UCC Student History Journal

UCC Student History Journal
Est. 2024

Immigration & Influence

Ideas, Peoples, and Individuals across Borders

November 2025
Volume III | Issue I

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Reader,

I am honoured to begin my first ever solo-reign over this unique organ of the History Society, and I hope my team and I can do it proud.

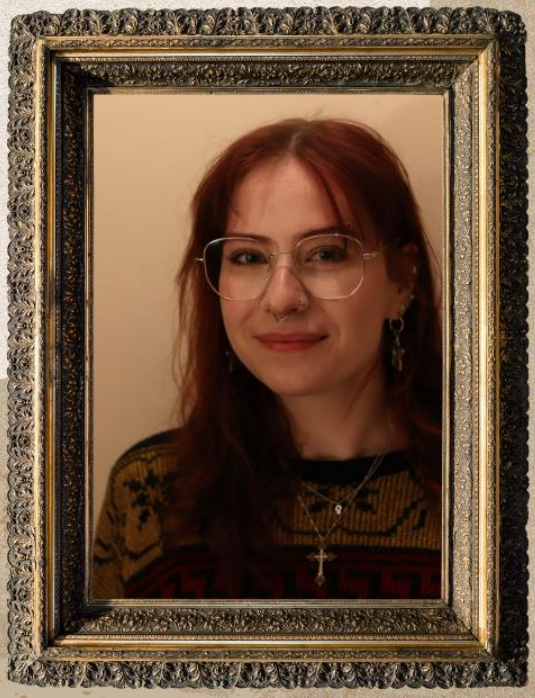
This edition of the Journal is ambitious as always, and the continued aspirations of this publication will become more apparent throughout this academic year.
This edition of the Journal has seen the onboarding of a fully involved staff, who I cannot be more grateful for. This is also the first edition of the Journal that will be onboarded onto the UCC Library OJS system.

This edition of the Journal is entitled 'Immigration and Influence'. The inspiration for this theme finds it's origins in many different ideas and thoughts that swirled around our weekly meetings. I believe it is important to stress that all 'histories' are welcome, and indeed encouraged in our publication. Diversity of people and diversity of thought ought to be championed by a tome such as ours.

The stories of migration and movement are directly linked to the study of history in many ways. If I am allowed to be reductive, the study of history can be one of two things, a stagnant continuity or a change over time. Without change and without movement, we as historians are completely shut off from one line of inquiry. This for me, is what makes this Issue of the journal necessary.

I can only hope you enjoy this edition of the journal as much as we do,

Mise le Meas,
Emma P. Ní Muirthile



UCC *Student History Journal*
Est. 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

04

'Crossing Borders of Style: The Migration of Italian Renaissance Ideals into Irish Art and Cultural Identity, 1840-1940
Denise Scanlon

08

The Killing of the "Lord of the Foreigners of Luimneach" in Ardrahan in AD 940

Tadhg Holland

13

RPrinting, Law, and the Republic of Letters: Venice as a Crossroads of Legal Knowledge

Rebecca Bourke

20

'It is forbidden to speak Breton and to spit on the ground': Internal Racism, Diasporas and Regionalisms in Modern France

Nathan Gleyses

26

"Breen in Bengal" - Links Between Irish Revolutionary Literature and Indian Revolutionary Violence in the Early 20th Century.

Emma Hurley

32

Class, Translation, and Publishing in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Ireland

Donal O'Connell,

38

Acknowledgements

Crossing Borders of Style: The Migration of Italian Renaissance Ideals into Irish Art and Cultural Identity, 1840–1940

Denise Scanlon
University College Cork

Art has always travelled further than its makers. Across centuries, images, ideals, and styles have crossed borders as persistently as people themselves. In nineteenth- and early twentieth -century Ireland, these migrations of form were not mere echoes of European taste but powerful vehicles of self-definition. This essay explores how Italian Renaissance ideals of beauty, harmony, and sacred composition moved across space and time to shape Irish art between 1840 and 1940. It argues that this migration of style, carried through church patronage, art education, and cultural revival, became a subtle act of translation: Ireland transforming the language of the Renaissance into its own expression of faith and nationhood. Far from imitation, this exchange reveals how the circulation of art can forge identity in motion.

The Renaissance was not only an epoch in time but an enduring vocabulary of form and meaning. Its ideals - balance, naturalism, ideal proportion, and divine beauty - became universal markers of artistic excellence. The "migration" of these ideals into nineteenth-century Ireland must be read within the intertwined frameworks of religion, education, and empire. The Royal Hibernian Academy, founded in 1823, modelled itself on continental prototypes, its curriculum rooted in the study of classical casts and Italian masters.[1] Reproductions of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo circulated widely through print and plaster, creating what Ernst Gombrich later called "a heritage of Apelles": the diffusion of canonical ideals as cultural currency.[2] This migration was not a simple importation of aesthetics; it was also a movement of people and institutions. Italian craftsmen and painters were commissioned for Irish churches during the Catholic revival, bringing with them the iconographic conventions of Renaissance piety.[3] The Jesuit and Presentation orders encouraged art education based on Italian devotional models, intertwining Catholic reform with visual culture. Through these channels, the Renaissance became a living presence in nineteenth-century Ireland translated, adapted, and sanctified in new contexts.

One of the clearest mediators of this aesthetic migration was Frederick William Burton, whose celebrated *The Meeting on the Turret Stairs* (1864) blends the emotional intensity of early Italian art with the moral idealism of Victorian Britain. Burton's composition, inspired by quattrocento frescoes, translates Renaissance tenderness into a national idiom of romantic restraint.[4] Though painted while Burton served as Director of the National Gallery, London, its reception in Ireland was immediate; the work became a symbol of Irish sensibility elevated through continental form. In Burton's art, Italian grace became a means of articulating Irish emotion. Women artists such as Sarah Purser further redefined these imported ideals in early twentieth-century Ireland. Her stained-glass studio *An Túr Gloine* (The Tower of Glass), founded in 1903, drew on Renaissance workshop structures and Marian iconography while serving the cultural aims of the Gaelic Revival.[5] Purser's practice, informed by Florentine compositional balance and medieval craftsmanship, embodied what Fintan Cullen terms the "visual politics" of Irish identity: an art both cosmopolitan and nationalist.[6] The migration of Italian ideals thus reached into craft, ecclesiastical art, and pedagogy, reconfiguring the sacred image as an emblem of Irish self-definition.

---

[1] Michael Ann Holly, *Past Looking: Historical Imagination and the Rhetoric of the Image* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 42.
[2] Ernst Gombrich, *The Heritage of Apelles* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1976), p. 9.
[3] Fintan Cullen, *Visual Politics: The Representation of Ireland 1750–1930* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1997), p. 118.
[4] Nicola Figgis and Brendan Rooney, *Irish Paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland* (Dublin: NGI, 2001), p. 204.
[5] Charles Ford, *Art and Nationalism in Ireland: The Visual Dimension of Irish Identity, 1920–1940* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), p. 37
[6] Cullen, *Visual Politics*, p. 130.

The transmission of Renaissance ideals was sustained through Ireland's developing art-school network. In Dublin, the Metropolitan School of Art (later NCAD) followed the South Kensington system, itself derived from continental models that privileged linear drawing and anatomy.[7] In Cork and Belfast, smaller schools echoed this method, ensuring that the Renaissance remained the silent foundation of artistic training. By the early twentieth century, reproductions of Raphael's *School of Athens* and Leonardo's anatomical studies adorned classroom walls across Ireland.[8] These images served as both pedagogical tools and cultural mirrors, reflecting a tension between inherited authority and emerging independence. At University College Cork, the teaching of art history in the 1910s and 1920s drew heavily on continental scholarship, positioning Renaissance art as the wellspring of civilisation.[9] Yet Irish scholars increasingly questioned the colonial implications of this hierarchy. To embrace the Renaissance was to claim participation in European culture; to adapt it was to assert autonomy within that culture. The classroom thus became another site of migration—where visual knowledge crossed borders, and Irish students learned to see themselves as both heirs to and interpreters of continental tradition.

By the time of the Irish Free State, the language of Renaissance form had been thoroughly naturalised in Irish art, but its meanings had shifted. Artists of the interwar period such as Seán Keating and Leo Whelan employed Renaissance compositional clarity to depict Irish modernity and labour.[10] Their monumental figure's muscular, dignified, idealised recall Michelangelo's prophets and Raphael's saints, yet stand firmly on Irish soil. The aesthetic of ideal proportion became a metaphor for moral order and national strength. This process exemplifies what Benedict Anderson calls an *imagined community*: a shared sense of belonging constructed through symbolic forms that cross space and time.[11] Just as Renaissance humanism travelled northward centuries earlier, its Irish reception represents a re-imagining of community through visual language. In appropriating these ideals, Irish artists engaged in what postcolonial theorists later termed *transculturation* - a negotiation of power through cultural exchange.[12] The migration of style thus mirrored the migration of political consciousness.

Ireland's embrace of Renaissance visuality cannot be divorced from its Catholic identity. The Counter-Reformation had long associated Italian art with orthodoxy, and in post-Emancipation Ireland, this association gained renewed power. Church commissions in Dublin, Cork, and Limerick often favoured Italianate designs, with imported mosaics and frescoes reinforcing a sense of universal Catholic belonging.[13] Yet within these sacred interiors, Irish artists inserted local saints, landscapes, and features, domesticating the universal. The visual migration of sanctity thus operated in both directions: Italy lent form, Ireland supplied soul. Dorothy Walker has noted that Purser's *An Túr Gloine* windows, though modelled on Florentine balance, reveal "a distinctly Irish melancholy, a spirituality of weather and place."[14] This hybridity encapsulates the impact of migration in its broadest sense, the transformation that occurs when an idea crosses a border and finds new meaning in altered light.

By the 1920s, younger Irish artists began to reassess the authority of the Renaissance tradition itself. The *Exhibition of Living Art* (founded 1943) later positioned modernism as a new migration of ideas, yet its founders - Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone - had both trained in continental studios steeped in sacred geometry and iconographic discipline.[15] Even in abstraction, the ghost of the Renaissance lingered: proportion, rhythm, and the search for spiritual order endured. The migration of form had become cyclical, each generation translating the old into new idioms. For Evie Hone, whose stained-

[7] Ford, *Art and Nationalism in Ireland*, p. 54.
[8] Holly, *Past Looking*, p. 57.
[9] Cullen, *Visual Politics*, p. 146.
[10] Ford, *Art and Nationalism in Ireland*, p. 81.
[11] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 6.
[12] Holly, *Past Looking*, p. 63.
[13] Cullen, *Visual Politics*, p. 162.
[14] Walker, *Modern Art in Ireland* (Dublin: Ward River Press, 1982), p. 27.
[15] Ford, *Art and Nationalism in Ireland*, p. 102.

glass work for Eton College Chapel (1949) fuses Cubist structure with Gothic reverence, the line from Giotto to modernism was unbroken.[16] Her art demonstrates that the Renaissance in Ireland was never static but a continuously evolving conversation. The impact of this centuries-long exchange lies not merely in stylistic borrowing but in the creation of a cultural habit: to look outward and inward at once.

The migration of Renaissance ideals into Irish art did not end with the early twentieth century; it became part of Ireland's broader cultural memory. Exhibitions, publications, and religious commissions continued to position Renaissance art as both a moral model and a measure of civilisation. The National Gallery of Ireland's acquisitions during the 1920s and 1930s—particularly Italian devotional panels and drawings—reflected a curatorial interest in linking Irish audiences to a shared European heritage.[17] This collecting impulse reinforced the idea that Ireland, through art, could claim intellectual kinship with the continent. Public exhibitions also reanimated Renaissance imagery for new political and social purposes. During the 1932 Eucharistic Congress in Dublin, processional art and ecclesiastical design consciously drew on Renaissance spatial harmony and pageantry, transforming civic space into a sacred theatre.[18] These visual spectacles echoed the Renaissance synthesis of faith and display, yet they carried a distinctly Irish inflection: a celebration of national piety and postcolonial independence.

At the same time, modern Irish writers and critics invoked the Renaissance to articulate a vision of renewal. In cultural journals such as *The Bell* and *The Capuchin Annual*, art critics described contemporary Irish creativity as a 'rebirth', consciously echoing the term *rinascita*.[19] The persistence of the Renaissance as metaphor reveals how thoroughly its language of rebirth and enlightenment had entered Irish cultural consciousness. To speak of an "Irish Renaissance" was not merely to reference Yeats or the literary revival but to position Irish art within a transnational lineage of creativity and awakening. This enduring dialogue between past and present demonstrates that artistic migration extends beyond stylistic influence: it shapes how a nation imagines its place in history. The Renaissance in Ireland was not a closed chapter but an ongoing conversation—a lens through which artists and audiences alike interpreted questions of identity, modernity, and belonging.[20]

The migration of Italian Renaissance ideals into Irish art between 1840 and 1940 was neither imitation nor accident. It was a sustained act of cultural translation, one that shaped how Ireland saw itself and how it wished to be seen. Through the devotional image, the art school, and the national studio, continental aesthetics were re-imagined as expressions of Irish faith, resilience, and modernity. The Renaissance, far from being a foreign inheritance, became a shared language of renewal.

In tracing this journey of ideas, one perceives that migration is not solely the movement of people but of visions, values, and forms. The crossing of aesthetic borders forged a bridge between Ireland's colonial past and its creative future. The impact endures in the stained glass of Purser and Hone, in Burton's tender lovers, and in every Irish artwork that carries the memory of distant light refracted through local colour. Art, like migration itself, reminds us that identity is never fixed but always in motion.

[16] Walker, *Modern Art in Ireland*, p. 88.
[17] Figgis and Rooney, *Irish Paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland*, p. 224.
[18] Ford, *Art and Nationalism in Ireland*, p. 95.
[19] Cullen, *Visual Politics*, p. 172.
[20] Holly, *Past Looking*, p. 69.

Bibliography

Primary and Visual Sources

Burton, Frederick William. *The Meeting on the Turret Stairs.* 1864. National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

Purser, Sarah. Works of *An Túr Gloine* Studio. Various locations, 1903–1940.

Hone, Evie. *Eton College Chapel Windows.* Eton College, Windsor, 1949.

Books and Scholarly Studies

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso, 1983.

Cullen, Fintan. *Visual Politics: The Representation of Ireland 1750–1930.* Cork: Cork University Press, 1997.

Figgis, Nicola, and Brendan Rooney. *Irish Paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland.* Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 2001.

Ford, Charles. *Art and Nationalism in Ireland: The Visual Dimension of Irish Identity, 1920–1940.* Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007.

Gombrich, Ernst H. *The Heritage of Apelles: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance.* Oxford: Phaidon, 1976.

Holly, Michael Ann. *Past Looking: Historical Imagination and the Rhetoric of the Image.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996.

