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British Publications on Latin America prior to 1900

Introduction

The principal difficulty facing the bibliographer of British publications relating to Latin America prior to 1900 derives from their abundance rather than their scarcity: there are literally thousands from which to choose, and identifying the 40 or so most important is no easy task. The selection of works which follows, is, therefore, necessarily not only subjective but also illustrative rather than encyclopedic. Similarly, any attempt to impose a periodization upon British publications relating to the region runs the risk of being superficial. However, in the interests of facilitating the comprehension of the reader who may be unfamiliar with the subject matter, it seems appropriate to seek to identify some chronological development. Accordingly, it has been decided to group key works as follows:

1. Publications prior to 1700
2. Publications during the Period 1700-1808
3. Publications in the Independence and Early National Periods
4. Publications in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

For ease of reference, the selected works are referred to by their author(s)/date in the text of this essay, and full titles are given in the Appendix. The 'Notes', which precede the Appendix, refer primarily to secondary and bibliographical sources to which interested readers might refer for further information on arguments presented in the essay.

Publications Prior to 1700

Historians of British maritime activity in the Early Modern Period continue to disagree, perhaps rather pointlessly, about whether Bristol-based voyagers reached the northeastern coast of North America in 1481. What is clear is that in 1497 John Cabot - whose son, Sebastian, subsequently served

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Spain as both an eminent explorer and as chief pilot (piloto mayor) - landed a small craft from Bristol on the coast of (modern) Canada. However, although this and subsequent voyages undertaken in the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547) stimulated interest in the search for a trading passage to the east, the principal attraction in the north-western Atlantic for English navigators in the sixteenth century was the existence of rich cod fisheries off the coast of Newfoundland rather than the possibility of conquering new lands. Although Sir Humphrey Gilbert (a half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh) formally announced the annexation of Newfoundland to the English monarchy in 1583, he failed to establish any permanent settlement there; even more significantly, like Martin Frobisher in the 1570s, he was unable to find precious metals on the island. This debacle, coupled with the literal disappearance by 1590 of the small English colony established in 1585 on the island of Roanoke off the coast of Virginia, helped ensure that successful English settlement in the Americas would be delayed until the first decade of the seventeenth century - Jamestown (Virginia) was established in 1607 - despite the strenuous efforts of Richard Hakluyt in the 1580s to persuade both Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and her court that the establishment of American colonies would, amongst other benefits, provide England with an ideal platform for attacking the ships and colonies of hostile Spain. His most famous work, the Principal Navigations [Hakluyt, 1589], was published in London immediately after the defeat of the attempted Spanish invasion of England in 1588. This compendium chronicled not only the North American voyages already referred to but also the growing fascination of English mariners and adventurers with the riches - real and imagined - potentially awaiting them along the Pacific coast of Spanish America, as revealed by the triumphant return of Francis Drake in 1580 from his circumnavigation, laden with treasure. The almost simultaneous publication of the first English translation of the 1552 Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias of Bartolomé de Las Casas [Las Casas, 1583] reflected in part a growing para-

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4 As early as 1574 Richard Grenville mounted a persistent campaign to persuade Elizabeth I to back commercial and colonizing expeditions through the Straits of Magellan, but, in the event, the only English navigator other than Drake to enter the South Sea in the sixteenth century was Thomas Cavendish, who attacked ships and settlements along the coast of Peru during his circumnavigation of 1586-1588: Bradley, British Maritime Enterprise, pp. 338-41, 382-91.
noia in northern Europe about Spanish imperial ambitions (editions in French had appeared in Paris and Antwerp in 1579 and 1582). However, in more general terms its publication in London resulted from a growing English fascination with the geography, fauna and flora, and material resources of the New World, which was both cause and effect of the publication in London in the Elizabethan era of seventeen separate editions of translations of works by Spanish and - to a lesser extent - Portuguese chroniclers and travelers, often under the patronage of prominent merchants and courtiers committed to raising public awareness of the potential material benefits awaiting English explorers in the Americas. With the exception of Las Casas none of these works reappeared in new editions until modern times, but they were frequently cited by subsequent writers, and thus underpinned prior to 1700 an increasingly outdated image of Spanish America dominated by the detail of the conquest and its immediate aftermath rather than of the more settled society that had emerged since the second half of the sixteenth century. The most influential included Francisco López de Gómara's account of the conquest of Mexico [López de Gómara, 1578], first published in Spain in 1552, Agustín de Zarate's 1555 account of the discovery and conquest of Peru [Zarate, 1581] - which contained a drawing and appendix on the Riche Mines of Potosí - Martín Fernández de Enciso's 1519 report on the coasts and ports of the Caribbean basin [Fernández de Enciso, 1578], and the 1577 translation of the treatise by Nicolás Monardes on the medicinal properties of the flora of the New World [Monardes, 1577].

