



Europe and the world in European historiography / edited by Csaba Lévai
(Thematic work group)

940.072 (21.)

I. Europa - Storiografia I. Lévai, Csaba



CIP a cura del Sistema bibliotecario dell'Università di Pisa

This volume is published, thanks to the support of the Directorate General for Research of the European Commission, by the Sixth Framework Network of Excellence CLIOHRES.net under the contract CIT3-CT-2005-006164. The volume is solely the responsibility of the Network and the authors; the European Community cannot be held responsible for its contents or for any use which may be made of it.

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Lungarno Pacinotti, 43
56126 Pisa
Tel. 050 2212056 – Fax 050 2212945
info-plus@edizioniplus.it
www.edizioniplus.it - Section "Biblioteca"

ISBN 88-8492-403-0

Manager

Claudia Napolitano

Editing

Francesca Petrucci

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Irish Historical Writing on Latin America, and on Irish Links with Latin America

MARY N. HARRIS

National University of Ireland, Galway

Cé gur beag starat Éireannach atá ina shaineolaí ar stair Mheiriceá Laidinigh, nó ar stair na nGael i Meiriceá Laidineach, tá réimse leathan daoine tar éis tabhairt faoi stair an cheantair sin a scríobh; ina measc siúd faighimid scoláirí i ndisciplíní éagsúla, saighdiúirí, iriseoirí, sagairt, agus Éireannaigh a thug turas ar an áit. Thairis sin, tá scoláirí iasachta tar éis altanna ar Mheiriceá Laidineach a sholáthar do leabhair aistí agus irisleabhair a cuireadh i gcló in Éirinn. Tá na scríbhneoirí seo go léir tar éis cur le díospóireachtaí in Éirinn faoi Mheiriceá Laidineach.

Baineann scríbhinní Éireannacha faoi Mheiriceá Laidineach, don chuid is mó, le hábhair a mhúsclaíonn suim an phobail in Éirinn, Chuir Caitlicigh na hÉireann suim mhór sa ghearleanúint a rinneadh ar Chaitlicigh i Mheicsiceo sna 1920í agus sa Chogadh cathardha a tharla in El Salvador sna 1980í: bhí tionscnamh ag Trócaire ann, bhí misinéirí ó Éirinn ag obair ann agus dúnmharaíodh bean óg Mheiriceánach de shliocht Éireannach. Spreag na géirchéimeanna sin daoine chun cúlra na ngéirchéimeanna a iniúchadh.

Baineann roinnt mhaith taighde leis na Gaeil i Meiriceá Laidineach. Tá éachtaí na nGael a ghlac páirt i gcogaí na saoirse i dtús na 1800í agus in imeachtaí míleata eile á ríomh le fada, agus cuireanna staraithe áitiúla agus ginealeolaithe suim sna réimsí sin freisin. Tá scoláirí eile tar éis cúl a thabhairt le stair na ngníomhartha gaisce agus díriú ar shaol na nGael a chuaigh thar tír amach, go háirithe iad siúd a thug aghaidh ar an Airgintín. Tuigtear anois na castachtaí a bhaineann le cur síos a dheanamh an an bpobal sin agus an cineál féiniúlachta a bhí acu. Is mór an cúnamb do na scoláirí sin an dul chun cinn mór atá ar siúl i léann an diaspora tré chéile, agus an t-eolas atá le fail ar shuíomhanna idirlín ar nós Irish Migration Studies in Latin America, suíomh Chumann Éireannach Léann Mheiriceá Laidinigh agus irishdiaspora.net. Cé go bhfuil teora i gcónaí leis an méid taighde atá ar siúl sna réimsí seo, is cinnte go bhfuil na cúinsí taighde níos fearr ná riamh maidir le cursaí cumarsáide agus acmhainní ar an idirlíon.

Irish historical writing on Latin America focuses primarily on Irish links with Latin America and on issues of common concern. The pattern of Irish relations with Latin America, described by Edmundo Murray as “heterogeneous, fragmentary and erratic”¹ is reflected in the variety of writings on the topic, highlighting the exploits of Irish individuals who won acclaim in Latin America and the varied experiences of Irish settlers in

there. Colonialism and Catholicism emerge as the key issues of common interest. In the early decades of Irish independence, Irish Catholics, who frequently harked back to the injustices faced by their forefathers under British Protestant rule, took a keen interest in problems facing the Catholic Church in Latin America; in later decades Irish missionary presence in Latin America maintained Irish interest in that region. Irish attitudes towards Spanish colonization, however, were complicated by the historic friendship between Irish nationalists and Spain.

In seeking out Irish historians of Latin America it soon becomes apparent that the categories of 'historian' and 'Irish' are problematic. Writers on the history of Latin America include not only academic historians, but also scholars in the fields of geography and Hispanic studies, as well as journalists, genealogists, priests, travellers to Latin America and participants in Latin American political struggles. These are not watertight categories; a number of important writers have had chequered careers, journalists have become academics, academics have contributed to newspapers, literary scholars have become historians, and collections of essays are often multidisciplinary. Nor is the category 'Irish' entirely clear cut; many of the writers were born and raised in Ireland but some are Irish emigrants, second generation Irish or foreign scholars who come to work or study in Ireland. In some cases the distinction is not clear. Furthermore, Irish journals and collections of essays seeking to explain the background to issues contemporary relevance in Latin America frequently invite contributions from experts outside Ireland. All of these have contributed to Irish discussions of Latin American history.

This chapter takes a broad definition of Irish historiography: it focuses on works of a historical nature written or published by people in Ireland or with a strong Irish connection in the 20th and 21st centuries. It is organised thematically, looking at the issues of exploration and colonization, Irish contributions to political and military campaigns, the Catholic Church in Latin America, international relations and the Irish diaspora in Latin America. Finally, it considers the questions raised by these studies for certain aspects of Irish historiography and some possible future lines of investigation.

