# IRISH POLITICAL THOUGHT AND THE UNION

Moving beyond binary nationalist and unionist narratives of nineteenth-century Irish history, this study instead explores political thought through ideological battles over government. Drawing on neglected pamphlets, political tracts, and polemical newspapers, Colin W. Reid reveals how Irish protagonists – unionists and anti-unionists, Catholic Emancipationists, Repealers, Tories, Fenians, and federalists – clashed over the meaning of representation, sovereignty, and the British connection. Reid traces how competing constitutional visions, rather than national allegiances, drove Ireland's political evolution. From the bitter Union debates to the birth of Home Rule, it recovers forgotten arguments about parliamentary reform, the 'Irish question' in imperial context, and the fraught experience of a small nation within a multinational polity. With fresh insights into figures such as Daniel O'Connell, Isaac Butt, and lesser-known polemicists, this study redefines Irish political thought as a dynamic struggle for representative government. This title is also available as open access on Cambridge Core.

COLIN W. REID is Senior Lecturer in British and Irish History at the University of Sheffield. He is the author of *The Lost Ireland of Stephen Gwynn: Irish Constitutional Nationalism and Cultural Politics, 1864–1950* (2011) and a number of articles and chapters on Irish political thought.

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# IRISH POLITICAL THOUGHT AND THE UNION

## *Visions of Representative Government, 1798–1879*

COLIN W. REID
*University of Sheffield*

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