

Daniel Cottier's Aesthetic of Beauty in Australia

Andrew Montana



Detail from Fig. 11. Lyon, Cottier & Co. *The Seasons* staircase window Glenyarrah mansion, Sydney. c.1876.

“A range of performance beyond any modern artist”; so Ford Madox Brown’s appreciation of the work of his former pupil, the brilliant colourist, decorator and stained glass artist, Daniel Cottier (1837-91) was reported in the *Glaswegian* press. “Here tone and colour are suggestive of paradise itself,” he enthused about Cottier’s decorative enrichment of the interior of Queen’s Park United Presbyterian Church (1867-69), which Brown saw in Glasgow in 1883.¹ Brown had befriended Cottier in the late 1850s at the Working Men’s College in Red Lion Square, London, where Cottier attended lectures by John Ruskin and was instructed in drawing by Brown, who had taken over from Dante Gabriel Rossetti.² Through Brown, Cottier studied Pre-Raphaelite art and observed the formation of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. in London in 1861.³

Following on from Morris’s example, Cottier made a successful career from his decorating businesses in London, New York, and Sydney, where he co-established Lyon, Cottier & Co. in 1873. He brought distinctive expressions of the British Aesthetic movement in painted and

¹ “Gossip and Grumbles,” *Evening Times* (Glasgow), 9 Oct. 1893, p. 1.

² Margaret H. Hobler: *In Search of Daniel Cottier, Artistic Entrepreneur, 1838-1891*. The City University of New York: M. A. Thesis (unpub.), Hunter College, 1987, pp. 10, 22.

³ Juliet Kinchin: “Cottier’s in Context: the Significance of Dowanhill Church.” *Cottier’s in Context: Daniel Cottier, William Leiper and Dowanhill Church, Glasgow*. Eds. Hilary Macartney and David Robertson. Edinburgh: Historic Scotland, 2011, p. 12.

stencilled decorations (e.g. Fig. 1) and stained glass windows to private residences, churches and public buildings around New South Wales and throughout Australia.

Yet Cottier's impact in Australia through the Sydney firm remains unfamiliar to scholars and consequently has remained under-appreciated in Victorian art and design studies. It is the purpose of this article to illuminate the early years of the enterprise in Sydney and to bring forward the resonances of Pre-Raphaelitism to be found in Daniel Cottier's aesthetic influences through analysis of some significant examples of Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s decorative art between 1873 and *circa* 1880.



Fig. 1. Stencilled and painted chivalric wall decorations by Lyon, Cottier, & Co., Sydney, in the entrance hall of The Abbey Residence, Annandale, Sydney, NSW, c.1883.

Photograph: Andrew Montana, courtesy of The Abbey estate.

The first Australian reference to Daniel Cottier's work is an 1872 account in the *Sydney Mail* of windows at the Cathedral Church of St. Machar in Aberdeen. Quoting from the twelfth appendix of Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53), the writer observes that "In filling three of the windows in the Aberdeen Cathedral the principles thus laid down by Mr. Ruskin have been carefully and successfully carried out by Mr. Daniel Cottier, of London."⁴ According to the anonymous writer, the Cathedral's committee consulted Ruskin on stained glass design and Ruskin railed against the tendency to paint pictures on windows, as if they were

⁴ Anon.: "Wayfaring Notes," *The Sydney Mail*, 1872, p. 265.

easel paintings, which destroyed the physical qualities of glass, its transparency and colouring, and its spiritual character. For Ruskin, this press report noted, perfection was reached in a painted window through its serenity, intensity and brilliance. It further quoted Ruskin's words from this appendix that emphasised stained glass should appear "like flaming jewellery—full of easily legible and quaint subjects, and exquisitely subtle, yet simple, in its harmonies."⁵



Fig. 2. Cottier & Co., Daniel Cottier, Memorial window in St. Machar Cathedral, Aberdeen, c.1871. Stained glass. Photograph: Andrew Montana, courtesy of St. Machar Cathedral.

In the reporter's view, Cottier achieved Ruskin's precepts in his windows for St. Machar, and indeed Cottier's aesthetic hallmark is there. The colours and tones of the figurative compositions are vivid, the ornamentation is stylised and geometric, and the classicised figures are slightly archaic in treatment (Fig. 2). The outlines of the faces are subtle but defined, and the expressions simplified and characterful. With its breadth of treatment and colourful radiance, Cottier's work is powerful decorative art.

This is a remarkable prelude to Cottier's Australian work in stained glass and interior painted decoration. The firm of Lyon, Cottier & Co. was established in the same year that Cottier opened his enterprise on Fifth Avenue, New York. While Cottier sailed across the Atlantic

⁵ John Ruskin: *Stones of Venice*, p. 457 cited in "Wayfaring Notes," 1872, p. 265.

between London and New York to launch his North American branch,⁶ Lyon established Lyon, Cottier & Co. in Sydney, attracting the attention of leading architects, aspiring businessmen, and political figures in New South Wales.⁷

By early 1874, the interior walls and ceilings of this new company's Sydney showroom were richly painted and stencilled in such a striking and modern manner that the Pre-Raphaelite love of romance, history and motifs from nature was transposed into a new decorative aesthetic beauty. Coupled with the displays of domestic stained glass by Cottier, the new Aesthetic style of these decorations had never been seen in Australia. Without reference to Cottier's New York branch in advertisements and announcements, Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s artistic lineage was, unsurprisingly, cast as British by the Australian press:

Messrs. Lyon, Cottier, and Co. (a branch of the firm of Cottier and Co., Regent-street, London), have opened an establishment at 333 Pitt-street, and as a specimen of their new style of decoration, have painted their showroom. The ceiling is an elaborate design, containing allegorical heads of the seasons, festoons of foliage, grotesque animals, birds, butterflies, &c. The frieze is an adaptation of the Greek honeysuckle and lotus pattern, on which are let in heads of the Greek heroines, painted in colours on gold ground. The wall [tinted vellum shade] is powdered over with gold rosettes down to the dado, where the old fashion of a chair [rail] is revived. The dado is a dark woody green, relieved with an inlaid looking work [ornamental pencilling]—the aim has been to get a quiet harmony of colour, avoiding all that is loud, raw, or gaudy. The windows contain specimens of their stained glass work. One window has the figures of Pomona and Flora in the richest antique glass; the other is very light, having no colour but that produced by the yellow silver stain; the groundwork is little circles like the old German roundlets. Messrs. Lyon, Cottier, and Co., are also makers of art furniture, encaustic tile painters, and importers of real Venetian glass and oriental carpets. The firm have been commissioned to decorate the superior rooms of the new General Post Office, and are now engaged on that work.⁸

Lyon had moved quickly to establish Lyon, Cottier & Co. in September 1873 after relinquishing his partnership with the Melbourne based glass-staining firm of Ferguson, Urie & Lyon in August.⁹ Moving with his family to Sydney, Lyon set up Cottier's new branch with decades of experience behind him. Like Cottier, Lyon was Glaswegian by birth and he had been apprenticed to John Cairney & Co. in Glasgow alongside Cottier, only two years his junior, before working in London for six years with Ward & Hughes, stained glass painters to

⁶ "Shipping," *New York Times*, 26 Oct. 1873, p. 8.

⁷ "Special Advertisements," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 Sept. 1873, p. 4.