EXPLORATION AND COLONIZATION

Tales of Saint Brendan having sailed from Ireland to Mexico in the 6th century must remain in the realm of mythology. The themes of exploration and colonization from the late 15th century, however, have received Irish scholarly attention. While Nicholas Canny and D.B. Quinn have focussed on English expansion in North America, they have also touched on issues relating to the Spanish Empire. Canny's interest in explorers' accounts of the new world is reflected in his *Remembering Columbus*². Published on the 500th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage, this examines Columbus' perception of the world, its size and possible routes. D.B. Quinn has compared English, French and Spanish colonial ambitions and approaches. Quinn's documentary history of North America to 1612 includes material relating to areas under Spanish control there³. He also examined the visualization of the new world, looking at expectations, interpreta-

tions and accounts of Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci⁴. Clare Carroll has compared the accounts of Amerindians by Bartolomé de Las Casas and Jean de Léry with Philip O'Sullivan Beare's account (1621) of the depredations of the English in Ireland, as part of her argument for the relevance of postcolonial theory to Ireland⁵.

Quinn discusses early Irish links with Latin America in *Ireland and America: Their Early Associations, 1500-1640*⁶ noting the fate of John Martin, a Cork man who was executed by the Inquisition in Mexico in 1575. A more detailed account of Martin's fate by P.E. Hair appears in "Irish Historical Studies"⁷. Another casualty of the Inquisition was William Lamport of Wexford. After a colourful military career in the Spanish army and a scandalous love affair, Lamport found his way to Mexico. He was accused of plotting against the state for seeking land reforms, the abolition of slavery and independence from Spain, and was arrested in 1642. He escaped but was ultimately sentenced to execution in 1659. Lamport's life is the subject of an article in "History Ireland" by Fabio Troncarelli, who drew on Inquisition records, and a detailed biography by Gerard Ronan⁸.

Irish settlement in 17th-century Latin America is the subject of a number of articles by Aubrey Gwynn S.J. His *Documents relating to the Irish in the West Indies*⁹ includes Spanish and English archival material and relating to Irish proposals to settle on the Amazon. In a separate article, Gwynn examined the progress of Irish tobacco planters in Amazon basin¹⁰, an issue addressed in Quinn's *Ireland and America*. Gwynn has also examined Irish missionary activity in 17th-century Latin America, looking, in particular at Fr Thomas Field, an Irish Jesuit whose work in Paraguay prefigured that of the Jesuit reductions a few years later, and is the main source for Peadar Kirby's useful survey of Jesuit activities in Mexico and South America¹¹.

IRISH INVOLVEMENT IN MILITARY AND POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Significant Irish involvement in Latin American military campaigns is not surprising, given the longstanding Irish tradition of serving in foreign armies. Following political upheavals in 17th-century Ireland, many Irishmen left to serve in the Catholic armies of Europe, in particular in the Spanish Army. By the early 19th century, the British Army attracted large numbers of Irish recruits. Many others who left poverty, pressure on land and famine in 19th-century Ireland joined armies in North America. Some of these went on to participate in military struggles in Latin America; others were recruited in Ireland to fight in Latin American campaigns. Some achieved considerable acclaim: maritime and military historian John de Courcy Ireland has based an article on Irish soldiers and seamen who had Latin American naval vessels named after them¹². "The Irish Sword", journal of the Military History Society of Ireland, has provided the main forum for Irish and international historians writing on Irish military achievements, and, to a lesser extent Irish failures in Latin American conflicts, but local history publications have also highlighted the exploits of local men who won fame overseas.

In 1768 the Regimiento de Ultonia, one of three regiments making up the Irish Brigade in Spain, arrived in Mexico to protect Mexico in the event of any British attack. W. S.

Murphy describes their experiences and their difficult relationship with the local population¹³. By the early 19th century, however, most Irish soldiers in Latin America were fighting against Spanish authority. Peter Pyne's *The Invasions of Buenos Aires, 1806-1807: The Irish Dimension*¹⁴ highlights the involvement of Irish soldiers in assaults that contributed to the collapse of Spanish rule a few years later. In a further study Pyne examines in detail the activities of James Florence Burke, an Irish soldier who began his military career in the French army, switched allegiance to Britain and engaged in espionage in Latin America in the same period¹⁵.

Among those involved in Latin America struggles was Admiral William Brown, from Foxford, County Mayo, celebrated in both Ireland and Argentina as the father of the Argentine navy. Having worked as a seaman and a soldier, Brown arrived in Buenos Aires in 1810, the year in which Creoles in the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata declared independence from Spain. Following the capture of two of his boats by the Spaniards in 1813, he came to sympathise with the patriot cause, was appointed commander of the patriot navy and helped to consolidate independence. Brown's exploits are the subject of a biography by John de Courcy Ireland¹⁶. He was honoured in a commemorative issue of "The Irish Sword" in 1957, the centenary of death; this included a contribution from John de Courcy Ireland¹⁷, a list of unpublished documents relating to Brown in Madrid¹⁸ and condensed translations of papers delivered in Argentina to mark his centenary. A subsequent note by Ireland includes a long article from the *Wexford Herald* relating Brown's exploits as a privateer off South America's Pacific coast and in the Caribbean¹⁹. Further accounts of Brown's exploits appear in Mayo local history publications. Tom Walsh's two-part article on Brown in the journal of the Westport Historical Society draws heavily on "Irish Sword" material but is more accessible and contextualises Brown's exploits well²⁰. Brown also features among the famous Mayo men in Bernard O'Hara's *Mayo*²¹.

Irish involvement in Simón Bolívar's campaigns to liberate much of South America from Spanish rule has also aroused much Irish interest, not least because Daniel O'Connell, Ireland's leading nationalist figure in the first half of the 19th century, admired Bolívar. His son, Morgan, enlisted in an Irish Legion at the age of 15 to fight for Bolívar, but ultimately saw no action, as Eric Lambert and F. Glenn Thompson have briefly recounted²². Lambert's three-volume study of British and Irish volunteers in Bolívar's campaigns was published in Spanish in Caracas²³. Lambert has also provided a detailed survey for "The Irish Sword" of Irish military involvement in South America in the years 1818-30, considering the soldiers' motivations their military activities and their ultimate fate²⁴. Furthermore, Lambert has penned a detailed survey of the career of Daniel O'Leary, a Cork man who enlisted in the Red Hussars of Venezuela in 1817 and served as aide-de-camp to Simón Bolívar²⁵.

