



LIGUE DES BIBLIOTHÈQUES EUROPÉENNES DE RECHERCHE  
ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

Manuscript Librarians Group

## Ireland – Progress Report 2003-2007

**Bernard Meehan** (Trinity College Library Dublin).

Reports for Ireland have been drawn up with the kind assistance of Gerard Lyne (National Library of Ireland), Seamus Helferty (UCD Archives) and Carol Quinn (NUI Cork).

Contents: 1. Acquisitions. – 2. Cataloguing projects. – 3. Digital access. – 4. Conservation. – 5. Selected exhibitions. – 6. Other research activities (including conferences). – 7. Selected literature. – 8. Education. – 9. News on staff, organizations, varia.

### 1. Acquisitions

- On 20 July 2006, a latin copy of a psalter dating from around 800 CE was unearthed by a mechanical digger at Faddan More bog, county Tipperary. The find, which has attracted considerable international attention, is currently undergoing conservation and examination at the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.
- Trinity College Library, Dublin (TCD): Samuel Beckett (1906-89), manuscript containing drafts of *Imagination Dead Imagine* and other texts, 1960s (TCD MS 11223). – Several medieval codices and leaves, including texts by Bernard of Clairvaux and Jean Gerson, mostly purchased at auction.
- National Library of Ireland, Dublin (NLI): Literary archives of Bernard McLaverty (born 1942), author of novels including *Cal*, *Lamb* and *Grace Notes* – Literary archives of Colm Tóibín (born 1955), best known for the novels *The Master* and *The Blackwater Lightship*; James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* MS (6 pp of notes by Joyce towards *Finnegans Wake*): see <http://homepage.eircom.net/~seanjmurphy/irhismys/joyce.htm>
- University College, Dublin (UCD): Papers of John A. Costello (1891-1976), former Taoiseach and Attorney-General. – Papers of Seán Lester (1888-1959), diplomat and last secretary general of the League of Nations. – Papers of Michael MacWhite (1883-1958), diplomat. – Papers of Dan O'Herlihy (1919-2005), actor (see: <http://www.ucd.ie/archives/html/depositedcollections.htm>).

- University College Cork (UCC): papers relating to the Villiers Stuart estate at Dromana, Co. Waterford, c1215-1945. — Papers of Sean O Riada, composer, c1920s-1970s.

## 2. Cataloguing projects

- University College, Dublin (UCD): Descriptive catalogues of the following papers: Costello, Lester, MacWhite, O’Herlihy. — Constituency archives of the Fine Gael Party [http://www.ucd.ie/archives/html/collections/finegaeal\\_constituency.html](http://www.ucd.ie/archives/html/collections/finegaeal_constituency.html). — John and Maire Sweeney (including correspondence with Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, T S Eliot, Seamus Heaney)
- Trinity College, Dublin (TCD): Descriptive catalogues of the following papers: Maurice Stewart Collis (1889-1973), MS 11064. — Robert Graves (1895-1985), MS 11222. — Jennifer Johnston (born 1930), MS 11063. — Smythe of Barbavilla family papers (1665-1929), MS 11198. — Thomas Addis Emmet (1764-1827) and Martha Bradstreet (1780-1871), MS 11138. — McCarthy and Herbert family (1587-1866), MS 10576. — Rev Elias Thackeray (c1770-1854), MS 5856-7. — Risteárd Ó Glaisne (1927-2003): listing started, MS 11234. — Harry Clarke Stained Glass Studio Ltd: Catalogue of designs, cartoons and photographs, MS 11182. — M L Colker, volume of addenda and corrigenda to his *Trinity College Library Dublin. Descriptive Catalogue of the Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Manuscripts* (Scolar Press, 1991) in preparation.
- National Library of Ireland (NLI): Descriptive catalogues of the following papers: Westport Papers (papers of the Brown family, earls of Sligo, from the 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century). — Lismore Papers (papers of the Dukes of Devonshire, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup>). — John Redmond Papers (papers of John Redmond, leader of the Irish Home Rule party, died 1918).

## 3. Digital access

- ISOS (Irish Script on Screen — <http://www.isos.dias.ie/>) is a project of the School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (<http://www.dias.ie>). The object of ISOS is to create digital images of Irish-language manuscripts, and to make these images, together with relevant commentary, accessible on the website. Most institutions with Irish-language material have contributed to this on-going project. Recently, University College Dublin (UCD) Archives contributed 29 manuscripts from the collection of Franciscan ‘A’ MSS, including the Liber Hymnorum, Psalter of St Caimin, and Annals of the Four Masters. The National Library of Ireland (NLI) has contributed around 25 medical manuscripts.
- The Heritage Council have commissioned a market research study towards creating an Archives Portal in Ireland: ‘Survey of Irish Archives’ e-publication: [http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/manda/Archive\\_Portal\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/manda/Archive_Portal_Draft.pdf)
- A major project to have the catalogues of Trinity College Dublin (TCD) available online was started in March 2007.
- TCD Library has set up a digital photographic unit.

