

“Our Irish Muse”:

“Jacobite Relics” in Charlotte Brooke’s *Reliques of Irish Poetry*

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Introduction

Charlotte Brooke (c.1740–1793) can be situated at the starting point of creative literary exchanges between English and Irish writings. Her *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789) (Hereafter cited as *Reliques*) established her as a pioneer of cultural nationalism. The main part of the *Reliques* consists of Brooke’s English translation of Irish language poetry, which is followed by the original. While her translations have been criticized for being too distanced from the original poems both in content and in style, the meanings of differences that Brooke created have not yet been fully explored.¹ The aim of this paper is to set in high relief echoes and

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1 The major criticism against her English translation is that it is under heavy influence of the style and vocabulary of contemporary English verse so much so that it undermines the originals. See O’Driscoll and Welch. Alspach highly values Brooke’s achievement, concluding the chapter on her with the sentence: “There seems to be little doubt

resonances of “Jacobite relics” in Brooke’s *Reliques* and to reveal their drastic and subtle implications.²

Irish muse as Ireland

Against the background of a lingering dream of recovery of Catholic hegemony on the British isles, 18th-century Ireland saw quite a few Jacobite poems. In the world of real politics of Brooke’s time little hope was left for Jacobite sympathizers, but Jacobite songs and poems remained close to the popular mind, as they carried an acute sense of lament over the miserable state of Ireland as well as a sense of protest against the oppressive power.³ Jacobite poetry often features a woman symbolical of Ireland. In its prominent genre called *Aisling*, meaning “dream” or “vision,” Ireland appears as a woman, lamenting her miserable state and longing for liberation from tyranny.

There is no reference to Jacobite poems in the *Reliques*, which marks an apparent imbalance in Brooke’s selection.⁴ Nevertheless, it has been speculated that not only did Brooke know Jacobite poetry but she also noticed the significant position of a woman representing Ireland in Jacobite tradition.⁵ This can explain why the “Irish muse” that Brooke refers to several times in the *Reliques* has close

↘ that as the forces which led to the literary revival of the late nineteenth century are better understood, her importance will increase” (Alspach 121).

2 Charlotte’s father, Henry Brooke was a supporter of Penal Laws. The *Reliques* contains subtle nuances that do not completely accord with Henry Brooke’s political stance.

3 For the attraction of Jacobitism as “discourse of opposition” for those politically marginalized in the British isles in the 18th century, see Szechi.

4 For the diversity of Irish language poems in the 18th century, see Buttimer.

5 Leith 1994, 39; Ni Mhunchaile 157.

affinities with a woman who represents Ireland.⁶ There is no direct Irish equivalent of the English word "muse," but Brooke insists that belief in the muse is deeply rooted in Ireland. According to Brooke, "the thoughts" of the "Irish muse" underlie Irish songs and poems that she translated for the *Reliques* (Brooke 1816, cxxxii–vxxxiii). Brooke claims that the muse in Ireland was "the goddess of unbounded idolatry" and "her worship was the business of life" (Brooke 1816, 296). As such, the reverence for the muse and the bard had a long history:

All Irish Histories, Chronicles and Poems, concur in testimony of the high respect in which the office of the Bard, and the favours of the Muse, were formerly held in this kingdom. (Brooke 1816, 123)

The status of the Irish muse seems comparable to that of the goddess who is symbolical of Ireland.

The Irish muse's special connection to Irish kings and heroes especially concerned Brooke (Brooke 1816, cxxxiii).⁷ In "Ode to Gaul" translated by Brooke,

6 Apart from the *Reliques*, the Irish muse is not necessarily interchangeable with a woman who personifies Ireland (often called Erin or Eire after the name of an Irish goddess). Croker's *Popular Songs of Ireland* provides only one song in which "the Muse" can be taken as representing Ireland. The song includes the lines "Oh the Muse shed a tear / when the cruel auctioneer, / With a hammer in his hand, to sweet Blarney came" (Croker 142). In *The Poets and Poetry of Munster* (1849) a clear distinction is made between the muse and Ireland. While Ireland makes frequent appearances as a woman in poems, the muse appears only in the sections of commentary and is mentioned as a source of poetic inspiration.

