

THE PRODUCTION OF BRAZILIAN MEMORIALISTS AND LOCAL IRISH HISTORIANS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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I am a Brazilian historian, I work at the Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro (Brazil) and I am an associate professor in the Department of History. At the moment, I am developing a comparative study between the local historians in Brazil and Ireland. This study is part of a historical research project and I'm planning to write an article about it next year.

The appearing of memorialists (or local historian) is quite common in Brazilian cities. It is possible to affirm that most Brazilian cities have their own local historian, from the largest to the smallest ones. They are usually independent professionals, doctors, lawyers, journalists who have experience and professional and/or affection for the city and throughout their lives accumulate a series of historical documents that allow them to describe the events, the characters, the times, the events that they consider fundamental to understand their history.

Just as in Brazil there is a production of local historians, in Ireland, there is a concern with the production and appreciation of the histories and culture of their cities. It is possible to find historians and local history societies that seek to carry out projects for the production of works that value the local history and their historical heritage.

The historical knowledge produced by them is reasonable because it reaches different audiences: scholar, academic, dilettante, amateur, professional and others. It is possible to affirm that, although some of local historian do not have a professional background in history, they contribute to the diffusion of a "public history", and contribute to the enhancement of the interest in the history of the place as well as history in the broad sense. And when it is appropriated, it can encourage public policies for the preservation of the material and immaterial heritage, for the creation of didactic materials (written, visual and sound) for the use in formal and non-formal learning spaces, radio and TV programme production, and others.

In the analysis of the local historian's works, some questions are inexcusable: What is the conception of history that underlies its production? What was their methodology? What is the impact of their work to the community? How did they gain notoriety and legitimacy? When and whom did they produce to? What is their importance in shaping the historical awareness of the reader?

There is a common aspect between the two countries, both Irish and Brazilian local historians agree with the preservation of the history of people, families, places and cities. But there is a singularity in Ireland. There are many local history societies that gather local historians and carry out different activities about local history and historical heritage. In Brazil, there aren't any such societies. Therefore, I would like to obtain more information about them.

Could you help me? I have a script of questions:

1. When was the society founded? What are its aims and scope?
2. How is its staff made up? (professional or amateur historians; journalists, researchers, teachers, genealogists, volunteers and others)?
3. Does the society receive any kind of financial or other support from other institutions? How does it maintain its activities?
4. What are its activities (research, lectures, conferences, outings, travel, publications, others)?
5. Is there much community participation? Does the community recognize the society?
6. How important is this society for the conservation of local history?
7. Is there any relationship between any academic historians or institutions? If yes, what is this relationship like? If no, how does the society recognise the academic work of historical production?

Please feel free to answer any or all of these questions. There is no obligation to answer every question. I appreciate your collaboration.

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