#### 4. Conservation

- While there is no conservation school as such in Ireland, the Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in Ireland (ICHAWI – <http://www.irelandconservation.org/>), established in 1991, aims 'To promote for the benefit of Ireland the preservation of Historic and Artistic works therein', and 'to provide courses for its own members as part of their continuing professional development, courses of interest to curators and administrators of museums, libraries and archives, and to give financial support to students enrolled in an accredited course in conservation overseas'.
- The Faddan More Psalter (see 1, above) presents unique conservation difficulties due to its distressed state following 1200+ years in a bog. Research into its treatment, and analysis of its composition, forms an ongoing project between the National Museum of Ireland, Trinity College Dublin and other institutions.

#### 5. Selected exhibitions

- Trinity College Dublin (TCD):
  - 'Turning darkness into light': 'permanent' Book of Kells exhibition
  - '*All this this here*: Samuel Beckett manuscripts at Trinity College Library Dublin', Long Room, TCD, April-June 2006
  - 'Writing Irish History: The Four Masters and their World', Oct-Dec 2007
- National Library of Ireland (NLI):
  - 'James Joyce and Ulysses', 15 June 2004 - 10 March 2006 (<http://www.nli.ie/joyce/>). – 'The Life and Works of William Butler Yeats' opened 25 May 2006 (<http://www.nli.ie/yeats/>)
- Chester Beatty Library:
  - 'Leonardo. The Codex Leicester. Reflections on Water and the Moon', June-August 2007
- University College Dublin (UCD):
  - 'Eamon de Valera Photographs', online exhibition of 34 photographs from the De Valera papers, 2005 [www.ucd.ie/archives](http://www.ucd.ie/archives)

#### 6. Other research activities

- Examination of medieval manuscript pigments, a cooperative project between Trinity College Dublin (TCD) Library and Department of Physics: Phase 1 investigation using Raman spectroscopy completed and results presented at meeting of British Association for the Advancement of Science in TCD, Sept 2005. Study continued 2006, not yet reported.
- 'Making and Meaning: the fifth international conference on insular art', TCD, August 2005, included papers on the Book of Kells and other early Irish manuscripts
- MacRegol Gospels conference, Birr, Co Offaly, August 2006

## 7. Selected literature

- Colker, M.L., 'Michael of Belluno and His *Speculum Conscientie*: The Unique Manuscript Recently Discovered', in: *Medievalia et Humanistica*, New Series 29 (2003), 103-119. — [TCD MS 10994]
- Colker, M.L. (ed.), *Petronius Redivivus et Helias Tripolanensis* (Mittelateinische Studien und Texte 35), Leiden/Boston 2007. — With extensive use of TCD MS 604.
- *The Faddan More Psalter. A Medieval Manuscript Discovered in County Tipperary, Ireland, 20 July 2006. A Special Supplement to Archaeology Ireland for the National Museum of Ireland 77* (Autumn 2006).
- Frost, Everett & Jane Maxwell, 'Catalogue of "Notes Divers Holo[graph]"', in: *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 16 (Amsterdam/New York 2006), 29-172
- Gillespie, R. & R. Refaüssé (eds.), *The Medieval Manuscripts of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin*. Dublin 2006.
- King, Carla (ed.), *Michael Davitt, Jottings in Solitary*. Dublin 2003.
- Le Juez, Brigitte, *Beckett avant la lettre*. Paris 2007.
- Maxwell, Jane, 'Catalogue of the Samuel Beckett Manuscripts at Trinity College Library Dublin', in: *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 16 (Amsterdam/New York 2006), 183-199
- Meehan, Bernard, 'Manuscript accessions in Trinity College Library Dublin, 1982-2003, part 1', in: *Long Room* 48 (2003), 38-55
- Scattergood, John, *Manuscripts and Ghosts. Essays on the Transmission of Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature*. Dublin 2006. — Includes many references to Middle English manuscripts at Trinity College Library, Dublin.
- Yvard, Catherine, 'Minute masterpieces: study of a late fifteenth-century French Book of Hours (CBL WMs 89)'. — Unpublished TCD PhD thesis.

## 8. Education

- [MA in Archives and Record Management](#) is available at University College Dublin (UCD)
- The Society of Archivists, Ireland, organizes a variety of training workshops
- There is no formal education of 'traditional' curators of medieval manuscripts: in-house training only is provided.

## 9. News on staff, organizations; varia

- Under the terms of the National Cultural Institutions Act (1997) the National Library became a semi-autonomous body in 2003 under the control of an independent board of management.
- A single facsimile copy of the Macregol Gospels (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. D 2 19), from the early 9th-century, was made for display at the heritage centre at Birr, county Offaly, its original home.
- Official website of author 'Frank O'Connor' (Michael O'Donovan, 1903-1966) hosted by University College Cork (UCC).
- *Long Room. Ireland's Journal for the History of the Book* contains an increasing number of articles on manuscripts as well as early printed books.