Walker, Dorothy. *Modern Art in Ireland.* Dublin: Ward River Press, 1982.

Articles and Additional Readings

Cullen, Fintan. “The Colonial Subject and the Aesthetic of the Nation.” *Art History* 16, no. 4 (1993): 621–635.

Ferriter, Diarmaid. “Faith, Culture, and Image in Post-Emancipation Ireland.” *Irish Historical Studies* 31, no. 123 (1999): 404–421.

Kennedy, Máire. “Art Education and the South Kensington System in Ireland, 1850–1900.” *Irish Educational Studies* 23, no. 3 (2004): 53–70.

McEvansoneya, Philip. “The Academy and the Nation: The Royal Hibernian Academy, 1823–1916.” *Irish Arts Review* 23 (2006): 88–95.

Purser, Sarah. “The Founding of An Túr Gloine.” *Irish Arts Review* 1, no. 2 (1905): 45–48.

The Killing of the "Lord of the Foreigners of Luimneach" in Ardrahan in AD 940

Tadgh Holland
University College Cork

If the small parish of Ardrahan in South Galway is known for any historical event it is the battle of 1225 which was immortalised by Thomas Davis in *The West's Awake* with the lines,

> For often, in O'Connor's van,/ To triumph dashed each Connaught clan—/ And fleet as deer the Normans ran/ Through Corlieu's Pass and Ardrahan[1]

a song later made iconic by Joe MacDonagh's rendition from the Hogan Stand upon Galway's 1980 All-Ireland victory.[2] Davis's ballad was an act of nationalistic mythmaking, overlooking the record in the Annals where the *Galls* (foreigners) were merely allied to Aed mac Chthail Chrobdeirg in his effort to suppress the rebellion of the O'Connors, and transforming it into an Irish triumph over the Normans.[3] A similar treatment has been given to another of Ardrahan's entries in the annals, the killing of Aralt, king of the Vikings in Limerick in AD 940. Aralt was not just a grandson of Ívarr – the famed dynasty supposedly descending from the mythical Ragnarr loðbrók which came to entirely dominate Viking Ireland as well as play an active role in England, mainland Scotland, the Hebrides, and Wales – but, as a member of the final generation of Ívarr's *derbfhine* (certain kindred), he was one of the last to be explicitly identified in Annals belonging to his lineage.[4] However the only work of history to discuss his death, Jerome Fahey's *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Kilmacduagh* (1893), again reduced the history of Ardrahan to nationalistic simplifications, reflecting on it that "we must admire the persevering fearlessness with which [The Irish Chieftains] continued to resist [the Northern hordes] for over two centuries… The heroism of our people at that period had perhaps few parallels in history".[5] A contribution to the historiography which analyses the historical record more dispassionately and places the killing in the context of the overall decline of Viking Limerick is therefore necessary.

Evidence from the Annals

The Annals of the Four Master's thirteenth entry for AD 938 tells us "Aralt, grandson of Imhar, i.e. the son of Sitric, lord of the foreigners of Luimneach, was killed in Connaught by the Caenraighi of Aidhne".[6] In the first full translation of the Annals, John O'Donovan's classic 1848 *Annals of the kingdom of Ireland From the Four Masters,* O'Donovan claims "Caenraighi of Aidhne" to be "a Sept seated at Ard-Aidhne, near Ardrahan, in the barony of Kiltartan, and county of Galway".[7] Evidence of this can be seen in *The Genealogies, Tribes, and Customs of Hy-Fiachrach, Commonly Called O'Dowda's Country* which includes the passage, "there were three tribes in Aidhne before the Hy-Fiachrach, namely, the Ciarraighe, Oga Beathra, the Tradraighe, of Dubh-ros, and the Caonraighe, of

---

[1] Thomas Davis, *The Poems Of Thomas Davis,* (James Duffy, 1846), pp. 9-10. Paddy Downey, *DAY OF GLORY*

[2] Duggan, Barry, *Hurling champ Joe's dreaming of Galway win -- and new song,* The Irish Independent, September 29th 2012,

[3] *Annála Connacht*, CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts: a project of University College, Cork, AC1225.24-1225.26.

[4] "[A derbfhine] was a family-unit comprising the descendants in a male line from a common great-grandfather. The significance of the derbfhine was that any male belonging to the derbfhine of a previous king was eligible to inherit part of his property. It was also more likely that a new king would arise from within this immediate kin-group", see Clare Downham *The Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014*, (Dunedin Academic Press, 2007), pp. 1, 4-5, 29.

[5] Fahey, Jerome, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Kilmacduagh*, (M. H. Gill and Son, 1893), pp. 117-119.

[6] *The Annals of the Four Masters,* CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts: a project of University College, Cork, FM938.13.

[7] John O'Donovan ed. and trans., *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by The Four Masters*, (Dublin, 1849), p. 640. For details on this translation see Bernadette Cunnigham. *John O'Donovan's Edition of the Annals of the Four Masters: an Irish Classic? EUROPEAN STUDIES* 26 (2008), pp. 129-149.

Ard Aidhne".[8] This text is translated from the genealogical manuscript of Duald mac Firbis in the library of Lord Roden, and the Book of Lecan in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, which has long been regarded as "one of the earliest most authoritative compilations of Irish genealogical material extant".[9] However the exact location of Ard Aidhne or the potential battle itself is still unclear from this account. Some additional help in locating the event can be found in *The Annals of Clonmacnoise* or *Mageoghagan's Book* which tells us "Harald (Aralt) O'Hymer (Imhar) king of the Danes of Lymbrick (Luimneach) was killed in Connaught at Ratheyney".[10] The location of Ratheyney is, again, not certain; however, considering *The Four Masters* place the event in "Aidhne" and the above mentioned evidence of the Caenraighi being at "Ard Aidhne", the suggestion made by Jerome Fahy in *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Kilmacduagh* that the battle took place in the townland of Raheen in Ardrahan seems overwhelmingly likely.[11]

However, *Mageoghagan's Book* also introduces a problem of chronology. It dates its entry as AD 933, five years earlier than the Annals of the Four Masters places it (Fahey overestimates the discrepancy incorrectly stating the Annals of Clonmacnoise place it in 833).[12] This can largely be resolved by looking at *The Chronicum Scotorum* entry, "Aralt son of Ímar's grandson, i.e. son of Sitric king of the foreigners of Luimnech, was killed by the Connachta", dated as AD 940 (The *Annals of Inisfallen* also record the "Death of Aralt, grandson of Ímar, at the hands of the Connachta" the same year).[13] Analysis by D.P. McCarthy of the kalend and ferial chronological apparatus employed in the Annals and comparisons made to independently verifiable events has concluded the Annals of the so-called Clonmacnoise group, which includes the *Chronicum Scotorum*, though not *The Annals of Clonmacnoise,* present a reliable and consistent chronology from AD 1 to 1178, with the exception of 425-31, 616-63, and 767-803.[14] Therefore we can conclude AD 940 to be the most accurate date for the killing of Aralt.

Archaeology

It is worth examining briefly the existing archaeological evidence, or lack there of, for Viking Activity in Ardrahan. The M18 motorway was built through the townland identified as the most likely for the battle against the Danes, Raheen, opening in 2017.[15] In advance of this, an archaeological excavation was undertaken in the vicinity of the townland at a Cashel and Cemetery in Owenbristy as one of twenty-three sites studied between June 2008 and March 2010.[16] The drystone enclosure was likely used from the 5th to the 10th centuries and the 97 burials identified in the cemetery were similarly radio-carbon dated to an aggregate range from AD 550 to 970.[17] The rate of violent death, at 31% of adult males, is much higher than comparative sites such as Raystown, Co. Meath (8%), Mount Gamble (11%), and Augherskea, Co. Meath (10%).[18] The indication of a high level of violence cannot be taken as any

---

[8] Duald Mac Firbis, *The Genealogies, Tribes, and Customs of Hy-Fiachrach, commonly called O'Dowda's County*, ed. and trans. by John O'Donovan (Printed at the University Press for the Irish Archaeological Society, 1844), p. 59.

[9] Quote from W. D. H Sellar, *The Origins and Ancestry of Somerled, The Scottish Historical Review,* 45*,* No. 140, Part 2 (1966), p. 126.

[10] Dennis Murphy ed., *The Annals of Clonmacnoise from the Creation to AD 1408*, trans. Mageoghagan, Conell, (University Press for The Royal Society of Antiquaries Ireland, 1896), p. 151. Connection is noted by O'Donovan but fails to note chronological discrepancy, see O'Donovan*, AFM*, p. 641.

[11] Jerome Fahey, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Kilmacduagh*, (M. H. Gill and Son, 1893), p. 117.

[12] *Ibid*. and Murphy, *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 151.

[13] *Chronicum Scotorum,* CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts: A Project of University College, Cork, CS940 and *The Annals of Inisfallen*, CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts: a project of University College, Cork, AI940.1.

[14] Daniel P. McCarthy, *The Irish Annals: Their Genesis, Evolution, and History*, (Four Courts Press, 2008), pp. 342-348.

[15] *New motorway in Galway Set to Cut Journey Times, RTÉ News,* 27th of September 2017,

[16] Finn Delaney and John Tierney, *In the Lowlands of South Galway: Archaeological Excavations On the N18 Oranmore to Gort National Road Scheme,* (National Roads Authority, 2011), p. 18-19.

[17] *Ibid*., pp. 103, 107.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

evidence of a significant battle around AD 940 however as all but one lay within the range AD 554 to 776 (the exception being between AD 780 and 972).[19] There is no supporting evidence to connect the site to the Caenraighi of Aidhne and unfortunately the excavation offers no support in understanding the entries in the Annals.

However there is one possible piece of material evidence for Viking activity in the area, 'The Ardrahan Brooch', a rare piece of Viking silver currently held in The British Museum.[20] Bossed penannular brooches with a thistle and ball, like the 'The Ardrahan Brooch' are a late sub-type of penannular brooches developed in the 9th century and associated with areas of Viking influence of which fourteen out of forty-three finds have been in Ireland.[21] However the provenance of the piece is questionable. We can identify the brooch in question as being that held by the British Museum based on correspondence from James V. Browne MD, professor of surgery at Queen's College, Galway, to MP William Gregory, who held significant estates in Galway, primarily at Coole, where some of his lands extended into Ardrahan.[22] The correspondence shows an advanced stage of discussion on acquiring it for the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) from a Miss Burdge (whom the British Museum lists as having purchased the artefact from), reporting that it is as "a Danish broach, 5 inches in diameter, silver with a pin 14 inches in length", approximately matching the museum cataloguing details.[23] The only reference to it being "The Ardrahan Broach" comes from further correspondence on a possible acquisition between William Wilde, member of the RIA's Antiquities committee, to Gregory saying, "The Ardrahan Brooch was never directly or indirectly offered for sale to the R.I.A".[24] It has been suggested that referring to it as such was an in-joke between Wilde and Gregory.[25] However based on the tone of the letter, which appears exercised that "the British Museum had the command of thousands with which to buy up every thing of interest found in this Country", that "Miss Burdge sold [The brooch] to a Jew dealer who will no doubt turn a penny upon it", and that "[The RIA] cannot be expected to hunt up the Jew dealer to whom Miss Burdge sold the article if she will not give his address", there is no evidence of any joke being present.[26] There is also an intuitive explanation to how the brooch would have been found in Ardrahan, should this be its actual provenance, as the railway reached Ardrahan during 1867-1868 and the discovery of an artefact during a civil engineering project by a labourer who would quickly sell it on (in this case to Louisa Burdge who ran a Galway jewellers) would not be uncommon.[27] However without any corroboration of Wilde's claim or proper recording of the finding – The British Museum merely records it as being "found/acquired" in Co. Galway[28] – and the fact the invention of names for such finds did not reflect their actual provenance, such as the 'Tara' Brooch or 'Dál Riada' brooch, were common in the period, means tying the 'Ardrahan' brooch to Ardrahan with any certainty is impossible.[29] The absence of firm archaeological evidence indicates Viking activity in Ardrahan was limited, perhaps exclusively to the sole event in AD 940 for which we have evidence in the Annals.

---

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 89-94.
[20] *Bossed Penannular Brooch*, The British Museum,.
[21] Philip McEvansoneya, *'The 'Ardrahan' Brooch'*, *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 62 (2010), p. 19
[22] *Landed Estates Database*, *Gregory,* University of Galway2025,
[23] Quoted in McEvansoneya, *'The 'Ardrahan' Brooch',* p. 20. For cataloguing details see The British Museum*, Bossed Penannular Brooch.*
[24] Quoted in McEvansoneya, *'The 'Ardrahan' Brooch',* pp. 20-22.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[26] Quoted in *ibid*., pp. 20-21.
[27] *Ibid*., pp. 24-25.
[28] The British Museum*, Bossed Penannular Brooch.*
[29] McEvansoneya, *'The 'Ardrahan' Brooch'*, pp. 23-24.

