

The archives of the Pontifical Irish College, Rome: history and holdings

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‘The lost cannot be recovered; but let us save what remains: not by vaults and locks which fence them from the public eye and use, in consigning them to the waste of time, but by such a multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident.’

Thomas Jefferson to Ebenezer Hazard, Philadelphia, 18 February 1791.

THE WIDE-RANGING ESSAYS comprised in this volume are connected in sharing a common source – papers, in their character usually letters, deposited in the archives of the Roman Irish College. These are private institutional archives and the ‘archival series’ or collections mostly derive from the day-to-day administration of an ecclesiastical college. Therefore, in listing the more important holdings, we never lose sight of the college’s purpose of furnishing students with a base from which to follow their studies in Rome and to eventually attain ordination. How is it that such a seemingly narrow repository, not ostensibly designed to ‘collect’ papers of import in following a certain theme, can assist in so many lines of research? An overview of the holdings will show why that is, illustrating a rule that could be applied to any type of archives.

A few words can be said about the history of the collections, their consultation and access, and past activities of house-keeping. For the purpose of discussing the holdings, they have been separated into institutional archives – by-products of daily business and students’ residencies; and non-institutional holdings – those added by various activities of its residents, in other clerical or in private roles.

HISTORY

From the inception of the college in 1626 onwards, documents bearing on its funding and administration started accruing and were added to as business files became obsolete and were deposited in the archives: this is only excepting the seven-year period of the French occupation and its aftermath, 1799–1826. Other activities of the college’s staff, like the co-operation of Rector Hagan with the

Dublin archdiocese in searching Roman archives for Irish sources, or involvement of staff in beatification and canonization processes, explain the additions of series of transcripts, and of material for saints' causes. Other additions were made but not documented, like those of the two manuscript collections, leaving us uncertain about their provenance, and how they were acquired.

As a deposit for institutional records, the archives were transferred within Rome with each move the college made, in 1635, 1826, 1837, and 1926. But moreover, emergencies caused them to be removed twice from college premises: during the French Revolutionary invasion of the Papal States the archives were in storage – presumably with Propaganda Fide. The Vatican archives in the same period were famously prey to Napoleon's edict of 1810, and the contingencies arising from their transport back from Paris caused losses as well as long-lasting confusion. Having little by comparison to recommend themselves to the French, the college's archives are judged to have been returned more or less intact in 1826.¹ The second removal took place when, in the late summer of 1939 and in the spirit of a sharpening crisis and likely war, Rector McDaid took up the offer of the Vatican to safe guard archives or other valuables for the ecclesiastical colleges: under the direction of Monsignor Pietro Savio, archivist of the Vatican Archives, the college's records were taken in storage by the Pontificia Amministrazione delle Opere di Religione until the end of the war, together with three paintings by Guido Reni, Seán Keating, and De Dominicis.² Of the early locations for records and archives there are no descriptions; presently all archives are located in one room but it is not known whether this was planned when designing the new building in 1924 and 1925.

As with most institutional archives the holdings are mostly consulted by the staff, especially since the students' rolls and rectors' correspondence are still kept in the archives as active records series. These are subject to both data protection and to the universally applied thirty-years rule. That means that most students' files are for in-house administrative use or for consultation by the student concerned; the rectors' correspondence is open for research up to 1977 except in cases where sensitivity is an issue or the potential for distress or embarrassment

¹ John J. Hanly, 'The restoration of the college: Dr Michael Blake 1824–1828', in the annual college magazine *The Coelian* (1970), pp 12–15, at 14. Monsignor Hanly made this judgment by correlating the references used in Marefoschi's report of 1772 with the material now in the archives. This account was based on an article by Michael J. Curran in the *Repertorium Novum* (Dublin Diocesan History Record), vol. 1, no. 2 (1956), pp 434–42, but despite Curran's enthusiasm for all things archival, he does not mention the restitution of the College's archives patrimony of 1826. ² See Denis McDaid, *College Diary War Years / Annála Choláiste na nGaedheal san Róimh* (manuscript January 1939–January 1944), PICR Archives D/McD/1. Also cf. Denis F. McDaid, 'Villa Irlanda during the war', *The Coelian* (1968), pp 63–71, 63–4.

exists. That there is a need for transparent and well-kept archives need not be stressed, but one plain instance of 'data abuse' of 1771 illustrates this tenet: Cardinal Mario Marefoschi, about to conduct a visitation in the college, was allegedly informed by students that Rector Petrelli had been tampering with the archives. On the alert, the rector took some records to his room prior to the visitation and refused to have them examined.³ He was to be the last of the Jesuit rectors. Whether this be true or merely a fabrication assisting the end of Jesuit administration,⁴ it is certainly a cautionary tale against withholding or misusing administrative documents.

