

AN OVERVIEW OF ASPECTS OF THE AN GÚM CATALOGUE

BREANDÁN Ó HUALLACHÁIN
Orcid: 0009-0002-6039-8287

Coláiste Mhuire Gan Smál/Mary Immaculate College

ABSTRACT

An Gúm, or ‘The Scheme’ as it translates into English, also known as An Scéim Foillsiúcháin [The Publication Scheme], was created in the early years of the Irish Free State to provide Irish language reading material. The aim of this paper is to focus on a vital and complex aspect of Irish language revival at the beginning of the fledgling Irish Free State, as An Gúm remains an unknown entity to many. It was stated in a review in *Irish Books* (no date) of the Irish translation of *Robert Emmet* that reading matter for the large and increasing number of Irish language speakers was required for the advancement of Gaelic outside the Gaeltacht. It mentioned that the best Irish language literature is that which comes from the Irish-speaking areas, but while a library of Irish-language materials was being created well-chosen translations would suffice (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A6 [98]).

Many of the early An Gúm publications were translations of famous English-language books such as *Dracula*. There were translations of other European authors, as well as translations of books written in English by Irish authors. An Gúm published musical scores during this period – some of them specifically for educational purposes in schools. This paper will discuss the recommending and commissioning of works, procurement of a printing and publishing company, hiring of a designer for the book cover, copyright issues, choosing, monitoring and paying of translators, as well as internal and external examination of material.

Keywords: An Gúm, Translation, Irish Language, Publishing, Textbooks

1. Introduction – The Education System

Prior to the establishment of the Irish Free State, there were four sectors in Irish education: primary, secondary, technical and tertiary. Part of the latter level, Trinity College (the University of Dublin) was long established (McDowell and Webb 2004), others, the Queen’s University and institutions which sprung from

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it, namely Queen's University Belfast (Moody and Beckett 1959) and the National University of Ireland (Dunne 2008), were newly established.

The national education system was started in 1831 by Lord Stanley (1799-1869), Chief Secretary of Ireland, with commissioners in charge of this area. The *Intermediate Education Act 1878* under which the Intermediate Education Board was created for secondary schools, and, in 1899, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Education was created for that sector (Akenson 1975: 1-14), two elements that would not be linked for some time.

No Minister for Education was appointed by Dáil Éireann [the Irish parliament] in January 1919 as the promotion of Irish was more important. Akenson (1975: 26) maintains that:

“[a]s a result, what little thought there was about educational policy was an incidental offshoot of language concerns.”

However, that would ultimately change. In August 1921, Éamon de Valera (1882-1975) founded the Ministry of Education under the stewardship of Seán Ó Ceallaigh (“Sceilg”) (1872-1957). The new Minister was in charge of national education and intermediate level, but the technical schools were not part of his responsibility; it was the Minister for Agriculture who took charge of that area. Boards of Commissioners were abolished for primary and secondary education in June 1923, and a board of management of the representatives from these two branches was created.

According to Donald Akenson (1975: 30):

The new government of southern Ireland had taken full, unfettered control of the central administrative apparatus for education and had concentrated effective control of that apparatus in the hands of a small number of civil servants.

One of the aims of the leaders of the new Irish Free State was the creation of a free Gaelic Ireland. It was considered that the education system was the best means of achieving this aim. The country's leaders wanted to move away from the “*murder machine*” (CELT: The Corpus of Electronic Texts) as Pádraig Pearse had described the education system when under British rule. As the majority of Irish children attended primary, or national schools as they were also referred to, focusing on this sector, it was thought, was the most effective means to foster Gaelic Irishness.

The Department of Education that was created under the *Ministers and Secretaries Act, 1924*, brought primary, secondary and technical education under one Minister, a measure that meant, according to Norman Atkinson (1969: 161), that Pádraig Pearse's vision that the education of Ireland would be controlled by one specific unit was now put in place by an Irish Government.

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The National Programme Conference (Ó hUallacháin 2010: 5-10) was convened and following a number of meetings it was decided to make some school subjects compulsory, Irish amongst them. English, mathematics, history and geography were just some of the other compulsory subjects.

2. An Gúm and its files

What is An Gúm? It is the scheme established by the Irish Government for the provision of textbooks and general reading material for schoolchildren, and the Irish language reading community, at the foundation of Saorstát Éireann/the Irish Free State in the 1920s. These books it was felt would be required to implement the Irish Government's policy of reviving the Irish language.

An Gúm was established in 1926 under the Department of Education (Ó hUallacháin 2010: 5-20). It remained under the aegis of that Irish Government Department until 1999 when its functions were transferred to the cross-border language body Foras na Gaeilge (Foras na Gaeilge website). To date An Gúm has, according to its website, published 2,500 books and 350 music pieces (Foras na Gaeilge website).

The opinion of the Department of Education in regard to the provision and teaching of Irish is found in the year reports, na Tuarascála Bliantúla. In its 1924-25 report, it stated that there was a lack of suitable textbooks, something that was impeding the use of Irish as a teaching medium:

the absence of a choice of suitable class books in Irish in many ordinary subjects such as History, Mathematics, Science, etc., has tended to deter schools from using Irish as a teaching medium (An Roinn Oideachais 1926: 93).

