Chapter III

Portrait Busts and Statues

The portrait busts and statues at the university have a similar raison d'être to that of the painted portraits. A representative selection of the official portrait sculpture at the university will be discussed in the following chapter. Benedict Read's Victorian Sculpture (1982) provides a scholarly source of background material and context for this study of the nineteenth-century busts and statues in the University Collection. Examples have been chosen from a general collection of sculpture at the University of Sydney which represents a history in miniature of sculpture in New South Wales for the period addressed in this thesis. The collection includes early sculpture made in the colony, such as the bust by Charles Abrahams William Windeyer (1844). Abrahams was active in New South Wales in the 1840s and is said to be the first sculptor in the colony. \(^1\) There are also statues and casts which were brought into the colony, for example William Beynes' (1795-1862) Helenus Scott (1828) and William Grinell Nichol's Captain Cook. \(^2\) Casts of the Elgin marbles and busts of Queen Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, Lorenzo de' Medici and Shakespeare were given by William Long in 1859, one year before Sir Charles Nicholson gave his collection of antiquities. These donations have not been acknowledged in university history, probably because of Long's convict forebears. There are numerous plaster busts of famous medical men but little has been discovered about them, except that they were given by a number of individual members of the medical profession to embellish the Anderson Stuart building. In the collection there is also some sculpture of Italian origin but the majority of the sculptures were executed in the colony by sculptors who include Thomas Woolner, Archille Simonetti, Tommaso Sani, Emile Leysalle and James White, none of whom were Australian-born. Australia's most famous native-born nineteenth-century sculptor, Bertram Mackennal, is represented by the Peter Nichol Russell Memorial and two other smaller works. Women sculptors have a small representation from Dora Ohlfsen (1867-1948). The following discussion will, however, concentrate on sculpture representing official personages, dating from 1854 to 1894.
In comparison with the painted portraits, the collection of official portrait sculpture at the university is small. Obviously a marked preference for paintings is indicated. As previously noted, the majority of painted portraits were executed by English artists, and were often private commissions, or at least the results of the individual sitter's own efforts and taste. Most of the sculpture, on the other hand, was the result of public or university funded commissions, which included specific instructions to the sculptor, as in the case of the Challis statue. While a majority of the university sculptures were executed in New South Wales, those produced overseas were not commissioned in England, like a number of the portraits, but were produced in Italy. This was even the case with the Wentworth statue, although judges had been appointed in London to decide upon a sculptor. Therefore, it was the English fashion only, for displaying commemorative statuary, particularly in relation to Oxford and Cambridge, which was followed at the university. Yet in view of the English associations of the Great Hall and the works of art procured for its decoration together with the increasing production of portrait busts and commemorative statues in England in the mid-nineteenth century it is surprising that no busts or statues were commissioned in England. Paradoxically there are marked Italian and French influences found in the sculpture to be discussed. Although the university did commission some of the sculpture, once again there was no articulated policy in this regard.

Regardless of where the sculptures were commissioned, as mentioned, it was the English fashion for commemorative sculpture which was emulated at the university. Therefore the following brief survey of the position of English sculpture in the mid-nineteenth century will provide a context for the sculpture commissioned for the university. The escalating popularity of the portrait bust and statue in England was in part the result of the neoclassical movement and the many antique prototypes which were available, as well as the influence of artists such as Flaxman. The cult of the hero, which was directly related to the Napoleonic wars, the death of the Prince Consort and the rebuilding and decoration of the Houses of Parliament also created a demand for public portrait sculpture. Among other public institutions, Oxford and Cambridge Universities
were prominent patrons of sculpture; their collections include representations of famous scientists, academics and patrons. ⁴

Nevertheless, British sculpture was not highly regarded by serious critics in the nineteenth century. According to William Michael Rossetti, British sculpture was poor. ⁵ Ruskin was silent on the subject and the Royal Academy did little to encourage sculpture. ⁶ Moreover, English sculptors had difficulties in procuring suitable faultless marble, which was not obtainable in England. Marble was often imported from Carrara at considerable expense, a life-size piece cost £100 in 1849 and importation was slow due to shipping delays and strikes. ⁷ Therefore, although the portrait bust and statue were popular in England, there were difficulties associated with production. In spite of these drawbacks 'more money than ever, it is credibly stated, is now in the course of expenditure upon marble chipping and smoothing'. wrote Palgrave in 1866. ⁸

Was there a preference in England for European, rather than English sculptors? If so, were the individuals responsible for commissioning sculpture for the university following a trend? It is difficult to know without pursuing a detailed study of commissions for sculpture in England, but from the evidence available it seems unlikely. In London, the most visible nineteenth-century sculpture by an Italian was Baron Marochetti’s Richard Coeur de Lion (1851) which was exhibited at the Great Exhibition and then placed before the Houses of Parliament. Yet Marochetti was not universally popular with English critics or sculptors, and was said to have gained commissions through his friendship with Prince Albert. ⁹ The French thought their own sculptors were superior to the best nineteenth-century Italians, such as Bartolini and Tenerani. ¹⁰ But there was little interest in French sculpture in England until the advent of naturalism in English sculpture, when French sculptors such as Carpeaux began exhibiting at the Royal Academy from the beginning of the 1870s. ¹¹ Art auction records indicate that apart from Canova (died 1822) and occasionally Thorvaldsen and Hyram Power, the most popular nineteenth-century sculptors on the English art market were English. ¹² In summary, there is no indication that the English preferred European sculptors and therefore it cannot be argued
that the university followed an English trend when Deas Thomson, Wentworth and Peter Nicol Russell commissioned Italian sculptors to immortalise them in marble. Yet the significance of these three commissions should not be over-rated as these were the only sculptures commissioned for the university in Italy and their commissioning may have been partly due to expediency.