Apart from his military exploits, O'Leary was the author of the most substantial Irish contribution to the history of Latin America: a work entitled *Memorias del General Daniel Florencio O'Leary publicados por su hijo Simón B. O'Leary, por orden del Gobierno de Venezuela*. This consists of twenty-nine volumes of documents, including many

kept by Bolívar himself, and two volumes of O'Leary's own memoirs together with an appendix. These writings were edited by O'Leary's son, Simón Bolívar O'Leary, and published in Caracas in 1879-88 by order of the Venezuelan Government. In 1959, J.G. Healy, professor of Spanish at University College, Cork, marked the appearance of Manuel Pérez Vila's award winning biography *Vida de Daniel Florencio O'Leary, Primer Edecán del Libertador*, with an article O'Leary's role in South America in the "Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society"²⁶. The same journal carries a short article by Laurence Geary on Corkman Francis Burdett O'Connor, whose memoirs were also published posthumously in Bolivia in 1895. O'Connor's turbulent youth, his involvement in Bolívar's campaigns and his political career in Bolivia after independence are discussed by Eric Lambert²⁷. A less well-known figure from the same period was a former member of the British navy, Thomas Charles Wright, from Drogheda, Co. Louth, whose involvement in Bolívar's campaigns and subsequent role in founding the Ecuadorian navy are recounted by John de Courcy Ireland²⁸.

Two figures frequently mentioned but not in any detail in Ireland are Ambrose O'Higgins, an Irishman who served as viceroy of Peru from 1796-1801 and his son Bernardo O'Higgins, who fought against Spain and became independent Chile's first head of state. Perhaps the uncertainty regarding Ambrosio's origins has left him without Irish local interest, though this uncertainty has been addressed by Brian De Breffny²⁹.

Writings on Irishmen who fought in Spanish America tend to emphasise their achievements. The experience of Irishmen who were recruited to serve in newly independent Brazil in 1826, however, was disillusion. These are also recounted in Irish journals, though not always by Irish authors. In an article in "The Irish Sword" Frederic von Allendorfer relates the experiences of 2,400 Irish would-be soldiers and their families who arrived in Brazil only to find appalling living conditions, poor pay and hostility from the local black population who eventually joined in mutiny with a German corps. Those who could be found were rounded up and returned to Ireland³⁰.

The tragic fate of the San Patricios has captured the imagination of subsequent generations. The San Patricios, an Irish battalion who fought for Mexico during the US war with Mexico in 1846-8, were led by John Riley, a deserter from the American army who formed a company from other deserters and Catholic foreigners living in Mexico. Having withstood major assaults they were captured, court-martialled, tortured and hanged in 1847. "The Irish Sword" published an article by Richard Blaine McCornack of Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, on the San Patricios' engagement with the American army, drawing on evidence presented at the subsequent courts martial to provide a nuanced examination of the San Patricios' political allegiances³¹. The "Sword" also reprinted extracts from "Life Magazine" (New York) detailing the execution of some of the San Patricios³². One hundred and fifty years later they were commemorated in both Ireland and Mexico. "History Ireland" has published a short article by Michael Hogan, Irish-American author of a detailed study of the San Patricios. Hogan has examined the motivation of the soldiers, noting the high level of anti-Catholicism in America and the American army at the time³³. The *Irish Migration Studies in Latin*

America website has also posted short articles on the San Patricios by Jaime Fogarty and Michael Connaughton³⁴.

NATIONALIST HUMANITARIANS IN THE COLONIAL SERVICE

Richard Robert Madden (1798-1886), best known in Ireland for his nationalist sympathies and his writings on Irish history, worked in the British colonial service in the Caribbean. His writings on the Caribbean include a translation of the life and poems of a recently liberated Cuban slave, Juan Franciso Manzano. Madden, Manzano and the Cuban Slave narrative are the subject of a recent study by Irish scholar Fionnghuala Sweeney, currently based at the Institute of Latin American Studies in the University of Liverpool. Her research focuses on Cuba in the context of the black Atlantic and examines the literary interaction and exchange between Cuba and other Atlantic sites, including Ireland³⁵.

Writings by and about Roger Casement, another humanitarian and nationalist, exemplify the impact of political and ideological concerns on Irish studies of Latin America. Casement (1864-1916) is best remembered in Ireland as a martyr for the nationalist cause, convicted of treason for seeking German assistance for a rebellion in Ireland and executed by the British government. At an earlier stage, however, Casement had believed in the benefits of extending British rule³⁶. He served as British consul in Africa and in Brazil from 1906-1913 and was knighted for his services in exposing the ill-treatment of workers in the Congo and Putumayo³⁷ basins. In addition to Casement's official reports, his copious personal papers provide invaluable accounts of the ill-treatment of indigenous workers and immigrant workers from Barbados; they also highlight the attitudes of officials of the Peruvian Amazon Company who flogged and mutilated workers, locked them in stocks and sometimes killed them. However, the study of Casement's role and findings in the Putumayo region has been eclipsed by debates surrounding the authenticity or otherwise of the so-called "Black Diaries". Two of these cover Casement's time in South America; they include many observations on the physique of young men and boys, of their sexuality, his longing for them and his sexual experiences with them³⁸. The diaries, in the possession of the British government, were shown to a number of influential figures shortly before Casement's execution. Little was known about them until the publication in 1936 of *The Forged Casement Diaries* by W.J. Maloney, a British Army Officer who had come to sympathise with radical Irish nationalism³⁹. The ensuing debate continues to this day; some scholars consider the diaries authentic, others suspect that they were a British forgery, concocted with view to discrediting Casement and discouraging appeals for a reprieve of his death sentence remain. The diaries did not enter the public domain until limited access was permitted in 1959, and an edition of them was published in Paris⁴⁰. Unlimited access was permitted in 1994 and was followed by further conferences and publications on the debate⁴¹.

