

# **Spanish archives on Latin-American Irish: sources, perspectives and challenges for the Early Modern Period**

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## **Abstract**

This article deals with the most active research trends and richest archives available in Spain which deal with the history of Irish migration in Latin America. Their greatest strength lies in the Early Modern Period, where all Latin speaking territories of America were politically linked to the Iberian Peninsula. Spanish archives are rich in administrative material (appointments, trials, contracts, last wills, etc.), well preserved and many of them now available on-line. However, they are weak in private documentation (memoirs, personal letters, etc.). These characteristics have led researchers to focus mostly on the careers and networks of the Irish who achieved top political, military and administrative positions in the Early Modern Latin America. The article concludes prospecting trends for future research.

What three things do Duarte Valois, a seventeenth century surgeon, Juan Bautista, a church robber, Francisca de Paula de Birkdale, a lady of La Habana, and Juan Beard, her servant have in common? The first two, of course, are that all of them share an Irish ancestry and sought their fortune in Latin America. The third element is that, for the study of their lives, sources stored in Spanish archives play a key role. That is also the case for thousands of Irish, known and unknown, in early modern Latin America.

From the time of the arrival in 1492 of Columbus to what he believed to be somewhere near Japan, much of the American continent became incorporated into the Spanish crown as part of its constellation of kingdoms and territories. This dominion evolved over time, until the surrender of the defenders of Baler in the Philippine Islands in June 1899, who continued fighting for a year after the Spanish government had already officially handed over its last American and Asian possessions to

the United States. For more than three centuries, the Spanish monarchy ruled all these immense territories almost as it did its European possessions, through a combination of local self-rule and the sending of key administrative, military and religious staff. The circulation of these people was indispensable in keeping together such distant and disparate territories and creating a shared global culture; as essential as the flow of migrants that every year left the Iberian Peninsula for the New World.

The Irish exiles and migrants in the Spanish monarchy adapted to this environment. The increase of their numbers in the 1580s coincided with the union of the Castilian and Portuguese crowns, which greatly expanded the global dimension of the Habsburg monarchy. Irish newcomers not only circulated around the European territories of the Catholic kings, especially in the Iberian Peninsula, Italy and the Southern Netherlands, they also availed of the global dimension of the Iberian empire (García Hernán, Pérez Tostado 2010).

In spite of the significance of the Irish presence in Early Modern Latin-America, their experience has received relatively little scholarly attention. The shortage becomes more manifest in comparison with the more ample research on Irish migrations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This imbalance might be the result of three interconnected factors. First, there is hardly any present day group who claims to be descendant of those early modern Irish Latin-Americans. Thus, their study lacks the drive and enthusiasm usually at work in the preservation of a living heritage. Second, in America the Spanish crown did not allow the foundation of “national” institutions, such as guilds, confraternities, schools or religious houses reserved exclusively for people of a certain geographical origin. This American particularity was in sharp contrast with the practice in all the European territories of the Spanish Monarchy, where national corporate bodies and institutions were not only allowed, but protected and fostered by the crown itself. The difference has caused the lack of “Irish” institutions in Spanish America, similar to the college network in Europe or the Irish tercios and regiments present in the Flemish, Italian or Iberian armies. There were no expressly Irish military units in America prior to the dispatch of regiments from Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century (Marchena Fernández 2007, 317-350). As a result, the presence of individuals of Irish origin at the top of the American administration, such as Alexander O’Reilly or Ambrosio O’Higgins, have been traditionally seen as isolated cases; in fact they were the visible peak of a wide network of patronage relationships which included many Irish and non-Irish individuals (Chauca García 2003, 481-500). The third and last factor is that, as a consequence of the two others, the Irish in the Spanish America have no clearly defined archives, or archive sections, devoted to them which could serve as starting points to reconstruct their invisible story.

However, there is no lack of source materials for the study of the Irish. Overabundance of administrative documentation rather than the lack of it is more likely to distress new researchers. To avoid such an event, the following pages will consider the characteristics and scope of the sources available in Spain for the study of the Irish in Latin America. This article will then look at the main focus of the researchers working with that documentation. Attention will also be paid to the growing number of repositories and catalogues available on-line. Finally, the limits and challenges of the sources will be considered in order to conclude with an exploration of some promising lines future of research.