The publication pattern established in the third quarter of the sixteenth century continued into the seventeenth, notably with translations of José de Acosta's 1591 survey of the history of the Indies [Acosta, 1604], and, some eighty years later, the even more pro-Inca Royal Commentaries of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, first published in Spain in 1617 [Garcilaso de la Vega, 1688]. Similarly, Cristóbal de Acuña's 1641 account of explorations in the

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6 Ibid., pp. 9-10.
7 This last work, like several other translations published in the same period, was translated from Spanish by the merchant John Frampton, whose knowledge of and interest in the Indies were derived from his having lived in Spain, an experience which included time as a prisoner of the Spanish Inquisition: Ibid., p. 10.
8 An outstanding analysis of Peru in English: The Early History of the English Fascination with Peru is provided by Peter T. Bradley and David Cahill, Habsburg *Peru: Images, Imagination and Memory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 1-84.
Amazon basin was published in London twenty years later [Acuna, 1661]. However, the increasing propensity for non-Iberian adventures, merchants, and buccaneers - mainly Dutch in the early-seventeenth century, with French and English becoming more prominent later - was reflected in several editions in English of accounts of their exploits first published in continental Europe [L'Hermite, 1625; Exquemelin, 1684] as well as patriotic accounts of the parallel, although generally less successful, intrusions of English mariners [Hawkins, 1622; Dampier, 1697]. The first significant glimmerings of scientific interest in the Americas came with the edition in 1669 of Alvaro Alonso Barba's famous treatise, first published in Madrid in 1640, on the refining of silver ores [Barba, 1669]. In practical terms the most influential work of all was Thomas Gage's The English American [Gage, 1648]: its depiction of corruption and immorality in Spanish America - derived from his extensive travels (as an Irish-born, French-educated Catholic) in New Spain as a member of the Dominican Order in 1625-1637 -was a key factor in the decision of Oliver Cromwell to formulate his Western Design and attack Hispaniola in 1655. As in well-known, this particular initiative, entrusted to ill-armed indentured servants recruited in Barbados, turned into a fiasco, but its failure was redeemed by the leaders' successful attempt to seize Jamaica, which became thereafter the `chief center of English wealth and power on the West Indies’.

Publication during the Period 1700-1808

The demise of Spain’s Habsburg dynasty in 1700 and the consequential accession of the Bourbon Philip V (1700-1746) to the Spanish throne provoked, as is well known, a series of complex international conflicts characterized in part by formal hostilities between Britain and Spain. These wars, including the War of American Independence, were by no means confined to Spanish America and the Caribbean, but territorial and commercial rivalries in that sphere constituted an important element in them. This context quickened British public awareness of and interest in Spanish America, which London publishers were quick to exploit. They resorted in part to the traditional device of publishing English translations of Spanish chronicles originally written over a century-and-a-half earlier [Cieza de León, 1709], as well as more-recent but still outdated seventeenth century works [Solís, 1724].

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10 Cieza's outstanding narrative - the first part of his Crónica del Perú - had originally been published in Seville in 1553, and Solís' Historia de la conquista de México in Madrid in 1684.
More accurate impressions of the reality of conditions in eighteenth-century Spanish America were provided by translations of works by modern travelers in the region of whom the most influential were the Spanish naval officers Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa: their detailed account of the flora, fauna, geography, people, and cities of Peru and Ecuador, first published in Madrid in 1744, had its first edition in English in 1758 [Juan and Ulloa, 1758].