The Department decided to provide £4,000 to create school textbooks, especially for post-primary education. 'The Scheme', or An Gúm, would provide general literature, suitable for reading in schools, and would also provide Irish language handbooks, as stated in the Department of Education's 1924-25 report:

The arrangements provide for the publication of a book at the minimum of cost, the payment of a bonus to the author, and the reversion to the author of all rights in the published work when the proceeds from its sales have repaid the costs of publication.

It continued:

It is hoped that when the scheme is in full operation it will go some way to surmount the obstacles that at present hinder the extended use of Irish

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as a medium of instruction in the higher classes of Secondary Schools
(An Roinn Oideachais 1926: 93; Ó Néill 1946).

Coiste na Leabhar (The Book Committee), an advisory committee consisting of Irish language scholars, was established to solve the problem of the lack of Irish language textbooks, to read manuscripts and to provide guidance to the Department on their suitability for publication, under the auspices of the aforementioned scheme. The Committee's task would deal with two types of works: those suitable as textbooks and reading material for schoolchildren, and new Irish language books for the commonality, both newly composed and translated from other languages (An Roinn Oideachais 1926: 93; Ó Néill 1946). The onus was placed on An Gúm specifically to prepare books that were deemed as textbooks in secondary schools in particular. Aside from these, other works which would be considered important for the particular benefit of language learners were also required.

The work of Coiste na Leabhar as well as individuals has contributed much to the success of An Gúm over the years. The *National Archives Act, 1986*, encouraged an interest by students and academics in An Gúm (Buttimer, Rynne & Guerin 2000). Despite the work of Tracey Ní Mhaonaigh (2002 & 2008), Áinead Ní Mhuirthile (2005), Marie Darmody (2008) and Freda Ní Mhuileann (2011) this is an area of Irish language and Celtic Studies which has arguably still not received the same focus and attention as others.

Information on An Gúm files is available as a typescript in the form of a guide in the Archives Reading Service of the National Archives of Ireland in Dublin. Files are listed under different capital letters, in particular "A" (or "a"), "C", "G", "MA", "MF" and "N". The guide to the files does not explain what the letters represent. As priority is given to "A" files in the guidance typescript, my screening of those specific files relates to the years 1926 to 1945, an era I had previously studied as part of an M.Phil. degree (Ó hUallacháin 2002). For 1926-45, the Archives' typescript showed that 564 publishing projects had commenced under heading "A" of An Gúm's records. As an individual researcher it would have been an unimaginable task to read and assess so much documentation in depth. As a result, a proportion of 100 files for the period were chosen at random. The school-related subjects chosen were Science and Home Economics, Education, Citizenship, Sport, Classical Languages, Geography, Travel and Nature, Religion and History.

My audit of An Gúm's files, which was done manually, was permitted in the Archives Reading Room. Each file has the most recent item of information on top, so to trace the development of the project, it is necessary to start at the bottom of the file and work one's way up. These files contain accounting documents, correspondence, memos, and reports for example. The entries in the files usually state from whom the item came, to whom it concerns, as well as other related

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information. While An Gúm or the Publications Branch were responsible for the creation of the proposals, the Department of Finance was in charge of funding, and the Stationary Office was the State's publishing company.

3. Recommending and Selecting

With regard to choosing books potentially suitable for publication, there was an external and an internal dimension to it. Writers, academics, and readers external to An Gúm sent ideas and suggestions to the organisation, and at times recommended books for publication. In one example, in a note dated 4 November 1931, Lúise Gabhánach Ní Dhubhthaigh praised *The Marvellous History of St Bernard* because it was very appropriate, in her opinion – it was later published as *Beatha Iongantach Bhearnáird Óig de Menthon* by Liam Ó Briain (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A34 [2]).

Information on the book recommendations is available for a total of 41 works that I researched. Eleven were not published (26.83%).¹ Of the other 30 books recommended, and information available on the process, 16 were internal recommendations,² with only 13 proposed externally.³ Of the books recommended internally, five are historical works,⁴ three books are on geography and travel,⁵ three works are religious,⁶ two books relate to Latin and Greek,⁷ one

¹ *De Senectute*, Lord Edward Fitzgerald: *an Historical Romance*, *Limen – A First Latin Book*, *The Prison Life of O'Donovan Rossa*, *Irish Rebels in English Prisons: a Record of Prison Life*, *The Citizen's Manual: being a Simple Guide through the New Constitution*, *A History of Europe 1378-1494*, *In God's Wonderland*, *Education: its Data and First Principles*, *Preparation for Teaching*, *Modern Developments in Educational Practice*, *Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals*.

