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Just Like Don Quixote's Blues Again: an outsider's view of Celtic Studies in Brazil

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Abstract :

In this paper, I critically examine Celtic Studies in Brazil. Although the Celtic area appears to be going through somewhat of a boom in Brazil at present, this does not always translate happily for scholars in the area. Amongst the reasons for this is the rise of what I call a *Celtomania* discourse, a very broad, romantic, and ahistorical way of discussing the Celts. There is thus a need to clarify what is actually meant by *Celtic*, as the term has had various meanings, and also to historicise the Celts, to show how have the different Celtic groups changed over time. After this, again drawing on my personal experience, I look at some of the institutional difficulties faced by the area of Celtic Studies in Brazil. Finally, I close the article on a positive note, trying to map out some possible steps that could be taken to build a better and more solid future path for Celtic Studies in Brazil.

Keywords : Celtic Studies; Gaelic Ireland; Gaelic History

Resumo :

Neste trabalho faço uma análise crítica dos Estudos Célticos no Brasil. Apesar da área parecer florescente, isto não necessariamente se traduz numa situação favorável para os estudiosos do assunto no país. Entre os motivos, pode-se apontar um crescimento do que chamo discurso *celtomania*, uma abordagem generalista, romântica e a-histórica dos celtas. Destaco a importância de esclarecer o que se entende por *céltico*, na medida em que o termo teve diversos significados ao longo do tempo, bem como de historicizá-los, associando-os às mudanças dos diversos grupos celtas. Em seguida, novamente a partir da minha experiência pessoal, detenho-me sobre algumas dificuldades institucionais que atrapalham o fortalecimento da área de Estudos Célticos no Brasil. Encerro num tom mais leve, sugerindo passos para construir uma base melhor e mais sólida para os Estudos Célticos no Brasil.

Palavras-chave : Estudos Célticos; Irlanda Gaélica; História Gaélica

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Introduction

In recent years Celtic Studies have been experiencing somewhat of a boom in Brazil. For example, Irish Studies has also been enjoying a wave of popularity (although this has generally been within the area of Modern Languages – such as literary studies, drama, and cinema –, Irish history, politics, or sociology have, unfortunately, been largely bypassed by this). In the more general cultural sphere Irish dance, in its post-Riverdance mutation, and Irish (or Irish inspired) music have carved out certain niches for themselves in Brazil. Even St. Patrick's Day seems to have made space for itself in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, at least among a certain *jeunesse dorée*, to use a not very popular term. Added to this is the fact that Ireland has become a popular destination for Brazilian emigrants and holidaymakers.

Despite all this, and despite the admirable progress made in the field, Celtic Studies is facing certain difficulties. In part these are institutional, related to the struggles of a new area to establish itself. However, it also needs to define better its field and go beyond traditional academic boundaries, to (re)capture the Celtic imagination in Brazil, which too often is related to an ahistoric perspective of the Celts. Doing this will, I believe, serve to tie together the various individuals doing research in many different aspects of Celtic Studies, who in my own experience can too often feel like Don Quixote fighting windmills. In this paper, I will thus critically examine the field of Celtic Studies in Brazil and look at some of the difficulties which this academic area faces and which hinder its development. Although this may seem a somewhat negative agenda for a paper, it is nonetheless both necessary and an approach that will hopefully be fruitful and help to advance Celtic (and Irish) Studies in Brazil.

I will first look at the lack of a definition of what *Celtic* means, and the impact this has on what is studied and what is not. After this I will turn to the tensions between the use of the word *Celtic* and the study of Gaelic Ireland, especially in the Early Modern period. Finally, I will end this paper on a positive note, pointing to some possible steps that could be taken to build a better and more solid future path for Celtic Studies in Brazil.

Defining the undefinable?: Celts and Celtic Studies

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In some ways the application of the word Celtic to Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Bretons, and various other European regions is unfortunate. It is a very imprecise word, whose meanings have changed dramatically over time. What it means in the early twenty-first century is far different from when it was first used in classical times, when it was rediscovered in the Early Modern era, or when it became popular in nineteenth century Europe. Moreover, although in the area of Celtic Studies the use of the word *Celtic* has been criticised and debated,[2] in other parts of academia it is often used somewhat unreflexively.[3] At present, Celtic is usually taken to mean the non-English parts (or peoples) of the British Isles, as well as Brittany and occasionally parts of Spain and Portugal. But it has also previously meant Gaul, Germany, and large parts of classical Europe, reaching as far as Turkey. It is a name much applied, claimed, and misused. Indeed, as mentioned, the word has had various meanings, and is applied differently in different historical periods, with the most common being the Celts of the Classical world - the Gauls, the Britons, and various other peoples scattered around Europe, ranging from Iberia to what is now Turkey, - and the Medieval Insular Celts (and their descendants) of Britain and Ireland.

What does Celtic actually mean though? And based on this, what is Celtic Studies? The definition of Celtic has varied dramatically. Ironically, despite being in existence for more than 2000 years, it is only really in the last 150 years that large groups of people began to see themselves as Celtic or having a Celtic past. Initially used by Greek and Roman scholars to describe a people north of them who in the third and fourth centuries BC migrated into/invaded both Greece and Rome, and occupied a large part of Western Europe, notably Gaul (roughly equivalent to modern day France). Furthermore, Celt and Gaul would become interchangeable, especially thanks of the influence of the works of Julius Cesar. Following the fall of Rome the idea of Celt disappeared, to be reborn in Early Modern European scholarship.[4] At first this new (post-Renaissance) Celt was restricted to Continental Europe, as none of the classical writers had applied the word Celt to Britain or Ireland. Eventually the Britons eventually became Celtic – as did the Gaelic Irish, though much later. Romanticism had a huge influence on the idea of Celtic that developed during the nineteenth century.[5] Indeed, the Celticization of Gaelic Ireland and Scotland (and the idea of Insular Celts) was very much a product of the Romantic period. Nevertheless, it was really only at the

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end of the nineteenth century that Ireland became *Celtic*. A final twist in the historiography of Celtic identity occurred at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century, when Celticity became global to an extent, breaking away from definitions that previously had been linguistic or culturally based. Now it appears that anyone can claim to be Celtic.[6]

Ironically this was one of Cunliffe's conclusions in his impressive work *The Ancient Celts*. Initially he provides a useful wide-ranging general definition, which takes into account criticisms of the use of the concept: 'For us the Celts comprise a large number of ethnic groups who occupied much of central and western Europe in the first millennium BC and spoke a series of related dialects which linguists define as "Celtic." […]. Over much of the rest of the Continent 'Celticness' eventually disappeared in the turmoil and reformation of the first half of the first millennium AD and only in the extreme western fringes did the language, and with it the memory of the Celtic heritage, survive.' (1997: 268). This is a useful working definition of Celtic, especially since it manages to connect the Continental and Insular Celts. Importantly, Cunliffe also acknowledges that no one in Gaelic Ireland ever regarded themselves as Celtic. Aware of the criticisms of Chapman (1992), James (1999), and others of the use of the word Celtic, as well as the 'invented tradition' nature of Celtic identities in Ireland, Scotland, and elsewhere, he points out that Celtic nonetheless has a strong emotional appeal and has become something important:

> 'The Celtic past, in all its manifestations, took on a new importance as a symbol of unity. It was in this mood of ethnic struggle that the Celtic revival, (…), had its genesis. To what extent the Celticism of the Atlantic façade is a survival or a revival is a matter for anthropologists to debate. What is not in doubt, (…), is the very strong emotional appeal which the idea of sharing a Celtic heritage has.'(Cunliffe, 1997: 267).

