

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM OF
SOCIETAS CELTO-SLAVICA

ŁÓDŹ, POLAND, 13-15 SEPTEMBER 2009

WELCOMING REMARKS

SÉAMUS MAC MATHÚNA

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the *Fourth International Colloquium of Societas Celto-Slavica* being held here in Poland at the University of Łódź. Poland is a country rich in tradition, with a people of great resilience who have contributed significantly to the culture and history of Europe, and to the world of scholarship. It has a distinguished history of engagement over many years with Celtic Studies, and it is fitting at this first meeting of *Societas Celto-Slavica* in Poland that we should remember some of the great Polish scholars who laid the foundations of the tradition in this country – scholars such as Stefan Czarnowski, Tadeusz Lehr-Splawiński, Jerzy Kuryłowicz, Leszek Bednarczuk, and Witold Stefański. It is a history which, thankfully, continues to the present day, as is reflected in the range and variety of scholarly papers to be delivered by our Polish colleagues over the next few days. As Professor Stalmaszczyk, the Chair of Conference and a distinguished Celticist in his own right, pointed out in his address to the *First International Colloquium* in Coleraine, Celtic Studies in Poland is presently well-served by the Department of Celtic Philology at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin under the direction of Professor Eugeniusz Cyran, the Department of Celtic Languages and Literature under the direction of Professor Sabine Heinz at the School of English, at Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań, and the developments in Celtic here at Łódź spearheaded by Professor Stalmaszczyk himself.

I should point out on a personal note that it is now exactly forty years since I first met Professor Edmund Gussmann when we were young scholars studying at the University of Iceland, in Reykjavik. Already a dedicated and brilliant student of Linguistics, he was developing a keen interest in the Celtic languages, and his many endeavours and achievements on behalf of the discipline in Poland, especially perhaps his association with the Chair and school of Celtic Linguistics at Lublin, deserve special mention here today. It is a pleasure to see so many scholarly papers at the

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conference from this distinguished body of scholars, including one from the Irish linguist Dr Aidan Doyle, who has had a close affiliation with the Chair for many years.

A special word of thanks is due to the Irish Embassy, which has yet again generously assisted the *Societas* and this Colloquium: the continuing support and interest of the Embassy and Irish Government in our work are very greatly appreciated. *Go raibh míle maith agaibh!*

Finally, let me thank the organisers of the Colloquium – the Organising Committee, Professor Stalmaszczyk (Chair), and Professor Jerzy Jarniewicz and Dr Maxim Fomin; and the Conference Secretaries, Krzysztof Lewoc (who has kept us well-informed throughout the process), Dr Marta Goszczyńska, and Dr Anna Ginter. As is clear from the excellent programme of lectures and events on offer, the conference has been very well-organised. I notice, for example, that this is the first time we have both parallel sessions and a number of plenary papers. The broad range of subject matter and themes to be addressed, including the plenary session papers, will, I am sure, provide something of interest for each of us. It only remains for me to wish the Colloquium the best of luck and success and to hope that you all have an enjoyable and pleasant experience here in Łódź. *Go n-éirí go geal leis an Chomhdháil!* I now pass you over to our host, the Chair of Conference, Professor Piotr Stalmaszczyk.

Séamus Mac Mathúna
President
Societas Celto-Slavica
14 September 2009