

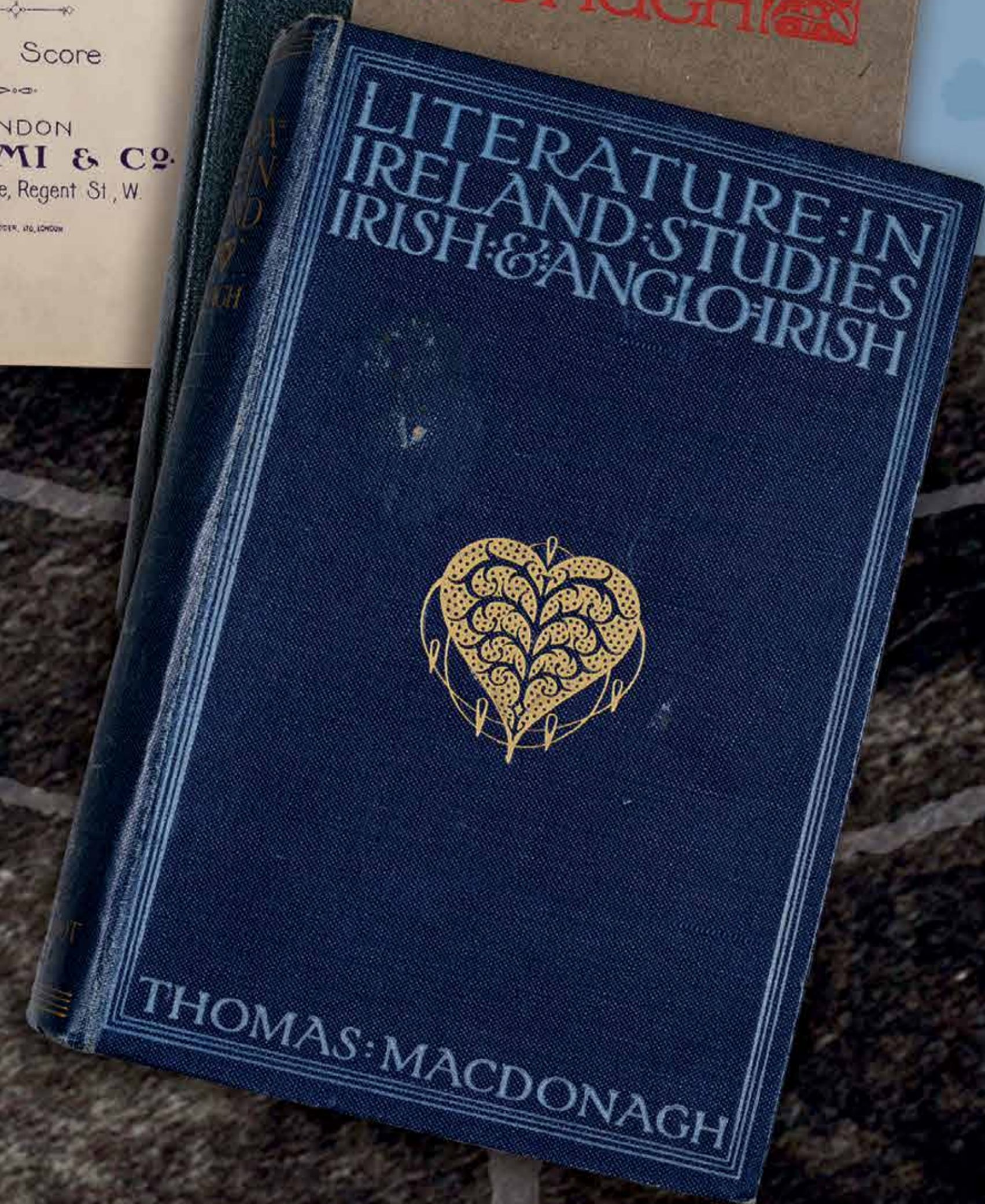
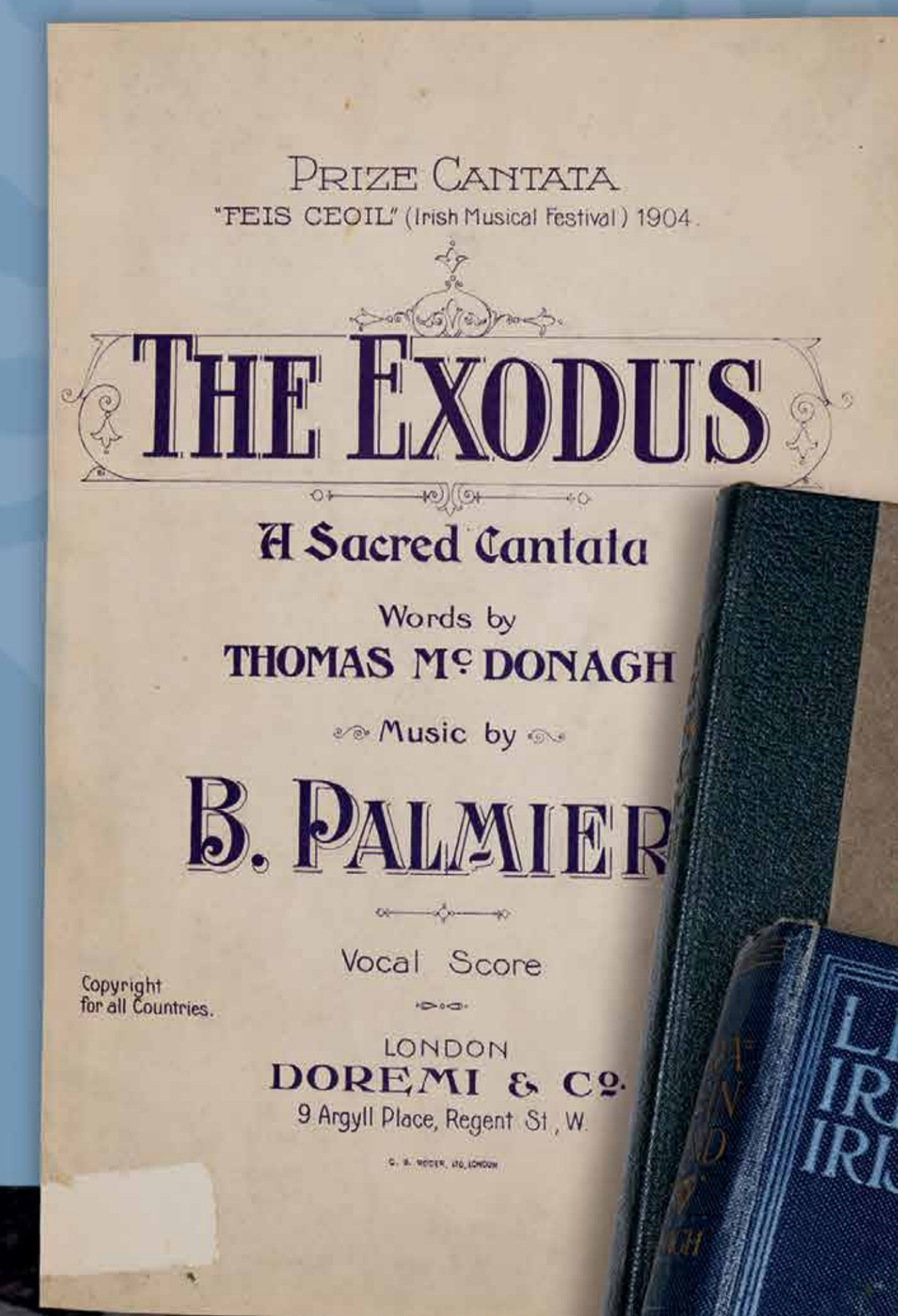
