

INTRODUCTION

The First International Colloquium of *Societas Celto-Slavica*, hosted by the Research Institute for Irish and Celtic Studies at the University of Ulster, was held at the University's Coleraine campus between the 19th and 21st June 2005. The aim of the Colloquium was to take stock of the history and present state of Celtic scholarship in the Slavic countries and to examine parallels between the Slavic and Celtic traditions. The Colloquium was attended by scholars and students from many Slavic and Celtic countries and also from other countries such as the United States, Germany and Sweden.

Following discussions with various Celtic scholars from the Slavic countries, the foundation meeting of *Societas Celto-Slavica* took place in Moscow at the Institute of Linguistics in July 2004 in the office of the late Professor Viktor Kalygin. In addition to Professors Kalygin, Séamus Mac Mathúna and Tatyana Mikhailova, the meeting was also attended by Drs Natalia O'Shea, Nina Chekhonadskaya and Grigory Bondarenko. Dr Maxim Fomin could not unfortunately attend, but was there in spirit. It was formally agreed at this meeting that the first Colloquium of the Society would be hosted by the University of Ulster at Coleraine in 2005.

Celtic scholars from the Slavic countries have worked indefatigably for many years in nurturing and developing Celtic Studies. Their increasingly close links with scholars and scholarship in the West – particularly since the time of the break-up of the USSR – have led to a situation in which there is now a significant body of scholarly work being produced by Slavic academics of Celtic languages, literatures and culture. Moreover, much of this work is informed by traditions, methodologies and insights which are, to varying degrees, quite new to Celtic scholars from the West. It is hoped that the new Society will provide a forum for the promotion of research and development of Celtic Studies in the Slavic countries and will lead to closer links and exchanges between Celticists from the West and the East.

The present volume contains most of the papers read at the Colloquium, together with three other papers, two by scholars who were to attend but could not do so – Dr Alexander Falileyev and Mr Victor Bayda – and another which takes the place of the presentation given at the Colloquium by Dr Fomin. Dr O'Shea translated into English Professor Kalygin's article, which she also presented at the Colloquium. In all, nineteen papers

are published here, including the inaugural address by Professor Karl Horst Schmidt, the Patron of the Society. In addition, Professor Schmidt and Dr Anna Muradova have provided obituaries of Professor Kalygin. Drs Muradova, Sergey Ivanov and Grigory Bondarenko also contributed to a compilation of a list of Professor Kalygin's published works.

The papers contributed to the volume reflect the impressive range and diversity of the connections and points of interest between the Celtic and Slavic traditions.

The book opens with Professor Schmidt's address and important remarks on the question of early Celto-Slavic links and isoglosses, in which he gives an outline of the main works in this area and the present state of research.

The first part of the volume contains two papers by Professors Mac Mathúna and Piotr Stalmaszczyk respectively which deal with the history of Celtic scholarship in Russia and the Soviet Union on the one hand, and Poland on the other. They are partly intended to inform scholars and students of Celtic Studies in the West of the tradition of Celtic scholarship in the Slavic countries. They also contain substantial bibliographical information.

The second part opens with Professor Kalygin's paper in which he examines links between the Slavs and the Celts in light of Professor Schmidt's views on the Eastern origin of the Celts. The paper was prepared before Professor Kalygin's untimely death and was dedicated by him to Professor Schmidt. In it, a chronological timescale of Celto-Slavic contacts is presented.

The papers by Dr Falileyev and Professor Václav Blažek discuss the question of linguistic isoglosses and correspondences between Celtic and Slavic and possible early contacts between the two peoples. In the absence of inscriptions of Roman date containing Celtic place- and personal names and the lack of onomastic information by ancient authors, Dr Falileyev examines toponymic data from the Ukraine in order to determine possible Celtic presence in the area. He points out that not a single river-name of Celtic provenance has been securely attested in the territories of the "Eastern Celts", be it the Balkans or North-Western Dacia, and that one must proceed with extreme caution in dealing with this subject. Professor Blažek investigates four Celtic-Slavic correspondences in mythology and the sacral lexicon. While not excluding the possibility of a common

heritage, he argues that borrowing or adaptation of the Celtic terms into Slavic seems to be a more plausible explanation.

Further linguistic comparisons between Celtic and Slavic are made by Professor Folke Josephson, who examines Old Irish and Slavic prefixed verbs and the function of prefixes. He demonstrates that the position of actionally-used telic affixes in the chain of prefixes is different in Old Irish and Slavic. While in Old Irish they are placed at the end of the chain because of their telic meaning, in Slavic they are placed initially and may be used for expressing Slavic perfective aspect.

Professor Anna Bondaruk establishes a typology of control for Irish and Polish non-finite clauses. She shows that whereas modals and aspectuals in Irish typically take raising complements, other predicate classes require control complements. Moreover, control clauses in Polish have a covert PRO subject, while in Irish their subject may be either a covert PRO or an overt DP. Dr Elena Parina examines pronoun reprise in Celtic (Middle and Modern Welsh, Middle Irish) and Southern Slavic languages (Bulgarian and Macedonian), concentrating particularly on Middle Welsh and Bulgarian. She notes that pronominal reprise in Bulgarian is obligatory in a small number of contexts only. There is also a major distinction between spoken and literary Welsh, the greater use of reprise being dictated by the requirements of oral speech processing. Mr Bayda's paper is concerned with structural similarities between Irish and Russian perfect formations. The fact that possession is used for marking perfects in both languages is linked with the positioning of the action in the agent's domain or with identification in the action with the agent.

