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PLATE 4



Osmond Barnes, Chief Herald at the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi, 1876-7.
Private Collection. See page 108.

HERALDS AT THE DELHI DURBARS

Peter O'Donoghue

Three great imperial durbars took place on the Ridge outside Delhi during the height of the British Raj, on a site which was associated with the heroics of the Mutiny. The first durbar, in 1876-77, proclaimed Queen Victoria as Empress of India, whilst the second and third, in 1902-3 and 1911, proclaimed the accessions of Edward VII and George V respectively. All three drew upon Indian traditions of ceremonial meetings or durbars between rulers and ruled, and in particular upon the Mughal Empire's manner of expressing its power to its subject princes. Yet all three also drew to varying degrees upon medieval European traditions of imperial ceremony, or rather upon Victorian ideas about what those traditions might have been.¹ Each durbar was larger and more elaborate than the last, and on each occasion the Government of India sought to combine Indian and European signs of imperial might on the one side, and of feudal subordination or client status on the other. Among the European motifs were heralds and heraldry: it is the intention of this article to discuss the heralds employed at each durbar and their rôles, and to look briefly at the heraldry devised for the princes who were the principal audience for these imperial pageants.

Heralds in Britain have responsibility for proclaiming the accession of new sovereigns at certain locations charged with historical and political significance. The use of heralds at the three imperial durbars of British India to make proclamations was part of the historicising process intended to draw India closer to the Crown. It may be seen as a recognition that the Indian princes were equal in some ways to the ruling classes at home, and had an equal right to learn of key developments in the paramount power of the mother country. By enacting medieval rites of kingship and chivalry, the presence of the heralds also emphasized for British and Indian publics alike the differences between British and Indian society; such differences could render the values of liberalism inoperable and thus justify British rule.

I.

The Imperial Assemblage of 1876-7 was arranged to proclaim the assumption by the Queen of the title Empress of India, following Disraeli's Royal Titles Act of 1876.² It served as the model for the two durbars that followed. Initiated by the Viceroy

¹ Bernard S. Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in *The Invention of Tradition*, edd. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (new edn., Cambridge 1999), pp. 165-209, provides a classic introduction to this interpretation of the imperial project and the 1877 Assemblage in particular.

² *An act to enable Her most Gracious Majesty to make an addition to the Royal Style and Titles appertaining to the Imperial Crown of the United Kingdom and its Dependencies*, 39 & 40 Victoria c. 10 [27 April 1876]. For a discussion of the background to the Act and reactions to it in Britain and India, see L. A. Knight, 'The Royal Titles Act and India', *Historical Journal* 11 (1968), pp. 488-507.

Lord Lytton and his private secretary Owen Tudor Burne, it was intended as an expression of the new relationship between the paramount power and the native princes following the Mutiny. Lytton believed that the power of ritual was uniquely appealing to the 'native mind':³ the Indian princes 'are easily affected by sentiment, and susceptible to the influence of symbols to which facts very inadequately correspond.'⁴ This conception of the princes was one which would inform all three durbars.

The imperial government of India had inherited from the East India Company relationships with hundreds of Indian rulers whose states varied greatly in size and wealth. Each relationship was defined by its own treaty, but broadly they were characterised by a degree of internal autonomy, subject to the guidance of a British Resident. The Assemblage was thus also an opportunity to impress upon the princes the splendour of the British Crown, and their own closeness to that splendour. Although the Imperial Assemblage drew upon Indian traditions, the details were European in origin: it was European feudal relations that were evoked. Thus, rather than a succession of personal presentations to the ruler in a public setting, at which gifts were given and received, and personal relationships contracted, as was the case with Mughal durbars, the Assemblage placed the Viceroy and his staff on a dais in the centre of an arena, with the princes and other dignitaries in stands arranged in an arc around it. This removed the difficulties of precedence between princes that had complicated previous gatherings (all were equidistant from the Viceroy) but also removed the personal element from the formal occasion. The performance became akin to a mystery play for the enlightenment of an audience in India and at home.

The Assemblage met in late December 1876, and the proclamation was made in English on 1 January 1877 by the Chief Herald, Major Osmond Barnes of the 10th Bengal Lancers (**Plate 4**). Born on 23 December 1834 at 7 Bryanston Square, London, he was the son of John Barnes of Chorleywood House, Hertfordshire.⁵ His father was the high sheriff of Hertfordshire and had made his fortune as a stockbroker, before buying the Chorleywood estate in 1822 and building a house there. The family's accession to the landowning classes would be short-lived: Osmond Barnes's brothers were forced to sell the estate in 1870. Barnes went to Rugby School in 1846 aged 11, where he won the prize for drawing, which remained a hobby throughout his life. After some further education in France, Barnes passed the examination for military service with the East India Company, and sailed for Bombay in March 1854, where he was posted ensign in the 13th Native Infantry on 29 August 1855. He was promoted lieutenant in 1856, and in 1860 began to serve with the Lahore Light Horse in the Bengal Presidency. On 5 August 1862 at Barrackpore, Bengal, Osmond Barnes married Emily Sophia Isabella, daughter of General Edward Mainwaring;⁶ they

³ Alan Trevithick, 'Some Structural and Sequential Aspects of the British Imperial Assemblages at Delhi: 1877-1911', *Modern Asian Studies* 24 (1990), no. 3 pp. 561-78.