Meanwhile, in 1930, prolific Irish writer Denis Gwynn had published *The Life and Death of Roger Casement* drawing extensively on Casement's official report for his ac-

count of the Putumayo. Brian Inglis's later and more wide-ranging *Roger Casement* explores the complexity of Casement's character⁴². His treatment of the Putumayo draws on incorporates extracts from the "Black Diaries" as well as drawing on Casement's private and published observations on the Putumayo. Casement's analysis of the Putumayo came to light again with the publication in 1993 of *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement*, edited by Angus Mitchell. Born in Kenya and educated in Britain, Mitchell is now working in the University of Limerick and is a frequent contributor to Irish debates on Casement⁴³. Mitchell along with Roger Sawyer, had been commissioned by London publisher Pimlico to edit the 'Black Diaries' but withdrew when he became convinced that they were forgeries. The *Amazon Journal*, published in Dublin, draws on different papers and includes Casement's reflections on the historic roots of the problems of South America⁴⁴, and his concern that United States influence and commercial interests were providing immunity to the exploiters of indigenous people⁴⁵. It also provides much ethnographic information.

Casement's ethnographic interests, which extended to taking body measurements of Putumayo Indians, have been examined by Séamas Ó Síocháin. Casement believed that European civilization, Christianity and commerce would enable Indians to progress to a higher level⁴⁶. Furthermore, as, Ó Síocháin notes, Casement condemned Spanish and Portuguese colonisation: 'The curse of this continent has been its Latinization' and, more graphically, '400 years of Spaniards at its sources, 300 years of Portuguese at its mouth ... first hell, then, a desert'⁴⁷.

The study of Casement's ideology received a further boost with the Royal Irish Academy's organisation of a symposium on 'Casement in Irish and World History' in 2000. *Taoiseach* [prime minister] Bertie Ahern had proposed such a seminar to examine the Black Diaries controversy, but the 2000 symposium, as well as presenting valuable evidence in relation to the diaries, also addressed a wider range of issues, and its proceedings were subsequently published⁴⁸. A number of papers related Casement's thinking on the Putumayo and the Congo to his views on Ireland. In *Roger Casement's Vision of Freedom*, Séamas Ó Síocháin the common threads of interest in landholding and sympathy for the underdog running through Casement's observations on Ireland, the Congo and the Putumayo. Margaret O'Callaghan's "*With the Eyes of Another Race, a People Once Hunted Themselves*": *Casement, Colonialism and a Remembered Past* notes the recurring theme of nationalism in Casement's writings. O'Callaghan cites Casement's comment 'Ireland is the British peon, the great peon of the British empire'⁴⁹. Nevertheless, as Andrew Porter points out in *Sir Roger Casement and the International Humanitarian Movement*, Casement 'did not emerge as an obviously systematic thinker'; his achievement and his mode of operating were of a different kind⁵⁰.

THE MEXICAN CRISIS

Early 20th-century Irish Catholics showed a keen interest in the wider Catholic world. Religious publications and the "Irish Independent", Ireland's best-selling daily newspa-

per, devoted much space to church-state relations. With a strong sense of the injustices their forefathers had suffered under British rule, Irish Catholics were quick to identify with Catholics suffering persecution and discrimination elsewhere. Not surprisingly, the difficulties facing the Catholic Church in Mexico in the 1920s generated much interest in Ireland. The restrictions imposed on the Catholic Church in Mexico under the 1917 constitution and by President Calles in the 1920s met with strong Catholic opposition, culminating in the ‘Cristero Rebellion’, so called as the rebels claimed to fight in defence of Cristo Rey, Christ the King. As news of these events broke, writers and editors of religious journals such as the “Catholic Bulletin”, “The Irish Monthly” and “Studies” sought to provide explanations and historical background to the events in question. Over the next two decades articles appeared in the religious conflict in Mexico. Comparisons with the Irish past were drawn: Lambert McKenna S.J. argued, ‘The Catholic Church in Mexico is undergoing an ordeal as savage as the early Roman Persecutions or the Irish Penal Laws’⁵¹.

One of the recurring themes of these articles is the rejection of the ‘black legend’, the view that the Spanish conquest was particularly cruel and bloodthirsty. In an article entitled ‘Martyred Mexico’ the author, “An Irish Exile”, criticised “the English propaganda against Spain which has passed for history in almost every English-speaking country for the past 300 or 400 years”. Rejecting the romantic image of the Aztecs, he defended Spain’s role in Mexican history: ‘Mexico before the coming of the Spaniards was a land of blood and terror, a land of which human sacrifice was the predominant trait,’ and that ‘the conquerors strained every nerve to bring peace, happiness and Christian culture to the new nation which they had added to the Spanish dominions’⁵². The benefits of Christianity for indigenous people are also noted by Lambert McKenna, a leading Irish Jesuit intellectual, who saw the Catholic Church as the main civilizing influence in Mexico⁵³.

Many of these articles drew on pro-Catholic American publications, in particular *Blood-Drenched Altars* by Francis Kelley, bishop of Oklahoma and Tulsa, who is noted in a number of Irish articles and is discussed by P.E. Magennis, an ardent Irish nationalist and Carmelite priest. *No God Next Door* by Michael Kenny S.J. of Spring Hill College, Alabama, was another popular source. Kenny also contributed an article on the causes and consequences of the Mexican Crisis, highlighting United States influence on Mexico’s government, and Masonic influence on both the American and Mexican governments⁵⁴. A further commentator on American influence was Irish war correspondent, Captain Francis McCullagh, author of *Red Mexico* (1928) and many other works. McCullagh, who previously visited and written on Russia⁵⁵, drew strong parallels with Soviet Russia and was highly critical of American support for Mexican revolutionary leaders. McCullagh also contributed articles to “Studies” on American press coverage of Mexico and on Calles⁵⁶. Such writings chimed with Irish concerns about Bolshevism and Freemasonry in this period.

The Catholic Truth Society of Ireland also entered the debate, publishing a pamphlet, *Mexico* (1930) by C.M. Davis. This provides a well-informed account of the historic

relationship between Spaniards, Creoles and indigenous in Mexico, followed by an account of government treatment of the Catholic Church after independence.