⁸ *Illustrated Sydney News & N.S.W. Agriculturalist and Grazier*, 28 Feb. 1874, p. 3.

⁹ "Dissolution of Partnership," *Government Gazette* (Victoria), 29 Aug. 1873, p. 1553.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. It was reported that Cottier also worked with Ward & Hughes for a time, thus reinforcing his and Lyon's formative connection.¹⁰

Within months of his arrival in Victoria in early 1861,¹¹ John Lamb Lyon had sent a stained glass window, described as being in the Early English [Medieval] style, and designs for windows to the Victorian Industrial Exhibition in Melbourne.¹² Soon employed by Ferguson & Urie, Lyon was a member of this firm of fellow Scotsmen, which commenced in 1853 as plumbers, glaziers and decorators. By the 1860s, this firm was making stained glass windows in competition with imported British windows. Bringing prominence to Ferguson & Urie through his artistic and technical abilities in designing and making stained glass windows for ecclesiastical and domestic purposes, Lyon was promoted to partner in what became Ferguson, Urie & Lyon in 1866. Soon Victoria's leading glass staining firm, they specialised in memorial, heraldic and grisaille windows, the production of lead lights in cathedral and other glass, embossing plate glass, and ecclesiastical wall decorations and illuminations.¹³

Travelling throughout Britain during a trip from Melbourne with his wife between 1870 and late 1871, Lyon visited Daniel Cottier at his residence at St. James Terrace in Regent's Park, London, and saw Cottier's business establishment Cottier & Co. in Langham Place, Regent Street, where Cottier sold his stained glass and furniture, his painted tiles and some antique furniture, and was commissioned to decorate interiors.¹⁴ The prospect of establishing an Australian branch was undoubtedly discussed between these two enterprising Scots at this time. Cottier had established his London branch at Langham Place in 1869, firstly with fellow Scotsmen Bruce J. Talbert, as well as the "Queen Anne" revival architect John McKean Brydon, designer William Wallace and John Bennet. This was dissolved by late 1871 and Cottier looked for international opportunities to expand his sole business.¹⁵ As the English poet, critic and editor William Ernest Henley wrote in 1892, Cottier picked his men astutely and had the faculty "common to all great artists . . . of imposing himself upon them

¹⁰ "Personal: Mr. John L. Lyon," *Australasian Decorator and Painter*, Aug. 1909, pp. 263-64.

¹¹ The gold rushes brought Lyon to Victoria in 1861, where he settled in Maldon with his second wife Elizabeth Gillespie *née* Pearson, whom he married in Glasgow towards the end of 1860. Martha Rutledge, "Lyon, John Lamb (1835–1916)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lyon-john-lamb-7276/text12613>, published first in hardcopy 1986, accessed online 2 Sept. 2018.

¹² *Bendigo Advertiser*, 3 Sept. 1861, p. 3; *Mercury*, 26 March 1862, p. 3.

¹³ *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory*, Melbourne: Sands & McDougall, 1865, p. 511.

¹⁴ *Post Office London Trades and Professional Directory for 1871*, London: Kelly & Co., 1871, pp. 1402, 1474, 1576, 1991.

¹⁵ *House Furnisher and Decorator*, March 1872, p. 29.

so as to make them practically exponents and expressions of himself.”¹⁶ This is certainly true of his influence on the formation of Lyon, Cottier & Co. through Lyon in Australia.

But Lyon was more than a conduit for Cottier’s Aestheticism. He was a Scots entrepreneur in his own right. He adapted Cottier’s designs, sometimes translating them into variant decorative idioms that responded to the needs of Australia’s burgeoning and changing late nineteenth-century markets, with symbolic representations of prominent figures from colonial society and history, and motifs from Australian nature, which were also emblematic of the sprawling British Empire. From his partnership in Melbourne with Ferguson, Urie & Lyon, Lyon knew the conventional taste for Gothic revival ecclesiastical stained glass illustrating biblical scenes, typologies and parables, yet as an artist he knew the difference between a picture and a modern design for stained glass. Influenced by Cottier’s aesthetic and adding further to the imported range of designs from Cottier in London, Lyon went on to simplify compositions that gave great precision to line and used clear, rich tones and colours, as can be seen in the windows crafted by the firm in Sydney within a year of its opening. Groupings of classicised figures in a reduced pictorial space recalling Pre-Raphaelite and early Renaissance compositions, and embellished with aesthetic neo-Renaissance and neo-Grec patterned borders and textile patterns, were inspired by Cottier’s decorative art (Fig. 3).

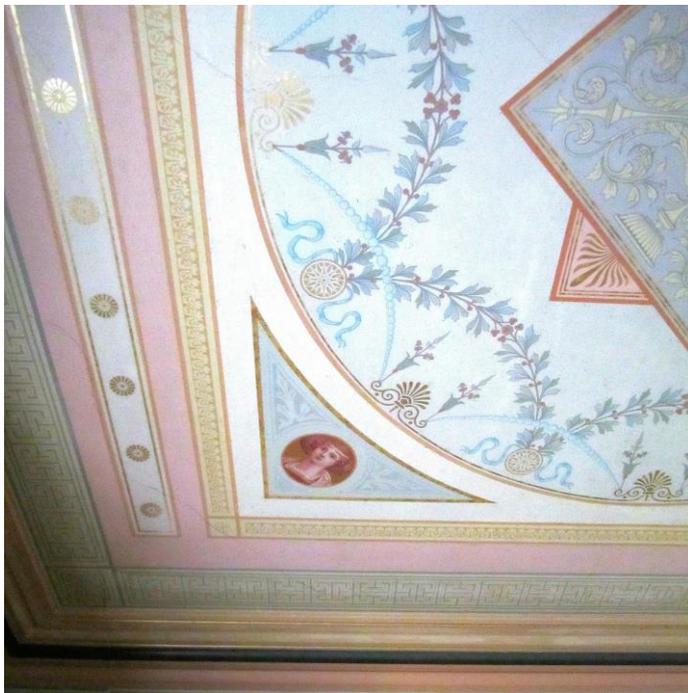


Fig. 3. Example of Lyon, Cottier & Co.’s ceiling decoration depicting a painted panel portrait of an early Renaissance maiden at Glenleigh mansion, near Penrith, NSW, designed by William Wardell, c.1882. Photograph: Andrew Montana, courtesy of Glenleigh estate.

Daniel Cottier almost certainly encouraged the talented Scottish artist Charles Gow (fl. 1830-91) to go to Australia and assist Lyon in the new enterprise in 1873, and supervise the decorations of the showroom in what Lyon later called the “latest London style.”¹⁷ Cottier had persuaded Gow,

¹⁶ William Ernest Henley (W. E. H.): “Daniel Cottier,” *Collection Cottier*, Edinburgh: T. & A. Constable, 1892, p. xii.

