



Continental stuccowork and English rococo carving at Russborough

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We came to a beautiful situation, where we found a noble new house, forming into perfection, the seat of J. Leeson, Esq; if we may judge of the picture by the outlines, we shall, when finished, see a compleat beauty. Artificers from most parts of Europe are employed in this great work.

— William Chetwood

A Tour Through Ireland in Several Entertaining Letters (Dublin, 1746)

WILLIAM CHETWOOD'S DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING OF RUSSBOROUGH, FIRST published in Dublin in 1746, is the earliest account of the erection of Joseph Leeson's mansion in county Wicklow. In the literature on Russborough, however, it is invariably stated that the earliest reference to the building dates from 1748. This error first occurred in the essay on Russborough in volume five of the *Georgian Society Records* (1913), where the 1748 London reprint of Chetwood's *Tour* is cited.¹

After inheriting his father's fortune in 1741 at the age of thirty, Joseph Leeson (c.1701-1783), created 1st Earl of Milltown in 1763, began to spend it in a spectacular fashion. An estate was acquired in county Wicklow and planted with over 21,000 trees by February of 1742.² The renowned architect Richard Castle (1690-1751) was commissioned to erect one of the most picturesque Palladian mansions in the country, stretched out like a necklace of glinting local granite and extending for 700 feet on the Wicklow highlands beyond the Pale. Leeson's nearest neighbour was William Stewart, 1st Earl of Blessington (1709-1769), whose mansion, built by Primate Boyle in 1672, boasted a chapel with an interior which, according to Chetwood, was 'finely stucco'd with basso relievos and ornamented with gold'.³ Unfortunately, Blessington's fine mansion and

1 – 'The St Peter's Stuccadore', detail of dining-room ceiling at Russborough (photo by RO'C)

chapel were later destroyed during the 1798 rebellion.

With the building of his house well under way, Leeson embarked on the Grand Tour, making two separate journeys in 1744-45 and 1750-51. Although the first of these tours ended with the unfortunate loss of much of his newly acquired property – £60,000 worth of goods were apparently lost to him during the capture of a merchant ship by the French navy – other items, such as the long-admired scagliola tabletop at Russborough, are a testament to the quality of luxury goods available to the British and Irish connoisseur (Plate 2).⁴ In a letter between Horace Mann and Horace Walpole, dated 1747, Mann notes that:

You bid me to get you [Walpole] two scagliola tables, but don't mention the size or any other particulars. The man who made yours is no longer in Florence. Here is a scholar of his, but vastly inferior to him, and so slow in working that he has been almost three years about a pair of tables for a Mr. Leson [sic], and required still six months more.⁵

A much sought-after commodity, scagliola tables, made of pulverised selenite, a substitute for marble, were a speciality of the monastery of Vallombrosa near Florence, where the Abbott Don Enrico Hugford (1695-1771) had developed and refined the technique of making scenic table tops. As Mann's letter to Walpole suggests, the Abbott Hugford was no longer in Florence in 1747, and the 'scholar' referred to is Don Pietro Belloni. Despite Hugford's reputation among Grand Tourists, the work of his pupil Belloni is, however, better known today, as a number of table tops bearing his signature are found in English and Irish collections.

During the same trip, Leeson ordered a parcel of pictures and frames from Dr James Tyrrell (fl.1737-69), an Irish physician and dealer living in Florence. Tyrrell, in a letter to Ralph Howard dated 26th January 1753, mentions sending Leeson a list of fourteen pictures to have copied, and urges him to have handsome frames made in Rome and neatly gilt, 'as I've done for a parcel of Pictures which I sent away last Saturday for Mr Leeson'.⁶ Is this a reference to the dozen or so *seicento* Florentine pictures which are such a remarkable feature of the Milltown collection?⁷

This article discusses the stuccowork, and sheds new light on the rococo carving at Russborough and the recently rediscovered carved support for the renowned Belloni scagliola tabletop (Plates 1, 2).

THE LAFRANCHINI AT RUSSBOROUGH

WHEN LEESON RETURNED TO IRELAND FROM HIS SECOND GRAND TOUR IN 1751, Russborough must have been nearing completion, as Bishop Pococke, in a letter dated 17th July 1753, mentions 'passing by Mr. Leeson's fine new built house and offices' on his tour of Leinster.⁸ The decoration of the interior was completed



2 – Pietro Belloni, scagliola table-top at Russborough, signed and dated 1750
(courtesy National Gallery of Ireland)

in stages and involved two different stuccodores and their troupes. The initial stage was finished, probably before Leeson embarked on his second Grand Tour in 1750, by one or both of the celebrated Lafranchini brothers, Paolo (1695-1770) and Filippo (1702-1779), who stuccoed the ceiling and niches of the entrance hall, the coved ceiling of the saloon, the flanking music room, and the present-day library (called the small dining room in the nineteenth century) on the north front.⁹

