



LIGUE DES BIBLIOTHÈQUES EUROPÉENNES DE RECHERCHE
ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

Manuscript Librarians Group

Ireland – Backgrounds

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Introduction

The greatest concentrations of manuscripts and archives in Ireland are at repositories in Dublin, and, under UK jurisdiction, at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast. Details can be found in the indispensable guide to Irish repositories and collections, *Directory of Irish Archives*, ed Seamus Helferty and Raymond Refaüssé (4th edition, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2003).

Trinity College Library Dublin (TCD)

<http://www.tcd.ie/Library/>

Major collections:

- Medieval manuscripts including the Book of Kells (c 800 CE) and Book of Durrow (c 700 CE)
- Irish-language manuscripts, 11th-21st century
- Archives of the College, 16th-21st century, and of prominent associated individuals
- Roman inquisitorial records, 16th-18th century
- Records of individuals and organisations involved in the movement for national independence, 17th-20th century
- Modern literary manuscripts, including major holdings of Samuel Beckett (1906-89), James Stephens (1880-1950) and John Banville (born 1945).

National Library of Ireland (NLI)

<http://www.nli.ie/>

Major collections:

- Estate papers from across the country, mostly 17th-20th century. — Ormond papers (counties Kilkenny and Tipperary) include deeds going back to the arrival of the Normans in the 12th century
- Papers relating to nationalist movements and politicians from the 18th century onwards, including Daniel O’Connell and Roger Casement
- Business archives
- Literary papers, particularly W B Yeats and James Joyce
- 1200+ Irish-language manuscripts from the 14th century onwards

University College Dublin (UCD) Archives

<http://www.ucd.ie/archives/>

Major collections:

- Private papers of individuals involved in movement for national independence and development of state, including Eamon de Valera, Michael Collins and Conor Cruise O’Brien
- Records of predecessor institutions of the university, including Catholic University of Ireland, 1854-1911
- Private papers of prominent individuals associated with the university
- Irish-language manuscripts, 11th-20th century, housed at Franciscan Library, county Dublin until 2000.
- Family and estate papers, from 17th century, including Caulfield (county Tyrone) and Wandersford (county Kilkenny)

Royal Irish Academy

<http://www.ria.ie/library+catalogue/index.html>

Major collections:

- Medieval manuscripts including the ‘Cathach’ psalter (6th/7th century) and Leabhar Breac (15th century)
- Around 1,400 Irish-language manuscripts, 17th - 20th century
- Antiquarian collections including drawings of Dublin by George Petrie
- Archives of the RIA from its beginning in 1785

Chester Beatty Library

<http://www.cbl.ie/>

The CBL was the private library of Sir Alfred Chester Beatty (1875-1968), bequeathed on his death to the Irish people.

Major collections:

- Cuneiform clay tablets
- Egyptian, Greek and Coptic papyri, including texts of lost Manichean texts
- Over 3,000 Arabic manuscripts dating from 9th century
- Indian, Burmese, Siamese, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese collections
- Small collection of Western medieval manuscripts

National University of Ireland (NUI)

The constituent colleges of the National University of Ireland (NUI) have growing collections of manuscripts and archives.

Maynooth:

http://www.nuim.ie/library/russell/collections_manuscripts.shtml

The Russell Library at NUI Maynooth holds a large and important body of manuscripts in Irish; a small collection of medieval Latin manuscripts; archives of the Irish College in Salamanca which came to Maynooth on the closure of the college in 1951. They comprise around 50,000 administrative documents dating from the foundation of the college in 1592 to the mid- 20th century. The collection also includes some papers from other Irish colleges in Spain.

Cork (UCC)

<http://booleweb.ucc.ie/search/subject/speccol/sc-manus.htm#1.1>

<http://booleweb.ucc.ie/search/subject/archives/archives2.htm>

Galway

<http://www.library.nuigalway.ie/>

National Archives of Ireland

<http://www.nationalarchives.ie/>

The National Archives, established on 1 June 1988, took over the functions previously performed by the State Paper Office (1702) and the Public Record Office of Ireland (1867). In June 1922, during the Civil War, most of the archives collected by the PROI, some dating back to the 13th century, were destroyed by fire. In addition to archives of government and state organisations, the National Archives holds records from many other sources, including hospitals, trade unions and solicitors.

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

<http://www.proni.gov.uk/>

PRONI's principal holdings are the records of the government of Northern Ireland from the 1920s. It also has substantial holdings of landed estate, business, solicitors and private papers.