Irish interest in Mexico declined as the conflict between church and state in Mexico abated. Since the early 2000s, however, Matthew Butler, an English scholar now lecturing in Latin American studies at the Queen's University of Belfast, has published a number of scholarly articles on the Cristero rebellion. His *Popular Piety and Political Identity in Mexico's Cristero Rebellion Michoacán, 1927-29*⁵⁷ examines local responses to the conflict, drawing on a range of ecclesiastical and state archives as well as oral testimony.

IRISH MISSIONARIES IN LATIN AMERICA

Few Irish missionaries worked in Latin America before the mid-20th century, and many of those Irish religious who did work there aimed to serve the Irish community. Peadar Kirby⁵⁸ has surveyed the history of Irish missionary efforts from the mid-20th century to the early 1990s. Kirby notes the role of lay missionaries working through the Legion of Mary in the 1950s, and the growing involvement of Irish missionary orders in the area following Pope John XXIII's appeal for more missionary priests for Latin America. Kirby also comments on the challenges facing Cork priests who served in Peru: in 1965 the Diocese of Cork and Ross undertook pastoral responsibility for a shanty town on the edge of the city of Trujillo in northern Peru⁵⁹. The establishment of Trócaire, the Catholic Church's development agency in Ireland, in 1973 further promoted interest in Latin America; it set up projects in the region. Trócaire committed 20% of its funding to raising awareness in Ireland⁶⁰ and commissioned various studies, including Peadar Kirby's *Ireland and Latin America: Links and Lessons*, published in 1992 in the context of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas. This is the only survey of its kind. It grew out of his report for a project entitled "Programme on Political Relations and Co-operation Europe-Latin America" examining the role of non-governmental organisations in various European countries involved in development work in Latin America⁶¹. *Ireland and Latin America* provides a survey of Latin American history, commenting on the legacy of colonisation, the missed opportunities following independence and more recent challenges, as well as an exploration of Irish and Latin American links from the 16th to the 20th centuries. Kirby, who had spent seven months travelling in Latin America in 1979 and had published on religious issues there, later went on to become Director of the Centre for International Studies at Dublin City University and to focus on more contemporary issues of the impact of globalisation on Latin America.

CRISIS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The Central American crisis of the early 1980s aroused much interest in Ireland. In El Salvador left-wing guerrillas, the armed forces and right wing death squads were

engaged in civil war. The murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980 aroused much interest; Dermot Keogh covered the funeral mass, which came under attack, for RTÉ, the national television station. The following year Keogh, by now a lecturer in the History Department of University College, Cork, published *Romero: El Salvador's Martyr*⁶². Irish interest in El Salvador increased when it emerged that one of four American missionaries were raped and murdered in El Salvador in December 1980 was Jean Donovan, an Irish American who had studied at University College, Cork, in the 1970s, and had addressed a youth mass in Cork during a visit a few months before her murder. In 1984 a Jean Donovan Memorial Committee involving friends of Jean Donovan, Dermot Keogh and others, was established in Cork and organised a number of memorial conferences, addressed by Irish and international academics, journalists, politicians, diplomats and church figures. In 1985 the proceedings of the first of these conferences, *Central America: Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Policy* appeared edited by Dermot Keogh⁶³. This included Keogh's own study of the United States and the 1979 coup in El Salvador. A further collection of conference proceedings, *Witness to the Truth: Church and Dictatorship in Latin America* appeared in 1989⁶⁴. In 1990 Keogh edited *Church and Politics in Latin America*⁶⁵ a collection of articles by Irish and other writers, including a foreword by the novelist Graham Greene, and a number of essays by Rodolfo Cardenal, Jesuit historian in El Salvador. Irish contributors included Patrick Rice, who had worked as a priest and human rights organiser in Latin America, and had 'disappeared' in Argentina in 1976 and Conor Cruise O'Brien, former diplomat, politician and historian. Keogh went on to publish a number of articles on El Salvador's recent history, as well as a study of the 1932 Peasant Revolt in that country⁶⁶.

During the 1980s and 1990s a number of research students at University College, Cork further explored Central American themes. David Ryan's doctoral thesis examined diplomatic relations between the United States and the Sandinista government in Nicaragua during the Reagan presidency within the broader context of U.S. policy in the region during the Cold War, and highlighted the tension between diplomatic and covert approaches towards Nicaragua⁶⁷. This led to the publication of Ryan's *US-Sandinista Diplomatic Relations: Voice of Intolerance* (London 1995). At MA level Julia Crowley examined the historiography of the Catholic Church in Latin America, focussing in particular on Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador and drawing on her field work in Central America⁶⁸. Denis Dineen looked at the Carter administration's policies regarding the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979⁶⁹. Earlier Central American themes were explored by Josephine Vaughan, who analysed British-Nicaraguan diplomatic relations 1926-34, Marita Foster, who looked at US perceptions of and policies towards El Salvador in the 1930s and 1940s⁷⁰ and Treasa Landers, who investigated El Salvador's Peasant uprising in 1932⁷¹.

Among the Jean Donovan conference contributors was Gary MacEoin, an Irish-born writer who, for reasons he never discovered, was been forced to leave a Redemptorist seminary just weeks before his ordination was due. MacEoin went on to become a

prolific religious affairs journalist, travelling extensively in Latin America. His *Memoirs and Memories*⁷² among other works, provides many insights into Latin American conditions and their underlying causes, the role of the Catholic Church in Latin America and the impact of the United States on them.

Much Irish debate at this time was critical of the United States' support for El Salvador's military and its attempts to undermine the revolutionary government in Nicaragua through assisting its opponents. Hostility towards Ronald Reagan's foreign policy in Central America was evident when the president visited Ireland in 1984. For some in Ireland the prestige of having links with such a powerful president and appreciation for his family values did not outweigh the impact of his foreign policy. There was a mixed reception to the National University of Ireland's decision to grant Reagan an honorary doctorate of laws. Protests were held when he arrived in Galway to receive his degree and the local bishop, Eamon Casey, who was also chairman of Trócaire, stayed away from the event.

