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Compliments.*

INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUNG IRELAND

HOW TO CONCILIATE THE PROTESTANTS,

AND

REPEAL THE UNION:

DEVELOPED IN

TWO LETTERS,

RESPECTFULLY ADDRESSED TO

DANIEL O'CONNELL, ESQ., M.P.

BY MICHAEL M'CARTAN, B.D.,

Successively Parish Priest of Segoe, Clonallen, and Dromara, in the Diocese of Dromore, Ireland;
of Mandisovi, in Eutrerios, and Alegrete, in Brazil, South America.

"Now, therefore, go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you; return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good."—JEREMIAN XVIII. 11.
"The Catholics must conciliate the Protestants, proving to them, not by empty words, but by their whole lives and acts, that there is no Catholic bigotry in Ireland, and that religious liberty is as dear to one Church as to the other. The Protestants, almost to a man, admit England's injustice to Ireland, and sympathize with the cry for self-government; but they dread Catholic ascendancy."
THE NATION.

DUBLIN:

JOHN KEOGH, 35, LOWER SACKVILLE-STREET;

AND SOLD BY ALL RESPECTABLE BOOKSELLERS.

1845.

Michael McCartan's Books Luminary or Lunatic?

Os livros de Michael McCartan: Visionário ou lunático?

Edward Walsh and Laura P. Z. Izarra

Abstract: *This is a first attempt to put Fr. Michael John McCartan in the cartography of the Irish chaplains in Argentina under the shadow of Fr. Anthony Fahy, a renowned priest leader of the Irish community in that country. The aim of this article is to motivate historians to look for more information and contextualize McCartan's actions and impact in the diasporic Irish communities of nineteenth-century Latin America. This is a work-in-progress, and we are indebted to Roberto di Stefano for his generous assistance with this topic and for providing Edward Walsh with a copy of McCartan's opus in the Mitre Museum, Buenos Aires.*

Keywords: *Michael McCartan; Irish Diaspora; Latin America.*

Resumo: *Esta é a primeira tentativa de inserir a figura do Padre Michael John McCartan na cartografia dos capelães irlandeses em Argentina, sob a liderança do reconhecido Padre Anthony Fahy, líder da comunidade irlandesa nesse país. O objetivo deste artigo é motivar jovens historiadores a buscar mais informações e contextualizar as ações do Padre McCartan na América Latina do século XIX. Esta é uma pesquisa em andamento e agradecemos a Roberto di Stefano por sua generosa ajuda neste tema e por providenciar para Edward Walsh uma cópia da carta de McCartan que se encontra no Museu Mitre, em Buenos Aires.*

Palavras-chave: *Michael McCartan; Diáspora irlandesa; América Latina.*

Over the course of the twenty-seven years of his priestly life in Argentina, Fr Anthony Fahy¹ regularly met with other priests. If his own lifestyle was austere (and it was) he was nevertheless by no means a kill joy being blessed with an excellent and rather droll sense of humour. Renowned for being direct of manner, almost to the point of apparent gruffness, there were times nonetheless when he was not always exactly very complimentary in what he had to say about some fellow clergy. One such individual who came into contact with

Fr Fahy from 1862 onwards was the very eccentric Fr Michael John McCartan (1798-1876). McCartan suffered from an extreme form of paranoia and a persecution mania which today would be described as a serious mental illness. In modern parlance he would probably be described as being very mentally unbalanced. Though his malady would be treated nowadays by a combination of drugs and specialist psychiatric care, those were other times. As a young man, McCartan was living in a somewhat hostile religious environment.

