

POPULATION, PROVIDENCE, AND EMPIRE: THE CHURCHES AND EMIGRATION FROM NINETEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND. By Sarah Roddy. Pp xii, 275. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2014. £70.

Over many decades, historians in the U.S., Britain and Australasia have written dozens of histories recounting the remarkable feats of Ireland's enormous nineteenth-century emigrant populations in building churches, schools and the infrastructure of their religious communities. From humble beginnings like those of the navvies who met their priest under arches in London's East End to the erection of fine cathedrals, the impress of the pennies and muscle of the poor have rightly been celebrated. By contrast, there has been much less interest in the homeland effects of Irish emigration. Even where there has been interest, as with Arnold Schrier, economic and social factors have yielded far more interest than religious ones.

Roddy has written a much-needed account. In some ways, it is a study fitting a new wave of Irish history in which Ireland itself is rightly becoming as important as the diaspora within currents of emigration history. This readable and widely researched study draws upon a wide range of archives, though principally masses of published primary works to unite two of the great themes of nineteenth-century history: mass emigration and religious change. Roddy's book is not, however, principally concerned with the communities of settlement. There is no cursory case study of settlement here. But the dialogue between religious authorities in Ireland and the diaspora is very much to the fore.

Population, providence, and empire entails some clear comparative dimensions in that it looks at the major denominations in the homeland. The comparison is not, however, with or between overseas territories; she does not consider the way similar motivations shaped other nations' religious communities as they watched the fever of emigration sweep their lands. However, the close reading of different denominations' response to Ireland's epic exodus results in illuminating perspectives, ranging from the relative limitations on the churches' support for those leaving, to the growing sectarian animosity between the faiths as they debated the providential dimensions and feared the dissipation of their own flocks.

Roddy explores such religious attitudes to emigration from a number of perspectives. In the early part, she uncovers how churches responded to emigration, in theoretical and practical terms, assessing what they thought of the benefits and costs of emigrations, the extent of church interventions: encouraging, discouraging, helping or hindering, those who would leave. In this dimension, *Population, providence, and empire* fits into wider interpretations of the effects of emigration, both in Ireland and beyond. For instance, eighteenth-century precursors are acknowledged as Presbyterian flight-induced fears expressed in the Dublin administration about the exodus of Protestants which contrasted with the immobility of what they considered fecund 'Popish' peoples. It seems that a common theme crossing the centuries is that commentators did not mind the supposed dross of societies being shovelled out to the colonies; they worried more about artisans and men of capital, the focal points of parishes and professions. Whether Englishmen in the early seventeenth century, or landlords, poor law officials or Protestant clergy in the nineteenth, all but the Catholic Church saw emigration by the poor and unskilled as a good thing: after all, most Irish folk in this category were Catholic. Opinions favoured emigration at times of growing population; but they ebbed when demographic trends went into reverse. We can see this in 1670s England, 1740s Ulster, and almost universally among faiths in post-Famine Ireland.

Roddy offers a particularly substantial exploration of the difficulties of the colonial churches in missioning to immigrant populations of miners and farmers across massive expanses of territories. In this respect, she very effectively enters the wider cultural history of the British Empire, adding vital perspectives to recent important works by Hilary Carey, John Wolffe, Joe Hardwick, and others. At this stage we also see a close engagement with the diaspora in considerations of the important dialogue between

clergy in, for example, the U.S. and Canada, and Ireland. Alms-givers at home were less moved by ministering to Irish settlers in the colonies and the U.S. than they were in funding conversion missions among indigenous peoples in Asia. Priests were expensive to export and seemingly always in short supply till later in the century. Letters, memoirs, journalism and commentaries provide vivid insights into the difficulties at home and in the field among the ‘hardest worked clergymen of any in the world’, as one New Zealand missionary publication put it. Though they might labour hard, Roddy affirms Owen Dudley Edwards’s conclusion that many of the Catholic priests shipped off to the diaspora were ‘third-rate’. The best clergymen gained parishes at home; for the rest, the colonies or U.S. were sometimes the only option.

Roddy compares how emigration affected the major communities on the island and the religious interpretation of emigration as a divinely appointed Christian mission. The Catholic bishop of Charleston, John England, was a notable example. Scaremongering, anti-Protestant, and on the defensive over shortages of priests and rising anti-Catholic hostility, England pressed Daniel O’Connell and the clerical authorities in the 1840s to supply Irish priests for the expanding Irish Catholic communities. Presbyterians recognised the role Scotland had played in ministering to their early Irish communities and remembered it as they discussed the provision of ministers in Canada and the U.S. Roddy reckons pre-1815 Irish Anglicans were best provisioned by clear Episcopalian structures, and, as Joe Hardwick’s important work has shown, Anglicanism the world over provided livings for disproportionate numbers of Irish clergy. As the Famine subsided from memory, Irishmen had come to represent very important elements of the web of religious provision for all three major denominations, Presbyterian, and especially Catholic and Anglican. The debates and disagreement that framed the creation of commensurate clerical diasporas is well handled here.

Diasporic dimensions are ably worked into the swirl of religious politics at home. We find Famine-period evangelism, growing Protestant and Catholic tensions over conversion, framed by debates about the threats of apostasy and godlessness in the vast, wild territories of settler societies. The later chapters also engage with long-established notions of emigration as an ordained process creating a global Irish community. Here, Catholics imagined emigration as the creation of a special type of global Irish empire; for Anglicans and Presbyterians, this meant contributing fully to the British–Protestant–empire (notwithstanding some Irish liberal theological criticism of imperialism and racism).

Ultimately, *Population, providence, and empire* is a timely and important addition to the literature and a very current case for the integration of Ireland into wider, global, transnational histories. Dialogues between homeland and new lands were part of the fabric of Irish life and show how emigration, in inducing a sense of loss, affected churches in Ireland more than they shaped it.

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THE IRISH AND THE MAKING OF AMERICAN SPORT, 1835–1920. By Patrick R. Redmond. Pp 468. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland. 2014. \$55 paperback.

U.K.-based journalist Patrick Redmond’s book on the Irish in the sport of the United States from the middle of the nineteenth century to the 1920s began as an undergraduate dissertation on the Irish in American boxing, and here he has expanded this initial piece to cover all angles of the Irish and Irish-Americans in organised athletic endeavours. Rather than arranging by sport, however,