This leads him to conclude that 'Perhaps the only real definition of a Celt, now as in the past, is that a Celt is a person who believes him or herself to be Celtic.' (Cunliffe, 1997: 267). Although I believe this definition to be useful, especially when applied to the nineteenth century world, it can also mean that Celtic Studies is in danger of becoming too vague an academic subject. On the one hand, if the definition of Celtic is those who believe themselves to be Celtic, in Classical, Medieval, and Early Modern History Celtic effectively ceases to exist, as the subjects of these periods did not believe

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themselves to be Celtic. On the other hand, if, by way of example, neo-pagan groups in Brazil believe themselves to be Celtic and believe that their 'invented traditions' are somehow 'real' representations of Celtic religion, are they part of Celtic Studies? Similarly, if – as has happened - someone argues that Celtic warfare is based on an offensive tactics, which can not only be found in Classical times in the fights between Celts and Romans/Greeks, but also Early Modern Ireland and Scotland, and also Confederate armies in the American Civil War, can the latter war be considered to be part of Celtic Studies as well?[7] I actually would tend to agree that both are part of Celtic Studies – but without surrendering the right to be critical of the pseudo-history/religion/culture built by these groups. Here I would tend to follow Colin Williams: "If the 'past is a foreign country' (Lowenthal 1985), then the creative anachronism of the contemporary Celtic landscape is a country yet to be fully discovered and mapped." (2000: 226).

Celtic is a useful sociological and historical label. It is perhaps unique in that in can be applied to radically different historical and sociological times and groups, ranging from approximately the fourth century BC to the current day. A non-exhaustive list of these different forms of Celticity includes the following: I) the ethnic groups regarded by Romans and Greeks as Celts (or Gauls); II) the rediscovery of (Continental) Celts in the sixteenth and seventeen centuries; III) the emergence of the Romantic Celt, inspired by Ossian and other works, after the last Gaelic/Celtic culture had been destroyed in the aftermath of Culloden in 1745; IV) the political use of the Celts, notably Napoleon III's 'cult' of Vercingetorix, as well as the use of other Celtic/Gallic figures elsewhere in Europe; V) the Insular Celts, essentially the non-English inhabitants of the British Isles; VI) a cultural/social/political category also applied to the non-English in the British Isles, such as Michael Hechter's well-known work, the *Celtic Fringe*; VII) the extension of this to Brittany and later to parts of Spain and Portugal. VIII) its use in recent times, especially in cultural/religious aspects, covering 'Celtic' music, spirituality, religion, and archaeology, amongst others.

Celtic Studies can cover all of this. Obviously, there is a danger of it becoming something that covers everything and nothing. Yet, this is what gives great potency to Celtic Studies. The tension between something and nothing, between an area confined to very restricted and specialised studies and one that is open to new ideas, to criticism, to blurring boundaries and crossing frontiers, can produce exciting new works. Its

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potential is vast, and in a place like Brazil where academic history is dominated by the study of Brazil, Celtic Studies has the possibility of drawing together quite disparate research areas, all of which are on the fringe of 'mainstream' history, but capable of producing important advances. Here I tend to follow Williams, who is a strident advocate of a radical new Celtic Studies, one that breaks away from an initial dominance of linguists and takes into account new cultural phenomena (such as Riverdance), but also the 'erosion' of the Celtic languages, the media, New Age spirituality, economic and political factors, especially political changes and the 'growth of nationalism and ethnic-regionalism.' (Williams, 2000: 207).

What is in a name?: Celtic, Gaelic, Irish, Scottish, Welsh… whatever

"Of my nation? What ish my nation? Ish a villain and a basterd and a knave and a rascal. What ish my nation? Who talks of my nation?"

Henry V, Act 3, Scene 2

Nowadays, in both the academic and popular spheres, the idea of *Celtic* is most frequently applied to Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Brittany (and Spain and Portugal to a lesser extent). Ironically, before the nineteenth century none of these peoples would ever have applied the label of Celtic to themselves.[8] Ireland was Gaelic, with invasions of Vikings, Normans, and English. The Welsh were Britons or Cymru, while Scotland was a mix of Picts, Gaelic Irish, Britons, Vikings, Saxons, and Normans, and the English were English (but also a mix of Britons, Romans, Saxons, Angles, Vikings, Normans, and probably Gaelic Irish). To complicate matters still further, detailing the Irish case a little, when the idea of Celtic first began to be used, in the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries, the Gaelic Irish – generally regarded by the Elizabethans and Stuarts as degenerates and barely human – were specifically excluded from being Celtic.[9] They were definitely not regarded as 'noble savages.' Gradually, as a result of successive defeats and the destruction of their culture, the Gaelic Irish merged with the Old English (descendants of the first Norman/English settlers who came to Ireland), became Irish, and then civilised,[10] before much later becoming Celtic (and lately appear to have become 'white'). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Gaelic Irish (and indeed the Gaelic Scottish) were regarded with a contempt and hatred that twenty-first century

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susceptibilities find hard to accept. They were seen as barbarous, almost subhuman, and a risk to civility with the potential to corrupt and threaten the foundations of civilised, polite, society, and who had to be reformed either with the sword or the pen. Their culture, their society, their institutions were all seen as repugnant.[11] Nevertheless, moving to the neighbouring island, in Scotland approximately 50 years after the destruction of Gaelic Scotland, the 'Highlanders' were created, with the conservative Romanticism of MacPherson and Walter Scott (and indeed the first wave of *Celtomania*) playing a hugely important role.[12] This was very quickly co-opted by the Hanoverian monarchs, who made themselves into Highlanders, a role still claimed by the British royal family.

In Ireland the recreation or reinvention of Gaelic Ireland took longer and occurred in a very different manner than in Scotland. In part due to very different historical and cultural circumstances, but also in part in reaction to MacPherson's blatant theft of Gaelic mythology. However, Romanticism (and nationalism) also influenced the Celtic Ireland that was being constructed, an Irishness based on the island of Ireland, rather than the broader Gaelic world, the *Gaeltacht*, which had covered both Ireland and parts of Scotland. Moreover, as could be expected in the socially conservative late nineteenth century – especially among the more refined parts of society -, the values of this Celtic Ireland were moulded to fit into this moral view. Helped by this, the idea of Celtic Ireland proved successful, and contributed to an important change: Gaelic Ireland had been despised by the elites, seen as a culture of poverty and depravity and was also in rapid decline (evidenced by the collapse of the Irish language in the second half of the nineteenth century), but Celtic Ireland came to be seen as worthy of being saved/preserved/frozen. Whereas Gaelic Ireland had represented the contemptible other, by way of contrast Celtic Ireland emerged as something pure, representative of some sort of Rousseauian noble savages. Gaelic Ireland, or at least the idea of it, was not preserved. The Gaelic Irish still remained as outsiders, as *others*, as now silenced others, whose name had been replaced by something different which tied them into a cultural universe they had never seen themselves as part of. In the late nineteenth century Gaelic Ireland disappeared, being replaced by the idea of Celtic Ireland.[13] Indeed, the idea of being Celtic is strong in Ireland today, it has become one of the key elements of Irish identity. Now intertwined with Gaelic, Celtic – probably due to the more widespread use it gained - has achieved

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primacy, especially in popular history, but also at a more level. For example, Celtic Ireland often appears in official discourse, especially in the work of Fáilte Ireland, the Irish tourist board, and also – at least in Brazil - in many cultural events here which have some sort of official backing. Gaelic Ireland, by way of contrast, is largely surrounded by silence.