7 Percy introduces two poems by King James I and mentions a folio named "The Muses welcome to King James," which may indicate a close relationship between James I and the "Muses," and his supposed poetical talent (Percy 122). In "The Shepherd's Address to his Muse," the muse seems to be a lover of the poet as well as the source of his inspiration (Percy 235).

an Irish hero Finn is claimed as a "favourite of the muse" (Brooke 1816, 206). Even though she finds no corresponding phrase in the original, Brooke puts a note to this part of her translation, and elaborates the intimate tie between historical Irish chiefs and the muse:

Irish history informs us, that those of their Monarchs or chiefs, who, besides the accustomed patronage of science and song, were themselves possessed of the gifts of the muse, obtained, on that account, from their Fileas, and from their countrymen in general, a distinguished portion of honor, respect and celebrity. (Brooke 1816, 213–214)

In that the muse's support guarantees a leader a special acknowledgement among people, her role overlaps with that of the Irish goddess who bestowed the kingship in ancient Ireland. Brooke was likely to know that there was no longer an Irish king in 18th-century Ireland, but the century saw a great number of poems featuring Ireland as a woman. The role of Ireland as a muse to inspire poets loomed larger.⁸

Brooke's patriotism

Brooke claims that poetry is "the vital soul of the nation" (cxxx).⁹ The stress on the national importance of poetic tradition was often linked to a political aspiration for the recovery of the sovereignty of Ireland, but Brooke's idea was not as revolutionary as to promote Ireland under the rule of the native Catholic Irish. The *Reliques* never denes the social system dominated by Anglo-Irish. It includes poems to testify that the Anglo-Irish succeeded the role of Irish king and chieftains

8 *The Poets and Poetry of Munster* offers a variety of examples.

9 Brooke meant to follow Charles O'Connor's view (Brooke 1816, cxxx).

as the "patronage of science and song" (Brooke 1816, Preface cxxxii–cxxxiii). The fourth elegy "Lament for John Burke" is one of the 18th-century Irish-language poems that praise the prominent Anglo-Irish who made distinct contribution to "science and song" in the native Irish tradition. Turlough O'Carolan (1670–1738) composed "Song for Gracey Nugent," the first song in the *Reliques*, for the sake of his patron's daughter (Brooke 1816, 305–307).¹⁰ As patrons of indigenous culture and literature, the Anglo-Irish could secure their privileged position. Nevertheless, not all Anglo-Irish took it as being to their own benefit to support the native Irish tradition and language. Protestant Bishop Woodward was hostile to the Irish language as an obstacle to the conversion of the Irish Catholics:

The third Impediment mentioned, is the want of an [sic] universal use of the English Tongue. This is a matter of infinite moment; and in every point of view extremely to be regretted. The difference of Language is a bar of Separation between Descendants of the Irish and English, which too much pains [sic] cannot be employed to remove. It obstructs Religion; it embarrasses Civil intercourse; it prevents cordial Union (Woodward 1787, 90).¹¹

Brooke would rather think that the appreciation of Irish could contribute to a more desirable form of "cordial Union," even though she did not go so far as to propose the preservation of Irish as a living language.

Jacobite poetry provided the best example of the living tradition of personify-

10 According to Walker, the Nugents took the land from Carolan's ancestors. Walker did not mention how Carolan may have considered this fact. See Brooke's quotation from Walker (Brooke 1816, 299–301).

11 It is likely that Brooke knew this pamphlet and basically accepted its contention, but her use of "cordial union" in the next quotation seems to have slightly different connotations.

ing Ireland as a woman, but its message was deeply anti-British. The *Reliques* had no room for such a sentiment, as Brooke's aim was to achieve "cordial union between two countries" by introducing the Irish muse to the British muse (Brooke 1816, cxxxiii–vxxxvi).¹² Accordingly, the *Reliques* is marked by Brooke's endeavor to correct the savage image of the Irish. After repeated battles between the native Irish and the English in 17th-century Ireland, British historians tended to exaggerate the number of English settlers killed in Ireland, and thus subscribed to the view that the Irish were barbarians.

