

---

**Galicia and Ireland: cultural and historical similarities**  
University of Birmingham, 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2002

*Xoán M. Paredes*  
Dept. of Geography, University College Cork, Ireland

---

**Abstract:** It has been stated that there exist clear affinities between Galicia and Ireland. The main objective of this talk is to summarise these facts, verify their historical basis, and their representations (in folklore, for instance). Therefore, my intention is to open a debate on the present reality of these issues, their future, as well as exploring the possibility of their “practical use”.

a) What is this affinity based on?

- Geography: Atlantic Europe; Physical Geography and Climate (common references).
- Ancient historical relations: from Neolithic to the Celts.
- Medieval and Modern History: trade; war against England.
- Similar social processes in the contemporary period.

b) How is this affinity represented?

- Cultural geography: the spatial shaping of culture: settlement pattern, land use, spatial perception.
- Folklore: Customs, traditions, dance and music.
- Behaviour: psychology, common references.
- Contemporary cultural and scientific production: new re-interpretations of Ireland in Galicia; growing interest for Galicia abroad.

c) Present Day: which are the conclusions today? Can this be applied? How?

Both nations are similar. Both presented comparable problems throughout history. Both coincided in the way some of those problems were solved, although the formal result may appear different. There still exists a background of cultural similarity and mutual understanding (once the linguistic barrier is solved). Therefore: Can we extrapolate cases? This could be applied in areas such as economy, cultural heritage and language, tourism or environmental management.

### **(Some) sources**

- Almagro Gorbea, M.** (1998); "A orixe dos celtas na beira atlántica da Península Ibérica", in *Actas do II Congreso Internacional sobre a Cultura Celta*, Ferrol.
- Alonso Romero, F.** and **Rivas Fernández, J.C.** (1974); *Relaciones atlánticas prehistóricas entre Galicia y las Islas Británicas y los medios de navegación*, Salamanca.
- Brañas, R.** (1995); *Indixenas e Romanos na Galicia celta*, Follas Novas, Compostela.
- Brañas, R.** (2000); *Deuses, heroes e lugares sagrados na Cultura Castrexa*, Sotelo Blanco, Santiago de Compostela.
- Cunliffe, B.** (2001); *Facing the Ocean. The Atlantic and its Peoples, 8000BC-1500AD*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- García Fernández-Abalat, M<sup>a</sup> B.** (1998); "Tradiciones populares celtas na literatural galega de transmisión oral", in *Actas do II Congreso Internacional sobre a Cultura Celta*, Ferrol.
- Keating, E.F.** (1990); *Afinidades culturais entre Galicia e Irlanda*, Galaxia, Vigo.
- López Cuevillas, F.** (1953); *La civilización céltica en Galicia*, Madrid.
- Omnés, R.** (1998); "A pegada celta na lingua galega", in *Actas do II Congreso Internacional sobre a Cultura Celta*, Ferrol.
- Paredes, X.M.** (2000); "Curiosities across the Atlantic: a brief summary of some of the Irish-Galician classical folkloric similarities nowadays. Galician singularities for the Irish", in *Chimera*, no. 15, Dept. of Geography, University College Cork. pp. 43-49.
- Pena Graña, A.** (1994); "O territorio e as categorías sociais na Gallaecia antiga: un matrimonio entre a Terra (Treba) e a Deusa (Mater)", in *Anuario Brigantino*, no. 17, Betanzos. pp. 33-78.
- Pena Graña, A.** (1998); "Celtas sen filtro", in *Ferrol Análisis*, no. 12, Concello de Ferrol. pp. 218-227.