

## INTRODUCTION

This volume presents the second part of the Proceedings of the Fourth International Colloquium of the Learned Association *Societas Celto-Slavica* held at the University of Łódź, Poland, between 13-15 September 2009. While the focus of the first part was primarily linguistic, dealing with such matters as phonology and syntax, language contact and linguistic borrowing, this volume is mostly concerned with issues in Celtic and Slavic (both early and modern) literatures and cultures.

The papers submitted to this volume fell into three distinct sections. The first section, *Celtic and Slavic Cultures in Each Other's Eyes*, is devoted to a question of cross-cultural perception of Celtic and Slavic traditions. The volume opens with the key-note address presented at the colloquium 'Between Dublin and Siberia: Poland in the *Nation* Newspaper, 1846' by Jan Jędrzejewski who challenges the established stereotype of Ireland and Poland as sister nations. He examines a poem 'Siberia' by James Clarence Mangan published by 18 April 1846 in the *Nation* newspaper, the semi-official standard-bearer of Irish Romantic nationalism, then surveys the poem's various interpretations, and proposes to look at it in its pan-European, rather than specifically Hiberno-Polish or Polono-Irish, context, leaning towards a more universal, international perspective.

Liam Mac Mathúna in his 'Snapshot or Signpost? The Role of English in Tadhg Ó Neachtain's Early Eighteenth-Century Manuscripts' looks at Seán Ó Neachtain (c. 1640-1729) and his son Tadhg (c. 1671-c. 1752) – the two figures who were at the centre of an extensive circle of Gaelic scholars in the eighteenth century Dublin. Primarily written in Irish, Seán Ó Neachtain's works include examples of Irish/English code-mixing as well as pieces composed entirely in English. His son, Tadhg Ó Neachtain, makes considerable use of English sources and of English itself in a number of pedagogical, geographical and historical writings, and in his records of contemporary events. This paper examines the interaction of the two languages in these manuscripts, exploring the use of English language sources (textbooks and Dublin newspapers), the content of the English portions of the manuscripts in question, and the relationship of the English material to the Irish in the immediate compositional context.

The issue of language code-switching and translation is further explored by Alan Titley in his 'Polish, Romish, Irish: The Irish Translation of *Quo Vadis?*' who analyses Henryk Sienkiewicz's famous *Quo Vadis?* translated into Irish by Fr. Aindrias Ó Céileachair (1883-1954) in 1935. *Quo Vadis* was translated from the English version of the Sienkiewicz's composition which, in its turn, was

translated from Polish by Jeremiah Curtin, an Irish-American linguist who himself collected stories and tales in Irish.

As far as the translation of Polish literary compositions into Celtic languages is concerned, Karolina Rosiak and Sabine Heinz look at a similar episode from the history of the Welsh-Polish cultural literary exchange in their article 'A Romantic Twentieth-century Welsh View of Polish Literature from 1800-1945'. An anthology of Polish literary works, called *Bannau Llên Pwyl* 'Highlights of Polish Literature' published by Thomas Hudson-Williams (1873-1961) in 1953 is analysed. In contrast to his Irish colleagues operating under the auspices of the state-governed scheme *An Gum* and translating into Irish (albeit from English) works, among other, of Italian, English, Russian, and Polish literature, Hudson-Williams did not succeed in scrutinising and subsequently presenting Polish literature in a satisfactory way: having failed to transliterate Polish names and surnames into Modern Welsh, and focusing predominantly on the Romantic Polish literature, he preferred topics that would have appealed to the Welsh audience, so that the rural setting, nature descriptions, melancholic mood, and local affairs are given most of attention.

The paper 'Celtic Countries from the Perspective of Polish Romantics and Exiles' by Katarzyna Gmerek focuses on accounts by Polish travellers and exiles in the first half of the nineteenth century. The special role of cultural patronage by the Czartoryski family, their library containing antiquarian and historical books on Celtic related subjects, and the Puławy literary circle is also examined. The author discusses connections between travel accounts, and the corresponding development of the Polish pre-Romantic and Romantic literatures of the time in the context of the nineteenth century political realities.

The first section of the volume is concluded with the paper 'Russian Beckett: Paradoxes of Perception' by Nadezhda Prozorova. It is focused on some hermeneutical aspects of Beckett's works connected with the problems of their perception and interpretation in a changing historical context of contemporary Russia. Beckett's works and his metaphysics of the absurd reveal a striking resemblance with the concepts of Russian religious philosophers and the Oberiuty literary circle that were active in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The paper is also concerned with a paradoxical chronological inversion of Russian perception of Beckett and with complex problems of Beckett's national identity connected with the phenomenon of the emigrant literature.