The Killing of Aralt in Context

The killing of Aralt must be considered in the context of the overall decline of Viking Limerick in the period. Some degree of Viking settlement can be seen around Limerick as early as 845.[30] However, it wasn't until the 920s they began to rival the power of Dublin and Waterford, capturing the overking of Munster in 921 and then, in 922 plundering "Cluain Moccu Nóis [Clonmacnoise], and all the islands on Loch *Ri*".[31] They remained active in the area until at least 924 when their presence on Lough Ree was noted in the *Chronicum Scotorum.*[32] This entry shows Limerick under a King Colla, possibly the son of Bárðr son of Ívarr who died in 881, making Limerick a rival dynasty of Ívarr to Dublin (though it is also possible he was son of a Bárðr Óttarsson).[33] As a result of this activity, the Limerick Vikings appear to have been considered a threat to Dublin and Waterford, a rival military, naval power and centre of commercial transactions which through the widespread economic influence Viking-bases projected, could establish a web of relations with Irish kings menacing the vital interests of rival Viking settlements. Notably, in regards to access to the Shannon, essential because of its navigability, size, and proximity to sites of wealth such as Clonmacnoise.[34] Consequently in AD 924, "Gothfrith, grandson of Ímar, made an expedition from Áth Cliath to Luimnech, and a very large company of his followers were left behind *dead* with Ailche's son".[35] Limerick was also further embattled by the presence of Waterford Vikings who settled at Lough Gur, in response they allied with "the men of Munster" (demonstrating their growing influence) to "inflict a slaughter of the foreigners of Waterford".[36] The height of the power of Limerick was reached in 928 with the entry in *Annals of Ulster* noting that "Ailche's son went on Loch nEchach [Lough Neagh] with a fleet of the foreigners, and he ravaged the islands of the lake and the territories bordering it", the furthest North they would reach.[37] From this point the power of Limerick generally trends downwards. In 930 after plundering Lough Corrib they were forced off by men from Connaught moving to settle for a period at Ossory, where they were in turn expelled by Godfrey.[38] A war broke out between Dublin and Limerick continuing until C. AD 935 when "Amhlaeibh, son of Godfrey, lord of the foreigners, came at Lammas from Ath-cliath, and carried off *as prisoners* Amhlaeibh Ceanncairech from Loch Ribh, and the foreigners who were with him (i.e. with Cairech), after breaking their ships".[39] The victory appears to have given Dublin a dominant position – they raided Clonmacnoise in 936, 942 and 946 without any attempt by Limerick to assert its own rights to pillage in the area.[40]

It is in this light the death of Aralt must be seen, it is one point along a general downward trend of the strength of Limerick. Fahey's claim,

> Our Irish chiefs, though too often engaged in petty warfare amongst themselves, seldom failed to meet those pagan plunderers with a determined spirit of resistance; and frequently their resistance was crowned with success, as in the case of the victory… which the chiefs of Aidhne gained over the Northmen at Raheen

paints a picture of an underdog victory of the Irish who defeated pagans only by their "spirited opposition".[41] However by AD 940 Limerick was far from the power it had been in the 920s. Limerick

---

[30] *The Annals of Ulster,* trans. Mac Airt, Seán and Mac Niocaill, Gearóid, *CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts: a project of University College, Cork*, 2025, AU845.1.
[31] AFM*,* 921.16 and AU922.3.
[32] CS924,
[33] Downham, *The Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland,* p. 36.
[34] *Ibid*.*,* p. 37 and Valante, Mary A., *The Vikings in Ireland: Settlement, Trade, and Urbanization*, (Four Courts Press, 2008), pp. 103-104.
[35] AU924.3.
[36] AI926.2 and AI927.2
[37] AU928.5 and Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, p. 105.
[38] CS 929, FM 928.10, FM 929.11 and Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland,* p. 105.
[39] AFM 935.16 and Downham, *The Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland,* pp. 40-1.
[40] AU936.2, AU942.7, AU946.1 and Valante, *Vikings in Ireland*, p. 109.
[41] Fahey, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Kilmacduagh*, pp. 117-119.

would go on to be taken under Dál Cais control, it's King Imar and his two sons killed by Brian Boru in 977, ending Viking control of Limerick.[42] The establishment of any direct causality between Aralt's death and the ultimate end of Viking Limerick is impossible; however a more complete picture of Aralt's death as provided by a comparative analysis of the annals contributes not only to the local history of Ardrahan – it being based on the archaeological record likely one of the only incidents of Viking activity in the area – but also more significantly to a to fuller understanding of the process by which Limerick declined in the mid 10th century.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts: a project of University College, Cork. *Annála Connacht*. Accessed November 8, 2025. http://www.ucc.ie/celt.

CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts: A Project of University College, Cork. *Chronicum Scotorum*. Accessed November 10, 2025. http://www.ucc.ie/celt.

CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts: a project of University College, Cork, *The Annals of the Four Masters.* Accessed November 9, 2025. *http://www.ucc.ie/celt/*.

CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts: a project of University College, Cork, *The Annals of Inisfallen.* Accessed November 9, 2025. *http://www.ucc.ie/celt/*.

Davis, Thomas Osborne. *The Poems Of Thomas Davis.* James Duffy, 1846.

Downey, Paddy. *DAY OF GLORY At LONG LAST FOR GALWAY: Storming Display of Grit and Brilliance Proves Too Much for Gallant Limerick. The Irish Times,* September 8th 1980. https://archive.irishtimes.com/titles/irishtimes/5088/publications/45610/pages/2.

Duggan, Barry. *Hurling champ Joe's dreaming of Galway win -- and new song.* The Irish Independent, September 29th 2012.https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/hurling-champ-joes-dreaming-of-galway-win-and-new-song/28815366.html.

Mac Firbis, Duald. *The Genealogies, Tribes, and Customs of Hy-Fiachrach, commonly called O'Dowda's County*, ed. and trans. by O'Donovan, John. Printed at the University Press for the Irish Archaeological Society, 1844.

Murphy, Dennis ed. *The Annals of Clonmacnoise from the Creation to AD 1408*. Trans. Mageoghagan, Conell. University Press for The Royal Society of Antiquaries Ireland, 1896.

O'Donovan John, ed. and trans. *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by The Four Masters*. 1849.

RTÉ News. *New motorway in Galway Set to Cut Journey Times.* 27th of September 2017. https://www.rte.ie/news/2017/0927/907774-galway-motorway/.

The British Museum. *Bossed Penannular Brooch.* Accessed November 11, 2025. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1869-0301-1.

University of Galway. *Landed Estates Database*, *Gregory*. Accessed November 12, 2025. https://landedestates.ie/estate/753.

Secondary Sources

Cunnigham, Bernadette. John O'Donovan's Edition of the Annals of the Four Masters: an Irish Classic? *European Studies* 26 (2008): pp. 129-149.

Delaney Finn and Tierney, John. *In the Lowlands of South Galway: Archaeological Excavations On the N18 Oranmore to Gort National Road Scheme.* National Roads Authority, 2011.

Downham, Clare. *The Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014*. Dunedin Academic Press, 2007.

Fahey, Jerome. *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Kilmacduagh*. M. H. Gill and Son, 1893.

McCarthy, Daniel P. *The Irish Annals: Their Genesis, Evolution, and History*. Four Courts Press, 2008.

McEvansoneya, Philip. *'The 'Ardrahan' Brooch.* Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society 62 (2010): pp. 19-29.

Sellar, W. D. H, *The Origins and Ancestry of Somerled. The Scottish Historical Review,* 45, No. 140, Part 2 (1966): pp. 123-142.

Valante, Mary A. *The Vikings in Ireland: Settlement, Trade, and Urbanization*. Four Courts Press, 2008.

[42] CS977 and Downham, *The Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland,* p. 53-55.

Printing, Law, and the Republic of Letters: Venice as a Crossroads of Legal Knowledge

Rebecca Bourke,
BCL
History Society Alum.

Introduction

During the Renaissance, Venice emerged as Europe's foremost centre of printing and intellectual exchange. Its strategic position between the Latin West, Byzantine East, and Islamic world made it a unique meeting ground of commerce, law, and humanist scholarship. The city's cosmopolitan identity was reflected in its print culture, which projected Venice as both a physical and symbolic crossroads of knowledge and power.[1] The invention of movable type in the mid-fifteenth century revolutionised communication, transforming not only literature and theology but also the way law was produced, taught, and transmitted. By 1500, Venice's presses were responsible for nearly a third of Europe's printed output.[2] Aldus Manutius and his contemporaries fused scholarship and commerce, issuing classical, humanist, and legal texts that circulated widely throughout Europe and the Mediterranean.[3] Venice's commercial openness and republican governance provided fertile conditions for this intellectual flowering, while its relative tolerance allowed printers and jurists to operate with more freedom than in most other European states.[4] The Venetian printing industry became a vital conduit for the transnational movement of legal ideas. Through the publication and dissemination of Roman, canon, and commercial law, Venetian presses connected jurists, scholars, and statesmen in what is identified as the "Republic of Letters", an early form of intellectual globalisation.[5] In this network, printed law operated as both a scholarly discipline and an imperial language, reinforcing what has been described as the legal pluralism of early modern empires.[6]

The Rise of the Venetian Printing Industry

By the close of the 15th century, Venice had established itself as Europe's foremost printing centre, responsible for nearly a third of all books produced on the continent.[7] Its ascendancy rested on a combination of geographic advantage, mercantile wealth, and a culture of civic pragmatism that encouraged both intellectual and economic enterprise. Situated between Western Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, Venice functioned as a conduit for the movement of goods and ideas. Its trade networks linked the city with the Byzantine world and the Islamic empires, fostering an environment in which commercial and intellectual exchange were inseparable.[8] Printing in Venice developed within this matrix of trade and cultural interaction. The industry's infrastructure grew rapidly, supported by the availability of skilled artisans, ready access to paper, and a stable government willing to regulate but not suffocate innovation[9]. By 1500, the city's presses had transformed the flow of information in Europe, producing an unprecedented quantity and diversity of printed works. The emergence of smaller,

---

[1] Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), p. 23.

[2] Brian Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 56.

[3] Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 17-18.

[4] Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540–1605* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p.5.

[5] Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), p.42.

[6] Richard Ross and Lauren Benton, *Legal Pluralism and Empires, 1500–1850* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), p. 3.

[7] Richardson, *Printing*, p. 3.

[8] Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, p. 56.

[9] Horatio F. Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press, 1469–1800: An Historical Study Based upon Documents for the Most Part Hitherto Unpublished* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1891), pp. 12-13.

affordable editions made legal, religious, and scholarly texts accessible to a broader audience than ever before.[10] These editions not only preserved and disseminated Roman and canon law but also encouraged uniformity in legal education and practice across jurisdictions.[11]

Venice's republican institutions were central to this flourishing of print. In contrast to the restrictive oversight characteristic of many contemporary monarchies and papal territories, Venetian governance balanced regulation with economic freedom. The Senate's early introduction of *privilegi*, exclusive rights to reproduce specific works, constituted one of the earliest examples of state-sanctioned intellectual property protection.[12] These privileges functioned as a proto–copyright system, ensuring stability within the industry while encouraging printers to invest in the costly production of complex scholarly and legal texts.[13] At the same time, civic oversight sought to maintain public morality and political order without wholly impeding the circulation of ideas.[14]

The city's multilingual and multicultural composition further reinforced its dominance. Venetian presses produced texts in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, reflecting a diverse intellectual community drawn from across Europe and the Mediterranean.[15] Greek émigrés after the fall of Constantinople contributed to the transmission of classical knowledge, while Jewish scholars and Islamic traders expanded the linguistic and thematic range of printed material. Such diversity turned Venice into a center of comparative scholarship, where distinct intellectual traditions intersected and interacted.[16] The cumulative effect was the emergence of a transnational print culture that mirrored the Republic's maritime reach. The Venetian press did more than reproduce texts- it standardised them, giving written authority to knowledge and law that could now be transported across borders. In doing so, it contributed to the creation of a shared intellectual and legal framework that transcended linguistic, religious, and political boundaries.[17] Printing transformed Venice from a regional mercantile power into the intellectual clearinghouse of early modern Europe, an engine through which law, scholarship, and culture circulated on a continental scale.

Printing and the Circulation of Legal Knowledge

The rise of printing in Venice transformed not only the material conditions of scholarship but also the nature and movement of legal knowledge itself. Before the mid-fifteenth century, law circulated primarily through manuscript culture, hand-copied texts limited in scope, accuracy, and accessibility. The introduction of movable type in Venice standardised this fragmented system, allowing for the mass reproduction of legal materials and the stabilisation of juridical language across Europe.[18] The printed page created a new form of textual authority, law became fixed, uniform, and transportable, no longer dependent on local scribal interpretation.

Venetian presses were among the first to publish comprehensive editions of Roman and canon law, including the *Corpus Juris Civilis* and *Corpus Juris Canonici*, as well as glosses and commentaries that accompanied these texts.[19] The circulation of these works redefined the intellectual geography of legal study, linking jurists from Bologna to Paris and Salamanca to Kraków. Legal education, once

[10] Lowry, *World of Aldus*, p. 3.
[11] Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge, Vol. 1: From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p. 44.
[12] Brown, *Venetian Printing Press*, pp. 6-7
[13] Jamie Cumby (Grolier Club), "Printing and the Law," exhibition text, p. 2.
[14] Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, p. 33.
[15] Wilson, *World in Venice*, p. 112.
[16] Stefan Kiedroń and Anna-Maria Rimm, eds., *Early Modern Print Culture in Central Europe* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2014), p. 9.
[17] Ross & Benton, *Legal Pluralism*, pp. 5-6.
[18] Burke, *Social History*, p. 52.
[19] Richardson, *Printing*, p. 61.

constrained by limited manuscript access, was transformed by the availability of standardized editions that ensured consistency of interpretation and pedagogy.[20] Through print, Venice provided the infrastructure for a shared European legal vocabulary, fostering a sense of coherence among disparate legal traditions.

The city's commercial orientation also shaped the types of legal texts that flourished. Maritime and mercantile law, reflecting Venice's status as a trading republic, featured prominently in its printed output. Treatises on partnership, insurance, and contract law reflected the lived realities of Mediterranean commerce and were rapidly adopted by other European trading centers.[21] In this sense, printing acted as a vehicle for the globalisation of legal norms. Venetian editions of commercial law circulated alongside goods through the same maritime routes that carried spices, textiles, and grain, embedding the principles of contract and maritime regulation within the broader framework of European trade.[22] Printing also facilitated the development of legal pluralism, enabling comparative legal studies that could not have emerged in a purely manuscript-based culture. Jurists and scholars could now engage with texts from multiple legal systems simultaneously, Roman, canon, customary, and Islamic, creating a framework for understanding law as an interconnected, transnational discourse.[23] The multilingual capacity of Venetian presses further reinforced this dynamic. Legal works were printed in Latin, the *lingua franca* of scholarship, but also in vernacular languages that extended access beyond university-trained jurists.[24] This diffusion blurred the boundary between professional and public knowledge, making law a component of civic literacy as well as state governance.

Venetian publishers understood that law was not merely a technical field but a domain of authority. The production and circulation of legal texts thus carried political significance. Each edition represented both a commercial commodity and an assertion of interpretive control. Printing privileges served to regulate these claims, ensuring that the state could oversee the publication of legal works while simultaneously encouraging their dissemination.[25] In balancing regulation and freedom, Venice developed a pragmatic model for the management of intellectual capital that other European powers later emulated.[26]

Through these processes, Venice became the principal conduit for the circulation of legal thought in early modern Europe. Its presses translated local legal experience into a universal form, shaping not only the intellectual tools of jurists but also the conceptual foundations of the emerging modern state.

The Republic of Letters: Venice as a Transnational Legal Hub

The intellectual landscape of early modern Europe was shaped by what became known as the *Republic of Letters*, a transnational network of scholars, jurists, and humanists bound by correspondence, shared texts, and mutual exchange rather than by allegiance to any political state.[27] Within this framework, Venice occupied a uniquely influential position. Its presses, libraries, and academies transformed the city into a central node through which legal and philosophical ideas circulated freely across Europe and the Mediterranean. The infrastructure that enabled the movement of commodities, ships, merchants, and brokers, also facilitated the transmission of manuscripts, books, and scholarly discourse.[28]

Venice's printing industry allowed it to function as the logistical and intellectual meeting point for diverse scholarly traditions. Jurists, theologians, and humanists converged upon the city to publish,

[20] Burke, *Social History*, pp. 53-54.
[21] Cumby, *Printing and the Law*, p. 3.
[22] Ross & Benton, *Legal Pluralism*, pp. 7-8.
[23] *Ibid*., p. 12.
[24] Wilson, *World in Venice*, p. 145.
[25] Brown, *Venetian Printing Press*, pp. 10-11.
[26] Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, p. 41.
[27] Leerssen, *National Thought*, pp. 38-39.
[28] Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, p. 58.

debate, and distribute their works. The close relationship between the University of Padua and the Venetian printing houses deepened this scholarly traffic. Jurists trained at Padua or Bologna collaborated with publishers to edit and annotate classical and legal texts, ensuring that Venetian editions were both authoritative and pedagogically refined.[29] The city's presses printed not only the works of local scholars but also those of leading figures from abroad, including Erasmus, whose writings found eager readership through Venetian intermediaries.[30] Through such publications, Venice facilitated a pan-European intellectual dialogue that transcended territorial and confessional divisions.

