

Uncover centuries of Cork City's history through the first interactive free to access digital map

For immediate release: 7 December 2023

A free online interactive map that invites everyone to discover the built heritage of Cork City was launched today. The *Digital Atlas of Cork/Corcaigh* showcases 6,245 sites of Cork City's history, including buildings, streets, bridges and monuments, from AD 623 through to 1900. The atlas includes descriptions of over 800 streets, including their names in Irish and English as well as historical variants. Users can browse the digital atlas or search for a specific site in the city. They can also select and view features associated with specific time periods, from medieval times to the present day.

The *Digital Atlas of Cork/Corcaigh* includes a specially commissioned historical map depicting each individual house and plot during the mid-nineteenth century (1842). This is just one of a number of layered maps that may be switched on and off to show how the city developed over 200 years. Other layers include Ordnance Survey maps — a present-day plan of the city, as well as historic maps showing Cork pre-Famine and at the turn of the twentieth century. The *Digital Atlas of Cork/Corcaigh* will be of interest to a wide range of individuals from the 'rebel city' and beyond, including students of all levels and their teachers, researchers and planners. A downloadable user guide has been created to accompany the resource, to allow anyone to explore the Digital Atlas with further education and project work in mind.

The *Digital Atlas of Cork/Corcaigh* can be accessed online through the Royal Irish Academy's website: <https://www.ria.ie/digital-atlas-corkcorcaigh>

Commenting on the launch, Virginia Teehan, Chief Executive, The Heritage Council said:

'The Digital Atlas of Cork/Corcaigh will greatly facilitate easy access to the rich array of source materials for understanding the evolution of Cork. The Heritage Council is very pleased to support this work and congratulates the Irish Historic Towns Atlas, Royal Irish Academy and partners Cork City Council, Digital Repository of Ireland, Tailte Éireann and the National Archives of Ireland for bringing this to fruition.'

Councillor Kieran McCarthy, Lord Mayor of Cork City commented:

'The interactive digital map is remarkable and a tremendous new resource for all the people of Cork. It no doubt will instil a sense of pride in local communities, through its use in schools and libraries. In particular, the research and further reading aspect of the atlas will be a terrific source for anyone with an interest in the history and development of Cork City. I welcome this innovative project from the Royal Irish Academy, which will make the valuable research of the Irish Historic Towns Atlas available to a wider and more varied audience than heretofore.'

Ciara Brett, City Archaeologist, Cork City Council said:

'The Cork/Corcaigh Digital Atlas, when utilised with the forthcoming printed Atlas, will be a great benefit to the study of the changing urban environment and will provide practical assistance in the preparation and implementation of planning policy and development management in the city. The IHTA Cork/Corcaigh volume in digital format will add to the existing corpus of published material and

will, I believe, encourage future research and study that will enhance our understanding and appreciation of our city.’

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Image attached (caption): Cork, 1610, by John Speed (Royal Irish Academy); size 11 x 16.5 cm in Irish Historic Towns Atlas, no. 31 *Cork/Corcaigh* by Howard Clarke and Máire Ní Laoi (forthcoming, 2024).

Background to the *Digital Atlas of Cork/Corcaigh* project

The *Digital Atlas of Cork/Corcaigh* is based on research carried out for Irish Historic Towns Atlas (IHTA), volume. 31, *Cork/Corcaigh* by H.B. Clarke and Máire Ní Laoi, which will be published by the Royal Irish Academy in print in May 2024. The *Digital Atlas of Cork/Corcaigh* is an initiative of the IHTA, the project has been led by Sarah Gearty (Royal Irish Academy) and Rachel Murphy (University of Limerick), with Mani Morse (Dublin City University) as Digital Manager.

It is one of a series of digital atlases created by the Irish Historic Towns Atlas team (others are Derry, Dungarvan and Galway). The Cork Digital Atlas, created using ESRI Ireland’s ArcGIS Experience Builder, includes the most functionality to date. Data and layers from the *Digital Atlas of Cork/Corcaigh* will be preserved and made available in the Digital Repository of Ireland.

The project has been part funded by the Heritage Council Stewardship Fund 2023. It has been supported by partners Cork City Council, the Digital Repository of Ireland, the National Archives of Ireland and Tailte Éireann.

About the Irish Historic Towns Atlas research programme

Based at the Royal Irish Academy, the Irish Historic Towns Atlas research programme traces the topographical development of towns, cities and suburbs through its atlas and ancillary publications, annual seminars and special exhibitions. It is part of a wider international scheme that covers nineteen countries. The Irish programme is considered a leader in the development of digital atlases of this kind.