The Anglo-Irish as a whole searched for ways to overcome the English or British prejudice against Ireland, as they wished to pursue economic and political interests on equal terms with the British. Among the Anglo-Irish prevailed a notion of a patriot as one who strove to achieve their common political goal. This fell short of Brooke's ideal, as Brooke regarded being "disinterested" as a prerequisite for a patriot:

The productions of our Irish Bards exhibit a glow of cultivated genius, – a spirit of elevated heroism, – sentiments of pure honor, – instances of disinterested patriotism, – and manners of a degree of refinement, totally astonishing, at a period when the rest of Europe was nearly sunk in barbarism. (Brooke 1816, cxxxiii)

While Brooke seems to be referring to the remote past, it is unlikely that she was ignorant of the contested ideas of patriotism in 18th-century Britain and Ireland. She was among those who sought to define the role of a patriot in universal terms.

12 Brooke's proposal of "cordial union" has been often quoted (Kiberd 619–620; Wright 336; Welch 36). It is hardly possible to know whether Brooke had any concrete idea of "union" on a political level, but it is speculated that the Act of Union in 1800 was far from Brooke's ideal (Kiberd 304–305).

According to Leersen, "in the calmer decades of the early-to-middle eighteenth century" there was a concept of the patriot which carried "a less party-political meaning." In this sense, a patriot was distinguished by "disinterested service to one's country" and was almost synonymous with a "good citizen," namely, "the loyal, responsible member of society." Leersen further states that "Bishop Berkeley gave a studiously neutral (but tellingly non-national) definition of 'a Patriot' when he said that it was 'one who heartily wisheth the public prosperity, and doth not only wish, but also study and endeavor to promote it' " (Leersen 10).

Despite her claim about the civilized Irish, Brooke did not insist that there was nothing savage and violent in the Ireland of her time. It must be that Brooke fully recognized the on-going atrocious violence in Ireland at that time. In order to oppose rent and Tithes the Whiteboys and Rightboys attacked the Protestant landowners and clergymen. It was in 1787, two years before the publication of the *Reliques*, that Dominick Trant accused the Whiteboys of rebellious behaviors in his pamphlet *Considerations on the Present Disturbances in the Province of Munster*. On the same year, Charles Woodward in *The Present State of the Church of Ireland* expressed his deep anxiety about the future of Protestant churches and clergymen in Ireland under the threat of violent Catholics. Trant defines the "True Patriot legislator" as one who endeavours to maintain the social stability by upholding law and order (Trant 60).

Brooke surely shared their desire for peace and social stability. Behind her aim to promote "cordial union" between Britain and Ireland lies her hope for the end of the conflict between the Anglo-Irish and native Irish. However, unlike Trant and Woodward she does not blame only Catholics, as she says:

were we less barbarians, when torn with civil broils, and foreign invasions, than when we were a conquering and flourishing people ? (Brooke 1816, 84)

The implication is that compared to the civilized ancient Irish found in old literature, "we" Irish, whether Protestant or Catholic, would seem more barbarous. In view of forceful suppression of rebellious acts by authority in the name of law and order (Donnelly 24), the savageness was clearly not exclusive to those Catholics whose acts clashed with the Anglo-Irish interest.

In sharp contrast with the notion that Irish blood was responsible for savageness Brooke had high respect for the Irish race. On the premise that "our veins" contain both Irish and British blood, Brooke insists that British blood is "rather ennobled than disgraced by the mingling tides that descended from our heroic ancestors" (Brooke 1816, cxxxiv). Brooke's idea that the Irish muse is "an elder sister" of the British muse is not a mere metaphor but is related to her claim of actual kinship between the two countries (Brooke 1816, cxxxiii–vxxxvi).¹³ She also believes that the native Irish and the Anglo-Irish share "heroic ancestors" as represented in heroic poems in the *Reliques*. This is why she attempts to redress the prejudice against the whole people of Ireland.

