

Lions' heads and webbed claw feet: the first book devoted to Irish furniture and woodwork raises thorny questions of definition

definition

Citation metadata

Author: Adam Bowett
Date: Sept. 2007
From: Apollo (Vol. 166, Issue 546)
Publisher: Apollo Magazine Ltd.
Document Type: Book review
Length: 2,321 words

Main content

Article Preview :

Irish Furniture THE KNIGHT OF GLIN & JAMES PEILL Yale University Press, 50 [pounds sterling]/\$125 ISBN 978-0-300-11715-8

Irish furniture has not been well served by furniture historians, ever since Constance Simon coined the phrase 'Irish Chippendale' in 1905. The term was always controversial, and in 1912 Herbert Cescinsky devoted a chapter of his three volume English Furniture of the Eighteenth Century to debunking it, arguing in his typically opaque style that all 'Irish Chippendale' furniture originated in England. Half a century later, the American pundit F. Lewis Hinckley reduced the whole of Irish furniture studies to absurdity by suggesting that almost all high-style British furniture that was not made in London emanated from Dublin. In between these two eccentrics, serious English scholars made occasional stabs at describing and defining Irish furniture. In *The Present State of Old English Furniture* (1923), R.W. Symonds was the first objectively to classify the Irish characteristics that are still recognised today, adding; 'It is the heavy appearance, superfluity of carved ornament, and absence of elegant and graceful lines that make its present-day appreciation and value considerably less than that of contemporary English furniture'. Thus 'Irish' was often used in a perjorative sense, as shorthand for clumsy, inept, naive or retardataire. The authors of *The Dictionary of English Furniture* (1924 and 1954) considered that Irish Chippendale was characterised by 'flat and disconnected carving', while in an article written for *Country Life* in 1952, Symonds drew attention to the large number of Irish pieces devoted to the pleasures of the table and the bottle. Despite thoughtful work by Margaret Jourdain in 1948-50, it was not until Anthony Coleridge and Desmond Fitz-Gerald published a ground-breaking article in *APOLLO* in 1966 that Irish furniture studies amounted to more than light diversion for English historians.

Things have not improved of late. The spending power of the 'Irish tiger' has led to 'Irish' becoming a marketing term rather than an accurate description, in this self-fulfilling market, pieces of uncertain provenance but with some 'Irish' attributes are bought in the London salerooms, taken to Ireland and thereafter are irrefutably Irish. The waters have been further muddied by American dealers and scholars, who have made much of the running in Irish furniture studies in recent years. Desperately seeking their furniture roots, they accept the popular notions of 'Irishness' at face value without seriously questioning the assumptions on which they are based. This tells us more about American social politics than it does about Irish furniture.

It is with a sense of anticipation and some trepidation, therefore, that I opened this book, the first devoted entirely to Irish furniture and woodwork. Most of the book is a survey in chronological order of Irish woodwork and furniture from medieval times to the end of the 18th century. The last third is taken by a pictorial catalogue of 255 images, ordered by type and date, together with a dictionary of Irish furniture makers compiled by John Rogers. These are useful reference sections, but the catalogue must...

[Access from your library](#)

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

Source Citation

Source Citation

Bowett, Adam. "Lions' heads and webbed claw feet: the first book devoted to Irish furniture and woodwork raises thorny questions of definition." *Apollo*, vol. 166, no. 546, Sept. 2007, p. 116+. Accessed 27 Nov. 2020.

Gale Document Number: GALE|A168629678


Explore

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.



Footer

- [About](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Accessibility](#)

of the book is mainly given up to such shifts and expedi-ents as are learned in the wilderness itself, where we have nothing to choose from but the raw materials that lie around us. As for camps situated within easy reach of towns or supply-posts, every one, I suppose, knows best how to gratify his own tastes in fitting them up, and prefers to use his own ingenuity rather than copy after others. Real woodcraft consists rather in knowing how to get. along without the appliances of civilization than in adapting them to wildwood life. Such an art comes in. play when we travel "light," a Lion Head by IgorGosling on DeviantArt. Sculpture in Oil Clay Lion Head. Ian  Anderson Ref: Lions. Wood Furniture Legs Antique Furniture Diy Furniture Container Shop Carving Designs Dust Collection Sculpture Table Legs Wood Carving. Cheap Furniture Legs, Buy Quality Furniture Directly from China Suppliers:4pcs/lot, European Wooden Carved Furniture Legs Sofa Coffee Table Legs feet(A751) Enjoy ✓Free Shipping Worldwide! ✓Limited Time Sale ✓Easy Return. keith bennette123 I like these. Study Furniture Design Cool Furniture Modern Sofa Modern Chairs Couches Sofas Wood Sofa Sofa Shop Vintage Sofa. Antique and Vintage Sofas - 9,213 For Sale at 1stdibs. fantasy furniture and grotto furniture for sale. a carved wood dragon side table ca. 1900. Check out our lion claw feet selection for the very best in unique or custom, handmade pieces from our shops. Some of the technologies we use are necessary for critical functions like security and site integrity, account authentication, security and privacy preferences, internal site usage and maintenance data, and to make the site work correctly for browsing and transactions. On. Personalized Advertising. The first is the thorny question of classification. From the. Hansard archive. Example from the Hansard archive. Contains Parliamentary information licensed under the Open Parliament Licence v3.0. They address the thorny question of the planners and their public and how far there was a democratic agenda in decision-making. This raises the thorny question of how best to deal fairly with small woodlands. From the. Hansard archive. These examples are from the Cambridge English Corpus and from sources on the web. Any opinions in the examples do not represent the opinion of the Cambridge Dictionary editors or of Cambridge University Press or its licensors. Want to learn more? Go to the definition of thorny. Go to the definition of question.