² *Plutarch's Lives*, *Wild Sports of the West*, *Irish Nationality*, *Robert Emmet*, *Gaelic Pioneers of Christianity: the Work and Influence of Irish Monks and Saints in Continental Europe*, *The Makers of Europe*, *The Christian Era I*, *Housecraft: Principles and Practice*, *Sir John Magill's Last Journey*, *Macmillan's General and Regional Geography of Ireland Vol. I / Macmillan's General and Regional Geography of Ireland Part II*, *The Wild North Land*, *The World's Debt to the Irish*, *Ros Comáin*, *A Latin Grammar I*, *Christ is All*, *The Romance of Exploration*, *A First Electrical Book for Boys*.

³ *Life of Matt Talbot*, *The Marvellous History of St Bernard*, *Ceatharlach*, *Ciarraighe*, *Saint Bernadette of Lourdes*, *A Book of Marvels*, *Ireland's Loyalty to the Mass*, *Sligeach*, *Loch Garman*, *An Leabhar Aifrin – Cuid I*, *Une année de collège à Paris*, *Life of St John Bosco*, *The Practice of Instruction: A Manual of Method General and Special*.

⁴ *Irish Nationality*, *Robert Emmet*, *The Makers of Europe*, *The Christian Era I*, *Ros Comáin*.

⁵ *Sir John Magill's Last Journey*, *Macmillan's General and Regional Geography of Ireland Vol. I / Macmillan's General and Regional Geography of Ireland Part II*, *The Wild North Land*, *The Romance of Exploration*.

⁶ *Gaelic Pioneers of Christianity: the Work and Influence of Irish Monks and Saints in Continental Europe*, *The World's Debt to the Irish*, *Christ is All*.

⁷ *Plutarch's Lives* and *A Latin Grammar I*.

science-based,⁸ one educational,⁹ and one on sport.¹⁰

As far as externally suggested works for translation, there were six books on religion,¹¹ and five were historical manuscripts¹² – that is 84.62% of books in this category. There was one education book¹³ and one travel as well.¹⁴ The majority of them were universally-read and praised. An Gúm had a separate duty to perform once a decision had been taken to translate a book into the Irish language. As the majority of books they published did not belong to them, they had to negotiate with the owners of the copyright. This aspect of the negotiations was a relatively multilateral process: An Gúm would normally contact the companies and this could lead to different types of results. There were many elements involved: the concept of copyright, costs, ways of printing and selling.

Apart from the lapse of copyright or the decommitment of authors or translators, the most common occurrence was that An Gúm had to make a decision and then negotiate which edition of the original book would be sought, while drawing, production, and cost issues were also matters for discussion. Translators were selected in four ways. The primary method of choosing a translator was entrusting a manuscript to a person who had been recommended to An Gúm. In other cases, a sample of a translation was sent to An Gúm by a translator, or perhaps they had already made a full translation by this stage.

A number of translators submitted an application for work; when the operators of the publishing scheme were looking for a translator, they were asked to undertake the initiative. An Gúm organised a number of translation competitions, with the organisation asking the winners of these competitions to translate works into Irish. The evaluation criteria used in the translation competitions was not evident in the files studied.

The next step taken once translators were found was to monitor their work. While a translator was converting work into Irish, An Gúm's editor(s) kept a close eye on their progress, especially when new translators undertook work for the first time. The files reveal that specific problems were encountered during the monitoring process; one such problem was the standard of Irish. Mairéad Uí Shé's translation of *Aesop* was adjudged not "sách maith lena foilsíú" (good enough for publication) (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A41 [9]), while Pádhraic Ó Domhnalláin's effort at *The Christian Era II* was a "droch-aistriúchán" (bad

⁸ *Housecraft: Principles and Practice.*

⁹ *A First Electrical Book for Boys.*

¹⁰ *Wild Sports of the West.*

¹¹ *Life of Matt Talbot, The Marvellous History of St Bernard, Saint Bernadette of Lourdes, Ireland's Loyalty to the Mass, An Leabhar Aifrinne – Cuid I, Life of St John Bosco.*

¹² *Ceatharlach, Ciarraighe, Sligeach, Loch Garman, Une année de collège à Paris.*

¹³ *The Practice of Instruction: A Manual of Method General and Special.*

¹⁴ *A Book of Marvels.*

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translation) (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A38 [38]). If there was either a lack of terminology, or problems with the terms used in the translations, those issues were forwarded to An Gúm. The matter was then placed before members of Coiste um Leabhra Eolais [Books Information Committee] seeking their suggestions. Members of the Committee expressed their opinion to the editor or Publications Officer, after which this information was forwarded to the translator (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A26 [19-20]).

Another issue evident in some of the An Gúm files is the failure of some translators to implement all of the suggested changes. In a Minute Sheet found in the National Archives of Ireland, dated 16 September 1930, Domhnall Mac Grianna wrote that the manuscript of *Stair Coitcheann na Ré Críostaidhe I* [*The Christian Era I*] (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A26 [19-20]) was returned to its translator, Pádraic Ó Domhnalláin, and though he was asked to deal with a number of points, he chose to undertake only some of the recommendations. The Minute Sheet read:

The manuscript looks as though the translator read it again but did only a very few of the corrections that I had mentioned. That is to say, the translator read, and knew from the particular list given to him and from the instructions given to him, what was on our minds, and he decided not to make those changes. I recommend sending the manuscript directly to the printer as it is, and giving the translator himself responsibility for accuracy and correct terminology (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A26 [19-20]).