Celtic and Gaelic Ireland: definitions and silences

As I learned in school in Ireland in the 1970s/1980s, the Celts were a people from Central Europe, who moved westwards into what the Romans called Gaul, as well as into Italy – where they sacked Rome – but also into Turkey. This 'heroic' people were presumed to have migrated from Gaul into what is now Britain and from there into Ireland.[14] No consideration was given in this account to Gaelic myths which said the Milesians (the mythical ancestors of the Gaelic nobility) had arrived in Ireland via Spain. In 1980s Ireland, the Irish were Celts and thus were presumed to be related to the 'tall,' 'fair,' and heroic people who had fought the Romans. Ireland may never have been Romanised, but this 'Celticization' ensured that the country had an honourable past, which was now somehow tied into the Classical world. In a way, this was a response to the work of Cambrensius, and numerous Elizabethan, Stuart, and even more modern English writers, personified in numerous nineteenth century cartoons portraying the Irish as apelike. By making Ireland Celtic, cultural and political nationalists were thus claiming a classical basis to refute these 'infamies' and also making Ireland 'European,' as part of a long tradition stretching back to the Romans and Greeks. Perhaps like any historical path, this would have significant implications for both the historiography of Ireland, the understanding of the country's past, and the national identity that would be continually forged and remade.

The Irish claim to be Celtic, initially made in the nineteenth century and which since then has become hegemonic, has never really been debated. Nor has what Celtic means in Ireland been. Gaelic is taken to be synonymous to Celtic, but where does that leave the Viking/Norse, Norman, or English 'contributions' to Ireland? Celtic has become a sort of default Irish identity, but what does it mean, also in terms of 'colour'? As certain Celtic symbols, notably the Celtic cross, have been co-opted by Europe racist

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movements – and also due to the prominent contribution of some Irish-Americans to what is now called the Alt-Right, it urgently needs to be asked if Celtic means white?[15]

Among many Irish academics the idea of Celtic Ireland has become an accepted truth – albeit one never really challenged -, while non-Irish writers tended to be either indifferent or tolerated it, possibly due to reasons of post-colonial guilt. The concept of Celtic has become very popular in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and many other countries distant from the 'traditional' Celtic regions. It appears in a vast range of often ahistorical spheres: Celtic Christianity; Celtic Religion; Celtic Spirituality; Celtic Women; Celtic Music; Celtic Warfare; Celtic Tarot. This is, perhaps obviously, the result of an oversell of Celtic in commercial spheres, but also a reflection of the currently popularity of the concept. Furthermore, it is also an impact of how the concept is used in governmental spheres, to sell Ireland (and to a lesser extent Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) – that can be observed in Brazil.[16]

Going backwards in time again, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Gaelic culture was 'rediscovered' by Anglo-Irish and Irish writers, the label that was attached to this period was the *Celtic* Revival not the Gaelic. As mentioned above, it appears as if the idea of *Gaelic* was being rejected – with the notable exceptions of the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association[17] – and replaced with Celtic. Perhaps *Gaelic* was unacceptable as it was tied to ideas of barbarity, depravity, poverty, non-civilisation, and Catholicism, in short it was too alien, too distant from the 'normalness' of Victorian Protestant reality. By way of contrast, the idea of Celtic did not have this baggage. In fact, as mentioned, what had previously occurred in Scotland was now being copied, when the Gaelic Scots were transformed after their destruction into 'Highlanders'. Celtic was thus a useful label for Irish nationalists (that in turn would later be applied to Scotland and Wales).[18] Although Gaelic was used occasionally, in the metanarrative forged before and after independence Ireland was framed as *Celtic*. Irish 'became' a Celtic language and was tied to the continental Celts. For example, it was even argued that the name of the Gaelic hero and god Lugh formed part of the names of London (said to be Lugdunum, although the Romans called it Londinium) and Paris (known to the Romans as Lutetia). Arguing about whether or not Paris and London were originally named after Lugh is not a relevant issue here, but it seems worth drawing attention to the fact that in relation to Celtic Ireland and Europe, great attention needs to be paid to 'facts,' to perceived

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knowledge, and inherited tradition. All of these can be correct, all can be wrong, but all can contain information of great importance, once we know how to unwrap and interpret them. Perhaps this is the most important lesson needed for Celtic Studies in Brazil, knowing how to interpret and contextualize texts, understanding that while X may have meant Z in the fifth century, in the ninth it was interpreted as Y, but three centuries later it would be reinterpreted as something completely different.[19]

The transformation of Gaelic into Celtic has had some complicated effects. Perhaps the most noxious is the fossilisation of Gaelic/Celtic Ireland. A society which, like any other, went through numerous changes and transformations, and incorporated/assimilated newcomers has been historiographically frozen. This can be found in numerous works of popular history, but also sometimes in more academic ones. In this picture, Gaelic/Celtic Ireland is presumed to have remained the same for an absurd historical period, ranging from Classical times to the defeat of Hugh O'Neill's Gaelic Confederacy in 1603.[20] Furthermore, certain features are singled out, supposed to represent the essence of the Celts, said to be found in certain heroes, such as Vercingetorix, Boadicea, Brian Ború, and Red Hugh O'Donnell.[21] All of these are presumed to share some sort of essential characteristics, which usually involved certain 'non-civilized' stereotypes: bravery, rashness, and uncontrollable, quick temperments. On the other hand, a figure such as Hugh O'Neill who revolutionised late Gaelic Ireland and who was the greatest threat to English control of Ireland, is excluded from this pantheon for being too deviant from these ascribed features.[22] Furthermore, in this vision Celtic Ireland is regarded as static, and as managing to preserve its 'essence' - its 'purity' – throughout a long historically indeterminate period. Celtic Ireland in the third or fourth century is somehow the same as in the tenth or eleventh. Its laws, culture, and society being miraculously preserved from change – something which in this perspective is often seen as exogenous, introduced by the Vikings, Normans, or English. In addition, this atemporality of the Irish Celts is projected backwards to the Classical period. The Gauls who sacked Rome, Vercingetorix, and Boadicea are all essentially the same as the Celtic Irish: in other words, brave, rash, foolhardy, and impetuous. Noble warriors with important qualities, but who, like Shakespearian tragic heroes, are doomed to be defeated by civilisation and progress. An implicit corollary of this is that these impulsive Celts needed the civilised 'tutoring' and discipline brought by Rome or

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by England. To develop, the Celtic Irish (and indeed the other 'Celtic' nations) needed to be ruled and guided.[23]

Obviously, this perspective is completely ahistorical and ignores the good work done in the area by many historians. However, go into a bookshop in Dublin (or London or Edinburgh) and alongside well researched studies one will find found numerous books about the Celts covering a period that runs from approximately the third century BCE to an even more fuzzy end date, anywhere between the 800 and 1600 CE. Alongside these are works about Celtic legends, Celtic religion, Celtic art, Celtic laws, Celtic spirituality, and probably even Celtic Sexuality. In many of these books, especially those dealing with Ireland or Scotland, Celtic means Gaelic. Furthermore, there is also a strong tendency to accept texts – or rather translations of texts – as definitive, and even almost factual or empirical statements, instead of as dynamic documents containing biases (and errors), which are products of particular historical/cultural/political/regional circumstances, and which were copied and edited numerous times. It should also be noted that this type of *Celtomania* work has multiplied in recent decades, especially on the internet. In Brazil too it is becoming very common.[24] Ironically many mainstream works on British history unintentionally share this perspective, seeing Gaelic Ireland as something backward and doomed to failure, and not as a modern – albeit different – society capable of developing and 'modernising.'

Celtomania and Beyond

Although there is some interesting academic production in Brazil about specific aspects of Celtic/Gaelic Ireland, this has tended to be drowned out by the more *Celtomania* type of work. Browsing the internet, it is quite easy to find texts (or invitations to talks) about Celtic history, law, legends, and 'spirituality' in Portuguese. Even in newsstands, it is relatively easy to find Brazilian publications about Celtic legends and the 'Celtic world.' Conversely, it is harder, outside of the specialised conference related to this journal, to find academic presentations about Celtic Studies in Brazil. Indeed, I might be the only person to publish papers about *Gaelic* history in Brazil, though the reason for the title of this paper, in many of these I have felt I was talking to no one, a bit like Don Quixote attacking the windmills.

