

Irish Migration to Spain and the formation of an Irish College Network, 1589-1800

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In the early modern period, Ireland's maritime links with the Low Countries, France, Spain and Portugal took on new significance. This was due partly to political and religious changes in Ireland and partly to the re-configuration of European politics as religious differences hardened.

This was especially true of Hispano-Irish relations. Commercial and fishing links between Ireland and Spanish ports such as La Coruña were important in the medieval period. With the extension of Tudor state power into Ireland and attempts to impose the Anglican version of the Reformation on Ireland, Gaelic Irish nobility, especially in the North of Ireland, began to resist, particularly in the early 1590s. They looked to Philip II for military support against Tudor centralisation. They also saw him as champion of international Catholicism. Ireland's traditional maritime links with Spain, which in the past assured commercial contact between the two countries, now took on diplomatic significance, as envoys moved over and back between Ireland and Iberia. They later assumed military importance as the Spanish decided to intervene militarily under Philip III. In late 1601 an Armada arrived in Kinsale in the south of Ireland.

This Spanish intervention was unsuccessful as a military exercise. However, it cemented Spain's role as champion of Irish Catholics. In defeat, after 1603, they travelled to Spain in considerable numbers, as soldiers, diplomats, students and as impoverished refugees. Spain struggled to cope with an influx of over a thousand individuals in the 1600s. While diplomatic relations with England did not allow Philip III to take the part of the Irish in a public, military way, his government was anxious to keep the Irish situation in reserve, so to speak, in the event of relations with London deteriorating in the future. This meant that the Spanish, while declining to intervene militarily in Ireland after 1602, did accept large numbers of Irish migrants, throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. The Spanish government felt obliged to assist the Irish because the latter, in rebellion against Elizabeth I, had transferred allegiance to the Spanish king. Philip III and his successors were therefore obliged, in honour, to the Irish. This explains why the Spanish Habsburgs integrated so many of the Irish soldiers into the army, especially in Flanders. As champions of Catholicism they supported the establishment of Irish colleges in Spain for the education of Catholic priests. (Catholic education was proscribed in Ireland by the Tudor and, later, Stuart administrations.) Further, the Spanish offered pensions to war widows and in some cases relief to poor migrants, though this created serious problems in Spanish coastal towns which had their own poor to support. Finally, the Irish became deeply involved in Spanish trade with England, Ireland and the New World. As Irish merchants they understood English and Irish law, language and customs; as Catholics they enjoyed the trust of the Spanish government. They made very profitable use of their dual status.

The Hiberno-Spanish connection joined two extremities of Europe in a bond that grew more diverse as it matured. Some of the Irish who arrived in Spain went on to the New World where they played an important role in colonial administration and trade. Current research in the Archives of the Indies in Seville is revealing the extent of this aspect of Irish migration to Spain and Spanish territories.

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Trade, war and religion were the sinews of Hiberno-Spanish relations in the early modern period ¹. Long-established fishing and commercial interests linked the two in the late medieval period. The ports of Waterford, Dublin, Limerick and Galway traded with Bilbao, Cádiz, Lisbon and La Coruña exchanging fish, hides and timber for iron, salt and wine. In the second half of the 16th century the twin phenomena of state building and confessionalisation forged new common interests in diplomacy, war and religion. By the 1590s, relations between the Ulster lords and the Tudor monarchy had reached a crisis point. The Gaelic Irish nobles' conflict with Tudor government made Spain a magnet for Irish spies, soldiers and emissaries. A report by Captain Eduardo Geraldino, datable to 1603, estimated the number of Irish and Scots at court and in other places in the peninsula at up to six hundred ². Spain's Irish dealings, however, were only a small part of her overall diplomatic strategy. While there was no doubting the Habsburgs' commitment to Catholicism, Madrid's priorities also included hegemony in the Low Countries and the Italian Peninsula, control of the Spanish Way, dominance on the seas, especially with regard to trade with the Indies ³. Ireland did occasionally reach first place in the Habsburgs' wish-list but never stayed there for very long. The English government, for its part, in the face of Habsburg might, tended to overestimate Spanish interest in Ireland.

As the internal crisis in Ireland resolved itself in war and later confiscation and plantation, large numbers of Irish migrants arrived in the Spanish ports. Because of their arrival, the informal, sporadic links between Spain and Catholic Ireland matured into formal institutions, including the network of Irish colleges established in the peninsula after 1589. Royal support of these colleges, together with grants to returning Irish priests, employment of Irish soldiers and relief to Irish war widows did not mean, however, that Spain was embarking on a new, more involved phase in its relations with Ireland. On the contrary, after the unsuccessful expedition to Kinsale, the Spanish, anxious to bring the Dutch rebels to heel and take advantage of the dynastic change in England, favoured peace with London, which was signed in 1604. Peace with the Stuarts did not, however, mean disengagement from Ireland. Rather it opened up new opportunities for waging war by other means, in this case confessionally, by supporting the reform of the Irish Church. Hence Madrid's support for the Irish colleges. The employment of Irish soldiers, on the other hand, was merely a recognition of the fact that war would return, sooner or later. Care for the war widows and other military dependants was the compassionate face of this hard political reality.

This was the context in which the Irish colleges were established. They were founded to cater for the education of young men for the church and the professions. On the one hand,

they were one of the means by which the Spanish government fulfilled its obligations to its defeated Irish allies and saw to their gradual integration into the Spanish *ancien régime*. This was perfectly consistent with Spanish efforts to maintain peace with England, helping to defuse the military situation in Ireland by employing Irish soldiers on the continent and supporting exiled Irish nobility with pensions. It was inevitable that the colleges would also act, on the other hand, as part of the Irish Catholic *ancien régime manqué*, a component of the amorphous Catholic *natio* which was gaining in strength and definition, at least on an ideological and cultural level in the early 17th century. In this way the colleges played a decisive role in the consolidation of the Counter-Reformation in Ireland and the re-organisation of the Irish Church after the 1610s but not in a way which necessarily endangered Spanish relations with England. The Catholic *natio*, of which they were a functioning part, was not equal to the task of resisting the Stuart state. In any case the Catholic community emerged from the late 16th century was deeply divided. The fraught search for a sustainable Irish Catholic policy vis-à-vis the Stuart monarchy ensured that it remained so. Inter-catholic divisions were reflected in the disputes which marked the early history of the Spanish colleges. These set seculars against regulars, Jesuits against Franciscans and Dominicans, Old English against Old Irish, recently arrived migrants against established exiles and Spanish officialdom against Gaelic nobles. These disputes are reflected in the varying fortunes of different Irish cliques at Madrid and the provinces as they took advantage of changes in Hispano-English relations to push their particular political agenda. Diplomatic efforts to arrange a Spanish match, though they eventually came to nought, favoured the Jesuit-Old English, who seemed more pliable allies to the Spanish. It is not surprising that their efforts to control the emerging college network won government support. Through their control of the Spanish colleges the Jesuits were in a position to exercise an influence on the quality of the re-organisation of the Irish Church in the early 17th century whose importance has not yet been fully appreciated.