As the translator of Juan and Ulloa noted, without access to this and similar works by other Spanish authorities, English knowledge of Spanish America would have been almost entirely restricted to coastal areas accidentally visited by seamen, or harrassed and plundered by privateers (...) they can only report truly, what little they have seen: and what idea can we form of a Turkey carpet, if we look only at the border (...)? Typical of the offshore genre was George Anson's account [Anson, 1748] of his circumnavigation of the globe in 1740-1744, during the course of which he succeeded in capturing Spain's Manila galleon. Further influential publications to emerge from this expedition were the account of Chile written by Captain John Byron [Byron, 1768] who was imprisoned first in Chiloé and later in Santiago following the wrecking of his ship, Wager, soon after the expedition entered the southern Pacific, and the earlier narrative written jointly by the ship's gunner and carpenter [Bulkeley and Cummins, 1743]. Byron's sympathetic account of the city of Santiago and of the friendly attitude displayed towards him by its creole inhabitants (notably the 'remarkably handsome' women) helped foster in England the myth that Spain's American subjects might welcome the opportunity to switch their allegiance to their traditional enemy, particularly as Anson's voyage - and the subsequent expeditions of Samuel Wallis, Philip Carteret, and James Cook - made it abundantly clear to an increasingly jingoistic English public that the Pacific could no longer be regarded as a private Spanish lake. However, as the account, published in 1773 [Hawkesworth, 1773], of his 1764-1766 voyage to Patagonia and the

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11 The first Spanish edition was published in Madrid (Antonio Marín, 1744) in 4 volumes. The parallel 1745 French account of the scientific expedition to which they were attached, by Charles Marie de La Condamine was also published in English in 1747 as A Succinct Abridgement of a Voyage made within the Inland Parts of South America, from the Coasts of the South Sea to the Coasts of Brazil.

12 Quoted in Steele, op.cit., p. 166.

South Atlantic made clear enormous practical difficulties awaited ill-prepared explorers of the most southerly parts of South America.14

Interest in Spanish America among Britain's rapidly growing, literate middle-class always intensified during periods of formal hostilities with Spain, notably in 1796-1808, when the latter's alliance with revolutionary France created a climate in which politicians, naval commanders and merchants began to believe that Spanish Americans would welcome armed British intervention to free them from Spanish imperialism. One author who exploited the increasing demand for information, particularly about the prospects for British trade in the region, was Joseph Skinner [Skinner, 1805], who produced a handsome, beautifully-illustrated account of Peru drawn from articles published in 1791-1795 in the Mercurio Peruano of Lima. The failure of the British invasions of Buenos Aires and Montevideo in 1806-1807 brought in their train a more sober awareness of the limited prospects for territorial expansion. However, the military setback was partially compensated by the consolidation of commercial ties with the victorious porteños, and, in the publishing sphere, by an upsurge in public interest in Latin America, satisfied by the narratives of their experiences written by returning members of the expeditions [for example Thomson, 1808].

Publications during the Independence and Early National Periods

The flight of the Portuguese royal family to Brazil in 1807, the reversal of alliances with Spain in 1808, and the onset of the Spanish American Revolutions for Independence in 1810 quickly turned the steady trickle of British publications on Latin America into a flood.15 They included scholarly works by distinguished writers who relied upon literary sources rather than first-hand experience of the region [Southey, 1810-1819].16 However, the vast majority was written by travelers, often on the basis of prolonged resi-

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14 For further details of the 1764-1766 voyage, see Bradley, *British Maritime Enterprise*, pp. 536-44.
Some of the most valuable for the historian are those of English naval officers [Hall, 1824; Smyth and Lowe 1836], who went ashore from their ships to evaluate conditions in the emerging states. Similarly, the memoirs of British participants in the final stages of the movements for emancipation [Miller, 1828; Stevenson 1825] constitute primary sources of enduring value about the aims and attitudes of prominent participants in the process, including Simón Bolívar, José de San Martín, and Thomas Cochrane. Several of the early British diplomatic representatives wrote perceptive analyses of economic, social and political affairs in the new republics, the most valuable of which are Hamilton's account of his travels in Colombia [Hamilton, 1827] and Ward's outstanding discussion of Mexico in 1827 [Ward, 1828].