4. Voicing Opinions and Approving

Politicians were one group who voiced their opinions – usually about costs (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A10 [17]) – when publications were being chosen. This happened for a number of reasons. An Gúm came under the responsibility of the Department of Education, as has previously been mentioned, and it is therefore easy to understand that the Minister with this portfolio would have some involvement. The actual final decision was with the Minister for Finance, however, in the case of all translations, as he was the person who approved, or did not approve, funding. Each time the translator or the Department of Education looked for additional finance, the Department of Finance was contacted seeking such approval (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A10 [160-5]). It was in this way that the Minister for Finance played a central role in the Department of Education translations. Outside of these Ministers, Teachtaí Dála (TDs), i.e. elected politicians in Dáil Éireann [The Assembly, lower house of the Irish parliament] wrote from time to time exploring the progress of a translation.

Politicians weren't the only group that had an input into the moulding of a book. The Catholic Church also played a key role in some of the approved publications, especially those in the areas of religion, education and morality.

Any time an author wrote a work on faith, morals or theology, this publication was submitted to the bishop of his diocese or bishop of the diocese in which it was created, before being released to the market (*Canon Law* 824 §1).¹⁵ The bishop or his representative – a knowledgeable person – would read the text. They might recommend changes, and/or corrections may be proposed. If, in the opinion of the Commission, the changes were made, approval would be obtained in two stages. *Nihil Obstat* was written on the book by the censor [reader], explaining that there was no obstacle to printing it, that is, that the material was not contrary to the belief or morality of the Catholic Church. This was followed by a bishop's *Imprimatur*, if he were satisfied with it. This granted official permission to print the book. This did not mean supporting it, and it was not a statement that there was something worthwhile to read (Hurley 1911, Martin 2006).

The responsibility of assessing An Gúm work was placed on priests within the general hierarchy and administrative framework of the Catholic Church. According to the files examined for this research, the Catholic Church's licence was sought or discussed for fourteen books. These works related predominantly to religious and educational matters, that is, they related to morality in some way. The licence was sought by An Gúm itself, and it was not the original author, nor the translator. When *Nihil Obstat* was in the English original of a book, workers had the opinion that one would also be required in the Irish translation, for example, *Christ is All* (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A51 [86]). In particular, the Department of Education did not seek the *Imprimatur* until such time as the manuscript was ready, for example, *The Little Flowers of St Francis* (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A16 [13]).

A translation of the following works was issued: *Cinnirí Gaedhealacha na Críostaidheachta*, *Flóisíní Shain Próinsias*, *Beatha Mhaitiú Talbóid*, *Beatha Iongantach Bhearnáid Óig de Menthon*, *Críost an Uile*, *San Bernadette Lourdes*, *Dílse na nGael don Aifreann*, *An Leabhar Aifrin*, *Cúrsa Simplidhe sa Chreideamh*, *Naomh Eoin Bosco: Aodhaire Anam*. The following were not published as an Irish translation: *Heath's New Practical French Grammar*, *The Formation of Character*, *Divini Illius Magistri: on Christian Education of Youth*, and *Talk to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals*.

5. Provision, Demand and Reviews

The creation of educational books in Irish was more than just negotiating with translators or those charged with approval. Designers and printers also played a

¹⁵ *Code of Canon Law – Book III – The teaching function of the Church* (Cann. 822-833) https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib3-cann822-833_en.html.

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key role in the process, where their responsibilities included creating the illustrations for the works that were generated and produced as goods. Designers decorated or enriched the books by producing a cover, drawings and images to provide information.

All aspects of the various relationships involved in the process of producing a translation did not, as one might expect, always blossom. Some of the problems in the process were a time delay, printing problems, and errors in the texts, and these issues were not concentrated in any one particular genre. The greatest complication was the delay in the printing of translations, something Oifig an tSoláthair was sometimes blamed for. The issue of printing problems is evident in a letter of 1 January 1930 from the publishers M. H. Gill, in which An Gúm was informed that the publishing company would not “*concede to foreign print*” in the case of *Camchuarta i nÉirinn*, as their books were in Gaelic print (*Rambles in Éirinn*) (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A9 [40]). In further correspondence of 2 May 1932, the publishing company again stated that they would not accept any print, other than Gaelic print (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A9 [50]).

Productivity is explained in three illustrations. Table 1a reveals the English works that were translated to Irish or written in the language itself and printed (“Published”), 57 out of the 100 files examined are in this category. These cover all subject classes involved in the study. Tables (1b, 1c) indicate which proposals were unsuccessful; in the first grid those books were (“Rejected”), with the next table showing works that were not published for various reasons (“Other”).

