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The Unsolved Victorian Controversy:

Who was the *Bona Fide* Architect of the Houses of Parliament?

Ariyuki KONDO

ヴィクトリア朝時代の未決の論争
— イギリス国会議事堂の本当の建築家は誰であったか —

近藤存志

イギリス国会議事堂が1834年に焼失したことから、その翌年、ゴシック様式ないしはエリザベス朝様式による議事堂の再建に向けた設計競技が開催された。審査を経て1836年の1月に発表された当選案は、新古典主義の建築家として知られたチャールズ・バリーのゴシック様式でまとめられた設計案であった。この設計競技でのバリーの勝因をめぐるのは、若いゴシック・リヴァイヴァリスト、オーガスタス・ウェルビー・ノースモア・ピュージンを「アシスタント」として雇用したことが功を奏したと考えられている。しかしこのピュージンの雇用をめぐるのは、「単なるアシスタント」から「影の建築家」まで、その具体的な役割についてこれまで諸説伝えられてきた。19世紀当時のイギリスにおいても、ピュージンの働きは装飾のデザインや設計図面の作成を担当する補助的なものであったと考える人々がいた一方で、新古典主義建築を得意とするバリーに変わって、実際の設計はほとんどすべてピュージンの手によるものであったと主張する人々もいた。そしてこの二人の関係は後に、「新しいイギリス国会議事堂の本当の建築家は誰であったか」という前代未聞の、そして未だに明確な答えが得られていない論争を生み出すことになった。

本稿は、ピュージンとバリーの死後、主としてピュージンの息子で自らもゴシック・リヴァイヴァルの建築家であったエドワード・ピュージンとチャールズ・バリーの息子で後にシドニー主教となったアルフレッド・バリーの間で繰り広げられた「イギリス国会議事堂の本当の建築家は誰であったか」をめぐる論争の全容を明らかにしようとするものである。その際、特にエドワード・ピュージンとアルフレッド・バリーが1860年代に相次いで出版した3冊の小冊子、すなわち1867年にエドワード・ピュージンが出した『イギリス国会議事堂の本当の建築家は誰か—チャールズ・バリー卿の手紙とオーガスタス・ウェルビー・ピュージンの日記に見出される真実の記録』(*Who Was the Art Architect of the Houses of Parliament: A Statement of Facts, Founded on the Letters of Sir Charles Barry and the Diaries of Augustus Welby Pugin*) とアルフレッド・バリーがこれに対する反論としてその翌年に出版した『新ウエストミンスター宮殿の建築家—エドワード・ピュージン氏への回答』(*The Architect of the New Palace at Westminster: A Reply to the Statements of Mr. E. Pugin*)、そしてさらにこれに応じる形でエドワード・ピュージンが同じ年に出版した『イギリス国会議事堂に関するE・W・ピュージンの「見当違いな主張」に対してアルフレッド・バリー司祭が示した回答について』(*Notes on the Reply of the Rev. Alfred Barry, D.D. to the "Infatuated Statements" Made by E. W. Pugin, on the Houses of Parliament*) の内容を中心に検討している。

Key words: イギリス国会議事堂、オーガスタス・ウェルビー・ノースモア・ピュージン、チャールズ・バリー、エドワード・ピュージン、アルフレッド・バリー

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I. INTRODUCTION

When a competition was held in order to redesign and rebuild the Palace of Westminster (the Houses of Parliament), which was destroyed in a fire in 1834, one of the resolutions was “that the style of the building be either Gothic or Elizabethan style.”¹ The winner of the competition was Sir Charles Barry (1795-1860). His success, however, was often attributed to his decision to engage a young Gothic specialist, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-52) as an assistant, which ultimately led to an unprecedented controversy over who was the *bona fide* architect of the New Houses of Parliament.

It was, in fact, after both men had died that the controversy of the authorship of the Houses of Parliament became a matter of public dispute between the two men’s sons, Rev. Alfred Barry (1826-1910), later the Bishop of Sydney, and the architect Edward Welby Pugin (1834-1875). This dispute arose primarily through the publication of claims of authorship by both men in consecutive pamphlets which appeared in the late 1860s.