The circulation of law books from Venice reinforced this dynamic. Legal texts printed in the city were shipped along commercial routes to Paris, Antwerp, Kraków, and Constantinople, where they became essential resources for jurists and university faculties.[31] These networks extended the reach of Venetian print culture well beyond Western Europe, embedding it within a Mediterranean system of exchange that included the Ottoman Empire. Printed law became a universal language of governance and diplomacy, a textual embodiment of the legal norms that underpinned trade, navigation, and jurisdiction across imperial frontiers.[32] The humanist orientation of Venetian scholarship played a central role in this transnational legal exchange. The fusion of philology and jurisprudence, often termed *legal humanism*, emerged directly from the city's print culture. Editions of Roman law produced in Venice were not simple reproductions but critical, annotated texts that applied the techniques of humanist scholarship to legal interpretation.[33] By returning to the original language and structure of the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, printers and editors transformed jurisprudence into a discipline grounded in historical and textual precision. This approach redefined the study of law as both an art and a science, harmonizing classical learning with practical governance.[34]

Venice's proximity to the Ottoman Empire further expanded the city's role as a mediator between legal traditions. Through trade and diplomacy, Venetian officials encountered Islamic commercial and maritime practices that informed their own understandings of jurisdiction and contract. This exposure encouraged comparative studies in international law and diplomacy, anticipating later efforts to reconcile diverse legal systems within a shared normative framework.[35] The city's diplomatic archives and translated documents reveal how legal ideas circulated not only through books but also through treaties, correspondence, and mercantile negotiation, channels that mirrored the intellectual exchanges of the Republic of Letters itself.[36] In this way, Venice stood at the intersection of material and intellectual mobility. Its presses gave physical form to abstract legal principles, while its maritime networks ensured their dissemination. The city's contribution to the Republic of Letters was thus not merely cultural but structural: it provided the mechanisms, technological, commercial, and institutional, that made transnational scholarship possible. Through print, law became both an academic discipline and a medium of international dialogue, binding together the diverse legal and cultural worlds of early-modern Europe.

Censorship, Control, and the Limits of Legal Exchange

The flourishing of the Venetian press rested on a paradox: a republic renowned for intellectual vitality and commercial openness also maintained one of the most intricate systems of censorship in early modern Europe. Although Venice was more tolerant than many of its contemporaries, the freedom of the press was never absolute. The state's vigilance was exercised through the *Revisori e Censori*, officials responsible for reviewing publications to ensure conformity with civic order and religious

[29] Richardson, *Printing*, p. 74.
[30] *Ibid*., p. 82.
[31] Wilson, *World in Venice*, p. 203.
[32] Ross & Benton, *Legal Pluralism*, pp. 14-15.
[33] Lowry, *World of Aldus*, pp. 101-102.
[34] Burke, *Social History*, p. 62.
[35] Ross & Benton, *Legal Pluralism*, pp. 19-20.
[36] Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, pp. 89-90.

orthodoxy.[37] Their oversight extended beyond overtly political or theological texts to include works of law, history, and philosophy, whose interpretations could threaten established authority.

From the mid-sixteenth century, the Church's *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* added an additional layer of control, restricting the circulation of certain commentaries and legal treatises deemed incompatible with Catholic doctrine.[38] The Venetian Senate was frequently forced to negotiate between its economic interests and papal demands for stricter censorship. While the Republic often implemented ecclesiastical directives, enforcement was selective and inconsistent, reflecting Venice's determination to preserve its sovereignty over intellectual commerce.[39] The resulting legal landscape was one of constant negotiation between spiritual jurisdiction and secular autonomy. The regulatory framework surrounding printing privileges further revealed this tension between control and creativity. The Venetian decrees of 1469 and 1517 established a system of *privilegi* granting printers exclusive rights to reproduce specific works for limited periods.[40] These measures, designed to protect investment and deter piracy, effectively constituted the first codified form of intellectual property. By defining ownership of texts and ideas, the Republic introduced a legal mechanism that foreshadowed modern copyright law.[41] The privilege system thus served a dual purpose: it promoted innovation by guaranteeing profit, while simultaneously enabling the state to monitor and restrict the circulation of potentially subversive material.

Venice's approach to censorship and intellectual property reflected its broader political philosophy, the pursuit of equilibrium between knowledge and order. The Republic recognized that the printed word was both an economic asset and a potential threat to civic stability. Maintaining dominance in the book trade required tolerance of intellectual experimentation, yet preserving moral authority demanded regulation. This balance between openness and control encapsulated the central dilemma of early modern legal exchange: the same mechanisms that allowed ideas to circulate freely also imposed the limits within which that freedom could exist. Venice's management of print thus became a model for later European states seeking to reconcile the global movement of knowledge with the imperatives of governance and law.[42]

Legacy and Influence

The legacy of the Venetian printing industry extended far beyond the physical boundaries of the Republic. By transforming law from a localised manuscript tradition into a printed, standardized, and exportable corpus of knowledge, Venice helped define the intellectual architecture of modern Europe. The city's presses not only disseminated texts but also shaped the epistemological foundations of how law was conceived, taught, and practiced. Through print, legal discourse acquired the permanence, coherence, and accessibility necessary for the emergence of a unified European juridical consciousness.[43] The influence of Venetian printing was visible in both institutional and conceptual terms. Across Europe, universities and courts adopted Venetian editions of Roman and canon law as authoritative reference points, fostering a measure of uniformity in interpretation.[44] These texts were reprinted, translated, and adapted in legal centers from Paris to Kraków, embedding Venetian editorial methods within continental jurisprudence.[45] The typographical conventions and critical apparatus developed in Venice, such as marginal glosses, concordances, and indices, became standard features of

---

[37] *Ibid*., pp. 112-113.
[38] Brown, *Venetian Printing Press*, p. 42.
[39] Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, pp. 154-155.
[40] Brown, *Venetian Printing Press*, pp. 47-48.
[41] Cumby, *Printing and the Law*, p. 4.
[42] Leerssen, *National Thought*, p. 51.
[43] Burke, *Social History*, pp. 68-69.
[44] Richardson, *Printing*, p. 103.
[45] Wilson, *World in Venice*, pp. 167-168.

legal publishing, ensuring the continued utility of the printed book as both a scholarly and administrative tool.[46]

Venice's early system of printing privileges also left an enduring mark on modern intellectual property law. The legal principle that ideas and texts could be treated as forms of property under state protection anticipated later European copyright regimes. These precedents informed subsequent legislation in the Dutch Republic, England, and France, demonstrating how Venetian models of regulation became templates for other emerging print economies.[47] The Republic's balance between protection and openness thus foreshadowed modern debates over ownership, innovation, and the circulation of knowledge in global markets.[48] Culturally, the Venetian press preserved and propagated a humanist vision of law as both an art and a science. Its integration of classical philology, moral philosophy, and jurisprudence shaped the development of legal humanism, influencing later Enlightenment conceptions of universal law and civic order.[49] Even as the Republic's political power waned, its intellectual infrastructure endured. The transnational legal networks fostered by Venetian print culture anticipated the modern idea of international legal cooperation, a world in which law is not confined by geography but carried across borders by shared texts and traditions.

Venice's presses thus left behind more than volumes of printed paper, they forged an enduring system of intellectual exchange. In the convergence of commerce, scholarship, and governance, the Venetian model offered a prototype for how law could circulate globally while maintaining its cultural depth and moral authority.

Conclusion

The history of printing in Renaissance Venice reveals how law, commerce, and scholarships could merge to produce a new kind of transnational knowledge. Through its presses, the Republic transformed legal understanding from a localized, manuscript-bound tradition into a dynamic, portable, and standardised discourse. The printed word allowed law to travel across linguistic, political, and religious frontiers, binding together jurists and scholars within the wider fabric of the Republic of Letters. In doing so, Venice became not merely a site of production but an engine of intellectual connectivity, shaping the contours of European legal modernity.[50]

The city's achievement lay in its balance between freedom and regulation, commerce and conscience. Its legal infrastructure, censorship mechanisms, and printing privileges together defined how knowledge could circulate without losing coherence. The Venetian press thus operated at the intersection of movement and control, an enduring theme in the history of law itself. By structuring how ideas could cross borders, the Republic demonstrated that regulation and innovation were not opposites but mutually sustaining forces.[51]This synthesis speaks directly to a wider theme in the movement of peoples, individuals, and ideas. Venice's presses embodied all three. They drew scholars and artisans from across the Mediterranean, enabled individuals to reshape intellectual traditions, and allowed ideas, legal, humanist, and commercial, to move beyond the confines of empire or creed. The result was a form of cultural and juridical globalisation that prefigured the modern world, a networked exchange of texts and principles in which the law, like the sea that sustained Venice itself, flowed freely across borders.

[46] Lowry, *World of Aldus*, p. 139.
[47] Brown, *Venetian Printing Press*, pp. 75-77.
[48] Leerssen, *National Thought*, pp. 53-54.
[49] Burke, *Social History*, p. 72.
[50] Leerssen, *National Thought*, p. 60.
[51] Brown, *Venetian Printing Press*, p. 82.

Bibliography

Brown, Horatio F. *The Venetian Printing Press, 1469–1800: An Historical Study Based upon Documents for the Most Part Hitherto Unpublished* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1891).

Burke, Peter. *A Social History of Knowledge, Vol. 1: From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

Cumby (Grolier Club), Jamie. "Printing and the Law" exhibition text (installed May 8, 2025).

Grendler, Paul F. *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540–1605* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

Kiedroń, Stefan and Maria Rimm, Anna eds. *Early Modern Print Culture in Central Europe* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2014).

Leerssen, Joep. *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006).

Lowry, Martin. *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979).

Richard Ross and Lauren Benton. *Legal Pluralism and Empires, 1500–1850* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

Richardson, Brian. *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Wilson, Bronwen. *The World in Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

‘It is forbidden to speak Breton and to spit on the ground’: Internal Racism, Diasporas and Regionalisms in Modern France

Nathan Gleyses
University College Cork

Outside of the academic world, the perception of France as a country that was practically the founder of a political open-mindedness followed by equitable democracy, pleonasmic phrasing to talk about a system which aims to ‘leave no one behind’, remains strongly anchored in the common world culture. This sort of collective presumption first of all tends to fade away, especially in the recent years which brought to light studies exacerbating rampant authoritarian tendencies in the Hexagon[1], and second of all completely veils the dark past of French intellectual history in regards to race and racial hierarchy. By the latter, one can emphasise the indubitable contribution that French intellectuals of the modern period, be they writers, philosophers or politicians, effectively put in place in the history of philosophical, scientific and political racism.

Despite other European testimonies of phrenological experiments, like those of William Bally’s 1832 collection of skulls which could have been used as a means of teaching in universities,[2] French intellectuals can be said to have operated a shift from racism as a mere and simple constatation of the existence of other races to racism as an organised ideology of hierarchisation of humans in races, thus conceptualising a model for the use of future generations. That is to say, not a racism solely based on the belief of the existence of different races within mankind, but an imperative to subdue and control other ‘inferior’ civilisations, presumably because their genetics would entice them to persevere in this inferior state.[3]

This essay will attempt to show that, given this state of affairs, this historical French racism has been the quintessential tool of the modern French state to assert its one and undividable nature on every parcel of its territory, going headlong into what it thought to be a danger for stability: regional cultures, languages and sometimes even the very individuals that composed this national mosaic. Firstly this was achieved through the implementation of a judicial arsenal, followed by a scholarly banishment of languages and regional studies and cultural productions which did not meet this agenda of unity under a single nation; this will be addressed in the first part of the essay. Secondly the general portrayal made of these interior minorities and of their population movements into bigger cities will be examined, emphasising the various methods of demonisation to which they were subjected in society.

Repression in legal structures and academic isolation: a discriminatory state in nature

If the French Revolution as a whole did indeed aim to bring about an ideal of freedom and equity among all members of the social order, which it did with the clear indication that “all men are born and remaining equal and free before the law”,[4] it also brought along a certain idea of unity which trespassed upon the free will of the people to use whatever language they preferred. The French language is branded as becoming the “one and only language of France” and thus becomes the language of all

[1] H. Delzangles, S. Platon, L. Puech, “Dérive Autocratique : Mode d’Emploi”, in *La résistance du système juridique français face à un potentiel choc autoritaire*, Les Verts / Alliance Libre Européenne, July 2022.

[2] A. Cliff, *Coming home: Bally’s miniature phrenological system*, Science Museum Group Journal, Spring 2014.

[3] C. Guillaumin, *Aspects latents du racisme chez Gobineau*, Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie, vol. 42, p. 145 - 158, January - June 1967.

[4] First article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, 1789.

administrations across the country.[5] In 1789, it is estimated that only 15-20% of the population spoke French natively. Therefore, the mission of the new government appears clear: in a tentacular effort to instigate the revolutionary spirit through language, local institutions must abide by the implementation of this linguistic prerogative. Centralisation marches on, unstoppable. A study initiated by clergyman and Abbé Grégoire marked a very perceptible feeling that pre-empted similar work on regional cultures and languages throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The title of his final report, handed in to the government in 1794, "*On the necessity to annihilate patois and universalise the use of the French language*", and his questionnaire aimed at "understanding the customs of the countryside people". Grégoire's work brought to light two central notions in the dynamic of the new Republic that would be the backbone of repression on regionalisms. Firstly was the immutable use of one language, that being French; secondly, the clear process of an 'othering' campaign: "us, who are the respectable revolutionary Parisian society, governing and knowing what is best for the birth of a nation, versus them, reactionary, backwarded and ignorant people of the Provincial countryside".