Michael John McCartan (1798-1876) was born at Ryan, in the parish of Saval, County Down, and studied at Maynooth College where he was ordained on 16 June 1821 by the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Daniel Murray.² He was parish priest of Seagoe (1821-26), an ecclesiastical parish of the Church of Ireland that is located in Portadown, County Armagh, Northern Ireland. Apparently, owing to trouble with the Orangemen he was living in Newry, he was appointed Administrator at Clonallon in December 1826, and then he went to Dromara as parish priest on 20 March 1829 where he would minister until 1836. Between 1835 and 1836 some of his letters appeared in the columns of the *Northern Herald* and the *Newry Examiner*.³ By now, he was in conflict and at loggerheads with the bishop of Dromore, Dr Michael Blake (1833-1860), and was removed. Writing to Dr Blake from 36 Ormond Quay, Dublin on 8 June 1836, McCartan advised the bishop – “I am sorry to trouble you so much as a correspondent, but I know you are too reasonable not to allow that my present circumstances sufficiently please my apologies. In the unhappy difference between us, I acknowledge your urbanity as a gentleman, but pardon me if I take exceptions to your conduct as a judge...”

Here after, the chronology of McCartan’s life is a little confused – it seems that he arrived in Buenos Aires on his own account, in 1835 and is noted in the *Guía de Forasteros* for 1837 as one of the two Irish Chaplains ministering at San Roque.⁴ The other priest was Father Michael Gannon.⁵ Thomas Murray (1919) wrote “they were not Irish chaplains in the sense that we ordinarily understand” (ed. 2012, 190), but they attended the Irish people whenever called upon (6). McCartan left Buenos Aires soon after and he returns in the early sixties. However, according to Murray, McCartan “came here in ’85 and remained for a few years, went up to Entre Ríos and Brazil where he knocked about for some years and returned to Buenos Aires” (91). This is certainly a misprinting of [18]’58, as a sketch of his life published in *The Standard* says he arrived in Buenos Aires around 1862. Murray also adds that McCartan “seems to have been even then [when in Ireland] of a somewhat unsettled disposition for he travelled in England, North America, the West Indies and Chile before coming to Argentina” (ed. 2012, 91). Everywhere he went, he differed with

the church authorities believing that he was the prophet and tried to prove it writing two books which are perhaps now best remembered.

The first, *Instructions For Young Ireland, How To Conciliate The Protestants, and Repeal The Union*, was published in 1846, in the format of two letters addressed to Daniel O’Connell MP – the first letter (1-71) and the second letter (72-84) including the author’s poem “To My Dromara Flock” (76-77) – and a final text which is a letter of the Rev. John Ronge⁶ about the famous Holy Tunic at Treves (85-86). Daniel O’Connell, called in his time as The Liberator, was a political leader of Ireland’s Roman Catholic majority. He advocated for the poorest class of tenant farmers securing the Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and taking a seat in the UK Parliament. McCartan rebukes Daniel O’Connell (1776-1847) for giving counsel to a church capable of so much injustice. In nineteenth-century Ireland, diocesan clergy could be dismissed, and he was sacked by the bishop from Dromore, a Catholic diocese in County Down in today’s Northern Ireland, with no compensation or explanation. Thus, he resents the church’s attitude towards priests and mentions numerous injustices perpetrated by the Catholic Church from earliest times. McCartan also resents the bishop’s renunciation of the *Nation* newspaper and states the church oppressed the Protestants first. He cites a letter of support from his parishioners (published originally in the *Newry Examiner* 13 August 1836). In a formal Address, the parishioners of Dromara presented McCartan with a Bible asking that he “receive it from us, as an expression of the approval in which we hold your public conduct, and as a proof of the affection and veneration with which we treasure up your private worth and exalted spiritual character” (Op. cit.). McCartan replied from Dublin on 7 July 1836,

... the Address you did me the honour to present me with, I accept with sentiments of gratitude....The splendid Bible which accompanied your Address, I accept with sentiments of the liveliest gratitude and affection; and I beg to assure you that I will ever treasure it up as the most precious gift, not only on account of the inestimable truths it contains, but also on account of the kind and good people by whom it was bestowed.

