The Man Beneath the Painting:
A Historical and Technical Investigation of Henry John Dobson and *Burns Grace* (c. 1910)
Laura Turco and Laura House

Fig. 1: H. J. Dobson, *Burns Grace* (c. 1910). Nottingham City Museums. 101.6 x 127 cm

Introduction

The Conservation and Technology and Art History Departments at The Courtauld Institute of Art carried out a joint technical and art historical investigation into the artist Henry John Dobson, a prominent Scottish artist in his own time who has been overlooked by art history. His twentieth century genre painting, *Burns Grace* (Fig. 1) served as a case study for contextualizing Dobson's life and work. The painting came from Nottingham City Museums for conservation treatment, and its technical study was undertaken simultaneously, offering various insights into this little-known artist and the complexities of the painting. Using the combined knowledge promoted by the interdisciplinary exchange between art historians and conservators, Dobson's life and work have been unmasked and his materials and techniques revealed. The study also succeeded in establishing a previously undocumented influence and rationale for the dissemination of Dobson's work abroad. This report will explore the life of Henry John Dobson, his influences, patrons, and oeuvre, and how these contributed to the formation of *Burns Grace*: through composition, materials, and techniques.

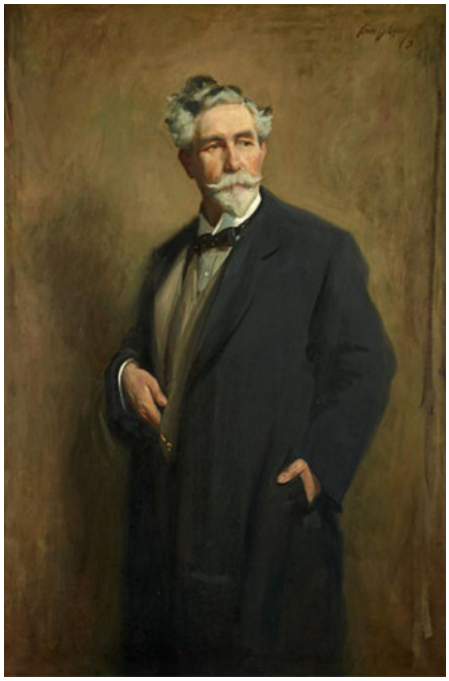


Fig. 2: Cowan Dobson, *Henry John Dobson* (1923). National Galleries of Scotland. 137.8 x 91.7 cm.

Dobson's Biography

Henry John Dobson was born in 1858 in Peeblesshire to parents Rebecca and Thomas Dobson. Little is known about Dobson's early childhood, apart from the fact that his father was a wool merchant.[1] Dobson chose to become a painter and received his professional training at the Trustees Academy School of Design in Edinburgh.[2] It has been speculated that Dobson's choice was not supported by his family, and that his father may have in fact disowned him.[3] Dobson also studied at the Royal Scottish Academy, and he began exhibiting his work with the RSA in 1880. In 1890, he was admitted as a member of the Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour. In the same year, he married Jeanie Charlotte Hannah Cowan in Ayreshire. Together they raised four children, two of whom followed in their father's footsteps to become successful painters.[4] In 1906, Dobson was inducted as an associate member of the Royal Cambrian Society, obtaining full membership in 1920.

Over the duration of his career, Dobson painted portraits, landscapes, anatomical sketches and religious anecdotes. However, the artist achieved the most consistent success with his genre subjects. A close study of relevant exhibition catalogues suggests that it was in the 1890s when Dobson began almost exclusively to paint genres scenes that depicted Scottish rural life. This was also around the time when his career gained peak momentum. In these paintings, Dobson depicts domestic interior scenes that evoke feelings of kinship, humility, and quiet contemplation. In an initial survey of Dobson's works, it is evident that the painter employed the same compositional elements in many of his genre paintings that are found in *Burns Grace*, including specific domestic props (such as the bowl, spoon, tam 'o shanter cap, and cat), the position of his figures, and the general setting (Fig. 3).

