

MS 95 T.F O'Rahilly Correspondence

(Formerly listed as Miscellaneous Manuscripts MS 1/208, MS 1/236, MS 1/237)

About the Collection

T.F (Thomas Francis) O'Rahilly, born 11th November 1882 in Listowel Co Kerry; was an Irish scholar of Celtic languages particularly historical linguistics and Irish dialects. He became Professor of Modern Irish at Trinity College Dublin in 1919, held the position of National University of Ireland Research Professor in Gaelic Languages (1929-1940), Senior Professor in the School of Celtic Studies at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (1940-1948) and Honorary Professor of Irish in Trinity College Dublin (1952-1953).

He was regarded as the foremost scholar of Modern Irish of the period.

T.F O'Rahilly was also known for his controversial theories on Irish history, bilingualism, and language contact. Although O'Rahilly's theories were highly influential, many of these theories which have been challenged by linguists, historians and archaeologists are no longer accepted.

T.F O'Rahilly died suddenly at home on 16th November 1953.

This collection consists of a series of correspondence and transcripts.

Of the correspondence can be found, fifteen letters from D.J. O'Sullivan to T.F. O'Rahilly 1926-28 which ask O'Rahilly to act as witness in a libel action taken by the Clandillons against O'Sullivan. Several letters also make reference to MS Bunting part ii, which O'Sullivan has sent to O'Rahilly asking him to read and add suggestions and corrections to the manuscript.

There are also seven letters from George Russell (AE) to T.F O'Rahilly on Irish statesman notepaper 1925-27, dealing with the question of state financial support for Gaelic scholarship, and with the setting up of a fund for the promotion of Irish Studies by Judge H.B Higgins of Melbourne - included is a MS 2pp. memorandum on the proposed administration of the fund signed by O. Bergin, T.F. O'Rahilly, R. Best, and E.J. Gwynn.

Other correspondents include M. O'Cathain (letter in Irish) and Paul Grosjean (letter in French). Correspondence between A. Martin Freeman and T.F. O'Rahilly, and between James Hogan and T.F. O'Rahilly is in regards to translations. There is also a letter to Mr Price from T.F. O'Rahilly pertaining to the publication of 'Onanestus' and discussing a government sponsored Irish Place Names Institute.

In addition, the collection contains typescripts of translations with handwritten annotations.

**Further information on T.F O'Rahilly can be found in the Dictionary of Irish Biography [O'Rahilly, Thomas Francis \('T. F.'\)](#) | [Dictionary of Irish Biography \(dib.ie\)](#)*

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MS 95/2 Letters from George Russell (AE) to T.F. O'Rahilly (formerly MS 1/236)

MS 95/3 Letters from D.J. O'Sullivan to T.F. O'Rahilly, 1926-28 (formerly MS 1/237)

Abbreviations used:

ALS: autograph letter signed.

TLS: typewritten letter signed.

MS: Manuscript

p. /pp. page/pages

MS 95/1 Correspondence to and from T.F O'Rahilly. Miscellaneous typescripts of translations.

Correspondents: M. O'Catháin, A. Martin Freeman, Paul Grosjean, James Hogan (includes various newspaper clippings)

Letters from M O'Catháin (x1 with translations); A. Martin Freeman (x5 some with translations), Paul Grosjean (x1) and James Hogan (x2 includes newspaper clippings). Letter from T.F O'Rahilly to James Hogan. Letter fragment from T.F O'Rahilly containing translations. Miscellaneous typescripts of translations of Irish Songs.

MS 95/1/1 19/03/1922 Letter from M. O'Catháin to T.F. O'Rahilly

9 Iona Road, Glasnevin

Written in Irish with Irish-English translations attached. TLS 1p with 9pp of translations, typed with handwritten annotations.