The compartment ceiling in the hall is obviously based on a design by Richard Castle, as a surviving drawing of a similar one by the architect for a bedroom in Leinster House (formerly Kildare House), built between 1745 and 1751, is now held in the Irish Architectural Archive.¹⁰ According to the earliest description of the hall and its contents by Edward Leeson, 6th Earl of Milltown (1835-1890) – an account overlooked in recent narratives – the five niches in the hall contained ‘two Grecian antique statues of heroes, and three casts from the antique of the Musical Faun and Mercury, from the Florentine Museum, and the Venus de Medici’.¹¹ With the publication of the recently discovered 1860s photograph of the front hall and the identification of the antique statues as Bacchus and Diana, plus the clearly visible plaster casts of Mercury and the *Venus de Medici* on either side of the door into the saloon, the identity of the statue in the pedimented niche (not visible in the photograph) is obviously the cast of the *Dancing* (or *Musical*) *Faun*, and not the antique statue of *Venus Genetrix* as recently suggested.¹²

After passing through the classical simplicity of the hall, the visitor entered the saloon which lies behind, filling the centre of the north front. The contrast must have appeared extraordinary, the saloon then being decorated with a richly ornate gilt rococo overmantel above a pedimented chimney piece of Siena and white marble, pier glasses

and scagliola tables, a dark San Domingo mahogany dado, and closely hung paintings on red textile hangings.¹³ Here, the Lafranchini stuccoed the coved ceiling with four pairs of putti, emblematic of the elements and the times of day, amid scrolling acanthus ornament, while the bed of the ceiling displays bandwork and acanthus motifs. The frieze is typical of the Lafranchini style of the 1740s, and may be compared with the saloon ceiling in Tyrone House on Marlborough Street, Dublin, built in 1740 for Marcus Beresford, Viscount Tyrone (1694-1763).¹⁴

To the left of the saloon is the music room, with its saucer dome of four diminishing circles with octagonal coffers, ending in a vortex in the centre created by two cornucopias; this is undoubtedly from another design by Castle.¹⁵ Flanking the music room, on the other side of the saloon, is the library (formerly the old dining room), with an ogee-patterned coffering decoration on the cross vault, reminiscent of an earlier ceiling by Castle at Hazelwood, county Sligo (built 1731).¹⁶ The rooms on the south front and the staircase hall still awaited decoration when the Lafranchini left, probably in the late 1740s, never to return.

THE ST PETER'S STUCCODORE

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE STUCCO DECORATION WAS CARRIED OUT BY THE 'ST PETER'S Stuccodore' and his troupe, probably after the return of Leeson from Italy in 1752. This anonymous foreign craftsman is known for his distinctive late-baroque-style stuccowork in the chancel of the newly built church of St Peter's in Drogheda, completed about 1752.¹⁷ His work at Russborough can be identified in the large drawing room to the left of the hall and the flanking dining room on the right (described as the library in the nineteenth-century inventories). The large drawing room has four large mural (formerly gilded) baroque cartouche frames in stucco, made to receive four oval seascapes which Leeson had commissioned from the French artist Claude Joseph Vernet (1714-1789) in 1748. A fifth, smaller oval frame between the windows, surmounted by a bird, is now empty but probably contained a looking glass. Above a deep cornice with pulvinated frieze and bay leaf decoration is a coved ceiling with vigorous pulsating acanthus scrolling, very different to the relaxed rhythm of the Lafranchini work in the saloon. In the corners are urns with projecting garlands (similar work is found in certain German interiors).¹⁸

The large drawing room leads through a jib door to the tapestry room (called the small drawing room in the nineteenth century), with a segmental-vaulted and coffered ceiling with auricular cartouches in the tympana; again, this is the work of the St Peter's stuccodore. This design was first used in Ireland by the architect Sir Edward Lovett Pearce (1699-1733) for the Irish House of Lords (begun 1729), after a reconstruction by Palladio of the interior of the Temple of Roma and Venus in Rome.¹⁹ Richard Castle subsequently used the segmental vaulted ceiling in the hall at Westport House, county Mayo, in 1731.²⁰