Table 1a *Works translated to Irish and published (“Published”)*¹⁶

Code	Archive Code	Name of Original Book	Original Author
A2	A0005	<i>Plutarch’s Lives</i>	Plutarch
A3	A0013	<i>Wild Sports of the West</i>	William Hamilton Maxwell
A4	A0021	<i>Irish Nationality</i>	Alice Stopford Green
A5	A0022	<i>Plutarch’s Lives – Demosthenes and Cicero</i>	Plutarch
A6	A0024	<i>Robert Emmet</i>	Raymond William Postgate
A7	A0027	<i>Gaelic Pioneers of Christianity: the Work and Influence of Irish Monks and Saints in Continental Europe</i>	Dom Louis Gougaud
A8	A0031	<i>Quo Vadis</i>	Henryk Sienkiewicz

¹⁶ Titles in this table are as per the An Gúm catalogue, *Department of Education: An Gúm, 1924-1998*, in The National Archives of Ireland.

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A9	A0052	<i>Rambles in Éirinn</i>	William Bulfin ('Che Buono')
A10	A0053	<i>The Makers of Europe</i>	Ethel Mary Wilmot-Burton
A11	A0055	<i>In The Days of Owen Roe</i>	James Murphy
A12	A0058	<i>The Pikemen</i>	Samuel Robert Keightley
A13	A0060	<i>Seeteufel</i>	Felix Graf von Luckner
A14	A0089	<i>The Scottish Chiefs</i>	Jane Porter
A15	A0117	<i>The Christian Era 1</i>	Nicholas Aloysius Weber
A16	A0147	<i>The Little Flowers of St Francis</i>	Not named in file
A17	A0160	<i>Housecraft: Principle and Practice</i>	Ruth Binnie agus Julia Elisabeth Boxall
A18	A0162	<i>Ireland and Irishmen in the French Revolution</i>	Richard Francis Hayes
A19	A0163	<i>Life of Matt Talbot</i>	Sir Joseph Aloysius Glynn
A20	A0166	<i>Sir John Magill's Last Journey</i>	Freeman Wills Crofts
A21	A0168	<i>Apollo's Understudy: Retribution</i>	Rev. Michael Henry Gaffney
A22	A0170	<i>The Hermit of the Well: a play about St Fiacre and St Thomas Aquinas</i>	Rev. Michael Henry Gaffney
A24	A0179	<i>Wonder Tales of Great Explorers</i>	Robert Finch
A25	A0210	<i>Macmillan's General and Regional Geography of Ireland Vol. I</i>	Thomas Joseph Dunne
A27	A0215	<i>De Senectute</i>	Marcus Tullius Cicero
A28	A0218	<i>Cicero: Philippic II</i>	Marcus Tullius Cicero
A29	A0234	<i>The Wild North Land</i>	Sir William Francis Butler
A30	A0236	<i>Lives of the Gracchi</i>	Plutarch
A33	A0257	<i>Tom Creagan: a Novel</i>	Dermot Barry
A34	A0263	<i>Jail Journal; or Five years in British Prisons</i>	Seán Mistéal (John Mitchel)
A35	A0274	<i>The Marvellous History of St Bernard</i>	Henri Ghéon (i.e. Henri Léon Vangeon)
A40	A0300	<i>A School Course in Hygiene</i>	Robert Arthur Lyster
A43	A0321	<i>Iphigenia in Aulis</i>	Euripedes
A45	A0329	<i>Orationes Ciceronis in Catalinam I-IV</i>	Marcus Tullius Cicero
A46	A0332	<i>A Local History of Dún Laoghaire District</i>	An tAth. Maolmhuire Ó Rónáin
A47	A0333	<i>Ros Comáin</i>	Rev. Michael O'Flanagan

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A48	A0335	<i>The Last Independent Parliament of Ireland</i>	George Sigerson
A49	A0336	<i>A Latin Grammar I</i>	Edward Adolf Sonnenschein
A51	A0339	<i>Christ is All</i>	Rev. John Carr
A52	A0352	<i>Muineachán</i>	Rev. Michael O'Flanagan
A58	A0376	<i>Ceatharlach</i>	Rev. Michael O'Flanagan
A61	A0396	<i>The Romance of Exploration</i>	George Gibbard Jackson
A62	A0398	<i>Ciarraighe</i>	Rev. Michael O'Flanagan
A63,A64	A0403	<i>A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great</i>	John Bagnell Bury
A65	A0412	<i>A First Electrical Book for Boys</i>	Alfred Powell Morgan agus Cecil Leonard Boltz
A66	A0414	<i>Saint Bernadette of Lourdes</i>	Bean Riaghalta
A67	A0416	<i>A Book of Marvels</i>	Richard Halliburton
A68	A0418	<i>Ireland's Loyalty to the Mass</i>	An tOirmh. Agaistín Ó hAodáin O.F.M. Cap.
A69	A0419	<i>Sligeach</i>	Rev. Michael O'Flanagan
A72	A0440	<i>Young Housewife's Cookery Book</i>	Brigid Russell
A74	A0447	<i>Loch Garman</i>	Rev. Michael O'Flanagan
A75A	A0471	<i>An Leabhar Aifrinne – Cuid I</i>	An tAth. Benedictus
A79	A0499	<i>A Simple Course of Religion</i>	Archbishop Micheál Ó Síocháin
A80	A0500	<i>The Boys of St Declan's</i>	Br Abhuistín Ó Tuama
A82	A0503	<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>	John Drinkwater
A84	A0507	<i>Life of St John Bosco</i>	Francis Alice Monica Forbes
A85	A0510	<i>The Midnight Angelus: a School Story</i>	Vincent J. Walker
A100	A0639	<i>Outline of Evidence, Practice and Procedure in Ireland</i>	Pádraig Aibhistín Ó Síocháin