A copy of this first book is in the British Library in London⁷ with the following dedication: “Presented to the Editor of the *Edinburgh Review* with the author’s compliments.” The *Edinburgh Review* is the title of four distinct intellectual and cultural Scottish magazines: the first was published between 1755 and 1756; the second, between 1773 and 1776; the third was the best known, regularly published between 1802 and 1929; and, the fourth, between 1984 and 2014.

The second of McCartan's books, *La actualidad o la solución de las cuestiones de Roma, del Oriente y del Poniente, demostrada en las Profecias Divinas, por un Presbítero Cristiano VIII* (102 pp.) [*The present or the solution of the questions of Rome, the East and the West*] was published by Imprenta Alemana in Buenos Aires and, although the book itself is undated, there is a note "El Sacerdote Irlandés, Buenos Aires Noviembre de 1866" [The Irish priest, Buenos Aires, November 1866] (vi). McCartan declared "Esta obrita está muy respetuosamente dedicada a la juventud ilustrada de Buenos Aires" ["This tiny work is dedicated with respect to the illustrated youth of Buenos Aires"]⁸ and was on sale at the Hotel Italiano as well as at some other booksellers noted on the frontispiece. The theologians, (then resident in Buenos Aires) Anglican Minister Dr Ford,⁹ Presbyterian Minister Dr Smith,¹⁰ Methodist Minister Dr Goodfellow,¹¹ Luthern Minister Dr Goerke, Bible seller Dr Corfield¹² and Canon Fahy Irish Chaplain are mentioned on page xvii and he signs as "Miguel" three times (xxii, xxxii and 102). Santiago Ussher, an important member of the Irish Catholic Association in Argentina, said of McCartan: "hizo algunas publicaciones en que con múltiples citas bíblicas, sostenía, entre otras ilusiones y rarezas, que por intermedio del arcángel San Miguel se le había confiado 'la misión divina de purificar el santuario y librar al pueblo de la maldición'." ["he published many texts in which he affirmed, based on multiple biblical quotations among other illusions and strange things, that Archangel St. Michael has given him 'the divine mission to purify the sanctuary and free the people from the curse'."] ¹³ McCartan advised readers that "esta obra es propiedad de su autor, y se perseguirá la reimpression por las leyes del país" ["this book is the author's property and its reimpression will be done according to the country's laws"]. There is a copy of this book in the Mitre Museum, Buenos Aires.¹⁴

If Santiago Ussher's assessment of McCartan was harsh and a tad critical of the priest, then the historian Thomas Murray was no less so when commenting that "the poor man was as mad as a March hare" (91). Murray adds that Father Fahy, whom McCartan always called, Mr Fahy, "helped to support him for years before that truly good man [Fahey] died." (ed. 2012, 91-2). In the light of those stinging critiques maybe it is Edward Mulhall¹⁵ who provides a gentle, kinder, more charitable and less jaundiced perspective in a short sketch of McCartan's life published in *The Standard* on 24 June 1876:

We regret to announce the demise of an eccentric old clergyman well known to our readers during the last ten years, Rev. Michael McCartan, who was born near Belfast in 1798, and came to South America about forty years ago. His first charge was as cura¹⁶ at Gualeguaychu, from which place he was banished for extreme political opinions. For some years he was P. P. of Alegrete, Rio Grande

do Sol [sic.], [Brazil], and afterwards went to Cuba and the Southern States as tutor in a planter's family. Later on he was assistant cura in a town in Chili [sic] from which he crossed over to San Luis, in this Republic. About 1862 he arrived in Buenos Aires and came direct to our office to warn us that the end of the world was at hand. His numerous vicissitudes and trials had affected his mind. This explanation is only just to the memory of the deceased gentleman, as people unduly censured him for some pamphlets which ought not to have been printed. During the last year he was quite lucid, and Canon Dillon¹⁷ gave him hospitality and kindly attended him in his closing days. He died calmly and with perfect resignation, and his funeral will take place today from Archdeacon Dillon's residence, 235 Corrientes, at half past twelve.

