

# THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT MAKING IT IRISH



EDITED BY VERA KREILKAMP  
MCMULLEN MUSEUM OF ART, BOSTON COLLEGE





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This publication is issued in conjunction with the exhibition *The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish* at the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, February 6–June 5, 2016. Organized by the McMullen Museum, the exhibition is co-curated by Vera Kreilkamp and Diana Larsen in collaboration with Virginia Teehan (University College Cork). *Making It Irish* has been underwritten by Boston College, the Patrons of the McMullen Museum, and an anonymous donor in honor of Colman Welby, with transportation provided by Aer Lingus. Additional support has been provided by Ireland’s Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, John Sisk and Son, and the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, University College Cork.

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## PREFACE

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The idea for *Making It Irish* arose during the run of a previous McMullen exhibition, *Rural Ireland: The Inside Story*, in 2012. Irish historian and professor at University College Cork, Dermot Keogh, at the time the Burns Visiting Scholar at Boston College, suggested an opportunity for the McMullen to explore the understudied and little-known gem of Ireland's Arts and Crafts movement, the Honan Chapel at University College Cork (UCC). Funded privately by the Honan bequest, the Chapel is a unified assemblage of the best of the country's Arts and Crafts movement, for which Irish artists and artisans produced a splendid array of stone carvings, stained glass, wood furnishings, textiles, and silver.

Meetings with Keogh and Virginia Teehan, Director of Cultural Projects at UCC, led Vera Kreilkamp and Diana Larsen to co-curate, in consultation with Teehan, the first comprehensive exhibition of Ireland's unique contribution to the Arts and Crafts movement, including major works from the Honan and additional domestic, antiquarian, and political objects. Joseph Nugent, Associate Professor of English at Boston College, conceived a course in which he and his students would research and create a digital guide to works in the exhibition. Marjorie Howes and Vera Kreilkamp organized a symposium in 2015, funded by the Irish Studies Program and Boston College's Institute for the Liberal Arts, to bring major scholars to lecture and confer on this academic project, which will, in addition, include an interdisciplinary

exhibition course taught by Boston College faculty, Kevin O'Neill, Kreilkamp, and myself, in the Departments of History, English, and Art History.

This project marks the ninth collaboration with Boston College's Irish Studies faculty since the McMullen opened in 1993. Scholars of English, history, and art, they, along with colleagues in Ireland and under the guidance of Vera Kreilkamp, conceived the questions to be asked of the works both in the exhibition and in this accompanying volume of essays.

In her role as editor, Kreilkamp assembled a group of international contributors to this volume to whom we extend special thanks: Nicola Gordon Bowe, Janice Heland, Marguerite Helmers, Marjorie Howes, Andrew A. Kuhn, Paul Larmour, Diana Larsen, Tomás Ó Carragáin, Fintan O'Toole, Kayla Rose, Kelly Sullivan, and Virginia Teehan.

The greatest debt of gratitude is owed to Vera Kreilkamp, whose scholarly vision and editorial expertise inform all aspects of the exhibition and publication. Her creativity, broad knowledge of Irish literature, history, and culture, and generosity have made this a rewarding and collegial enterprise. No less committed is the exhibition's gifted co-curator, the McMullen's Assistant Director Diana Larsen, who visited Irish collections with Kreilkamp and Teehan to select objects for the exhibition and who designed the installation to tell the story of the development of how the Arts and Crafts movement was made Irish. Virginia Teehan also helped with research,

securing loans, transport, and funding in Ireland.

Completion of this complex project would not have been possible without the aid and support of colleagues at the McMullen Museum, across Boston College, and beyond. In designing this volume, the exhibition's graphics, and its website, Assistant Director John McCoy has captured the aesthetic style of Arts and Crafts publications by the Cuala Press. Manager of Publications & Exhibitions Kate Shugert organized loans, copyedited all the texts with great care, and expertly stewarded this publication and the exhibition to completion. Interns Haley Carey, Caroline Colavita, Gabriela Goizueta, Maria Picariello, and Haley Wallace assisted with documentation and served as proofreaders. Shelley Barber, Barbara Hebard, Christian Dupont, Andrew A. Kuhn, Justine Sundaram, Elizabeth Sweeney, Thomas Wall, and Kathleen Williams helped with loans from Boston College University Libraries. Rose Breen and Anastos Chiavaras from Boston College's Office of Risk Management provided valuable guidance regarding insurance. Oliver Rafferty, Director of the Irish Studies Program at Boston College and Michael Cronin, Academic Director of Boston College Ireland supplied valuable support for our efforts. Kaitlin Astrella, Matthew Delvaux, John McElearney, Sean McGowan, Ben Price, Ryan Reede, Patrick Synan, Kathleen Van De Wille, and the students in Joseph Nugent's Digital Humanities course, Brooks Bebon, Katherine Clark, Maria Cordova, Alex Corona, Erik Cwik, Tessa Flaga, Megan Greeley, Meghan Hickey, Ellen Hill, Robin Jensen, Robert Johnson, Sullivan McCormack, Laura McLoughlin, Ryan Nunes, Kathy O'Neill, Eric Rauckhorst, Lexie Sullivan, and Gabrielle Rowand contributed valuable research, images, and design to the digital guide accompanying the exhibition. Paul Larmour and Christopher Soldt took superb photographs of many objects in the catalogue.

And we are grateful to Boston College's Office of University Advancement—especially David Cave, Catherine Concannon, Mary Lou Crane, Beth McDermott,

and Ginger Saariaho—for aiding our funding efforts.

We extend our appreciation to many individuals from Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, and the United States, who loaned objects generously from their collections, many that have never before been exhibited. We thank the following friends and colleagues for their assistance with loans, photography, and research: Fíach Mac Conghail, Mairéad Delaney, and Oonagh Desire (Abbey Theatre); Cathal Geraghty (St. Brendan's Cathedral); Sven Habermann and Roisin Miles (Conservation Letterfrack); Stella Cherry and Dan Breen (Cork Public Museum); John Bryan, Tom Gleason, and Dru Muskovin (Crab Tree Farm); Peter Murray, Anne Boddart, Jean O'Donovan, and Dawn Williams (Crawford Art Gallery); Fiana Griffin; Michael B. Murphy, Marius O'Riordan, and members of the Board of the Honan Trust (The Honan Trust, University College Cork); Declan McGonagle and Donna Romano (National College of Art and Design); Anne Hodge and Pauline Swords (National Gallery of Ireland); Sandra Collins, Mary Broderick, Matthew Cains, Catherine Fahy, Honora Faul, Sandra McDermott, Louise O'Connor, and Colette O'Flaherty (National Library of Ireland); Ragnall Ó Floinn, Valerie Dowling, Chris Harbidge, Rolly Read, Alex Ward, and Karen Wilson (National Museum of Ireland); Jude Helliker, Michelle Ashmore, Anna Liesching, Kim Mawhinney, Anne Orr, Elise Taylor, and Valerie Wilson (National Museums Northern Ireland); Éimear O'Connor; James O'Sullivan; Virginia Raguin; James Galbraith, Emily Smith, and Audrey Whitty (Rakow Research Library, Corning Museum of Glass); Paul Darragh and Harriet Wheelock (Royal College of Physicians of Ireland Heritage Center); Mary E. Daly, Laura Mahoney, and Siobhán Fitzpatrick (Royal Irish Academy); Ruth Sheehy (Trinity College Dublin); Silvia Barisione and Amy Silverman (The Wolfsonian-Florida International University); Caroline Fennell, Nancy Hawkes, Michael Holland, Patrick O'Donovan, Virginia Teehan, and Denis Twomey (University College Cork).

We could not have undertaken such a complex project of international scope were it not for the continued generosity of the administration of Boston College and the McMullen family. We especially thank Jacqueline McMullen, President William P. Leahy, SJ; Provost David Quigley; Chancellor J. Donald Monan, SJ; Vice-Provost Patricia DeLeeuw; Dean, Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences Gregory Kalscheur, SJ; and Institute of Liberal Arts Director Mary Crane. For major support of the exhibition we are indebted to the Patrons of the McMullen Museum, chaired by C. Michael Daley, and to an anonymous donor in honor of Colman Welby. Transport was provided by Aer Lingus. Additional support has been provided by Ireland's Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, John Sisk and Son, and the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, University College Cork. Publication of this volume is underwritten in part by the fund named in memory of our late, and much beloved, docent Peggy Simons, a great lover of scholarship and all things Irish.

Nancy Netzer  
Director and Professor of Art History





# INTRODUCTION

Vera Kreilkamp

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Between the early 1890s and the waning of Arts and Crafts activity by the late 1920s, Ireland experienced unprecedented creative, intellectual, religious, and political ferment; these transformative years brought partition of the island, establishing a semi-independent South and a Northern Ireland that remained a part of the United Kingdom. They also witnessed the Irish Literary Revival, an internationally acclaimed movement of Revivalist modernism presided over by William Butler Yeats. *The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish* examines an under-explored concurrent achievement in the visual arts. Even as future-directed proposals about forms of governance, language, national dress, sports, theater, and dairy farming filled civic debates across the island, Arts and Crafts practitioners, like their literary counterparts, turned to a distant pre-conquest past in their search for themes and images expressing their country's claims for the future. This look backward played a significant role in shaping literature, music, popular culture, and the visual arts during Ireland's seemingly unstoppable passage to modernity.

The Irish Arts and Crafts movement flourished not only beside a Literary Revival and a national theater, but also with other cultural—and eventually more politically radical—initiatives. These included the Gaelic League that organized thousands around the revitalization of a disappearing language, the Gaelic Athletic Association dedicated to reviving native sports, and a general self-help movement that arose with the loss of faith in

parliamentary politics after the 1893 defeat of the second Home Rule Bill.<sup>1</sup> These were heady years in which social and political issues became absorbed into cultural forms, including the decorative and applied arts.

## ARTS AND CRAFTS

Widely described as a set of ideologies rather than a single aesthetic style, the foundational English Arts and Crafts movement championed John Ruskin's ideal: the medieval craftsman-artist as an alternative to capitalism's alienated factory laborer churning out cheap mass-produced products that threatened the very survival of the hand-made. William Morris's role as visionary cheerleader, chief propagandist, theoretician, craftsman, artist, and shopkeeper in his successful London business enterprises brought a new respect to applied arts and design. Ruskin and Morris's ideals, if never fully realized in England's capitalist industrial economy,<sup>2</sup> resonated with educated supporters across the Irish Sea: the joy of ennobling labor; the value of the individual worker's handmade object crafted of local materials; the need to break down hierarchical distinctions between artists, designers, and craftworkers, as well as between the fine and applied arts; vigorous support of design instruction to improve the beauty and usefulness of objects surrounding everyday life at home and in public spaces.

Less than a decade after the 1887 organization of England's Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, the founders of the Irish Arts and Crafts Society in 1894

echoed both the new defining term “Arts and Crafts” in the London-based organization’s title and London’s goals. Mechanized factory work was far rarer in post-Famine agricultural Ireland than in England, the world’s most industrialized country; nevertheless, the Irish Arts and Crafts Society’s chairman, Lord Mayo, explicitly committed the new organization to freeing craftworkers from brutalizing labor that turned them into “hired machines” in an “art destroying system.”<sup>3</sup> The combination of philanthropic concern for the maker’s well-being, an enhanced esteem for the threatened handcrafted object, and an aesthetic and practical focus on well-designed furniture, rugs, wall hangings, and lace (affordable only to the prosperous) characterizes the movement’s sometimes irreconcilable, even contradictory, goals.

An English-inflected romantic idealization of the medieval craftsman artist touched Ireland perhaps in its celebration of its early Christian monastic culture. Present-day crafts were, rather, in need of design improvement. The Irish Arts and Crafts Society’s strong emphasis on design quality led to meetings, publications, lectures, visits to workshops, educational initiatives, and most importantly, a series of sponsored exhibitions. By the seventh and last exhibition in 1925, these showcases had resulted in increasingly professional entries as trained artists and designers began to replace amateurs. Already at the fourth Irish Arts and Crafts Society’s exhibition in 1910, at which Wilhelmina Geddes and Harry Clarke displayed work they had produced at Dublin’s Metropolitan School of Art, the quality of the Irish movement—especially its stained glass—garnered increased attention.<sup>4</sup> Paul Larmour notes, however, that an industry-based model for arts education had been long explicit in the North. For George Trobridge, the headmaster of Belfast’s School of Art through the 1880s and 1890s, “the most important question in regard to any School of Art is whether its operations are of benefit to local industries.”<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding such practical and economic imperatives, Belfast also produced artists like Geddes, Eva

McKee, and John Campbell (pls. 103–9)—as well as the designers needed for its linen industry.

This exhibition traces the growing professionalism of Ireland’s arts education in the early twentieth century as expert teachers from England—Alfred Ernest Child in stained glass and Oswald Reeves in metalwork and enamel—joined the faculty of Dublin’s Metropolitan School of Art. Improved instruction transformed a movement that began, as Janice Helland points out, with the promotion of craft in mostly rural guilds organized by middle-class or aristocratic philanthropists.<sup>6</sup> Arts and Crafts increasingly became, rather, a movement of individualized or “named” artist/designers. An initial controversial aim of the founders of the Arts and Crafts Society was, in fact, to bring recognition to the work of individual designers and artisans.<sup>7</sup>

But the goal of seamlessly uniting the role of artist and craftsman, even in quintessentially Arts and Crafts organizations, remained as often an ideal as a reality. As Nicola Gordon Bowe observes, Sarah Purser, who established the Irish stained glass studio *An Túr Gloine* (The Tower of Glass) in 1903, advocated that each window be “the work of one individual artist,” who would make the cartoon and select and paint the glass by herself.<sup>8</sup> However, the workers who embroidered textiles for the Honan Chapel or built its wooden pews—or the women who helped Elizabeth Yeats produce books for the Cuala Industries—also retained essential roles in the movement, even if design responsibilities remained in the hands of others. And as Fintan O’Toole makes clear, lace workers incarcerated in Magdalene laundries remained unremunerated and unnamed, never artists or designers.<sup>9</sup>

### CURATORIAL AIMS

As its centerpiece, *The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish* introduces early medieval-influenced metalwork, embroidered hangings and vestments, altar cards, and leatherwork from University College Cork’s Honan Chapel. The collection of this ideological masterpiece of

Arts and Crafts achievement, consecrated in 1916, has never before traveled beyond Cork. By displaying the Honan collection in a year of commemorations across Ireland of the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme, the exhibition celebrates the cultural, not the military, work of 1916.

For this comprehensive exploration of Arts and Crafts in Ireland, curators gathered objects emphasizing how the contexts of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Irish Revivalist nationalisms, both in the North and the South, brought significant change to Morris's foundational movement in London. The exhibition offers evidence of continuities with familiar Morris-influenced floral designs evident in a few works (pls. 64, 114), but its focus is elsewhere: on the adaptation of an existing British movement to the specific needs of a country emerging from more than seven centuries of foreign domination. The objects on display generally call attention to the second phrase of the exhibition's title: *Making It Irish*.

What justifies this new project in America? The catalogue *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Europe and America: Design for the Modern World* (2004) for a major exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) includes little more than a single-page analysis of an Irish movement. This analysis appears within a chapter describing the founding of Arts and Crafts in the United Kingdom<sup>10</sup>—somewhat as, until the mid-twentieth century rise of Irish studies, writers like W. B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, James Joyce, J. M. Synge, and Samuel Beckett were absorbed into the study of British literature. But Wendy Kaplan wisely, if briefly in that catalogue, compares Ireland's Arts and Crafts practice not with the United Kingdom's, but with that of other countries seeking political autonomy: Norway from Sweden, Finland from Russia, Hungary from the Austro-Hungarian empire (with Hungary covered in a lengthy individual chapter that provides ample material for further comparative exploration with Ireland).<sup>11</sup> Such wider contexts for the study of Irish Arts and Crafts are promising.

The absence in LACMA's 2004 overview of any work by Harry Clarke, whom Nicola Gordon Bowe and Kelly Sullivan present as a major Arts and Crafts and symbolist artist working in both stained glass and illustration, or of any mention of the Honan Chapel, suggests that Ireland's contribution to the movement warrants further attention.<sup>12</sup> We offer *The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish* as a scholarly addition to previous work in the area, but also in the interests of an Irish studies perspective, as a corrective to the assumption that Ireland's Arts and Crafts practice is best conflated within analyses of the movement in Britain. Given the foundational and ongoing scholarly contributions to the field by Bowe and Larmour, attention to an Irish Arts and Crafts movement in the Honan Chapel's centennial year of 2016 seems especially appropriate.<sup>13</sup>

And why exhibit these works at Boston College? The University's Bapst Library contains three stained glass windows by Richard King (pls. 168–69), Harry Clarke's talented student and colleague, who oversaw his mentor's studio for five years after Clarke's premature death in 1931. As Diana Larsen notes, the commissioning of three King windows for a North American library's study space in 1952 suggested the continuing influence of Arts and Crafts practice decades after the waning of the movement in Ireland.<sup>14</sup> The three King windows constitute a New England epilogue for the exhibition and suggest the appropriateness of Boston College, with its deep Irish roots and a history of eight previous exhibitions of Irish visual culture,<sup>15</sup> as the setting for *The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish*.

### ARTS AND CRAFTS REVIVALISM: LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

Nineteenth-century antiquarians, many influenced by the example of the polymath collector, musicologist, artist, and scholar George Petrie (1790–1866), studied recently excavated early medieval finds—most famously the Tara Brooch discovered in 1850. Petrie advocated for

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1. George Petrie, *The Last Circuit of the Pilgrims at Clonmacnoise, County Offaly*, c. 1842. Graphite and watercolor on paper, 67.2 x 98 cm, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, NGL.2230.

their display, along with other precious artifacts, within a developing national museum system. As a collector and preserver of antiquities and manuscripts and a leading figure within the Royal Irish Academy (RIA), he encouraged the 1839 acquisition, for example, of the Cross of Cong,<sup>16</sup> which appears in this exhibition in the form of a Henry O'Neill watercolor and a 1916 Honan Chapel replica (pls. 2, 30). The RIA's major collection of Irish antiquities joined the holdings of the newly constructed Dublin Museum of Science and Art at Kildare Street in 1891; frequent viewings of these treasures undoubtedly served the designers of objects in this exhibition.

Petrie's famously controversial 1833 essay "On the Origins and Uses of the Round Towers of Ireland," later published in his volume *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland* (1845; pl. 23), established the safely Christian origins of the small tower-like belfry included in the architectural plan of the Honan Chapel—a round tower that Tomás Ó Carragáin observes was an "icon of Irish cultural nationalism."<sup>17</sup> Although Petrie antedated the construction of round towers by centuries, he conclusively undermined romantic readings of their pagan origin, instead arguing that they were built as belfries, treasure houses, and, in an explanation now largely discounted,

as lookouts for Irish monks fearing Viking predators. He also contributed drawings of what he feared were fast-disappearing historical and picturesque sites on Ireland's early tourist trails—such as Finbarr's island monastery Gougane Barra, County Cork or Glendalough, County Wicklow (pls. 21–22)—and, most famously, his romantic watercolors of Irish monastic ruins such as *The Last Circuit of the Pilgrims at Clonmacnoise, County Offaly* (c. 1842; fig. 1). As Tom Dunne suggests, such evocative imagery of Ireland's past could transform the antiquaries' landscape of medieval ruins into a reminder of national loss. Dunne implies that the potential for what Joep Leerssen terms the "cultivation of remembrance" by the Anglo-Irish (or in Petrie's case the Scots-Irish) cannot be fully separated from evolving nationalism.<sup>18</sup> Again, nineteenth-century evocations of Ireland's early saints and their crumbling monastic settlements can arguably already be political, and forward-looking in implication.

With Ireland's small industrial base concentrated around Belfast, an overwhelmingly agricultural country necessarily brought new directions to the foundational British Arts and Crafts movement. Existing on the western European periphery of an imperial center, Ireland was already deeply enmeshed in systems of colonial modernity by the 1890s. After centuries of economic, political, and social mismanagement, it suffered notorious rural and urban poverty. But as a testing ground for British innovation in key strategic areas, Ireland could boast of an advanced postal and telegraph service, an organized police force, a national education system, and impressive railroad connectivity. Through claims upon an Irish early Christian "Golden Age," Revivalists advanced new directions in literary and visual art. Only with the waves of social conservatism that overwhelmed both the North and the South after partition and independence in 1921 do we see a waning of Arts and Crafts innovation.

Many Arts and Crafts leaders and practitioners, such as those who built and furnished the Honan Chapel in Cork, turned for inspiration to Ireland's pre-conquest

period of monastic achievement. The impeccably high cultural credentials of this distant past asserted sources for national identity that implicitly contested long held British assumptions of a recalcitrant, if not irrationally uncivilized, Ireland. These seemingly backward-looking design choices might, indeed, be regarded as wholly forward looking—as one among many decisive steps in the nineteenth-century Revivalist cultural arena asserting much of the island’s rejection of colonial control.

The forms of a broader Celtic Revivalism have deep roots in the antiquarian revival that began in the late eighteenth century and continued into the nineteenth. Joep Leerssen argues that in the years before the 1800 Act of Union with Britain, Ireland’s Anglo-Irish participated in what Eric Hobsbaum terms the “invention of tradition”:

Originally English on ethnic grounds, cultural outlook and political allegiance, [the Anglo-Irish elite] redefined its self-image and sought to place itself under Gaelic auspices.... This vogue for Gaelic antiquity as constituting one’s own national antecedents was part of the pre-romantic Celtic revival of the later eighteenth century... [that] leads into a widespread adoption and application of “Gaelic” design and iconography.<sup>19</sup>

Such a long-standing search for Irish cultural antecedents, even among those assertively identifying with a British rather than Gaelic ethnic background, helps account for later claims on Revivalist motifs by communities across the island: Protestant and Catholic, unionist and republican, northern and southern. Marguerite Helmers and Kayla Rose examine common Arts and Crafts design elements appearing on key public objects in a period of early twentieth-century rebellion and partition.<sup>20</sup> Separatist demands of Northern Ireland did not preclude the use of Irish Revivalist decorative motifs on the elaborately illuminated album presented at the

1924 retirement of Edward Carson (pl. 133), the leading unionist politician opposing Home Rule and a key founder of the Ulster Volunteers. Similarly sourced motifs appear, quite without contradiction, on Art O’Murnaghan’s *Éire* page from the *Leabhar na hAiséirghe (Book of Resurrection)*, a work of illumination commemorating, rather, fallen republican martyrs and heroes (pl. 135). Paul Larmour also provides abundant evidence of shared claims on such Revivalist subject matter and motifs by artists from a range of backgrounds.<sup>21</sup>

Both artists and writers of the period turned to Celtic sources from early Irish literature, preserved and recorded by a monastic culture and made available by antiquaries. Wilhelmina Geddes’s *The Fate of the Children of Lir* (1930), an eight-paneled window based on an Irish mythological cycle tale, was commissioned for the façade of the Ulster Museum and Art School (pl. 163) and following decades of storage may be reinstalled after this exhibition. Eleanor Hull’s *The Cuchullin Saga in Irish Literature* and Augusta Gregory’s adaptations of the Ulster and Finn cycles became major sources for W. B. Yeats’s poetry and drama.<sup>22</sup> Although these legendary stories were to provide a conveniently heroic model for physical force republicanism in the warrior figure Cu Chulainn, a major Arts and Crafts organization looked to quite another order of activity described in these narratives: not to the military feats of Cu Chulainn, but to the talents of his wife Emer, renowned for teaching her needlework and fine embroidery skills to young women. Emer’s name was adopted by the Dun Emer (“Fortress of Emer”) women’s textile and printing collective formed by Evelyn Gleeson and Susan and Elizabeth Yeats in 1902.<sup>23</sup>

## REPRODUCTION AND REPLICATION

The use of Ireland’s early Christian art as source for serious artists/designers was encouraged by nineteenth-century finds such as the Tara Brooch and the Ardagh Chalice, the latter brilliantly cleaned and repaired by the silversmith Edmund Johnson, who crafted some

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2–3. Mary Fitzpatrick (illuminator), “The Prime Minister’s Meeting in the Theatre Royal Dublin,” 1912. Card, 16 x 12 cm, National Library of Ireland, Dublin, EPH A143.

of the Honan Chapel’s metalwork on display in this exhibition (pls. 30–32, 34–38). Nancy Netzer points out how increasingly advanced forms of reproduction made

Ireland’s greatest illuminated manuscript, the Book of Kells, accessible first through detailed drawings and finally through color photography.<sup>24</sup>

But such motifs were loosely applied even before extensive photographic reproduction supported the Honan textile designers in their exacting artistic interactions with the Book of Kells. The National Library of Ireland’s ephemera collection includes a souvenir invitation card to a July 19, 1912 Home Rule meeting. The card’s cover depicts the former Irish parliament building, converted to the Bank of Ireland after the 1800 Act of Union, with decorative lettering inspired by Irish illuminated manuscripts (fig. 2). The interior features a map of Ireland’s four provinces, highlighting each in color, with printed engravings in ovals of William Gladstone, British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, Charles Stewart Parnell, and Irish parliamentary leader John Redmond (fig. 3). These key figures in the protracted Home Rule campaign are accompanied by Kells-inspired zoomorphic spirals. Such widely disseminated Revivalist motifs juxtaposed with an image of the country’s lost parliament building instantly articulate the 1912 card’s political agenda two months before the Government of Ireland Act finally approved Home Rule—later postponed by the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

As Arts and Crafts artists and craftworkers reimagined contemporary Ireland by adopting motifs from Golden Age metalwork, illumination, and early Christian crosses, they could draw upon earlier volumes of antiquarian reproduction, including Henry O’Neill’s romantically conceived but generally faithful *Illustrations of the Most Interesting of the Sculptured Crosses of Ancient Ireland* (1857; pl. 4) or his detailed drawings of the Tara Brooch in *The Fine Arts and Civilization of Ancient Ireland* (1863; pl. 5). A related, if more commercial, enterprise involved the making of replicas, some of which have been gathered for this exhibition to illustrate their many roles in the Arts and Crafts period (pls. 6–9, 13, 15–16, 30): disseminating evidence of a civilized medieval past, modeling

medieval techniques for modern craftworkers, providing economic opportunity for jewelers, and even signaling class or political ties.

The enterprising Dublin jeweler George Waterhouse's purchase, naming, replication, and commercial exploitation of a CE 700 piece of jewelry discovered on a Drogheda beach in 1850 shaped the meaning of the so-called "Tara" Brooch (pls. 6–7), which rapidly became an iconic treasure of early Irish metalwork. Waterhouse successfully offered the piece to Petrie for scholarly study and under considerable moral pressure finally sold it to the RIA. His shrewd marketing strategy of associating the brooch with the ancient Kings of Ireland on Tara Hill established the artifact's aristocratic associations, certainly after Queen Victoria acquired his reproductions at the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition. Her purchase signaled both the commercial value of replica making and the brooch's role as a status indicator among the middle class and elite—especially those Anglo-Irish seeking to accrue the glamour of their country's medieval past as their political and economic position declined.<sup>25</sup> As nationalists appropriated the Tara Brooch, it became an emblem for revolutionary groups such as the *Cumann na mBan*, the republican women's paramilitary organization formed in 1914.

Not all imagery from the past carried equal weight among critics. This exhibition includes the 1882 bog oak casket designed to hold an illuminated address conferring freedom of the City of Dublin upon Parnell. The casket demonstrates how stock motifs—the figure of Erin, shamrocks, wolfhounds, harps, ancient bards, and round towers—dominated nationalist iconography on the very eve of the Arts and Crafts movement (pl. 131).<sup>26</sup> But despite the historical roots of such motifs,<sup>27</sup> some design reformers began to criticize them as hackneyed, even vulgar. In his report on the Irish products exhibited at the 1883 Cork Industrial Exhibition, Dr. William Sullivan, President of Queen's College, Cork objected to Ireland's arts education, not just for failing to offer an adequate

technical mastery of design technique and for being out of touch with industrial needs, but for encouraging the dependence on "supposed national emblems—the harp, the round tower and the wolf-dog."<sup>28</sup> Although he countenanced the shamrock, Sullivan regarded other common motifs as artistically incongruous and vulgarly applied by inadequately trained craftworkers. Like Ruskin before him, he looked to medieval triumphs: in his case, to Ireland's pre-conquest metalwork produced by monastic craftsmen artists.

Thomas Moore's early nineteenth-century lyrics for "The Harp That Once through Tara's Hall," like Mervyn Lawrence's c. 1904 bust of *Erina* (pl. 111), continued to shape melancholy evocations of a country's history

## INTRODUCTION



4. Coster, Johnston & Co. (printers), "Edward Duggan, Family Grocer Wine & Spirit Stores," c. 1880s. Grocery bag, 24.9 x 15.3 cm, National Library of Ireland, Dublin, EPH C790.

Vera Kreilkamp



5. S. Maxwell, “Nodlaig mhaith chugat thar saile: ó Chonnradh na Gaedhilge nÉirinn Nodlaig 1911” (Happy Christmas to you across the sea: From the Gaelic League in Ireland Christmas 1911). Card, 17 x 12 cm, National Library of Ireland, Dublin, EPH A387.

of losses—and sometimes signal motives for resistance. But other and more stealthily triumphal visual sources for national identity influenced the design of major Arts and Crafts artifacts. Conventional cultural nationalist imagery never disappeared (the harp appears on Ireland’s one Euro coin today) and such popular motifs proliferated exuberantly throughout the nineteenth century on architectural decoration and advertising; see for example, an 1880s grocery bag for tea leaves featuring an advertisement for Home Rule leaders Isaac Butt and Patrick James Smyth surrounded by shamrocks, harps, and a round tower (fig. 4) or a Gaelic League’s Christmas card sold to Irish living abroad in America, decorated with shamrocks, Revivalist interlace, and a bald eagle (fig. 5). But when Harry Clarke appropriated such motifs, they were carefully supplemented, as on his title page for *Ireland’s Memorial Records*, which enumerated the Irish World War I dead. There, layers of Kells-like zoomorphic

interlace surround more conventional imagery of Erin with harp and wolfhound, a round tower, and an early Christian Irish cross (pl. 136). With more accessibility, an increasingly sophisticated embrace of the country’s medieval motifs accompanied, and hastened, what Alan Crawford describes as the “tentative” and even “anxious” modernism of the foundational British Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>29</sup>

## MODERNITY AND MODERNISM

Ireland’s particular expression of early twentieth-century modernism—characterizing the work of the Literary Revivalists like William Butler Yeats and J. M. Synge<sup>30</sup> and the stained glass of Harry Clarke and Wilhelmina Geddes in this exhibition—appears, seemingly counter-intuitively, in the most medievalist seeming of Arts and Crafts artifacts. The interior of the Honan Chapel, whose collection anchors the exhibition, is austere uncluttered and even contemporary in its 1916 expression of medievalism. But how might an early twentieth-century chapel in Cork, self-consciously designed to echo medieval “Hiberno-Romanesque” architecture, be viewed as part of Ireland’s move toward modernity—as, in fact, one of many incubators of Ireland’s progress toward political modernity? How can the scrutiny of the past move a culture into the future?

John O’Connell, the Honan family lawyer who oversaw each detail of the Chapel, wrote repeatedly and deliberately of a simplicity that contributed to the experience of a “harmonious whole.”<sup>31</sup> In his stern, even ruthless, emphasis on the absence of unnecessary or ill chosen ornament,<sup>32</sup> O’Connell seemingly evokes the twentieth century’s reaction to Victorian clutter—as well as the aesthetic of a Hiberno-Romanesque building modeled on the austerity of still older churches in the age of Ireland’s early Christian founding saints. Examining the medieval sources of what he describes as that “ideologically charged little building,”<sup>33</sup> Tomás Ó Carragáin argues that a society’s choices of architectural styles is essentially

“a reconfiguration of the past to suit the needs of the present.” He quotes Susan Alcock’s observation that in constructing social memory a group selects what provides “a coherent image of their past and a design for their future.”<sup>34</sup> Ó Carragáin’s analysis of the Honan reveals how O’Connell’s conservative architectural choices served early twentieth-century nationalist needs. The past was reimagined to fulfill the need of the present—and the future.

Dun Emer’s design choices in depicting medieval Irish saints for the sodality banners made for St. Brendan’s Cathedral in Loughrea, County Galway, many by Jack Yeats, offer another convergence of a modernist aesthetic with tradition (pls. 121–22). When the various confraternities of the cathedral carried the banners in processions, these stylistically experimental textiles provoked immediate attention. The *Irish Monthly* proclaimed,

There is nothing of the conventional style about them...these saintly little mediaeval figures carry with them the real atmosphere and feeling of Ancient Ireland, the island of Saints, and the ordinary style of church banner soon becomes common-place and uninteresting by comparison.<sup>35</sup>

The simplified compositions of the banners, suggesting medieval folk art, struck viewers as deeply traditional, but also as new and forward-looking. Reviving traditions in a long colonized country supported, rather than conservatively retarded, Ireland’s contributions to early twentieth-century modernism. Or as Marjorie Howes so aptly puts it, for the intellectual leaders of the period, “tradition was revolutionary; modernity and tradition were natural allies.”<sup>36</sup>

The exhibition’s stained glass panels by Harry Clarke and Wilhelmina Geddes reimagine early medieval Irish church history (pl. 159), a bloody seventeenth-century French tale (pl. 160), and a tragic Celtic legend (pl. 163); they signal Ireland’s startlingly modern mastery of a

medieval medium that Nicola Gordon Bowe terms the “jewel in the crown” of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>37</sup> Such achievement is dramatically represented by the windows of early Christian Irish saints that Harry Clarke provided for the Honan Chapel (pls. 49–50), but the artist’s knowledge of medieval iconography appeared already in *The Baptism of St. Patrick* (1912; pl. 159), which brought the young Irish art student international attention. In the Honan windows, as both Bowe and Sullivan note in this catalogue, Clarke’s synthesis of Irish early Christian and contemporary influences marks the originality of work that is, again, at once medieval and modern. Working in a medium traditionally associated with craft, the artist draws not only on Ruskin’s vision of grotesquely Gothic form, but on the sexualized decadence and symbolism he absorbed from Aubrey Beardsley, Egon Schiele, and Gustav Klimt. Sullivan traces a modernist subjectivity—characterized by dark humor, self-loathing, and eroticism—appearing throughout Clarke’s drawings, illustrations, and windows.<sup>38</sup>

The waning of Arts and Crafts practice is often prematurely identified with the arrival of World War I in England—or in Ireland, more persuasively, with a conservative Free State’s hostility to cultural innovation.<sup>39</sup> One might argue, however, that with Clarke’s achievement the forward-looking reach of an Irish Arts and Crafts movement had already attained a major modernist synthesis with tradition. The high literary modernism achieved by James Joyce and Samuel Beckett came only with self-exile. Clarke brought a yoking of past and future, the expression of a characteristic Irish Revivalist modernism, while working at his North Frederick Street studio in Dublin.

## WOMEN IN IRISH ARTS AND CRAFTS

The early twentieth century witnessed social advances for middle-class women across Europe; despite Ireland’s reactionary policies relegating women to domesticity after independence, the Arts and Crafts period brought

a temporary reversal of longstanding assumptions about gender roles. The movement's early work in home industries, primarily embroidery and lacemaking, encouraged female involvement through safely gender-appropriate domestic crafts well into the twentieth century. However as Andrew A. Kuhn points out, Elizabeth Yeats established an Arts and Craft's printing press in a male industry.<sup>40</sup> Other Irish women's contributions—such as Mia Cranwill's in metalwork and the acclaimed stained glass produced by the many female artists associated with Sarah Purser's collective *An Túr Gloine* (pls. 138, 162–63)—opened up new opportunities.

Irish women took on leadership positions both in the Arts and Crafts movement and in its revolutionary political and social contexts; a few actively participated in the 1916 Rising and the subsequent War of Independence and Civil War—but also in the creation and dissemination of both art and crafts. This exhibition includes a wooden tray designed and carved by Constance Markievicz, Minister for Labour for the Irish Republic from 1919 to 1922, and the first female cabinet minister in Irish history (pl. 140). Markievicz abandoned her Anglo-Irish big house heritage, trained as a landscape painter, joined the republican party Sinn Féin, and fought with James Connolly's Citizen's Army on St. Stephen's Green in the Rising. Markievicz's tray was carved for St. Ultan's Hospital, co-founded in 1919 by Kathleen Florence Lynn, Sinn Féin politician, activist and medical doctor, who had also served with the Citizen's Army in 1916.

Other women participating in the Arts and Crafts movement chose roles within equally complex webs of aesthetic and political involvement. Mia Cranwill, who had stored weapons for War of Independence insurgents in her Dublin studio, created the Revivalist-themed *Senate casket* (pl. 138); it sat on the Senate chairman's desk during each session and held the names of Free State senators inscribed on vellum (pl. 139) in the shrine-like container, whose shape recalls that of a Golden Age house-shaped reliquary. Helmers and Rose note that if

in shape, the casket draws on Ireland's medieval past, its elaborate Revivalist decoration alludes to a still threatening present.<sup>41</sup> In the face of recent attacks on senators' lives and property by anti-Treaty republicans, feminist Senator Alice Stopford Green—herself a gunrunner in the War of Independence—commissioned the casket to assert faith in the Free State's future.

Although politically sympathetic to constitutional nationalism rather than republican politics, Evelyn Gleeson and Susan and Elizabeth Yeats organized Dun Emer, Ireland's first women's arts industries collective, to produce “Irish” textiles and books through the work of “Irish” workers using only local materials.<sup>42</sup> Kuhn explores how Dun Emer and Cuala Presses' printing initiatives supported contemporary writers of the Literary Revival, a movement that Howes reads as intimately connected—through its principles and personnel—with the concurrent Arts and Crafts movement. Cuala retained traditional methods of print, including Elizabeth Yeats's use of a hand press, locally sourced linen rag paper, and traditional designs for layout—choices that ensured beautiful books for those able to afford such work. Her choices for the press, carefully described by Kuhn, reveal the distinctive, spare layout and Caslon typeface of Cuala volumes. John McCoy's design of this catalogue alludes to these Irish Arts and Crafts choices—austerely modern rather than medievalist.

Still other women contributed to the movement. The Irish-born and trained artist Phoebe Traquair left for Scotland as young woman and has been fully embraced by that country's Arts and Crafts movement: however, the opportunity to display Traquair's jewelry encouraged a curatorial decision to reclaim her as an Irish Arts and Crafts figure as well (pls. 91–95). Purser's *An Túr Gloine* studio produced major female glassmakers such as Wilhelmina Geddes and Ethel Rhind, both represented in the exhibition. Larmour notes other Northern women—Eva McKee (pls. 98–102) and Rosamund Praeger (pl. 110)—active as organizers, designers, and artists.

In addition to such celebrated figures are those female needleworkers for the Cork firm William Egan and Sons, who attained a measure of individuality by embroidering their names on the linings of the Honan Chapel's cloths of gold vestments; as Nancy Netzer points out this act of self assertion identified Ethel Scally, the otherwise unacknowledged designer of these extraordinary textiles (pls. 43, 46). Far less accessible are the often anonymous lacemakers of works on display in this exhibition (pls. 65, 67–77); their labor sustained families and produced luxury products for an international marketplace, but brought them no acknowledgment as individualized craftswomen or artists.

### THE HONAN CHAPEL: 1916 AND COMMEMORATION

Planning for the exhibition began with an opportunity to display works created for the Honan Chapel—the finest, if still under-celebrated example of a harmonious and total Irish Arts and Crafts assemblage, a modern *Gesamtkunstwerk* rather than a collection of disparate objects. Virginia Teehan describes the range and quality of the Honan's Arts and Crafts 1916 achievement.<sup>43</sup> Funded through a bequest from a local merchant family, the Chapel was conceived as a place of worship for the Catholic students of the nondenominational University College Cork; such a religious motivation in British-controlled Ireland was politically charged.

Anglo-Ireland's classically inflected Georgian and Palladian big houses and civic buildings had long been viewed as the country's major contribution to architecture, but now in 1916 the planning and furnishing of the Honan Chapel suggested new private sources of support for artistic innovation. The Irish church hierarchy, however, remained conservative in its building programs and the Honan achievement remains unique. Except for the slightly earlier enlightened stewardship of Fr. Jeremiah O'Donovan over the Arts and Crafts furnishing at St. Brendan's Cathedral in Loughrea—resulting in magnif-

icent stained glass windows by Michael Healy and the modernist/medieval Dun Emer banners on display in the exhibition (pls. 121–24)—comparable large-scale Arts and Crafts innovation failed to materialize in twentieth-century Ireland.

A key date in the narrative of the exhibition can raise misleading expectations about any simple relationship between Ireland's Arts and Crafts movement and its contexts. The Honan Chapel was consecrated in 1916, the year of the Easter Rising. That political flashpoint of Irish republicanism occurred just a few months before the devastating Battle of the Somme, which saw two thousand of the Irishmen fighting with the Thirty-Sixth Ulster Division dead within a few hours. World War I, then, provided not only the "opportunity" for the Rising but a "suitably violent model" for subsequent political activity.<sup>44</sup> The Chapel opened its doors for Catholic worship in a year of deepening crisis for citizens on both sides of Ireland's sectarian, geographic, and political divides. But as Teehan points out, the two figures responsible for planning the Chapel—John O'Connell, the solicitor and executor of the Honan estate, and Bertram Windle, President of University College Cork—were constitutional nationalists supporting Home Rule. Both deplored the physical force violence ushered in by the 1916 Rising and abandoned their positions of influence in Ireland. After his wife's death in 1925, O'Connell left for service with the Catholic priesthood in England, and the British Windle, dejected by Ireland's rising violence and a new radical nationalist coalition, left in 1919 for residence in Canada.<sup>45</sup>

### CONTRADICTIONS AND LEGACIES

Despite its foundation in Ruskin's ideal of the medieval craftsman artist, Irish Arts and Crafts was essentially a top down movement made up of increasingly well-trained individualized artists and designers and more anonymous craftworkers. Leadership generally emerged from a minority middle-class Anglo-Irish stratum—

liberal in its philanthropic motives and aspirations for the “craft-making” people of the countryside. But these indigenous crafts were to be reformed by trained designers; their makers were offered practical opportunities for marketing textiles, including luxurious lace, to Dublin and London consumers. An Anglo-Irish class, although often cited as a dying presence in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland, vigorously asserted its cultural clout within an array of Revivalist movements. Literary Revivalists such as W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, Augusta Gregory, and Douglas Hyde, as well as Arts and Crafts organizers like Sarah Purser, Evelyn Gleeson, Susan and Elizabeth Yeats, and many, if not most, of the artists included in this exhibition emerged from middle-class Protestant backgrounds. Leaders of the movement included elites like Lord Mayo, chairman of the Irish Arts and Crafts Society, and the English wife of Ireland’s Lord Lieutenant, Lady Ishbel Aberdeen—as well as educated and civic-minded Catholic professionals like John O’Connell. Edward Martyn, a leading cultural force behind the revival of Irish stained glass, emerged from a small surviving Catholic big house society. Generally most Arts and Crafts organizers, like O’Connell and Windle, supported some version of Home Rule rather than allying themselves with a rising tide of revolutionary republicanism that brought independence for the Irish Free State and a new identity for the North.

More radical thinking, however, would have been common among the anonymous craftworkers whose labor produced many Arts and Crafts artifacts, and whose identities are slowly emerging in recent retrieval scholarship. The memoir of Sarah Hyland, a working-class girl who joined Dun Emer at fourteen to embroider under the tutelage of Susan Yeats, reveals her devotion to her employers for their benevolent nurturing of her cultural aspirations, including free tickets to the Abbey Theatre and exposure to the highest echelons of Revivalist creative and intellectual circles. But Hyland’s political opinions—her brother was a driver for the revolutionary

leader Michael Collins and from early youth she was deeply anti-British—were kept from her employers.<sup>46</sup> Working with Elizabeth Yeats’s printing division of Cuala Industries, Máire Gill, who became the press’s chief compositor by 1930, initially joined Maud Gonno’s *Inghinidhe na hÉireann* (Daughters of Ireland) a radical nationalist women’s organization; Gill soon moved on to become an organizer of meetings for *Cumann na mBan*, and was arrested and held in Kilmainham Gaol for months in 1923 for possessing incriminating literature.<sup>47</sup> The name N. Barry, appearing on the Honan’s cloth of gold chasuble lining (Netzer, fig. 1), preserves the memory of an otherwise anonymous worker embroidering the textiles at William Egan and Sons; but by 1921 Nan Barry had also joined the Cork branch of *Cumann na mBan*.<sup>48</sup>

This exhibition argues that a historicist Irish Arts and Crafts movement’s forward-looking negotiations with Revivalist sources of Ireland’s Golden Age past was inseparable from a colonial country’s negotiations for its future. But this look to the past, when appropriated by a subsequent conservative rejection of cultural innovation by the Irish Free State, had far reaching consequences. In 1927, after being approached by government officials, Harry Clarke submitted his proposal for an eight-panel window commissioned for the International Labour Building at the League of Nations in Geneva. The *Geneva Window* commemorates the works of fifteen early twentieth-century Irish authors that Clarke chose with the help of W. B. Yeats: several are Protestants involved with the Abbey Theatre and two panels address literature by James Joyce and Liam O’Flaherty. The latter’s novel *The House of Gold* was the first work the Free State’s new Censorship of Publications Board banned for indecency and obscenity in 1929.<sup>49</sup> After reviewing the *Geneva Window* in 1930, government officials rejected it as an unsuitable representation of the new state. The magnificent glass panel, hanging neither in Geneva nor Ireland, is now owned and displayed by the Wolfsonian-FIU in Miami Beach. (It was, unfortunately, deemed too fragile to be

shipped to this exhibition [pl. 161].)

*Making It Irish* displays still under-examined objects produced by the convergence of Irish Arts and Crafts and Revivalism. But as an incubator of modernism, Arts and Crafts practice was replaced in time across Europe and America by the triumphs of that international movement. Thus the Free State's attempt to calcify Revivalism's look back as part of its conservative Catholic agenda had consequences for its arts community. In her introduction to the RIA's *Art and Architecture of Ireland: Twentieth Century*, Catherine Marshall reads post-independence efforts to establish a visual identity based on the nation's early pre-conquest Golden Age as an impediment to subsequent artistic progress. Measuring twentieth-century achievement in the visual arts by Ireland's reach outward to Europe and America, Marshall criticizes major cultural institutions as having been "under siege for decades to a Gaelic revival movement."<sup>50</sup>

Other contradictions need to be addressed. Arts and Crafts ideology was deeply embedded in ideals of reform: of objects that had become degraded by mechanical production and of labor regarded as joyless. A philanthropic home arts industries initiative in the 1880s and 1890s witnessed the Irish movement's beginnings in an idealistic commitment to social reform: bringing economic relief to households facing scarcity, eviction, and unemployment. Helland and Larmour describe how Alice Hart, a middle-class English philanthropist influenced by Ruskin's anti-industrial ideals, established the Donegal Industrial Fund in 1883; only three years later, Lady Aberdeen founded the Irish Industries Association in 1886—the year of the British parliamentary defeat of Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill. Both groups successfully brought design reform and efficient distribution outlets to hand textile production, creating a market economy for luxury goods that put money directly into the hands of artisans.

But such early Arts and Crafts rural arts initiatives, as Helland acknowledges, invite more than one reading. In

a countryside facing land agitation and rising Home Rule expectations, top-down philanthropic reform brought not just relief to the poor, but, presumably, opportunities for self-improvement and the acquisition of safely middle-class values of "cleanliness and thrift."<sup>51</sup> Because lace had to be kept white, lacemaking taught tidiness and disciplined work habits—thus addressing a stereotypical British anxiety about the conditions of potentially unruly Irish tenants living and working among their animals in squalid mud-floored thatched cabins. Such anxiety played a role in the works included in the McMullen Museum's exhibition *Rural Ireland: The Inside Story* (2012)—evident in Basil Bradley's *Interior of a Cabin, Connemara, Ireland* (fig. 6). For Fenwick's of Bond Street in London, a fashion house exhibiting the finest luxury textiles distributed by Lady Aberdeen's Irish Industrial Association, the political benefits of rural organizing by elites were clear: an 1897 Fenwick advertisement announced that fashions devised from cottage crafts "will be of infinitely more practical benefit to the Irish peasant than HOME RULE."<sup>52</sup>

Fintan O'Toole's contribution to the catalogue offers a dark coda to the Irish Arts and Crafts movement. He argues that its idealization of the handcrafted over the

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6. Basil Bradley (1842–1904), *Interior of a Cabin, Connemara, Ireland*, 1880. Oil on canvas, 36.8 x 57.2 cm, private collection.

Vera Kreilkamp

machine-made as joyful labor became co-opted and exploited by Irish state and religious alliances bent on controlling the purity of potentially unruly women. In this reading, Irish women increasingly became imprisoned through two moral disciplines: not only within the ideal of feminized domestic work symbolized by the creation of “exquisite” handmade lace, but also through literal incarceration in convent-run, lace-producing Magdalene laundries—institutions that justified the “benevolence” of unpaid labor and lifetime servitude through their appropriations of an Arts and Crafts ideal of the handmade.

Despite its legacy of inherent ideological contradictions—the purity of crafts and the joy of labor in a market economy—and the subsequent inward-looking conservatism of the Free State, the Arts and Crafts movement had played a sustaining role in what Declan Kiberd so convincingly describes in his account of the Literary Revival as the reinvention of Ireland.<sup>53</sup> The sweeping power of Revivalism played its part in initiating an international literary modernism.<sup>54</sup> In conjunction with such unprecedented cultural energy in literature, the smaller movement inaugurated by Arts and Crafts organizers, designers, artists, and craftworkers participated in this reinvention of a colonized country and the preservation of a national visual archive. During this centenary year for the Honan Chapel and the Easter Rising, *The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish* celebrates a transformative Revivalist movement of autonomous cultural identity beginning decades before political independence and partition.

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Crafts female workers whose contributions might have been otherwise forgotten, Paul Larmour reminded me of the whole-island dimension of the Arts and Crafts movement. In Ireland, Angela Bourke and Michael Hayes, as well as Claire Connolly and Paul O’Donovan, provided welcome hospitality and intellectual support, and at home Louise Gluck, Marjorie Howes, Robin Lydenberg, Nancy Netzer, Kelly Sullivan, Linda Webb, and especially Kevin O’Neill were careful readers of this introduction. (I am of course responsible for any errors.) Catherine McKenna’s invitation to share this project with students and faculty at the Harvard Celtic Literature and Culture Colloquium focused my mind on what had to be said about a still under-explored movement in Irish culture. At Boston College, I want to thank John McCoy who designed the catalogue, my multi-talented co-curator Diana Larsen, who also designed the exhibition, and the remarkable Kate Shugert, whose persistence in getting things right continues to impress me—as well as the Irish Studies Program that has supported my work on Irish visual art for decades. Working with Joseph Nugent’s innovative class dedicated to preparing a digital guide for the exhibition has been invigorating, and I am grateful for the research that Matthew Delvaux has contributed. A special pleasure of this project has been working with Nancy Netzer, Director of the McMullen Museum, and an endless source of information about the medieval background of Ireland’s Arts and Crafts movement. Finally, as always, I want to again thank Tom Kreilkamp, for his patient support and his thoughtful advice about yet another Irish project.



- 1 See P.J. Mathews, *Revival: The Abbey Theatre, Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League and the Co-operative Movement* (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2003).
- 2 Peter Stansky, like many others, notes that if Morris advocated a return to sounder practices of earlier times for both idealistic and practical reasons, in actuality his shop was similar to others. He had a “genius for design” and a “talent for business.” Peter Stansky, *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s, and the Arts and Crafts* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985), 5.
- 3 “Irish Arts and Crafts,” *New Ireland Review* (Jan. 1895): 673, qtd. in Paul Larmour, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland* (Belfast: Friar’s Bush, 1992), 57.
- 4 Nicola Gordon Bowe, “The Irish Arts and Crafts Movement: Aspects of Nationalism (1886–1925); Suggested Parallels and Context,” *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* (1990–91): 180; Larmour, *Arts and Crafts*, 79.
- 5 Qtd. in Paul Larmour, “The Arts and Crafts Movement in the North of Ireland,” 57.
- 6 Janice Helland, “Philanthropy and Irish Craft, 1883–1900.”
- 7 Achieving “individuality” for artisans was no easy matter. Larmour notes an initial resistance by manufacturers to fulfilling the Irish Arts and Crafts Society’s condition (in its 1894 prospectus) that the names of designers, artists, workmen, and firms employing them should be given at exhibitions. Larmour, *Arts and Crafts*, 59.
- 8 Purser’s speech at the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of *An Túr Gloine*, qtd. in Nicola Gordon Bowe, “The Jewel in the Crown: The Art of Stained Glass in the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement, 1903–30,” 119.
- 9 Fintan O’Toole, “Exquisite Lace and Dirty Linen: The Taming of Girl Power.”
- 10 Alan Crawford, “United Kingdom: Origins and First Flowering,” in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Europe and America: Design for the Modern World*, ed. Wendy Kaplan, exh. cat. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 20–67. Another major exhibition catalogue similarly offers two pages on Irish Arts and Crafts within a discussion of aspects of the British movement: Alan Crawford, “The Importance of the City,” in *International Arts and Crafts*, ed. Karen Livingstone and Linda Parry, exh. cat. (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2005), 62–81.
- 11 Wendy Kaplan, “Design for the Modern World,” in *Arts and Crafts Movement in Europe and America*, 17. Kaplan offers a fuller explanation of Ireland’s Arts and Crafts movement in a comparative European context with that of Norway, Finland, and Russia in “Traditions Transformed: Romantic Nationalism in Design, 1890–1920,” in *Designing Modernity: The Arts of Reform and Persuasion, 1885–1945* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 19–41. Also see Nicola Gordon Bowe, ed., *Art and the National Dream: The Search for Vernacular Expression in Turn-of-the-Century Design* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993).
- 12 Bowe, “Jewel in the Crown,” and Kelly Sullivan, “Harry Clarke’s Saints, Sinners, and Self-Portraits.”
- 13 See, for example, Larmour, *Arts and Crafts*; Nicola Gordon Bowe and Elizabeth Cumming, *The Arts and Crafts Movements in Dublin and Edinburgh, 1885–1925* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998); Nicola Gordon Bowe, *Harry Clarke: The Life and Work*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Dublin: History Press Ireland, 2012); Nicola Gordon Bowe, *Wilhelmina Geddes: Life and Work* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2015):
- 14 Diana Larsen, “Richard King’s Roche Room Windows: A Legacy of the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement at Boston College.”
- 15 *Rural Ireland: The Inside Story* (2012), *Literary Lives: Portraits from the Crawford Art Gallery and Abbey Theatre, Ireland* (2010), *GONE: Site-Specific Works by Dorothy Cross*

- (2005), *Éire/Land* (2003), *Irish Art Now: From the Poetic to the Political* (1999), *Re/Dressing Cathleen: Contemporary Works from Irish Women Artists* (1997), *America's Eye: Paintings from the Collection of Brian P. Burns* (1996), and *Drawings and Watercolors from the National Gallery of Ireland* (1993).
- 16 Peter Murray, ed., *George Petrie (1790–1866): The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past*, exh. cat. (Cork: Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, 2004), 84–86.
  - 17 Tomás Ó Carragáin, “Truly and Sincerely Irish?: The Medieval Sources for the Architecture of the Honan Chapel,” 91–92.
  - 18 Tom Dunne, “Towards a Nationalist Art?: George Petrie's Two Versions of *The Last Circuit of the Pilgrims of Clonmacnoise*,” in Murray, *George Petrie*, 126–36.
  - 19 Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination* (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 1996), 11–12.
  - 20 Marguerite Helmers and Kayla Rose, “The Spirit of Ireland's Past: Illumination, Ornament, and National Identity in Public Art.”
  - 21 Larmour, “Arts and Crafts Movement in the North.”
  - 22 Eleanor Hull, *The Cuchullin Saga in Irish Literature* (London: David Nutt, 1898); Lady Augusta Gregory, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne: The Story of the Men of the Red Branch of Ulster* (London: John Murray, 1902); *Gods and Fighting Men: The Story of the Tuatha de Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland* (London: John Murray, 1904).
  - 23 The major cultural contributions of Dun Emer and the Yeats sisters' breakaway Cuala Industries have been overlooked in Ireland's recent industry of commemoration, but both Arts and Crafts organizations are represented in this exhibition and an auxiliary display at the Burns Library (pls. 127–30). To fully characterize Irish Revivalism in the revolutionary Arts and Crafts decades, the sites of Dun Emer and Cuala Industries might be pointed out to Dublin's commemoration tourists—in addition to Oliver Sheppard's 1911–12 bronze statue of the dying Cu Chulainn. In 1935 President Eamon de Valera appropriated and installed that image of death in the General Post Office, the center of the Easter Rising, to celebrate a young nation's embrace of 1916's militant martyrdom. The Dun Emer and Cuala sites—places of Arts and Crafts cultural energy shaping national identity in the same decades—remain unmarked.
  - 24 Nancy Netzer, “Cloths of Ireland's New ‘Golden Age’: Creating Textiles for the Honan Chapel,” 103–4.
  - 25 For fuller accounts, see Michael Camille, “Domesticating the Dragon: The Rediscovery, Reproduction, and Re-invention of Early Irish Metalwork,” in *Imagining an Irish Past: The Celtic Revival, 1840–1940*, ed. T. J. Edelstein, exh. cat. (Chicago: Smart Museum of Art, 1992), 1–21; and Nancy Netzer, “Art/Full Ground: Unearthing National Identity and an Early Medieval ‘Golden Age,’” in *Éire/Land*, ed. Vera Kreilkamp, exh. cat. (Chestnut Hill: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2003), 49–56.
  - 26 For a discussion of the nineteenth-century popular dissemination of popular Revivalist images on architectural decoration, lampstands, jewelry, woodwork, and more, see Jeanne Sheehy, “Popular and Applied Arts,” in *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival, 1830–1930* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 71–94.
  - 27 For a summary of the post-conquest origins of national emblems of the shamrock, harp, round tower, and wolfhound, see Sheehy, *Rediscovery of Ireland's Past*, 9–13.
  - 28 Qtd. in Larmour, *Arts and Crafts*, 4.
  - 29 Crawford, “United Kingdom,” 66.
  - 30 For an account of the modernism of the Irish Liter-

- ary Revival, see Marjorie Howes, “The Arts and Crafts Movement and the Irish Literary Revival,” 46 and Ronan McDonald, “The Irish Revival and Modernism,” in *Cambridge Companion to Literary Modernism*, ed. Joe Cleary (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014), 51–62.
- 31 John R. O’Connell, *The Honan Hostel Chapel, Cork: Some Notes on the Building and the Ideals Which Inspired It* (Cork: Guy, 1916). This work appeared in a second edition as *The Collegiate Chapel, Cork: Some Notes on the Building and on the Ideals Which Inspired It* (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 1932), 18.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ó Carragáin, “Truly and Sincerely Irish?,” 91.
- 34 Ibid., 87.
- 35 Nora O’Mahony, “Celtic Church Banners,” *Irish Monthly* 32, no. 367 (Jan. 1904): 167.
- 36 Howes, “Irish Literary Revival,” 46.
- 37 Bowe, “Jewel in the Crown.”
- 38 Sullivan, “Harry Clarke’s Saints.”
- 39 Bowe, “Irish Arts and Crafts,” 181.
- 40 Andrew A. Kuhn, “The Irish Arts and Crafts Edition: Printing at Dun Emer and Cuala.”
- 41 Helmers and Rose, “Spirit of Ireland’s Past,” 37–38.
- 42 See Dun Emer’s first prospectus (1903): “Everything as far as possible, is Irish: the paper of the books, the linen of the embroidery and the wool of the tapestry & carpets. The designs are also of the spirit and tradition of the country.... Things made of pure materials, worked by these Irish girls must be more lasting and more valuable than machine-made goods which only serve a temporary purpose.” “First Prospectus of the Dun Emer Industries (1903)—E-text,” The Dun Emer Industries, <http://www.pitt.edu/~jkna/DunEmer/Industries.html>.
- 43 Virginia Teehan, “‘Items of Extraordinary Beauty’: The Honan Chapel and Collection.”
- 44 Keith Jeffery, “The First World War and the Rising: Moment and Memory,” in *1916: The Long Revolution*, ed. Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh (Dublin: Mercier, 2007), 191.
- 45 Teehan, “‘Items of Extraordinary Beauty,’” 74.
- 46 See Sarah Hyland, *I Call to the Eye of the Mind: A Memoir by Sarah Hyland*, ed. Maureen Murphy (Dublin: Attic Press, 1996), 14, 103–4.
- 47 Sineád McCoole, *No Ordinary Women: Irish Female Activists in the Revolutionary Years 1900–1923* (Dublin: O’Brien, 2008), 181.
- 48 Nan Barry’s name appears on a July 11, 1921 *Cumann na mBan* (Tomás MacCurtain Branch in Cork) membership list. According to her granddaughter, Edel Breathnach, she married Maurice Walsh, IRA First Cork Brigade. E-mail to Nancy Netzer, Dec. 11, 2015.
- 49 Sarah Gilmartin, “Baiting the Censor: 10 Books They Tried to Suppress,” *Irish Times*, Sept. 29, 2014, <http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/baiting-the-censor-10-books-they-tried-to-suppress-1.1941916>.
- 50 Catherine Marshall, “Introduction,” in *Art and Architecture of Ireland: Volume 5; Twentieth Century*, ed. Catherine Marshall and Peter Murray (Dublin: Yale Univ. Press, 2014), 7.
- 51 For a sense of the goals of such philanthropy, note the following account of Harriet Bagwell’s Marlsfield cottage industry set up in 1885: “The people have learnt a practical lesson in cleanliness and thrift; they have become not only more prosperous, but also more refined. Their cottages and persons are now clean and neat, and each of the workers has a tidy sum in the savings bank, for it is one of the

conditions of the industry that each worker must invest a quarter of the wages which she receives weekly. It is wonderful to see what an interest the women and girls take in their work, which brings them into connection with the larger and richer world beyond their little village." Constance Smedley, ed., "The Work of the Women's World," *World's Work* 9 (Nov.–May 1907): 636, qtd. in Larmour, *Arts and Crafts*, 14.

Vera Kreilkamp

- 52 Janice Helland, "Caprices of Fashion!: Homemade Lace in Ireland, 1883–1907," *Textile History* 39, no. 2 (Nov. 2008): 202.
- 53 Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1996).
- 54 "What 'British' modernism there was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was largely of Irish origin." Terry Eagleton, "The Archaic Avant-Garde," in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London: Verso, 1995), 287.

# THE SPIRIT OF IRELAND'S PAST: ILLUMINATION, ORNAMENT, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN PUBLIC ART

Marguerite Helmers and Kayla Rose

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The Celtic Revival, as expressed in language, literature, and the contributions of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement, signaled a growing sense of civic pride and national identity. This movement of cultural nationalism began around 1780 and culminated in the early twentieth century. Simultaneously existing as a part of and at a political, geographic, and cultural distance from the United Kingdom, Ireland sought to distinguish its separate cultural and political identity. Throughout the period of the Celtic Revival, the country turned for inspiration to its early medieval “Golden Age”—and thus to a pre-conquest past of independence and cultural achievement.

Artists and politicians alike appropriated Ireland's cultural and material history. In 1901, the Irish architect Charles McCarthy wrote in his address to the Architectural Association of Ireland that “all great art must—in its origin, in its growth, in its making—be instinct with the spirit of the country which has produced it, and, therefore, in the true meaning of the word, essentially national.”<sup>1</sup> In that same year, T. W. Rolleston recommended that young Irish artists be trained in art with “an element of national individuality,” focusing on “the past art-life of their country.”<sup>2</sup> The Celtic Revival's focus embodied these beliefs and led to the revitalization of an indigenous art that was eventually appropriated for nationalist goals.<sup>3</sup>

As a result, the long nineteenth century in Ireland was defined by more than just a return to the past in visual art, language, and literature; rather, past achievements were

used by nationalists as a platform upon which to build a case for independence by establishing Ireland's unique cultural identity and its legitimacy as a country capable of self-rule. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Dublin poet, painter, and playwright Æ (George William Russell) declared that a symbol could be “more potent than history.”<sup>4</sup> In this symbolic capacity, the works of art created during the Celtic Revival and the Irish Arts and Crafts movement assumed important roles within both civic and national contexts.

Illustrated memorial books and illuminated addresses, in particular, made events into tangible objects for remembrance. Several works exhibited together in *The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish*—by Harry Clarke, John Vinycomb, Art O'Murnaghan, and Mia Cranwill—show how commemorative objects can visibly express the nation's past. To comprehend these Revivalist-influenced works, commissioned privately or by the state, we must look both north and south and across both sides of the political divide. The applications of Celtic Revivalist motifs to the art of commemoration transcended religious, geographic, class, and political divisions, creating a form that was distinctly Irish.

## JOHN VINYCOMB'S ILLUMINATED ADDRESS TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR GEORGE STUART WHITE, 1900

During the Irish Victorian decades, the art of illumination was revived and appropriated in the form of the

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1. John Vinycomb, page from *Illuminated Address to Lieutenant General Sir George Stuart White*, 1900. National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.W2014.133.



2. John Vinycomb, detail from *Illuminated Album Presented to Robert Lloyd Patterson from the Belfast Chamber of Commerce*, November 16, 1899. National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, B014401.

presentation address. Illumination as an art form characterized the early Christian period when Irish monastic cultural production reached extraordinary heights, and the country's monasteries became repositories of trea-

sured artifacts and knowledge. In medieval manuscripts, illumination adorned the word of God through the application of gold or silver to handwritten texts; nineteenth- and early twentieth-century illumination resulted in material objects connoting both status and remembrance. As physical manifestations of identity, these addresses were decorative commemorative objects presented to honorees for significant achievement.

The illuminated address used calligraphy, ornamental borders, symbolic imagery, and occasionally portraiture or landscapes to honor the life, work, and achievements of an esteemed individual. Such addresses materialized the words read out in a ceremony and were presented to the individual as keepsakes, usually along with various other gifts. The form became popular after 1850 and continued so until the late 1920s, with most created in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Although these addresses were produced on both sides of the nationalist debate, the majority of those still extant represent a particular stratum of Irish society: the Protestant middle class leading the Celtic Revival in Belfast and Dublin.

The commission for the address to Lieutenant General Sir George Stuart White (pl. 134) went to the English-born artist and designer John Vinycomb while he still worked with Marcus Ward & Co. of Belfast. From Portstewart, County Londonderry of a Presbyterian family, White had served as an officer in the British army.<sup>5</sup> Vinycomb designed and executed this elaborate address with floriated borders; decorated initials; landscape scenes of Ireland, India, and Afghanistan; portraits of White (fig. 1); and heraldic motifs related to his Irish nationality and British service. In both quality and historical accuracy this volume is recognizably Vinycomb's work. The ornament of his addresses ranges from mainly abstract and geometric, with a type of patterned intricacy drawn from early Irish and Anglo-Irish illumination, including the use of flowers and foliage evoking the Book of Kells and pre-Renaissance Italian illumination (fig. 2).<sup>6</sup> Vinycomb used vellum (calfskin) rather than parchment or linen



3. John Vinycomb, page from *Illuminated Address to His Grace John Winston Spencer–Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, K.G., Lord Lieutenant General, and General Governor of Ireland*, c. 1880. National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, B018675, Zg. 7362.



