This is the only instance in Irish history of a woman appearing to solicit for a son, an husband, or a brother. However high the spirit of chivalry appeared in these days, and the respect paid to the fair, yet the sacrifice like this present is unexampled in history.

AN HISTORY PIECE

The surrender of the crown of Ireland by Melaglin¹² the 2d to Brian Boroime (Boru). The story - Brian being called upon by a large majority of the people to assume the monarchy, sent ambassadors to Malachie to surrender the crown to him, or to meet him on a certain day on the plains of Dublin, where he would be at the head of 25,000 chosen men. This was the language from the remotest antiquity. To collect forces sufficient at the time appointed, Malachie sent ambassadors to Brian requesting a month longer, at the expiration of which he pledged himself that if not in force to meet him, he would peaceably surrender the Imperial Crown into his hands. Unable to oppose force to force at the day appointed, he waited on Brian at the head of 12,000 cavalry, made a formal surrender of his crown with a speech on the occasion. Brian, melted by the distress of his rival, embraced him, replaced the crown on his head, and gave him a further time of twelve months to try to retrieve his affairs, but even then not prepared to oppose so powerful an antagonist, he made a formal surrender of the crown to Brian in the presence

of the national estates, who was then formerly inaugurated Monarch of Ireland; and this, by the bye, is the only instance in Irish history of a peaceable abdication of the crown.

I have now finished what I intended to say; it only remains to know in what light you will consider my proposals, but at worst I shall console myself with the purity of my intentions.

I remain, dear Sir,

Your most humble and obliged servant,

Silr. O'Halloran.

Endnotes and Bibliography

¹ There are three people I would like to thank that have contributed to this article. Firstly, I would like to thank Professor Tadhg Foley Galway for drawing my attention to the importance of this O'Halloran to Barry letter. Secondly, my thanks to my PhD supervisor, Dr. Niall Ó Ciosáin Galway for reviewing the draft of this article for me. Thirdly, I would like to express my gratitude to Professor William L. Pressly, University of Maryland for his generosity in reading this article and many helpful suggestions. In the final analysis, however, I alone am responsible for whatever opinions or errors expressed here.

² There is no mention of this letter in any of the known repositories of Barry's work, The Lewis Walpole Library, the RSA or Royal Academy of Arts. I would like to thank Sue Walker of the Lewis Walpole Library who searched the Barry correspondence held there in addition to their miscellaneous manuscript catalogue cards in an attempt to locate a reference to this letter.

³ Ref. Bibliography: Wilde, W. 1845; Lyons, J.B. 1961, 1963, 1989; Lyons, C.E. 2007, 2009.

⁴ Ref. Bibliography: Barry, J. 1809, Pressly W.L. 1976, 1981. Dunne, T. 2005.

⁵ Sir George Saville and the Hon. Charles Fox who were correspondents of Barry also appear on O'Halloran's 'Subscriber List' for his *A General History of Ireland 1778*:xiv, xi indicating further points of social contact. Barry, J. 1809 ed. Fryer, E. 2:253, 255; 2:285, 286 respectively.

⁶ Lucas records six families surnamed Russell in Limerick. All families were in trade but to which our Mr. Russell here belongs is impossible to say. Lucas, R. 1788 *A General Directory of the Kingdom of Ireland*. Dublin. I am taking O'Halloran's reference 'is the son of a wealthy and amiable couple, and from the little attempts he made here,' to mean Limerick.

⁷ I would like to thank the librarian at the Royal Academy who was kind enough to search 'The School Register of the Royal Academy 1769-1830' for me.

⁸ pp. iv, ix, 3, 6, 17, 19, 23, 24, 28, 34, 35, 35 etc.

⁹ Barry's Commonplace Book is jointly owned by Eoin C. Daly, of Cork along with his brother and sister; Pressly, W.L. 1976:644 n.12.

¹⁰ Ref. also Gibbons, L. 1991:121-2,132. *The Baptism of the King of Cashel by St. Patrick, a sketch*.

¹¹ The residence of Prince William, Duke of Gloucester and Edinburgh (1743-1805), younger brother of George III, forth in line of succession at birth. I sense that O'Halloran's presentation to Gloucester House may have occurred sometime in 1777 as that is the year that Barry's proposal to paint the Great Room of the Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce was accepted.