International Relations

In addition to the research on Central America mentioned above, a number of dissertations on international relations have been written, mainly on British and US foreign policy. Cuba, in particular the Cuban missile crisis, has proven the most popular topic, but no particular Irish approach to Cuba emerges. Louise Kingston, John O'Shea and John Farrell have examined U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba⁷³. Patrick Horgan has examined Irish-Cuban relations 1959-62⁷⁴ and Caroline Buckley the Soviet perspective⁷⁵. Tomás Ó Murchú has looked at the survival of the communist regimes in Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea⁷⁶ and John O'Neill at changing directions in Cuba⁷⁷. Alexander Gray, whose dissertation at the University of Limerick examined the involvement of NGOs in Cuba⁷⁸ is currently pursuing this theme at doctoral level at the University of Deusto, Bilbao. Fiona Carr's study of US foreign policy in relation to Columbia, considers questions relating to drugs and human rights⁷⁹.

A number of MA students at University College, Cork, have examined British relations with Latin American countries. Marina Hayes has investigated Anglo-Chilean relations⁸⁰, Geraldine Barry, Anglo-Cuban relation⁸¹ and Ann Cronin, Britain and Venezuela⁸². Gertrude Cotter's dissertation on Britain's relationship with Perón's Argentina, 1946-55, is a very substantial work, drawing on a wide range of primary sources⁸³ It considers the evolution of British policy against a background of Britain's longstanding economic relations with Argentina, and studies Britain's responses to economic, political and social change under Peron.

Most of these topic allow students to rely heavily on English language sources. It is regrettable, however, that few Irish students have sufficient Spanish to allow them investigate the Latin American perspective in any detail.

THE IRISH DIASPORA IN LATIN AMERICA

An estimated eight million Irish men, women and children left Ireland between 1800 and 1921, and emigration remained a recurring feature of Irish life for much of the 20th century. Irish diaspora studies, investigating Irish immigrant communities as well as noting the exploits of exceptional individuals, has developed considerably in the past twenty years, and while this has concentrated on Irish immigrants in popular Anglophone destinations, it has also impacted on the study of Irish immigrants and their descendants in Latin America, particularly Argentina, the most popular Latin American destination. This interest in the Latin American Irish was not unprecedented: Thomas Murray's *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* was published in New York in 1919 but remains the only published book on this topic. Murray wrote with a decidedly Catholic nationalist slant, and was scathing in his criticism of prominent newspaper owner Michael Mulhall for his identification with English settlers. In 1949 John Murray's article, *The Irish and Others in Argentina*⁸⁴ also examined the sense of identity of the Irish Community. Since then, a number of important theses have been written, articles published and informative websites set up. The growing interest in Irish family history has further promoted this field; family history journals such as "Familia" and "Irish Roots" have provided platforms for short essays on the Irish in Latin America⁸⁵.

Patrick McKenna has pioneered academic research in this area: his MA dissertation⁸⁶ examined the context of Irish emigration, the profile of Irish emigrants, and their organisation and social conditions in Argentina. McKenna has published some of his findings in contributions to the Irish World Wide: History, Heritage and Identity series and to Andy Bielenberg (ed.) *The Irish Diaspora*⁸⁷ McKenna profiles of successive waves of Irish emigrants: those involved the exploration of South America in the 16th century, Irish landowners and merchants in and around Buenos Aires in the 18th century, skilled tradesmen who found work in the beef industry in the late 18th century; Irish soldiers and sailors in the British service settled in Argentina in the early 19th. McKenna argues that the patriotism of those Irish who fought against the Spaniards in the war of independence "contributed greatly to the acceptability of the Irish as immigrants throughout the 19th century"⁸⁸. McKenna examines rural life on the Pampas of Argentina, noting the opportunities for Irish immigrants. McKenna notes the central role of the Catholic Church, in particular the role of Fr Anthony Fahy, a Dominican priest from County Galway, who helped newly arrived Irish immigrants to find accommodation, employment and social opportunities. The combined activities of Fahy and Westmeath man Thomas Armstrong, who formed a stock exchange and a bank in Argentina, helped to promote a rather self-contained Irish community. Recruitment of Irish priests and nuns to teach the Irish in Argentina contributed to this development, and Daniel Murphy, in his study of Irish emigrant and missionary education, attributes the progress of the Irish in Argentina to this education⁸⁹.

The question of Irish immigrant identity has been taken up by other writers. A heightened sense of Irish nationalism is discussed in Edward Walsh's article on a broadsheet produced

by the Irish Catholic Association of Argentina, probably in 1918, in relation to the annual St Patrick's Day pilgrimage to the shrine of the virgin of Luján. This document called for prayers for peace, as the Pope had recently urged, for consolation for those afflicted by war, inspiration for negotiations leading to a universal just peace that would establish an Irish republic, return Gibraltar to Spain, the Malvinas to Argentina, and bring liberty for all the people oppressed and exploited by the British Empire⁹⁰.

Irish local history and family history publications have also contributed to studies of Irish settlers in Argentina. Pat Nally, secretary of the Longford-Westmeath Argentina society, has written on this topic, focussing in particular on migrants from Westmeath and Wexford⁹¹. He also notes the reflection of Irish political divisions between moderate and radical nationalists in Irish newspapers in Argentina. Helen Meehan's study of 'The McManus brothers – Patrick: 1864-1929. Seamas: 1868-1960' also addresses nationalist issues⁹². Seamas McManus was a well known Irish writer involved in various nationalist organisations. His brother Patrick emigrated first to America and then to Argentina, but maintained contact with those involved in cultural activities at home and established a branch of the Gaelic League, an organisation aiming to promote the Irish language, in Buenos Aires as well as producing a publication known as the *Fianna* for the Irish community in Argentina.

Nationalist issues also feature in Michael Kennedy's study of Irish diplomats in Latin America during the war of independence. In 1919 members of the radical nationalist Sinn Féin party who had been elected to the British parliament set up an alternative assembly, known as Dáil Éireann, in Dublin and declared independence. The Dáil appointed envoys to various countries with view to raising funds and promoting recognition of the Irish republic. Michael Kennedy discusses such efforts by Frank Egan, who operated a mining company in Chile and whose in-laws were related to the Chilean president by marriage, and Eamon Bulfin, born in Argentina but educated in Ireland and deported to Argentina following his involvement in the 1916 Easter Rising⁹³. Kennedy notes that Argentina's close economic ties with Britain and divisions within the Irish Argentine community itself created difficulties for those seeking to promote the cause of the Irish republic.