4. John Vinycomb, illuminated Psalm 150, n.d. National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, B018673, Zg. 7432.

paper, for according to contemporary antiquarian sources and artists' handbooks, vellum stood preeminent in "the beauty of its texture and the high finish of its surface" for the art of illumination.<sup>7</sup>

The address to White is a full-color example of Vinycomb's work that recalls established medieval traditions in the use of different shades of blue, violet, purple, and rose. As with these earlier illuminated works, the modern artist stained rather than painted the vellum and also used gold leaf and aluminum powder (figs. 3–4).<sup>8</sup> Vinycomb's designs for the album's binding reflect the Book of Kells and other medieval Irish manuscripts, for example, in the use of interlacing zoomorphic figures—but he also turns to the Celtic Revivalist motif of flowering shamrocks. The heraldic crest at the center of the binding shows a knight's arm holding three flowers, likely a reference to the White family's connections to England (pl. 134).

#### J. W. CAREY AND RICHARD THOMSON'S *ILLUMINATED ADDRESS TO LORD CARSON OF DUNCAIRN, 1921–24*

The illuminated album presented to Lord Edward Carson of Duncairn evidences the use of Celtic Revivalist motifs in the service of Ireland's unionist identity (pl. 133). Irish illuminators fulfilled commissions for both sides of the island's identity divide, and Carson's album commemorates Northern unionism as vigorously as does Art O'Murnaghan's commemoration of radical nationalism to be discussed below. This "Carson Testimonial" is probably the most overtly political example of an illuminated presentation volume completed by Belfast artists following independence and partition. Commissioned by the Ulster Unionists of Northern Ireland, it was designed, illuminated, and illustrated by the Northern artists J. W. Carey and Richard Thomson, who specialized in illumination and illustration, and bound by W. & G. Baird.

This album includes a collection of addresses from the Ulster Unionists to the Right Honorable Lord Carson of Duncairn. Although born and raised in Dublin, Edward Carson (1854–1935) served as leader of the Irish Unionist Alliance and the Ulster Unionist Party between 1910 and 1921. He was the first to sign the 1912 Ulster Covenant that protested against the Third Home Rule Bill,

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5. County Antrim's page from Carey and Thomson, *Illuminated Address to Lord Carson of Duncairn* with details of natural and historic monuments. National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.P8.1982.

introduced by the British Government in the same year. Carson was also a founding leader of the first unionist paramilitary force, the Ulster Volunteers, which went on to become the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), an involvement that identifies him as a radical unionist. Fervently opposed to the terms of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty, he nevertheless opposed partition—viewing the continued union of the whole of Ireland with the United Kingdom as safeguarding the country's well-being.

A commemorative record of respect to an esteemed civic figure, the album also reveals the strong unionist sentiment existing in the North after independence and partition. The Ulster Unionists of Northern Ireland paid for the album by public subscription from its members, and the number of names contained within the album's pages is staggering. These names are arranged alphabetically by their counties of residence, with a section devoted entirely to Belfast. Before each set of names is an illuminated page with the name of the relevant county followed by views of the various landscapes of Northern Ireland.

For example, the page for County Antrim depicts the Giant's Causeway as well as Carrickfergus and Dunluce Castles, two of the county's most recognizable historic buildings (fig. 5).

The names of the Belfast subscribers make up a large portion of the album, along with two pages of miniature paintings depicting the city's key buildings. These pages include images of Ulster Unionist Headquarters (pl. 133) as well as Belfast City Hall, Ulster Hall, and characteristic views of the city such as Cave Hill and Belfast Harbour (fig. 6). The border incorporates Vinycomb's Belfast City coat of arms, and its Celtic Revival-inspired ornament alludes to the city's past. Collectively, the images comprising the album provide a visual record of the natural and manmade beauty of Northern Ireland.

The signatories on the decorated and illuminated title page represent Northern Ireland's unionist politicians (pl. 133); most prominent are the names of Lord Londonderry and James Craig, both of whom had, with



6. Belfast's page from Carey and Thomson, *Illuminated Address to Lord Carson of Duncairn* with details of city buildings and shipyards. National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.P8.1982.

Carson, signed the Ulster Covenant in 1912. Bound in dark blue leather, the cover of the album contains the Red Hand of Ulster surmounted by the British crown within a shield, clearly a heraldic-inspired design, and a motif that appears consistently throughout the address. The calligraphy and illumination were most likely completed by Thomson, whereas the landscapes contained within the album are the work of J. W. Carey, showing stylistic similarities with the illustrations in an earlier address signed by Carey and Thomson held in the National Library of Ireland.<sup>9</sup>

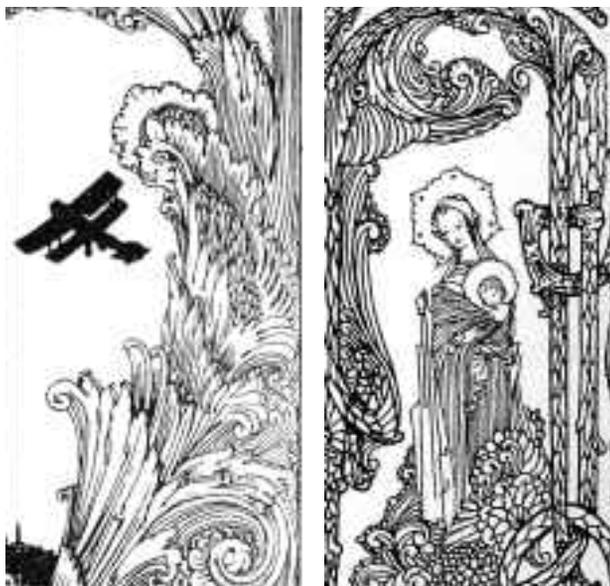
**HARRY CLARKE, IRELAND'S  
MEMORIAL RECORDS, 1914–1918**

Appearing in the same period as Belfast's commemorative volume addressed to a single retiring unionist leader, *Ireland's Memorial Records* offers tribute to a whole generation of the island's dead. These books of remembrance, commissioned by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland after the First World War, express appreciation for service to the United Kingdom and commemorate the sacrifice of officers and enlisted men. *Ireland's Memorial Records'* eight volumes contain the names of 49,435 Irishmen who lost their lives on the battlefields or died of wounds between August 4, 1914 and August 31, 1921. The volumes are noteworthy because of the artistic borders created by Harry Clarke, who extended the possibilities of Celtic Revivalist design, while also infusing the rolls of the dead with his artistic vision and iconoclastic style.

They were issued in 1923 by Maunsel and Roberts, the foremost publishers of nationalist literature in Dublin, also recognized for their finely crafted books in the Arts and Crafts tradition.<sup>10</sup> Full sets of *Ireland's Memorial Records* are available at St. Patrick's Cathedral and the National Library, as well as other locations—including the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, designed by Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944), at Islandbridge on the Liffey River (fig. 15).

The illustrations for *Ireland's Memorial Records* draw

from several traditions associated with Celtic art: curvilinear forms known as La Tène style, and Scandinavian Ringerike and Urnes, both of which combine animal heads with ribbon interlace. The title page of the *Records* is most specifically Celtic Revival in style (pl. 136). Centrally at the bottom of the page stands Erin, the female representation of Ireland, surrounded by traditional



7–9. Details of foilated curves around soldier, airplane, and Virgin and Child from Harry Clarke, *Ireland's Memorial Records, 1914–1918* (Dublin: Maunsel and Roberts, 1923).

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national attributes—a wolfhound and a harp.<sup>11</sup> The harp, alluding to bardic song in Irish culture, is uncrowned, implying an independent Ireland, free of British rule.<sup>12</sup> Behind Erin are further traditional Celtic Revivalist emblems: a round tower, ruined monastery, and an Irish early Christian cross; the left and right borders of the title page contain angels bearing shields with emblems of the four provinces. The page is surrounded by zoomorphic interlace, with the serpents at the top of the page forming the characteristic figure-eight pattern of Ringerike style. Clarke's interlace unites several illustration traditions. The sinuous curves of snakes, dragons, and wyverns lent themselves to figurative lettering and marginalia in medieval manuscripts such as the Book of Kells. Existing concurrently with the Celtic Revival and sharing the romanticized medieval aesthetic of the nineteenth century, fin-de-siècle art nouveau design turned to stylized serpentine lines, often using a snake or dragon head to mark its allusion to the ancient arts.

In the eight engravings repeated in the body of *Ireland's Memorial Records*, Clarke adds heavy foliated classical curves to the Celtic Revivalist interlace (fig. 7), and incorporates scenes of battle from the Western Front and the Gallipoli Campaign, such as tanks, airplanes (fig. 8), ships, Lewis guns, cannon, and soldiers with grenades and pistols. He also draws from Christian symbolism, particularly through allusions to the Apocalypse and the Resurrection. The Virgin and Child are worked into one of the borders (fig. 9), as well as a tiny chrysalis that may signify resurrection and the promise of eternal life. On two different pages within the text, laurel leaf wreaths figure into the design. As another symbol of the Resurrection, laurel is also a sign of victory and an emblem of peace. Clarke includes an angel crowned with laurel leaves and, on another page, a second angel, in mourning, extends a laurel wreath toward the names on the page.

Because Clarke's drawings in this extraordinary roll of honor are illustrations, not documentary photographs, the "range of possible meanings available to those who

encounter them" is great, as Lawrence Prelli suggests.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps most striking are the silhouetted soldiers who seem to dance across the pages, arc lights at their backs, swirls of sea foam, mist, and foliage at their feet (fig. 10). Within the elaborate ornamentation of the borders, Clarke's silhouettes echo the aesthetics of early cinema.



10. Detail of silhouetted soldiers from Clarke, *Ireland's Memorial Records*.



11. Charles Johnson Payne (Snaffles) (1884–1967), "Wipers," 1915. Lithograph, 20.3 x 28.7 cm.



12. David Allen and Sons (printers), *The Call to Arms: Irishmen Don't You Hear It?*, 1915. Lithograph, 76 x 50 cm.

Pointing out that art nouveau came “of age in the same period as cinema,” Lucy Fisher has shown how fin-de-siècle cinematography absorbed an art nouveau aesthetic drawn from print, placing actors within screens of vines and floral borders.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, although the imagery of *Ireland's Memorial Records* derives from tradition and echoes other memorial work of the postwar period, the disarming style of the borders owes something to how Clarke's silhouettes undercut the façade of heroic masculinity surrounding World War I. Although characteristic of his style, the silhouetted soldiers juxtapose military uniform with balletic poses, in marked contrast to the stereotypical masculine poses of fighting soldiers from popular illustrations in newspapers, magazines, and posters of the time (fig. 11).

Clarke's illustrations also subtly register the tension between the visual nationalistic rhetoric of *Ireland's Memorial Records'* title page and the language of the war scenes. Nationalist Ireland neither physically nor ideolog-

ically supported the war; thus “Erin,” as depicted on the title page, remains ambiguous: she is either the symbol of Irish victory or a reproach against English domination. Despite their association with nationalist politics from the late eighteenth century, the shamrock, harp, wolfhound, and round tower were becoming stale and commercial symbols of Irish identity by the early twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> Joanna Brück, for example, notes their use “to decorate shop fronts, pubs and the bog oak souvenirs bought by Victorian tourists....[Even] recruiting posters for the British Army in World War I employed the same range of national symbols to appeal to Irishmen to join up” (fig. 12).<sup>16</sup> In this exhibition, the bog oak casket conferring freedom of the City of Dublin to Charles Stewart Parnell in 1882 illustrates the nationalist embrace of the Hibernia and wolfhound symbols that Irish Arts and Crafts practice began to avoid, replacing them with imagery from, for example, early Christian art (pl. 131).<sup>17</sup>

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13–14. Details of figure in loose cloak and peacock from Clarke, *Ireland's Memorial Records*.

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15. Sir Edwin Lutyens (architect), Irish National War Memorial, Islandbridge, 1938.

Although Clarke draws from these stock symbols to mark nationality in *Ireland's Memorial Records*, his illustrations are informed as well by modernist traditions of European illustration echoing work by a number of Continental artists: Sidney Sime, Willy Pogany, Gustav Klimt, Leon Bakst, and Aubrey Beardsley.

Particularly striking are Clarke's allusions to the artistic motifs of aesthetic decadents like Beardsley. Both artists emphasized the stark contrasts between black and white, using heavy blocks of black ink for emphasis either in backgrounds or to clothe figures. Supple and elongated human figures are frequently draped in loose cloaks and fantasized medieval garments (fig. 13). Recognizing that the peacock represented a dichotomy between incorruptible flesh and corruptible soul, Beardsley incorporated peacock imagery into many book illustrations, one of most famous being *The Peacock Skirt* (Larsen, fig. 11), which was completed for Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (1893). Similarly, peacocks in *Ireland's Memorial Records* (fig. 14) promise, with the Virgin, life everlasting, even as they also ambiguously undercut that meaning through allusion to Wilde's assertion that "all art is quite useless," having no purpose other than to please.<sup>18</sup>

Although exhibited in 1924 and 1925, with one hundred copies sent to libraries and religious institutions around the globe, these volumes failed to find a permanent home within the book room of the Irish National War Memorial Garden until 1939. The volatile political situation in Ireland precluded any work on the memorial, and particularly one dedicated to those who served in the First World War—now construed as a war perpetrated by the army of occupation that had preyed on Dublin's poor. Clarke received the commission for the illustrations in 1919 and Maunsel and Roberts published *Ireland's Memorial Records* in 1923, dates that parallel the bloody period of guerilla warfare, partition, executions, and reprisals.<sup>19</sup> For a half century, moreover, the elaborate Irish War Memorial Park sat unused at its site on the Liffey, where it was victimized by vandals and populated by vagrants until it was finally officially dedicated only in 1988.<sup>20</sup> A full set of the volumes is currently displayed in the locked southeast book room of Lutyens's designed park (fig. 15).

#### ARTHUR (ART) WALTER O'MURNAGHAN'S *LEABHAR NA HAISÉIRGHE (BOOK OF RESURRECTION)*, 1924–51

How would the Irish dead of republican wars be remembered? Might their names be recorded in a book as carefully planned, funded, and elaborately produced as *Ireland's Memorial Records*? Following the formation of the Irish Free State, the new government established the Irish Republican Memorial Committee (IRMC) to commemorate the Easter Rising of 1916 and the Irish War of Independence.<sup>21</sup> The IRMC met for the first time in 1922 and held a competition to find the artist who would best represent the spirit of Irish national identity. It would hire another noted Irish illustrator, Art O'Murnaghan (1872–1954), to complete a modern illuminated manuscript.<sup>22</sup> O'Murnaghan won the commission with his *Éire* page, which was chosen by Mia Cranwill, both for its Revivalist echoing of medieval Irish illuminated

manuscripts and for its unique composition.<sup>23</sup> The signed lithographic print in this exhibition is one of several sold by O’Murnaghan in order to raise money for the complete book project (pl. 135).

It seems reasonable to imagine that the decision to create the *Leabhar na hAiséirghe* (*Book of Resurrection*) was made, at least partly, in response to the commission of *Ireland’s Memorial Records*. The IRMC emerged from a very different political background than the committee that privately planned and raised funds for those volumes. Formed in 1922, its founding members included the politically active writers and artists Maud Gonne, Pádraig de Brún, Mia Cranwill, and Ella Young. Moreover, the IRMC commissioned the *Book of Resurrection* to commemorate a different group of Irish dead, not those who lay far from home in Flanders Fields, but those who “died for the Republic since 1916: Irish-born fighters for the Irish cause of freedom.”<sup>24</sup> Aided by public subscription raised through “concerts, picnic excursions, raffles, dances, [and] whist drives,”<sup>25</sup> this Memorial Committee turned to O’Murnaghan to illuminate the *Book of Resurrection*, praising him for his “faultless line.”<sup>26</sup>

O’Murnaghan was a self-taught painter, as well as an actor, writer, and teacher. Born Arthur Murnaghan in Southampton, England, he moved to Dublin in his twenties, where, stimulated by his interest in Irish calligraphy, illumination, history, and mythology, he embraced his Irish roots and changed his name to Art O’Murnaghan. He joined the Gaelic League in 1893, where he became friends with Arthur Griffith and Douglas Hyde and designed badges for the organization.<sup>27</sup>

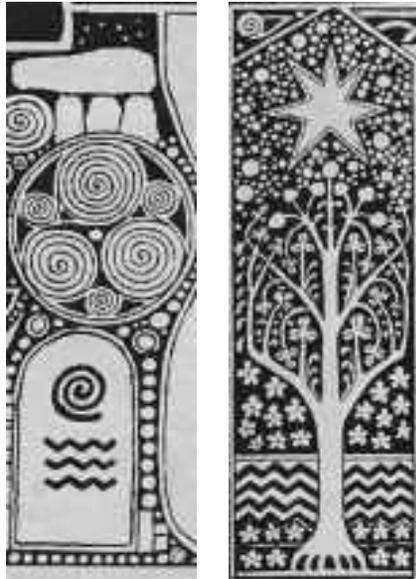
Working with only a magnifying glass and a set of tiny brushes in a private room at the National Library, O’Murnaghan was paid a small stipend of £1 a day to produce *Leabhar na hAiséirghe*. Like the Gospel illuminations of a medieval Irish scribe, his work became his “life’s mission,”<sup>28</sup> for he carried on “after more than a thousand years the Irish tradition of beautiful sacred books.”<sup>29</sup> His grandson Peter Figgis recalls that the

artist mixed his own paint from a mixture of dry pigment, egg white, “parchment glue, fish glue, and gum.”<sup>30</sup> In all, he devoted twenty-seven years in three different stages—from Easter 1924 to 1951—to completing the manuscript of twenty-six pages of intricately painted scenes on vellum.<sup>31</sup> Among those commemorated within its pages are fallen republican martyrs and heroes such as Kevin Barry, Cathal Brugha, Roger Casement, Erskine Childers, Michael Collins, Terence MacSwiney, Kevin O’Higgins, Patrick Pearse, and Joseph Mary Plunkett. O’Murnaghan also dedicated pages to the Milesians (the final race to settle Ireland in prehistoric saga), the four provinces of Ireland, the *Cumann na mBan* (the women’s paramilitary organization formed in 1914), and the Treaty of 1921 that established the newly independent Free State. Elements that recur in the pages include strapwork ornamentation; swirls, feathers, and jewel-tones that suggest the tail feathers of the male peacock; fish that rise from the decorative and spinning sea, such as the salmon whose flesh nourished and enriched Fionn Mac Cumhaill; and the use of the rising or full sun of the Fianna. Celtic ornamentation recurs throughout—in the form of decorated initials, two- and three-lobed spirals, peltae, triskeles, and trumpet spirals, taken directly from the Book of Kells and other medieval Irish illuminated manuscripts.

O’Murnaghan’s *Éire* page narrates Irish history from the Neolithic ages (circa 3000 BCE) while also incorporating the mythological origins of the island. A small dolmen, or portal tomb, at the center of the page and within the lettering of “Éire” strategically marks the center of the Celtic world. Below it, a standing stone contains the spiral and zigzag symbols found on the giant kerbstones at Newgrange and Knowth (fig. 16), the Neolithic passage tombs along the Boyne River. This stone mirrors the shape of the Lia Fáil, the Stone of Destiny at Tara, upon which the High Kings of Ireland were crowned. The page is decorated by more elaborate spirals, assertive strapwork and designs that suggest Norse runes, and a gammadion

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16–17. Details of dolmen/kerbstones and Yggdrasil from O’Murnaghan, *Éire* page.

cross (the swastika), an ancient symbol for the sun.

The artist also incorporates the legacy of the Tuatha dé Danann—the two swans in elaborate tracery at the center of the page—into the *Éire* page, representing the deities of pre-Christian Ireland. In Celtic mythology, the Tuatha dé Danann retreated to the underworld after yielding the island to the Milesians. In the upper left corner of the page stands Yggdrasil, the enormous ash tree that, in Norse legend, supports the world (fig. 17). Its branches reach to heaven with leaves that are tiny shamrocks; its roots extend to other worlds, including the lair of dragons and the realm of humankind. To the left and right at the base of the page, feathered and serpent-like dragons emerge from the branches of the foliage. In this domain the Tuatha dé Danann would rule through eternity. An extravagantly knotted serpent and other small dragons inhabit the corners of the pages. Below the *E* of “Éire,” a downward facing bird merges with a harp, as the

curving shape of the harp become the wings of the bird (fig. 18).

The *Éire* page incorporates familiar nationalist icons of shamrock, swans, harp, round tower, and rising sun. But Paul Larmour warns against confusing *Leabhar na hAiséirghe* with mere copyist tendencies: “O’Murnaghan went beyond the straightforward revival of ancient motifs in creating an entirely personal art that was new and vital but which was essentially based on the traditional elements of Celtic ornament.”<sup>32</sup> The artist’s Celtic Revival-inspired design was popular in his lifetime, both in Ireland and abroad, as evidenced by the demand for his presence to exhibit or discuss his work. Over the course of two years, 1946 to 1947, O’Murnaghan was in regular correspondence with the then director of the Belfast Municipal Museum and Art Gallery (now the Ulster Museum), J. A. S. Stendall. The artist also disseminated images and copies, for a set of photographs of *Leabhar na hAiséirghe* was sent to Pittsburgh University, Pennsylvania and Syracuse University, New York.<sup>33</sup>

The influence of mythologist Ella Young can be seen



18. Detail of harp-bird from O’Murnaghan, *Éire* page.

in the initial description of the *Book of Resurrection* to subscribers; she notes that “Old Gaelic ranns and poems dealing with Ireland will also be written in, together with sayings of the men themselves.”<sup>34</sup> Lettering, naming, and story are as much of the design as the images. For example, within a scroll-like insert on the *Éire* page the various names of Ireland are printed, including those of three sisters, Ériu, Banba, and Fódla. Throughout the illuminated pages, poems and visions are penned in tiny script, such as the eighth-century *Voyage of Bran* on the page devoted to Roger Casement and Erskine Childers. The Memorial Committee stressed that *Leabhar na hAiséirghe* would join the Celtic heritage of Ireland with the present new republic: “It will be a national heritage: it may even be the starting-point of a new school of Celtic designers.”<sup>35</sup> The *Éire* page contains a passage from the Vision of St. Brigid of Kildare, the fifth-century saint and one of three patron saints of Ireland. Brigid founded a school of art and illumination at Kildare, which produced the Book of Kildare, now lost. Her vision confirms the sanctity of the Irish after the coming of St. Patrick, attesting to “a steady bright flame blazing in the north and which spread scattering itself from its focus till the whole island was once more brilliantly lighted up.”<sup>36</sup> The imagery in her vision is amplified in the illustration by two very distinct seven-pointed stars at the top of the page, one above the tree and another above the word “Éire.”

### MIA [MARIA] CRANWILL'S SENATE CASKET AND THE SENATE ROLL<sup>37</sup>

The leaves from the *Book of Resurrection* and the *Senate casket* share a relationship to the early medieval practices in Irish book arts. Michael Camille points out that the Gospels of Durrow, Lindisfarne, and Kells were protected “in great casketlike cases or *cumdach*,” preserved as were relics of the saints. This practice, he notes, “linked manuscript art directly with the skills of the metalworker.”<sup>38</sup> Edmond Johnson, a jeweler specializing in reproductions and interpretations of early medieval masterpieces (pl.

30), helped to popularize and circulate high Celtic silver-work to wealthy patrons from his premises at 95 and 96 Grafton Street, Dublin (pl. 18). By contrast, Mia Cranwill's (1880–1972) work appealed to a clientele interested in original designs. Neither artist suffers from comparison; their works are exquisitely crafted and did much to codify Revivalist design in the public sphere.

Born in Dublin, Cranwill received a scholarship to the Manchester School of Art, remaining in England until 1917, during which time she studied Irish history, art, and mythology and began to experiment with enameled Celtic design. Returning to Ireland, she established a studio where much of her work was devoted to ecclesiastical furnishings. Her friendships with leaders in the independence movement led her to use her workroom as a space to hide guns destined for republican forces.<sup>39</sup> Like *Ireland's Memorial Records* and the *Book of Resurrection*, Cranwill's *Senate casket* is a piece with remarkable ties to conflict (pl. 138).

The First Seanad Éireann of the Irish Free State met in 1922, one year after a treaty was signed with England to end the hostilities of the War of Independence. The Treaty physically and politically divided the country, leading as if inevitably to bloody civil war. Over half of the First Seanad's sixty members were Catholic, and the others were Protestant, Quaker, and Jewish. This body of politicians included William Butler Yeats, Oliver St. John Gogarty (Buck Mulligan to devotees of Joyce's *Ulysses*), and General Sir Bryan Mahon, who had led the Tenth (Irish) Division in the disastrous Gallipoli Campaign of 1915. Since many of this group of wealthy senators were suspect as pro-British, the opposing (anti-Treaty) forces viewed them as legitimate targets.<sup>40</sup> Within months of the first sitting of the senate, thirty-seven senators' homes were completely destroyed by fires.

The historian and writer Alice Stopford Green (1847–1929) presented the casket to the Irish Senate on November 26, 1924. Active in the Congo Reform Association with Roger Casement, in 1914 she helped plan the

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Howth gunrunning scheme, which imported arms from Germany to aid the Irish Volunteers. Her house at 90 St. Stephen's Green in Dublin had been a meeting place for nationalists, while also a target of British surveillance. A supporter of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, Stopford Green was elected to the Seanad. Green felt that Cranwill's *Senate casket* represented a symbol of solidarity and dedication to the welfare of the Irish State. The casket, intended to hold a vellum roll of signatures of each member of the first Seanad, was placed on the Senate Chairman's desk for the duration of every senate meeting; it remained a part of the body's ritual until 1936.

Echoing the shape of the Gallarus Oratory in County Kerry, an early Christian corbel vaulted stone church with sloping side walls, Cranwill's work is made of copper, silver, and gold and ornamented with dramatic conical shapes in dappled red, crafted from enamel. Paul Lar-mour points out that because the artist fashioned the feet of the casket in the form of rings that could be locked into an upright position, the container for the *Senate roll* (pl. 139), like early shrines, "could be carried ceremonially on poles."<sup>41</sup> And like early medieval Irish caskets, the *Senate casket* contains a vellum manuscript—with signatures of the sixty members of the First Seanad penned in Celtic script. The vellum roll was inscribed in Celtic script by George Atkinson, RHA (1880–1941), then head of the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art.

Although illness prevented her from attending the official dedication, Stopford Green's presentation speech was read out in full at the event. It drew on the essential Revivalist theme of the relationship of the past to the present, giving particular weight to the importance of the land and soil of Ireland, flashpoints that played such a key role in the nationalist ideology that led to independence:

Senators will agree that we should place no emblem before us in this Assembly that is not of Ireland, in spirit and in workmanship, carrying in it the faith both of the Old Irish world and of the New. I have insisted, therefore, that the form

of the casket should go back in direct descent to the "shrines" designed by the Irish over a thousand years ago.... Thus the shrine in its intense vitality carries to us its own message. That if we want to revive here an Irish nation we must dig our roots deep into its soil, and be nourished by that ancient earth.<sup>42</sup>

Cranwill later recalled that she wanted to join the donor to the gift. Accordingly, the imagery of the casket displays the crest of the Stopford family: a wyvern, the legendary creature with outspread wings that resembles the auspicious snake familiar from medieval iconography; here it shelters the heads of government officials. But painfully aware of the contentious politics of the period, on the reverse of the container the artist includes figures symbolizing Body, Mind, and Estate, over a horned beast that conveys how each class and order appears forced to prey upon each other.<sup>43</sup>

### INTERNMENT BOOKS (1916–23)

The various publications that emerge from internment camps for Irish prisoners following the Easter Rising and during the War of Independence must be included in any account of Irish book arts of the early twentieth century. Several prisoners who published memoirs of the time commented on their desire to counter British expectations that they had incarcerated uncivilized brutes. Thus, prisoners took care not only to maintain discipline, but studied the Irish language and history, and they published camp newspapers, several of which survive, including the *Frongoch Favourite*, probably written by James Mallon of the Third Battalion, Irish Volunteers, fighting at Mount Street Bridge. Other titles were *The Insect* (1918, Lincoln Prison) and *The Barbed Wire* (1921, a camp newspaper from Ballykinlar, County Down).<sup>44</sup>

The Irish suffered through several waves of internment in the early twentieth century. The first occurred in the aftermath of the 1916 Easter Rising, when approximately two thousand men and women were imprisoned

in jails around the Dublin city center, then deported to camps in England and Scotland and—perhaps most notoriously—to Frongoch Internment Camp in Wales, which held close to eighteen hundred Irish prisoners until December 1916. The future Irish president Eamon de Valera was sent to England, spending time in Dartmoor, Lewes, and Maidstone Prisons. Frongoch became known as the “University of Revolution” or sometimes “Sinn Féin University.”<sup>45</sup> Members of the camp drilled daily, received lessons in Irish language and history, and learned about guerilla warfare from Michael Collins. William Brennan-Whitmore (1886–1977), part of the brigade fighting on O’Connell (Sackville) Street in 1916, writes of the camp’s educational scheme, which included debates, telegraphy, bookkeeping, math, shorthand, and step dancing:

In the civilian studies the major portion of our time was devoted to the Irish language, which was only as it should be. The classes in Frongoch were ideal, inasmuch as we had a large number of highly qualified teachers, and a considerable number of native speakers....[Many prisoners] were university and college professors of no mean standing; and all of them clean, intelligent, and reasoning people.<sup>46</sup>

The next major period of internment occurred in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday, November 21, 1920, when British authorities arrested hundreds of republicans and opened several internment camps throughout Ireland. Ballykinlar, County Down, was the largest internment camp of its kind in Ireland, at its peak housing at least eighteen hundred prisoners. Although only active for a twelve-month period (December 1920 to December 1921), the harsh conditions in Ballykinlar Prison gained a notorious reputation. The volume of arrests was so great that additional camps had to be established throughout Ireland; they included Kilmainham Gaol and Mountjoy Gaol in County Dublin and the Curragh Camp, County

Kildare, of which Hare Park and Tintown were subdivisions. The Curragh military barracks area was ceded to the Irish Free State (National) Army, where it held anti-Treaty protesters during a third wave of internment.

The autograph books produced by prisoners during these periods of internment allowed camp internees to register nationalist sentiments and express their sense of comradeship. In their memoirs, Darrell Figgis and Brennan-Whitmore both attest to the comradeship of internees, who quickly formed friendships “almost as complete as in ordinary life.”<sup>47</sup> “That was compensation,” Figgis wrote of his time in Richmond Prison.<sup>48</sup> Signatures, of course, are the main feature of the autograph books; some pages are just lists of names, which have since provided an important record of internment. Prisoners often signed their hut number, their IRA battalion number, and their full address, in addition to their name.

Since some internees were learning Irish in their camps’ language and history classes, lettering in Gaelic script appears, with the books often signed in Irish, many in a faltering and uneven hand.<sup>49</sup> The books often contain full-color images, typically fanciful imaginings of scenes outside the walls of the prisons, such as castles, streams and stone bridges, and lakes. Other books include excerpts from nationalist speeches and publications, serving to remind fellow prisoners of stories of oppression. Internees penned poetry, quoted from nationalist political speeches, caricatured camp life in ink drawings, and some created detailed ornamentation in Celtic Revivalist style.

The autograph book on display (pl. 137) reveals yet another source of Revivalist imagery in the Irish Arts and Crafts period—another claim upon the motifs of a pre-conquest past that extends from the Ulster addresses and the *Book of Resurrection* through the illuminations of Harry Clarke in *Ireland’s Memorial Records*. The National Museum of Ireland records that the autograph book belonged to P. S. O’Ceannáin,<sup>50</sup> Ballykinlar Internment Camp, Co. Down, 1921, Hut 24, Camp 2. A colorfully inked page contains a full border in Celtic style that

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19. Page from John Sayers's autograph book, 1923.  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, HE:EW 5531.

surrounds the names of the men interned in one of the huts. The design features Celtic triskeles in the four corners and an intertwined design of four fish, an allusion to Irish mythology in which an ancient salmon was the keeper of the world's knowledge, wisdom that was passed on to Fionn Mac Cumhaill, the leader of the Fianna. Within the roundels along the side of the page are tiny illustrations of the prison camp dormitories, with a row of the low red huts along the left. The hut leader's name, J. J. Boyle, is placed over the names of those who resided in the same prison quarters. The illustration is unsigned, and it may or may not be the work of the book's owner. Most likely, however, the creator of this illustration was a student in one of Camp 2's Celtic Art classes taught by Micéal O'Riada. Although evidently the work of a student, the inked drawing demonstrates knowledge of the basic patterns and style of illumination and was influenced by some of O'Riada's ornamental Celtic designs. While imprisoned, O'Riada had collaborated on an elaborate text known as the *Book of Ballykinlar* from Camp 2 (1921)—one of two books produced containing signatures of internees, a full record of camp life, and illustrations.

A later example of autograph book is that kept by John Sayers (1923), imprisoned at Mountjoy Gaol (Dub-

lin) and Tintown (*Baile an Stáin*). Tintown held anti-Treaty prisoners primarily from the counties of Dublin, Kerry, Limerick, and Mayo. The creator of an elaborately decorated page within Sayers's book took time over the art and inscription. A striking reverse drawing in Celtic style with dragon heads marking the four corners of the interlace surrounds the names of four men executed by a National Army firing squad on December 8, 1922 (fig. 19). Among the names is Rory O'Connor, who from April through June 1922 occupied the Four Courts in Dublin in opposition to the Provisional government. Translated, the inscription in the autograph book reads, "In fond memory of Liam Mellows, Rory O'Connor, Joe McKelvey, Richard Barrett, who were foully murdered by the heads of the 'Free-State' in Dublin on the eighth day of December, 1922."

These autograph books and artifacts from internment camps overwhelmingly demonstrate that Celtic Revivalism in the visual arts represented far more than the restoration of a style; these handcrafted works were also an active means of constructing and expressing identity. As Paul Basu remarks, objects and humans are "in fact coconstitutive of one another," an observation that supports the reading of the autograph books as forms of republican identity formation.<sup>51</sup> Internees used Celtic Revivalist motifs to represent their Irishness and their allegiance to republican ideals. Simultaneously the motifs they drew upon reinforced the internees' nationalism, offering them a visual language to express their adherence to and membership in a wider movement.

## CONCLUSION

Douglas Hyde, founder of the Gaelic League and eventually Ireland's first president, declared, "without a distinctive Irish cultural identity, political independence was meaningless."<sup>52</sup> The need to construct, define, and represent Irish identity through Arts and Crafts objects was essential to uniting a people and establishing a separate political jurisdiction for the island. For both

those in the North and South, Celtic-inspired design conveyed national pride and established an exclusively Irish identity that was legitimized by a pre-conquest past. From untutored drawings in an autograph book to silver urns modeled on the Ardagh Chalice, from watercolors of the Aran Islands or Carrickfergus Castle to lace handkerchiefs for a reticule (pl. 70), Arts and Crafts married Irish design with often-useful material objects in order to disseminate ideology and identity. The elaborately crafted presentation addresses, *Ireland's Memorial Records*, and *Book of Resurrection* demonstrate the connection between politics and visual art through Celtic Revivalist-inspired design. An art imbued with the spirit of Ireland's past became the agent of national consciousness.



- 1 Paul Larmour, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland* (Belfast: Friar's Bush, 1992), 126. This quotation appeared in its original form in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (Oct. 24, 1901): 914.
- 2 Qtd. in *ibid.*, 126. First appeared in *Journal and Proceedings of the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland* 3 (1901): 232.
- 3 Jeanne Sheehy, *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival, 1830–1930* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980).
- 4 Æ [George William Russell], *Imaginations and Reveries* (London: Maunsel, 1899), 9.
- 5 Henry Mortimer Durand, *The Life of Field-Marshal Sir George White, V.C.*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood, 1915).
- 6 J. F. X. O'Brien, "The Art of Irish Illuminated Manuscripts. II: The Characteristics and Excellence of Irish Illumination," *Irish Monthly* 45, no. 531 (Sept. 1917): 587 and Patricia Lovett, *The British Library Companion to Calligraphy, Illumination, and Heraldry: A History and Practical Guide* (London: British Library, 2000), 72.
- 7 *Art Amateur* 7, no. 1 (1882): 12.
- 8 Henry Shaw, *A Handbook of the Art of Illumination as Practised during the Middle Ages* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1866), 10.
- 9 MS 35,984/48.
- 10 Nicola Gordon Bowe and Elizabeth Cumming, *The Arts and Crafts Movements in Dublin and Edinburgh, 1885–1925* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998), 96.
- 11 While the figure is referred to as "Hibernia" in the index to the volumes, Clarke's drawing is of a young woman in Celtic dress. Hibernia is typically clothed in classical robes, befitting her role as the counterpart to Britannia.
- 12 The harp alluded to the important role of bards and song

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- in ancient Ireland. As the critic Edward Hirsch has pointed out, the link between “homeland and song” was important to Revival writers from Thomas Davis (who envisioned, but never realized, a *Ballad History of Ireland*) through Yeats. Edward Hirsch, “The Imaginary Irish Peasant,” *PMLA* 106, no. 5 (Oct. 1991): 1121.
- 13 Lawrence J. Prelli, ed., *Rhetorics of Display* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2006), 2.
  - 14 Lucy Fisher, “Invisible by Design: Reclaiming Art Nouveau for the Cinema,” *Film History* 25, no. 1–2 (2013): 56.
  - 15 Sheehy, *Rediscovery of Ireland’s Past*, 92.
  - 16 Joanna Brück, “A Good Irishman Should Blush Every Time He Sees a Penny’: Gender, Nationalism and Memory in Irish Internment Camp Craftwork, 1916–1923,” *Journal of Material Culture* 20 (2015): 155. Some of this material is repeated in Brück, “Nationalism, Gender and Memory: Internment Camp Craftwork, 1916–1923,” in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the Easter Rising*, ed. Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 2015), 99–107.
  - 17 Sheehy, *Rediscovery of Ireland’s Past*, 176.
  - 18 Oscar Wilde, “The Preface,” in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Ward Lock, 1891), vii.
  - 19 The historical record does not reveal how the artist himself felt about the commission. His notebook contains only the words “Irish Nat Memorials” and the date September 29, 1919. Pocket diary, 1919, Harry Clarke Papers, National Library of Ireland, Dublin, MS 39,202 B.
  - 20 Jane Leonard, “‘Lest We Forget’: I. Irish War Memorials II. The Plates,” in *Ireland and the First World War*, ed. David Fitzpatrick (Dublin: Lilliput, 1988), 66–67.
  - 21 Minutes of the Meetings of Committee of the Irish Republican Memorial Society, National Library of Ireland, Dublin (1924–26 and 1937–39), MS 1737.
  - 22 “Commemoration,” National Museum of Ireland, accessed Oct. 5, 2015, [http://www.museum.ie/Decorative-Arts-History/Exhibitions/Previous-Exhibitions/The-Easter-Rising-Understanding-1916-\(1\)/Commemoration](http://www.museum.ie/Decorative-Arts-History/Exhibitions/Previous-Exhibitions/The-Easter-Rising-Understanding-1916-(1)/Commemoration).
  - 23 MS 1737 (1924–26) and Peter Figgis, “Remembering Art O’Murnaghan,” *Irish Arts Review* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 41.
  - 24 Irish Republican Memorial Society, *Cuimhneachán maírtíreach saoirse Éireann: Leabhar na hAiséirghe* (Dublin: Irish Republican Memorial Society, 1924–27). National Library of Ireland, Dublin, EPH D290.
  - 25 Ella Young, “Open Letter from Author Ella Young to Members of the League of Helpers” (Dublin: League of Helpers, 1922). National Library of Ireland, Dublin, EPH B232.
  - 26 Irish Republican Memorial Society, *Cuimhneachán*, n.p.
  - 27 Figgis, “Art O’Murnaghan,” 41. *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, s.v. “O’Murnaghan, Arthur Walter,” by Andrew O’Brien and Linde Lunney, accessed Nov. 15, 2015, <http://dib.cambridge.org>.
  - 28 O’Brien and Lunney, “O’Murnaghan.”
  - 29 Bowe and Cumming, *Arts and Crafts Movements*, 160.
  - 30 Figgis, “Art O’Murnaghan,” 41.
  - 31 Ibid. Nicola Gordon Bowe cites a figure of fourteen folio sheets in “The Iconic Book in Ireland, 1891–1930,” in *The Oxford History of the Irish Book, Volume 5: The Irish Book in English, 1891–2000*, ed. Clare Hutton and Patrick Walsh (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 412.
  - 32 Paul Larmour, *Celtic Ornament* (Dublin: Eason and Son, 1981), n.p.
  - 33 Letters between O’Murnaghan and Stendall in the archives

- of the Ulster Museum in Belfast reveal the demand for O’Murnaghan’s artistic style in London and America. They had met at some point in the 1930s and formed an acquaintanceship over their shared interest in nature, birds in particular. The first letter O’Murnaghan wrote to Stendall on September 4, 1946 mentions this fact, stating that they had met in the Belfast Museum ten years before. Both men published in the *Irish Naturalists’ Journal* in the mid-1930s.
- 34 Irish Republican Memorial Society, *Cuimhneachán*, n.p.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Patrick Kennedy, ed., *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts* (London: Macmillan, 1866), 329–30.
- 37 Cranwill’s name is sometimes spelled “Cranwell.”
- 38 Michael Camille, “Domesticating the Dragon: The Rediscovery, Reproduction, and Re-invention of Early Irish Metalwork,” in *Imagining an Irish Past: The Celtic Revival, 1840–1940*, ed. T. J. Edelstein, exh. cat. (Chicago: Smart Museum of Art, 1992), 16.
- 39 *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, s.v. “Cranwill, Maria (‘Mia’),” by Frances Clarke, accessed Nov. 15, 2015, <http://dib.cambridge.org>.
- 40 Elaine Byrne, “Hands That Shaped Irish History,” *Irish Times*, July 29, 2008, <http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/hands-that-shaped-irish-history-1.947347>.
- 41 Larmour, *Arts and Crafts*, 213.
- 42 “Senator’s Gift to the Seanad: Wednesday, 26 November 1924,” *Seanad Éireann Debate* 3, no. 21, <http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debates%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/takes/seanad1924112600009?opendocument>.
- 43 “The Irish Senate Casket: Explanatory Note and Select Bibliography,” Royal Irish Academy, accessed Oct. 5, 2015, <https://www.ria.ie/Library/Special-Collections/Art-and-Sculpture/The-Senate-Casket>.
- 44 Justin D. Stover, “Irish Political Prisoner Culture, 1916–1923,” *Crosscurrents* 64 (2014): 100.
- 45 Sean O Mahony, *Frongoch: University of Revolution* (Dublin: FDR Teoranta, 1987).
- 46 W. J. Brennan-Whitmore, *With the Irish in Frongoch* (Dublin: Talbot, 1917), 39–40. Stover also notes that “political prisoners read a wide variety of books, continued university studies, prepared plays and skits, organized secret societies, penned satirical letters, published prison journals, and commemorated their experiences in autograph books” (“Political Prisoner Culture,” 97).
- 47 Darrell Figgis, *A Chronicle of Jails* (Dublin: Talbot, 1917), 25.
- 48 Ibid., 56.
- 49 Brück, “A Good Irishman,” 154.
- 50 Although the National Museum lists P. S. O’Ceannáin as the owner of the autograph book, internal evidence suggests that the owner is the same as the illustrator of the page—Padraic O’Conchubhair (Colonel Patrick J. O’Connor, Dublin). O’Conchubhair was in the same hut as the men listed on the page, including Morris McGonigal and Brendan Kennedy (a.k.a. Brian O’Kennedy). McGonigal, a relative of Harry Clarke, was an artist, who worked for a time in a style similar to Clarke’s. Usually, the illustrations in the autograph books are signed and dated, which makes this book page unusual; however, given the similarity of the blue ink, the art seems to be that of O’Conchubhair, the last name on the list.
- 51 Paul Basu, “Material Culture: Ancestries and Trajectories in Material Culture Studies,” in *Handbook of Sociocultural Anthropology*, ed. James Carrier and Deborah Gewertz (Oxford: Berg, 2011), 382.
- 52 Bowe and Cumming, *Arts and Crafts Movements*, 77.

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# THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT AND THE IRISH LITERARY REVIVAL

Marjorie Howes

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The various strands of cultural nationalism that developed under the heading of Irish Revivalism had become so robust and diverse by 1894 that one observer, William Patrick Ryan, published *The Irish Literary Revival: Its History, Pioneers and Possibilities* in that year.<sup>1</sup> He noted that although his book was “devoted only to Irish literature, or the signs of an Irish literary awakening,” in fact Revivalism encompassed people working in a dizzying array of fields: translation, music, folklore, history, antiquities, science, and art.<sup>2</sup> Eighteen ninety-four was also the year in which the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland was founded, and this essay explores the Irish Arts and Crafts movement as an element of a wider Revivalism. I argue that the country’s Arts and Crafts practice had particularly close ties with the Irish Literary Revival<sup>3</sup> and that these ties appeared in several forms. Arts and Crafts and the Literary Revival shared a number of ideological features, and there were multiple social and familial connections among the personnel of the two. In addition, the Arts and Crafts movement carried into visual and material forms many of the ideas of the Literary Revival.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the Literary Revival provides an important and specific political context within which to interpret the subjects, designs, and styles of Arts and Crafts objects.

Ryan’s observation that the Irish Revival was made up of a series of elements, diverse but linked, has been further explored in much recent scholarship.<sup>5</sup> All the elements of Revivalism emerged in the context of a bur-

geoning cultural nationalism in Ireland; taken together they sought to “nationalize” almost every aspect of life. The Gaelic League, founded by Douglas Hyde in 1893, worked to revive the Irish language, Horace Plunkett’s cooperative movement sought to improve Irish agriculture and rural life, still other Revivalists exhorted Irish consumers to wear Irish clothes and buy Irish products. Ireland was not unique in this respect, but participated in a broader European trend toward self-determination for small nations. Cultural nationalism was also a powerful force in Hungary, Poland, and Finland, and according to Rosalind Blakesley part of “a broader political landscape of national resurrection and resistance to the oppression of foreign rule.”<sup>6</sup> Ideologically the Arts and Crafts movement fit the all-encompassing ambitions of such cultural nationalism very well. As Nicola Gordon Bowe observes, the movement “was as much an ideology as a style. It involved the attitude of the artist, craftsman or designer to materials, process and technique, production, iconography, way of life, even dress, and relationship to society.”<sup>7</sup> An advertisement for the Dun Emer Guild, an Arts and Crafts studio, was similarly all-encompassing: “decorate your home with Dun Emer tufted rugs, embroidered portieres and sofa backs, put Dun Emer tapestries on your walls and Dun Emer books in your bookcases. This is the duty of an Irish woman.”<sup>8</sup> In Ireland such cultural nationalism contributed significantly to the political developments that would eventually lead to the Anglo-Irish War and the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922.

The Irish Literary Revival was an important part of that “broader political landscape of national insurrection” in Ireland. It began to gather steam in the 1880s, and its major architects included W. B. Yeats, Augusta Gregory, and J. M. Synge. They and other writers engaged in a wide range of literary pursuits: collecting and publishing Irish folklore and folktales, uncovering and re-telling ancient Irish legends and stories, issuing translations, producing critical and theoretical discourses, and working to found an Irish national theater. Writing in poetry, prose, and drama, they drew upon Irish subject matter and tried to speak to Irish audiences. The best Revivalist writers deliberately eschewed mere patriotism or propaganda; they wanted to produce literary works that would be aesthetically accomplished and innovative, and at the same time authentically and distinctively national. Much, if not most, of the Irish literature produced between 1880 and 1922 and now considered canonical engaged in some way with the Irish Literary Revival.

W. B. Yeats’s circle of family and friends illustrates many of the personal interconnections between the Literary Revival and Arts and Crafts. Although he would eventually become a writer, Yeats attended the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art and later the Royal Hibernian Academy between 1884 and 1887; during those years he reportedly visited the Irish National Gallery a total of ninety-three times, demonstrating an avid interest in the visual arts.<sup>9</sup> In 1887 he moved to London and met William Morris; the term “Arts and Crafts” was coined that same year. Yeats’s sisters also attended art school; Susan learned embroidery from Morris’s daughter, May, subsequently moving back to Ireland and becoming part of the Dun Emer Guild.<sup>10</sup> His other sister, Elizabeth, worked there as well, concentrating on printing. The painter Jack Yeats (W. B. Yeats’s brother) and his wife Mary were also intimately connected with the Arts and Crafts movement in Ireland. Over the years, W. B. Yeats was involved in various ways with Dun Emer and its successor, the Cuala Press, an involvement that spawned

both collaboration and conflict.

Both the Literary Revival and Irish Arts and Crafts practice looked back to the past, but they did so in order to face forward into the future. Writers and artists in these movements sought to reanimate pieces of traditional Irish culture, to employ them to produce new cultural artifacts that would embody a distinctive—and distinctively modern—Irish nationality. As Bowe observes, “lost traditions were revived or adapted in a determinedly modern idiom.”<sup>11</sup> In an 1892 essay, Yeats wrote, “We have behind us in the past the most moving legends and a history full of lofty passions. If we can but take that history and those legends and turn them into dramas, poems, and stories full of the living soul of the present,...we may deliver that new great utterance for which the world is waiting.”<sup>12</sup> This formulation linked past, present, and future, tradition and modernity, with no sense of contradiction. For Yeats and other Revivalist writers, because Ireland was a colonized nation in which indigenous culture and language had been long suppressed and scorned by the ruling classes, tradition *was* revolutionary; modernity and tradition were natural allies.<sup>13</sup> As P. J. Mathews observes, “the ‘alternative modernity’ of the revival is distinctive in that it repeatedly understands the idea of tradition as a stimulus towards innovation and change rather than a barrier to it.”<sup>14</sup>

Like Revivalism more generally, the Literary Revival explicitly aimed to create a whole “way of life,” and the opportunities for individuals and groups to signify their Irishness were nearly limitless. As Yeats recalled in his autobiography, “I wished for a world where I could discover this tradition perpetually, and not in pictures and in poems only, but in tiles round the chimney-piece and in the hangings that keep out the draft.”<sup>15</sup> He did not see the production of literature as taking place in a separate sphere from more everyday forms of production; instead, Yeats conceived of his literary pursuits as allied with the efforts of craftsmen and women seeking to produce distinctively Irish home furnishings and other objects

that would be both beautiful and functional. Lord Mayo, the founder of Arts and Crafts in Ireland, imagined an alliance between high art and daily life in similar terms, writing, “Our efforts are directed to efface, as far as is possible, the distinction between the artist and the artisan, and to carry the contemplation of beauty from public galleries and buildings into the homes of the people and into their daily life.”<sup>16</sup>

Yeats also envisioned Ireland’s past as a culture in which literature was allied to the applied arts and to daily life and hoped that reviving tradition would stimulate a similar alliance in the present. Reviewing a book about ancient Ireland in 1890, he claimed, “In those ages the genius of the Gael seems to have found its most complete expression. From the monasteries of Ireland, Europe learned to illuminate its bibles and psalters, and there-with the manner of working beautifully in metals”; Yeats linked “the shaping of bardic tales, the adornment of missals, [and] the working in precious metals.”<sup>17</sup> He even coined the term “the applied arts of literature,” writing that he hoped to achieve a nation in which “all, artist and poet, craftsman and day-laborer would accept a common design.”<sup>18</sup> Like many artists and artisans of Ireland’s Arts and Crafts movement, he saw the Irish past to be revived as a specifically medieval one. He described Morris, whom he made into an honorary Celt by calling him “the great Welshman,” as building on the “great modern mediaeval movement” of the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

Beyond shared personnel and a shared ideology, the Irish Arts and Crafts movement provided a series of visual and material equivalents to some of the major themes of the literature being produced by Yeats and other Literary Revivalists. Unlike the ideological convictions and goals discussed above, these themes do not always appear explicitly in the theoretical writing of the movement. But by viewing such thematic preoccupations in Irish Arts and Crafts practice in the context of the Literary Revival, we can uncover the ways in which they function as visual analogues to it. Such an interpretive

procedure is necessarily somewhat speculative, and to some extent involves “reading” Arts and Crafts objects as if they were literary texts. But it offers us a way of apprehending what Arts and Crafts objects might have signified to the Ireland of their time, or to a portion of that Ireland, and it makes visible the multiple connections between the two movements.

Two sorts of human figures repeatedly appear in Revivalist writing. The first—heroic figures from Irish saga literature and legend such as Cu Chulainn, Oisín, and Deirdre<sup>20</sup>—were stately, powerful, and dignified; their stories were usually tragic. Revivalist writers, however, did not simply transmit ancient Irish sagas and legends into the present; they were selective in their literary adaptations and allusions, by and large choosing certain characters over others and shaping representations of them to emphasize their heroic qualities. Another figure pre-occupying the Literary Revival was the Irish peasant, and here too, writers actively and selectively interpreted their

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1. Western Irish peasants, *Illustrated London News* (Dec. 4, 1890).

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2. Thomas Nast (1840–1902), “The Usual Irish Way of Doing Things,” *Harper’s Weekly* (Sept. 2, 1871).

representations. Revivalists imagined the Irish peasant as materially impoverished but culturally rich, as untouched by anglicization, and as Irish speaking. To avoid the uncomfortable fact that Irish rural dwellers were overwhelmingly Catholic, whereas most major Revivalist writers were Protestant, the Literary Revival tended to cast the peasantry as pagan or pre-Christian. As with the heroic figures, Revivalist writers typically emphasized the dignified, even tragic aspects of the peasant’s life (fig. 1).

Much of the impetus behind this emphasis originated in the Literary Revival’s reaction against the stage Irishman, a comic buffoon or ignorant brawler who dominated representations of the Irish in theaters during much of the nineteenth century (fig. 2). In response, Yeats and Augusta Gregory’s public announcement of the new Irish national theater described their intention to “show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and of easy sentiment, as it has been represented, but the home of an ancient idealism.”<sup>21</sup> For Revivalists, adding dignity to Ireland involved acknowledging, even insisting, that Ireland’s history was a history of failure, defeat, and oppression, but simultaneously transforming such failure into the makings of heroic spiritual triumph. As Yeats wrote in

1897, “It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the spiritual history of the world has been the history of conquered races.”<sup>22</sup> Two years later he put it slightly differently, arguing that Ireland had “no great wealth, no preoccupation with successful persons” and that its literature instead dwelt on “ideas living in the perfection of hope, on visions of unfulfilled desire, and not on the sordid compromise of success.”<sup>23</sup> Gregory’s formulation was similar; she exhorted Irish writers to “tell of the meaning of failure, of the gain that may lie in the wake of a lost battle.”<sup>24</sup> Revivalist writers who favored ancient heroic figures generally looked to that past—to saga literature and legend—to locate a distinctive Irishness. Those who favored depictions of the peasantry, on the other hand, highlighted the living vigor of a contemporary indigenous culture so as to combine the anthropological and the literary in their representations. But both sorts of figures—the mythic heroes and the peasantry—involved translating failure into potential victory, and both found their way into objects produced by the Arts and Crafts movement in Ireland.

Something of this stoic spiritual heroism in the face of difficult circumstances characterizes the Catholic sodality banners produced in 1904 by Dun Emer for St. Brendan’s Cathedral in Loughrea, County Galway (fig. 3). Because these commissions came from churches, the stately



3. St. Brendan’s Cathedral, Loughrea.



4. J. M. Synge, *Aran Islanders*, c. 1900. Manuscripts and Archives Research Library, Papers of John Millington Synge, Trinity College Dublin, MS 11332. Published in *My Wallet of Photographs* (Dublin: Dolmen, 1971).

human figures depicted are saints rather than legendary heroes. But the saints are treated in accordance with the Literary Revival's focus on the heroic. These figures, with what Sheehy calls their "bold simplified shapes,"<sup>25</sup> are imposing and solemn; they gesture toward mythic types rather than emphasizing their individuality. Their dress is stately but not ornate, and they are depicted as figures of dignified action, but not necessarily of complete power or control. Conventions dictated that St. Patrick be pictured driving the snakes out of Ireland (pl. 123), but two other banners present figures whose actions are more ambiguous and more in keeping with the central preoccupations and contradictions of the Literary Revival. The banner representing St. Jarlath (pl. 121) prominently depicts the broken chariot wheel associated with that saint. After he founded a monastery at Cloonfush, Jarlath retired to Tuam, choosing that city because the wheel of his chariot broke there. In the Loughrea banner he looks back at the viewer, his progress obviously arrested by the broken wheel. But his stance is defiant—one hand upon his hip, shoulders squared back, and with both his body and his

horse pointed forward into the future. In the banner representing St. Columcille (pl. 122), said to have made a copy of the oldest surviving Irish psalter, the saint is a less physically imposing figure, his eyes downcast rather than engaging the viewer. He is seated and writing with one hand, as he is often depicted, but the other hand is clenched in an ambiguous fist. Such body language could express frustration, anguish, determination, or defiance. Both banners might be read as imaging a central trope of Revivalist writing: the union of worldly failure with spiritual strength and success.

The theme of material deprivation functioned somewhat differently in representations of peasant figures, but here, too, aspects of Revivalist thinking appear in Arts and Crafts designs. Because the Literary Revival was primarily a middle- and upper-class movement that idealized an impoverished indigenous peasant culture, its writers were often in danger of romanticizing the Irish tenant's rural poverty as well. In the Irish countryside, English, rather than Irish, was the language of upward mobility, and cultural anglicization was often associated with material prosperity. So for Revivalists, poverty could appear to guarantee cultural purity. On the Aran Islands, J. M. Synge claimed that the inhabitants of the least anglicized island had lives that had "the strange quality that is found in the oldest poetry and legend" and lamented the "falling off that has come with the increased prosperity" of a less primitive island (fig. 4).<sup>26</sup> Yeats put it in yet another way: "he who would write a folk tale, and thereby bring a new life into literature, must have the fatigue of the spade in his hands and the stupor of the fields in his heart."<sup>27</sup> As they sang the praises of the authentic Irish culture located among the poorest and least anglicized inhabitants of rural Ireland, Literary Revivalists frequently, if perhaps unconsciously, registered the social and economic divide between themselves and the peasantry, who they often referred to as "the people."<sup>28</sup>

The middle- and upper-class Arts and Crafts "champions of Irishness"<sup>29</sup> who depicted Irish country people

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5. John Lavery (1856–1941), *Portrait of Lady Lavery as Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, 1928. Oil on canvas, 75.5 x 62.5 cm, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, L.14776.



6. Maud Gonne as *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, Abbey Theatre, 1902.

displayed a similar formulation, presenting idealized peasant figures who were also held firmly in their impoverished economic sphere. Two of John Campbell's prints in this exhibition exemplify this tendency. Both were produced as illustrations for Ethna Carbery's *Songs from "The Four Winds of Eirinn,"* a set of six booklets of illustrated poems.<sup>30</sup> *Mary of Carrick* (pl. 103) depicts a barefoot young woman carrying two milking pails along a country road. She dominates the foreground, and Campbell's use

of blues for her clothes and her path creates the impression that the very road she travels, as well as the landscape more generally, has somehow been produced by her, is connected to her—giving an added layer of meaning to the title. She is “of” Carrick in the sense that she has made it; she embodies it.

This allegorical status for Mary offers a visual echo of Revivalist literature—such as Carbery's poems—that drew upon a long-established literary and cultural tradition of representing Ireland as a woman (fig. 5). The most famous, even iconic, Revivalist example of this trope is Yeats and Gregory's play *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, produced in 1902 (fig. 6), four years before Campbell's print. At the end of the play, the mysterious, dispossessed old woman representing a dispossessed Ireland is rejuvenated when a young countryman abandons his worldly ambitions and family to sacrifice himself for her—choosing almost certain death by joining the 1798 rebellion against the British. Cathleen's transformation happens offstage; in the play's last line, the only character to see the now young Cathleen describes her as “a young girl” with “the walk of a queen.”<sup>31</sup> Campbell's Mary also has a queenly walk and an air of mystery (her head is turned away from viewer, eyes hidden, and chin raised, perhaps in haughtiness). She too is observed by a male figure in the background, holding a rake to indicate that, like the young boy who observes the old woman's transformation in *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, he belongs to the peasant class. Campbell's Mary combines idealization and national allegory, but also an insistence on her lower-class position that refuses any acknowledgment of the hardships of that status—again all tropes related to those of Revivalist literature.

*Thinkin' Long* (pl. 104), from the same set of illustrations, offers a somewhat different version of this same female figure, one in which Campbell raises the issues of class more explicitly and consciously. Contemplative and still rather than queenly and walking, this peasant woman displays her bare foot prominently. She is surrounded by objects that signify her class status and the labor such

status involves: a spinning wheel, a basket of yarn or wool, a bucket, a broom, and a jug. This print suggests that her life could be harsh—or that she might want to resist its labor. The objects lie about her unused, and, rather than dominating the foreground of the picture, she is framed by the cottage interior around her in a more realistic manner than *Mary of Carrick*, with the window and books on the right suggesting kinds of freedom and opportunity she may lack. Campbell's elaborate use of shadows suggests a profound ambiguity. She faces the light source, so roughly half of her body and clothes are illuminated, while the other half appears in shadow. Most striking is the large and somewhat sinister shadow behind her. It looms over her; the shadows of both the woman and the spinning wheel appear taller than the objects that produce them, suggesting that some threatening, hidden truth may be embodied in the scene. Should we see her as an ideal Irish maiden, engaged in a spiritual reverie on "ideas living in the perfection of hope," the anti-materialist vision of the life of "the people" that Literary Revivalists such as Yeats liked to attribute to authentic Irish culture? Or does the ominous shadow tell the real story of her life, and of the potential costs of such idealization?<sup>32</sup> The accompanying poem casts the young woman, not as Cathleen ni Houlihan, but as Delia, the deserted woman in Yeats and Gregory's play whose man left her "When from the soul of Ireland came / A call for fightin' men."<sup>33</sup> We can see a related ambiguity about the period's representations of the nation as a woman by contrasting Mervyn Lawrence's bust *Erina* (pl. 111) and a female figure depicted on the pokerwork spinning stool (pl. 62) made in the same period. *Erina* appears pensive and passive, a woman deserted or a nation dispossessed, whereas the figure on the stool stands upright and raises her arm in defiance or exhortation.

Representations of nature, landscapes, plants, and animals also suggest the Arts and Crafts movement's intimate connections with the Irish Literary Revival. For Revivalist writers, the land of Ireland itself became

a repository of authentic Irishness and an argument for political independence. As one popular nineteenth-century political ballad, Thomas Davis's "The West's Asleep," put it: "That chainless wave and lovely land / Freedom and nationhood demand."<sup>34</sup> Edward Said, drawing on work by geographers and postcolonial thinkers, points out that imperialism transforms the natural world, producing a "second nature" whose features can be marshaled to support the colonial project. For example, Ireland's geographical proximity to England was sometimes cited as evidence that it was "natural" for England to rule Ireland. In response, Said argues, writers like Yeats are preoccupied with writing about the natural world, not in order to return to a pristine state of nature, but rather to engage in acts of anti-colonial re-territorialization, to "seek out, to map, to invent, or to discover a *third* nature." Thus, Said concludes, "one of the first tasks of the culture of resistance was to reclaim, rename, and reinhabit the land."<sup>35</sup>

This cartographic impulse was central to the Literary Revival, and it encompassed not just landscapes but other aspects of the natural world as well. Yeats wrote of Irish folklore, much of which deals with place names and involves traditions and stories that are tied to specific localities: "All these stories are such as to unite man more closely to the woods and hills and waters about him, and to the birds and animals that live in them, and to give him types and symbols for those feelings and passions which find no adequate expression in common life."<sup>36</sup> He urged Irish writers to "make the land about them a Holy Land" and argued that the Irish "have a passion for their lands, and the waters and mountains of their lands."<sup>37</sup> Whereas some Revivalist writers, such as J. M. Synge and Emily Lawless, stressed the bare, desolate qualities of the landscapes and natural world on the Aran Islands, others depicted fertile Irish landscapes, teeming with life and meaning—a tradition that predated the Revival and was appropriated and revised by the movement. A poem written by "T. C. D." during the Famine, for example, asks, "Is not this bright and fruitful earth / Sufficient to sustain /

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7. William Morris (1834–96), *Acanthus* wallpaper, 1874.

The creatures of thy framing, Lord! / With root and bursting grain? / Are *we* mere step-sons of this teeming soil...?”<sup>38</sup> A few decades later, the early Yeats features less explicitly agricultural Irish landscapes, but ones symbolically rich in both natural beauty and mystical significance: “The Lake Isle of Innisfree,” where the speaker praises his “nine bean rows” and his “hive for the honey bee” is one famous example. His sister Susan’s embroidered panel *The Meadow* (pl. 114) offers a visual counterpart to such literary landscapes of abundance. These representations of Irish nature functioned as emblems of national potential and as rebukes to an English imperialism that had exploited, stolen, or crushed the land’s natural profusion.

Yeats associated William Morris in particular with “the worshippers of natural abundance.”<sup>39</sup> Morris did, in fact, often favor designs drawn from nature, and especially in the floral motifs of many famous wallpaper and textile patterns, one can see his influence on the Irish movement (fig. 7). Work produced by Arts and Crafts artists in Ireland participated in this impulse, pursuing the Literary Revival’s project of uniting the Irish more closely to their

woods, hills, waters, plants, and animals. Morris’s interest in floral patterns is evident in the English Arts and Crafts artist Charles F. A. Voysey’s design for this exhibition’s hearth rug in the popular “Donemana” series (named after a small village in Ireland) depicting tulips and other floral motifs (pl. 64). Voysey’s floral designs, sometimes based on popular French wallpaper patterns rather than more obviously Celtic inspired motifs, were immensely popular patterns in the Donegal carpet industry that the Scotsman Alexander Morton founded in Killybegs in 1898. Morton’s firm, which rapidly achieved a flourishing international trade, offered employment to rural Irish women, who most frequently executed English Arts and Crafts motifs.

But Irish Arts and Crafts representations of the natural world could differ from the English model in several respects. In the context of early twentieth-century Irish cultural nationalism and political insurrection, any impulse to define the natural world through potential and/or actual abundance carried strong nationalist connotations. Morris’s engagement with nature lacked the anti-colonial tenor of the Irish movement, which sought, not an untouched nature, but the politically motivated creation of Said’s “third nature.” The Irish movement’s use, for example, of abstract interlace as an integral element in representations of plants and animals gestured toward a specifically Celtic design tradition and emphasized a conception of nature that, as Said suggests, has been appropriated and shaped by culture.

In a Cork School of Art student panel in the Irish Arts and Crafts style modeled on *Christ Enthroned*, from the Book of Kells (fig. 8), natural profusion and rich cultural allusion are allied (pl. 81). Celtic interlacing accompanies birds and symbols of the Four Evangelists. These elements reflect both human imagination and the natural world, and gesture toward the Literary Revival’s interest in myth and folklore, both Christian and pre-Christian. In the top portion of the panel, the human artifice of the interlacing and natural world of the birds are rendered



8. *Christ Enthroned*, Book of Kells, fol. 32v.  
Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 58.

nearly indistinguishable. The peacocks, symbolizing resurrection in Christian iconography, stand on vegetation shaped like the interlacing and, in the space between them, the interlaced design contains visual echoes of the birds' beaks and—in perhaps the most striking detail of all—has bird feet.