¹² Malachy.

Bibliography

Barry, J. 1809 *The Works of James Barry*. In: Fryer, E. ed. 2 London.

-
- Brooke, C. 1789 *Reliques of Irish Poetry Consisting of Heroic Poems, Odes, Elegies, and Songs, Translated into English Verse: With Notes Explanatory and Historical; and the Originals in the Irish Character. To Which Is Subjoined an Irish Tale*. Dublin:George Bonham.
- Cullen, F. 2005 'Barry and his Public: Issues of Display and Access'. In: T. Dunne ed. *James Barry 1741-1806 'The Great Historical Painter'*. Kinsale:Crawford Art Gallery and Gandon Editions. 36-45.
- Davis, T. 1843 'Hints for Irish Historical Paintings'. *The Nation*, 29 July 12.
- Dunne, T. (2005) ed. *James Barry 1741-1806 'The Great Historical Painter'*. Kinsale:Crawford Art Gallery and Gandon Editions.
- _____, 2005 'Painting and Patriotism'. In: T. Dunne ed. *James Barry 1741-1806 'The Great Historical Painter'*. Kinsale:Crawford Art Gallery and Gandon Editions. 118-139.
- Gibbons, L. 1991 'A Shadowy Narrator': History, Art and Romantic Nationalism in Ireland 1750-1850'. In: Ciaran Brady ed. *Ideology and the Historians* Dublin:Lilliput Press.
- Leland, T. *The History of Ireland from the Invasion of Henry II. With a Preliminary Discourse on the Antient State of That Kingdom* 3 London.
- Lyons, J.B. 1961 'The Letters of Sylvester O'Halloran, pt. 1'. *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 8:168-181.
- _____, 1963 'Sylvester O'Halloran (1728-1807)'. *Irish Journal of Medical Science*, 38(5): 217-32.
- _____, 1963 'Sylvester O'Halloran (1728-1807)'. *Irish Journal of Medical Science*, 38(6): 279-88.
- _____, 1963 'The Letters of Sylvester O'Halloran, pt. 11'. *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 9:25-50.
- _____, 1989 'Sylvester O'Halloran, 1728-1807'. *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 4:65-74.
- _____, 1991 *The Quality of Mercers: The Story of Mercers Hospital, 1734-1991*. Dublin: Glendale Publications.
- Lyons, C.E. 2007 'A Rediscovered Letter of Sylvester O'Halloran to Dr. De Salis, 1 February 1771'. *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, 59: 46-58. This article contextualises O'Halloran with the antiquarian world of this time;
- _____, 2009 'Sylvester O'Halloran (1728-1807): Three unpublished Letters'. To be published in the *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 2009.
- Murray, P. 2005 'James Barry: The Cork Background'. In: T. Dunne ed. *James Barry 1741-1806 'The Great Historical Painter'*. Kinsale:Crawford Art Gallery and Gandon Editions. 18-25.
- _____, 2005 'I am forming Myself for a History Painter': Barry in Rome'. In: T. Dunne ed. *James Barry 1741-1806 'The Great Historical Painter'*. Kinsale:Crawford Art Gallery and Gandon Editions. 26-35.
- Noll, M.A. 1992 *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. New York:Eerdmans.
- O'Halloran, Sylvester. 1778 *A General History of Ireland*. 2 Dublin & London
- _____, 1772 *An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland*. London and Dublin.

Pressly, W.L. 'The Baptism of the King of Cashel by St Patrick'. *The Burlington Magazine*. 118 (882):643-647.

_____, 1981 *The Life and Art of James Barry*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Walker, Cooper J. 1786 *Historical memoirs of the Irish bards. Interspersed with anecdotes of, and occasional observations on the music of Ireland. Also, an historical and descriptive account of the musical instruments of the ancient Irish. And an appendix*

Warner, F. 1763 *The History of Ireland* London.

Wilde, W. (1845) 'Illustrious Physicians and Surgeons in Ireland. No. VI. Sylvester O'Halloran, M.R.I.A'. *The Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science*, 5:223-50. This article contains a comprehensive list of O'Halloran's publication.