⁴ Letter to Salisbury, 11 May 1876, in Lady Betty Balfour, *Personal and Literary Letters of Robert, First Earl of Lytton* (London 1906: henceforth *Lytton Letters*), vol. 2 p. 21.

⁵ *Rugby School Register 1675-1867* (London 1867), p. 150.

⁶ Ecclesiastical Returns, Barrackpore: BL OIOC N/1/102 f. 59.

would have four sons and two daughters. By 1866 Barnes was 2nd Squadron Officer with the 10th Regiment of Bengal Cavalry, formerly part of Hodson's Horse. In 1867 he was advanced to the rank of major, and it was in this rank that he served as Chief Herald at the Imperial Assemblage of 1877. He was promoted lieutenant-colonel in 1881 with the 10th Bengal Cavalry, which he now commanded. He retired in 1888 and was appointed CB in 1893 in recognition of his military service. Like many Indian Army officers, Barnes retired to Ealing in west London, where he lived with his wife Emily until her death in 1912. He died on 20 May 1930 aged 95, and his obituary made reference to his prodigious height, his great age, and his service as Chief Herald.⁷

The Times provides lively descriptions of most aspects of the Imperial Assemblage, including the role of the herald; I shall quote extensively from their correspondent as his accounts illuminate not only the proceedings themselves, but also their reception. The accounts in *The Times* regularly liken the proceedings to a play, and the uniforms and robes to costumes. A few days before the Assemblage opened, the newspaper's correspondent reported that

Major Barnes, 10th Bengal Lancers, being the tallest military officer in India, has been selected to act as Chief Herald, and will read the Imperial Proclamation. He will be dressed in heraldic costume, which has been ordered from England, and it is stated will cost £200. Six European and six Native trumpeters, mounted on selected gray horses and arrayed as Heralds, will attend him.⁸

The description by the same correspondent of the state entry of the Viceroy at the opening of the Imperial Assemblage also reveals this fascination with the heralds:

Then appeared a personage anxiously looked for by us all, I mean Major Barnes, the Chief Herald. The Imperial Assemblage selected him for that post – so, at least, the Indian papers say – by reason of his being the biggest officer in the Army. What his exact height may be I know not, but sitting on horseback he did not seem greatly to surpass the ordinary stature. But if there be any deficiency in his inches his gorgeous dress made ample amends Suffice it to say that so long as he remained in sight he was the cynosure of all eyes and the glory of the Viceroy. The native chiefs seemed pale and insipid beside him. In attendance on Major Barnes were his 12 trumpeters ... riding by threes, the Europeans and natives alternately like squares in a chess board. Their dresses were on the same model as that of the Chief Herald, but, of course, far inferior in point of splendour.⁹

⁷ Obituary of Colonel Osmond Barnes in *The Times*, 21 May 1930. See also *Who Was Who 1929-1940* (London 1947), p. 67; *East India Register and Army List* (London, 1855-60 editions), and *The Indian Army and Civil Service List* (London, 1861-88 editions).

⁸ *The Times*, 18 December 1876, p. 5.

⁹ *The Times*, 25 December 1876, p. 3.

The correspondent holds up the European medieval display of royal identity — the tabard — for comparison with the clothes of the native princes, who seek by their robes and uniforms laden with orders to assert their own authority and royal status. The herald is the victor here, the princes disappointing the expectation of oriental exuberance, but the tone would seem to mock rather than elevate his triumph. Barnes was designated the Chief Herald as in this enthusiastic rather than scholarly recreation of medieval court ritual, the trumpeters were described as heralds and dressed accordingly.

On the day of the proclamation, 1 January 1877, the native princes and other dignitaries both British and Indian, were seated in the stands. Their heraldic banners, which we shall discuss below, were displayed above them. At a signal from Lord Lytton, Major Barnes stepped forward and read first the Royal Titles Act, and then the proclamation in English of the assumption of the title Empress of India by Queen Victoria. His loud voice was audible to all those present. The Viceroy then spoke, and certain princes responded with expressions of loyalty to the British Crown. The Imperial salute of 101 guns was fired, which caused the hundreds of elephants to stampede.¹⁰

II.

The second of our three durbars at Delhi, that of 1903, proclaimed the accession of Edward VII in the presence of the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, and the Duke of Connaught, and drew upon the experiences of the 1877 Assemblage. It was designed by Curzon and by Sir Hugh Shakespeare Barnes, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India and President of the Durbar Central Committee. Held on exactly the same site, it again made use of an arc of seating for the princes, divided according to their provinces to avoid problems of precedence. The scale though was much greater: in 1877 only 5,000 could be accommodated in the stands; this time the seating was arranged in a great horseshoe, which held 16,000 guests. The Viceroy's dais was part of and projected from this stand; spectators and participants were all thus equidistant from the flagpole at the centre of the arena, from which the Royal Standard was flown. The design of the stands was in the hands of Bhai Ram Singh and Gunga Ram, and was copied in part from a pavilion at Agra. This was a result of the feeling that the 1877 Assemblage had been too influenced by European traditions and aesthetics, and had therefore made less of an impact than was desired: medievalism was not a wholly satisfactory mode for representing Britain's relations with Indian princes. Lord Curzon rejected the medieval in favour of an 'Indian' mode of representation, which in architectural terms meant 'indo-saracenic'. Where the 1877 Assemblage had deliberately avoided some of the associations bound up with the durbar, Curzon reverted to the durbar form, familiar and even sacred in India, replacing the Mughal

