



Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce: A Socioeconomic History

Cormac Ó Gráda

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James Joyce's Leopold Bloom--the atheistic Everyman of *Ulysses*, son of a Hungarian Jewish father and an Irish Protestant mother--may have turned the world's literary eyes on Dublin, but those who look to him for history should think again. He could hardly have been a product of the city's bona fide Jewish community, where intermarriage with outsiders was rare and piety was pronounced. In *Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce*, a leading economic historian tells the real story of how Jewish Ireland--and Dublin's Little Jerusalem in particular--made ends meet from the 1870s, when the first Lithuanian Jewish immigrants landed in Dublin, to the late 1940s, just before the community began its dramatic decline.

In 1866--the year Bloom was born--Dublin's Jewish population hardly existed, and on the eve of World War I it numbered barely three thousand. But this small group of people quickly found an economic niche in an era of depression, and developed a surprisingly vibrant web of institutions.

In a richly detailed, elegantly written blend of historical, economic, and demographic analysis, Cormac Ó Gráda examines the challenges this community faced. He asks how its patterns of child rearing, schooling, and cultural and religious behavior influenced its marital, fertility, and infant-mortality rates. He argues that the community's small size shaped its occupational profile and influenced its acculturation; it also compromised its viability in the long run.

Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce presents a fascinating portrait of a group of people in an unlikely location who, though small in number, comprised Ireland's most resilient immigrant community until the Celtic Tiger's immigration surge of the 1990s.

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