Dobson remained in Edinburgh for the majority of his artistic career. In 1900, he exhibited with Alexander Kellock Brown at the Scottish Gallery.[5] In

[1] Cabris, E. 'The Life and Work of Henry Raeburn Dobson (1901-83),' in *The British Art Journal*. Vol. 9, No. 3. Spring 2009. 70.

[2] Cabris 70.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid. David Cowan Dobson and Henry Raeburn Dobson both became professional artist. Henry Raeburn was inducted as a member of the Royal Cambrian Academy in 1922.

[5] Halsby, J. *Scottish Watercolours, 1740-1940*. London: Batsford, 1986. 256.

Fig. 3: H. J. Dobson, *A Good Read* (Date unknown). Private collection.

1905, he contributed illustrations to a book written by William Sanderson, titled *Scottish Life and Character*. Dobson achieved a significant milestone in 1911, when he was invited to travel to the United States and Canada as a visiting artist. During this trip, Dobson was presented with a gold medal in recognition of his work.[6] Following his return to Scotland, Dobson achieved a high-profile sale when his work *The Sabbath Hat* was purchased by Newcastle Corporation Tramways in 1913.[7]

Dobson's output was steady over the forty years he worked as a painter. He exhibited at least 122 paintings with numerous institutions, including the Royal Academy and Royal Scottish Academy, before he died in Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire in 1928.

Artistic Trends in Victorian Scotland

Although Dobson is rarely referenced in any art historical texts, his working practices reflect broader artistic trends taking place in 19th century Scotland. Dobson, like many of his contemporaries, found inspiration in the Scottish Highlands, which were regarded as the site of the country's cultural identity in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Thanks in part to the romantic writings of Sir Walter Scott and the wealth of Scottish song championed by the poet Robert Burns, the Highlands were viewed as being founded on bonds of kinship and equality.[8]

This romanticised view was solidified during the reign of Queen Victoria, a monarch who invested wholesale in Scotland's Highland identity by manufacturing a touristic pageantry of 'traditional' Scottish culture during her annual visits to Balmoral Castle.[9]

Unsurprisingly, paintings served as key vehicles for the dissemination of these nationalistic ideas. The humble portrayal of rural Scotland evolved into an entire artistic movement known as 'Highlandism' and helped give rise to the wider belief that the Scots are an inherently open, mobile and communal people.[10] Although there are countless examples of paintings that capture the sublime beauty and drama of the Scottish glens and mountains, Dobson's work follows a different strategy wherein

[6] 'Henry John Dobson.' *National Library of Scotland*. 1 Dec. 2007. <https://doi-org.nls.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ww/9780199540884.013.U195656>. Accessed 12 Jan, 2018.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Morrison, J. Painting the Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting, 1800-1920. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003. 10.

[9] Morrison 148.

[10] Morrison 100.

Scottish identity is expressed through modest interior scenes.

The style was embraced by a number of artists including David Wilkie and Thomas Faed (Fig. 4). Their presentation of rural Scottish identity adopted a particular aesthetic with the influence of modern Dutch and French paintings in the mid-19th century. Scottish painters found resonance in works that were arriving from France and Holland (particularly The Hague School), as all three countries possessed a strong national tradition of rural life.[11] Traces of these complex ideas and influences are evident in a work such as *Burns Grace*.

Fig. 4: Thomas Faed, *When the Day is Done* (c. 1870). Private Collection. 118.1 x 152.4 cm

Dobson's Artistic Heritage

Dobson's keen awareness of broader art historical trends and influences is evident in a particular lecture he delivered during his 1911 trip to the United States. In this lecture (titled 'Scottish Art'), Dobson provides a sweeping overview of Scottish art history spanning from the 12th to the 19th centuries, and includes a notable mention of another Scottish artist, George Paul Chalmers. He includes a personal anecdote, sharing that one of his first memories from school was hearing about Chalmers' untimely death.[12] Chalmers died in Edinburgh at the age of 55 as the result of a tragic mugging.[13] Dobson and Chalmers both attended the Trustees Academy in Edinburgh and would likely have overlapped, as Dobson was 20 years old and living in Edinburgh at the time of Chalmers' death.