II. THE CONTROVERSY

In 1867 Edward Pugin published *Who Was the Art Architect of the Houses of Parliament: A Statement of Facts, Founded on the Letters of Sir Charles Barry and the Diaries of Augustus Welby Pugin*, in which he explained that “my desire is that my father should receive his fair share of that fame which is now wholly accorded to one, who has hitherto been regarded as the sole designer of that which my father mainly originated.”² Edward Pugin’s claim was mainly characterized by his strong suspicion that Barry had ignored his father’s contribution to the design and “seemed studiously desirous to sever ... all connection” with the Pugin family. Edward Pugin was incensed that his father was not considered to be the joint architect of the Houses of Parliament. Alfred Barry published his reply to Pugin’s pamphlet in 1868 under the title of *The Architect of the New Palace at Westminster: A Reply to the Statements of Mr. E. Pugin*. This was followed by another attack by Pugin in the same year in the publication of *Notes on the Reply of the Rev. Alfred Barry, D.D. to the “Infatuated Statements” Made by E. W. Pugin, on the Houses of Parliament*.

Prior to the publication of his first pamphlet, Edward Pugin had written letters to many different newspapers in which he questioned the authorship or originality of the designs of the Parliament Building. For Alfred Barry, Edward Pugin’s first pamphlet, which made public the dispute between them, was “only the conclusion” of these letters and “in fact, contains very little which has not been

expressed in them.”³ Pugin had collected letters and testimonies in his pamphlet to support his claim; Barry questioned their reliability, as they had been “chosen with an idea of making quantity a substitute for quality.” He disregarded them as “mere hearsay of what was ‘generally believed’” or as “vague occasional sayings” of the late Augustus Pugin.⁴

Pugin, on the other hand, felt that, “however imposing may be the array of counter-evidence contained in Dr. Barry’s pamphlet,” it had “an effect exactly opposite” to what Barry intended. Pugin said that “the very magnitude of the machinery brought to bear against me is in itself suspicious,” and “like an overdose of poison carries with it its own antidote.” Pugin found the statements of Barry’s witnesses to be “so sweeping and complete” that they claimed “too much” for what Barry hoped to establish. The smear campaign waged by the two men became a brawl.

While various points were contended in the course of the controversy, the present study will limit its focus to the following three questions:

1. At what stage did Pugin actually join the Parliament project: Did he help prepare Barry’s competition drawings?
2. Concerning the nature of Pugin’s share in the actual design of the Parliament Building: Was he a mere “assistant” or was he in fact a “joint-architect”?
3. What happened to evidence which might suggest that Pugin’s contribution to the design of the Houses of Parliament was significant?

1. The stage at which Pugin joined the Parliamentary project

Alfred Barry maintained that, long before his father sought Augustus Pugin’s assistance, “the entire design had been not only worked out in his [Charles Barry’s] own mind, but committed to paper in a series of plans, elevations, and sections all drawn by his own hand, in his well-known and admired style of pencilling.”⁵ According to Alfred Barry, it was only when his father began to fear that time was running out that he “determined to seek the assistance of Pugin.”⁶ He stresses that “this was at so late a date that had not the designs, in plan and elevation, been definitely settled, it would have been impossible, even with Pugin’s assistance, to complete the competition drawings by the time fixed for their reception.”⁷ This assertion is supported by Charles Barry’s diary, which contains no mention of Augustus Pugin’s assistance before October 12, 1835. Augustus Pugin’s diary, however, has a number of entries suggesting that Pugin had assisted in Barry’s competition drawings well before that date. For instance, on August 6, Augustus Pugin wrote “Saw Mr. Barry. *Working*

drawings.” This entry is then followed by mentions of Barry’s name on August 10 and 11. Pugin’s diary also reveals that Barry visited him on September 24 and indicates that discussion of the design of the Parliament Building could have taken place during this visit.