It is hard to say when external interest in the historical part of the archives began, though it seems that the first to consult the rectors' correspondence were Irish and British colonial dioceses in the process of writing histories of their churches. Even in the 1970s the archivist erred on the side of caution in allowing access, the nominal closure date for records being put at 1883. In recent times and in an increased climate of confidence, Irish church archives have been in the forefront of opening their doors to researchers on more recent history, applying the thirty-years rule.

Over the course of the last century there has been much activity, if never consistent for the lack of resources, in arranging and cataloguing particularly the rectors' files. Over and above this, a certain degree of 'antiquarian' interest in the archives was also taken by staff: Rector Michael O'Riordan worked and read in the archives for a period in the summer of 1913, for instance: he refers to classifying 'that heap of correspondence' which amounts to 'an ugly (and) tedious work', as well as reading for leisure.⁵ Likewise the (then) Vice-rector M.J. Curran in 1927 paid particular attention to the account books of the early seventeenth century, proving that they can give facts where other sources fail or have not survived.⁶ The medieval manuscript fragments aroused interest without, however, steps being taken to conserve them, certainly again for lack of resources. Handwritten notes were found dispersed among them from Fathers Michael J. Curran and Eric MacFhinn (Eric Fair): in a few instances the latter consulted a Vatican library expert on provenance, script and date of specific fragments.

³ See Patrick Devitt, 'The Irish College under the Jesuits (1635–1772)', *The Coelian* (1968), pp 7–20, 12, 20. ⁴ See Clare Carroll's discussion of Marefoschi's claims against the Jesuits elsewhere in this volume. ⁵ PICR Archives, O'Riordan to Hagan HAG 1/1913/83 of 3 June 1913; HAG 1/1913/93 of 30 June 1913, HAG 1/1913/99 of 27 July 1913 – stating that his illness has caused him to stay away from serious studies so that he reads desultorily in the archives instead. He tells Hagan of having found proof that in 1824 the Jesuits nearly came back to running the College – some students reported vice-rector Dr O'Connor to Cardinal Weld: 'we are great nationalists!' (27 July 1913). ⁶ PICR Archives 'V. R.' [M. J. Curran] 'College accounts', *Manuscript Journal* (1927) no. 2, 36–45; this is dated 1 January 1928.

HOLDINGS

Media and catalogue access The greatest part of the written records in our possession are on paper; only the medieval manuscripts (22 ff.) are on vellum. All photographic images are on paper supports, excepting a few negatives and two reels of moving images; some audio- and video-tape has recently been added (from private legacies). Digital media so far only comprises surrogate copies of correspondence files and of photographs – a digitisation project is underway to make the rectors' correspondence of the nineteenth – and eventually also twentieth-century more easily available. Previously, surrogate copies of the same files had been obtained on microfilm in the 1960s. Above these different media of word and image, the archives hold some newspaper and a number of artefacts including reliquaries, memorabilia, and the personal effects of former staff and students.

Complete inventories of the archives existed in 1891, in 1939, and John J. Silke began compiling a new inventory around 1976.⁷ The present complete inventory runs into over sixty pages but includes many items not strictly archival. On the more detailed level of archival finding aids we have handwritten and typescript catalogues for the rectors' correspondence from Cullen to O'Riordan; the catalogue project for Hagan's papers should be completed in 2008.

Institutional records The institutional part of the archives takes up about two thirds of the whole, consisting of accounts, the rectors' correspondence collections, students and personnel files, documentation on the college itself (mostly photos and film), Monsignor McDaid's College War Diary, and agency lists (tasks carried out at the Curia for the Irish clergy); the first are worth commenting on in detail.

