



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy

The Royal Irish Academy Library

The Royal Irish Academy was founded in 1785 as a society for 'promoting the study of science, polite literature and antiquities', and began publishing scholarly papers, assembling a library and museum, and encouraging new research in the sciences, Irish studies, languages, archaeology and history. Today, the Academy continues to serve research interests throughout the island of Ireland and internationally.

The Library with its unique manuscript and printed collections is at the heart of the Academy. The collection of over 1,500 manuscripts began in the foundation year 1785 with the presentation to the Academy of the fourteenth-century Book of Ballymote by the Chevalier O'Gorman. Home to the *Cathach*, the sixth-century Latin psalter reputed to have been copied by St Colum Cille (Columba), our repository houses the largest collection of Irish language manuscripts in the world, including *Lebor na hUidre* (the Book of the Dun Cow), the oldest extant manuscript completely in Irish. We encourage the publication of texts based on our manuscripts and engage with the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies' Irish Script on Screen project (www.isos.dias.ie) in making the manuscripts freely accessible for research and scholarly purposes. Information on the medieval and later Irish manuscripts in the collections is available at <https://www.ria.ie/library/special-collections/medieval-and-early-modern-manuscripts>

Important manuscripts for the study of Irish history and society include the Books of Survey and Distribution, the Haliday manuscript collections including the deeds of the Guild of St Anne (thirteenth- to seventeenth-century), the papers of James Caulfeild, 1st earl of Charlemont, the Caldwell archive, the Charles and James Graves collections and the papers of Cork antiquarian John Windele. Recent acquisitions include the papers of W.T. Cosgrave, head of the first government of the Irish Free State, and the papers of Kevin B. Nowlan, which include significant material in relation to the conservation of the built environment, particularly in relation to Dublin from the 1960s to 1990s. <https://www.ria.ie/modern-manuscripts>

Other manuscript holdings include extensive natural history collections ranging from the correspondence of botanist A.G. More, which includes letters from Charles Darwin *et al.*, to the papers of Robert Lloyd Praeger, D.R. Pack-Beresford, C.B. Moffat, R.A. Phillips, J.A. Ussher, and the entomologist, Cynthia Longfield. These collections are complemented by print collections relating to Praeger, and by the significant entomological collections built up by A.H. Haliday and by Cynthia Longfield respectively.

Sources for genealogy include the De La Ponce papers relating to Irish soldiers in the service of France, the Marquess MacSwiney papers which cover the Irish in the service of France, Spain and Italy, the Upton papers relating to midland families, and the Dublin Unitarian Church collection which includes schools registers. The Blackall collection relates mainly to Limerick and Tipperary families and there is information on Clare families in the papers of antiquarian, T.J. Westropp.

The Library holds over 8,000 drawings of antiquarian interest from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries including works by Gabriel Beranger, Sir Richard Colt Hoare, Henry Dryden, G.V. Du Noyer, George Petrie, W.F. Wakeman and T.J. Westropp. The Ordnance Survey records of the great nineteenth-century 6-inch mapping project include Memoirs, Letters, Extracts & Inquisitions and an extensive collection of drawings. <https://www.ria.ie/antiquarian-drawings>

The Library has excellent collections of antiquarian books and periodicals. We curate the library of Thomas Moore, the philological collection of Osborn J. Bergin and the book collection of Henry A.S. Upton. Charles Haliday's pamphlet and tract collections, donated by his widow in 1867, relate to every important event in Ireland over a 300-year period and include much of interest to economic, political, religious, social and local historians.

The Library welcomes postgraduate and other researchers and participates in the ALCID access scheme (Academic Libraries Co-operating in Ireland). We are institutional members of CONUL (The Consortium of National and University Libraries). Significant resources are deployed on the preservation and conservation of manuscripts, books and other collections, and, increasingly, on the purchase of electronic resources for our users. We acknowledge funding from Atlantic Philanthropies, the Heritage Council, the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, and many private individuals which have enabled our work.

Our catalogues are accessible online at <http://catalogues.ria.ie/Presto/home/home.aspx> and Irish History Online, an essential resource for students of history is accessible at <https://www.ria.ie/research-projects/irish-history-online>

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Librarian

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