The dining room to the right of the hall has a vigorously modelled baroque coved

ceiling with the motif of a lambrequin ornament supporting two birds on either side of a flaming urn in the centre of the long sides (Plate 1).²¹ As John Cornforth has remarked, ‘the lambrequin is not a common ornament in the British Isles and confirms the impression that this is the work of a foreign craftsman.’²² The lambrequin is found mostly in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century French engravings of ornament, occasionally in the designs of the Huguenot architect and designer Daniel Marot (1661-1752), but most frequently in the prints after the French draughtsman and designer Jean Bérain (1637-1711). Bérain’s prints were pirated in Augsburg and were a major source for stuccodores in Germany. The stuccodore F.X. Zimmermann (1680-1758), for example, included the lambrequin in his work at Neues Schloss, Schleissheim (1723-24).²³ The Lafranchini had used the motif once in their coved ceiling in the saloon at Curraghmore, county Waterford, in 1746, and it is instructive to compare their flatter modelling there with the more robust handling by the St Peter’s stuccodore in the Russborough dining room.²⁴ Formerly, the walls were decorated with gilt architectural stucco frames to hold the Irish painter George Barret’s (1730-1784) copies of Italianate views. At first glance they seem very similar to the Lafranchini framing of the alcoves in the front hall, but on closer inspection the handling is more sculptural, with the charming detail of a bird resting on top of the frames betraying the hand of the St Peter’s stuccodore.²⁵ The stuccowork in the stair hall has always attracted the most comment, and has been described as the ravings of a mad Irishman. However, as I have previously shown, the rococo cartouches are derived from German print sources, and the workmanship has all the hallmarks of the St Peter’s stuccodore and his troupe.²⁶

ROCOCO CARVING

A PART FROM THE FURNITURE, DISCUSSED LATER, ROCOCO ORNAMENT IS ALSO FOUND IN the carved overdoors of the front hall and the marble chimney pieces in the drawing room and dining room, all on the south front. The source for the splendidly crisp rococo carving of the overdoor in the front hall leading into the saloon, and the brackets over the remaining doors, is found in Matthias Lock and Henry Copland’s *New Book of Ornaments*, published in London in 1752; the overdoor frieze, a detail from one of the plates, is transposed upside down in the carving (Plate 3, 4).²⁷

The *Georgian Society Records* states that the chimney pieces in the large drawing room and the corresponding dining room (formerly the library) flanking the main hall were made from grey Sicilian marble.²⁸ The various motifs on these chimney pieces were evidently executed on separate white marble slips and attached like stucco drops to the centres and sides. The marble ‘drops’ on the large drawing room chimney piece feature rococo *chinoiserie* motifs of dragon heads emerging from the centres of the *rocaille* cartouches above a festoon of fruit (Plate 5). This type of decoration is associated with the London workshop of the renowned sculptor and monumental mason Sir Henry Cheere



Russborough House

3, 4 – Overdoor frieze in the hall leading into the saloon, based on a plate from Lock and Copland's 1752 pattern book (photos by RO'C and the author)

5 – A detail from the drawing room marble mantelpiece showing a dragon peering through a rocaille cartouche (courtesy Irish Architectural Archive)

(1703-1781). In the dining room, the marble chimney piece is similarly decorated but with the head of Silenus occupying the breast of the fireplace amid vine branches, as befits the room's purpose.²⁹

THE MILLTOWN SCAGLIOLA TABLES

MUCH CONFUSION HAS SURROUNDED THE MILLTOWN SCAGLIOLA TABLES IN THE LITERATURE on Russborough to date. It was assumed that the large table top still at Russborough, signed and dated 'D: Petro Belloni Monacho: V. F. Anno. Dni 1750' (Plate 2), was one of the pair referred to by Mann (noted above).³⁰ The 1902 deed of gift to the National Gallery of Ireland (NGI), however, listed three scagliola tables. The first two were described as 'A Pair of black Marble Florentine Pier Tables, the Centres inlaid with Landscapes in colours and Borders of Shells, and Scrolls', but no mention of their stands is recorded here.³¹ According to the late nineteenth-century inventory, however, they had 'carved gilt stands with flowers & supports' and stood in the saloon between the windows beneath a pair of pier glasses 'in carved and gilt frames with man mask below'.³² This pair had been overlooked in the literature until their recent discovery in the basement of the NGI, albeit missing their giltwood table stands (NGI 12257 and 12258).³³

The third table listed in the 1902 deed of gift inventory is the well-known example at Russborough: 'A Large Florentine Mosaic Table by P. Belloni, 1750. The top of Black Marble, inlaid in the centre with a River Scene, Buildings, and Anglers, with Smaller Medallions at the Corners, Scrolls and Animals in coloured Marbles, Lapis, Jasper, &c., on richly carved and Gilt Wood Stand and Scrolls'.³⁴ We know that Ralph Howard, Leeson's neighbour, received his pair of scagliola slabs, also dated 1750, in 1753 and had a pair of rococo giltwood table supports made for them. It seems likely that Leeson's 1750 scagliola slab arrived at Russborough around the same time.³⁵ Although this scagliola slab and table support are listed in the inventory of the 1902 Milltown deed of gift to the NGI, as noted above, it was deemed too fragile to travel and remained at Russborough. The table support was also in a very fragile state, but it was dispatched in four pieces in a box to the NGI.³⁶