MS 95/1/2 1934 - 1936 Letters from A. Martin Freeman to T.F O'Rahilly

1. 16/02/1934 166 Lauderdale Mansions London W.9
A. Martin Freeman to T.F. O'Rahilly with translations (Irish-English) attached, apologising for errors in translations and inaccurate printing. TLS 1 p. with 3 pp. of translations; typed with handwritten annotations.
2. 09/03/1934 166 Lauderdale Mansions London W.9
A. Martin Freeman to T.F O'Rahilly following up from earlier letter sent regarding translation errors and printing. TLS 2 pp. with 1 p. of translations; typed with handwritten annotations.
3. 07/11/1934 166 Lauderdale Mansions, Maida Vale London W.9
Letter from A. Martin Freeman to T.F O'Rahilly referring to Connaught Annals and one page of corrigenda (Irish-English, attached). Letter also contains invitation for T. F O'Rahilly to stay with A. Martin Freeman in London. TLS 2 pp. with 1 p. of translations; typed with handwritten annotations.

4. 17/12/1934 166 Lauderdale Mansions London W.9
Letter from A. Martin Freeman to T.F O'Rahilly containing further corrections and good wishes for the festive season. TLS 2 pp.
5. 12/03/1936 166 Lauderdale Mansions London W.9
Letter from A. Martin Freeman to T.F O'Rahilly discussing an instalment of Annals and corrections. TLS 1 p. with handwritten annotations.

MS 95/1/3 23/08/1945 Letter from Paul Grosjean to T.F O'Rahilly

Société des Bollandistes, Boulevard Saint-Michel 24, Bruxelles
Letter from Paul Grosjean to T.F O'Rahilly; letter is in French. TLS 2 pp.

MS 95/1/4 1946 Letters from James Hogan to T.F O'Rahilly; with reply from T.F O'Rahilly

1. 14/07/1946 Cluain Meadhon, Ballintemple Cork
Letter from James Hogan to T.F O'Rahilly regarding the banning of 'The Midnight Court' - a new translation' by Frank O'Connor. The letter also discusses and includes various translations. TLS 4 pp. with handwritten annotations.
2. 15/08/1946 Cluain Meadhon, Ballintemple Cork
Letter from James Hogan to T.F O'Rahilly discussing the controversy about 'The Midnight Court' in the Irish times. The letter also refers to James Hogan's letter, referencing the publication which was published in the Irish Times on 9th August. TLS 2 pp. with handwritten annotations.
3. 26/08/1946 Cluain Meadhon, Ballintemple Cork
Letter from T.F. O'Rahilly to James Hogan in referencing James Hogan's letter to the Irish Times on 9th August. The letter also expresses approval for Hogan's translation and describes the '*translation of these lines invented by Mr P.A Ussher as a complete travesty of the original*'. ALS 1 p. with notes regarding the Irish Times correspondence pertaining to '*The Midnight Court*'.

4. 03/09/1946 Cluain Meadhon, Ballintemple Cork
Letter from James Hogan to T.F O'Rahilly further discussing 'The Midnight Court,' letters published in the Irish Times and apologising for asking T. F O'Rahilly to intervene. TLS 3 pp. with handwritten annotations.

Additional Material – Newspaper Clippings

- a. 9 October 1926 The Irish Statesman
Reviews by F O'C: 'The Midnight Court,' translated from the Gaelic by Percy Arland Ussher.
- b. 1 October 1926 The Irish Times
An Irish Rabelais: 'The Midnight Court' in English, review of translation in book form by Mr P.A Ussher introduced by W.B. Yeats.
- c. 26 July 1946 The Irish Times
Letter to the Editor in reference to 'The Midnight Court' from B McMahon Secretary, Censorship of Publications.
- d. 27 July 1946 The Irish Times
Letter to the Editor in reference to Mr McMahon and Professor James Hogan's refusal of the appeal of Mr O'Connor's translation of 'The Midnight Court' from Frank O'Connor.

