WHAT?

The ‘Business’ of Embellishment

What did it cost to furnish a post-Famine Catholic church?

WHY?

‘Religion pays’ - Leopold Bloom (Ulysses)

• Churches furnished 1850 – 1914: > 2,500
• Price range of church furnishings: £2 - > £1,200
• Stained glass costs: £2 per square foot
• Building craftsman’s wages (average): > £2 per week

Research Questions

• What was the scale of activity by church furnishing firms?
• To what extent was this a profitable business?
• How accurate was the term ‘Trade’ art?

HOW?

• Established by analyzing reports on church building projects & publicity material of firms
• Determined by linking labour & materials costs to commissions
• Evaluated by relating production methods to the finished artwork

SOURCES?

Primary

• Written & visual accounts
• Business documents
• Design records
• Church buildings