Dobson praises Chalmers' talents as an artist, singling out *The Legend* (1864-1878) as his masterpiece (Fig. 5). He then includes another key anecdote, stating, 'I may say that the old woman in [Chalmers'] picture of the legend was one of my first models and acted for me in this capacity for about eight years.'[14] A comparison of the figures in Dobson's genre paintings and those in Chalmers' works reveals numerous areas of overlap and similarity. The elderly woman in Chalmers's *The Legend* bears an uncanny resemblance to the elderly woman in *Burns Grace* and in so many other of Dobson's genre paintings (Figs. 6-7). When placed together, the women's white bonnets with blue ribbons and tartan shawls share resemblance in

[11] Morrison 153.

[12] Dobson, H.J. *Scottish Art.* Red Oak: The Thos. D. Murphy Co., 1921. 61.

[13] McEwan, P. 'George Paul Chalmers,' in *Dictionary of Scottish Art and Architecture*. London: Antique Collectors' Club, 1994. 123.

[14] Dobson 62.

Fig. 5: George Paul Chalmers, *The Legend* (c. 1864-78), National Galleries of Scotland. 130.5 x 180.3 cm.

Dobson's work, *Granny's Blessing*, and Chalmers' work, *Gossip* (Figs. 8-9). In Edward Pinnington's biography of George Paul Chalmers (1896), the name of Dobson's and Chalmers' shared sitter is recorded as Mrs. Jackson.[15] She lived in Edinburgh and was recruited by Chalmers' landlady. In 'Scottish Art,' Dobson also adds that he later owned the glasses worn by the old woman when she sat for Chalmers to paint *The Legend*.[16]

The setting in which the women are seated in *Granny's Blessing* and *Gossip* is also strikingly similar, suggesting that Dobson and Chalmers shared a visual vocabulary. This is particularly noticeable in Chalmers' work, *Asleep*, which features a four-paned window that is almost identical to that included in *Burns Grace* (Fig. 10). The windowsill, table, and bowl in Dobson's paintings are reminiscent of the compositional elements seen in *Asleep*.

In a study for *The Legend,* Chalmers rendered the interior of a cottage at Haughend in Glenesk, which bears an uncanny resemblance to the interior that is so consistent in Dobson's work (Fig. 11). Artist David Waterson painted an image of the exterior of this

[15] Pinnington, E. *George Paul Chalmers and the Art of His Time*. Glasgow: T & R Annan and Sons, 1896. 118.

[16] Dobson, 63.




Figs. 6-9: G. P. Chalmers, *The Legend* (detail); *Burns Grace* (detail); *Gossip* (detail); H.J. Dobson, *Granny's Blessing* (detail)

cottage, which still exists today between Aberdeen and Dundee Perhaps Dobson also used it as a model for his own settings, but this is only a hypothesis. Chalmers was also notorious for never completing compositions, as he was a stubborn perfectionist. He spent fourteen years working on his masterpiece *The Legend*, and his tragic death prevented it from ever being completed.[17] Pinnington's biography of Chalmers records that the painting was 'modified by rubbing out, repainting, and sometimes radical alterations.'[18] The nature of this reworking meant that Chalmers made many changes, another area of similarity also observed in Dobson's working methods.

Fig. 10: G. P. Chalmers, *Asleep* (1871). Private collection.

Chalmers used primarily primary colours in a manner similar to observations of the ways in which Dobson constructed his paintings. Evidence would suggest that Dobson was greatly influenced by Chalmers. It is possible to suggest that Dobson was formally connected with Chalmers in some way, perhaps as an apprentice or student.