Between peace and revolution

The first set of two poems in the *Reliques* highlights the disaster of killing among blood relatives. The poem "Conloch," followed by "The Lamentation of Cucullin over the body of his Son Conloch," presents the story of the Celtic hero Cucullin's killing Conloch without knowing that he is his own son. They would not have fought with each other if they had known the tragic outcome.

The cause of this most unnatural fight is one focal point of the story. It is

13 Cox justified the British (Anglo-Irish) rule in Ireland on the basis of the blood relationship between the Irish and British (O'Halloran 2006, 600–601).

Conloch's mother Aife who is blamed for having instigated the fight between her son and his father out of malice. What characterizes Brooke's version is Conloch's accusation of his mother's "lying tale" and "deceit" (Brooke 1816, 23). The point of emphasis is that Conloch's enmity for his father is falsely aroused. In that Aife's "lying tale" about Cuchulain serves to nurture hostility, its effect parallels the potential of historical writings and political songs to enhance bias and hatred.

In her translation of "Ode to Gaul" the word "peace" is repeated seven times (Brooke 1816, 200, 201, 203, 206, 207), while it appears only once in the original poem. In the ode, two Irish chieftains, Finn and Gaul, are on the verge of fighting, and a poet keeps trying to stop them. Brooke adds the phrase "people's voice" that asks for reconciliation (Brooke 1816, 200), creating a subtle implication that it is not people but leaders who are responsible for the violation of social stability. The crash is narrowly avoided, and the poem ends in peace.

Brooke's firm opposition to domestic conflict comes out strongly in her introduction to the first ode in the *Reliques* "War Ode to Osgur, the Son of Oisín, in the front of the Battle of Gabhra." Osgur was leading a small band of the Fenni, the Irish defense army, during the absence of their chief, Finn. The Battle was the Fenni's fight against Ireland's chief Monarch, which ends in their total destruction. Brooke does not take sides with either, stating that "the fault most likely was mutual, and both parties severely suffered for it" (Brooke 1816, 176). It is not difficult to assume her restrained sense of regret about the war especially in view of her note that clarifies the blood relationships between the King Cairbre and those who opposed him (Brooke 1816, 189).

The selection of the poem can nevertheless indicate the endorsement of resistance by those in an unfavorable position against those in power. The speaker of the poem, the bard, whom Brooke considers to be Fergus, is on the side of the Fenni and is trying to heighten the morale of Osgur. Contrary to the neutral stance

that Brooke takes in the introduction, the poem is followed by her note that elaborates Osgur's claim for justice. It reveals that Osgur felt "the gross injustice and ingratitude with which they had been treated by the Monarch" even though "they and their predecessors had been the guardians of the nation, protecting its harbours, and repelling its invaders; and also increasing its glory by the splendor of foreign conquests, and the rich trophies of foreign tributes to its power" (Brooke 1816, 190). This is most likely to arouse readers' sympathy toward the Fenni.

The position of the Fenni finds its equivalent in the Irish society of Brooke's time. In that Fenni fight against the injustice of the authoritative power, their stance is close to that of the Irish Catholics who protested against oppression from the colonial rule. We can also find that the cause of the Fenni's resentment against the High King closely resembles the Anglo-Irish complaint against the British Empire. At the heart of the Anglo-Irish discontent was a sense of unfairness that their sacrifice was not rewarded enough (Bartlett 73). They felt that the Empire had exploited them in the course of the expansion of colonial territory. As the Empire eventually came to demand military support not only from the Anglo-Irish but also from the Irish Catholics, they could unite together against the imperial exploitation.