MS 95/1/5 1952

Letters from T.F O'Rahilly and translations

1. No Date Letter of recommendation from T.F O'Rahilly includes two pages of Irish-English Translation and a torn paper fragment with continuation of a letter on one side and translation on the other side. No Date or Address. ALS 1 p. and 2 pp. of Translations.
2. 14 August 1952 Letter to Mr Price from T.F O'Rahilly pertaining to a translation and publication of 'Onanestus' and discussing a government sponsored Irish Place Names Institute. ALS 2 pp.

MS 95/1/6

Translations of Irish Songs

Translations of Irish songs to English most have the original Irish title. Typescript, no date, 15 pages.

1. Aohbhinn an galar gradh mna
2. 'In the old age black was not counted fair' (*'Richard Burke sang this'* is written in black pen above title)
3. 111
4. Croidhe lan do smuaintighthibh
5. Goirt anoch deireadh mo sgeal
6. Croidhe so da ghoid uaimne
7. Dar liom is galar e an gradh
8. An goluine me a mhacaoimh mna (with correction in pencil)
9. Cumann do cheangail an chorr
10. Cead slan iomraidh do na mnaibh
11. Tugas fein mo ghradh ar fhuath
12. Soraidh slan don oidhche areir

MS 95/1/7

Translations of Irish Songs

Translations of Irish songs to English. Typescript, no date, 28 pages with some handwritten annotations.

1. Description of a lady's hair
2. The sorrow of parting (Maghnus O'Domhnaill cct)
3. Keen sorrow fills my heart tonight (Maghnus O'Domhnaill cct)
4. My heart from me is now being wooed (Maghnus O'Domhnaill cct)
5. To me, love seems a malady (Maghnus O'Domhnaill cct)
6. Youthful lady, hearest thou?
7. My love is now exchanged for hate
8. The heron a compact once made
9. To women, highest praise I give
10. To yesternight a fond farewell (Niall Mor Mac Muireadhaigh cct)

11. A pleasant malady is love
12. Man's concept of love is false
13. No absent things attract the eye
14. I'm in love now with hate
15. Weep no more, young lady
16. Unrequited love (Maghnus 1 O'Domhnaill cct)
17. A poets ridicule of dying swains
18. Tempt me not with thy kiss
19. Oh lady, trouble me no more
20. Our love is far from even
21. The worries caused by her I love
22. My love-lay commit well to mind
23. A harmless malady is love (Cuchonnact O'Cleirigh cct)
24. Oh maiden, who dost scorn me now
25. Oh lady, who hast sealed my fate
26. Why thus so sad, oh youthful maid
27. My hopes, alas I have flown too high
28. 'T were woe to trust to women's love
29. Blind man, thine is a happy lot
30. Unto the self-deluder, woe! (Verso – pencil writing (?) 'Munster Arms)
31. A vision sad perturbed my mind
32. Woe! Alas – Oh Mary dear (Domhnaill Mac Carrtha Mor, 1 an chead Iarla, cct)
33. My wayward deals I now regret (with correction in pencil)
34. A dire disease is secret love
35. In wanton ways some time I'll spend (Laoiseach Mac an Bhaird cct)
36. Erin's songs are eager, longing (Riocard do Burc cct)
37. Daughter of Eoghain, behold my plight (O' Gearain cct)

Additional Material

Maroon coloured leather (?) book cover. 'Gaelic Journal' written in gold print along the spine. Writing in pencil inside the front cover, calculations and writing in Irish (?) translations with page numbers and date '1913'. (24cm x 18cm).

Letters from George Russell (AE): 7 letters (6 typed; 1 holograph) to T.F. O'Rahilly on Irish Statesman notepaper 17/2/1925 – 19/8/1927, dealing with the question of state financial support for Gaelic scholarship and with the setting up by Judge H. B. Higgins of Melbourne of a fund for the promotion of Irish studies. Enclosure included: 2pp. memorandum on the proposed administration of the fund signed by O. Bergin, T.F. O'Rahilly, R. Best, and E.J. Gwynn.