¹⁰ A detailed description of the 1877 Assemblage is in J. Talboys Wheeler, *The History of the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi* (London 1877).

acts of exchange of gifts with an interchange of 'homage and courtesy', which consisted of a handshake.¹¹

As in 1877, the gathering at Delhi was opened by the State Entry into the city by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, accompanied this time by the princes and many elephants. An important figure in this procession was the herald, Major Alexander Gordon Maxwell of the 6th Bengal Cavalry. He rode in a tabard of the royal arms, carrying a mace of ebony and silver ensigned with a silver crown, with white breeches and black boots, and a white helmet with gold and white *pagri*. Curzon had consulted the Earl Marshal and the College of Arms about what the herald should wear; the tabard was made by Messrs Wilkinson and Son, tailors and robe makers, to designs provided by the College of Arms.¹² Maxwell was accompanied by a drummer and twelve trumpeters, six European and six Indian, who wore a version of the uniform of the state trumpeters, emblazoned with the royal cypher. Like Barnes he was a commanding figure more than six feet tall, and his appearance 'recalled for a moment the chivalrous traditions of mediæval Europe' according to one observer.¹³ The special correspondent of *The Times* employed biblical and chivalric imagery to describe him, saying that 'the herald, Major Maxwell, stands forth, a splendid figure blazing in his raiment of gold and many colours under the rays of the Indian sun, on his jet black charger.'¹⁴

Unlike Barnes, Alexander Gordon Maxwell came from a family background of service in India. He was born in Meerut, India, on 8 March 1867, the son of Hamilton Maxwell, a colonel of the Indian Army. Maxwell was commissioned into the Royal Irish Fusiliers in 1889, but transferred to the 6th Bengal Cavalry in the Indian Army in 1890. He was promoted lieutenant in 1892; by 1903 he had been appointed brevet-major, which was the rank he held when he served as herald at the durbar. In 1907, Major Maxwell was appointed to act as the adjutant for the Calcutta Light Horse. He retired from the Indian Army in 1909.¹⁵

Although the location and form of the 1903 durbar drew in many ways upon the precedent established in 1877, the details of the proceedings on the day of the proclamation were rather different. Special music had been composed for the occasion, reflecting the developing concept of the great royal ceremony as a musical showcase that had emerged at the coronation of the previous year. When all were seated in the horseshoe of stands around the arena, the massed military bands played the music 'Summons to the Herald'. In response came a flourish from the trumpets accompanying Major Maxwell, who then appeared in the arena with his drummer and trumpeters. He rode up to the dais to the tune of the 'Herald's March', composed by Captain G. B. Sanford. There he wheeled his horse to face the entrance, and read the

¹¹ A full account of the 1903 Durbar appears in Stephen Wheeler, *History of the Delhi Coronation Durbar* (London 1904).

¹² Curzon papers: BL OIOC Mss Eur F111/161 no. 75 and Mss Eur F111/172 nos. 381 and 433.

¹³ Stephen Wheeler, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁴ *The Times*, 2 January 1903, p. 3.

¹⁵ For details of Maxwell's military career see *The Quarterly Indian Army List* (Calcutta), for 1903 and 1908.

proclamation 'in tones that could be heard to the furthest limits of the amphitheatre.'¹⁶ The Royal Standard was then run up the flagpole, and the Royal Salute of 101 guns was sounded. There followed a speech by Lord Curzon in which he reminded the princes and people of India that 'under the benign influence of the British Crown, they were one, that they were not scattered atoms in a heterogeneous and cumbersome mass, but co-ordinate units in a harmonious and majestic whole.'¹⁷ Then Maxwell approached the dais with his trumpeters once more, and called for three cheers for His Majesty the King-Emperor. After the National Anthem, each prince was then presented in turn to the Viceroy, in a ceremony deliberately avoided by the 1877 Assemblage. Problems of precedence between the princes were diminished by having them approach simultaneously from both sides of the dais.

Maxwell's role in 1903 was thus very similar to that created for Barnes in 1877; he read the proclamation in a loud voice so that the princes and dignitaries present could hear. He made his proclamation from a horse rather than on foot, perhaps reflecting the greater scale of the stands; and on this occasion the herald and his party of trumpeters made an entrance (and exit) that were dramatized by the musical compositions.

III.

The third durbar at Delhi, in 1911, was in some ways very different from its predecessors. The scale of the event was much greater: the seated audience of 1877 had been 5,000, and that of 1903 was 16,000. The general public had not participated in either of these, and had scarcely been spectators, being kept at a great distance from the drama. The audiences, for whom the spectacles were designed, consisted entirely of Indian princes and the most prominent members of the middle classes. In contrast the durbar of 1911 took place in front of vast two vast stands in order to accommodate 100,000 members of the public. A huge arena was filled with soldiery, and opposite the public stands were smaller stands for the princes and dignitaries, who had become participants in the stage-show as well as audience for it. It culminated not on 1 January, as had those of 1877 and 1903, but on 12 December, to avoid conflict with the Muslim festival of Muhurram. Finally, the 1911 durbar differed from the two earlier examples by taking place in the presence of the newly-crowned King-Emperor himself and his Queen.¹⁸

According to what was now an established tradition, the King and Queen arrived in Delhi by train and went to their residence by way of a vast procession or State Entry. To the disappointment of the crowds, the great procession of elephants seen in 1903 was not repeated. Indeed the whole procession was nearly a failure: after weeks of expectation most of the spectators were unable to recognise their King. He rode

¹⁶ Stephen Wheeler, op. cit., p. 116.