The immediate motor for their establishment was the arrival of large numbers of Irish migrants in Northern Spain as a result of the Nine Years War. Late 16th and early 17th century Irish political migrants followed established commercial and trade routes to the ports of Northern Spain. They were also attracted to the Spanish court, resident in Valladolid between 1601 and 1606. As the Irish piled into the Spanish ports, the problem of catering for their material and spiritual sustenance, in a manner appropriate to their rank and service to the Spanish crown, imposed itself on the Spanish authorities. While some of the migrant Irish found a home with already established relatives in Spain, others were reliant on Spanish pensions for survival. Large numbers entered Spanish military service in Iberia and the Spanish Netherlands ⁴. It was also necessary to see to the proper education of the Irish youth, again in a manner appropriate to their rank ⁵. Important also was the training of priests for the reforming but beleaguered Irish Catholic Church, in line with Tridentine legislation on clerical formation ⁶. This was the immediate context for the organisation of the small communities of migrant Irish students, gathered in the Spanish university cities, into colleges. The first, in Lisbon, was founded in 1589 ⁷. Other foundations followed, notably at Salamanca in 1592. Priestly formation was only one aspect of the colleges' role. Compostela, for instance, was founded in 1605 to cater for the retinue of Domnall Cam O'Sullivan Beare, many of its early students studying medicine and law in the local university. It was only subsequently, and controversially, commandeered for the production of counter-reformation

clerics. Like the colleges in France, those in Spain functioned as parts of the local Irish expatriate communities and fulfilled many social, financial and political functions not usually associated with Tridentine seminaries. This plurality of functions caused significant tensions in the infant colleges as they struggled to define their roles and as counter-reformation Catholicism was integrated into the early-modern Irish identity mosaic.

If the colleges, at least at their origin, were not entirely ecclesiastical, the formation of priests was central to their mission. The establishment of these small colleges enabled the Irish church to conform to the educational legislation of the Council of Trent without running the risk of attempting to mount a seminary in Ireland. Pope Paul IV, in the 1560s, envisaged the setting up of seminaries and universities in Ireland. This proved unrealistic and an alternative was found in Catholic Europe. For instance, in 1577, Pope Gregory XIII made a recommendation to the University of Douai for Irish students studying there ⁸. By the last quarter of the 16th century, a network of dedicated colleges for the training of priests was emerging ⁹. As they established themselves they opened Ireland up to a set of spiritual, theological, political and cultural influences that helped shape the early-modern Catholic Church in Ireland.

In all twenty-nine Irish colleges were established on the continent between 1578 and 1689. Twelve of them were set up by religious orders to train their own students ¹⁰. The remaining seventeen colleges catered for the training of secular or diocesan clergy ¹¹. Six of these colleges, the subject of this paper, were established in the Iberian peninsula at Salamanca, Santiago de Compostela, Seville, Madrid, Alcalá de Henares and Lisbon ¹². It is difficult to establish how many Irish students attended the Iberian colleges under the *ancien régime*. It is known that between 1570 and 1659, 137 Irish students attended the university of Alcalá and during roughly the same period 41 attended Valladolid ¹³. The colleges were small. Lisbon and Alcalá had about fourteen places each, Compostela nine and Salamanca and Seville between a dozen and fourteen apiece. Not all of these places were always filled and many students split their time between two or more colleges.

The colleges were founded between 1589 and 1649; most of them functioned until the end of the *ancien régime*, Lisbon and Salamanca surviving the revolutionary wars, the latter closing only in the middle of the last century ¹⁴. Irish students destined for the priesthood arrived in the peninsula usually with some knowledge of Latin and the humanities received in the network of informal secondary schools in Ireland. Normally they entered the seminary at about eighteen years of age. Once in Iberia, they enrolled for the prescribed study of arts and philosophy before moving on to theology and canon law. The whole course of study lasted seven years. While some of the seminaries were later recognised as colleges of the local university and provided courses themselves, it was more usual for students to attend philosophy and theology classes outside the college in the local faculty.

Significantly, all the Iberian colleges, except Alcalá de Henares, came under the control of Spanish, Portuguese or Irish Jesuits. This granted the Society a decisive influence with regard to the formation of Irish counter-reformation clergy. It also permitted a high degree of co-operation between the different establishments and even some specialisation. In time, for instance, the college at Santiago came to be a centre for the study of philosophy. Having completed a two-year course there, collegians moved to Salamanca where they

completed their theological studies and were ordained.

On the completion of their courses and following ordination the new priests applied to the king for the *viaticum*, a royal contribution granted under certain conditions to newly-ordained priests of the Irish colleges. This was worth one hundred ducats¹⁵ and was given to priests returning to Ireland to cover the cost of their journeys¹⁶. Between 1619 and 1659, at least 280 Irish priests applied for the *viaticum*. About half of these were Franciscans or Dominicans, only one quarter were secular clergy¹⁷. For the seculars, the Madrid college played an important role in this regard. Founded by Theobald Stapleton in 1629 it was converted later into a hostel for the collegians who came to Madrid seeking their *viaticum*. Petitioning took time and frequently demanded a lengthy stay in the city. In 1709, the rector of the Salamanca college requested the *viaticum* for five priests recently ordained and said in his petition, [...] *They disguise themselves as sailors to escape discovery when they leave the ship on arrival in Ireland*¹⁸. The usual route home was through the port of Bilbao. Generally, the young cleric had to wait in the port for good weather, for the departure of a ship for Ireland and, most importantly, for a captain disposed to run the risk of arrest on arrival in an Irish port. With all these uncertainties, the journey could take weeks to complete. There is the case of one student who had been expelled from Salamanca in 1747 having to spend two weeks in Lisbon before being able to embark on his return journey¹⁹. Unusually, the Madrid college did not receive royal funding and was in constant financial difficulty. When it ceased to be a house of study its only source of income was a contribution from the Mass offerings of the priests who stayed there awaiting their *viaticum*²⁰.