1. 17/02/1925 The Irish Statesman Editorial Office, 84 Merrion Street Dublin. Official Note Paper. Letter apologising for not including T. F. O'Rahilly's letter in this week's paper and stating that the rationale behind the article in question was to encourage people to think. TLS 1p.
2. 13/03/1925 The Irish Statesman Editorial Office, 84 Merrion Street Dublin. Official Note Paper. Letter offering to draft a special article if O'Rahilly and Bergin talk over and agree what could be done by the State to help the cause of the Gaelic Scholarship. TLS 1p.
3. 19/03/1925 The Irish Statesman Editorial Office, 84 Merrion Street Dublin. Official Note Paper. Letter suggesting a meeting between O'Rahilly and Bergin following which A. E. would draft an article for The Irish Statesman. TLS 1p.
4. 06/03/1927 Deena, Malvern, Melbourne.
Copy of a letter, from H. B. Higgins, signed by G. W. Russell, requesting advice regarding the founding of a Chair for Irish, at the National University, Ireland or an alternative suggestion if this is not viable. TLTS 1p.
5. 12/04/1927 The Irish Statesman Editorial Office, 84 Merrion Street Dublin. Official Note Paper. Letter asking O'Rahilly to consider, meeting with Bergin, and make suggestions as to how best to spend a sum of money to be bequeathed by Lord Justice Higgins in Australia for the promotion of Irish/Celtic Studies. ALS 1p.

6. 06/05/1927 The Irish Statesman Editorial Office, 84 Merrion Street Dublin. Official Note Paper. Letter thanking O'Rahilly for his letter and memorandum which included the suggestions of Bergin, Best and Gwynn. Reference is made to an article in the Irish Statesman in which such a scheme was proposed. A copy of the article had previously been sent to Lord Justice Higgins. TLS 1p.
7. 19/08/1927 The Irish Statesman Editorial Office, 84 Merrion Street Dublin. Official Note Paper. Letter of thanks for O'Rahilly's previous letter. Once Bergin's comments have been received the notes will be passed to Lord Justice Higgins. TLS 1p.

Additional Material

A draft memorandum, of the proposals, for the setting up of a fund for the promotion of Irish Studies. Signed by, O. Bergin, T.F. O'Rahilly, R. Best and E.J. Gwynn. Writing on the back on pencil '*This is a rough draft of suggestions to A.E. concerning proposed request. Please tell me if you approve.*' MS ALS 2pp.

Brown envelope addressed to '*The Librarian, Queen's University of Belfast, The Library Belfast, Northern Ireland.*' Postmark 4D London 10 June 1959. Return address '*D.A Berry, 141 Westmount Road, Eltham Park, London SE9.*' (27cm x 21cm).

Letters from D.J. O'Sullivan, 15 letters (6 typed; 9 holographs) to T.F. O'Rahilly 3/12/1926 - 3/12/1928 pressing O'Rahilly to act as witness in a libel action taken by the Clandillons against O'Sullivan for statements made by O'Sullivan in a review in the Irish Statesman about the Clandillons editing. Reference is also made to a manuscript 'Bunting part ii', which O'Sullivan has asked O'Rahilly to read and add suggestions and corrections. Typescript of errata in the book. MS 17p. and envelope.