The earliest institutional material we possess for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is now largely bound into twenty-eight volumes; this covers the period 1628 to 1798.⁸ Called 'Jesuit files' for dealing with the entire period of Jesuit administration 1635–1772, they are of great value for the college's own history, containing correspondence between college staff and Vatican officials or clergy in Ireland, memoranda, instructions for banks, bills and receipts and other book-keeping documents. Most importantly, it holds the *Fundatio et Progressus Collegii Ludovisiani Hibernorum de Urbe*, probably by James Reilly SJ.⁹ It is only

⁷ A manuscript report from Rector Michael Kelly of 21 August 1891 quoted by Fr J.J. Silke in draft reports on the archives c.1976; McDaid, 'Villa Irlanda', p. 64. ⁸ PICR Archives MSS 17–18/libri 1–28; some loose seventeenth and eighteenth-century material has never been bound. ⁹ Albert McDonnell (ed.), *The Irish College, Rome, 1628–1678* (Rome, 2003).

now, with a list compiled by Monsignor John J. Hanly, historian, editor of St Oliver Plunkett's letters and former rector of the Irish College, that this material can be searched in any way effectively.¹⁰

Around a third of the institutional part of the archives (well over a quarter of the whole) is made up of accountancy files; from the time of foundation up to now about six different series can be distinguished.¹¹ There are 230 volumes of various sizes, including the most consistent series comprising over fifty heavy bundles of end-of-year 'Filze di giustificazioni'. None of these are complete, but the college's economy of successive administrations could still be followed to some degree of detail from 1772 onwards. In each series we find daybooks and end-of-year ledgers, expenses of particular staff and students, as well as special accounts such as income from students' burses, from mass intentions, and from other resources. That these cannot be neglected for the college's economic history is clear, but their further interest was demonstrated by Vice-rector Michael J. Curran who, on searching accounts material in the Jesuit volumes, ascertained the disputed date of the first rector Eugene Callanan's death as 27 July 1629.¹² In addition, they and the preceding twenty-eight volumes can be the only remaining alley to take when looking for students, for the time before rolls survive consistently in 1826.

About a third of the archives as a whole is made up of the rectors' correspondence – the series which draw the majority of the researchers coming to the archives. They are mostly arranged chronologically¹³, and are consulted for their wide-ranging points of reference which outreach by far the administrative role the rectors played as agents of the Irish bishops (in Ireland and in British colonies) from Cullen's time to the appointment of Ireland's first papal nuncio in 1929. Certainly, the above-mentioned Jesuit volumes contain some correspondence with Irish College staff between 1623 and 1779, and likewise there are around ninety items of correspondence belonging to the period 1759–1832

¹⁰ We hope that this inventory, at present incomplete, will be published in due course.

¹¹ There are two complementary account books at the Franciscan archives, Dún Mhuire, Killiney (Mss.FLK 59, 60), covering the period 1629–34 – cf. John J. Hanly, 'Sources for the history of the Irish College, Rome', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 102 (1964) series 5, pp 28–34, at 29. These belonged to St Isidore's, Rome, but date to a time when the students of the newly-founded Irish College attended classes there, giving rise to extra expenses. I am grateful to Father Ignatius Fennessy, Franciscan Library, Dún Mhuire, Killiney, for comments. The College archives possess copies on microfilm. ¹² Cf. note 6. ¹³ An unknown agency separated some letters of Cullen's correspondence for their origin, albeit not consistently (America, Bishop O'Connell of Pittsburgh). Also, a considerable section of the New Collection is undated and was arranged by name, and then by theme (agency records, lecture notes, devotions, spiritual direction).

in the later series¹⁴, it is since Cullen's vice-rectorship that the incoming mail has been kept systematically. There are approximately 77,000 items in these collections from 1821 to the present day. As for languages, well over 80 per cent of the correspondence is in English, a certain amount is in Italian, fewer items are in Latin and less again in French. Only the odd item exists in Irish, where for instance an avid Gaelgeoir cousin of Rector Hagan's, Sister Mary Celsus ('Vi'), writes him teasingly and proudly in a language she takes pains to master.¹⁵ The collections contain mostly incoming mail, but since a letter writer tailors his words, to varying degrees, to the recipient, we can very often see a rector's own views and character as reflected in a letter.