This hostility towards regional studies and towards determination of localities would have dramatic consequences in the cultural lives of the French Province. When it came to education, pupils from Occitania, the Basque Country, Alsace and other regions without French as a majority language were forbidden to speak in their native tongues at school, from the mid-1850s on. The most saddening, albeit representative, instance of this was in Brittany, where practically every school held placards on the walls next to playgrounds stating: "It is forbidden to speak Breton and to spit on the ground", not so subtly making pupils understand that their native language was not even worthy enough to be called one. To make a language go extinct, first divide its society: this is the exact method that the Parisian government followed. In 1850, it is estimated that the five biggest cities of Ille-et-Vilaine region held literacy rates in French three times as high on average than other villages of the département.[6] In other terms, rich families were helped in acquiring the means to become respectable citizens, while more modest families were left aside to an inefficient integration.

In Toulouse, Southwestern part of the country, revolutionaries took the decision to close the Consistory of the Gay Science in 1791. It was the epicentre of Occitan poetry and philology whose activity had not ceased since its opening in 1323. Despite its re-opening a couple of decades later, the Southwest of France was sent a message that would persist in the following century and impact the advancement of academic research.[7] This famously occurred in the 1870s when speculations around the historiography of the Song of Roland became artificially altered by university heads. Theories surrounding the possible inspiration of the Song by Occitan oral history seemed so unacceptable that the academia of the time thought it more relevant to promote theories suggesting a German origin to the Song, despite the recent loss of Alsace and Lorraine after the Prussian War.[8] This arguably provides a scale to the resentment felt by modern French authorities towards regional cultures, when they would prefer even to cede their heritage to foreign nations rather than to their own internal minorities. Although surprising at first assessment, this happened at a conjunction of annexations which exemplify the difficulties encountered by new regions that hardly knew where to find their space in this nation.

---

[5] Robespierre, decree of the 20th July 1794 declaring public servants responsible for an exclusive communication in the language of the Kingdom.

[6] R. Gildéa , *L'enseignement en Bretagne au XIXème siècle: l'Ille-et-Vilaine*, Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest, vol. 2 - 84, p. 457 - 479, 1977.

[7] P. Dazet-Brun, A. De Pérignon, M.P. Rey, *L'Académie des Jeux Floraux. 700 ans de poésie à Toulouse.*, Cairn, 2024.

[8] P. Escudé , *L'épopée perdue de l'Occitan… a été retrouvée.*, symposium held at the Hôtel d'Assezat, Toulouse, France, 12th January 2023.

From a rural exodus to urban moral panics

19th century France met with a plethora of unexpected yet evershifting causes for new instabilities. Political turmoil and inconsistency was a primary cause and illustrated in several changes of regime across the century, bringing with them revisions of entire institutions and judicial systems. Collateral damage inevitably was shared in major conflicts engendered by this French "sneeze".[9] As mentioned before, two annexations occurred also in the 1850s/60s, those of the Nice country and of Savoy, which brought about regional control once more and imposed new challenges to the government. Finally, the second half of the century also saw the first wave of a rural exodus that would push 120,000 new urban inhabitants into cities every year.[10]

Just like the flow of Algerian and Moroccan workers after them, natives from all over the province came to either Paris or other hubs of trade, economy and opportunity in search of a better life. However, just like their coreligionists of pain from Belgium, Italy or Spain, French internal minorities started being used as an endless and replaceable *main d'oeuvre* to reduce their costs. Since the countryside in France has always had a tradition of being associated with poverty, this stereotypical vision of an "internal foreigner" being dirty, poor, badly-educated and hostile to good members of society was a recurrent trope. One instance of this is perfectly embodied by the role occupied by Auvergnats in the capital. Despite them owning three major newspapers and several dozens of businesses in Paris, the "bougnats" were attributed with a legend that, far from being coherent, discouraged Parisians to engage in contact with them. In the same fashion as Schrodinger's 'cat in a box' experiment, either Auvergnats were going to be the death of the capital, manipulating polls and elections and stealing businesses from honest, working Parisians - not too dissimilar to how Jews were portrayed in some literary works of the time - or else they were the pinnacle of the ghettos' squalor, laziness and parasiting. Despite Auvergnat children being in the frontline for some essential works at the time, chiefly as chimney sweepers alongside Savoyard children, the press had a certain ungratefulness towards this population and warned - in capital letters - of the arrival of 500,000 Auvergnats in Paris in 1881. This in fact accounted for the total population of their descendants, past and present.[11] This example conveys a clear illustration of a xenophobia that exercises in class disdain: either internal minorities are succeeding too much, frightening the local bourgeoisie in their hegemony, or they are elevated as pariahs who intentionally refuse to integrate.

This very issue of a 'refused integration', when in fact very little is done to effectively integrate local populations, can be seen in other cities where the dichotomy of classes is added to another form of rejection: the perpetual division between cities and the countryside. In 1851, a manifesto was released for the "eradication" of Breton immigrants in the city of Nantes, who were then accused of spreading scabies in the city, parking in ghettos and intentionally refusing to speak French.[12] Squalor as a whole is almost systematically agglutinated to the idea of an underdeveloped countryside which would threaten the cities with going backwards and 'poisoning' the efforts of public services to work efficiently. Again, because of their lack of opportunity and access to education in ultra-rural areas, Bretons were also seen as stupid and brutal, with no concern for common sense or proper behaviour.

Intellectual jurisprudence notwithstanding, the issue went further than simple slander of rural populations. In 1831, Prefect Auguste Romieu very seriously suggested under the July Monarchy

[9] The original quotation being "Whenever France sneezes, Europe catches a cold", attributed to Austrian chancellor Metternich by Eric Hobsbawm in *The Age of Capital: 1848 - 1875*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1975.

[10] J. M. Mayeur, *Les Débuts de la IIIème République*, Le Seuil, Paris, 1973.

[11] F. Raison-Jourde, *Endogamie et stratégie d'implantation professionnelle des migrants auvergnats à Paris au XIXe siècle.*, Ethnologie Française, vol. 10, p. 153 - 162, April - June 1980.

[12] D. Guyvarc'h, *Un manifeste de 1851 contre les immigrants bretons*, Genèses et Trajectoires, vol. 24, p. 137 - 144, 1996.

imposing a colonial regime on Brittany's villages and its rural world in general, leaving aside the cities, more developed and apt to acquire the urban way.[13] The use of the word 'colonial' here in some way implies a reversed process from that examined above: it implies that the state as an entity takes into management the most deprived and therefore inferior parts of the country, to prevent this colliding of the rural and urban worlds. As explained before, this ideal failed, and diasporas of Bretons, Auvergnats and others in bigger cities are common. Despite this, the rejection of Provincial regions, ultimately undissociated from their backwarded rurality, was genuine and included a racial dimension, as illustrated by historian Michelet: "Brittany is a colony, like Alsace and the Basque Country, even more so than Guadeloupe".[14]

Through this comparison, phrenological vocabulary and the active attempt at putting on the same level regional populations and colonised overseas territories was profuse, thus degrading a white population to the equivalent of 'sub-races'. This sort of 'racial downgrading' of which regional populations were victims will remain a constant state of affairs across the modern period and become the main concern of a eugenicist and racist branch of the intellectual life of the country. Antimeridionalism was in this way a restricted discriminating process towards populations from the Southwest of France, also called the 'Midi' region. Hyppolite Taine, eminent historian from the first part of the 19th century, writes about Meridionals: "Seeing them rumbling and speaking, one knows their race is different to our own. They are a mix of Carlin dogs and monkeys".[15] Louis-Ferdinand Céline, pillar of French literature, wrote of Toulousians in 1942: "Southern Zone, full of bastardised Mediterraneans, degenerated Narbonnoids, Arabic parasites who ought to be thrown back into the sea".[16] The use of the neologism 'Narbonnoids' here refers clearly to a racial classification like those found in Gobineau's work, designating corrupt genetics through the mixing of a noble race with a lower one. Later in the text Céline continues his hostility, aimed at the regionalist literary movement of the Felibrige, historically persecuted for their academic prowesses on the Occitan language, history and sub-cultures.[17] Another author, Vacher de Lapouge, proposes a classification of the Midi region between 'dolichocephali' and 'brachyocephali' to illustrate a 'bastardisation' of the inhabitants of the city of Montpellier from inhabitants from Lozere and Aveyron regions, once again the most rural parts of the area.[18]

General conclusion

Two main paradoxes can be brought to light with the presented facts of this conundrum. Firstly, this indubitable societal discrimination lived by French internal minorities was a factor in cultural construction and provided a heritage that would not have been achieved without the migration of those "undesirables" in cities and connected hubs of the country. Notably, entire extents of French contemporary argot have been constructed with terms that, at the time, had the use of racial slurs. One can think of the word "cretin": also used in English to talk of someone with limited intelligence: the French have used it since the beginning of the 19th century to describe the inhabitants of the Savoy region.[19] Secondly, witnessed concurrently to the modern period was the creation of movements of

---

[13] Revue de Paris, vol. 6, July 1831.

[14] A. Dupouy, *Michelet en Bretagne, son journal inédit d'Août 1831*, Horizons, Paris, 1947.

[15] H. Taine, *Carnets de Voyage (1863)*, Hachette et Compagnie, 1893.

[16] L.-F. Céline, *L'école des Cadavres*, Editions Denoël, 1938.

[17] A. Cazennave, *Napoléon Peyrat et Montségur*, Acte des Congrès Nationaux des Sociétés Historiques et Scientifiques, vol. 134, p. 97 - 110, 2001.

[18] G. Vacher de Lapouge, *Race et milieu social : essai d'anthroposociologie*, Marcel Rivière, 1909.

[19] M. Meyer-Hilfiger, *Qui étaient vraiment les Crétins des Alpes ?,* National Geographic Magazine (French edition), March 2025.

solidarity between those immigrants of the interior, sometimes even in the form of organised societies for the promotion and un-demonisation of their character (see for instance Ernest Laut's Valenciennese Society of Paris).[20] This deduced and implied duality therefore leads to a possible application of this reasoning to the apparent hypocrisy of the French intellectual elites of the time, when in fact others praised the diversity of the country precisely because of the variety of its regions.[21]

All in all, this topic embodies a unique yet effective social dimension in answering French contemporary turmoils surrounding the topic of immigration. As can be seen, moral panic targeting immigration at a time of factually low numbers of foreign immigrants remains an ongoing and fierce machine. This matter of fact is crucial in understanding the present rhetoric of the far-right regarding immigrants: this was especially shown before the French presidential elections of 2022, when historian Gérard Noiriel did not fail to remind the French public sphere that far-right (future) candidate Eric Zemmour did not suggest anything new in terms of ideology, but rather applied old concepts to a contemporary situation also vastly exaggerated. One could almost conclude that the Bretons, Occitans and Savoyards of yesterday are the French Arabic and French Black populations of today, observing the campaign of denigration imposed by an anti-immigration and racially motivated far-right.[22]

Bibliography

Newspapers

La Revue de Paris
Le Petit Journal

Primary literature
Céline Louis-Ferdinand. *L'école des Cadavres*. Editions Denoël. 1938.

Declaration of the Right of Man and of the Citizen, 1789.

Dupouy Auguste. *Michelet en Bretagne, son journal inédit d'Août 1831*. Paris: Horizons. 1947.

Taine Hippolyte. *Carnets de Voyage (1863)*. Hachette et Compagnie. 1893.

Vacher de Lapouge Georges. *Race et milieu social : essai d'anthroposociologie*. Marcel Rivière. 1909.

Secondary literature
Burdick Christa. *Branding the Alsatian Oxymoron: The Production of Ambivalent Identity*. Signs and Society. Vol. 4. Winter 2006.

Cazennave Annie. *Napoléon Peyrat et Montségur.* Actes des Congrès Nationaux des Sociétés Historiques et Scientifiques. Vol. 134 (2001) : 97-110.

Cliff Alice. *Coming Home: Bally's Miniature Phrenological System.* Science Museum Group Journal (Spring 2014).

[20] Homage to Ernest Laut by the Société des Amis de Panckoucke, Nord-pas-de-Calais Press Club (blog), March 2025.

[21] A.-M. Thiesse, *Les Deux Identités de la France,* Modern and Contemporary France, Vol. 9, 2001.

[22] G. Noiriel, *Le Venin dans la Plume : Edouard Drumont, Eric Zemmour et la part sombre de la République*, Editions La Découverte, Paris, 2019.

Dazet-Brun Philippe, De Pérignon Amandine, Rey Marie-Pierre. *L'Académie des Jeux Floraux. 700 ans de poésie à Toulouse.* Cairn. 2024.

Delzangles Hubert, Platon Sébastien, Puech Laurent. "Dérive Autocratique : Mode d'Emploi." In *La résistance du système juridique français face à un potentiel choc autoritaire*. Les Verts / Alliance Libre Européenne, July 2022.

Escudé Pierre. "L'épopée perdue de l'Occitan… a été retrouvée." Symposium hosted at the Hôtel d'Assézat, Toulouse, France, 12th January 2023.

Fraysse Patrick. *L'historytelling du Pays Cathare.* Mythes et Postérités Cathares, February 2024.

Gicquel Jérôme. "Bretagne : des indépendantistes appellent au boycott du film "Bécassine !" avec Denis Podalydès." 20 Minutes, Agence France-Presse, 28th May 2018.

Gildéa Robert. *L'enseignement en Bretagne au XIX^e siècle : l'Ille-et-Vilaine.* Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest. Vol. 84, no. 2 (1977): 457-79.

Guillaumin Claire. *Aspects latents du racisme chez Gobineau*. Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie. Vol. 42 (January-June 1967): 145-58.

Guyvarc'h Didier. *Un manifeste de 1851 contre les immigrants bretons.* Genèses et Trajectoires. Vol. 24 (1996): 137-44.

Hobsbawm Eric. *The Age of Capital: 1848–1875.* London : Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975.

Klusáková Luďa. "Between Urban and Rural Culture: Public Use of History and Cultural Heritage in Building Collective Identities (1990-2007)." In *Frontiers and Identities, Cities in Regions and Nations.* Pisa: Edizioni Plus. 2008.

Mayeur Jean-Marie. *Les Débuts de la III^e République.* Paris : Le Seuil, 1973.

Meyer-Hilfiger Manon. "Qui étaient vraiment les Crétins des Alpes ?" National Geographic Magazine (Édition française), mars 2025.

Noiriel Gérard. *Le Venin dans la Plume : Edouard Drumont, Eric Zemmour et la part sombre de la République*. Paris : La Découverte, 2019.

Perron Tangui. *Le cinéma en Bretagne.* Plomelin : Palantines, 2006.

Raison-Jourde François. *Endogamie et stratégie d'implantation professionnelle des migrants auvergnats à Paris au XIX^e siècle.* Ethnologie Française. *Vol.* 10 (April - June 1980): 153-62.

Thiesse Anne-Marie. *Les Deux Identités de la France.* Modern and Contemporary France. Vol. 9 (2001).

"Breen in Bengal" – Links Between Irish Revolutionary Literature and Indian Revolutionary Violence in the Early 20th Century.