1. 03/12/1926 Seanad Eireann, Tigh Laighean (Leinster House), Baile Átha Cliath (Dublin). Letter on Leinster House official note paper, thanking Professor T.F. O'Rahilly for the points about which he is currently writing. TLS 1p.
2. 09/12/1927 Leinster House, Official note paper with a home address, Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co Dublin. Letter requesting Professor O'Rahilly give evidence in a pending court case. D.J O'Sullivan explains that he had reviewed a book and in doing so had made reference to the fact that only 11 of the 75 songs had not been previously published. As a result, he had been served with a writ for libel. TLS 1p.
3. 12/12/1927 Leinster House, Official note paper with a home address, Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co Dublin. Letter thanking Professor O' Rahilly, for his offer of help. The plan is to approach experts on Irish and Irish Music and pass the book on to them for consideration. TLS 1p.
4. 13/01/1928 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co. Dublin with "Oireachtas Eireann" stamp. Letter inviting both Professor and Mrs O'Rahilly to tea. He indicates that he has heard nothing re the Clandillon affair and having studied the book for defence purposes, has found it very bad and open to exposure if it ever goes to court. TLS 1p.
5. 08/02/1928 Leinster House, Official note paper with a home address, Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co Dublin. Letter asking Professor O' Rahilly to read the enclosed manuscript of Bunting part ii and to annotate it with corrections etc. Permission is sought to reprint a quatrain from Dánfhocail. It is requested that the corrected manuscript is not returned by post but that when complete, notification is sent, and D.J. O'Sullivan will collect it in person. ALS 2pp.

6. 15/03/1928 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co Dublin.
Letter of congratulations on honorary degree. Request made for the return of the Bunting manuscript. Advice is also sought on some academic work. TLS 2pp.
7. 26/03/1928 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co Dublin.
Letter of thanks, for the corrected manuscript. Invitation issued to visit after Easter when the professor is feeling better. Mention is made of the diary transcription which the professor had advised on. TLS 1p.
8. 04/06/1928 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co Dublin.
Letter stating that the Clandillons intend to pursue the matter through the courts, D.J. O'Sullivan suggests that the two of them meet to see the book together. ALS 3pp.
9. 02/09/1928 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co Dublin.
Letter stating that the Clandillon case is to be heard next month and he is looking for possible witnesses. He asks the professor about meeting up to look at the book. ALS 1p.
10. 24/09/1928 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co. Dublin with "Oireachtas Eireann" stamp.
Letter asking the professor to clarify his position re his willingness to give evidence in the Clandillon libel case. ALS 1p.
11. 01/10/1928 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co. Dublin with "Oireachtas Eireann" stamp.
Letter of some urgency. A copy of the book with the more serious mistakes highlighted has been left for the professor to study prior to the court case. He feels that the professor's help is vital for a good outcome. ALS 2pp.
12. 05/10/1928 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co. Dublin with "Oireachtas Eireann" stamp.
Letter following a brief chance talk with Professor O'Rahilly informing him that the solicitor and counsel think it best if Professor O'Rahilly acts as a witness in the case. Offer for Professor and Mrs O'Rahilly to call on Sunday for tea extended. ALS 2pp.

13. 23/10/1928 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co. Dublin with “Oireachtas Eireann” stamp.
Letter stating that a date has been fixed for the case and requesting a meeting with Professor O’Rahilly. ALS 1p.
14. 25/10/1928 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co. Dublin with “Oireachtas Eireann” stamp.
Letter of understanding re: Professor O’Rahilly’s reluctance to appear as a witness, but that the defence team believe that the professor’s appearance is vital to the case due to his knowledge of the Irish language. ALS 2pp.
15. 03/12/1928 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Co. Dublin with “Oireachtas Eireann” stamp.
Letter thanking Professor O’Rahilly for his kindness in acting as a witness as he believes his being there helped to impress the judge and bring forth a positive outcome to the case. An offer of tea the following Sunday extended to Professor and Mrs O’Rahilly. ALS 1p.

Additional Material

Typescript copy of *‘Londubh an Chairn’* with lists of errata. Most pages have handwritten annotations in pencil. Copy is marked ‘Strictly confidential.’ MS 17pp (32cm x 20.5cm).

Large white envelope with *‘University College Dublin’* stamp in Black. Envelope is addressed to *‘Professor T.F. O’Rahilly, 19 Castlewood Park, Rathmines’*. Red wax seal x2 on the back. Date stamp 4 Oct 1928 (31cm x 26cm).