The Archbishops of Buenos Aires always assisted the Irish in providing chaplains and teachers and conferring privileges to Irish priests. Due to the long distances, they travelled on horseback under difficult weather conditions, where roads hardly existed and rivers had very few or no bridges in the remote camps. The Irish Chaplains were “the only priests in the country” that were “allowed to dress in any other than the prescribed ecclesiastical garb” (Murray 193).

To complete his life information, Edward Walsh has found one unpublished McCartan letter addressed to William Dougal Chistie,¹⁸ then Consul General to the Argentine Confederation, in the UK National Archives, Kew.¹⁹ Here McCartan claims the ownership of a property in Entre Ríos which was sold by the government:

Santiago de Chile,
14 April 1857

W. D. Chistie Esq., H. B. M., M. P.,

Sir,

Herewith I transmit to you the authenticated copies of the legal documents, to which attest my ownership of a house and two lots of ground in the town of Concordia and province of Entre Rios. In 1840 during the civil wars, not finding Concordia [a] very agreeable residence, I left it, entrusting to the alcalde Don Juan Peneyro, the care of my property, who has since died without being able to communicate with him. But so early as 1840 and only some months after my departure the government took possession of my house and made it a *cuartel*²⁰ or military hospital. Since then being absent in Brazil, Ireland, United States and Cuba I [had no] means of obtaining any information in respect [of

my] property, till I arrived here in Chile, when [_____] written to my friend Mr Campbell, an English [settler] on the Yeruá, he informs me that [the] Government [of] Entre Ríos sold my property during the civil [war for] one thousand dollars. Now what I respectfully so[licit] Sir, is to present my claim for this sum [and leg]al interest since the *Entreirian* Government [po]ssession of my house. The legal interest then [ten] or twelve percent per annum. But regarding this point, you may [act] as your own discerning prudence may dictate.

Personally, I require this money very much, having nearly reached my 60th year, without friends, or parish or permanent situation, and suffering so severely from rheumatism that I am now incapable of undergoing fatigue.

Please to address information to the Hon. Captain Harris H.B.M., Chargé d’Affairs, Santiago de Chile.

I have the honor to remain
Your most obedient servant
Michael McCartan,
Presbiter.

PS. I also transmit an affidavit that I never sold or disposed of this property,
M. McCartan.

Mr Campbell was Scotsman Donald Campbell who purchased the estancia Rincón del Yeruá in Estancia Grande, Concordia, in 1835. He started sheep farming and exporting high quality wool direct to the Manchester textile mills. He lost livestock during the 1839-40 invasion by Lavalle’s troops and, like McCartan, would also request the intervention of the British Minister on his behalf. Captain Harris was one Admiral Edward A. J. Harris, RN, MP for Christchurch 1844/1852, Chargé d’Affairs and Consul General in Peru in 1852 and in Chile from 1853. Did Chistie reply to McCartan? He may have, but we will never know for a note in the Chilean Register Index at Kew remarks: “the Legation House at Santiago and its records were destroyed by fire in 1891.”

Luminary or lunatic? Wherever he went, McCartan differed from the Church authorities; undoubtedly, he certainly considered himself to be something of a prophet whilst his erratic behaviour inevitably caused contemporaries to view him as a harmless lunatic – doolally. Hopes remain that future scholars will search for more Irish-South American relations following the threads provided either by the Chaplains’ history or by governments’ diplomatic documents from the countries where McCartan lived in.