A useful account of imperial Brazil is provided by Robert Walsh [Walsh, 1830], who served as chaplain to the British embassy, while life within the court of Pedro I of Brazil is described by the journal of Maria Graham, who served as tutor to Dona Maria, the emperor's daughter and future queen of Portugal [Graham, 1824]. Among the many accounts of economic conditions in the emerging states written by merchants and managers of British companies, those which stand out include the report on Paraguay produced by the Robertson brothers [Robertson and Robertson, 1843] and Edmond Temple's description of his unsuccessful attempts to manage the affairs of the Potosí, La Paz and Peruvian Mining Association in Bolivia [Temple, 1830]. Failure of a different sort is recounted in Allen Gardiner's poignant account of his ill-fated attempts to establish Protestant missions among the Indians of Patagonia [Gardiner, 1840].

**Publications during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century**

In some respects, the publication pattern established during the first three decades after independence persisted into the second half of the nineteenth century, as an increasing number of travelers published accounts of their experiences to satisfy the almost insatiable demand for information from both potential investors [Duffield, 1877] in the region and, at a different level an increasingly literate general population. Some works of general appeal, including Richard Burton's account of the Paraguayan War [Burton, 1870], and his description of the highlands of Brazil [Burton, 1869], written

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17 The value of such accounts as source material for understanding Latin America is discussed in Ricardo Ciccerchia, *Journey, Rediscovery and Narrative: British Travel Accounts of Argentina* (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1998).
from the vantage point of his service as British consul in Santos in 1865-
1869, were of a very high literary quality. Others, such as Stephens' famous
description of ancient Mayan ruins in southern Mexico and Central America
[Stephens, 1851] and Markham's admiring description of Cuzco [Markham,
1856] rekindled public awareness of the splendors of the great pre-Conquest
civilizations. Several of the works of the Argentine-born naturalist William
Henry Hudson conveyed both a nostalgia for lost British opportunities to
succeed Spain as the imperial power in the River Plate region [Hudson,
1885] and, in anticipation of the importance of eco-tourism, a glimpse of the
extraordinarily rich bird and animal life of Latin America [Hudson, 1892]18.
This latter theme was also embraced more systematically in the detailed a-
counts of their travels in Amazonia published by the self-educated naturalists
Alfred Russel Wallace [Wallace, 1853] and Henry Walter Bates [Bates,
1863], who had traveled together to Pará in 1848 to begin their many years
of research in the equatorial forests of Brazil. The third key member of their
remarkable team of scientists was Richard Spruce, whose lavish-ly-illustrated
notes of his botanical discoveries in 1849-1864, edited and condensed by
Wallace, were eventually published in 190819. The late-nineteenth century
was truly the age of the scientific traveler, although it is worth remembering
that Charles Darwin's first account of his zoological discoveries in South
America date from an earlier period20.

Conclusion

In his introduction to his 1837 catalogue of works relating to America
published prior to 1700, the French bibliographer Ternaux-Compans com-
mented unfavorably upon the contemporary outpouring of relatively useless
publications on Latin America: *Chaque année*, he observed, *voit éclore un
grand nombre de publications, parmi lesquelles on en compte malheureuse-
ment bien peu que méritent d’être lues avec confiance*21. Perhaps this was

18 Extracts from his Idle Days in Patagonia (London: Chapman and Hall, 1893) are repro-
duced in Frank MacShane, *Impressions of Latin America: Five Centuries of Travel and Ad-
169-87.


20 Robert Fitzroy (ed.), *Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of His Majesty’s Ships Adven-
ture and Beagle, between the years 1826 and 1836. Describing their Examination of the
(London: Henry Colburn, 1839). Vol. 3 is: *Journal and Remarks* by Charles Darwin, 1832-
36.

