THE BEYOND 2022 RESEARCH PROJECT
Archival Discovery at the
Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI),
Belfast

Post title: Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Early Modern History (c.1500–c.1800)

Job Posted: 20 December 2019

Closing Date for Applications: Monday, 20 January 2020 at 5pm

Contract Type: Specific Purpose Research Contract (Fixed Term, Whole-Time)

Post Duration: 24 months from 1 April 2020

Academic Unit: The Department of History, School of Histories and Humanities, Trinity College Dublin.

Salary: €37,223 p.a. (IUA Salary Scale: Level 2, Point 1)\(^1\)

Position Summary
The Beyond 2022: Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury Research Project is an all-island and international collaboration funded by the Government of Ireland, through the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, under the Project Ireland 2040 framework.

\(^1\) The successful applicant will be employed by Trinity College Dublin and remuneration will be made in Euro. The project will provide expenses by reimbursement for agreed project-related travel including research, collaboration and dissemination activities.
Based in Trinity College Dublin, *Beyond 2022* seeks to re-imagine and re-create through virtual reality the Public Record Office of Ireland building and its archival collections, which were destroyed in the opening engagement of the Irish Civil War. The resource created by the Project will be an open-access virtual archive.

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland [hereafter PRONI] is a core partner in the *Beyond 2022* project, along with the other core partners

- National Archives of Ireland
- The National Archives of the United Kingdom
- Irish Manuscripts Commission
- Trinity College Dublin Library

and a range of over 30 participating institutions.

Through this collaboration, the project seeks to locate and identify archival materials relevant to the project’s ambition to reconstruct, to the greatest extent possible, the collections destroyed in 1922.

*Beyond 2022* is seeking an exceptional historical and archival researcher, **to be based at PRONI in Belfast**, working within the project’s Archival Discovery work package.

The successful applicant will work under the direction of **Dr Peter Crooks** (Programme Director/Principal Investigator) and **Stephen Scarth** (Head of Public Services in PRONI), together with archival colleagues in PRONI. The successful candidate will be employed in parallel with two other ‘Archival Discovery’ Postdoctoral Research Fellows, one based at Trinity College Dublin and another at TNA (UK). It is expected that they will be active in presenting their research to internal PRONI audiences, and to public audiences at PRONI and elsewhere. They will also contribute to developing engagement opportunities related to *Beyond 2022*. 
Archival Discovery Work Package: Overview

The Archival Discovery work package within Beyond 2022 seeks to identify materials that can replace the documents destroyed in the Four Courts blaze in 1922, replenishing the destroyed Record Treasury to a greater extent than ever imagined.

The objectives of this work package are:

- to create an inventory of loss and survival from the 1922 fire
- to identify and scope replacement collections in libraries and archival repositories across the world
- to identify, in collaboration with curators and conservators, collections in these repositories requiring conservation and prioritize those suitable for enhanced digitization
- to create metadata descriptions of salved and replacement sources to be included in the Beyond 2022 database
- to connect these metadata descriptions of replacement collections to the database entries for destroyed records

Role of the Research Fellow at PRONI

Archival Discovery involves the enhancement of the known and, more importantly, discovery of the unknown. The successful applicant will have expert archival research skills to explore relevant Northern Ireland and Scottish archives to identify replacement material, create suitable descriptions and fully contextualise the importance of any discoveries. In essence, the project aims to find, describe and contextualize.

At PRONI, the candidate will work with Stephen Scarth, Head of Public Services, and other PRONI staff, to identify Irish and Irish-related records held in repositories in Northern Ireland and Scotland. PRONI’s Early Modern collections were assiduously sourced to closely reflect and enhance those records destroyed at the PROI in 1922. Working as part of an interdisciplinary and international team, the post-holder will use their specialist archival knowledge to enhance descriptions of
previously-identified archival material; to identify and prepare scoping reports on additional potential replacement sets in archives in Northern Ireland and Scotland; to develop publications that contextualize and interpret relevant archival materials and record-keeping practices; to generate metadata to the project’s specifications, to enable digitized manuscripts and archives to be ingested into the Virtual Record Treasury and made accessible through the IIIF (International Image Interoperability Framework).

As a member of the project team, the post-holder will collaborate with the computer scientists on the project to experiment with entity extraction and data linking on the semantic web in order to create metadata and populate Beyond 2022’s Knowledge Base for Irish History, thereby contributing to the development of its standards and protocols. The post-holder will also undertake dissemination and public engagement activities to assist the project in its mission to communicate the importance of its discoveries to the widest possible audience.