Barry’s diary entry for the same day (September 24) confirms that this visit did in fact occur, but that the reason for it was not to discuss the plans for the design of the Houses of Parliament: “Arrived at Salisbury from Bowood at half-past four. Mr. Pugin at the White Hart to receive my directions as to designs for the *furnishing of Dr. Jeune’s House.*”⁸ At that time, Charles Barry was engaged in rebuilding King Edward’s Grammar School, Birmingham, of which the headmaster was Dr. Francis Jeune (1806-1868), later the Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and Bishop of Peterborough. This inconsistency between the two men’s diaries aroused Edward Pugin’s suspicion that Charles Barry’s diary entry had been intentionally altered, for he asks “why so unimportant an event as Dr. Jeune’s furniture is noted in Sir Charles’s diary, when he makes no allusion to the ‘compositions,’ or the numerous architectural drawings forwarded to him by my father, immediately before and after?”⁹ Moreover, Augustus Pugin’s diary shows that, from the 16th to the 18th of September, Augustus Pugin was working on “*composition* for Mr. Barry,” and that, on the 19th, sent off more than one drawing to Barry.¹⁰ After the visit of Barry to Pugin on September 24, there are further relevant entries: “Sent off five drawings to Mr. Barry” (September 25); “Worked all night” (September 26); “Parliament House” (September 27); “Sent to Mr. Barry 14 drawings” (September 29); “Central portion” (September 30); and “Sent to Mr. Barry 12 drawings” (October 2).¹¹ The amount of work Pugin handled for Barry in two weeks surely exceeded what was normally required for the designing of furnishings for the residence of the headmaster of a grammar school.

An even more dramatic assertion was then made by Edward Pugin in attributing the entire authorship of the competition design solely to his own father. When the *Report* of the Select Committee issued on June 3 1835 revealed that, for the new design of the Parliament, medieval styles were preferred to those of Greece and Rome, no one doubted that Pugin would be at the head of the competitors’ list and “furnish a design immeasurably superior to those of his professional brethren.”¹² Therefore, Pugin’s unexpected decision to provide his ideas and services to two well-known competitors, Gillespie Graham and Sir Charles Barry, rather than work alone in the competition, undoubtedly surprised those who knew him.

However, there are indications that Augustus Pugin might have already prepared, on his own, a set of designs for the competition. A craftsman named Hogarth, who had mounted other designs produced by Pugin for Charles Barry some time before he, Hogarth, began the ones for the Parliament Building, testified that Pugin himself had initially intended to be a competitor for the

Parliament Houses.¹³ According to Edward Pugin, his father's competition drawings were last seen on the day they were mounted, but there can be no doubt that a complete set of designs by Pugin was sold to Barry for 400 guineas, an amount "less than one-twentieth of what Barry received as the premium, without counting the subsequent professional fees."¹⁴ No record of this payment is to be found in Barry's diary, and Edward Pugin himself admitted that he was "unable to say with any exactness"¹⁵ who actually paid the 400 guineas for the plans to his father. Yet he insisted that his father had told him that he [Augustus Pugin] had received 400 guineas from Barry and that his mother had reproached his father for "selling his brains."¹⁶

It has been also suggested that Augustus Pugin was unwilling to enter into the competition because he was a Catholic. Denis Gwynn points out that Pugin was convinced that, as a Catholic, his "chance for the Houses vanished,"¹⁷ so that he was forced to make "the best of the situation"¹⁸ by helping other competitors. Pugin felt this because there was general prejudice against Catholics in Britain at that time. However, Talbot Bury, an acquaintance of Augustus Pugin, categorically denied that Pugin declined to enter the competition for this reason, and instead attributed Augustus Pugin's decision to sell the plans for the Houses of Parliament to a pressing need for money.¹⁹ However, it seems not entirely convincing to connect Augustus Pugin's decision to sell his plans for the Houses of Parliament solely to a need for money; for "Pugin would have gained one of the premiums (which were large) even if he failed to obtain the execution of the design."²⁰ Although the Emancipation Act had already been passed in 1829, anti-Catholic feeling still lingered on in mid-1830s England.