¹⁷ Quoted in Government of India, *The Historical Record of the Imperial Visit to India 1911* (London 1914: henceforth *Imperial Visit 1911*), p. 10.

¹⁸ For a full account of the 1911 Durbar and related events see *Imperial Visit 1911*.

past on a horse, in the uniform of a Field Marshal and with a hat obscuring his features, surrounded by attendants in nearly identical uniforms: the crowds had perhaps looked to see someone more gorgeously or luxuriously dressed and equipped.¹⁹

The senior herald at the 1911 durbar was Brigadier-General William Eliot Peyton (**Figure 1**). In 1877 and 1903, the heralds were appointed informally by the Viceroy or his staff. Perhaps because of the presence of the King-Emperor, Peyton was appointed Delhi Herald Extraordinary by Royal Warrant dated 8 August 1911,²⁰ following formal recommendation by the Earl Marshal, much as heralds in England are appointed. As a further innovation he was provided with an Assistant Herald, Malik Umar Hayat Khan, Tiwana (**Figure 2**).²¹ The Government of India ordered a tabard for Peyton from the Royal School of Art Needlework in London, which cost £50, compared to the £65 that was charged by Messrs. Wilkinson and Sons for the tabard used in 1903. At the same time, however, Peyton had ordered privately a tabard from Wilkinsons, which he paid for himself. This confusion led to the existence in India of two tabards, and might, one may speculate, have been one reason for the appointment of an Assistant Herald. Malik Umar Hayat Khan refunded the cost of his tabard to the Government of India, and both tabards thus became the personal property of their wearers.²²

William Eliot Peyton was born 7 May 1866, the son of Colonel John Peyton of the 7th Dragoon Guards. He was educated at Brighton College and enlisted into his father's regiment in 1885, being first commissioned in 1887. He transferred to the 15th Hussars in 1896, and married Mabel Maria, daughter of Lieutenant-General Edward Gage, in 1899. He served in the Sudan in 1897 and 1898, and in South Africa in 1899-1900 when his service was cut short by illness. His first wife died in 1901, and he remarried in 1903 Gertrude, daughter of Major-General Arthur Reid Lempriere. Peyton then became a staff officer, acting as Assistant Quartermaster-General, India, until 1908, in which year he took command of the Meerut Brigade.

Following his appointment as Delhi Herald in 1911 he was appointed military secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, India, in 1912. Returning to Britain in 1914, Peyton commanded the 2nd Mounted Division at Gallipoli, where it suffered severe casualties. He then briefly took command of the Western Desert Force in Egypt in 1916, before being appointed to serve as Sir Douglas Haig's military secretary, with vast responsibilities over appointments, promotions, removals, honours and other matters in the huge British Army of the First World War. Having been awarded the D.S.O. in 1898, and appointed C.B. in 1913, Peyton was knighted as both K.C.V.O. and K.C.B. in 1917. He led a division through Flanders in 1918 as the war drew to a close. After the war, Peyton returned to India, before serving as military secretary to the Secretary of State for War, and finally as Commander-in-Chief, Scottish Command. He retired in 1930 and died on 14 November 1931.²³

¹⁹ Stacy Waddy, *At the Delhi Durbar* (Parramatta 1912), p. 72.

²⁰ CA record Ms I.76/246.

²¹ *Imperial Visit 1911*.

²² Political and Secret Annual Files 1912: BL OIOC L/P&S/10/179 ff. 9, 15, 19, 48.

²³ For biographical details see *Who Was Who 1929-1940* (London 1947), pp. 1070-71.

The junior herald in 1911 was Malik Umar Hayat Khan. He was born in 1875, the son of Khan Bahadur Malik Sahib Khan, a noted landowner of the Punjab and supporter of the British, who died in 1879. On inheriting his estate at Kalra, in Shahpur district, Malik Umar Hayat Khan began a process of management and expansion which led to his being one of the greatest landowners in the Punjab. He was educated at Aitchison College for Chiefs in Lahore, and in 1901 obtained an honorary commission in the regiment raised by his father, the 18th (later the 19th) King George's Own Lancers. He served in Somaliland in 1902-4 and was Transport Officer in Younghusband's Tibet Expedition of 1904. He was appointed C.I.E. for his military services. Khan was appointed to the Viceroy's legislative Council shortly after its formation in 1909. He was granted the honorary rank of Captain in 1911, with which rank he served as Assistant Herald at the durbar. Following this rôle he was appointed M.V.O. Khan fought on the Western Front and in Mesopotamia during the First World War, being mentioned six times in despatches, and was appointed K.C.I.E. in 1916 in recognition of his services. He also took part in the Afghan War of 1919, and was appointed C.B.E. in the same year. He advised the Government on the composition and working of the Indian Army in 1920.²⁴

After service on the Council of State in India he was appointed in 1929 to the Council of the Secretary of State for India, on which he served in London for five years. He was appointed an honorary aide-de-camp to George V in 1930 and this was renewed by George VI on his accession. Khan took part in the 1935 Jubilee celebrations in London, being appointed an honorary Major-General in that year. He died in 1944 aged 69; his obituary referred to his military and conciliar careers, and to his great skill at chess. He was also described as having a zest for every kind of outdoor sport:

