

Papers of the early period of College administration [1628-1798]

Pontifical Irish College, Rome (Archives): MSS 17-18/

This is a guide to the archival collection of papers pertaining to the foundation period, and the Irish College's earlier administration, predominantly by the Society of Jesus. The collection is held in the archives of the Pontifical Irish College, Rome.

IDENTITY STATEMENT

Title: Papers of the early administration of the Irish College Rome ['Jesuit files']

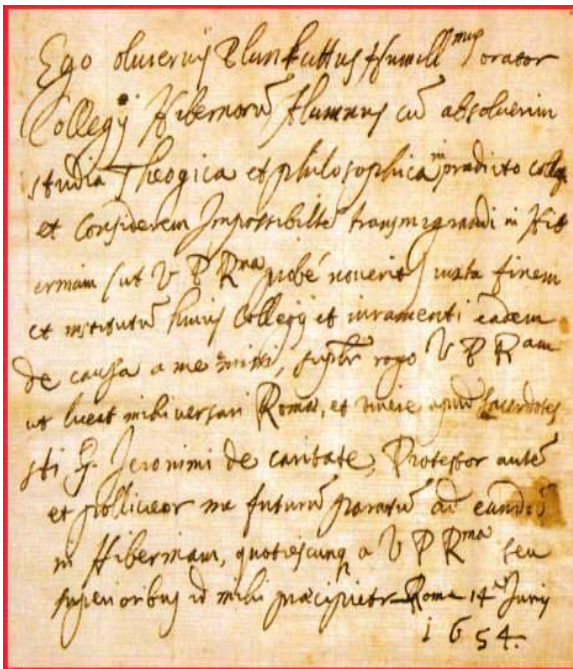
Covering Dates: [1628-1798]

Collection Code: PICR Archives MSS 17-18/

Collection Size: 28 volumes; 1 box

Finding Aids: Descriptive list (in preparation)

Description level: fonds



Oliver Plunkett Letter- MS17-18/liber 12/ 1r

Ego oliverius Plunkettus Humill[issi]mus orator /
Collegij Hibernorum Alumnus cum absolverim /
studia Theo[lo]gica et philosophica in praedicto collegio /
et Considerens Impossibilitate transmigrandi in Hib[erniam] (ut V[ostra] P[aternitas]¹ R[everendissim]a /
probé noverit) iuxta finem /
et institutu[m] huius Collegij et iuramenti eadem /
de causa a me emissi, sup[plicante]r rogo V[ostram] /
P[aternitatem] R[everendissim]am /
ut liceat mihi versari Romae, et vivere apud sacerdotes /
[sancti] [G (crossed out)] Ieronimi de caritate, /
Protestor aute[m] /
et pollineor me futuru[m] paratu[m] ad eandu[m] /
in Hiberniam, quotiescunq[ue] a V[ostra] P[aternitas] /
R[everendissim]a seu /
superioribus id mihi praecipit[u]r Roma 14 Iunii /

1654

I, Oliver Plunkett, most humble petitioner, student of the Irish College, have completed my philosophical and theological studies in the said college; considering the impossibility of returning to Ireland (of which Your Reverence is well aware) according to the purpose and constitutions of this college as well as the oath taken in this regard by me, I humbly beg Your Reverence that I be permitted to remain in Rome and take up residence with the fathers of San Girolamo della Carità. I declare and promise that I shall be ready at a future date to go to Ireland whenever this will be commanded to me by Your Reverence or my superiors. Rome, 14th June 1654.

John J. Hanly's transcription and translation, in his edition *The letters of St. Oliver Plunkett* (Dublin 1979)

¹ Superior General of Jesuits is Praepositus Generalis and styled 'Your Reverence'. Suggestion from Don Riccardo Ferri, 15 May 2007, that 'paternitas' is implied.