Dr Muradova's contribution 'Some Breton Words in the Dictionary of the Russian Empress' is concerned with the first references to the Breton language in Russian linguistic literature. It deals specifically with the history and background of the Breton words contained in the dictionary *Vocabularia Linguarum Totius Orbis*, compiled by Peter Simon Pallas (1741-1811), which was commissioned by the Russian Empress Catherine II.

Dr John Carey investigates the interesting topic of Russia as the cradle of the Gael – the medieval Irish doctrine that the patriarch of the Gaels was ruler of Scythia. He traces this idea back to its likely origins and argues that the alternating kingship between the Northern and Southern Uí Néill in Ireland is modelled on the tradition of dynastic warfare in Scythia

until the proto-Gaels were driven into exile. The Irish may have thought of Scythia as a kind of ‘Ireland in the East’.

Professor Tatyana Mikhailova’s paper deals with the function of the name in the Irish and Russian popular charm traditions. She distinguishes between ‘background name’ and ‘subject name’ and concludes that the Western charm tradition, including Irish, has lost the idea of the obligatory use of subject names, using rather ‘receipts’ as magical texts, which originally contained no magic at all. The Eastern (Slavonic and Balkan) charm tradition is more conservative and more archaic.

The well-known Indo-European ‘father-son conflict’ theme is the subject of Professor Dean Miller’s paper which analyses the resemblances between Cú Chulainn and Il’ya of Murom, the great heroes of the medieval Irish and Slavo-Russian traditions respectively. Professor Miller also compares the Greek mythic material and seeks to explain the Oedipal shift whereby the son slays the father. Dr Bondarenko discusses and analyses an example of formulaic similarity in Old Irish and Old Russian poetic speech which is concerned with ‘knowledge in the clouds’. The texts in question – *Immacallam in druad Brain ocus inna banfátho hóas Loch Fébuil* (‘The Dialogue of Bran’s druid and Febul’s prophetess above Loch Febuil’) and *Slovo o plBku Igoreve* (‘The Song of Igor’s Campaign’) – reflect the linkage between the poet’s and the priest’s activity and the association with shamanic experience. In ‘A Swan Uncarved: Russian and Irish Heroes Breaking Table Etiquette’, Dr Nina Chekhonadskaya examines and compares the theme of quarrels in the literary depiction of feasts in the Irish and Russian heroic traditions. Feasts are classified on the basis of the manner in which order is maintained, which may be regulated, relatively regulated, or not regulated. The principal texts examined are the Early Irish *Scéla Mucce meic Dathó* (‘The Tale of Mac Dathó’s Pig’) and the Old Russian *Alyosha Popovich i Tugarin* (‘Alyosha Popovich and Tugarin’).

Dr Fomin examines the contribution of Slavic and Western scholars to the question of correspondences between the traditions of early India and those of the Celtic-speaking peoples. While the emphasis is primarily on the institution of kingship, he also examines religious, sacral and lexicographical parallels. He points out that the comparative genetic method has not stood up to close scrutiny and argues rather for a cultural

typological approach, a methodology favoured by many Russian and East European scholars.

In his paper on ‘Going Home to Russia? Irish Writers and Russian Literature’, Dr Frank Sewell discusses some of the impact and influence that Russian writers have had on Irish writers of both Irish and English. The title of his paper is taken from Paul Durcan’s collection of poems *Going Home to Russia*, which reflects the view of some Irish writers who identify with Russian writers and find close analogues between conditions of life in Ireland and Russia.

In the final paper by Professor Hildegard L. C. Tristram, ‘What’s in Celto-Slavica?’, the author discusses the scope and nature of Celto-Slavica studies and presents some concluding remarks on the Colloquium. She points out that no overarching coherent account of the connections and exchanges between Celts and Slavs, ancient and modern, has yet been written, and suggests a number of different areas of research interest and potential for future work. The keywords ‘curiosity’, ‘contrast’, ‘contact’, and ‘genetic connection’ are used to represent these areas. The papers presented at the Colloquium are then analysed and categorised according to these four types of research interest. An excursus deals with other research work by Dr Falileyev and Dr Graham R. Isaac which belongs to the category of genetic connections.

The essays in this volume reflect the robust health of research into Celto-Slavic traditions at present and are a testimony to the dedication, farsightedness and fine work of scholars from Celtic and Slavic countries, particularly in times when there was little contact between East and West. In the present climate of easy communication across cultures and academic disciplines, there is clearly the potential in Celto-Slavica for new and exciting developments in the fields of research and teaching, and we hope that *Societas Celto-Slavica* will be a vehicle by which these activities and aspirations may be facilitated and realised in the years to come.

Séamus Mac Mathúna
Maxim Fomin

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