Emma Hurley
University College Cork.

Popular historiography surrounding the independence movement in India conjures up images of Gandhian policies of non-violence and non-cooperation. International inspiration and intervention in the Indian independence movement within the literature is overwhelmingly ascribed to the contemporary communist thought emerging in Europe, chiefly in Germany and Russia. The common perception of the Indian revolution as anti-violence, or at least non-violent, ignores the diverse interdimensional element of the movement, especially regarding geographical variations.

'The Bengali Terrorist Movement' reached its height during the 1920s and 1930s. It emerged amongst a dominant campaign of non-violence and often came into conflict with populist pacifist ideals. The movement also possessed the unique feature of a continued Irish influence. Irish people were influential in forming some aspects of the Indian struggle for independence, but formal political collaboration through an anti-colonial lens was limited.[1] Connections between the two political wings of each respective movement — whether between the Indian National Congress (INC) and the various incarnations of Irish nationalists — seem to appear as mere expressions of mutual admiration.[2][3] In the early genesis of the INC, Irish political thought was common knowledge amongst members in many ways, but by 1928, Nehru attests, any awareness of Irish nationalism had evaporated.[4] Where it had not evaporated, however, was the province of Bengal.

Bengal emerges as an 'outlier' in the popular historiography of the Indian Independence Struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Bengali revolutionary terrorism, in groups such as Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar, were violent in their manifestation and carried an Irish influence, as did events in Chittagong in 1930 in particular.

The Tradition of Political Violence in Ireland.

Physical force nationalism as a legitimate form of political patriotism came to the forefront of Irish Revolutionary politics in the mid-19th century. Young Ireland, a political and cultural movement founded primarily by Dublin-based intellectuals, emerged as proponents of physical force nationalism during an era of peaceful O'Connellite Constitutional Nationalism. The split between Young Ireland and Daniel O'Connell and his repeal movement in 1846 is, in many ways, similar to the division between Gandhi and the Revolutionaries in Bengal. A populist and ubiquitous leader – coincidentally both trained lawyers – whose movement relied heavily on peaceful and democratic means came into heavy conflict with a generation of restless, middle-class young men promoting tactics of violence as a 'legitimate' vehicle to achieve military victory.

This 'genealogy' of violence against the backdrop of populist democratic movements continues through the rest of the 19th century, as do the quarrels (much like those seen in India) about the correct methods of achieving national independence. The Fenian movement emerges as the heir apparent to the physical violence tradition of Young Ireland. The Fenian Dynamite Campaign (1881-1885) gained

[1] One of the most prominent attempts at Irish-Indian Influence was Thomas Davis' "India, Her Own and Another's" (1840) featured in the *Nation*.
[2] Sri Aurobindo, *Sri Aurobindo: Bande Mataram; Early Political Writings*, vol. 1 (Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publications Department, 1998). 431.
[3] "Address delivered at the India freedom dinner of the Friends of freedom for India, on February 28, 1920, at the Central opera house, New York city", DA962. D39, South Asian Digital Collection, Library of Congress, 101 Independence Ave, SE Washington, DC 20540, United States.
[4] Michael Silvestri, "'The Sinn Fein of India': Irish Nationalism and the Policing of Revolutionary Terrorism in Bengal," Journal of British Studies 39, no. 4 (2000): 454–86. 461.

notoriety as an international Irish program of terrorism to solve the Irish national question,[5] coinciding with the equally international epoch of Charles Stewart Parnell and his Irish Parliamentary Party's (IPP) advocations for Irish Home Rule in Westminster. The Fenian bombing campaign, which ran almost parallel to Parnell's political heyday, unspectacularly fizzled out by 1885, as the increasing arrests of Fenian dynamiters deterred prospective recruits from joining the cause.[6] As the remaining Young Irelanders went on to organise the Fenian movements, the remaining Fenians would continue to form the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

Revolutionary Terror and Political Terror in Ireland, 1916-1923.

The idea of martyrdom for the cause and continuous links between each generation of Irish revolutionaries became increasingly important with each failed revolution in Ireland. The increasing fervour surrounding bloodshed and the veneration of revolutionary martyrs is best exemplified by Pádraig Pearse in his graveside oration at the funeral of former Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa in 1915:

> *[…] the fools, the fools, the fools! They have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.*[7]

Pádraig Pearse, as president of the provisional Irish republic, would in 1916 inflict on Dublin City what esteemed Irish writer W.B. Yeats calls a "terrible beauty".[8] The Easter Rising is crucial to understanding the Irish impact on Bengal. On Easter Monday 1916, an Irish force around 1,200 strong — either members of the Irish Volunteers or James' Conolly's Irish Citizen Army — took over various buildings across Dublin. The new Provisional Government of the Republic of Ireland set up a government in the General Post Office (GPO), where the "Proclamation of the Irish Republic" was read aloud by Pádraig Pearse, and Young Irelander Thomas Francis Meagher's tricolour was raised.[9] The timing of the Rising, at Eastertide, was not a coincidence, as the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) — chiefly Pearse — wanted the association of Irish martyrdom with the Martyrdom of Christ to be wholly apparent.

The Rising was quickly quelled by the British Government, with fighting coming to a halt on Easter Saturday.[10] 260 Irish civilians, 82 Irish Rebels, and 143 British soldiers lost their lives during Easter Week.[11] The initial reaction from the Irish public was overwhelmingly negative. The tide would quickly change, however, when sixteen men were executed for their role in organising or taking part in the 1916 Rising. The most unpalatable of these executions was that of William Pearse, who was executed seemingly because he was the younger brother of Pádraig Pearse, and James Connolly, who was shot tied to a chair, as the wound he had gained during the Rising rendered him unable to stand. Due to the innate secrecy of the IRB, it is impossible to know whether or not this Rising was intended to be a failure. To Pádraig Pearse, however, it was all the same:

---

[5] Deaglán Ó Donghaile, "Anarchism, Anti-Imperialism and 'the Doctrine of Dynamite,'" in *Literature, Migration and the "War on Terror,"* ed. Fiona Tolan et al. (Routledge, 2013). 5.
[6] Richard Kirkland, "'A Secret, Melodramatic Sort of Conspiracy': The Disreputable Legacies of Fenian Violence in Nineteenth-Century London," *The London Journal* 45, no. 1 (August 12, 2019): 39–52, https://doi.org/10.1080/03058034.2019.1649523. 45.
[7] Seán Ó Lúing, *Ó Donnabháin Rosa,* 1st ed., vol. 2 (Dublin: Sáirséal agus Dill, 1979). 289. Translated from Irish.
[8] W B Yeats, *Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats.* (London: Collector's Library, 2010). 154.
[9] Maureen Buckley, "Irish Easter Rising of 1916," *Social Science* 31, no. 1 (1956): 49–55. 52.
[10] *Ibid*., 54.
[11] Glasnevin Trust, "1916 Necrology, 485" (Dublin: Glasnevin Trust, 2017), https://web.archive.org/web/20171214221924/http://www.glasnevintrust.ie/__uuid/55a29fab-3b24-41dd-a1d9-12d148a78f74/Glasnevin-Trust-1916-Necrology-485.pdf.

> *"Bloodshed is a cleansing and a sanctifying thing, and the nation which regards it as the final horror has lost its manhood. There are many things more horrible than bloodshed; and slavery is one of them."*[12]

The failure of 1916 is not inherently negative when looking at the effects of 1916 in Ireland and indeed abroad. The martyrdom of the sixteen sparked outrage in the Irish people, and in India, and Bengal in particular, this small blow was still inspirational.[13] As Nehru keenly observed about the event,

> *The Easter Week Rising […] by its very failure attracted, for was that not true Courage which mocked at almost certain failure and proclaimed to the world that no physical might could crush the invincible spirit of a nation.*[14]

If Pádraig Pearse had lived to see his ideological successors in physical force nationalism in both Ireland and Bengal, he surely would not have been worried about the "manhood" of India and Ireland. The men and women who were arrested for their part in 1916, those who would later wage and ultimately win the Irish War of Independence, would 'graduate' from Frongach in 1918 after a general amnesty for Irish political prisoners was issued.[15] The violence during the War of Independence (1919-1921) was a heightened version of all previous iterations of Irish physical force nationalism.

Daniel 'Dan' Breen, a member of the IRA, is often credited with being the man who fired the first shots of the Irish War of Independence. On the 21st of January 1919, Dan Breen, under IRA Captain Séumas Robinson, took part in an ambush of two RIC officers in Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary.[16] Dan Breen also gained fame as one of the first revolutionaries to publish his autobiography about the War of Independence in 1924 with Talbot Press.[17] This was not remembered in Ireland as a classic of the genre however, perhaps overshadowed by his comrades Tom Barry and Ernie O'Malley in sensationalism and literary prowess respectively. It is India, specifically in Bengal, where, amongst a select few other Irish Revolutionaries, Dan Breen and his book *My Fight for Irish Freedom* (1924) found their fame.

Political Violence in Revolutionary Ireland, in India.

The Indian-Irish relationship had changed drastically since the advent of WW1, and so had the image of the Irishman in the Indian imagination.[18] Bengali nationalists had begun increasingly looking outwards for violent inspiration, as Valentine Chirol, a critic of Bengali terrorism, writes in *History of the Freedom Movement in India* that Bengalis;

> "*Of all Indians had been the most slavish imitators of the west, as represented, at any rate, by the Irish Fenian and the Russian anarchist"*

Éamon de Valera became a problem for Westminster in terms of Colonial cohesion.[19] During the course of the War of Independence, he returned to his country of birth, embarking on a fundraising campaign for the IRA across the United States in his official capacity as president of Dáil Éireann. One such stop

---

[12] J. Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse* (Springer, 2010). 242.
[13] Aditi Sen, "The Proscription of an Irish Text and the Chittagong Rising of 1930," *Indian Historical Review* 34, no. 2 (July 1, 2007): 95–121, https://doi.org/10.1177/037698360703400206. 101.
[14] Quoted in Richard P. Davis, "India in Irish Revolutionary Propaganda 1905-1922", in Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Volume XXII, No. I, 1977.
[15] Justin D Stover, "IRISH POLITICAL PRISONER CULTURE, 1916-1923," *CrossCurrents* 64, no. 1 (2014): 90–106, https://doi.org/10.2307/24462363. 91.
[16] John Dundon, "The War of Independence and the Civil War," *The Past: The Organ of the Uí Cinsealaigh Historical Society*, no. 35 (2021): 60–73, https://doi.org/10.2307/48635741. 60.
[17] Dan Breen, My Fight for Irish Freedom (1924; repr., Dublin: Anvil Books, 1997). IX.
[18] Silvestri, "The Sinn Féin of India," 459.
[19] *Ibid*., 460.

on his fundraising' tour was the "Friends of India Society" on February 28th, 1920. Addressing the society, he dedicates his speech to;

> *"The memory of the Martyrs who gave their lives to make India and Ireland Free and Independent"*[20]

In his address he links the struggles of India and Ireland, using the American Revolution as a reference point. The triad of anti-colonial trouble for England — Ireland, Egypt, and India — is naturally mentioned also.[21] De Valera is certain of Indian links to the contemporary Irish cause, telling attendees, "Patriots of India, your cause is identical to ours".[22] De Valera made it clear that his words are not aimed at proponents of non-violence or pacifism. In his speech, he tries to justify violence as such.

> *"No one appeals to physical force except as a last resort when there is no hope of securing justice otherwise".*[23]

This is not only de Valera's justification of violence in Ireland to American donors attending that evening's dinner but also an endorsement of anti-colonial violence wherever necessary. Although a gifted statesman, a fact that would appear later in his career, and indeed a committed democrat; as head of an anti-colonial revolutionary government de Valera was not opposed to anti-imperial violence, whether in India, Ireland, or Egypt. De Valera suggests the need for violence, telling the crowd, "If ever the sword was legitimate, it is in a case such as ours!", [24] And "Can we, struggling for our freedom, afford to fling away any weapon by which nations in the past achieved their freedom?".[25] Éamon de Valera's speech is not aimed at a particular group of physical force proponents in India, but rather encourages all Indian nationalists to "act as we have tried to act".[26] Éamon de Valera, as an inspiration for India, and trouble for the Empire, did not end in February 1920. Éamon de Valera's suggestion to Indian patriots to free their homeland through physical violence became a genuine fear for those in Westminster, who felt that the Irish had been rewarded for terrorism by being given a state.[27]

The Irish State during the 1930s was indeed still supportive of anti-imperial violence abroad when Subhas Chandra Bose – the founder of an Irish-style Volunteer force, the India Nationals Army (INA) in Calcutta in 1928 — came to visit Ireland in 1936.[28] Bose, Gandhi's antonym, was an aggressive radical and a proponent of revolutionary terrorism.[29] Bose was invited to visit the Dáil and discuss nation-building with Fianna Fáil government ministers.[30] Bose also met with the family of hungerstriker and Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney. Bose would write positively of Ireland in his statement entitled "Impressions of Ireland" released after his visit, praising the casual and policy conversations he held with government ministers.[31] The special relationship between India and Ireland, or at least between India and de Valera continued to the founding of an Indian state in 1947. Nehru visited Ireland in 1949 after it officially became an independent republic, and was the first foreign dignitary to speak in a fully independent Dáil Éireann.

---

[20] De Valera, *Ireland and India,* 2.
[21] *Ibid*., 24.
[22] *Ibid*., 3.
[23] *Ibid*., 22.
[24] De Valera, *Ireland and India,* 23.
[25] *Ibid*., 21.
[26] *Ibid*., 5.
[27] Silvestri, *Sinn Féin of India,* 460.
[28] See: Kate O'Malley, "Subhas Chandra Bose and Ireland," in *Ireland, India, and Empire Indo-Irish Radical Connections, 1919–64* (Manchester University Press, 2017).
[29] Kate O'Malley, "LEARNING the TRICKS of the IMPERIAL SECESSION TRADE: Irish and Indian Nationalism in the '30s and '40s," *History Ireland* 18, no. 4 (2010): 32–35, https://doi.org/10.2307/27823026. 33.
[30] *Ibid*., 34.
[31] O'Malley, *Irish and Indian Nationalism*, 34.