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On a more positive note, last year (2017) a course on the history of Ireland was given in USP, in which I had the honour to participate. In addition, there are a reasonable number of scholars and students carrying out serious work in the area of Celtic Studies in Brazil. Indeed, the fact that the *Celtomania* approach has become so dominant and commonplace shows that there is a lot of interest in the area. Nevertheless, my work (and that of other serious academics about Irish/Celtic Studies in Brazil) tends to be largely ignored by official Irish channels here, which have been rather 'peculiar' in their relation to academic works about Ireland in Brazil. On the one hand there is a chair of Irish Studies in USP, which the Irish government sponsors, as well as various academic conferences on Irish/Celtic studies. On the other hand, for example the USP course mentioned above, the first of its kind in Brazil, was largely ignored by the Consulate, which in its cultural events appears to prefer a more *Celtomania* approach. Indeed, until the present – though hopefully this will change – no attempt has been made by the Irish consulate/embassy to draw on Irish scholars in Brazil or Brazilian scholars studying Ireland. Rather, there seems to have been an option to draw on the work of Brazilian *Celtomaniacs* as opposed to serious scholars of Irish history, culture, literature[25].

It is worth now turning to the *Celtomania* perspective. Although this material is generally produced outside the academic sphere, it is something which academia needs to be concerned with for various reasons. Perhaps in a Brazilian context the most important is that due to the relative academic weakness of Celtic Studies here, the non-academic sphere – especially when it is sponsored by governmental organizations from the 'Celtic countries' – can gain an exaggerated significance, which can weaken academic work in the area. As is widely known, the *Celtomania* view of the Celts goes back to Romanticism in the late eighteenth century. According to Haywood, Romanticism was a 'cultural rebellions against the rationalism and materialism of the Enlightenment.' (2014: 183). It 'exalted imagination, irrationalism, individualism and rebellion, and love of wild nature, the mysterious and the exotic'. (Haywood, 2014: 183). Romantics saw the Celts as embodying everything which their movement stood for, and adopted them, especially the druids. Ironically, this description of the first *Celtomaniacs* from the eighteenth century fits the Brazilian *Celtomaniacs* perfectly.

Despite what are probably good intentions of the authors of this type of work, they often convey a very conservative – and even imperialistic – narrative. This appears

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first, as mentioned above, in the focus on Celtic and the silencing of Gaelic, as well as emphasising the atemporality of the Irish Celts, in which a Whig version of history is implicitly accepted.[26] It is presumed that Celtic Ireland, no matter the many wonderful aspects of its culture, was always going to be eclipsed by the forces of 'civilisation', by England. That Celtic Ireland – accepting this terminology for the purposes of this paper – had the ability to change and develop, that it could absorb newcomers and allow them space, such as the Hiberno-Norse or the Hiberno-Normans (later the Old English), is simply ignored. That tradition was a trope in Celtic Irish literature, especially bardic poetry, often used to disguise innovation – of which there was a lot – is a dimension not understood. Indeed, in this type of literature there is much discussion of the generic *Celtic Ireland*, but very little discussion of original sources, and certainly no comparison of different versions of the same text.[27] For the twenty-first century Romantics, and among the tropes often used in *Celtomania*, instead of changing and evolving, Celtic Ireland has to remain 'pure,' a purity which was based on an inability to develop[28] something historically and sociologically absurd – despite being evoked so often in many narrative levels.

Second, as mentioned above, *Celtomania* discourse tends to be an imperialistic discourse. More than likely this is often unintentional and perhaps even contrary to the intentions of its proponents, but *ignorantia juris non excusat*, naiveite is no excuse. As stated more than once, implicit in much of this atemporal and ahistoric vision of Celtic Ireland is that the brutish, impetuous, and rash Celt had to be taken in hand and 'tutored' by the civilised and rational English. Although many would refute this, the logic of their ideas, as they present them, is undeniable. The Celt, based on heart, on feeling, on emotion, would ultimately be defeated by civilisation – by Rome, by Caesar, by progress, by science, by *capitalism*. Notwithstanding any nostalgia, a certain historical *boho chic,* and the belief that the defeat of the Celts involved the loss of certain virtues, the defeat of the Celts is usually seen as something impossible to stop, one of those 'terrible effects of History'. More seriously, in recent years, the attempts by the far-right to appropriate aspects of Celtic history and symbology point to a certain desire, among some *Celtomaniacs*, for a return to a pre-democratic or even *ancien regime* society. Indeed, searching through Brazilian internet sites about the Celts, something similar can be encountered. Given the rise in recent years of the far-right in the US and Europe, and

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also of quasi-fascist groups in Brazil, this could prove a very significant question for research.

Furthermore, regarding the Irish case, labelling the Gaelic Irish as Celtic and tying them to the Gauls and Celtic peoples of Classical times removes the Gaelic Irish from history, from their *own* history, which saw themselves as arriving in Ireland from Spain/Portugal. The Gaelic Irish were adept at adapting their histories and connecting themselves into various meta-histories. For example, the Milesians (the mythic ancestors of many the Gaelic elite) were tied into Old Testament history. However, no attempt was made to tie themselves to the Gauls or the Celtic peoples of Western and Central Europe. The Gaelic Irish and Scottish saw themselves as Gaelic not Celtic. The latter would have been an utterly incomprehensible category for them. Its use there needs to be questioned - to avoid an anachronist narrative and, from a more normative perspective, to show some 'respect' towards their world views, through interpretations more akin to the records left from the concrete, to go back to the label, types of Celtic societies that enlivened European, and world, history.

The final point is perhaps the most serious, the denial of agency to the Gaelic people – part of the denial of agency to certain peoples common to the Romantic view. This has a dual aspect. On the one hand, in all their fights against the English or Normans, the Gaelic Irish were regarded as always destined to be ultimately defeated by the English. Civilisation would inevitably and inexorably triumph over the 'remnants' of the 'antiquated' Celtic Ireland. However, for instance, in the Nine Years War (1594-1603), the Gaelic Confederacy under Hugh O'Neill inflicted serious defeats on the Elizabethan forces and came very close to winning. Indeed, English victory was very much a matter of luck.[29] Their eradication from history after the defeat of the Gaelic Confederacy and the brutal destruction of Gaelic Ireland (and later of Gaelic Scotland) is a further wound, no matter how unintentional, the wound of denial of violence with the intent of destroying a people. For example, the current idea of Scottish highlanders was largely constructed after 1745-6, as mentioned above. What existed before this was Gaelic Scotland, whose inhabitants were called Irish – and often despised - by the 'enlightened' bourgeoisie of Edinburgh. With the advent of Romanticism, MacPherson, and Scott, these 'Irish' magically become highlanders, while the latter and their costume, in particular the kilt, in turn became almost the stereotypical mark of Scotland.[30] Equally, in the early nineteenth century the Hanoverian royal family also

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became Scottish and have continued so until the present (having changed their German name during World War I). All this superimposing and obliterating the tragic wars the 'Gaelic' people were involved in, making their 'ways of life,' from a political, social, and economic standpoints, untenable apart from, at least to a great extent, being associated with the clichés, a 'cute' part of the hegemonic 'natural paths of history' personified in the British Empire.

In relation to Ireland, it did not prove possible to similarly posthumously transform the Gaelic Irish into a people analogous to the Highlanders. As already stated, the Gaelic Irish have been largely written out of popular history, and indeed within modern academia have been consigned to an academic periphery. Despite the fact that from end of the twelfth century until the twentieth, the English monarch was also the lord/monarch of Ireland, and that after the Act of Union in 1800 Irish MPs sat in Westminster, Irish history is separated from English/British. It is possible to write about the development of liberal democracy in Britain but ignore Ireland. It is possible to laud the achievements of Britain in the nineteenth century but ignore the fact that one million Irish died in the Great Famine of the 1840s due to a mixture of laissez-faire economic policy (the type of liberal politics currently in vogue in certain sectors in Brazil), prejudice, and incompetence. The wonders of capitalism in nineteenth century Britain and the horrors of poverty in nineteenth century Ireland are completely intertwined, yet in academic history they have been separated – something which is far from inevitable or innocent.