In the colony before the 1860s, however, if a colonial commission had been desired, there was Charles Abrahams, a product of the English and French Academies. He arrived in Sydney in the 1840s and took advantage of the discovery of marble on the Abercrombie River in New South Wales in 1842. Abrahams held exhibitions of portrait busts in Sydney in February and October 1845 and in 1846 he showed twenty-one portrait busts. Included in the 1845 exhibits were busts of Charles Windeyer, Dr. (later Sir Charles) Nicholson and the Hon. and Mrs. Deas Thomson. Another possibility was the English sculptor William Grinsell Nicholl, who arrived in the colony in 1851. He also had studied at the Royal Academy schools, probably under Flaxman, and had been employed at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. In Sydney Nicholl opened a Sculpture Gallery in Dowling St. Woolloomooloo. Nicholl's Governor Gipps (1849) is included in the University Collection, but has never been accorded the official status of display in the Great Hall. The Nicholl statue of Captain Cook which stood in the Great Hall at the university for forty years was not admired by the critics. Apart from Abrahams' Charles Windeyer and Nicholl's Governor Gipps which the university acquired by donation, the first commissions for sculpture for the university were from European sculptors.

How were the commissions for the works to be discussed negotiated? Deas Thomson commissioned Odoardo Fantacchioti of Florence (1809-1877) for his bust of 1855, while Thomson and his family were taking a Grand Tour of the continent. Fantocchioti was born in Rome and died in Florence. According to Benezit his reputation gained him admission to many academies, although he is not widely known today. He is represented by a monument to the engraver Raphael Morghen in the church of Santa Croce, Florence; in the Turin Museum and in Cincinnati, U.S.A. As affirmed on the plinth of the bust, it was paid for by public
subscription. The bust was sculpted in Florence in the same year that Alessandro Capalti of Rome was commissioned by Deas Thomson for a portrait, referred to earlier. It was obviously convenient to have both bust and portrait executed whilst the busy colonial secretary was on holiday with his family in Italy. Deas Thomson was in England from 1854-56 and could therefore have commissioned an English sculptor, but whilst in England Deas Thomson was representing the colony in seeing the New South Wales Constitution Bill through the Imperial Parliament. 19 Official matters took precedence over sculpture. As already noted Deas Thomson's bust was sculpted by Charles Abrahams in Sydney, but this later Italian work was commissioned specifically for the university and has always been exhibited prominently there.

plate 31 William Charles Wentworth, likewise, commissioned an Italian, Pietro Tenerani (1789-1869) of Rome for the full-length statue of 1861 which now stands in the Great Hall. This commission was the result of long deliberations. The committee to collect funds for the Wentworth statue was formed at a public meeting in Sydney on 19 December, 1853, the public subscription yielding £3000. 20 The subscription committee comprised about eighty members, the most prominent at the top of the list being Wentworth's political colleague Sir Charles Nicholson, speaker of the Legislative Council, followed by members of the Select Committee to Draft the Constitution (of which Wentworth was chairman), H.G. Douglass, T.A. Murray, George McLeay and James Macarthur. 21 Murray (known as Murray of the Monaro, a powerful landowner) moved that the testimonial should take the form of a statue, which, although unusual, according to Murray, had a precedent in Edward Bailey's Sir Richard Bourke. Murray also suggested that the statue, which Mr. Thomas Barker said should be of 'colossal proportions', might be appropriately erected before the proposed new parliament house (never built). Wentworth was gratified and agreed. Although it was the practice to assemble a large subscription committee, it was unusual to nominate the form of the testimonial before the sum raised was known. The Deas Thomson testimonial committee, which was collecting at the same time as the Wentworth committee, did not commit themselves to a bust until the total of the subscription was ascertained. 22
How was this proposed statue of colossal proportions commissioned? Soon after the Wentworth subscription committee was formed, Thomas Woolner, the Pre-Raphaelite sculptor then working in Sydney, wrote to his father announcing that he came here (Sydney) chiefly to try to get a statue of Wentworth the Sydney folks have been subscribing towards: they have already raised nearly three thousand pounds. I fear I have but little chance, tho' I am the only sculptor, they are afraid to give it to anyone whose name they are not familiar with.

Woolner thought his rival was the English Edward Hodges Bailey R.A., whose life-size bronze. Sir Richard Bourke (1841) referred to by T.A. Murray, had been produced in England and unveiled in Sydney in April 1842. Bailey was also responsible for the Nelson statue in Trafalgar Square, London. Woolner hoped that because he had executed a successful portrait medallion of W.C. Wentworth (1854) the commission would be his:

I should have been quite sure of the statue, but one sharp and wise gentleman suggested that there was no reason I could do a statue because I had done a medallion, no matter how admirable: this notion frightened most of them and a few who fought for me were beaten: the consequence is they are going to appoint judges in London to decide upon a Sculptor.

It seems that neither the committee nor Wentworth wanted the work to be executed in Sydney or by a sculptor with colonial associations, even though Woolner was quite well-known in London. All the same his correspondence suggests that he was having difficulty in obtaining commissions when he left England in 1853, although his monument to William Wordsworth of 1851 at Grasmere received critical acclaim in the Spectator and his design for the Wordsworth national memorial was shown at the Royal Academy in 1852. In spite of Woolner's burgeoning reputation his relentless pursuit of the commission points to the difficulties and competition young sculptors faced when seeking a large commission. 'I must return to England', wrote Woolner, 'I make a great sacrifice in doing this (because he had established a reputation in Sydney) but the statue is £2000 commission and too good an opportunity to allow any chance to escape'. Although Woolner submitted a sketch for the statue, he wrote that he 'had but little hope as Wentworth knows nothing of art and
will not understand my sketch', implying that in London it was Wentworth who would decide upon the commission. Ford Madox Brown, after meeting with Woolner in December, 1854 wrote in his diary: 'Poor Woolner, the lag has some idea of being done by some greater artist - and going down to posterity more beautiful'.