[17] Pinnington 122.

[18] Ibid.

Fig. 11: G. P. Chalmers, Study for *The Legend* (c. 1864). National Galleries of Scotland.

The Story of *Burns Grace*

In *Burns Grace*, Dobson paints an elderly man and woman pausing in a moment of silent prayer before a meal. Both figures bow their heads in respectful piety while the woman holds an object, possibly a piece of fruit, in her hands. The man holds a tartan "tam o' shanter" cap in his left hand, while his right hand hovers above the bowl and spoon laid on the round table. On the table are a blue ceramic pitcher, a plate, and a spoon. The plate and spoon are presumably set for the elderly woman, but the position of the utensils is slightly ambiguous and could perhaps suggest that the table has been set for a third individual. Underneath the table, a calico cat licks a bowl of cream, while the lowered position of its head echoes the postures of the couple. Light streams through the window in the left corner of the scene, revealing a deep windowsill, with a small framed picture or mirror hanging on the wall. Behind the man, a cloth sack decorates the wall.

When discussing this painting, it is important to consider how the condition of the painting affects its interpretation. This painting before treatment has many conservation concerns. It has structural issues, specifically the failing tacking margins that are causing many undulations in the canvas and areas of flaking paint. The varnish is significantly under-saturating in many areas, leaving large areas of matte paint that make it nearly impossible to view the underlying composition. There is a thick layer of surface dirt that has considerably darkened the painting. There are also large drying cracks that interrupt forms and figures. Through technical study, aspects of this painting that were unrealized at first glance have been revealed. The image of *Burns Grace* included in this report shows the painting in mid-treatment, following the application of a saturating varnish. Further work will be undertaken on the painting which will slightly alter its current appearance (Fig. 1).

The subject of *Burns Grace* is in fact an illustration of the 18th century blessing made famous by Scottish poet Robert Burns. It is also referred to as 'The Selkirk Grace':

Some hae meat and canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it,
But we hae meat and we can eat,
Sae let the Lord be Thankit![19]

Although 'The Selkirk Grace' is attributed to Robert Burns, a version of his stanza was already known in the 17th century as 'The Galloway Grace' or 'The Covenanters' Grace' and was traditionally said

[19] Burns, R. 'The Selkirk Grace.' *Rampant Scotland*. Accessed 31 May 2018.

in Lallans, which is the Lowland Scots dialect.[20] Historically, Burns is said to have delivered an extemporaneous version at a dinner given by the Earl of Selkirk. The Grace is still recited at Burns Suppers today.

An inscription bearing 'The Selkirk Grace' appears on the back of the painting in the same Lowland Scots dialect. The entire poem is inscribed in graphite on the centre of the upper stretcher bar in cursive handwriting.

Dobson repeatedly used the poems of Robert Burns as a source of inspiration for his exhibited works. Burns contributed a rich quantity of literary source-material to artists of the 19th century, and his narrative poem, 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' proved to be one of the most popular of all poetic subjects.[21] Dobson later painted a work specifically titled *The Cotter's Saturday Night* that featured in the 1896 Glasgow Burns Exhibition, which celebrated the centenary of Burns' death. Dobson cites other Burns poems in works such as *The Gloamin'* (1891), *The Cup that Cheers* (1898), and *John Anderson, My Jo* (1901).

Materials and Technique: Dobson's Process of Making

When viewing his paintings, it initially appears as if Dobson was an artist who did not employ a broad range of colours. His paintings feature mostly brown and muted warm tones. Within the scheme of his other paintings, the palette used in *Burns Grace* initially appeared to be inconsistently darker.

Fig. 12: Photomicrograph of streaks of colour in *Burns Grace* (detail from upper window).