## Major Repositories and Research Trends

Between the 1490s and the 1820s, much of the land mass between California and *Tierra del Fuego* was incorporated into the Crown of Castile. Information relating to military, administrative, fiscal and religious affairs was regularly shipped to Spain and appointments, orders and regulations decided by the king and his advisory councils and secretariats were sent back. Issues ranged from the very broad to the very specific. Among the former, major military decisions, founding of new administrative units and settlements, fiscal changes and financial allocations or court cases and laws and regulations issued by the king are found. Among the very specific, individual travel permissions, appointments for civil ecclesiastical or military offices, pensions, auditing of public servants (*visitas*), solving of local conflicts, and similar issues abound. In many cases, the files sent from the court to the Americas have been later lost or destroyed. Fortunately for historians, the central administration kept incoming files and copies of the orders and appointments sent to its subordinate administrators, together with the minutes. Once the documentation in the government offices became unnecessary for daily business, it was taken from Madrid, where the royal court was usually seated, to be stored near Valladolid, in a medieval castle revamped in the sixteenth century as the first purpose-built archive of Europe: Simancas (*Portada del Archivo General de Simancas*, available online (<http://www.mcu.es/archivos/MC/AGS/>))

The central administration was organised in a system of advisory boards or *consejos*, which helped the king to decide on specific issues. Some of the councils were organised following geographical areas, each including a political unit, such as the crown of Aragon, or a composition of political units linked by geography, like the Italian peninsula, where the crown possessed a string of different territories. For the Americas, the main territorial advisory board was the *consejo de Indias*, the council of the Indies. Other boards were “thematic”, deciding globally on matters such as war, diplomacy, finance, inquisition, military orders, etc. When matters overlapped, files would pass from one board to another. Sometimes in

order to speed up process or specific complex issues, ad-hoc mixed committees or *juntas* were created. In the eighteenth century councils lost part of their relevance, while the administration was progressively reorganised in a shape similar to present day ministries. When an issue was finally archived, the file ended up usually in the deposit of the last council or committee which dealt with it. Sometimes documents relating to one issue were brought back from Simancas to the council of the Indies in order to deal with a similar or related problem. When returned to the archive, they were not always restored to their original position but filed inside the new dossier.

The regular pattern of decision making, communication and data storage was similar for all the territories ruled by the Spanish crown. Thus, the historian wishing to know more on the Irish in Puebla should, as a rule, follow the same methodology as the one inquiring on the Irish in Palermo. However, there is one major issue affecting research in Latin American History. In 1785, King Charles III created a new institution in Seville, the General Archive of the Indies (AGI), with the aim of putting together the major historical sources relating to his American and Asian dominions. (*Portada del Archivo General de Indias*. available online (<http://www.mcu.es/archivos/MC/AGI/>), accessed 15 September 2013) Most, although not all archive material from the central administration was sent from Simancas and Madrid to Seville. The new institution was enriched with archives of another nature, mainly of the mercantile institutions which regulated the inter-oceanic exchange, administrative material brought from American territories after independence, especially from Cuba, and private archives connected to America. In contrast, material relating to the twentieth century is much scarcer and has thus attracted less scholarly attention. The following pages will be dedicated to the Early Modern period, the age for which sources for the Irish in Latin America are richest and Spanish scholarship is the liveliest.

Spanish-based research on Ireland and the Irish in Latin America began to grow in the in the last decade or so out of two different intellectual traditions. One is grounded in early modern historical research, connected to the unflagging effort of Enrique García Hernán from the CSIC (Spanish Research Council). This endeavour was part of a wider historiographical development which brought the study of foreign communities and migrations from the margins to the core of early modern studies (Schüller 1999; Villar García 2000; Villar García and Pi Corrales 2003). A group of *irlandesistas* developed which, in close contact with Irish historical trends (see specially: O'Connor 2001; Morgan 2004; O'Connor, Lyons 2003, 2006, 2010; Downey, Crespo McLennan, 2008; Hazard, 2010; Gillespie, Ó hUiginn, 2013), has produced individual publications (Lario Oñate 2002, Pérez Tostado 2008; Tellez Alarcia 2008; García Hernán 2009; Recio Morales 2010), series of international conferences

