

Ireland and Latin America: an amazing network

Guest Editor: María Graciela Eliggi (National University of La Pampa)

Santa Rosa, La Pampa, Argentina

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The multiple connections between Ireland and Latin America have been a matter of discussion and study by many scholars and from many different perspectives along the last decades of the 20th century, gaining a renewed interest during the past twenty years of the 21st century. However, as Edmundo Murray very well points out, “the pattern of relations between Ireland and Latin America has been heterogeneous, fragmentary and erratic.” Details about early links between Ireland and Latin America are derived from mythical sources and refer to the possibility that St. Brendan, the Navigator of Co. Kerry had landed in the 5th or 6th century on Mexican shores. However, and leaving the myths and legends aside, it is a fact that as far back as 1536, there is a first historical record of Irish people in Latin America, Juan and Tomás Farrel, members of the expedition commanded by Pedro de Mendoza to the River Plate which led to the foundation of the city of Buenos Aires, centuries later to become the capital of the Argentine Republic. Between the 1500s and the 1700s the relations established were linked to military, religious and commercial interests, coinciding with the European journeys of exploration, colonization and evangelization of the newly discovered territories. Thomas Field - a Jesuit from Limerick, arrived in Brazil around 1577 and years later moved south to Paraguay leaving important traces of religious activities. In the field of travel and commerce, other Irish people not only set up colonies on the mouth of the Amazon river and surrounding areas and started trading goods while learning, at the same time, indigenous dialects and the intricate geography of the region what gave them an advantage over other colonists. By the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th the presence of the Irish in Latin America was basically associated with military campaigns organised as part of what was known as “the Wars of Independence” fought against the European colonizing countries- Spain and Portugal- and leading to the establishment of many Latin American new nations. Many Irish surnames are connected with those enterprises but just a few would suffice to exemplify the point: Brown and O’Brien in Argentina, O’Higgins in Chile and Perú, O’Leary in Colombia and Venezuela, Wright in Ecuador, Campbell in Uruguay to mention just a few. The relations between Ireland and Latin America continued to be expanded in the intersection between military developments in America and the increased need by mid 18th century and after the Great Famine of 1845, for many Irish to emigrate and secure a place to live, settle and prosper “elsewhere”. Thus, many

Irish enlisted in different armies to serve as soldiers as is the case of Irish soldiers hired to fight for the Brazilian army against the Argentine one, or that of the “San Patricios”/San Patricio Battalion, Irish deserting the U.S. army and joining Mexican forces, in both cases attracted by the promise of receiving lands where to settle afterwards. Some of these actions proved to be successful although others turned out to be complete failures, having to re-emigrate from their first destinations back home or to other countries in the region. Irish presence in the Hispanic Caribbean and mostly in Cuba is also recorded at around 1835 and has to do with Irish workers living in the U.S. and recruited to build the first stretch of railroad in Latin America but also with Irish merchants and sugar planters- O’Reilly, O’Farril, O’Gaban- closely connected with the Cuban aristocracy. (Brehony, 2014) By late 19th century and early 20th century numerous new contacts emerged which, apart from the already mentioned ones, opened up other possibilities at the level of politics, diplomacy and international affairs, fields in which the Irish and the Latin Americans would meet and establish enduring relationships that continued to develop for all that was left of the 20th century and until the present.

This summary of the many connections between Ireland and Latin America shows mostly that Latin America received, along times, and through different waves of emigration/immigration, large numbers of Irish citizens who chose different non-English speaking countries to make them their new homes away from home. This special section of *Studi irlandesi* aims at exploring different aspects of the emigration/immigration/ settlement processes of the Irish in Latin America but also places a special interest in investigating processes of reverse diaspora and/or the role of Ireland as a host country during the Celtic Tiger era and beyond. We are seeking papers from different inter/trans/multi disciplinary backgrounds which examine the topics suggested below.

This 11th issue of *Studi irlandesi: A Journal of Irish Studies* <<http://www.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-sijis>> will explore the relations between Ireland and Latin America from an interdisciplinary perspective. This special edition aims to provide an overview of various academic approaches to and interpretations of the multiple forms in which both Ireland and Latin America have related in the past, and continue to do so in the present; possible future scenarios after the unexpected Covid-19 2020 pandemic will also be part of the discussion. Both theoretical and methodological essays, as well as case studies are welcome.

Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal published by Florence University Press. It aims to promote and contribute to the interdisciplinary debate on themes and research issues on every aspect of Irish culture, to create a place for international discussion and high-quality research on Irish literary studies, history, cultural perspectives and linguistic inquiry, from the Romantic Era to the present age. The journal is published in English and Italian.

Fields of research / Topics:

Irish Travellers to Latin America. Latin American travellers to Ireland.

Women travellers and writers.

Diary and /or letter writing

Children, Childhood and Education

Ireland and Latin America in the news. Journalistic accounts of the relationship between Ireland and Latin American countries.

Chronicles, histories and herstories.

The Irish in the making of the new Latin American nations /Latin Americans in the making of contemporary Ireland.

Post-Brexit economies in Ireland and Latin America

Untold stories of migration, emigration /immigration. Diaspora and Reverse Diaspora.

Literature and Arts

Linguistics / Sociolinguistics / Ethnolinguistics

The language of the Irish in Latin America: acculturation, adaptation, assimilation.

Cultural heritage

Education: Irish Studies in Latin America and Latin American Studies in Ireland.

Translation: literary, cultural, historical.

Articles are subject to full double blind peer-review. Please send abstracts of 250 to 400 words, outlines and expressions of interest for 8.000 to 10.000 words papers, as well as biographic information of 50 to 100 words by 30 October 2020 to the Guest Editor: María Graciela Eliggi (mgeliggi@yahoo.com) and to the General Editor: Fiorenzo Fantaccini (ffantaccini@unifi.it). Successful candidates will be informed in mid November 2020. The deadline for submission of manuscripts is 15/20 February 2021. Informal enquiries to the editor about possible paper submissions are welcome and should be addressed to the contacts above. The 11th issue of Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies will be published in June 2021.