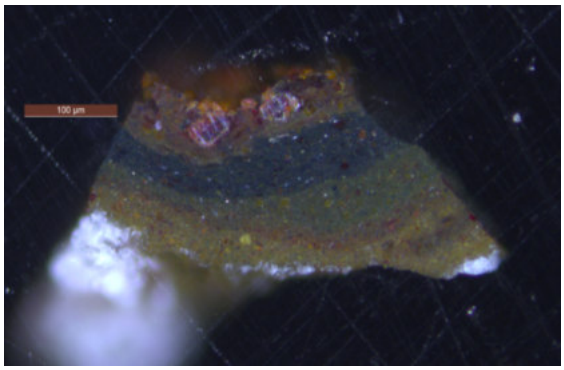


Fig. 13: Cross section from upper right corner of *Burns Grace*, showing layer structure.

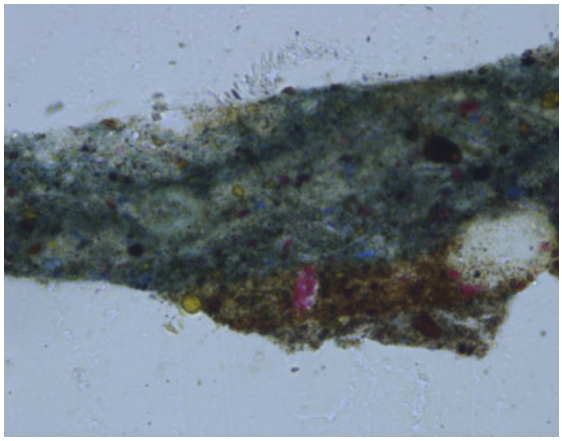


Fig. 14: Thin section from *Burns Grace*, showing cobalt blue, yellow ochre and a lake pigment.

[20] Clarke, D. and V. Remington. *Scottish Artists 1750-1900: From Caledonia to the Continent*. London: Royal Collection Trust, 2015. 96.

[21] Ibid.

However, a closer look and a little surface cleaning revealed that *Burns Grace* actually showcases a rich spectrum of hues, and Dobson was more liberal with his use of colour then previously realized.

Bright and pure colours are applied within the same brushstroke, as if the artist partially mixed colour and applied the brushstroke allowing streaks of pure colour to intermingle. These streaks of colour are almost exclusively the three primary colours: red, blue, and yellow, or more specifically, yellow ochre, cobalt blue, and some red lake pigment (perhaps alizarin crimson). Accents of these pure colours appear in every facet of the painting: the background, the flesh paint, and every form. They seem to be intentional but spontaneously chosen for their exact locations. Another way Dobson's paint mixtures can be visualised is to look at thin sections. A thin section is a cross section attached to a glass slide that is ground thin until the paint sample is only one particle layer thick. This allows the pigments to be seen in transmitted light. In the thin section produced from *Burns Grace*, it is possible to visually identify pigment particles of yellow ochre, a red lake, and cobalt blue (Fig. 14).

Dobson wrote eloquently about his own technique and ideas about art in an article entitled 'The Composition of a Picture,' which was published in 1900. In many ways, his words corroborate his painting technique. He believed that 'everyone who had good eyesight could be taught how to paint and draw up to a certain point, but invention, feeling mere mechanist, could not be taught, but must be born.'[22] In fact, Dobson expressed that the only way to learn is by experience. He described the importance of meticulously planning a composition, especially when working from life. The subjects

Figs. 15-17: Infrared Reflectogram, OSIRIS Camera with an InGaAs detector; details of pentimenti in *Burns Grace*

[22] Dobson, H.J. 'The Composition of a Picture,' in *The British Journal of Photography*. Vol. 47, Iss. 2079. 9 March 1900. 150.

should be positioned, 'in the most pleasing and artistic way to achieve the best results,' before beginning working, as it will also save valuable time.[23] He also detailed how when the models occasionally move in the process of working, it either yields a more beautiful picture or something that is less favourable.[24]

Technical analysis and visual analysis made it clear that Dobson made changes as he worked. In his article 'The Composition of a Picture,' he further stressed the importance of a picture's composition, stating, 'the art, or I might say the knack, of composing a picture is a very important one, and is, to a great extent, a gift from nature.'[25] Both of these opinions are materialized in *Burns* Grace, which was examined with an OSIRIS Infrared camera with an InGaAs detector, revealing Dobson's compositional changes.