CONTEXT

Historical background

The Roman Irish College was founded in 1627 by the Irish Franciscan, Fr Luke Wadding OFM (1588-1657) and Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi (1597-1632), nephew of Gregory XV. Wadding had previously founded the Franciscan house of St. Isidore's (1625); at the same time the first Irish secular students arrived, and it became clear that a house for seculars was a necessity for the priestly ministry in Ireland. Having been appointed Cardinal Protector of Ireland, Ludovisi was eager to honour his title, and when he was approached by Luke Wadding to help educate Irish priests in Rome, he undertook the task of founding and endowing the Irish College. Six students were officially admitted to the new college on January 1st 1628.

Fr Eugene Callanan (Killaloe), became the first Rector of the College, with the overall presidency of Wadding. Following Ludovisi's death in 1632, however, a dispute arose with the Jesuits for care of the College which he had willed to the Society of Jesus. This was decided in the order's favour at the Sacred Roman Rota in 1635. From then on, and until 1772, the Irish College was managed by the Jesuits.

The change from Jesuit administration in 1772 was due to a general anti-Jesuit campaign staged in the mid-and later eighteenth century. In the Irish College, some student unrest culminated in a visitation by Cardinal Marefoschi; subsequently the College was placed under the care of an Italian secular priest, Don Luigi Cuccagni. Despite many efforts to have an Irish Rector installed in the College, Cuccagni served his rectorate until the French entered Rome in June 1798.

Unlike other colleges like the English and Scotch Colleges, the Irish College was not a papal foundation. A certain influence was exerted on college affairs by the Ludovisi family following Innocent X's brief for their rights of patronage in 1647; this strong link began to unravel in the 1720s, with the sale of formerly Ludovisian property from which the College had formerly derived its annual funding. However, papal subsidies, and exemptions from some taxes, had already become essential for the survival of the College even in the late 17th century (liber i). Beside the Society of Jesus, it was the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, with its general remit for the missions, that concerned itself with the College's educational work and management.

The College seems to have housed six to eight students on average throughout the period in question (cf. e.g. liber xiv); circa 193 students' names have been compiled from the collection. Among the seminarians educated during the earlier period of the College there were many notable for scholarship, personal charisma or gifts for the missions; among those attaining episcopal status were St Oliver Plunkett of Armagh, James Brennan of Cashel, James Cusack of Meath, Peter Creagh of Cork, Bernard McMahon of Clogher and Armagh, James Gallagher of Raphoe and Kildare, and Roch McMahon of Clogher and Armagh.

Students took a missionary oath on entering the College, promising to obey the rules, and to return to Ireland after their studies; for some period they also took a *viaticum* oath, promising not to ask for a subsidy for the return journey. Admissions of students were not always as straightforward as the status as diocesan seminary would suggest; several of those recorded arrived in Rome without being sent by a bishop and were taken up on the strength of their zeal and ability, not always with good results (liber xxvi). Student life was divided between the academic, the spiritual, and the shared community life; the students attended the Collegio Romano, a university founded by St Ignatius. The holidays ('villeggiatura' cf. liber xi) in September were usually spent in Castel Gandolfo.

Only 13 of the 35 rectors preceding the Roman occupation by the French in 1798 were Irish. A controversy regarding the administration of foreign colleges by native rectors lasted for most of the 18th century without being decided definitely before the arrival of the French forces. Some critics, like Rector Cuccagni (liber i) held that natives would be more given to favouritism in following local rivalries.

This collection does not reach beyond the following interim of 28 years when the College was closed during the French occupation and the Napoleonic Wars. In 1824, Fr Michael Blake (Dublin), a former student under Rector Cuccagni, began what was to be a protracted campaign to re-instate and -endow the College. In October 1826 its first students arrived in Rome. Having lost the property in Via degli Ibernese, Pope Leo XII granted the Irish the Umbrian College. Archival documentation of the modern period after 1826 is found foremostly in the diverse accounts series of the College, and in the rectors' correspondence collections kept separately from the rectorship of Paul Cullen onwards.

Provenance and archival history

The items contained in this collection is the issue of the early administrations of the College, under Franciscan, Jesuit and secular governments. Of the original 28 volumes, two have to be regarded as lost. The binding into volumes go back at least to 1897, although 23 of the existing volumes were rebound very recently. Some material is in loose leaves and will remain so.