The appointment, by the New South Wales Wentworth committee, of judges in London not only shows colonial dependence on English taste but also indicates both a lack of confidence in their own (colonial) taste and ignorance of the conditions of the London art world. Once again New South Wales is seen as an extension of the motherland. But although Woolner claimed that judges were to be appointed in London, no references to them have been discovered to date. In Europe, Wentworth and his family led a peripatetic life and spent only five months living in London between 2 June 1854 when Wentworth arrived in London, and mid 1856. In the interim they lived in Brussels and Paris, whilst Wentworth travelled to London from time to time to attend to constitutional business for the colony with Deas Thomson. Wentworth's relationship with any committee of judges in London set up to commission his statue would necessarily have been sporadic.

Wentworth seems to have assumed the responsibility of selecting a sculptor himself. He was in touch with the Italian sculptor Baron Carlo Marochetti who not only was responsible for the friezes on the Arc de Triomphe but as mentioned earlier for the Richard Coeur de Lion statue and who moved in Court circles. Did Wentworth see himself as an Australian Coeur de Lion guarding the Australian Houses of Parliament? Wentworth also consulted Alexander Munro and then he invited John Gibson to accept the commission, but Gibson refused, 'saying his hands were too full of work'. Thus Wentworth's first preference was for an English sculptor, but his efforts to commission an Englishman failed.

Finally Pietro Tenerani (1789-1869) was commissioned when there was no success with the English. He was a faithful pupil of Thorvaldsen and a leading Italian sculptor of his day. His studio was in Rome, but he had exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1846 and 1854 and at the French Salon of 1841, where his work was
criticised by Gautier for its simplicity. Wentworth went to Rome twice to sit for Tenerani, in 1858 and 1859. When in Rome, the Wentworth family visited Adelaide Ironside, whom they had known well in Sydney and Wentworth bought an Ironside painting. As Adelaide Ironside was on very good terms with the sculptor John Gibson who also had a studio in Rome and who had refused Wentworth's offer of a commission for his statue, it is tempting to speculate that it was Adelaide Ironside who assisted Wentworth in his search for a sculptor, and who may even have introduced him to Tenerani.

Plate 32 The commission for the bust of Peter Nicol Russell (1877) also went to an Italian sculptor, G. Benzoni of whom little is known in Australia. The bust was given to the university by Lady Russell and was probably originally commissioned for the family who lived in England from 1869. The circumstances of the commission are unknown, but Peter Nicol Russell's nephew John Peter Russell (1858–1930) was too young at the time of the commission to have had any influence in the choice of a sculptor. In any case he had not then embarked upon his distinguished career as an artist, which was financed by the Australian P. N. Russell iron foundry and engineering firm. The Russell family's association with Bertram Mackennal (1863–1931) to whom they gave financial assistance as well as patronage also occurred later than the commission of Benzoni. The link between Mackennal and the Russell family can be seen in the imposing Peter Nicol Russell Memorial monument which was also given to the university by Lady Russell to commemorate her husband, who had endowed the school of Engineering at the university with a gift of £50,000 in 1896.

All the other official portrait sculpture at the university was commissioned in Australia. Although Woolner was disappointed over the Wentworth statue, he received commissions for portrait medallions from Sir Charles Nicholson. Woolner met Nicholson upon his arrival in Sydney and through him met other members of Sydney society. Five medallions commissioned by Nicholson remain in the University Collection. They are profiles of Sir Charles Nicholson himself; Mr. Thomas Barker, donor of a substantial scholarship
of one thousand pounds in 1853, as well as one of the windows
of the Great Hall; Sir James Martin, Chief Justice and a member
of the university senate from 1858–78; W.C. Wentworth who presented
the bill to incorporate and endow the University of Sydney in the
Legislative Council, and Sir Charles Augustus Fitzroy, official visitor
to the university from 1850–55 also governor of the colony. In
1854 Woolner was paid twenty-five pounds for each medallion in the
colony, although as he wrote to his father 'in England they would
not give me twenty-five pence'.

The Charles Abrahams bust Charles Windeyer (1844) is included
in the collection because of his son W.C. Windeyer's prominent
role at the university; the commissioning of the bust obviously
had nothing to do with the university and the bust itself was not
received until the twentieth century. Apart from the Woolner
medallions the earliest bust of a university personage commissioned
in Australia is the posthumous bust Professor John Smith (1886)
by James White. Smith was the first Professor of Chemistry and
Experimental Physics at the university and a pioneer photographer.
Nothing is known of the commissioning or of how the bust came
to the university. It was executed a year after Smith's death,
the year in which his fellow Scot, James White arrived in the colony.
White had earlier worked as an anatomical modeller in the Surgeon's
Hall at Edinburgh University which provided a tenuous link with
the medical profession in Sydney. James White was also commissioned
in Sydney for the official portrait of another prominent medical figure
at the university Professor Thomas Peter Anderson Stuart (1894)
of which a slightly different version exists at the Prince Alfred
Hospital, with which Anderson Stuart was also associated.