In Ireland, the existence of a strong academic tradition allows this popular picture to be combatted and corrected – or even used to subtly correct its excesses.[31] In addition, there are numerous blogs and social media accounts which present non-*Celtomania* views, while the discipline of history itself has a far higher status in Ireland than in Brazil.[32] However, in Brazil this counterbalance is missing. Although there is important academic production, it is rather scattered and lacks the mass to counterbalance *Celtomania* approaches. What is thus produced in many of these Brazilian talks and texts about the Celts (which most of the time means Celtic Ireland) is something that is fundamentally reactionary. Instead of a real living society which faces problems, which develops, uses, and discards ideas, which is composed of various classes and sub-classes, consisting of elites, and individuals struggling in life, some doing better, others not, a generic, romantic ahistorical society is presented, consisting

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of robotic individuals who do what they are told, never innovate, never change, never complain or rebel, yet who existed for a millennium at the very least. Anyone trying a similar approach to the pre-Columbian Americas, to the Incas, the Aztecs, or indeed any of the indigenous cultures existing in the Americas in the early 1500s, would be harshly criticised. All of these had agency, the various native Brazilian groups had agency, why then is it so hard to take the jump and acknowledge the agency of Gaelic Ireland? Why is it so hard to admit the existence of Gaelic Ireland and that it was a society that – like all other societies in the history of humanity – was dynamic. This is something I have stated in texts directed at various audiences. It is the basis of social science, yet somehow it has to be continually stated about Gaelic Ireland, since even people in mainstream academic history seem to have a problem acknowledging this. As is evident in the following absurd quote about the Nine Years War in a book published, not in Brazil but by the British National Archives: 'The *primitive tactics* employed by the Irish were not much use as an introduction to *sophisticated continental warfare*, but courage and tenacity were at a premium.' (Loades, 2009: 194-5, italics added).

To conclude this possibly abrasive section, I wish to extend an olive branch. Notwithstanding reservations about the word Celtic, I believe that it is a useful concept and one that it is necessary to use due its critical mass. Nevertheless, it is one that needs to be better defined and understood. Phrasing it differently, perhaps it could be stated that the academic sphere needs, in Brazil at least, to find a better way of interacting with and transmitting knowledge to the non-academic sphere. First, it has to be clarified that there is no Celtic essence, no Celtic charge, no Celtic spirituality, no Celtic laws. Rather, and I will state this once again, like all other societies, the Celts changed and evolved. In terms of Celtic/Gaelic Ireland this is obvious in many ways, such as the history of the Irish language, the changes it has gone through, and the terms/words incorporated or dropped. There are important differences between Old, Middle, Early Modern, and current Irish, as in any language. This leads to my second point, historiographically it has to be acknowledged that Celtic/Gaelic society changed, that Ireland in the second century was different from the third century, and even more from the tenth. Attempts to describe a Celtic society or culture that existed for more than a millennium *without change* need to be strongly refuted - if we are to get to know and learn from a group that proved interesting and capable of dealing with the challenges facing human societies in different ways, that can challenge and highlight limits of the mainstream, hegemonic

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path, which many have tried to portray as unique and, in such movement, obliterating all others.

Celtic Studies in Brazil: threats and opportunities

Having tentatively defined Celtic and Celtic Studies and outlined some of the difficulties with *Celtic* and *Gaelic*, this final section will look at Celtic Studies in Brazil. In particular, I will discuss its struggles to establish itself in the structure of Brazilian academia and to move beyond being the production of individuals working in different areas to become something more institutionalised, with all the difficulties inherent with this.

Perhaps it is wise to start with the obstacles this potential institutionalisation faces. The most obvious is bureaucracy. It is difficult for new academic areas to emerge, to obtain funding, grants, attract students, produce innovative research. In a time of economic difficulties, when university funding has been reduced, this becomes even harder. However, leaving aside financial questions, other more human aspects are also of importance, such as the construction of networks of knowledge and research. This is fundamental to transform a group of people working in the same general area into a strong academic network. The absence of this can be clearly felt by scholars trying to build Celtic Studies in Brazil, in difficulties to get funding, in finding congresses to submit papers to, or even making space for the subject in an already crowded and diffuse academic sphere. A strong group of researchers can stimulate and assist the research of those involved, but also push the area forward and encourage more fundamental or controversial questions to be examined.

This is something that Celtic Studies in Brazil needs to address. For example, in presenting academic papers in Brazil about Ireland, in both general and specific congresses/roundtables about Celtic/Irish studies, I have found that there is a lack of debate about the papers presented, but also rarely an attempt to relate them to any sort of theoretical framework. This may be due to the nature of Celtic Studies in Brazil and the vast area that is covered, meaning that participants do not feel confident enough to criticize the work of others. Undoubtedly, the nature of presentations in roundtables and congresses also often inhibits debate and theorising. Nevertheless, there might be an unwillingness to tackle controversial issues or enter into debates that may be raging elsewhere in the academic world. Perhaps the peripherality of Celtic Studies in

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Brazilian universities plays an important role here. Participants may feel nervous about raising academic debates that they think they do not understand fully.

Peripherality has another, and perhaps more fundamental, impact. A reluctance to take part in international debates, to advocate or refute theories, to tackle the greater picture. Part is a result of academic structures which prioritise publication in certain journals, where quantity too often counts over quality, and where there is often not enough time to develop the big picture, as funding is not available, or is only available for other projects. All of this has an impact, generally a negative one on the capacity for academic innovation. Moreover, this can be illustrated by leaving aside Literature, Sociology, and other areas that can contribute to Celtic Studies in Brazil and focusing on history alone. Most history in Brazil is Brazilian history. Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern/Modern history (the areas most concerned with Celtic Studies) are all rather peripheral, continually struggling for resources and to attract students. My area is Early Modern history. In the Brazilian system, this period is subsumed in Modern History. What has struck me about this area, and which I believe is of relevance to Celtic Studies, is that while in relation to Brazil (and to an extent Latin America/Iberia) a lot of exciting and innovative work is produced by Brazilian scholars in Modern History, in relation to European History this is not the case. For example, this year is the 400th anniversary of the Thirty Years War, which was arguably the first global war, especially as it was tied into the conflict between Spain and the Dutch rebels. In addition to being a war which marked the birth of a modern European state system, it was also one in which Brazil was involved, due to the Dutch invasions. However, as far as I know, it is going unmarked in Brazilian universities. Which Brazilian researchers are using the anniversary to 'internationalize' themselves? It is a lost opportunity.

This brings us to my next point, the non-internationalization of Modern History in Brazil. At the risk of boring the reader, this is extremely important for Celtic Studies. In every country in the world the academic subject of History has a parochial tendency, an inward focus.[33] However, in Brazil this is exacerbated. In part due to the size of the country, but also perhaps due to something that has taken me years, if not decades, to understand. It is hard to put a name on this in English: an inferiority complex, a weird sort of colonialism. This is often translated into a reluctance of Brazilian academics to innovate and/or be controversial in areas involving European countries and the United

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States. While English authors often write polemical works about US, French, Spanish, and even Brazilian history, which Brazilians do this in the opposite sense? Put another way, Brazilianists are welcomed in Brazil, but few Brazilian academics seem to dive into the history of other countries (at least outside Latin America and Spain/Portugal) and publish polemical works challenging the current orthodoxy in European, US, or even Celtic history.