A keen tent-pegger and pig-sticker in earlier life, he was also a fine polo player and kept two teams of his own. He was a fast runner, especially in long-distance matches, and he organized and participated in camel races. The keeper for a long time of a racing stud, he formerly rode his own horses, often to victory. He was patron of Indian wrestling...he much improved greyhound breeding...he was an authority on Indian music and as himself a good musician.²⁵

Peyton and Khan were accompanied in the procession marking the State Entry to Delhi by twenty-five trumpeters, dressed as before in uniforms based on the state

²⁴ His obituary in *The Times* 5 April 1944 p. 7 styled him Major-General Nawab Malik Sir Mahomed Umar Hayat Khan, Tiwana, GBE, KCIE, MVO, honorary ADC to the King. He is usually referred to as Malik Umar Hayat Khan, not Malik Mohammed Amur Khan, as stated by Godfrey and Wagner, *CA*, p. 315. Further biographical information comes from K. R. Khosla, *His Imperial Majesty King George V and The Princes of India and the Indian Empire*, ed. R. P. Chatterjee (Lahore 1937), pp. 586-7; *Who's Who in India 1911* (Lucknow 1911), pp. 66-8. See also *London Gazette* 10 May 1901, p. 6; 20 June 1911 p. 5; 2 June 1916 p. 10.

²⁵ *The Times*, loc. cit.



Figure 1: William Eliot Peyton, Delhi Herald Extraordinary
to the Imperial Durbar at Delhi, 1911.



Figure 2: Malik Umar Hayat Khan, Assistant Herald to the Imperial Durbar at Delhi, 1911.

trumpeters in Britain. Twelve were European and thirteen were Indian. The official historian of the durbar described the State Entry, reporting that

As though as a reminder of the continuity of British institutions, the chivalry of medieval times was recalled for a moment by the costume of the Heralds ... who wore their tabards of the Royal Arms.

It was added that Delhi Herald 'carried a golden sceptre in token of his high authority', and the Assistant Herald 'a gold-mounted ebony baton'.²⁶ *The Pioneer*, an Indian English-language newspaper, reported that 'a murmur of admiration rose, as General Peyton, the Delhi Herald, and Malik Umar Hayat Khan, Tiwana, Assistant Herald, appeared among their British and Indian trumpeters.'²⁷

The durbar itself took place on 12 December 1911, and drew upon the invented traditions of 1877 and 1903, remodelling them dramatically to take account of the presence of both the King-Emperor and the general public. It began with the rite of homage, by which all the Indian princes present and other members of the ruling class of India asserted their loyalty and submission to George V in what was a replication or extension of the coronation rite. For this ceremony the King and Queen faced the princes' stands, and thus faced away from the public who were some distance away. With this ritual completed the King and Queen, wearing the new Imperial Crowns made for the occasion, rose from their seats and processed to the central pavilion, which housed a steep flight of steps up to the imperial thrones. The thrones, which were made of solid silver encased in gold, faced the public stands.²⁸

After the King and Queen were seated, a trumpet summons was sounded to the heralds, who were stationed outside the arena. The two heralds and their trumpeters rode into the arena:

The Delhi Herald here received the Emperor's command to read the Proclamation, which he did from horseback, turning towards the soldiers and the people. His voice was distinctly heard at the outer stands 300 yards away, but was not audible to those seated in the Durbar behind, where, however, copies of the document in English and Urdu were distributed at the same time. The actual Proclamation read by the Delhi Herald was printed in gold on white satin, with a bullion fringe and fastenings.²⁹

The Assistant Herald, Malik Umar Hayat Khan, then read the proclamation in Urdu. After a speech by the Viceroy the Delhi Herald, raising his helmet, called for three cheers for the King-Emperor. The Assistant Herald then did the same for the Queen-Empress.

The Royal visit to Delhi provided further employment for the heralds Peyton and Khan. Before the durbar, they had been present at the unveiling of a statue to the memory of Edward VII. On 14 December, two days after the durbar, a great investi-

²⁶ *Imperial Visit 1911*, pp. 99-100.

²⁷ *Coronation Durbar, 1911*, comprising articles from *The Pioneer* (Allahabad 1912), p. 82.

²⁸ *Imperial Visit 1911*, pp. 204-5.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

ture ceremony took place in a large canvas pavilion. The King entered and departed in procession, preceded by mace-bearers and by the Delhi Herald carrying his sceptre, in a deliberate evocation of the ceremonies of orders of knighthood in Britain. The following day Peyton and Khan were present at the inauguration of New Delhi, a project which had been announced at the durbar. The King and Queen each laid a stone with trowel and mortar; when they had done so, Peyton mounted the steps of the pedestal and proclaimed in a loud voice that by command of the King-Emperor he declared the stones to have been 'well and truly laid'. The announcement was repeated in Urdu by the Assistant Herald.³⁰

IV.