There was no suggestion that the over-life-size memorial statue
John Henry Challis (1833) should be commissioned anywhere else
but in Sydney. When the estate of Challis was finalised and 'the
university ... (was) relieved from the claim which had been made
for duty on Australian assets ... out of the large amount saved
by this compromise an expenditure (was to) be authorized to a
sufficient sum for the erection of a marble statue in memory of Mr.
Challis'. There were two sculptors under consideration, Giovanni
Fontana and Archille Simonetti. Fontana's application for the
commission was supported by the Italian consul, as well as by Sir Arthur Renwick, a member of the university senate and later vice-chancellor (1889-91), who wrote, 'the Italian consul Dr. Murana is anxious that M. Fontana, sculptor, should have an opportunity of creating the statue of Challis for which funds have been voted by the university'. Fontana's bust Sir Henry Parkes is in the council chambers at Parkes, New South Wales, and his work was exhibited at the Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition of 1888. Fontana offered to make the statue for £1000. This was a very modest sum in comparison with Wentworth's statue which cost about £2500 in 1861. Archille Simonetti's application, on the other hand was supported by Mr. Justice Peter Faucett, another member of senate, who 'strongly recommended Signor Simonetti', who would 'undertake the work at a very moderate cost.' Archille Simonetti (1838-1900) obtained the commission. He had arrived in Australia in 1871 and by 1888 was established as a leading sculptor in the colony. He was the instructor in sculpture at the New South Wales Academy of Art and was commissioned for the Governor Phillip Monument (1889-1897). Of more importance for his commissioning for the Challis statue was his work on St. John's College at the university, of which Mr. Peter Faucett was an early supporter.

In view of the enormous sum of £250,000 bequeathed by Challis, the discussion of a cheap commission for the statue by the university chancellor, Sir William Manning, appears parsimonious to say the least. On the other hand, there was economic instability in the colony at that time, with falling wool prices and strikes in the pastoral industry leading up to the Great Depression of the early 1890s. Therefore money tenaciously fought for was not to be disposed of injudiciously. Manning had, through considerable personal effort, forestalled the Department of Inland Revenue in England in the matter of the Challis estate, as Challis had not lived in the colony for some years prior to his death in Europe. Nevertheless, the general attitude regarding payment for works of art at the university was one of stinginess, as observed in the discussion of the portrait commissions. Whilst an impressive result was required, there was almost always an unwillingness to spend an impressive amount of money.
Simoneiti was also commissioned for the bust Sir Arthur Renwick (1892) in spite of Sir Arthur's earlier support for Fontana. Sir Arthur Renwick was both benefactor and vice-chancellor of the university (1889-91, 1900-02, 1906-08), but his bust, like many of the portraits, was commissioned by his family and was given to the university by Lady Renwick in 1912. The bust has since then been situated in the Great Hall.

While he was chancellor of the university a bust of Sir William Montague Manning was commissioned by the university from public subscription and university funds. The sculptor commissioned was a Frenchman then working in Sydney, Emile Leysalle (born Paris 1834, died ?). Little is known of Leysalle, but he arrived in Australia in 1892, and exhibited at the Art Society of New South Wales from 1893 to 1894. He is not known in Australia after 1899.

Once these sculptures had been commissioned the question of style arose. Is there any consistency in the style of the busts and statues at the university? How much control did the commissioner have over the sculptor? When installed at the university how were these sculptures received? Were they merely seen as institutional monuments or were any of them classed as works of art? The choice of sculptor was to some extent linked to the stylistic preference of the commissioner. All the same, some sculptors, such as James White, produced both classical-style and naturalistic busts for the university. White's bust Anderson Stuart (1894) is an official work in a classical style, whilst the smaller posthumous bust, Professor John Smith (1886) is a naturalistic representation, and has never been considered important enough to be placed in the Great Hall, although it was located in the adjacent anteroom for some years.

Most of the works discussed were executed in a vaguely classical style, in which the shoulders of the subject are loosely draped in imitation of the Roman toga, a convention which was supposed to invest the subject with a veneer of nobility. Only the busts John Smith, Sir William Montague Manning and the statues Wentworth and Challis show the subjects in contemporary dress. Nevertheless, each of the sculptures under discussion combines elements of realism,
idealisation and verisimilitude to a greater of lesser extent, in a complex stylistic amalgam, typical of nineteenth-century sculpture in general.

Whilst neoclassical portrait sculpture had always retained certain elements of realism it characteristically exhibits a smooth surface. There was little attempt to work the stone to represent a naturalistic illusion of the surfaces such as the texture of skin, hair etc. Most of the portrait sculpture at the university has the smooth, gleaming surface associated with classical sculpture, even in statues and busts which represent the subjects in contemporary clothing, thus in these works some elements of the classical type are combined with verisimilitude. Yet the portrait sculptures also contain elements of realism in that they are 'like' the subjects, but they are in most cases idealised representations, presenting for posterity what the sculptor saw as the 'essence' of the subject, thus combining the heroic with the quotid. The exceptions are the portrait medallions by the Pre-Raphaelite sculptor Thomas Woolner, and the bust of Sir William Montague Manning by the French sculptor Emile Leysalle, who specialised in painterly effects in sculpture. But again, whilst both Woolner and Leysalle created surface effects aimed at a naturalistic representation of the texture of skin, clothing etc. they also remained faithful to the basic laws of sculptural form based on classical ideals.

As Read has pointed out the principal aim of the neoclassic portrait bust was to present a timeless image worthy of eternity. Ironically the use of the drape in the neoclassical busts at the university is almost as clear an indication of date as the contemporary dress, therefore the aim of timeless immortality is somewhat diluted. Although the draped bust was still quite popular in the 1860s in England, for instance Theed's Prince Albert (1862-3), critics of the day advised the use of the unclothed herm type which does not appear in the University Collection. As the draped bust appears in the collection as late at 1894, however, again a retarda?aire taste is indicated on the part of those associated with the university.