Complementary collections

The College archives hold various series of financial accounts. Those matching the collection here described are the series of bills, receipts and lists called 'Giustificazioni' for 1772-1826 (A/GIU/1-10), two general ledgers 1772-1797 and 1699-1712 (A/GL1 and 4), four day-books 1772-1798 (A/GJ/1-4), and various day'books with specialised content (A/SJ/K1-4 for kitchen expenses 1681-1757; A/SJ1-2 for vineyard and missions 1772-1798; A/SJ/B1 for bank account with the Banco di S.Spirito 1772-1792).

Seven documents of the early administration complementing this collection are contained in the 'pre-Cullen New Collection' (PCUL/NC/1/1-7). There is also a list of legal documents, possibly a number once deposited by the Irish College in a legal office, ranging from 1728 to 1828.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Scope and Content

The main themes covered in these predominantly administrative records are *admissions and student discipline* (libri i, iii, xi, xii, xix, xxv, xxvii, xxviii); *property and connected legal matters* (libri v, vi, vii [viii], ix, x, xiii, xv); *mixed and petty accounts* (parts of libri i, xiv; libri iii, xvii, xviii); the *missions* (libri xxi, xxii, and loose files); the *Marefoschi visitation* (libri xxiii, xxiv); *historical documents* also going beyond College matters (libri i, xx, xvi, parts of libri iv, xxvi).

The bulk of this collection consists of records kept for their relevance in the day-to-day management of the seminary - concerned on the one hand with the admission and supervision of the seminarians, and on the other with the management of external funding, of capital and of investments; at the lowest level the latter financial accounts consist of bills and receipts for food, medicines, clothing, repairs.

Beyond the administration proper, there are many items valuable for the history of the College itself, and for the history of the Irish missions in general. The archives do not hold the College's original 'foundation charter'; this instrument of agreement (24 November 1627) by which Wadding and the Franciscans undertook the government of the Irish College is part of the Ludovisi papers in the Vatican Secret Archives. However, there are copies of Wadding's rules (*Institutiones Domus Hibernorum de urbe*), Ludovisi's financial legacy of an annual sum, and many historical memoranda about the foundation: among the most important of these for the history of the College is the history written in 1678 by the Jesuit James O`Reilly (liber i).

Liber I

Foundation of the College; rights of patronage; subsidies received from the Popes; exemption from taxes; loans received from the Jesuit order; debate on the question of national rectors with a view to the English, Scotch and Irish Colleges.

Liber II – missing

Liber III pars I (unbound)

College rules; directives to the College rectors from Jesuit superiors.

Liber III pars II (bound)

Accounts (apothecary, import of wine, cost of SJ circulars, collection of rents due to the College).

Liber IV

Ludovisian legacy of 1,000 scudi; controversy of sum deposited at the College in Matthew Bale's name; payment of and exemption from wine tax; College library (deposits especially from Rector Albergati); 'Historical memoirs'; miscellaneous memoranda; the Guido Reni paintings at the College.

Liber V

College property / investments (Casa Rosolini; Casa ai Pantani; Casa in Via Baccina; Casa a Piazza Morgana ossia Casa Iacovacci; Casa a S.Isidoro; Casa al vicolo di Gesù e Maria).

Liber VI and VII [1621-1739]

Vigna pars I et II: College vineyards (Cannetto o Salceto; Vigna fuori di Porta S. Sebastiano; [Vigna] delle Colonnelle; Altre Vigne).

Liber VIII [Vigna pars III] – missing

Liber IX 1635-1779

Vigna pars IV: College vineyards (works carried out; accounts for 1635)

Liber X [1671-1773]

Accounts (bank deposits 1608-1719; capital and investments; income; income from the Cadiz bourse 1752-[1798]).

Liber XI [1660s-1771]

Student complaints; apostolic visitations; students' receipts of the *viaticum* (subsidy for return to Ireland); College inventories (1720, 1771); summer 'villeggiatura' (rules, accounts 1669-1779); student deposits (early 1770s).

Liber XII 1635-1770

Student oaths (142 students, including Oliver Plunkett, 1654).

