

CONCLUDING REMARKS  
WHAT'S IN CELTO-SLAVICA?

HILDEGARD L.C. TRISTRAM

**0. Introduction**

The importance of the study of the connection and exchange between Celtic and Slavic has been underrated in past scholarship, so much so that little published research has been known in the West concerning this very rewarding field of research.<sup>1</sup> Prof. Mac Mathúna's paper on the scope and achievement of Celtic Studies in Russia and the USSR in this volume counts over one hundred and fifty titles of importance,<sup>2</sup> while Prof. Stalmaszczyk lists some two hundred titles from Poland (Stalmaszczyk 2004).<sup>3</sup> Publications from the Czech Republic,<sup>4</sup> Croatia<sup>5</sup> and other Slavic countries on Celtic matters are still waiting to be listed and made known to a wider audience.

Translations are of course very important mediators between academic cultures as they are instrumental for the transfer of knowledge. Here are great opportunities for Celtic research undertaken in the Slavic countries to become accessed outside their own domains. Until recently, scholarly publications on Celtic matters in the Slavic languages were accessible only to very few academics in the Western countries, as political and linguistic barriers restricted both physical and intellectual mobility. It is to be hoped that, in the future, the most important research results on *materia*

---

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Alexander Falileyev (Aberystwyth) for discussing the spirit and purpose of Celto-Slavic Studies with me in Hallstatt (Austria, July 2005). He sharpened my awareness of the danger of uncritically accepting apparent correspondences (or parallels) as underlying identities. He also advised against the pitfalls of arbitrariness in the presentation of research results. I also wish to thank Prof. Václav Blažek (Freiburg, 16 Sept. 2005) for very kindly checking references for me. Needless to say, these scholars are not to be associated with any shortcomings in this contribution. Abstracts of the conference were kindly made available to me by Dr Maxim Fomin (see Fomin 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Mac Mathúna's report is not intended to be either a complete bibliography or an exhaustive study of all works of Celtic scholarship. It highlights the most important contributions in this very wide study field.

<sup>3</sup> See also his contribution in this volume. Prof. Stalmaszczyk's 2004 work is a bibliography and also includes Anglo-Irish, Hiberno-English, Celtic English material.

<sup>4</sup> See the publication of Prof. Václav Blažek in this volume.

<sup>5</sup> I am thinking in particular of Prof. Ranko Matasović's study and translation of medieval Irish sagas into Croatian (Matasović 2004).

*celtica* published in the Slavic languages will soon be made available in translation to scholars elsewhere, if only in translation.<sup>6</sup>

I became aware of this storehouse of knowledge, when between the 1970s and 1990s in the house of one of my academic teachers, Herbert Pilch, I had the great privilege of personally meeting Professors Viktoriya N. Yartseva, Thomas Gamkrelidze, Anatolij Liberman and others while on their lecturing tours in Germany. It is also in his house that I first met Dr. Alexander Falileyev. Awareness of the great Eastern academic potential led me to invite Dr. Viktor P. Kalygin as a Humboldt scholar to the University of Freiburg i. Breisgau in 1990-1992 and Dr. Sergej V. Shkunayev to one of the Government-sponsored Colloquia on the 'Oral and the Written in Tension and Transition with special reference to *Táin Bó Cuailnge*' (cf. Shkunayev 1994). Dr. Falileyev kindly arranged for me to publish a report in St. Petersburg (Tristram 1999) on the Potsdam project of the 'Celtic Englishes' as well as a preliminary study on the influence which the initial language contact between the native Britons and the early Anglo-Saxons exercised on the formation of the English language (Tristram 1998).<sup>7</sup>

Celtic, Germanic, Romance and Slavic form the largest groups of speakers in Europe of the Indo-European linguistic family. The investigation of the overarching structures between these groups of speakers has a long tradition. Suffice it here to mention the most important recent studies of the interface between Celtic and Germanic (Birkhan 1970, Ellis Evans 1981, Schmidt 1991), Celtic and Romance (Müller 1982, Schmitt 1997), and Celtic and Slavic (Schmidt 1985, Kalygin 1997). I am not aware, however, of the existence as yet of a coherent account of the connections and the exchanges between the Celts and Slavs, ancient and modern. It is to be hoped that the conferences organised by the Societas Celto-Slavica will lay the foundation for a future general conspectus of the linguistic,

<sup>6</sup> My own modest contribution to this urgent desideratum is my facilitation of the translation of Victor Kalygin's important study of Old Irish mythopoetics into French by Yves Le Berre (Kalygin 1986). Yves Le Berre also translated Alexander Falileyev's important account of the Old Welsh language (Falileyev 2002) into French, as I did into German with the help of Potsdam students, notably Alexander Haselow, so that it can be used for class work on the foundations of the English language.