Plate 30 Attempts to assimilate the individual portrait features to the classical type can be seen in Deas Thomson, Peter Nicol Russell.
plate 30 Anderson Stuart and Sir Arthur Renwick, which are versions of
the classical style, although each of these works bears a distinct
likeness to the sitter. Such a combination is in direct contradiction
to the prototype Roman bust, which was predicated upon the ideal,
and even when characterisation crept in, this had more to do with
type than with truth to nature, for instance, boxers were shown
with coarse features. 58 Thus, although of 'classical derivation'
there is a contradiction between the neoclassical and the naturalistic
in these busts at the university, for although some aspects of the
ideal are employed, they all contain elements of likeness as mentioned
above. The contradiction is exacerbated by details such as the
emphatic side whiskers shown in Deas Thomson and Sir Arthur Renwick.

plate 41 That this characteristic falls into the category of 'effectism', or
exaggeration of certain features to compensate for the lack of colour
and described by Read, is shown by examining a photograph of
Deas Thomson in which the weedy whiskers in the photograph contrast
with the prominent curly side boards of the bust. 59 The Victorian

plate 32 'handle-bar' moustache shown in Benzoni's Sir Peter Nicol Russell
(1877), incongruously teamed with the stylised curled beard, is
a further example of 'effectism' which according to Read was practiced
by foreigners such as Benzoni and Fantacchioti. 60 James White's

plate 39 Anderson Stuart displays the same contradictory characteristics
of realism and neoclassicism. The drape knotted on the shoulder
in classical style contrasts with the realism of the head in which
idiosyncratic details such as the hair cut in turn-of-the-century
style of short back and sides, is parted on the right rather than
the more conventional left hand side for men. The diluted classicism
of the Anderson Stuart bust has more in common with Charles Abrahams'
Charles Windley executed fifty years earlier than with styles of
contemporary sculpture. Anderson Stuart's aspirations towards
immortality are also indicated by the placement of this bust in the
foyer of the Anderson Stuart Building, for which he was largely
responsible. Placed in such a position, the bust acts as a personal
signature to the building, which stylistically is a copy of the Great
Hall, just as this bust is stylistically a copy of earlier sculpture.
Again one sees an indication of the conservative taste in matters
of art at the university in the nineteenth century.

A distinct contrast in style is provided by Leysall's
Sir William Montague Manning (1894) sculpted in the same year as White's Anderson Stuart. Whilst working in Australia, Leysalle remained faithful to his early training in painterly realism in sculpture under Carpeaux, producing works such as Mrs. Gerald Marr Thompson in which verisimilitude results from fine detailing of the fabric, of the clothing and the hair. His bust, Sir William Montague Manning, whilst formal in structure, not only shows the man in nineteenth-century clothing with details such as seams, buttons and creases just as carefully executed as the decorations on the breast and around the neck, but the head is also realistically and sensitively realised, without evidence of idealisation by omission or exaggeration. Executed the year before his death, here we see a portrayal of an old man, with flat hair, thin lips and lined brow, details which contrast with the exaggerated pout of Deas Thomson and the thrusting jaw of Anderson Stuart. Leysalle's official busts were praised by a contemporary critic for 'striking likeness and beautiful smoothness of marble'. This comment is, however, partly contradicted by the evidence of this particular bust, which displays careful surface detailing.

There are two representations of Sir William Montague Manning at the university. In the discussion of his painted portrait, which was executed in England, attention was drawn to the representation of a powerful individual in a portrayal which was successful in spite of the absence from the portrait of the accoutrements or symbols of office. It appears to be a realistic portrayal of the man as he was then. For his bust, Manning also chose to be represented realistically in contemporary dress. Manning also commissioned the Challis statue which again shows the subject realistically portrayed in contemporary garb. These three examples indicate Manning's consistent predilection for realism or at least verisimilitude, although realism in sculpture must always be qualified by the limitations of the medium used. Manning's preference for lack of pomp is also evidenced by the fact that his bust was 'unveiled without ceremony on 6 April, 1895', although Manning's position in colonial society warranted a public presentation for he was an outstanding chancellor of the university (1878-95) and had held the office of attorney-general and supreme court judge in New South Wales. No critical attention was registered for Leysalle's sculpture of Manning.
On the other hand, when Fantacchiotti's bust, Deas Thomson arrived in the colony, admittedly about forty years earlier, the local press referred to Fantacchiotti as 'a sculptor of great genius in Florence', the public was urged to visit the university to view the work carved from 'exquisite material' - Carrara marble for the bust and the slightly inferior spezzi for the pedestal. 'The likeness is striking and expression and pose happily given, and the drapery and general finish of the work is admirable', was one press comment, which continued, 'independently of its personal uses and association, as a work of high art (it) is a most valuable accession to the intellectual wealth of Sydney'.

Perhaps Daniel Deniehy had Deas Thomson's bust in mind when, in 1857, he wrote 'what has been done in the colony to mark our recognition of art? ... look at our public buildings, look at our public institutions' for which he claimed 'impetus given to thought, intelligence and imagination'. Although the Deas Thomson bust was said to be a contribution to the 'intellectual wealth of Sydney' it was some time before it was placed in the most prestigious location at the university. In 1859, when the Great Hall was inaugurated, the bust stood before the fireplace in the Library, even though it was considered to be 'an excellent likeness ... in the highest style of art'. It was obviously not then considered important enough for the Great Hall where it now stands. As this bust was considered such a valuable artistic contribution, the artistic scene in Sydney must have been a little poverty stricken. The enthusiastic reception of the bust was no doubt partly due to the prevailing attitude that works of art produced overseas were superior to colonial works, together with an element of deference on the part of the newspaper to the powerful colonial secretary, the subject of the bust.

To return to questions of style, the over life-size statues

William Charles Wentworth (Tenerani, 1860) and John Henry Challis (Simonetti, 1893) will both be considered in relation to style and reception. Both works combine aspects of the classical type and the ideal, yet both the sculptors have achieved a degree of verisimilitude. The figures are presented in contemporary dress
although both sculptors defer to the classical traditions associated with portrait statues.

