Mónica Amenedo Costa’s detailed archival study of the Anglo-Irish population of Enlightenment Ferrol and their legacy in the city is a welcome addition to the growing critical literature about connections between the British, Irish and Hispanic worlds. Ferrol itself is, of course, a familiar name in the historiography of Anglo-Hispanic relations. We might think, for example, of the failed ‘Ferrol Expedition’ in August 1800, when the British Army and Navy under General Pellew and Admiral Pulteney combined to try to take the city, by now a crucial hub in Spain’s maritime imperial network (the Brits lasted two days before getting back on their ships). Or we might remember the early twentieth-century, when the Sociedad Española de Construcción Naval —a British investment company, despite its Spanish name— brought thousands of British clerks, engineers, mechanics and their families to settle in the city between 1909 and the Civil War.
Amenedo Costa’s study adds a valuable new chapter to this history. More than a century before the Edwardian influx, Bourbon investment had transformed Ferrol into Galicia’s largest city. As a key hub in the maritime networks of the Spanish Empire and the site of one of the empire’s principal arsenals, it was also a cosmopolitan place, attracting residents from across Europe. *La población británica* aims to assess the place of the eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish community in this history, following the migration lifecycle from departure (why did they come?) through settlement (how did they get along with their fellow ferroláns? Did they integrate or keep to themselves?), to its aftermath (what is their legacy?). The book is divided into five chapters, giving a rounded account of the community in its historical and social context. While the shorter first three chapters provide context, outlining respectively the bibliographical, archival and historical background to the project, it is in the more extensive final chapters that the meat of the project is to be found.

Chapter four provides a detailed analysis of Ferrol’s Anglo-Irish community by place of origin, gender, and occupation, although the author reminds us that all conclusions should be considered partial given the idiosyncrasies of eighteenth-century record-keeping practice. A key problem Amenedo Costa has had to counter is the absence of women’s names—and sometimes even acknowledgment of their existence—from many civil records. For example, the annual census of foreign residents during the period under discussion admits women only in two specific years: 1791 and 1792 (51). Sometimes, too, there is so little verifiable information or names have become so corrupted through transcription (a constant hazard in tracing migrant communities) that potentially interesting individuals have had to be left to one side so as not to compromise the conclusions. This is the case, for example, for the cavalry officer ‘José Connock’, who in 1782 witnessed an Irishwoman’s claim for ‘limpieza de sangre,’ but whose own country of origin is never stated; or for the naval lieutenant ‘Diego Morgan’, who witnessed several English marriages in the 1750s, but whose own personal information is too conflicting to be of use (49). As both of these examples show, the Spanish convention of translating foreign forenames (think of ‘el Príncipe Carlos’ and ‘la Reina Isabel’) creates additional obstacles to identification. Most notably, it prevents us from distinguishing between individuals given a Spanish forename, perhaps as a result of family connections, or who adopted a new name on assimilating to a new country, and those whose forename was simply translated by the parish priest or notary as a matter of course.

Amenedo Costa’s primary source, parish records, can provide a more comprehensive picture of women’s lives that includes newborn girls and the female dead alongside wives, mothers, and godmothers. However, as the author notes, parish records too have their limitations. After all, a project based largely on parish records requires an individual to have been baptized, married or buried, or to have been a formal witness at one of these ceremonies, in order for their presence to be recorded, and clearly that will not have been the case for everybody (48). Nonetheless, through extensive cross-referencing and a detailed process of elimination, Amenedo Costa succeeds in establishing that the Anglo-Irish community in Ferrol was perhaps in the region of 100-120 adults at any given moment.

The final chapter delves deeper into the structures of Anglo-Irish family life in eighteenth-century Ferrol to reconstruct families, kinship and social networks from records of baptism, marriage and burial. For
La población británica e irlandesa en el Ferrol de la Ilustración. Análisis de fuentes demográficas gallegas y documentación de estado británica

Kirsty Hooper

La población británica e irlandesa en el Ferrol de la Ilustración es un estudio de relevancia por su contribución a nuestra conocimiento sobre el aterrizaje y asentamiento de la población anglo-irlandesa en Galicia durante el siglo XVIII. Los registros demográficos y familiares demuestran la importancia de las mujeres en el proceso de asentamiento, y no solo de los hombres, como se ha tendido a suponer. Los registros de matrimonio, bautizo, fallecimiento, etc., son ricos en detalles biográficos y proporcionan valiosas insinuaciones sobre la vida cotidiana e interacción social de esta población en el Ferrol. La meticulosidad con la que se documenta el asentamiento y la vida de estas familias permite un seguimiento detallado a lo largo del tiempo, permitiendo observaciones sobre la integración, el acercamiento cultural y las relaciones sociales establecidas.

Por otro lado, la dedicación a la descripción de estos individuos y familias en el contexto de su integración social y económica demuestra el enfoque y la meticulosidad en el trabajo de Hooper. La referencia a la obra de Amenedo Costa, ‘La población británica e irlandesa en el Ferrol de la Ilustración’, resalta la importancia de este estudio en el marco de los estudios culturales y demográficos. La obra de Hooper, por otro lado, se centra en la reconstrucción de las redes sociales y económicas del siglo XVIII en Galicia, y se puede considerar como una contribución valiosa tanto para los investigadores académicos como para aquellos interesados en la historia de la familia y la comunidad, en el ámbito gallego y más ampliamente, en el contexto de la migración y familia en el Atlántico.