Tensions of a different sort surface in Tim Pat Coogan's treatment of Latin America in *Wherever Green is Worn: the Story of the Irish Diaspora*⁹⁴. Coogan surveys Irish involvement in Latin America up to the 20th century and writes in more detail on Irish Argentine reactions to the 'Dirty War' in Argentina, drawing on interviews he conducted there. He notes that liberals recalled the 'disappearances' of political suspects with horror, and conservatives recalled the activities of 'guerillas'. This tension was reflected in interpretations of the killings of three priests and two seminarians belonging to the Pallotine Order were gunned down, apparently by the navy, in 1976; Irish members of the Order were deeply affected by the event. Coogan goes on to discuss the torture of Pat Rice, a Cork missionary priest serving in Argentina in this period. Another victim of this era was Irish Argentine Rodolfo Walsh, investigative journalist and critic of the regime, and subject of Michael McCaughan's *True Crimes: the life and times of a radical*

intellectual, London 2002. In this study McCaughan, a journalist who writes for the "Irish Times" and the "Guardian", reprints some of Walsh's own writings.

The study of Irish communities in Latin America has benefited considerably from the work of Brian McGinn, Born in New York of Irish parents, McGinn spent some of his childhood in Ireland, an experience shared by many others and one that highlights the complexity of defining "Irishness". McGinn produced a lengthy annotated bibliography on the Irish in Latin America for irishdiaspora.net, the website of the Irish Diaspora Research Unit at the University of Bradford⁹⁵, and contributed numerous articles on the Irish in Latin America to genealogical and other publications. Reacting against the assertion of American writer William B. Read⁹⁶ that the 'Irish contributed little to the South American way of life, except a pattern of Puritanical ... thrift and industry' and that the Argentine-Irish were "money-grubbing bourgeoisie", McGinn surveyed Irish efforts in the fields of engineering, medicine, naval and military affairs, and journalism⁹⁷ A further article on newspaper proprietors Michael and Edward Mulhalls highlights both the potential and the divisions within the 19th-century Irish community⁹⁸.

McGinn has highlighted some of the problems confronting investigators of Irish migrants and their descendants⁹⁹. Argentines tended to refer to all English-speaking foreigners as English. Language difficulties arise and the Hispanicization of Irish names causes confusion: Lynch became *Lince*, Martin *Martinez*. Personal histories have been fabricated and misinformation has gone unchallenged. Francis Burdett O'Connor, who fought with Bolívar, is a case in point: although he was descended from a Protestant landlord family named Conner, O'Connor, in Bolivia, claimed descent from the last high king of Ireland. In the preface to O'Connor's memoirs, published in 1895, his grandson repeated this claim and asserted that his ancestors had been martyrs to the Catholic faith. McGinn asks, "Who in Tarija, Bolivia was going to contradict him?"

The formation of the Irish Argentine Society in 2003, renamed the Society for Irish Latin American Studies [SILAS] in 2005 has proven a significant development in Irish Latin American studies. By early 2006 the Society had over 70 members from ten countries. The Society's website "Irish Migration Studies in Latin America", is intended, according to its editor, Edmundo Murray, as a resource for historians, literary scholars, anthropologists and geographers of Irish and British migration to Latin America¹⁰⁰. It provides databases relating to emigration, short articles on the Irish in Latin America, and short biographies of Irish men and women in Argentina. Its reprints from other sources include a useful and often cited lecture by David Barnwell on 19th-century emigration to Argentina¹⁰¹. Murray himself has provided most of the short biographies on the websites, but other contributors include Máirtín Ó Catháin of the University of Ulster on Irish-Argentine anarchist Dr John O'Dwyer Creaghe (1841-1920) and Claire Healy of the National University of Ireland, Galway, on Daniel Florence O'Leary. The Society also provides grants of up to €1,000 to support research on the Irish in Latin America. Recipients for the academic year 2004-5 included Irish doctoral students scholars Helen Kelly (Trinity College, Dublin) working on an analysis of the Irish community in Argentina from the 1830s to the turn of the century and Claire

Healy (National University of Ireland, Galway), studying migration to Buenos Aires, 1776-1890, including an analysis of the interaction between Argentina, Afro-Argentine and Irish-Argentine peoples at local level.

Edmundo Murray notes that most writings on the Irish in Argentina have focussed on the positive contribution of Irish migrants to Argentina, overlooking migrants who were not Catholic nationalists and those whose contribution was negative. He sees SILAS as 'an open invitation to articulate alternative discourses about the history of the Irish in Argentina'¹⁰². In a study of Irish Argentine writings, he discusses the peculiar position of Irish Argentines in relation to postcolonial discourse, colonised in Ireland but colonisers in Argentina, noting that they wrote with an English view of the natives'¹⁰³. Nevertheless, he points out that this was not the case for William Bulfin, father of nationalist Eamon Bulfin mentioned above; Bulfin's characters "share common ground of colonised against the English and the native bourgeoisie"¹⁰⁴.

OTHER AREAS OF RESEARCH

The decades leading up to the struggles for independence in Latin America were a period of intellectual ferment, particularly evident in the periodicals of that period. Fiona Clarke, currently a postdoctoral fellow at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin, has worked on the literary-scientific periodical press in 18th-century Mexico, and has published on the *Gazeta de Literatura de México*, 1788-95¹⁰⁵. She has given numerous papers on issues of identity in late 18th-century Mexico. Joe Cleary, in an article arguing for the location of Ireland within a postcolonial framework, drew parallels between Latin American Creoles' sense of nationalism in this period and the position of Irish Protestants in Ireland¹⁰⁶.

Belfast born H.Montgomery has published a detailed history of Maximilian and Carlota of Mexico, drawing on archival work in Mexico and the U.S.¹⁰⁷. Maximilian, a member of the Habsburg family, was installed as Emperor of Mexico in 1864, but failed to win support and was executed in 1867. Hyde was a prolific writer whose chequered career included working as a lawyer, civil servant, member of parliament, British intelligence.

