



**New Call for Papers**  
***Celtic Myths and Folklores in the Anglophone World***  
**International and interdisciplinary Conference**  
**The University of Savoie Mont Blanc, Chambéry, France**  
**November 5-6, 2020**

Initial one-day workshop expanded into a **two-day international Conference**.  
Deadline for paper proposals extended to **June 15, 2020**.



**Keynote speakers**

Dr. Jenny Butler, Lecturer in the Study of Religions, University College Cork, Ireland, author of the forthcoming monograph *21st Century Irish Paganism: Worldview, Ritual, Identity* (Routledge).

Pr. Pierre-Yves Lambert, Researcher at the CNRS and Professor Emeritus at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Celtic Philology, Paris, France. Author of *La langue gauloise* (Paris: Editions Errance, 1993).

Dr. Gaël Hily, specialised in Celtic Medieval Literature and History of Religions, author of *Le dieu celtique Lugus* (Rennes: Editions Tir, 2012).

The international and interdisciplinary conference “Celtic Myths and Folklores in the Anglophone World” will take place on November 5-6 2020 at the University of Savoie Mont Blanc (USMB), Chambéry, Savoie, France.<sup>1</sup> The conference is supported by the two interdisciplinary research teams LLSETI (Languages, Literatures and Societies: Transnational and International Studies, EA 3706), the University of Savoie Mont Blanc (USMB),<sup>2</sup> and Babel (Languages, Literatures, Civilisations and Societies, EA 2649), the University of Toulon,<sup>3</sup> as well as the CRECIB (French Centre for British Studies),<sup>4</sup> and the SOFEIR (French Society for Irish Studies).<sup>5</sup> The event is co-organised by Noémie Beck, Senior Lecturer in British and Irish History at USMB, and Frédéric Armao, Senior Lecturer at the University of Toulon; both specialists in Celtic myths and folklores. This conference is the first of a series of workshops/conferences, which will alternately take place at the University of Savoie Mont Blanc and the University of Toulon every year.

While Celtic legends have been rediscovered, collected, translated, published and studied since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they have thus far remained little known to the scientific community, students and the general public, largely because the written documentation is limited, complex and not easily accessible. Indeed, the Iron Age Celts had an oral tradition; their myths and religious beliefs were written down by Christian monks in medieval times, and were thus shaped by various influences (Indo-European, Celtic, Greco-Roman, Nordic, Christian and medieval). Added to this complexity is the debate on the definition and the very existence of a ‘Celtic’ civilisation (Jean-Louis Brunaux, *Les Celtes : Histoire d'un mythe*, 2014), and the profusion of stereotypes, connotations and fantasies developed by Celtomans (James Macpherson, *The Works of Ossian*, 1765), nationalists and neo-Celtic movements in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These images were then spread in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries by pseudo-scientific mainstream books (Jean Markale, *Women of the Celts*, 1972), the revival of neo-druidic movements (in 2010, druidism became an official religion in the UK), the selling of ‘Celtic’ objects, jewels and witchcraft sessions on the Internet, the influence of Celtic fantasy on modern and contemporary popular music (ranging from popular artists, such as Clannad and Enya, to more obscure underground heavy and Celtic metal bands, such as Cruachan, Waylander and Absu), and the development of festivals (*Festival Interceltique* in Lorient, Morbihan, Brittany; *Festival Celte* in Gévaudan, Haute-Loire, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France), not to mention the appropriation and the political exploitation of Celtic imagery by a fraction of far-right nationalists in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

Nowadays, the Celts are indeed ‘in vogue’, which gives rise to many imprecisions and phantasmagorical clichés. The aim of this series of annual workshops/conferences is neither to call into question the existence of a Celtic civilisation nor to denigrate the various contemporary ‘Celtic’ movements, but rather to critically analyse the various aspects of ‘Celtic’ myths and legends, be they past or present, traditional or modern, authentic or revisited.