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Table 1b *Works rejected (“Rejected”)*¹⁷

Code	Archive Code	Name of Original Book	Original Author
A23	A0175	<i>The Young St Patrick</i>	Rev. Michael Henry Gaffney
A31	A0245	<i>Lord Edward Fitzgerald: an Historical Romance</i>	Matthias Mc Donnell Bodkin
A32	A0253	<i>The World’s Debt to the Irish</i>	James Joseph Walsh
A38	A0285	<i>The Christian Era II</i>	Nicholas Aloysius Weber
A39	A0295	<i>Limen – A First Latin Book</i>	Limen
A41	A0316	<i>Aesop</i>	Not named in file
A42	A0319	<i>Laelius de Amicitia</i>	Marcus Tullius Cicero
A44	A0328	<i>Oídhche Nodlag</i>	Séamus Ó Briain
A53	A0362	<i>The Prison Life of O’Donovan Rossa, Irish Rebels in English Prisons: a Record of Prison Life</i>	Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa
A54	A0366	<i>A Smaller History of Rome from the Earliest Times to the Death of Trajan</i>	Sir William Smith
A55	A0366	<i>A Smaller History of Rome from the Earliest Times to the Death of Trajan</i>	Sir William Smith
A56	A0373	<i>The Californian Gold Discovery</i>	Not named in file
A57	A0374	<i>The Story of the Merv Oasis</i>	Edmond O’Donovan
A59	A0378	<i>Virgil – Aeneid I</i>	Virgil
A60	A0385	<i>The Abbey of Holy Cross</i>	Martin Callanan
A70	A0430	<i>The Citizen’s Manual: being a Simple Guide through the New Constitution</i>	George Gavan Duffy
A77	A0480	<i>Laochra Gaedheal</i>	Tomás Ua Concheanainn
A81	A0502	<i>Une année de collège à Paris</i>	André Laurie
A83	A0506	<i>Das Bild Christi</i>	Johannes Taepper
A86	A0516	<i>The History of the Great Irish Famine</i>	Canon John O’Rourke
A87	A0530	<i>Pope Pius XII: Priest and Statesman, a Biography</i>	Kees van Hoek
A88	A0558	<i>A History of Europe 1378-1494</i>	W. J. Waugh
A89	A0563	<i>In God’s Wonderland</i>	Rev. Oliver Tiplady

¹⁷ Titles in this table are as per the An Gúm catalogue, *Department of Education: An Gúm, 1924-1998*, in The National Archives of Ireland.

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Table 1c *Works not published for various reasons (“Other”)* (Ó hUallacháin 2021)

Code	Archive Code	Name of Original Book	Original Author
A1	A0005	<i>Plutarch’s Lives</i>	Plutarch
A36	A0280	<i>Robert Emmet</i>	Raymond William Postgate
A37	A0284	<i>The Meaning of Money</i>	Hartley Withers
A49	A0336	<i>A Latin Grammar – Part II</i>	Edward Adolf Sonnenschein
A71	A0439	<i>Boxing for Beginners</i>	Herbert Maurice Herman
A76	A0478	<i>Heath’s New Practical French Grammar</i>	William Henry Fraser agus John Squair
A78	A0484	<i>The Wild Birds of Killeevy</i>	Rosa Mulholland (An Bhantiarna Gilbert)
A90	A0580	<i>The Practice of Instruction: A Manual of Method General and Special</i>	John William Adamson
A91	A0581	<i>Education: Its Data and First Principles</i>	Thomas Percy Nunn
A92	A0582	<i>Preparation for Teaching</i>	Mary Florence Margaret O’Leary
A93	A0583	<i>A Short History of Education</i>	John William Adamson
A94	A0584	<i>Modern Developments in Educational Practice</i>	Sir John Adams
A95	A0585	<i>Ratio Studiorum: the Official Plan for Jesuit Education</i>	Cumann Íosa
A96	A0586	<i>The Formation of Character</i>	Ernest Reginald Hull
A97	A0587	<i>Principles and Methods of Teaching</i>	James Welton
A98	A0588	<i>Encyclical Letter – Divini Illius Magistri: on Christian Education of Youth</i>	Pope Pius XI
A99	A0589	<i>Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life’s Ideals</i>	William James