¹⁷ “Personal. Mr. John L. Lyon,” *op. cit.*, p. 264.

also a former apprentice of John Cairney & Co., to join his first enterprise as a glass painter and mural decorator based in Edinburgh in 1864. Gow spent twelve years with Cottier doing top end decorative work in Scotland, England and Australia, which included working and living in Australia between 1873 and 1876.¹⁸ It is known that Gow had previously worked on one of Cottier's prestigious and now well-documented commissions after Cottier established his London branch in 1869, namely the glass and decorative work for Cairndhu House at Helensburgh, Scotland, designed by architect William Leiper for Provost John G. Ure of Glasgow. Gow's signature is visible on the large stair window with others by Cottier's assistants.¹⁹ It is likely that Gow also worked on one of Cottier's domestic commissions around 1870, the residence of the Scottish industrialist Alexander Stuart Mackintosh, also designed by Leiper, called Coll-Earn House in Perthshire.²⁰

This later commission brought together major Aesthetic movement decorators and artists including Bruce J. Talbert, Albert Moore, Cottier's friend from Glasgow, John Moyr Smith, and the freelance artist and former student of Albert Moore, Frederick Vincent Hart.²¹ As furniture historian and curator Max Donnelly noted, a full-blown Aesthetic flavour pervaded the interiors of Coll-Earn House.²² This was characterised by Anglo-Japanese roundels depicting birds, painted tiles, stylised sunflower designs, stencils, 'Mon' motifs after the chrysanthemum flower, wave patterns and ornamental motifs painted on rich gold grounds. The naturalistic imagery of pomegranates and sunflower-like patterns was continued in the quarries (panes or pieces of glass cut into shapes) in the stained glass windows at Coll-Earn House, where they were combined with stylised Gothic revival flora and fauna.

Personifications of the seasons in stained glass were a major hallmark of Cottier's repertoire. Clearly inspired by Pre-Raphaelite prototypes, these figures have a physical vigour particular to Cottier's representations in his work of the late 1860s and early 1870s and this differentiates his interpretation from the slender and attenuated Pre-Raphaelite figures of Edward

¹⁸ "Contemporary Decorative Artists: Mr. Charles Gow." *Journal of Decorative Art*, 10 Jan. 1891, p. 12; "Shipping Notice," *The Sydney Mail*, 23 Dec. 1876, p. 882. Gow left Sydney in early December 1876 to return to London. Gow never revisited Australia, and died in Scotland in 1891.

¹⁹ Michael Donnelly: *Glasgow Stained Glass*, Glasgow: Glasgow Museums, 1981, pp. 17, 26, 39 n. 137.

²⁰ Gow had moved to London with Cottier and was working for Cottier at the time Coll-Earn house was built as one of his major assistants. I am grateful to Max Donnelly for this information.

²¹ Anne Marie Stapleton: *John Moyr Smith 1839-1914: a Victorian Designer*, Somerset, England: Richard Dennis, 2002, p. 29.

²² Max Donnelly: "Daniel Cottier, Pioneer of Aestheticism," *The Decorative Arts Society: 1850 to the Present* 23, 1999, p. 40.

Burne-Jones, in particular. Significantly, Cottier's personifications of the Seasons reflect a Pre-Raphaelite ancestry combined with subtle suggestions of Albert Moore's Aesthetic evocations of idealised female beauty touched by Japonisme, and were adapted by Lyon, Cottier & Co. in New South Wales from the firm's inception. Cottier's personifications of the Seasons appeared also in the windows at Cairndu House, and again in the large staircase window of another private property, the Links, in Montrose, north of Dundee in Scotland. Cottier & Co. decorated this residence for the owner of the nearby Paton's Mill, John Middleton Paton, in the early 1870s.²³ Cottier's Aesthetic tiled fireplace with its fitted overmantel also survives in the large central hall of The Links. Its quasi-Jacobean panelling, surmounted by a large coved pediment framed by painted stylised flora and foliage on a gold ground, suggests it was designed by Talbert, and was adapted by Cottier for his art furniture. This treatment is also reminiscent of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co.'s panel paintings of fruit and flora around the dado of the Green Dining Room at the South Kensington Museum in 1867, which Cottier certainly would have known.

Similar depictions of stylised fruit and flora appeared in Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s work. Cottier's influence, transmitted through Gow's work in Australia between 1873 and 1876, resonates in the previously quoted descriptions of Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s new showroom, and in the stained glass and decorative treatments that the Australian firm created for private and public buildings in Sydney and New South Wales during the 1870s and 1880s. Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s interior decorations for the new Sydney General Post Office were highly commended when the building was opened in September 1874. The building was made of local Pyrmont sandstone and designed by the Scottish-born colonial government architect James Barnet in a colonnaded Classical revival style with runs of dramatic Venetian-styled fenestration on the upper two levels. Hundreds of Sydney's leading judiciary, governmental, parliamentary, religious, medical, and business figures were present to celebrate the possibilities in communication promised by the modern technologies of this new Post Office. The building also reflected the growth in population (by 1881, Sydney's population reached around 225,000, just under one third of the colony's population) and the development of extensive railroad connections throughout New South Wales, from which Lyon, Cottier & Co. benefited in further developing their clientele in rural areas and country towns.²⁴

²³ I am grateful to Anne Stott, Mid Links, Montrose, Scotland, for following up my research request with information and photographs of Cottier's windows.

²⁴ *Wright's Australian and American Commercial Directory and Gazetteer*, New York: Wright, 1881-82, p. 15.

The Postmaster-General's room was elaborately decorated; the ceiling "frescoing" was described by the press as being "upon a plan now much in vogue in England," and adopted there for large public buildings and private mansions.²⁵ Distempering was a medium often used by the Sydney firm, which, although it at times needed retouching, dried more quickly in Australia than in Britain. The walls were stencilled and the colours were soft and harmonious. Lyon, Cottier & Co. selected the carpet, the pattern of which was admired for being appropriate to the decoration of the ceiling. Richly coloured drapes hung from massive gilt cornices over the windows. The anteroom of the Post Office was treated in a similar style and because of the quality of the decorations the firm received the contract to decorate the principal portions of the building. The neo-Grec style predominated in their work on the Post Office, and would be used in one of their next major public commissions, the decorations for Parliament House, Sydney, in 1875.

A composite of the neo-Grec and neo-Egyptian styles formed the decoration of the arched framed lobby in Parliament house, and gave life to Owen Jones's philosophy expressed in his *The Grammar of Ornament* that the decorative arts are dependent on architecture. Bands of Grecian ornament—meander, palmette, anthemion and geometric angled forms—issued from Egyptian fan-like decorations while swirling neo-Grec patterns fused with stylised Egyptian lotus and gothic-leaf forms. Foliate circular wreaths enclosed the names of deceased members of the Legislative Assembly in gold, the most prominent being the name William Charles Wentworth (Fig. 4). This was an arresting reminder of the audacious statesman and landowner, born of a convict mother on the voyage to Australia in 1790.