The heroic poem "The Chase" is a far cry from Jacobite poems, in that a woman who seeks help from the heroes turns out to be an enemy. Worthy of notice are two notes that are rather outside of the context of the poem but serve to hint at Brooke's sympathy with Jacobite tradition. In one note, Brooke states that the role of a patriot is to fight for "lives" and "laws" against "foreign invaders" (Brooke 1816, 124–125) rather than devoting oneself to religious duties like Oisín, the narrator of the poem. Brooke blames warriors who willingly turned to religious duties and discarded the defense of Ireland, but in the poem Oisín is rather resentful toward God and obviously does not choose a religious life of his own accord. It

can be speculated that Brookes takes an opportunity to reveal her approval of fighting against oppression and injustice.¹⁴

The other note is in accord with Brooke's stress on a hero's role to serve "the injured and the oppressed." She celebrates the personality of the central hero, Finn, quoting the part where he asks the lady, "Is it the husband of thy youth, / O fair-one, that has died?" that follows his questioning her about the cause of her "distress." Among Finn's virtues to be noted here, Brooke includes "the firmness of the patriot" (Brooke 1816, 136). Her idealistic vision of a chivalrous patriot finds its roots in ancient Irish literature where "no danger or difficulty was to deter a hero from the assistance of a distressed female, and her request was to be a law" (Brooke 1816, 10). Ironically, the woman to whom Finn gives a helping hand turns out to be a malicious fairy.

The main plot of "The Chase" testifies to the power of unity against a common enemy. The warriors of the Fenni are united to rescue their deceived leader Finn, after suppressing the defiant one among members that dares to go against Finn. The theme is seen as having had a political resonance in the Ireland of the time when the unity among the Irish was required to overcome the colonial power.¹⁵ The poem was reprinted in the first Irish language periodical *Bolg an tSolair* (1795) which had a strong connection to a revolutionary organization, the United Irishmen.

14 O'Halloran claims that "Brooke's emphasis on patriotism and military heroism struck a chord with United Irishmen in the 1790s" (O'Halloran 2004, 121-122).

15 Thuente speculates that the poem had strong appeal to the Irish trying to protest against the colonial domination of Ireland as it demonstrated the significance of being united against the common enemy (Thuente 94).

Search for an ideal union

The fourth heroic poem "Moira Borb" is a story of fighting to save a beautiful woman who is harassed by the aggressive approach of a foreign prince named Moira Borb. Like Ireland in Jacobite poems, the lady in the poem seeks the help of Irish heroes. Brooke's translation reflects her awareness of the points shared by this poem and Jacobite poetry.

While both the original and Brooke's versions feature the outstanding beauty of the lady, it is only in the latter that Finn describes her as "distrest" and "opprest":

Say, wherefore, loveliest! art thou thus distrest?
Whom do'st thou fly? — by whom art thou opprest? (Brooke 2016, 150)¹⁶

The state of the lady reflects that of the Irish suffering under colonization. Brooke's quotation from Walker's *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* indicates how "the native composers" were "distressed" because of the persecution in the course of colonization (Brooke 1816, 292; Walker 127).¹⁷ According to Walker, the bards were often persecuted "together with their patrons by the sword of Oppression" (Walker 125).

In one translation of "Jacobite relics" collected by James Hardiman, Ireland appears as a woman "oppressed" by English or British "churls":

16 For the original see Ni Mhughhaile 57.

17 A general consensus is that Joseph Cooper Walker and his *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* greatly affected Brooke's *Reliques*.

<p>Is fada mé a g-cúmhaidh gan tnúth le túrma go dúbh-chroidheach, tréith-lag, tláith, gan treóir</p>	<p>Too long have the churls in dark bondage oppressed me, Too long have I cursed them in anguish and gloom. (Irish Minstrelsy II 32–33)</p>
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The original lines lack the exact equivalent of the English word “oppressed.” It seems that the state of being oppressed and depressed came to be regarded as the general mood that permeated the colonized Ireland.