21 Quoted in John R. Fisher, *Viajeros británicos en América del Sur en la primera mitad del
true of many French works. Insofar as British publications on Latin America are concerned, it is certainly the case that their principal value lies in what they reveal about British attitudes towards religion, race, politics, and social organization rather than as a mirror of Latin American reality. However, it is equally important to emphasize that, once British observers were able to write about the region from first-hand experience - that is, with a few earlier exceptions, from 1808 - many of their accounts of what they observed came to constitute a major primary source for all serious students of Latin America during the independence and republican periods.

**Selected British Publications on Latin America**

1. **Pre-1700**


   **Fernández De Enciso, Martín**, 1578, *A Briefe Description of the Portes, Creekes, Bayes and Havens of the Weast India* (London: Henry Bynneman).


   **Hakluyt, Richard**, 1589, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation, Made by Sea or ouer Land, to the Most Remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth at Any Time within the Compass of These 1500 Yeeres* (London: George Bishop and Ralph Newberie).


2. 1700-1808


Bulkeley, John, and John Cummins, 1743, *A Voyage to the South Seas in the Years 1740-1. Containing a Faithful Narrative of the Loss of His Majesty’s Ship Wager* (London: Jacob Robinson).


Cieza de León, Pedro, 1709, *The Seventeen Years Travels of Peter de Cieza through the Mighty Kingdom of Peru and the Large Provinces of Cartagena and Popayán in South America* (London: John Stevens)


Juan, Jorge, and Antonio de Ulloa, 1758, *A Voyage to South America ... Undertaken ... by G. Juan and A. de Ulloa* (London: Davis and Reymers).


Thompson, Joseph, 1808, *An Authentic Narrative of the Proceedings of the Expedition under the Command of Brigadier-General Craufurd, until its Arrival at Monte Video; with an Account of the Operations against Buenos Ayres under the Command of Lieut.-Gen. Whitelocke. By an Officer of the Expedition* (London: Published by the Author).

3. **The Independence and Early National Periods**


Smyth, William, and Frederick Lowe, 1836, *Narrative of a Journey from Lima to Para, across the Andes and down the Amazon: Undertaken with a View of Ascertaining the Practicability of a Navigable Communication with the Atlantic, by the Rivers Pachita, Ucayali, and Amazon* (London: John Murray).


Stevenson, William Bennet, 1825, *A Historical and Descriptive Narrative of Twenty Years Residence in South America. in Three Volumes; Containing Travels in Arauco, Chile, Peru and Colombia; with an Account of the Revolution, its Rise, Progress and Results,* 3 vols. (London: Hurst, Robinson).


4. **The Second Half of the Nineteenth Century**


Duffield, Alexander James. 1877, *Peru in the Guano Age: Being a Short Account of a Recent Visit to the Guano Deposits with Some Reflections on the Money They Have Produced and the Uses to Which It Has Been Applied* (London: Richard Bentley).


Wallace, Alfred Russel. 1853, *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro, with an Account of the Native Tribes, and Observations on the Climate, Geology, and Natural History of the Amazon Valley* (London: Reeve).
The American intervention in the Caribbean aroused a hostility throughout Latin America that still affects our relations with the other countries of the hemisphere. What happened might have been forgotten after the repudiation of the intervention policy by Presidents Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt, had it not been for the belief that the policy was Latin America is bursting with daily-circulation newspapers that anyone, even if you’re not based there, should be reading as a respectable way of keeping yourself informed. Here are ten of the best Latin American newspapers that you can check out, in print or online. El Espectador, Colombia. El Espectador, the oldest Colombian newspaper still in circulation—and with a massive readership to boot—was named for its founder’s love of Victor Hugo, who collaborated on a publication of the same name in France. While El The value of Latin American and Caribbean exports contracted at an estimated rate of 2.4% in 2019, after having grown by 8.7% in 2018. Goods exports from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) entered a contraction phase in 2019, following two years of expansion. The region’s total external sales are estimated to have fallen 2.4% in 2019, after growing 8.7% in 2018 and 12.2% in 2017. The downturn in LAC exports was in line with the downward trend in the value of global trade, which dropped 3.1% year-on-year in the first three quarters of 2019 (Figure 1). LAC exports lost momentum throughout 2018, slowed down further in the first quarter of 2019, and then started to contract.