THE REDISCOVERY OF THE LARGE SCAGLIOLA TABLE STAND

DURING A SCOPING EXERCISE CARRIED OUT ON THE MILLTOWN COLLECTION FOR THE NGI in 2009 by the present writer, the table support was located and identified in an offsite store of the Office of Public Works (Plates 6, 7) albeit in a reconstructed state (since reunited with the Belloni table top at Russborough).³⁷ Further confirmation came with the recent discovery of a photograph of the music room dating from the 1860s, which shows a side view of the table (Plate 8).³⁸ It also shows that the origi-



Russborough House

6, 7 – Two views of the recently discovered Milltown Belloni table stand, now returned to Russborough

(courtesy National Gallery of Ireland and the author)

opposite 8 – 1860s photograph of the music room showing the Belloni scagliola table in situ (reproduced with permission)

nal scrolling frieze from the side was lost and replaced by a modern carving, probably during the 1960s refurbishment of the table stand, by which time its true provenance was forgotten.³⁹ The apron of the table stand is composed of openwork scrolling acanthus with shelly rim, and centred with an asymmetrical flower; the curving legs are carved with scrollwork and *rocaille* ornamentation, and recall the designs for tables published by the English carver Matthew Lock in 1744.⁴⁰

The carving of the recently discovered scagliola table stand of the early 1750s is clearly by the same master craftsman responsible for the suite of three eagle frames which were formerly in the saloon, hereafter referred to as the ‘Master of the Milltown eagle frames’ to differentiate his work from other carvings by less-skilled hands engaged at Russborough. The eagle frames in the saloon included the pair of matching pier glasses (NGI 12003 and 12004) hung between the windows (Plate 9),⁴¹ and the overmantel (NGI 12158) framing a copy of Rubens’ *Judgement of Paris* (Plate 10).⁴² Three other looking-

glass frames are also by the same master carver, including the pier glass (NGI 12092) which formerly hung in the large drawing room, with the head of cupid alongside his quiver and arrows derived from Matthias Lock's *Suite of Pier Glasses*, published in London in 1744.⁴³ In the old dining room hung a rococo chinoiserie overmantel (NGI 12090) with rockwork and flowing water motifs on the bottom rail,⁴⁴ while another overmantel is decorated with foliage and scrolls (NGI 12091).

The saloon pier glasses (243 x 102 cm), of narrow vertical format with openwork frames, are each composed of inner fillets and pronounced undulating outer profiles. The bases of each are centred with a bearded mask backed by *rocaille* cartouches; the sides are composed of C-scrolls supporting plants and ascending trailing foliage topped by putti terms; the upper section narrows with coved corners supporting male and female dragons; and the whole is surmounted by asymmetrical cresting supporting an eagle. Of the matching gilt pier tables, only the scagliola tops are extant (NGI 12257/8).

The large overmantel in the saloon of horizontal format (210 x 234 cm), which formerly enclosed a copy of Rubens' *Judgement of Paris*, is a tour de force of rococo grotesque carving, probably symbolising the four elements. The frame's structure is apparently held together by broken cornices and scrollwork overlaid with grotesque imagery. The undulating profile of this overmantel frame is surmounted by an eagle with outstretched wings, perched amid thunderbolts on an asymmetrical pediment with lambrequin ornament. This motif, symbolising Jove, is derived from plate six of Matthias Lock's





9, 10 – One of a pair of pier glasses and the overmantel (opposite) which formerly hung in the saloon at Russborough (courtesy NGI)

suite of *Six Sconces*, published in London in 1744, who in turn borrowed it from Gilles Oppenord's *Livre De Differents Morceaux*, published in Paris in 1737-38.⁴⁵ The grotesque imagery continues with bird-like creatures terminating the shoulders of the overmantel, while the lower rail is dominated by the mask of a river god crowned with a wreath of bulrushes in a *rocaille* cartouche, and surrounded by depictions of dripping water, rockwork crawling with reptiles, and a variety of carved shells (including some real specimens pasted on). Terminating the lower corners are a pair of wonderfully mischievous and whiskery dolphins inhabiting *rocaille* coves, which, in true grotesque fashion, prop up the frame's sides of bulrushes and split scrollwork terms, bearing putti heads and overflowing vases.⁴⁶ Some of this exotic imagery of rocks and reptiles is reminiscent of the *rocaille* head pieces by the French engraver Hubert Gravelot in Thomas Shaw's *Travels* (London, 1738),⁴⁷

and reminds us of the diverse range of printed material utilised by craftsmen.⁴⁸ Two carved side tables (NGI 12001 and 12002), with aprons decorated with asymmetrical *rocaille* ornament, were also present in the saloon at Russborough (called the large dining room at the end of the nineteenth century).⁴⁹ The carving in the flat style, commonly associated with Irish workmanship, is in great contrast to the sculptural plasticity of the Belloni scagliola table.