Nearly half of the correspondence dates to the nineteenth century and to the important rectorships of Paul Cullen (archbishop of Dublin 1852, cardinal 1866) and Tobias Kirby (titular archbishop of Ephesus 1885). The reasons why these correspondence files bulk so large were given by Patrick Corish as firstly, the revolutionary development of communications during the nineteenth century, and secondly, the increase of 'Roman business' through the national churches' greater emphasis on the role of the papacy when *ancien régimes* throughout Europe were under threat.¹⁶ Beyond the rectors' official agency, which caused them to intervene at the Curia for the hierarchy, secular or religious clergy, and beyond matters concerning the students (admissions, references, dismissorial letters), the Irish College was also naturally a centre for Irish exiles and a destination for lay people on pilgrimage, as well as a point of reference for devotional requests. With that regard, letters written requesting an agency, expressing gratitude for tasks carried out and favours obtained, or simply letters from family, friends, and past students, will usually reflect on the conditions at home – however cursorily, and depending on the correspondent's familiarity with the rector. The Irish community in Rome comes to life when passing visitors or former residents of Rome write back to the rector, thanking him for past kindness. In May 1925, Hagan finds it necessary to defend the college's tradition of keeping an open house daily for Irish people of all political *couleurs* at tea-time: any subject was open here for discussion if not for hot-headed debate.¹⁷ A big section (around 18,000 items) pertains to Tobias Kirby's vice rectorship and rectorship after Cullen's departure (1836–91); the catalogue for

¹⁴ 95 items in the New Collection, PICR Archives PCUL/NC/1–5. ¹⁵ E.g. PICR Archives HAG 1/1923/476, HAG 1/1924/102. It is in the students' annuals, the *Manuscript Journals* discussed below, that more Irish material can be found. ¹⁶ See Patrick J. Corish, 'Tobias Kirby', *The Coelian* (1995), pp 18–19. ¹⁷ PICR Archives 30 May 1925; HAG 1/1925/288. The coadjutor Bishop Downey of Ossory had brought back home tales of students openly criticising the Irish hierarchy and of a general politicization of the College.

Kirby's papers runs into ten volumes, but about one third of his papers are uncatalogued.¹⁸ Patrick Corish has judged him 'the soul of discretion' and 'a good man for a bishop to trust his affairs to', and two scholars deal with the man and the documents elsewhere in this volume.¹⁹ 'An almost compulsive keeper of letters', two of the most important men of his correspondence were Cardinal Paul Cullen himself and Archbishop William Walsh of Dublin.²⁰ The latter was still corresponding with Rectors O'Riordan (1905–19) and Hagan (1920–30) during their periods of tenure.

Letters are historically very valuable sources, as borne out by the essays in this volume, but it should be added that they are valuable for both their literal content and for style and physical appearance. Three items could be taken out of their context to illustrate that: Oliver Plunkett writes in a bold hand, if humbly, to the Jesuit superior general in Rome in 1654, asking to be exempted from his oath to return to Ireland for the time being because of the impossibility of returning to penal-day Ireland.²¹ Chaplain John Miley writes from Genoa in 1847 to Rector Cullen, filling the sheet of paper in miniature script to the last corner, describing Daniel O'Connell's last hours and death at Genoa, when he bequeathed his heart to Rome.²² George Gavan Duffy writes in 1919 as diplomatic attaché from the Peace Conference in Paris to Rector Hagan, using a printed letterhead with 'Délégation du Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Irlandaise' where the uncertain 'provisoire' is crossed out by hand and substituted by the assertive 'élu'.²³

Another point worth making about letters in general is that considered statements usually vie with casual remarks which are valuable for their lack of reflection and which can light up the contemporary situation back home, whether in Ireland or in one of those British colonies with a great number of Irish. In complementing the larger themes discussed in this volume some random documents could be lit up out of context: an English lady correspondent of Rector Tobias Kirby, E.C. Nimmo – a convert – asks for a few kind

