



# ‘The Cries of Dublin’ revisited: four new drawings by Hugh Douglas Hamilton

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WILLIAM LAFFAN

## ‘A MISTY WORLD CLARIFIED’

WRITING IN 2003, ANNE CROOKSHANK AND THE KNIGHT OF GLIN – SCHOLARS NOT given to hyperbole – characterised Hugh Douglas Hamilton’s album of drawings *The Cries of Dublin*, as ‘one of the most fascinating works of art to have survived from Georgian Ireland’ and described the album’s rediscovery (in Australia the previous year) as among the ‘most sensational events in the historiography of Irish art in recent decades’.<sup>1</sup> The 2003 book dedicated to the *Cries*, published by Churchill House Press for the Irish Georgian Society, included contributions from Toby Barnard, Joseph McDonnell, Brendan Rooney, Sean Shesgreen and the present author. Its stated aim was to explore the drawings from ‘socio-historical, bibliographical, iconological and stylistic viewpoints’.<sup>2</sup> The sheer breadth of the subject matter demanded this multidisciplinary approach, and Crookshank and Glin predicted that the drawings would ‘provide material for students of costume, foodstuffs, transport, and social history generally for many years to come’.<sup>3</sup> This has proved to be the case in the sixteen years since the *Cries* was finally published; indeed no other eighteenth-century visual source has been as widely and profitably exploited, with Hamilton’s drawings having been cited in some fifty academic publications, some of which are summarised below.

This scholarly attention offers a partial correction to a historiographical deficit regarding the use of visual material which was identified by Kevin O’Neill in 1993: ‘Historians of Ireland have been reluctant to incorporate visual evidence into their documentary catalogue.’<sup>4</sup> Brian Kennedy and Raymond Gillespie made the same point the following year: ‘In Ireland, historians still regard visual images as sideshows to the main task of interpreting written documents from the past.’<sup>5</sup> It is certainly the case that one can scan volume after volume of the otherwise exemplary journal *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*

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*All drawings in this article are by Hugh Douglas Hamilton (1740-1808)*

1 – *A YOUNG WOMAN LEADING AN EMACIATED HORSE, c. 1760 (private collection)*

2 – *A WOMAN ACCOMPANIED BY A CHILD AND DOG DRIVING A LADEN HORSE, c. 1760 (private collection)*