IDENTIFYING THE CARVER AT RUSSBOROUGH

WHO, THEN, CARVED THE TABLE SUPPORT AND THE EAGLE FRAMES OF THE SALOON which are of such outstanding quality and are not met with elsewhere in Ireland? To attempt to answer this question it is necessary to discuss the chronology of the arrival and absorption of the rococo style in Ireland, especially in carved wood, which has not been previously addressed in the literature.

As in England, the rococo style (of French origin) was introduced into Ireland by goldsmiths and silversmiths, some of whom were of Huguenot origin. The greatest of



them, Paul de Lamerie (1688-1751), dominated the London trade and was patronised by Algernon Coote, 6th Earl of Mountrath (1689-1744) early on in his career. In Ireland, John Hamilton (fl.1709-51), the Dublin silversmith, produced the first recorded examples of rococo style decoration on his silverware in the late 1730s.⁵⁰ Only later did the new style spread to interior decoration.⁵¹ Unlike plate, which often carries the maker's initials and date mark, Irish eighteenth-century carved furniture is very rarely signed and dated. Fortunately, Trinity College has preserved much documentation with regard to its acquisition of portraits from the eighteenth century onwards, catalogued by Anne Crookshank and David Webb.⁵² Three portraits and their frames in the university dining hall afford us a unique opportunity to observe, in chronological order, the arrival and local response to the new style of rococo carving. A portrait of the formidable looking provost, Richard Baldwin (1672-1758), painted in 1745 by the Irish architect and artist Francis Bindon (c.1690-1765) and paid for by voluntary subscriptions from the scholars, has a French-style swept frame with centre and corner cartouches and lambrequin borders, which marks a decided break with the previous style of carved frame found in Ireland (Plate 11).⁵³

Documented examples by or attributed to the carver John Houghton (fl.1723-61) are in the Palladian architectural format. However, while the frame of the Baldwin portrait has no shelly or *rocaille* ornament, it is otherwise on the cusp of the rococo. The catalyst was the arrival from London in 1748, amid much publicity, of the portrait of Frederick, Prince of Wales, that was placed in the most prominent place in the dining



11 – The gilt-wood frame of the Bindon portrait of Provost Baldwin in the dining hall at Trinity College, Dublin (courtesy Trinity College, Dublin)

12 – Gilt-wood frame on the portrait of Archbishop Price, presented in 1749, now in the dining hall at Trinity College (courtesy TCD)



hall, where it has remained ever since.⁵⁴ The portrait of the prince in his role as Chancellor of the University, painted in 1745 by the English artist Thomas Hudson (1701-1779), was accompanied by a very expensive trophy frame by the Huguenot carver Paul Petit (fl.1722-57), a spectacular entrée for the rococo style of carving to Ireland (Plate 13).

Petit's monumental style of carving derived from the French school of trophy frames which were popular during the *Régence* (1715-23). Petit, along with Henry Joris, achieved fame for supplying the baroque rococo trophy frames, the most extraordinary in Britain, for the portraits of the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1739 that later hung in Warwick Castle.⁵⁵ The immediate influence of Petit's rococo carving can be seen in the frame of the portrait of archbishop Price of Cashel (1678-1752), Vice Chancellor of the university, presented to Trinity College in 1749, a year after the arrival of the Prince of Wales' portrait.⁵⁶ The frame, with its swept sides, centre and corner *rocaille* asymmetrical detailing, is the first documented example of Irish rococo carving (Plate 12). A telling detail, illustrating the direct influence of the Petit frame of the Prince of Wales' portrait, are the brackets ending in *rocaille* scrolls at the lower corners of the frame.