and collective publications (García Hernán, Bunes Ibarra, Recio Morales 2002; García Hernán, Recio Morales 2007; García Hernán, Pérez Tostado 2010; Recio Morales, 2011, 2012) and source publications (Recio Morales 2007; García Hernán, 2013) whose themes have been in constant evolution. The chronological focus has progressively moved from the late sixteenth century towards the early nineteenth century. Methodology has unfolded, from being based on prosopography and the study of institutions, towards a wider focus on social networks, culture and *mentalités*. The most studied individuals and groups are those who left abundant traces in the Spanish administrative records; clergymen, aristocrats and soldiers. Only later have family lives, intellectual endeavours or destitute migrants been brought to light (Guillespie, Ó hUiginn, 2013). The geographical framework has expanded progressively from the study of mainly bi-directional relations between Ireland and the Spanish Monarchy, towards a wider European understanding of those connections (see specially O'Connor, Lyons 2003, 2006, 2010; García Hernán, Pérez Tostado 2010; Recio Morales, 2011, 2012). Its logical consequence was the incorporation of the American dimension of the Irish-Spanish links. At present, the main common goal is to understand the Irish experience as part of the worldwide stream of migrants, exiles and refugees that reshaped the Spanish Monarchy and gave birth to the first global culture. (Pérez Tostado, Ruiz Ibáñez, forthcoming)

The other intellectual tradition of Spanish studies on the Irish in Latin America is grounded in the study of literature and arts. Its evolution has followed an independent, but equally exciting, path. The divergence is probably a result of Spanish academic tradition where history and literature are taught at separate faculties and thus less cross-fertilisation occurs. Literary and cultural studies on the subject are gathered around the Spanish Association of Irish Studies (*Asociación Española de Estudios Irlandeses*, <http://www.aedei.es>). The collective was founded in 2001 thanks to the effort of Professor Ines Braga of the University of Burgos. In addition to Early Modern History, the interests of the association cover modern history, culture, literature and art. Among their major activities, the AEDEI organises an annual conference and publishes *Estudios Irlandeses*, an electronic journal devoted to literature, history, arts and media in connection to Ireland (Estudios Irlandeses. available online <http://estudiosirlandeses.org>).

In combination, the historical and literary approaches offer a rich research panorama made possible by abundant sources. To the newcomer, the exhibition organised this year by the *Archivo General de Simancas* on The Irish and the Hispanic Monarchy curated by Ciaran O'Scea is the perfect starting place to get a taste of the possibilities of the Spanish archives for the study of Ireland and the Irish in Latin-America. (*Archivo General de Simancas*, 2012).

Although Simancas and Seville are the biggest and richest, they are not the sole major archives with relevant material. The *Archivo Histórico Nacional* (AHN) in Madrid must also be taken into account (Portada del Archivo General de Simancas, available online (<http://www.mcu.es/archivos/MC/AHN/>)). It was created in the mid-nineteenth century to expand the services provided by Simancas as the main receptacle of state documentation of historical value. It also served to accommodate the archives of the religious institutions seized by the state and the deposits of administrative units closed down with the end of the *Ancien Régime*. Among those, it is important to note that the AHN preserves the records of the Supreme Council of the Inquisition, the final court of appeal for all territorial tribunals, including the American ones. This allows for the reconstruction of processes in regions, such as Cartagena de Indias, whose inquisitorial archives have been badly damaged.

The AHN has a separate section in Toledo dedicated to aristocratic archives. It preserves the documentation donated to, or bought by, the Spanish state and deposits from noble houses still in existence. The contents are very eclectic, mainly to do with property rights, financial documentation, accounts, wills and private correspondence (*Portada de la Sección Nobleza del Archivo Histórico Nacional*. Available on-line (<http://www.mcu.es/archivos/MC/NHN/>)). The documentation relates in many cases to the different territories of the Spanish Monarchy, including America, due to the circulation of Spanish aristocrats in high official positions (Yun Casalilla 2009). Irish-related material might be very difficult to spot at a first glance, but if the researcher has previously identified Americans of Irish descent who were granted nobility titles, it is worth following the trail in order to see if the documentation has been preserved (Andujar Castillo 2007; Felices de la Fuente 2013).