What I am saying is probably somewhat uncomfortable or even unpalatable. However, it is intended in a positive way. Indeed, it is a challenge to my Brazilian colleagues. Write about the history of other countries, publish abroad, be controversial, advance new ideas, dare to look at the larger picture, not just restricted studies. In the area of Celtic Studies in Brazil, this is something that is urgent. Academic Celtic Studies exists here, but it too largely consists of scattered scholars, focusing on their (important) research projects which are usually quite restricted in scope. In the meantime, the 'bigger picture,' the *Celtic imagination* in Brazil, has been captured by a *Celtomania* perspective. Admittedly, academic history and popular history have different aims. The purposes of tourism, neo-pagans, spirituality, folklore etc., can sometimes be very distant from the work of an academic historian. Yet the academic and popular spheres intersect. Moreover, this should be a source of strength for Celtic Studies, for something that is struggling in institutional terms, but for which an audience exists in Brazil. Celtic Studies in Brazil needs to find out how to tap into this audience. Also, as mentioned above, cultural and diplomatic bodies in Brazil could play a greater role here, moving away from the *Celtomania* vision they have tended to adhere to.

History is complex, society is complex. It follows that Celtic Studies must be complex. However, the *Celtomania* vision of the Celts both freezes Celtic/Gaelic history (and indeed Irish history), denying their dynamism and protagonism and imposing an imperialistic silence on them. At the same time, just to mention an area of expertise, it fails to understand the military revolution that occurred in one of the poorest parts of Western Europe in the 1590s, which came so close to defeating the English, and indeed was far more successful against them than the Spanish. Something special happened in Gaelic Ireland in the 1590s, something which this perspective cannot understand. In addition, looking at aspects of what happened - instead of at a frozen picture - somewhere, sometime in the past, may, as the almost common sense idea of history

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goes, help us trying to invent new worlds for here and everywhere, for now and tomorrow.

While accepting the existence of the Celts, as a broad cultural group, it also has to be recognized that the Gaelic people also existed – or even further than several Gaelic peoples existed. Classified as Celtic in the modern era, they saw themselves as Gaelic. Obviously, there is a tension in the nomenclature, but this can be a useful starting point for examining the meanings of both Celtic and Gaelic. We have good historical records for the Gaelic peoples for much of the period between the fourth and seventeenth centuries. They lived, fought, suffered, they did good things and bad things, but like any other group in the history of humanity, they changed, they progressed, they regressed, they evolved. Nor were they frozen in time. The same applied to the Celts, who comprised numerous different social and cultural groups, who existed in a wide vary of social contexts and co-existed (though not always peacefully) with numerous other social and ethnic groups. There is no such thing as an *Alma Celtica, Celtic Way of Warfare*, or *Celtic Spirituality,* rather there were groups of people struggling to survive in life, most of whom were oppressed in one way or another, but who persisted. Beautiful things were made, beautiful texts were produced (and lost), but these have to be understood in their context, usually in a context of people trying to find and adapt strategies of survival in a complex world.

Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, none of these peoples saw themselves as Celtic. In the pre-Romantic world, identity was something that was very malleable and extremely complex. People saw themselves as Gaelic, they saw themselves as Christian/Catholic or followers of traditional religions, they saw themselves almost in terms of class (in more of a Weberian than a Marxist manner), as members of an elite, as nobles, as poets, but also as peasant, merchants, and soldiers. In Ireland, they were part of the Cenél nEógain, the Cenél Conaill, the Uí Néill, Uí Bhriain, or numerous other family groups. Region and geography were also important for identity: Tir Eoghain, Leinster, Munster, Desmond, Ormond. There are layers and more layers wrapped around each other in (often 'non-rational') 'bundles' which make up identity. However, at least before the nineteenth century, Celtic is not a part of this. I am willing to accept that the Gaelic world was one of the subdivisions of the Celtic world, to accept the academic use of the word Celtic. Nevertheless, the Gaelic people

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existed in a Gaelic world (obviously one that was in contact with various other worlds). While the academic use of the concept of Celtic – once it is clarified what is meant by this – can be of importance, this should not occur at the expense of the silencing of the Gaelic world, especially since this was the reference in which the Gaelic people existed and in which the various 'Celtic Laws' and 'Celtic Myths and Legends' were created. Even more, perhaps the most significant meaning and lessons we can learn from the 'Celtic' peoples, is their variety, their complexities, their specific attempts to find several 'unique' ways to answer the challenges of social and political life, in its intercourse with nature and other societies, escaping the 'single realm' - of whichever kind - and its attempt at domination and obliteration.

Conclusion: *o caminho Celta* – the torturous path of Celtic Studies – and Gaelic Studies - in Brazil

While this article may have seemed quite negative so far, it is not intended to be so. There is much to be celebrated in terms of Celtic Studies in Brazil, but there are many difficulties, not least finding space for the subject in an academic structure that is strongly institutionalised. Nevertheless, having outlined the obstacles Celtic Studies faces, here in the conclusion I want to point towards possible paths for its development and strengthening.

Undoubtedly, this must begin with bringing greater academic rigour to the area. This is essential if we want to prevent Celtic Studies from remained a weak network of scholars and studies in a field increasingly dominated by *Celtomania*,[34] whose vision while well-meaning is actually very conservative and even imperialistic in the sense that it helps to silence the often already weak – or silent - voices of the Gaelic people (and indeed other European peoples), as well as to impoverish the enormous diversity associated with the 'Celtic' peoples. This academic rigour should be based on the historicization of the Celts and a clarification of who they actually were. In relation to the latter, as mentioned above, the word Celtic has been applied to many peoples and has many meanings. Its use needs to be discussed in greater detail, and the many long-standing conceptions (and omissions) in the field need to be critically analysed. This debate took place, mainly among European based writers, in the 1990s and 2000s. Since

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then, unfortunately, it seems to have died out, but it may well be revived with further examinations of the concepts of Celtic, Gaelic, and Celtic Studies.

I also believe that Brazilian researchers, whether writing for Brazilian or international publications, need to be more forceful, and should not be afraid of challenging long held opinions or engaging in polemical debates. They have a right to do so, since they can also offer potential new viewpoints, drawing on Brazilian/Iberian history, but also they can draw on theoretical frameworks that differ from those dominant in English language works.[35] Much work needs to be done in the field of Celtic Studies, a lot of which involves repairing the damage inflicted by the 'Celtic' history and imagination that emerged in the nineteenth century which had imbibed too much romanticism and MacPherson. Several of the questions raised above could be useful starting points for this. As an example, I have stressed the importance of Gaelic history, as this is how the Irish speaking people of Ireland saw themselves from classical times to the Modern period. Indeed, the Irish[36] word for Irish, *Éireannach*, only dates from the 1620s. Several questions arise out of this. What was the relationship between the Gaelic people and the Celts? Where the Gaelic people a group of Celts, as were the Gauls and Welsh, and others, or were they completely distinct? While it is easy to produce a suitable academic definition of Gaelic, Celtic is more difficult. This is something that should be debated in Brazil, especially if it is intended to advance the field here and to make it rewarding in terms of the broader philosophical and historiographical debate in which Brazilian academics can play an outstanding role.

Related to this, although the general label of Celtic Studies is useful – perhaps due to convenience and lack of an alternative -, much work needs to be done by critically investigating the simple question who were the Celts? Indeed, this can also be put in a more sceptical form: since none of the ancient/Early Modern peoples now considered Celtic saw themselves as Celts, can/should the word be used at all? Although these may seem basic questions, probably because they involve concepts deeply intertwined in the national identities (both official and unofficial) of many European countries, they are rarely asked – which does not mean that they are not relevant. In addition, there is also space here for Brazilian researchers brave enough to carry out such innovative research. And as an aside, since so many European researchers have come to Brazil with these types of questions why should the opposite not happen?