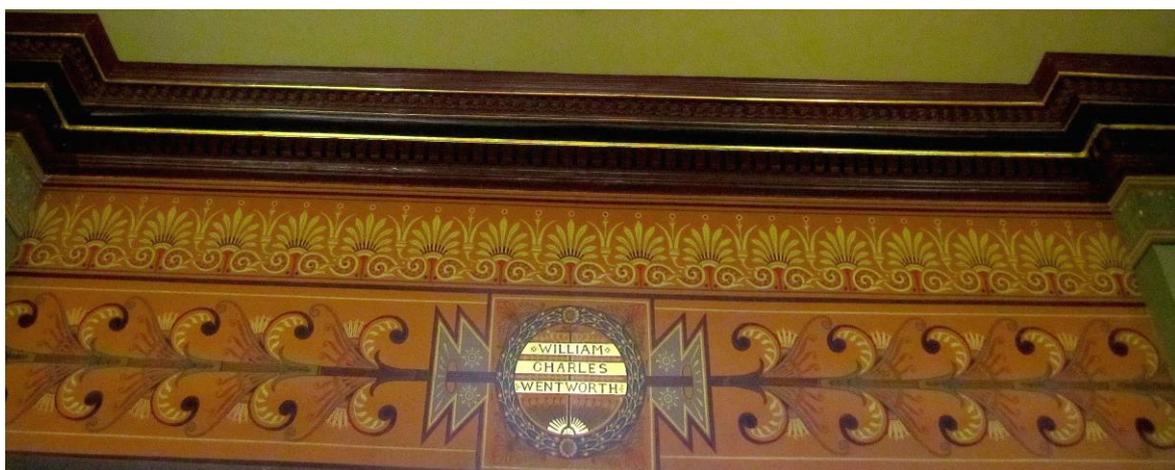


Fig. 4. Example of Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s Grecian and Egyptian style frieze decoration showing the Wentworth wreath design at the centre in the lobby of Parliament House, Sydney. Reconstructed in the late twentieth century from the 1875 decorations. Photograph: Andrew Montana, courtesy of Parliament House, Sydney.

²⁵ "Opening of the New Post Office," *The Sydney Mail*, 5 Sept. 1874, p. 307.

Wentworth's knowledge of British history determined his passionate aspirations for an Australia that would have the free institutions that in eighteenth-century England were based on values inspired by the Ancient worlds. Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s decorations recalled the patterns of ancient civilisations; in the lobby area of Parliament House, the firm brought together stencilled dados, wide friezes, decorated column bases and capitals and enriched coved ceilings and archways.

Their decorations for the dining room at Parliament House were described as being in "what is known as the style of Queen Anne,"²⁶ a term often used loosely, as John Moyr Smith observed in his book *Ornamental Interiors: Ancient and Modern* (1887).²⁷ But in 1870s Sydney, its usage suggests Charles Gow's knowledge of the new Queen Anne architecture that had been introduced to London by the early 1870s by the Glaswegian-born John James Stevenson, with whom Talbert briefly trained,²⁸ and Brydon, who had worked in the offices of Richard Norman Shaw and William Eden Nesfield in London. All of this talented group were within Daniel Cottier's circle. Most likely these painted and stencilled decorations for the dining room reflected an Adam style, with the use of a chair-rail-patterned dado, embellished wall panels, a decorated frieze and cornice, and circular compositions of ornamental motifs, and swags and festoons of fruits laid across the ceiling.

Recommendations to Lyon, Cottier & Co. came through their business networks and through Sydney's leading architects, including James Barnet (Lyon, Cottier & Co. decorated Barnet's residence), William Wardell and John Horbury Hunt. One such commission was initiated by the horse breeder, pastoralist and former member of the Legislative Assembly James White, who employed the Australian, Canadian-born and Boston-trained architect John Horbury Hunt to remodel his residence, Cranbrook, situated on over eighteen acres of cultivated terraced gardens and fruit groves overlooking Sydney Harbour and which he acquired in 1873. An accomplished architect in the reformed Gothic style, Horbury Hunt remodelled Cranbrook in 1874 in what was termed an Australian-Italian style.²⁹ He soon developed an Anglo-American Australian Queen Anne style in his domestic architecture, which nodded to

²⁶ "The Parliamentary Buildings," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 Nov. 1875, p. 7.

²⁷ "The moral of this allegorical prelude is that the name of Queen Anne has been tacked to things of very opposite styles, periods and countries, with which the style of the real Queen Anne had no connection." (John Moyr Smith, *Ornamental Interiors: Ancient & Modern*, London: Crosby Lockwood and Co., 1887, p. 69).

²⁸ Mark Girouard: *Sweetness and Light: the Queen Anne Movement 1860-1900*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977, pp. 38-40; *Decoration*, Oct. 1886, p. 3.

²⁹ "Garden Notes. Cranbrook, Rose Bay," *The Sydney Mail*, 16 Dec. 1876, p. 776.

the British architects Philip Webb and Richard Norman Shaw, and to Henry Hobson Richardson in America. But Hunt's architecture was very much his own idiom in Australia.

Turn of the nineteenth-century photographs of White's Cranbrook illustrate the striking Lyon, Cottier & Co. decorations from the 1870s, highlighting the interior's architectural lines.³⁰ Imbued with an Aesthetic and neo-Grec character, the walls of the wide entrance hall were treated with a delicate horizontal and vertical pattern of open rectangles intersected by small circles, each circle surrounded by fine radiating lines (Fig. 5). A narrow horizontal lintel frieze joined the pilasters dividing this hall into an anteroom and along this frieze a Grecian lotus flower motif ran in successive repeats. An abstract border of dots and vertical lines defined the bottom of the frieze, with a dentilled cornice painted in contrasting colours surmounting it. Large over-door panels were hand painted in harmonious tints with depictions of fruit, birds, butterflies and branches that transported the Pre-Raphaelite spirit into Aestheticism. The inner archway wall recesses were treated with stylised foliage issuing from Aesthetic Grecian urns. Patterns in blue, silver and gold enriched the ceiling.³¹



Fig. 5. Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s painted and stencilled decorations on the walls, arches, overdoor and upper frieze of Cranbrook's entrance hall, Bellevue Hill, Sydney, c.1875.
Photograph c.1902 courtesy of the Archives Office of New South Wales, Sydney.

³⁰ State Records Office of N.S.W., "Cranbrook, Bellevue Hills, (N.S.W.)." Photographs: series 4481.

³¹ "Cranbrook," *Evening News* (Sydney) (Supplement), 28 Sept. 1901, p. 1.

Lyon, Cottier & Co. exhibited their stained glass windows and decorative work in their Sydney showroom and at intercolonial and international exhibitions throughout Australia. As well as promoting their domestic work, this exposure ensured a steady flow of commissions amongst religious denominations, for ecclesiastical ornamentation reflected the growing appreciation of aesthetic beauty as a spiritually improving agent, and memorialised deceased family members. A staunch Scots Presbyterian, Lyon knew that, unlike Britain, where Catholics generally went to Hardman's for stained and painted glass and Protestants went to Clayton and Bell, the Australian firm must cater to all religions, including Judaism, for which faith they designed the stained and embossed geometric patterned glass for the great synagogue in Sydney in the late 1870s. This breadth of practice reflected the range of religious denominations in the Australian colonies; catering to this spectrum of faiths was essential for the ongoing success of Lyon, Cottier & Co. in a comparatively small market.

