

María Xosé Rodríguez Galdo and Daniel Varela-Suanzes-Carpegna (orgs). *Galicia & América: Cinco Siglos de Historia*. Coruña: Consello Da Cultura Galega, 1992.

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This book is a scholarly attempt to commemorate the role Galicia and its people played in the building of a transatlantic relation between Europe and America, since the time of Christopher Columbus's encounter with America to the present day. The multidisciplinary volume offers a comprehensive vision of how Galicia has come to serve as a crucial intermediary in the reciprocal cultural exchange between the two continents, ever since it received the first ship returning from America in its port of Baiona in 1493. *Galicia & América* consists of fifty-two monographs, written in Castilian and divided into six chapters (Departure, Arrival, Sons of Galicia, The Fifth Province, Exile and Return). Issues dealt with are diverse, covering the participation of Galicians in Columbus's mission, the Galician diaspora in the late eighteenth century, the cultural and political impact Galicians played in the constitution of Latin American countries, the political exile of Galician intellectuals to Latin America during the Civil War, and the contribution of Galician émigrés in the resuscitation of a Galician national conscious.

The first chapter (Departure) documents the history of Galician immigration to Latin America from the end of the fifteenth century to the twentieth century. This section pays special attention to the social debates concerning immigration and its impact on Galician society from the nineteenth century onward. The discussion includes the root causes, remedies for immigration, travel conditions of the immigrants, the opposition to the central government restrictions on Galician immigrants and concerns about the massive demographic loss. Luís Alonso Alvarez accounts for the scope of this phenomenon by pointing out that the transportation of Galicians, by the mid-nineteenth century, replaced that of African slaves (31).

The second chapter (Arrival) deals with the process of adaptation of immigrants to different cultures, languages, clothing and food. While they had to speak Castilian (except those who went to Brazil where the linguistic affinity between Portuguese and Galician facilitated their adaptation), they were united by the shared goal of returning one day to their homeland. One

article indicates that while Galicians played a limited role in the participation of the Spanish construction of Empire, their religious symbol, Santiago the Apostle, was appropriated by indigenous popular tradition, in particular, in Mexico and Guatemala. Another article argues that Galician immigration reached its peak after the dissolution of Spanish colonialism and contributed to the demographic growth of Latin America.

Chapter three (Sons of Galicia) examines the role Galicians played in religion, education and the production of colonial literature through which the knowledge of cartography and translation of indigenous languages into Castilian was advanced. Several studies are dedicated to an investigation of the political presence of Galicians from the emancipation of Latin America from the Spanish Empire in the nineteenth century to the political positions held by them across the continent, and their prominence in diverse commercial sectors. Another topic highlighted in this section is their contribution to Latin American literature, their portrayal in it, and their involvement in arts and popular culture.

Chapter four (The Fifth Province: Associationism and the Culture of Immigration) focuses on the contexts in which Galician cultural centers throughout the continent were founded, evolved to serve social causes in their host countries and preserved a cultural attachment to the homeland. It also discusses the role *Congresos de emigración gallega* played not only in reconsidering Republican political ideology but also in consolidating immigrants as a political voice in Galicia. The rest of the chapter investigates the Galician presence in different parts of Latin America as a heterogeneous socio-cultural phenomenon.

Chapter five (Exile: A New Presence of Galicia in America) constitutes a brief report of how Galician exiles formed an intellectual community in foreign lands.

Chapter six (Return: Influence of America in Galicia) looks into the many ways in which Galician immigration has benefited Galicia. During the colonial period, new agricultural products such as corn, potatoes, tomatoes, pepper and tobacco were introduced in Galicia, and from the mid-nineteenth century, Galicians returning from America (*indianos*) brought back different cultural ideas and flavors in architecture, literature (both in Galician and Spanish), natural sciences, music, dance, gastronomy as well as fashion. Several monographs detail the contribution of *indianos* to Galician industrialization and their financial commitment to education, social welfare and religious foundations. This chapter also explores how immigrants took polit-

ical initiatives in Galicia from America, especially in the construction of Galician nationalism and agrarian reform, influenced by socio-political reforms that were taking place in Latin America.

Galicia & América is a truly resourceful study for scholars working on topics related to transatlantic studies, immigration, colonial history, postcolonial theories, Galician nationalism as well as Iberian cultural studies. Its emphasis on mutual influence in the cultural contact between Europe and Latin America provides a new perspective from which the current European “problem” of African immigration can be reflectively handled. Furthermore, as Manuel Rivas argues in his prologue, the long history of immigration enabled Galicia to construct a nationalist stance, open and tolerant to other cultures.

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