



ダブリン・トリニティ・カレッジ図書館における西洋古刊本の保存プロジェクトについて(最新情報)

トリニティ・カレッジ訪問 / 調査記録 - 訪問日：2005年3月1日及び11日

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The Old Library Preservation Project at University of Dublin, Trinity College:

report on visit to Trinity College Library in Dublin, March 11th 2005

by Martin Connolly

In March, as an additional element of my two-week research trip to Ireland, which was principally to study medieval literature at Queen's University, Belfast, I made brief visits to my original alma mater, The University of Dublin, Trinity College. The purpose was to check some information and to present some books produced by Tsurumi University for their collection, helping to forge a link between Tsurumi University and one of the world's most famous educational institutions. It also proved to be an opportunity to learn about their Old Library's preservation and conservation project.

The Long Room constitutes the main chamber of the Old Library in Trinity College, Dublin, and, at 65 metres, is the longest library of its type in Europe, and possibly the world. The frequency of foreign visitors is high, and the shop, located directly below, has an explanatory pamphlet printed in, apart from English, the following languages: Irish, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and Japanese. The Long Room holds about 250,000 books on its open shelves, with a further 60,000 volumes in closed stacks. Marble busts of famous writers and thinkers, from Aristotle to Jonathan Swift, are stationed at each pillar, adding extra grandeur to the room. Also on permanent display is Ireland's oldest harp, called the Brian Boru Harp, which dates to at least the fifteenth century. Glass cases in the centre of the library's corridor are home to a rotating series of outstanding volumes, both printed books and manuscripts. My attention was drawn to an important book from an exhibition entitled, in Irish, 'An teanga Ghaelige I gclo', or in English translation, 'The Irish Language in Print', running from February to May. The book on display was the first book printed in the Irish

language, dating to the year 1571, and is instructional in nature, containing the Irish alphabet and a catechism. The Old Library's world-renowned illustrated manuscripts, like the ninth century *Book of Kells* and the eighth century *Book of Durrow* are on display in a different chamber called the Treasury.



The Long Room, Trinity College, Dublin.

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I was met by Ms Susie Bioletti, Keeper of Preservation and Conservation at Trinity College Library, who gave me a tour of the Long Room, and explained about the project. Ms Bioletti took up her position in October 2002. Her brief was to manage preservation and conservation across the entire library collection, historic and modern. She was appointed to this new position on the retirement of the then Director of Conservation, Anthony Cains, co-author of the above mentioned Trinity-produced articles. One of the tasks she has taken up has been the preservation of items in the Long Room, although with a slightly different approach. When Anthony Cains began the Long Room project he included in the work highly detailed reports on how each book was constructed, and to what extent each volume was damaged. Ms Bioletti's approach could be termed more pragmatic in that she wished to focus the work on the following four principle areas: environmental impact, condition assessment, collection care, and minor repair.

The Old Library Preservation Project, as it is officially known, is currently funded from a mixture of library and private funds (including a bequest from Vincent Kinane, late of the Department of Early Printed Books). It has been estimated to cost around two million Euros to finance basic care of this collection of Early Printed Books. The main problem facing the volumes in the Old Library is the accumulation of dust and dirt over the years. It is essential to maintain the integrity of the collection, which, besides being an important cultural asset, attracting tourists from all over the world to Trinity, still operates as a research library for scholars. Ms Bioletti has engaged the input of two teams, tackling two distinct areas. Firstly, she is working with the TCD Buildings and environmental scientists in the UK to analyse the building and the air quality within, with a view to ameliorating the environment of the books. They gather data on temperature, relative humidity, light, dust and pollution levels. Dr Robbie Goodhue of the Geology Department at Trinity College is also assisting this survey voluntarily. Secondly, the actual task of cleaning and documentation is carried out by a team of four graduates (two of whom are directly schooled in library studies), trained and supervised by Ms Bioletti and her professional staff. Ms Bioletti explained in detail the work carried out by this team of preservation assistants.

The four-member team's task begins with the systematic, phased removal of books from the shelves. These are placed onto a trolley and ferried to a workstation inside the Long Room. Each book is then submitted to a process involving damage assessment, cleaning, minor repairs, and documentation. The preservation assistants wear special filter-masks to protect against the inhalation of dust. One of the first things they need to check is whether the boards of the book are still attached to the body of the book. Where it is found that the boards' attachment to the book has deteriorated a book will, after cleaning and documentation, be bound by a long strip of white cotton. On the shelves where the books have been processed one can readily notice the many volumes marked by this white cotton binding. In

the workstation, all books are subject to the following systemized process, the staff working in a kind of production line cleaning the items over a HEPA-filtered low-pressure vacuum table:

- (a) The first preservation assistant uses a gentle, HEPA-filtered suction tube fitted with special mini brush attachments, fed into a sealed bag, to remove surface dust from the pages. Attention is given to the first and final few pages, as it is most likely that dust will have entered these areas, and not further in.
- (b) The next assistant removes ingrained dirt with a special eraser.
- (c) The third preservation assistant consolidates loose parts and administers minor repairs.
- (d) Eventually, everything is checked very thoroughly and delicately, in a non-invasive manner, ending with documentation of the volume's title and contents. The books are then returned by trolley to the shelves.

The key-words in this process are 'delicate' and 'non-invasive'. Great care is taken to avoid any incidental damage to the books: each volume is examined, treated and documented in a manner deemed as unobtrusive as possible. It is painstaking work, but it has been proceeding apace. The team gets through about one thousand volumes a month. In the period from July 2004 to February 2005, four entire bays, holding about 7,000 books, were processed in the way described above.



*Preservation assistants at work in the Long Room
of the Old Library at Trinity College, Dublin.*

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While the books in the Old library can be consulted by scholars for research purposes consultation is by no means automatic, and depends on a number of factors. Students and staff from TCD can, on producing a library readers ticket, request items from the collection, which are read in the Early Printed Book reading room. Outside readers are usually asked for a letter of introduction, confirming their research interests and will be allocated a temporary readers pass for the reading room. Not every item in the collection is accessible to all readers. Extremely fragile items will not be available if they are likely to be further damaged during the consultation, and readers may also be re-directed to later editions of very valuable items.

There has not been a lot of digitalisation of these early printed books: priority has been given to maintaining and documenting the collection. There has, however, been some

limited digitalisation of some scientific journals from these shelves. Furthermore, the library is about to embark on a project partly funded by the Mellon Foundation to create electronic records of all items dating from 1870 -1960. This will include updating existing paper records to include information of scholarly interest.

Details regarding The Long Room and *The Book of Kells* and related areas of interest can be accessed at Trinity Library's website at <http://www.tcd.ie/Library/index.php>

Martin Connolly

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Martin Connolly belongs to the Sogo-kyoiku section of Tsurumi Daigaku Tankidaigakubu. He completed a two-week research trip to Ireland in March (spending most time at Queen's University in Belfast, from which he received an M.A. in 1990). His area of research divides between Medieval and Modern English Literature. Martin Connolly graduated with a B.A. from Trinity College, Dublin in 1986.

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