Salamanca was the most important of the Iberian colleges and, in time, as the college network was rationalised and smaller colleges closed, its position was enhanced. It is claimed that between 1594 and 1644, Salamanca educated 370 students, including one primate of all Ireland, 4 archbishops, 5 bishops, 9 provincials of religious orders, 30 martyrs, 120 order priests, 12 distinguished writers, 40 doctors of Divinity²¹. The college was founded in 1592 by the Jesuit Thomas White of Clonmel²². He had already attempted to organise the fledgling Irish student community in Valladolid into a college²³. Philip II was resident in the city at that time and after many petitions White secured royal sanction for a college, not in Valladolid, but in Salamanca. The new establishment was called the Royal College of Saint Patrick for Irish Nobles, *el real colegio de San Patricio de nobles irlandeses*²⁴. The college's original seat was the ancient *colegio de Santiago Apóstol* built in 1521. The rectorship was nominally vested in the superior of the Salamanca Jesuits, but it was the Irish Jesuits, Thomas White and James Archer in particular, who saw to the running of the establishment. One of the Irish Jesuits was always in residence while colleagues moved between Spain, Portugal and Ireland. During its first twenty years it never housed more than ten or eleven students. Its early years were marked by differences between the Jesuit administration and the exiled Gaelic aristocracy. They judged the Irish Jesuits hostile to Northern Gaelic students and indulgent towards Old English Leinster and Munster candidates. Philip III was actually petitioned to have Thomas White removed for alleged prejudice against Gaelic students. These disputes indicate the depth of divisions among migrant Irish Catholics. They also indicate the diplomatic preoccupations of the Spanish crown. It was the policy of Madrid to entrust the Irish colleges to Jesuit direction largely, it would seem,

because the society drew its members mostly from the Old English community in Ireland and Spain. This community was more ready than the Old Irish to maintain good relations with the Stuarts. This desire of theirs coincided nicely with Spanish diplomatic efforts to maintain peace with England. This explains, at least in part, Madrid's preference for Jesuit management of the Irish college network. The Old English society members were unlikely to permit the colleges to become hotbeds of anti-Stuart activity.

Early divisions over race tended to fade as time went on and students were drawn from all parts of Ireland. Much of our information about them is found in the *juramentos* or oaths of obedience taken by them, to obey the rules of the college, to strive to be a worthy collegian and to return to the Irish mission at the end of their course. These oaths give details of their parents, place of birth, age and sometimes the names of their teachers in Ireland. Unfortunately, we do not have *juramentos* for all students so personal details of many collegians are lacking, in particular for the earlier years of all the colleges. Those extant were written by the student himself according to an established formula²⁵. One good example is that of Nicholas Marob, one of the first collegians. He was a native of Kilkenny city, son of John Marob and Margaret Ryan and was 19 years old in 1595. He came to the college well equipped, bringing with him from Ireland two pairs of blankets, four shirts, four pairs of freize leggings, four pairs of breeches, two of leather, one of cloth and one of yarn, three pairs of shoes, fourteen collars, a belt, various quills, a cape of Irish freize, a cap, a doublet, and, significantly, a volume of Suárez's *Rhetoric*²⁶.

Not all records are as complete as that of Nicholas Marob. However they do reveal much about the library, kitchens and servants. John O'Brien, native of Waterford, who was rector of Salamanca between 1743-60, kept a journal in which he noted entrances and departures of students, their examination results, financial and personal details and other scraps of information. One account tells of a lawsuit against the transfer to an orphanage of a *spolium* belonging to the Irish College. The college received in 1743 a favourable judgement but had to present the judge with gifts, among them a length of velvet cloth sufficient for *una chupa* (a coat), breeches and one and a half *arrobas de chocolate*²⁷.

The college had a summer house in Aldearrubia, a small village about 15 kilometres from Salamanca. This residence was bought in 1749. Since the students could not return to Ireland for holidays this place was their summer retreat. When the property was bought it consisted of a large house, with cellar, courtyard, a large portiere, a well, a kiln, lofts, stables, cattle fold, hay loft and vines. There were 47.73 hectares in the main estate and additions of small pieces of land, such as meadows or vineyards, were made over time²⁸. Local villagers worked on the farm attached to the house, in particular during the wine harvest. It is obvious from the records kept in 1781 by the *mayordomo*, or butler, that the small property supplied wine for the needs of this house as well as altar wines and many items of food for college residents, especially wheat, honey, vegetables and fruit²⁹. They also raised cattle and poultry. Although the college produced much of its essential foodstuffs from its estate, it was often in dire financial straits. Payments of grants and other sources of income were frequently in arrears and investments never came up to expectations due to inflation and other problems. Despite this, the fare would appear to have been adequate, bread, meat and wine were provided at the main meal and the *porcion* or daily ration was exact³⁰. Occasional indulgence was not unknown. On St Patrick's Day, the Salamanca collegians took their

“Oaths”³¹ and also sat down to a substantial banquet. On the 17 March 1796, for instance, the ledgers record the consumption of eight ducks, three pints of Peralta wine, a bottle each of white wine and of aniseed and seven pounds of cake³². In 1767, when the Jesuits were suppressed, the Irish were dispossessed and the college was subsequently destroyed in 1812 during the Napoleonic Wars. While most of the Iberian colleges did not survive the double blow of Jesuit suppression and French invasion, the Irish did return to Salamanca after the war and from 1838 they occupied *el palacio del Arzobispo*, the Fonseca Palace. It had been built in 1538 and the Irish were given the use of the building through the influence of the English Ambassador to Spain at that time, Sir George Villiers³³. Some deceased students of the college found a resting-place in the local graveyard in Aldearrubia³⁴.