It was not enough for An Gúm to make books available to readers of Irish. An Gúm collected critical reviews of their publications, with reports on up to 30 of the translations researched available in their files. Reviews of An Gúm’s published books were written in many publications: in national newspapers such as *Irish Independent* / *Sunday Independent*, *Irish Press* / *Scéala Éireann* and *Irish Times*; in regional publications like *Connacht Tribune*, and *Cork Examiner*; in

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local newspapers such as *Clonmel Nationalist* and *Waterford News and Star*. Opinions on the translations were also in sectoral and trade periodicals, for example, *Garda Review*, *Irish Book Lover*, *Irish Library Bulletin* and *Irish School Weekly*. An Gúm sent samples of the translations to religious magazines like *Catholic Bulletin*, *Catholic Standard*, and *Irish Catholic* and to Irish language publications such as *Ar Aghaidh*.

In a review of *Meanma Gaedhal* in the *Irish Independent*, a positive opinion of the print in the translation was expressed, but at the same time the reader was informed that this quality of print isn't evident too often "something that is rare – flawless font" ("... rud is annamh – cló gan locht") (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A4 [175]). The reviews were not all positive, however. In one review of a history publication, the translator, Seán Mac Maoláin's knowledge was criticised in the *Irish Independent*'s report on *Muineachán*:

The writer (or translator) is continually astray in his version of the names of persons and places. He has no deep knowledge of correct spelling and accentuation where uncommon descriptions are introduced. At times his grammar is questionable, and the constant use of colloquial phraseology is a lasting blemish upon what purports to be a serious book of history (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A52 [135]).

The Irish language is a subject that was raised many times in the reviews, not surprisingly. The high standard of the language was praised in the translation of *Démostenés agus Cicero: Tuairisc a mBeathadh*. It was brilliant in some parts of the conversion, according to the *Irish Press / Scéala Éireann* on 28 January 1936: "An tAthair Micheál" wrote in his review of *Cinnirí Gaedhealacha na Críostaidheachta* (*Gaelic Pioneers of Christianity: the Work and Influence of Irish Monks and Saints in Continental Europe*) in *Bonaventura* in the summer of 1940 that the language in the translation was of the same standard as any other international language:

When you read this Irish, the thing that comes to mind is that our language in this form, is not one jot behind any language in Europe" ("Nuair a léigheann tú an Ghaedhilg seo sé a bhuailear isteach ad' aigne na fuil ár dteanga sa chrut so aon phioc i ndiaidh aon teangan na Euróip") (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A7 [114]).

6. Value for Money and Suitability

It appears that the selling price of a translation depended on the fee for the rights, the number of words in the original text, quality of translation, designer's price and printing costs. Each of these elements aren't referenced, however, in the files.

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There were a number of common price levels: 2 shillings,¹⁸ 2 shillings and 6 pence,¹⁹ 3 shillings and 6 pence, and 4 shillings, but there were some other prices as well. Those for sale at 2 shillings each included history, religion, geography, grammar, travel and Latin and Greek publications.²⁰

Seven books I studied sold for 2 shillings and 6 pence, among them four history publications,²¹ two works of Latin and Greek,²² as well as a travel book.²³ There are seven books in the 3 shillings and 6 pence price category, though one of them *Robert Emmet* increased in price from 3 shillings and 6 pence to 5 shillings per copy when republished. Of the seven items here, two are history books,²⁴ another two are travel publications,²⁵ and there is one religious,²⁶ one educational,²⁷ and one Latin and Greek publication.²⁸ There are five books, in the 4 shillings band: two religious,²⁹ two history³⁰ and one travel.³¹

A few Irish language translations were sold at various prices. *Tír-Eoluíocht na h-Éireann* cost 1 shilling and 6 pence; *Scol-chúrsa i Sláinteachas* 4 shillings and 6 pence per copy for the first print, and the price increased to 7 shillings and 6 pence for the reprint; *Stair na Gréige* was priced at 3 shillings. *An Leabhar Aifrin* is an interesting translation as the price depended on the quality of the product: the book with a cloth cover was 20 shillings, the translation in seal thread was 30 shillings, and the most expensive copy of the book was in Moroccan cover, which was 42 shillings. *Dlí na Fianaise in Éirinn* was the most expensive

¹⁸ A shilling was a subdivision of the pre-decimal Irish pound.

¹⁹ Two shillings and sixpence, often written as 2s6d or 2/6, was also known as a half-crown, and was worth 1/8 of a pound.

²⁰ History publications (*Gaelic Pioneers of Christianity: the Work and Influence of Irish Monks and Saints in Continental Europe*, *The Makers of Europe*, *The Pikemen*, *Abraham Lincoln*), religious (*Life of Matt Talbot*, *The Marvellous History of St Bernard*, *Christ is All*, *A Simple Course of Religion*), Geography (*Macmillan's General and Regional Geography of Ireland Part II*), grammar (*A Latin Grammar 1*), travel (*Sir John Magill's Last Journey*) and Latin and Greek (*De Senectute*).