Celtic legends, traditions and arts are indeed extremely rich in their religious, imaginary and magical dimensions. They have influenced many an author and artist throughout the ages (the Arthurian cycle, Shakespeare, Yeats, Joyce, Tolkien, Rowling...) and have become an integral part of the history, identity and culture of many Anglophone countries, such as Great Britain (Scotland, Wales and England), Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Irish, Scottish and Welsh Diaspora countries (the USA, Canada, Australia, etc.). The study of the link between the ancient traditions and Celtic mythology, on the one hand, and modern folklore and popular contemporary culture, on the other hand, is particularly productive: questioning the ‘Celtic’ also – and perhaps above all – entails examining the evolution of traditions throughout the centuries, their adaptation to the populations that have espoused them, and

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.univ-smb.fr/en/>

<sup>2</sup> Research subteam 2 ‘Texts, Images and Digital Arts’. <http://www.llseti.univ-smb.fr/>

<sup>3</sup> Research subteam ‘Contemporary Anglophone World’. <http://babel.univ-tln.fr/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://crecibuk.wordpress.com/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sofeir.fr/en/>

the various influences that have been imposed or provoked by them. In this regard, the distinction and links between 'myth' and 'folklore' – the popular epiphenomenon of myth – is a valuable research topic.

This project, which is international, interdisciplinary and diachronic, is innovative, such topics never having been seriously studied in France before. The aim is to make researchers from different disciplines, methodologies and horizons (Anglophone Studies, Celtic Studies, History, Literature, Ethnology/Anthropology, Archaeology, the Arts, Communication Hypermedia...) work and debate together, so as to enrich research in this specific domain, introduce its characteristics and interests to non-specialists, and carry out exhaustive, dynamic and creative projects for the scientific community, students and the general public. Ongoing projects will be included in these workshops/conferences, such as the common research project "An Domhan" carried out by the English and Hypermedia Communication Departments of USMB, combining virtual reality (VR), digital arts and Irish legends, whose aims are scientific and pedagogical, as well as cultural. Working closely with students seems particularly important to us too. They will be invited to attend the workshops/conferences and present their research (Masters, PhD).

This first conference will allow researchers from different disciplines, interested in this long-term project, to meet. With the aim of apprehending the work, methodologies and interests of each participant, each paper will consist in the presentation of one's research and projects in relation to the subject. Half a day will be dedicated to the presentation of the "An Domhan" project, and participants will have the opportunity to test the VR prototype during the conference. The conference will end with a roundtable during which every participant will have the opportunity to share their ideas and constructively debate new scientific perspectives (publication, creation, innovation) regarding Celtic myths and folklores, notably regarding their transmission to the general public.

#### **Potential paper topics:**

- ✓ Traditional themes:
  - Irish and Welsh mythological texts dating from the Middle Ages – 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries - (*The Battle of Moytura, The Cattle Raid of Cooley, Y Goddodin, The Mabinogion...*), recounting the legends of the gods and goddesses (Lugh, the Morrigan...), heroes (Cúchulainn, Fionn Mac Cumhaill...), and mythical kings (Cormac Mac Airt, Conn Cétchathach...). Study of Celtic legacy and Greco-Roman, Nordic, Christian, medieval, etc., influences. Comparison with other countries or mythologies of the Antique World, as well as with contemporary religions, customs, and traditions which can highlight some aspects of the Celtic myths.
  - Folklores and popular cultures of Great Britain, Ireland, and Irish, Welsh and Scottish Diaspora countries. Study of the popular oral legends, customs, and traditions which have been collected and studied since the 19<sup>th</sup> century in these various countries or nations. The Anglophone world is the starting point of this project: comparisons with Gaul and/or areas influenced by Celtic culture in Europe (obviously, Brittany in the first place) are relevant, as long as they are made from a comparative point of view.
  
- ✓ Contemporary themes:
  - The survival of Celtic legends and traditions in British, Irish, American, Canadian and Australian contemporary cultures.
  - Evolution of ancient Celtic traditions in modern and contemporary societies (Hallow'een...).
  - Re-use, invention, revisitation of the ancient myths for identity and/or political purposes (for instance in Ireland, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>, beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries).

- Development of 'new' modern and contemporary pagan religions: neo-paganism, neo-druidism, influence of Wicca and other movements claiming their association to witchcraft.
- Re-use, valorisation and revisitation of the ancient myths through the Arts, literature, digital technology...

**Proposals** should include: title, 300-word abstract for each paper submitted, a short bibliography, and a brief biography. We accept papers in English or French. Please send to Noémie Beck: [noemie.beck@univ-smb.fr](mailto:noemie.beck@univ-smb.fr) and Frédéric Armao: [armao@univ-tln.fr](mailto:armao@univ-tln.fr) by **15 June 2020**.

**Location of the conference:** Jacob-Bellecombette Campus, the University of Savoie Mont Blanc, Chambéry, Savoie, France.

Coffee breaks, lunch and dinner will be provided by the LLSETI and Babel research teams. Accommodation and travel expenses must be covered by your own research team or university.