Pugin converted to the Catholic Church, more precisely to the Old English Catholic Church, in June 1835. There was criticism concerning his conversion on the grounds that it was not a purely religious decision, but was, in fact, due to "his enthusiasm for medieval architecture and for the Catholic liturgy."²¹ This sort of criticism even appeared in newspapers, and in answer to it, Pugin was compelled to express the hope that "in Christian charity my conversion will not any longer be attributed solely to my admiration of architectural excellence ...".²² Taking into consideration such circumstances, it is quite possible that Pugin himself accepted "an inferior position as a Catholic in regard to public works,"²³ especially when the public work in question was the Houses of Parliament of an Anglican nation.

Whatever the reason for Pugin's decision not to enter the competition, choosing instead to work as a "ghost designer" for Charles Barry, it leads us to consider a further question: Was he a mere "assistant" to Barry or was he in fact a "joint-architect" of the Parliamentary project?

2. The nature of Pugin's share in the actual work of the Parliamentary Buildings

Edward Pugin maintained that his father designed not only medieval details, but also exterior, interior and sectional elevations, as well as working drawings for every portion of the Parliamentary Building. Edward Pugin insisted that “the plan of the Parliament Houses was solely Sir Charles Barry’s; the elevation and all details wholly my father’s.”²⁴ Edward Pugin never questioned that “the ground plan and general arrangements of the building” were Barry’s, nor denied “the natural authority and advantages” of Barry’s position as “the publicly appointed and recognised architect of the Houses.” However, he could not accept his father being treated as a mere assistant or a ghost designer, nor the knowledge that his father’s share in the work was being hidden.

Charles Barry himself clarifies the actual extent of Pugin’s contribution in one of his personal letters to Pugin. On October 22, 1836, Barry wrote a letter acknowledging the receipt from Pugin of “the drawings of the House of Lords, the King’s Stairs, &c.” In this letter, after praising Pugin’s drawings, as “they will in all respects answer the purpose most admirably,” Barry requests further drawings from him, and continues,

I send by this morning’s mail a packet containing tracings of the Grand Public Entrance, and approach to the Houses and Committee Rooms. They are most wretchedly made by a youngster, who is as dull and destitute of feeling as the board upon which he draws: they will nevertheless, I doubt not, afford you all the data you require. The groining and interior generally of the King’s or Record Tower entrance you may make of any design you think proper. I am much flattered by your hearty commendation of the plan, and shall know where to look for a champion if I should hereafter require one.²⁵

It appears from the letters Barry wrote to Pugin that Pugin was given some leeway in the designs. For Alfred Barry, however, Pugin’s employment in the Parliamentary project was more a matter of assistance in the preparation of internal details and decorations of Charles Barry’s design and superintendence of their practical execution. Charles Barry’s decision to seek the assistance of Augustus Pugin was, in Alfred Barry’s view, perfectly justified, as “every architect, in conducting works on a great scale, must necessarily avail himself of assistance in detail.”²⁶ To assert that an assistant’s share in the work of a great monument such as the Parliament Building was in fact worthy of that of a joint-architect was not by any means a question affecting his father alone, but any architect who designed large-scale buildings.

One of the pieces of evidence on which Alfred Barry based his assertion that Pugin was an assistant

rather than a joint-architect was a letter to the editor of *The Builder* from Augustus Pugin in 1845. In this letter, Pugin intended to put a stop to “certain rumours” which attributed to him more than “his proper share” in the actual work of the Parliament building.

To the Editor of *The Builder*

Sir, — As it appears by an article in the last number of the *Builder*, as well as in notices contained of late in other periodicals, that a misconception prevails as to the nature of my employment in the works of the new Palace of Westminster, I think it incumbent on me, in justice to Mr. Barry, to state that I am engaged by him, and by him alone, with the approval of the Government, to assist in preparing working drawings, and models from his designs of all the wood carvings and of the internal decorations, and to procure models and drawings of the best examples of ancient decorative art of the proper kind, wherever they are to be found, as specimens for the guidance of the workmen in respect of the taste and feeling to be imitated; to engage with artists and the most skilful workmen that can be procured in every branch of decorative art, and to superintend personally the practical execution of the works upon the most economical terms compatible with the nature of it, and its most perfect performance. In fulfilling the duties of my office, I do not do anything whatever on my own responsibility; all models and working drawings being prepared from Mr. Barry’s designs, and submitted to him for his approval or alteration previous to being carried into effect; in fine, my occupation is simply to assist in carrying out practically Mr. Barry’s own designs and views in all respects. Trusting to your fairness in giving insertion to this letter in your next number,