18 Only a quarter of the so-called New (or Manly) Collection has been listed – this collection had been separated from the original Cullen and Kirby correspondence and taken by Bishop Patrick F Moran to Sydney, Australia for the purpose of writing a biography of Cardinal Cullen; they were returned in the 1960s. Patrick Corish prepared a selective catalogue 'of public and political interest' in 'Irish College, Rome: Kirby Papers', *Archivium Hibernicum* 30–2 (1972–4), pp 29–116/1–94/1–62. He judged only few of the New Collection items valuable for his purposes. **19** Patrick Corish, 'Irish College, Rome: Kirby Papers', *Arch. Hib.*, 30 (1972), pp 29–116, at 29; and Corish 'Tobias Kirby', p. 19. **20** *Ibid.*, 'Tobias Kirby', p. 19. **21** 14 June 1654; PICR Archives MSS 17–18/liber xii – 1r. **22** 16 May 1847; PICR Archives CUL/1388. **23** 14 April 1919; PICR Archives HAG 1/1919/ 66. Gavan Duffy writes that 'Seán T. [Ó Ceallaigh]'s hard work is gradually penetrating the anglo-seasoned pachyderm of

words from the pope appreciating her cousin Gladstone's work for Ireland, because of 'William's great respect for His Holiness'.²⁴ Michael O'Riordan writes from St Munchin's, Limerick, to Rector Kirby, commenting on the *Freeman's Journal's* unscrupulous means of supporting Parnell – not two decades later when O'Riordan himself is rector he offers (in letters to Vice-rector Hagan) witty, at times acerbic observations on current affairs – his affectionate observations on their students – then always 'i giovani' – are no less critical.²⁵ In May 1921 an employee of Gill's the publishers adds in a rushed P.S. to Rector John Hagan that 'our fine Custom House was completely burnt out yesterday' while Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, Paris, regrets the burning which must have been a military necessity.²⁶ Also, past students often write back to their Alma Mater giving impressions from their missions: Thomas Moloney, a chaplain on the Crimea in the 1850s, writes two letters to Rector Kirby from Constantinople and from Sebastopol, listing the awful casualties around him and employing the language of his time for the ill deeds which brought this calamity on England.²⁷ It is the unstudied quality of much in these letters that adds local colour and poignancy to moments in the past. For these reasons our collections are historically of such interest.

As for the students and personnel files, only two series are consulted on a regular basis, and mostly by those interested in family or diocesan history, and by former alumni. They are, firstly, the older of the two Register Books and, secondly, the 58 volumes of the students' *Manuscript Journals* (1917–2000). The Register Book spans a period of nearly two centuries, beginning with an entry on Patritius Dogherty on 27 October 1826, and finishing in 1998. It gives the usual anagraphic details about student residents, adding the academic progress made, and in some cases the *annotationes* contain sketches of the student's later career or, very rarely, comment on his person.²⁸ The *Manuscript Journals* are for the most part made up of handwritten and pasted articles by students and staff on seminary life, current affairs, college history, with philosophical musings, and a number of photographic and other graphic enclosures. In the early twentieth century these were complemented by short-lived Irish language journals but throughout the earlier decades there is a certain amount of contributions in Irish. Though much encouraged as an 'on-campus language' in the first part of the twentieth century, the language naturally had no great chance abroad as

opinion here'. ²⁴ PICR Archives KIR/NC/ N/ 41– no date. ²⁵ PICR Archives KIR/NC/3/O/152 – no date [c.1890] judging that 'all the thinking people of the country are dead against him, with very few exceptions'. ²⁶ PICR Archives HAG 1/ 1921/ 280 and 289. ²⁷ 20 May [1854]; PICR Archives KIR/NC/M/ 227: '[in the past] England has sinned. She has done evil before the Lord. She has persecuted the chaste immaculate spouse of Christ, the Holy Catholic Church, and she is now paying for it ...' ²⁸ Cf. the appreciative article in *The*

exigencies of local vernacular and the classical linguistic curriculum at university made themselves felt.

Various series of photographs document the college's history from the early twentieth century, although there are only very few images of the premises on Via Mazzarino.²⁹ For the purpose of this discussion the photographs that were in private possession of college residents are dealt with below as non-institutional material. Usually the photographs, beginning with the rectorship of Michael O'Riordan, document particular events such as visits from members of the Irish government, events such as Pope John Paul II's visit to the college in 1980, Eucharistic Congresses or national pilgrimages, but also conferences such as that held to commemorate the college's 375th anniversary in 2003. There are also images of students' ordinations, but in order to illustrate seminary life it is best to turn to the photographic enclosures in the *Manuscript Journals*, to Rector Curran's (private) collection, or for a short glimpse to two films made in the mid-1920s.