The Irish movement characteristically turned to zoomorphic designs drawn from early Christian manuscripts, again most notably the Book of Kells, as in another Cork School of Art panel (pl. 82). In Maeve O'Byrne's prize-winning design in the Celtic style (pl. 84), the stylized birds and Celtic interlace surround an object resembling the Tara Brooch, but with the addition of a stem transforming it into a chalice. Such an object suggests the dependence of the emerging Arts and Crafts movement on Ireland's great early Christian design sources. Although elements of the Celtic style became fashionable in other parts of Britain, and it certainly appears in English designs for Liberty and Co., the nationalist significance of that style in Ireland was central to its

frequent appearance in Arts and Crafts practice. A few years later, Evelyn Gleeson's design for her *Hand-knotted rug* (c. 1913; pl. 120) combines zoomorphic Christian imagery with Celtic decoration. Such an object suggests how the Dun Emer workshop, in Nicola Gordon Bowe's words, "reflected the nationalist, socialist, industrial and ultimately political concerns in Ireland which had been gathering momentum since the early years of the nineteenth century."<sup>40</sup>

It is helpful to see the Irish Arts and Crafts movement through a double lens. On the one hand, it absorbed and conveyed ideas, themes, and techniques from Britain's foundational Arts and Crafts practitioners to Ireland. But the Irish movement was as profoundly shaped by its intimate ties with the country's Literary Revival and should be seen as one strand in the wider project of Revivalism during this period. William Patrick Ryan captures both the alliance between various fields of endeavor and the combination of Irish distinctiveness and indebtedness to foreign models in summing up what "true nationhood" meant to the Literary Revival in 1894: "true nationhood presupposes a people thoroughly conversant with their own characteristics and powers, keenly conscious of their industrial and other resources, proud of their rights and their home institutions, manly, dignified, self-supporting, but in sympathy with the human and spiritual interests of outer humanity; loving their own artistic and intellectual creations, and finding in them something spiritually noble to rally to; distinctive but not insular."<sup>41</sup>

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- 1 William Patrick Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival: Its History, Pioneers and Possibilities* (London: Ward and Downey, 1894).
- 2 Ibid., 122–24. The quote is on 122.
- 3 Jeanne Sheehy argues that “the aspect of Irish art that came closest to the literary and language revivals, and had most support from all the people concerned, was applied art.” Jeanne Sheehy, *The Rediscovery of Ireland’s Past: The Celtic Revival, 1830–1930* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 149.
- 4 For an excellent survey of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement as a “visual counterpart of the Celtic Revival” see Nicola Gordon Bowe, “Preserving the Relics of Heroic Time: Visualizing the Celtic Revival in Early Twentieth-Century Ireland,” in *Synge and Edwardian Ireland*, ed. Brian Cliff and Nicholas Grene (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 58.
- 5 See, for example, P. J. Mathews, *Revival: The Abbey Theatre, Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League and the Co-operative Movement* (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2003).
- 6 Rosalind Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: Phaidon, 2006), 8. See also Nicola Gordon Bowe, “The Irish Arts and Crafts Movement: Aspects of Nationalism (1886–1925); Suggested Parallels and Context,” *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* (1990–91): 172–85.
- 7 Bowe, “Irish Arts and Crafts,” 172.
- 8 Emer Cheasley Paterson, “Crafting a National Identity: The Dun Emer Guild, 1902–8,” in *The Irish Revival Reappraised*, ed. Betsey Taylor FitzSimon and James H. Murphy (Dublin: Four Courts, 2004), 116.
- 9 Bernadette McCarthy, “William Butler Yeats: The Poet in the School of Art,” *Notes and Queries* 55, no. 4 (2008): 518–21. See also R. F. Foster, *W. B. Yeats: A Life; Volume 1, The Apprentice Mage* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), 34–58, passim.
- 10 For more information on Dun Emer, see essays by Andrew A. Kuhn and Nancy Netzer in this catalogue.
- 11 Bowe, “Preserving the Relics,” 61.
- 12 W. B. Yeats, *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Volume 9: Early Articles and Reviews*, ed. John P. Frayne and Madeleine Marchaterre (New York: Scribner, 2004), 187.
- 13 For a compelling and authoritative formulation of Yeats’s sense of the revolutionary nature of Irish tradition, see Seamus Deane, “Yeats and the Idea of Revolution,” in *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature, 1880–1980* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 38–50.
- 14 Mathews, *Revival*, 2.
- 15 W. B. Yeats, *The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats* (1935; New York: Macmillan, 1965), 77.
- 16 Qtd. in Paul Larmour, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland* (Belfast: Friar’s Bush, 1992), 73.
- 17 Yeats, *Early Articles*, 109, 112.
- 18 Yeats, *Autobiography*, 131.
- 19 Yeats, *Early Articles*, 369.
- 20 Cu Chulainn appears in Gregory’s re-telling of the saga, *Cuchulainn of Muirthemne* and several of Yeats’s plays. Oisín is the subject of Yeats’s long poem “The Wanderings of Usheen.” And Yeats, Æ (George William Russell), and Synge all wrote plays about Deirdre.
- 21 Lady Augusta Gregory, *Selected Writings*, ed. Lucy McDiarmid and Maureen Waters (London: Penguin, 1995), xvi.
- 22 Yeats, *Early Articles*, 368.
- 23 Ibid., 469.
- 24 Gregory, *Selected Writings*, 254.

- 25 Sheehy, *Rediscovery of Ireland's Past*, 157.
- 26 J. M. Synge, *The Aran Islands* (1907; London: Penguin, 1992), 69.
- 27 Yeats, *Early Articles*, 212–13.
- 28 See, for example, Synge's preface to *The Playboy of the Western World* (*The Playboy of the Western World and Other Plays* [New York: Signet Classic, 1997], 2) and Gregory, *Selected Writings*, 57.
- 29 Alan Crawford, "United Kingdom: Origins and First Flowering," in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Europe and America: Design for the Modern World*, ed. Wendy Kaplan, exh. cat. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 51.
- 30 See Paul Larmour, "John Campbell (1883–1962): An Artist of the Irish Revival," *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* 14 (1998): 62–73.
- 31 W. B. Yeats, *The Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1952), 88.
- 32 Paul Larmour reports that in Ulster usage, "thinkin' long" means "fretting after somebody or something" ("John Campbell," 70).
- 33 Seumas MacManus, ed., *The Four Winds of Eirinn: The Poems of Ethna Carbery* (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, Jas. Duffy, 1906), 67, <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/carbery/eirinn/eirinn.html#long>.
- 34 Thomas Davis, *The Poems of Thomas Davis* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1857), 9.
- 35 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1993), 225–26.
- 36 Yeats, *Early Articles*, 212.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 354.
- 38 "The Last Appeal," in *The Hungry Voice: The Poetry of the Irish Famine*, ed. Christopher Morash (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), 50.
- 39 W. B. Yeats, *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Volume 4: Early Essays*, ed. Richard Finneran and George Bornstein (New York: Scribner, 2007), 43.
- 40 Nicola Gordon Bowe, "Two Early Twentieth-Century Irish Arts and Crafts Workshops in Context: An Túr Gloine and the Dun Emer Guild and Industries," *Journal of Design History* 2, no. 2–3 (1989): 197.
- 41 Ryan, *Irish Literary Revival*, 179.

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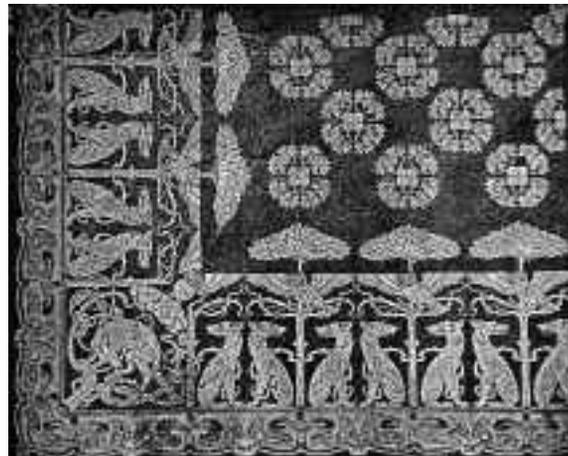
# THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

Paul Larmour

**B**elfast and the province of Ulster, or “the North,” was a thriving area of Arts and Crafts activity from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries—this despite Dublin’s more prominent role, with its central organizations and nationally important exhibitions.<sup>1</sup> Many developments in the North, however, echoed or even anticipated those elsewhere in Ireland: from the promotion of cottage industries in rural areas in the 1880s and 1890s to the subsequent cultivation of individual professional careers and of specialist firms both before and after the First World War. Artists from the region displayed their work widely in exhibitions and World’s Fairs, both in Ireland and internationally. By exploring areas of Arts and Crafts strength in the region, including the vital role of women, this essay argues for the important contributions of the North of Ireland to that movement.<sup>2</sup>

An emphasis on decorative design at the School of Art in Belfast—reflecting that city’s particular needs as the great manufacturing center of Ireland—was a distinctive element of Northern activity in the period and made the school an important focus for the city’s decorative arts. “The most important question in regard to any School of Art is whether its operations are of benefit to local industries,” wrote George Trobridge, headmaster in the 1880s and 1890s; he conducted instruction accordingly.<sup>3</sup> As a world leader in the production of linen, Belfast looked to its local school of art to provide designers for the city’s damask firms, and many stu-

dents and former students fulfilled that need. Essentially English-inspired floriated motifs were popular during the Trobridge years, typified by the damask designs produced by the prize-winning student Edwin Morrow (fig. 1), one of which was purchased as an exemplar by the Hungarian government. Trobridge’s own background inevitably led to such a design focus, but this emphasis on English Arts and Crafts motifs was stimulated by the 1895 Belfast Art and Industrial Exhibition’s display of wallpapers by the leading English designers of the day, including Walter Crane and Lewis Day. Moreover, in 1898, the School of Art engaged Day as an adjudicator and lecturer on the



1. Edwin Morrow, *Enchanted Forest*, design for a damask tablecloth, c. 1897 (Coyne, *Ireland: Industrial and Agricultural*).

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2. The design room in the School of Art, Belfast, with Robert Dawson to the right, explaining the construction of Celtic knots and interlaced panels (*Prospectus of the Municipal Technical Institute, Belfast, 1907*).



3. The enameling and metalwork room in the School of Art, Belfast (*Prospectus of the Municipal Technical Institute, Belfast, 1907*).

subjects of “Pattern Design” and “Decorative Design.”

The prevailing character of the School of Art’s design program changed, however, with the 1901 appointment of Robert Dawson as new headmaster.<sup>4</sup> An enthusiast about Celtic ornament, he lectured on its construction (fig. 2), influencing his students to apply such motifs not only in damask design, but in other fields as well. Dawson also introduced specialist craft classes in the school (fig. 3), including enameling and metalwork, woodcarving,

embroidery, and lacemaking, all newly established in 1902, followed by stained glass in 1909. Such a comprehensive range of classes equipped graduates from the Belfast school to become principal designers for the city’s damask firms, as well as artists and craftworkers in other fields. Collectively, they brought a range of influences—from William Morris-inspired English Arts and Crafts to Celtic Revivalism—in their contributions to Northern manufacturing and decorative design.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL COTTAGE INDUSTRIES IN THE NORTH

One of Ireland’s earliest and most significant ventures in cottage industries began in the North—in County Donegal, where Alice Hart of London established the Donegal Industrial Fund in 1883 to help a poverty-stricken peasantry in a neglected part of the country. Touring there with her husband in the wake of the Donegal Famine of 1879–83, she was struck by the lack of employment for its impoverished inhabitants. Hart set about reviving a craft industry that had once flourished in the region; she established classes not only in weaving, but also in the extraction of natural dyes from some of the wild plants of the area—heathers, lichens, and mosses—as well as from soot from cabin chimneys. She also supplied designs, sought orders through displays at public exhibitions in London and elsewhere, and eventually established Donegal House, a shop in central London for the products of the Donegal Industrial Fund. Her help extended beyond the organization of rural tenants in County Donegal, for Hart also recruited women in villages elsewhere in the North.

The Donegal Industrial Fund was best known for its “Kells embroidery,” worked in dyed and polished flax threads on Irish linen, after designs chiefly taken from early Irish manuscripts such as the Book of Kells. Typical of such embroidery was a tablecloth designed by Aimée Carpenter, exhibited at the Paris International Exhibition of 1889 and decorated with paired interlacing dogs



4. Section of a tablecloth designed by Aimée Carpenter and embroidered by Alice Hart's workers, exhibited at the Paris International Exhibition, 1889 (*Art Journal*, 1889).

based on a detail from the Book of Kells (fig. 4). The Fund's craftworkers also produced a set of curtains made for Candice Wheeler's Associated Artists of New York in 1886, which featured more freely treated zoomorphic interlace (see Helland, fig. 3). These curtains were so admired by Queen Victoria that she ordered a similar set for Windsor Castle. Hart's organization, eventually embracing woodcarving as well as weaving and embroidery, was widely publicized, its products on display at major Arts and Crafts exhibitions in both Ireland and England. In 1893, the Donegal Industrial Fund successfully exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair, carrying off six awards.

Among the many woodcarving classes set up all over Ireland in the 1880s and 1890s, mostly under the aegis of the Home Arts and Industries Association, were three in County Donegal run by Everina Sinclair, daughter of a well-off family from Holyhill in neighboring County Tyrone. Located in Donegal Town, Dunkineely, and Bonnyglen where the Sinclairs had their second home, all three classes were regular exhibitors at the Royal Dublin Society's annual "Art Industries" sales in the 1890s; some

of this work was also shown at the 1895 first exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland in Dublin. These woodworking groups produced carved boxes, screens, chairs, wall cabinets, bellows, picture frames, and plaques, all carried out in a variety of styles, including Renaissance, Moorish, and Celtic (fig. 5).

Another early cottage industry in the North, again run by a woman, was the Fivemiletown Art Metal-Work class established in 1892 by Mary Montgomery, wife of the local landowner at Blessingbourne in Fivemiletown, County Tyrone. Having run embroidery and sewing instruction for girls for some years, she arranged a metal-work class for the boys and young men of the area. John Williams, a well-known art teacher and metalworker from London, and his daughter Mary helped Montgomery both in instruction and in providing designs. Williams had been one of the first members of Charles Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft, a pioneering Arts and

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5. Examples of work executed in the Bonnyglen Wood-Carving Class to the designs of Everina Sinclair, photographed in 1890.

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6. The Fivemiletown Art Metal-Work stall at the Home Arts and Industries exhibition, London, 1897.

Crafts group in England. As a result of this background, and indeed of Mary Montgomery's own training in England, the Fivemiletown work evidenced a predominantly English character—of nature-based designs following those of Morris and his associates. Wares ranged from small inkwells to large fireplace surrounds, and included tankards, trays, mirror frames, and sconces, all in repoussé copper and brass (fig. 6), although the most accomplished craftworkers were also permitted to make some small items in silver. A large brass tray depicting a pair of peacocks designed by John Williams (pl. 55), a two-handled vase also decorated with birds (pl. 56), and a hearth fan embellished with a floral design of stylized sweet pea (pl. 54) are typical of the decoratively treated but useful domestic objects that Fivemiletown produced. The class exhibited successfully at the main arts and crafts and industrial art shows of the time, both in Ireland and England, and also at the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904—frequently winning prizes and occasionally being favored with royal patronage when its work was displayed in London.

A much larger rural art industry in the North, commercially organized and marketed widely, was the hand-tufted carpet venture known as Donegal Carpets established in the late 1890s by the Scottish textile firm

of Alexander Morton & Co.<sup>5</sup> With factories in four villages in County Donegal—Killybegs, Kilcar, Annagry, and Crolly—the firm employed six hundred local women by 1906 (fig. 7). Handlooms were used to produce rugs and carpets (pl. 119), some very large, to patterns supplied by several well-known British designers of the time, including the prominent English architect Charles F. A. Voysey. Most were of a floral type, whether of Turkish inspiration or of English art nouveau design, such as the “Donemana” rug; its flowing design of flattened natural forms is typical of Voysey's work (pl. 64). Other products offered Celtic ornamental style, an example being the “Pelican” rug based on a design originally created in 1899 by Mary Watts, wife of the renowned English painter G. F. Watts. Symbolic in design, with birds near the corners representative of the pelican feeding her young with her own blood, it has panels of Celtic knotwork at each end (pl. 63).

Famed for their deep coloring and soft springy texture underfoot, Donegal carpets were supplied to prestigious locations throughout Britain and Ireland, including Belfast City Hall; the Vice-Regal Lodge in Dublin; the Prime Minister's residence in Downing Street, London; and the royal houses at Windsor Castle, Buckingham Palace, and Osborne, as well as the Royal Yacht. The carpets were also exported across the Atlantic, stocked,



7. Carpet weavers at work in the first factory established by Alexander Morton & Co. at Killybegs, County Donegal (*Art Journal*, 1900).

for example, in Gustav Stickley's "Craftsman" shops as in keeping with his Arts and Crafts furniture, and used to furnish such prominent settings as the Arctic Club in Seattle, the Athletic Club in Chicago, and the White House in Washington, DC.

### WOMEN IN THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT OF THE NORTH

Women played vital roles in the development of Arts and Crafts throughout Ireland. The North was no exception, not only in its contribution of philanthropic organizers and teachers like Hart, Montgomery, and Sinclair, but also through the emergence of practicing artists and craftswomen, whether as individuals or as members of collectives.

An enduring organization in the history of the Arts and Crafts movement was the Irish Decorative Art Association in Belfast, a group founded in 1894 by women, largely for their communal benefit. As one of the few remunerative activities open to interested and talented women in the late nineteenth century, such Arts and Crafts activity had precedents in the North even prior to 1894. The Belfast School of Art Needlework under Miss E. T. Brook employed middle-class as well as working-class women and displayed prominently at Belfast's 1891 Ladies' Industrial Exhibition. In the early 1890s in the wake of that exhibition, where the Russian artist known in Ireland and America as Madame Korvin-Pogosky<sup>6</sup> had demonstrated the art of burnt-wood engraving, or "pokerwork" as it came to be popularly known, Mina Robinson set up the Belfast School of Pokerwork. With another Belfast craftswoman, Eta Lowry, Robinson then organized the Irish Decorative Art Association—with a more ambitious program than her earlier pokerwork school. Over the next two decades this new group, although based in Belfast, held a series of popular annual summer exhibitions in the north coast resort of Portrush, County Antrim, while also sending its work to the main Arts and Crafts exhibitions in Dublin and

further afield. The group's members exhibited at the Cork International Exhibition of 1902, the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904—and in following years at the Franco-British, the Japan-British, and the Imperial International Exhibitions in London.

Pokerwork (or pyrography), a favorite craft of the Irish Decorative Art Association, decorated a host of wooden furnishings for the home—including picture frames, boxes (pl. 132), rose bowls, spinning stools, side tables, and hall settles (fig. 8)—as well as wall panels for railway carriages and saloons on steamships. Some of the group's output was floral in motif, of an English Arts and Crafts inspiration that occasionally applied the sinuous line of Continental art nouveau design; more objects, however, were crafted in Celtic ornamental style, sometimes incorporating symbolic or mythical Irish figures. One of the group's typical spinning stools is embellished with a female figure brandishing a spool of yarn, arms of the

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8. Margaret Houston, settle decorated with pokerwork, c. 1902. Wood, 141 x 138.5 x 37.5 cm, private collection.

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9. Rosamond Praeger, *The Fairy Fountain*, 1901. Plaster, 64.8 x 76.2 x 28.6 cm, private collection.

four provinces of Ireland, and panels of Celtic interlace (pl. 62). A particular Belfast specialty from 1902 involved applying Celtic decoration to Irish harps manufactured by the self-taught specialist maker James McFall (pl. 1). Other crafts were added to the group's repertoire from time to time, such as the hand-tooling of leather for bookbindings, card-cases, purses, notebooks, cigarette cases, and ladies' bags, as well as the hand-painting of ceramics using blanks from the Belleek Pottery of County Fermanagh.

Other women in the North achieved significant individual success in the region's Arts and Crafts community. Rosamund Praeger trained initially at the School of Art in Belfast, and then briefly in London and Paris, returning to Ireland to open her own studio, first in Belfast, and then in Holywood, County Down.<sup>7</sup> Praeger illustrated a number of children's books in the 1890s and early 1900s before concentrating on sculpture. Aside from straightforward figure and portrait pieces, and the sentimental studies of children for which she is most popularly known (fig. 9), she frequently chose Irish subjects, including works with mythological themes. She also turned to scenes of idealized Irish peasant life as in *A Wind from the East*, a plaster plaque depicting a mother and child

looking out to sea (pl. 110), or another depicting a young woman and child feeding the flames beneath a cooking pot at an Irish cottage fireplace (fig. 10). Arts and Crafts theorists after John Ruskin advocated the loosening of divisions between the "fine" and "applied" arts, and Praeger habitually straddled the line between the two forms. She exhibited not only with the Belfast Art Society, the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin, and the Royal Academy in London, but also with the Irish Decorative Art Association at its summer exhibitions in Portrush, and with the Dublin-based Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland.

Edith McDermott who had also trained at Belfast's School of Art, was a local professional artworker known for Celtic ornamentation. Her entries at the Irish International Exhibition of 1907—a firescreen of carved oak set with copper enamels and a stained wooden bowl also set with enamels—were typical of her work, both before and



10. Rosamond Praeger, relief plaque of woman and child, c. 1910. Plaster, 29.8 x 15.2 cm, private collection.



11. Edith McDermott, bowl, c. 1907. Wood, copper, enamel, pewter, 14 x 30.5 (diam.) cm, private collection.

after the First World War, as an independent rival to the women of the Irish Decorative Art Association (fig. 11).

In the period after the First World War, the Irish Decorative Art Association saw a change in personnel with Lowry and Robinson, the joint founders in the 1890s, now replaced as the key figures by two other Northern women, Eveline McCloy and Eva McKee. They produced much craftwork, including jewelry, repoussé copper work, and painted calendars (pl. 100) and cards, in addition to the previous range of the studio; and, as in the earlier years, much of it was Celtic in style, with boldly drawn designs by McKee capturing much attention (pl. 98). McKee appears responsible for most of the studio's designs, often signed in the Irish version of her name, A. McAoda or Aoife McA. Many of her Celtic ornamental pieces incorporate exotic long-plumed birds, as in a pokerwork panel of peacocks and flowers for a box lid; the sinuous lines of its composition also evidence a strong element of art nouveau (pl. 99). McKee's work, probably more than that of anyone else in the city, inspired the writer Aodh de Blacam to note in 1921 that "Belfast, such is my impression, gathered with no small surprise, is in advance of Dublin in the matter of national art. In Belfast I saw extraordinary specimens of vigorous Celtic work."<sup>8</sup> In a further Irish dimension, many of the studio's hand-colored and hand-lettered prints contained verses from such well-known Irish writers as James Stephens

(pl. 101), Æ (George William Russell), Moira O'Neill, and Joseph Campbell, as well as traditional sayings, sometimes inscribed in the Irish language.

### GRAPHIC DESIGN, ILLUSTRATION, ILLUMINATION, AND ALLIED ARTS IN THE NORTH

Northern artists and organizations made significant Arts and Crafts contributions in graphic design. With an art department led by John Vinycomb,<sup>9</sup> the internationally acclaimed Belfast printing and publishing firm Marcus Ward & Co. produced illuminated addresses and albums with fine bindings.<sup>10</sup> Much of such work was Celtic in style, for example the colored illuminated address to the Catholic Bishop of Limerick in 1886 (fig. 12), the forerunner of a form that would become a mainstay of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement well into the next century (see pls. 133–34). The firm's most ambitious illuminated volumes honoring local dignitaries were occasionally housed in ornate silver caskets such as the one for presentation by the citizens of Belfast to the ninth

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12. Marcus Ward & Co., page of an illuminated volume, 1886.

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13. Sharman D. Neill, casket in form of early Irish shrine, 1891. Silver, 40.5 x 40.5 x 23 cm.

Earl of Shaftesbury in 1891. Designed by Vinycomb and made by the Belfast silversmith Sharman D. Neill, it took the shape of an early Irish shrine—like the Breac Maidoc (although it was the Shrine of St. Patrick's Bell that the press cited at the time)—lavishly decorated with Celtic ornament (fig. 13). The casket was first displayed at the Belfast Art and Industrial Exhibition in early 1895, and again at the first exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland in Dublin later that year. The firm of Sharman D. Neill went on to produce other silver presentation pieces of an Irish character in the next two decades, including versions of the Ardagh Chalice as golf or yachting trophies, and others with evocative Irish names, such as the “Cashed” for a three-handled hand-hammered loving cup (pl. 57).

Belfast produced talented book illustrators and graphic designers such as John Campbell, who brilliantly adopted Celtic ornament when still a student—leading Ireland's Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction to send his illumination in the Celtic style to the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair for exhibition. Campbell became known for his “Irish” drawings, both of legendary and mythological figures or scenes of rural life, usually under the Irish version of his name, Seaghan MacCathm-

haoil. Such work began with a series of illustrations of romanticized peasants, Celtic initials, and surrounds of Celtic interlace for *Songs of Uladh* in 1904 (fig. 14). This compilation of traditional folk music was collected on a trip to County Donegal by Herbert Hughes in the company of the artist, with lyrics added later by John's brother, Joseph Campbell.

Campbell's cover design for *Uladh*, a short-lived literary and critical quarterly published in Belfast from 1904 to 1905 (fig. 15), anticipates much of his best work.<sup>11</sup> It depicts an ancient Irish warrior symbolizing Ulster being urged to “Go Forth” by a torch-bearing companion, with framing of Celtic interlace. A bookplate design of the same period for Francis Bigger—the Belfast solicitor,



14. John Campbell, “My Lagan Love,” from Herbert Hughes, *Songs of Uladh* (Belfast: W. & G. Baird, 1904).



15. John Campbell, cover of *Uladh*, Feb. 1905.



16. John Campbell, “Maev Rides Forth to Speak with Her Druid,” 1907. Published in Mary Hutton’s translation of *The Táin* (Dublin: Talbot, 1924).

antiquarian, and advocate of the Irish Revival—also turns to Celtic motifs.

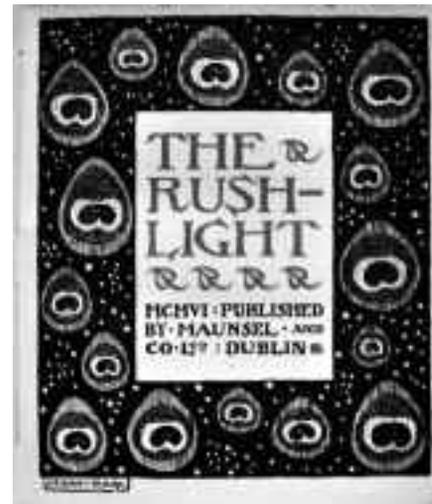
In 1906 Campbell illustrated *Four Irish Songs*, by Charlotte Milligan Fox, *Freamacha na hEireann*, by Aodmain MacGriogair, and *Calendar of the Saints: Patric*. The calendar book, which Campbell composed, offers a drawing for each month illustrating an incident in the life of St. Patrick (pl. 109). That same year Campbell was also responsible for providing color drawings for *Songs from “The Four Winds of Eirinn,”* a set of six booklets of poems by Ethna Carbery—the pen-name of Anna MacManus, the artist’s Ballymena-born, Donegal-based cousin. In a well designed format, with card covers tied with silk ribbon, these attractive booklets printed by W. & G. Baird of Dublin and Belfast were a comparatively rare example of “art printing” in Ireland. The scenes depicted are drawn in the artist’s usual confident manner, but now being designed in color, are more textured than usual—halftones predominating over solid black or white masses (pls. 103–8). In addition to successfully evoking the mood of the poems, the illustrations were remarkable, according to a contemporary review, for “the patient minuteness of

the workmanship, with its quaint convention of reiterated lines,” as well as for recalling “the elaborate conscientiousness of the old Gael.”<sup>12</sup>

Campbell produced one of his most impressive series of book illustrations in 1907 for the Belfast writer Mary Hutton’s translation of *The Táin*, an Irish saga conjuring up the ring of battle and the revelry of ancient kings; the task gave full scope to the artist’s increasingly powerful expression of Irish themes (fig. 16). Although not used by Hutton until the book’s second edition in 1924, some of the drawings were exhibited and published in the intervening years. Campbell exhibited with the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland in 1910 and was also a member of the Guild of Irish Art-Workers,<sup>13</sup> but left Ireland in 1912 for America on tour with the Ulster Literary Theatre, deciding to remain there for the rest of his life.

His elder brother Joseph Campbell, although best known for his literary achievements as one of the stalwarts of the Irish Literary Revival, was also a visual artist, decorating and illustrating a few of his own books of

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17. Joseph Campbell, title page for *The Rushlight* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1906); signed with his pseudonym “Ceann-Mor” meaning “big head.”

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18. George Morrow, cover of the fifteenth edition of Ethna Carbery's *The Four Winds of Eirinn* (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, 1905).



19. Charles Braithwaite, illuminated poem on vellum ("Lost," by Moira O'Neill), 1907.

poetry: *The Rushlight* (1906; fig. 17) and *Earth of Cualann* (1917).<sup>14</sup> Most visually notable in these volumes are the boldly drawn vignettes redolent of rediscovered folk culture, in addition to a striking title page design for the former, based on peacock feather "eyes." Collectively, the various publications illustrated or decorated by the two Campbell brothers, a number of them printed in Belfast, comprise a small but significant body of work produced in the North.

Various members of another artistic family in Belfast, the Morrows, who all trained at the local School of Art, also contributed to early twentieth-century decorative art and design in the region. As graphic artists, Edwin Morrow and his brother George provided illustrations for *Uladh* magazine; George also depicted a female Irish harpist framed in foliage for the cover of the 1905 edition of Ethna Carbery's *The Four Winds of Eirinn* (fig. 18). Their brother Jack, an art metalworker based in Belfast, was a graphic artist who painted the *An Tuirne Beag* (The Little Spinning Wheel) sign to hang outside the Irish Peasant Home Industries Shop established in Ballycastle, County Antrim in 1903.

Belfast's Charles Braithwaite, one of the most accomplished and widely recognized Irish artists in the early 1900s, was a master of illumination. Initially a student at the Belfast School of Art, he refined his skills under William Lethaby at the Royal College of Art in London, before returning to the North; there he and a few friends opened a studio in 1907 under the title "Ulster School of Arts and Crafts." Braithwaite specialized in lettering and illuminated work that he exhibited with the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland from 1904 to 1921, and occasionally, with the English Arts and Crafts Society. During most of these years he also taught at the School of Art in Belfast. His work was invariably in a style typical of much modern English graphic art, with swirling vine tendrils and other floral motifs drawn from European medieval sources (fig. 19), whereas another Belfast illuminator contemporary with him, Joseph Dempsey, became known



20. Ward and Partners, detail of large bay window from house in County Down, 1912.

mainly for his work in Celtic style, such as a very elaborate *Specimen of Celtic Art* fashioned after the monogram page in the Book of Kells (pl. 85).

### EARLY ACHIEVEMENT IN STAINED GLASS

The two Campbell brothers and various Morrow brothers eventually moved away from Belfast, including Jack who settled in Dublin, but within Belfast's Arts and Crafts community other artists and firms flourished. Ward and Partners, established around 1895 by the Belfast architect Francis Ward (grandson of the founder of the printing firm of Marcus Ward & Co.) as "Designers and Art-Craftsmen," offered "Chimney Pieces, Stained Glass, Art Metalwork, Decoration, Fibrous Plaster and Wallpapers."<sup>15</sup> Although contributing some of the finest pieces of furniture to the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland exhibition in Dublin in 1899, the firm specialized in stained glass—including decorative windows

for both domestic and public buildings and figural ones for churches. Much of its work, like that of a significant sample of Northern Arts and Crafts practice, drew on the English movement's influence (fig. 20), with some windows designed in an art nouveau style.

William Douglas, a graduate of the School of Art in Belfast, where he had been skilled in damask design, became the firm's chief stained glass artist. An accomplished graphic artist, he created stencil work for wall decoration shown at the 1899 Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland exhibition and won the competition for the cover design of the exhibition catalogue that year. A leading

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21. Campbell Brothers, stained glass window in Second Broughshane Presbyterian Church, County Antrim, 1911.

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English critic described his 1899 glasswork for Ward and Partners shown at that exhibition as of an “intelligent, jewel-like quality.”<sup>16</sup> Pioneers of Arts and Crafts stained glass in Ireland, Ward and Partners were leaders in the field, before being overshadowed within a few years by the highly publicized *An Túr Gloine* (The Tower of Glass) studio founded by Sarah Purser in Dublin in 1903. Although that Dublin group benefited from influential patronage allied to greater opportunities in a region building far more churches in the period, Ward and Partners’ contributions in stained glass remain considerable. The firm’s chief local rival in the medium, meanwhile, was the Belfast firm of Campbell Brothers, which sometimes worked in an overtly Irish mode. In their 1911 pair of windows for a Presbyterian church in Broughshane, County Antrim, for example, designed under the direction of the antiquarian Francis Bigger, the central figures are set in surrounds of densely packed Celtic interlace<sup>17</sup> (fig. 21).

### NORTHERN-TRAINED, BUT FLOURISHING ELSEWHERE

Many Northern Arts and Crafts artists and craftworkers in the early decades of the twentieth century remained in the region to develop productive careers. Others, however, left early to flourish elsewhere—drawn to the more expansive centers of London or Dublin by greater opportunities in their particular fields. These participants in the movement are worth recalling here, both to establish their initial origins in the region or to explain their later links with the movement; either way, they were part of Arts and Crafts in Ireland’s North.

Mary Houston, from Coleraine in County Derry, left first for Dublin in 1890 to study at the Metropolitan School of Art and then went on to London in 1896 to continue her training at South Kensington. One of the most talented craftswomen in Britain at the turn of the century—specializing in embossed and chased leatherwork and repoussé metalwork—she exhibited with the

main Arts and Crafts Society in England and at the Royal Academy. Although she had settled in London, Houston maintained links with home, contributing works to the summer exhibitions organized by the Irish Decorative Art Association held annually at Portrush just a few miles from her family home in Coleraine. One of her finest pieces was an exquisite Celtic-ornamented silver-plated Irish shrine-like repoussé casket shown at the Cork International Exhibition of 1902 (fig. 22).

Joseph Doran of Belfast, another talented designer who left to study in London, had originally trained at the Belfast School of Art; while a student he had his work shown at both the Belfast Art and Industrial Exhibition of 1895 and the first exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland in Dublin that same year. Doran won a scholarship to South Kensington in 1899 and subsequently found employment in London, but still kept in touch with the movement at home by, for example, exhibiting with the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland in 1910. Although best known as a designer of wallpapers and printed and woven textiles, working for some of the



22. Mary Houston, silver-plated casket shown at the Cork International Exhibition, 1902 (*Studio*, Sept. 1902).

leading English manufacturers of the time, his exceptional ability in metalwork and enameling is evident in the gilt-brass jewel box that the National Museum of Ireland purchased from him in 1908. It is decorated with champlevé enamels depicting “the combat of Thor and the Midgard Serpent” on the lid and other scenes from Norse mythology in panels around the side (pl. 88).

A number of other graduates of the School of Art in Belfast went on to success elsewhere as stained glass artists. Ethel Mary Rhind moved to Dublin where she joined the *An Túr Gloine* studio in 1908, executing work in *opus sectile* and stained glass in churches all over Ireland and beyond, as well as occasional other decorative pieces, whether in stained glass (pl. 162) or textiles (pl. 125).<sup>18</sup> William McBride<sup>19</sup> from Ballymena, County Antrim, moved from the School of Art in Belfast, first to London, and then to Dublin in 1910 to work for the stained glass firm of Joshua Clarke, before establishing his own glass workshop as part of “The Craftworkers” enterprise he co-founded in Dublin.

Wilhelmina Geddes, the most celebrated of artists and craftworkers from the North who made careers elsewhere, was educated at the Methodist College in Belfast before studying at the city’s School of Art.<sup>20</sup> There she excelled in graphic art, but also engaged with stained glass for the first time. Moving to Dublin and working with great success at *An Túr Gloine* for some years, she executed stained glass commissions not only in Ireland and England, but also in New Zealand and Canada—including a large Great War memorial window in Ottawa in 1917–19 that established her international reputation. In 1928 Geddes left Belfast for good to set up a studio in London, from where, despite recurring poor health, she carried out prestigious commissions for windows in England and further afield, as well as a few in the North of Ireland. These included a stair window for Belfast’s new Museum and Art Gallery commissioned in 1929 at the urging of her friend Rosamond Praeger.<sup>21</sup> This eight-paneled window on the theme of *The Fate of the*

*Children of Lir* (1930; pl. 163), rhythmically leaved and with rich and earthy colors, is one of her finest works. It depicts a tragic story from Irish mythology in which the four children of Lir were turned into swans by his second wife, to remain in their enchanted imprisonment for six hundred years until changed back into ancient human form by St. Keerog, a disciple of St. Patrick.

Several years later, in 1934, the British Army and the Royal Air Force commissioned Geddes to provide the huge *Te Deum* memorial window to Albert, King of the Belgians, in the restored Cathedral of Ypres. At twenty-five feet in diameter, it was the largest rose window in Belgium, consisting of a multitude of half-lifesize figures of prophets, apostles, and martyrs surrounding the central rosette of Christ flanked by two soldier saints (fig. 23). The work of an artist who insisted on being personally responsible for every aspect of manufacture, the window represents a major feat in the history of modern stained glass and a triumph for the Irish Arts and Crafts movement. Geddes was also a highly individual needlework

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23. Wilhelmina Geddes, central rosette of the *Te Deum* window for St. Martin’s Cathedral, Ypres, 1934–38.

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24. Embroidered panel for a banner of St. Brendan, designed by Wilhelmina Geddes, and executed by Ethel Geddes, c. 1921 (*Studio*, Dec. 1921).

designer (fig. 24) and graphic artist, creating works of primitive power and intensity—as in her cover design for the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland exhibition catalogue of 1921 (pl. 79). Her elevated status within her favorite craft was underlined when London’s *Times* proclaimed her, on her 1955 death as “the finest stained glass artist of our time.”<sup>22</sup>

The furthest traveled of all these exports from the North was Ernest Lakeman, who initially trained at the Belfast School of Art before taking up the first stained glass scholarship at the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin. After traveling to America to work in 1912—first at the Goodhue Studios in Boston and then for Charles Connick in Boston—he eventually formed his own firm in New York. He was well known for important windows in Cleveland, Denver, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York where he was responsible for the Astor Memorial in the American History Bay.

## CONCLUSION

The Arts and Crafts movement in the North, as elsewhere in Ireland, drew together many people from varying backgrounds, uniting them in a common quest for artistic fulfillment. As this record of achievement suggests, the contributions of the North represent an essential focus for *The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish*. The region’s centrality to the movement developed early, with the late nineteenth-century emergence of the sophisticated and highly accomplished art of Marcus Ward & Co. in Belfast and the more rustic creations of the pioneering cottage enterprises in rural areas. At the turn of the century and beyond, Belfast’s School of Art nurtured many artists of talent, who were recognized both at home and abroad and contributed actively to the city’s manufacturing success. We see that Belfast and the province of Ulster continued to make significant contributions to the Arts and Crafts movement—in many cases making it conspicuously Irish.



- 1 Among these were the Royal Dublin Society, which held annual Art Industries sales in Dublin from the 1880s to the early 1900s; the Irish Industries Association, inaugurated in 1886; the Home Arts and Industries Association, established in Ireland in 1886 with a central sales depot in Dublin; the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland, founded in 1894, which held exhibitions in 1895, 1899, 1904, 1910, 1917, 1921, and 1925; the Tailteann Art Exhibitions held periodically in the 1920s and 1930s; and the Irish International Exhibition of 1907.
- 2 For the more detailed story of the Irish movement from the 1880s to the 1930s and additional information about figures and topics discussed in this essay, see Paul Larmour, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland* (Belfast: Friar's Bush, 1992). That comprehensive volume contains numerous contemporary newspaper and art-press references that are not repeated here. Also see, by same author, the following: *Celtic Ornament* (Dublin: Eason and Son, 1981); "The Celtic Revival in Ulster," in *The Modern Traveller to Our Past: Festschrift in Honour of Ann Hamlin*, ed. Marion Meek (n.p.: DKP, 2006), 359–67; "The Donegal Industrial Fund" and "Donegal Carpets," *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* (1990–91): 128–33, 210–17; "John Campbell (1883–1962): An Artist of the Irish Revival," *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* 14 (1998): 62–73; "The Art-Carving Schools in Ireland," *GPA Irish Arts Review Yearbook* (1989–90): 151–57.
- 3 "Belfast Government School of Art," in *Ireland: Industrial and Agricultural*, ed. William P. Coyne (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1902), 148–52. Trobridge was born in Exeter, England in 1851, and studied at Birmingham and at South Kensington in London from where he moved to the Belfast appointment. His background was in painting, but he believed in the Arts and Crafts ethos and initiated the school's move from fine to applied art.
- 4 Dawson came from England where he had been a distinguished student at the Royal College of Art in London before joining the staff there. He was an active artworker himself, exhibiting with the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in London in 1903 and the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland in 1904; he became chairman of the Ulster committee of the Society in Ireland by 1917 and a member of the Guild of Irish Art-Workers. He left Belfast in 1919 to take over the Manchester School of Art.
- 5 Malcolm Haslam, *Arts and Crafts Carpets* (London: David Black, 1991), 86–145. The industry declined after 1939 and only the Killybegs factory remained open into the post-Second World War period, continuing on a limited scale into the start of the twenty-first century.
- 6 She is more correctly identified as Anna Pogosskaia, a Russian craftworker based in London where she had shown a "stool in burnt wood" with the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in 1889 under the name Mrs. A. L. Korvin Pogosky. In 1893 she also exhibited her pokerwork at the Chicago World's Fair in Chicago, as well as in New York and Boston.
- 7 For more information on Praeger see also Theo Snoddy, *Dictionary of Irish Artists: 20th Century* (Dublin: Wolfhound, 1996), 403–5; and Joseph McBrinn, *Sophia Rosamond Praeger, 1867–1954: Art, Literature, Science*, exh. cat. (Belfast: The Naughton Gallery at Queen's, 2007).
- 8 Aodh de Blacam, *From a Gaelic Outpost* (Dublin: Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, 1921), 70.
- 9 Vinycomb was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1833 and joined Marcus Ward & Co. in Belfast in 1855. In his own right he showed designs for bookplates in the "Irish Pavilion" at the Glasgow International Exhibition in Scotland in 1901, and in the display of Irish Arts and Crafts at the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904.
- 10 Marcus Ward & Co. was formed in Belfast in 1833 as a

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- printing firm, and became successful in the field of color lithography and the production of decorative greeting cards and illustrated books. Walter Crane and Kate Greenaway were among the artists engaged as illustrators. A London branch was established in the 1860s, and offices also were established in New York and Sydney; after financial difficulties, the firm was eventually dissolved in 1899.
- 11 *Uladh* was the organ of the pioneering Ulster Literary Theatre, established in 1904, of which John Campbell, his brother Joseph, and his sister Josephine were founding members. The company was set up in emulation of the achievements of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin of W. B. Yeats and his associates, but with a distinctly Northern identity. John Campbell both acted in the company and provided costume designs for it.
  - 12 *An Claidheamb Soluis* (Aug. 11, 1906): 8.
  - 13 The Guild of Irish Art-Workers was established in 1909 by the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland for the enrollment of professional artworkers by election themselves for united self-help and the general promotion of their work.
  - 14 John Campbell's brother Joseph Campbell, the poet and dramatist, helped organize the Irish Volunteers and was interned for his anti-Treaty activities in the Civil War. On release he emigrated to the US. His literary works include *The Garden of the Bees and Other Poems* (1905), with a cover and title page decorated by him; *The Mountainy Singer* (1909); and *Mearing Stones* (1911). He wrote plays for the Ulster Literary Theatre and also had a play, *Judgement*, produced at the Abbey Theatre in 1913.
  - 15 From an advertisement in *Official Catalogue of the Belfast Art and Industrial Exhibition* (Belfast: J. W. Boyd, 1895), 50.
  - 16 Harold Rathbone, "Report on the Second Exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society in Dublin 1899," *Journal and Proceedings of the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland* 3 (1901): 193.
  - 17 Both windows are illustrated in Larmour, "Celtic Revival in Ulster," 363.
  - 18 For more on Rhind see Snoddy, *Dictionary*, 423–24.
  - 19 *Ibid.*, 276–77, for more on McBride.
  - 20 For a detailed discussion of Geddes see Nicola Gordon Bowe, "Wilhelmina Geddes 1887–1955: Her Life and Work—A Reappraisal," *Journal of Stained Glass* 18, no. 3 (1988): 275–301; Nicola Gordon Bowe, *Wilhelmina Geddes: Life and Work* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2015); Larmour, *Arts and Crafts*, 191–95; and Snoddy, *Dictionary*, 131–33.
  - 21 The window was installed in the museum in 1930, but when the building was extended from 1966 to 1971 it was removed to storage where it has remained.
  - 22 *Times* (Aug. 16, 1955).

# “ITEMS OF EXTRAORDINARY BEAUTY”: THE HONAN CHAPEL AND COLLECTION

Virginia Teehan

## THE HONAN CHAPEL AND COLLECTION: FOUNDING VISION

Conceived and executed at the height of Ireland’s Celtic Revival, the Honan Collegiate Chapel and its collection of liturgical artworks at University College Cork—in silver, wood, cloth, paper, and stone—comprise the most complete extant expression of Irish Arts and Crafts practice, providing a unique record of the creativity and skill of the country’s finest designers, artists, and craftspeople. The Chapel was made possible through the generosity of Isabella Honan (1861–1913), the last remaining member of a prosperous Cork merchant family active in the commercial life of the city since the late eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In the early twentieth century, the family established links with University College Cork, donating various sums of money from 1909, and in 1913 awarding £40,000 to build and furnish the Chapel.<sup>2</sup> In her final bequest, Isabella Honan made clear her expectation that every aspect of the project—intellectual, liturgical, architectural, and historical—would be fully researched and that the building would be built to the highest standards, using the best local materials (fig. 1).

Two key figures were largely responsible for conceiving, commissioning, overseeing, and shepherding the Chapel and its collection into existence. Sir John R. O’Connell (1868–1943; fig. 2), solicitor and executor of Isabella Honan’s estate, was a governor of University College Cork and close friend of and advisor to Sir Bertram Windle (1858–1929; fig. 3), the president of the

University from 1904 to 1919. English by birth, but with Irish ancestry, Windle was a gifted administrator and polymath, making important contributions in science, medicine, and antiquities; he was elected as a fellow of the Royal Society in his primary discipline of anatomy.<sup>3</sup> O’Connell’s interests were also wide ranging; a successful lawyer, active participant in Irish civic life, and a leading patron of the arts, he was also a fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. Knighted in 1914, he was made a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great by



1. West façade of Honan Chapel, entrance with railings and pillars.

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2. Sir John R. O'Connell.



3. Sir Bertram Windle.

Pope Pius XI; after the death of his wife in 1925, O'Connell entered the priesthood, ministering in the United Kingdom.

Deeply interested in Ireland's society, O'Connell, like Windle, was a constitutional nationalist and supporter of the Home Rule movement. However, both abhorred radical militaristic approaches within the republican movement from 1916, and recently released intelligence documents confirm O'Connell's conservatism during a period of revolutionary change in Ireland. Although solicitor for the family of Eoin MacNeill (1867–1945), founder of the Irish Volunteers and co-founder of the Gaelic League, O'Connell refused to act as his legal representative when MacNeill was arrested and sen-

tenced to life imprisonment following the Easter Rising.<sup>4</sup> With a similar abhorrence of violent tactics, Windle left Ireland for Canada in 1919, bitterly dejected by the rapidly changing political and social landscape.<sup>5</sup> Ironically, just over ten years earlier, in January 1905, his first public engagement as university president had been to address a lecture organized by the Cork branch of the Gaelic League at which Douglas Hyde was the principal speaker. Windle was a strong advocate of the cultural revival movement and became closely aligned with its leaders—even hosting that Revivalist leader and president of the Gaelic League at his own home during Hyde's 1905 visit to Cork.<sup>6</sup> He also backed Revivalist principles of national self-sufficiency, outlining his support of industrial self-reliance and the promotion of Irish skills in his inaugural address as chairman of the Irish Industrial Conference of 1905.<sup>7</sup> At the public meeting of the Cork Industrial Development Association in 1916, he proposed the adoption of the Association's report and expressed disappointment at the exclusion of the Honan Chapel from that document:

Because with two comparatively small exceptions, everything in the chapel was built, fashioned, and made by Irish workmen and women... the chapel was proof positive that Irish workers were in no way deficient, but as ready now as in the past centuries to create such wonders as we admire in museums.<sup>8</sup>

### DESIGN INSPIRATION

The Honan Chapel, including its furnishings, stands as the tangible expression of Windle and O'Connell's passion for the promotion of Irish industries and design. Completely designed, both externally and internally, by a single architect, this building is remarkable in the context of Ireland's church architecture.<sup>9</sup> Its unity contrasts with most contemporary Irish ecclesiastical buildings, which, as Fr. Gerald O'Donovan angrily told the Maynooth

Union in 1901, were the products of “incompetent architects and pushful commercial travellers from Birmingham and Munich.”<sup>10</sup> A church conceived as a planned entity—or in O’Connell’s words, one planned as a “harmonious whole”<sup>11</sup>—was indeed a new concept.

After Catholic Emancipation in 1829, the needs and practices of Catholic devotion changed in significant ways. Emancipation was followed by decades of active church building and refurbishment, and subsequent reforms instituted by Cardinal Cullen (1803–78) led to an increased emphasis on the devotion to the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin, and various saints. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Irish ecclesiastical decoration mirrored these liturgical changes, as painted statuary and other decorative features—much imported from large English or Continental firms—flooded the island’s church-building. By the end of the century and as a result of accelerated training in design and applied art in the country’s art schools, more skilled sculptors and stone carving firms became available to supply ready carved work and statues made to order. Regrettably, patronage of this emerging generation of Irish artists failed to develop,<sup>12</sup> and instead the church hierarchy maintained a pattern of ordering mass-produced plaster or painted terracotta statues—purchased off-the-shelf from abroad. Stylistically, the statues looked back to the figurative tradition of the best of European post-Renaissance religious art, but now worked in hackneyed formats. As Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch puts it, “the figures appear to have depended on a kind of simpering prettiness for devotional effect.”<sup>13</sup> This style of church decoration remained popular for decades, and Bhreathnach-Lynch observes that in a country largely untutored in the visual arts—where, for example, art was neglected in state schools—“the prettified doll-like figures were attractive to look at, and easy to relate to.”<sup>14</sup>

But such pervasive decoration of Irish churches provoked criticism. O’Connell, for example, believed, rather, that all ornament should be applied with restraint

and severity so as to achieve that solemn dignity that he viewed as desirable in a house of God:

Simplicity in decoration is essential since it does not disturb the thoughts of the congregation thus leaving the mind free to concentrate. The achievement of this simplicity calls for patience and enthusiasm from the craftworkers whose exceptional skills were inspired by this single purpose. Those few essential items which furnish the chapel are the best and most suitable for their purpose. They are in themselves items of extraordinary beauty and therefore fall into place naturally as part of a harmonious whole.<sup>15</sup>

Because O’Connell and Windle organized the Honan Chapel as an independent legal entity, they could disregard the prevailing ecclesiastical ethos regarding decoration. Furthermore, the Honan Chapel was and remains apart from the traditional Roman Catholic administrative structures: the diocese and parish. Legally structured as a trust, the Chapel is governed by a Royal Charter, incorporated in 1915, that vests the responsibilities for the management and maintenance of the Chapel in a Board of Governors, who continue to fulfill this responsibility to this day.<sup>16</sup> From its conception the building was planned as an almost wholly Irish enterprise. The *Irish Builder and Engineer* records that on December 5, 1914, Messrs. John Sisk and Son, of Cove Street, Cork had been awarded the contract, the value being £8,000;<sup>17</sup> the architect, James F. McMullen (1859–1933), was also from Cork.<sup>18</sup> The *Freeman’s Journal* records the laying of the foundation stone on May 18, 1915,<sup>19</sup> just a year and half before the Chapel was formally opened in November 1916.

Architecturally, the building is Hiberno-Romanesque in style, influenced by early Irish church buildings such as Cormac’s Chapel, Cashel, County Tipperary.<sup>20</sup> *The Honan Hostel Chapel, Cork*, which O’Connell published to coincide with the opening of the building, outlined his convictions on details of construction and design. The

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4. Detail of carving from west façade's entranceway.

new Chapel was founded, according to O'Connell, in the belief that "it is essential for a university to meet both the spiritual and academic needs of students." In addition, he notes that "to win the hearts of its congregation the chapel's design must be truly Irish in inspiration and representative of insular ecclesiastical art. In both the design and construction of the building this purpose has been achieved."<sup>21</sup> Supervising every detail himself, O'Connell succeeded in creating a church of striking simplicity and dignity, with a unified aesthetic linking the building and the contents, not only in character, as inspired by early Christian artworks, but also in manufacture through the use of locally sourced materials such as limestone, wood, and metal, largely using the skills of individual artists and craftworkers (fig. 4). The specific visual language he sought was rooted in a set of measured and modest values, not unique to Ireland, but expressed in many other European countries—and commonly understood as representing the views of advocates of the Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>22</sup>

The Arts and Crafts movement originated in England and spread through various nations in Europe and much of America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its ideals profoundly affected arts education,

as well as the many small industries, guilds, workshops, classes, and societies the movement inspired. Arts and Crafts practitioners advocated the mental and moral satisfactions of craftsmanship and the right of all humans to make objects of beauty from indigenous material. Stylistic manifestations varied nationally, even regionally. As evidenced by this exhibition, Ireland had its own Arts and Crafts movement. Although hardly comparable in scale, scope, extent, or influence to the major English, American, or wealthier European movements, it nonetheless denotes a key period in Ireland's cultural history.

### ARTWORKS AND FURNISHINGS

The success of the Honan Chapel and its furnishings clearly arose from O'Connell's vision and the contemporary artistic context. Central to that successful realization was his control of design and his selection of artists, who in his own words, "enthusiastically seconded his efforts to make this chapel an expression of the best work that



5. Oswald Reeves, tabernacle door and tympanum, 1916. Silver, bronze, and enamel, 50 x 42 cm (door), 39 x 38 cm (tympanum), The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/39.



6. Alfred Ernest Child (*An Túr Gloine*), *St. Colman* window, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork.

can be produced in Ireland.”<sup>23</sup> Equally, this achievement emerges from O’Connell’s ability, unhampered by financial constraint, to commission from the best available Irish artists.

The Chapel is noted for many outstanding pieces of artwork; the tabernacle door and tympanum by Oswald Reeves are striking in their luminosity and strength of colors (fig. 5).<sup>24</sup> Harry Clarke’s windows, symbolic and unified in style and content, are generally acknowledged as the finest examples of stained glass work in Ireland. Clarke, still a young man when he created them, richly deserved the immediate international acclaim he received after completing the commission (pls. 49–50).<sup>25</sup> The work of *An Túr Gloine* (The Tower of Glass) studio is represented with eight windows; although before O’Connell discovered Clarke, Sarah Purser had expected that her studio would execute all the Honan windows (fig. 6). The elaborate collection of textiles, the work of the Dun Emer Guild (pls. 44–45, 47) and the women at the studio of William Egan and Sons in Cork—which also made plate for the Chapel—under the direction of Barry Michael Egan (pls. 43, 46), represents the best of Irish Arts and Crafts practice.<sup>26</sup> The Egan family, with a long and

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7. Ludwig Oppenheimer Ltd., mosaic floors in chancel and nave, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork.

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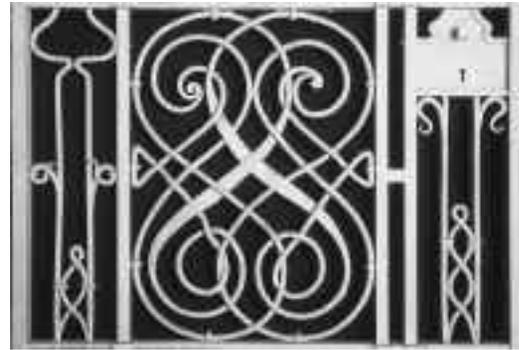


8. John Sisk and Son, lectern, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork.

respected tradition as silversmiths, watchmakers, and jewelers, also sold vestments and church plate from at least 1875.<sup>27</sup> To improve that ecclesiastical side of the family business along the most advanced contemporary lines, Barry Egan trained in Paris and Belgium.<sup>28</sup> In the development of his embroidery workshops he had, moreover, a considerable local advantage. Because the Cork School of Art had held embroidery classes from at least 1897, Egan could employ gifted and trained artisans.<sup>29</sup> And since James Brenan, head of the Crawford School of Art, encouraged and nurtured training in lace design, Egan drew on graduates who understood the subtleties of color and shading.<sup>30</sup> The influence of William Alphonsus Scott (1871–1921) is intriguing,<sup>31</sup> for although trained as an architect, he may have been instrumental in providing the design for the spectacular mosaic floors, the work of the firm Ludwig Oppenheimer Ltd., of Manchester (fig. 7).<sup>32</sup> Little is known of the designers of the pews, the lectern (fig. 8), or the magnificent ceremonial chairs and kneelers: however, John Sisk and Son of Cork, as the main building

contractor, constructed them all. The woodcarvers were possibly trained at the Crawford School of Art where there were apprentice classes initiated by John Lenihan and continued by Michael McNamara between 1900 and 1925.<sup>33</sup>

The Honan metalwork on display in this exhibition was primarily designed by Scott and made by Edmond Johnson Ltd., a leading firm of silversmiths, established in Dublin in the eighteenth century and remaining in operation until the 1920s. The firm was known for its many nineteenth-century popular replicas of early Christian archaeological finds and domestic items. Scott's distinctive design for the Honan metalwork commission reflects his unique visual language. Having studied in the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin, he trained as an architect under his father, Anthony Scott,<sup>34</sup> and Sir Thomas Newenham Deane,<sup>35</sup> both knowledgeable about early Irish buildings. Scott previously designed the woodwork and metalwork for Loughrea Cathedral (1904–10), a major Irish Arts and Crafts achievement of the period. Early travels in Europe and Turkey influenced the development of Scott's "Celts-Byzantine" style, so evident in the form and decoration of his Honan metalwork. The dome-shaped bases of the monstrance, benediction candlesticks, missal stands, and other items of plate echo eastern influences. His use of brilliantly contrasting



9. Detail of wrought-iron gate from west doorway.

jewel-like colors and textures—for example with the royal blue enamels of the bosses and knobs set against richly colored silver gilt—produce an eastern-inspired exoticism in form and color, as well as elements of Celtic-inspired decoration.

Scott supplied designs for the altar plate made in a variety of metals (silver, silver gilt, brass, bronze, and copper) as well as for the remarkable wrought-iron set of gates at the west door (fig. 9) made to cast gossamer Celtic interlace shadows over the mosaics when closed. Regrettably, the gates, no longer in use and in storage, were too large for shipment and thus are not included in the exhibition. Asymmetrical in design, they comprise a maze of iron rods shaped in interlace forms. The iron is hammered and cut into striking art nouveau swirls and animal shapes, divided by an early Christian Irish cross. The objects that Scott designed for the Honan—in particular, the larger items included in this exhibition—the monstrance, altar candlesticks, and missal stand (pls. 31–32, 38) are all visually striking and in harmony. In all three, the shaft tapers toward central ornamental knobs, embellished with blue enamel bosses; all are supported on domed feet with cut-metal Celtic style ribbon work. The benediction candlesticks (pl. 32), because of their different functions, vary in design: their sloping arms are supported by very freely designed interlaced animals, with elaborately textured surfaces, involving gouging, and beading. Subtle contrasts of both materials and finish (copper, brass, and silver plate; matte and polish) characterize these objects; this combining of metals of different colors is a distinct feature of Scott's design technique.

A repeated use of the motif of the ringed Celtic cross, as well as finely detailed enamel shields featuring coats of arms connected with the Chapel, links the decoration of all the metalwork in this exhibition. Echoing the practice of early Christian art, many key items in the Honan collection bear inscriptions; that on the monstrance (pl. 31), so central to the benediction rite, is in Irish lettering, which records the names of designer, maker, patron, and

executor of the Honan estate. Other items include the thurible and censer; a chalice-like bowl with pointed lid, linked by silver chains (pl. 34).<sup>36</sup> The lid, with its double-curved profile, features diminishing bands of strap work. The associated cruets, containers for water and wine used in the Mass, are a pair of glass bottles mounted in silver gilt Celtic cut-work, with a silver gilt tray finely engraved with interlace (fig. 10). The beautifully worked silver gilt custos (with lunette) is a simplified miniature monstrance, with repoussé Celtic work and garnets (fig. 11).<sup>37</sup>

The processional cross, a silver and enamel replica of



10. Edmond Johnson Ltd., cruet set, 1916. Silver, 35 x 18 cm (tray), silver, gilt, and glass, 13 x 8.3 cm (cruets, each), The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/13.



11. Edmond Johnson Ltd., custos and lunette, 1916. Silver, gilt, and garnets, 22.5 x 9.5 cm, The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/6.

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the Cross of Cong, hallmarked 1916 and again made by Edmond Johnson Ltd. (pl. 30), is one of the jewels of the Honan collection. A national treasure on permanent display at the National Museum of Ireland,<sup>38</sup> the original Cross of Cong from the Augustinian Abbey, in Cong, County Mayo dates from the early twelfth century—the Irish “Hiberno-Romanesque” period defined by cultural activity in architecture, metalwork, manuscript illumination, and scholarly activities.<sup>39</sup> Engraved on its side, the Cross of Cong bears an inscription seeking prayers for Muiredach Ua Dubthaig, the senior ecclesiastic of Ireland; Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair, the King of Ireland; Domnall mac Flannacáin Uí Dubhtaig, the patron who funded the commission; and the maker Máel Ísu mac Bratáin Uí Echach.<sup>40</sup> The replica in the Honan collection likewise bears an inscription on its side; written in Latin and English, this inscription commemorates the patrons and founder of the Chapel:

Hac cruce crus tegitur qua passus coeditor orbis.  
Of your charity pray for the souls of Matthew  
and Isabella Honan by whose zeal and piety the  
chapel of St. Finn Barr, for which this cross was  
made, was founded for the Honan Hostel in the  
City of Cork A.D. 1916. Requiescant in pace.  
Pray for the good estate here and hereafter of  
Sir John Robert O’Connell and of Dame Mary  
O’Connell his wife.

Edmond Johnson Ltd. made a number of facsimiles of the Cross of Cong during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, now housed, for example, at the Ulster Museum, Belfast, the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, and the Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, as well as at the Honan collection. Johnson first came to prominence in 1869 when he undertook the cleaning of the Ardagh Chalice,<sup>41</sup> discovered the previous year in County Limerick. Subsequently he became the chief restorer and technical expert for the Royal Irish Academy,<sup>42</sup> the owners of the Chalice. He made plaster

casts of all the ancient work that came to him, and his pattern drawers “contained impressions and plaster casts actually taken from these relics of antiquity as they were found from time to time.”<sup>43</sup> This rich repository of patterns undoubtedly inspired the firm’s work for the Honan collection. But when the firm closed in the 1920s, all its records were burned and the unique collection of casts was discarded.<sup>44</sup>

William Egan and Sons made a ciborium, paten, and chalice (fig. 12) for the Honan Chapel. The beautifully designed ciborium included in this exhibition (pl. 33) is decorated with panels of repoussé knotwork, garnets, and armorial shields in enamel. Its lid is topped with a miniature Celtic cross and its form references the base and knob of the Ardagh Chalice. The matching chalice, a vessel for holding communion wine, is stylistically similar to the ciborium.

*The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish* also displays elaborately illuminated altar cards in silver frames, commissioned from Joseph Tierney of the Columban Studio in Dublin (pls. 40–42).<sup>45</sup> These works, provided



12. William Egan and Sons, chalice, 1916. Silver, gilt, enamel, and semi-precious stones, 24.5 x 12.5 cm, The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/1.



## Virginia Teehan

Seeking new expressions of identity was not exclusive to the visual arts. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Revivalist writers such as Æ (George William Russell) sought a new “signature of the Irish mind.”<sup>50</sup> Elsewhere in Europe, art movements proclaimed that art did not simply imitate what other ages achieved but had another purpose: to interpret the present.<sup>51</sup> In 1916, the year that marked the opening of the Honan Chapel, Irishmen were fighting for national freedom at home and some were joining with others fighting “in defence of right, of freedom and of religion”<sup>52</sup> on the battlefields of Europe. In this violent era, principled men like Bertram Windle and John O’Connell advocated for a “new” Ireland, as they sought writers and artists to develop a cultural language to express their hopes for a new nation.

Fired with idealism, John O’Connell was funded by a family that respected his standards; for this project he selected artists of the highest caliber, most of whom were conversant with recent thinking in international art circles. Their commitment to the project was such that they overcame the difficulties of supply in wartime, and many of the Honan Chapel’s artists achieved the greatest work of their creative lives. The fruits of their work, the Honan Chapel and its liturgical collection of artworks, conveys pride in Ireland’s past and hope for its future.