After Salamanca, the Irish College of Santiago de Compostela was perhaps the most important. Eugene (or Kilian) MacCarthy, parish priest of Fermoy, travelled to Santiago in the wake of the Kinsale defeat. There he organised students among the Irish exiles into a small community and set up a college in 1605, primarily to see to the education of the retinue of the Gaelic lord, Domnall Cam O’Sullivan Beare, who himself had sought refuge in Spain in 1603. He arrived with the remnants of his followers who numbered almost thirty men, accompanied by their wives, children, servants and chaplains. King Philip III treated them generously³⁵.

In the years immediately after its foundation, disputes broke out over the nature and the management of the college. O’Sullivan, supported by MacCarthy, maintained that the King had founded the college for the education of the children of his retinue of *caballeros*. However, the King decided, in 1611, to invite the Society of Jesus to govern and administer the institution exclusively as a seminary. This resulted in a long and heated exchange of views between those for and against the Jesuit take-over³⁶. Three Irish Jesuits, Thomas White, William White and Richard Conway eventually took charge. They faced severe discipline problems. Before it became a seminary the college was, in effect, a private college, informal in discipline. Students, most of whom studied medicine or law in the university, could visit their families during the vacations and had a great deal of freedom in their comings and goings. A contemporary Irish priest, Patrick Synnott, complained in a memorial to the king that “[...] since they are not obliged to study nor to [make] exercises of virtue, they give themselves over to music, to playing the guitar, and to fencing, and in these [activities] nobody surpasses them”³⁷. These arrangements did not suit the new Jesuit regime and they quickly took action to bring college discipline into line with that of other Tridentine seminaries.

Many of the students at that time had family and relatives living in Bilbao or La Coruña, some of these recently exiled from Ireland, but also others who were part of existing Irish colonies in these towns. They were engaged either in the professions or in business. This remained the case in the 18th century, indicating a significant continuity in Irish-Spanish contacts over the whole period. Indeed Patrick Morgan (a brother of Andrew Morgan, one of the collegians), a resident of Bilbao in 1733, is recorded as having reimbursed the college for the medical expenses incurred by the college when his student brother became ill in November of that year, shortly after his arrival in the college³⁸. Another case of illness at about the same time concerns two students, John Codd and Patrick Redmond, who reached the college in 1733, exhausted after their journey from Ireland. They had travelled

from Tuy, near Pontevedra, to Santiago on mules and arrived at the college in very poor health ³⁹.

The financial position of the college was nearly always precarious. The O'Sullivan Beare family did amass resources in their adopted country but this did not always redound to the college's advantage. Domnall Cam O'Sullivan Beare's son ⁴⁰, Dermot, left his fortune to his ten year old daughter, nominating the Salamanca College as his heir in a codicil in the event of his daughter not having a legitimate heir. As she was a minor at the time of her father's death, her maternal grandfather became her guardian and married her off at fifteen to his own bastard son, the marqués de Velferte. With exemplary consistency, her husband dissipated not only his own but her fortune too. With an unerring eye for a bounder, the same woman, two years after the death of her first husband, joined herself in marriage to Don Baltasar Borja, a man of good family and extravagant taste. He disposed of the remainder of her fortune and she died penniless at seventy years of age ⁴¹. It would appear, however, that monies owed by the King to Dermot's heirs did pass eventually to the Salamanca college and helped put it on a fairly secure financial footing.

Like the other colleges, Santiago amassed various properties, either by donation or purchase. These generated some income but receipts were rarely adequate. This is not surprising since many of these properties were ruinous or of little value. The college possessed, for example, *four houses and a piece of land no bigger than a kitchen garden in calle de San Nicolás parish of Santa María la Real de Sar, almost uninhabitable because of a stream which runs through the inside of one of them; another house in the tenancy of Sar which is almost uninhabitable because of being in a place of very little value; the said Royal College has a two storey house in the calle de Entrehornos, parish of Saint Andrew, the Apostle, of this city which is rented by Pedro Amigo for which he pays the college 300 reales per annum [...] and by reason of repairs needed reduced by 6 ducats annually [...] This house was bought by the college in 1621*" ⁴². The four houses mentioned above gave nothing but trouble to the college authorities and their disposal cost them dearly ⁴³. It would appear that though the college was included in wills, the property it gained thereby was often at the cost of litigation with the deceased's family. In the nature of things, the really valuable property went to family members rather than to church or church institutions, like the Irish colleges.

Apart from rents on its house property, the Santiago college received its main annual revenue from *censos* or *juros* ⁴⁴ but this income fluctuated. Perhaps the most curious source of college revenue was the so-called *derecho de la Alhóndiga*. This was the right to collect a fee of one *maravedí* on every *ferrado de grano* ⁴⁵ sold in the *Alhóndiga* or Public Granary in Santiago de Compostela. This right had been acquired in 1689 by Felipe Stafford, consul general of England and Ireland in La Coruña ⁴⁶. He sold the right ten years later to the college. These *derechos* were generally sold at public auction to the highest bidder. It would appear that the Irish College on acquiring the rights to the levy appointed an agent to collect the fees for them at the Public Granary. It also appears that they were required *to install and pay for the gauges for weighing*. This indicates a fairly complete integration of the Santiago college into the town's economic life.

In 1767, when the Jesuits were suppressed in Spain, Santiago came to be subsumed into the Salamanca establishment. This was the occasion for a rash of litigation. Salamanca claimed

that the right to the *Alhóndiga* was not a royal grant but a clear purchase by the college from its own funds and therefore the *Ayuntamiento*, regional council, was not entitled to confiscate it as Jesuit property, as it had done ⁴⁷. In any case in 1767 the *Comisionado de Temporalidades*, the Commission for Ecclesiastical Revenues, made an inventory of the establishment ⁴⁸. In 1774 the college building was sold at public auction. It was bought by Don José María Vermúdez Pardiñas, a native of El Ferrol and converted into a manor house ⁴⁹.