Notes

- ¹ Fr Anthony Fahy O.P. (1805-1871) legendary chaplain to the Irish in Argentina who arrived in Buenos Aires 11 January 1844 on the brig *Plata* from Liverpool. See James Ussher *Father Fahy – A Biography of Anthony Dominic Fahy O.P. Irish Missionary in Argentina (1805-1871)*, Buenos Aires, 1951.
- ² See Patrick J. Hammell, *Maynooth Students and Ordinations List 1795-1895*, Cardinal Press, Maynooth, 1982, No.4889.
- ³ McCartan's correspondence was published in the *Northern Herald* 11 July 1835, *Newry Examiner* 26 December 1835, 16 March 1836, 13 August 1836.
- ⁴ Capilla San Roque – a smallish chapel at the corner of Defensa and Alsina streets, Buenos Aires, part of the Franciscan complex which dates from the 1750s and was much used by the Irish community.
- ⁵ Father Gannon was an intimate friend of the O'Gorman family and knew the love affair of Camila O'Gorman and Father Gutierrez. When they eloped and went to the parish Goya in Corrientes, where Gannon was being appointed, he had them arrested and handed over to the Federal authorities who executed them following Dictator Rosas' orders. See *Camila O'Gorman*. Colección Félix Luna. Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta, 1999.
- ⁶ John Ronge (1813-1887) priest from Upper Silesia in Prussia who was suspended from the priesthood for his criticism for the Church. Principal founder of the New Catholics. Ronge's *The Holy Coat of Treves, and the New German-Catholic Church*. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1845.
- ⁷ There is also a copy of this book in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin, Call Number P 674.
- ⁸ It cost 20 \$ m/c, one *peso fuerte* abroad. The Hotel Italiano was on 118 Calle San Martin, room 10, Buenos Aires.
- ⁹ Dr John Chubb Ford, English chaplain at St John's Church, 1854-1870.
- ¹⁰ Dr James Smith, Presbyterian minister at St Andrews, 1850-1883.
- ¹¹ Dr William Goodfellow, minister at the American Methodist Church 1856-1889.
- ¹² Probably Richard Corfield (1810-1885) native of Shrewsbury. Resident in Buenos Aires 1876-1968 and Secretary to the British and Foreign Bible Society in South America. See *Richard Corfield – The Corfields and their Relations* in corfield.port5.com/web/70.htm accessed 27 February 2016.
- ¹³ See Santiago Ussher, *Los Capellanes Irlandeses en la colectividad Hiberno-Argentina durante el siglo XIX*, Buenos Aires, 1854, p.176.
- ¹⁴ Andrew Graham-Yooll wrote an interesting piece "Trying to breathe new life into Mitre Museum" in the *Buenos Aires Herald*, 20 June 2015.
- ¹⁵ Edward Thomas Mulhall (1832-1899) from Dublin, who emigrated to the USA in 1852 and subsequently Argentina where he started sheep farming at Ranchos. He was joined by his brother Michael George Mulhall and in 1861 they founded *The Standard* first English language newspaper in Buenos Aires. The brothers were co-proprietors and co-editors of the newspaper. Edward married Sarah Eliza "Eloisa" Eborall in 1856 and they had eleven children. The brothers were politically very well connected.
- ¹⁶ In Spanish "cura" means priest. Murray used to write some words in Spanish.
- ¹⁷ Canon (subsequently Dean) Patrick Dillon (1841-1889) from County Mayo. Ordained October 1863. Ministered in Buenos Aires, Professor of Theology 1866. Appointed Dean 1869 and accompanied Archbishop Escalada to First Vatican Council. Founded *The Southern Cross* newspaper in 1875. Elected a State Deputy and Senator. Travelled to Europe 1881 as a special agent for nation and provincial governments to promote emigration from Ireland.
- ¹⁸ William Dougal Chistie (1816-1874), British diplomat, politician and man of letters educated at Oxford and Cambridge, barrister. Appointed Consul General to the Argentine Republic 1854, Minister

Plenipotentiary 1856, Envoy Extra Ordinary to Brazil 1859-63. Retired on full pension 1863. See Michael Stenton's *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament: A Biographical Dictionary of the House of Commons*, The Harvester Press, Hassocks, 1976, Vol.1, 1832-1885, p.76.

¹⁹ NA: FO 118/85, 274. This letter is slightly damaged and the text between brackets is missing.

²⁰ A military headquarter.

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