A sophisticated example of the framer's craft can be seen on the large rococo *chinoiserie* frame of the Flemish artist W.S. Beschey's painting, *The Descent from the Cross* (1755), in St Andrew's church, Westland Row. The painting was formerly the altarpiece of the old Penal-era chapel in Townsend Street, which, despite its drab exterior, was obviously furnished



13 – The 1748 gilt-wood frame by Paul Petit on the portrait of Frederick, Prince of Wales, chancellor of the university, in the dining hall at Trinity College, Dublin

(COUNTRY LIFE photo; reproduced with permission)

14 – Carving of a dolphin from the saloon overmantel (detail of Plate 10)



internally in some splendour.⁵⁷ It has even been suggested, without any evidence, that the frame may be the work of the English carver and designer of pattern books, Thomas Johnson (1714-1778), who was working in Dublin at this time.⁵⁸

The two visits to Dublin of Thomas Johnson, in 1746 and again in 1753 (where he remained until 1755), introduced the very latest English rococo work to the Irish public. His identifiable designs, if not his own handiwork, can be seen in the suite of gilt furniture, consisting of overmantels and pier tables, apparently made for Marcus Beresford, 1st Earl of Tyrone, and intended for Tyrone House in Dublin or for Curraghmore, the Earl's country seat. Johnson's published designs, however, do not relate to the work of the 'Master of the Milltown Eagle Frames' at Russborough.⁵⁹

Richard Cranfield (1731-1809) was one of the leading Dublin rococo carvers of the period who employed a number of talented craftsmen in his successful business. In 1760 he was paid large sums of money for work in the Provost's House at Trinity College, which apparently included the carved chimney tablets based on Francois Boucher's *Livres des Arts* (1750s) and a set of giltwood wall brackets.⁶⁰ Cranfield, along with James Robinson (d.1778), carved the Dublin Society's presidential ceremonial chair in 1769 and apparently a frame for a portrait of the Lord Lieutenant in the Mansion House.⁶¹

CONCLUSION

THIS MORE OR LESS SUMS UP THE DOCUMENTED AND DATED EXAMPLES OF IRISH ROCOCO carving, which, compared to the oeuvre of the 'Master of the Milltown eagle frames', lack his virtuoso carving technique and the supremely adroit application of the gesso and gilding. It is instructive to compare, for example, his carving of the pair of dolphins on the saloon overmantel (Plate 14) with those found on Cranfield's 1769 ceremonial chair (noted above), or the a set of pier glasses from Headfort, county Meath, now on display in the Bishop's Palace, Waterford.⁶² Only the Milltown overmantel dolphins capture the spirit of fantasy which bring these carvings alive. The sculptural style of the 'Master of the Milltown eagle frames' is closest to the London master Paul Petit, and one need only compare the mask at the bottom of the frame of the Prince of Wales' portrait in Trinity College with those found on the Milltown frames to realise that both carvers worked in the same milieu. It seems likely, therefore, that the 'Master of the Milltown eagle frames' was based in London, where he either had his own shop or was employed by an upholster who supplied the furnishings for Russborough.

The splendour of Russborough, as Chetwood remarked in 1746, began when 'artificers from most parts of Europe were employed in this great work'. The interior must have been finally completed when the curiosity of the Countess of Kildare overcame her prejudice against the lifestyle of her host as she ventured in May 1759 'among these mountains' to visit the place, and informed her husband 'that the house is really fine and the furniture magnificent'.⁶³

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ENDNOTES

The following abbreviations are used:

GSR *Georgian Society Records*, 5 vols (Dublin 1909-13).

McDonnell Joseph McDonnell, *Irish Eighteenth-Century Stuccowork and its European Sources* (Dublin, 1991)

- ¹ *GSR*, V, 68; [W.R. Chetwood] *A Tour through Ireland in several Entertaining Letters* (Dublin, 1746) 243. Note, the London issue of 1748 is a reprint of the Dublin edition.
- ² Dublin Society minute book, quoted by the Knight of Glin in his unpublished thesis, 'The Irish Palladians' (n.d., incomplete copy deposited in the Irish Architectural Archive) 108, n.281.
- ³ Chetwood, *A Tour through Ireland*, 244. See also Brian de Breffny, 'The Building of the Mansion at Blessington, 1672', *The GPA Irish Arts Review Yearbook* (Dublin, 1988) 73-77.
- ⁴ The last we hear of Leeson on his first Grand Tour was in October 1745 when he dined with Dr Clephane, Richard Phelps and John Bouverie in Rome. Leeson had commissioned Dr Clephane for a 'Dresden snuff-box', probably one of the luxurious and much-sought after items, made of gold and semi-precious stones, which were a speciality at the Saxon court. See John Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701-1800* (New Haven and London, 1997) 215b. For a description of these snuff boxes, see A.K. Snowman, *Eighteenth Century Gold Boxes of Europe* (London, 1966) 99-103.
- ⁵ W.S. Lewis (ed.), *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 vols (New Haven and London, 1955) XIX, 423.
- ⁶ Cynthia O'Connor, 'Dr James Tyrrell, Agent at Florence', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, LXIX, 274, 1980, 137-144.
- ⁷ Michael Wynne, 'The Milltowns as Patrons', *Apollo*, XCIX, 144, 1974, 24-31.
- ⁸ John McVeigh (ed.), *Richard Pococke's Irish Tours* (Shannon, 1995) 131.
- ⁹ McDonnell, cat. 10, pls 87-88; *GSR*, V, pls LVI, LXI, LXVIII, LXXI.
- ¹⁰ David Griffin and Caroline Pegum, *Leinster House* (Dublin, 2000) figs 114, 118.
- ¹¹ The account was published in *GSR*, V, 69-70.
- ¹² Aidan O'Boyle, 'The Milltown Collection: reconstructing an eighteenth-century picture-hang', *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, XIII, 2010, 37-38.