It is not intended here to attempt a history of the evolution of heraldic display in India, or to chronicle the relationships between the College of Arms, the India Office and the Government of India in the later years of the empire. It is appropriate however to consider briefly the matter of heraldic display at the Assemblage of 1877, which was regarded as a serious and important element in the proceedings. Heraldry as used by the Viceroy in 1877 furnished an opportunity to enhance the prestige of the Indian princes and to give them gifts which would bind them to the paramount power, much as the giving of *Khelat* (which could be clothes, jewellery, weapons or other items) had symbolised their ties to the Mughals. The correspondent for *The Times* foresaw possibilities in this regard, writing in October 1876 that a new and useful tradition could thus be created:

Special presents from the Queen should, and no doubt will, be made to the leading Native Princes and Chiefs, symbols of their quasi-feudal relation to the Empress of India and of her protecting power, which would be handed down from father to son as the most revered of the family heirlooms.³¹

The Viceroy Lord Lytton and Owen Tudor Burne his private secretary decided that banners should be presented to each prince in attendance, bearing arms devised for each princely house. The task for devising such arms fell upon probably the only civil servant in India with relevant experience: Robert Taylor of the Bengal Civil Service, inspector of local offices of account.³² He later published a volume of these designs called *The Princely Armory*, which included in some copies an account written in 1877 of how the matter unfolded. Here he states that arms for princes were first required when the Duke of Edinburgh visited India in 1869 and was invested with the Star of India. The then Viceroy Lord Mayo had an interest in heraldry, and decided that there should be a procession with banners bearing arms for the princes. 'No time was left for debate or consultation, and as the work of creation was thrown on

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 297, 309-10.

³¹ *The Times*, 7 October 1876, p. 8.

³² *The Indian Army and Civil Service List* (London, January 1876 edition), p. 5.

Girdleston ... he appealed to me as his only acquaintance with even a schoolboy's smattering of the noble science.' In succeeding years Taylor was consulted about arms for new knights of the order, and was asked to prepare arms and banners for the larger number of princes who appeared at the grand ceremony of the order in 1875 in the presence of the Prince of Wales.³³

Only in May 1876 was he asked to prepare designs and banners for all of the native princes to attend the Imperial Assemblage at the end of that year. This he did by contacting all of the British residents in the princely states to ask for suggestions from each prince, and by conducting his own research.³⁴ The banners themselves were designed and made by John Lockwood Kipling (1837-1911), Superintendent of the Lahore School of Arts, a talented artist and designer, and father of Rudyard Kipling. Lockwood Kipling was later responsible for the design with Bhai Ram Singh of the Durbar Room at Osborne House in 1892.³⁵

Taylor reveals that he had learnt from his previous experiences, and from his correspondence with Garter Sir Albert William Woods:

In 1869, through our ignorance, the banners were of white satin with fringes of gold coloured silk, and bore the arms painted on a heater-shaped shield laid on the mantle of the order and surmounted by helmet and crest. ... In 1875 I made as much use of a tailor as ... possible, but there was a good deal of paint; Garter's instructions came in time, and the banners displayed the bearings only with fringes of the proper livery colours ... For the Delhi assemblage, I believe there was no paint but for S.I. badges; all was satin appliqué.³⁶

It is not our intention here to discuss the arms themselves. Taylor was understandably both proud and self-deprecating in *The Princely Armory* and in correspondence with Garter Woods about the designs: 'I have only a middle-aged man's recollection of a schoolboy's smattering of the rules but I am afraid that ignorance less complete was not to be found in India. The supporters are in most cases rubbish and the crests in many, but – so far as I am responsible for them – every line on the shield had a meaning for me at the time I assigned it.'³⁷

At the Imperial Assemblage the Viceroy received each prince in turn, and presented them with the heraldic banners produced by Taylor and Kipling. *The Times* once more provides an account which emphasizes the desire to create a new tradition in each princely house:

³³ Robert Taylor, *The Princely Armory* (Calcutta 1877); this includes a lengthy series of notes about the arms devised, preceded by recollections of Taylor's involvement in and experience of the scheme.

³⁴ *The Times*, 2 January 1877, p. 5.

³⁵ *Who was Who 1897-1916* (London 1920), p. 400; see also *The India List, Civil and Military* (London, March 1877 edition), p. 110.

³⁶ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 217, note A.

³⁷ Ms letter from Robert Taylor to Garter 11 April 1877, in CA Garter House files, 'miscellaneous Indian matters'.

Each of the greater chiefs also received a heavy and beautifully-worked banner, emblazoned with the arms of his house, and carried on a gilt pole, which bore the inscription 'From Victoria, Empress of India. 1st January 1877.' Two stalwart Highlanders supported the banner before the Throne, and the Viceroy, rising and grasping the pole, addressed to his visitor some such words as these: 'Whenever this banner is unfurled, let it remind you of the relations between your Princely House and the Paramount Power.'³⁸

The official book of the Imperial Assemblage by J. Talboys Wheeler also presented the banners as particularly important, stating that they were regarded by the princes with 'peculiar favour'.