- 1 The grant of probate for Isabella Honan of 29 Sidney Place, Wellington Road, Cork, who died on August 16, 1913, records that she left an estate valued £153,331 8s. 5d., which was granted to John R. O’Connell.
- 2 Virginia Teehan, “A Golden Vision: John O’Connell, Bertram Windle and the Honan Bequest,” in *The Honan Chapel: A Golden Vision*, ed. Virginia Teehan and Elizabeth Wincott Heckett (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 2004), 17–36.
- 3 See Ann Keogh and Dermot Keogh, *Bertram Windle: The Honan Bequest and the Modernisation of University College Cork, 1904–1919* (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 2010).
- 4 Witness statement of M. J. Curran, Vice-Rector of the, Irish College in Rome. “Bureau of Military History, 1913–21. Statement by Witness: Document No. W.S. 687,” Bureau of Military History, accessed Dec. 15, 2015, <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0687.pdf>, 79.
- 5 Teehan, “Golden Vision,” 28–29.
- 6 Witness statement of Liam de Roiste, Sinn Féin member (1913–21), Dail Éireann member (1918). “Bureau of Military History, 1913–21. Statement by Witness: Document No. W.S. 1698,” Bureau of Military History, accessed Dec. 15, 2015, <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS1698%20PART%201.pdf>, 42.
- 7 John J. Horgan, “Sir Bertram Windle,” *Studies* 21, no. 84 (Dec. 1932): 611–26.
- 8 *Report of the Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Public Meeting of the Cork Industrial Development Association* (Cork: Cork Industrial Development Association, 1917), 25.
- 9 The architect was James F. McMullen, however, it is certain that John O’Connell and William Scott were also influential. It is unclear what roles were played by each; however,

- it is very clear that the guiding instructions were channeled and delivered as one.
- 10 “Address to the Maynooth College Union,” *Irish Builder and Engineer* (July 8, 1901): 809.
  - 11 John R. O’Connell, *The Honan Hostel Chapel, Cork: Some Notes on the Building and the Ideals Which Inspired It* (Cork: Guy, 1916). This work appeared in a second edition as *The Collegiate Chapel, Cork: Some Notes on the Building and on the Ideals Which Inspired It* (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 1932), 13.
  - 12 Brian Lalor, “A Lost Leader: M. J. McNamara and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Cork,” *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* 17 (2001): 37–43, discusses the development of initiation and development of stone and woodcarving classes at the Crawford School of Art, with particular reference to the expertise of their teacher, M. J. McNamara, a great exponent of Arts and Crafts practice.
  - 13 Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch, “The Church and the Artist: Practice and Patronage 1922–45,” *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* (1991–92): 130–34.
  - 14 Ibid.
  - 15 O’Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 18.
  - 16 *The Royal Charter for Incorporating the Governors of the Honan Hostel Cork*. The original charter is extant and administered by the University Archives, University College Cork.
  - 17 *Irish Builder and Engineer* (Dec. 5, 1914).
  - 18 *Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720–1940*, s.v. “McMullen, James Finbarre,” accessed Dec. 15, 2015, <http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/3936/MCMULLEN-JAMESFINBARRE%5B1%5D>.
  - 19 *Freeman’s Journal* (May 20, 1915).
  - 20 See article in this catalogue, Tomás Ó Carragáin, “‘Truly and Sincerely Irish’?: The Medieval Sources for the Architecture of the Honan Chapel.”
  - 21 O’Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 13.
  - 22 See Nicola Gordon Bowe, “The Irish Arts and Crafts Movement: Aspects of Nationalism (1886–1925); Suggested Parallels and Context,” *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* (1990–91): 172–85, for an excellent outline of contemporary European contexts.
  - 23 O’Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 55.
  - 24 Paul Larmour, “The Works of Oswald Reeves (1870–1967), Artist and Craftsman: An Interim Catalogue,” *Journal of the Irish Georgian Society* 1 (1998): 35–59; Nicola Gordon Bowe, “Evocative and Symbolic: Memorials and Trophies by Percy Oswald Reeves,” *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* 16 (2000): 131–38; Nicola Gordon Bowe and Elizabeth Cumming, *The Arts and Crafts Movements in Dublin and Edinburgh, 1885–1925* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998), 173–77.
  - 25 Nicola Gordon Bowe, *Harry Clarke: The Life and Work*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Dublin: History Press Ireland, 2012). See also in this catalogue, Nicola Gordon Bowe, “The Jewel in the Crown: The Art of Stained Glass in the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement, 1903–30.”
  - 26 “William Egan and Sons, Watchmakers, Diamond Merchants, and Ecclesiastical Furnishers, 32 & 33, Patrick Street, Cork,” in *Dublin, Cork, and South of Ireland: A Literary, Commercial, and Social Review, Past and Present; With a Description of Leading Mercantile Houses and Commercial Enterprises* (London: Stratten and Stratten, 1892), 160–61.
  - 27 Francis Guy, *County and City of Cork Directory for the Years 1875–76* (Cork: Guy, 1875), 24.
  - 28 Elizabeth Wincott Heckett, “The Embroidered Cloths of Heaven: The Textiles,” in Teehan and Heckett, *Golden*

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- Vision*, 133–62.
- 29 Lalor, “A Lost Leader.”
- 30 Brian Lalor, “Art and Industry,” *Irish Arts Review* 22, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 118–21.
- 31 *Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720–1940*, s.v. “Scott, William Alphonsus,” accessed Dec. 15, 2015, <http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/4766/SCOTT-WILLIAMALPHONSUS>.
- 32 Virginia Teehan Jane Hawkes, “The Honan Chapel: An Iconographic Excursus,” in Teehan and Heckett, *Golden Vision*, 105–33. Robert Field, “L. Oppenheimer Ltd and the Mosaics of Eric Newton,” TACS Conference 2006, accessed Dec. 15, 2015, <http://tilesoc.org.uk/events/conference2006/papers/pdf/field.pdf> and *Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720–1940*, s.v. “Oppenheimer, Ludwig, Ltd,” accessed Dec. 15, 2015, <http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/4230/OPPENHEIMER-LUDWIG-LTD%2A%23>.
- 33 Lalor, “Art and Industry.”
- 34 *Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720–1940*, s.v. “Scott, Anthony,” accessed Dec. 15, 2015, <http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/4764/SCOTT-ANTHONY>.
- 35 *Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720–1940*, s.v. “Deane, Thomas Newenham (Sir),” accessed Dec. 15, 2015, <http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/1429/DEANE-THOMASNEWENHAM%28SIR%29>.
- 36 A thurible is a receptacle for incense and is used in many liturgical rites including benediction and funeral services.
- 37 A custos is a small, portable vessel used to hold a consecrated host and a lunette is the removable part designed specifically to hold the host.
- 38 National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, R2833.
- 39 Pádraig Ó Riain and Griffin Murray, “The Cross of Cong: Some Recent Discoveries,” *Archaeology Ireland* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 18–21. See also Ó Carragáin, “‘Truly and Sincerely Irish?’,” in this volume.
- 40 For a recent transcription of the inscription, see O’Riain and Murray, “Cross of Cong,” 20.
- 41 See Nancy Netzer, “Art/Full Ground: Unearthing National Identity and an Early Medieval ‘Golden Age,’” in *Éire/Land*, ed. Vera Kreilkamp, exh. cat. (Chestnut Hill: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2003), 49–56.
- 42 Cheryl Washer, “The Work of Edmond Johnson: Archaeology and Commerce,” in *Imagining an Irish Past: The Celtic Revival, 1840–1940*, ed. T. J. Edelstein, exh. cat. (Chicago: Smart Museum of Art, 1992), 106–21.
- 43 Edmond Johnson, *Description and History of the Irish Antique Art Metal Work Facsimile Reproductions of Which Have Been Specially Manufactured for Exhibition at Chicago* (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers & Walker, 1893), 7.
- 44 Peter Lamb, “The Furnishings of the Honan Chapel, Cork, 1915–16,” in Teehan and Heckett, *Golden Vision*, 89n8.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 76.
- 46 See in this catalogue Andrew A. Kuhn, “The Irish Arts and Crafts Edition: Printing at Dun Emer and Cuala.”
- 47 See in this volume Nancy Netzer, “Cloths of Ireland’s New ‘Golden Age’: Creating Textiles for the Honan Chapel.” In this article Netzer discusses in detail the use of early Christian art monuments and decoration with special reference to the Tullylease cross and its use on the altar textiles and vestments.
- 48 J. J. H., review of *The Honan Hostel Chapel, Cork: Some Notes on the Building and the Ideals Which Inspired It*, by Sir John R. O’Connell, *Studies* 5, no. 20 (Dec. 1916): 612–14.
- 49 Wendy Kaplan, “The Vernacular in America, 1890–1920: Ideology and Design,” in *Art and the National Dream: The*

*Search for Vernacular Expression in Turn-of-the-Century Design*, ed. Nicola Gordon Bowe (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993), 53, 143–45; Bowe, “Irish Arts and Crafts,” and Mairéad Dunlevy, “Introduction: The Honan Chapel; A Visionary Monument,” in Teehan and Heckett, *Golden Vision*, 1–12.

- 50 Æ [George William Russell], *The National Being: Some Thoughts on an Irish Polity* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1916), 110.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 122–25.
- 52 John Redmond, in speech to Irish Volunteers on parade in Woodenbridge, County Wicklow on September 20, 1914. Qtd. in John O’Beirne Ranelagh, *A Short History of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012), 195.

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# “TRULY AND SINCERELY IRISH”?: THE MEDIEVAL SOURCES FOR THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE HONAN CHAPEL

Tomás Ó Carragáin

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**T**he Honan Chapel at University College Cork, the art of which forms the centerpiece of this exhibition, was one of the most historicist of Celtic Revival churches. The writings of John O’Connell, the lawyer for the Honan family trust who was the main driver behind the project, provide us with a unique opportunity to analyze the design choices of those responsible for commissioning such churches. They show how, inspired by recent antiquarian work and responding to cultural nationalist imperatives, he set out to revive a medieval architectural style—the Hiberno-Romanesque—which he considered to be “truly and sincerely Irish.”<sup>1</sup> This essay will approach the Honan Chapel primarily from the perspective of its medieval models. It will focus on architecture, rather than mosaics and stained glass, although it will also look briefly at the sculpture. And it will consider not only the models themselves, but also the ideas they were believed to embody, both in the medieval period and at the turn of the twentieth century.

There are interesting parallels between O’Connell’s conscious conservatism on the one hand and that of the medieval clerics he sought to emulate on the other. In their own ways, and in very different cultural contexts, both of these architectural styles are characterized by a reconfiguration of the past to suit the needs of the present. Like other important buildings, churches are storehouses of social memory—of beliefs about the past that a group or society holds in common. In the words of Susan Alcock, social memories are carefully selected to

provide a group with “a coherent image of their past and a design for their future.”<sup>2</sup> Both in the medieval period and the modern, everyone who built or commissioned a church had to negotiate its relationship with the past. The commissioners of churches in Cork in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries variously evoked classical, Renaissance, and Gothic pasts. For example, St. Finbarr’s Cathedral, constructed in the 1860s, is an homage to buildings such as Reims Cathedral; its builder, William Burges, did not draw upon Ireland’s much more modest Gothic heritage.<sup>3</sup> About fifty years later, those commissioning the nearby Honan Chapel, also dedicated to St. Finbarr, looked to an earlier, more local past: that of the Hiberno-Romanesque.

## SOCIAL MEMORY AND THE HIBERNO-ROMANESQUE

Let us consider the original meaning of this architecture before looking at why it was revived in the early twentieth century. Like their Celtic Revival successors, many twelfth-century Hiberno-Romanesque churches were built to evoke a past Golden Age: namely the Age of Saints in the fifth to seventh century when Ireland was converted to Christianity and most of its great ecclesiastical centers were established by founders such as Patrick of Armagh, Columba of Iona, Ciarán of Clonmacnoise, and Kevin of Glendalough, who were later revered as saints. Throughout the intervening centuries, between the sixth and the twelfth, the pre-Romanesque churches built



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1. St. MacDara's Island, County Galway. Pre-Romanesque church with antae and skeuomorphs of end rafters and finials.

in Ireland are unusually uniform and conservative (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> Like the Honan Chapel, in modern scholarship these simple, austere buildings usually, and quite understandably, play second fiddle to the much more opulent artworks that some of them contained, such as the Book of Kells and the Ardagh Chalice. Initially of wood, the only distinctive features of the stone churches are carried over from their predecessors as skeuomorphs—features copied from one material to another—although they serve no practical or structural purpose in the new medium. Projections of the side walls beyond the end walls known as antae are translations into stone of wooden corner-posts, and in some churches the wooden end rafters and finials were also translated into stone. This building form was associated with the founding saints and so could not be improved upon. Perpetuating it in stone was almost like enshrining it: these buildings have a reliquary quality.<sup>5</sup>

The Hiberno-Romanesque developed from around 1100, before the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1169 but nevertheless at a time of profound change. The church was being reformed, a system of dioceses was being put in place, and ancient church sites had to compete with each other for a place in the new hierarchy. Some succeeded, but many others fell into obscurity. The arrival of the Romanesque offered architects and patrons endless possibilities to proclaim the importance of these old sites.

They could have built larger churches with much more complex plans, engaged belfries, architectural sculpture, and vaulted ceilings. Such ideas *were* adopted in Ireland, for example, for the new Cistercian abbeys that were established from the 1140s and for special-function churches, such as Cormac's Chapel (c. 1134), a royal chapel at Cashel (figs. 2–3).<sup>6</sup> So the skills required to build churches that employed the full language of the Romanesque were present. But almost invariably, when it came to rebuilding the principal churches at the old



2. Baltinglass Cistercian abbey, County Wicklow, showing mid-twelfth-century aisled nave.



3. Cormac's Chapel, Cashel (c. 1134) from the south.



4. Kilmalkedar, County Kerry (c. 1130s) from the west.

sites, very sparing use was made of the Romanesque even though in many cases the same masons were involved. Often the only Romanesque elements are a decorated portal and chancel arch, and perhaps a bit of blind arcading at the interior. Instead, the emphasis was still on simple forms and skeuomorphs such as antae (fig. 4): the past was what mattered most. As these sites competed with each other for a place in the new hierarchy, their claims were based on their association with the founding saints, the original evangelizers of these newly formalized bishoprics. The overriding concern of those who commissioned these sites was to remain faithful to the lineage of structures believed to have its origin in a simple wooden edifice built by the saint. These sites effected institutional change through the use of a symbolic language that had continuity at its core.<sup>7</sup>

#### ANTIQUARIAN UNDERSTANDINGS

The Honan, also built at a time of profound change, likewise looks to the past in order to help influence and manage that change. Medievalists like myself are used to interpreting buildings with limited help from textual

sources: perhaps a laconic mention in the annals or an oblique reference in hagiography. In contrast, we find a great richness of documentary sources relating to the Honan Chapel. First and foremost, as mentioned already, is John O’Connell’s *The Honan Hostel Chapel, Cork*, which was published to coincide with the consecration of the chapel in 1916. A lesser-known but interesting source is a popular booklet, *The Chapel of St Finbar, University College, Cork*, published in 1920 by Patrick Power, both a canon and the Professor of Archaeology at University College Cork (UCC).<sup>8</sup> O’Connell and his collaborators were able to draw upon a considerable body of anti-quarian scholarship on the Hiberno-Romanesque, for antiquarians such as Edward Dunraven, Margaret Stokes, and Arthur Champneys had written extensively about these buildings.<sup>9</sup> In particular, the great antiquarian George Petrie had recognized that these churches were meant to evoke the Age of Saints: “the unadorned simplicity [of these churches is not]...the result of poverty or ignorance of the arts....[But a] choice originating in the spirit of their faith, or a veneration for some model given to them by their first teachers.”<sup>10</sup> This association was crucial for both O’Connell and Power. O’Connell states that Irish architects should look to this style not because of its “symmetry and beauty” but because “it brings us back to the early ages of the Faith in Ireland. It reminds us of the labours and works of the saints.” The young Catholic men of Munster should realize that “they have here a counterpart of what their forefathers did nearly a thousand years ago for the Glory of God.”<sup>11</sup> According to Power, “The great old Irish builders—Ciaran of Clonmacnoise...[and] Finnian of Clonard, must...have rejoiced to see revived—restored again to life in this glorious building—the long forgotten art of Ireland.”<sup>12</sup>

#### CONTESTED TERRITORY

The location of the Honan heightened its ideological significance. On the one hand, O’Connell and Power claim that it was on the site of the early medieval mon-

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astery reputedly founded by St. Finbarr around 600, the first substantial settlement at Cork: it is “almost on the very spot where St Finbarr...had marked off his caseal [stone enclosure] and had set up his monastery and his school”<sup>13</sup> where “the Roman and the Frank, the Angle, the Iberian and the Teuton from beyond the Rhine met and studied...and brought back with them to their own lands glowing accounts of Irish scholarship, Irish sanctity and kindly Irish hospitality.”<sup>14</sup> Such continuity of location was, of course, an essential characteristic of its Hiberno-Romanesque models: they were new versions of the church built by the saint. In reality, the early monastery was some distance to the east, where Burges’s Gothic cathedral now stands, but the Honan was close enough for O’Connell and Power to be able to suggest continuity with the Age of Saints, not only in terms of architectural style but also of location.

On the other hand, in its early twentieth-century context, the Honan Chapel was built in what might be considered liminal, even contested, territory. It was situated on private land bordering the campus of University College Cork, which was considered a successor to St. Finbarr’s school (the university’s motto is: “Where Finbarr taught, let Munster learn”), as a way for the Catholic Church to gain a foothold on the campus of this so-called godless institution.<sup>15</sup> Of course, this plan was supported by the president, Bertram Windle, a prominent convert to Catholicism,<sup>16</sup> and probably by most of the staff; but it did not exactly enter into the spirit of the Irish Universities Act, which stated that no church could be built on the grounds of the college. This non-sectarian dimension of the act was widely read as anti-Catholic, and John O’Connell clearly saw the Honan as an act of defiance against the British Parliament: “Irish history is full of instances in which the people were put in the anomalous position of being compelled to evade the laws in order to preserve their rights....It is perhaps partly in this spirit, to render ineffective the restrictions imposed in the Universities Act...that this chapel...has been erected.”<sup>17</sup>

The Honan Chapel, therefore, is a building in which religion and nationalism were inextricably linked. Its small, marginal site and modest size made it all the more important that the chapel made an impact through its form and its art. It was the ideal project to revive the modest but symbolically sophisticated architecture of the Hiberno-Romanesque; and it is no coincidence that the Honan is the finest and most historicist of so-called



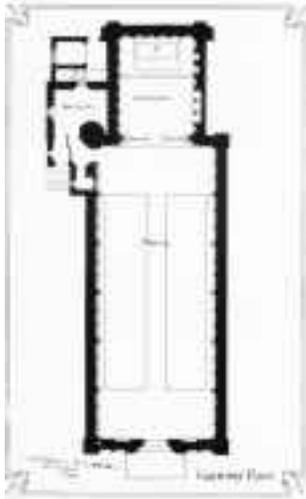
5. The Honan from the northwest. Note the small round tower-like belfry over the sacristy.



6. Romanesque round tower, Ardmore, County Waterford, with contemporary cathedral at left.



7. Dunlewey, County Donegal.



8. Plan of the Honan Chapel. From M. J. O'Kelly, *The Collegiate Chapel, Cork* (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 1955).

Celtic Revival churches. The resources and skill lavished on it were disproportionate to its physical size; it is an exquisitely put together and ideologically charged little building.

The Honan was not visually as prominent on the campus of UCC in the early twentieth century as it is today, for it was screened off by several other buildings that have

since been demolished.<sup>18</sup> Its effect on the atmosphere and environment of UCC was not solely visual, however, for its architect James McMullen states that its round tower-like belfry “chimes the Angelus thrice daily, and strikes each hour” (fig. 5).<sup>19</sup> Recent scholarship on the much larger freestanding round towers that stood next to its Hiberno-Romanesque exemplars emphasizes their aural as well as their visual impact (fig. 6). Round towers placed their church sites at the center of soundscapes. The sound of their bells expressed dominion over a territory and its people and became central to people’s sense of place and identity, punctuating their daily lives and reinforcing their loyalty to the church.<sup>20</sup> In a very different cultural context, the Honan’s round tower helped to extend its impact beyond its private enclave onto the campus of this “godless college.”

**“THE MOST PERFECT REPRODUCTION OF OLD IRISH ARCHITECTURE”**

Power states that the Honan is “perhaps the most perfect reproduction of old Irish architecture yet attempted in Ireland...more fully than any other modern building, it suggests the characteristic atmosphere of the ancient Church of Ireland.”<sup>21</sup> As we shall see, the Honan is not faithful to its Hiberno-Romanesque models in every respect, but it certainly comes far closer to them than most Celtic Revival churches, which usually borrow very selectively from the style, combining some sculptural motifs and perhaps a pedimented doorway or round tower-like belfry, with a range of other influences (fig. 7).<sup>22</sup> Although some details (e.g., blind arcading, vaulted ceiling) are derived from Cormac’s Chapel, Cashel (c. 1134), a subsidiary royal chapel, the Honan’s main models were the simpler, principal churches associated with the founding saints, such as Roscrea, County Tipperary (fig. 17) and Kilmalkedar, County Kerry (fig. 4). This lineage is evident, for example, in its bicameral plan and the position of the main doorway in the west wall (fig. 8). Given that the round tower had become such an icon of Irish

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9. West façade of the Honan Chapel. The pedimented doorway flanked by blind arcading is derived from Roscrea (fig. 17).



10. Ardamore Church, County Kerry (1866–71), based on Kilmalkedar (fig. 4).

cultural nationalism, it would have been hard for those commissioning the Honan not to include a round tower-like belfry. Principal Hiberno-Romanesque churches did not usually have engaged round towers, however; instead a freestanding tower usually stood nearby. O’Connell seems to have been conscious of this, for, whereas the Honan ticks the obligatory round tower box, its example is unusually small and placed in an unobtrusive position (on the north side at the junction of the nave and chan-

cel) so that it does not dominate one’s visual (as distinct from aural) experience of the building.<sup>23</sup> Instead, like principal Hiberno-Romanesque churches, the emphasis is on the west façade, as O’Connell highlights in his book (fig. 9).<sup>24</sup>

Some of the details of the Honan’s west façade diverge substantially from its exemplars; for example, that façade is flanked by features that were clearly meant to be antae. But they project from the side walls as well as the end walls and so have more in common with the clasping buttresses found in Gothic buildings, and are capped by little turrets that find no parallel in early Irish architecture.<sup>25</sup> These turrets were presumably dreamed up because at the time there was no clear understanding of what antae were and how they functioned. It is remarkable how little attention antae received from nineteenth-century antiquarians. Petrie was a great pioneer but not a careful analyst of architectural details, and he makes no reference to antae in his important monograph. A few other antiquarians referred to them in passing as buttresses, while in 1910 Champneys argued that they were derived from the antae that define the façades of many classical buildings, and this term has stuck.<sup>26</sup> Not until after the Honan was built was it generally accepted that antae are skeuomorphs—translations into stone of large corner-posts in timber churches, which supported end rafters and finials. Indeed, Power’s 1920 booklet on the Honan was among the first publications to suggest this: “The side walls of our Chapel, it will be observed, project somewhat beyond the gables...no satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon has ever been offered. The writer ventures to suggest that the projecting piers represent the great protruding corner posts of the wooden house on which the stone Church was modelled.”<sup>27</sup> It would take R. A. S. Macalister and later Harold Leask to develop this idea fully.<sup>28</sup> In fairness, then, we should probably blame unobservant antiquarians rather than John O’Connell and his architect, James McMullen, for the inaccuracy of the Honan’s antae. Yet it is possible to find a few earlier

and contemporary examples that are much more accurate. For example, the renowned Gothic Revival architect J. J. McCarthy built a church at Ardamore on the Dingle Peninsula, County Kerry (1866–71), which quite accurately echoes the nearby Hiberno-Romanesque church of Kilmalkedar, complete with antae that support stone skeuomorphs of end-rafters (fig. 10).<sup>29</sup> Similarly, one of the altar frontals made for the Honan Chapel by the Dun Emer Guild features a depiction of St. Brigit carrying her church of Kildare in which antae clearly support end rafters (pl. 44).<sup>30</sup> Both of these are historically more accurate and aesthetically more successful than the turrets of the Honan.

The proportions of the Honan's west façade are also very different from its Hiberno-Romanesque models, which have quite low sidewalls and very steeply pitched gables; indeed some of these churches are as high as they are long. This is something that early medieval writers emphasize when they describe their churches: for example, in the seventh century, the church at Kildare was of "awesome height towering upwards" according to Cogitosus.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, the Honan has relatively high sidewalls and a more modestly pitched roof, and the impression created by its façade is therefore very different. Of course, the high walls contribute to an interior that is also far removed from those of Hiberno-Romanesque churches (fig. 11). Its plaster vault is much higher up than the stone one of Cormac's Chapel, for example, as are the piers of the chancel arch. The use of natural light is also very different. In Hiberno-Romanesque churches natural light is used very sparingly: tiny windows essentially provided spotlights to add to the drama of the liturgy and the sense of the church as an otherworldly space (fig. 12). One almost never finds windows in the north and west walls, and certainly the banks of windows in all walls of the Honan were unheard of. Also, although their chevron decoration is Romanesque, in form and proportions, as well as in certain other details such as embrasure form, the use of string coursing, and the niches to either side

of the window lights, the Honan's windows are closer to thirteenth-century windows of the Gothic-influenced School of the West, such as those of Clonfert Cathedral, County Galway (figs. 13–14).<sup>32</sup> In addition, to provide more natural light and a larger canvas for stained glass artists, the lights of the Honan's windows occupy far more of the embrasure than they should. In the case of the choir windows, from a distance the tops of the lights



11. Interior of the Honan Chapel.



12. Donaghmore, County Tipperary, illustrating the small size and number of windows found in principal Hiberno-Romanesque churches.

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13. Harry Clarke's *St. Brendan* (l) and *St. Gobnait* (r) windows in the south wall of the Honan Chapel.



14. Thirteenth-century east window, Clonfert Cathedral, County Galway.

appear to be truncated by the embrasure arches in a way that a medieval mason would never have countenanced (except where mistakes were made such as at Corcomroe Abbey, County Clare, where the upper east window is truncated because the masons miscalculated the height of the vault) (see east window in fig. 11; also cf. figs. 13–14).

Thus, the similarities are in some respects quite superficial. The sensory experience of approaching, entering, and moving through the Honan is, in fact, far removed from that created by its Hiberno-Romanesque archetypes. This, of course, is what we should expect for a church built centuries later. Notwithstanding the claims of O'Connell and Power, the architecture of the Honan

draws selectively on the Hiberno-Romanesque. The Honan was built in a radically different cultural context to fulfill a very different purpose.

### “PECULIAR TO THE CELTIC RACE”: THE HONAN'S SCULPTURE

As O'Connell emphasizes, sculpture is used quite sparingly, and its form and positioning are reminiscent of the Hiberno-Romanesque. For example, the human head capitals with their interlacing hair (fig. 15) are like those at sites such as Killeshin and Timahoe (fig. 16), and the blind arcading is like that of Cormac's Chapel. In particular, as in principal Hiberno-Romanesque churches, sculpture is used sparingly on the exterior, apart from the west portal and the blind arcading flanking it, a combination that faithfully evokes the west façade of the 1130s cathedral at Roscrea, County Tipperary (fig. 17).<sup>33</sup> Like the better-preserved and roughly contemporary church at Kilmalkedar, County Kerry, there is somewhat more sculpture in the interior. O'Connell is justified in contrasting the restraint of the Honan with the ornamentation of Victorian churches, which he characterizes as over-elaborate and inauthentic.<sup>34</sup> This sentiment is echoed by Power: “Here is nothing overdone or false; there is no plaster masquerading as marble, no shocking tinsel mockery of gold or gems within God's house...everything is what it seems to be—stone or wood or metal or enamel.”<sup>35</sup> Apart from the plaster ceiling masquerading as a stone vault, this assessment generally stands. O'Connell also emphasized the use of local craftsmen and materials as well as styles, which of course chimes not only with the ethos of the Arts and Crafts movement internationally but also with the cultural nationalist movement in Ireland.

As we have seen, Romanesque sculpture arrived in Ireland in the twelfth century. However most nineteenth-century antiquarians thought it originated far earlier, and for obvious reasons they tended to downplay any English influences. Not until 1910 did the English



15. Honan Chapel west door sculpted capitals.



16. Timahoe round tower door sculpted capitals as drawn by George Petrie (*Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland*, 236).

scholar Arthur Champneys demonstrate beyond doubt that Norman England was the most important source for Hiberno-Romanesque sculpture.<sup>36</sup> As one might expect, it took a long time for his views to find acceptance in Ireland. John O'Connell takes on Champneys in his Honan Chapel book, but he must have realized that his arguments were weak. When all else fails he states that the "feeling" of the sculpture is "peculiar to the Celtic race," so rational argument goes out the window.<sup>37</sup> Patrick Power goes further, ignoring Champneys entirely, instead portraying this sculpture as part of a native continuum

going back to the eighth century. In his reading, far from providing the models for this art, Norman England was responsible for its demise. This art was "fully developed by the 8th century....The sun which shone for four centuries sank in the 12th century as suddenly as it rose. For the suddenness of its rising we cannot account. We know, only too well, why its decline was rapid. The coming of the Norman killed it. Ere however it set forever it crystallised in Cormac's Chapel and elsewhere a few expiring rays to tell to future ages the glory of the art that died."<sup>38</sup>

### CONCLUSION

As University College Cork's Professor of Archaeology, Power had a duty to present this building and the ancient architecture it was modeled on in an objective and balanced manner, taking full account of current scholarship, including that of Arthur Champneys. That duty was clearly trumped, however, by his religious vocation and his commitment to Irish independence. In fairness, we should remember that his booklet was published in 1920 during the War of Independence. In March of that year Tomás Mac Curtain, the Lord Mayor of Cork, was

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17. The west façade is all that survives of Roscrea Cathedral (c. 1130s).

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shot dead and his successor, Terence McSweeney, went on hunger strike and died in October. In such circumstances, it would probably be too much for us to expect academic impartiality even from the Professor of Archaeology. Nevertheless, it is striking to see the extent to which both Power's and O'Connell's publications manipulate the past to suit the needs of the present. The creation of social memory is as much about selecting and forgetting as it is about remembering, and these authors gloss over anything that detracts from their vision of what this building should represent. Indeed, O'Connell misrepresents his medieval models to make them conform to what he had created. He erroneously states that Hiberno-Romanesque churches were characterized by triple west windows and northern sacristies, presumably because these were features he had selected for the Honan.<sup>39</sup>

There are, then, some interesting parallels between the Honan and its Hiberno-Romanesque models, not only in terms of form but also in their use of the past. In the latter what we see is the conscious continuation of an existing and current tradition, with very selective use of international Romanesque elements that only serve to emphasize the conservatism of these buildings. By contrast, the Honan is a conscious revival of a long-dead style from what was perceived as Ireland's Golden Age, so this is a case of the *creation* of continuity. As O'Connell puts it, this style "seems to unite us with the teachers of the church in Ireland to whom we owe so much, with a chain of faith and piety which throughout the ages has known no weakening and no break."<sup>40</sup> As we have seen, the Honan Chapel is not as exact a recreation of the Hiberno-Romanesque as its patrons claimed, and these disparities are, in themselves, very revealing. Whereas the building has some architectural merit, its chief importance, of course, is as a receptacle for stunning artworks in metal, stone, textiles, and especially glass. Although these have lost none of their impact, in some respects the Ireland that those who commissioned the Honan were trying to create, through selective remembering, now

seems almost as removed from contemporary Ireland as the medieval Golden Age that they sought to evoke.



- 1 John R. O'Connell, *The Honan Hostel Chapel, Cork: Some Notes on the Building and the Ideals Which Inspired It* (Cork: Guy, 1916), 6–8.
- 2 Susan Alcock, *Archaeologies of the Greek Past: Landscape, Monuments, and Memories* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 1.
- 3 David Lawrence, *The Cathedral of Saint Fin Barre at Cork: William Burges in Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006). When, however, he later visited the Gothic cathedral of St. Canice in Kilkenny, he is reported to have said: “If I had had any idea that there was such a church as this in Ireland, I would never have built a French church in Cork.” Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh, “Why Medieval Ireland Failed to Edify,” in *Architecture and Interpretation: Essays for Eric Fernie*, ed. Jill Franklin, T. Heslop, and Christine Stevenson (Suffolk: Boydell, 2012), 303.
- 4 Tomás Ó Carragáin, *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland: Architecture, Ritual and Memory* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2010), 15–48, 87–142.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 143–66.
- 6 Tadhg O’Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland: Architecture and Ideology in the Twelfth Century* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003), 96–165.
- 7 Ó Carragáin, *Churches*, 293–96.
- 8 Patrick Power, *The Chapel of St Finbar, University College, Cork: Its History, Architecture and Symbolism* (Cork: Purcell, n.d.). Although there is no date on the booklet, it must have been published in 1920, for it was reviewed in the *Irish Book Lover* 12 (1920): 63–65, as Elizabeth Twohig has pointed out. Elizabeth Twohig, “Devoted to Archaeology: Professor (Canon) Patrick Power (1862–1951),” *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 118 (2013): 131.
- 9 Edward Dunraven, *Notes on Irish Architecture*, 2 vols. (London: Bell, 1875–77); Margaret Stokes, *Early Christian Architecture in Ireland* (London: Bell, 1878); Arthur Champneys, *Irish Ecclesiastical Architecture* (London: Bell, 1910).
- 10 George Petrie, *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland, Anterior to the Anglo-Norman Invasion* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1845), 192.
- 11 O’Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 21, 64.
- 12 Power, *Chapel of St Finbar*, 20.
- 13 O’Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 20.
- 14 Power, *Chapel of St Finbar*, 5, 22.
- 15 Virginia Teehan, “A Golden Vision: John O’Connell, Bertram Windle and the Honan Bequest,” in *The Honan Chapel: A Golden Vision*, ed. Virginia Teehan and Elizabeth Wincott Heckett (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 2004), 17–36.
- 16 Ann Keogh and Dermot Keogh, *Bertram Windle: The Honan Bequest and the Modernisation of University College Cork, 1904–1919* (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 2010), 111–40.
- 17 O’Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 9–10.
- 18 Teehan, “Golden Vision,” 19–20.
- 19 James McMullen, “St Finn Barr’s Collegiate Chapel,” *University College Cork Gazette* 7 (Dec. 19, 1916): 187–88.
- 20 Roger Stalley, “Sex, Symbol and Myth: Some Observations on the Irish Round Towers,” in *From Ireland Coming: Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Late Gothic Period and Its European Context*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), 27–48; Tadhg O’Keeffe, *Ireland’s Round Towers* (Stroud: Tempus, 2004); Ó Carragáin, *Churches*, 161–65.
- 21 Power, *Chapel of St Finbar*, 5.
- 22 Examples include St. Patrick’s, Jordanstown, Antrim (1865–68), Rathdaire, County Laois (1887–90), Dunlewey,

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- County Donegal (1877), Newport, Mayo (1918). See, for example, Jeanne Sheehy, *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival, 1830–1930* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 129, 130, 137, 145.
- 23 Temple Finghin, Clonmacnoise, is the only Hiberno-Romanesque church with a round tower-like belfry at the junction of the nave and the chancel, although it is to the south rather than the north. Larmour made the reasonable suggestion that this was the model for the Honan's round tower. Paul Larmour, "The Honan Chapel: The Architectural Background," in Teehan and Heckett, *Golden Vision*, 37–51, 43. It should be noted, however, that the Honan's architect, James McMullen, makes no mention of this building but instead states that the Honan's round tower was derived from St. Kevin's, Glendalough, another subsidiary church. McMullen, "St Finn Barr's," 187–88. Certainly, in proportion to the building as a whole, St. Kevin's round tower-like belfry is more closely comparable in size to that of the Honan, although it is positioned on the axis of the building rather than to one side. The position of the Honan's round tower, over a north sacristy at the junction between the nave and the chancel, may be derived from Cormac's Chapel, Cashel (see below, note 39). We should not, however, rule out the possibility of influence from illustrations of Temple Finghin in publications such as Petrie's *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland*, 267.
- 24 O'Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 31.
- 25 Larmour, "Architectural Background," 43–44.
- 26 Champneys, *Irish Ecclesiastical Architecture*, 36–38. In the 1932 edition of his Honan book, O'Connell adds a quotation from Butler's popular article on Irish architecture in the *Irish Free State Official Handbook* (1932), including the following: "Another feature peculiarly Irish is the use of antae or the side walls produced (or prolonged) and appearing in the gables, as in Greek work." John O'Connell, *The Collegiate Chapel, Cork: Some Notes on the Building and on the Ideals Which Inspired It* (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 1932), 30.
- 27 Power, *Chapel of St Finbar*, 7.
- 28 R. A. S. Macalister, *The Archaeology of Ireland* (London: Methuen, 1928), 248–49; Harold Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings, Volume 1* (Dundalk: Dundalgan, 1955), 43–47.
- 29 Paul Larmour, "Hiberno-Romanesque Revival," in *Art and Architecture of Ireland: Volume 4; Architecture, 1600–2000*, ed. Rolf Loeber et al. (Dublin: Yale Univ. Press, 2014), 107. The church was re-roofed and refurbished at some point in the twentieth century, but the antae at least are original. Another example is the O'Growney Memorial Tomb, Maynooth, County Kildare, completed in 1905. See Sheehy, *Rediscovery of Ireland's Past*, 138. Although its antae project from the side walls as well as the end walls, in a manner rarely found in early Irish churches, they are accurate insofar they support stone skeuomorphs of end rafters.
- 30 Virginia Teehan, Elizabeth Wincott Heckett, and Peter Lamb, "The Inventory," in Teehan and Heckett, *Golden Vision*, 221, fig. 20.
- 31 Ó Carragáin, *Churches*, 23.
- 32 Harold Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings, Volume 2* (Dundalk: Dundalgan, 1960), frontispiece.
- 33 McMullen, "St Finn Barr's," 187–88; Power, *Chapel of St Finbar*, 8. This façade had already been copied, albeit less exactly, at Rathdaire, County Laois (1887–90).
- 34 O'Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 15–19.
- 35 Power, *Chapel of St Finbar*, 9.
- 36 Champneys, *Irish Ecclesiastical Architecture*, 112–44.

37 O'Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 26–27.

38 Power, *Chapel of St Finbar*, 6.

39 O'Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 28–29. In fairness to O'Connell, this was probably partly due to limitations in his knowledge of the Hiberno-Romanesque. In addition to antiquarian publications, this knowledge was partly derived from visits paid by his architect, James McMullen, to a number of churches, apparently all in County Tipperary (McMullen, “St Finn Barr’s,” 187–88). Although he does not mention it, these probably included Cormac’s Chapel, Cashel, which, as noted above, was a subsidiary royal chapel rather than a principal church. It is one of the few Hiberno-Romanesque buildings to feature a (now blocked, single-light) west window and almost the only one with a chamber on its north side that might have functioned as a sacristy. Like the Honan’s sacristy, it is located at the junction of the nave with the chancel and at the base of a tower although the Cormac’s Chapel tower is much larger and different in form. For a recent discussion of the significance of this chamber see Tomás Ó Carragáin, “Relics and Recluses Revisited: Some Thoughts on Cormac’s Chapel,” in *Clerics, Kings and Vikings: Essays on Medieval Ireland in Honour of Donnchadh Ó Corráin*, ed. E. Purcell et al. (Dublin: Four Courts, 2015), 326–37. One of the principal Hiberno-Romanesque churches visited by McMullen was Monaincha, which he states provided the model for the Honan’s chancel arch. This features a single-light later medieval window inserted above its west door, which McMullen might conceivably have thought was original. Even so, O’Connell’s claim that three-light west windows, “each light being comparatively small, the outer two being smaller than the middle light,” were a characteristic feature of the Hiberno-Romanesque, is pure fantasy arising from the imperative to present the Honan as an accurate reproduction of this style. Even in thirteenth-century School of the West churches, where one sometimes finds

three round-headed lights side by side—for example in the east walls of Ballintubber Abbey and Corcomroe Cathedral—they are usually of equal height, unlike the west windows of the Honan. West windows are extremely rare in principal Hiberno-Romanesque churches. There are small single-light examples at Killeshin and Ullard, but in both cases their west façades were extensively rebuilt in the later Middle Ages, at which point these windows may well have been repositioned from elsewhere. Tadhg O’Keeffe, “Diarmait Mac Murchada and Romanesque Leinster: Four Twelfth-Century Churches in Context,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 127 (1996): 66; O’Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 252.

40 O’Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 21.

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# CLOTHS OF IRELAND'S NEW "GOLDEN AGE": CREATING TEXTILES FOR THE HONAN CHAPEL

Nancy Netzer

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**T**he focus of an elaborate display in Trinity College Library, Dublin and an imperative stop for scholars and tourists alike—the Book of Kells has long been celebrated as the greatest illuminated manuscript of Ireland's early Christian period.<sup>1</sup> This masterwork assumed new importance during the nineteenth-century Celtic Revival—a movement of cultural renewal accompanying the eventual transformation of southern Ireland from colony to independent state. Nineteenth-century cultural nationalists championed the island's early Middle Ages before the twelfth-century Norman conquest as what they termed the "Irish Golden Age"—a source of cultural achievement playing no small role in the country's eventual vision of itself as independent of Britain. Examining the influence of the Book of Kells, in conjunction with that of other allusions to Ireland's early medieval treasures in the decorative program of textiles commissioned for the Honan Chapel, offers a small but significant lens into a larger narrative about the role of visual art within the forces of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Irish cultural nationalism.

## DESIGNING VESTMENTS AND ALTAR FURNISHINGS FOR THE HONAN CHAPEL

The creators of the Honan textiles include major figures active in the early twentieth-century Irish Arts and Crafts movement—from John O'Connell, the visionary implementer of the project, to the artists and craftswomen designing and fabricating them. As the

lawyer who executed the disposition of the Honan family bequest, O'Connell commissioned the Honan Chapel according to what he called a "definite and consistent plan" that was, above all, to be "truly and sincerely Irish."<sup>2</sup> A fellow of both the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland and the Royal Irish Academy and a supporter of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement developing from the 1890s, he felt himself knowledgeable—in fact, probably more than he was—about early medieval art in Ireland.<sup>3</sup> O'Connell insisted on carefully researched historical sources for the building he envisioned as a sorely needed place of worship for the Catholic students of the non-denominational University College Cork. Most significantly, following the wishes of Isabella Honan, he decreed that in so far as possible each detail of the chapel be created by local Irish designers and craftspeople; their charge was to recall what was most "distinctive and suggestive of the best age of Irish ecclesiastical Art."<sup>4</sup> At the heart of this aspiration is an evocation of the "native genius" of the island expressing itself most fully in the lives of its early saints—for example, Patrick, Columcille, Brigid, and Finbarr—and the great works they inspired.<sup>5</sup> Visiting the Honan today, worshipers are still struck by over-lifesize figures of these saints in the chapel's magnificent stained glass windows,<sup>6</sup> presented as models for the University's young Catholic students.<sup>7</sup> The textiles surrounding the altar and draping the celebrants reinforce this attention to Ireland's heroic early Christian saints.

To execute his vision of the chapel's textiles, of which



for example, living with the O'Connells in the exclusive community of Killiney, County Dublin<sup>20</sup>—characterized circumstances she shared with many central figures involved with the Irish Arts and Crafts movement.

Founded by Evelyn Gleeson (1855–1944), Dun Emer Industries operated from Gleeson's house in the Dublin suburb of Dundrum, where young women worked in weaving and embroidery among other crafts (pls. 116–17).<sup>21</sup> Anglo-Irish Gleeson (pl. 115) was educated in England as a teacher; in the 1890s she studied art in London; first portraiture at the Ludovici Atelier and then textile design with Alexander Millar, a follower of William Morris.<sup>22</sup> Katharine (Kitty) MacCormack (1892–1975; pl. 118), Gleeson's niece and assistant whom she trained from an early age and who studied “Elementary Design” at the Metropolitan School of Art in 1910,<sup>23</sup> is credited as the designer in the inscriptions sewn to the back of several Honan altar furnishings,<sup>24</sup> a commission she worked on in her early twenties. An amateur actress who went on to be a theater set designer and writer and to take over the firm after Gleeson's death, MacCormack became Dun Emer's principal textile designer. Working primarily on garments and furnishings for ecclesiastical settings, she also designed “Celtic Costumes” for nationalist women and domestic items such as the carpets and tapestries that Dun Emer produced.

### ACCESS TO THE BOOK OF KELLS

Although “Golden Age” metalwork could be studied in Dublin's Museum of Science and Art (renamed the National Museum of Ireland in 1921), a designer's access to the illuminations in the period's most celebrated manuscript, the Book of Kells, would have proved challenging. Belonging to Trinity College Library since 1661, the Book of Kells was placed on display in the library's Long Room only in the mid-nineteenth century. Central to any discussion of the use and public recognition of the manuscript is the question of the availability of the images on its three hundred forty vellum leaves. Simply viewing

individual pages to which the book (locked in its case) might be open would have provided insufficient access for designers seeking motifs supporting Celtic Revivalist design aspirations.

Attempts to make Kells imagery more accessible to artists and scholars began in the late nineteenth century. In 1888, black and white photographs taken of the manuscript were sold at home and abroad, and by 1892, three years before the manuscript's 1895 rebinding, some of its loose leaves were displayed at Trinity.<sup>25</sup> But these individual pages in themselves could not provide an educated understanding of the book and its visual richness. Between 1892 and 1895, however, in nine affordable paper-bound volumes, Trinity librarian T. K. Abbott published a series of black and white photographs of some of the book's “principal” full pages, some with details of the designs on them and “a few of the most striking initials”—all with the purpose of “supply[ing] useful lessons to Art Students.”<sup>26</sup> Cork School of Art student John Dennehy's *Design for Panel: Celtic Ornament* (pl.

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2. *Christ Enthroned*, Book of Kells, fol. 32v.  
Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 58.

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81) suggests the use of a black and white source for the inaccurately colored peacocks modeled on those in Kells flanking Christ on fol. 32v (fig. 2). Appearing when Ethel Scally was studying at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art, these black and white reproductions would have served design students who were barred from adequate access to the full range of images in the original manuscript located just a few blocks from their school. Such publications demonstrate the growing role that motifs from Kells, as well those from other objects of Revivalist interest, assumed in the training of designers—a key component of Irish arts education at the time.

Further opportunities for viewing the Book of Kells—and now more accurately through color reproduction—developed in 1906. The manuscript was given a new case in Trinity’s Long Room and colored copies of many of its initials made by Helen Campbell Lawson D’Olier (1829–87), who apparently traced the originals,<sup>27</sup> were displayed nearby.<sup>28</sup> Most significant for access to Kells motifs, was the 1914 publication of Edward Sullivan’s widely circulated color monograph *The Book of Kells*, appearing in the very year that the Honan textiles were commissioned. In his introduction, Sullivan argues that the publication’s images represent a considerable improvement over previous attempts at color reproduction.<sup>29</sup> He presumably refers here to J. O. Westwood’s *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Art and Ornament* published in 1868, which included but four plates from Kells, meticulously drawn by the author and then chromo-lithographed. Sullivan’s far more ambitious project comprised twenty-four plates including nineteen full pages of the manuscript and five reproducing thirty illuminated initials drawn by D’Olier. This publication could finally provide designers at work in their studios with close approximations of colors used by the Kells illuminators.

### EVELYN GLEESON AND KATHARINE MACCORMACK’S USE OF “GOLDEN AGE” SOURCES

In creating the Honan’s altar furnishings (altar frontals, dossals, seating cushions, banner, and carpets),<sup>30</sup> Dun Emer’s two major designers, Gleeson and MacCormack, make creative use of a limited number of the most well-known motifs from Kells, accessible in Sullivan’s publication. They combine these motifs with imagery of Christ and local saints to convey a message of continuity with early Christian Ireland. With an embroidered gold ground and multi-colored embroidered images, designs, and inscriptions, their red and gold altar frontal used for festivals of Christ is the most sumptuous textile produced for the Honan (pl. 44).<sup>31</sup>

As designer for the frontal,<sup>32</sup> MacCormack prominently alludes to the Book of Kells, seemingly as those motifs became accessible to her through color reproduction. Her design features a central medallion with Christ in late medieval garb enthroned as ruler of the world. His throne—its arms embellished with a step pattern and draped with a textile decorated with trefoils of dots—so closely echoes John the Evangelist’s seat in Kells (fol. 291v) that the latter appears to be MacCormack’s source probably via Sullivan.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, the Four Symbols of the Evangelists emanating from the medallion and representing Christ’s heavenly court as described in chapter four of the Book of Revelation evoke those in Kells, especially in the spandrels of the Canon Table on fol. 5r.<sup>34</sup> But working with Ireland’s most innovative all-female Arts and Crafts collective, MacCormack takes license with her Kells model to give the male angel the profile of a red-haired Irish beauty queen. When MacCormack, now working with Gleeson,<sup>35</sup> designed the matching dossal (fig. 3) to hang behind the red and gold altar frontal, however, she was more faithful to her model. This woven wool tapestry displays large roundels with the Evangelist symbols modeled on those in rectangles on a Kells Four Symbols page (fig. 4). Their approximate matching colors



3. Red and gold dossal with Four Symbols of the Evangelists, 1915–16. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/85.



4. *Four Symbols of the Evangelists*, Book of Kells, fol. 27v. Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 58.

suggest that their source is Kells itself or, even more likely, given the difficulty of access to the manuscript, Sullivan's color reproduction.<sup>36</sup> (Woven to the same pattern based on a Kells design, the eagle—John's symbol—reproduced on the single existing cushion cover [pl. 47] suggests that three cushions embroidered with the other Evangelist

symbols may be missing.)

In addition to drawing from the Book of Kells for the altar frontal, MacCormack also dutifully responds to O'Connell's mandate for the Honan Chapel: "to put before the eyes of the Catholic students" the example of Ireland's heroic founding fathers.<sup>37</sup> She includes six early medieval saints to flank the central ensemble of her frontal, choosing both the three patron saints of Ireland<sup>38</sup> and three local patron saints from Munster—all also represented in the stained glass windows of the Chapel. On the right of the textile are Brigid of Kildare, Finbarr of Cork, Colman of Cloyne; Patrick, Columcille, and Ita of Killeedy pay homage from the left. But Brigid's prominent position next to Christ, as well as MacCormack's choice of St. Ita—said to embody the six virtues of Irish womanhood, including needle skills—appears to reflect the designer's subtle feminist assertions on behalf of the Dun Emer seamstresses. The figure of Finbarr, repeated on a banner to the altar, celebrates his role as patron saint of the Honan Chapel. This saint's prominence asserts, most significantly for young male students, that the present-day secular university was in fact the successor to Finbarr's seventh-century school nearby.<sup>39</sup> These elegantly attired saints, the females in the sort of Celtic costumes that MacCormack was to design for nationalistic Irish women,<sup>40</sup> appear in profile, perhaps a conscious decision to discourage direct devotional engagement with the viewer.<sup>41</sup>

For the white altar frontal<sup>42</sup> (fig. 5), used for feast days



5. White altar frontal, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/68.

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6. Detail of cross from black altar frontal, 1917. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/40.



7. Tombstone of Berechert from Tullylease, County Cork, eighth century.

of the Blessed Virgin, the designers now turn to early Irish metalwork, yet another source of Revivalist motifs, if one on which they less frequently depend. The borders and the medallions of this textile incorporate Celtic trumpets and spiral decoration inspired by early Christian works on display at the National Museum of Ireland, for example on the back of the Tara Brooch and on the base of the Ardagh Chalice. These designs are juxtaposed with

three traditional scenes from the life of the Virgin across the upper band (Annunciation, Assumption, Nativity). Here again, the Dun Emer designers, interested in gaelicizing the biblical narratives, give their angels red hair.

MacCormack turns to yet another, but in this case, a local, source for her design for the Honan's black altar frontal (fig. 6; pl. 45), used for funeral and the annual Founder's Day memorial Masses. This stark and beautiful cloth embroidered in shades of purple, gray, and silver features a central cross—reminding of the Crucifixion with its promise of redemption.<sup>43</sup> She designs the frontal with great fidelity to a cross on the tombstone (fig. 7) of a ruined church at Tullylease, County Cork, forty-two miles north of Cork City. Variants of the Tullylease cross design are also carved on a pier of the Honan altar<sup>44</sup> and tooled in gold on the leather cover of the Chapel's Roman missal (pl. 39) that was used with the black frontal at the Founder's Day Mass. In the early twentieth century, the Tullylease tombstone, inscribed to Berechert, the seventh-century saint who founded a monastery on the site, had never been reproduced in a publication. But after a 1911 mention of the tombstone in a Cork archaeological journal<sup>45</sup> we can only surmise that one of the designers connected to the Honan project visited the site to photograph or make a rubbing of it. The cross's association with Berechert contributes to the overarching message conveyed by the Chapel's decorative scheme. Yet another local Munster saint from Ireland's Golden Age, Berechert was the brother of St. Ita, and he was said to have come to Ireland with St. Colman; both Colman and Ita appear on the red and gold altar frontal and in the Chapel's stained glass windows. Drawing upon a variety of early Christian Irish models and subtly calling attention to Irish women in their contribution to their project, Gleeson and MacCormack succeed in fulfilling O'Connell's mandate to convey the message of a new Golden Age for the nation.



8. Detail of serpents and IHS monogram on cloth of gold chasuble, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/88.

### ETHEL JOSEPHINE SCALLY

Two vestments, the cloth of gold chasuble (fig. 8; pl. 43) and cope (fig. 9), bear inscriptions crediting Ethel Scally as their designer.<sup>46</sup> The black cope,<sup>47</sup> without mention of a designer, lists her as one of the women working on it. Thus we know of Scally's contributions only from information embroidered on the backs of these textiles; but we also have her brother-in-law's praise of her as uniting "an extraordinary understanding for the intricate beauty and mysterious charm of Celtic ornament with an exceptional capacity for expressing its feeling both in line and colour."<sup>48</sup> The advantages of class and antiquarian knowledge that Scally brought to the work are considerable; a Catholic merchant-class Dublin prosperity, membership in a rarified antiquarian elite, and ties to O'Connell, who assigned all of the Honan commissions. Moreover, despite Cork resident James Berry Lees's credited role as designer of other sets of the Honan vestments,<sup>49</sup> Scally's assignment gave her the significant advantage of working with the most

opulent of the vestments, the cloths of gold, worn for the festivals of Christ. Nonetheless, she was more than up to the task, selecting motifs from the Book of Kells and early medieval metalwork in ways that suggest a distinctively sophisticated understanding of her sources and a willingness to move beyond the most well-known motifs. A few examples will make the point.

During her training, Scally, like her fellow art students at the Metropolitan School of Art, would have adopted the motif of the serpent as part of her "tool kit," possibly by looking at Abbot's inclusion of a snake interlace detail from Kells fol. 120r.<sup>50</sup> Twenty years later, when working on her Honan commission, she gained easy access to a color version of the snake interlace in Sullivan's newly published volume. There, his commentary links the meaning and use of the symbol in Kells to its adoption by early Christians from pagan contexts.<sup>51</sup> Scally's use of multicolored strands of interlace with small snake heads seen from above on the cloth of gold chasuble (fig. 8), dalmatics,<sup>52</sup> cope (fig. 9), and humeral veil (fig. 11),<sup>53</sup> derives from Kells, where the motif occurs throughout.<sup>54</sup> Sullivan's commentary, however, could well have drawn her to the recurrent—even ubiquitous—use of that motif in the manuscript. The serpent, a familiar symbol of

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9. Detail of angel Evangelist symbol on cloth of gold cope, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/86.



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10. Detail of clasp from cloth of gold cope, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/86.

Satan, serves for her primarily as an emblem of Christ's Resurrection based on John 3:14–15: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish but may have life everlasting."

Scally's choice of this symbol for the gold vestments worn on Easter signals that rather than indiscriminately drawing on Celtic Revival motifs available, she carefully matches her choices to the use of the garment she was designing. She may have been alert, moreover, to the profusion of serpent interlace on the full-page illuminations in Kells (fols. 114r–v) immediately before Matthew's textual account of the Resurrection. On the chasuble Scally creates a powerful visual pun when she adapts yet another common Kells motif, the leaping lion (fig. 8).<sup>55</sup> She takes this recognized symbol of Christ (representing the house of Judah from which he descended) and shapes its body to form the *H* in the monogram for Christ's name IHS<sup>56</sup>—rather than copying one of the existing examples of the monogram in Kells.<sup>57</sup>

Scally is especially cognizant of the relationship between the performative role of her garments and the background against which they are set. On both the gold chasuble (pl. 43) and the matching dalmatics, her snake interlace (asymmetrical yet balanced in a manner reminiscent of the best early medieval examples) frames four

roundels with symbols of the Evangelists. Like those on MacCormack and Gleeson's red and gold dossal (fig. 3), which supplied the backdrop against which the priests wearing these vestments would perform their sacred roles, Scally's symbols copy in approximate matching colors those on the Kells Four Symbols page (fig. 4). She expands her impressive repertoire of motifs from Kells even further on the gold cope, choosing Four Evangelist symbols in medallions (fig. 9) from another Four Symbols page in Kells, fol. 129v, again reproduced by Sullivan.<sup>58</sup> Echoing the iconography on MacCormack's red and gold frontal (pl. 44), which would have been seen behind the garment, she adds four roundels with the three patron saints of Ireland and Finbarr of Cork. She closes the cope and the humeral veil worn over it with clasps (fig. 10) that replicate the lower half of the Tara Brooch—the most splendid example of Irish Golden Age secular metalwork that she surely knew from the National Museum.

The elaborately embroidered humeral veil, worn as part of the gold cope identified by inscription as Scally's design, is also of her creation.<sup>59</sup> Here she again demonstrates her knowledge of Kells, a comprehension that enables her to create an original IHS monogram (fig. 11) tapping multiple sources in the manuscript. The rectangu-



11. Detail of IHS monogram on cloth of gold humeral veil, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/87.



12. *Liber* monogram, Book of Kells, fol. 29r. Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 58.

lar patterning of her *I* echoes the decoration of verticals in the full-page INP monogram marking the beginning of John's Gospel (Larsen, fig. 2).<sup>60</sup> Her *S* is filled with interlaced snakes; but this time instead of repeating herself she creates heads viewed in profile (less frequent in Kells<sup>61</sup>) rather than from above. Her *H* is covered with an unusual split interlace surrounding red bosses. This interlace matches that found in Kells filling the upper outlines of the *L* of the *Liber* monogram on fol. 29r (fig. 12).<sup>62</sup> This intricate design based on minute details indicates how carefully Scally examined her source—almost certainly with a magnifying glass—to seek motifs uncommon in the Arts and Crafts repertoire.

The same sophisticated use of Kells sources evident on the embroidery of the gold garments appears as well on vestments in the white set that have never been attributed to Scally. The only indication of attribution for that set, in fact, is for its now-lost chasuble. This missing vestment was reproduced in black and white in a review of the 1917 Arts and Crafts of Ireland exhibition; the text attri-

butes the chasuble, quite without explanation, to “John Lees.”<sup>63</sup> The embroidery on the white cope<sup>64</sup> and matching humeral veil (fig. 13) signals the resourcefulness and ingenuity typical of Scally's designs—even designs that have never been attributed to her. This essay's explorations of Scally's decorative work for the gold vestments reveal her inventiveness, originality, erudition, and knowledge of medieval sources, gifts that surpass those of the other designer(s) of Honan vestments—especially of the violet, green, and red sets.<sup>65</sup>

Scally's talents manifest themselves in the designs of the complex, asymmetrical embroidered interlace, incorporating splendid long—often spiral-necked—peacocks with multicolored trains and wings on the white cope, humeral veil (fig. 13), and chasuble. Believed to have flesh that does not decay and thereby adopted as symbols of paradise, the vividly colored peacocks on the celebrant's finery reminds those attending Mass that through the Eucharist the faithful share in Christ's eternal life. Models for the peacocks, probably well known from Scally's student days, are found throughout Kells<sup>66</sup>—especially the most elaborate examples on fol. 32v (fig. 2) that students often copied on design panels (pls. 81, 84). On fol. 32v



13. Detail of peacocks from white humeral veil. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/72.

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14. Detail of black cope, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/43.

the painted birds, feet entangled in vines emanating from a chalice flanking Christ, look down at Eucharistic hosts (white discs with a red cross) that mark their wing joints. Scally picks up the discs of her model, transforming them into roundels with multicolored Celtic triskeles—a design related to that of the enamel bosses on Honan silver (pl. 35)—to mark the wing joints on several of her peacocks. Complex interlace, a skill she demonstrates so expertly on her gold vestments, is here distinguished by spirals marking its curves and its lacing through the birds' feathers. Scally's subtlety is evident again in the gradation of colors ranging from buff to ocher and light pink to rose, a refined palette allowing her peacocks—with vividly patterned wings and tails—to stand out against Dun Emer's restrained white altar frontal and dossal.

Scally's resourceful invention of new designs, even as she uses familiar elements, can also be detected in the exquisitely rendered peacocks from Kells with purple triskeles marking their wing joints that are entwined in the interlace on the black cope (fig. 14)<sup>67</sup> and chasuble<sup>68</sup> (pl. 46). Although her name appears in the black cope's inscription (again with her date of death), only as one of many who worked on it, the vestment's intricacy and originality suggest her design. Both the black chasu-

ble and cope manifest the same mastery of color in the modulating tones of their purple and gray/silver threads and of complex interlace evident on the cloth of gold and white vestments. The small protrusions with spiral insets on the black garments' interlaced strands suggest buds, in this case subtly transforming themselves into vines, a commonly recognized representation of Christ, deriving from John 15:5, "I am the Vine." A central motif on both black vestments is a cross of four triangles<sup>69</sup> laced with a braid with small protrusions, reminiscent of Christ's crown of thorns. For the clasp of this cope (fig. 15), worn for funeral Masses, Scally makes a less opulent choice than for the gold; she now fastens the garment with replicas of the lower halves of the large Ardagh Brooch (rather than the Tara Brooch).<sup>70</sup>

The designs attributed to Scally in this essay reveal her exceptional talent—in particular her unusual mastery of the symbolism and of the decorative vocabulary employed by the artists of the Book of Kells. By analyzing design principles evident in the cloths of gold and detecting them in vestments from the white and black sets, this essay argues that her contributions to the Honan commission were more extensive than those traditionally attributed to her. Scally created vestments for the Honan celebrants that rather than simply mimicking her sources, were intricately and intelligently conceived to project themselves against the altar furnishings created by Dun



15. Detail of clasp from black cope, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/43.

Emer's designers. During Mass, when attention was focused on the altar, the ensemble would have satisfied John O'Connell's fullest aspiration to remind the "Catholic youth of Munster...day after day and for generations yet to come" of the "precious heritage which had been handed down to them from, and bound them to, the past."<sup>71</sup> O'Connell's lament for his sister-in-law's early death, before she could see the full "working out of her exquisite designs," rings all too true.<sup>72</sup>



- 1 Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 58. A digital facsimile of the Book of Kells is available at [http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/index.php?DRIS\\_ID-MS58\\_003v](http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/index.php?DRIS_ID-MS58_003v) and is suggested as a source of magnifiable images referred to by folio numbers in this essay.
- 2 John R. O'Connell, *The Honan Hostel Chapel, Cork: Some Notes on the Building and the Ideals Which Inspired It* (Cork: Guy, 1916), 11, 55.
- 3 Ann Keogh and Dermot Keogh, *Bertram Windle: The Honan Bequest and the Modernisation of University College Cork, 1904–1919* (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 2010), 125–34. O'Connell makes several mistakes in his references to the Book of Kells suggesting that his knowledge of the manuscript was not deep. See, for example, his misattribution of Kells Evangelist symbols to another "Golden Age" Gospel book in Trinity College Library, the Book of Durrow (*Honan Hostel Chapel*, 56).
- 4 O'Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 11. See also Virginia Teehan in this volume, "Items of Extraordinary Beauty": The Honan Chapel and Collection."
- 5 O'Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 11.
- 6 For discussion see Paul Larmour, "The Honan Chapel: The Artistic and Cultural Content," and Nicola Gordon Bowe, "A New Byzantium: The Stained Glass Windows by Harry Clarke," in *The Honan Chapel: A Golden Vision*, ed. Virginia Teehan and Elizabeth Wincott Heckett (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 2004), 91–103, 163–90.
- 7 O'Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 60.
- 8 For a listing and description of the textiles that survive in various states of repair see Virginia Teehan, Elizabeth Wincott Heckett, and Peter Lamb, "The Inventory," in Teehan and Heckett, *Golden Vision*, 210–25; and Elizabeth Wincott Heckett, "Heavens' Embroidered Cloths: Textiles from the Honan Chapel, University College Cork,

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- Ireland," *Approaching Textiles, Varying Viewpoints: Proceedings of the Seventh Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America, Santa Fe, New Mexico* (2000): 167–72, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf/795>.
- 9 Jeanne Sheehy, *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival, 1830–1930* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 156–67, pls. 6–12.
  - 10 Elizabeth Wincott Heckett, "The Embroidered Cloths of Heaven: The Textiles," in Teehan and Heckett, *Golden Vision*, 136, and Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, "Inventory," 214; Paul Larmour, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland* (Belfast: Friar's Bush, 1992), 121, 134–35. John O'Connell does not mention Lees in his discussion of the textiles (*Honan Hostel Chapel*, 55–58). The source of this attribution may stem from the 1917 catalogue for the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland exhibition, which lists two sets of a "chasuble and accessories, embroidered. Designed by John Lees," exhibited by the Egan firm with the permission of O'Connell, the latter suggesting they were made for the Honan (*Arts & Crafts Exhibition* [Dublin: Maunsel and Roberts, 1917], 42, nos. 151–52). Virginia Teehan alerted me that the Cork census of 1911 records not John but a James Berry Lees (1871–1936), a "designer and lithographic artist." According to the 1901 census, he worked in Belfast as a lithographic artist and then moved to Cork where he was probably designing for Egan's by 1907 when, according to the 1911 census, his third child was born, and where he died in 1936.
  - 11 Heckett, "Cloths of Heaven," 133–42, esp. 133 for explanation of the colors worn at specific times during the year.
  - 12 *Arts & Crafts Exhibition*, 25, no. 3 lists an antependium for the Honan Chapel executed at Dun Emer in the exhibition; 43, no. 154 describes an "Embroidered Poplin Cope for Honan Chapel" executed at Dun Emer. The attribution of the latter may be in error. Four copes made for the Honan are known to survive: gold (HCC/86 designed by Scally, see note 14), black (HCC/43), white (HCC/71), and violet (HCC/59); none bears an inscription of the Dun Emer Guild.
  - 13 Records of the commission and of Egan's workshop appear to have been destroyed. See Heckett, "Cloths of Heaven," 138, and Larmour, *Arts and Crafts*, 134 for a letter from O'Connell discussing the Egan commission found in a book in a Belfast library.
  - 14 Ethel Scally's name as designer with her date of death (July 28, 1915) appears in inscriptions along with the names of the workshop's director, Barry Michael Egan, and twenty-three seamstresses on the reverse of the cloth of gold cope (HCC/86) and chasuble (fig. 1; HCC/88) where the original gold cloth has been replaced. See Heckett, "Cloths of Heaven," 136–38, fig. 6.7 and Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, "Inventory," 220. The embroidered inscription on the lining of HCC/86, which is in poor condition and has not been recorded previously, reads: "Of your Charity, Pray for the souls of Matthew, Robert and Isabella Honan, the Founders of this Chapel and Hostel. Pray for the welfare here and hereafter of the Warden and Students of the Honan Hostel. Pray for the welfare here and hereafter of Sir John O'Connell who built this chapel and of his wife Dame Mary O'Connell. Pray for the soul of Ethel Josephine Scally (who died on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1915.) who designed this cope and for the welfare here and hereafter of Barry Michael Egan who made it and for all who worked on it namely M. Barrett. N. Harte. A. Calnan. K. Allman. M. Dermond. M. Twomey. N. Ahearne. K. Cramer. M. E. Jenkins. M. Dorney. K. Quirk. K. Barry. N. Good. N. Spillane. C. McCarthy. A. Cromy. L. Crone. N. Driscoll. C. Carter. M. Driscoll. N. Collins. M. Mahoney. The making of this cope was ended in the workshop of Barry Michael Egan in Patrick Street in the City of Cork on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of October 1916." (The Irish historian Edel Breathnach's

- grandmother, Nan Barry, was one of the seamstresses mentioned by name in the inscriptions. She studied in the Crawford School of Art in Cork and was an active republican, being a member of *Cumann na mBan*. I am grateful to Raghall Ó Floinn for this information.)
- 15 Scally's name appears in the admission registers of students at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art from 1892 to 1894 (National Irish Visual Arts Library, IE/NIVAL CR/CR160/1370 and IE/NIVAL CR/CR18/441). During that time her address was Deepwell, Blackrock, a grand house belonging to her father Thomas Scally, a wealthy merchant. Her older sister Mary, wife of John O'Connell, had also been a student at the school from 1889 to 1891. (I thank Virginia Teehan for this information.)
- 16 *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 6<sup>th</sup> ser., 4, no. 3 (Sept. 30, 1914). I am grateful to Virginia Teehan and Aaron Binchy, librarian of the RSAI, for this information.
- 17 Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 57.
- 18 National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, R4015.
- 19 National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, A1874.99 and 1874.10 respectively. For discussion of the Tara and Ardagh discoveries in the mid-nineteenth century see Nancy Netzer, "Art/Full Ground: Unearthing National Identity and an Early Medieval 'Golden Age,'" in *Éire/Land*, ed. Vera Kreilkamp (Chestnut Hill: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2003), 49–56; Niamh Whitfield, "The Finding of the Tara Brooch," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 104 (1974): 120–42; Earl of Dunraven, "On an Ancient Chalice and Brooches Lately Found at Ardagh, in the County of Limerick," *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* 24 (1867–74): 433–54.
- 20 The census of 1911 states that Ethel Scally lived in John O'Connell's household, Ard Einin, in Killiney, Dublin.
- 21 See Larmour, *Arts and Crafts*, 151–62.
- 22 Papers of Evelyn Gleeson and the Dun Emer Guild, Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 10676. Gleeson's experience serving as an advisor for textiles at the Dublin Museum (now the National Museum of Ireland) may have offered her first-hand knowledge of the splendid cloth of gold vestments from Waterford Cathedral embroidered in Bruges in the 1460s. Purchased from Bruges in about 1468 for the chaplains of the chantry chapel of Waterford Cathedral, the cloth of gold vestments (three copes, two dalmatics, and a chasuble) are now installed in the Medieval Museum at Waterford. The only full set of medieval vestments surviving from the Middle Ages, they are regarded as the finest treasure of late medieval Ireland. Mairéad Dunlevy ("Introduction: The Honan Chapel; A Visionary Monument," in Teehan and Heckett, *Golden Vision*, 7–8) states that the Waterford vestments were on loan to the Dublin Museum in the early twentieth century. I can only document their loan to the National Museum in the mid-twentieth century (see Catriona MacLeod, "Fifteenth Century Vestments in Waterford," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 82, no. 1 [1952]: 85–98), but it seems likely that Gleeson would have been familiar with the celebrated textiles wherever they were housed.
- 23 Metropolitan School of Art Register, 1910. National Irish Visual Arts Library, IE/NIVAL CR/CR162/817 and IE/NIVAL CR/CR162/827.
- 24 Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, "Inventory," 212, 220.
- 25 See Peter Fox, *Trinity College Library Dublin: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014), 254 with references to library archives.
- 26 Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, *Celtic Ornaments from the Book of Kells* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, 1892–95), esp. 1 for explanation of the project (pl. 26).