The paper by Jerzy Jarniewicz entitled 'The Poetry of Eastern European Ireland: Stereotypes and Appropriations' opens the second part of the volume that contains four studies on *Irish and Scottish Poets and Poetry*. Jarniewicz scrutinises Seamus Heaney's *The Government of the Tongue* in which the poet put forward an analogy between Eastern bloc countries, with their history of opposition to the inhuman political system, and Northern Ireland of sectarian prejudice and discrimination. Jarniewicz continues the line of thought proposed

by J. Jędrzejewski earlier in this volume that such Irish-Polish analogies (popular at the height of the Troubles and the Solidarity movement) always emerged in the times of trouble and turmoil, but nowadays should rather be looked in the pan-European context and must be reinterpreted. The poetry of Seamus Heaney, as well as of Tom Paulin and of Medbh McGuckian, is studied further by Stephanie Schwerter. In her paper ‘‘Making Strange’’: Defamiliarising Perspectives on the Troubles’, she assesses the poets from Northern Ireland from the point of view of Viktor Shklovsky’s concept of ‘ostraneniye’ which she literally translates as ‘making strange’. Heaney, Paulin and McGuckian take Russia as a point of comparison and contrast. In so doing, they attempt to generate a new vision of the Northern Irish situation and work against the traditionally one-sided discourse of the conflict.

Two other papers from the second section of the volume look at the poets from Scotland and their compositions. While Piotr Stalmaszczyk in his ‘Place-names in Modern Scottish Gaelic Poetry’ looks at the writings of Derick Thomson, Sorley MacLean, Coinneach MacMhanais and Ian MacDonald from a specific perspective of Celtic rootedness in names, nature and places, hence joining the habitat, heritage and history in one appropriated unity, Aniela Korzeniowska in her paper ‘On the Translation of Voices, Accents, Tongues: Scottish Poets Commemorating Robert Burns Today’, studies the anthology *New Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* published to mark the centennial anniversary of the major Scottish poet Robert Burns, reflecting different voices and accents of the Scottish contemporary poets.

Three papers presented within the scope of the third section of the volume are dedicated to the problems of *Celtic Scholarship* and textual reconstruction. Grigory Bondarenko devotes his attention to ‘Alexander Smirnov and the Beginnings of Celtic Studies in Russia’, pointing out some unknown facts from the biography of a major Russian Celticist of the first half of the twentieth century. In her paper, ‘Textual Criticism and Text Reconstruction: Approaches to Early Russian and Welsh Poetry’, Elena Parina compares editions of the two poetic texts equally important for the history of Early Russian and Welsh literature – *The Tale of Igor’s Campaign* and *The Gododdin*. She scrutinises Anna Dybo’s and John T. Koch’s attempts of the *Ur*-text reconstruction of the sources: while A. Dybo relied mainly on linguistic evidence of the Early Russian sources, J.T. Koch, in the absence of a reliable extensive literary corpus of the period under investigation, employed the hypothetical historical framework and its subsequent interpretation instead.

Maxim Fomin discusses ‘A Newly Discovered Fragment of the Early Irish Wisdom-Text *Tecosca Cormaic* in TCD MS 1298 (H. 2. 7)’. He presents his preliminary findings in relation to various palaeographic, orthographical and grammatical features of the fragment, compares its diverse linguistic data (belonging to both Old and Middle Irish periods) with other manuscripts, in which

the wisdom-text is also available, and provides a tentative stemma for the manuscripts discussed.

The last two papers of the third section are devoted to the archaeological and cosmological matters of the *Celtic Antiquity*. In ‘The Late La Tène Decorated Scabbard from the Upper Dniester Area: A Far Relative of the Gundestrup Cauldron?’, Gennadiy Kazakevich discusses the late La Tène scabbard with open work decoration from the Przeworsk burial n. 3 of the Gryniv cemetery (the Upper Dniester area). The scabbard was made using the La Tène metalworking tradition, while its decoration demonstrates a mixture of the Celtic and Thracian art practices and religious beliefs, belonging to the same artistic style as the Gundestrup cauldron, and can be seen as a characteristic product of the late La Tène Central Europe that involved Celtic, Germanic, Thracian and possibly Proto-Slavic population groups.

The contribution ‘The Stone Novel of Éire’ by Natalia Abelian includes the study of the *Bruig na Bóinde* ritual complex of the river Boyne valley, including New Grange, Knowth and Dowth. She takes into account various sets of data available from the Old Irish *dindshenchas* tradition, some astronomical considerations, and associated mythological motifs, and also looks at the Irish dolmens and compares them with similar stone structures found in the North Caucasus. In her opinion, the megalithic structures were linked with both the underground and the upper worlds – viewed as two aspects of a single Otherworld in the pre-literate culture of early Ireland.

An obituary of Professor Edmund Gussmann, an internationally distinguished academic in the field of Celtic and Icelandic Studies, concludes the volume. We are especially grateful to Professor Séamus Mac Mathúna, the President of the *Societas*, for writing the obituary.

The transliteration of Cyrillic titles and names throughout the volume follows the conventions applied by the authors.

The conference was accompanied by two cultural events. We are grateful to Ciaran Carson who presented a reading of his recent translation of the renowned Ulster epic *The Táin*, and Natalia Abelian who prepared an exhibition of works of art and photographs, inspired by stone artefacts of ancient and medieval Ireland.

The editors wish to thank the secretaries of the conference (Krzysztof Lewoc, Marta Goszczyńska and Anna Ginter) for their hard work. We are thankful to our reviewers and anonymous readers, and would also like to express our acknowledgement to, notably, all the guests and participants to the conference.

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Maxim Fomin  
University of Ulster

Jerzy Jarniewicz  
University of Łódź

Piotr Stalmaszyk  
University of Łódź