The presentation of a banner [Wheeler writes] has been accepted as one of the insignia of investiture from a remote antiquity. The ceremony at Delhi confirmed every Ruling Chief in his authority; it disabused him of any alarm as to any change in his relations with the Paramount Power. On subsequent occasions throughout the Assemblage, the banners were displayed with every show of gratification and pride.³⁹

The Viceroy's own correspondence confirms the great effect of the heraldic banners. In a letter to Queen Victoria, however, he points out a fault with the design, present but unstated in the journalist's account, which is that 'the brass poles, which are elaborately worked, make them so heavy that it requires the united efforts of two stalwart Highlanders to carry one of them; and, consequently, the native chiefs who have received them will, in future processions, be obliged, I anticipate, to hoist them on the backs of elephants.'⁴⁰

Robert Taylor later expressed doubts as to whether even the formality with which the banners were presented would make the princes and chiefs content to retain the same bearings generations after generation;⁴¹ his prediction proved to be correct. Pereira has studied the evolution of the Arms of the princes in some detail.⁴² It suffices here to say that having introduced the princes to the concept of armorial display during the nineteenth century, the government of India saw difficulties arise during the twentieth century with regard to the adoption of new devices. The Chapter of the College of Arms appointed in 1916 a committee of its members to examine the question of grants of Arms to Indians, both in the princely states and in British India. This committee met irregularly until May 1940, being summoned to consider questions of Arms for Indians when they arose. It also sought to decide not only what the mechanisms might be by which the English Kings of Arms could make grants of Arms to Indians, but also to establish guiding principles on whether princes could

³⁸ *The Times*, 1 January 1877, p. 5.

³⁹ Talboys Wheeler, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁴⁰ Letter to Queen Victoria 23 December 1876 to 10 January 1877, in *Lytton Letters* vol. 2, p. 44.

⁴¹ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 218, note B.

⁴² Harold B. Pereira, 'Indian Heraldry', *CoA* 8 (1964-5), no. 60 pp. 151-6; no. 61 pp. 206-10; no. 62 pp. 240-3; no. 63 pp. 292-7.

determine their own Arms and those of their subjects. Amongst its conclusions was a ruling that the Arms devised by Taylor for the Indian princes had no legal status until granted or confirmed under due authority.

As India Office policy moved from encouraging indirect rule through the princes, to preferring to consult with more popular representatives of the urban middle classes, so we can see their attitude to heraldry changing. Robert Taylor had been requested to devise Arms to be used by the princes without consulting the College of Arms; by the 1930s some of the princes were demanding that their devices be registered at the College of Arms, but arguing at the same time that they were sovereign states with power to grant Arms to themselves and their subjects.⁴³ Kooiman's recent article studies the arms of the Maharaja of Travancore, arguing that the importance attached to the devices in the 1930s reveals insecurity in at least one princely family about their position.⁴⁴ The India Office was unwilling to take any decision on this question, despite repeated requests for clarification from the College of Arms. At last in 1937 the India Office suggested that the College should itself decide whether any individual prince had authority to grant himself Arms, thus successfully transferring responsibility away from the Secretary of State. This was settled in 1939 and 1940, with the College ruling that it would regard princes with full powers as being entitled to grant Arms.⁴⁵

V.

In the three great imperial durbars we see the invention of an accepted formula: the State Entry to Delhi, followed some days later by the durbar itself. The appearance of the heralds at the State Entry remains much the same in all three durbars: in each case they process on horseback in advance of the Viceroy (or King-Emperor), accompanied by a number of trumpeters. British observers at all three State Entries stress in their accounts the colourful tabards and the great impression made on spectators; often favourable comparisons are made with the oriental luxury and show of the princes. The role of the heralds at the durbar itself always consists of the making of the proclamation, followed by a translation. The power of the heralds' voices is regularly noted.

Cannadine, writing of the technique of indirect rule employed first in relation to the Indian princes and later to many parts of Africa, has argued that the British Empire was a 'mechanism for the export, projection and analogization of domestic social structures and social perceptions.' It was, he writes, 'generally built around the principle of replicating and supporting a hierarchical social structure modelled on, or

⁴³ CA Garter House files D/C/11 include a typescript letter from J. P. Gibson of the India Office to Garter, 31 July 1931, stating that 'the Secretary of State for India is reluctant to press to a decision the difficult question whether the Indian princes are entitled to define their own Arms and those of their states.'

⁴⁴ Dick Kooiman, 'Invention of Tradition in Travancore: A Maharaja's Quest for Political Security', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3rd series 15 (2005), no. 2 pp. 151-64.

⁴⁵ CA Indian Grants Committee Minute Book.

likened to, and tied in with, that which it was thought existed (or had once existed) in Britain itself.' The importance of the Indian princes then was that they could be identified with the medieval nobles of Britain's past, and therefore both be given a comprehensible historical role and also be drawn more tightly to British imperial rule. They were a conservative elite who could counteract the influence of the emerging educated Indian middle class.⁴⁶ All three of these great imperial events sought to bind the princes more closely to the Crown, using techniques of ritual and display that derived from a conception of Indian society as essentially medieval.

The three durbars can be seen in the context of the changing ways in which Britain conceived of its relationship with India after the Mutiny. As Indian social structures could be understood only by placing the subcontinent in a historical relationship with Britain (medieval or pre-medieval past encountering civilized present), Nuckolls has argued for three phases in the evolution of the British historical consciousness in the period.⁴⁷ The first, which followed the Mutiny and the assumption of Crown government in India, saw the British reformulate their relationship with India to accord greater importance to Indian opinion, and to link it via rituals such as the 1877 Assemblage, to symbols of British authority. Thus the 1877 event commemorated an exclusively British mastery of the subcontinent. Kooiman argues that the idiom of interactions between the princely states and the colonial government mingled Mughal signs and symbols with elements derived from European court ceremonial, thus weaving the princes into the colonial narrative.⁴⁸