The influence of Irish Revolutionary literature served as perhaps the greatest influence on Bengali revolutionary movements. Except for de Valera, there are no substantial direct and official connections between the Irish Revolutionary Government and Bengali revolutionaries. Rather, a handful of revolutionaries in Bengal were superficially inspired by the successful physical force revolution in Ireland via written accounts, and a number of these admirers of the Irish tried to put these works into practice.[32] Irish revolutionary literature, rather than the literature of any other violent revolution, became popular because of the inherent anti-British sentiment contained within the texts and the characters also present within. Pádraig Pearse was the sacrificial idealist, Breen the pragmatic rebel, Michael Collins the military genius, Terence MacSwiney the holy martyr, and de Valera the nation builder.[33]

The links between Pearse and movements in Bengal were tangible. In a report published in 1937, by the British Government in India, entitled "Terrorism in India 1917-1936", details of a "revolutionary pamphlet" distributed in 1925 in Bengal are revealed.[34] This leaflet suggests to any young idealist that "an armed revolution is the only way to establish [...] a Federal Republic of the United States of India".[35] The Irish campaign of guerilla warfare is cited as the model for this supposed armed revolution. Literature that was widely published across India by the Hindustani Republican Association in 1929 entitled "Long Live Revolution" called for young Indians to "make India another Ireland and the reins of government are in your hands!".[36] The explicit mention of Pearse arises in a pamphlet entitled 'The Youths of Bengal', produced in 1929 by the Chittagong Branch of the Indian Republican Army. It calls for the young spirited men of Bengal to,

> *Read and learn the histories of Pearse – the gem of Young Ireland, and you will find how noble is his sacrifice; how he stimulated new animation in the nation, being made over independence.*[37]

Dan Breen's *My Fight for Irish Freedom* became the most popular autobiography in the region – perhaps due to his timing more than anything. Chinmohan Sehanabis called the work "one of our Bibles", and Niranjan Sen Gupta adopted it as his manual for revolution.[38] Breen's work was also perhaps the most accessible, being translated into several Indian languages, including Hindi, Punjabi and Tamil.[39] One such translation was completed by Bhagat Singh of the Hindustani Socialist Republic Association.[40] Breen's 'manual' increasingly became an issue for the British government in Bengal, as Governor John Anderson noted that Breen represented the "Individual terrorist as a heroic and romantic figure".[41] Sir John Anderson had experience with Irish 'terrorists', having served as undersecretary for Ireland from 1921 – 1922.[42] What made Breen influential was the fact he was not a professional soldier, academic or ideologue – but still he alone had 'declared' war on the British Empire by firing a single shot.[43] Revolutionaries in Bengal, inspired by 1916 and Breen, felt as if they did not have to be wholly militarily successful, but at least try. Daniel Breen's popularity in revolutionary circles in Bengal led to

---

[32] Peter Heehs, "Foreign Influences on Bengali Revolutionary Terrorism 1902–1908," *Modern Asian Studies* 28, no. 3 (July 1994): 533–56, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0026749x00011859. 543.
[33] Silvestri*, The Sinn Féin of India,* 467.
[34] Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department of the Government of India, "Terrorism in India" (Simla: Government of India Press, 1937). 1.
[35] *Ibid*., 1.
[36] *Ibid*., 211.
[37] *Ibid*., 214.
[38] Cited in Leonard A Gordon, *Brothers against the Raj: A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose* (Kolkata: Rupa & Co, 2008). 103.
[39] *Ibid*., 470.
[40] Michael Silvestri, "The Bomb, Bhadralok, Bhagavad Gita, and Dan Breen: Terrorism in Bengal and Its Relation to the European Experience," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, no. 1 (January 5, 2009): 1–27, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550802544383. 14.
[41] Cited in Silvestri, *The Sinn Féin of India*, 470.
[42] Banerjee, *Muscular Nationalism.* 23.
[43] Aditi Sen, "The Proscription of an Irish Text and the Chittagong Rising of 1930," *Indian Historical Review* 34, no. 2 (July 1, 2007): 95–121, https://doi.org/10.1177/037698360703400206. 102.

his autobiography being banned under the Indian Press Act of 1910. The Indian Press Act of 1910 aimed to prevent the semination of "seditious literature", including the details and documentation of revolutionary activity abroad, especially those revolutions about the removal of crown forces, and even more specifically in Ireland.[44] The British Government in India knew Breen's work to be influential for these young nationalists, with the previously cited 1937 report produced by the British government on political terror in Bengal mentioning that Niranjan Sen Gupta had formed the secret revolutionary organisation, Jugantar, based on the principles outlined in *My Fight for Irish Freedom.*[45] Among the titles included alongside the proscription of *My Fight for Irish Freedom* were literature about Irish revolutionary Countess Constance Markievicz, details about youth movements in Ireland, biographies about Young Irelander John Dillon, as well as de Valera, and other historical texts on the revolution in Ireland as a whole.[46] Breen's influence is best seen in the Chittagong Armoury Raid – or the Chittagong Uprising in 1930, a self-conscious imitation of the events of Easter 1916 as described by Breen in his book.

Chittagong 1930 – a reflection of Dublin 1916.

With less than 100 or so rebels in Chittagong in 1930, failure was a known inevitability. Organising, like how Volunteers had organised, was simply not possible in India for a variety of reasons. Yet, Bengali revolutionaries knew that military failure had not deterred rebels in Ireland – in fact, military failure had been a galvanising factor in rallying popular support in Ireland. Surya Sen, the leader of the Chittagong uprising, is recorded as recounting the words of Young Irelander James Fintan Lalor,

> *Somehow, somewhere, and by somebody a beginning must be made, and the first act of resistance is always and shall ever be premature, imprudent, unwise and dangerous.*[47]

This was the quote that was found in Sen's pocket when he was captured in the aftermath of the Rising.[48] With Fintan Lalor ringing in their ears, Surya Sen and Ganesh Ghosh met in Calcutta in 1929 to plan armoury raids across Bengal. Both men, having read the pamphlet entitled "Youths of Bengal" released that same month, were inspired by Pearse's programme of death and martyrdom described in his writings.[49] On Good Friday, the 18th of April, 1930, around 75 men led by Ganesh Ghosh and Lokenath Bal began raiding the British Armoury in Chittagong. The plan, almost directly modeled off 1916, included plans to attack armoury magazines, guardrooms, and barracks and to destroy communication lines. Also included in these plans was a massacre of Europeans in their clubhouse within the region.[50] The timing of the rising in 1916 was a deliberate action taken by the Indian Republican Army. Other elements of the 1916 Rising were emulated, including the hoisting of a national flag, and Sen reading the Proclamation of Independence, as Pearse did in 1916.[51]

Although experiencing some initial success, especially in isolating Chittagong from the rest of Bengal and aquiring some arms, the rebels failed to raid a single bullet, and came vastly unprepared in terms of food and supplies. As for the planned attack on the European Club, for all the knowledge they possesed on the Easter Rising, they had little knowledge about the Christian traditions associated with Easter itself. There were no European officers present in the Club that Friday, as drinking alcohol is

---

[44] India Office Library, Publications Proscribed by the Government of India, ed. Graham Shaw and Mary Llyod (London: British Library, 1985). viii.
[45] Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department of the Government of India, "Terrorism in India" (Simla: Government of India Press, 1937). 25.
[46] *Ibid*., 49, 30, 80, 44, 136.
[47] Sen, *The Proscription of an Irish Text, and the Chittagong Rising of 1930,* 98.
[48] *Ibid*., 116.
[49] *Ibid*., 111.
[50] Sen, *The Proscription of an Irish Text, and the Chittagong Rising of 1930, 112*-113.
[51] *Ibid*., 115.

generally impermissible on Good Friday.[52] After a gallant encore by the revolutionaries in the Jalalabad hills – in an attempt to copy the guerilla warfare of the Irish War of Independence,[53] and the deaths of 80 British soldiers and 12 revolutionaries, the fighting ceased. Sen would eventually be captured in 1933 and was executed in 1934. The rising in Chittagong did not have the effect in India as Breen or Pearse had, and non-violence as a form of political protest would continue to dominate the Indian revolution.

Conclusions

There are clear differences between the successes of Irish Revolutionary Violence and Indian Revolutionary violence, especially focused in Bengal. On a practical level in terms of sheer population numbers, one can't expect the level of national organisation to take place in India as in Ireland. To be able to achieve political synthesis amongst such a diverse nation is not a task comparable to the organisation of a generally heterogeneous Ireland.[54] The father of Irish Republicanism,Theobald Wolfe Tone, founded his 'Society of United Irishmen' with an ecumenical vision in mind. All iterations of Irish nationalist politics were naturally heavily Catholic, but included a vocal Protestant minority. Revolutionary violence in Bengal, however, was overwhelmingly, if not completely Hindu. Although Irish physical force nationalists had previously come into conflict with high politics, by 1918, the political wing of Sinn Féin was able to fuse with the military wing of the party, the IRA. As such, the existence of the Sinn Féin government was able to provide political legitimacy for the IRA as a national army defending the sovereignty of an independent nation. The Indian National Congress was not able to provide this critical support for any revolting group in Bengal – nor did it have any political will to. India, under the non-violent leadership of Gandhi, felt as if it was capable of freeing itself using other methods.

The relationship between the nations that emerged out of the British Raj (India, Pakistan and later Bangladesh), and Ireland was in many ways altered by the diplomatic relationships established between the two nations, and indeed the hardships both experienced during this exact epoch. Both experienced the births of their independent Republics during this era – India in 1947 and Ireland in 1949. India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, alongside Ireland, also experienced the pain and violence of the divisions of their respective countries on religious grounds, and indeed the mass refugee crises that arise from partition of this nature. One can glean from a close analysis of foreign influence on violence in Bengal, that although their ideology was mainly Russian, their tactics were Irish. Men like Surya Sen and Pádraig Pearse were divided by oceans and time, and yet their ideals, values and actions mirror one another in many ways. What can be seen is genuine mutual appreciation for the anti-colonial work carried out by each nation and a legitimate appreciation for Irish Revolutionary Literature.

---

[52] *Ibid*., 115.

[53] Amit Kumar Gupta, "Defying Death: Nationalist Revolutionism in India, 1897-1938," *Social Scientist* 25, no. 9/10 (September 1997): 3, https://doi.org/10.2307/3517678. 24.

[54] Office of the Census Commissioner for India, "Census of India 1931" (Dehli: Government of India Publications, 1933).

Bibliography

Primary Source Material

Breen, Dan. *My Fight for Irish Freedom*. 1924. Reprint, Dublin: Anvil Books, 1997.

De Valera, Éamon. India and Ireland. New York, Friends of Freedom for India, 1920. Pdf. https://www.loc.gov/item/21014931/.

India Office Library . *Publications Proscribed by the Government of India*. Edited by Graham Shaw and Mary Llyod. London: British Library, 1985.

Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department of the Government of India. "Terrorism in India." Simla: Government of India Press, 1937.

Office of the Census Commissioner for India. "Census of India 1931." Dehli: Government of India Publications, 1933.

Yeats, W B. *Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats.* London: Collector's Library, 2010.

Secondary Readings

Aurobindo, Sri. *Sri Aurobindo: Bande Mataram; Early Political Writings*. Vol. 1. Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publications Department , 1998.

Buckley, Maureen. "Irish Easter Rising of 1916." *Social Science* 31, no. 1 (1956): 49–55.

Das, Taraknath. "The Progress of the Non-Violent Revolution in India." *The Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 2 (1921): 204. https://doi.org/10.2307/29738473.

Davis, Richard P. "India in Irish Revolutionary Propaganda, 1905–1922." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh* 22, no. 1 (1977): 66-89.

Dundon, John. "The War of Independence and the Civil War." *The Past: The Organ of the Uí Cinsealaigh Historical Society*, no. 35 (2021): 60–73. https://doi.org/10.2307/48635741.

Glasnevin Trust. "1916 Necrology, 485." Dublin: Glasnevin Trust, 2017. https://web.archive.org/web/20171214221924/http://www.glasnevintrust.ie/__uuid/55a29fab-3b24-41dd-a1d9-12d148a78f74/Glasnevin-Trust-1916-Necrology-485.pdf.

Gordon, Leonard A. *Brothers against the Raj : A Biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*. Calcutta: Rupa & Co, 2008.

Gupta, Amit Kumar. "Defying Death: Nationalist Revolutionism in India, 1897-1938." *Social Scientist* 25, no. 9/10 (September 1997): 3. https://doi.org/10.2307/3517678.

Heehs, Peter. "Foreign Influences on Bengali Revolutionary Terrorism 1902–1908." *Modern Asian Studies* 28, no. 3 (July 1994): 533–56. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0026749x00011859.

J. Augusteijn. *Patrick Pearse*. Springer, 2010.

Kirkland, Richard. "'A Secret, Melodramatic Sort of Conspiracy': The Disreputable Legacies of Fenian Violence in Nineteenth-Century London." *The London Journal* 45, no. 1 (August 12, 2019): 39–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/03058034.2019.1649523..

Ó Donghaile, Deaglán. "Anarchism, Anti-Imperialism and 'the Doctrine of Dynamite.'" In *Literature, Migration and the "War on Terror,"* edited by Fiona Tolan, Stephen Morton, Anastasia Valassopoulos, and Robert Spencer. Routledge, 2013.

Ó Lúing, Seán. *Ó Donnabháin Rosa* . 1st ed. Vol. 2. Dublin: Sáirséal agus Dill, 1979.

O'Malley, Kate. "LEARNING the TRICKS of the IMPERIAL SECESSION TRADE: Irish and Indian Nationalism in the ′30s and ′40s." *History Ireland* 18, no. 4 (2010): 32–35. https://doi.org/10.2307/27823026.

———. "Subhas Chandra Bose and Ireland." In *Ireland, India and Empire Indo-Irish Radical Connections, 1919–64*. Manchester University Press, 2017.

Sen, Aditi. "The Proscription of an Irish Text and the Chittagong Rising of 1930." *Indian Historical Review* 34, no. 2 (July 1, 2007): 95–121. https://doi.org/10.1177/037698360703400206.

Silvestri, Michael. "'The Sinn Fein of India': Irish Nationalism and the Policing of Revolutionary Terrorism in Bengal." *Journal of British Studies* 39, no. 4 (2000): 454–86.

———. "The Bomb,Bhadralok, Bhagavad Gita, and Dan Breen: Terrorism in Bengal and Its Relation to the European Experience." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, no. 1 (January 5, 2009): 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550802544383.

Stover, Justin D. "IRISH POLITICAL PRISONER CULTURE, 19161923." *CrossCurrents* 64, no. 1 (2014): 90–106. https://doi.org/10.2307/24462363.

Class, Translation, and Publishing in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Ireland[1]

Donal O'Connell, M.A.
History Society Alum.