**Key Duties and Responsibilities**

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<th>Duties and Responsibilities</th>
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<td>To conduct excellent research at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) and assist the Principal Investigator and project colleagues in the planning, organizing, conducting, and communicating of research within the overall scope of the project.</td>
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<td>To coordinate and perform independent and team-led activities involved in the collection, analysis, documentation and interpretation of information/results.</td>
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<td>To participate in training and other periodic meetings in Dublin and other international venues.</td>
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<td>To present information on research progress and outcomes to others responsible for the research project.</td>
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<td>To act as a source of information and guidance as required to any support staff and/or research students assisting with the research project, as agreed with the Principal Investigator.</td>
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To publish research outputs in peer-reviewed journals, relevant to the wider project, in his/her area of specialist expertise, and to contribute to co-authored publications.

To confer with the Principal Investigator in developing plans for research projects and to discuss the interpretation of results and the preparation of manuscripts for publication.

To perform other related duties incidental to the work described herein.

To contribute to the public engagement components of the project through talks, podcasts, blogs /vlogs, archive workshops, exhibitions

**Selection Criteria**

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<td>Essential</td>
<td>A completed PhD, or evidence that a PhD is close to completion, in a relevant sub-period of Irish or Irish/British history between c.1500 and c.1800</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Sufficient specialist knowledge to conduct high-quality research that identifies previously little known or unknown records that act as replacements for those held by the Public Record Office of Ireland before 1922</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Demonstrable competence in Early Modern palaeography</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Research experience with Early Modern record-keeping practice and manuscript sources</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>A publication record commensurate with career stage and personal circumstances</td>
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<td>Desirable</td>
<td>A working knowledge of Latin</td>
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<td>Desirable</td>
<td>Demonstrable understanding of government and administration in</td>
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<td><strong>Early Modern Ireland and the bureaucratic outputs that formed the core of the Public Record Office of Ireland collections</strong></td>
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<td>Desirable</td>
<td>A knowledge of the application of digital technologies to historical projects</td>
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**Personal Effectiveness**

| Essential | Ability to manage own research and associated activities to meet multiple, competing deadlines |
| Essential | Experience of working constructively within a team to achieve a common goal |
| Essential | Evidence of excellent organisational and communication skills |
| Essential | Ability to work in highly interdisciplinary and international research environments |
| Desirable | Knowledge of image capture, metadata curation and data visualisation |
| Desirable | Evidence of excellent stakeholder management skills and a willingness to represent the project at meetings, conferences and other relevant events |

**Technical Skills**

| Essential | High level of IT literacy including the use of word-processor and spreadsheet applications |
| Essential | Excellent report writing and presentation skills |
| Desirable | A knowledge of data curation and analysis |
Background to *Beyond 2022*

June 30th, 2022, marks the centenary of the terrible explosion and fire at the Four Courts, Dublin, which destroyed the Public Record Office of Ireland (PROI) and, with it, seven centuries of Ireland’s collective memories. While incomparable with the loss of human life, the destruction of the Record Treasury at the PROI was one of the great tragedies of the Civil War.

*Beyond 2022: Ireland’s Virtual Record Treasury* is an all-island and international research programme to recreate digitally this lost national treasure. Combining historical research, archival discovery and technical innovation, *Beyond 2022* offers a lasting and meaningful legacy from the Decade of Centenaries, democratising access to invaluable records and illuminating seven centuries of Irish history.

The aim of *Beyond 2022* is to create and launch on 30 June 2022 a Virtual Record Treasury for Irish history—an open-access, virtual reconstruction of the Record Treasury destroyed at the PROI in 1922. The Virtual Record Treasury will provide an enabling framework for connecting archival collections worldwide and rediscovering our collective national memories.

[www.beyond2022.ie](http://www.beyond2022.ie)
For informal enquiries on the post, candidates should contact:

Name: Dr Peter Crooks  
Title: Beyond 2022 Programme Director  
Email Address: pcrooks@tcd.ie

To Apply:
To apply for this post, please send by email attachment the following materials (saved as PDF documents) to Dr Ciarán Wallace, Deputy Director, Beyond 2022 Project (cwallace@tcd.ie) before the deadline:

- Cover letter (1 page)
- Research statement describing your specialist knowledge of relevant archival collections and proposing how you would prioritize your research in PRONI to further the vision of Beyond 2022 if offered this position (3pp)
- Full CV (3 pp) including the names of two referees who may be contacted if you are shortlisted.

Deadline: Monday, 20 January 2020 at 5pm (local time)

Further Particulars:
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited to present for interview at Trinity College Dublin. It is envisaged that interviews will take place on 13/14 February 2020.
- Successful candidates will be required to obtain basic level security clearance in order to work at PRONI.