Towards the end of 1874 the firm executed a large four-light window for All Saint's Anglican Cathedral in Bathurst depicting the four evangelists surrounded by symbolism associated with each saint. It was one of their many windows commissioned for this Cathedral in a country town made prosperous from the earlier gold rushes in the colony (Fig. 6).³²

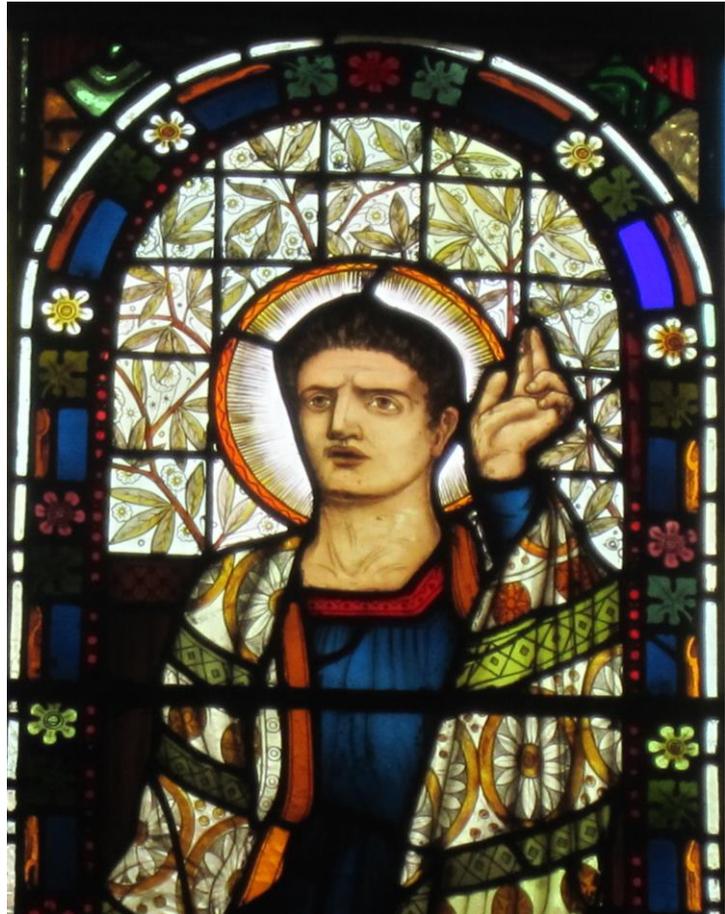


Fig. 6. Detail of window by Cottier depicting Daniel in All Saints' Cathedral, Bathurst, N.S.W., through Lyon, Cottier & Co., c.1876. Stained glass. Photograph: Andrew Montana.

³² "Magnificent Stained Glass Windows," *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Dec. 1874, p. 10.

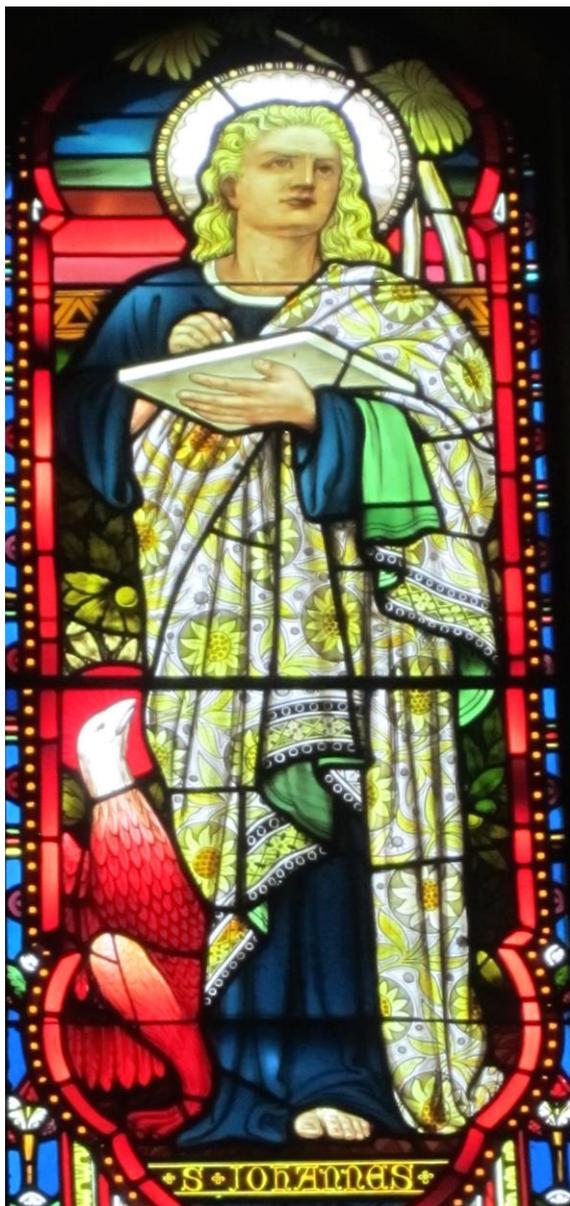


Fig. 7. Window of St. John. Installed by Lyon, Cottier & Co., 1875. Stained glass. Photograph: Andrew Montana, courtesy of All Saints' Anglican Cathedral, Bathurst.

Some of the figures of Old Testament prophets and evangelists in the windows have archaic and androgynous features akin to the faces drawn by artists of the Pre-Raphaelite circle of D. G. Rossetti, such as Simeon Solomon and Frederick Sandys. These figures were robed in tunics and drapery bearing swirling sunflowers and large Renaissance inspired circular motifs. Background foliage was reminiscent of William Morris's stylisation of leaves and flowers and coloured in an Aesthetic tertiary olive green.

Traditional Old and New Testament iconography in these windows rejected historicist Gothic revival glass and is reinterpreted with an aesthetic richness that resulted in what the English cultural critic and essayist Matthew Arnold termed "sweetness and light," fusing qualities of Hebraism and Hellenism (Fig. 7). Critical of the dull narrow-mindedness and puritanism of the English middle classes of the late 1860s, Arnold called for a "quickening of consciousness," which he associated with Grecian Hellenic beauty and intelligence, to

counter the "strictness of consciousness" associated with the force of the culturally dominant Hebraism.³³ This window bears the bold theatricality of a Cottier design in which Pre-Raphaelitism blends into an Aesthetic spirit, bordered by Lyon's glass designs. Glowing red, the emblem of the eagle in the St. John window colour-shifts to pink and pearly white.

³³ Matthew Arnold: "Culture and Anarchy," (1868-69). *Norton Anthology of English Literature* 2. Ed. Meyer Howard Abrams, New York: W. W. Norton, 1986, 5th ed., pp. 1425-32.

The blazing rose window, completed *circa* 1875, featured the Creation and depicted, in clockwise direction, roundels set in petals showing Day One: earth, space, time, and light; Day Two: atmosphere; Day Three: land and plants; Day Four: sun, moon, and stars; Day Five: sea and flying creatures; Day Six: land, animals, man, and woman (Fig. 8). The two top roundels depicted in visual rhythm Pre-Raphaelite maidens encircled by nimbus halos, with upstretched arms, and dressed in simple robes, with abstracted, draped wing-like forms. Across these figures, undulating banners joyously announce the creation narrative from the book of Genesis in modernised medieval lettering.



Fig. 8. Detail of *Days of Creation* Rose Window. Lyon, Cottier & Co. 1875. Stained glass.
Photograph: Douglas Fulton, courtesy of All Saints' Anglican Cathedral, Bathurst.