This combination saw the princes as feudal subsidiaries of the British Crown, a role emphasized by the Royal Titles Act 1876 and dramatized by the 1877 Assemblage. Indeed the Assemblage was intended to feudalize India: Lytton wrote that 'here is a great feudal aristocracy which we cannot get rid of, which we are avowedly anxious to conciliate and command, but which we have as yet done next to nothing to rally round the British Crown as its feudal head.'⁴⁹ This conception drew upon an evolutionist assumption about the development of societies,⁵⁰ and sought to mobilize India's dormant feudal spirit, setting the subcontinent on the path of progress, whilst simultaneously advancing the interests of British rule. The idioms of the Assemblage can be linked to the creation of Indian orders of chivalry such as the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, created in 1861.⁵¹ It represented an appropriation of indigenous forms (the durbar), which legitimated the position of the

⁴⁶ David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (2nd edn., London 2002), pp. 10, 13.

⁴⁷ Charles W. Nuckolls, 'The Durbar Incident', *Modern Asiatic Studies* 24 (1990), no. 3 pp. 529-59. See especially pp. 529-30.

⁴⁸ Kooiman, op. cit., and Manu Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India* (New Delhi 2003).

⁴⁹ Letter to Disraeli 30 April 1876, in *Lytton Letters* vol. 2, p. 18.

⁵⁰ Henry Maine, *The Effects of Observation of India on Modern European Thought* (London 1875), quoted in Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj. The New Cambridge History of India* vol. III 4 (Cambridge 1995, repr. 2005), pp. 66, 68.

⁵¹ Nuckolls, op. cit., pp. 531-4.

Queen-Empress whilst also being a medievalist spectacular of rank and inequality.⁵² It has even been likened by Thomas Metcalf to the Eglinton Tournament. Metcalf emphasizes the mechanisms by which the British constructed India as different from western nations, and thereby justified its occupation and rule, a rule which might otherwise have been felt to conflict with the enlightened and liberal self-image that the British sought.⁵³

In 1877, the princes were part of the audience during the State Entry, intended to be impressed by British imperial display. The relatively small gathering at the Imperial Assemblage could be addressed by a herald on foot: the intention was that the princes felt bound more closely to the Crown, in the way that medieval feudal vassals were bound to their lord. The introduction of heralds and heraldry into the proceedings of the 1877 Assemblage was consonant with this intention.

We can detect an evolution in the role of the heralds at these durbars, which reflects perhaps the changing circumstances and points to the alterations which took place in the policy of the government. By 1903 the heraldry had gone: Curzon determined that the durbar should draw more clearly upon Indian, or rather Mughal, traditions and themes. Yet the herald remained, a necessary representation to India of the voice of the absent Sovereign; Curzon stressed in his speech to the durbar that loyalty to the person of the sovereign could unite all the peoples of India.

By the late nineteenth century, Nuckolls argues, we can perceive the development of an interactive Anglo-Indian tradition, in which British authority was indigenized.⁵⁴ Curzon's durbar rejected Lytton's faux-medieval theme in favour of a new Mughal or 'saracenic' form. The British rule in India became a natural part of the history of India. The 1911 durbar in turn drew attention to a regime whose terms and tokens of authority were likewise an amalgam of the European and Indian. It also, for Nuckolls, marked a transition to the third stage in the development of the British historical consciousness. In this final phase Indian nationalist movements began to focus attention on direct representation and the extension of democracy to colonially subjugated people. 'A political ideology had to be devised that would at once accommodate Indian participation in a public arena, and yet secure power firmly in British hands.' The presence of the King-Emperor and his consort, and the growing conception of the importance of Indian public opinion, determined that all proceedings should be on a greatly enlarged scale. The audience was the general public. The role of the heralds was enlarged, and the appointment of Malik Umar Hayat Khan, even if motivated partly by the existence of a second tabard, signified that it was appropriate for Indian nobles to participate in imperial ceremony, as it was for them to participate in imperial orders of chivalry.

Introduced as part of the medievalist tendencies of the mid-nineteenth century Viceroy Mayo and Lytton, the heralds remained part of the new tradition of imperial durbars. Indeed although the design of the durbar moved away in 1903 and 1911 from the medieval towards the mughal or 'saracenic', the role of the heralds

⁵² Cannadine, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁵³ Metcalf, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁵⁴ Nuckolls, *op. cit.*, p. 529.

remained much the same; it was even added to during the visit of George V in person. The Assemblage of 1877 with its proclamation had been directed at the Indian princes and at the British public; by 1911 the Indian general public had to be seen to be considered. It was hoped that the transfer of the capital to Delhi, seemingly by Royal decree, would impress the Indian public with the might of the British Crown, and please them with the elevation of the traditional seat of Mughal power. By the time the new capital was built, it would come to be an expression of declining confidence in Empire.

In 1877 Barnes had been seeking to mobilize the cheers and loyalty of the Indian princes; by 1911 Peyton and Khan's three cheers for the King-Emperor and Queen-Empress were directed rather more towards the general public. The actions of the heralds remained almost identical but were given changing meanings by the alterations in their ceremonial, architectural and political contexts.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ I am grateful to Catherine Wolfe for reading a draft of this article and making a number of most helpful suggestions; and to Robert Travers who suggested some useful source material relating to the interpretation of the Imperial durbars. I would also like to thank Richard Hayes, who first drew my attention to this subject and supplied the photograph (previously unpublished) of Major Barnes, reproduced here as Plate 4.