²¹ *Irish Nationality*, *Jail Journal; or Five years in British Prisons*, *Ros Comáin*, *Loch Garman*.

²² *Plutarch's Lives and Orationes Ciceronis in Catalanam I-IV*.

²³ *Wild Sports of the West*. 750 copies of *Irisleabhar Príosúin Sheáin Mhistéil* were available. The Department of Education decided to buy them. According to a letter from "S. G. Ó Faoilleacháin", Oifig an tSoláthair, 1,400 copies at 2/6p = £175 (less discount 40%, £70) = £105. The Secretary and the Deputy-Secretary of the Department of Finance discussed about buying the 400 copies. The estimate the Deputy-Secretary had was 400 copies at 2/6 = £50 (less discount 40%, £20) (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A34 [34]).

²⁴ *Robert Emmet* and *The Christian Era 1*.

²⁵ *Tom Creagan: a Novel* and *The Romance of Exploration*.

²⁶ *Life of St John Bosco*.

²⁷ *A First Electrical Book for Boys*.

²⁸ *A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great*.

²⁹ *Ireland's Loyalty to the Mass* and *The Midnight Angelus: a School Story*.

³⁰ *Ireland and Irishmen in the French Revolution* and *Sligeach*.

³¹ *A Book of Marvels*.

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translation in this cohort at 21 shillings a copy for a normal standard cover on the publication (Ó hUallacháin 2021).

Permission was sought from the Minister for Finance to place a value of 4 shillings on the work *Scol-chúrsa i Sláinteachas (A School Course in Hygiene)*. According to correspondence in the An Gúm files, however, C. S. Almond stated that the Minister thought it should cost 4 shillings and 6 pence (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A40 [156-9]). The holders of the copyright, University Tutorial Press, didn't have an issue with the sale price (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A40 [160]). On 28 December 1951, Seán Mac Lellan recommended selling copies of the translation for 4 shillings and 6 pence, 5 shillings, 5 shillings and 6 pence and 6 shillings per copy, to reimburse the cost of production (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A40 [70]). An Ceannasaí didn't agree, however, that the cost could be covered without selling 10,000 copies at 6 shillings each (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A40 [171]). The translation should be priced at 6 shillings or 7 shilling, according to Seán Mac Lellan (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A40 [178-9]).

Some of the details and discussion of the books reveal that the first print run of many works involved about 100 copies. The *Clonmel Nationalist* thought there was good value in *San Bernadette Lourdes*, stating:

The Irish translation runs to 156 pages, cloth, printed on excellent paper, in clear Gaelic type (An Gúm). At 2 s. (shillings) it is splendid value in these days of high cost of book production (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A66 [130])

This is a category of circumstance that is more abstract and subjective than the one before it. Many different points emerge in judgements reflecting unsuitability, with one interesting example being the comments on a Minute Sheet signed by Seán Mac Lellan on 9 November 1945, in which the Publications Officer [an tOifigeach Foilseachán] admitted that pages 130-57 of *The Practice of Instruction: A Manual of Method General and Special* [a book originally authored in England] were unsuitable, and that some of the chapter entitled 'History' was inappropriate for this country (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A90 [2]).

Other aspects of unsuitability included the language used. On reading an Irish manuscript on *Limen – A First Latin Grammar*, Micheál Ó Gríobhtha was of the opinion that Irish wasn't adaptable to Latin. He also believed that neither the grammar nor the vocabulary used were acceptable (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A39 [30]). Seoirse Mac Niocaill of An Gúm reiterated that they could never accept "unnatural or bad Irish" ("*Gaeilge mhí-nádúrtha ná droch-Ghaeilge*") in print in any book, something the translator Seán Ó Loingsigh (Ó hUallacháin 2021 A39 [31-2]) was made aware of. In both of these cases the translation of the books was cancelled.

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7. Conclusion and Limitations

The scope of this research is manifestly limited for a number of reasons. At first glance, despite education being the goal here, not all sectors, nor subjects within any of these, even secondary education itself, have been examined. Accordingly, it will be recognised that a broader perspective is needed to make the picture as comprehensive as possible. In this regard, priority should be given to the level of university colleges, where the published works of An Gúm were used for teaching and learning, and which were composed or advised by their lecturers and professors during the creation of these artefacts. One would think that there is useful information on this topic in academics' personal papers, which might shed further light on their partnership with An Gúm.

More of the relationship between universities, academics and An Gúm may be revealed by looking at the remaining 400 or so type "A" files that were not read but were launched during the years leading up to the mid-1940s, not to mention the administrative documents that survive under the rubric "G", papers under "MA", the original manuscripts from which the printed books later arose. An Gúm's dependence on other state structures, the Department of Finance for example, would also have to be weighed in during this type of search.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my research and PhD supervisor Dr Neil Buttimer, University College Cork; to the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences at University College Cork for three travel research bursaries which assisted me in conducting this research. Finally, I would like to thank Coláiste Mhuire Gan Smál/Mary Immaculate College's Research and Graduate School for funding which allowed me attend the conference.

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