I am Sir, &c.,

London, Sept. 3, 1845. A. WELBY PUGIN.²⁷

Before writing this letter, Augustus Pugin had repeatedly expressed his fidelity to Charles Barry in private letters to Barry. In a letter dated June 16, 1844, Pugin says “it is next to impossible for me to design any abstract portion of a great whole in the same spirit as you have conceived the rest, and I know it is only a waste of time in me to attempt it.”²⁸ At his appointment to be Superintendent of Wood-Carving of the Parliamentary project, Pugin sent a letter to Barry to “have a perfect understanding” of his role at starting, in which he stated: “I am only responsible to you [Barry] in all matters connected with the work. I act as your agent entirely, and have nothing to do with any other

person.”²⁹ He followed this with several more letters in which he repeatedly stressed the same point. In one undated letter, Pugin writes:

Since I saw you last night, I have been informed that some most exaggerated statements respecting the nature of my employment at the Palace of Westminster have appeared in one of the papers. I need not tell you how distressed and annoyed I feel at it, for I have always been most careful to prevent any misconception on this head. I have most distinctly stated that I was engaged by you and for you to carry out into practical execution the minor details of the decorations according to your designs, that I did nothing whatever on my own responsibility, that everything was submitted to be approved or altered by you; that in fine, my occupation was simply to carry out your views in the practical execution of the internal detail. I can assure you, I wish to serve you in this work with the greatest fidelity; no one can better appreciate your skill and judgement than myself, and no man has ever borne more sincere and willing testimony to them than myself.³⁰

Due to the number of rumours concerning the nature of his employment at the Parliamentary project, Pugin felt compelled to repeatedly express his fidelity to Barry. When an assertion was made in the House of Lords that Augustus Pugin was actually a joint-architect, the publication of the above-cited letter to the editor of *The Builder* was crucial in securing Charles Barry’s reputation as the winner of the competition and as the *bona fide* designer of the Parliament Building.

Alfred Barry explained that Pugin had voluntarily publicised his subsidiary role in the Parliamentary project. However, it is doubtful that Pugin wrote these letters on his own initiative or actually meant what he wrote. Mrs. Mares, an intimate friend of Pugin’s wife, testified that she had happened to encounter Pugin in a moment of distress as he was repining that “Barry is in an awful state, respecting the reports which have oozed out about my being the architect of the Houses, and he wants me to write a letter to save his reputation.”³¹ There is also the testimony of a letter that Pugin wrote to Lord Shrewsbury, his greatest patron and an altogether trustworthy friend, in which he stated, “I could not be guilty of the meanness of brainsucking, much less of building a reputation on the labours of others.”³² These words support Edward Pugin’s own recollection of what his father had told him: “Barry said, I must write it, and if I hadn’t the whole thing must have been given up — the Houses would have been ruined and Barry’s reputation gone.”³³

3. The missing evidence

A scandalous anecdote concerning the partnership of Barry and Pugin has also been reported regarding the loss of conclusive verification of Pugin's indisputable share in the Parliamentary project. Seventy-six private letters of Charles Barry to Augustus Pugin confirming Pugin's role in designing the new Parliament Building have been lost and have not been seen since Edward Pugin lent them to Charles Barry at Barry's own request, shortly before Barry's death. According to Edward Pugin, Barry's plot to destroy all traces of Augustus Pugin's contribution to the project started after he had written to Barry, at the request of Benjamin Ferrey, who was then preparing a biography of Augustus Pugin, for the loan of any letters or documents in Barry's possession bearing on Augustus Pugin's connection with the Parliament Building. As soon as he had received this letter from Edward Pugin, Barry visited him to tell him that it was impossible to comply with this request, as he had destroyed the whole of the correspondence. At the same time, Barry expressed "an emphatic hope" that all his letters to Augustus Pugin had also been destroyed. Edward Pugin later recalled that moment:

I shall never forget his [Barry's] agitation when I informed him that, on the contrary, I was in possession of a vast number of his original letters. His confusion and distress were painful to witness.³⁴

At this meeting, Edward Pugin told Charles Barry that he intended to publicly assert the true nature of his father's services to Barry. Barry promised that Augustus Pugin's status "should no longer remain unacknowledged; guaranteed that every emolument which had been held out to him should, as far as possible, be secured."³⁵ Before leaving, Barry "begged" Edward Pugin to "entrust him with the letters for perusal," and invited Pugin to dinner the next day. The next day, while they were dining, Barry requested more time to peruse the letters and "promised to return them by the hand of his wife, Lady Barry, in a day or two; but he failed to fulfil this promise and the letters were never returned."³⁶ A similar story, albeit with minor differences as to the order of the events, is reported in *The Burlington Magazine* of March 1906 by Robert Dell, who heard it in person from Mrs. Pugin, Edward Pugin's step-mother.

Alfred Barry responded bitterly to Edward Pugin's accusations. Contending that, "after diligent search and careful enquiry," he had found no trace of such letters, nor any evidence for their existence, he maintained that "it is impossible, on principles of common fairness, to accept a charge so serious, as established under such circumstances against one who can no longer defend himself."³⁷

He did not forget to add that "... I think I may be excused if I decline to accept them [Edward Pugin's accusations] as proved, especially when the examination of Mr. E. Pugin's statements has shown in him such singular inaccuracy, both of remembrance and quotation."³⁸

III. THE UNSOLVED CONTROVERSY AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING

This controversy has not yet been satisfactorily settled, precisely because the architectural tastes of both Barry and Pugin are realised in the design of the buildings. Barry was recognised as an essentially Classic or Palladian Architect and admired as such. Pugin, on the other hand, was widely seen as a Medieval Architect, deeply imbued with the spirit and feelings of the priest-builders of medieval times. The controversy over who was the real architect of the new Houses of Parliament stems, therefore, from the attempt to make an appraisal of the significance of both Italianate and Gothic influences in the executed design of the Parliament.

Barry and Pugin's plan was essentially symmetrical, exposing a bold mixture of, or even antagonism between, Italianate ideas and the Gothic spirit. In *An Outline of European Architecture* (1943), Sir Nikolaus Pevsner writes that the Houses of Parliament "have ... a picturesque asymmetry in their towers and spires, but the river front is, in spite of that, with its emphasized centre and corner pavilions, a composition of Palladian formality ... one can indeed without much effort visualize the façade of the Houses of Parliament with porticoes of a William Kent or the John Wood type."³⁹ The river front in particular displays a strong sense of regularity expressed through dynamic Palladian elevations. Sir Kenneth Clark indicates that, long before the building of the new Houses of Parliament was completed, no serious Gothic Revivalist "dared to praise it"⁴⁰ because of "its forced symmetry, its sham windows and its numberless artificialities."⁴¹ Certainly Pugin was not blind to the forced symmetry of the design, as he himself once said: "... all Grecian, Sir. Tudor details on a classic body."⁴² Moreover, Pugin acknowledged that much of this Palladian inclination had in fact originated in Barry's architectural taste. Returning from a visit to Barry, Pugin told a friend who had accompanied him there that "Mr. Barry had sought to give an Italian outline to Gothic details."⁴³ As a matter of fact, "with Barry, order, symmetry and, above all, unity, were essential principles of composition in every design whose importance made grandeur attainable."⁴⁴

Nevertheless, it is misleading for anyone to assert that Pugin never had any significant influence on the work on the grounds that Pugin considered the above-mentioned principle of symmetry to be a heretical feature of architecture, and that "Pugin would have recommended irregular and picturesque grouping of parts, utterly at variance with the regularity and symmetry actually adopted."⁴⁵ Indeed,

