

PRESIDENTIAL WELCOME AND ADDRESS

SÉAMUS MAC MATHÚNA

(ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA, 28 JUNE 2012)

Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the Sixth International Colloquium of Societas Celto-Slavica, which is being held this year in Saint Petersburg University in this beautiful and architecturally-impressive Russian city on the banks of the Neva. Together with lectures on a diverse range of subjects on aspects of the Celtic languages, the fame of the city has succeeded in attracting to the Colloquium an impressively large number of scholars and students from many countries – the Celtic countries, Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, Germany, Austria and Scandinavia. On behalf of the Societas, I welcome you all to the colloquium and Saint Petersburg.

This is the second colloquium to be held by the Societas in the Russian Federation, the first having taken place in Moscow State University in 2006. The return to Saint Petersburg is a reflection of the growing vitality of Celtic Studies in the Russian Federation and the excellent scholarly work being carried out here. It also represents a continuation of the work in Celtic languages and cultures associated in the past with Saint Petersburg and scholars such as Viktoria Yartseva and Alexander Falileyev.

I would like to thank the President of Saint Petersburg University and the Dean of the Philological Faculty, Professor Liudmila Alexeyevna Verbitskaya, as well as Elena Vsevolodovna Perexval'skaya, Professor and Head of the Department of General Linguistics and Alexandr Semenovich Asinovsky, Deputy Dean of the Philological Faculty, Professor and Chair of General Linguistics, for their assistance in facilitating the holding of the conference in the University. Professor Tatyana Andreevna Mikhailova has also been most helpful. We are very grateful to them.

We extend our special thanks to Dr Elena Alexeyevna Parina, the organizer and secretary of conference, for her dedication and hard work in making all the necessary arrangements to bring the colloquium to Saint Petersburg. She has done a really excellent job. Together with the assistant secretary, Ksenia Mikhailovna Kudenko, Dr Parina has succeeded in liaising with many delegates, easing their travel arrangements and preparing for us all a most impressive range of scholarly lectures and social activities. I should draw your attention to the fact that, whilst previous conferences have had papers on Welsh language and culture, the present colloquium has given particular prominence to this aspect of Celtic Studies and the Societas has arranged that the Seventh International Colloquium will be held at the University of Bangor, North Wales, in 2014. Dr Parina, together with Professors

Peredur Lynch and Dafydd Johnston, in conjunction with the Secretary of the Societas, Dr Maxim Fomin, will be the principal organizers of the Bangor conference.

We have three intensive days ahead, with some 29 talks, as well as a very full cultural programme which will include trips to many of the city's iconic landmarks. As you all probably know, the city was established by Tsar Peter the Great in 1703 with the laying of the foundations of the Peter and Paul Fortress and developed considerably in the following years. Soon after its foundation, the imperial capital was moved from Moscow to the new city, and with the exception of the period 1728-1732, Saint Petersburg remained the capital until 1918. Due to its association with Peter the Great, it became known as Peter(burg) in everyday speech. The official name was changed to Petrograd in 1914; in 1924 it was changed again to Leningrad but later reverted to the original Saint Petersburg in 1991. Our cultural programme will include visits to many of the great cultural landmarks of the city, including the Mikhailovsky Theatre and Tsarskoe Selo.

I wish the conference great success and hope we have a most enjoyable and rewarding stay here in this great city.

It is appropriate that I should try to say a few short words of thanks and welcome in Russian to our hosts and delegates.

Доброе утро, дорогие коллеги!

Сегодня мы открываем Шестую международную конференцию общества Кельто-Славика, на сей раз на берегах Невы, в прекрасном городе, творении Петра Великого – Санкт-Петербурге.

От имени общества я благодарю президента Санкт-Петербургского государственного университета и декана филологического факультета, профессора Людмилу Алексеевну Вербицкую за помощь и поддержку в организации конференции, а также заместителя декана филологического факультета по научной работе, профессора кафедры общего языкознания Александра Семеновича Асиновского и профессора кафедры общего языкознания Елену Всеволодовну Перехвальскую, ответственного секретаря конференции Елену Алексеевну Парину и ассистента секретаря Ксению Михайловну Куденко.

Впереди у нас три напряжённых дня, двадцать восемь докладов, а так же насыщенная культурная программа, которая завершится поездкой в Царское село. Огромное спасибо организаторам, я надеюсь, что конференция будет плодотворной на дискуссии и полезной для всех участников. Мы рады приветствовать старых друзей, которые были с нами на конференциях в Дубровнике, Лодзи и Пшибраме, а также новых коллег, для которых эта Кельто-Славика – первая. Надеюсь, что не последняя!