A similar fate attended the Irish college in Seville which, like Compostela, did not survive the 1767 dissolution of the Jesuits. It had been dedicated to Saint Patrick, the Immaculate Conception and the Holy Catholic Faith. Its founder, in 1612, was Theobald Stapleton. He had studied at the Irish College, Lisbon, before coming to Seville where he gathered together a group of Irish students in a rented house. He was assisted by Felix de Guzman who eventually became bishop-elect of Majorca. Guzman died before being consecrated bishop and in his will named the college as his heir. Another college benefactor was Geronimo de Medina Farragut ⁵⁰. The college was governed by secular clergy from 1612 to 1619 when the Jesuits took over its administration. Initially the rectors were Irish Jesuits, but from 1687 Spanish Jesuits assumed the role and ruled the college until the dissolution of the order in Spain. Like Compostela and Madrid, the college was then absorbed into Salamanca.

The Irish college at Alcalá was also eventually absorbed into Salamanca but this rationalisation did not coincide with the suppression of the Jesuits. In fact, Alcalá was the only Iberian college which the Jesuits did not come to direct. A small Irish scholarly population was present in Alcalá in the 1620s under the direction of Don Teobaldo de Burgo ⁵¹. In 1624 Richard Goold, a Limerick priest, was regent of studies and professor of theology at the University of Alcalá. He was also confessor to John O'Neill (1599-1640), third earl of Tyrone. It may have been at Goold's instigation that the earl founded the college, under the patronage of Sts Peter, Paul and Patrick, in 1630. It disappeared shortly afterwards ⁵². It was refounded by another lay patron, baron Don Jorge de Paz de Silveira. He was of Portuguese origin, a rich *asentista* or banker and placed the college under the patronage of St George. According to the baron's will, Alcalá was to have thirty students from Ireland, or, in the case of a shortage of Irish candidates, from England or Flanders. The students were to stay seven years, to study arts and theology and to return to Ireland to preach the faith. Numbers never reached those provided for in the baron's will. Physical conditions were not unlike those pertaining in other Irish colleges ⁵³.

It was said that Silveira's mother was a MacDonnell from Antrim ⁵⁴ and this may in part explain the accusation that the Alcalá college favoured students from the province of Ulster. As in other colleges, this alleged provincial preference created difficulties and eventually it was ruled that in all the colleges a quota from every province should be maintained ⁵⁵. The rectorship was to be rotated between the four ecclesiastical provinces.

There were other difficulties. Silveira, in his will, had stipulated that the rector be a student of the college, elected by those collegians possessing voting rights. This rule had unfortunate results for discipline. In general the student rectors lacked authority and experience ⁵⁶. Hence the repeated disorders, the most serious taking place in 1728, 1745, 1747, and 1777. It is often difficult to discover the causes but usually discontent with conditions,

disputes between established and newly-arrived students and regional tensions were in the mix. The disturbances of 1728 were due to the extension of the rectorship of Bernard O Connor by the college patrons⁵⁷. This was seen by the collegians as an attempt by the patrons to usurp the right of students to choose and elect a rector. The events of 1745 were due to complaints of bad government against the then rector, James Cavanagh, on this occasion not by the students but by the vice-rector. This led to a long investigation that vindicated the rector⁵⁸.

In 1747 some collegians complained to the rector, Tulio McKenna, that a college servant was a tale-bearer (*un soplón*). When the rector refused to dismiss him the students wrote to the patrons asking them to intervene. This resulted in a house revolt⁵⁹. Later, in 1777, some rebellious students absented themselves from the college without permission. This was the most serious of all the disturbances and because of it thirteen students were expelled 'for discord and disturbance'⁶⁰. It is not known what caused it. Legal wrangles occupied much of the administration's attention. In 1776 the rector travelled to Madrid *to seek the release from prison of the cook*. There is an account of a lawsuit between the college and Cecilia Kelly who was at an earlier time cook and cellar-keeper in the college. The cause of the dispute with Kelly is not known but she won her case and the college had to pay up⁶¹. The evidence indicates that the college employed at least some servants from Irish families well into the 18th century though it is impossible, given the current state of research, to elaborate on the relationship between the college and the local Irish community.

The final act in the life of this college betrays evidence of rebellious turbulence too but this time on the part of the last rector and the last student remaining in the establishment in 1785⁶². The rector, Patrick Magennis, was ordered to hand over the house to the rector of Salamanca, Patrick Curtis, who travelled to Alcalá to take over. The rector and student barricaded the door against him, necessitating the intervention of law officers⁶³.

Not all colleges went out in such style and Lisbon ended its days more serenely. A college, dedicated to Saint Patrick, was founded there in the 1590s. The date of the founding of this college is generally given as 1593 and the Jesuit, Father John Howling, is usually taken to have been its 'founder', with the help of the Portuguese Jesuit, Pedro Fonseca, a wealthy nobleman. However, according to more recent research it would appear that the college existed three years before this date, from 1590⁶⁴. The college was later housed in a building purchased in 1611 by another 'founder', don Antonio Fernández Ximenes, a nobleman and a palace official. Originally it was the *casa senhorial* or manor house of a viceroy of India, one of the Noronha family, who is said to have died in Goa in 1566⁶⁵. The house was sold in 1604 to the Discalced Carmelites who sold it in 1611 to Ximenes. He presented it to the Irish⁶⁶ as '*su propria casa*'.

Whoever the real founder was there is no doubt that the Irish Jesuits were the driving force behind its establishment. From 1605 to 1624 the Irish Jesuits governed the college. Portuguese Jesuits later acted as rectors in spite of the sometimes violent opposition of the Irish students. In 1624, they rebelled against the Portuguese rectors and in one case forcibly ejected a Portuguese Jesuit whom they suspected of having been sent to the college as the new rector⁶⁷. In its heyday the college owned a *quinta*, an estate or farm, outside Lisbon,

with vines and olive groves, land in Alentejo and windmills in Alferim. All these properties were given to the college through the generosity of either Irish or Portuguese benefactors, residents of Lisbon ⁶⁸.

The college survived many vicissitudes, including the earthquake, fires and tidal waves of 1755, which left it badly damaged. More serious was the suppression of the Jesuits in Portugal in 1759 which led to the confiscation of their properties by the government of the Marques de Pombal ⁶⁹. After the fall of Pombal in 1777 and the accession of Queen Maria I, the college was returned to the Irish. During the 18th century, Lisbon never housed more than fourteen students but as the city was not immediately affected by the French Revolution, the number swelled to between thirty and forty during the revolutionary wars ⁷⁰.