If Wentworth had been successful in commissioning the English sculptor John Gibson, he might have been portrayed in a toga. According to Woolner, Gibson 'is unable to do a modern statue and when obliged to do one he puts his man in a sheet or blanket, is it not odd?' Gibson even portrayed Queen Victoria (1849) in classical drapery, he also tinted some of his neoclassical statues, for example his Tinted Venus (1861-66). Would a tinted statue of Wentworth in a toga have been acceptable to the university senate or the members of the subscription committee? In view of Wentworth's efforts to commission a sculptor in England, Woolner's rejection remains puzzling, and could not have been on stylistic grounds for Woolner produced a number of busts and statues showing the subject in contemporary dress and conforming to the requirements of realism. Many of these were commissioned for the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge from 1857 onwards. The sculptor finally chosen, A. Tenerani, was imbued with neoclassical ideas by his teacher, Thorvaldsen, and followed these ideals in his monument to Pope Pius VII (1866), St. Peter's, Rome. In the Wentworth statue, however, he combined classical elements with realism. Sturgeon's description of the Wentworth statue as a 'fine neoclassical work' is not entirely correct. There are some references to neoclassicism in the oratorical stance, the gesture of the right hand and in the supporting classical short pillar on which rests a stylised scroll, but the untidiness of the contemporary dress in which Wentworth is portrayed is not idealised, and gives the statue a life-like appearance.

The realistic portrayal was probably Wentworth's own choice, for he took a close interest in the production of the statue, going to great pains to have a faithful replica of himself created, even insisting on his eccentricities of dress in the words of one commentator. Although Tenerani has used 'effectism' in the curled stylised hair, which is arranged to cover the ears, and in the enlarged eyes, disguising Wentworth's turned eye, the heavy-jawed face is a naturalistic representation if compared with a photograph of the subject. The asymmetrical drapery resulting from the 'eccentricities of dress' has been put to telling use by
the sculptor. The deeply incised folds of the layers of clothing produce an effect of solidity and movement, which is balanced by the positioning of the arms. The result is a commanding yet relaxed figure. The convincing naturalism of this figure becomes apparent upon a comparison with Archille Simonetti's posthumous neo-classical bust of Wentworth (1893). The commission was not a source of great satisfaction for Tenerani who spoke of 'years of various delays imposed especially due to the absolute repugnance expressed by Mr. Wentworth who did not tolerate the expenditure of so much money on his portrait'. Again the general colonial attitude of stinginess in regard to art is apparent for Wentworth had £3,000 to spend, an ample sum when compared to the cost of Marochetti's Richard Coeur de Lion (1851) which was only slightly higher.

The Wentworth statue received a qualified reception in Sydney. As mentioned earlier, it was not originally intended for installation in the Great Hall. The Collection Committee, formed in 1853, had proposed that the statue should be erected before the new Parliament House, which was never built. On the statue's arrival in Sydney in November 1861, the question of a site arose. In February, 1862 the university senate received a delegation led by Mr. Terence Aubrey Murray, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Wentworth's successor as President of the Legislative Council. Murray's original enthusiasm for the statue seems to have waned. The delegation requested that in view of Wentworth's connections with the university, the statue be housed in the Great Hall. The reason that the statue had become an embarrassment to the government will be discussed later. The university senate agreed to the request, with the stipulation that 'it may be removed to the new Houses of Parliament if within twelve months from the commencement of the first session held within the building the majority of the then surviving subscribers shall desire such a removal and obtain the requisite permission of both Houses of Parliament'. In spite of the qualified agreement the statue has remained in the Great Hall for the past one hundred and twenty-seven years. The statue was unveiled on 23 June, 1862 by Sir James Martin, Chief Justice of New South Wales, a member of the university senate from 1858-78. The senate had only agreed to a public unveiling ceremony on condition that
in accordance with the previous understanding (that) there would be nothing of a party political nature in the proceedings'. 77 Wentworth, who at the time was visiting the colony for political reasons, was not present, 'it having been decided I ought not to be there' he wrote. 78

The controversial inauguration took place in the presence of the governor, a few politicians, members of the university, the armed forces and 'a large number of ladies' whilst a band played the national anthem and other patriotic tunes. Wentworth's was only the second statue to have been inaugurated in the colony, the Sir Richard Bourke statue being erected twenty years earlier in the Domain. According to the Sydney Morning Herald a third memorial was planned 'to the honour and memory of the illustrious Prince Albert'. Wentworth's statue was therefore located in vice-regal if not regal company. The unveiling ceremony for the Wentworth statue was reported by the Sydney Morning Herald in a leader and an article, which although in the same edition took differing points of view. 79 Nowhere was Wentworth's absence from the ceremony mentioned. The article contained a verbatim report of Sir James Martin's oration, which was preceded by a description of the statue as 'this magnificent work of art ... of pure white carrara marble'. It was noted that 'the thickly clustered hair (is) perhaps the only flattery which the sculptor has indulged in'. The only comment on the style of the sculpture was a reference to the 'life-like portraiture of the original'. Sir James Martin's speech concentrated on a flattering account of Wentworth's career, describing him as an heroic and noble statesman. Interspersed among the praises of Wentworth, however, were veiled references to the importance of the Cowper government's land bills, suggested by reference to Wentworth's 'genius and foresight' in relation to the land question throughout his career. Martin made only short reference to the university, but that was in terms of associationism - 'here under the magnificent roof, where gilded ornaments ... (etc.) ... we feel conscious of a link which unites us to the past and to the future'. He stressed the heroic nature of the statue which was, he said 'suggested by the graceful practice of classic times. It is a memorial which cannot be raised without the aid of art in its highest form
... which preserves the image of those whom the world would not willingly let die'. Hypocritically he concluded, the statue 'is erected in this noble hall where he himself (Wentworth) desired to see it placed'. Martin could have made more extended reference to the statue as he had some familiarity with sculpture, but this speech was designed with other ends in view, to flatter Wentworth and further the interests of the Cowper government in which Martin was vitally involved.

