

INTRODUCTION

This volume presents the first 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. The colloquium was opened by Mr Eddie Brannigan, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Republic of Ireland in Poland. In his short speech, he presented an encouraging analysis of figures and facts supporting not only the healthy integration of Polish citizens to the Irish state that happened in the recent decade, but also the long established cultural exchange between the Irish and Polish Republics in the history of the two European states. This stimulating introduction was followed by welcoming remarks of the President of the Society, Professor Séamus Mac Mathúna, MRIA, published in this volume, and by the address of the Chair of the colloquium, Professor Piotr Stalmaszczyk, Dean, Philological Faculty (University of Łódź) as well as few encouraging words of welcome by Professor Jarosław Wierziński, Vice Dean of the Philological Faculty. While the colloquium was devoted to the issues of Celticity, Celtic languages and cultures, it is the linguistic aspect that forms the focus of our attention here.

The papers submitted to this volume fell into three distinct sections. The first group takes a historical approach to Celtic languages (V. Blažek; I. R. Danka and K.T. Witzak, A. Muradova), including Goidelic (K. Jaskuła; N. O'Shea). This is followed by studies in phonology and syntax of Celtic and Slavic languages (A. Bondaruk, A. Bloch-Rozmej, M. Bloch-Trojnar, and A. Doyle), whereas the final two papers of the volume look at various issues of language contact and linguistic borrowing (K. Jędrzejewska-Pyszcak, P. Stalmaszczyk)

The volume opens up with two papers that deal with Celtic lexemes connected with horse and the horse-cult. In his paper 'Slavic **komoňь* and its probable Celtic source', Václav Blažek proposes a Celtic source for this Slavic word, possibly based on (**epos/*ekwos* or **markos*) **kammanios* 'riding (horse)' with ellipsis of the word for horse.

In their paper, '*DEIS EQUUNUBO* – The Divine Twins in Asturia', Ignacy Ryszard Danka and Krzysztof Tomasz Witzak, examine the Latin dedication *Deis Equeunubo*, attested in the votive inscription from Asturia. The dedication appears in the dative plural and refers to the Celtic or Lusitanian divine twins, providing the probable meaning as 'to the sons [riding] on the horse'.

Krzysztof Jaskuła looks at ‘Vocalic Alternations in the History of Irish’. In his opinion, alternations of short vowels occur in both Modern Irish and Old Irish. Many short vowels alternate with other short nuclei in a variety of contexts, while other short vowels refuse to undergo alternation. Traditional and ultra-modern analyses of these phonological systems seem to attach much importance to the idea that, whenever such changes take place, they are synchronically motivated, i.e. that they belong to phonology proper. Nonetheless, he proposes to look back into the reconstructed prehistory of the Irish language, and argues that a number of these alternations go back to Primitive Irish and even earlier.

Natalia O’Shea in her article ‘The Old Irish Evidence for the Reconstruction of the Indo-European Acrostatic Presents’ analyses a small number of Old Irish verbs (*ithid* ‘eats’, *rigid* ‘stretches, rules’, *mligid* ‘milks’ and *midithir* ‘judges’) and reconstructs some Indo-European acrostatic presents. In her opinion, this evidence from the Western dialects of the Indo-European periphery provides a strong argument that acrostatic presents existed at least at a later stage of the Indo-European proto-language.

Anna Bloch-Rozmej in her paper ‘Syllabic consonants in Slavic and Celtic languages’ addresses the problem of syllabic consonants in a number of Slavic and Celtic languages, including Polish, Czech and Irish. Considering this issue through the optic of Government Phonology (henceforth GP), she makes a specific proposal that onset-nucleus domains are not only licensing domains but they also constitute the so-called extension domains. She maintains that the phenomenon of the syllabic consonants can be analysed in terms of segment extension occurring within such onset-nucleus extension domains and demonstrates that this solution effectively accounts for the relevant linguistic facts attested to in languages under discussion.