- ¹³ *ibid.*, fig. 7.
- ¹⁴ McDonnell, pl. 87; John Cornforth, 'Russborough, Co. Wicklow – III', *Country Life*, CXXXIV, 3485, 19th December 1963, figs 2, 4, 5; *GSR*, V, pl. LXI. For the saloon ceiling in Tyrone House, see *GSR*, III, pls XXXV-VI.
- ¹⁵ *GSR*, V, pl. LXX; Brian Fitzgerald, 'Russborough, Co. Wicklow, part I-II, Co. Wicklow, the seat of Denis Daly, begun from designs by Richard Castle in 1741', *Country Life*, LXXXI, 2089, 30th January 1937, 122-23, fig. 8.
- ¹⁶ *GSR*, V, pl. LXX; Cornforth, 'Russborough, Co. Wicklow – III', figs 7, 9. I am grateful to David Griffin for pointing out the similarity of the decoration of the cross vaulting in the back hallway at Hazelwood.
- ¹⁷ McDonnell, 11, 24, pls 97-85. His work can also be seen in Ballamont Forest, county Cavan, Glasnevin House in Dublin, and Bert House in county Kildare.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*, 11, n.34, pls 100-102; *GSR*, V, pls LX, LXIX; Fitzgerald, 'Russborough, Co. Wicklow', fig. 7; Cornforth, 'Russborough, Co. Wicklow – III'.
- ¹⁹ *GSR*, V, pl. LXIX; Fitzgerald, 'Russborough, Co. Wicklow', fig. 10; Edward McParland, 'Edward Lovett Pearce and the Parliament House in Dublin', *Burlington Magazine*, CXXXI, 1031, 1989, 91-100.
- ²⁰ I am grateful to David Griffin for drawing my attention to the hall ceiling in Westport House.
- ²¹ McDonnell, pls 102-03; *GSR*, V, pl. LXVIII; Fitzgerald, 'Russborough, Co. Wicklow', fig. 6; John Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors* (New Haven and London, 2004) 343, fig. 318.
- ²² Cornforth, 'Russborough, Co. Wicklow – II', *Country Life*, CXXXIV, 3484, 12th December 1963, 1627.
- ²³ C. Thon, *Johann Baptist Zimmermann als Stukkator* (Munich, 1977) pls 68-69.
- ²⁴ McDonnell, pl. 91.
- ²⁵ Illustrated in Fitzgerald, 'Russborough, Co. Wicklow', 122-23, figs 5-6; Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, 343, fig. 318; Seán O'Reilly, *Irish Houses and Gardens* (London, 1998) 86.
- ²⁶ Joseph McDonnell, 'Patrons and plasterers: the origin of Dublin rococo stuccowork', in Christine Casey (ed.), *The Eighteenth-Century Dublin Town House* (Dublin, 2010) 233-35.
- ²⁷ Illustrated in Peter Ward-Jackson, *English Furniture Designs of the Eighteenth-Century* (London, 1958) pl. 54. Lock and Copland's *New Book of Ornaments* (London, 1752) was also the source of the design of the overmantel picture frame (NGI 12089) seen in the 1860s photograph of the large drawing room, published in O'Boyle, 'The Milltown Collection', pl. 4.
- ²⁸ *GSR*, V, 71, pls LVIII, LXII.
- ²⁹ *ibid.*, pl. LXIII.
- ³⁰ Anthony Coleridge, 'Don Petro's Table-tops: Scagliola and Grand Tour Clients,' *Apollo*, 83, 1955, 184-87.
- ³¹ *Inventory of the Milltown Deed of Gift to the National Gallery of Ireland* (Dublin, 1902) 18.
- ³² National Gallery of Ireland (NGI), Milltown correspondence: Late 19th-century manuscript inventory of the contents of Russborough (by the Countess of Milltown?).
- ³³ Guide to the National Gallery of Ireland (London, 2008) 284, entry by S. Benedetti.
- ³⁴ *Inventory of the Milltown Deed of Gift to the National Gallery of Ireland*, 18
- ³⁵ O'Connor, 'Dr James Tyrrell, Agent at Florence', 142.
- ³⁶ NGI, Milltown correspondence, The housekeeper's (Miss Mary Kelly) inventory of the contents at Russborough before being moved to the National Gallery of Ireland, 2nd April 1906: 'Music Room: Richly carved & gilt wood stand & scrolls for Large Florentine Mosaic Table by P Belloni 1750. Note legs taken off the Table (4) & Packed with Table. This table should be carefully stayed before Marble top is put on.' 'Marble Top Not Sent'. Again, on 6th April 1906, Miss Kelly noted the con-