Liber XIII [1722-1798]

Lite diverse, pars I

Legal disputes (with Prince of Santa Croce; the monastery of S. Maria del Soccorso di Fara/Maria Alessandra de' Rossi/ Propaganda College; trustee de Sabbis; the Arrighi and Serratti; Giovanni Battista a Minimi; Maria Tomassina Marini and Marquis Agostino Lombardi; Duke of Soraal and the rector of the Collegio Romano); incomes.

Liber XIV 1625-1792

Liti Diverse pars II (title not corresponding to contents)

References to students; customs payments, College rules post-Marefoschi; deposits of students; student *viatica* (receipts); Carboni Mass intentions; receipts and bills (notaries, workmen); receipts Hugh McKeane; bank and land business; College use of the Acqua Felice.

Liber XIV Liti diverse pars VI (only *rubricella* extant).

Liber XV [mostly 1740s-1760s]

Lite de' Vacabili

Legal disputes regarding *vacabilium* [College property].

Liber XVI [1657-1772]

Papal Bulls and briefs; history of the Italian Cappuchins; various legal documents (obligations, testaments, contracts); promissary notes and orders; use of common water supply.

Liber XVII [1704-1778]

Building and repair works.

Liber XVIII [1635-1757]

Accounts (mostly monthly entries).

Liber XIX [1648-1772]

Students' admissions certificates; various correspondence; memoranda.

Liber XX [1628-1757]

Sample *formulae*; didactic and other essays on various subjects; diverse speeches and eulogies; diverse certificates; list of Jesuits sent to Ireland at various times.

Liber XXI [1564-1695]

Missioni pars I

Correspondence (College, students, SJ superiors and hierarchy), memoranda, petitions, declarations, reports, grants of faculty and other documents dealing with the Jesuit missions in Ireland.

Liber XXII 1701-[1780]

Missioni pars II Same as liber xxi.

Liber XXIII 1627-1771

Visita pars I

Correspondence (College, students, SJ superiors, apostolic offices), complaints, petitions, reports, on the administration of the College, gathered for the visitation by Cardinal Marefoschi 1771.

Liber XXIV [1771-1773]

Visita pars II

(first half no longer extant)

Same as liber xxiii; further issues of the Marefoschi visitation.

Liber XXV

Liber Ordinationum

Circulars and other directives from SJ superior generals and from SJ provincials (1637-1683); SJ visitations of the College (1653-1677).

Liber XXVI 1623-[1779]

Missioni pars III

Correspondence (College, SJ superiors, Irish hierarchy, political bodies, private individuals), petitions, lists, and other documents mostly with a bearing on the College administration, on events in Ireland and Italy.

Liber XXVII [1628-1764]

College rules (*Institutiones* 1628, *Regulae* 1629); *Ratio victus* (meals); administrative conventions; rules for paying guests (*convittori*).

Liber XXVIII

Custom book of the Roman province SJ; rules for superiors and officials; elegy; meditations.

Loose leaves

Apart from the unbound liber iii pars I, and the *rubricelle* of Liber XIV pars VI and Liber XXIV pars II, there are other items which at one stage may have been bound with various volumes (c.220 ff.). They are being archivally accessed but will be kept in loose-leaf form. They are related to material on the missions and student discipline, on the Marefoschi visitation, accounts files, and general historical memoranda.

Arrangement

Judging from the contents lists (*rubricelle*) extant today which appear to be very near-contemporary with the contents, the arrangement as it stands now must have been arrived at very soon after creation of the records. There is no over-ruling order, and often a stricter arrangement separating the accounts files from correspondence and other non-financial reports could have been wished for. The existence of the unbound items is particularly to be regretted; it is clear, however, that the creation of a 29th volume had been contemplated at one time for accommodating stray files.

CONDITIONS OF ACCESS AND USE

Conditions governing access: open access

Languages: Italian, Latin, English, French, Irish.

Publications (James O'Reilly's manuscript history (1678) and oath formula from Libri i, xii): Hanly, John "Records of the Irish College, Rome, under Jesuit administration" in *Archivium Hibernicum* xxvii (1964) 13-75.

Pontifical Irish College Rome (eds) *Collegium Hibernorum de Urbe 1628-1678* (Rome 2003).