Some major aristocratic archives, much connected with America, are still owned by the historic houses. That is specially the case of the archive of Medina Sidonia, one of the biggest and richest in private hands. Up to the 1640s, the dukes were lords of the estuary of the Guadalquivir River which connected Spain to its American dominions. This location was strategic for American trade, since the river's sand spit made the passage up of big vessels very dangerous, and thus forcing big ships to unload and reload, creating big opportunities for dubious businesses. The dukes of Medina Sidonia had fiscal rights and privileges on the river trade, and the archive reflects their deep involvement with trans-oceanic trade (Fundación casa Medina Sidonia, Archivo, Available on-line (<http://www.fcmedinasidonia.com/archivo.html>)). The archive, located in San Lucar de Barrameda, has not been explored in relation to material of Irish interest. However, it is open to researchers and is also developing digitalisation programs. Recent outstanding research based on its sources

serves as an example of the possibilities of the documentation it hosts (Salas Almela 2008).

The Spanish military archives offer a rich documentation for the study of the thousands of Irish who served in the royal army on both sides of the Atlantic. An excellent resource is the “personnel” series at the General Military Archive, located in Segovia (Cultura de Defensa, Archivo General Militar de Segovia). Available on-line ([http://www.portalcultura.mde.es/cultural/archivos/castillaLeon/archivo\\_150.html](http://www.portalcultura.mde.es/cultural/archivos/castillaLeon/archivo_150.html)), accessed 15 September 2013). Those interested in the American independence process and in the Spanish Caribbean during the nineteenth century, should not miss either the *Archivo General Militar in Madrid*, which hosts all the documentation issued by the ministry of war (Cultura de Defensa, *Archivo General Militar de Madrid*. Available on-line ([http://www.portalcultura.mde.es/cultural/archivos/madrid/archivo\\_3.html](http://www.portalcultura.mde.es/cultural/archivos/madrid/archivo_3.html)). The General archive of the Navy “Alvaro de Bazán”, located in a spectacular palace in el Viso del Marqués, preserves the documentation of the military maritime activity from the late eighteenth century onwards (Cultura de Defensa, *Archivo General de la Marina*, “Alvaro de Bazán”, available online ([http://www.portalcultura.mde.es/cultural/archivos/castillaLaMancha/archivo\\_1095.html](http://www.portalcultura.mde.es/cultural/archivos/castillaLaMancha/archivo_1095.html)), accessed 15 September 2013).

The scientific activity of the Irish in the Spanish America has not been thoroughly researched. Military archives host information on the experimental and technological pursuits carried out by the army and navy. The Archive of the Naval Museum in Madrid preserves interesting material relating to the scientific activity of the Navy, some of which are connected to the Irish (Cultura de Defensa, *Archivo del Museo Naval*. Available on-line ([http://www.portalcultura.mde.es/cultural/archivos/madrid/archivo\\_153.html](http://www.portalcultura.mde.es/cultural/archivos/madrid/archivo_153.html)). Eclectic in nature, its documentation covers all the early modern period and the nineteenth century. The archive also has an excellent cartographic and image collection.

During the eighteenth century, the crown promoted several scientific expeditions to its American territories with the aim of setting firm and clear boundaries with other empires, gathering geographical and anthropological knowledge about its dominions, and designing projects of economic development, such as new cash crops. The Archive of the Royal Botanic Garden, located in Madrid next to the Prado Museum, conserves the principal documentation generated by these enlightened expeditions (*Real Jardín Botánico de Madrid*. Available on-line (<http://www.rjb.csic.es/jardinbotanico/jardin/index.php?Cab=111&SubCab=214&len=es>). In spite of the number of Irish serving in the navy and its technical positions, so far as this writer is aware, they have not been explored in connection with these scientific endeavours.

There are other Spanish archives with material relevant to the Irish beyond the Atlantic outside the administrative units connected to the government of the American territories. The most relevant ones are the local notary records of the monopoly ports trading with America: Seville in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and Cadiz afterwards (*Portal de Archivos de Andalucía, Archivos Históricos Provinciales, Archivos Históricos Provinciales*, AHP Sevilla. Available on-line (<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/culturaydeporte/archivos/ahpsevilla>); *Portal de Archivos de Andalucía, Archivos Históricos Provinciales, Archivos Históricos Provinciales*, AHP Cádiz. Available on-line (<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/culturaydeporte/archivos/ahpcadiz>), Fernández Chaves, Gamero Rojas 2010, 2012). In the eighteenth century, new chartered companies were created which connected directly a port in Spain with an American region, in order to foster the trade and communications of little-attended to territories. Such was the case of the *Real Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas* created in 1728, which connected the Northern part of Spain with present day Venezuela, holding exclusive rights to the cocoa trade. Although the American commerce was legally opened to any Spanish port in 1778, Cadiz, host to a lively Irish community, remained the principal hub for trans-Atlantic connection up to the American independence (Lario Oñate, 2002).