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Turning again to the historicization of the Celts is necessary. Looking at my own bookshelves while writing this, I can seems numerous ahistorical titles about the Celts, I know I can look online and find many, many more, and that if I go to Google and throw in Portuguese words such as *Celta, Alma Celta, Religião Celta* I will find a long list of websites (if I added the words *druida* or *magia* this list would be even longer). While it is historiographically not acceptable to talk of the Romans as being the same, for example, in the Punic Wars (264-146 BCE), at the time of the Battle of Adrianople (378), or the fall of Constantinople in 1453, too many writers and historians discuss the Celts as if during a similar period they did not change. Although I am not an expert on Roman history, I know that it is divided into various periods. I also know that the Roman army and the way it fought changed dramatically during this period. Indeed, the Roman army at the time of Adrianople would have been unrecognisable to the Roman army of Julius Cesar, to the same extent that the British army of 1914 would have been unrecognisable to the army of Marlborough at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Celtic studies thus urgently needs some form of periodisation. Celts from the third century BCE have to be distinguished from those of the first century CE. This periodisation is linked to the definition of what Celtic means – and rather than the *Celts*, what should be worked with are Celtic peoples, all of whom had their own histories and their own paths. In this historicisation what needs to be rejected are attempts to freeze the Celts, whether historically or in terms of their characteristics. Not all 'Celts' were fierce and foolhardy, a reading of the Irish myths and annals, or indeed the works of Julius Cesar, illustrate this. Not all Celts believed in the same gods, indeed many were Christian! Looking through the Gaelic works that have survived from the Early Christian period to the Gaelic Renaissance of the 1620s, it can be seen that every sort of human emotion can be found in the histories and myths. Certain stereotypes need to be broken with. After all this is what history should be about, going beyond the traditional picture and rupturing with and destroying stereotypes.

Official Ireland could be of more help here. Although the embassy and consulate do support academic events, when there are non-academic cultural events – such as St. Patrick's Day -, a *Celtomania* version of Irish/Celtic history is often turned to, as if the official version of Irish culture is akin to the stereotypical version of *Bord Failte* Ireland that used to be 'sold' to the United States. Celtic/Gaelic Ireland is, to say the least, very much a minority interest within Brazil history. Nevertheless, scattered around Brazil are

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various scholars working on different aspects of Irish/Celtic history. Unfortunately, little support is given to these scholars from Irish diplomatic circles. Indeed, while it is often easy to find out information about Brazilian bands which play 'Irish' music or about Brazilian Irish dancing groups from the Consulate's online publications, neither the embassy in Brasilia nor the Consulate in São Paulo seem to have a record of theses, doctorates, or other publications about Ireland (or other Celtic regions) in the academic area. This is something that should be improved. From my own interactions in the academic area I have encountered various Brazilian students intent on studying Ireland. Furthermore, the large Brazilian presence in Ireland and the *Ciência sem Fronteiras* programme have resulted in interesting academic production in a wide variety of areas, going beyond history/literature, reaching architecture and engineering for example. Even its most direct intervention in Brazil, the Chair in USP, is somewhat stereotypically in the area of literature. Yet despite the co-funding of the USP Chair of Irish Studies, in the more 'popular' events held by the Consulate, or on which it is has an influence, the expertise of the USP Irish Studies group is rarely drawn on. Instead the tendency has been to opt instead for local *Celtomaniacs* which presented a very outdated and univocal picture of Ireland – as the recent events in the Immigration Museum and on Avenida Paulista on St. Patrick's Day illustrate.

Turning now to the second part of my paper, the essential question here night be how can Celtic Studies be institutionalised in a scenario that is not conducive to innovation. Somewhat obviously, an initial movement could be to establish some sort of academic *grupo de trabalho*, the first step in the long pursuit of academic funding and recognition. At the same time, despite the existence of scholars interested in this area, and indeed the existence of this journal, the area still needs to gain critical mass, especially in terms of teaching staff in universities. It is important to assess this critically with the aim of attracting more scholars to the area, especially at the doctoral, post-doctoral, and teaching staff levels. I think the reasons are complex and related to what was discussed above. A historicized Celtic Studies with a clearer definition of its subject matter and a sharper periodisation would be much more attractive. Furthermore, I think that greater internal debate within the area would be beneficial. Those involved in it should be academically challenged and also be challenging others. By encouraging debate (and indeed argument) one can generate interest in and attachment to the field. In addition, and this is a subtle potential of the area, the internationalisation of the field

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should be better taken advantage of. Although it is very much a peripheral one in Brazil, it is nonetheless part of a large international area with great potential in terms of postgraduate study and international conferences. Something which few areas of history can offer in Brazil.

Another point is that Celtic Studies in Brazil tends to be restricted to Ancient (and sometimes Medieval) History. Not many have tried to extend it to (Early) Modern History, in an attempt to produce an alternative perspective to the 'Rise of the West' perspective, an alternative which ironically can be found easily in Western Europe but is almost absent in Brazil. On the other hand, Irish Studies tends to be restricted to Literature, internationally, not just in Brazil. Consequently, there is room to expand Celtic Studies in Brazil, to open it and make it more welcoming to other academic areas and other periods, and also to encourage research into more general topics. Scholars need to be adventurous and daring, to draw on new theories and ideas, which will result in more fertile and more rewarding interactions. For example, I have (quite tentatively at first, I must admit), placed my own research in Late Gaelic Ireland and state formation in the area of Celtic Studies of Brazil, work that brings together history and sociology. Other possibilities of this sort of approach could be looking at the Viking kingdom of Dublin, when (and how) did the Vikings become Hiberno-Norse, and when did they become just Irish? Or plotting the history of specific kingdoms, the Northern and Southern Uí Néill are just one obvious example. Indeed, for the even more adventurous and brave at heart, a history of the Uí Néill is crying out to be written. Finally, this sort of research can lead to very interesting interaction between various academic areas. The numerous works on Edmund Spenser and Ireland, drawing on history and literary studies are an example of this sort of approach.

It is perhaps appropriate to end this article as it began, comparing the *descompasso* between a Brazil where interest in Ireland and Celtic Studies has never been greater, where the romantic *Celtomania* approach is dominant and even facilitated, and where studying Gaelic Ireland in Brazil is quite difficult. Still I persist, still I have an obstinate belief that my studies are worth it. Here the similarity with Don Quixote is almost too painful. Since arriving in Brazil in 1993 I have felt that the country was progressing, albeit at times this progress was painfully slow. Since the 2016 *Golpe*, this belief has been challenged like never before, but I cling to it, I cling to hope. I believe in both a better time for Brazil, but also that Celtic Studies in Brazil can become a proper

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academic area, one thriving and based on research and historiographical debate, not something concerned with a fictional people who somehow miraculously managed to avoid any change during a 1500 year period, but instead people(s) that endured difficulties, tried changes, experimented forms of life within their smaller societies and with others - playing with and respecting times, differences, nature, life.

Shortly after I arrived in Brazil someone told me hope is the last to die....

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[2] See, for example, Chapman (1992), James (1999); Cunliffe (1997); and Williams (2000). For an interesting and at times heated debate about the word Celtic, see Megaw and Megaw (1996 and 1998), and James (1998).

[3] An example can be found in Adrian Hastings' *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism* (1997). In this work Hastings refers to a Celtic ethnicity in Ireland. He also alternates the use of Gaelic and Celtic and undermines an otherwise interesting account by drawing on stereotypes: "Bureaucracy was not a mark of the Celt as it was of the Saxon." (1997: 68). Another example is Michael Hechter's use of the phrase Celtic Fringe to define the non-English peripheral parts of the United Kingdom: *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe In British National Development*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

[4] Kidd (1999), pp. 188-193.

[5] Haywood (2014): 183.