Another phrase that Brooke adds to the poem is “hateful union” that refers to the relationship that Borb is enforcing on the woman (Brooke 1816, 152):

Then spoke my Osgur, Erin’s lovely boast,
Pride of her fame, and glory of her host!
With generous zeal his youthful bosom glow’d
His fervent speech with rapid ardour flow’d
“Fear not, (he cry’d) no power shall force thee hence;
“My arm, my life, O maid! is thy defence!
“No hateful union shall thy vows compel,
“Nor shalt thou with the dreadful Sora dwell!” (Brooke 1816, 151–152)

The image of the most unwelcome state of unity reminds us of the way the British colonization of Ireland is presented as the imposition of a sexual union on Ireland like the “rape and abduction” in Jacobite poetry (Nic Eoin 18). Furthermore, Brooke adds a phrase “Erin’s lovely boast” to address Osgur’s being enraged at Borb’s attempt at forcing a “hateful union,” and this serves to clarify Osgar’s role as a protector of Ireland.¹⁸ The union demanded by Borb is far from the “cordial

18 “Erin’s lovely boast” is reminiscent of Henry Brooke’s “Erin’s hope” and “Erin’s strength” in his work “Conrade” (Henry Brooke 395, 403). Erin (Eire) is a place name

union" that Brooke advocates. Brooke was deeply aware that the state of a "union" could not always be a desirable one.

"Moira Borb" has two marked differences from Jacobite poetry as well. Firstly, while Jacobite poems present England as an incarnation of evil, there is some ambiguity in the presentation of the enemy, Moira Borb. It is true that Borb is a violent villain, but he is still depicted as a good-looking noble man:

<p>Bhí néull flatha, is rosg ríoghda fo an fhíor sháimh fa caoimh cruth, maith ashnúadh, fa geal a dhéud ba luaithe astéud no gach sruth.</p>	<p>There was the aspect of a chief and regal eyes, on the true mind [man] of beautiful shape. Fair his face, and white his teeth. His steed was swifter than every stream. (Ní Mhunghaile 59.)</p>
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Brook's version presents Borb's height as "monstrous" (Brooke 1816, 152) and his face as "dreadful" (Brooke 1816, 154), but it should not be missed that there is something "princely" in his movement (Brooke 1816, 153). As a natural response to Borb's respectability, the Fenni show the utmost respect for Borb after he was killed in the battle. This is in accord with Brooke's repeated celebration of chivalrous attitudes among the ancient Irish toward their enemies.¹⁹ Their justice to

↳ for Ireland as well as a name of Ireland as a woman. It is sometimes hard to distinguish between them in such lines as "all true-born sons of Erin" and "Long may he flourish, and Erin nourish such saplings by the Onnabuoy" (Croker 10, 157). A personification is clear in "When Erin awakes, and her fetters are broken" (Croker 194). In *Aisling* or Jacobite tradition in general, both Erin and Eire largely refer to a woman symbolical of Ireland. See Hardiman. The tradition of personifying Ireland as "Erin" culminates in William Drennan's ballad "Erin," published in 1795 (Thuente 239).

19 Brooke 1816, 77, 83-84, 119, 121, 138, 139. Brooke makes the point that even "the writers of a nation" that were "bitter enemies" of the Irish remarked "a spirit of honor" and "a natural rectitude of mind" as characteristics of the Irish. One of the comments quoted by Brooke is that by Sir John Davis who claims that "there is no nation under

enemies proves their impartial mind.

Only in Brooke's translation Borb's eye looks "imperial" and evokes a sense of "terror," marking the role of the Empire projected onto him. At the same time, it is also true that "imperial" here conveys nuances similar to "princely" as well. In one of the songs included in the *Reliques*, "imperial" conveys only positive nuances such as noble and royal (Brooke 1816, 320).

The other notable difference from Jacobite poetry is that "Moirá Borb" contains a critical view of fighting for one woman. The poem ends with a deep sense of lament over the shedding of many brave heroes' blood on both sides, blaming the woman for the tragedy. By noting similarities between this poem and Jacobite poetry that Brooke's translation sets in high relief, we can also see their meaningful disparities.

The respect toward an enemy ends in an ideal union between opposing parties in the heroic poem "Magnus the Great." The poem deals with the battle between the Danes and the Fenni. The end of the poem sees a peaceful reconciliation between the Fenni and the invaders. The defeated Magnus is even invited to stay in Ireland. Brooke amplifies Finn's magnanimity toward Magnus, and adds Finn's proposal that they will "unite" together "in peace" rather than keep fighting (Brooke 1816, 68).