Pugin never disregarded or anathematized regularity and symmetry per se. What he criticised was the tendency to scrupulously adhere to regularity or symmetry; and, in his view, to deliberately design a building to be picturesque or irregular was no better. Pugin stated in *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841) that “an edifice which is arranged with the principal view of looking picturesque is sure to resemble an artificial waterfall or a made-up rock, which are generally so *unnaturally natural* [emphasis in original] as to appear ridiculous.”⁴⁶

The regularity and symmetry of the New Houses of Parliament were not merely a manifestation of Barry’s Italianate taste, but the inevitable outcome of the evolution of architectural taste in eighteenth and nineteenth century England. Pevsner points out that “once Palladio had been firmly established as the English amateur’s and architect’s guide and master, nothing changed for a hundred years ...”⁴⁷ It was due to the sway of such conservatism in the eighteenth century that the Palladian inclination for regularity and symmetry continued into and undoubtedly influenced architectural taste in the nineteenth century, in particular in its greatest project, the rebuilding of the new Houses of Parliament.

IV. CONCLUSION

Among the various items of evidence collected in Alfred Barry’s pamphlet is the testimony of Rev. Benjamin Webb, a close friend of Augustus Pugin. Webb recalled that Augustus Pugin had “never claimed for himself the merit of designing the Houses of Parliament” and even affirmed that Augustus Pugin sometimes used to talk of the elevations unfavourably.⁴⁸ As for the actual share of Pugin in the work of the Parliamentary project, Webb states that “no doubt, after the ground plan had been arranged, Pugin rendered very important subordinate services to Sir Charles Barry, and made his unrivalled knowledge of Third-Pointed detail available for the more complete working out of this great national building.”⁴⁹ Webb then concludes that “this is the utmost that can be said of Pugin’s share in the work, in my opinion.”⁵⁰ Such a statement, coming as it does from a friend of Augustus Pugin, was naturally seized upon by Alfred Barry as evidence for Pugin’s role being merely that of an assistant responsible only for designing medieval details, while Charles Barry alone was the *bona fide* architect of the renewed Houses of Parliament.

Yet Pugin’s design of details, not Barry’s Italianate composition, was the indispensable element in giving a medieval character to the whole project. The novelty of the renewed Parliament Building was Pugin’s fine medieval crust, which transformed Barry’s conventional classicism into a new national monument, fulfilling the requirement of the Parliamentary committee that the building be

constructed in either a Gothic or Elizabethan style. The impact of Augustus Pugin's Gothic revival designs exceeded Charles Barry's Palladian traditionalism in impact; thus an ex-member of Parliament, who was able to closely observe the ongoing rebuilding but wished to remain anonymous, explained his impression of "the real authorship" or *bona fide* architect of the Parliament as follows:

I certainly was always under the impression that although the plan of the work may have been designed by Sir C. Barry, yet, that all its illustrations, and many at least of the deviations from the original designs, were due to the late Mr. Pugin. ... I cannot offer you any direct evidence in justification of this impression, but my recollection is, that it was so generally accepted by every one who cared for such matters, that it seemed almost a certainty, not requiring investigation or proof.⁵¹

This impression was in fact shared by many others who believed that "no man," however great Charles Barry's talent, "could '*per saltum*' transfer his mind from classicism to mediævalism, so opposite are all their ideas ...".⁵² Although we may never ultimately solve the controversy of the actual authorship of the Houses of Parliament, it was on this unproven but widely accepted impression that Edward Pugin found the firmest justification for his assertion that his father, Augustus Pugin, had "the right of being considered *at least the joint architect of the Houses of Parliament*."⁵³

Postscript

This paper is the extended version of the author's presentation at the NASSR/NAVSA 2006, the joint conference of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism and the North American Victorian Studies Association, which was held at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, in the summer of 2006. The study represents a part of the author's research project which was conducted with the support of KAKENHI, the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan, from April 2004 to March 2006.

Notes

- 1 *Report from the Select Committee on Rebuilding Houses of Parliament with the Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix*, The House of Commons, 3 June 1835.
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