[6] Haywood (2014) pp. 211-14; and Harvey et al. (2003) p.3

[7] See Hill (1986 and 1992). Since these publications and their new form of *Celtomania*, Hill's work has been mainly political and often almost racist, as he was involved in the formation of the Neo-Confederate League of the South. His political activities are summed up here: https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/michael-hill Accessed on 29/3/2018. See also: Kerr (2009).

[8] Cunliffe (1997): 146.

[9] Kidd (1999), p.192.

[10] See O'Neill (2008 and 2013).

[11] See Bradshaw (1978); Morgan (1999).

[12] Haywood (2014), p.186.

[13] An example of this can be found in the best-seller by Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilisation* (1995). Leaving aside questions of the accuracy of his account, more significant for me is that it was not the Gaelic Irish who saved civilisation, but the Irish or Celtic Irish. In other words, the Gaelic voice and name are silenced, replaced by a word which would have made no sense to the Gaelic monks who had such an impact on Europe. They had no word for Irish, they were not Irish, not Eireannach (from Éire) but Gaelic. Definitely they were not Celts, a word which had no sense then. By way of illustration of the silencing of the Gaelic Irish, this could have been written more easily in Portuguese than in England, for in Portuguese the word *Gaélico* exists and can be contrasted with *Irlandês* or Irish, while in English, the Gaelic requires a second noun, the Gaelic Irish, the Gaelic people.

[14] Cunliffe (1997) provides a good overview of the historiography of the Celts. See also Kidd (1999).

[15] To me the answer to this is a resounding no, backed up by the work of the first musician to mix Celtic themes and rock, the black Irishman (and possibly half-Brazilian) Phil Lynott.

[16] For example, on St. Patrick's Day 2018, the Irish Consulate General sponsored an event in São Paulo which had academic talks about Irish folklore, but also one with the following title, "Irlanda: Ilha da Magia, Terras Celtas, Reino de Mulheres," (Ireland: Island of Magic, Celtic Lands, Kingdom of Women). Apart from the participation of a visiting academic from Ireland, there was no role for Irish living in Brazil. Also when I was writing this article, the Immigration Museum of São Paulo held a day to celebrate Ireland. This 'celebration' consisted of Brazilian bands playing Irish music, an Irish film (Song of the Sea), and a so-called mini-course on the Irish language given by a member of one of the bands. However, there does not seem to have been any participation by Irish living in Brazil – a celebration of immigration without immigrants! See: http://museudaimigracao.org.br/viva-irlanda/ Accessed on 5/3/2018.

[17] However, these two associations used Gaelic in a restrictive manner: the Gaelic League was concerned with the Irish language and the Gaelic Athletic Association with sport. Although both were extremely important in the development of a nationalism which would eventually resort to violent means to achieve independence for Ireland, none of these institutions fought for an idea of Gaelic Ireland. An example of this is Eoin MacNeill, co-founder of the Gaelic League, also involved in the Irish Volunteers, who published an important work called *Celtic Ireland*. The nemesis of MacNeill in the Volunteers, Padraig Pearse insisted a lot on the idea of Gaelic Ireland, but his Gaelic appears to have been more related to the language. No matter how much he longed for a Gaelic Ireland, he never really questioned the idea of

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Celtic Ireland. There is much work to be done to elucidate what Pearse and others (notably Eamon De Valera) understood by Gaelic, whether they simply meant Irish speaking, and how this was related to the idea of Celticism.

[18] Undoubtedly it would very useful task to draw a map of the Celticisation of the non-English parts of the British Isles and other European Atlantic regions. Something which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been fully done.

[19] An interesting discussion of this can be found in the Vox Hiberionacum blog on Early Irish Christianity and Early Medieval Ireland. For example, in a discussion of St. Patrick and the construction of his legend/legacy, available at: https://voxhiberionacum.wordpress.com/2017/03/13/17-things-you-probably-didnt-know-about-the-historical-st-patrick/ accessed on 21/03/2018.

[20] See Loades (2009).

[21] See Newark (1986).

[22] This can be seen, in O'Faolain's work *The Great O'Neill* which describes a 'hero' torn by the task of revolutionising a conservative people. It can be argued that O'Faolain underestimated both O'Neill and the Gaelic people. See Morgan (2015).

[23] One of the best examples of this need for English guidance can be found in the work of Cyril Falls, notably his *Elizabeth's Irish Wars* (1950) and *The Birth of Ulster* (1936).

[24] One example, which succinctly (and probably unintentionally) summarises many of the traits I mentioned above, notably the historiographic freezing of the Celts, essentially describing them as being the same at the time of the sack of Rome and in the late medieval period, can be seen here in the following website: http://www.claudiocrow.com.br/celtas-origenssobrevivencia.htm18. Accessed on 10/3/2018. The author, who comes from a neo-pagan background, calls himself a 'researcher of Celtic and Irish culture, musician, writer, and instructor in druidism and Celtic spirituality.' Numerous other similar websites can be easily found in Portuguese and in English.

[25] It is important, however, to acknowledge that the Irish Embassy in Brazil has an agreement of mutual support with the Cátedra de Estudos Irlandeses William B. Yeats da University of São Paulo. http://catedrawbyeats.fflch.usp.br/apresentacao (Accessed on November 26th 2018).

[26] Although any Irish or British history student would easily understand what I mean by Whig history, in Brazil it may not be so evident. The reason for this is both that it has been less important in relation to Brazilian history, but also that it is to a large extent ingrained in the World History and indeed the history of political theory taught in Brazil. Put extremely succinctly, it is the idea that from the Renaissance, and more especially from the Glorious Revolution, until the twentieth century, the history of Europe was a period of progression towards ever greater freedoms, culminating in liberal democracy, typified by the history of the United Kingdom (or at least Britain, because Ireland presented this school of history with numerous problems).

[27] See the following discussion of the different versions of St. Patrick's *Confessio* in the ninth century: "St. Patrick: The Man from Nowhere." Available at: https://voxhiberionacum.wordpress.com/2017/03/17/st-patrick-the-man-from-nowhere/#more-12987. Accessed on 23/3/2018.

[28] One is tempted to ask if they did not read Synge, or if so did they not understand his deep irony?

[29] See O'Neill (2009).

[30] Trevor-Roper (1983).

[31] For example, University College Cork offered a course on Celtic Ireland in the Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation in April 2018. However, although the course is entitled Celtic Ireland, in the detailed outline of what will be taught, instead of Celtic, Ancient, Medieval, and Pre-Christian Ireland are used. Available at: https://web.facebook.com/skelligcri/photos/pcb.1673267059417318/1673266762750681/?type=3&theater Accessed on 29/3/2018.

[32] Perhaps due to the absence of a hegemonic media in Ireland, the status of historians and economists is almost the inverse in Ireland and Brazil. Since Ireland's economy and state are far stronger than in Brazil, there may be a lesson worth taking here.

[33] There is nothing as such wrong with this, as aptly illustrated by the words of Patrick Kavanagh in his poem *Epic*: "Homer's ghost came whispering to my mind/ He said: I made the Iliad from such/ A local row. Gods make their own importance." (Kavanagh, 1972: 238).

[34] Perhaps it should be made clearer here that the term is not being used about Brazilians or those writing in Portuguese. Rather, as referred to above, it is an important niche in Ireland and an important element of

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Irish tourist strategy. In Irish academic literature/historiography, this sort of work is often referred to as popular history. However, the informal term *Celtomania* might be seen as a much more colourful way of expressing this concept, and one which in many cases is a more than adequate label.

[35] The obvious reference here is Morse (1988).

[36] Here I mean *Gaeilge*, called Gaelic by many Americans and British, something which the Irish find somewhat offensive. They stubbornly refer to their language as Irish, even though Gaelic is actually a better description.