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- 27 For Helen Campbell D'Olier's drawings now preserved at Trinity College Library see Edward Sullivan, *The Book of Kells: Described by Sir Edward Sullivan, Bart., and Illustrated with Twenty-Four Plates in Colour* (London: Studio, 1914), 46–47; Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 2465, 4729, 9932, and 11227; and Bernard Meehan, "Scribe2scribe," *Manuscripts at Trinity* (blog), Sept. 26, 2014, <https://manuscriptsattrinity.wordpress.com/2014/09/26/scribe2scribe/>. D'Olier lived at Herbert House, Boonstown, County Dublin where many of her drawings remained after her death and before they were given to Trinity.
- 28 Apparently, several other artists had been given permission to make drawings of Kells, causing complaints about its removal from its case. From 1906 on, the staff became more discriminating in granting permission to artists requesting to make copies. For discussion and references to library archives see Fox, *Trinity College Library*, 255.
- 29 Sullivan, *Book of Kells*, 1.
- 30 Heckett, "Cloths of Heaven," 142–56; Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, "Inventory," 212–25.
- 31 O'Connell claims that its "conception was suggested by an antependium of the Dukes of Burgundy in the sixteenth century" (*Honan Hostel Chapel*, 56). He also sees the textile as having "a curiously Celtic feeling in the ornamental borders which contained some of our characteristic interlaced and zigzag work," but provides no additional information about this mysterious sixteenth-century source.
- 32 O'Connell attributes the design to Evelyn Gleeson (*ibid.*); the embroidered label sewn to the reverse reads differently. Heckett, "Cloths of Heaven," 143, fig. 6.13 reproduces this inscription misattributing it to the black frontal.
- 33 Sullivan, *Book of Kells*, pl. 18.
- 34 *Ibid.*, pl. 1.
- 35 *Ibid.*, pl. 4. Heckett, "Cloths of Heaven," 150–52, fig. 6.26; Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, "Inventory," 220, HCC/85; 222, fig. 24. The inscription sewn to the reverse of the dossal reads: "Pray for the designers of this dossal Evelyn Gleeson and Cáitíá nic Cormaic: and for the weavers {Kate Dempsey, Tina Fanning, Cissie Burke, Christina Byrne, May Keegan, Lily Keegan, Mary Stapleton; Dun Emer Guild, Dublin. 1915–1916."
- 36 Especially pleased with Gleeson and MacCormack's dossal, O'Connell declared that it was "probably the first time for several hundred years...since [such an altar hanging] has been designed and woven in this country by Irish women, of Irish material" (*Honan Hostel Chapel*, 56).
- 37 *Ibid.*, 11, 60.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 40 refers to the Brigid, Patrick, and Columcille windows on the west façade of the Honan Chapel as the "Trias Thaumaturga, the three wonder working saints of Ireland."
- 39 Heckett, "Cloths of Heaven," 144–47, fig. 6.21; Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, "Inventory," 219, HCC/83; the University College Cork motto is "Where Finbarr taught, let Munster learn."
- 40 See Alex Ward, "Dress and National Identity: Women's Clothing and the Celtic Revival," *Costume* 48, no. 2 (2014): 193–211.
- 41 For discussion of the avoidance of devotional imagery in the Honan Chapel see Ann Wilson, "Arts and Crafts and Revivalism in Catholic Church Decoration: A Brief Duration," *Éire-Ireland* 48, no. 3–4 (2011): 34–37.
- 42 Dunlevy, "Introduction," 9, fig. 4; Heckett, "Cloths of Heaven," 144–46, figs. 6.17–20; Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, "Inventory," 213, fig. 18; 217, HCC/68.
- 43 Heckett, "Cloths of Heaven," 142, fig. 6.12; 155, fig. 6.32; Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, "Inventory," 212, HCC/40.

- The inscription on the reverse reads: “Made at the Dun Emer Guild, Hardwicke Street, Dublin; under the direction of Evelyn Gleeson; by Kate Dempsey, Susan Dillon, Tina Fanning, Sheila Stapleton, Mary Corri and Kathleen MacLoughlin. Designed by Katherine MacConmack. Dún Emer, Báile-áta-Cliat, 1917.” Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb (“Inventory,” 212, HCC/40) record in error the inscription found on the reverse of the cloth of gold frontal; see note 32 above.
- 44 Larmour, “Artistic and Cultural Content,” 49, fig. 2.23.
- 45 J. Fetherston Lynch, “Tullylease,” *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 17 (1911): 66–87; page 67 mentions the tombstone; page 66 describes the current thinking about the local importance of St. Berechert: “the son of a Saxon Prince who left England after the Synod of Whitby, with his brothers and sisters, and a great many followers; together with Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne. They landed in the west of Ireland, and his brother St. Gerald, settled in Mayo. St Ita of Killeedy was his sister.”
- 46 See note 14.
- 47 Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, “Inventory,” 212, HCC/43.
- 48 O’Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 57.
- 49 See note 10.
- 50 Abbott, *Celtic Ornaments*, 2.
- 51 Sullivan, *Book of Kells*, 42: “The adoption of this serpentine form by the church for decorative purposes would have been but another instance of what we know was the custom of the Christian Church in very early days when many pagan elements were for good reasons absorbed into the practices of the Christian missionaries, and afterwards became permanently interwoven with Christian belief.”
- 52 Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, “Inventory,” 223, HCC/92, 93.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 220, HCC/87.
- 54 For examples see Kells fols. 52v, 127v, 114r–v, 120r, 130r, 276v, 292r; for discussion of the snake in Kells see Heather Pulliam, *Word and Image in the Book of Kells* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006), 130–37 and Bernard Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2012), 148. A similar form of snake head terminates interlace on the mosaic floor in the Honan Chapel; Jane Hawkes, “The Honan Chapel: An Iconographic Excursus,” in Teehan and Heckett, *Golden Vision*, 131, fig. 5.22.
- 55 For discussion of the lion in Kells see Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 138–45.
- 56 O’Connell (*Honan Hostel Chapel*, 17) credits St. Bernardino of Siena with inventing this monogram and cites its adoption by the Jesuits, the “great Company” which made it a “permanent feature” in the decoration of their churches.
- 57 See for example, the IHS monograms on Kells fols. 87r and 282v.
- 58 Sullivan, *Book of Kells*, pl. 12.
- 59 Note O’Connell’s praise for Scally: “The finest *set* of vestments consists of a cope, chasuble, and dalmatics for High Mass, made of cloth of gold, very richly embroidered” (*Honan Hostel Chapel*, 57; my italics).
- 60 Fol. 292r; Sullivan, *Book of Kells*, pl. 19.
- 61 See, for example, Kells fols. 38v, 43r, and 264v.
- 62 Sullivan, *Book of Kells*, pl. 6.
- 63 P. Oswald Reeves, “Irish Arts and Crafts,” *Studio* 72, no. 295 (1917): 16. The photograph labeled “Chasuble of white poplin, embroidered / Designed by John Lees / Executed by Egan and Sons,” reveals that the white set was one of the two from the Honan displayed in the 1917 exhibition (see note 10 above). Sheehy, *Rediscovery of Ireland’s Past*, 165–67, fig. 135 attributes what she calls “detail of white

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stole” but which is actually a detail of the white humeral veil to Scally in her figure caption, but Larmour, *Arts and Crafts*, 224n59 corrects Sheehy’s attribution stating it was made by Lees.

- 64 Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, “Inventory,” 217, HCC/71, 72. The cope is now in very poor condition.
- 65 For the violet, green, and red sets see Heckett, “Cloths of Heaven,” 133–42; Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, “Inventory,” 215–16, 218, 224.
- 66 For the most recent discussion of the peacock in Kells see Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 150–53.
- 67 Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, “Inventory,” 212, HCC/43 with a transcription of the inscription on the reverse listing the women who worked on the garment. The cope is in such poor condition that I was not able to view it unfolded to verify the recorded inscription.
- 68 The chasuble bears on its lining this embroidered description indicating that it was dedicated to the memory of the Honan family: “Of your Charity, Pray for the eternal repose of the souls of Isabella Honan and of her brothers Matthew and Robert Honan of the City of Cork, and for their parents, sister and Kinfolk. Requiescant in pace.”
- 69 This design for a cross is also found on the cloth of gold chalice veil, maniples, and stoles, and the black maniples and stoles, Teehan, Heckett, and Lamb, “Inventory,” 223, HCC/91, 94–99; 214, HCC/49–54.
- 70 See note 19.
- 71 O’Connell, *Honan Hostel Chapel*, 22.
- 72 *Ibid.*, 57. I thank this volume’s editor, Vera Kreilkamp, for her important contribution to the presentation of arguments presented here and Virginia Teehan for helpful discussions and organizing access to the Honan textiles.

Nancy Netzer

# THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN: THE ART OF STAINED GLASS IN THE IRISH ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT, 1903–30

Nicola Gordon Bowe

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**L**ike other contemporary organizations in Britain and North America, the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland was named after London's Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, which was established in 1887 to encourage and exhibit the best and most modern applied arts, exemplifying truth to the materials used in their construction.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to its better-known literary corollary, the late nineteenth-century Irish Celtic Revival found its most popular form of expression in the applied arts and industries, variously informed by scholarly antiquarian research, literature, and archaeological discovery. By the 1890s, growing numbers of idealistic patrons, cultural leaders, writers, and professional practitioners had joined trained architects, artists, and craftworkers in formative ventures that would manifest a new spirit of aspiration and achievement. In its pressing search for an independent national cultural identity, Ireland's greatest need was to be reunited with its past in order to proceed forward in an appropriately contemporary idiom.

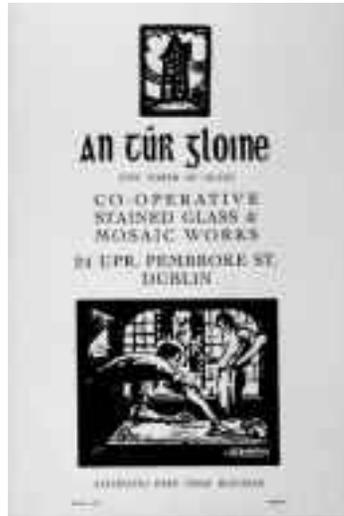
Eighteen ninety-four saw the foundation in Dublin of Sir Horace Plunkett's cooperatively-based Irish Agricultural Organization Society, as well as the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland. Emulating its English counterpart, the Irish Society aimed to raise artistic standards by encouraging original design and execution in the handcrafts; through exhibitions it sought "to bring into recognition the individual authorship of such craft as is honourable to Ireland."<sup>2</sup> Not until the Society's fourth Dublin exhibition in 1910—increasingly selective and by then predom-

inantly Irish—did a new generation of individual Irish artistic identities appear to be emerging. These young artists had the advantage of training at Irish art schools newly reformed at the turn of the century by Plunkett's visionary governmental Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, under the enlightened organization of its secretary, T. P. Gill. The Dublin Metropolitan School of Art now set up new classes to train artists, designers, teachers, and craftworkers in art forms seen as reflecting Ireland's past achievements and traditions, as well as those responding to current demand. These included painting, sculpture, metalwork, tapestry, embroidery, mosaic, and stained glass. In his objectives, Gill sought to establish "a national School of Art, encouraging freedom" while "aiming at distinctive national qualities" inspired by "the beautiful and suggestive objects in the Museum."<sup>3</sup>

## STAINED GLASS: A REVIVED ARTS AND CRAFTS MEDIUM IN IRELAND

The early twentieth-century Irish revival of stained glass constitutes one of the major successes and longest lasting ventures of the Arts and Crafts movement in Ireland.<sup>4</sup> Responding to progressive exhortation, instruction, and example, as well as exhibiting internationally, Irish artists displayed distinctively original work in this medium—one that often came to reflect and express nationalist aspirations. Although no evidence existed of an indigenous Irish-made medieval precedent in stained

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1. *An Túr Gloine* pamphlet, c. 1916.

glass, the Galway-based cultural activist Edward Martyn (1859–1923) was convinced that this medium, like enameling, illumination, and textiles, should play a prominent role in reconstructing Ireland’s national visual identity. He determined that stained glass should be adopted by artists whose draftsmanship, skill, and creative understanding of the craft would be valued—rather than the inferior trade work too often favored by those seeking low-cost conventional windows. And, where possible, Martyn believed, such artists were to depict Irish subjects in the many new ecclesiastical buildings being erected or decorated since Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

Martyn opposed importing windows churned out by the big foreign commercial firms, where labor was divided, designs were rarely purpose-made, and materials unsympathetic. Instead he advocated selecting a small number of native artists to train in this often-demoralized medium: “Why...should we in such important matters as ecclesiastical design and ornament employ the commercial manufacturer...instead of the artist?”<sup>5</sup> In 1901, after Martyn and Sarah Purser (1848–1943), a committed

nationalist entrepreneur and portrait painter, had sought advice in London, Christopher Whall,<sup>6</sup> the acknowledged father of the British Arts and Crafts stained glass movement, sent the English glazier Alfred Ernest Child (1875–1939) to Dublin.<sup>7</sup> Child subsequently inaugurated classes in stained glass design and technique at Dublin’s Metropolitan School of Art and also became manager of *An Túr Gloine* (The Tower of Glass). When Purser set up this small, predominantly female workshop in Dublin in 1903 to employ students trained by Child (fig. 1)—as well as those with an instinctive feel for a challenging medium traditionally dominated by men—she named the studio after “a beautiful Gaelic Legend.”<sup>8</sup>

### ANTÚR GLOINE: AN IRISH ARTS AND CRAFTS WORKSHOP

Through Martyn, Bishop Healy of Clonfert and Fr. Jeremiah O’Donovan, the committed administrator of St. Brendan’s Cathedral, Loughrea, County Galway, offered substantial first commissions to two recently formed arts organizations. One went to *An Túr Gloine* and another to the Dun Emer Guild, which Evelyn Gleeson had recently set up in the Dublin foothills with W. B. Yeats’s two sisters. Both of these Dublin-based, archetypally Arts and Crafts enterprises favored the use of time-honored materials as the essence of form and introduced fresh approaches to national imagery. The set of sodality banners that Susan (Lily) Yeats and her Dun Emer girls embroidered were designed by her brother Jack Yeats, the graphic artist and painter; his wife Mary Cottenham Yeats; Æ (George William Russell); and Pamela Colman Smith.<sup>9</sup> These banners offered a fresh modern vigor and handcrafted skills to the depiction of hitherto little-known Irish saints (pls. 121–24). Adhering closely to Whall’s lively yet historically informed designs, Child himself made four windows for the cathedral, and in 1904, *An Túr Gloine*’s first recruit, Michael Healy (1873–1941), created a window for Loughrea whose subtly painted and strongly colored Celto-Byzantine treatment



2. Sarah Purser, *Naomh Colmcille (St. Columcille)*, c. 1903. Stained glass, private collection.

immediately demonstrated his aptitude for stained glass.

Sarah Purser affirmed *An Túr Gloine's* credo that “each window should be in all its artistic parts the work of one individual artist, the glass chosen and painted by the same mind and hand that made the design, and drew the cartoon, in fact a bit of stained glass should be a work of free art as much as any other painting or picture.”<sup>10</sup> As far as possible, her workshop adhered to these fundamental Arts and Crafts principles for its forty-one years of existence. Although Purser designed several windows and panels, like *King Cormac of Cashel* (1906) in St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin and *Naomh Colmcille (St. Columcille)* (c. 1903; fig. 2), she herself supervised the running of the workshop, its glaziers, orders, clients, exhibitions, and the artists she recruited between 1903 and 1912: Beatrice Elvery (1883–1968), Catherine O’Brien (1881–1963), Ethel Rhind (c. 1878–1952), and Wilhelmina Geddes (1887–1955).<sup>11</sup> Like Rhind, Geddes had been trained in Belfast, at the progressive Belfast School of Art, where she designed her first panel in 1911. Sarah Purser invited Geddes to join *An Túr Gloine* after seeing one of her striking book illustrations at the key 1910 fourth exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland in Dublin.

## EXHIBITING THE NEW SPIRIT IN STAINED GLASS AND RELATED MEDIA

Although Purser had exhibited glass and mosaics by her artists at *An Túr Gloine* at the third Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland exhibition, and at other local and major exhibitions at home and abroad, such as the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair, it was only at the Society’s 1910 exhibition that these pieces began to attract critical attention. This important event gathered work by individual artists and craftworkers who were to design and execute both stained glass and graphic literary illustrations of rare skill and originality in a modern yet clearly Irish idiom in the second, post-philanthropic and industrial phase of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement.

By 1910, Ethel Rhind’s *opus sectile* and Catherine O’Brien’s stained glass had decorated the interior of William Alphonsus Scott’s articulate new “Hiberno-Romanesque”<sup>12</sup> Church of St. Enda (fig. 3) at Spiddal, County Galway (1904–07). Similarly, Healy and Elvery had inventively incorporated Irish Romanesque and early Christian calligraphy and figurative details into windows of unique charm and local interest, for example in Healy’s *St. Patrick and the Two Princesses* (1914), in the Church of

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3. William Alphonsus Scott, “Design for Spiddal Parish Church,” 1904 (Elliott, *Art and Ireland*).

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4. Michael Healy, detail of *St. Patrick and the Two Princesses* window, 1914. Stained glass, Church of the Sacred Heart, Donnybrook.



5. Ethel and Wilhelmina Geddes, *St. Gonnait* needlework panel, 1918–19. Sacred Heart Sodality, Duniry.

the Sacred Heart, Donnybrook, Dublin (fig. 4). The latter two artists continued to design and make small autonomous stained glass panels of specifically Irish subjects. Elvery, when she was not sculpting or painting on glass or canvas, drew some of the most evocative book illustra-

tions of the Celtic Revival. Through Purser's Galway connections, Geddes designed and her sister Ethel worked minimalist figurative needlework panels of Irish saints (1918–19) for the Sacred Heart Sodality in the small parish church at Duniry near Loughrea, County Galway (fig. 5); these were successors to the sodality banners worked by Lily Yeats for Dun Emer at Loughrea's cathedral (pls. 121–24).<sup>13</sup> Geddes's *An Túr Gloine* colleague Rhind designed a silk and woolen warp tapestry panel drawn from Celtic myth, *Smuainteach (Reverie)* (c. 1912–13) that was woven by the Dun Emer Guild (pl. 125).<sup>14</sup>

### HARRY CLARKE AND WILHELMINA GEDDES: VERSATILE REPRESENTATIVES OF IRELAND'S ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT<sup>15</sup>

The 1910 Arts and Crafts Society exhibition also included *The Consecration of Mel, Bishop of Longford by St. Patrick* (1910; fig. 6), the first mature stained glass work Harry Clarke (1889–1931) made as a competition panel in Child's Metropolitan School of Art classes. Clarke would emerge as the best-known and most prolific individual artist/craftsman of the movement.<sup>16</sup> Raised in Joshua Clarke and Sons, his father's Dublin ecclesiastical decorating business, he was the only major figure in the Irish Arts and Crafts movement to produce stained glass unconnected with Purser's rival studio. Clarke's incorporation of dramatic narrative details taken from Celtic and Irish ecclesiastical mythology and literature won the admiration of eminent judges and collectors from his early student work onward.

In 1914, two award-winning stained glass exhibits represented Ireland at the major Arts and Crafts *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs de Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande* mounted at the Palais du Louvre's Pavillon de Marsan in Paris. Clarke's soulful stained, acid-dipped, painted, and leaded panel *The Baptism of St. Patrick* of 1912 (pl. 159) was worked from the full-scale cartoon that was part of his 1912 gold medal winning entry for stained glass at the annual Board of Education National Competition



6. Harry Clarke, *The Consecration of St. Mel, Bishop of Longford by St. Patrick*, 1910. Stained glass, 66.7 x 51.4 cm, Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, 111-STG.

held at the South Kensington Design Schools.<sup>17</sup> Praised as a “fine imaginative design,” it had already won him a 1912 Royal Dublin Society Taylor art scholarship and first prize at the Society’s 1913 annual Art Industries Exhibition. Like its predecessor, *The Consecration of St. Mel*, it focuses on individually characterized portrayals of the devoutly thoughtful St. Patrick depicted close-up with his entourage. Their inventively constructed Celtic Revival costumes, the golden effigy on the banner and the images inserted into the thick slabs of white glass behind them indicate the young artist’s impressive mastery of his chosen medium and the Arts and Crafts influence of Whall’s teaching.

Geddes’s first autonomous (and similarly prize-winning) work in stained glass, a brooding 1911 triptych, commissioned by Purser for Martyn, illustrates in three miniature panels *Scenes from the Life of St. Colman MacDuagh of Galway* (fig. 7).<sup>18</sup> With expressively graphic brushstrokes, Geddes incorporates symbolic devices from the surviving ruins of the monastic settlement at

Kilmacduagh in authentic-looking scenes of Colman as a bearded hermit traversing the Burren, as a bishop preaching to the faithful, and as a saintly old man before his beehive oratory overseeing the building of the monastery named after him. In their choice of subject matter, both Clarke and Geddes demonstrate their visual awareness of current antiquarian research and strong interest in vividly conveying this new knowledge to contemporary audiences. As with Clarke, Geddes’s technical grasp of this demanding craft enabled her—even in her first independent essay in the medium—to freely interpret her strikingly original design through her painting, leading, and careful selection of sonorously-colored glass. These panels also display two readily identifiable, progressive artistic achievements—promising the distinction in the medium both Clarke and Geddes were to go on to achieve.

The pen and ink illustrations for literature by both artists as they began making stained glass were featured in pioneering literary magazines of the time, such as Padraic Colum’s monthly *Irish Review*. In 1913, Clarke’s idiosyncratically decorative evocation of Æ’s poem, “The City,” curiously entitled *The Golden Apples of the Sun* (pl. 112) after W. B. Yeats’s poem “The Song of Wandering Aengus” (1913), followed Geddes’s dramatically expres-



7. Wilhelmina Geddes, *Scenes from the Life of St. Colman MacDuagh of Galway*, 1911. Stained glass, 45 x 11 cm (each), Dublin City Gallery the Hugh Lane, Reg.1225–27.

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sionist graphic interpretation of the traditional ballad, “The Wife of Usher’s Well.”

Clarke’s drawing anticipated his highly successful published book illustrations for *Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen* (1916; pl. 158) and *Tales of Mystery and Imagination by Edgar Allan Poe* (1919; pl. 157). Motifs from his decorative designs for Sefton’s printed fabrics and handkerchiefs toward the end of the decade (pl. 142) can be found in his literary illustrations and in his miniature stained glass panels of, for example, Perrault’s gruesome fairy tale, *Bluebeard’s Last Wife* (1921; pl. 160), encased in a specially made wooden Arts and Crafts cabinet.<sup>19</sup> Both Clarke and Geddes, being particularly well read and aware of current literature and the arts, researched their subjects extensively before embarking on each commission, with the result that their work is distinguished by a wealth of iconographic allusions and narrative details.

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#### CLARKE AND THE HONAN CHAPEL, CORK (1915–17)

Early in 1915, Harry Clarke was commissioned to design the west window depicting the three wonder-working saints of Ireland, *Patrick, Brigid, and Columcille*, above the entrance of the Honan Chapel at University College Cork.<sup>20</sup> His detailed small-scale colored schemes for these give little idea of the richly jeweled colors, technical skill, and symbolist splendor of his finished windows, in whose execution he was assisted by his friend and former Metropolitan School of Art colleague, Austin Molloy. Such was the success of Clarke’s first three-light window that he was invited to make five of the Chapel’s nave windows representing patron saints of Munster, and two of the chancel windows. Purser, anticipating receiving the entire commission for her artists at *An Túr Gloine*, was disappointed to be given only eight windows, including six single-light nave windows in the Munster saint series, designed and made by Child, O’Brien, and Rhind.

Clarke’s nave windows at the Chapel include references to multiple influences: to the medieval stained glass he had studied in France and England on a traveling scholarship, to the published lives of Irish saints chronicled toward the end of the nineteenth century, to contemporary art, and to his observations of the people and archaeological remains on the Aran Islands, where he spent every summer between 1909 and 1914. Through his consummate skill and fertile imagination in the Honan window, he brilliantly synthesizes an unexpected range of European images from past and present. Among these he incorporates local references to Cork, Ardmore, Roscrea, Ballyvourney, Inishere, Killeedy, Clonfert within the intricate kaleidoscope of rich color and fluidly painted and leaded lines abounding around each full-scale central saintly figure, as well as in the predella panel below illustrating a dramatic story from his or her life.

Particularly striking is Clarke’s *St. Gobnait* window (fig. 8; pl. 49), made in 1916 following his small-scale preparatory watercolor design of 1914 (pl. 48) when he visited Cill Gobnait on Inishere, Aran, as recorded in



8. Harry Clarke, detail of *St. Gobnait* window, 1916.

his friend Seán Keating's painting, *Thinking Out Gobnait* (1917; pl. 144).<sup>21</sup> Clarke spared no time or expense in securing the thickest possible royal blue glass, specially ordered to cut into the intricately painted honeycomb slabs that make up the robes of Ireland's patron saint of beekeeping. Her pale, profiled face and long, flaming red hair are framed by the bees that guard the honey she and her nuns made at their monastic abbey, a model of which she holds in one elegant hand, while the other bears her abbess's wooden crozier. When Geddes represented St. Gobnait in one of her Duniry needlework panels two years later (see fig. 5), she deliberately depicted the abbess holding the small "square box, full of holes at the side" that is "called, in Gaelic, the *beachaire*, i.e. 'something to hold bees'" traditionally used when her abbey was under siege.<sup>22</sup> Clarke's full-scale charcoal cartoon for this window was among those he showed in his impressive representation at the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland's fifth exhibition in 1917, whose catalogue cover he also designed in pen and ink (pl. 78) and on whose council and executive committee he served.

In a review of this traveling exhibition, Oswald Reeves (1870–1967), enameler and metalworker and honorary secretary of the Society, wrote of:

One artist represented in the exhibition...who has gone further in achievement than any of his fellows, and whose work illustrates more clearly than any...how a genuine Celtic character marks the best Irish Applied Art. Harry Clarke, of Dublin, exhibits drawings for reproduction, stained glass, and cartoons for stained glass windows....It is in his stained glass, however, that the full scope of his undoubted genius is to be seen, and his best efforts, so far, now enrich the chapel attached to the Honan Hostel.<sup>23</sup>

Reeves hoped that Clarke's example would stimulate a strong national character to emerge in the country's Arts and Crafts movement, such as was already recognized in

the Irish Literary Revival.

### THE PEAK OF THE MOVEMENT

For the cover of the sixth exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland in 1921, Wilhelmina Geddes produced a powerfully expressionist design printed from a linocut titled *The Saint* (pl. 79). She depicted an ancient saint seated before his beehive *clochán* on a stone slab carved with Irish Romanesque figures. Deep in thought, he considers the past while the contemporary figures of male and female artworkers stand dramatically profiled behind him, poised ready for future hands-on action beside a symbolically flowering tree. The staff the saint holds is deliberately and visually connected to the woman's hand. Like Harry Clarke's cover of 1917, as well as Austin Molloy's for the Society's seventh exhibition in 1925 (pl. 80), Geddes's design was finely printed (although without her bold lettering) by Maunsel and Roberts in Dublin. The firm also exhibited its work in 1925, showing eight privately printed volumes of *Ireland's Memorial Records, 1914–1918*, engraved on hand-made paper with Clarke's imposing title page and eight repeated regimental borders (pl. 136). Thus, all three catalogue covers represented the distinctive graphic work of three major figures in the stained glass revival in Ireland, all of whom were active members of the Arts and Crafts Society and its affiliated Guild of Irish Art-Workers, and who exhibited in its three major exhibitions between 1917 and 1925.

### GEDDES'S SWAN SONG FOR IRELAND

Although Geddes left *An Túr Gloine* and moved to London in 1925, where she set up a studio and exhibited with the English Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, in 1929 she was commissioned to design and make a window illustrating "old Ulster legends" for the Belfast Art Gallery and Museum's imposing new building (pl. 163). Completed in March 1930, its eight rectangular panels were installed two months later within a specially

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9. Wilhelmina Geddes, detail of King Lir and Bove Derg listening to the music of the swans from *The Fate of the Children of Lir* window, 1930. Stained glass, National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.U2120.

constructed iron framework in a staircase window on the top floor of what is now the Ulster Museum's Botanic Gardens' façade. In its depiction of the pre-Christian mythological cycle, *The Fate of the Children of Lir*, this small, secular window epitomizes the ideals of the Irish Arts and Crafts Society: to translate ancient Ireland into a modern, accessible idiom.<sup>24</sup> Referring to the antiquarian P. W. Joyce's popular English translation from the Gaelic in *Old Celtic Romances* (1907) for her text, Geddes narrates the most tragic of the *Three Sorrowful Tales of Erin* in eight poignant narrative scenes. The figures' strikingly dramatic attitudes and the artist's expressive painting on each rich, sonorously colored piece of glass enhanced by sinuous leadlines require no text. In each consecutive panel, which should be read from top left to bottom right, she shows how the innocent children of the Tuatha dé Danann chieftain Lir are transformed into swans through the wicked fate imposed on them by their jealous step-mother, Aefi.

In the first panel, we see the four small, plump children standing obediently at the feet of their father, attended by their new stepmother, whose ruby robe suggests her future cruel jealousy. Next, with her "druidical fairy wand"<sup>25</sup> the wicked queen transforms the children into white swans on the shore of Lake Derravaragh; small figures gesticulate behind her. The third panel shows King Lir with Bove Derg desolately standing beside the lake, listening to the "slow, sweet, fairy music"<sup>26</sup> of the beloved cursed children while the evil queen is punished by being turned into a demon of the air (fig. 9). In the panel beside this, the two chieftains sit mournfully as the swans are doomed to fly to the stormy Sea of Moyle for three hundred years. Salvation arrives with the intervention of the early Patrician hero, St. Kemoc, who seeks them out on Inish Glora in the Western Sea to offer them protection after another three hundred years of barely endurable hardship. We see him forbidding Largnen, King of Connaught, from trying to steal the legendary swans for his avaricious wife in panel six. As Largnen turns away in panel seven, with a flash of light Kemoc's faith vanquishes the druidic curse, and the children sink to their knees in his cell, reverting from swans to their ancient human forms. The final panel shows the saint kneeling in prayer before the grassy grave-mound he has dug for them, while above him appears the vision of the children as they once were, flying with the "light, silvery wings"<sup>27</sup> of angels. The window, which is signed and dated as though on parchment, was admired for its "restraint and strength" and its ability to transport the viewer "far away on the wings of enchantment."<sup>28</sup>

### BOSTON CODA

In 1927, *An Túr Gloine* was to receive its "largest and most prestigious overseas commission" from Charles Maginnis of Maginnis and Walsh, Architects—also of Boston College's Burns and Bapst Libraries and Gasson Hall.<sup>29</sup> The commission was to make seven three-light windows depicting female saints for the Chapel of the



10. Michael Healy, *St. Helena* window, 1927. Stained glass, Chapel of the Sacred Heart Convent, Newton.

Sacred Heart Convent in Newton, near Boston, Massachusetts. Of the windows by the six artists involved, Michael Healy's *St. Helena* window (fig. 10), which he signed in Irish, is exceptional for its solemn majesty and spiritual expressiveness, its hieratic heroine almost Hollywood in her shimmering apparel. This series is a fitting representation in America of Ireland's unique achievement in stained glass during a period of radical political and cultural aspiration.



- 1 See Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 26; Wendy Kaplan, "Design for the Modern World," in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Europe and America: Design for the Modern World* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 10–19; also Nicola Gordon Bowe and Elizabeth Cumming, *The Arts and Crafts Movements in Dublin and Edinburgh, 1885–1925* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998), 76–85.
- 2 The Earl of Mayo, "Inauguration of the Arts & Crafts Society of Ireland," quoting Albert E. Murray in *Journal and Proceedings of the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland* 1 (1896): 8.
- 3 DATI *Report* (1900–01): 25 and DATI *Report* (1901–02): 84; see Nicola Gordon Bowe, "The Irish Arts and Crafts Movement: Aspects of Nationalism (1886–1925); Suggested Parallels and Context," *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* (1990–91): 172–85.
- 4 See Nicola Gordon Bowe, "Harry Clarke, An Túr Gloine and the Early Twentieth-Century Irish Stained Glass Revival," in *Glassmaking in Ireland from the Medieval to the Contemporary*, ed. John M. Hearne (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010), 195–214, 271–73.
- 5 Edward Martyn, preface to Robert Elliott, *Art and Ireland* (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers & Walker, 1906), ix.
- 6 See Peter Cormack, *The Stained Glass Work of Christopher Whall, 1849–1924: "Aglow with Brave Resplendent Colour"* (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, 1999).
- 7 See Nicola Gordon Bowe, David Caron, and Michael Wynne, *Gazetteer of Irish Stained Glass* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1988); also Bowe, "Stained Glass Revival."
- 8 T. P. Gill, *An Túr Gloine Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration* (Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1928), 5.

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OF STAINED  
GLASS IN THE  
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- 9 See Nicola Gordon Bowe, “Dun Emer Guild” and “Jack Butler Yeats” in Bowe and Cumming, *Arts and Crafts Movements*, 120–25, 208.
- 10 Purser’s speech at the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of *An Túr Gloine* in 1928, qtd. in Elizabeth Coxhead, *Daughters of Erin* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1962), 142–43.
- 11 For brief biographies and their windows, see Bowe, Caron, and Wynne, *Gazetteer* and Bowe, “Stained Glass Revival.”
- 12 Elliot, *Art and Ireland*, 58; the epithet “Celto-Byzantine” could be considered more appropriate. See Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture, 1900–1940* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1991), and Bowe and Cumming, *Arts and Crafts Movements*, 190–91.
- 13 See Nicola Gordon Bowe, “Arts and Crafts Textiles in Ireland: Two Sets of Embroidered Banners in Co. Galway, Designed and Made by Lily Yeats at the Dun Emer Guild for Loughrea (1902–4), and by Wilhelmina and Ethel Geddes for Duniry (1918–1919),” *TEXT: For the Study of Textile Art, Design and History* (2011–12): 39, 29–35. Only those for Sts. Gobnait, Eithne, and Ita survive.
- 14 See Bowe and Cumming, *Arts and Crafts Movements*, 178–79.
- 15 See Nicola Gordon Bowe, “Wilhelmina Geddes, Harry Clarke, and Their Part in the Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland,” *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 8 (Spring 1988): 58–79.
- 16 See Nicola Gordon Bowe, *Harry Clarke: The Life and Work*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Dublin: History Press Ireland, 2012), 46, 48.
- 17 This panel was discovered in the former Dublin Metropolitan School of Art studio of Alfred Child c. 1970 by his successor, John Murphy. It now hangs in the staff canteen of NCAD’s current site on Thomas Street; see Bowe, *Harry Clarke*, 46–52.
- 18 See Nicola Gordon Bowe, *Wilhelmina Geddes: Life and Work* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2015), 49–52.
- 19 See Bowe, *Harry Clarke*, 150–52, 193, and 198.
- 20 Ibid., 74 and Nicola Gordon Bowe, “A New Byzantium: The Stained Glass Windows by Harry Clarke,” in *The Honan Chapel: A Golden Vision*, ed. Virginia Teehan and Elizabeth Wincott Heckett (Cork: Cork Univ. Press, 2004), 16–90.
- 21 See Bowe, *Harry Clarke*, 100–102.
- 22 Rev. John O’Hanlon, *Lives of the Irish Saints*, vol. 2 (Dublin: James Duffy and Sons, 1877), 464, qtd. in Nicola Gordon Bowe, “Preserving the Relics of Heroic Time: Visualizing the Celtic Revival in Early Twentieth-Century Ireland,” in *Synge and Edwardian Ireland*, ed. Brian Cliff and Nicholas Grene (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 77.
- 23 P. Oswald Reeves, “Irish Arts and Crafts,” *Studio* 72, no. 295 (1917): 15–22.
- 24 See Nicola Gordon Bowe, “A Forgotten Masterpiece: The Fate of the Children of Lit,” *Irish Arts Review* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 78–85.
- 25 P. W. Joyce, trans., *Old Celtic Romances*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Dublin: Educational Co. of Ireland, 1920), 8.
- 26 Ibid., 15.
- 27 Ibid., 35.
- 28 *Belfast News-Letter* (May 22, 1930). It is hoped that the window will be reinstalled in the Ulster Museum after its exhibition at the McMullen Museum, having been relegated to storage since the 1969–71 rehanging of the Museum.
- 29 On the recommendation of the Boston stained glass artist Charles J. Connick. See David Caron, *An Túr Gloine and Michael Healy (1873–1941)*, vol. 2 (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 1991), 139.

# HARRY CLARKE'S SAINTS, SINNERS, AND SELF-PORTRAITS

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In his undated *Self-Portrait as a Drunken Saint* (pl. 145), the stained glass artist and illustrator Harry Clarke (1889–1931) depicts himself as a bawdy street musician playing an accordion with a cigarette in his mouth, his eyes half-closed in his downturned expression. It takes little imagination to assign a five o'clock shadow to the sketchy pencil and red ink lines of his face. His hair stands up in a characteristically untidy cowlick at the back of his head, while a menacing line points like an arrow piercing his skull or a paintbrush tucked behind his ear. The large, gestural wings arc from his back, comically encountering the bowler hat suspended over his hair in saintly swoon.

The juxtaposition of the saintly with the comically sinful suggests both the pressure Clarke felt as a craftsman working in the tradition of religious stained glass for Catholic and Protestant clients and his light-hearted interest in jest and uncanny alignment. In this sketch, he associates himself with the saints he was so often asked to depict in the many windows he designed between 1910 and his early death in 1931. Yet Clarke views himself in contrast to them—as “drunken” and bawdy, as connected rather to the grotesque and earthly creatures he drew in illustrations for literary works. And now the artist himself serves as the focus of attention. For all its casual comic relief, this self-portrait gestures toward Clarke’s modernist interest in subjectivity and ways of sharing his own views of early twentieth-century Ireland: a world being refigured through war, technological change, social and

political revolution, urban decay, and the shifting mores of church and state.

Clarke was one of the leading artists of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement, which differed from its English counterpart in that Irish artists and craftspeople were concerned with shaping a national idiom and vernacular during a period of political revolution and nation building. His work refers back to traditional forms of craft while stretching beyond them to find a distinctly modern outlook for the new Irish state. Like other artists working in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries throughout Europe, Harry Clarke often took himself as subject in his work; but unlike many of his contemporaries, his genres—ecclesiastical and domestic stained glass and pen and ink book illustration—were not forms in which self-portraiture ordinarily makes an appearance. He often represents himself in his self-portraits as a figure of corruption, disease, or sin; in his most transgressive work, Clarke illustrates the damned Faust in his own image, a choice that indicates a modernist angst in depicting the change, aporia, and uncertainty of a rapidly shifting world.

If Clarke’s *Self-Portrait as a Drunken Saint* ironically alludes to his economic servitude to an Irish church hierarchy that commissioned windows from his father’s and, later, his own studio, the sketch also alludes to the work of modernist Continental artists. Although it may predate Egon Schiele’s violently self-sacrificial *Self-Portrait as St. Sebastian* (1914; fig. 1) or that same painter’s *Triple*

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1. Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Self-Portrait as St. Sebastian*, 1914. Pencil on paper, 32.2 x 48.3 cm, private collection.



2. Egon Schiele, *Triple Self-Portrait*, 1913. Gouache and ink on paper, 48.4 x 32 cm, private collection.

*Self-Portrait* (1913; fig. 2) in which the artist appears as an eroticized bishop, Clarke's sketch shares intellectual and expressive concerns with the contemporary Austrian painter. Both explore self-identity in its relationship to sexuality and religious belief—and both appear preoccupied with artistic martyrdom.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, both artists were influenced by the symbolist movement in general and Gustav Klimt's work in particular; Schiele was Klimt's

student, and Clarke's patterned windows and illustrations with expressive, realistic hands and faces indicate a clear indebtedness to both of his European contemporaries.<sup>2</sup> Through a language of symbols that are both personal and universal, these artists strove to represent a host of experiences in a moment of singular perception. The goal was to create in the viewer a sense of ethereal uncertainty, even "to approximate the indefiniteness of music."<sup>3</sup> Like Schiele and Klimt, Clarke created figures of otherworldly beauty coupled with atmospheric uncertainty, producing stained glass windows and ink illustrations that elicit strong emotional responses from his viewers.

Together, Schiele and Clarke represent a transition between the last decadent and impressionistic movements of Victorian art and the burgeoning radicalism of modernist style and modern life. Clarke merges the religious, the macabre, and the symbolic, with the modern in both his stained glass and his illustrations. His choice of medium reflects his adherence to the Arts and Crafts ethos of traditional craft and skill; by employing a Gothic-derived aesthetic in his work, he suggests the connection between the fragmented, alienated, and self-reflexive modernism of his era's literature and painting, and the medieval work that artists of the Arts and Crafts movement sought to emulate. His obsessive merging of the merely beautiful, both in delicate line work and subject matter, with the grotesque—envisioned through deformed bodies, bowdlerized and sexualized figures, larval growths—indicates how his oeuvre marks, in a period of revolutionary political and social change, the often uncomfortable transition to something new. Even his record of commissions reflects a tense dialectic of values and visions. In his work life, Clarke balanced stained glass orders from churches in Ireland (and eventually in England and elsewhere) with book illustrations for *Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen* (1916; pl. 158), Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (1919; pl. 157), and Goethe's *Faust* (1925; pl. 156). For private clients he created domestic stained glass art illustrations like the

delicately rendered *Bluebeard's Last Wife* (1921; pl. 160) and J. M. Synge's *Queens* (1917), even as he was taking on commercial commissions like the Jameson whiskey booklet *Elixir of Life* (1925; pl. 152). The pressures of producing such commercial work to deadline meant that on any given day, Clarke might design St. Columcille draped in flowing robes and then sit down to sketch a bespectacled chemist concocting a new recipe for whiskey. Drunken saints indeed!

### RUSKIN: ARTS AND CRAFTS AND MODERNISM

Although the mannered, decadent, and sexualized figures of Clarke's illustrations and his stained glass indicate the influence of late Victorian figures like Aubrey Beardsley and the Pre-Raphaelite school, the presence of the grotesque in juxtaposition with the beautiful even more closely links Clarke's work to its medieval precursors. This antecedent influence, in turn, establishes a transition toward modernism, one too little considered by scholars of that movement. In *The Stones of Venice* (1851–53), John Ruskin writes of the grotesque in art in relation to the Gothic—a style that delights in combining horror with pleasure, the terror of death with rapture and delight. Calling this style “that magnificent condition of fantastic imagination,” Ruskin locates in the Gothic imagination a “spirit of jesting” that is “perpetual, careless, and not infrequently obscene.”<sup>4</sup> My essay reads Clarke's fascination with the grotesque as related not only to medieval religious and nineteenth-century symbolist art, but also as vitally connected to the aporia and fracture that distinguishes the visual and literary art of the modernist period.

A critical precedent for connecting modernism to the Gothic grotesque appears in *Ruskin and Modernism* (2000), in which Giovanni Cianci and Peter Nicholls draw continuities between the nineteenth-century thinker's definition of the “grotesque” and “forms of disjunction and discontinuity.”<sup>5</sup> They argue that Gothic elements in modernist literature and art speak to the historic and

aesthetic continuity at work in a stylistic period we tend to associate with Pound's dictate to “make it new” and the modernists' own self-described break from tradition. Ruskin's adherence to a Gothic ideal greatly influenced the Arts and Crafts movement, for his ideas found a ready home among craftspeople reviving traditional medieval forms and values five hundred years later. But his influence on literary and visual modernism has been muffled by an aversion to what that movement's practitioners viewed as his Victorian conservatism. Nevertheless, Ruskin has shaped many tenets of modernism, most clearly its affiliation with symbolism and naturalism. Peter Nicholls, for example, describes the Victorian critic's leap forward as precisely linked to the grotesque as an aesthetic structure in which what is left out—the gaps—are as important as the compositional or thematic elements themselves. “Something is always lacking in the grotesque,” he explains, “something always remains in shadow, imperfectly present.”<sup>6</sup> Reading such gaps requires that the viewer participate in the aesthetic work by solving what Ruskin called its “perceptual riddle”; this, in turn, creates “art arising from the confusion of the imagination by the presence of truths which it cannot wholly grasp.”<sup>7</sup>

In Ruskin's definition, it takes a particular innovative genius to create a “fine grotesque,” which he defines as “the expression, in a moment, by a series of symbols thrown together in bold and fearless connection, of truths which it would have taken a long time to express in any verbal way, and of which the connection is left for the beholder to work out for himself; the gaps, left or overleaped by the haste.”<sup>8</sup> Symbolists similarly grappled with describing through language a host of experiences in a moment of singular perception. Thus the preternatural beauty combined with a sense of uneasiness in symbolist work derives from a related Gothic grotesque. Clarke's most symbolist work, like that of many fellow modernists, appears inseparable from the visual memory of his Gothic predecessors. He delights in combining

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3. Harry Clarke, "The Last Hour of the Night," frontispiece to Patrick Abercrombie, *Dublin of the Future* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922).

his darkest themes with forms of ethereal beauty and delicate stylistic execution, as do many artists working at the intersection of symbolism and naturalism. This Darwinian-influenced aesthetic appeared at the end of the nineteenth century among major artists like Klimt and Schiele, and in literature with James Joyce. Connections between Joyce and Clarke abound, not least because they both were born in Dublin only seven years apart, were educated at Belvedere College in that city, and responded to modern Dublin's urban squalor at the turn of the century and into its first decades. Clarke's 1922 frontispiece "The Last Hour of the Night" suggests his particularly Gothic interpretation of Dublin slum life (fig. 3). Moreover, the Nighttown scenes of Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) share a fevered atmosphere with Clarke's illustrations to *Faust*, where demonic visions and sexualized forms replicate themselves on the pages. But connections between the two Irish artists, one literary and one visual, are most arresting in their use of the competing expressive outlets of symbolism and naturalism. Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) juxtaposes devout self-sacrifice, expressed through the rhetoric of religion and aesthetics, with squalid sexual

conquest in the night streets of Dublin. As the authorial alter ego Stephen Dedalus strolls through the city discussing aesthetics and philosophy with his friends, he simultaneously undergoes a private sexual and spiritual



4. Harry Clarke, detail of self-portrait from the *Dempsey Memorial Lancel of St. Maculind*, 1924. Stained glass, St. MacCullin's Church, Lusk, County Dublin.



5. Detail of birds of carrion, *Dempsey Memorial Lancel*.

crisis, compelling him to “fly by the nets” of Ireland and its religious constrictions. The novel’s autobiographical elements make Joyce’s self-presentation akin to self-portraiture in allegorical painting, and Clarke, too, includes such self-presentation in his art. His *St. Maculind* (1924; fig. 4) window reveals his own pale, effete, wide-eyed face peering out from among a collection of worshipers at the feet of the saint. But this holy scene transforms itself into a grotesque mélange of deathly forewarning: a skull accompanies the saint, a toothless monster peeks out over the shoulder of another worshiper, and writhing above the saint’s head are dark birds of carrion (fig. 5). Ruskin’s “fantastic imagination” is amply in evidence here. The viewer observes at once both beauty and horror; the effect of sustained wonder alongside a terror held in abeyance fulfills the Victorian critic’s call for the revival of a Gothic “great field of human intelligence, long entirely closed.”<sup>9</sup> Surely this quality of, in Ruskin’s words, “disjunction and discontinuity” integrally linked to the grotesque has led so many to use the word “genius” when describing Clarke’s work.

#### CLARKE’S GOTHIC AND MEDIEVAL PRECEDENTS

Harry Clarke was a student of Gothic stained glass; he carefully examined windows of the great cathedrals in Chartres, Rouen, and Amiens and shaped for himself and for Ireland a national iconography linked to European medieval aesthetics and craft practice. The playful blending of narrative Bible stories, saints’ lives, and the life of Christ with a terrifying—if sometimes humorous—depiction of suffering, trauma, violence, and death particularly delighted him. Such juxtapositions shape the Gothic grotesque in his windows. Early in his brief career, Clarke readily adopted such a visual language, especially in his windows for the Honan Chapel, created in 1916 and 1917. He designed and executed these magnificent works shortly after a period of travel in France and England. At Chartres, he was able to climb scaffolding erected for glass conservation and closely observe



6. Detail of *Noah and the Flood* windows, c. 1205–15. Chartres Cathedral.

the work of the cathedral’s master craftsmen. There he explored these medieval artists’ macabre employment of images like the *Noah and the Flood* windows, in which the raven Noah sends to check on the receding flood feasts on the bodies of drowned men. Heads of men and horses roil in the multicolored floodwaters in another light, the human faces and hands displaying a pathos both undermined by and made powerful through the similarly suffering horse (fig. 6).

Yet Clarke did not simply attempt to recreate the work of his Gothic precursors. His windows “make new” in several ways, including through a frequent nuance in perspective: the inclusion of himself as the creative genius behind the work or, at times, actively engaged within it. This perspectival shift appears in a variety of examples—ranging from a direct address to the viewer through a figure’s gaze and the troubling of temporal or narrative process in the windows, to the self-conscious decadence in the book illustrations. Clarke’s use of self-portraiture, a deeply self-conscious act, suggests his fascination with representation, subjective experience, perspective, and the role of authorship in a form that was still uncomfort-

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7. Hildebertus (1055–1133), self-portrait with assistant, from Augustine, *Civitas Dei*, 153v. Metropolitan Library, Prague.

ably situated between “art” and “craft.”<sup>10</sup> If Ruskin’s “fine grotesque” functions as a moment of horror and pleasure that unifies to rectify a sense of fracture and confusion in the face of incomprehensible truth, the autobiographical work of Clarke—like that of Joyce or Schiele—similarly invokes momentary cohesive aesthetic wholes to cope imaginatively with the fracture and aporia these contemporary artists felt so central to modern life. This essay considers Clarke’s use of self-portraits and signatures in objects that merge symbolism with a grotesquely radical imagination in his Arts and Crafts work—work that contributed a modernist visual aesthetic to the Irish Free State.<sup>11</sup>

Most histories of self-portraiture begin with the Renaissance invention of the glass mirror and the rise of individual subjectivity in art. But an established tradition of self-portraiture in art existed before the cult of the artist; as James Hall points out, “in the Middle Ages self-portraiture becomes very much a Christian concern, connected with personal salvation, honour, and love.”<sup>12</sup> He adds that although art historians generally portray medieval artists as “anonymous dogsbodies,” in this period we first see “a coherent tradition of self-port-

traiture.”<sup>13</sup> Much of the tradition developed through the miniature, often humorous portraits that monks added into the illuminated manuscripts they illustrated.<sup>14</sup> Clarke would certainly have been familiar with this custom through careful study of the Book of Kells on display at Dublin’s Trinity College; we can read his detailed window margins as inspired by the intricately designed and sketched margins of medieval illuminated manuscripts. Such early Christian self-portraiture subsumes the portrait—and therefore its artist—into the craft, and indeed into the architecture of the book itself. Clarke’s self-portraits in glass in part mimic this act, placing him both within a religious structure and simultaneously calling attention to that structure as a made object.

Although not all viewers would have recognized Clarke’s portrait within the windows once they were installed in churches, he displayed many in his studio first, allowing friends and interested visitors to view the fine details close up. Certainly this audience—and any careful viewer who recognizes the self-portraits—became aware of how Clarke positions himself within symbolic narratives of saints’ lives and biblical stories, making the general tropes of stained glass particularly personal. The medieval scribe or artist presented himself as subordinate to the book (and therefore to the word of God), and his subservience became a form of creation. Yet through their display of “savage humor,” Clarke’s self-portraits and jests disrupt a sense of such subservience.

Medieval self-portraits demonstrate their connection to Christian salvation through a specifically religious mission: in almost every case, they depict monks working for spiritual goals. But alongside this distinctly Christian theme of service to God appears a self-conscious humor that allows for Ruskin’s “jest”—as, for example, with the twelfth-century lay painter Hildebertus’s self-portrait (fig. 7). The monk portrays himself as a mock-St. Gerome the lion-tamer; a lion holds up his lectern with its front paws. But what at first glance appears to be a rock with which St. Gerome assailed his breast in penance is, in



8. Harry Clarke, *Self-Portrait as a Medieval Scribe*, n.d.



9. Harry Clarke, *I. Try To. Draw. Myself*, 1909. Ink on paper, private collection.

fact, a sponge that the painter throws at a mouse making a move on his bread. Such self-consciousness acts as a kind of wink to the viewer; we know Hildebertus is only momentarily distracted from his work directed toward

religious ends, but that distraction becomes ours as well. We recognize he is creating the parodic image we now view, and momentarily he communicates directly to us through it.<sup>15</sup>

Clarke similarly parodied his work as a craftsman in sketches and autograph book cartoons he made for friends. In an undated sketch (fig. 8), he shows himself as a starving medieval artist, holed up in his crumbling garret where a saint in stained glass and a spider look down at him from the walls. He wears a jacket comically out at the elbows, and his hair—usually drawn with his signature cowlick—hangs in a foppish forelock across his eyes. The artist works on a cartoon for a window depicting a saint not very different from the one hanging over him: thus we can read into this self-portrait not sacrifice for religious redemption, but instead repetition and aesthetic staleness, as well as economic and personal entrapment. Clarke's 1909 self-portrait, *I. Try To. Draw. Myself* is even more explicit: the artist bends over his desk under the foreboding gaze of a bishop and a crucifix (fig. 9). His efforts to create something other than religious art—emphasized by the title's stuttering punctuation—are hindered by the regulating gaze of these Catholic icons. This off-hand sketch is, in fact, a double self-portrait, with the cigarette-smoking artist within the work sketching another cigarette-smoking Harry Clarke, with a miniature hand raised to the page. Already in these early works created before Clarke's first major stained glass commission for the Honan Chapel established his reputation, we see a self-conscious impulse to register the tension of producing religious work to order while still allowing full expression of his own imagination.

### SYMBOLISM, SAINTS, AND SIGNATURES

In 1919, after completing the Honan windows, Clarke took on a major commission to illustrate Edgar Allen Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* for Harrap's in London. Poe had strongly influenced Baudelaire and

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later French symbolists, many of whom Clarke read and absorbed into his work. One of the key attributes of symbolism is the attempt to merge the real with the imaginary, indeed to confuse the two in a chaotic, hypnotic way. Symbolism evokes things; as Stéphane Mallarmé says it “charms the imagination.”<sup>16</sup> Evocation is key because the symbolist imagination, like that of the Gothic grotesque, depends largely on the viewer or reader’s ability to bridge interpretative gaps. Poe’s work, and Clarke’s illustrations of it, engage Ruskin’s description of the Gothic imagination at work in “a series of symbols thrown together in bold and fearless connection...of which the connection is left for the beholder to work out for himself; the gaps, left or overleaped.”<sup>17</sup> In his illustrations of Poe, Clarke reveals how the symbolist imagination that merges the real and imagined and the beautiful with the horrific invokes the Gothic grotesque: both attempt a complete, disharmonious sensation of unease and indefiniteness through uncanny juxtaposition. Yet vital to the success of the symbolic or grotesque work of art is the confident organizing vision of the artist. Clarke’s subtle but persistent presence within his own illustrations and glass commissions remind us of his authority within the work and undermine the viewer’s neutrality: once we are aware that it is a likeness of Clarke himself staring out of the image at us, we can no longer abstract the fantastic imagination of the artist from the work of art. They become one and the same.

In some of his earliest glass work, Clarke’s authorial presence and modernist aesthetic makes itself felt alongside stylistic borrowing from Gothic windows he observed in Europe. In the Honan Chapel *St. Gobnait* window (pl. 49), the light is dominated by the rich blue honeycombs that decorate Gobnait’s dress and the honey-like flow of blue and red drops fabricating the window’s background, patterning all the more apparent in the watercolor drawing Clarke first made for the window (pl. 48). The hieratic saint stands with her face and hands vivid against the Byzantine pattern work. Bowe



10. Harry Clarke, detail of plague victims and self-portrait from *St. Gobnait* window, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork.

notes that Clarke’s effect in *St. Gobnait* recalls Klimt, who similarly juxtaposed detailed hands and faces against a mosaic-like setting in his paintings.<sup>18</sup> In *St. Gobnait*, large bees stylistically interrupt the composition at key points, and the “jest” and pathos of the window appears in the story illustrated through figures and symbols surrounding the stately saint. A band of robbers runs in terror from Gobnait’s giant bees, an allusion to the legend that she would turn them on those who attempted to steal her hives. Yet even more emphatically, the scene at the top of the window illustrates the legend of St. Gobnait drawing a wall against the plague in order to protect parishioners who have taken refuge in her community. Just outside this protective line a group of disease-ridden men writhe, their faces distorted by pustules and their hands bandaged. One of these men—dark-haired and, despite a mouth full of rotted teeth and one damaged and bloodshot eye, vaguely resembling Clarke himself—



11. Harry Clarke posing in his studio as Christ, 1920.

carries on his long green robe Clarke's initials and the date, 1916, of its fabrication (fig. 10). As Bowe explains in her careful analysis of this scene, Clarke "shows the delight he took in depicting deformity, disease and the macabre."<sup>19</sup> Equally important, however, is that the artist associates himself with the most horrific narrative moment of his window, fixing himself within the glass both through self-portraiture and signature. But unlike his medieval precursors, this deliberate self-reference serves to heighten the grotesquerie and suffering of the scene rather than pay homage to religious piety. In a particularly dramatic example, Clarke used photographs of himself, posed "only in a towel as a loincloth, hanging on to a wire,"<sup>20</sup> as a model for Christ in his *Crucifixion* window for St. Joseph's Church, Terenure, Dublin, 1920 (fig. 11).<sup>21</sup>

### CLARKE'S MODERN FAUST

Two of Clarke's most radically personal works are also among his most grotesque and self-damning: his 1924 illustrations for *Faust*, and the 1930 *Last Judgment*

window in Newport, County Mayo. In each, Clarke's self-portraits add a dark poignancy as well as a sense of fragmentation and skepticism to the work, attributes particularly fitting during the final years of his life when, suffering from advanced tuberculosis, he knew he was dying. After the success of his illustrations for Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, in 1924 Clarke began planning illustrations for Goethe's *Faust* for Harrap's. Particularly interested in the layout and design of this book, he lavished care in making the dummy copy (a mock-up design for the final book) (pl. 154). Like many of his illustrated works, *Faust* shows meticulously executed pen and ink drawings with intricate lines and an almost depraved, feverish abundance of grotesquerie and horrors (figs. 13–17). The dummy copy only hints at this depravity, however, with its looser ink wash drawings showing a gestural, open side of Clarke rarely on view in his technical craftwork. His use of watercolor in the dummy copy indicates the importance of color in his work: the green used on the double-page end paper illustrations recalls that used in the much earlier self-portrait *Mephisto* (1914; fig. 12), a drawing that anticipates the absinthe-like green of the later work with its hazy, drugged sense of evil.

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12. Harry Clarke, *Mephisto*, 1914. Pencil, ink, and watercolor on paper, 17.8 x 15.2 cm, private collection.

Kelly Sullivan



13. Harry Clarke, "I Wish You Had Something Else to Do Than Thus Torment Me When I'm Quiet," from *Faust by Goethe* (London: Harrap, 1925), 180.



14. Faust under rat.

Even more notably, this early self-portrait reveals Clarke's personal connection to the story of Faust. Now, however, his association is no longer with the tempter Mephisto, but instead with the damned Faust who, throughout the volume, he depicts as himself (fig. 13). Clarke's delicate features appear as Faust's in the full-page illustrations of the book, and as self-portraits that suffer terribly in the decorative insertions. In one he lies prostrate under a rat



15. Creatures gnawing Faust's face.



16. Bodies and larval growths.



17. Mephisto gripping Faust's skull.

(fig. 14) and in another amorphous creatures seem to gnaw his face (fig. 15).

Clarke acknowledged the symbolic and personal sources of the *Faust* illustrations, claiming that he simply drew what he felt when reading the text.<sup>22</sup> Harrap's, however, was not pleased with the final product, primarily because the firm felt itself open to legal charges of indecency. The artist reports that his publisher viewed his illustrations for *Faust* as "full of stench and steaming horrors."<sup>23</sup> Although Clarke affects a certain innocence in his defense of the work, the illustrations are indeed overtly sexual, with a profusion of penises, breasts, cadaverous bodies, and growths in a witty, grotesque display (fig. 16; pl. 155). These figures arguably merge Clarke's dark interior world with the reality of post-1918 Europe, with its damaged physical bodies and psychological debris left from the Great War—as well as with north Dublin where the artist worked in the 1920s, a place of slums and poverty suffering the aftermath of a revolutionary battle. Indeed, Clarke declared that some of his creatures in *Faust* came from people he observed in the Tara Street baths.<sup>24</sup>

Disappointed with Harrap's complaints, Clarke wrote Harry Bodkin that *Faust* was his "best book." The artist also insisted, "such as it is it is terribly, terribly sincere... 'tis horrid I know—in fact I had to laugh at my creations or I would have become morbid."<sup>25</sup> Clarke's ability to laugh in the face of horror is a Gothic sort of jest; not the least of this "jest" is that in most illustrations of the book, Clarke portrays himself suffering as Faust, with the supernatural force of Mephisto grasping his skull with one powerful hand (fig. 17) or riding on his back as he seems to fly through the air. Like symbolist artists before him, Clarke felt he expressed a deeply personal experience in his illustrations. Working as he did through a period of cultural trauma and catastrophe, this personal response evokes the modernist fissures he likewise represents. But his wariness about illustrating again and the defensive posture inherent in his expressions of sincerity gesture to

a deeply personal investment in *Faust*'s psychological and cultural sources.

The presence of Clarke's own portrait in so many of these drawings and windows brings human pathos to scenes of grotesque horror and suffering, but also shields him and us from any resolution through religious absolution. In his *Last Judgment* (1930), the final stained glass window he designed and only partially executed before his death, Clarke prominently includes himself among the "pestilential" creatures descending to hell. This upside-down green visage is in fact part of a double self-portrait; mirrored opposite this face we see his image again, in dark shadow (fig. 18). This double portrait evokes a fractured sense of self and a particularly modernist juxtaposition of individual consciousness with symbolic suffering. The damned souls portrayed alongside Clarke are cousins

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18. Harry Clarke, detail of *Last Judgment* window with self-portrait, 1930. Stained glass, St. Patrick's Church, Newport, County Mayo.

to the writhing figures illustrating *Faust*; all of them evidence a fantastic imagination synthesizing the symbolic elements of the Last Judgment, the fevered distortions of disease, and sin and death, with the artist's own self-representation. Clarke's grotesque self-portraits illustrate for us the fracture and aporia, the day-to-day sensation of uncertainty and paradox experienced by his generation.

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- 1 As Alessandra Comini notes, for Schiele the preoccupation with martyrdom extended to the realm of self-pity. After Schiele was briefly incarcerated in Neulengbach in 1912 on charges of lewdness and seducing a minor, his sense of the artist's plight and his relation to society, as well as his own sense of isolation, became transformed. In reaction, he painted and threw himself "in the role of hermit, monk, or martyred saint." See Alessandra Comini, ed., *Egon Schiele: Portraits* (New York: Prestel, 2014), 31.
- 2 Nicola Gordon Bowe discusses the influence of Klimt on Clarke's work in *Harry Clarke: The Life and Work*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Dublin: History Press Ireland, 2012), 30.
- 3 Edmund Wilson, *Axel's Castle: A Study of the Imaginative Literature of 1870–1930* (1931; London: Fontana, 1984), 18.
- 4 John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin: Volume 11; The Stones of Venice Volume 3*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1904), 145, 136. Qtd. in Peter Nicholls, "Ruskin's Grotesque and the Modernism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis," in *Ruskin and Modernism*, ed. Giovanni Cianci and Peter Nicholls (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 170.
- 5 Cianci and Nicholls, "Introduction," in *Ruskin and Modernism*, xv. Cianci and Nicholls make links between Ruskin and modernism through themes beyond the grotesque—including his interest in myth, his "historical sense" which provided a "powerful model for modernist readings of the past" and his "preoccupation with cultural heritage and personal memory which is so frequently echoed in the aesthetic of the new century" (ibid).
- 6 Nicholls, "Ruskin's Grotesque," 173.
- 7 John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin: Volume 5; Modern Painters Volume 3*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1906), 130.

