

## INTRODUCTION

The Third International Colloquium of *Societas Celto-Slavica* was held at the welcoming city of Dubrovnik between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September 2009. It was hosted by the Dubrovnik Inter-University Centre under the auspices of the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics and the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Zagreb. Since the venue of the Third Colloquium of the *Societas* was at that stage the borderland between the Central and the Southeastern Europe, we decided to give the general theme for the colloquium and, subsequently, the title to the volume of its future proceedings as "Celts and Slavs in Central and Southeastern Europe". The Colloquium was an important event to confirm the growth of the Celto-Slavic research: it was not only attended by the Society's members who previously attended its inaugural and its second colloquia, but also by the scholars and graduate students from several Slavic countries who were new to the Celto-Slavica; we were also glad to welcome many established Celtic and Indo-European specialists from Ireland, the United States and Germany.

The colloquium was preceded by a graduate course "New Perspectives on Medieval Celtic Prose" organised through generous support of the Irish Embassy in Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and the keen involvement of The Irish Ambassador to Croatia, His Excellency Patrick McCabe, who was also able to attend and to officially open the colloquium and to host its opening reception. The Croatian Ambassador to Ireland, His Excellency Veselko Grubišić extended his welcome on behalf of the hosts to the conference delegates and expressed his earnest interest in Celto-Slavic by attending the conference in its entirety. The official opening was concluded by the formal address by the President of *Societas Celto-Slavica*, Professor Séamus Mac Mathúna of the University of Ulster.

The present volume contains most of the papers read at the colloquium, together with three other papers, one by Professor Václav Blažek who could not unfortunately attend and another two which take the place of the presentations given at the colloquium by Professor Tatyana Mikhailova and Dr Anna Muradova. In all, fifteen papers are published here, reflecting the various interests of the scholars involved in Celto-Slavic research. The volume logically falls into three parts.

The first part opens with an important yet provoking paper by Professor Stefan Zimmer who challenges a number of Celto-Slavic comparisons in the field of theonymy, rejecting "anything like a privileged Slavo-Celtic relation". The wealth of research into Celto-Slavic carried out by contributors to the volume does not necessarily refute such criticism, but it shows that comparing Celtic and Slavic languages and cultures has a merit in its own right. Professor Ranko Matasović's paper deals with Celto-Slavic etymologies, exploring various linguistic connections existing between Proto-Celtic and Proto-Slavic groups of languages. This paper is based on the major piece of research carried out by Prof Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic*, published in 2009 by Brill, Leiden. It is followed by Professor Blažek's contribution that provides a tentative etymological analysis of the toponyms, oronyms and hydronyms recorded in Ptolemy's description of Central Europe. Dubravka Ivšić devotes special attention to Italo-Celtic isoglosses with a special reference to the correspondences in verb formation which, in her opinion, indicate shared retentions or incidental convergences. Ana Galjanić's paper, offers some typological parallels in enumerative passages in early Celtic and Greek texts, as well as in some Slavic folklore texts.

The second part of the volume is mostly concerned with various linguistic features of Celtic and Slavic languages. It opens with Professor Anna Bondaruk's paper on copular sentences in Irish and Polish, who compares their properties from the points of view of their morphology, of the contexts in which they appear, of their meaning and the syntactic position occupied by the predicative elements in the two languages. Professors Eugeniusz Cyran and Bogdan Szymanek in their joint contribution explore the functions of palatalisation in the phonology and morphology of Irish and Polish. The very presence of palatalisation in the consonantal systems of Irish and Polish and its various features (phonemic contrasts, palatal assimilation in consonantal clusters, segment replacements) make the languages similar; however, on a closer look they highly diverge. Dr Anna Bloch-Rozmej discusses the phonological function of noise in Irish and Ukrainian and the property of turbulence in the two languages. Dr Maria Bloch-Trojnar studies the syntax and semantics of de-verbal nominalisations in Irish, English and Polish: establishing two nominalising rules (*Nomina Verbalia* and *Nomina De-verbalia*), she states that in all the three languages regularly formed nominals are subject to lexicalisation. The important and highly stimulating issue of the loanwords, language borrowings and the language shift in Celtic languages is discussed by Dr Elena Parina for Modern Welsh and by Ms Olga Karkishchenko for Middle Irish of the period of the Anglo-Norman conquest.



The third part contains papers devoted to parallels between Celtic and Slavic traditions existing in the fields of early narrative and folklore. Professor Dean Miller reports on the issue of colour coding and symbolic "loading" of the category of colour, with a special attention to emblematic conventions existing in Irish and South Slavic narrative traditions in representing red (Hero-function) and grey (Trickster-function) colours. Professor Tatyana Mikhailova's paper deals with the meaning and the genesis of the comb-motif linked to the attributes of the long hair and foretelling death with a special reference to the folklore figures of the Irish *banshee* (Ir. *bean sí*) and the Russian *rusalka* (Russ. *русалка*). Dr Anna Muradova scrutinises the concept of "wasteland" and reconstructs the PIE root \**lendh-* on the basis of the Breton folklore, toponymic and lexicographic evidence (e.g. *lann*, *lanneg* 'wasteland; sacred place') and the contemporary Russian ethnographic and lexicographic material in relation to the dialectal Russian lexeme *lyada* (ляда) 'terra inculta'. The notion of domesticated land is discussed by Dr Maxim Fomin in the light of the land acquisition motif which is found in the stock of the Irish (describing the arrival of St. Columcille on the island of Tory) and the Russian (the "Frog Princess") folklore legends. Dr Fomin also provides special references to the Indian comparanda and to the archaic mythical store of motifs to do with royal inauguration and kingship. Dr Grigory Bondarenko deals with the issue of representation of the autochthonous population in Celtic and Slavic narrative traditions and their descriptions of the Otherworld in which the binary opposition between the lower Otherworld and the upper world of the humans becomes a distinctive feature of the early mythological narrative.

The final paper of which the volume consists is by Professor Alan Titley, who shifts the focus of the conference to the Northern Europe and explores the Celtic fringe in Scotland, in particular, the modern Scottish novel and the role that the Russians play as disruptors of the Gàidhealtachd community in such novels.

The conference benefited greatly from the generous help of the industrious conference secretaries, Ms Tena Gnjatović and Ms Dubravka Ivšić to whom we wish to express our appreciation. The last, but not the least, is our acknowledgment of the financial aid received towards the smooth running of the conference from the Croatian Ministry of Science and Technology, and the Embassy of Republic of Ireland in Croatia. We express our gratitude to both our sponsors, and especially to Patrick McCabe, The Irish Ambassador to Croatia.

*Editors*