Peter Pyne, formerly of the University of Ulster, has published a number of articles on the nature of Ecuadorian politics in the 1960s. He has examined the nature of presidential powers in Ecuador, taking the presidency of José María Velasco Ibarra, 1960-1, as a case study¹⁰⁸. Pyne notes the personalised nature of political power, high expectations of the presidency and virtual impossibility of meeting with the expectations of his loyal followers. He considers the conflict between the president and the legislature and assesses Velasco's contribution to his own downfall. Pyne's doctoral dissertation subsequently examined *Ecuador's Junta Militar, 1963-6*, examining military reformism in that period¹⁰⁹.

More contemporary Latin American topics have been pursued by students on the MA in Equality Studies programme at University College, Dublin, and in Limerick,

Rory Finegan completed a study on the important subject of insurrection in Chiapas, Mexico¹¹⁰.

CONCLUSIONS

Weighty Irish academic studies of Latin American history are very few indeed. Irish interest in Latin American topics outstrips Irish expertise, and there is a recurring tendency on the part of editors to rely for the most part on international authors. Lack of fluency in Spanish has seriously limited the fields of research in relation to Latin America, and other areas; many of the MA dissertations listed above dealt with either U.S. or British foreign policy in relation to Latin America, drawing primarily on English language sources. Writing on the Irish in Latin America is undoubtedly on the increase, though most articles on this theme are rather short and vary in quality. Nevertheless, the growing recognition of Irish communities in Latin America is evident in the inclusion in Brian Lalor (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Ireland* (2003) of entries on the Irish in Brazil and Mexico, by Brian McGinn, and an entry on the Irish in Argentina, by Patrick McKenna.

Irish Latin American studies is a dynamic field. Research in this area is very much a co-operative, interdisciplinary venture, involving scholars on both sides of the Atlantic; much interaction takes place in a virtual space rather than a physical location, Irish or otherwise. The great facilitator is undoubtedly Edmundo Murray, born in Argentina, of Irish descent, and currently running the Society of Irish Latin American Studies and its website from his base in Geneva. The website's assistant editor is Irish scholar Clarie Healy. Murray has challenged the tradition of 'contributionist' studies; Irish publications tended to emphasise heroic Irish exploits of which the heroes' birthplaces in Ireland back in Ireland could be proud, Murray calls for a recognition of the diversity of Irish Latin American experiences. Thus the biographical notes on *Irish Migration Studies* website include not only military heroes but also Eliza Lynch (1835-86), first lady in Paraguay, though she never actually married Solano López, and Camila O'Gorman (1828-48), executed by firing squad along with a priest with whom she had an affair. Murray also includes biographies of female educationalists and benefactors, a welcome addition to a field focussing very much on men.

Irish and Irish Argentine writings combined offer a new perspective on Irish diaspora studies: Irish communities in white settler countries found themselves economically disadvantaged and on the defensive in predominantly Protestant surroundings. The Irish in 19th-century Argentina, however, were in a Catholic environment and their knowledge of English proved an advantage in a country that had close economic ties with Britain.

The history of the Irish in Latin America presents challenges for scholars who might wish to locate Ireland within the discourse of colonialism. Irish men at various points have participated in colonial administration, have fought with the Spaniards and fought against them, and at other points lauded the Spaniards for bringing Christianity

and civilization to Mexico. Catholicism, rather than postcolonialism proved the strong point of Irish identification with Latin America: culturally, the Irish were European. Murray notes that 19th-century Irish immigrants in Argentina “behaved as English colonisers in a remote location of the Anglosphere”¹¹¹. Not surprisingly, Irish migration to Argentina extended to Irish settlement in the Falklands/Malvinas, the subject of articles by Dermot Keogh and Edward Walsh¹¹². The possibility of exploring the Irish in South America in a broader Anglophone context is also indicated by the work of Oxford historians Oliver Marshall on English-speaking communities in Latin America¹¹³ and Leslie Bethell, whose *Brazil by British and Irish Authors*¹¹⁴ provides much useful information on Irish writings.

Finally, the international dimension of Irish Latin American Studies is also promoted by increasing scholarly mobility. Irish scholars can now apply for travel bursaries for research in Latin America and international scholars in the field have come to Ireland. During the academic year 2005-6, for example, Van Gosse, from Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was visiting scholar in the History Department, Cork. Gosse, author of various works on American foreign policy, among other themes, is currently working on the theme “Complicating the Cold War Narrative: Ronald Reagan’s 1984 visit to Ireland”. Félix Flores Varona, a Cuban expert on the life and works of 19th-century Cuban nationalist José Martí, spent a semester in the National University of Ireland, Galway, working on Martí’s Irish interests. His presentations led to the discovery of new areas of common ground. It is to be hoped that Irish historians of Latin America will continue to benefit from close international links and discover new lines of investigation.

NOTES

I would like to thank James Amelang, Matthew Butler, Fiona Clark, Van Gosse, Claire Healy, Dermot Keogh and Oliver Marshall for points of information for this article.

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SOURCE

Martyred Mexico

Irish people at home are, no doubt, well aware that the Church is undergoing persecution in Mexico, but probably not one of them has any real conception of the actual horrors of that persecution. Neither the Christians of the period of Nero and Caligula, nor the Irish Catholics of the Penal times, were victims of a more savage or diabolical tyranny than that which is now crushing the Mexican people. A Catholic nation is suffering martyrdom while the rest of the world nods approvingly or else is strangely silent.

In order to understand the present situation in Mexico it is necessary to go back to the time of the Spanish conquest which began in 1519 A.D. In dealing with this period, one has first of all to disabuse his mind of the false English propaganda against Spain which has passed for history in almost every English-speaking country for the past 300 or 400 years. From the time of Queen Elizabeth onwards, Spain was the enemy of the "progressive" Protestant world. Long before the theory of Nordic superiority was broached as a "scientific truth" the official histories of England taught that the Catholic nations of Europe were superstitious, lazy and ignorant. This kind of "history" was taken over by the United States, and has had its influence even upon American Catholics.

From: "An Irish Exile", *Martyred Mexico*, "Catholic Bulletin", 24:9, 1935, pp. 714-22.

