

- 3 Frederick J. Turner, "The West and American Ideals," *The Washington Historical Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1914): 246.

Commemorating Abraham Lincoln and the Transnational Way: Lincoln Monuments in Great Britain. By Liv Birte Buchmann (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2020), 311pp.

Joshua Parker, University of Salzburg

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Buchmann's monograph *Commemorating Abraham Lincoln and the Transnational Way*, which lays out a long history of Lincoln studies and iconographic studies of the United States' sixteenth president, focuses on three public monuments to Lincoln erected in Edinburgh, Manchester, and London, presented to the British people by U.S. private initiatives. The sculptures, erected in 1893, 1919, and 1921, respectively, highlight the Anglo-American "special relationship" period of the early twentieth century, but are of particular interest today, as radical "conservatives" in America attempt to co-opt Lincoln's legacy as a Republican politician, while Black Lives Matter activists seek to reframe his image as the great emancipator to instead stress nineteenth-century African Americans' work in liberating themselves.

The volume begins by queering the essential ambiguity of such iconography with a quote from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), then goes on to untangle the sculptures' complex histories, through research in the Manuscript Division of the U.S. Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Archives, the New York Public Library, Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the British National Archives at Kew, Manchester's Central Library, and the Edinburgh City Archives.

The Edinburgh monument's tale began when a U.S. consul, approached by the Scottish widow of a Union soldier for support, discovered the late veteran had fought in a regiment of mainly Scottish descent, and was among others buried on Calton Hill, the "Scottish Valhalla," a space already charged with significance, since the mausoleum of David Hume (a key figure of the Scottish Enlightenment) and the Scottish Political Martyrs' Monument (commemorating an exiled group of Scottish reformist "Friends of the People" who lobbied for universal suffrage) are located there. Lincoln's addition to this space boosted these other monuments' "still unfulfilled desire for political reforms" (122). But the Lincoln monument itself is not without its contradictions: like New York's now much-contested statue of Theodore Roosevelt leading (while towering above) an African American and a Native American figure, still standing on the steps of New York's Museum of Natural History, or Washington DC's Lincoln Park sculpture showing Lincoln looming over a cowering slave, Edinburgh's Lincoln depicts the "god-like" (109) president towering placidly above a ragged, barefoot freedman who seems to appeal from below, holding a book and embellished with sculpted this-

tle and cotton branches. Buchmann elegantly teases out the ambiguities of this spatial relationship, as well as the sculpture's relationship to the other monuments on Calton Hill. However fraught such iconography seems in retrospect today, Buchmann suggests that the trio of monuments is symbolically linked to represent the "universal fight for political and intellectual freedom and democracy" (114), commemorating "political underdogs who fought actively or passively for reforms . . . and for a change in the perception and acceptance of human nature" (125), but also to demark Scottish nationalism and identity. It is worth noting that Scotland's final official call for independence in 2004 was with the Declaration of Calton Hill. Buchmann adds a final nuance by noting that the U.S. Civil War's fight to maintain the Union held, in 1893, clear symbolic links with Scottish Unionist Nationalism.

Manchester's and London's Lincoln sculptures, meanwhile, were clearly meant to mark the centennial of "Peace Among English Speaking Peoples 1914–1915" and, belatedly, the international peace movement of the early 1910s, which, in the United States, lobbied for cultural diplomacy outside the Department of State, which would itself not take up such efforts until 1938. Laudable goals, but Buchmann again nuances this trend: Anglo-American diplomatic rapprochement in this period "was accompanied by a strong wave of Anglo-Saxonism" among intellectual, political, and business elites, a racist ideology with strong beliefs in "the innate moral and cultural superiority of the 'Anglo-Saxon races,'" emphasizing "the natural duty of the Anglo-Saxon race to lead the world which also served as a convenient justification for nationalist and imperialist notions" (49–50). London's bid to accept a Lincoln statue in Parliament Square was complicated when George Grey Barnard, the artist chosen, depicted Lincoln not as great statesman or icon of Anglo-Saxon superiority, but as a modest man of the Midwestern prairie, with humble posture, wrinkled face, simple shoes, and unkempt hair. The image displeased both American funders and the British establishment. Barnard's statue was instead sent to Manchester and set on a simple unpolished granite boulder, to represent top-down "British 19th-century initiatives for public parks in urban areas" for "promoting health, recreation, cultural and political education, as well as conveying civic norms of behavior for the working classes and distraction from political unrests and possible radical tendencies" (136–37). In this setting, in a largely working-class city, Lincoln was depicted as a "benefactor of the working classes" and as "a role model through his image as the self-made man" (137). It suited Manchester's history, as well, as a place where cotton mill workers in the 1860s had lobbied through unions for the abolition of slavery in the United States, sparked in part by a letter sent from Lincoln to the "Working Men of Manchester," while the British establishment had remained neutral. Buchmann lays out the history of this transnational connection, and of the re-inscription the statue's base in 1986 to change reference to the working "men" of Lancashire to the work-

ing “people” (a change which, decades later, sparked another outrage by conservative politicians).

Parliament Square in London itself, two years later in 1921, opted for a copy of Augustus Saint-Gaudins’s 1887 more majestic Lincoln, the original of which stands in Chicago. This was partly the result of a flurry of discussion at the time on setting up a monument to George Washington in Westminster Abbey, or even of creating a monument to Queen Victoria in Central Park (both extremely fraught suggestions, for obvious historical reasons). Lincoln, meanwhile, during a time of debate on Irish Home Rule prior to the Irish Civil War, made a convenient screen for both the British establishment, Unionists (as the leader of the U.S. Union), and Irish Republicans (as the great liberator). Gaudins’s statue, with its aristocratic pose before a stately chair, in the words of Kirk Savage, “emancipated Lincoln from emancipation,” but also set the US president in the “political heart” of the United Kingdom, a space first purchased by Washington’s opponent George III, and already set about with images of British prime ministers, of which Buchmann takes due note and makes extensive survey in terms of symbolism and iconography (George Canning, Sir Robert Peel, Disraeli, the Earl of Derby, all to some degree reformers, Derby himself involved in support of the Lancashire cotton workers during the US blockade of imports in the U.S. Civil War). It’s this teasing out of connections, in the landscape, and in adjoining monuments that makes Buchmann’s work so rich and rewarding to read.

Her volume is divided into a section on the three statues themselves, and a second on the pageantry surrounding their unveilings, with extensive quotes from the speeches given, the politicians and religious leaders in attendance, the way their first presentation was framed to the public, the political motivations (sometimes complex) behind such framings, and their “bilateral dynamics” (255), as Lincoln, in this era, “travelled the world” (258). These were, after all, the first three statues of any foreign dignitary ever erected in the United Kingdom. Beautifully written, the volume includes a fascinating collection of 29 black-and-white photos of the monuments in question, as well as others relating to them.