In contrast, the leader (which is the customary vehicle for editorial views) was critical of Wentworth's political career and scathing about the statue. It drew attention to Wentworth's disappointed hopes regarding the Constitution and his only partial responsibility for the founding of 'a university which (was) ... feeble and premature'. Maliciously, the writer then pointed out that although 'Mr. Wentworth has had the good fortune to see the statue erected to his renown ... we do not fancy that any illusion about immortality has obscured his (Wentworth's) vision in reference to the fate of all such memorials; but that which may last for centuries ought to satisfy his ambition'. However, 'the marble memorial of transitory greatness is subject to all the vicissitudes of material things', the writer warned. These vicissitudes, impossible for the writer to foresee, include featuring the Wentworth statue in television advertisements filmed in the Great Hall when traditional scenes are required.

Behind the contradictory views published by the Sydney Morning Herald on 24 June 1862 describing the unveiling of Wentworth's statue at the university lay a very complicated political situation. In March 1854, when Wentworth and Deas Thomson left for England to see the colonial constitution bills through the British parliament, Wentworth received a moving farewell from a crowded dock and an assurance from James Macarthur of the respect and gratitude of his compatriots. 80 The collection for his statue took place when he was still seen as a great Australian patriot, although liberals such as Henry Parkes were already sneering at Wentworth's hopes of receiving a baronetcy. 81

Wentworth's proposed constitution included provision for an upper house nominated by the governor, thus conferring power
on the already privileged class of society, although not creating the bunyip aristocracy which Wentworth originally sought. During the time the bill took to appear in the imperial parliament, the tragedy of the Crimean war turned public opinion in England against the aristocracy and privileged. When the bill came to Parliament, Wentworth's old emeny Robert Lowe, now in the British House of Commons, damned Wentworth's proposals as an 'inquitous device of an oligarchical clique'. Therefore a power of constitutional amendment was included in the bill, thus providing a possible avenue for the removal of all class privilege and defeating Wentworth's intention of creating a colonial aristocracy.

When Wentworth returned to Sydney in April, 1861, the liberal Sir Charles Cowper was the Premier of New South Wales. Cowper and his colleague Sir John Robertson, the Secretary for Lands, were trying to steer the land bills through the Legislative Council, which was in its last days of office. The land bills were opposed by the conservative squattocracy. Cowper's ruse of asking the governor to appoint more Council members who would support the bills had failed, putting the outgoing Council under a cloud. To confer a degree of respectability upon the incoming Legislative Council, Cowper persuaded Wentworth, who privately held the ministry and Assembly in unmeasured contempt, to accept the position of President of the new Legislative Council on 24 June 1861. Cowper played on Wentworth's thwarted hopes of official honours and convinced him that he should modify his views on the land bills, although Wentworth and James Macarthur had supported political power based on 'interests' and originally opposed Cowper. The inclusion of some of Wentworth's earlier colleagues such as Manning, Merewether, Deas Thomson (all associated with the university) and Plunkett on the Council added weight to Cowper's persuasions. Thus Cowper manipulated Wentworth into ensuring that the Legislative Council endorsed the free selection clauses of Robertson's land bills. The result was that Wentworth was once again seen to change sides, being regarded as vain and gullible by the liberals who were in office, and as a traitor by the conservatives. It is therefore not surprising that the siting of the statue became such a problem, and that even the university expressed reservations about
receiving it and apprehension regarding the political outcome.

Sir James Martin, who gave the inaugural address at the unveiling of the statue, was a member of the liberal Cowper government. Martin was extremely ambitious, a man who had started his career as a journalist and rose to become Chief Justice of New South Wales, but who in his youth had been a drinking companion of Wentworth's. His speech, reproduced in the Herald, while properly praising Wentworth and his statue, was so excessively adulatory as to suggest that the objective was to gain Wentworth's continued allegiance to his (Martin's and Cowper's) liberal political party.

On the other hand, the policy of the Herald was conservative and the owner John Fairfax, described as an erstwhile liberal, had old political scores to settle with Cowper. 86 Before the land bills were passed the Herald published an article comparing the proposed adoption of the Land Act with the passing of a 'law that the Museum should be burned down, that the University should be demolished and that Government House should be turned into a pigsty', asserting that one would naturally resist such laws. 87 The laws did not in fact disadvantage big land holders such as Robertson himself, although the Herald feared that 'there may be revolutionary changes in the future'.

It is revealing that the university and the museum are classed with Government House as bastions of conservatism, and particularly ironic in view of Wentworth's original proposal for a university from which no-one would be barred, when in fact his own statue was only accepted on sufferance. Although Wentworth's statue received some credit as a 'work of art', it was also exploited as an object which carried the potential for political advantage, not so much to the sitter, for whom it achieved a measure of personal immortality, but for the political party which then held office. From being a liability for the government, through Martin's speech the statue was used to reinforce the respectability of the government. For the university, the statue became an impressive addition to the temple of worthies - another historical figure for the Great Hall.
Opposite the Wentworth statue in the Great Hall of the
university stands Archille Simonetti's John Henry Challis (1893).
Simonetti often employed a classical treatment of the subject, as
seen in his busts of Sir Arthur Renwick (1892, University Collection)
and William Charles Wentworth (1893, Legislative Council of N.S.W.).
The Challis statue, in contrast, represents the subject in contemporary
dress. The chancellor of the university, Sir William Montague
Manning not only played a part in commissioning the statue, but
also personally supervised all facets of its production. The fact
that Manning's own portrait and busts are largely realistic indicates
his personal stylistic preference which is also shown in the choice
of a realistic style for the Challis statue. Although Challis is a
posthumous work, the university wanted 'a statue which should
fairly represent Mr. Challis'. Manning realised that this would
be 'necessarily very difficult, but we hope this difficulty has been
overcome by a photograph taken late in life and a portrait of an
earlier date and by personal recollection', he wrote. 88