- 8 Ibid., 132. Qtd. in Nicholls, “Ruskin’s Grotesque,” 172.
- 9 Ruskin, *Works: Volume 5*, 139.
- 10 Art historians generally agree that in the thirteenth century, stained glass “becomes an autonomous, major art form,” although it remains “closely connected to architecture.” Elisabeth von Witzleben, *Stained Glass in French Cathedrals* (New York: William Morrow, 1968), 30. But for Clarke, working in stained glass initially in his father’s studios—which provided a variety of church furnishings and supplies—the production of windows was closer to “craft” than to art, given the poor status of stained glass in Ireland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- 11 Clarke was undoubtedly influenced by a tradition of transgressive self-portraiture in classical and modern painting. Diego Velázquez’s *Las Meninas* (1656), for example, which includes a portrait of the court-appointed artist, plays with perspective and self-consciousness in a way that influenced generations of artists. Irish artists whose work Clarke knew well, like William Orpen and Sir John Lavery, allude to Velázquez’s self-portrait in their paintings.
- 12 James Hall, *The Self-Portrait: A Cultural History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2014), 8.
- 13 Ibid., 17.
- 14 Bokody offers a consideration of the self-reflexivity of such portraits, and the complications in identifying the “author” of an illuminated manuscript in contrast to the work’s craftsman. See Péter Bokody, *Images-within-Images in Italian Painting (1250–1350): Reality and Reflexivity* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2015), 15–16.
- 15 For more analysis of the self-portrait see Hall, *Self-Portrait*, 27–28.
- 16 Qtd. in Wilson, *Axel’s Castle*, 23.
- 17 Ruskin, *Works: Volume 5*, 132.
- 18 Bowe, *Harry Clarke*, 30.
- 19 Ibid., 100.
- 20 Ibid., 176.
- 21 Clarke’s friend, the painter Seán Keating, may have influenced him to work from photographs and to use himself as a model for figures in his windows. Keating, who was particularly interested in modern technology and its application to studio art, often photographed himself and friends as models for his work, which ranged from ecclesiastical paintings for churches, to depictions of life on the Aran Islands, to murals for public spaces. In preliminary photographs made for a series of paintings depicting the Passion of the Christ, commissioned in 1919 by Clongowes Woods College, Keating appears as Christ on the Cross, with his wife, May Keating, posing as the Virgin Mary. Éimear O’Connor argues that it was “for economically pragmatic reasons Keating used his own features for those of Christ” (*Seán Keating: Art, Politics and Building the Irish Nation* [Sallins: Irish Academic Press, 2013], 70). See 48–49 and 69–74 for more on Keating’s use of photography and himself as model.
- 22 In a letter to the publisher Harrap’s, he claims that he is “endeavouring in a simplified manner to illustrate actual allusions, abstract or otherwise in the text.” Qtd. in Nicola Gordon Bowe, *Harry Clarke: His Graphic Art* (Dublin: Dolmen, 1983), 79.
- 23 In a 1924 letter to his friend, the reviewer Harry Bodkin, Clarke wrote that Harrap’s alleged the drawings are “full of stench and steaming horrors and they say ‘leave you open to charges which we are sure you would indignantly repudiate.’ But there it is...I did my best to convey what I felt. Harraps are bringing it out beautifully” (ibid.).
- 24 See Bowe, *Harry Clarke*, 258.
- 25 Qtd. in Bowe, *His Graphic Art*, 79.

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# RICHARD KING'S ROCHE ROOM WINDOWS: A LEGACY OF THE IRISH ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT AT BOSTON COLLEGE

Diana Larsen

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Arts and Crafts practice arrived at Boston College more than two decades after the waning of the movement in Ireland—and a quarter century after the University's Jesuit founders erected the Collegiate Gothic buildings on the Chestnut Hill campus. In 1952 the stained glass artist Richard King completed a distinctive commission at the University, making clear the influence of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement in a North American setting. This essay suggests how the windows in the campus's Bapst Library, created by an apprentice and colleague of Harry Clarke in the 1920s and 1930s, preserved and transmitted the influence of this distinguished stained glass artist long after his death. It also argues that King's still under-explored graphic and stained glass production warrants more attention than it has received.

In 1951 Fr. Terrence Connolly, SJ, director of the college libraries, commissioned Richard J. King (1907–74) to execute one two-light and one single-light window for the James Jeffrey Roche Room in the Neo-Gothic library building (fig. 1). This study space—named for a prominent writer and editor of the Boston Archdiocese's newspaper, the *Pilot*—had been repurposed four years earlier to house the recently founded Special Irish Collection.<sup>1</sup> With the addition of new furniture and King's three stained glass windows in 1951, the room assumed its current appearance. Since King had previously designed a bookplate for the John T. Hughes collection of rare Irish books already housed in the Roche Room, his work was

familiar to Fr. Connolly. The Boston College academic librarian worked closely, although from long distance, with the artist in his studio in Dalkey, County Dublin to establish the iconography of the windows.<sup>2</sup>

Born in County Mayo in 1907, Richard King was an accomplished graphic and stained glass artist, whose talents ranged from architecture to a variety of crafts to which he applied his considerable skills.<sup>3</sup> In his early twenties, he trained at Dublin's Metropolitan School of Art under the Irish Arts and Crafts graphic artist Austin Molloy (1886–1961; pl. 80), who introduced his talented pupil to Harry Clarke (1889–1931), Ireland's preeminent stained glass artist whose illustrations and glass work



1. Roche Room, Bapst Library, Boston College.

feature prominently in this exhibition. When he invited King to join his studio in March 1928, Clarke was at the height of his career.

Clarke recognized King's talents and encouraged his independence by giving him design tasks early in his employment at the studio. According to King's son, "There was a considerable rapport between them."<sup>4</sup> Under Clarke's direction, King attended evening classes at the Metropolitan School of Art, where he studied stained glass with Alfred Ernest Child (1875–1939), the teacher whose instruction had shaped the careers of Ireland's major Arts and Crafts artists in that medium.<sup>5</sup> The time spent working closely with Clarke at his studio, however, was most pivotal for King's training as a glass artist. After his mentor's early death in 1931, King continued at the studio and became its manager and chief designer from 1935 until 1940.<sup>6</sup> Studying with Child and apprenticing with Clarke, he had encountered many of Ireland's finest stained glass artists of the period, including some later members of *An Túr Gloine* (The Tower of Glass), the cooperative founded in 1903 by Sarah Purser and Edward Martyn.<sup>7</sup> King's Boston College windows—especially in their rich colors emphasizing reds and blues, which harken back to medieval glass—reveal the significant influence of these predecessors. They had, like Clarke, studied the stained glass of European cathedrals and brought their knowledge of medieval techniques to Ireland. King absorbed much from these Irish artists who were knowledgeable and skilled enough to create what Matthew Arnold had termed new "pavement[s] of...heaven," just as their medieval forebears had done.<sup>8</sup>

### THE BOSTON COLLEGE WINDOWS: ICONOGRAPHY AND STYLE

In planning the themes for the Roche Room windows in 1951, Richard King and Fr. Connolly acquainted Americans with the key elements of national identity that the young Irish state was projecting mid-century.<sup>9</sup> These included an emphasis on Ireland's pre-Christian

past, strong Catholic traditions, and the island's historical role as a cradle of early Christianity—when its monasteries produced illuminated manuscripts and disseminated religion through much of Europe. The left light of King's two-light window depicts the pre-Christian god of sun and light, Lugh of the Long Arm, triumphing over Balor, the one-eyed monster; the right light reveals Jesus Christ triumphing over the Devil (pl. 168). The Devil defeated by Christ echoes the adjacent figure of Balor who is similarly crushed by Lugh. In this double-light window, the dominating figures of Lugh and Christ are contrasted with the images of their terrifying conquests, Balor and the Devil.

In this highly original composition combining pre-Christian and Christian iconography, the pair of windows celebrates the theme of the triumph of light over darkness in Ireland. King explained his overall conception in October 1951:

When the idea of introducing stained glass into the library was first proposed, I thought it would be a good idea to give visual expression to the fundamental ideals of Ireland's temperament, as expressed in her literature from the earliest time. First, I thought of the pre-historic period when the first stirrings of the wonder of existence made itself vocal in Ireland's mythological tales. The storytellers looked outside the matter-of-fact way of life for their inspiration, and got it in the solar system, and so we have the sun symbolic of the great god Lugh, with attributes of goodness, nobility, brightness and chivalry. Night, on the other hand, was symbolic of evil, darkness and treachery. The continual war between the two was the basis for future tales. I think they enshrine an answer to the often-posed question—how was St. Patrick able to effect such a prodigious work as the conversion of a whole nation to the Faith in such a limited time and to such effect? The answer seems to be clear. The Irish ideal was akin to Christianity, and what Patrick brought was,

in effect, a confirmation of the aspirations of the race.<sup>10</sup>

A smaller third single-light window and its cartoon depict a monk scribe seated at an ornate writing desk, with an angel of devotion at his side and an angel of inspiration in the form of a dove above (pls. 169, 167). He wears a cowl and is seen in profile with an aura of flames encircling his head. At the base of the desk is a closed Bible with a Celtic interlace clasp and to the right, an upright manuscript cover with stylized symbols of the Four Evangelists. With this window, King emphasizes the importance of Ireland as the “island of saints and scholars”:

I think [St.] Patrick himself must have felt the kinship between the pagan myths and the Christian truths. For it was at his request that the Christian scribes not only gave Ireland its first Christian literature, but also preserved and transcribed much of our pagan literature. That was why I devoted the small third window to the figure of a monk writing. If it weren't for these Christian scribes the wealth of our ancient literature would have been lost to us and I would never have been able even to conceive the idea that I've expressed in the Boston College windows.<sup>11</sup>

The dynamic sweeping diagonal curves of the original design of the Boston College commission, as seen in the colored sketch for the two-light window (pl. 165), distinguishes King's work in stained glass. A typewritten note found among the King papers in the University's archives (possibly written by a librarian at the time) indicates that Fr. Connolly changed the position of the two panels so that Christ would be on the right or “good” side, a doctrinal decision that compromised the aesthetic plan of the windows. The note reads, “He thus ruined the design, as the long robes of Lugh now, instead of carrying out the line of the design, cut it in half, and create opposition.”<sup>12</sup> However since the initials, *L* for Lugh and *I* for

Jesus, which appear above each figure, seem to have been intended for their specific shaped spaces, the artist must have agreed to this change before the windows were sent to Boston. King's preliminary sketch for the double-light window shows his original positioning of the figures (pl. 165).

These windows offer a syncretic vision of Ireland's heroic pagan and Christian traditions. Heroes from Ireland's Celtic past appear to the left of Lugh: Cu Chulainn, Lugh's son and the warrior hero of the Ulster cycle of Irish saga literature; Fergus mac Róich, king of Ulster; and Medb, the sexually voracious warrior queen of Connacht. At the bottom to Lugh's left are three more Celtic heroes, one holding a shield that forms a pattern with Lugh's above and the roundel with the initial *L* above that. Iconography referring to Ireland's Christian patron saints plays an equal role in the design. To Christ's left appear St. Patrick, the “Apostle of Ireland” who converted the island to Christianity; St. Columcille, founder of monasteries, including Iona on the west coast of Scotland; and St. Brigid, who established the monastery at Kildare. In the lower left, to Christ's right, appears St. Brendan, “The Voyager,” who traveled to the “Isle of the Blessed” with fourteen pilgrims, many of whom are depicted behind him. Above Christ's head is the three ring Celtic knot symbol of the Trinity and to his left the Chi-Rho monogram, one of the oldest known letter symbols for Christ. King's signature and date (1951) appear in the lower right corner, suggesting that the artist was aware of the switching of the main figures' positions before he signed the windows.

The rich colors of the two-light window are punctuated dramatically with panels of deep purple-blue, with the contrast of the strong reds and other shades of blue and gold creating a jewel-like effect. Each glass piece has been carefully painted or acid etched, adding to the overall patterned brilliance. The painted detail articulates the figures' robes; their attributes, such as Lugh's unconquerable sword and shield; Christ's cross and jeweled orphrey

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(vestment's front panel); as well as their intense faces and the swirling background. Like his mentor Clarke, King uses the lead lines around the glass pieces to enhance the overall design, in particular the characteristic strong S-curves in each panel.

The design of King's *Monk Scribe* window also forms a vigorous S-curve; the rather modern stylized angel supporting the desk creates one side of the S and the monk's flaming halo and angel of devotion creates the other. The feather pen with which the monk writes forms a dramatic horizontal element just as the descending dove of inspiration forms a strong vertical.

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### INFLUENCES, PAST AND PRESENT

Following the stylistic choices of his Irish Arts and Crafts predecessors, King incorporated Celtic imagery and motifs derived from the Book of Kells,<sup>13</sup> as well as from early Christian metalwork and Irish high crosses. In King's windows, Lugh's and Fergus's shields incorporate decorative roundels and La Tène trumpet and spiral motifs, similar to those found in Kells fol. 292r (at the beginning of St. John's Gospel) (fig. 2). The jewels of Christ's orphrey that incorporate saltire (diagonal) and interlace crosses, the pin on Lugh's cloak, as well as the interlace motifs of the trefoils above each figure, also refer to Kells designs seen on that page and others. Another allusion to the illuminated manuscript appears as King's serpent emerges from the monogram's interlace above the figure of Christ. In addition to ornament from the Book of Kells, the interlace details of both figures' clothing and the initials above each reference early Christian metalwork such as the Ardagh Chalice and Tara Brooch, so often echoed by King's Arts and Crafts mentors and to Irish sculptured high crosses made available through printed books (pl. 4). King's frontal bearded figures of both Christ and Lugh reveal an evident relationship to the portrait of Christ of Kells fol. 32v with flanking angels (fig. 3). Even the articulation of the eyes and nose, the stylization of the hands and feet, and the positioning of smaller flanking



2. *In Principio Erat Verbum*, Book of Kells, fol. 292r.  
Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 58.



3. *Christ Enthroned*, Book of Kells, fol. 32v.  
Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 58.



4. Harry Clarke, detail of *St. Albert* window, 1916. The Honan Chapel, University College Cork (Virginia Raguin, *Stained Glass from Its Origins to the Present* [New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003], 251).

figures—all fitting into an arch shape—echo that early Christian source.

Harry Clarke's Honan Chapel figure of *St. Albert* (1916; fig. 4) represents a precursor to King's work since both artists clearly looked to the frontal figural depictions in the Book of Kells for inspiration. Working in Clarke's studio, King certainly would have been familiar with the Honan window, probably through full-scale workshop cartoons. Other elements in King's Boston College windows reflect Clarke's *St. Albert*: the decorative articulation of each piece of colored glass surrounding the central figure, the use of a grid pattern or small dots for borders, and the shape of Christ's crown. In her description of Clarke's Honan Chapel windows, Nicola Gordon Bowe notes how the artist "fragments the daylight by breaking up the surface of the glass, painting the whole surface with devices, such as strings of little beads, so that light sparkles through, filtering kinetically."<sup>14</sup> King turns to these same techniques in his windows, creating a rich and scintillating effect.

During the 1940s, after leaving his post at the Clarke

studio and owing to the scarcity of imported stained glass supplies during and after the war years, King worked exclusively in pen and ink (often on scraperboard using etching tools), pencil, oils, and pastel. From 1940 to 1953, he was staff artist for the *Capuchin Annual*, published in Dublin between 1930 and 1977; he also illustrated its sister Catholic publication, the *Father Matthew Record*. Both featured articles on religion, Irish art, literature, history, and politics.<sup>15</sup>

In the 1930s and 1940s, King designed postage stamps for Ireland, works that feature bold linear patterns. A 1937 stamp commemorating St. Patrick (fig. 5) evidences the contemporary art deco style, which influenced aspects of the later Boston College windows. The frontal image of the stamp's saint with upraised arms arises from a characteristic sunburst; also familiar to art deco are the wavy motifs along the sides of the image. Features of that style reappear in King's Roche Room windows, such as the use of zig zags, articulating the figures' halos and their sunbursts.

One of Richard King's many commissions in Ireland in the general period of the Boston College windows were the mural paintings of the Four Evangelists, executed for

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5. Richard King, St. Patrick postage stamp, 1937.



**Diana Larsen** 6. Richard King, *St. Mark* from mural of the Four Evangelists, 1950. Oil on canvas, St. Mary's Church, Navan, County Meath.

the parish of St. Mary's, Navan, County Meath in 1950 (fig. 6). These large works suggest how his painting style had evolved from his time at the Clarke studio to incorporate art deco, as well as modernist elements taken from his contemporaries Evie Hone and Mairie Jellet, Irish artists whom King admired.<sup>16</sup> In these bold Four Evangelists murals, we see the influence of cubism in the hexagonal halos and expressionism in the vibrant colors and strong forms. A comparison of the Boston College windows with these contemporary paintings, however, clarifies how medievalist-inspired Arts and Crafts elements dominate over any explicitly modernist features.

### RICHARD KING REVISITS HARRY CLARKE

King's first stained glass commissions since his earlier Clarke studio years were in 1950 for St. Columba's in Perth, Western Australia, and in 1951, for Boston College. Despite his far more modernist work in other media at the time, for both of the glass commissions abroad he reverted to his earlier Clarke-influenced style of the 1930s, which by then he had mostly abandoned.<sup>17</sup> In returning to this earlier style for his two important mid-century foreign commissions, King implicitly acknowledges his Arts and Crafts predecessors' roles in shaping his career as a stained glass artist and introduces that stylistic approach to places unfamiliar with Irish art. The windows in Perth depict the Holy Family, the Queen of Heaven, the Infant

of Prague (fig. 7), and St. Anne. They share many characteristics with the Roche Room windows: the figures are frontal and hieratic, smaller figures are incorporated into the bottom of each panel, some have flaming halos, and considerable attention is directed to painted detail in the robes and background glass. The colors, too, emphasize medieval reds and blues. With these mid-twentieth-century windows, King succeeded in sharing a Revivalist vision of Ireland's past with Australia and North America. The windows in Perth and Boston demonstrate how an Irish Arts and Crafts-influenced style reached beyond its country of origin—with the artist now reviving Ireland's



7. Richard King, *Infant of Prague* window, 1951. Stained glass, St. Columba's, Perth (Phillip Pandal, "A Thing of Beauty..." *St. Columba's, South Perth, Western Australia* [Perth: St. Columba's, 1986], 8).



8. Harry Clarke, detail of *Geneva Window* with figures from *The Demi-Gods*, 1929–30. Stained glass, The Wolfsonian–Florida International University, Miami Beach, TD1988.34.1.

traditional medieval role as a disseminator of culture.

Among other young stained glass artists working in the Clarke studios, King had assisted in completing Clarke's two major final commissions, the *Geneva Window* (1929–30; pl. 161) and the *Last Judgment* window for St. Patrick's Church, Newport, County Mayo (1930). According to King's son, Clarke insisted that King, along with the other assistants, place his initials on the bottom right hand panel of the *Geneva Window*—uncommon, since assistants' names were rarely included in works by Clarke or studio work after Clarke's death.<sup>18</sup> At the time of this commission, Clarke was terminally ill in Switzerland and increasingly relied on his fellow artists at the Dublin studio to execute his designs for that window.

Although King's style had evolved in a very different direction from his mentor's by the 1950s, two late Clarke windows appear to have clearly influenced the Boston College windows. Bowe notes how Clarke often turned to “wings, flames or fire to symbolize mystical spiritual supernatural or metaphysical elements.”<sup>19</sup> Indeed, one of the eight panels of the *Geneva Window*, which commemorates contemporary Irish writers, illustrates James Stephens's novel *The Demi-Gods*; a detail depicts three winged frontal angels with distinctive colorful flaming

halos (fig. 8). The upward sweep of the wings and flames is surely echoed in King's figure of Lugh with the curves of his horned crown and flaming halo; his bearded staring face appears directly related to that of Clarke's central demi-god. A contemporary King image, “Dies Iræ” (Day of Judgment), a black and white drawing from the 1950–51 *Capuchin Annual*, depicts Christ with a flaming aura around his crowned head holding an orb and scepter—with the winged figure of St. Michael below holding a book depicting scales to weigh the souls (fig. 9). In this drawing, the multitudes fill the lower part of the image: the blessed, white with arms upraised, and the damned, black with bowed heads. These frontal figures with flaming halos and wings again echo those in Clarke's *Demi-Gods* panel and the figure of Lugh in the Boston College windows. The depiction of multitudes trailing behind St. Brendan in the Christ window and in “Dies Iræ” is characteristic of many of King's graphic compositions of the same mid-century period. In King's smaller *Monk Scribe* window at Boston College (pl. 169), the cowed figure echoes Harry Clarke's earlier *St. Gobnait* window at



9. Richard King, “Dies Iræ,” *Capuchin Annual* (1950–51): 140.

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the Honan Chapel (pls. 48–49) where figures are similarly seen in profile with head covers.

### GRAPHIC WORK: KING BORROWS FROM HIMSELF

Years before his Boston College commission, King had already executed a black and white drawing of Lugh triumphing over Balor, which first appeared in the 1936 *Capuchin Annual* (fig. 10). Here we see his mastery of the graphic medium, and how in Máirín Allen's words, "he never fails to savour...the peculiar pleasure of manipulating line and free space into the greater entity of his whole design."<sup>20</sup> Executed during the period King ran the Clarke studio in the 1930s, this design almost certainly served as a model for Boston College's Lugh window, which was commissioned a decade and half later. However, some clear differences emerge when the early graphic design is compared to both the colored cartoon for the later window (pl. 166) and the window itself (pl. 168).

In adapting his 1936 design to the arch-shaped window frames of the Roche Room, King had to limit the dramatic S-curve of Lugh's cape in the drawing and extend the horns of his crown and flamed halo to fit the more elongated space of the lancet. In the cartoon and stained glass window, where color and backlit pattern necessarily predominate, he filled all the negative space of the drawing with figures and decorative motifs and faces in blue; the entire surface is treated. The brilliance of King's early graphic image is in the lines, in particular the curves of the drapery and diminishing folds near the bottom edge and the simple contrast of positive and negative space: the solid black sweep of Lugh's cape with the stark white background. We can compare these elements to Aubrey Beardsley's well-known *The Peacock Skirt* (fig. 11) to illustrate how King emerges from a long tradition of graphic artists filtered through the work of Clarke—himself inspired by Beardsley.<sup>21</sup> Although the scope of this essay cannot include many of King's varied graphic works, in the medium of pen and ink he stands alongside major

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10. Richard King, "The Triumph of Lugh," *Capuchin Annual* (1936): 225 and (1940): 309.



11. Aubrey Beardsley (1872–98), *The Peacock Skirt*, 1907 (first published 1894). Line block print on Japanese vellum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, E.426-1972.



12. Austin Molloy, “Balor,” *Dublin Magazine* (Aug. 1923): 39.



13. Richard King, “With Shattering Logic Came the Answer,” *Capuchin Annual* (1941): 323.

artists of his time.

Ruth Sheehy observes a key distinction between Clarke and King: “the fascination with the decadent, the grotesque and the macabre which is so much a feature of Clarke’s Symbolist art is not to be found in the work of King who did not have the same interests nor the same

complex imagination.”<sup>22</sup> The figure of one-eyed Balor in the Boston College window, however, with his hooked nose, fangs, pointed ear, lethal twisted horn and worm-like locks is a rare instance of King depicting the grotesque. Knowing that he worked on Clarke’s *Last Judgment*, with its right-hand window depicting a stream of hideous souls condemned to Hell (Sullivan, fig. 18), again makes clear his mentor’s lasting influence on him.

King’s diabolic figures emerge from several sources. His teacher at the Dublin Metropolitan School, Austin Molloy, also depicted a Balor that King may well have seen; his own Balor seems to combine features from the two frightening figures in Molloy’s illustration (fig. 12). King’s Boston Satan has precedent in another of his own graphic works, “With Shattering Logic Came the Answer” (fig. 13) from the 1941 *Capuchin Annual*. The slanted eyes, fangs, pointed ears, horns, and long pointed nose in that print’s Satan are identical to the depiction of the comparable figure in the later window.

### CONCLUSION

Allen explores King’s special ability to design stained glass windows for particular architectural spaces:

His taste and training, his gifts for decoration, [and] his interest in problems of architectural design and structure—his early interest in design and materials was so pronounced that he first intended to be an architect—...[made] him an ideal collaborator for the architect keen to integrate [building] design and decoration.<sup>23</sup>

The majority of King’s stained glass commissions were for churches and were, therefore, much larger than the Boston College windows he designed for an intimate and contemplative library space dedicated to scholarly research. We have seen how he modified his earlier graphic image of “The Triumph of Lugh” (fig. 10) in creating one of the three narrative windows in the Roche Room—a design appropriate in size for close observation. The intricate

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decorative details over the surface of each light and the iconography chosen to support the room's function as home to a collection of rare Irish books indicates King's careful matching of form and function.

King's windows decorate one of the core campus buildings built between 1909 and 1928 and designed by the Boston architectural firm Maginnis (Charles D.) and Walsh (Timothy).<sup>24</sup> Collegiate Gothic was the Catholic choice in New England during the period, differing from the Hiberno-Romanesque style preferred by the Irish Arts and Crafts creators of the Honan Chapel.<sup>25</sup> Maginnis and Walsh designed many Neo-Gothic buildings, based on English precedents, throughout New England and beyond. These include the church of St. Vincent de Paul in Bayonne, New Jersey (1929), which houses the only Harry Clarke windows found in the United States,<sup>26</sup> as well as the chapel of the Newton Country Day School, home to another major Irish stained glass commission of eight windows by *An Túr Gloine*. In alluding to these Maginnis and Walsh structures, Maureen Meister points out that in their search for the "highest quality" ornament, the architects turned on occasion to Irish craftsmen.<sup>27</sup> By commissioning King's windows for the Boston College library, Fr. Connolly thus continued a long-standing Maginnis and Walsh tradition. These windows, despite their late date, suggest the appropriateness of this university as the setting for *The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish*. They also call attention to the continuing migration of artistic traditions beyond Ireland's island borders, a transmission of knowledge and style that began centuries earlier in a medieval "Golden Age."



- 1 A 1946 gift of a collection of rare Irish material from the family of the late John T. Hughes, a distinguished Boston lawyer, prompted Fr. Connolly in his role as head of the University's English Department to augment the collection which "was to contain the especially choice, scarce or rare books showing Irish life in all its aspects, written in both English and Irish." Helen Landreth, *An Informal History of the Special Irish Collection, Bapst Library, Boston College* (Chestnut Hill: Boston College, 1974), 1. The Roche Room and eventually the adjacent Carney Room housed the volumes of the growing Special Irish Collection in custom bookcases lining its walls, and Helen Landreth, its curator from 1946 until 1977, occupied the Carney Room to administer it.
- 2 King's most well-known commission done while at the Harry Clarke studio was the *Kevin Barry Memorial Window*, commemorating the Irish nationalist hero, completed in 1934. Consisting of an eight-panel narrative of Barry's martyrdom and other historic Irish heroes, the window's format is reminiscent of Clarke's *Geneva Window* that King worked on with him. Fr. Connolly may have been familiar with this window and the twelve postage stamps King designed for Ireland between 1933 and 1949. Theo Snoddy, *Dictionary of Irish Artists: 20th Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Dublin: Merlin, 2002), 321.
- 3 According to his lifelong friend and fellow stained glass artist, William Dowling, "Richard was most inventive and highly skillful in any craftwork which he chose to execute." "In Tribute to Richard King," *Capuchin Annual* (1975): 181. In another tribute, Richard Corcoran writes, "Richard showed great skill with his hands. His home was full of toys and gadgets of various kinds which displayed his precocious ingenuity and his talent for improvisation" (*ibid.*, 177).
- 4 Kenneth King, the artist's son, e-mail to author, May 29, 2015.

- 5 Child was a disciple of the English Arts and Crafts movement's major figure in that medium, Christopher Whall (1849–1924), and came to teach in Ireland at Whall's direction.
- 6 Before his death, Clarke asked King to take over as manager of the studio. King pleaded lack of managerial experience and promised to assist Simmonds who became manager first. Not until 1935 did he feel ready to manage the studio (King, e-mail).
- 7 In 1927–28, many of the most prominent artists of Dublin's *An Túr Gloine* designed a series of windows for the chapel at the Newton Country Day School, not far from Boston College. The artists include Alfred Child, who instructed Clarke and King, Michael Healy, Ethel Rhind (pl. 162), Catherine O'Brien, and Kathleen Quigley.
- 8 Monsignor J. T. McMahon, who commissioned the windows for St. Columba's, South Perth, Australia, cites these words from Matthew Arnold's poem, "The Church of Brou: The Tomb" in his tribute to King. "In Tribute to Richard King," 195.
- 9 King scholar Ruth Sheehy's comments on the Boston College windows, e-mail to author, May 8, 2015.
- 10 Richard King, typewritten statement dated October 1951, found in the Richard King Archive, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- 11 "Windows Answer St. Patrick Puzzle," *Boston Globe* (Mar. 16, 1952).
- 12 Note adhered to page copied from the *Capuchin Annual*, Richard King Archive, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- 13 See Nancy Netzer, "Cloths of Ireland's New 'Golden Age': Creating Textiles for the Honan Chapel," in this volume.
- 14 Nicola Gordon Bowe, *Harry Clarke: The Life and Work*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Dublin: History Press Ireland, 2012), 93.
- 15 Fr. Connolly was probably familiar with King's work in these publications before commissioning the Roche Room windows.
- 16 Ruth Sheehy, "Richard King's Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary," *Studies* 83, no. 329 (Spring 1994): 72.
- 17 Examples of Richard King's modernist style in the *Capuchin Annuals* from the early 1940s through 1961 include images of the Stations of the Cross with art deco influences and Irish saints, as well as his expressionist-influenced "The Way of the Cross" (1952).
- 18 Ruth Sheehy, e-mail to author, May 6, 2015.
- 19 Bowe, *Harry Clarke*, 97.
- 20 Máirín Allen, "The Art of Richard J. King," *Capuchin Annual* (1943): 271.
- 21 Bowe, *Harry Clarke*, 25.
- 22 Ruth Sheehy, "Richard King's Kevin Barry Memorial Window," *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* 11 (1995): 209.
- 23 Allen, "Richard J. King," 281.
- 24 Gasson Hall was begun in 1909 and the Bapst Library was completed in 1928.
- 25 See Tomás Ó Carragáin, "'Truly and Sincerely Irish?': The Medieval Sources for the Architecture of the Honan Chapel," in this volume.
- 26 These consist of a series of nine lancet windows depicting angels bearing symbols of the Mass. Bowe, *Harry Clarke*, 180–81.
- 27 Maureen Meister, *Arts and Crafts Architecture: History and Heritage in New England* (Hanover: Univ. Press of New England, 2014), 153.

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# THE IRISH ARTS AND CRAFTS EDITION: PRINTING AT DUN EMER AND CUALA

Andrew A. Kuhn

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**T**he Irish Literary Revival's presiding doyenne and hostess Augusta Gregory organized a 1905 fund to present W. B. Yeats with a fortieth birthday present—a copy of Chaucer's complete works printed by William Morris's Kelmscott Press. This so-called pocket cathedral of a book is the crowning achievement of Arts and Crafts book-making, a fitting gift for a poet heavily influenced by the romantic verse championed by Morris.<sup>1</sup> Yeats read the imposing volume at Lady Gregory's Coole Park that summer, and thereafter it occupied a prominent place on a lectern in his household.<sup>2</sup> The Kelmscott Chaucer inspired his imagination, and he carried this energy into his lectures in the months that followed. He viewed it as "the most beautiful of all printed books," and its woodcuts by Edward Burne-Jones suggested new scenes of antiquity for his play *Deirdre*.<sup>3</sup> Never one to elevate the collector's edition or praise the rare book market, Yeats nevertheless desired books to be beautiful as well as readable. In the Kelmscott Chaucer, a volume that paired wordcraft with handicraft, he read the book's illustrations, decorations, and typography as perfectly in concert with the medieval tales of pilgrimage to Canterbury.

In his role as literary editor of the Dun Emer Press, Yeats further came to understand the difficulties of designing and editing finely crafted books, as well as the pleasures of reading them. Although influenced by English Arts and Crafts techniques, Dun Emer committed itself to art printing that complemented the Irish literature it chose to publish. Yeats captured the press's

commitment to fine textual production in his inscription on John Quinn's copy of *In the Seven Woods* (1903), Dun Emer's first publication: "This is the first book of mine that it is a pleasure to look at—a pleasure whether open or shut."<sup>4</sup>

## **"TO MAKE BEAUTIFUL THINGS.... EVERYTHING AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, IS IRISH"**

In 1902 Elizabeth Corbet Yeats, W. B.'s sister, founded the Dun Emer Press, later renamed Cuala,<sup>5</sup> on a small estate in Dundrum, just five miles south of the center of Dublin. It produced limited edition hand-press books and introduced Arts and Crafts printing techniques to Ireland. Although Dun Emer embraced much from the ethos of hand production and techniques originating with Morris's Kelmscott Press, the particulars of the Irish process and aesthetic reflect some of the fundamental differences between Arts and Crafts printing in England and Ireland. Kelmscott's style drew heavily upon the design and methods of medieval illuminated manuscripts and early print forms. Like Morris's other ventures, the Kelmscott advanced the director's vision of guild socialism as an alternative to working conditions under British capitalism. Dun Emer, by contrast, dispensed with Morris's more politicized ideology in favor of a cooperative form of Irish cultural nationalism. In an effort to raise the literary profile of contemporary Irish writing, it combined Kelmscott's renovated Gothic style with modern typographic trends, thereby emphasizing

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1. “Hand Printing at Dun Emer,” *World’s Work and Play* 8, no. 46 (Sept. 1906): 398.

the ancient and modern components of Ireland’s Literary Revival.

As part of Evelyn Gleeson’s Dun Emer Guild, the press was a department in a larger cooperative organization training Irish women in embroidery, carpet weaving, and printing, with the goal of bringing native materials and design to the forefront of national consciousness. Gleeson, Elizabeth Yeats, and her sister Susan Pollexfen Yeats, who managed the embroidery section of the Guild, articulated these aims in a 1903 prospectus: “The idea is to make beautiful things....Everything as far as possible, is Irish....The designs are also of the spirit of the country.”<sup>6</sup> In 1908, Elizabeth and her sister Susan broke away from Gleeson’s Dun Emer and continued their work as the Cuala Industries. Together, Dun Emer and Cuala published seventy-seven books and printed hundreds of cards, pamphlets, broadsheets, and other ephemera.<sup>7</sup>

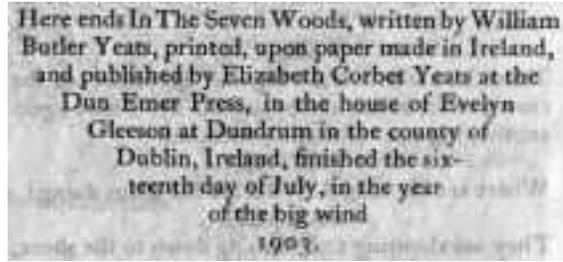
With origins in the overlapping social worlds of literature, art, and handicrafts, Evelyn Gleeson (pl. 115) entered the lives of the Yeats sisters, like so many of their contacts, through the literary circles inhabited and often dominated by their eldest brother. She had acted as secretary to London’s Irish Literary Society founded in part by W. B. Yeats in 1892; ten years later, when Gleeson decided to return to Dublin to join the burgeoning Irish

Arts and Crafts movement, she invited the Yeats sisters to join her in the venture. Occupying the back of Gleeson’s rustic Dundrum home, Elizabeth Yeats’s press room was the most humble of its workspaces. An imposing Albion press purchased from a provincial newspaper dominated the room, but ethereal pastel murals by a family friend—the painter, poet, and editor Æ (George William Russell)—softened the cold iron of the machinery and brightened the austere space (fig. 1). Guided by Elizabeth, the women working in the press composed type, inked forms, pulled the press bar, checked proofs, and hand-colored prints within tight confines. Dun Emer was the first European press entirely run by women.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike Morris’s “pocket cathedrals,” the Irish press’s octavos, such as its first issue—W. B. Yeats’s *In the Seven Woods* (1903; fig. 2)—are functional and simple in design; but buyers purchased these books not simply for their aesthetic beauty, but also in response to the social and political commitments they represented. The colophon for Dun Emer’s first book (fig. 3), for example, implies the new press’s ideals. This brief note marking the volume’s publication reveals much about the circumstances of its



2. Title page, W. B. Yeats, *In the Seven Woods* (Dundrum: Dun Emer, 1903).



3. Colophon, W. B. Yeats, *In The Seven Woods* (Dundrum: Dun Emer, 1903), 64.

creation and the aims of the press: its materials are local, and production work is done by women. Moreover the press is part of a larger home industry devoted to hand-craft, and it is responsive to recent changes in Ireland, in this case, “the big wind,” which assumes political, local, and occult significance in the book. In March 1903, Yeats had returned to Coole Park, the site of the “Seven Woods” of the book’s title, where he witnessed the destruction caused by a massive storm the previous month; winds knocked down many trees at Coole and uprooted nearly three thousand in Dublin’s Phoenix Park.<sup>9</sup> The “big wind” locates the book—in its literary and material forms—within the Irish landscape, but also within a rapidly changing contemporary politics. The colophons at the end of every Dun Emer volume narrate the book-making process by providing readers with a setting and characters through which the volume’s creation as artistic object can be understood; through this paratextual device the physical volume gains legibility. In numerous ways, both the Dun Emer and Cuala Presses confronted issues of gender, labor, and nationalism, all of which played a role in the design and execution of its product, as well as in advertisements and sales techniques. Over the years, the printers navigated a series of tensions and contradictions that were never fully resolved.

## IRISH ARTS AND CRAFTS PRINTING IN THE AGE OF THE MACHINE PRESS

The Dun Emer and Cuala Presses arose from technological and industrial shifts in the nineteenth century and the subsequent backlash created by English Arts and Crafts practitioners. The widespread adoption of stereotyping, steam-powered presses, mechanical composition, and wood pulp paper facilitated and encouraged the rise of literacy rates by bringing down print costs. A flood of inexpensive material in the form of newspapers, chapbooks, pamphlets, and flyers met the demands of new readers. Numerous scholars have sought to understand the growth of a new reading public, but few examine the transformation of the press worker during the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Print shops were seldom orderly, salubrious, or sober settings. Work was labor intensive and dirty, but not unskilled since composing type and operating a hand press required lengthy training, dexterity, and attention to detail. Systems of apprenticeship and unions supported those working their way into the trade. However, with the introduction of machine presses in the nineteenth century, printing houses adopted industrial models, through which unskilled, underemployed, and underpaid minders merely kept machines running, often in dangerous working conditions. In *Capital* Karl Marx describes the English printing industry as staffed mostly by young boys from the ages of eleven to seventeen, frequently working sixteen hours a day. As the boys neared adulthood they were turned out of the printing house in favor of younger and cheaper labor, leaving them unemployed and uneducated.<sup>11</sup> The plight of the press worker is reflected in the low aesthetic and material standards of books produced; as paper and book makers strove to increase profitability and volume, quality decreased. By the end of the nineteenth century, print was an increasingly disposable commodity—and the materials and labor force that went into its making became expendable as well.

Dun Emer opened, in part, as a response to these working conditions. The 1903 prospectus for the indus-

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tries presents “a wish to find work for Irish hands in the making of beautiful things,”<sup>12</sup> and in this sense Dun Emer is a part of the larger Revivalist movement in Ireland promoting Ireland’s cultural and economic independence from England. Specifically, the Dun Emer Press made Irish books by Irish authors as a way of countering a literary market dominated by English publishers and mass-produced books. Much like Alice Hart’s Donegal Industrial Fund founded in 1883, Countess Aberdeen’s Irish Industries Association in 1886, or Horace Plunkett’s Irish Agricultural Organisation Society in 1894, Dun Emer sought to motivate the Irish to produce and buy native goods, but also to reform modes of production. During a tour of the establishment, an American visitor celebrated Dun Emer’s positive effects on the body and soul—particularly in contrast to conditions in industrialized England:

In an English factory the air is foul—physically and morally—and the factory girl who bends over her daily toil is an unwilling victim.... Having in view these countless numbers of Irish exiles who daily struggle and strive after higher things in English cities, I looked with fresh interest on their happier sisters who were here at work under the shadow of the Irish hills. No unwilling victims were these.<sup>13</sup>

### GENDER AND CULTURAL NATIONALISM IN THE PRINTING TRADE

During the late nineteenth century, women’s involvement in the printing trade became a politically volatile issue in Britain and the United States. Reformers intent on opening traditionally male trades struggled with labor unions wishing to block women from entering the industry. In 1856, the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women set up the Victoria Press as a challenge to traditional institutions by training British women in the composition of type and employing them in printing

periodicals such as the *English Women’s Journal*. These early enterprises laid the groundwork for the Women’s Printing Society, which later trained Elizabeth Yeats in basic techniques that she brought to Ireland. Founded in 1876, the society formed itself on a “feminist community-based business model.”<sup>14</sup>

The early financial and professional organization of the Dun Emer Guild reflected many of these earlier English attempts to bring women into the trade; however the Irish organization’s gender politics were never as clearly articulated as those of the British Women’s Printing Society. Gleeson was active in the suffragist movement and in women’s political and cultural organizations in both Ireland and England, but the economically insecure Yeats sisters were less politically motivated and more financially dependent on the success of the press. And although both Dun Emer and Cuala established—and advertised—themselves as organizations dependent on women’s labor, they failed otherwise to campaign for gender equality. Moreover, since production of embroidery and weaving was viewed as respectable work for women, this form of female labor did not challenge traditional gender structures within the labor market.

If printing was a radical occupation for women, the literary content of the press neither searched out nor emphasized feminist views: in fact, only four contemporary women—Katherine Tynan, Lady Gregory, Elizabeth Bowen, and Elizabeth Rivers—published with the press. Of the presses’ seventy-seven titles, women authored only seven; almost a third of the books were by W. B. Yeats himself.<sup>15</sup> But if the press failed to articulate distinct feminist aims, it opened up social and political opportunities for the women who trained and worked there. Máire Gill, who was employed at Cuala for most of her life, was the longest serving president of the Camogie Association and active in the republican *Inghinidhe na hÉireann* and *Cumann na mBan*. Elizabeth Yeats, however, did not engage in overtly political activities and was frequently critical of republican activists such as Maud

Gonne and Constance Markievicz. In 1923 when Gill and Esther Ryan were arrested and sent to Kilmainham Gaol for republican activities, Yeats was more annoyed than worried or supportive, writing to a friend, “We had another upset, my two printing girls were arrested—the two silly girls belong to Cumann na mBan, the women’s Republican Society.”<sup>16</sup>

Elizabeth Yeats straddled two roles during a period of rapid gender shifts in the early twentieth century. Taking pride in her careers as painting instructor, printer, and author of popular arts manuals, she was also an anchor of the Yeats household—assuming the traditional unmarried daughter and sister’s role of caring for domestic duties as well as managing her frequently difficult father and brother. But she also corresponded with a wide range of bibliophiles, collectors, and booksellers, through financial necessity adopting a professional and social life denied to many women in the period. Yet as Joan Hardwick argues, over the years Elizabeth Yeats felt the sting of the new Irish State’s constricting views of the roles of women, most dramatically when the Free State army raided the Cuala premises in her absence,<sup>17</sup> and more subtly in the government’s suggestion that a woman’s place was in the home, not in the employment of a venture such as the Cuala.<sup>18</sup>

### IRISH ARTS AND CRAFTS BOOKS: TECHNIQUES AND DESIGN

In a founding essay on Arts and Crafts printing, Emery Walker and William Morris emphasized the essential unity between a book’s content and its material form. They focused on three basic elements of printing: typeface, layout, and decoration:

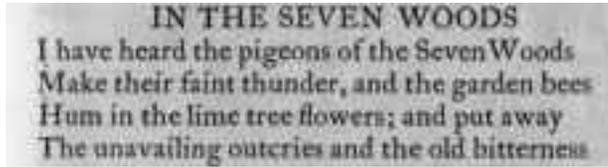
Therefore, granted well-designed type, due spacing of the lines and words, and proper position of the page on the paper, all books might be at least comely and well-looking; and if to these good qualities were added really beautiful ornament and pictures, printed books might

once again illustrate to the full the position of our Society that a work of utility might be also a work of art, if we cared to make it so.<sup>19</sup>

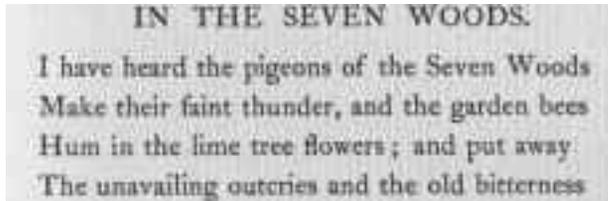
Under the influence of her family’s close ties to Morris, Elizabeth adopted similar elements as she established the design principles applied to every Dun Emer and Cuala book. While living in Bedford Park in the 1880s and 1890s, W. B., Elizabeth, and Susan Yeats frequently visited Kelmscott and Morris’s house in Hammersmith, where they took French lessons and listened in on socialist meetings; in 1888 Susan joined May Morris in the embroidery department she supervised at Morris & Co. When Elizabeth considered setting up a press in 1902, she thus consulted with the Arts and Crafts luminaries whom she had met through the Morris circle—among them her early supporters and mentors Emery Walker and Sidney Cockerel. Walker, a process engraver, had taught Morris much about printing, and their shared interest in typography led to the 1891 founding of Kelmscott Press. After Morris’s death, in collaboration with T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, Walker established the highly acclaimed Doves Press, and his expertise in the art of fine printing influenced the style adopted by Dun Emer. For example, he suggested both the use of an Albion hand press, like the one used at Kelmscott, and an eighteenth-century font of fourteen-point Old Style Caslon typeface. Created by English typesetter William Caslon after the Dutch Fell types, it has elegant and legible Roman characters. Walker preferred this font, often used in Arts and Crafts printing, because the uniform width of the characters gave a more pleasing proportion of printed and blank space than modern typefaces that varied greatly between broad and thin strokes. The unleaded Caslon typeface used in the Dun Emer edition of *In the Seven Woods* (fig. 4) forms a page where the black of the text block is more evenly balanced with the white space of the page. The thinner letterforms and wider leading of Macmillan’s Baskerville typeface used in its own edition of *In the Seven Woods* (fig. 5) appears more modern and

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4. Unledged Caslon typeface in W. B. Yeats, *In the Seven Woods* (Dundrum: Dun Emer, 1903), 1.



5. Leaded Baskerville typeface in W. B. Yeats, *In the Seven Woods* (London: Macmillan, 1903), 1.

less balanced in its use of space.

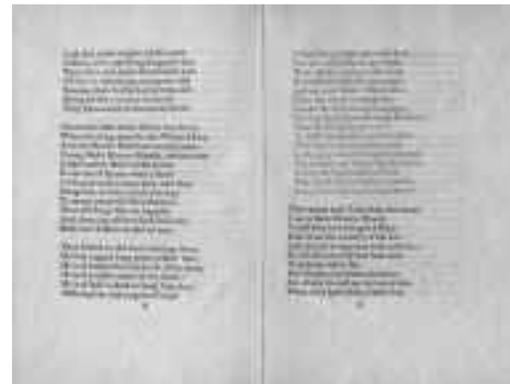
For Dun Emer's layout, Elizabeth Yeats adopted the two-page spread as the basic unit of book design, with the bottom and outside margins much greater than the top and inside margins (pl. 127)—a layout closely resembling that of medieval manuscript proportions. Such a design appears in early prose works, such as W. B. Yeats's *Discoveries* (1907), where the solid text blocks of prose sit neatly on the page (fig. 6). Because poetry draws meaning from spatial relationships between words on the page, page design for that genre was more complex. The layout of a poem such as "Baile and Aillinn," part of *In the Seven Woods*, challenges the typesetter with longer line lengths, indented dialogue, and the inclusion of characters printed in red as well as black ink (fig. 7). Such small details of book design, often overlooked by the casual reader, add to the goal of a unified and proportional page while remaining true to the intent of the literary text.

The press favored a minimalist decoration, privileging legibility and resisting many stereotypical visual tropes of both Irish nationalism and English Arts and Crafts practice. The books especially avoided images of

shamrocks, wolfhounds, round towers, and interlace, and most Dun Emer and Cuala volumes include only a press device as ornamentation. The early device by Elinor Monsell depicts the mythological origins of the Dun Emer Guild by representing Emer, wife of the Irish saga hero Cu Chulainn and known for her skill in embroidery, entwined with the sacred ash tree (fig. 8). Elizabeth Yeats designed the later device used by the Cuala Press—a lone tree set on the Irish landscape (fig. 9)—with others by



6. W. B. Yeats, *Discoveries: A Volume of Essays* (Dundrum: Dun Emer, 1907), 20–21.



7. W. B. Yeats, *In the Seven Woods* (Dundrum: Dun Emer, 1903), 6–7.



8. Elinor Monsell, Dun Emer pressmark, 1907.



9. Elizabeth Yeats, Cuala pressmark, 1925.

George Moore, Jack Yeats, and Emery Walker used sparingly in later publications. In contrast to the heavily decorated Kelmscott productions, Dun Emer and Cuala books focus attention on the text, creating a spare and austere visual environment for both reading and display. Such an unadorned style did not, however, extend to all of the works created. Popular productions—holiday cards, bookplates (pls. 128–29), broadsheets (pl. 130), prints, and other ephemera ensuring a steady income between book publications—often presented more elaborate styles. Such items, including images designed by Elizabeth’s brother Jack Yeats and others, were hand colored by the women at the press and communicated some of the more overtly Irish iconography in a less expensive format for broad audiences (figs. 10–11).

The influence of the English Arts and Crafts movement coupled with the sleek, modern layout of Elkin’s Bodley Head Press and the popular books of the decadent movement of the 1890s are evident in the early volumes of the Dun Emer Press.<sup>20</sup> Yet, these British influences are transformed into a distinctively Irish idiom. The prospectus of the press exemplifies its commitment to aesthetic excellence and locally sourced materials:

Though many books are printed in Ireland, book printing as an art has been little practised here since the eighteenth century. The Dun Emer Press has been founded in the hope of reviving this beautiful craft.

A good eighteenth century fount of type which is not eccentric in form, or difficult to read has been cast, and the paper has been made of linen rags and without bleaching chemicals, at the Saggart Mill in the county Dublin. The pages are printed at a Hand Press by Miss E. C. Yeats, and simplicity is aimed at in their composition.<sup>21</sup>

Some commentators nevertheless saw the Cuala’s operation as a minor outpost to the opulent English private presses. For example, Robert Steele writing in the *Academy* was dismissive of the Cuala’s work:

Among the minor presses of the present day we need only mention the Cuala Press in Dundrum. It is of an importance rather literary than typographic, owing to the number of works by Mr. Yeats, Mr. Synge, A. E. (George Russell), and other Irish authors issued by it. The books are printed by Irish girls on Irish paper and are sold at a moderate price.<sup>22</sup>

The Cuala productions, especially in their spare simplicity, differ from those created by the Doves, Ashendene, and Vale Presses; but the Irish press’s connections to contemporary writers and an active reading audience demanded a suitable format that the limited-edition expensive display

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10. *A Broadside* (Aug. 1908).



11. Elizabeth Yeats (print) and Douglas Hyde (text), Cuala Christmas card, c. 1908.

volumes of these English presses could not provide.

### NEW MARKETING FOR BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

An innovation of the Arts and Crafts movement involved moving the sale of crafts into alternative social spaces beyond those of normal retail commerce. Dun Emer and Cuala both operated with daily open-house hours where patrons and acquaintances could drop in to

view the goods for sale and the studios where the women worked. As with the studios of some artists, these Irish organizations became places in which like-minded people could meet. Although many Dun Emer and Cuala books were sold through subscription and traditional establishments such as Elkin Mathews bookshop in London, sales were also made on the premises. In the early days of the press, guests and potential buyers were entertained in the Dun Emer sitting room, which served both as a domestic space and a place of commerce (pl. 117). Additionally, female patrons would often host parties at their homes in order to promote the organization; as one early advertisement campaign noted, it was the patriotic duty of Irish women to decorate their homes with goods purchased from Dun Emer.<sup>23</sup> In addition to traditional Arts and Crafts exhibits and international book fairs covered by the press, small exhibitions were often hosted around larger social events such as the Dublin Horse Show. One reporter noted,

Some people go to the Dublin Horse Show because they have a real interest in horses. Others again, who can scarcely tell an Arab from a Clydesdale, and prefer the jumping to the judging, go to see one another and be seen. But some—and I confess I was one of these—prefer to spend their time in the Irish Art Industries Exhibition.<sup>24</sup>

This strange fusion of horses, fashionable society, and artistic handicrafts supports Thorstein Veblen's estimation of artistic book-making: "[a] limited edition is in effect a guarantee—somewhat crude, it is true—that this book is scarce and that it therefore is costly and lends pecuniary distinction to its consumer."<sup>25</sup> Undoubtedly, owning a Dun Emer or Cuala edition announced certain class affiliations and cultural nationalist leanings. Additionally, the already thriving marketplace for rare second-hand editions motivated many booksellers and collectors to purchase the books as they appeared. The estate of John Quinn, among

others, made a great deal of money from the sales of its library that included Dun Emer and Cuala editions.

The influence of these presses extends beyond the typographic to the literary history of Ireland. W. B. Yeats's role as editor of the press lent the Dun Emer and Cuala books name recognition and an extensive literary network. Reflecting on the print culture of his time and the role of the press's contribution, Yeats recalls the intimate relationship between print and orality during the mid-nineteenth-century's Young Ireland movement—when a verse could be published in the morning's paper and be heard in song throughout the countryside by the day's end. However, Yeats articulates a different legacy for the Cuala, based on its appeal to a more privileged audience:

When our age too has passed, . . . students will perhaps open these books, printed by village girls at Dundrum, as curiously as at twenty years I opened the books of history and ballad verse of the old "Library of Ireland." They will notice that this new "Library," where I have gathered so much that seems to me representative or beautiful, unlike the old, is intended for few people, and written by men and women with that ideal condemned by "Mary of the Nation," who wished, as she said, to make no elaborate beauty and to write nothing but a peasant could understand.<sup>26</sup>

Yeats clearly distinguishes his own publishing strategies from the populist vision of Young Ireland's. His words recall a heated episode in his earlier poetic and political career when his goals for a new Library of Ireland series were thwarted by Charles Gavin Duffy, Irish nationalist and editor of much nationalist poetry.

Yeats's insistence on promoting contemporary writing can be seen in his editorial decisions for Dun Emer and Cuala; through his influence, they became one of the primary engines of Ireland's Literary Revival. At the turn of

the century, when English publishers handled most Irish books, Yeats sought an Irish publisher for his own works and for those many established authors in his extensive literary circle. Consequently, Dun Emer and Cuala went on to publish important volumes by the key Revivalist writers: John Eglinton, Douglas Hyde, Augusta Gregory, Æ, J. M. Synge, and Katherine Tynan. Yeats selected the authors and works to be included in the press's catalogue—on numerous occasions instigating bitter rows with his sister and these authors over his autocratic control over selections. His editorial decisions, nevertheless, assisted in the creation of a rich bibliographic environment for his country's writing during the early twentieth century; the superb design and execution by Elizabeth Yeats and her female printers gave the Irish Literary Revival printed volumes worthy of their extraordinary content.



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- 1 Edward Burne-Jones first used the phrase “pocket cathedral” to describe the Kelmscott Chaucer in a letter to Charles Eliot Norton in December 1894. As Douglas E. Schoenherr argues, the phrase is an allusion to Ruskin’s description of the medieval illuminated missal as “a fairy cathedral full of painted windows, bound together to carry in one’s pocket.” “A Note on Burne-Jones’s ‘Pocket Cathedral’ and Ruskin,” *Journal of William Morris Studies* 15, no. 4 (2004): 91–93.
- 2 Joseph Hone, *W. B. Yeats: 1865–1939*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 335.
- 3 W. B. Yeats, *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats: Electronic Edition; Unpublished Letters (1905–1939)*, ed. John Kelly and Ronald Schuchard (Charlottesville: InteLex, 2012), #177.
- 4 Qtd. in Allan Wade, *A Bibliography of the Writings of W. B. Yeats*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Hart-Davis, 1968), 67.
- 5 Elizabeth Yeats founded the Dun Emer Press in 1903 as a part of the Dun Emer Guild, directed by Evelyn Gleeson. Financial difficulties and personal conflicts led to a split between the Yeats sisters and Gleeson in 1908. The Yeats sisters moved to a new location and started the Cuala Industries where Elizabeth continued to run the press and Susan operated an embroidery division. Despite the different management structure the press, its workers, and equipment remained the same at Cuala. In this essay, I use the names Dun Emer and Cuala to delineate these different periods of production; however, the two presses should be understood as a continuous project. Therefore, general statements about the Dun Emer and Cuala, unless otherwise noted, refer to both the Dun Emer and Cuala periods.
- 6 Qtd. in Liam Miller, *The Dun Emer Press, Later the Cuala Press* (Dublin: Dolmen, 1973), 15.
- 7 For a complete bibliography, see *ibid.*
- 8 For a more comprehensive history of the press, see *ibid.*, Joan Hardwick, *The Yeats Sisters: A Biography of Susan and Elizabeth Yeats* (San Francisco: Pandora, 1996), and Lewis Gifford, *The Yeats Sisters and the Cuala* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994).
- 9 Lady Gregory laments the uprooted trees in her diary: “The place sadly changed by storms of Feb[ruary] 26—the accounts of which had disturbed me in London—10 lime trees down between house & stables—& the big lime to the left (greatest loss of all) & the big evergreen oak in front lawn—& some parts of the woods laid flat.” Lady Augusta Persse Gregory, *Lady Gregory’s Diaries, 1892–1902*, ed. James Pethica (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 313.
- 10 See Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1963); Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, eds., *A History of Reading in the West*, trans. L. G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity, 1999); and Albert Manguel, *A History of Reading* (Bath: Flamingo, 1996).
- 11 Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume 1*, intro. Ernest Mandel, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1990), 615.
- 12 Qtd. in Miller, *Dun Emer Press*, 29.
- 13 May F. Quinlan, “In the Shadow of the Hills,” *Rosary Magazine* 27 (Oct. 1905): 375–76.
- 14 Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, “Reforming Work: Gender, Class, and the Printing Trade in Victorian Britain,” *Journal of Women’s History* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 106–7.
- 15 For a more comprehensive view of the feminist politics of the press, see Simone Murray, “The Cuala Press: Women, Publishing, and the Conflicted Genealogies of Feminist Publishing,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 27, no.

5–6 (Nov.–Dec. 2004): 486–506.

- 16 Qtd. in Sinéad McCoole, “Mollie Gill, 1891–1977: A Woman of Ireland,” *History Ireland* 13, no. 2 (Mar.–Apr. 2005).
- 17 Hardwick, *Yeats Sisters*, viii.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 240.
- 19 William Morris and Emery Walker, “Printing,” in *Arts and Crafts Essays: By Members of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society* (London: Rivington, Percival, 1893), 133.
- 20 Jerome McGann, *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993), 16.
- 21 Qtd. in Miller, *Dun Emer Press*, 29.
- 22 Robert Steele, “The Revival of Printing,” *Academy and Literature* 82 (Mar. 30, 1912): 407.
- 23 John Strachan and Claire Nally, *Advertising, Literature and Print Culture in Ireland, 1891–1922* (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 193.
- 24 W. B. W., “Notes from Ireland,” *Athenaeum* (Sept. 3, 1920): 308.
- 25 Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 103.
- 26 W. B. Yeats, “Introduction,” in *Selections from the Writings of Lord Dunsany* (Dundrum: Cuala, 1912).

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# PHILANTHROPY AND IRISH CRAFT, 1883–1900

## Janice Helland

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In the spring of 1883, a middle-class couple of secure means “went on a tour of inquiry into Donegal and county Mayo.” Alice Rowland Hart (1848–1931; fig. 1), the daughter of a London mercantile family, and her physician husband, Ernest Hart (1835–98), were determined to “ascertain the actual condition of, and the possible means of helping” Irish peasants who lived in the Congested Districts.<sup>1</sup> Within a year Alice Hart had established the Donegal Industrial Fund with a storefront near Oxford Street in London to promote and sell handcrafted objects made in Ireland to wealthy urban consumers. All profits were returned to the cottagers.

Three years later, in 1886, the wealthy and energetic Ishbel, Countess of Aberdeen (1847–1939; fig. 2), inaugurated a large umbrella organization, the Irish Industries Association, which sought to coordinate the activities of a number of philanthropic workshops active amongst the poor in Ireland. These included aristocratic workplaces such as the Duchess of Abercorn’s Barons Court industry and Viscountess Duncannon’s embroidery studio that gave work to her tenants, as well as convents that produced highly valued lace such as the collar designed and made by workers at the Presentation Convent in Youghal<sup>2</sup> (pl. 72), and more established ateliers that provided employment to poor gentlewomen such as the Royal Irish School of Art Needlework.

Both organizations, the Donegal Industrial Fund (DIF) and the Irish Industries Association (IIA), were benevolent or philanthropic; both proposed to enrich the



1. Alice Rowland Hart, *Lady's Pictorial* (Mar. 15, 1902): 368.



2. Ishbel, Countess of Aberdeen, wearing a court dress and train embroidered with Celtic patterns by the Royal Irish School of Art Needlework.

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production of Irish craft and return money to Irish craftspeople who were, for the most part, poor rural cottagers, usually female. At the same time as the DIF and the IIA advocated for the value of the handmade, they insured that the objects were displayed in high profile venues such as Arts and Crafts exhibitions and world's fairs. This essay will explore the relationship between philanthropy and craft in late nineteenth-century Ireland and suggest that while philanthropy is sometimes viewed with skepticism, these particular organizations encouraged craftspeople to make objects that would attract sophisticated, urban consumers. What the widely circulated women's magazine, *Lady's Pictorial* in 1888 termed the "silver cord of charity,"<sup>3</sup> stretched from Ireland to England and later reached across the ocean to North America. At the same time, according to nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts designer and architect Arthur Mackmurdo, the DIF and the IIA along with the English-based Home Art and Industries Association were the precursors of the Art Workers' Guild and the Arts and Crafts movement. "Hence," wrote Mackmurdo, "let us pause to pay a tribute of thanks to those workers—mostly women—who in the eighties [the 1880s] toiled to revive in the homes of the people the old cottage crafts."<sup>4</sup>

Unlike many nineteenth-century bazaars or fancy fairs, also largely organized by elite women for the benefit of the poor, and which "raised tens of millions of pounds" for charities,<sup>5</sup> the DIF and the IIA worked to display handcrafted objects in venues that would establish an acknowledged value for the goods. Fancy fairs or bazaars did not encourage poor cottagers or artisans to improve the quality of their production with the goal of displaying and selling the objects in recognized exhibition venues. Rather they enlisted support from other wealthy compatriots and sold donated or even recycled objects for the benefit of one particular cause. A 1896 bazaar in Cork, for example, meant to raise money for a hospital for women and children,<sup>6</sup> took place in the same year the Donegal Industrial Fund exhibited Irish craft in the large,

juried Arts and Crafts exhibition in London. DIF and IIA displays and sales, unlike charity events, participated in a market economy and developed clever strategies to attract buyers as well as patrons. This essay will argue that it was this sophisticated understanding of the impact of exhibitions that led to the success of the two organizations during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Thus, I have selected five of their numerous displays as exemplars of the associations, the objects they promoted, and the successes they achieved: the DIF's first exhibition held in the United States under the auspices of the Associated Artists (1886); the DIF's contribution to London's well-attended Irish Exhibition (1888);<sup>7</sup> the IIA's exhibition of objects earmarked for display in Chicago (1893); the two "Irish villages" constructed for the World's Fair in Chicago (1893); and the IIA exhibition and sale at Brighton (1896).

Alice Hart opened the DIF's London storefront in 1885 to encourage the production of Irish-made textiles and arrange for the sale of the goods in urban centers without the aid of middlemen; profits were to be returned to the artisans.<sup>8</sup> Her self-declared mandate was "to revive the old Cottage Industries, and to develop and improve the ancient arts of spinning, weaving, knitting, sewing, and embroidery."<sup>9</sup> In 1886 Hart arranged to introduce the Fund to American consumers; she opened an "exhibition and sale of laces, fabrics and embroideries" in New York "courtesy of the Associated Artists"—the fledgling organization that had begun its project in 1883 under the direction of New York designer Candace Wheeler (1827–1923). The venue was perfect for Hart's display; the association itself held views very close to Hart's own, which included designing textiles and "encouraging women in their quest to become self-supporting professional designers and artists."<sup>10</sup> The *New York Times*, in its announcement about the exhibition and sale wrote, "Irish peasant girls and destitute ladies" could produce the work during the winter months while the Fund secured a market. Additionally, the newspaper lauded the business

side of the venture: the “enterprise has been conducted on wise business principles and has succeeded beyond expectations.” According to the New York paper, the invoice of goods was “worth nearly \$3,000”; after expenses, the profits were returned to the craft makers.<sup>11</sup> Within a few years, the Fund expanded its American markets to include Philadelphia,<sup>12</sup> Chicago, and San Francisco.

It is not clear precisely how Hart made her connection to the United States; however, early in the spring of 1886, the *Queen*, *The Lady’s Newspaper and Court Chronicle* announced that a “unique and beautiful” bed quilt was on view at the showrooms of the DIF prior to “its dispatch to New York to a wealthy American purchaser.” The magazine, which consistently covered exhibitions and sales of the DIF and later the IIA, provided a lengthy description of the quilt: it was of cream-colored, handmade linen and included embroidery, specifically the DIF’s “Kells embroidery,” which as Hart acknowledged was inspired by pages from the medieval Irish manuscript, the Book of Kells.<sup>13</sup> Although similar interlacing designs could be found on many earlier and later Irish objects (see, for example, pls. 10, 43), Alice Hart trademarked her particular design as “Kells embroidery.”

The objects prepared for New York were also admired in London. Queen Victoria ordered curtains “made and embroidered by the workers of the Fund for Windsor Castle similar to those” she had seen “which had been specially hand-woven, designed and embroidered for the Associated Artists of New York”<sup>14</sup> (fig. 3). Royal and aristocratic patronage secured markets, ensured press coverage, and guaranteed interest in both product and artisan; in addition to these successes, the DIF had also attracted attention at Edinburgh’s International Exhibition of 1886, again with its embroideries and laces.

Smaller exhibitions encouraged consumers to purchase objects sold under the auspices of the DIF, such as a glamorous sale hosted by Countess Spencer (Vicereine of Ireland, 1882–85) in her London townhouse in the spring of 1887. Although not a typical venue for the



3. Kells embroidered dragon and serpent, detail from the curtains for the Associated Artists of New York, *Lady’s World* (Feb. 1887): 140.



4. Inside the Kells embroiderers’ cottage at the Irish Exhibition, Olympia, *Queen* (July 28, 1888): 108.

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DIF (Lady Aberdeen's IIA used London townhouses much more frequently), the display attracted a number of British and Irish aristocrats including the Princess of Wales, the Duchess of Marlborough, and the Countess of Carnarvon. In its comments on the exhibition, the *Irish Times* claimed that the Fund gave “skilled employment” to Irish cottagers and thus demonstrated “that the starving peasantry of the far West, in the wild outlying regions of rugged Donegal, possess instinctive skill and artistic taste that qualify them to produce the textile fabrics for which Old Ireland was famous.”<sup>15</sup> Alice Hart, to promote her organization, wore a dress embroidered with Kells embroidery, and at least one of her supporters, the Countess of Kilmorey, wore “fawn-coloured Irish linen”; another embroidered linen dress was displayed on a stand.<sup>16</sup> As significant as these events were, they paled in comparison to the Fund's participation in the large Irish Exhibition, which opened at Olympia in London in 1888 (fig. 4).

The Fund's presence at Olympia was a festival of textiles and a demonstration of Irish skill. Together with the Earl of Leitrim, Alice Hart designed a “village” comprised of twelve cottages “in an irregular street, in the centre of which is an Irish cross, and at the further end a ruined Irish tower.”<sup>17</sup> The large display in one of the cottages included embroidery and woven fabric, a “large and beautifully designed alb—one of the largest pieces of Limerick lace ever produced”—as well as a number of other objects made of Limerick lace, the designs of which would have been similar to an 1898 black fan cover (pl. 69). The display also included two lace shawls, one of which was made for Catherine Gladstone,<sup>18</sup> wife of former prime minister and advocate of Irish Home Rule, William Gladstone.<sup>19</sup> Linen and flax threads, dyed woolens, and silk brilliantly filled the space along with textiles covered with dragons, serpents, floral, and geometric designs in what the *Queen* called a “rainbow iridescence.”<sup>20</sup> Certainly, the success here along with the acclaim attached to other smaller exhibitions provided



5. “Unique Modes in Materials Purchased by Mr. J. J. Fenwick at the Irish Industries’ Sale, Londonderry House,” *Gentlewoman* (Mar. 28, 1896): 415.