The nineteenth century began in Ireland with severe censorship of the press. The uprisings of the United Irishmen led to a fear of radical sympathisers in Dublin Castle and, as such, papers thought to be aligned with the separatist or radical views of the Society of the United Irishmen were outlawed. This coincided with another reaction to the United Irish uprisings: the 1801 Act of Union. In effect, the role of the press in Ireland entering the new century was uncertain, and as censorship began to become less strict and the wars of the continent faded, the champion of Catholic Emancipation, Daniel O'Connell, would be the first to make a mark on the media landscape of Ireland under the Act of Union which he later sought to repeal. Brian Inglis summarised, back in 1952, O'Connell's relationship with the Irish press up until the beginning of the 1840s and concluded then that "O'Connell had little sympathy with the principle of the freedom of the press".[2] He presents a vision of the Irish press emerging from a period of intense censorship into one of domination by political actors and private wealth akin to censorship. Simultaneously, the Dublin printing industry was dealt a catastrophic blow by the Act of Union, and Ireland became increasingly reliant on imports from Britain and Europe.[3] This created an Ireland post-Union largely dependant on external trade for any print media beyond what was ordained by political elites and the interests of a small economic class. This changed dramatically as the century approached its mid-point, a change which this article will argue was connected to a larger shift in Irish class dynamics and that this shift shaped the international content which appeared in Irish print in translation during this period.

Broader studies involve this with a trend among the peripheral nations of Europe, whereby the growth of a national majority middle class coinciding with an increase in literacy in the dominant language resulting in the growth of a nationalism largely dictated by the cultural and class interests of this new national middle class. Bill Kissane explores this in a comparison of Finnish and Irish nationalism in the nineteenth century, finding the circumstances in which both nations entered the new century broadly similar as a transfer of power, as in the Act of Union and the Russian annexation in 1807.[4] He claims that "the development of nationalism […] was preceded by a fundamental restructuring of the relationship between the territory and its metropolitan centre" in both cases.[5] The development of a middle class or *petit bourgeois* dictated the character of this nationalism in both cases: this was ushered in in Finland as a result of the autonomy of the Grand Duchy and allowed in Ireland by the increasing liberalisation of the United Kingdom it had recently joined and respectively saw the rise of civic and cultural nationalism in either nation.[6] Thus, the growth of an urban, emancipated, Catholic, English-speaking, literate middle class in Ireland influenced a rise in cultural nationalism and a print media to reflect this. Despite this, Ireland was still peripheral, not as closed off to the world as Finland, and so much of the ideological foundation of this nationalist movement was the product of imported works.

Early works like Richard Davis's *The Young Ireland Movement* consistently claim a German ideological influence on the political work of Ireland's earliest cultural nationalist movement, the Young Irelanders.[7] "Young Ireland" arose as a phrase of attack against a radical subsection of

[1] This article is adapted from a section of Donal O'Connell's thesis submitted as part of the University College Dublin Irish History MA 2024-5 titled "A Core-Periphery Perspective on the European influences on Young Ireland Ideology, 1839-1848".
[2] Brian Inglis, "O'Connell and the Irish Press 1800-42," *Irish Historical Studies* 8, no. 29 (1952): 26.
[3] Charles Benson, "The Irish Trade," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 373-6.
[4] Bill Kissane, "Nineteenth-Century Nationalism in Finland and Ireland: A Comparative Analysis," *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics 6*, no. 2 (2000): 27.
[5] *Ibid.*, 28.
[6] *Ibid*., 30-1.
[7] Richard Davis, *The Young Ireland Movement*, (London: Gill & Macmillan, 1988): 19-20.

O'Connell's Repeal party dedicated to re-establishing an Irish parliament. This disorganised movement was made up of radical land reformers, Irish language enthusiasts, secularists, and crypto-republicans who eventually coalesced around *The Nation* journal co-founded by Thomas Davis, Charles Gavan Duffy, and John Blake Dillon. While writers in recent decades such as Richard English have doubted the veracity of the German influence on these nationalists, discounting their cultural nationalism to a reading of Thomas Carlyle, this view can be dismissed by the prominence of translation in Young Ireland affiliated media, and the explosion of the translated book publishing industry contemporaneously occurring in Dublin.[8]

Dublin Monthly Magazine, or *Citizen* as it was also known, preceded *Nation* and took a monthly format but saw many active Young Ireland writers including Thomas Davis. Edited by William Elliot Hudson, *Citizen* consistently published translations of German-language poetry from the *Sturm-und-Drang*, Weimar Classicism, and Romanticist movements spanning the late-eighteenth century into the mid-nineteenth century.[9] Possibly the premier magazine for Irish readers of translated European poetry and literature in this period was the *Dublin University Magazine*, affiliated with Trinity College Dublin. Young Ireland poet and translator James Clarence Mangan was employed with the *University Magazine* and produced an anthology of translated German works in 1845. This work is reviewed in *Nation*, which also copies advertisements for growing indigenous publishing houses including a new 1846 translation of Schlegel's *Philosophy of History* and booklists from S.J. Machen for books in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, English, and French.[10] Machen's role as the publisher of the volumised editions of *Citizen* after it had exited print reveals a partial image of the nationalist print ecosystem emerging around this movement, one which emphasised the translation of works relevant to the nationalist project embraced by the Young Irelanders including an emphasis on the works of German nationalist philosophers and poets.

A more complete image is offered by Anne O'Connor in her book *Translation and Language in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*. O'Connor emphasises how, as a peripheral nation, Ireland was largely on the receiving end of such translation, claiming that the "interchange of literatures, ideas, words and cultures can involve skewed and unbalanced transactions, with some cultures exporting much and importing little while others import much and export little," with Ireland falling into the latter category and therefore being significantly shaped by the import of culture from the continent.[11] The importation of ideas involved not just translation, but also transformation as they are suited to the context to which they arrive, reshaping, for example, German ideas of cultural nationalism rooted in unification and a strong academic background to an Irish context of separatism and underdeveloped academia prior to the 1845 Queen's Colleges Act. While also discussing the periodicals discussed above such as *Nation* and *Dublin University Magazine*, O'Connor draws particular attention to the work of a prolific Dublin-based publisher of translations, James Duffy.

Duffy marketed directly to the Catholic middle class and was not explicitly nationalist in character, instead prioritising translations from French, Italian, and Latin writers typically covering Catholic topics.[12] Being known for his strong personal brand and competitive pricing, Duffy dominated the indigenous Irish publishing industry when it came to translation, which meant that it could often be difficult in Ireland to find translated works on secular topics unless they were imported from English publishing houses by Irish booksellers or private individuals. The letters of Young Ireland's resident ideologue, Thomas Davis, to his London-based friend John Edward Pigott, reveal the often-intimate nature of this book trade as he writes requests for translated books for the Repeal reading rooms to his friend alongside accounts of recent affairs of his personal and political life.[13] The Repeal reading rooms provided a means for the literate outside of Dublin to encounter translated works purchased and provided by the Young Irelanders, who championed the reading rooms within Repeal, resulting in their

---

[8] Richard English, *Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland*, (London: Macmillan, 2006): 157-159.

[9] See S.J. Machen, *Citizen Vol. I,* (Dublin: SJ Machen, 1840).

[10] *Nation*, 1845;1846.

[11] Anne O'Connor, *Translation and Language in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: A European Perspective*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017), 39.

[12] O'Connor, *Translation and Language*, 61-2.

[13] Thomas Davis "Letters of Thomas Davis. Part II," The Irish Monthly 16, no. 180 (1888): 343.

more secular nature. Thus, it begins to become clearer that class interest generally dictated the translations available to the Irish market, limiting the influence of secular material that Young Ireland had to import from England. This meant that the availability of translated works in the Irish market was largely limited to two key interest groups: the majority being from the Catholic middle class, and the minority from secular cultural nationalists.

This leaves one group unspoken for: those competent in European languages and a subsect of this group being the translators themselves. Among Ireland's educated elite, both Catholic and Protestant, language-learning was a highly valued skill during the nineteenth century. This could also be tied to Ireland's peripherality and reliance on the idea-production of the European core, a cultural aversion to English exclusivity among Anglophobic nationalists, or the historic ties to the majority co-religionist France. Phyllis Gaffney describes it as "cultural and historical reasons" that "modern language study was given prominence in all of Ireland's universities some decades before [Britain's]."[14] Many of the contributors to *Nation* were multilingual, such as Jane 'Speranza' Wilde, Mangan, and possibly Davis.[15] Mangan was one of the most prolific translators of the period and, as such, his interests held sway. His interests lay largely in the German literary tradition, from contemporary Young Germany poets to eighteenth-century *Sturm und Drang* and Weimar Classicism authors such as Goethe. Like the Young Germans he translated such as Georg Herwegh, and like his German-inspired colleague on the *Nation*, Davis, Mangan approached cultural nationalist thought in a distinctly cosmopolitan and anti-imperialist way, with apparent inheritances from the early German nationalist philosopher Johann Gottfired Herder.[16] His work also often borrowed an orientalist character from Goethe, which imagined West Asia in inaccurate terms, but nonetheless reinforced an anti-racialist, anti-imperialist tone, such as his claim "Every Irishman is an Arab."[17] Over a third of translated works in *Nation* prior to Mangan's death were German in origin, highlighting his strong influence within the secular cultural nationalist sphere of translation.[18] Despite this, Mangan struggled to be published in Ireland, and the record shows that repeatedly Davis was one of his most steadfast supporters in getting published in London, indicating that the market share of these secular anti-imperialists was outcompeted by Duffy's Catholic brand.[19] Both men died young in the 1840s, limiting their long-term provenance, but they left a lasting legacy.

It can therefore be seen that the access of the Irish public to translated print material was mediated by a number of factors, first among them being the interests of the growing Catholic commercial class and increasing English literacy among Irish Catholics. Translators and publishers as individuals also held a great deal of sway in how ideas were transformed to the Irish context. Translation of context shaped the implementation of nationalist ideas significantly and systemically, but with the translation of language, change was often the prerogative of individuals or small groups due partly to the process of selection of works for translation, but also because of the authorship of translators. Translators like Mangan and publishers like Duffy therefore shaped the Irish audience's reception of continental ideas as much as the demands of the Catholic middle class did. Andrew Cusack argues that the German Gothic Revival in Victorian Ireland and Britain is a legacy of Mangan's prolific and selective translation work.[20] Mangan was well aware of the influence of a translator and in much of his

[14] Phyllis Gaffney, *Foreign Tongues: Victorian Language Learning and the Shaping of Modern Ireland*, (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2024), 4.

[15] In my thesis I interrogate claims regarding Davis's multilingualism and find that, while it is possible that Davis had some knowledge of French, German, and Irish, he likely did not contribute in a significant way to the translation work of *Nation*.

[16] Arda Arikan & Sukriye Teksener, "Cosmopolitanism in James Clarence Mangan's Prose," Forum for World Literature Studies 14, no. 3 (2022): 490-1.

[17] Melissa Fegan, "'Every Irishman is an Arab': James Clarence Mangan's Eastern 'Translations'," Translation and Literature 22, no. 2 (2013): 202.

[18] O'Connor, *Translation and Language*, 151.

[19] Davis, "Letters of Thomas Davis." *The Irish Monthly* 16, No. 179 (1888): 270; "Letters, II," 340-8; O'Connor, *Translation and Language*, 137-8.

[20] See: Andrew Cusack , "Cultural Transfer in the Dublin University Magazine: James Clarence Mangan and the German Gothic", in Popular Revenants, ed. Andrew Cusack & Barry Murnane (Rochester: Camden House, 2012), 87-104.

original work he toyed with the concept of the translator's authorship, indicating a self-consciousness of the non-objectivity of a translator.[21] As mentioned, Duffy's influence was far more systematic and impersonal. He made calculated economic decisions which nonetheless held great sway over the nature of continental works translated into English for an Irish audience.

Thus, Mangan and Duffy both represent the two major influences on the printing of translated works in Ireland during this period: the authority of the translator and the authority of the publisher. Respectively, these influences are shaped in nature by the growth of Irish cultural nationalism and the emergence of an economically powerful Catholic middle class. By Mangan's death in 1849, the landscape of translated media in Ireland had significantly transformed since the early decades of the century, with a greater availability of translated works being present in both periodicals and books. Censorship made a brief return to the island in the aftermath of the 1848 Young Ireland rebellion, but it did not have the lasting impact of the 1798 repressions. The impact of the transformation of the press and publishing in this period on the developments within Irish nationalism is notable and also reflects a broader trend of the Irish public sphere becoming dominated by a wealthy class of literate and Anglophonic Irish Catholics. This development then mediates the flow of ideas from the European core to Ireland in the periphery, impacting which works get translated and how they are imparted to an Irish context.

[21] Fegan, "'Every Irish Man is an Arab'," 206.

Bibliography

Nation. Irish Newspaper Archives.

Arikan, Arda and Sukriye Teksener. "Cosmopolitanism in James Clarence Mangan's Prose." *Forum for World Literature Studies* 14, no. 3 (2022): 488-500.

Benson, Charles. "The Irish Trade." In The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, 366-382. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Cusack, Andrew. "Cultural Transfer in the *Dublin University Magazine*: James Clarence Mangan and the German Gothic." In *Popular Revenants*, edited by Andrew Cusack and Barry Murnane, 87 104. Rochester: Camden House, 2012.

Davis, Richard. *The Young Ireland Movement*. London: Gill & MacMillan, 1988.

Davis, Thomas. "Letters of Thomas Davis." *The Irish Monthly* 16, No. 179 (1888): 261-270.

_____. "Letters of Thomas Davis. Part II." *The Irish Monthly 16*, no. 180 (1888): 335–48.

English, Richard. *Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland*. London: Macmillan, 2006.

Fegan, Melissa. "'Every Irishman is an Arab': James Clarence Mangan's Eastern 'Translations'." *Translation and Literature* 22, no. 2 (2013): 195-214.

Gaffney, Phyllis. *Foreign Tongues: Victorian Language Learning and the Shaping of Modern Ireland*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2024.

Inglis, Brian. "O'Connell and the Irish Press 1800-42." *Irish Historical Studies* 8, no. 29 (1952): 1-27.

Kissane, Bill. "Nineteenth-Century Nationalism in Finland and Ireland: A Comparative Analysis." *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics* 6, no. 2 (2000): 25-42.

Machen, S.J. *The Citizen: Or Dublin Monthly Magazine*. Dublin: Samuel J. Machen, 1842.

O'Connor, Anne. *Translation and Language in Nineteenth-Century Ireland : A European Perspective*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017.

Acknowledgements

Editor in Chief

Emma Patricia Ní Muirthile

Vice-Editor-In-Chief

Eoghan Hastings

Graphic Design and Photography

Emma Patricia Ní Muirthile & Laura Barszczewska

History Society Chairperson

Cian Mulhearne

Peer Reviewers and Editors

Róisín Buckley
Thomas Cosgrave (Grammar Czar)
Tomás Flynn
Tadhg Holland
Justin Isberg
Rhiannon Quirke

This edition of the Journal is dedicated to free editing pizza.

Let no Irishman throw a stone at the foreigner; he may hit his own clansman. Let no foreigner revile the Irish; he may be vilifying his own stock.

James Connolly, in Harp Strings (1908)

UCC History Society

@ucchistorysociety

@uccstudenthistoryjournal