Manning himself inspected the clay model for the statue in
Simonetti's Balmain studio on 7 February 1891 and reported that
'after a long inspection from every point of view and after some
little adjustments and a material one in the pose of the head, I was
satisfied with the memorial ...'. 89 At that stage, two years before
the statue was completed, Manning considered a request for a progress
payment by Simonetti was 'reasonable, as the genius and artistic
skill of the sculptor is chiefly employed in the model'. 90 The
Challis statue is of similar size to the Wentworth and was intended
to be placed in the Great Hall, 'in a position of honour corresponding
with that of Mr. Wentworth'. 91 The stance of the Challis figure
matches that of Wentworth, so that the statues placed opposite each
other in the Great Hall appear to communicate. The rendering
of the drapery in Wentworth is, however, not matched by the plainer
effect employed by Simonetti on the outfit worn by Challis. The
sculptor's inclusion of the caduceus adds an idiosyncratic element
to the work, for although the Challis estate endowed a chair in
the Faculty of Medicine, it also endowed seven other chairs as well
as lectureships. As Challis himself was a merchant, the inclusion
of the medical emblem is not entirely appropriate. 92
Although realistic in some aspects, such as the costume of
the subject, this statue is a completely idealised version of Challis
the man, as can be seen by comparison with photographs and the
various painted portraits of Challis at the university. 93 These
all show Challis with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks, as a far less
commanding figure than is portrayed in the statue. In spite of
Manning's preference for a realistic style and his wish for a statue
which 'would fairly represent Mr. Challis', here is an example of
a subject ennobled in the interests of presenting an image worthy
of posterity. This could be considered as a gracious gesture to
the university's most generous nineteenth-century benefactor, for
whatever Challis really looked like, the idealised statue now conditions
our perceptions of Challis and thus influences, in a small way, our
reading of history.

plate 33 The style of the Thomas Woolner medallions has been extensively
discussed by Benedict Read, who places Woolner as an important
figure in the Realist school and discusses his adherence to Pre-
Raphaelite tenets of 'truth to nature' as well as the influence of
the portrait medallion genre of the fourteenth century, for instance
in the work of Pisanello. 94 Before arriving in Melbourne, Woolner
had already made portrait medallions, the most famous of which was
Tennyson (1849-50), which was in demand in the colony. A comparison
between the two Tennyson medallions of 1850 and 1855 illustrates
the benefit to the sculptor of his 'practice' on colonial subjects. 95
The critical response to the Australian works concentrated upon
the likeness of the image and the workmanship of the sculptor.
Woolner himself wrote: 'You will have seen by the newspapers I
sent how highly a medallion of Wentworth I did is spoken of. There
has been the greatest praise bestowed upon it, but as was the case
in England, the matter seems to end there'. 96 The Argus commented,
'The merits of the work are (so) decidedly above the level of what
is met with in the Colonies ... the artist has caught by a happy
inspiration the mental characteristics - the very soul of the man.
We rejoice ... that such a high class of work is likely to be spread
abroad to educate the eye and refine the taste'. 97 Woolner exhibited
the Wentworth medallion at the Royal Academy in 1856 and his daughter
sold a copy to the National Portrait Gallery, London in 1912. 98
According to Woolner's daughter, the treatment of the hair in these medallions is a notable feature. Woolner often worked on the bronzes himself after their return from the foundry, giving them a quality and surface rarely seen in any other medallion. As Amy Woolner remarked, the finish on the medallions is detailed and faithful to nature in accordance with the ideals of the Pre-Raphaelites. The Wentworth, Nicholson and Martin portrait medallions in particular show a luxuriant growth of hair and eyebrows, all finely detailed and the texture of the skin is delicately worked, all these details are produced by the artist's hand after the casting. To date no critical response has been discovered in which Woolner's Australian plaques were linked with the Pre-Raphaelites, although at least one Sydney intellectual was familiar with the movement. James Lionel Michael, a Sydney lawyer and literary man who was part of the circle of intellectuals brought together by Nicol Stenhouse, had published a pamphlet in defence of the Pre-Raphaelites before his emigration to New South Wales in 1853. In England, Michael had been a friend of Millais and Ruskin, but there is no evidence of his association with Woolner during his sojourn in the colony. The significance of these small portraits has been overlooked by the university. Their provenance is unsure, although according to Macmillan they were commissioned by Nicholson and were found in a university basement in 1956. They were not framed or mounted until 1988 when this writer designed display cases and frames and they were shown in the 1988 University Collections Exhibition.

In summary, the portrait sculpture at the University of Sydney is largely a nineteenth-century phenomenon. As in the case of the painted portraits, there was no official university policy regarding commissioning of sculpture, but again as with the paintings, the university followed the English custom for displaying portrait busts and statues in prestigious public institutions like the Oxbridge universities. In most cases it fell to the subjects themselves to find a suitable sculptor, and surprisingly, no English sculptor was ever commissioned, although Wentworth's offer to commission Gibson was refused. Some of the sculptures were paid for by public subscription, but in other cases the university senate provided funds. The sculpture did not escape the prevailing nineteenth-
century attitude at the university of stinginess towards commissioning
works of art. Images for posterity with a convincing element of
artistic merit were required for the minimum cost, even when ample
funds were available. These works functioned as intimations of
immortality rather than as innovative examples of the sculptor's
art, although some attention was given to the choice of style by
the subjects or the commissioners. Stylistically, elements of classicism,
realism and naturalism were employed to produce a result which
combined verisimilitude with idealisation. Nineteenth-century ideas
about 'the divine role of sculpture' as expressed by Baudelaire,
are no longer current, yet the busts and statues remain as pale
phantoms which remind us of the past, but which also condition
our understanding of the past. The nineteenth-century sculpture
forged another link between English and colonial taste, and allowed
the University of Sydney to boast of a small collection of sculpture,
just like Oxford and Cambridge.