Abstracted and boldly coloured in oranges, reds, azure blue, greens, mauves and bright yellows, this blazing window has the visual energy of painted medieval glass brought into the realm of modern decorative art by Lyon, Cottier & Co. The surrounding medieval-inspired coloured ornaments are reminiscent of those used by Cottier for his rose window at Downanhill (Presbyterian) Church, Glasgow, in which portrait personifications of Old and New Testament figures resemble, as art historian Juliette Kinchin noted, subjects drawn and painted by Ford Madox Brown in the mid-1860s for an (unrealised) illustrated bible to be

published by the Dalziel Brothers, to which Simeon Solomon, Edward Poynter and Frederic Leighton also contributed work.³⁴

In competition with Ferguson & Urie, Lyon, Cottier & Co. exhibited a large staircase window at the 1875 Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition, designed to commemorate Captain Cook's voyages in the Pacific and his landing in Australia. This exhibition served as a preparation for the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876, where the window was also exhibited.³⁵ The Captain Cook window has not survived but a contemporary reviewer singled it out and noted the bold seated figure of a meditative-looking Cook, his hand on a golden globe, to which England had added Australia as a possession of Empire.³⁶ Taking a cue from Cottier's quarries featuring Pre-Raphaelite stylised flora and fauna, Lyon, Cottier & Co. introduced an Australian accent to their design, with quarries in gorgeous colours containing depictions of native Australian birds and animals (kangaroos and possums) surrounding this central figure.³⁷ Ferguson & Urie had also done this for windows in Rupertswood, the newly-built country mansion in Victoria of the pastoralist, cattle-breeder and heir of his father's fortune Sir William Clarke, where Australian birds incongruously surrounded a glass panel painted with a copy of Sir Edwin Landseer's *The Stag at Bay*.³⁸ Chiding Ferguson & Urie's mimetic depiction of Chillingham cattle that ignored the "true principles which should be kept steadily in view in this development of art," the Melbourne reviewer in 1875 praised Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s window of Cook for being from "a different but at the same time more boldly artistic school."³⁹

If Ferguson & Urie were thought by this reviewer to have been guided by the less elevated taste of their patron, and therefore might be excused for their realistic depiction of cattle on glass, Lyon, Cottier & Co. were more fortunate in the patronage of the merchant, pastoralist and politician Samuel Deane Gordon (1811-82) in Sydney. A prominent Presbyterian,

³⁴ Juliet Kinchin: "The Aesthetic and Design Context," *Cottier's in Context: Daniel Cottier, William Leiper and Dowanhill Church, Glasgow*. Eds. Hilary Macartney and David Robertson. Edinburgh., 2011, pp. 37-38.

³⁵ *Official Record, Philadelphia International Exhibition of 1876* (Melbourne 1875), Melbourne: McCarron, Bird & Co., 1875, p. 17.

³⁶ "The *Argus* account of the Victorian Exhibition of 1875," *Argus* (Supplement), 3 Sept. 1875, p. 3.

³⁷ Another version of this subject was shown at the Metropolitan Intercolonial exhibition in Sydney in 1878; see "Metropolitan Intercolonial Exhibition," *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 4 May 1878, p. 5. There are no similarities between the descriptions of these windows and the Captain Cook window at Cranbrook, Sydney. It has been suggested that the latter window by an unknown designer may have come through Daniel Cottier's contacts in England and installed at Cranbrook by Lyon, Cottier & Co. in the 1870s. This is possible but it is not a Cottier designed window. See Beverley Sherry: https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/stained_glass.

³⁸ *Bacchus Marsh Express*, 31 July 1875, p. 4.

³⁹ *Argus* (Supplement), 3 Sept. 1875, p. 3.

Gordon commissioned, between 1876 and 1878, stained glass windows and some of the painted interior decorations for the newly-built St. Andrew's College, for which he was a founder and one of the councillors, at the University of Sydney. Predominantly the design work of Daniel Cottier's firm, the large windows in the College's stairway hall portrayed John Knox, the Earl of Murray, George Buchanan, and Thomas Chalmers, literary men from British history committed to social reform and education. The large three-light lancet windows in the upstairs library bay were also from Daniel Cottier and featured full-length portraits of Homer, Chaucer and Dante.⁴⁰ Above these, the busts of Scottish poets James Hogg, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns were depicted in roundels and surrounded by quarries filled with small yellow sunflowers.⁴¹ These figures are robust, spirited and theatrical. Lyon, Cottier & Co. decorated the coved ceiling of the College library with compartments of bordered panels,⁴² the centres of each showing the mottos and crests of the Councillors in office from 1877.⁴³ "The walls have been painted and the ceiling gracefully ornamented," applauded the press, "[t]he varied colours and designs of the wall and ceiling produce a very fine effect."⁴⁴

Characteristically, Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s motifs of small gold circles and radiating stars on a deep blue ground decorating this ceiling harmonised with the stylised floriated border patterns, the laurel leaves, the neo-Grec palmettes and the crests and gold initials. The firm also decorated the students' dining room with a stencilled dado, frieze and lightly stencilled ceiling. The stained glass windows in this room by Lyon, Cottier & Co. featured Scottish scenes, and the portraits of John Milton and Shakespeare above the portraits of two Scottish poets, William Drummond and Thomas Campbell. Bordered by bold chevron patterns inset with bursting sun rays and leaves, and quarries painted with the English rose, the shamrock of Ireland, the leek of Wales, and Scottish thistle, these side windows also contained quarries with stylised representations of the kookaburra, kangaroo, parrot and koala set respectively in roundels.

"No more elegant treatment occurs to us, for an example far away in a literary man's home," wrote Charles Cole in America about Cottier's painted glass decoration in 1879, "than the

⁴⁰ "St. Andrew's College," *Illustrated Sydney News*, 23 Feb. 1878, p. 10.

⁴¹ Beverley Sherry: "Treasures in Stained Glass at the University of Sydney," *Heritage Australia* 6.4 (Summer 1987), pp. 3-4.

⁴² "St. Andrew's College," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 Dec. 1878, p. 3.

⁴³ Ian Jack: *The St. Andrew's Book*, Sydney: St. Andrew's College, 2013, pp. 17-19.

⁴⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 June 1878, p. 5.

staircase window designed by Messrs. Cottier for the poet Tennyson, in which figures of Dante, Homer and Chaucer filled the principle lights.”⁴⁵ The mood conveyed here through Cottier’s use of literary “saints” is pure Pre-Raphaelitism and anticipates Morris’s Kelmscott Press. A popular theme in Cottier’s decorative repertoire, stained glass portraits of the poets and writers who inspired Pre-Raphaelite artists were exhibited by Lyon, Cottier & Co. at the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition.⁴⁶ Further, the firm executed glass panels “of the poets and writers of past ages” for the front windows of a Sydney bookseller, stationer and artistic bric-a-brac store a year later.⁴⁷

Enlarged and beautified in 1875, St. Andrew’s Church, Sydney, contained Daniel Cottier’s windows, including King David playing the harp, and Saint Paul preaching (Fig. 9), commissioned by Gordon in memory of his deceased family members. These expressive and dramatic figures wear flowing patterned robes with neo-Grec details while the vivid olive green robe of Saint Paul is also decorated with large, bursting sunflowers. The emblems of Faith, Hope and Charity were placed above these figures in the smaller divisions of the windows and the flora and foliage surrounding the figures were conventionalised and richly coloured. Cottier’s work incarnated for the faithful a visual aesthetic beauty through the transposition of religious iconography, an incarnation also transferred to the public and private decorations by the firm through the use of beautified figural motifs and ornaments.



Fig. 9. King David and St. Paul windows by Cottier & Co., through Lyon, Cottier & Co. 1875. Stained glass. Photograph: Katherine Spadaro, courtesy of St. Andrew’s Scots Church.