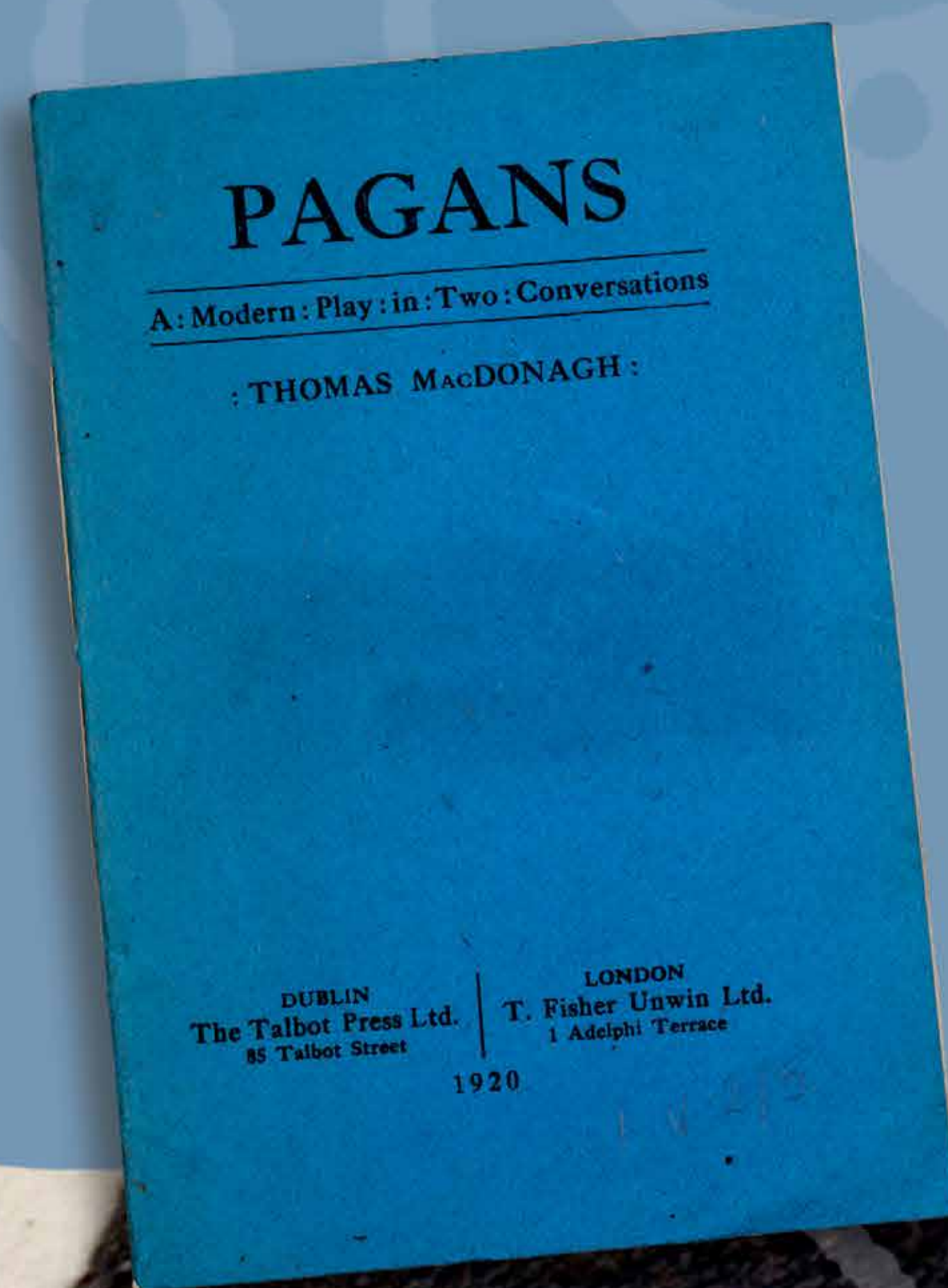
THOMAS MacDONAGH