The Irish colleges on the Iberian peninsula were part of the Spanish response to the consequences of the unsuccessful military expedition to Ireland. Their foundation marks less a new phase in Hiberno-Spanish relations than a new phase the Habsburg grand strategy, which from 1604 included peace with England. How exactly this was made to square with Madrid's support for the colleges, returning priests, soldiers and war widows will become clear only with further research.

As suggested earlier, the colleges operated as part of the Irish Catholic *natio*. They functioned to produce priests for the Irish Church, helped train others for professional activity in Ireland and elsewhere and acted as social and political centres for expatriate Irish communities in Spain. How the colleges functioned within the Spanish *ancien régime* is still unclear but it is probable that incidents such as the Jesuit take-over of Santiago were related to the machinations of the Irish cliques at the Spanish courts. Whether or not any of the Iberian colleges assumed the importance among their local Irish communities which the Paris college, for instance, assumed for the Parisian Irish, is difficult to say. It would appear, however, that the relative importance of the Iberian colleges lessened later in the 17th and 18th centuries. There were a number of reasons: Spain's political star waned; Irish migration to Iberia declined; local Irish communities became thoroughly integrated; the Catholic *natio* in Ireland grew better organised; France rose to prominence.

Further research will permit us to hazard a guess about the numbers of Irish clerics educated in the Iberian colleges between the end of the Nine Years War and the French Revolution. It will also enable us establish the links between the merchant and military communities on the one hand and the students of the colleges on the other. It will also provide us a clearer idea of the academic curricula followed in the colleges and the type of formation received. The Jesuit influence was decisive here. It will be important to establish if there were any differences in theological emphasis or formation systems between the Iberian colleges themselves or between the Iberian and, for instance, the French colleges. Future research might also permit us to speak with more confidence about the social pool from which clerical students were drawn and also to establish the proportion which returned to Ireland and remained in Iberia.

In the end, the suppression of the Jesuits, the French revolution and the founding of Maynooth in 1795 were three decisive blows to the Iberian network. In the longer term, the contraction and eventual disappearance of the network led to a standardisation of Irish

clerical formation and to the loss of an aspect of the continental connection which had shaped the Irish Catholic *natio* and had permitted it to survive when circumstances in Ireland seemed to threaten its very existence.

NOTES

- ¹ Schüller K., *Die beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Irland im 16. und 17 jahrhundert: diplomatie, handel und die soziale integration katholischer exulanten*, Münster 1999.
- ² Morales O.R., *The Irish college of Alcalá de Henares in a European perspective*, minor thesis, St Patrick's College, Maynooth 1995, p. 31.
- ³ Parker G., *The grand strategy of Philip II*, London 1998; Allen P., *Philip III and the pax hispanica*, Yale 2000.
- ⁴ According to Schüller, *op. cit.*, about 23,000 served in Iberia, a further 13,000 in the Spanish Netherlands.
- ⁵ For an overview of university education at the time de Ridder-Symoens H., ed. *A history of the university in Europe*, vol. II: *Universities in early modern Europe*, Cambridge, 1996; Kagan R.L., *Students and society in early modern Spain*, Baltimore and London 1974.
- ⁶ In 1564 Pope Paul IV issued the bull *Dum Exquisita* granting Archbishop Creagh of Armagh and David Wolfe, SJ, the authority to establish colleges and universities in Ireland under papal protection. For text see *Spicil. Ossor.*, i, pp. 32-8; Lennon C., *Archbishop Creagh of Armagh 1523-86*, Dublin 2000, p. 45.
- ⁷ Irish Jesuit Archives, Dublin, *Fundação da collegio*, v.
- ⁸ Schüller, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
- ⁹ O'Boyle J., *The Irish colleges on the continent; their origins and history*, Dublin, 1935; Walsh, *op. cit.*; Richardson R.W., *Bibliography of the Irish Colleges in Spain*, in Neligan A. (ed.), *Maynooth library treasures*, Dublin, 1995, pp. 144-147.
- ¹⁰ The Franciscans had colleges in Louvain (1607), Prague (1631), Vielan (1645), Capranica (1656) and Rome (1625); the Dominicans were in Lisbon (1659), Louvain (1626) and Rome (1677); the Augustinians set up a college in Rome (1656), the Capuchins in Charleville (1620), and the Carmelites in La Rochelle (1665) and Aix-la-Chapelle (1677).
- ¹¹ The 17 secular colleges were: Paris (1578); Bordeaux (1603); Rouen (1612); Toulouse (1645?); Nantes (1689?); Salamanca (1592); Santiago de Compostela (1605); Seville (1612); Madrid (1629); Alcalá de Henares (1649); Douai (1594); Antwerp (1600); Lille (1610); Tournai (1616); Louvain (1624); Rome (1627); Lisbon (1590).
- ¹² An Irish college was founded in Valladolid in 1589 but it did not survive long. It would appear that it was in existence between 1605 and 1630. Here we give only a short account of each of the colleges, based mainly on material in the Salamanca Archives (hereafter Sal. Arch.), Russell Library, Maynooth. The archives of the Irish College, Salamanca were deposited in St Patrick's College, Maynooth, in 1951. They include papers from the Irish colleges in Santiago de Compostela, Seville, Alcalá de Henares and Madrid. The manuscripts are arranged in *legajos* (bundles of files) each of which is divided into smaller units (*carpetas* or files). This arrangement is based on the 1870 listing made during the rectorship of William McDonald, with some additions made in 1880. The *legajos* are divided into two series, one using Roman and the other Arabic numerals. See Catalogue of Salamanca Archives, Russell Library, Maynooth.
- ¹³ Schüller, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
- ¹⁴ *Irish colleges since the reformation*, *Irish Ecclesiastical Record (IER)* viii (1871), pp. 307-13; ix (1872), pp. 1-5; 137-42; McDonald W., *loc. cit.*, *Irish colleges since the reformation*, viii (1871), pp. 465-73; [Seville] ix (1872), pp. 208-21; [Madrid and Alcalá] pp. 544-7; [Santiago] x (1872) pp. 167-81; 196-211; 245-59; 209-303; [Salamanca] pp. 353-66; 449-63; 519-32; 553-67; xi (1874) pp. 1-13; 101-14; the McErlean Transcripts in the Irish Jesuit Archives, Dublin, copied by the Jesuit, John McErlean (1870-1950). The documents date from 1527 until 1774; Francis Finnegan, *Irish rectors at Seville*, *IER*, 5th series, CVI, (July-Dec 1866), pp. 45-63; John J. Silke, *The Irish college, Seville*, *Arch. Hib.*, xxiv (1961) pp. 103-47; *The Irish abroad 1534-1691*, in Moody T.W., Martin F.X., Byrne F.J. (eds.), *A new history of Ireland*, iii: *early modern Ireland, 1534-1691*, Oxford, 1976, pp. 587-633; Corish P.J., *Correspondence of the superiors of the Jesuits mission in Ireland and John O'Brien, S.J., rector of Salamanca*, in *Arch. Hib.*, xxvii (1964), pp. 85-103; Fenning H., *Irishmen ordained at Lisbon 1587-1625: 1641-60: 1669-1739: 1740-1850*, in *Collect. Hib.*, xxxi/ii (1989-90), pp. 103-117; 59-76; 140-158; Huarte A., *Petitions of Irish students in the university of Salamanca, 1574-1591*, in:

Arch. Hib., iv (1915), pp. 96-130; Bouzas J.C., *El colegio de irlandeses de Santiago de Compostela*, Santiago, 193; Gonçalves da Costa M., *Fontes inéditas portuguesas para a história de Irlanda*, Braga, 1989; Arnáiz M.J., Sancho J.L., *El colegio de los irlandeses*, Alcalá de Henares 1985; Rivera Vázquez E., *Galicia y los jesuitas. Sus colegios y enseñanza en los siglos XVI al XVIII*, Santiago 1989; Recio de Morales, *op. cit.*; Mangana N.A., *A short history of the Irish college of Santiago de Compostela* (minor thesis, St Patrick's College Maynooth 1996).

- ¹⁵ This may be compared with the informal grant made by Jean de L'Escalopier (d. 1620) to the students of the Irish college, Paris, prior to their return to Ireland. See O'Connor T., *Thomas Messingham (c. 1575—1638?) and the seventeenth-century Irish Church*, in *Ríocht na Midhe*, xi (2000), pp. 88-105, p.90. The ducat, *ducado*, was a gold coin worth 11 reales and 1 *maravedí* or 375 *maravedís*; 1 *escudo* was worth 10 reales. A captain's pay at that time was roughly 40 ducats a month. See also O'Doherty D.J., *Students of the Irish College Salamanca (1595-1619)*, in *Arch. Hib.*, ii, (1913), p. 7.
- ¹⁶ O'Boyle, *op.cit.*, pp. 237-250.
- ¹⁷ Schüller, *op. cit.*, p. 280.
- ¹⁸ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 40/7.
- ¹⁹ Francis Bermingham, from the diocese of Tuam, left Salamanca under a cloud on 3 February 1747. Two letters written by him to the rector, John O'Brien (1743-60), while he waited in Lisbon for a ship, are in the Salamanca Archives. See Richardson R.W. (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 9.
- ²⁰ de Répide P., *Las calles de Madrid*, Madrid 1995, p. 323.
- ²¹ Hogan, *op cit.*, pp. 69-70.
- ²² Thomas White (1558-1622) came from a well-to-do merchant family. He was related to Luke Wadding (1588-1657) and was also connected to the Lombards, Wyses, Walshes and Comerfords. See Hogan E., *Distinguished Irishmen of the sixteenth century*, London 1894, pp.. 48-78.
- ²³ Hogan, *op.cit.*, p 49, quoted from Coppinger J., *Mnemosynum to the Catholics of Ireland 1608*, p. 268.
- ²⁴ The title may be explained by the fact that many of the early candidates for the priesthood came from the ranks of the Gaelic and Old English nobility.
- ²⁵ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 1/1. On the oaths see O'Doherty D.J., *loc. cit.*, pp. 1-36.
- ²⁶ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 1/1. The Jesuit, Francisco Suárez (1548-1617) was one of the leading philosophers and theologians of the University of Salamanca.
- ²⁷ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 40/3. The *arroba* was a measure roughly equivalent to 11 kilos.
- ²⁸ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 40/3.
- ²⁹ Sal. Arch., *legajo* V/1.
- ³⁰ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 31/1
- ³¹ O'Doherty, *loc. cit.*, pp. 1-6.
- ³² Sal. Arch., *legajo* V/4.
- ³³ O'Boyle, *op. cit.*, p. 166, ff.34. Villiers later became the fourth Earl of Clarendon and was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1847-52. He was a friend of the rector of Salamanca, Patrick Curtis, who subsequently became archbishop of Armagh.
- ³⁴ In 1923 the college purchased a summer villa in Asturias for £3,000. All the college property was disposed of at the time of its closure in 1951. Sal. Arch., *legajo* 46.
- ³⁵ Walsh M.K., 'O'Sullivan Beare in Spain: some unpublished documents' in *Arch. Hib.*, 1990, XLV, pp. 46-63, 54, 58.
- ³⁶ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 33/1/14 and 33/1/15.
- ³⁷ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 35/4. Synnott had been tutor to Philip O'Sullivan Beare, author of *Compendium historiae catholicae Iberniae* (1621), *Patritiana Decai* (1629), and *Zoilomastix* (1624-67) and also taught the children of the Conde de Caracena, Governor of Galicia (1602-1606). See also O Connell P., *The Irish College Santiago de Compostela 1605-1767*, in *Arch. Hib.*, i, (1996), pp. 19-28.
- ³⁸ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 34/7.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ Domnall Cam O'Sullivan Beare was the second conde de Biraben (Bearehaven). See Walsh M., *loc. cit.*, p. 46;