Old and New Testament iconography was united in the windows at St. Andrew’s Church to create aesthetic beauty. The ornamental bands surrounding the windows were a composite of

⁴⁵ Charles A. Cole: “Painted Glass in Household Decoration,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 57 (Oct. 1879), p. 662.

⁴⁶ “The Exhibition,” *Bendigo Advertiser*, 6 Oct. 1880, p. 3.

⁴⁷ “Messrs. Turner & Henderson’s New Premises,” *Illustrated Sydney News*, 26 Nov. 1881, p. 10.

abstracted medieval and antique Greco-Roman motifs. One report observed that the artist in designing the costume of King David “has evidently availed himself of the results of modern research into the antiquities of Assyria . . . And any person with a taste for art should visit St. Andrew’s Scots Church.”⁴⁸ Indeed, the figural and ornamental treatments resonate with William Holman Hunt’s belief in 1865 that Assyrian and Egyptian sources for accessories and costumes should guide biblical subjects.⁴⁹

Two other windows comprised medallion portraits of the four prophets of the Old Testament and the Four Evangelists, respectively, circumscribed by halos, scriptural texts, quatrefoils, roundels, mediaeval inspired heraldic devices and coloured bands of ornamental foliage. Scriptural scrolls spiralled around bouquets of vibrantly coloured stylised flowers. These windows were a composite of both Cottier’s glass designing and Lyon’s stained glasswork. While the fusion of the medieval and the antique worlds approximated Daniel Cottier’s windows for Dowanhill Church, Glasgow from 1866-67, the overall rhythmic energy of the windows’ composition in St. Andrew’s Church was very much Cottier’s repertoire of the early-to-mid 1870s.

Lyon, Cottier & Co. continued to use Cottier’s design of King David and portraits of the evangelists and prophets in other commissions for stained glass. They received a large commission for memorial windows featuring the evangelists for St. Andrew’s Anglican Church at Lutwyche near Brisbane.⁵⁰ And another major commission for memorial windows in St. John’s Anglican Church at Forbes in the mid-west of New South Wales included a



Fig. 10. Detail of the foliated lower section of the three-light triptych window showing Cottier’s Prophets at St. John’s Anglican Church, Forbes, New South Wales, 1877. Stained glass. Photograph: Reverend Geoffrey McAuliffe.

⁴⁸ “St. Andrew’s Scots Church. Memorial Windows,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 July 1875, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Kinchin: “The Aesthetic and Design Context,” *op.cit.*, p. 37.

⁵⁰ “Lutwyche, Queensland,” *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 9 Dec. 1876, p. 28.

large lancet framed triptych on the western wall bordered across the base by large medallions of the prophets (Fig. 10). Painted ornamental quarries surround the windows displaying portrait vignettes of the prophets interpreted with a Pre-Raphaelite beauty akin to Cottier's interpretation of Madox Brown's drawings for his windows at Dowanhill Church, Glasgow. These brought together geometric and arabesque arrangements of flat stylised leaves and flowers in rich and tertiary colours.

Cottier's King David was installed on the wall of the nave but bordered with a different arrangement of flowers and geometric patterning.⁵¹ More memorial windows for St. John's followed that evinced Cottier's response to Pre-Raphaelitism's decorative register; in 1878 the firm installed another version of Saint Paul, different from that used in St. Andrew's Scots Church, Sydney. This Saint Paul's drapery is patterned with large Aesthetic sunflower forms and large sunflowers are at the corners of the window's outer border anchoring the robust, full-frontal figure, delineated with the intensity of early paintings by John Everett Millais. Overall, the windows at Forbes appear to be a composite of John Lamb Lyon's and Daniel Cottier's stained glass work, with Lyon doing the ornamental work above and beneath the figured panels.⁵²

Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s decoration of public, private and ecclesiastical buildings, and commercial premises and institutions was often supported by a system of overlapping patronage. It is not surprising, then, that Gordon commissioned Lyon, Cottier & Co. to decorate his gothic styled residence Glenyarrah in Double Bay, Sydney at around the time the firm worked on the St. Andrew's College commission. Extensively altered internally during the twentieth century, this castellated, picturesque sandstone property was once decorated with the firm's painted and stencilled Aesthetic decorations. The magnificent sets of windows that Lyon, Cottier & Co. installed included two porch windows representing Daniel Cottier's Flora and Pomona, heraldic windows, and a large staircase window featuring wistful personifications of the Seasons in a Pre-Raphaelite style (Fig. 11).

⁵¹ "The Intercolonial Exhibition," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May 1877, p. 5.

⁵² I am grateful to Reverend Geoffrey McAuliffe, for providing me with research photographs of the dated Lyon, Cottier & Co. windows at St. John's, Forbes.



Fig. 11. Lyon, Cottier & Co. *The Seasons* staircase window Glenyarrah mansion, Double Bay, Sydney. c.1876. Photograph: Douglass Baglin, 1982. Contributed by Private Collection, by kind permission of the Baglin Estate

An Australian watercolour design for this Seasons window is in the Lyon, Cottier & Co. archive in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, and indicates the firm's artist's adaptation of Cottier's work for Coll-Earn House in Perthshire, and for Cairndhu in Helensburgh.

Gordon's Flora and Pomona windows are further key examples of Cottier's work in Australia and demonstrate the ways that Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s artists modified the ornamental patterning, the colouring of fabrics and the background details for different commissions. If Cottier & Co. revised and adapted decorative motifs across the mediums of painted glass, furniture and wall and ceiling ornamentation in London and New York, so too did Lyon, Cottier & Co. in Sydney. This transference is most recognisable in the Seasons designs used in stained

glass, in their decorative ceiling painting and in ceramic painting, including Pre-Raphaelite maidens, hand-painted on imported Minton, Hollins & Co. blank tiles (Fig. 12).