Madrid, seat of the royal court, was the place to which many Irish travelled in search of pensions, appointments and promotion. Among these, the Irish who settled in Spanish America are also found. The *Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Madrid*, the city notary's archive, is very well preserved, even if the level of description of the inventories is very limited, although improving (*Información Práctica, El Archivo de Protocolos de Madrid*. Available online ([http://www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?c=CM\\_InfPractica\\_FA&cid=1142661150374&idTema=1142598542569&language=es&pagename=ComunidadMadrid%2FEstructura&perfil=1273044216036&pid=1273078188154](http://www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?c=CM_InfPractica_FA&cid=1142661150374&idTema=1142598542569&language=es&pagename=ComunidadMadrid%2FEstructura&perfil=1273044216036&pid=1273078188154)). The staff are very helpful and the researcher with names of Irish in Latin America who may have stayed in Madrid to settle business, however briefly, should take some time to check the archive. Travelling in the Early Modern period was so dangerous that many people wrote their last will each time they started a major journey. Even if many of them were not executed, they offer a great wealth of information. Spanish last wills are a great source for social relations analysis, economic and material history and the study of cultural and religious practices. If the researcher is interested in servants in the king's household, the archive at the Royal Palace has preserved the personnel files of its workers (*Patrimonio Nacional, Archivo General de Palacio*. Available online (<http://www.patrimonionacional.es/Home/Colecciones-Reales/Archivo-General-de-Palacio.aspx>).



Finally, a special reference has to be made on the Canary Islands. During the early modern period, the archipelago served as the main provisioning station for the fleets on their way to and from America. The commercial privileges of the islands gave birth to a thriving and international mercantile community. Of course, the Irish were found among the traders and local Canarian archives abound with material relating to them (*Archivo Histórico Provincial de Las Palmas*. Available on-line (<http://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/cultura/archivos/ahplp/>); *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santa Cruz de Tenerife*. Available on-line (<http://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/cultura/archivos/ahptf/>); Guimerá Ravina 1985).

### Access to Material

Access to all these Spanish sources is relatively easy. Public archives are freely available to all citizens provided with identification (national ID card or passport). Ecclesiastical and private archives are normally open to accredited researchers. For independent scholars, a letter of recommendation will generally suffice to get access. Reproduction and shipping of archive material is relatively inexpensive in Spain, especially when compared with other European countries. However, researchers are not allowed to take photographs on their own, with the rare exception of the Provincial Historical Archives.

Many Spanish sources, inventories and databases are available on-line. The best starting resource for researchers on the Irish in Latin America is the page of the project coordinated by Enrique García Hernán (*Proyección política y social de la comunidad irlandesa en la Monarquía Hispánica y en la América colonial de la Edad Moderna (siglos XVI-XVIII)*). Available on-line, (<http://www.irishinspain.es/>). Its latest addition is a database on the Irish Mission, the publication of the sources on the support given by the Spanish crown to missionaries travelling to Ireland (*Base de Datos Misión de Irlanda*. Available on-line (<http://www.irishinspain.es/bdmisionirlanda.php>)). The work by Oscar Recio Morales on the Irish military service in the Spanish Monarchy, which covers the American territories, is available on CD (Recio Morales, 2007). The database published by Juan Marchena Fernández on the American army in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is also very useful (Marchena Fernández, 2005). Those researchers interested in Irish connections with the Early Modern world-wide Spanish administration, should also be aware of the Fichoz database project (Dedieu, Fichoz: a database for social history, available on-line (<http://fichoz.hypotheses.org/a-propos/ap-spanish>)).

Major collections on-line deal with Spanish America and contain materials relating to the Irish. The Spanish government began a major digitisation program of its American sources in the 1980s, in preparation for the 1992

celebration of the fifth centenary of Columbus' voyage. A pioneering program at the time, it continued to grow with the addition of the indexes, catalogues and digitised documentation of many other archives, not only in relation to America. Today PARES, the Portal of Spanish Archives (integrated in Europeana) is freely available on-line and constitutes one of the world's biggest online deposits of digital archive sources (*Portal de Archivos Españoles*. Available on-line (<http://pares.mcu.es/>); Europeana, Available on-line (<http://www.europeana.eu/>).