Infrared Reflectography is a non-invasive technique that uses infrared light to look below the visible paint layers. Some of the changes, or *pentimenti*, that can be detected include the man's right hand, which appears to have shifted down. The bowl in front of him was once further to the left (Figs. 15-17). IR technology reveals the extent to which Dobson applied his own aesthetic principles in this particular work. For example, his sitter may have shifted in a way that he perceived rendered the composition more appealing, and so he altered the composition to reflect this.

Fig. 18: H.J. Dobson, *James Keir Hardie* (1893); details of pentimenti. Stores of National Galleries of Scotland. SIZE

Dobson's career in portraiture links his working methods with his ideologies. Dobson has been described as finding 'little success' as a portrait artist, but additional research suggests this statement may not be entirely accurate.[26] While the number of completed portraits pales in comparison to his prolific genre scenes, Dobson nevertheless worked on a number of prestigious portraits during his career. His most notable commission is a portrait of *James Keir Hardie*, the founder of the Labour Party. A visual examination was conducted of Dobson's portrait of *James Keir Hardie* to further ascertain Dobson's tendency to make changes (Fig. 18).

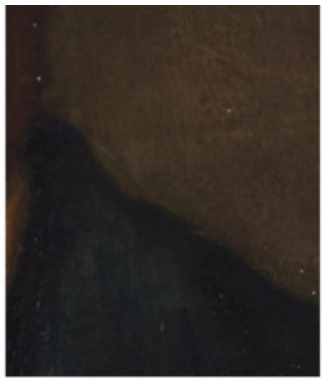
Even without the aid of a microscope, compositional changes are evident. For example, the fingers of the sitter's right hand have been shifted down and to the left slightly. The right collar of the sitter's jacket

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Cabris, E. 'The Life and Work of Henry Raeburn Dobson (1901-85),' in *The British Art Journal*. Vol. 9, No. 3. Spring 2009. 70.



Figs. 19-20: *James Keir Hardie* (1893); details of pentimenti.

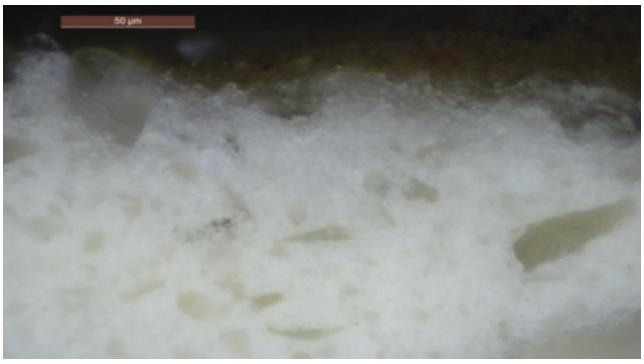


Fig. 21: Cross section from lower left corner of *Burns Grace*, showing barium sulphate inclusions.

has also been altered, evident by the raised impasto brushwork of the black jacket covered by the brown background (Figs. 19-20).

More broadly speaking, *James Keir Hardie* has been painted in a similar manner to *Burns Grace*. The brown background is constructed with the same streaks of the primary colours identified in *Burns Grace* and the figure is painted with the same thick impasto brushwork. The black jacket has areas of drying cracks, which the conservators at the National Galleries of Scotland believe to be the drying pattern characteristic of the pigment bitumen.[27] Bitumen is a pigment made from coal tar frequently used in nineteenth paintings, which is subject to deformations that resemble burn blisters (or more colloquially, "alligator skin"). In *Burns Grace*, the most significant drying defects are observed in the area where the underlying sitter's black jacket is present. It is possible bitumen was also used there and contributed to the drying defects.