Brooke's original work *Mäon: an Irish Tale* placed at the end of the *Reliques* explores the theme of an ideal unity as well as the role of a patriot in such a way as to project her political concerns. While its central theme is the recovery of the rightful kingship that is often advocated in Jacobite poems, Brooke's *Mäon* is

↳ the sun that love equal and *indifferent* justice better than the Irish" (Italics are mine) (Brooke 1816, 211).

based on an event that is supposed to have taken place in the 4th century.²⁰ According to Brooke's introduction to the tale, a bard named Craftine appears in her dream and encourages her to give *Mäon* to the world, saying, "Muse commands thee to go" (Brooke 1816, 341).²¹ The presence of the Muse is felt throughout the story.

The basic outline of the story goes as follows. Mäon is a grandson of the Irish King. When he is still an infant, his uncle kills his father together with the King and usurps the throne. Mäon is brought to Munster, a kingdom situated in the south of Ireland, and raised there together with Moriat, the daughter of the Munster king. After he goes to France, Moriat dispatches a bard there with her song to urge Mäon to avenge his murdered father and grandfather.

The tale comes to a climax at Moriat's song dedicated to Mäon.²² This is Brooke's version of *Aisling*. Like *Aisling*, which conveys a wish for the return of the Stuart prince from over the sea, the Muse demands Mäon, the legitimate heir to the Irish crown exiled in France, to come back to Ireland.

The song as a whole conveys the "Muse's strain" (Brooke 1816, 363), namely the cry of the suffering Muse, which corresponds to the groan of "struggling Erin" (Brooke 1816, 341) heard at the outset of the tale. The Muse's distress is due to

20 For Brooke's sources see the works by Ferdinando Warner, Sylvester O'Halloran, Joseph Cooper Walker, and Geoffrey Keating. Compared to the 19th century onward, there were not many literary works that took themes directly from Irish legends in the 18th century except Henry Brooke's "Conrade" and Georges Howard's *The Siege of Tamor* (1773).

21 Critics have noted here the reversal of gender roles in *Aisling*, where a male poet receives a message from a woman (Leith 1994, 39; Ní Mhunchaile 157).

22 Most of Brooke's source materials refer to Moriat's song but do not provide the song itself. The versions by Warner and Walker hint that the song is inspired by her love for Mäon but is meant to ignite his will to fight and take revenge.

Erin's great misery, and they are almost identical with each other. The Muse calls Mäon's attention to her "ruin'd land" with "the prostrate wall" and "the blood-staine'd field" that is his "bleeding country" suffering because of the murder of the Irish King. Similarly Jacobite poetry equates the death of the rightful king with the destruction of the whole land.²³

The Muse urges Mäon to think of Erin's "slaughter'd sons" and "captive sires" who are also his "slaughter'd race" (Brooke 1816, 363). The murdered Irish King and his son seem to represent all those unjustly persecuted and killed among the Irish race. From around the middle of the poem the dead King implores, "See Erin's dying Princes press the ground / See gasping patriots bleed around / See thy grandsire's closing eye!" (Brooke 1816, 364–365). The King not only reenacts the scene of the murder but also gives witness to those tormented by injustice and oppression at the very moment. The suffering of the race is not yet over.

The lamentation for Erin's sons and princes resonates with Jacobite poetry. Egan O'Rahilly's poem "The Ruin that Befell the Great Families of Erin [Ar milleadh d'imthig air mhór-shleachtaibh na h-Erionn]" presents Ireland as a widow, and the poet grieves for "[a] land in anguish, drained of her brave men! [Tír is craidhte tráighte tréan-fhir!])" (O'Rahilly 8–9) and "[a] land without a husband, without a son, without a spouse [Tír gan fear, gan mac, gan céile]" (O'Rahilly 6–7).²⁴

Moriat's song lacks a vision of happy marriage between the woman representing Ireland and a hero. The position of Ireland in the song runs parallel to that of

23 Examples can be seen in the poems of Egan O'Rahilly.

24 The tradition of *Aisling* has its limit. Louis Cullen has pointed out that when O'Rahilly deplores that great houses are in ruin and Erin has lost her husband and son, he does grieve for the fall of his patrons but he may not necessarily take into account the situation of the poor ordinary people.

