

DUNCAN (DOUGLAS M) COLLECTION

Sketches and notes for bookbindings executed by Douglas Duncan with some related correspondence. 1935-1943.

Small files of correspondence, typescripts, proofs, etc. collected by Duncan, including writings by such English authors as Richard Aldington, Max Beerbohm, Lord Alfred Douglas, D.H. Lawrence, William Sharp (Fiona Macleod), and others. 1882-ca.1930.

Extent: 2 ft.

Bequest to the University of Toronto Library from Douglas Duncan's estate, 1969. Some items given from the Duncan estate by N.J. Endicott. The manuscripts written by British authors were almost certainly acquired by Douglas Duncan during the period between 1927 and 1936 from booksellers in England. No details of provenance have so far been established.

K. Martyn
Dec. 1981

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Douglas Moerdyke Duncan was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 1902, the only son of Smith Frederick Duncan and Elizabeth Moerdyke, both of Michigan. In 1909 the Duncan family (including a second child, Douglas Duncan's sister, Frances) moved to Toronto where S.F. Duncan eventually became President of his own large paper business, Provincial Paper Ltd. Douglas Duncan attended U.T.S. and then the University of Toronto. In 1925, after his graduation, he worked briefly in his father's business in Toronto, but by the end of 1925 he had travelled to Paris to study at the Sorbonne.

From 1925 to 1928 Douglas Duncan lived happily in Paris, although he attended the Sorbonne for one term only. Among his circle of friends in Paris was a Canadian bookbinder, Agnes St. John, and it was through his friendship with her that Duncan added an interest in bookbinding to his intense love and knowledge of art, music, and contemporary literature. In the fall of 1927 he began to study bookbinding techniques with two recognized French masters, M. Noulhac and M. Dumont. After Agnes St. John's death in 1927, Duncan acquired some of her bookbinding equipment and in January 1928 set up his own studio in Paris. In the fall of 1928 Duncan returned to Toronto and set up his bookbinding studio there. He revisited Paris in the summers of 1929 and 1930 to continue studying with M. Noulhac and Dumont who both died in 1931.

At the same time as he began studying bookbinding, Duncan began seriously to collect books, mainly first editions of contemporary authors he admired. The bulk of his collecting occurred between 1927 and 1935 or 1936. Authors he collected in depth included Richard Aldington, Max Beerbohm, Samuel Butler, John Collier, De La Mare, Norman Douglas, Richard Hughes, Aldous Huxley, André Gide, Lacretelle, D.H. Lawrence, and Proust. By 1931 he had acquired a corrected typescript of Lawrence's Women in Love. Other manuscript acquisitions were made as well.

Through the 1930's Duncan visited France each summer, maintaining a small apartment in Paris until 1939. He continued to practise as a bookbinder in Toronto and his bindings were highly regarded and frequently exhibited at arts and crafts displays. In 1937 he was invited to show his work at the Exposition Internationale in Paris. Although he bound some books in the 1940's, most of his attention was concentrated elsewhere and he executed no more bindings after 1949.

In 1929 Duncan purchased his first significant modern work of art, a Picasso lithograph. His interest in art continued to assume more importance in his collecting until by 1936 he seems to have given up buying books to concentrate instead on paintings. In 1935 he first met David Milne, whom he visited in company with Alan Jarvis, at his shack on Six Mile Lake, and whom he began to promote and help by buying numbers of his paintings. In 1936 Duncan worked with a small committee, including Norah McCullough and H.G. Kettle, to found the Picture Loan Society with which Duncan's name is permanently associated. He soon assumed sole responsibility for its operation. The first artist to have a one man show at the Picture Loan Society was Carl Schaefer who had been previously unable to find a gallery willing to exhibit his work. From 1936 on Duncan's energies were concentrated more and more on the Picture Loan Society and on helping struggling artists through exhibiting and purchasing their work. As well as numerous Canadian artists, he helped substantially the British artists Wyndham Lewis and Scottie Wilson.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE (cont.)

In 1964 after his father died and the family home on Russell Hill Rd. was sold, Douglas Duncan took over three apartments to house his large art and book collections. In the summer of 1968 Douglas Duncan himself died and his paintings were dispersed to various art galleries, including the National Gallery, which acquired most of the Milne works. His bookbinding equipment was left to the University of Toronto Press. Most of his books came to the University of Toronto Library. In the Fisher Library a special book collection, bearing his name, was set up, containing editions of several of the authors whom he had collected.* The literary manuscripts which he had acquired and also bequeathed to the Library have been kept together in a single manuscript collection, also called by his name. Duncan's own papers, with the exception of a few notes and bookbinding designs and letters, did not come to the Library.

Sources of biographical information are:

Douglas Duncan: a memorial portrait. Edited by Alan Jarvis.
Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1974.

Gift from the Douglas M. Duncan Collection and the Milne-Duncan bequest. An exhibition at the National Gallery. Ottawa, 1971.

*Authors included: Richard Aldington, Max Beerbohm, Norman Douglas, Aldous Huxley, D.H. Lawrence.

CONTAINER LIST

A. DOUGLAS DUNCAN'S CORRESPONDENCE AND PAPERS

Box 1 Duncan, Douglas. Collection of sketches and notes for bindings executed by Douglas Duncan. Related correspondence, clippings, etc. 1935-1943. Also includes letters to Duncan from N.J. Endicott, George Faid, and Helene Sarrailh.