Beyond administrative records, other on-line deposits are concentrated on the arts and literature. The *Biblioteca Hispanica Digital* hosts the digitised documentation of the Spanish National Library and is part of the project of the European Digital Library (Biblioteca Digital Hispánica. Available on-line (<http://www.bne.es/es/Catalogos/BibliotecaDigitalHispanica/Inicio/>). The *Biblioteca virtual Miguel de Cervantes* focuses more on Spanish and Latin American history and literature (*Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*. Available on-line (<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/>), accessed 15 September 2013). The history of political thought is more profoundly dealt with at the Saavedra Fajardo Library (*Biblioteca Saavedra Fajardo de Pensamiento Político Hispánico*. Available on-line (<http://saavedrafajardo.um.es/Biblioteca/IndiceW.nsf/Inicio?Open>). Last but not least, some Spanish universities, as the University of Seville, are carrying on digitisation programs on their own historic libraries, making available on-line an important part of their heritage (Fondos digitalizados, Universidad de Sevilla. Available on-line (<http://fondosdigitales.us.es/>).

Unfortunately, not all early modern literature is available on-line. Much of the rare material is scattered through smaller and sometimes unexpected local archives and libraries. In order to help in the search, the Spanish Ministry of education developed a database, the Catálogo Colectivo del Patrimonio Bibliográfico Español (CCPBE). It works in a similar way to the Early English Books On-line (EEBO) catalogue. It is very exhaustive for the sixteenth and most of the seventeenth centuries. The difference with EEBO is that, instead of offering an online version of the work in question, the CCPBE tells you which among the Spanish libraries or archives hold a printed copy (*Catálogo Colectivo del Patrimonio Bibliográfico Español*. Available on-line (<http://www.mcu.es/bibliotecas/MC/CCPB/index.html>).

## Challenges

The sheer amount of documentation available in Spanish archives can feel overwhelming. No other European country hosts so many kilometres of records relating to America. Thus, finding one's way can become a thorny problem, especially when there are not archives or archive sections specifically allocated to the Irish in Latin America as such. The researcher

has to dig in general sections (government, justice, appointments, economic files, etc.) looking for bits and pieces of information. In this search, different people with the same name, and an individual using several names simultaneously, becomes a tricky issue (Salinero, Testón Núñez, 2010).

Another challenge to the research is the uneven detail of catalogues and inventories. Some sections have been thoroughly and minutely described, allowing the researcher to move faster but also reducing the chance of finding unstudied material. On the other hand, almost complete mammoth sections such as *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas* (general accounts) in Simancas and *Indiferente* (that is, not differentiated) in the *Archivo General de Indias* hold treasures of untapped material. The digging up, in return, requires a greater investment in time and patience. The key issue here is to ask the archivists, who in Spain are very well trained civil servants. In many cases, even if the available inventories are poor, there might be new cataloguing projects partially available on demand, or even complete sections digitised and catalogued anew in order to be uploaded into PARES. Even if such extreme cases are not frequent, it is always probable the archivists are aware of some Irish-related content in inventoried sections. So, as in general, it is always wise to ask the archivists.

It is possible at this point to infer the strengths and weaknesses of Spanish sources for Irish in Latin-America studies. The main advantage is the sheer quantity of records preserved and that most of them are stored in a few key locations and with a considerable part of them available online. The main two disadvantages are that working with this material can feel like looking for a needle in a haystack, and that Spanish sources are mainly composed of administrative records.

In short, most of the Irish in Early Modern Latin America did not leave any record in Spanish archives. Most among the few, who did so, just appear as passing reference in more general documentation. This makes it more difficult, although not impossible, to approach the life of non-elite people. For the very few on which considerable files have been preserved, mainly officials, clergymen and merchants, only a few dimensions of their experience can be studied: especially, their dealings with the public administration. Spanish archives are generally poor on private sources if we exclude those of the aristocracy. Personal or intimate material such as memories and diaries are very rare, only becoming available at the end of the early modern period. The examples of Monica Bolufer's study of Inés Joyes, or Luis Antonio Sierra's on Maria Edgeworth, demonstrate not only the existence of these kind of sources, but also of their research possibilities (Bolufer Peruga 2008; Sierra Gómez 2012). Also, the complex and prolific writer José María Blanco-White, who dedicated much of his intellectual energy to the political revolutions of Spanish America, offers a

window on the Irish-émigré understanding of the period (Moreno Alonso 2002; Méndez Bejarano 2009; Murphy, 2011).