The existing documentation for *Burns Grace* currently lists its attributed date as c. 1910. Dobson used primarily iron earth pigments in *Burns Grace*, such as iron oxide pigments and ochres. The red is some type of lake pigment, likely alizarin crimson and the white is lead white. The blue is cobalt blue, the production of which began in the nineteenth century.[28] The ground contains calcium carbonate and lead white. The large angular inclusions seen in cross section are barium sulphate, an extender commonly used in lesser quality lead white recipes of the nineteenth century (Fig. 21). This additive also serves to date the painting to at least from the start of the nineteenth century.

[27] National Galleries of Scotland, Condition Report for *James Keir Hardie*. 2014.

[28] 'Pigments through the Ages – Detailed Pigment Histories, Recipes,' in *Examples of Visual Poetry: Poetry through the Ages*.

"Painting within a Painting" – The Portrait Underneath *Burns Grace*

In comparison to Dobson's many other genre scenes, *Burns Grace* stands out as a significantly larger composition, measuring 101.6 x 127 centimetres. After reviewing the dimensions of numerous other paintings, it appears that Dobson's typical genre works were painted on canvases measuring about one-third the size of *Burns Grace*. However, in searching through Dobson's oeuvre, it was discovered that he normally reserved larger canvases for portraits. With this in mind, the size of *Burns Grace* came under scrutiny. Upon conducting the photography of this painting, several significant bulges in the canvas were noted when it was shown in raking light. With a little manipulation, it was discovered that these bulges were not inconsequential but actually formed the figure of a man (Fig. 22).

Fig. 22: X-ray of *Burns Grace*, showing underlying portrait of a man.

To view this man beneath the layers of paint, an X-ray was taken, which is a technique that produces an image of the contrast between denser elements that appear white and lighter elements that appear dark. The X-ray revealed a large balding man sitting in a chair, with a white collar, white sleeves, and a dark jacket (likely black). Lead is a dense element that appears light in x-ray, so the white areas of the composition most likely indicate the use of lead white. It appears Dobson reused this canvas that previously depicted a very complete larger than life portrait. This was a fascinating technical discovery that not only offers further insight into Dobson's working practice, but also information about his portrait painting career.

Fig. 23: H. J. Dobson, *George Hamilton* (1899). Glasgow Museums. 122.5 x 102 cm

As previously mentioned, the size of Dobson's portraits is large, frequently measuring 101.6 x 127 centimetres. A comparison of the dimensions of *James Keir Hardie* led to the discovery that they were identical to *Burns Grace.* Furthermore, the comparison of another of his portraits, *George Hamilton* (1899), led to the conclusion that it was just slightly smaller, measuring 122.5x 102cm (Fig. 23). The similar size of these works allowed comparisons to be drawn between them when Burns Grace was rotated, so the portrait was oriented as intended. The resulting conclusions were that Dobson seemed to have a methodology for constructing his portraits. All his sitters are set off to the right of the compositions in a three-quarters format, with part of their legs showing.

Dobson's Works as Reproductions

Additional research into Dobson's 1911 visit to the United States yielded new explanation for his widespread influence and popularity abroad. In the introduction to the 1921 published edition of Dobson's 'Scottish Art' lecture, the artist is described as a 'distinguished Scotchman' whose work 'has been so popular with our clients.'[29] This introduction was written by Thomas D. Murphy, the original owner of the Thomas D. Murphy Calendar Company.

Murphy was the first person who successfully developed advertising art calendars, and he is the individual most responsible for the creation, development and expansion of the art calendar industry.[30] The company's printing plant was

[29] Murphy, T. 'Introduction,' in *Scottish Art* (H.J. Dobson). Red Oak: Thos. D. Murphy Co, 1921.