Moriat. She does not compose the song for the fulfilment of her love. To stress the point, Brooke introduces into the original story a new character, the daughter of the King of France, Aide, as a candidate for Mäon's queen. Moriat gives up Mäon, considering he should marry the princess in order to secure French support for defeating the usurper in Ireland. According to the Bard, the marriage makes France and Ireland "joint empire" and their "united power" will bring about the expansion of France as an empire (Brooke 1816, 368). The Bard takes Moriat's self-sacrifice as a proof of her "patriot virtue" (Brooke 1816, 377).

The Bard detects "sublime emotions" in Moriat who demands the same patriotic love of Mäon. According to Moriat, Mäon's role as patriot is to follow what "Erin's woes demand," that is, to sacrifice everything to save the Irish under the tyrannical rule (Brooke 1816, 359). In her view, it is a "shame" if Mäon is not ready to give up his attachment to her for the noble cause of saving Ireland, as the welfare of the country must come before private happiness.

What sets Brooke's Mäon apart from Jacobite poetry is its proposal of a unique image of "union." The French princess, Aide, calls Moriat "the sister of my soul" and proposes that they are not rivals but should joyfully "join in union sweet / and ever lasting love." Prompted by a sense of sisterhood, Aide determines not to let Moriat sacrifice herself, even though they do not directly know each other. In that Brooke compares the relationship between the Irish muse and the British muse to that of sisters, the bond between Moriat and Aide parallels an ideal union between Ireland and Britain in Brooke's view.

Mäon never thinks of discarding Moriat for the sake of Ireland, probably because he does not separate the two. For him, to fight for Ireland is to fight for Moriat. Soon after Mäon addresses Ireland, "O Erin! that I hold thee dear . . ." (Brooke 1816, 373), he calls Moriat the "sov'reign" of his heart (Brooke 1816, 374), and asks her to "consecrate" his throne (Brooke 1816, 384). It seems that Moriat

takes the place of Erin as a goddess of sovereignty, but she can never be identical with Ireland. Moriat belongs to Munster, which is an ancient kingdom of Ireland, but is not regarded to be the center of Ireland in the context of the story. Symbolically or realistically, Moriat is not entitled to any political power. It is only Mäon who regards her as a guardian of his throne. Her true worth lies in her being a living individual woman rather than in any symbolical status.

In the tradition of Jacobite poems, too, a central role is sometimes attributed to a living woman instead of an Irish goddess symbolical of land or country. In some cases a woman dares to deny herself to be any legendary beauty or goddess, and insists on being a poor ordinary woman with such names as Síle, Mórín or Cailín (Nic Eoin 21).²⁵ As a representative of distressed Irish Catholics, she demands the liberation of suffering common people.

Brooke's attempt at an original version of *Aisling* reflects her exploration of ideal roles of a patriot. A true patriot is marked by his or her disinterested dedication to Ireland as well as to the oppressed. In place of Ireland as a woman to be saved Moriat comes to the fore, and sets the pattern for such an ideal patriot.

Conclusion

In Jacobite poetry the relationship between Britain and Ireland often appears as the former's enforcement of a sexual union on the latter. The *Reliques* testifies to Brooke's deep concerns about the construction of a better relationship between the two kingdoms, Ireland and Britain. It also gives us clues as to what attracted Brooke most in Jacobite poems. Brooke's selection of the poems, her translations

25 "Síle Ní Dhadhra" appears as "Sheela na Guire" in the English translation (Hardiman 54–63).

and notes reveal her ideal of a patriot, which indicates her possible sympathy with revolutionary nationalism. To speak for Ireland through the *Reliques* means for Brooke not to promote an interest of any particular party or political position but to side with those who are forced to be in an unjustly unfavorable position.

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