6. “Some Elegant Designs Exhibited by Mr. J. J. Fenwick, of Bond Street, at the Irish Industries’ Exhibition,” *Gentlewoman* (Mar. 27, 1897): 421.

Hart with the experience she would need to take the Donegal Industrial Fund to Chicago in 1893.

The Irish Industries Association, like the DIF, organized well-attended, publicly commended exhibitions but, unlike the Fund, they regularly displayed objects in the elegant interiors of London townhouses often belonging to aristocrats with Irish connections such as the Marchioness of Londonderry (Vicereine of Ireland, 1886–89) or Countess Cadogan (Vicereine of Ireland, 1895–1902). These events, which took place twice a year, on or near St. Patrick's Day and in November or December, were written about extensively in widely circulated women's magazines, as well as in mainstream newspapers, but were largely attended by wealthy elites. Objects on display varied but the most highly publicized and reproduced were those related to fashion such as the tweed and laces on display in Londonderry House in March 1896 (fig. 5) or the "elegant designs" exhibited in March 1897 (fig. 6) in Countess Cadogan's Chelsea House.

One of the most important of these exhibitions, however, took place not in the home of a British aristocrat, but in the London residence of wealthy American W. W. Astor.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps appropriately, he hosted a gala display of objects selected by the IIA for inclusion in the association's "Irish village" at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. To complement its lengthy description of the exhibition, the *Queen* published two large sketches of the event (figs. 7–8) and, whereas the sketches highlighted the wealthy viewers, the text provided extensive coverage of the objects. These included "ecclesiastical vestments, executed to the orders of patriotic Cardinals and Catholic Archbishops in the States," one of which, made specifically for Cardinal Gibbon,<sup>22</sup> featured embroidery very similar to that done later by the Dun Emer Guild for the Honan Chapel. Churches were, and continued to be, significant patrons for lavishly embroidered vestments both for private chapels such as the Duke of Newcastle's Clumber Church (1889),<sup>23</sup> and for public spaces, such as the Honan Chapel (pls. 43, 46). Lace, as would be expected,

featured largely in the display and included a lace wedding dress ordered by Ishbel Aberdeen specifically for display at the Fair. Unfortunately, the dress is not extant but it might be assumed that it shared characteristics with later dresses that have been conserved (pls. 67–68).<sup>24</sup>

Although differences of opinion had surfaced before 1893, it was at this point that a clear and very public division emerged between the Irish Industries Association



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7–8. "In the Sale Room" and "Amongst the Irish Exhibits" at W. W. Astor's, Carlton House Terrace, *Queen* (Mar. 11, 1893): 393.

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and the Donegal Industrial Fund. And always, although not consistently overt, lurked the Irish political question. Theresa, Marchioness of Londonderry, who followed Ishbel Aberdeen as president of the IIA, was a staunch unionist; she “opposed the first Home Rule Bill in 1886 and was the leading spirit in making Londonderry House a focal point of anti-home rule politics.”<sup>25</sup> Aberdeen supported Home Rule but clearly imagined an Ireland that remained part of Britain. Alice Hart openly condemned the English for the situation in Ireland and claimed that she, herself, after visiting Ireland and reading about its history “was ashamed of being an Englishwoman.”<sup>26</sup> The tension between Londonderry and Aberdeen was acknowledged subtly in a press account about the Astor residence exhibition: “Now and again the ear caught such ominous words as ‘boycotted’ and ‘the Plan of Campaign’, but they were soon drowned in the bright chatter of the throng; and the wives of Conservative and Liberal lord-lieutenants kept shop side by side in amicable rivalry.”<sup>27</sup> The more pronounced tension between Aberdeen and Hart surfaced along with the movement of objects and people to Chicago for the World’s Fair: Aberdeen envisioned one all-encompassing Irish village; Alice Hart disagreed. When, to great fanfare, the Chicago World’s Fair opened on May 1, 1893, there were two Irish villages.

Alice Hart preempted Ishbel Aberdeen in the United States with an exhibition in New York in December 1892 hosted by designer William Baumgarten in his Fifth Avenue showroom that included a preview of the kind of objects she would display in Chicago the following year: “beautiful and artistic woolen and linen fabrics, rich embroideries, and fine laces.”<sup>28</sup> She exhibited examples of the various types of work that could be undertaken by Irish women under the auspices of the Fund some of which were likely similar to a County Down embroidered sampler (pl. 65). Thus she promoted the Fund and prepared American viewers for the spectacle that would be part of the World’s Fair. Contemporary accounts of the

Donegal Industrial Fund’s village (fig. 9) were glowing and echoed the *Queen*’s endorsement: it was the “representative exhibit of Ireland at the World’s Fair.”<sup>29</sup> The *New York Times* considered the village “to be a microcosm of the actual Donegal of today” with its “typical Irish residences,” reconstructed Donegal Castle, and an Irish cross.<sup>30</sup> The interior of the village’s Donegal Castle was



9. Donegal Industrial Fund village at Chicago World’s Fair, *Queen* (Oct. 14, 1893): 636.



10. Irish Industries Association village at Chicago World’s Fair, *Queen* (Mar. 18, 1893): 416.

hung with portraits of “famous Irishmen,” along with paintings of Irish life and scenery by contemporary Irish artists such as Alexander Williams (1846–1930); the cottages provided viewers with demonstrations of various industries ranging from stone carving to sprigging and embroidery. Undoubtedly, and at least partially responsible for American-Irish approval of Hart’s village, was her inclusion of a model of Daniel O’Connell’s (1775–1847) Memorial Chapel “with the chair and hat of the great liberator.”<sup>31</sup> Even the decision to include a replica of Donegal Castle had political overtones: the original castle had been destroyed in the sixteenth century rather than fall into English hands.

The other Irish village (fig. 10) organized by Ishbel Aberdeen also sought to promote Ireland and its products. As she indicated in a speech given in Cork prior to the exhibition, the Irish Industries Association hoped “to make the beautiful productions of Ireland known all over the world.”<sup>32</sup> Certainly, among the rich and famous, Ishbel Aberdeen held a much more esteemed place than did Alice Hart; this is evident in historical accounts of the much written about countess,<sup>33</sup> if not so apparent in contemporary accounts of the exhibition. Her village, like Hart’s, consisted of a series of cottages with each highlighting an Irish craft and craftmaker: the focal point was a faux Blarney Castle where the “fair Irish maids” lived during the exhibition.<sup>34</sup> Hart had selected to reproduce Donegal Castle, a nationalist symbol of resistance, whereas Aberdeen replicated Blarney Castle, which had been captured by Cromwell. And, while Aberdeen openly commented on the “jarring point” caused by the “setting of an oppositional village” by Alice Hart, she did not comment on other “jarring points” that beset her village. Weeks after the opening of the Fair, a group of Irishmen attempted “to pull down the union jack” which floated from the tower of Blarney Castle. They “tore down the emblem, because they did not consider that it ought to be unfurled in an Irish village.” The protesters were apprehended by guards, only to escape and return again

and again, finally to be arrested; however according to the *New York Times* “a crowd of several thousand sympathizers” interfered with the police to such an extent that only three men remained in custody.<sup>35</sup>

Despite personal and political differences between Hart and Aberdeen, both Irish villages showcased Irish craft (and similar crafts at that). They thus provided exhibition goers with a comprehensive view of a myriad of objects made by Irish artisans that ranged from jewelry, lace, and embroidery; to woodwork, stone sculpture, and painting. Both villages promoted and sold Irish goods to an American audience, and after the Fair both women continued to advertise, market, and endorse craft made in Ireland. Alice Hart kept Donegal House going until into the twentieth century; Ishbel Aberdeen, even during her time in Canada as wife of the governor general (1893–98), supported the IIA and frequently attended the established schedule of spring/autumn exhibitions. However, for a brief time near the end of the century, the IIA unlike the Donegal Industrial Fund, made a dramatic foray into the world of fashion.

Ishbel Aberdeen had supported Irish-designed and Irish-made clothes since 1886 when she first went to Ireland as vicereine. She had gowns made by Irish dressmakers for court balls and commissioned a highly publicized dress of Irish materials for a large garden party she hosted soon after her arrival in Dublin. Two years later and no longer vicereine, she appeared at a court drawing room wearing an extravagant gown and train, lavishly embroidered with Celtic symbols by women at the Irish School of Art Needlework, a dress she wore on other formal occasions even when she was in Canada as wife of the governor general (see fig. 2).<sup>36</sup> She tended to wear Irish tweed to IIA exhibitions, including the 1893 display in the Astor house, and the press commented upon her lace and tweed garments during the time of the Fair in Chicago. However, three years after the Fair, the IIA partnered with an expanding London fashion house, J. J. Fenwick, to display clothes made from Irish materials

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that could be purchased from the Bond Street store. This took the sale of handwoven textiles a step beyond what previously had been viewed in IIA exhibitions or Donegal House displays and sales.

Fenwick's had expanded from Newcastle-upon-Tyne where it offered its wealthy clients "rich furs, sheeny silks, and soft woollen fabrics," as well as an assortment of gowns and coats that, according to *Gentlewoman*, rivaled Worth of Paris.<sup>37</sup> The fashion house opened its premises in London's in-vogue Bond Street in 1891,<sup>38</sup> and its name was first linked with the Irish Industries Association during the 1896 St. Patrick's Day exhibition held in Londonderry House, an important event referred to as the "first national sale" arranged by the IIA.<sup>39</sup> Fenwick's was singled out in the press as a purchaser of Irish textiles, and garnered further attention when a selection of made-up garments was sketched for *Gentlewoman* (see fig. 5), a magazine that consistently supported and promoted the IIA.<sup>40</sup> The *Queen*, too, offered its readers lengthy coverage of the exhibition and sale and described in great detail high quality fashion that could result from using Irish-made textiles. For example, "the collar, which Mr. Fenwick bought from the Marchioness of Londonderry, is beautifully shaped, and matches the lace on the sleeves almost identically. It is cut into square battlements over the fluted sleeves, and forms a yoke at the back, but in front is continued in two straight points down either side of a box-pleat of the poplin" and a "very *distingué* evening cloak of black Irish poplin is trimmed lavishly with bands of this *passementerie*, the cape, and the collar and the revers each having this charming work arranged on it. The lining is of shamrock-green and white brocade."<sup>41</sup> Thus, the philanthropic Irish Industries Association at this time partnered with magazines and newspapers to give readers, if not illustrations (as did *Gentlewoman*), then extravagantly worded portrayals of elegant and obviously expensive garments.

The Londonderry House exhibition began a brief but very public demonstration of how handmade Irish textiles

could become elite fashion and publicized both the organization and Fenwick's. The 1896 December exhibition, which opened in a fashionable Brighton hotel (not in an aristocratic townhouse), furthered the relationship between Irish textile and fashion when Fenwick's provided a live mannequin to model the clothes. Considered "a smart society function" by *Lady's Pictorial*,<sup>42</sup> the event again was highlighted in women's magazines as well as in widely circulated newspapers. Stallholders for the organization included the Duchess of Devonshire, the Marchioness of Londonderry, the Marchioness of Downshire, and the Countesses of Bective, Fingall, Kilmorey, Arran, Lucan, and Mayo, among others. The items for sale included "laces, embroideries, drawn-thread work, glorified linen, table centres, spangled dress trimmings, tweeds, and homespuns of all sorts, and hand-knitted stockings and socks."<sup>43</sup> According to *Gentlewoman*, "Mr. Fenwick, of Bond-street, showed gown after gown, made of Irish materials and trimmed with Irish work on a young lady who kindly acted as model."<sup>44</sup> The *Queen*, in its glowing comments about the exhibition identified the model as a shop assistant who worked for Fenwick; she displayed the "smart frocks" by "circulating through the rooms at intervals during the two days, attired in various costumes."<sup>45</sup> Both *Lady's Pictorial* and the *Queen* reproduced sketches (figs. 11–12) of the garments and thus, as with the March exhibition of 1896, both the Irish Industries Association and Fenwick's attracted considerable attention.

As might be expected from its effective marketing strategies, the Irish Industries Association was financially successful. In a report published in 1896, the IIA claimed that the years 1893 and 1894 yielded the association over £37,000. The funds resulted from exhibition sales at its London depot located on Motcomb Street and a wholesale office "for the sale of tweeds and laces" on St. James Street.<sup>46</sup> A report issued in 1905 indicated that total sales earned by the IIA since 1888 was £111,462.<sup>47</sup>

Alice Hart's Donegal Industrial Fund, unlike the Irish Industries Association, did not regularly exhibit prod-



11. “An Ideal Tea-Gown and a Smart Tailor-Made Shown by Mr. J. J. Fenwick at the Irish Industrial Association’s Exhibition,” *Lady’s Pictorial* (Dec. 19, 1896): 931.



12. Garments made by J. J. Fenwick, “From Woollens Woven by Irish Cottagers, and Dyed from Mosses, Lichens, and Barks of Trees,” *Queen* (Dec. 19, 1896): 1184.

ucts in private residences—the 1887 display organized by Countess Spencer in her London townhouse was the one exception. Instead Hart sought out more public and, one might argue, more high profile venues. She exhibited objects, for example, in the first Arts and Crafts exhibi-

tion of 1888 (London): “Appliqué work in ‘Kells’ coloured linens, executed by A Class of Irish Girls”; a selection of embroideries “executed by the Employees of the Donegal Industrial Fund”; a pair of “O’Neill” curtains “in indigo and Indian Red. Embroidered with flax on flax. Designed by Aimée Carpenter, executed by an Irish village class”;<sup>48</sup> and a Limerick lace alb “designed by the Nuns of Kenmare, executed by a Limerick Lace Worker, employed by the Donegal Industrial Fund.”<sup>49</sup> Hart also contributed to the first exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland (1895) with, for example, an appliqué wall hanging and an embroidered coverlet.<sup>50</sup> Thus, her presence at both the Irish Exhibition in London (1888) and the Chicago World’s Fair (1893) represents a continuum of her contribution to prominent exhibitions.<sup>51</sup>

The Donegal Industrial Fund and the Irish Industries Association were both founded on philanthropic or benevolent principles and operated as what today might be called “fair trade” organizations. As such, both can be criticized: they did—as Helen Gilbert and Chris Tiffin suggest in their introduction to *Burden or Benefit?: Imperial Benevolence and Its Legacy*—build “a structural relationship” that, even in the most well-meaning situations, established the organizers as dominant figures in a class-based, hierarchical configuration. This unequal relationship, according to Gilbert and Tiffin, “is never simple, and its complications multiply exponentially when the case is not that of the individual within a contained culture, but rather that of an organization or nation acting across cultures.”<sup>52</sup> But despite potential criticisms, both organizations connected craftspeople and artisans working within an increasingly industrializing economy with those who could provide a market for handcrafted products. Furthermore, the organizations eliminated middlemen, returned all profits to the craftspeople, and overcame what Hart referred to as the “extraordinary isolation and removal from markets.”<sup>53</sup> The legacy of the DIF and the IIA, even with the class discrepancies between wealthy English women and poor Irish cottag-

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ers, might best be considered a valuable one. For example, in his analysis of a report on the “standard of industrial design in Ireland” in the 1960s published by an international team of consultants, Seán Beattie contends that the glowing report was “an enduring tribute to the standards pioneered throughout the previous century.”<sup>54</sup> Despite blatantly unequal relationships and explicit imperialism, the Donegal Industrial Fund and the Irish Industries Association played a role in enhancing and promoting the arts and crafts of Ireland and contributed to the rich traditions that continue to flourish.

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- 1 Alice Hart, *The Cottage Industries of Ireland, with an Account of the Work of the Donegal Industrial Fund* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1887), 3. The paper was read before the Society of Arts on Wednesday, May 11, 1887.
- 2 Youghal lace was considered the “queen of Irish laces” and items such as the collar were extremely valuable. *Irish Textile Journal* (Nov. 15, 1896): 124. In 1908, for example, Gladys Vanderbilt purchased “a set [cuffs and collar] of old Youghal lace, valued at £200...just before her wedding with Count Szechenyi of Hungary.” “Countess Szechenyi’s £200 Irish Lace Set,” *Irish Independent* (Feb. 15, 1908): 7.
- 3 *Lady’s Pictorial* (July 21, 1888): 74.
- 4 Arthur Mackmurdo as qtd. in Peter Stansky, *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s, and the Arts and Crafts* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985), 106.
- 5 F. K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 47.
- 6 The Marchioness of Londonderry opened another fête in the same year in Dublin for the benefit of the Dental Hospital of Ireland. *Times* (London) (Feb. 7, 1890): 10.
- 7 For a detailed discussion of the Donegal Industrial Fund at the Irish Exhibition of 1888 and the Chicago Fair of 1893, see Janice Helland, “Exhibiting Ireland: The Donegal Industrial Fund in London and Chicago,” *Revue d’art canadienne/Canadian Art Review (RACAR)* 29, no. 1–2 (2004): 28–47.
- 8 The DIF had occupied smaller premises in New Cavendish Street but the 1885 move to Wigmore Street, just around the corner from Oxford Street, meant larger premises with an on-site warehouse. “Irish Cottage Industries,” *Times* (London) (Dec. 8, 1885): 4.
- 9 Alice Hart, *Cottage Industries: And What They Can Do for Ireland; Being a Verbatim Report of an Address Given by Mrs.*

- Ernest Hart at the Club House, Bedford Park, May 30th, 1885* (London: Smith, Elder, 1885), 14.
- 10 Amelia Peck and Carol Irish, *Candace Wheeler: The Art and Enterprise of American Design, 1875–1900* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2002), 48.
  - 11 *New York Times* (Dec. 15, 1886): 8.
  - 12 In 1894, John Wanamaker provided space, rent free, in his Philadelphia department store in order to enable Hart to continue to exhibit in the United States when the Chicago World's Fair ended. *New York Times* (Feb. 21, 1894): 2.
  - 13 "Irish Needlework," *Queen* (Mar. 20, 1886): 310. Alice Hart had viewed and marveled over the Book of Kells when she first visited Trinity College in the early 1880s.
  - 14 *Times* (London) (Nov. 27, 1886): 6.
  - 15 *Irish Times* (May 26, 1887): 6.
  - 16 *Illustrated London News* (June 4, 1887): 625.
  - 17 "Irish Exhibition at Olympia: Donegal Industrial Village," *Queen* (July 7, 1888): 3.
  - 18 Limerick lace was made under the auspices of Florence Vere O'Brien (ibid., 8). Florence Vere O'Brien opened her lace school in Limerick in 1883. Although Limerick lace is possibly the best known of the Irish laces, it is actually embroidery on machine-made net. See, for example, Nellie Ó Cléirigh and Veronica Rowe, *Limerick Lace: A Social History and a Maker's Manual* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1995).
  - 19 William Gladstone's Home Rule Bill resulted in his defeat in 1886. Alice Hart included a statue of him in her Irish village at the Chicago World's Fair.
  - 20 "Women's Industries at the Irish Exhibition," *Queen* (Aug. 11, 1888): 168.
  - 21 Astor had purchased the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1892 and entertained lavishly from his various residences in "a determined effort to gain acceptance in English society." Derek Wilson, *The Astors, 1763–1992: Landscape with Millionaires* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993), 125.
  - 22 "Exhibition and Sale of Irish Handiwork," *Queen* (Mar. 11, 1893): 393. The chasuble for Cardinal Gibbon included a Celtic cross worked in gold made at the Poor Clares' convent in Kenmare; another "covered with a flowery design" had been worked by women at the Royal Irish School of Art Needlework.
  - 23 The seventh Duke of Newcastle commissioned the Donegal Industrial Fund to make all the vestments for Clumber Church when he married Kathleen Candy, granddaughter of Baron Rossmore of Monaghan in 1889. See "Donegal Industrial Fund," *Women's Penny Paper* (Oct. 26, 1889): 3 and *Retford and Gainsborough Times* (Oct. 25, 1889): 8.
  - 24 The dress commissioned by Aberdeen was purchased by H. Gordon Selfridge, then a partner of Chicago's Marshall Field. *Queen* (Mar. 11, 1893): 393.
  - 25 Diane Urquhart, "Peeresses, Patronage and Power: The Politics of Ladies Frances Anne, Theresa and Edith Londonderry, 1800–1959," in *Irish Women's History*, ed. Alan Hayes and Diane Urquhart (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004), 53.
  - 26 Hart, *Cottage Industries*, 1.
  - 27 *Queen* (Mar. 11, 1893): 393. The Plan of Campaign advocated further rent strikes against landlords.
  - 28 The exhibition included an afternoon lecture by Hart, "illustrated with stereopticon views," in the showroom followed by another in a private residence. "Irish Laces and Embroideries: An Exhibition and Sale in Fifth Avenue This Week," *New York Times* (Dec. 18, 1892): 13.
  - 29 "Mrs. Ernest Hart's Irish Village at the Chicago Exhibi-

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- tion,” *Queen* (Oct. 14, 1893): 638.
- 30 *New York Times* (May 7, 1893): 17.
- 31 The laying of the foundation stone for the O’Connell Memorial Chapel in Dublin in 1864 “was followed by intense unionist anger and serious rioting in Belfast at what was seen as a privileging of the Catholic figure.” Fintan Cullen, *The Irish Face: Redefining the Irish Portrait* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2004), 53.
- 32 Ishbel Aberdeen as qtd. in *Queen* (Feb. 18, 1893): 251.
- 33 See, for example, Marjorie A. G. S. Pentland, *A Bonnie Fechter: The Life of Ishbel Marjoribanks, Marchioness of Aberdeen & Tremair, 1857 to 1939* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1952), Doris French, *Ishbel and the Empire: A Biography of Lady Aberdeen* (Toronto: Dundurn, 1988), Maureen Keane, *Ishbel: Lady Aberdeen in Ireland* (Newtownards: Colourpoint Books, 1999), or Ishbel Aberdeen’s, “*We Twa*”: *Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen*, 2 vols. (London: Collins, 1925).
- 34 *Queen* (Mar. 11, 1893): 393. See also Irish Industries Association, *Guide to the Irish Industries Village and Blarney Castle at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago* (Chicago: Irish Village Book Store, 1893), 31.
- 35 *New York Times* (Oct. 22, 1893): 8.
- 36 After wearing the dress to a court drawing room in 1888, Ishbel Aberdeen wore it to a Dublin Castle drawing room in 1893, was photographed in the dress and her vice-regal robes in Canada in 1893, and she was photographed wearing the dress for the cover of *Lady’s Pictorial* (Mar. 31, 1906). For further discussion about Ishbel Aberdeen’s Irish dresses, see Janice Helland, “Ishbel Aberdeen’s ‘Irish’ Dresses: Embroidery, Display and Meaning, 1886–1909,” *Journal of Design History* 26, no. 2 (2013): 152–67.
- 37 “A Northern Worth,” *Gentlewoman* (June 6, 1891): 780–81.
- 38 J. J. Fenwick was located at 62 New Bond Street. *Health & Home* referred to the “magic name of Fenwick,” and assured its readers that “originality reigns supreme” at the fashion house (Apr. 4, 1895): 750. Today the address for Fenwick Bond Street is 63 New Bond Street and the store still is recognized as a premier house of fashion. See, for example, Kate Abnett, “The Curious Case of Fenwick Bond Street,” *Business of Fashion*, Jan. 25, 2015, <http://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/intelligence/curious-case-fenwick-bond-street>.
- 39 *Queen* (Mar. 21, 1896): 499.
- 40 J. S. Wood, editor of *Gentlewoman*, which began publishing in 1890, enthusiastically supported the IIA in his magazine. He was the association’s honorary organizer 1888–1916.
- 41 *Queen* (Mar. 28, 1896): 542. This exhibition was the first to take place under the auspices of the recently formed London General Committee of the Irish Industries Association and its president, Theresa, Marchioness of Londonderry.
- 42 *Lady’s Pictorial* (Dec. 5, 1896): 851.
- 43 *Lady’s Pictorial* (Dec. 12, 1896): 893.
- 44 *Gentlewoman* (Dec. 19, 1896): 882.
- 45 *Queen* (Dec. 19, 1896): 1172.
- 46 *Times* (London) (Mar. 14, 1896): 6. From this time forward, the IIA published an overview of their annual London meeting in the *Times* which included a financial statement.
- 47 *Times* (London) (Feb. 22, 1905): 10. The purchasing power of £111,000 in 1905 would be the equivalent of approximately ten million pounds in 2015; thus although the amount represents almost twenty years of sales, it is con-

siderable. See Samuel H. Williamson, "Purchasing Power of Money in the United States from 1774 to Present," *MeasuringWorth*, 2015, <http://www.measuringworth.com/ppowerus/>.

- 48 Aimée Carpenter was one of two artist/designers who worked with the DIF teaching embroidery to Irish women and designing objects. The other, Una Taylor, an accomplished embroiderer, is best known for the stitching on the Irish National Banner, designed by Walter Crane and signed by Irish politician Charles Stewart Parnell, exhibited in the 1890 Arts and Crafts exhibition. Taylor was "fervently Irish" and, in addition to her accomplishments as an embroiderer, also wrote poetry and prose "almost exclusively on Irish and Catholic themes" for *United Ireland*, *Nation*, and other journals. D. J. O'Donoghue, *The Poets of Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1912), 451. Both women worked out of Donegal House in London.
- 49 Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, *Catalogue of the First Exhibition* (London: New Gallery, 1888). Hart also exhibited silk embroidered panels, a bed coverlet, and a case of dyed wools.
- 50 Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland, *Catalogue of the First Exhibition, at the Royal University Buildings, Dublin, 1895* (Dublin: Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland, 1895).
- 51 Her presence could be seen in New Orleans (1885), Paris (1889), and San Francisco (1894).
- 52 Helen Gilbert and Chris Tiffin, *Burden or Benefit?: Imperial Benevolence and Its Legacy* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2008), 4.
- 53 Hart, *Cottage Industries of Ireland*, 8.
- 54 Seán Beattie, "Cottage Industries: Arts and Crafts in Donegal, 1880–1920," *Donegal Annual* 60 (2008): 78.

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# EXQUISITE LACE AND DIRTY LINEN: THE TAMING OF GIRL POWER

Fintan O'Toole

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## “GRACIOUS MOTHERHOOD”

**T**he state visit of US president John F. Kennedy to Ireland in June 1963 was, for the hosts, an occasion of great moment. Ireland had embarked on a belated policy of industrialization and modernization, a project of opening to the world that raised hopes of prosperity but also fears that change might undermine Ireland's imagined Gaelic and Catholic identity. JFK's presence was electrifying in part because he seemed both traditional (as a returned son of the Irish Catholic diaspora) and breathtakingly modern: young, tanned, handsome, optimistic, telegenic, powerful. His presence allowed both the state and Irish society as a whole to showcase, not least to itself, an image of past, present, and future Irelands reconciled into a reassuring continuity.

After frantic late lobbying, JFK added to his planned trip a short visit to Limerick City, the point of origin of his Fitzgerald forebears. There, the city's mayor, Frances Condell, the only woman allowed a prominent role in the official ceremonies during the trip, presented him with special gifts for his wife Jacqueline, who had not traveled to Ireland because she was heavily pregnant. JFK received a beautiful lacework christening robe and perhaps also a tablecloth. A thank-you note to the mayor from the White House, dated July 22, 1963, records some important details:

The exquisite lace tablecloth, made at the Good Shepherd Convent in Limerick and presented

to me on behalf of my Fitzgerald relatives, was among those items that I took with me when I joined my family in Hyannis Port following my return from Europe. Mrs. Kennedy was simply delighted with this beautiful handiwork, and asked that I convey her sincere thanks, along with my own, to you and to all who had a part in this lovely remembrance.<sup>1</sup>

The gifts and their gracious reception were part of a tradition stitched into the history of the Arts and Crafts movement in Ireland. Handmade lace was the most successful consumer product of the movement. “Exquisite,” with all its connotations of elite appreciation, delicacy, and rareness, was a word that perfectly captured the glamour this handiwork had radiated for more than a century. In Ireland, lace had long been understood as having a special appeal to wealthy foreigners. For many of those who hosted JFK on his Irish trip, lace objects seemed the most obvious gifts to present to a visitor whose reception fell little short of idolatry. At his own ancestral home of New Ross (fig. 1), he was given a lace handkerchief of Venetian rose-point lace for Jackie and a crochet lace bag for his daughter Caroline. The Taoiseach, Sean Lemass, presented him with thirty-six Carrickmacross lace napkins (fig. 2). The National Council of the Blind of Ireland presented JFK with an antique quilt, handwoven in Mountmellick lace.<sup>2</sup> These gifts in themselves say a great deal about the extent to which fine handmade lace, such as that on display in this exhibition,

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1. JFK with his sisters Jean Kennedy Smith and Eunice Kennedy Shriver and cousins at their mutual ancestor's home in Dungantown, County Wexford, June 27, 1963.



2. Carrickmacross lace handkerchief, presented to JFK by Taoiseach Sean Lemass, June 1963. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston, MO 75.858.1.3a.

had been stitched into Ireland's self-image: JFK's visit had immense psychological importance for a nation still struggling to emerge into global modernity, and the gifts were undoubtedly chosen with great care. Lace objects had the advantage of being infused, without explicitly religious imagery, with the odor of a quasi-religious feminine sanctity. The lace products given to JFK were typically produced in convents. Mae Leonard, an official with the Limerick Corporation, recalled how even the packaging of the christening robe was assembled with a sense of the sacredness of the moment:

The mayor insisted that it had to be something synonymous with Limerick. But what? A Limerick lace christening robe made by the nuns at the Good Shepherd Convent was the choice for the Kennedys' expected baby. My mission was to organise packaging worthy of such a delicate gift and I was dispatched to the nuns at the Presentation Convent. In a parlour full of bees-waxed furniture, the reverend mother and three nuns constructed a white quilted box.<sup>3</sup>

It is striking that not one, but two sets of nuns, from different orders and convents, were deployed in creating the gift for presentation for JFK. There is more than a touch of a religious offering about the whole thing. These lace objects, intended for JFK's wife and children (one unborn), were statements about Irish femininity; refined, delicate, and precious, they had obvious connotations of both tradition and domesticity. But the christening robe had equally obvious sacramental overtones. In her speech, before she presented the robe in Limerick, Mayor Condell evoked the image of the pregnant Jackie Kennedy as an embodiment of an almost saintly motherhood: "We shall be very pleased if you will take back with you over the Atlantic warmest greetings, Irish prayers, and thoughts from the mothers of Limerick city and county especially to her whose gracious motherhood and wifely devotion endear her to us all."<sup>4</sup>

Yet, in fact, gracious motherhood and wifely devotion had little do with it. JFK was aware that the lace objects he received were “made at the Good Shepherd Convent in Limerick.” In Mae Leonard’s memory, the christening robe was “made by the nuns at the Good Shepherd Convent.” In fact, JFK’s formulation was more accurate. The lace was indeed made at the Good Shepherd Convent, but it was not “made by nuns,” or at the very least not exclusively so. The Good Shepherd Convent was what is commonly known as a Magdalene laundry, a place in which between one hundred and one hundred twenty women at any given time were incarcerated, generally without trial. (Only eight percent of women in Magdalene institutions were committed to them through the criminal justice system.<sup>5</sup>)

These women were locked away because they had children outside wedlock or merely because they were judged to be in danger of falling into immorality. They were made to work in conditions that amounted to a kind of slavery—unpaid, largely involuntary labor was extracted from them as a form of moral purgation. And whereas the bulk of the women at the Good Shepherd site worked in the laundry, lacemaking had been practiced in the convent since the 1850s. The exquisite christening robe was almost certainly made by inmates of an institution for punishing and controlling women.

In an oral history project, John Kennedy (no relation) who knew the Limerick Magdalene home intimately because two of his aunts were nuns there and because he ran the commercial operations of the laundry from 1976 onward, told the artist Evelyn Glynn:

In my time the American tourists [*sic*] buses used to pull to the front door for many years to see the [Magdalene] women making the lace and purchase the lace. I mean, it could take a week to make one lace handkerchief for which they were charging the Americans peanuts. What they were very proud of was when John F. Kennedy met Frances Condell, the former

mayor of Limerick, in Limerick Race Course. She presented him with a Limerick Lace christening veil. Now many families have Limerick Lace christening robes still. Now what they also did was embroidered table linen. So any one of the women who had a gift for needlework would be in the Lace Room....They were geniuses with their hands at needle craft those women.<sup>6</sup>

These female geniuses made the work that Jackie Kennedy so admired. It is poignant that they found some pride and pleasure in the knowledge that they were making something for the most famous and glamorous couple on earth. But it is also haunting to realize that this Lace Room was, literally, a front. The making of lace at the Good Shepherd Convent was an act both of display and of concealment. The display was a self-conscious presentation, not just of the work but also of the workers as objects of touristic interest. Purchasing the lace was an outcome of the spectacle of watching the women at work. But this display was also a way of hiding. Behind the elegant and dexterous work of lacemaking there was literal dirty work: the majority of the Magdalene inmates were not lacemakers. They were slaving in the laundry, washing the sheets and shirts, the dirty socks and soiled underwear, of the Limerick bourgeoisie. They washed the bloodstains out of butchers’ aprons and surgeons’ white coats.

These women were deliberately labeled as Magdalene—itsself in many cases an act of concealment. The home was called St. Mary’s to link it to the biblical reformed prostitute Mary Magdalene. This itself was a conscious act of stigmatization. The women were not in fact ex-prostitutes. As Kennedy explained:

Now there was a stigma attached to the name St. Mary’s because it was St. Mary Magdalene, giving the impression that they were “fallen women.” A lot of them had never been pregnant. And I don’t refer to a woman who gets pregnant as a fallen woman anyway. A lot of the women

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who came in here were taken advantage of in a very horrible way. . . . Some had been made pregnant by their own priest. Some had been made pregnant by their own father, their own brother. And at the time the Catholic Church had enormous power in the country, especially in the rural areas and they were loaded up sometimes in the dead of night, shipped in here and they were never heard of again. These poor women were whipped away from their neighbourhood, their friends, their neighbours, their acquaintances and in many instances they were never heard from again. They were given an assumed name. The trauma must have been incredible.<sup>7</sup>

In 1956, seven years before JFK's presidential visit, there were one hundred sixty "girls" in the Limerick Magdalene home. *Our Catholic Life* described the inmates as "maladjusted people" who "come voluntarily and . . . remain voluntarily" for "treatment" and "moral rehabilitation." It also described the system through which inmates could become permanent residents by being inducted, not into the Good Shepherd order itself, but into subaltern ranks dedicated to lifelong servitude:

Those among the girls who wish to give themselves to the service of God, may, after a term of probation, be received among the "Auxiliaries" of the Good Shepherd. They then wear a semi-religious dress of black, and every day recite in common the Office of the Seven Dolours and make a promise annually to remain in the Home. Some girls are anxious to consecrate their lives entirely to God. They may join a special community very appropriately known as "Magdalens." These dress in a brown habit, similar to the Carmelite Habit, and follow a mitigated rule of Carmel.<sup>8</sup>

This process of complete submergence into religious discipline (though without the social and spiritual prestige of actually becoming nuns) stripped the women of all

autonomy as workers. Bad conditions were not deplorable breaches of workers' rights; they were necessary aspects of the life of repentance and self-sacrifice. The vows, even of the Auxiliaries, were of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The Catholic magazine *Documentary Review*, in a special feature on the work of the Good Shepherd sisters in Limerick, reported on the induction of "girls" as "Auxiliaries" and asked,

Who are they? They are girls from our Classes of delinquent and pre-delinquent girls who feel called upon to work among their companions, living with them under the same conditions, sharing the same food at the same table, sleeping in the same dormitories. Having shared their temptations, and the difficulties of adaptation, they are in a position to be of great service to their companions. They have already worked with them for several years before making Religious Profession. The life is hard, having but little natural attraction, but to those who are called and who have the necessary generosity it offers great opportunity of service.<sup>9</sup>

It is worth reflecting on what a "pre-delinquent" girl might be. It seems clear that in many cases the phrase referred to a child who was being sexually abused and, as she approached adolescence, was thought to be in danger of becoming pregnant. She had to be removed from society before she became a cause of scandal.

Almost certainly, then, the lace objects that were presented to the US president had, like the Lace Room from which they came, a double character of display and concealment. They were, on an open level, a statement about Ireland's fine traditions and in particular about Irish women's devotion to the ladylike values of the ideal wife and mother. But they were also testament to the hidden Ireland, the vast system of "coercive confinement" into which approximately one percent of the population disappeared behind high walls, usually without any kind

of legal proceeding. Openly, they spoke of “gracious motherhood and wifely devotion.” Covertly, they had stitched into them a history of sexual, familial, and social repression. That history included an almost sadistic attack on motherhood. Kennedy remembered seeing the women (known as the Class) who worked in the laundry hoping to catch a glimpse of their own children, who were kept at the school (St. George’s) at the same site but screened off from their mothers, during Mass in the convent.

How did lacemaking, one of the glories of the Arts and Crafts movement, end up being associated with unfree labor, dreadful cruelty, and a system of punishment for women who were, for one reason or another, deemed a danger to the moral reputation of Irish society? The question is worth asking, not just because of the ironies it exposes, but because it opens up a broader set of questions about the ways in which the noble ideals of Arts and Crafts cannot be cleanly disentangled from power, social control, and the place of women in Irish society. Lace is valued for its intricacy but the values associated with it are also, in the Irish context at least, highly intricate. Although it seems to be the product of a very pure form of labor—the skilled and dexterous hands of a woman—it actually reflects changing and competing notions of the place of work in Ireland and of the even more uncertain place of women in that world of work. The story of lacemaking in Ireland is a story of exquisite beauty and creativity, but also a story of industrialization and deindustrialization, of technological advances and retreats, of free and unfree labor, and above all, of the possibilities offered to and withdrawn from girls and women.

### LACE AND THE IRISH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Post-Famine Ireland became so overwhelmingly agricultural that as late as 1949, two-thirds of all exports were live animals and food being sent to the UK market. The top four exports in 1949 were cattle, horses, fresh eggs, and beer. The image of Ireland was just beginning

to change at the time of JFK’s visit, but for the previous century it was essentially pastoral. The common assumption is that the country had missed out on the Industrial Revolution. In fact, what had happened was much stranger: Ireland had industrialized and then deindustrialized. A very significant aspect of this process was the virtual disappearance from national images of the female industrial worker. Thus, the 1841 census, the last before the catastrophe of the Great Hunger, recorded 500,000 women working in the textile industries. By contrast, over a century later, the 1946 census (admittedly excluding the more industrial area of Northern Ireland) had just 335,000 women categorized as “gainfully occupied”—in other words, as wage earners in all jobs, with the vast majority of these women working either in agriculture or as domestic servants. The industrial woman had become a rare creature. This long process of redefinition of a woman’s proper sphere forms the essential background to the shift in the meaning of Irish lace.

In Limerick—indeed on part of the very site later occupied by the Magdalene home—lacemaking was initially at the cutting edge of industrial modernity. For the first four decades of “Limerick Lace,” the term might have conjured for elite consumers the gossamer filigree of delicate handiwork, but for the city itself it meant something radically different: the arrival and expansion of the classic mass industrial factory system pioneered in England. Charles Walker, who established commercial lacemaking in Limerick, was an archetypal English entrepreneurial capitalist: he is first glimpsed in parish records in Essex attempting to recruit cheap labor. Walker established a tambour<sup>10</sup> lace factory in Limerick in 1829; Jonas Rolfé introduced the rival needle-run lace system in the late 1830s.<sup>11</sup>

Walker’s initiative was purely and ruthlessly commercial. The great center of the English lace industry, Nottingham, had an established system of relationships between workers, subcontractors, middlemen, and merchants; Limerick was a tabula rasa. A factory owner could

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control the whole process. The explosion of factory-made cotton twist made raw materials easily and cheaply available from England. As Pamela Sharpe and Stanley D. Chapman put it,

The result of the outpouring of twist was a need for cheap workers to pattern it. It was this which forced Walker to consider Ireland....Lace tambourers were ideally young females with nimble fingers who were easily controlled. It was the possibilities of employing this type of labour in an area which had no established structures of subcontract which made Walker's scheme a success. Limerick may have been distantly placed from the market, but a cheap and malleable labour force, with all the profits accruing to the manufacturer not to middlemen, made this a very worthwhile business enterprise.<sup>12</sup>

By the 1850s, the scale of industrial lacemaking in Limerick was impressive. John Francis Maguire, MP, then mayor of Cork, in *The Industrial Movement in Ireland as Illustrated by the National Exhibition of 1852*, notes that the Limerick lace industry “at this day” still employs “nearly two thousand girls at remunerative wages.”<sup>13</sup> Maguire visited, and was hugely impressed by the Walker factory, by now called Lambert and Bury:

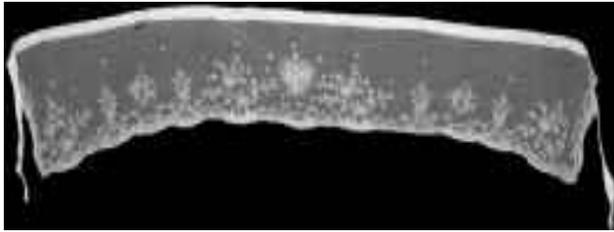
It affords constant employment to not less than seven hundred girls....[I] was greatly struck with its admirable management, the order and system that pervaded such a very extensive establishment, and the general air of neatness and comfort manifest in the appearance of the young persons employed. And, I may also add, that I was informed, on the authority of those who were qualified to speak upon the subject, that the girls employed in this, as in the other lace factories of Limerick, were amongst the best conducted of the orderly and moral population of that noble city.<sup>14</sup>

Maguire, interestingly, already links lacemaking with female morality, but moral considerations were not high on the industrial agenda. Much of the work done in the Limerick factories was poorly paid child labor. Walker advertised for children aged from ten to twelve to take up seven-year-long “apprenticeships,” allowing him to have a workforce largely made up of indentured apprentices with limited rights. Lord John Manners, visiting one of the Limerick lace factories in 1846, found two hundred girls aged from six upward employed at wages varying from two to ten shillings a week:

Many of these are taken from the poorest of the Limerick poor, and the addition of four or five shillings a week to such a household must be of the last importance....The great drawbacks in the system are the early age at which the girls commence work, the unintermitting nature of the toil, and the perplexing and harassing nature of many clauses in the indentures by which they are bound apprentices to the various manufacturers. Not a week passes without the city magistrates being called upon to adjudicate upon those indentures between master and apprentice.<sup>15</sup>

The coercive Master and Servants Acts were deployed to prevent girls hired as “apprentices” moving to other employers for better pay. Notably, the Catholic bishop of Limerick, Dr. John Ryan, also deployed one of his priests, Fr. John Nolan, to use his “vigilant zeal” to keep the girls in line.<sup>16</sup>

A key point, though, is that the system in which these girls and women were working in Limerick was not a mere imitation of English industrial modernity. It was significantly more “modern.” In Nottingham, much of the lacemaking industry was still organized around pre-industrial networks of home-based workers. Walker, and the industrialists who followed him to Limerick, brought all production into highly controlled factory conditions and



3. Limerick lace altar fringe in needle-run and tambour, 1880–1920. Lace, 22.7 x 130.5 cm, Jim Kemmy Municipal Museum, Limerick, 1989.0103.

believed that this allowed their product to greatly surpass the quality of Nottingham lace. Indeed Sharpe and Chapman note, “Walker wagered that he would select a hundred Irish girls from among his workers who would produce any given piece of lace superior to any similar work made by the same number of girls from France, Flanders, Saxony or Germany....The quality of Limerick lace was believed to be superior to that produced in Nottingham and brought a 25% higher price with less time spent on each article.”<sup>17</sup> The highly centralized Limerick factory system produced lace that was of better and more consistent quality, cleaner, and yet cheaper.

This cutting edge industrial modernity is not the dominant image of nineteenth-century—or indeed of much of twentieth-century—Ireland. And it is certainly not the dominant image of poor Irish girls in this period. Such Irish girls are pictured either in domestic or in natural settings, usually alone or with their families. The notion of Irish girls as a classic nineteenth-century industrial proletariat, congregated in their hundreds in highly organized factories, is hard to grasp. The qualities associated with their work—organization, efficiency, systematic labor—are very different from those that would later be implied by lacemaking when it was redefined as part of the country’s Arts and Crafts movement.

Hard and coercive as the work undoubtedly was, it took girls and young women into very different spaces and gave them some degree of economic independence.

The experiences of many of them, especially those who came into Limerick from the countryside, must have been very similar to those of young women in Bangladesh or Vietnam moving from their villages to work in today’s garment factories: hard and exploitative labor but opportunities for improvement that nonetheless seemed worth grasping. Here in embryo was a class with the potential to be subversive of existing Irish hierarchies: girls and young women working collectively in female-dominated environments, spearheading a kind of Irish modernity. There is at least a whisper of girl power.

How did Irish society control this potentially disturbing power? Partly through the alliance of the industrialist, the magistrate, and the priest. And partly through the ill fortune of a technological change that made the Limerick model redundant. From 1841, when the application of the Jacquard attachment to Leavers lace machines by Hooton Deverill made it possible for patterned lace to be made entirely by machine, lacemaking by hand was (apparently) on the way out.<sup>18</sup> Limerick continued to compete on its reputation for higher quality for the next two decades, but its viability was further damaged by the lifting of import restrictions in the UK, allowing foreign-manufactured lace to flood into Britain and Ireland. But there is an ironic twist: Limerick lace was a hybrid lace, with handwork over manufactured patterns (fig. 3). The Arts and Crafts movement, with its ideological commitment to purity and authenticity, shifted elite demand away from such products at the same time as fully manufactured lace was taking the lower end of the market.

The collapse of mass manufacture did not end the production of lace in Limerick. Rather it shifted its meaning and context and in the process pointed to much larger changes in the image and reality of female workers. Lace gradually moved out of the commercial sphere and into the religious, out of the industrial and into the philanthropic, out of “modernity” and into nostalgia. In these shifts what was lost was the idea of women and girls as employees. At the most extreme end of this process,

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female laceworkers lost all their rights, including the most basic right of a worker: the right to be paid for their labor.

It is true that the shift from seeing lace as an industrial commodity to regarding it as a carrier of very specific—and highly gendered—moral meanings was not absolute. As we have seen, the moral utility of factory discipline for girls was already part of the attraction of industrial lacemaking for commentators like Maguire. Even in the heyday of the factory system, there was a notion that lacemaking was not just an industry but also a means of rescuing young women from moral danger. The *Limerick Chronicle's* obituary of Walker in 1843 wonders at the effects of his benevolence in providing work for hundreds of girls: “What myriads of young, innocent, feeble, friendless females have been, by his means, rescued from ruin and wretchedness?”<sup>19</sup> These same notions of female weakness, and of the need to “rescue” girls from real or potential moral ruin underlay the institutionalization of women in the Magdalene homes. And, as the involvement of Fr. Nolan in keeping order in the lace factories shows, there was already a history of church supervision.

If the two systems—the industrial and the religious—overlapped in self-image, they also overlapped in time. When Maguire did his survey of Irish industries in 1852, the Limerick lace factories were still thriving. But he also notes another, much smaller and newer source of lacework. He introduces the Convent of the Good Shepherd in Limerick (fig. 4) with a stark coupling of the misery of the inmates with the beauty of the craftwork they are creating: “Deep interest attaches to this institution, not only from the varied and beautiful nature of the work executed within its sheltering walls, but from the sad condition of those poor beings by whom it is executed.... The Convent was chiefly established for the conversion of female penitents and affords an asylum at this moment for more than seventy inmates.”<sup>20</sup>

There is already in Maguire’s commentary the sense of lacemaking as a façade for the dirty work of the Magdalene laundries. Maguire notes that the main income of

the institution is derived from the laundry: “washing and ironing for the public of Limerick.” This he regards as “useful industry.” But he adds that there is also “elegant industry” at the convent—lacemaking:

The making of Valenciennes and Brussels lace affords constant occupation to fourteen or fifteen of the inmates. The Superior, wishing to introduce this beautiful branch of industry into Ireland, sent, about two years since, to Belgium for a competent teacher, who has been since then employed in teaching this work to the penitents; and they have been most successful learners; in fact so much so as that the work of the Convent of the Good Shepherd is fully equal to any of the work that bears the same name.<sup>21</sup>

Fine—and from a craft point of view, pure—as the work of these women may have been, the inmates differed from the factory girls in one respect that was far more significant than any other. They were not paid for their work. Their skills were not their own. They were taught them out of charitable and spiritual benevolence, and they were allowed to practice them as a form of atonement for their



4. Convent of the Good Shepherd, Limerick, c. 1900–10.

sins. Payment did not have to be monetary because it was spiritual. Maguire, whose reports are for the most part dryly businesslike, becomes rapturous as he comments on the Good Shepherd in Limerick. He calls it a “god-like institution” and evokes the work of the women as a religious drama. The piety and purity of the nuns imparts, “a healthful tone to minds broken down by misery and misfortune and to hearts tainted by crime, but refreshed, and, in happy instance, restored by the tears of penitence and contrition.”<sup>22</sup> As an advertising pitch, this is irresistible. The consumer who purchases a lace object from the convent is not simply acquiring an exquisite thing. She is purchasing cloth washed clean by tears of penitence, its whiteness a visible token of the invisible white soul for which it stands. And of course, this soul-washing takes away any unease about the more mundane washing by bent backs and chapped hands in the laundry.

It is highly symbolic that part of Walker’s old lace factory at Old Clare Street and Pennywell Road became part of the Convent of the Good Shepherd complex, which grew to include much of the architecture of coercive containment that would keep the Irish lower classes in order: the Magdalene laundry, the convent, an industrial school, and a reformatory school for girls (St. George’s). Women were incarcerated there until it closed in 1990. The building then became the Limerick School of Art and Design. No mention of its previous history was built in to its new purpose until a postgraduate student at the school, Evelyn Glynn, created a photographic and documentary website to recover the history of the building in 2011.<sup>23</sup>

### “SILENT IN REVERENT AWE”

If Walker’s modernity was the past and the Good Shepherd Convent was the future, there was a period in the middle when girl power really did seem to thrive. The closure of the big lace factories in Limerick coincided with the rise of the Arts and Crafts movement and in particular with the vast interest of the upper classes in handmade lace as a form of what Elaine Freedgood calls “Utopian

consumption.” Freedgood suggests that the ubiquitous “lace books” bought and studied by genteel ladies:

Helped their readers to imagine an alternative economy, one run by women for women working both by hand and at home that might form a bulwark—albeit a phantasmatic one—against the moral, physical, and aesthetic depredations of industrialization....The filaments of a feminist vision of political economy shimmer in this fantasy; they are, however, part of a discourse in which any utopian strain is ultimately reabsorbed by commodity fetishism.<sup>24</sup>

This new fetish for handmade lace dovetailed with notions of what it meant to be ladylike. To be “a lady” was to acquire as much of the manners and habits of the upper and middle classes as possible. One of these habits was, of course, needlework. The professional laceworker could now be seen, not as a proletarian, but as a woman fortunate enough to be acquiring the refinements of her betters. As Freedgood puts it, “The work of lacemakers can be represented in non-industrial, non-commodity terms, partly because it was (and to some extent still is) a leisure practice of women of other classes. The woman who makes lace for a living can closely resemble, in the terms of these representations, the more affluent woman who makes lace and other trims and ornaments in her ‘free’ time.”<sup>25</sup>

In the Irish context, though, these notions had particular resonances and contradictions. As a reaction against industrialization, the Arts and Crafts movement could become, in Ireland, a kind of consolation for the reality of deindustrialization. It helped to propagate the idea that Ireland, outside the northeast, was never industrialized in the first place. It fit neatly into a kind of cultural nationalism that operated by way of a potent contrast: England was grubbily industrial and had lost its soul; Ireland was pre-industrial and still had its soul. And this in turn fed into the use of lace in Magdalene homes as a soul-saving

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device: it could elevate the fallen, not just to proper femininity but also to spiritual cleanliness.

The most immediate contradiction, however, is that the revival of handmade lace surely did not, in the short term, consolidate Victorian gender relations among the lower classes in Ireland; it must have upset them. It did so because of much of the initial impulse for the handmade. Lace in Ireland was, as a form of Famine relief, usually undertaken by genuinely entrepreneurial and compassionate nuns trying to give girls and women from poor families a way to survive the catastrophe. In the first phase of post-Famine lacemaking, a developing Arts and Crafts ideology about the value of the handmade encouraged high prices for such luxury textiles. Thus lacemakers realized a real and important source of income—just as the men in their families were losing their means of livelihood in the wave of post-Famine evictions.

The happy confluence of the Arts and Crafts movement with a determination by some remarkable nuns and other female social entrepreneurs really did create a moment of genuine girl power. Between the factory and the Magdalene laundry, Utopian consumption did meet, if not quite Utopian production, then at least the production of skilled and valued work. Florence Vere O'Brien, designer of one piece of lace in the present exhibition (pl. 69), revived Limerick lacemaking in the 1880s after the collapse of the large factories and represented the most progressive strain of the Liberal landlord class. She tapped into the Arts and Crafts ethic and the related campaigns to promote Irish cottage industries by employing thirty-one women (later rising to fifty-six at the height of the scheme) to work in their own homes with materials and designs that she supplied. Hers was a hybrid enterprise, philanthropically motivated and subsidized, but with the aim of providing the women who worked in it with an income. In 1894, her workers earned seven shillings a week—a modest sum but a significant addition to the income of a poor family—and by 1908, a “good worker” could earn twice as much.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, the lace schools that emerged largely from convents as responses to the Famine had very clear aims: to allow young girls to earn money. The fulfillment of that aim—skilled girls could earn substantial incomes from their finest pieces—could have very radical consequences; instead of creating ladies or saving “penitents,” lacemaking could create young, female workers with a status and independence being denied to their fathers and brothers.

Maguire, writing in 1853, about one of the new lace schools in Blackrock, County Cork, picks up on just this phenomenon. He notes the radical challenge to gender relations and family hierarchies posed by the economic success of crochet lacemaking in the area: “the support of the whole family is not unfrequently thrown upon children of the tenderest years; and it is a curious, and even wonderful sight, to behold the strong and powerful father, whose skill and strength are of little avail to him now, and the vigorous son, who has no field for his labour, protected from hunger and misery by the fingers of the feeble child, and saved from the workhouse by her cheerful and untiring toil. But such is the literal fact.”<sup>27</sup>

Alongside their financial worth, these girls also had an outlet for their creativity. According to Maguire:

They exhibit a readiness of invention, and a faculty of design which are truly wonderful; and it is no uncommon thing to see a child of twelve or thirteen years old varying the pattern set before her, and imparting new attractions to her work, by the most delicate and beautiful additions, suggested by her own fancy. Some are so clever that they use the pattern with the utmost freedom, selecting those portions of it of which their taste approves, and combining the remainder into the most elegant and fanciful designs.... And these are the daughters of rude fishermen and uneducated labourers!<sup>28</sup>

Maguire’s astonishment is instructive. Even if his characterization of “cheerful and untiring toil” is surely

naïve, his wonder here seems genuine. It clearly had not occurred to him that girls from the laboring class (and the Irish laboring class was notoriously among the most miserable in Europe) could have not just individual agency but confident creativity and the ability to express personal taste in their working lives. In these reactions, we can see something of the potential of the short-lived boom in handmade lace to open up radical thoughts about the hierarchies of gender, age, and social class. If girls were earning more money than their fathers and if they were becoming confident enough to follow their “own fancy,” what next? How could these disturbances be contained?

In part, they were contained by emigration. It is likely that many young women used their surplus incomes from lacemaking to pay for their passage to the United States. (It would be an interesting exercise in micro-history to wonder whether many Irish lacemakers ended up as textile workers in the factories of the US, thus recreating on the far side of the Atlantic the female industrial proletariat that had disappeared in Limerick.) But in part, too, the potential rise of girl power was literally contained: lacemaking shifted back behind the walls of the Magdalene homes. And this process was helped along, largely inadvertently, by the ideology of the Arts and Crafts movement. Lacemaking was at its most potent as an agent of social change and female liberation when it was most about money, when it existed primarily as a means to a decent income for girls and young women. But Arts and Crafts, with its notions of Utopian consumption, wanted to take money out of the equation, to imagine a pure realm of beauty. It respiritualized lacemaking and in the process supported what was already in the Irish context a toxic idea: that lacemaking was a soul-saving activity.

The Arts and Crafts redefinition of lace as a delicate handmade shield against the evils of industrialization and crass commercialism could have strange consequences for perceptions of the work of women and girls. By the late nineteenth century, child labor was increasingly regarded as a social disgrace. Yet it is striking that the kind

of unease that Lord John Manners expressed on seeing young girls working in a Limerick lace factory in 1846 seems to disappear when lacemaking is redefined as a religious and philanthropic activity. This is the great irony: when lacemaking is industrial, it is subject to the moral concerns about the protection of workers that gather force in the nineteenth century; but when it becomes charitable and benevolent, those concerns seem to melt away.

It should be borne in mind that lace, in the Irish context, had the heavily sacramental character that we can still trace in JFK's visit as late as 1963. Although wealthy women bought Irish handmade lace to display their taste and delicacy, one of its most important markets was always ecclesiastical. Lace had been heavily feminized—with one large exception. The only men who could get away with wearing large amounts of lace were Catholic priests, bishops, and popes. In the late nineteenth century, the largest collection of lace in the world belonged to Pope Leo XIII. It included a “quantity of rich Limerick lace,” presented to him by the Bishop of Limerick, George Butler, in 1880.<sup>29</sup> It would be surprising if some of this was not made in the Good Shepherd home, which specialized in the production of lace for the ecclesiastical market. As late as 1979, Pope John Paul II used, at his open-air Mass in Limerick, an altar cloth commissioned by the Limerick Chamber of Commerce from the Good Shepherd Magdalene home.<sup>30</sup>

In any case, lace was woven into sacred performance. Bishops wore it in huge quantities: the best appointed had their white tunics (rochets) made entirely of lace. But even ordinary priests had albs or surplices extensively trimmed with lace. In a culture in which the church was in the ascendant, this association of lace with both clerical power and the sacred mysteries of the Mass made it part of a moral spectacle: the display of goodness and purity. For “penitents,” the supposedly fallen women of the Magdalene homes, making lace could thus be seen, not as work for which they should be paid, but as a form of spiritual elevation for which they should be eternally grateful.

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This dovetailed quite neatly with Arts and Crafts ideals about the moral superiority of handicraft work. But what becomes invisible in this alignment of the church and Arts and Crafts is any concern either about child labor or about the conditions of incarceration for girls and women. In fact, after the Arts and Crafts revival, lacemaking, even by children, becomes the kind of spectacle that it remained in Kennedy's memories of American tourists pulling up at the Magdalene home to see the lacemakers at work—the process was as much a consumer product as the product itself. Thus, the annals of the Good Shepherd Convent in Limerick record the following:

In 1897 a little eleven year old girl from St. George's School was sent to Dublin at the request of Countess Cadogan to represent our industry of lace making at the Textile Exhibition. In her place at the exhibition she became a centre of interest and attraction to visitors of all classes by her piquante appearance and dexterity in handling her "bobbins" which seemed to fly through her nimble fingers, but so engrossed was she in her work that she seemed neither to see or hear her admirers.<sup>31</sup>

It seems probable that this little girl was observed at work by the Duchess of York and "a large and fashionable ensemble," which, according to the *Irish Times*, visited "the department in which very beautiful lace work and embroidery were exhibited by the Convent of the Good Shepherd, Limerick, one of the very few institutions in Ireland in which Valenciennes lace is turned out in the finest form."<sup>32</sup>

Nowhere is there any suggestion that anyone felt uneasy about watching an eleven-year-old worker. It is notable that the *Irish Times* advertised this Irish Textile Exhibition under the heading "Public Amusements."<sup>33</sup> Work by incarcerated children seems to have featured prominently at the exhibition: the newspaper also reported, for example, a display of "embroidery in fine

gold executed by the children of St. Joseph's Orphanage and Industrial School, Dundalk, which was forwarded to the Textile Exhibition at the special request of Her Excellency."<sup>34</sup> This notion of lacemaking girls as a kind of ethnographic spectacle was continued in images such as postcards. An example from 1908 shows four young women supposedly "making lace" in staged poses, dressed in mock-traditional outfits with white blouses and red or green skirts—one of them has a dashing red cloak (fig. 5). The image is explicitly commercial: the women are posed outside a shop advertising "Carrickmacross and Limerick Lace." But what is being sold is not just a product but also a version of Ireland as an archaic, pre-industrial culture. The actual history of Limerick lace has by this time been utterly erased.

By the late nineteenth century, lacemaking was embedded in a system of relationships, values, and institutions that stitched together ideas of femininity, the physical control of girls and young women, the patronage of the aristocracy, the growing power of the Catholic Church, and ideals of Ireland as an anti-industrial space. There is a strongly performative element to the enactment of this system, as we can see from a visit that is, in its own



5. "Lace Makers, Ballymaclinton," 1908. Postcard, 8.8 x 13.9 cm, Jim Kemmy Municipal Museum, Limerick, 1999.0268.

way, as remarkable as that of JFK in 1963.

In February 1893, Lady Aberdeen (Ishbel Hamilton-Gordon), wife of the British viceroy and patron of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement, visited the Good Shepherd Convent in Cork—a sister convent to the Good Shepherd in Limerick, with broadly the same mix of institutions of confinement for women (a Magdalene laundry) and girls (an industrial school), and the same use of unpaid labor in its laundry and lace room. The *Irish Times*'s breathless report on the visit gives a good sense of the way lacemaking—morally good as a soul-saving process and productive of exquisite beauty—gave legitimacy to the performance of aristocratic patronage and church control while whitewashing the essentially enslaved labor of the “penitents” in the laundry:

We entered a great hall where there were some hundreds of little girls in the neatest and smartest attires, all knitting or engaged in the more elegant and delicate work of lace making. A young girl with an extremely beautiful voice sang with a power and sweetness that immediately struck the visitors with admiration. Then no sooner had they seated themselves than there tripped up the floor ten little girls with the brightest, prettiest faces it would be possible to see, who were attired in a miniature way as Irish women and Irish boys. Five of the girls wore quaint little white puckered caps, bright red and white shawls on the shoulders, blue frocks and green stockings. The other five, who represented the boys, wore green skirts, with a coat of swallow-tail pattern, and amber-coloured gaiters and they danced jigs and other Irish dances with a grace that is natural to unsophisticated childhood....After this exquisite entertainment her ladyship inspected the point-lace and Limerick lace worked by the girls, and with which she was much delighted....The next department visited was the Magdalen Asylum, where the penitents

were at their laundry work, which is carried on by machinery, mostly of the most recent invention. The work that the sisters accomplish in the asylum is so noble, so charitable, so transcendently good, that man, in regarding it, can only remain silent in reverent awe.<sup>35</sup>

This performance contains all the underlying tensions. The “elegant and delicate” work of making lace provides moral cover for the ugly and indelicate business of “penitents” at their laundry work—incarcerated women washing the dirty linen of respectable society. Child labor, which is to say children doing the work of adults, is transformed into a jolly charade—the girls dressed up as miniature women. An infantilized and archaic Irishness is played out for her ladyship, with merry jigs and the colorfully exotic shawls and swallowtail coats and gaiters of genre paintings and postcards. It is striking that the word the *Irish Times* reporter applies to the entertainment, “exquisite,” is the same one that JFK will use to describe the lace he was given by another Magdalene convent seventy years later.

The silence that the reporter felt plunged into by being in what he called “this great institution” may have been reverent awe, but it was also a silence about many things, among them the enslavement of the women in the laundry and the fact that, assuming the Limerick pattern held true for the sister convent in Cork, some of the delightful little girls may have been the daughters of those women in the laundry, who were not allowed contact with them. For all its delicacy, lace could cover a multitude.

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- 1 *Limerick Leader* (June 29, 2013): 22. It is not entirely clear from reports whether both a tablecloth and the christening robe were presented. The robe is well attested. It is possible that JFK, in his letter, is confusing it with another gift from elsewhere on the trip. I am grateful to Professor James Smith of Boston College for drawing this letter to my attention.
- 2 *Irish Independent* (June 17, 2013).
- 3 *Irish Times* (Nov. 19, 2013).
- 4 *Limerick Leader* (June 29, 2013): 22.
- 5 "Inter-Departmental Committee to Establish the Facts of State Involvement with the Magdalen Laundries," accessed Dec. 10, 2015, <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/MagdelanInterimReport2011Oct.pdf/Files/MagdelanInterimReport2011Oct.pdf>.
- 6 Evelyn Glynn, "Interview with J. Kennedy: June 2011," *Breaking the Rule of Silence*, accessed Dec. 10, 2015, <http://www.magdalenelaundrylimerick.com/johnk.html>.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 "Limerick Communities: Sisters of the Good Shepherd," *Our Catholic Life* (Easter 1956): 20–21.
- 9 *Documentary Review*, no. 22 (1957): 77.
- 10 Tambour lace is made by stretching a net over a circular frame and drawing threads through it with a hook. Needle-run is made with a needle embroidering on a net background.
- 11 Matthew Potter, *Amazing Lace: A History of the Limerick Lace Industry* (Limerick: Limerick City and County Council, 2014).
- 12 Pamela Sharpe and Stanley D. Chapman, "Women's Employment and Industrial Organisation: Commercial Lace Embroidery in Early Nineteenth-Century Ireland and England," *Women's History Review* 5, no. 3 (1996): 325–51.
- 13 John Francis Maguire, *The Industrial Movement in Ireland as Illustrated by the National Exhibition of 1852* (Cork: John O'Brien, 1853), 188.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 189–90.
- 15 *Qtd.* in Sharpe and Chapman, "Women's Employment," 337.
- 16 Potter, *Amazing Lace*, 84.
- 17 Sharpe and Chapman, "Women's Employment," 334–35.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 340.
- 19 Maguire, *Industrial Movement*, 475.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 247–48.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 248.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 249.
- 23 *Breaking the Rule of Silence*, accessed Dec. 10, 2015, <http://www.magdalenelaundrylimerick.com/home.html>.
- 24 Elaine Freedgood, "Fine Fingers': Victorian Handmade Lace and Utopian Consumption," *Victorian Studies* 45, no. 4 (Summer 2003): 625–47.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 634.
- 26 Potter, *Amazing Lace*, 58, 92.
- 27 Maguire, *Industrial Movement*, 205–6.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 206–7.
- 29 Potter, *Amazing Lace*, 104.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 134.
- 31 Rev. William Fitzmaurice and Kevin Hannan, eds., *In the Shadow of the Spire: A Profile of St. John's Parish* (Limerick: St. John's Parish, 1991), 29.
- 32 *Irish Times* (Aug. 27, 1897): 8.

33 For example, *Irish Times* (Aug. 18, 1897): 4.

34 *Irish Times* (Aug. 26, 1897): 10.

35 *Irish Times* (Feb. 18, 1893): 7.