These films were made in 1925, the year before the college moved to its present location on Via Santi Quattro Coronati. They were scanned from their original reels and run into five and three minutes respectively, showing the construction site, visited by rector and vice rector as well as visiting Irish prelates who were in Rome for the Holy Year, and then featuring the Villa Greci at Tivoli (the college's summer retreat) with Irish clergy, the year's class of students and visiting students from the German-Hungarian college. The decision to deploy this still avantgarde medium at the time is a comment on the lengthy fundraising and lobbying process that led to the building of the present college.³⁰

One other institutional record warrants mention, namely Monsignor McDaid's 'College War Diary' (1939–44). Rector McDaid conceived it at the beginning of his rectorship to instruct future rectors and staff but events gave it a different character. A detailed log, with some contemporary cuttings and fliers, it is an important document for the history of the college and of the wider Irish community in Rome with some compelling insights into the diplomatic activity of the time. It is a sign of the times that McDaid – of the Derry diocese – expressed in his foreword the strong wish that a successor and 'the child of a more Gaelic Ireland [will] surely adapt the ancient tongue of our Race'.³¹

Coelian (1999/2000), pp 14–15. ²⁹ These are in Curran's private collection. ³⁰ The man behind the camera was Father R. Ranaghan of the Maynooth Mission to China, practised by making documentary films on the missions, in Rome while preparing his Mission's contribution to the Vatican Missionary Exhibition for the Holy Year. Cf. PICR Archives 20 September 1924; HAG 1/ 1924/ 401; *Manuscript Journal* 1926. ³¹ D/McD/1. Monsignor McDaid presumably drew on this diary when writing 'The College in the Crucible' for *The*

Non-institutional records The remaining third of the archives, without intending to draw too rigid a line, contains non-institutional material, and that is principally material gathered for saints' causes, transcripts of historical documents, two collections of manuscripts of antiquarian interest, and former residents' legacies including photographs.

In the course of the last two centuries, Irish vice-rectors and rectors have taken the roles of researchers and postulators in beatification and canonization processes; most notably resulting in the canonisation of Oliver Plunkett in 1975 and the beatification of seventeen Irish martyrs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in 1992. Much of the evidence that was gathered for these two processes prior to presentation to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, as well as material for the cause of Matt Talbot, has been deposited here.

The transcripts (secondary archival sources) are copies of documents from Roman archives, selected because they illustrate either the early history of the College itself or wider Irish history of the early modern period. Most material is in loose files, but there are also sixty-nine bound volumes of transcripts from the Propaganda Fide Archives. The collecting activity was instigated by the Dublin Archdiocese when Michael Curran was secretary there in an endeavour to improve their sources on the archdiocese's history: copies were deposited in Dublin and in Rome, and some were edited for publication.³²

In contrast, the two manuscript collections now in possession of the College are worthy of closer inspection. The first consists of Irish literary texts, copied in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and now bound into five volumes. Four of these have been discussed by Monsignor Pádraig Ó Fiannachta.³³ It is probable that these reached the college in the possession of Michael O'Riordan.³⁴ They contain excerpts from bardic poetry and mythology then 'popular', including segments from the *Ruaráocht* and *Fiannaíocht* cycles like 'Agallamh na Seanórach', and also from Keating's *Foras Feasa Éireann*, and from the *Cath Cluana Tarbh*.³⁵ The second manuscript series is an artificial collection, and certainly not the result of any one antiquarian's collecting activity; as with the Irish material above we have no documentation as to their acquisition.³⁶ Judging

Coelian (three instalments 1970–2). ³² Hagan edited some of material of wider Irish interest in the series 'Miscellanea Vaticano-Hibernica 1580–1631' in *Archivium Hibernicum* beginning with no. 3 (1914), pp 226–365, with the Vatican Archives and Borghese collections as a starting point. ³³ Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, 'Lámhscríbhinní Gaelige Choláiste na nGael sa Róimh', *Studia Celtica* 3 (1968), pp 3–65. He discusses manuscripts 1–4 (now MS/CG 1–4) and the omission of the fifth is unexplained. ³⁴ He was a friend of Maurice Lenihan of Limerick, the previous owner; see Ó Fiannachta, op. cit., p. 53. ³⁵ The latter is a copy of the text most widely disseminated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; written comment from Méidhbhín Ní Urdáil (UCD) 21 March 2006. ³⁶ This is with the exception of three