<sup>7</sup> In 1997-1998, Bożena Gierek from the Jagellonian University of Kraków (Poland) spent a year with me in Freiburg on a grant from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD – German Students' Exchange Service) in order to study Irish culture and religion for her PhD. Her book was published in 2002 (Gierek 2002).

literary and cultural topics of shared interest between these two important European cultural domains.

How do we conceptualise such topics transcending the individual Celtic and Slavic language families, languages, literatures and cultures? What is their scientific research interest? I would suggest five different areas of research, whose specific methodologies may yield fruitful insights. The keywords for these areas are the four Cs: curiosity, contrast, contact and genetic connection.

### 1. Curiosity

The most basic interest is that of *curiosity* relating to unconnected, unrelated or only distantly related cultures. Anything can be made the subject of research in order to satisfy the desire for the knowledge about and the understanding of foreign lifestyle(s), languages, literatures, religions and other cultural manifestations. Curiosity mediates between the culture of the Self ('identity') and the culture of the Other ('alterity'). Anything can of course be compared to serve the Self in its desire of self-definition. Scholars outside the Celtic countries interested in Celtic cultures will therefore turn to the crossing points between their own cultures and that of the Celts.

One of the motors of this type of curiosity surely is fascination with the exoticism of Otherness. The recognition of Otherness broadens human understanding, leads to self-recognition and therefore serves self-awareness. This involves addressing questions like: Who am I? Am I what I am, because I know that I am not what the other is?

I would like to explain this by means of an example. As far as I can see, there is no genetic or geographic or historical connection between Japanese and Celtic.<sup>8</sup> The Japan Society of Celticists, the Cymmrodorion Society of Japan, The Japan Wales Society etc. unite Japanese people interested in the Celtic component of Western culture. They promote cultural ties with the Celtic countries and study Celtic related activities. Often such an interest is personally motivated.<sup>9</sup> Japanese interest in Celtic has found expression, for example, in the publication of the journals *Studia Celtica Japonica* of the Celtic Society of Japan, the *Celtic Forum* of the Japan

<sup>8</sup> Japanese and Celtic are to be understood in generic terms as language, literature and culture.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Naoichira Hirashima's translation of Bernhard Maier's *Lexikon der keltischen Religion und Kultur* (1996) into Japanese in 2001. Both scholars were former students of mine at the University of Freiburg i. Breisgau.

Celticists Society and *Cylchgrawn Astudiaethau Cymraeg* ('Magazine of Welsh Studies') of the Conference of Celticists in Japan.

The cultural closeness between Celtic and the Slavic cultures is, of course, much greater than that between Celtic and Japanese and interest motivated by the desire of mere exoticism may perhaps not form as much an incentive for reciprocal curiosity between Celtic and Slavic scholars. There is, however, much to be explored which may serve the knowledge about and understanding of these two particular types of Otherness as significant parts of the rich cultural heritage of the highly diversified European identity.

## 2. Contrast/Typology

*Contrastive* studies relating to the linguistic, literary and cultural domains of human expression form another relevant approach in this connection. The method usually resorted to is that of *typology*. Typological studies are concerned with the types and categories of cultural givens as contrastive or shared realisations of underlying concepts. In linguistics, this method is called the onomasiological approach, as opposed to the semasiological approach which, conversely, attempts to uncover the common underlying concepts of different surface realisations. Onomasiology involves questions such as, how is 'definiteness' or 'aspect' or 'agency' expressed in language (family)/dialect A and language (family)/dialect B which linguistic means are resorted to and how do they compare? Another research interest is that of the study of underlying (empirical) linguistic universals.<sup>10</sup> This means that the discovery of typological correspondences across languages may lead to the recognition of linguistic features common to all human languages, or to nearly all human languages. The typological approach in the domains of literature and culture, such as for instance, the study of orality and literacy or mythology and religion may also yield fruitful insights into the potential of human imagination expressed in verbal art and in the search of communicating with the transcendental.

## 3. Contact

The study of the *contact* between the languages, literatures and cultures of the Celts and Slavs, ancient and modern, is another approach of relevance

<sup>10</sup> The study of *empirical* universals differs from the study of *Universal Grammar* (UG) in that the empirical universals are not theoretical constructs, while language universals are, as in, for instance, Chomskyan types of formal grammars.

to the present field of research. Contact may be studied in many different domains, answering questions such as who were the agents initiating, maintaining or discontinuing the contacts, where, when and for how long, why and by which means. What was the result of the contact? Contact, of course, means direct interaction between people from the two cultural spheres and convergence of the differences between them. There may be many different degrees of interaction and convergence. Sometimes the contact may also be an indirect one, such as, for instance, words from Slavic languages borrowed into the Celtic languages mediated by means of English, or translations of medieval Celtic narratives into the Slavic languages also mediated by means of English translations. In such cases, English serves as a mediating filter in the process of cultural convergence.