- O'Doherty D.J., *Domnal O'Sullivan Beare and his family in Spain*, in *Studies*, xix (1930), p. 222.
- ⁴¹ *Loc. cit.*, pp. 221-26.
- ⁴² Sal. Arch., *legajo* 33/1/1.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, *legajo* 33/1/2. The two storey house, having been converted into a tannery, was eventually abandoned and the college had to bear the cost of selling it at auction.
- ⁴⁴ Both *censos* and *juros* were types of annuities or bonds giving interest in money or kind.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, the *ferrado* was an old measure of grain and land.
- ⁴⁶ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 33/1/2. Consul generals were appointed by the monarch of the time. Philip Stafford bought the *Alhóndiga* right the year William of Orange came to the throne. The case of Thomas Maynard, who was English consul general in Lisbon from 1656 to 1689, may be of interest. He was appointed by the Commonwealth and was one of the few retained in his post at the Restoration. Shaw L.M.E., *The Anglo-Portuguese alliance and the English merchants in Portugal 1654-1810.*, Aldershot, 1998, p. 47.
- ⁴⁷ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 33/1/2.
- ⁴⁸ Vázquez R., *Galicia y los jesuitas. Sus colegios y enseñanza en los siglos XVI al XVIII*, Santiago 1989, p. 434. The author is indebted to the former Mayor of Santiago de Compostela, Xerardo Estévez Fernández, for pointing out the source of footnotes 44, 45 and 46.
- ⁴⁹ Bouzas J.C., *El colegio de irlandeses de Santiago de Compostela*, Santiago 1935, p. 21. A statue of Saint Patrick was still in garden in 1989 when Rivera Vazquez wrote, "[...] the life-size image [of St Patrick] made of stone still shows the remains of its colours... it can be dated to the seventeenth century and attributed to the school of Mateo de Prado". Rivera Vazquez, *op.cit.*, pp. 435-436.
- ⁵⁰ There is a comparatively small amount of material in the Salamanca Archives on this college. It includes receipts for early eighteenth century, details of contents of the *ropería* (wardrobe room), lists of names of Spanish boarders, some oaths and testimonials for various years. For further details McDonald W., *Irish ecclesiastical colleges since the reformation*, I.E.R., viii (1871/2), p. 72: *Ibid.* ix (1871) pp. 208-22; Silke J.J., *The Irish College*, Seville, in *Arch. Hib.*, xxiv (1962), pp. 103-222; Finnegan F., *Irish rectors at Seville, 1619-1687* in *IER*, cvi (July/Dec 1966), pp. 45-63.
- ⁵¹ Archivo General de Simancas, E 2753, E 2754. Cited by Recio Morales, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-9.
- ⁵² Kearney Walsh M., *The Irish college of Alcalá de Henares*, in *Seanchas Ard Mhaca*, 1985, xi, 2, pp. 247-257.
- ⁵³ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 3/1.
- ⁵⁴ O'Boyle, *op. cit.*, p. 176; Silke, *The Irish Abroad, 1534-1691*, *op. cit.*, p. 618.
- ⁵⁵ This was by royal decree, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, *Universidades*, 417.
- ⁵⁶ O Connell P., *The Irish college at Alcalá de Henares 1649-1785*, Dublin 1997, pp. 35-36.
- ⁵⁷ AHN, *Universidades*, 417. The patrons were the superiors of three major religious houses in Madrid; O Connell, *op.cit.*, p. 35.
- ⁵⁸ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 29/3 and O Connell, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-101.
- ⁵⁹ AHN *Universidades*, 417.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁶¹ Sal. Arch., *legajo* 34/6; AHN, *Universidades*, 417.
- ⁶² Eugene MacMahon. The last student in Alcalá before its closure was the son of James MacMahon and Alison O'Neill of Cregan, County Armagh. His mother was one of the O'Neills of the Fews. See Sal. Arch., *legajo* 29/3.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 30/1/3; 21/1/1.
- ⁶⁴ Irish Jesuit Archives, Dublin, *Fundação da Collegio*, v.
- ⁶⁵ There were at least four viceroys in Goa in the late fifteenth century named Noronha according to the standard source of biographical data for Portugal and Brazil, *Grande Enciclopedia Portuguesa e Brasileira* (Lisbon, 1945). It is not clear which of them was the former owner.
- ⁶⁶ Dublin Diocesan Archives, 117/7. The building is in one of the oldest quarters of Lisbon. It still exists in *rua de San Mamedet*.

 **SOURCES**

Document (1607): source State papers Ireland, taken from C. P. Meehan, *The fate and fortune of Hugh O'Neill, early of Tyrone* (Dublin, 1868)

This document illustrates the political links between Ireland and Spain in the early 17th century.

The information of James Bath of Drogheda, in Ireland, aged twenty five years or thereabouts, brother of Captain John Bath, captain to the ship of four score tons, furnished with sixteen cast pieces of ordnance and three score soldiers, which Mac Gwyer carried from Dunkirk into Ireland for Tyrone.

Father Florence, of M'Dermott's country, in the province of Connaught, in Ireland, aged 43 years or thereabouts, provincial of the Franciscan order of friars for the Irish nation, and the chief man by whom the state of Spain do receive information, and from whom that state is pleased chiefly to take advice for the direction of the Irish affairs, came from Spain to Brussels, in the Low countries, about Christmas last, accompanied with David and Richard Bourke, being brothers of M'William's house in Connaught, who have four score crowns pension a month apiece from the king of Spain, and with Matthew Tully, who hath fifty crowns a month pension from the king of Spain being secretary to the earl of Tyrconnelle, who went with MacGwyer in the said ship into Ireland. This Matthew Tully went about Christmas was twelve months into Spain, and had great favour and access to the Marquis de Caracena, Viceroy and Captain-general in Galicia: and the said Matthew Tully reported in Spain that he was driven to run away out of England in great danger from the earl of Salisbury: and soon after his arrival in Spain, he went with the said marquis's letters of favour to the court of Spain, where he was formerly with O'Donel, who died there and had twenty-five crowns, a month pension then given onto him, and the arrerages thereof, being £180, was paid unto him upon his going to the court of Spain, the last winter was twelve months. The said Father Florence hath access to the Archduke, who, together with the said Bourke, are yet resident at Brussels. Rorie Albanagh, of the country of Tyrone, priest, and stewart to Henry O'Neill, Tyrone's second son, Colonel of the Irish regiment under the Archduke, went from the Low countries into Ireland about Easter last, and is returned into the Low Countries about a month ago. Nicholas Linch, of Galway, in Ireland, servant to Tyrconnell, who served O'Donel, that died in Spain, went from the Low Countries into Ireland about ten weeks past, and is returned back again into the Low Countries. The said Father Florence, Rorie Albanagh, Matthew Tully and Nicholas Linch, were conversant an very great with the said Henry O'Neil, Tyrone's son and were the instruments used in the plot of Tyrone and Tyrconnell going out of Ireland.