by some brief comments found with them they had been deposited in the archives by the 1920s.³⁷ However, some must have been found as bindings of early printed books in the college library – a parallel happened in 1995 when the librarian found fourteenth-century folia and fragments covering eight volumes – precious in themselves – of a sixteenth-century printed work by Bartolo da Sassoferrato.³⁸ The collection comprises thirty fragments on vellum, and two on paper, of mostly liturgical texts ranging from a gospel fragment of around AD 1000 in Beneventan script (cut to size for re-use), an eleventh-century illuminated initial for Luke's gospel (with a clear delineation of the book for which this served as a wrapper), a twelfth/thirteenth-century breviary text on Corinthians (used as binding for a Ciceronian work), small fragments from Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* with an animal head drawn in the margin (a 'canis domini?'), to a one-verse early excerpt from Dante's *Inferno* (both cut to size for re-use).³⁹ Although some 'knotwork' ornamentation in MS/13r, and some insular tendencies in the script of MS/5 gave rise to some 'wishful thinking', these cannot be said to have been brought from Ireland but are products of continental workshops. Eight fragments of the high and late medieval period stand out, containing neumes, that is early music notation, for liturgical use.⁴⁰ Despite the fragmentary survival of what once were codices with full texts of the gospels, of antiphons for monastic offices, of commentaries, these fragments have already raised great interest internationally and will play their part in related medieval studies.⁴¹

Among the former residents' legacies, mention need only be made of the photographs: the earliest images as a whole are found in a photoalbum presented to Tobias Kirby, archbishop of Ephesus, by 'a Sydney friend' – Cardinal Moran.⁴² But some of the college's most valuable photographs in terms of age and

fragments recently taken from the library, Ms/20–22 – see note 33 below. **37** As mentioned above, notes attributable to Father Curran and Father MacFhinn were found among them on rediscovery in 2005. MacFhinn took three fragments to the Vatican expert Father Bruno Katterbach OFM and preserved the information obtained from him. **38** Cf. the College's librarian, Domitilla Zoltan, 'Antiche Carte e nuove scoperte', *The Coelian* (1995), pp 17–18, at 17. The great Father Leonard Boyle of the Vatican Library recommended restoring covers and volumes together, not separating them. **39** PICR Archives MS/ 13 r; MS/17 v&r; MS/15 v&r; MS/8 r&v; MS/16. **40** PICR Archives MS/ Music 1–8; MS/ 8 falls outside that period, dated December 1799. **41** PICR Archives MS Music 1 and 2 contain rare offices of San Gemignano; MS/5 consists of two bifolia, heavily stitched, with the beginning of Flavius Iosephus' *Historiarum Antiquitatis iudaice*; MS/ 13 may be a breviary fragment. We are grateful for the opinions of Thomas McCarthy, TCD (April 2006), of Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, NUIG (September 2006), Peter Jeffery, Princeton University (October 2006), Virginia Brown, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto (November 2006), and Giacomo Barroffio, Università di Pavia (November 2006). **42** PICR Archives P/KIR/1.

evocative *sujet* are in a collection belonging to Michael J. Curran. Having been at first a student at the college 1900–04, later vice-rector and rector 1919–39, he gathered together prints that range in date from 1901 to the mid-1930s. They contain some arresting images of college life during the summer holidays at Tivoli, and some depictions of the college’s visitors during that period, including William O’Brien MP (1901), Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh (1920), lord mayor of Limerick Stephen O’Mara (1923), and Archbishop Harty (no date).⁴³ Curran’s photographs are a unique memorial to the singular existence of an Irish community on the continent.

It is typical for private archives to become repositories attracting a variety of interests: while initially they just received typical side-products of managing a seminary, nearly four centuries on their historical content is sought out for very diverse queries. As illustrated above, some chance acquisitions extend the period of interest well beyond the college’s foundation. Recent allocations of funding were made in recognition of the importance of both the Irish College library, and of the archives: the resultant archival preservation measures help safeguarding these treasures, and the digitization projects and web access to the images now gives remote access, engendering new angles of research.

⁴³ PICR Archives P/CUR/79 and 116; the latter may not originate in Rome.

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