EXQUISITE LACE  
AND DIRTY  
LINEN: THE  
TAMING OF  
GIRL POWER



# PLATES



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1. James McFall  
*Harp*, c. 1890  
Painted and carved wood, modern string, 152.4 x 150 x 46.7 cm  
Collection of Rosemary Caine



2. Henry O'Neill (1798–1880)

*The Royal Cross of Cong*, c. 1850

Watercolor on paper with bog oak frame, 101.6 x 91.5 x 3.2 cm  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, I.A.D.1989.2



3. *Casket in the shape of a shrine, 1907*  
Wood, 27.9 x 31.8 x 16.5 cm  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DF:2009.10



4. "East Side of the S.E. Cross, Monasterboice," from Henry O'Neill, *Illustrations of the Most Interesting of the Sculptured Crosses of Ancient Ireland* (London: Henry O'Neill, 1857), pl. 10.  
John J. Burns Library, Boston College



5. "The Tara Brooch" (back view), from Henry O'Neill, *The Fine Arts and Civilization of Ancient Ireland* (London: Smith, Elder; Dublin: G. Herbert, 1863), 53.  
John J. Burns Library, Boston College



6. Waterhouse and Company

*Replica Tara Brooch, c. 1850*

Silver gilt and Irish riverbed pearls in leather and velvet box, 7 x 10 cm (brooch)

National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DT:1994.67



7. Waterhouse and Company

*Replica Tara Brooch with chain, late 19<sup>th</sup> century*

Parcel gilt, 6.4 x 10.4 cm (pin on brooch and attachment), 50.8 cm (chain)

National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.T783



8. West and Son  
*Replica Cavan Brooch*, c. 1850  
Parcel gilt (silver) and coral beads, 6.8 x 9.3 cm  
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection  
Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.T542



9. West and Son  
*Replica Cavan Brooch*, 1849–51 or later  
Parcel gilt, pearls, and paste, 6.8 x 10.7 cm  
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection  
Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.T148



10. West and Son  
*Ring brooch with dragon*, 1871  
Parcel gilt, 7.6 x 6.3 cm  
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.T483



11. *Bracelet*, 1850–70  
 Bog oak and gold, 3.5 x 19.5 cm  
 National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.T3317



12. *Brooch depicting Erin with harp*, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century  
 Bog oak and silver gilt, 6.5 x 6.5 cm  
 National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection  
 Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.T1080



13. *Replica Tara Brooch*, mid–late 19<sup>th</sup> century  
 Bog oak and parcel gilt, 6.6 x 9.5 cm  
 National Museums Northern Ireland,  
 Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast,  
 BELUM.T2097



14. *Ardagh Chalice: Historic Studies*, n.d.  
Watercolor on paper, 32.5 x 46 cm  
Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, 2895



15. Edmond Johnson Ltd.  
*Replica trial pieces of sections of the Ardagh Chalice, c. 1868*  
Electrotyped metal, 7.1 (diam.) cm (left), 8.6 x 1.9 cm (center), 8.7 x 1.4 cm (right)  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, I.A.D.1983.65.35



16. Hopkins and Hopkins  
*Replica Ardagh Buckle, 1912*  
Silver, 5.3 x 10.2 cm  
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.T345



17. Henry Flavelle  
*Oval box with Celtic interlace designs, 1853*  
Silver, 5.4 x 17 x 3 cm  
Private collection



18. Edmond Johnson Ltd.  
*Teapot, sugar bowl, and milk jug with Celtic interlacing, c. 1890*  
Silver, 29 x 18 cm (teapot), 21 x 11.5 cm (bowl), 17 x 9 cm (jug)  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DM:2000.2-4



19. Cassandra Annie Walker (1875–1936, designer), Della Robbia Pottery (maker)  
*Two-handled vase*, c. 1904  
Glazed earthenware, 39 x 17.8 (diam.) cm  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DC:1980.25



20. Charles Russell (1852–1910, designer), Frederick Vodrey (1845–1897, maker)  
*Jardinière*, 1880s  
Glazed earthenware, 22.5 x 21.2 (diam.) cm  
Private collection



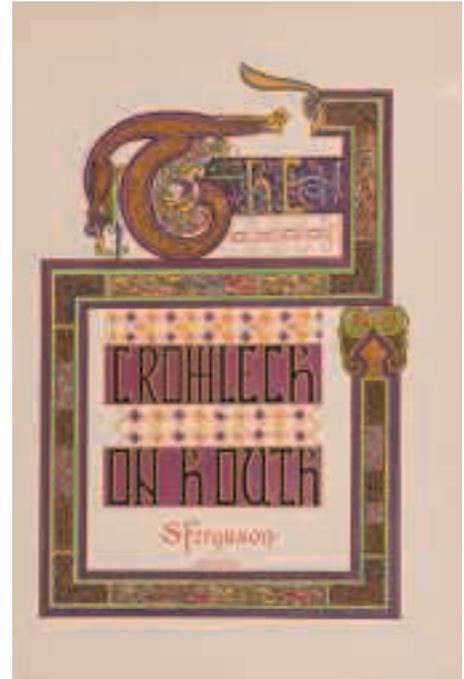
21. George Petrie (1790–1866)  
*Gougane Barra, Co. Cork*, 1835  
Print, 21.6 x 25.4 cm  
Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, 2727



22. George Petrie (1790–1866)  
*Glendalough, Co. Wicklow*, n.d.  
Sepia ink on paper, 10 x 15 cm  
Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, 2828



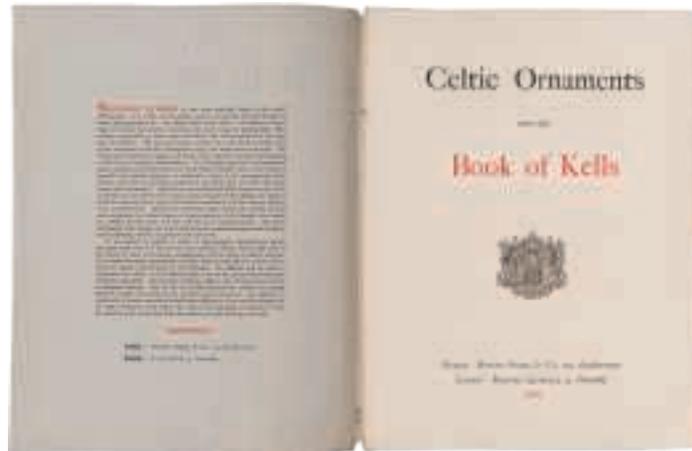
23. George Petrie, *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland, Anterior to the Anglo-Norman Invasion* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1845), 294–95.  
John J. Burns Library, Boston College



24. Margaret Stokes, title page to Samuel Ferguson, *The Cromlech on Howth*, ed. George Petrie (London: Day & Son, 1861).  
John J. Burns Library, Boston College



25. "Book of Kells. Pl. 1," from John Obadiah Westwood, *Palaographia Sacra Pictoria...* (London: W. Smith, 1843–45).  
John J. Burns Library, Boston College



26. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, *Celtic Ornaments from the Book of Kells*  
(Dublin: Hodges, Figgis; London: B. Quaritch, 1892).  
John J. Burns Library, Boston College



27. William A. Scott (1871–1921)  
*“Scott” Ciborium*, c. 1916–19  
Graphite, ink, and watercolor  
on paper, 43.2 x 30.8 cm  
Private collection



28. William A. Scott (1871–1921)  
*Dromore Monstrance*, c. 1916–19  
Graphite, ink, and watercolor  
on paper, 43.2 x 30.8 cm  
Private collection



29. William A. Scott (1871–1921)  
*Lough Derg Monstrance*, c. 1919  
Graphite, ink, and watercolor  
on paper, 43.2 x 30.8 cm  
Private collection



30. Edmond Johnson Ltd.  
*Processional cross, replica Cross of Cong (front and back), 1916*  
Silver, gilt, enamel, and semi-precious stones, 75 x 42.5 x 10.8 cm  
The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/15



31. William A. Scott (1871–1921, designer), Edmond Johnson Ltd. (silversmith)

*Monstrance*, 1916

Silver, gilt, and enamel, 99 x 36.5 x 11.5 cm

The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/27



32. William A. Scott (1871–1921, designer), Edmond Johnson Ltd. (silversmith)

*Benediction candlesticks*, 1916

Brass, copper, and silver plate, 72 x 44 x 18 cm (each)

The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/23–24



33. William Egan and Sons

*Ciborium and lid, 1916*

Silver, gilt, enamel, and semi-precious stones, 36 x 15 x 15 cm  
The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/2



34. William A. Scott (1871–1921, designer),  
Edmond Johnson Ltd. (silversmith)  
*Thurible*, 1916  
Silver, gilt, enamel, and copper,  
32 x 32.5 x 11 cm  
The Honan Chapel, University  
College Cork, HCC/29



35. William A. Scott (1871–1921, designer),  
Edmond Johnson Ltd. (silversmith)  
*Incense boat and stoup*, 1916  
Silver, gilt, and enamel, 18 x 12 cm (boat), 14 x 3.5 cm (stoup)  
The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/25



36. Edmond Johnson Ltd.

*Ewer with stand, 1916*

Silver, gilt, and enamel, 29 x 14 cm (ewer), 27 x 2.5 cm (stand)  
The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/14



37. Edmond Johnson Ltd.

*Candlestick, 1916*

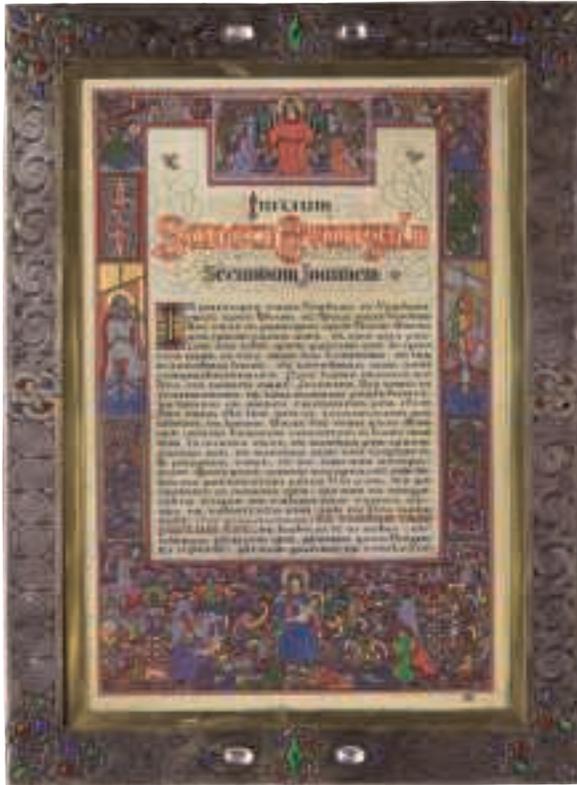
Silver, gilt, and enamel, 26 x 12.5 cm  
The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/12



38. William A. Scott (1871–1921, designer), Edmond Johnson Ltd. (silversmith)  
*Missal stand*, 1916  
Brass and enamel, 38 x 28 cm  
The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/26



39. Eleanor Kelly  
*Roman missal*, 1916  
Paper, ink, leather, and semi-precious stones, 35 x 25 x 2 cm  
The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/121



40–41. Joseph Tierney (calligrapher), Edmond Johnson Ltd. (silversmith)  
*Framed altar cards, 1916*

Silver, enameled panels, and rock crystal (frames), vellum, ink, watercolor and oil paints (cards), 40 x 29 x 17 cm (each)  
 The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/111–112



42. Joseph Tierney (calligrapher), Edmond Johnson Ltd. (silversmith)

*Framed altar card, 1916*

Silver, enamel, and rock crystal (frame), paper, ink, watercolor and oil paints (card), 54.5 x 62 x 7 cm

The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/114



43. Ethel Josephine Scally (1873–1915, designer), William Egan and Sons (maker)

*Cloth of gold chasuble, 1916*

Cloth of gold, silk lining, and acetate cloth (modern insertion), silk and metal embroidery thread, braid, 110 (center front) x 119 (center back) x 118 cm

The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/88



44. Katharine MacCormack (1892–1975, designer), Dun Emer Guild (maker)  
*Red and gold altar frontal, 1916*  
 Canvas, silk and metal embroidery thread, 94 x 304.8 cm  
 The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/81



45. Katharine MacCormack (1892–1975, designer), Dun Emer Guild (maker)  
*Black altar frontal, 1917*  
 Silk and wool poplin, silk embroidery thread, 100 x 306.4 cm  
 The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/40



46. Attr. to Ethel Josephine Scally (1873–1915, designer), William Egan and Sons (maker)

*Black chasuble, 1916*

Silk and wool poplin, silk and metal embroidery thread, 110 (center front) x 119 (center back) x 118 cm

The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/44



47. Dun Emer Guild

*Red and gold cushion, 1916*

Canvas, wool tapestry yarn, and gold-metal thread, 16.2 x 61 (diam.) cm  
The Honan Chapel, University College Cork, HCC/84



48. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Stained glass window design of St. Gobnait  
for Honan Hostel Chapel, 1914*  
Watercolor, graphite, and ink  
on paper, 73 x 23 cm  
Rakow Research Library, Corning  
Museum of Glass, 39821

49. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*St. Gobnait*, 1916  
Stained glass  
The Honan Chapel, University College Cork  
[not in exhibition]





50. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*St. Brendan*, 1916  
Stained glass  
The Honan Chapel, University College Cork  
[not in exhibition]



51. Youghal Art Metal Workers  
*Mirror frame, 1904*  
Repoussé copper, 152 (diam.) cm  
Abbey Theatre, Dublin



52. Youghal Art Metal Workers  
*Picture frame*, c. 1900  
Repoussé copper, 22.2 x 24.1 cm  
Private collection



53. Youghal Art Metal Workers  
*Buckles*, c. 1900  
Repoussé copper, 8.3 x 5.1 cm (top), 11.4 x 5.7 cm (bottom)  
Private collection



54. Fivemiletown Art Metal-Work  
*Hearth fan and holder*, c. 1890s  
Repoussé brass, 42.5 x 19.1 cm  
Private collection



55. John Williams (designer), Fivemiletown Art Metal-Work (maker)  
*Tray with design of peacocks and plants, 1890s*  
Repoussé brass, 66.1 x 45.7 x 2.5 cm  
Private collection



56. Fivemiletown Art Metal-Work  
*Two-handled cylindrical vessel, c. 1890s–early 1900s*  
Repoussé copper, 29.5 x 12.3 (diam.) cm  
Private collection



57. Sharman D. Neill  
*Three-handled loving cup, 1908*  
Hand-hammered silver, 31.8 x 18.5 x 18.5 cm  
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection  
Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.V107



58–59. Anne Bourke for Ahane Wood-Carving Class, County Limerick  
*Log carrier and coal scuttle*, 1890s  
Carved walnut and metal, 48 x 39 x 43 cm (carrier), 41 x 28.5 x 38 cm (scuttle)  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DF:2002.3 (a&b)



60. Cluna Studio, Dublin  
*Candlesticks*, c. 1925  
Stained wood and paint, 45.7 x 15.2 (diam.) cm (each)  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DF:1977.16 (A&B)



61. Clonkeen Wood-Carving Class, County Limerick  
*Letter box*, 1890s  
Carved oak, 20.3 x 40.6 x 17.8 cm  
Private collection



62. Irish Decorative Art Association, Belfast  
*Spinning stool with female figure and arms of the four provinces of Ireland, c. 1900*  
Wood with pokerwork decoration, 100.3 x 40.6 x 40.6 cm  
Private collection

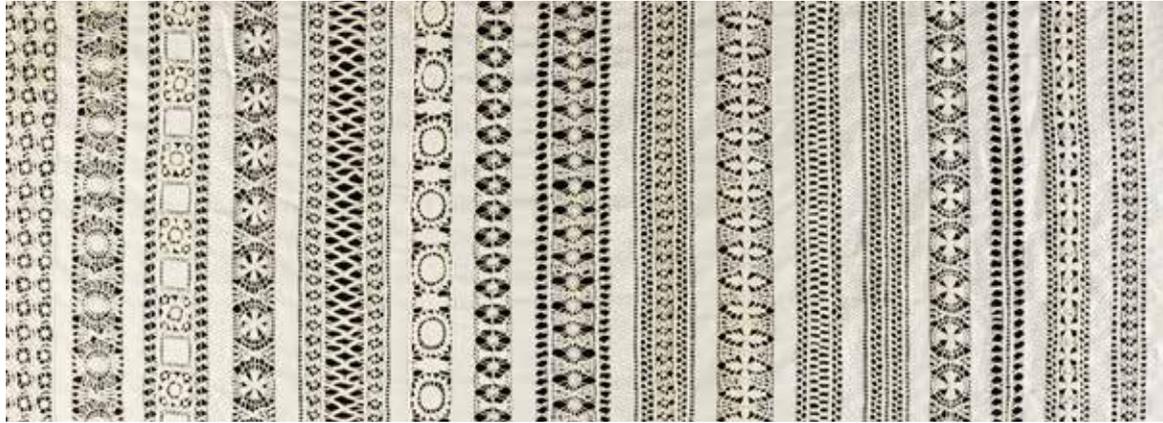


64. Charles F. A. Voysey (1857–1941, designer),  
Alexander Morton & Co. (maker)  
*“Donemana” rug*, 1901–08

Hand-knotted wool on woolen warp, 149.9 x 121.9 cm  
Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff

63. Mary Seton Watts (1849–1938, designer),  
Alexander Morton & Co. (maker)  
*“Pelican” Donegal rug*, c. 1899–1905

Hand-knotted wool on woolen warp, 393.7 x 91.4 cm  
Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff



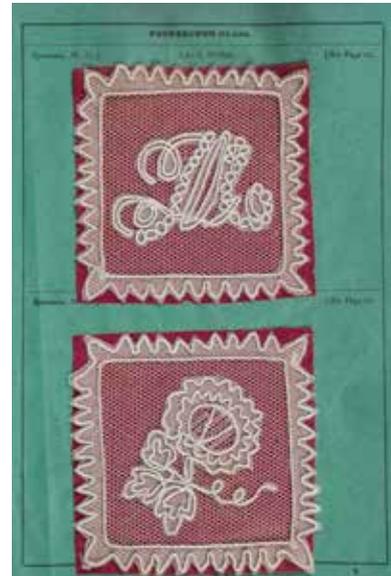
65. Webb & Co., Newtownards, County Down

*Embroidered sampler* (detail), 1900–10

Linen and cotton thread, 415 x 102 cm

National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra, HOYFM.91.1971

66. “Lace Work,” from *Simple Directions  
in Needle-Work and Cutting Out* (Dublin:  
Alex. Thom & Sons, 1861).  
John J. Burns Library, Boston College





67. *Dress*, c. 1911–12  
Crochet lace with embroidery, 162.6 x 74.9 cm  
Private collection



68. *Dress*, c. 1906  
Youghal crochet lace, 200.7 x 40.6 cm  
Private collection



69. Florence Vere O'Brien (1854–1936)  
*Fan cover*, 1898  
Limerick lace (on board), 18 x 30.5 cm  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DT:1898.196



70. *Carrickmacross handkerchief* (unfinished, showing cartoon), 1880–90  
Lace, ink on tracing paper, 36 x 33 cm  
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Folk  
and Transport Museum, Cultra, HOYFM.438.2000



71. *Collar*, late 1880s  
Needlepoint lace, 65 x 54 cm  
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster  
Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra, HOYFM.707.1994



72. Youghal Cooperative Lace Society  
*Collar*, 1906  
Needlepoint lace, 72 x 67 cm  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DT:1906.298



73. Hilda Grey (Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin)  
*Design for Carrickmacross Lace Fan Appliqué, 1911-12*  
 Ink on card, 37 x 54.5 cm  
 National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DT:2005.4.d



75. Hilda Grey (Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin)  
*Design for Limerick Lace Fan-Leaf, 1911-12*  
 Ink on card, 34 x 52.5 cm  
 National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DT:2005.4c



74. Hilda Grey (Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin)  
*Designs for Borders to be Worked in Flat Needle-point Lace, 1911-12*  
 Ink on card, 25.5 x 48 cm  
 National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DT:2005.4b



76. Hilda Grey (Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin)  
*Design for Carrickmacross Lace Handkerchief, 1911-12*  
 Ink on card, 57 x 41 cm  
 National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DT:2005.4j



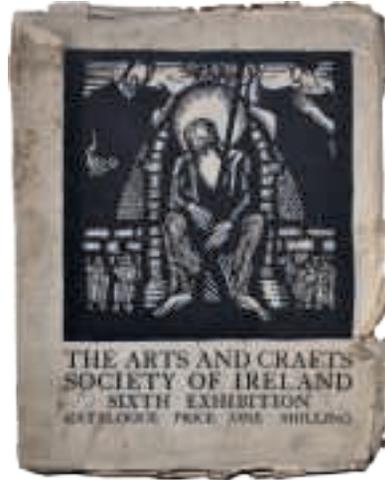
*77. Blouse, 1900–05*

Tape lace and linen, 56 x 45 cm

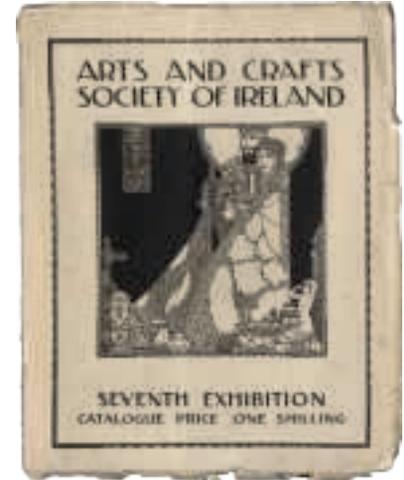
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra, HOYFM.3.1988



78. Harry Clarke, *Arts & Crafts [Fifth] Exhibition* (Dublin: Maunsel and Roberts, 1917), cover. Collection of Philip and Niamh Maddock [on display at John J. Burns Library, Boston College]



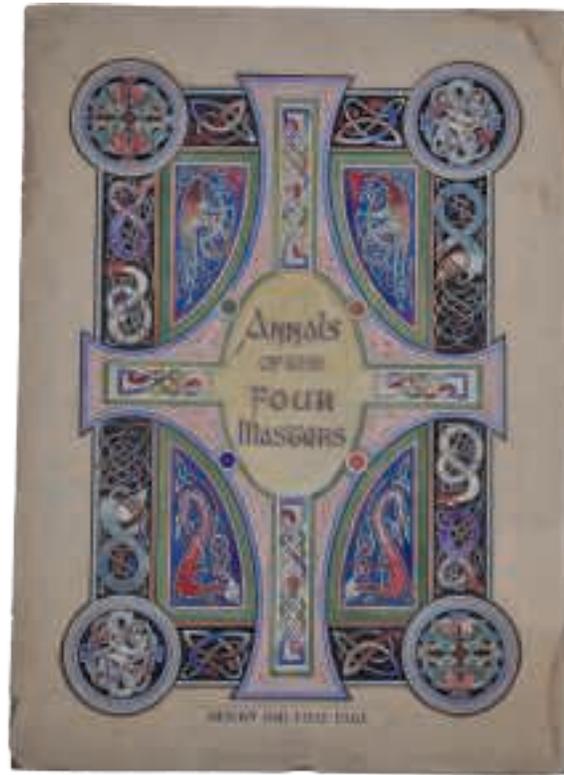
79. Wilhelmina Margaret Geddes, *The Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland: Sixth Exhibition* (Dublin: Maunsel and Roberts, 1921), cover. Private collection



80. Austin Molloy, *Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland: Seventh Exhibition* (Dublin: Maunsel and Roberts, 1925), cover. John J. Burns Library, Boston College



81. John Dennehy (School of Art, Cork)  
*Design for Panel: Celtic Ornament*, c. 1900–10  
 Watercolor on paper mounted on card, 75.5 x 54.6 cm  
 Private collection



82. Robert Lees (School of Art, Cork)  
*Annals of the Four Masters: Design for Title Page*, c. 1915  
 Watercolor on paper mounted on card, 75.6 x 54.7 cm  
 Private collection



83. William R. Sheehy  
*Set of Three Designs Based on  
 Flowering Plant, 1906*  
 Ink, watercolor, and gouache  
 on paper, 83 x 63 cm  
 Bolton Street/Dept. of Technical  
 Instruction Collection, National  
 Museum of Ireland, Dublin



84. Maeve O'Byrne  
*Design to Fill Rectangle: Style  
 Celtic. 9<sup>th</sup> Century, 1907*  
 Ink and watercolor on  
 paper, 83.5 x 63 cm  
 Bolton Street/Dept. of Technical  
 Instruction Collection, National  
 Museum of Ireland, Dublin



85. Joseph Dempsey  
*Specimen of Celtic Art: Fashioned  
 after Monogram Page in the  
 Book of Kells, c. 1900*  
 Illumination on paper, 70.2 x 53.7 cm  
 Private collection



86. James Archer (1871–1946)  
*Casket*, c. 1910  
Copper and enamel, 19.1 x 36.5 x 25.7 cm  
Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, 1469-DA



87. Dora Allen (1885–1981)  
*Excalibur*, 1909  
Enamel copper plaque and oak frame, 44 x 25 cm  
Private collection



88. Joseph M. Doran  
*Trinket box with Norse mythological scenes*, c. 1905  
Brass gilt and enamel, 12.7 x 14 (diam.) cm  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DM:1908.532



89. Agnes Callear (fl. 1922–26)  
*Purse with Celtic decoration*, c. 1922  
Tooled leather, 17.1 x 26 cm  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DT:1984.39



90. Phoebe Anna Traquair  
(1852–1936)  
Bookbinding for *Mrs.*  
*Browning's Sonnets*, 1897  
Tooled leather, 17 x 12.5 x 1.3 cm  
Private collection



91. Phoebe Anna Traquair (1852–1936)  
*The Finished Task, 1914 War, 1914–18*  
Painted enamel, 5 x 5.2 cm  
National Museums Northern  
Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum,  
Belfast, BELUM.T2133



92. Phoebe Anna Traquair (1852–1936)  
*Motherhood, 1906*  
Enamel over foil set in copper alloy  
frame, 17 x 14 cm (central enamel)  
Private collection



93. Phoebe Anna Traquair  
(1852–1936)  
*The Lovers*, 1902  
Gold, enamel, and pearls,  
7.3 x 4.4 cm  
Private collection



94. Phoebe Anna Traquair (1852–1936)  
*The Awakening*, 1903  
Gold and enamel, 5.4 x 5.1 cm  
Private collection



95. Phoebe Anna Traquair (1852–1936)  
*Eros*, 1906  
Gold and enamel, 5.4 x 3.5 cm  
Private collection



96. Fivemiletown Art Metal & Enamel Industry  
*Set of buttons in original box, c. 1907*  
Enamel, leather and velvet box, 20.3 x 5.1 cm (box, closed)  
Private collection



97. Belleek Pottery Works  
*Bowl with Celtic Revival motifs, 1911*  
Ceramic and paint, 11 x 23.5 (diam.) cm  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DC:1973.12



98. Eva McKee (1890–1955)  
*Bowl*, c. 1920  
Earthenware and enamel, 8.7 x 24.5 (diam.) cm  
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.V1540



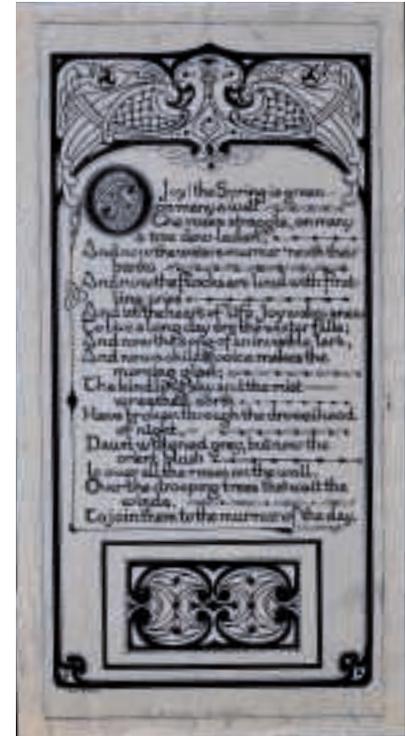
99. Eva McKee (1890–1955)  
*Panel (box lid) with peacocks, flowers, and Celtic interlace*, c. 1920–25  
Wood decorated with pokerwork and stained, 19.7 x 35.2 cm  
Private collection



100. Eva McKee (1890–1955)  
*Calendar* (from artist's portfolio), 1930s  
 Ink and watercolor on paper, 20.3 x 10.5 cm  
 Private collection



101. Eva McKee (1890–1955)  
 Illumination for James Stephens's "Dance" (from artist's portfolio), 1930s  
 Ink and watercolor on paper, 27.3 x 14 cm  
 Private collection



102. Eva McKee (1890–1955)  
 Illumination for Thomas MacDonagh's "The Golden Joy" (from artist's portfolio), 1920s  
 Ink on paper, 27.1 x 14.6 cm  
 Private collection



103. *Mary of Carrick*



104. *Thinkin' Long*

John Campbell (1883–1962)  
Illustrations for Ethna Carbery, *Songs*  
from *"The Four Winds of Eirinn,"* 1906  
Color prints, 13.3 x 13.7 cm (each)  
Private collection



105. *The Heathery Hill*



106. *The Green Woods of Truagh*

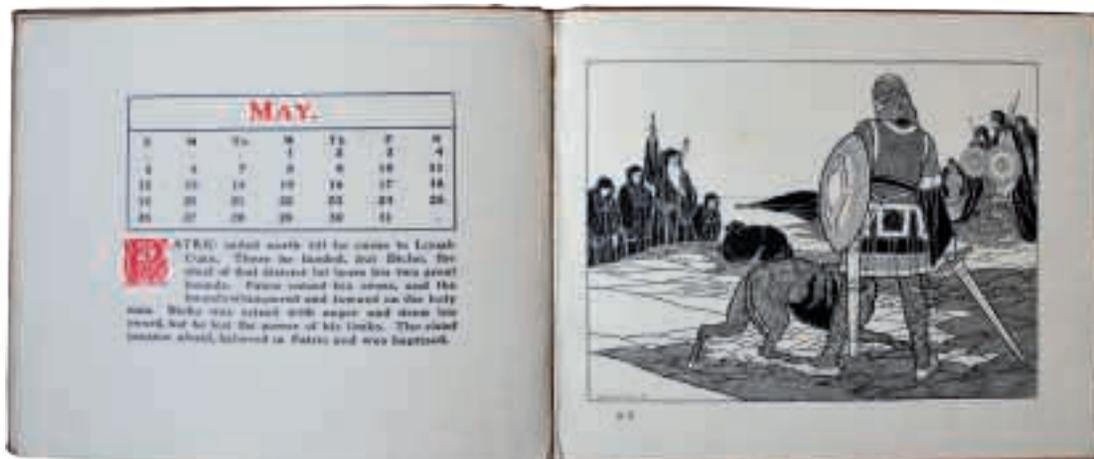


107. *A Beannacht Leat*



108. *Niamb*

John Campbell (1883–1962)  
Illustrations for Ethna Carbery, *Songs*  
from “*The Four Winds of Eirinn*,” 1906  
Color prints, 13.3 x 13.7 cm (each)  
Private collection



109. John Campbell, *Calendar of the Saints: Patric* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1906).  
Private collection



110. Sophia Rosamond Praeger (1867–1954)  
*A Wind from the East*, c. 1900  
Plaster, 41.4 x 27.3 cm  
Private collection



111. Mervyn Lawrence (1868–c. 1938) for the Irish Art Companions  
*Erina*, c. 1904  
Bronzed plaster cast, 74 x 50.5 x 27.8 cm  
Private collection



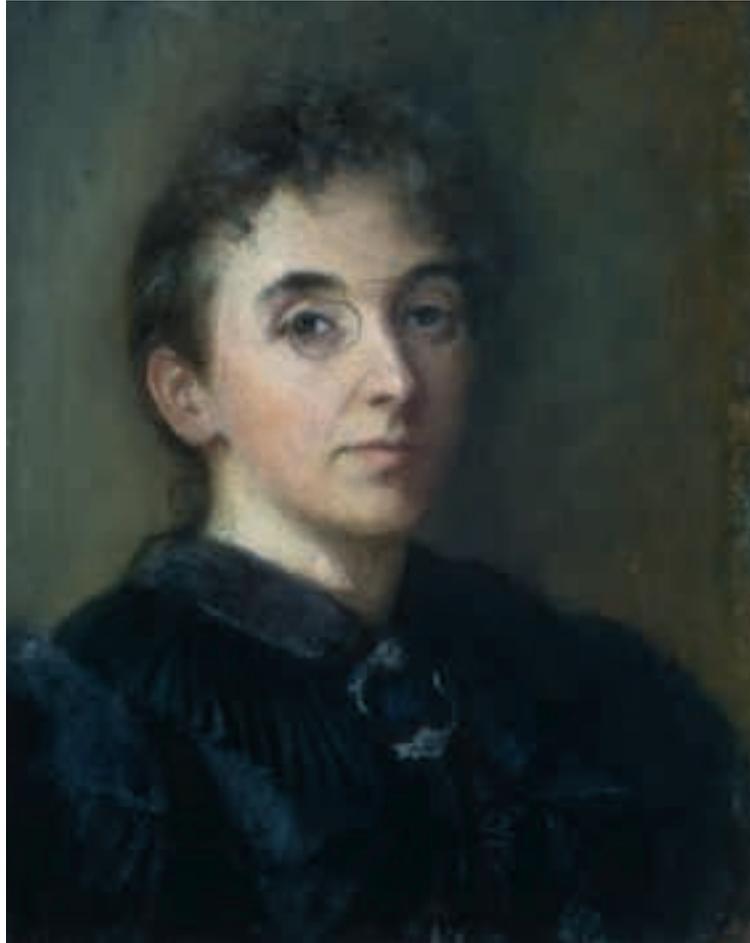
112. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*The Silver Apples of the Moon, the Golden Apples of the Sun*, 1913  
Ink on paper, 26.7 x 17.8 cm  
Private collection



113. Susan Mary Yeats (1866–1949) and Brigid O'Brien  
*The Proud and Careless Notes Live On but Bless Our Hands That Ebb Away*, 1929–32  
Embroidered silk, 36.8 x 29.2 cm  
John J. Burns Library, Boston College



114. Susan Mary Yeats (1866–1949)  
*The Meadow*, c. 1904  
Embroidered silk on Irish silk poplin, 23 x 36.5 cm  
Private collection



115. Evelyn Gleeson (1855–1944)  
*Self-Portrait*, early 1890s  
Pastel on paper, 73.6 x 63.5 cm  
Private collection



116. Katharine MacCormack (1892–1975)  
*Girls at Dun Emer*, before 1908  
Watercolor on paper, 60.1 x 45.7 cm  
Private collection



117. Eileen F. O'Connor  
*Sitting Room at Dun Emer*, 1904–05  
Watercolor on paper, 22.9 x 30.5 cm  
Private collection



118. Jack Butler Yeats (1871–1957)  
*Portrait of Katharine MacCormack*, 1902  
Graphite on paper, 26.6 x 31.2 cm  
Private collection



119. Dun Emer Guild  
*Handloom*, n.d.  
Wood and metal, 53.3 x 68.6 x 14 cm  
Private collection



120. Evelyn Gleeson (1855–1944, designer), Dun Emer Guild (maker)  
*Hand-knotted rug*, c. 1913  
Hand-knotted wool on woolen pile, jute binding on jute warp, 175.3 x 121.9 cm  
Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff



121. Jack Butler Yeats (1871–1957, designer), Dun Emer Guild (maker)  
*Sodality banner depicting Naomh Iarflaith (St. Jarlath), 1904*  
 Linen, silk, and wool, 84.8 x 50.5 cm  
 St. Brendan's Cathedral/Clonfert  
 Diocesan Museum, Loughrea



122. Jack Butler Yeats (1871–1957, designer), Dun Emer Guild (maker)  
*Sodality banner depicting Naomh Colm Cille (St. Columcille), 1904*  
 Linen, silk, and wool, 80.1 x 48.9 cm  
 St. Brendan's Cathedral/Clonfert  
 Diocesan Museum, Loughrea



123. Æ (George William Russell) (1867–1935, designer), Dun Emer Guild (maker)  
*Sodality banner depicting St. Patrick*, 1904  
 Linen, silk, and wool, 107 x 65.7 cm  
 St. Brendan's Cathedral/Clonfert  
 Diocesan Museum, Loughrea



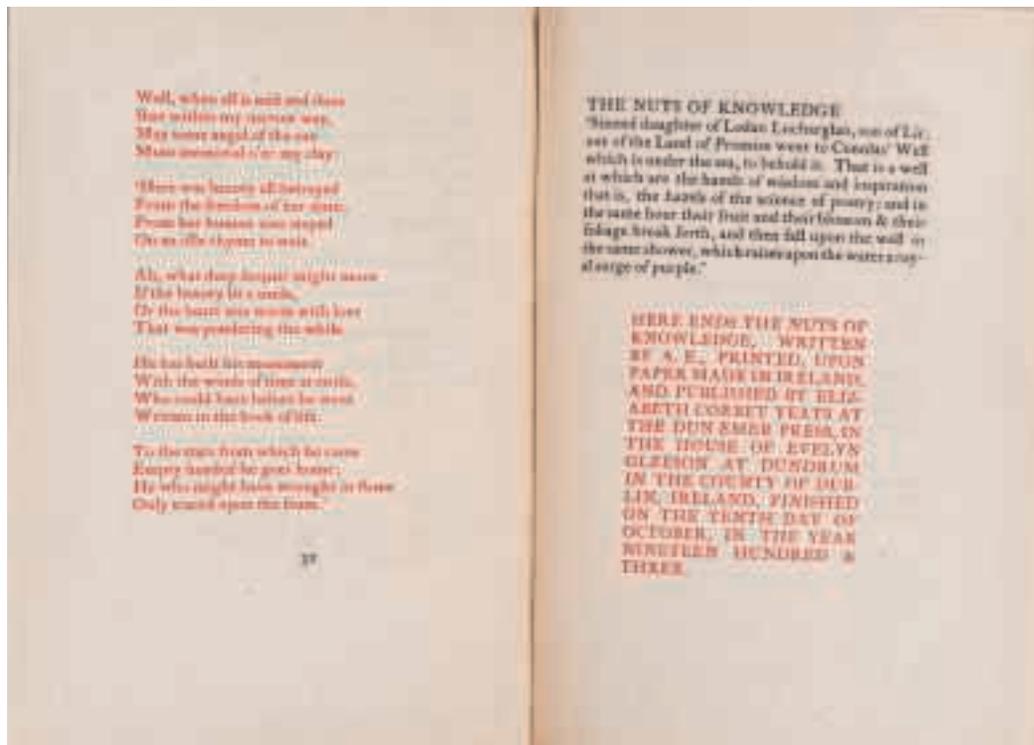
124. Mary Cottenham Yeats (1867–1947, designer), Dun Emer Guild (maker)  
*Sodality banner depicting Máire Gan Smál (Mary Immaculate)*, 1904  
 Linen, silk, and wool, 82.6 x 47.3 cm  
 St. Brendan's Cathedral/Clonfert  
 Diocesan Museum, Loughrea



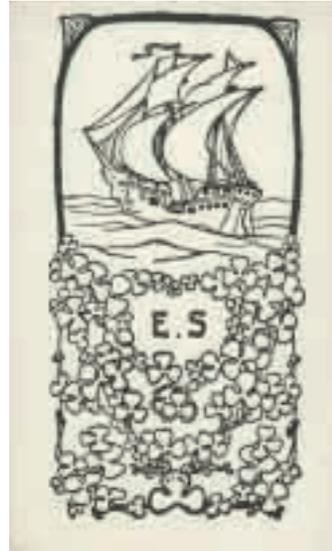
125. Ethel Mary Rhind (c. 1878–1952, designer), Dun Emer Guild (maker)  
*Smuainteach (Reverie)*, c. 1912–13  
Silk and woolen threads on woolen warp, 188 x 110.5 cm  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DT:1926.117



126. Dun Emer Guild  
*Danish ship*, c. 1912  
Silk and woolen threads on woolen warp, 79 x 68 cm  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DT:L.1322.2



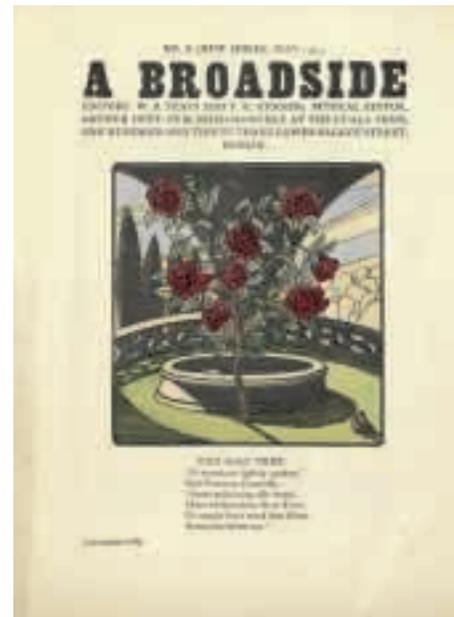
127. Æ (George William Russell), *The Nuts of Knowledge: Lyrical Poems  
Old and New* (Dundrum: Dun Emer, 1903), 32–33.  
John J. Burns Library, Boston College



128. Elizabeth Corbet Yeats (1868–1940)  
*Bookplate for E. S.*, n.d.  
 Print on paper, 11.1 x 6 cm  
 John J. Burns Library, Boston College,  
 Cuala Press Printed Materials



129. Jack Butler Yeats (1871–1957), Dun Emer Press  
*Bookplate for O'Duffy*, 1904  
 Print on paper, 7.9 x 9.5 cm  
 John J. Burns Library,  
 Boston College, Cuala  
 Press Printed Materials



130. Harry Kernoff (1900–74), Cuala Press  
 Illustration for W. B. Yeats's "The Rose  
 Tree," from *A Broadside*, May 1935  
 Print on paper, 29 x 21.5 cm  
 John J. Burns Library, Boston College



131. *Presentation casket for an address to Charles Stewart Parnell, 1882*  
Bog oak and silver, 33.7 x 48.3 x 33 cm  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DF:1930.49



132. Agnes Dunlop for the Irish Decorative Art Association, Belfast  
*Box with arms of the four provinces of Ireland, Celtic motifs, and Richard Robert Madden quote, 1904*  
Wood with pokerwork decoration, 22.5 x 28 x 8.5 cm  
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, HOYFM.DB125.6.4



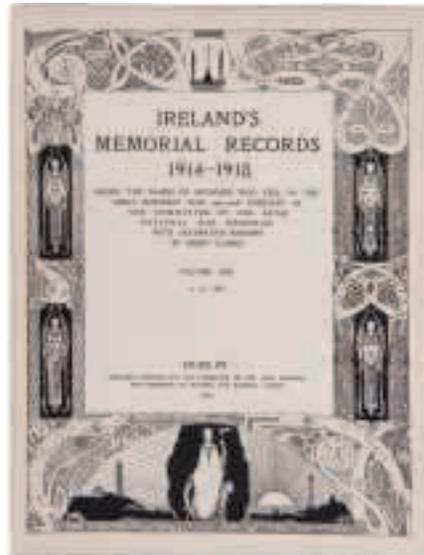
133. J. W. Carey and Richard Thomson (illuminators), W. & G. Baird (binders)  
*Illuminated Address to Lord Carson of Duncairn* (title page and Ulster Unionist Headquarters page), 1921–24  
 Ink and watercolor on paper and leather binding, 43.6 x 36 x 7.2 cm (closed)  
 National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.P8.1982



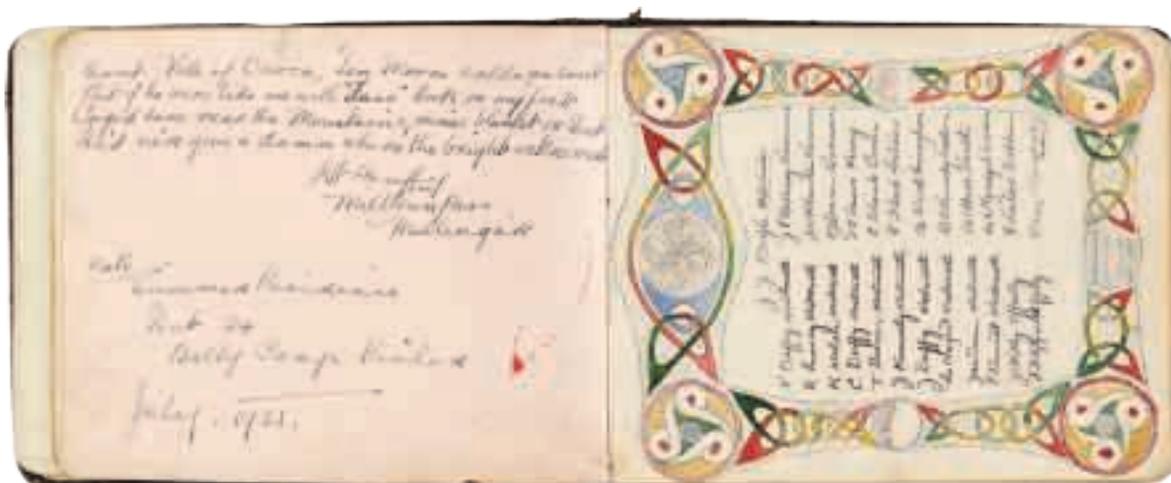
134. John Vinycomb (illuminator), W. & G. Baird (binders)  
*Illuminated Address to Lieutenant General Sir George Stuart White* (cover and title page), 1900  
Illumination on vellum and tooled gilded leather binding, 30.5 x 45 x 2.5 cm (closed)  
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.W2014.133



135. Art O'Murhaghan (1872–1954)  
*Éire* page, part of the unpublished *Leabhar na hAiséirghe* (*Book of the Resurrection*), 1922  
Lithographic print, 33 x 28 cm  
National Library of Ireland, Dublin, PD 4550 TC



136. Harry Clarke, *Ireland's Memorial Records, 1914-1918*, vol. 1 (Dublin: Maunsel and Roberts, 1923), title page and 64-65.  
John J. Burns Library, Boston College



137. P. S. O'Ceannáin or Padraic O'Conchubhair  
*Autograph book from Ballykinlar Internment Camp, Co. Down, 1921, Hut 24, Camp 2, 1921*  
Ink on paper and leather binding, 13.7 x 16.5 cm (closed)  
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, HE:EW.Temp.185



138. Mia Cranwill (1880–1972)  
*Senate casket*, 1924  
 Copper, silver, gold, enamel (casket), and  
 wood (base), 19 x 30 x 13 cm (casket)  
 Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, RIA/ART/1936/01



139. *Senate roll*, title inscribed by  
 George Atkinson (1880–1941), 1924  
 Ink on vellum, 55 x 21 cm  
 Royal Irish Academy, Dublin,  
 RIA/ART/1936/02



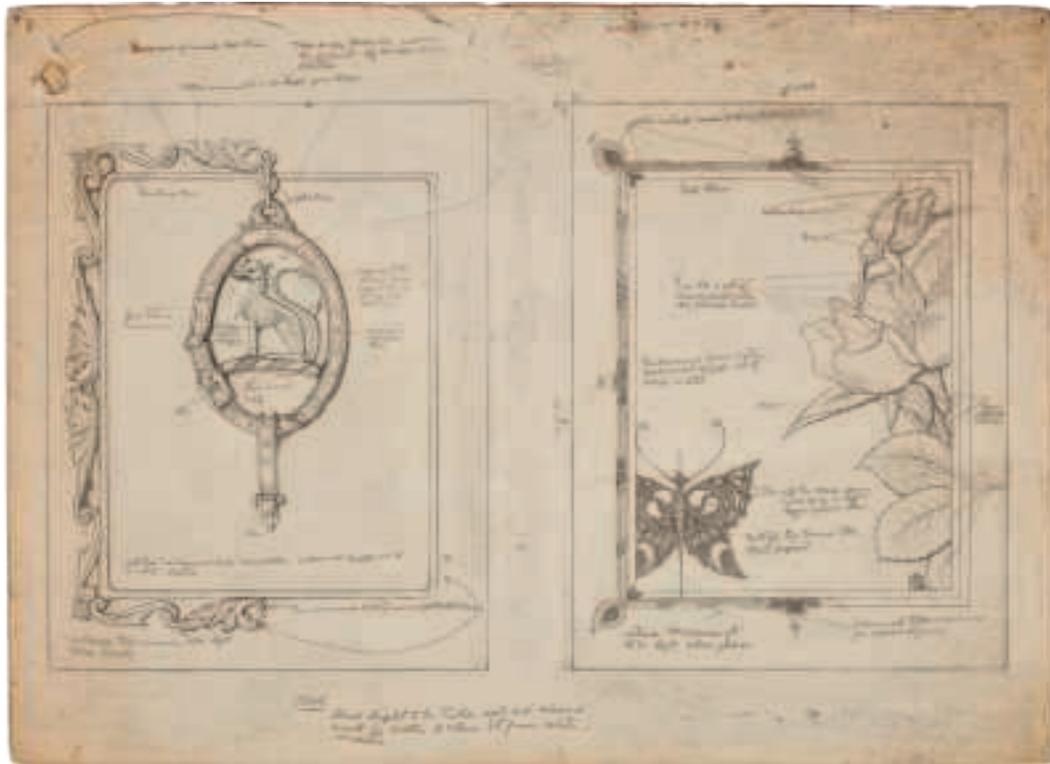
140. Constance Markievicz (1868–1927)  
*Tray*, early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Carved mahogany, 87 x 64 x 2 cm  
Royal College of Physicians of Ireland Heritage Centre, Dublin



141. *Sample napkin* (designed for Irish Industrial Exhibition), 1911  
Linen damask, 78 x 68 cm  
National Museums Northern Ireland,  
Collection Ulster Folk and Transport  
Museum, Cultra, HOYFM.2012.308



142. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Sefton Fabric Company handkerchief*, 1919  
Dyed linen with machine stitching, 29.4 x 27.6 cm  
National Library of Ireland, Dublin, PD 4245 TX 31



143. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Designs for a lantern*, c. 1910–31  
Graphite on board with facing paper, 26.5 x 36.8 cm  
National Library of Ireland, Dublin, PD 4245 TX 21



144. Seán Keating (1889–1977)  
*Thinking Out Gobnait*, 1917  
Oil on canvas, 73.7 x 73.7 cm  
Private collection



145. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Self-Portrait as a Drunken Saint*, c. 1909–31  
Ink and graphite on paper, 23.2 x 14.7 cm  
National Library of Ireland,  
Dublin, PD 4245 TX 38



146. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*The Fall of the House of Usher*, 1923  
Graphite and watercolor on paper, 40 x 29.8 cm  
Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, 105-P



147. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Ligeia*, 1918  
Ink on paper on board, 28 x 21.6 cm  
Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, 112-P



148. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*The Pit and the Pendulum*, 1923  
Ink on paper on board, 27 x 20.3 cm  
Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, 108-P



149. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Ophelia*, 1925  
Ink on parchment, 13.3 x 22 cm  
National Library of Ireland, Dublin, PD 4245 TX 20



150. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Galleon*, 1918  
Ink on paper, 11.6 x 14.4 cm  
National Library of Ireland, Dublin, PD 4245 TX 39



151. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Harlequin*, c. 1910–31  
Ink, watercolor, and graphite on board  
with facing paper, 29.7 x 23.5 cm  
National Library of Ireland,  
Dublin, PD 4245 TX 19



152. Harry Clarke, "Doctors Are Recommending It," from Geoffrey C. Warren,  
*Elixir of Life* (Dublin: John Jameson and Son, 1925), 16.  
 John J. Burns Library, Boston College



153. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*John Jamesons: A Short History of a Famous House* (dummy copy), 1924  
 Graphite and ink on paper, stitched with thread, 19.7 x 13 cm (closed)  
 National Library of Ireland, Dublin, PD 4245 TX 35



154. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Faust* (dummy copy), c. 1925  
Ink and watercolor on paper, board covers, 28.1 x 22.1 (closed)  
National Library of Ireland, Dublin, PD 4245 TX 37



155. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Tailpiece for Faust*, c. 1925  
Ink over graphite on board, 14.2 x 15.1 cm  
National Library of Ireland, Dublin, PD 4245 TX 17



156. Harry Clarke, "Ay! Roll the Devil Eyes Furiously Round in Thy Head!," from *Faust by Goethe* (London: Harrap, 1925), 242.  
John J. Burns Library,  
Boston College



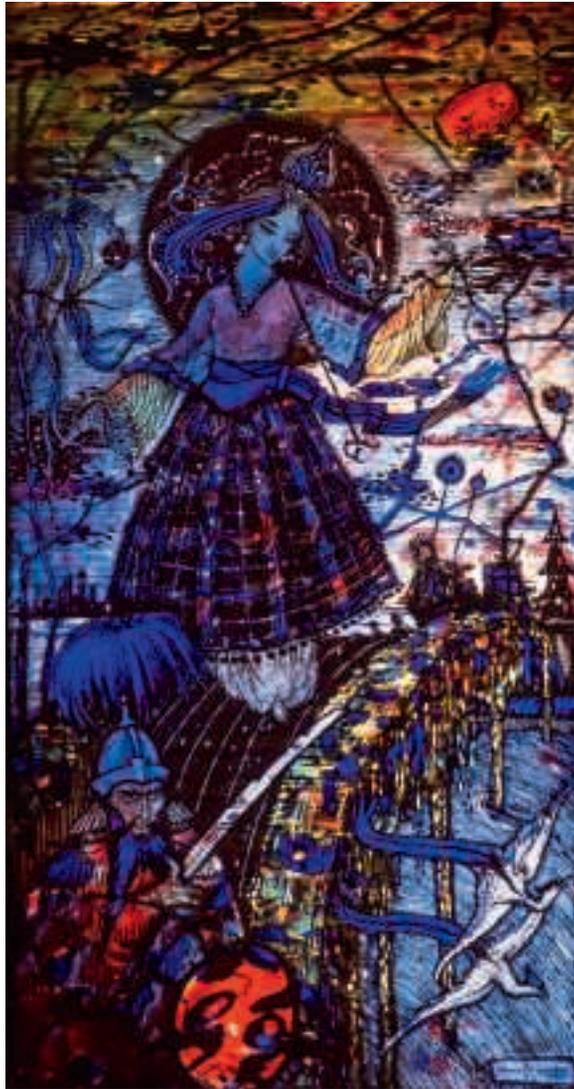
157. Harry Clarke, "They Swarmed Upon Me in Ever Accumulating Heaps," from *Tales of Mystery and Imagination by Edgar Allan Poe* (London: Harrap, 1919), 260.  
John J. Burns Library, Boston College



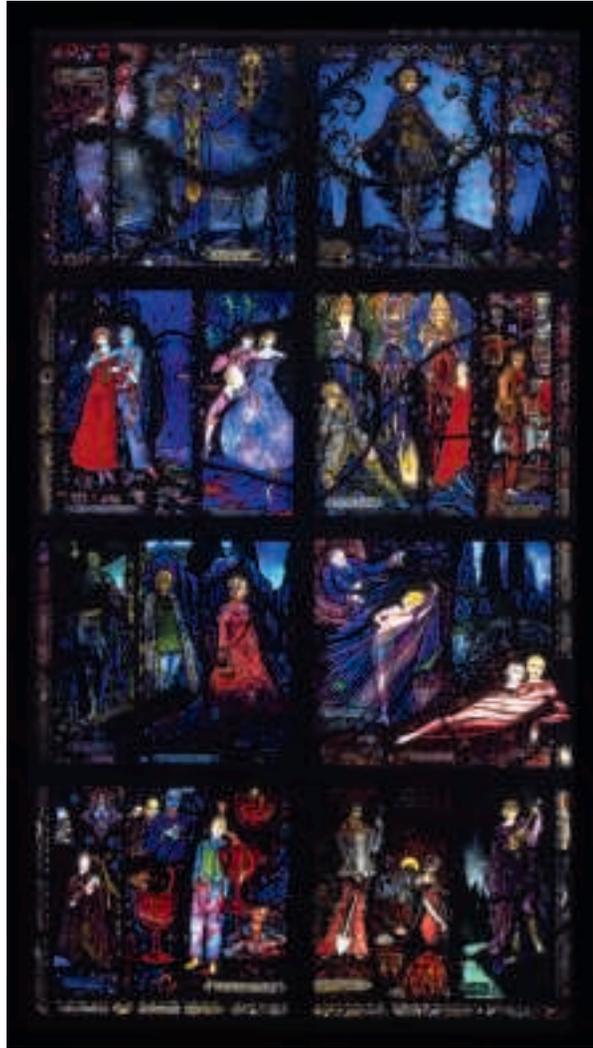
158. Harry Clarke, "The Wild Swans," from *Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen* (New York: Brentano's, 1916), 227.  
John J. Burns Library,  
Boston College



159. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*The Baptism of St. Patrick*, 1912  
Stained glass, 81.3 x 105.4 x 5.1 cm  
National College of Art and Design, Dublin



160. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Bluebeard's Last Wife*, 1921  
Stained glass, 28.9 x 15.9 cm  
Private collection



161. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)

*Geneva Window*, commissioned 1926, completed 1930 (never installed)

Stained glass, 181.6 x 101.6 cm

The Wolfsonian–Florida International University, Miami Beach, Mitchell Wolfson Jr. Collection, TD1988.34.1  
[not in exhibition]



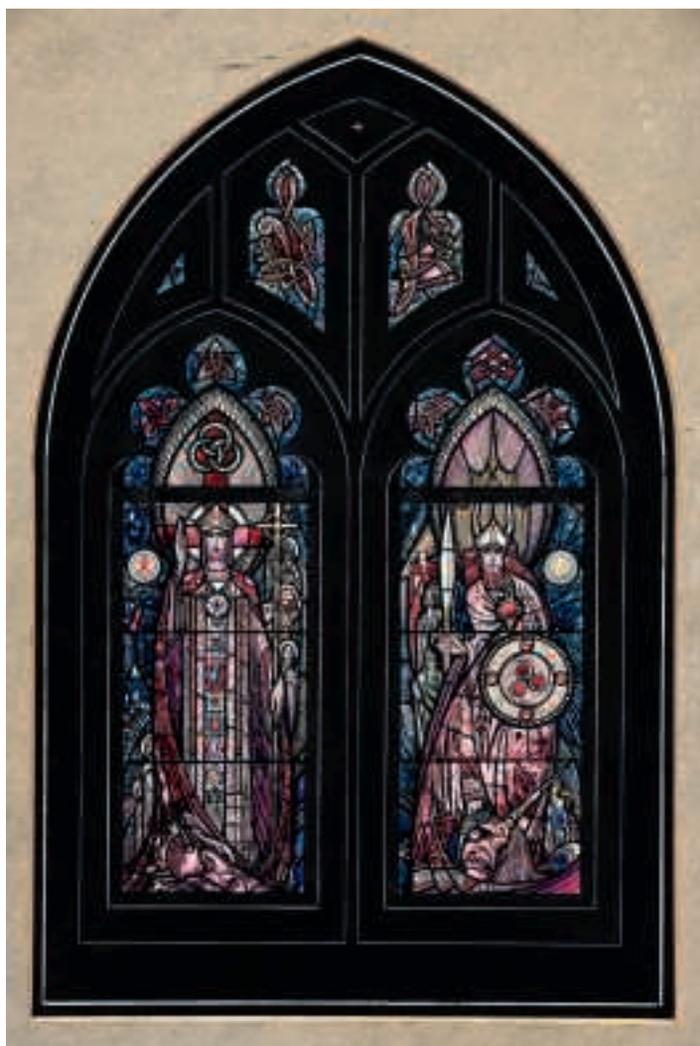
162. Ethel Mary Rhind (c. 1878–1952)  
*The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine*, 1920s  
Stained glass, 46.4 x 49.5 cm  
Boston College Libraries, donated in memory of Mary J. Donnelly



163. Wilhelmina Margaret Geddes (1887–1955)  
*The Fate of the Children of Lir*, 1930  
Stained glass in iron frame, 134.5 x 49.5 cm  
National Museums Northern Ireland, Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast, BELUM.U2120



164. Harry Clarke (1889–1931)  
*Scheme A: Martha, Christ in the House of Martha, Mary* (top) and *Scheme C* (bottom), c. 1909–21  
Graphite on board, 27.5 x 26.7 cm (each)  
National Library of Ireland, Dublin, PD 4245 TX 12



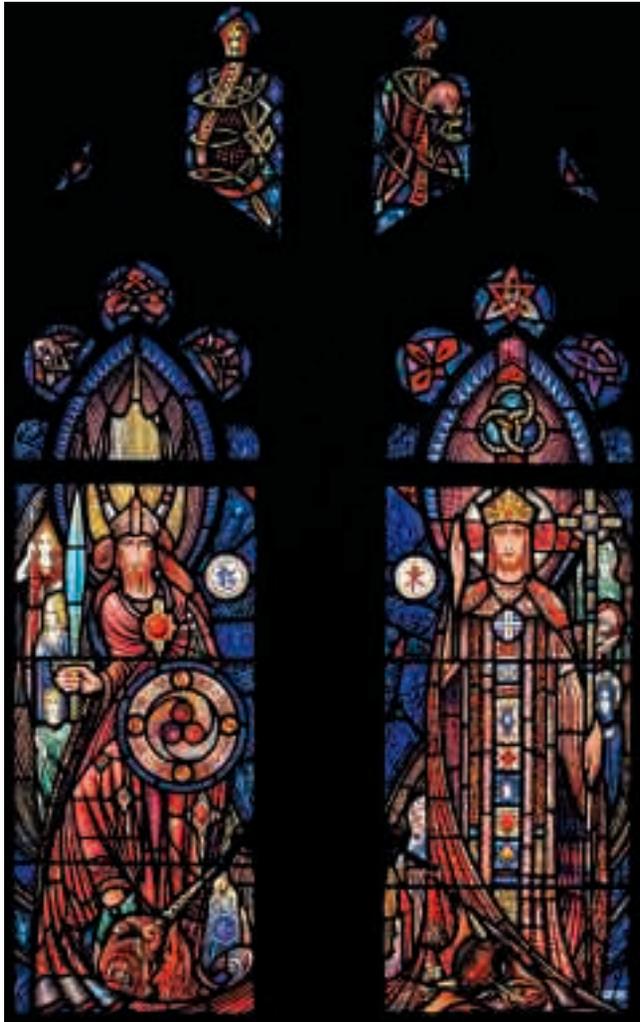
165. Richard King (1907–74)  
*Design for Lugh Triumphant over Balor and Christ Triumphant over the Devil*, before 1951  
Watercolor and ink on paper, 49.5 x 33 cm  
Collection of Kenneth and Anne King



166. Richard King (1907–74)  
*Cartoon of Lugh Triumphant over Balor*, before 1951  
 Watercolor and ink on paper, 156.8 x 52.1 cm  
 Collection of Kenneth and Anne King



167. Richard King (1907–74)  
*Cartoon of the Monk Scribe*, before 1951  
 Watercolor and ink on paper, 135.9 x 33 cm  
 Collection of Kenneth and Anne King



168. Richard King (1907–74)  
*Lugh Triumphant over Balor and Christ*  
*Triumphant over the Devil*, 1951  
 Stained glass  
 Roche Room, Bapst Library, Boston College  
 [not in exhibition]



169. Richard King (1907–74)  
*Monk Scribe*, 1951  
 Stained glass  
 Roche Room, Bapst Library,  
 Boston College  
 [not in exhibition]



## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Nicola Gordon Bowe**, Associate Fellow, Faculty of Visual Culture, National College of Art and Design (NCAD) (NUI) Ireland; Visiting Professor, Research Institute, School of Art and Design, University of Ulster, Belfast; Hon. Research Fellow, University of Wales; Hon. Fellow, British Society of Master Glass Painters, founded the degree course in History of Design and the MA course in History of Design and the Applied Arts, NCAD. Publications include *Harry Clarke* (1979), *A Gazetteer of Irish Stained Glass* (1988), *Art and the National Dream* (1993), *The Arts and Crafts Movements in Dublin and Edinburgh* (1998) with Elizabeth Cumming, *Harry Clarke: The Life and Work* (4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2012); and *Wilhelmina Geddes: Life and Work* (2015).

**Janice Helland** is Professor of Art History at Queen's University, Canada. She has published widely in journals such as *Textile History*, *Costume*, *Journal of Design History*, *Journal of Modern Craft*, and most recently co-edited *Craft, Community and the Material Culture of Place and Politics, 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Century* (2014). She published *British and Irish Home Arts and Industries, 1880–1914: Marketing Craft, Making Fashion* (2007) and co-edited *Craft, Space and Interior Design, 1855–2005* (2008). Her research interests lie in the area of late nineteenth-century craft and design with a focus upon women, philanthropy, and “fair trade,” and most recently upon embroidered samplers and the material culture of childhood.

**Marguerite Helmers** is Rosebush Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh where she teaches courses in Irish and British literature and visual culture studies. Her recent publications include *Harry Clarke's War: Illustrations for Ireland's Memorial Records, 1914–1918* (2016), articles in *Éire-Ireland*, and the *Journal of War and Culture Studies*. Her current research is focused on the intersections between the

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**Vera Kreilkamp** teaches Irish Studies at Boston College and co-edits *Éire-Ireland: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Irish Studies*. She wrote *The Anglo-Irish Novel and the Big House* (1998) and contributed “Irish Art and History” to *The Palgrave Guide to Irish Studies* (2008). Since 1993 she has worked on six McMullen exhibitions of Irish art, editing and contributing to the catalogues, including *Rural Ireland: The Inside Story* (2012) and *Éire/Land* (2003). Her recent research and other publications focus on nineteenth-century Irish fiction.

**Andrew A. Kuhn** is a doctoral candidate in the English Department at Boston College. His research is in British and Irish modernism and print culture. His current project examines modernist literary institutions in the works of Yeats, Joyce, Gissing, and Woolf. He is the editor of *Dubliners Bookshelf* and author of articles on literary representations of the British postal service in Ireland, the print culture of rural nineteenth-century Ireland, and the poetry of Ciaran Carson.

**Paul Larmour** taught for many years at Queen's University Belfast where he was Reader in Architecture. He now works as an art historian and built heritage consultant. Since 1973 he has carried out extensive research on nineteenth- and twentieth-

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**Diana Larsen**, Assistant Director at the McMullen Museum, has held curatorial positions at the Victoria and Albert Museum, Cooper-Hewitt Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, and at Harvard's Fogg Museum. She has curated exhibitions of nineteenth-century decorative arts, English and American silver, as well as co-curated *Rural Ireland: The Inside Story* at the McMullen Museum. She has also taught exhibition planning and design at the University of Victoria, British Columbia.

**Nancy Netzer** is Professor of Art History at Boston College and Director of the McMullen Museum of Art. She has published books and articles and organized exhibitions in her area of expertise, manuscripts and works of art of the medieval period. Recent publications have focused on one of Ireland's most treasured manuscripts, the Book of Durrow, and the development of design and decoration of deluxe manuscripts in Ireland and Britain. She also writes on the history and display of collections and the historiography of early medieval art.

**Tomás Ó Carragáin** of the Archaeology Department, University College Cork, specializes in the archaeology of early medieval Ireland and its European context (c. CE 400–1200). His publications include *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland: Architecture, Ritual and Memory* (2010). He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy and a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

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**Kayla Rose** is Research Fellow in Design History at Bath Spa University, where she works on the AHRC and Design

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**Kelly Sullivan** is Assistant Professor/Faculty Fellow at New York University where she teaches literature in the Irish Studies program. Her recent publications include essays on the environmental writing of Tim Robinson, Irish poet Derek Mahon, and Irish visual artists Harry Clarke and Gerard Dillon. Her current book project, *Epistolary Modernism*, looks at the use of letters in fiction and poetry by British and Irish writers working in the first half of the twentieth century.

**Virginia Teehan** is Director of Cultural Projects at University College Cork. Under her directorship, the Hunt Museum in Limerick was named Irish Museum of the Year. Teehan curated several award-winning exhibitions there, including *Louis le Brocq: Allegory and Legend*, which received a silver commendation at the European Museum of the Year Awards in 2007. She initiated and led a major internationally based provenance research project disproving the Simon Wiesenthal Center's claims about the Nazi origins of the Hunt Collection. Teehan continues to work on provenance research and in 2015 served as project leader and commissioning editor for a documentary film on the life of mathematician George Boole, *The Genius of George Boole*.











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