Maria Bloch-Trojnar studies ‘Semantic Constraints on Light Verb Constructions in Modern Irish’. Structures made up of a light verb (*déan* ‘do’, *tabhair* ‘give’, *faigh* ‘get’, *bain* ‘take, extract’) and a verbal noun (VN) complement are investigated. LVCs are argued to have a telicising effect which results from the interaction of the aktionsart of the VN complement and syntax. Particular light verbs show systematic behavior in their ability to combine with VNs derived from certain semantic verb classes (verbs of movement, emission of sound, social interaction etc.) in order to present the situation from different angles by giving prominence to certain participants (Agent, Patient, Experiencer).

Anna Bondaruk re-appraises Obligatory Control (OC) in Irish and Polish. Two special instances of OC are examined: namely, free variation of PRO and lexical subjects in Irish non-finite clauses, and the presence

of OC or non-obligatory control (NOC) in some Polish non-finite clauses introduced by the C *żeby* ‘so that’. In the case of Irish non-finite clauses with overt subjects it is necessary to assume that I is specified as [+Agr] although this marking is morphologically opaque. For Polish non-finite clauses with the overt C triggering NOC, rather than OC, an assumption must be made that C in such structures has just the [+T] feature while the non-finite I bears [+Agr].

Aidan Doyle in his contribution examines a sociolinguistic phenomenon attested in contemporary Irish, namely, ‘The Loss of the Impersonal in Bilingual Speakers of Irish’. In his view, this formal change in the grammar of the language is taking place in a context of wholesale restructuring of Irish due to the influence of English. Doyle notices the old impersonal of LMI rapidly giving way to a new passive, one that reflects very faithfully the structure of English. He also observes that this tendency is not an entirely new one, and appears to go back at least the 19th century. He suggests that the motive for the change is two-fold: a desire to allow for the expression of agents with passives, and a need to imitate the information structure of English for an audience consisting almost entirely of L2 speakers of English.

Anna Muradova takes as her subject cosmological aspects of the Celtic linguistic tradition in the paper ‘“Sky” and “Heavens” in Breton Oral Tradition’. She examines the linguistic development of two terms deriving from IE **nem-* in Breton: *neñv* ‘heavens’ and *nemet* ‘sacred’, which, in her view, seems to present a particular example of the Christian influence on the vocabulary of spoken and written Breton. While *neñv* was integrated in the vocabulary of the priests and was employed to mark the opposition between the heavens and the sky (ModB *oabl*), *nemet* disappeared from the language and the notion of ‘holy’, ‘sacred’ was explained by a Latin term *sacrum* > Modern Breton *sakr*.

In her paper, ‘Syntactic Patterns in Welsh and English Nicknames—a Comparison’, Katarzyna Jędrzejewska-Pyszczak investigates linguistic constructions that underlie Welsh and English nickname formations and, consequently, provide clues as to the function of nicknaming in both languages. The analysis, backed with examples, reveals that Welsh *llysenwau* retain their identificatory function and focus on enabling unambiguous nomination of individual community members. This assumption is borne out by the observation that the proper noun is the indispensable element in the structure of a Welsh nickname and the rule as such is harmed in a handful of examples only. In contrast, in English denominations instead of the proper noun it is mostly the common noun that constitutes the core of the formation. What follows is that the linguistic reality of nicknaming patterns might be considered as more

context-sensitive in the English language, while the inherent presence of official designations, i.e. the first/second name or the surname, in Welsh designations increases the autonomy of reference.

The paper 'From 'Ambassador' to 'Whisky': A Note on Celtic Elements in Contemporary Polish Vocabulary' by Piotr Stalmaszczyk concludes the volume. This paper surveys and examines words and elements of Celtic origin present in contemporary Polish vocabulary. Polish did not have any direct contacts with the Celtic languages, however, some elements of Celtic (i.e. Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, Breton) origin entered it via other languages, especially English and French. Additionally, several early borrowings from Continental Celtic spread through Latin, and subsequently the Romance languages, to other languages, including Polish, thus becoming internationalisms of Celtic origin. The relevant lexical items have been extracted from a general dictionary of Polish, several other words come from specialized sources.

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