## **Future Prospects**

In spite of their shortcomings, the Spanish sources hold great possibilities to explore new research on the Irish in Latin America. Some of them have been already hinted at. No research has addressed Irish feminine migration to the Spanish America. Although less visible in the documentation, female migration was both voluminous and of great importance. When the Spanish crown enrolled Irish migrants in order to repopulate and reinforce its most exposed American frontiers in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it aimed at enlisting complete Irish families, not just males. The success or failure of the policy is key to understanding the formation of new societies and their impact on the old ones, as the recent Spanish historiography demonstrates (Sánchez Rubio, Testón Núñez 1997, 91-120; Almorza Hidalgo 2011; Corbacho González 2013, 887-902). The private letters of the migrants allow access to the hopes, wonders, fears and anxieties of newcomers to the New World, especially taking into account the scarcity of other private and intimate material (Otte 1988; Sánchez Rubio, Testón Núñez 1999).

No thorough study has been carried out on the Irish brought in front of the Spanish Inquisition, both in Spanish and Spanish America. The spectacular case of William Lamport, judged by the Inquisition of Mexico, is the exception which hopefully will attract new research to these extremely rich and detailed sources (Troncarelli 1999; Crewe 2010). Isabel Drumond Braga's study on the Irish in the Portuguese Inquisition has served to uncover a previously unknown perspective on the connections and everyday practices of Irish sailors and migrants (Drumond Braga 2001, 165-191).

Comparisons between different areas in Latin America and the connection between hispanophone and lusophone America are some of the issues still to be studied. Before, during and after the union of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns (1580-1640), people of Irish origin criss-crossed the porous divisions among the two big American dominions. However, if the studies on the Irish in Spanish-speaking America during the early modern period are not very abundant, these are even rarer in the case of Brazil. Joyce Lorimer's book on English and Irish settlements in the river Amazon is one of the rare studies for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Lorimer 1989). However, the recent MA thesis of Ariadne Ketini Costa on the eighteenth century Belford family in Maranhao, directed by Maria Fernanda Bicalho, marks a new interest on the subject (Costa 2013).

Military personnel and administrators form, as a group, the main subjects of the Spanish documentation. However, only few of the analytical possibilities have been so far explored. Attention has focused mainly on those of Irish descent who reached the top military and political positions. Less attention has been paid to the whole network of people, Irish or not, connected to them. In addition to war and government, the administration and army played a crucial role in scientific advancements and teaching on medicine, botany, cartography, engineering, shipbuilding, etc. and the Irish connection to those activities have not yet been thoroughly studied. Oscar Recio Morales' work on Alexander O'Reilly's involvement in the renewal of Spanish military teaching in the eighteenth century serves as a guide in this direction (Recio Morales, 2012b).

Beyond Europe and America, the Pacific dimension of the Irish in the Spanish Monarchy remains untapped. The small islands and the Philippines functioned up to the nineteenth century as an extension of the vice-royalty of New Spain. Spanish sources allude to the Irish in the Pacific, such as Diego Daniel, a trumpeter in the fleet sent to Manila as early as in 1618 (AGI, Filipinas, legajo 5, f. 172). Documentation grows more abundant in the eighteenth century but has not yet received any scholarly attention.

This text has shown that the sources in Spanish archives are of enormous importance to the study of the Irish in Latin-America. The richest documentation is chronologically linked to the period between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, when Spanish-American links were strongest. In contrast with Europe, the foreign communities in Spanish America had not the right to organise their own corporate bodies and institutions. Thus specific documentary deposits on them do not exist, and their early heritage is difficult to grasp. They became more visible in the eighteenth century due to their participation, at all levels, in the reforms of the enlightenment period. As a consequence, it is the period leading to American independence and the revolutions themselves where their impact is most visible and where most researchers have focused (Brown 2006; Rodríguez 2006). On the other hand, the richest depositories in Spain are dedicated to state documentation, which deals mainly with military, religious and administrative affairs. As a result, efforts in the study of the Irish in the Spanish America have centred on those issues. This level of analysis was as a necessary first step. Thanks to its fruitful results, and together with the development of relational databases and massive digitisation programs, a different research environment emerges, where new fascinating subjects and approaches, a few of which, pointed out here, await, like Juan Bautista, Francisca de Paula de Birkdale, and Juan Beard, for their daring researcher.

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