(1878-1916)

“JOHN: Frances, I shall do better than write. A man who is a mere author is nothing. If there is anything good in anything I have written it is the potentiality of adventure in me—the power to do something better than write. My writings have been only the prelude to my other work. ...Sooner than you think, Frances, politics will be dropped here, and something better will take their place. ... You will not know yourself in the Ireland that we shall make here.” (*Pagans*)

Thomas MacDonagh's third and final play *Pagans* was staged in April 1915 at the Irish Theatre on Hardwicke Street. The closing lines above betray a latent revolutionary spirit which would be illuminated the following year when, as leader of the 2nd Battalion of the Irish Volunteers, he was executed at Kilmainham Gaol following the Easter Rising.

Born in Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary and educated at Rockwell College, MacDonagh became a teacher, working in Kilkenny and Fermoy before moving to Dublin to become assistant headmaster to Patrick Pearse at St Enda's School. After completing a BA and MA in UCD, he was appointed lecturer in English. He was a founding editor of the *Irish Review* (1911-14) and in 1914, alongside Edward Martyn and Joseph Mary Plunkett, he established the Irish Theatre with the intention of staging Irish language plays, English plays by Irish authors, and translations of European works. During his lifetime, MacDonagh published five volumes of poetry, three plays, two critical texts, and lyrics for a prize-winning cantata.



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