[30] Christian, R. 'Thos. D. Murphy Co. Factory and Power Plant.' National Parks Service. 29. April 2008. <https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/nrhp/text/08000505.PDF>. Accessed 26 May 2018.

established in Red Oak, Iowa in 1905, and most likely served as the venue for Dobson's lecture.

The motivation for Dobson's visit to Iowa is made apparent with the discovery that he contributed images of his paintings to be used as calendar illustrations (specific examples were found dating from 1915). In his introduction, Murphy specifically mentions the fortuitous timing of the lecture's publication (in 1921), as it occurred simultaneously with the company's release of 'the notable Scottish Song series by Mr. Dobson' which appeared in Murphy's 'forthcoming line.'[31] These calendars were printed by Murphy and distributed to locations spanning the United States of America, viewed by audiences ranging from Mississippi to Connecticut (Fig. 24).

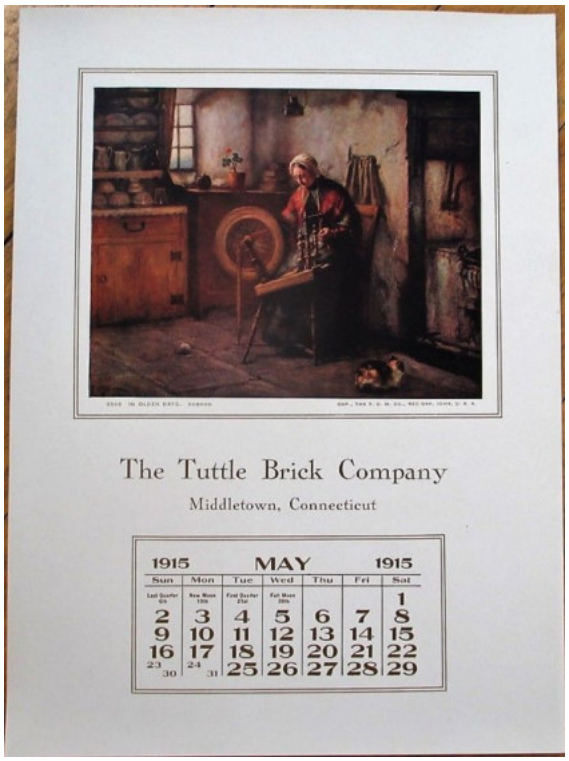


Fig. 24: Single page from 1915 Tuttle Brick Company Calendar, featuring reproduction of *In Olden Days* by H.J. Dobson (Thomas D. Murphy Calendar Co.).

To this day, numerous prints and reproductions of Dobson's work are sold in auctions and online all over the world. They are particularly numerous in the United States. Dobson's willingness to have his work used in mass produced items, like calendars, in the early twentieth century helps to clarify why many prints exist. It is more than likely that Dobson did this for financial reasons; but his popularity abroad awarded him opportunities to disseminate his ideas and opinions to a broader audience.

Conclusions

Burns Grace has proven to be a painting rich in content and mystery, yielding numerous insights on a painter who was previously relatively unknown in the Scottish canon of art. In identifying one of the figures depicted in *Burns Grace*, a key, and until now, undocumented influence for Dobson's work has also been uncovered. George Paul Chalmers' work and untimely death were immensely significant in helping steer the course of Dobson's painting career.

There is now also a more fully formed explanation for Dobson's surprising presence outside the United Kingdom. The popularity Dobson's works enjoyed in the United States during the early 20th century could be further explained by the fact that American audiences identified with both the virtuous tone of his paintings as well as the sitters (since many Americans claim a Scottish lineage).

[31] Ibid.

Although the identity of the gentleman underneath *Burns Grace* remains a mystery, this paper has endeavoured to bring forth the identity of the man behind this work, Henry John Dobson. It is hoped that this research has produced a much deeper understanding of an artist who, until now, has been largely overlooked by art historical texts.

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