dition of the scagliola top: 'Corners broken off & 1 piece of 1 off as it was only stuck with plaster this piece sent up with Table.'

- ³⁷ The discovery was announced in the letters page, 'A magnificent discovery', *Country Life*, CCIII, 25, 24th June 2009, 63.
- ³⁸ I am grateful to Aidan O'Boyle for informing me about the recent discovery of the photograph of the Russborough music room.
- ³⁹ NGI archives, restoration of the Milltown furniture correspondence 5th July 1962.
- ⁴⁰ Matthias Lock, *Six Tables* (London, 1744). See Ward-Jackson, *English Furniture Designs*, pl. 49.
- ⁴¹ Illustrated in Sergio Benedetti (ed.), *The Milltowns, A Family Reunion* (Dublin, 1997) fig. 58; Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, 79.
- ⁴² Illustrated in Benedetti (ed.) *The Milltowns*, fig. 59; Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, 80.
- ⁴³ Matthias Lock, *Six Sconces* (London, 1744). See Ward-Jackson, *English Furniture Designs*, pl. 51.
- ⁴⁴ Illustrated in Knight of Glin and James Peill, *Irish Furniture* (New Haven and London, 2007) 81.
- ⁴⁵ Michael Snodin (ed.), *Rococo: art and design in Hogarth's England* (London, 1984) 162-63 (L4).
- ⁴⁶ The dolphins are reminiscent of those found in Oppenord's suite, *Livre de differents morceaux*, published by Huquier in Paris in 1737-38.
- ⁴⁷ Illustrated in Snodin (ed.), *Rococo*, 50 (D4).
- ⁴⁸ For an account of the diverse range of printed material utilised by contemporary craftsmen, see Morrison H. Heckscher, 'Gideon Saint: An Eighteenth-Century Carver and his Scrapbook', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, XXVII, 6, 1969, 299-310.
- ⁴⁹ Benedetti, *The Milltowns*, 57.
- ⁵⁰ Joseph McDonnell, 'Irish Rococo Silver', *Irish Arts Review*, 13, 1977, 78-87.
- ⁵¹ McDonnell, 'Patrons and Plasterers', 233-35.
- ⁵² Anne Crookshank and David Webb, *Paintings and Sculptures in Trinity College Dublin* (Dublin, 1990).
- ⁵³ Illustrated in Anne Crookshank, 'Notes on the Cleaning and Framing of Pictures in Trinity College, Dublin', in B. Kennedy (ed.), *Art is My Life* (Dublin, 1991) 61; Crookshank and Webb, *Paintings and Sculptures in Trinity College Dublin*, 15.
- ⁵⁴ Illustrated in Crookshank, 'Notes on the Cleaning and Framing of Pictures in Trinity College, Dublin', 63; Crookshank and Webb, *Paintings and Sculptures in Trinity College Dublin*, 55.
- ⁵⁵ D. Buttery, 'The Picture frames of Paul Petit, and Frederick, Prince of Wales', *Apollo*, CXXVI, 1987, 12-15.
- ⁵⁶ Illustrated in Crookshank, 'Notes on the Cleaning and Framing of Pictures in Trinity College Dublin', 64; Crookshank and Webb, *Paintings and Sculptures in Trinity College Dublin*.
- ⁵⁷ Joseph McDonnell, *Ecclesiastical Art of the Penal Era* (Maynooth, 1995) 8.
- ⁵⁸ Glin and Peill, *Irish Furniture*, 138 and fig. 189
- ⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 243, fig. 163; 262, fig. 229.
- ⁶⁰ Joseph McDonnell, 'The Influence of the French rococo print in eighteenth-century Ireland', *Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, 36, 1994, 67, 69.
- ⁶¹ Glin and Peill, *Irish Furniture*, 136.
- ⁶² *ibid.*, 163.
- ⁶³ B. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily, Duchess of Leinster, 1731-1814*, 3 vols (Dublin, 1949-53) I, 59.