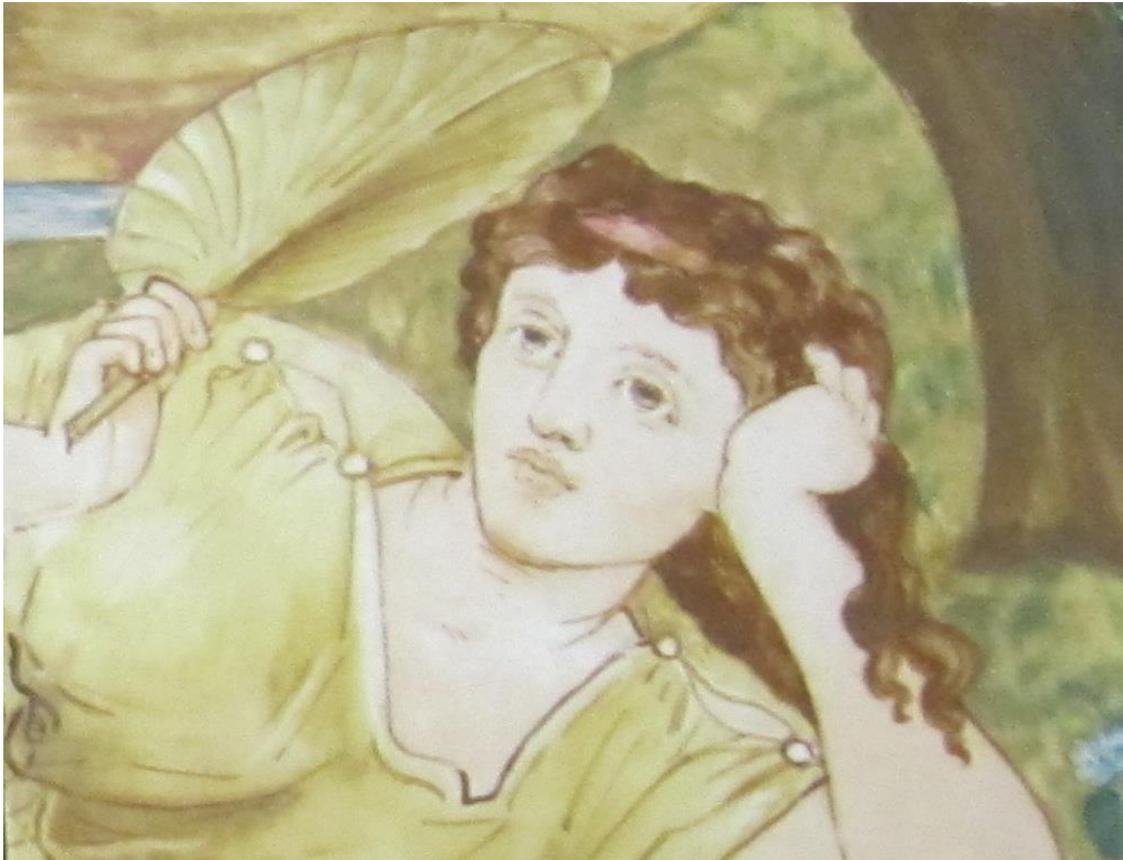


Fig. 12. Lyon, Cottier & Co. *Allegory of Summer* (detail), painted in enamel on blank Minton tiles, Sydney. c.1878. Three-tile panel 45 by 15 cm, Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection. Photograph: Andrew Montana, courtesy of Sydney Living Museums, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales.

Roundels of the Seasons were painted respectively on a gold ground and set within geometric compartments encircling the ceiling rose for the red drawing room at Government House, Sydney. Outwardly flanked by Pre-Raphaelite styled allegories of Night and Day, this ceiling scheme was part of Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s redecoration of the vice-regal residence to coincide with the staging of the 1879 Sydney International Exhibition, which was held in the building designed by James Barnett located in the Domain Gardens. Called the Garden Palace, the Exhibition Building's painted and stencilled interior decorations were also primarily designed by Lyon, Cottier & Co.⁵³

In 1876 Lyon, Cottier & Co. produced an advertising brochure listing many of their decorating commissions and emphasising that the firm, with a branch in Regent Street, London, was

⁵³ "International Exhibition," *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 17 May 1879, p. 13; "The International Exhibition," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 Sept. 1879, p. 6.

also engaged in picture selling and art furniture manufacture. Including Ruskin's poetic description from *The Stones of Venice* of painted windows "like flaming jewellery," the brochure also quoted from an earlier article in *St. Pauls: A Monthly Magazine* of 1872, written by the English arbiter and populariser of artistic household taste, Mrs Haweis, an ongoing supporter of Cottier's work in London through her publications and books.⁵⁴ Omitting both reference to the author, Haweis, and her praise of Owen Jones and William Morris, the modified text in the advertising brochure singled out Cottier alone and served to promote the Lyon, Cottier & Co. enterprise in Sydney, authorised by Cottier's early connections to Ruskin:

To Mr. Cottier, a pupil of Ruskin's, we owe a debt of gratitude. He has lavished his great gift of an "eye" for form and colour on mural and room decoration—the stained glass, the ceilings, the wall[s] . . . being quite perfect.⁵⁵

Lyon, Cottier & Co.'s enterprise continued to incorporate Pre-Raphaelite stylistic currents, including imagery evoking medieval romances, in its decorative repertoire well into the 1880s.⁵⁶ And appropriate to the fluid eclecticism of the ongoing Aesthetic movement within Australia that anticipated Art Nouveau ornament, the emblematic Seasons, which the firm introduced in their Pre-Raphaelite inspired decorations in Sydney from 1873, continued in their painted ornaments and stained glass windows into the 1890s, such as the windows at Arlington house (Figs. 13 and 14).

Fig. 13. Lyon, Cottier & Co. Variants of earlier "Spring" and "Summer" designs from the *Seasons* installed in the Queen Anne-inspired residence Arlington, Croydon, Sydney, c.1892. Stained glass. The wall's colour scheme dates from the late twentieth century. Photograph: Andrew Montana, courtesy of the Presbyterian Ladies College, Croydon.



⁵⁴ Mary Eliza Haweis (M. E. H.): "The Art of Beauty," *St. Pauls Magazine*, 10 (Feb. 1872), pp. 189-99. "To Mr. Owen Jones, Mr. Morris, Mr. Cottier, and a few other intelligent artists and architects, we owe a debt of gratitude. These gentlemen, especially Mr. Cottier, a pupil of Ruskin's, have lavished their great gift of an "eye" for form and colour in the direction of mural and room decoration - the stained glass, the ceilings, and stencils designed by them are quite perfect": Haweis's articles from *St. Pauls: A Monthly Magazine* were later published with some modifications in the book *The Art of Beauty* in 1883. "Why is not Cottier, for instance, a Royal Academician?" she queried in this book, in praise of his work as a consummate decorative artist (p. 210).

⁵⁵ *Lyon, Cottier & Co., 333 Pitt Street, Sydney, London House, 8 Pall Mall, Artistic Interior Decorators, Stained Glass Painters, Etc. Sydney: Gibbs Shallard & Co., c.1876* (Mitchell Library, Sydney, Manuscripts Series 1381/1 Item 10).

⁵⁶ For example, The Abbey residence in Annandale, Sydney, decorated by Lyon, Cottier & Co. c.1883-84.



Fig. 14. Lyon, Cottier & Co.
 “Spring” design from the *Seasons*
 window at Arlington, Croydon,
 Sydney, c.1892. Stained glass.
 Photograph: Douglass Baglin.
 Contributed by Private Collection, by
 kind permission of the Baglin Estate.

As this article has elucidated, Lyon, Cottier & Co. introduced a Pre-Raphaelite spirit from the early 1870s directly influenced by Daniel Cottier’s work in Britain. And in so doing they suffused Arnoldian “sweetness and light” into their stained glass and interior decorations for ecclesiastical and secular architecture throughout Sydney and New South Wales, and other colonies in Australia. Independent from the decorative work of rival firms emerging in Sydney by the year of Australia’s first international exhibition, Lyon, Cottier & Co.’s aesthetic styling was made international by Daniel Cottier, drawing on artistic trends also seen in Britain and North America, and translating the spirit of Pre-Raphaelitism with modern vigour into new and powerful Aesthetic decorative art in Australia.

Dr. Andrew Montana is Senior Lecturer in art and design history at the Australian National University, Canberra. A graduate of the University of Melbourne, he is the author of many articles on decorative arts and design, and the books *The Art Movement in Australia: Design, Taste and Society 1875-1900* (Melbourne: Miegunyah, MUP, 2000) and *Fantasy Modern: Loudon Sainthill’s Theatre of Art and Life* (Kensington: NewSouth, 2013). He curated an exhibition of decorative arts and design for The Australiana Fund and contributed to its book *Collecting for the National: The Australiana Fund* (Kensington: NewSouth, 2017).

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