B. CORRESPONDENCE COLLECTED BY DOUGLAS DUNCAN

- Box 1 Aldington, Richard. Correspondence addressed to his publisher, Martin Secker. London, 1934-1935. 6 T.L.S. Discuss publication of selected edition of D.H. Lawrence's poems which Aldington is editing.
- Beerbohm, Sir Max. Letter to the Editor of the Bookman's journal. Rapallo, Italy. n.d. A.L.S. Discusses possibility of writing article on George IV. (Gift from Duncan estate by N.J. Endicott)
- Correspondence addressed to Ada Levenson. London. n.d. 2 A.L.S. Decline invitations. (Gift from Duncan Estate by N.J. Endicott)
- Letter to Reggie Turner. Oxford, 1892. A.L.S. (with caricature) Discusses future theatre Party. (Gift from Duncan Estate by N.J. Endicott)
- Butler, Samuel. Letter to unknown recipient. London, Nov. 26, 1882. A.L.S. Refuses recipient's request. With this, letter (T.L.) from Francis Edwards Ltd. Booksellers, London, to Douglas Duncan, Mar. 27, 1936, regarding his purchase of Butler letter.
- Douglas, Lord Alfred. Correspondence addressed to John Lane, London. 1893-1894. 6 A.L.S. Discuss publication of Douglas' translation of Oscar Wilde's Salomé.
- Green, Julien. To unknown recipient. Paris, Jan. 29, 1929. A.L.S. Discusses translation of his work.
- Le Gallienne, Richard. Letter to John [?]. Brentford, Eng., Mar. 18, 1895. A.L.S. Discusses Beerbohm's essay attacking him which correspondent has sent him in proof.
- Sharp, William. Letter to Katharine Hinkson. Edinburgh, 1897. A.L.S. In persona of Fiona Macleod discusses her need for anonymity.
- Correspondence addressed to John Lane. Edinburgh and Iona, 1894. 5 A.L.S. Discuss publication of works by Sharp and by his persona, Fiona Macleod. Three letters signed by Fiona Macleod.

CONTAINER LIST (cont.)

C. LITERARY MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTED BY DOUGLAS DUNCAN

Box 1

Thoma, Richard. Sketch biographique sur la vie et l'oeuvre de Jean Cocteau. n.d. 22 leaves. Typescript (carbon copy)

Item 2

Aldington, Richard. Meditation on a German grave. [ca.1929] 33 leaves. Bound typescript of short story with some holograph corrections and changes. Bound with author's corrected page proofs from Nash's Pall Mall magazine, 1929. Published in Roads to glory (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930)

Item 3

Aldington, Richard. The verdict was ... [ca.1930] 23 leaves. Bound typescript of short story with some holograph corrections and changes. Bound with author's corrected page proofs from Nash's Pall Mall magazine, 1930. Published in Roads to glory (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930)

Item 4

Beerbohm, Sir Max. Ermine and motley. 1900. 10 leaves. Autograph manuscript of essay. Published in the Cornhill magazine, 1900.

Item 5

Lawrence, David Herbert. [Birds, beasts and flowers. ca.1922] 124 leaves. Typescript of book of poems, with some slight holograph notations. Published in 1923 by Thomas Seltzer in New York and Martin Secker in London. Typescript lacks title page and final poem, "The American eagle", of the published work. Also lacks typescript for section entitled "Tortoises" but includes this section from published work.

Microfilm
Duplicates
31

Microfilm copy available.

(Item 6)

Lawrence, David Herbert. Women in love. [ca.1916] 166 leaves. Typescript of novel with extensive holograph revision in both D.H. Lawrence's hand and Frieda Lawrence's. Pencilled annotations suggesting changes in names are initialled D.C. (possibly Donald Carswell) Contains several sections of material either omitted or reworked in published book. Final chapter contains earlier and difference version of the epilogue. Novel published privately in New York in 1920 and by Martin Secker in London in 1921. Articles on manuscript by Herbert Davis, David Farmer, and C.L. Ross available. (Notes on ms. collections file)

ORIGINAL NOT
AVAILABLE
USE MICROFILM
OR XEROX COPIES

Microfilm
Duplicates
32

Item 7

Lawrence, David Herbert. Women in love. [ca. 1916]
Xerox copy of original manuscript.

Ms.
Coll.
44

DUNCAN (DOUGLAS) COLLECTION
1942-1943, letters
1 box (7 cm)
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

Gift of Clare Endicott, December 15, 2004

This collection contains three letters from Wyndham Lewis to Douglas Duncan. The letters were written between December 1942 and October 1943.

Box 8 Correspondence – Wyndham Lewis

Folder 1

December 30, 1942

-TLS, from Lewis to Duncan, with editorial revisions in black ink = 1
-typescript envelope = 1 [no stamp]

Folder 2

July 17, 1943

-ALS from Lewis to Duncan = 1
-envelope with holograph address = 1

Folder 3

October 10, 1943

-typescript notification of change of address with ANS from Lewis to Duncan = 1
-typescript envelope = 1

Folder 4

Undated

-pre-paid postage envelope = 1 [with holograph notes in pencil, blue ink, and black ink (Clare Endicott?)]