While contrastive/typological studies aim at generalising research insights, contact studies are concerned with itemising and particularising. Specific contacts under specific contact conditions lead to particular contact effects, which may elucidate the cultural uniqueness of societies, customs, beliefs, concepts, expressions of art and mental activities. Some scholars have claimed the existence of contact universals, especially in linguistics, but in order to substantiate such claims, much more empirical research is needed.

#### **4. Genetic connections**

Finally, there are research interests which, starting from *genetically* conditioned differences between languages, literature and cultures, search to uncover the common roots behind these differences and explain the splits between the erstwhile commonalities. The main methods of this approach were developed in the nineteenth century philology and were subsumed under the heading of ‘historical reconstruction’.<sup>11</sup> Genetic reconstruction was used both for the discovery of basic Indo-European phonological and grammatical forms and for the social articulations and religious beliefs of the Indo-Europeans. The backward look was mandatory in the philological study of the oldest surviving texts. The study of origins is, of course, strongly hypothetical and its truth value lies in the plausibility of the arguments mounted in favour of specific cases. Such studies, however, fire people’s imagination in the search of self-defining identities.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Hoenigswald (1960) and Fox (1995).

*Curiosity, contrast, contact and genetic connections* are legitimate research incentives and may function as separate approaches, but they may also combine to form broader or overarching interests. Curiosity may lead to typological studies, contrasting native and foreign forms of cultural expression. Genetic derivation and contact studies may lead to the explanation of hybrid forms; the study of contrast and geneticism may lead to the postulation of deeper lying commonalities which could possibly be explained by resorting to the assumption of archetypes, and so forth. The four above-mentioned categories were set up for heuristic purposes; actual research approaches may of course straddle them.

### **5. The Contributions**

In the following, I shall briefly characterise the contributions to the Conference by sorting their approaches according to the four types of research interests just outlined.

#### **Curiosity**

Two papers deal with cultural curiosity and/or exoticism. John Carey's paper on 'Russia, Cradle of the Gael' is concerned with *Lebor Gabála* matter, i.e. the native Irish account of the exodus of the ultimate forefathers of the Irish from Scythia and their migration via Greece, Egypt and Spain to Ireland. This exodus was modelled on that of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan, God's *terra repromissionis* for them. The choice of Scythia as the ultimate homeland of the Irish separates them from their Western Insular neighbours and lends them an identity whose exoticism favourably compares to the medieval topos of the "Wonders of the East". Anna Muradova discusses the presence of Breton words in the dictionary (*Vocabularia Linguarum Totius Orbis*) compiled by Peter Simon Pallas (1741-1811) and commissioned by the Russian Empress Catherine II. This was a typical Enlightenment enterprise, trying to sound the known and the unknown. The exoticism of the Breton words was, however, toned down by their transliteration into Cyrillic which supposedly, but not really, made them more accessible to Russian users.

#### **Contrast/Typology**

Most of the contributions to this volume belong to the category concerned with contrast and typology. Three are of a linguistic nature, two are

culturally oriented and one is literary. Elena Parina's paper deals with double direct object marking in Celtic and South Slavic, notably in Welsh and in Bulgarian cum Macedonian. She claims that this feature serves the same purpose in the languages analysed, namely the maintenance of clarity, most notably in oral communications. She also claims that, beside this function, the double marking in Middle Welsh writing is used to distinguish between direct (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person interlocutor marking) and indirect speech (3<sup>rd</sup> person interlocutor marking). Folke Josephson compares the patterns of Celtic and Slavic multiple prefixation in verbal morphology. Old Irish and Bulgarian appear to have the longest chains of prefixes in the respective language families. Sequencing of the prefixes, their (original) local, directional and telic meanings are compared and discussed. Reference is also made to comparable functions in Anatolian languages, notably Hittite. In her comparison of Polish and Irish, Anna Bondaruk establishes a typology of the control of non-finite clauses. A distinction is drawn between obligatory and non-obligatory control as well as exhaustive and partial control. It appears that Polish and Irish are close if not identical in their seven types of predicates taking non-finite complements.

The two cultural papers in this category of contrast/typology deal with magic and shamanism. Tatyana Mikhailova discusses the function of naming patterns in oral-derived written charms in Russia and Ireland. According to Mikhailova, the Russian and Irish cultures were particularly close in the early period of writing because of the coexistence of Christianity and paganism. Both traditions use 'background names,' such as Christian and pagan divinities creating a specific verbal milieu for the magic formula, and 'subject names' which are used to denote the person against whom the charm is directed. Grigory Bondarenko discusses parallels in Old Irish and Old Russian of the formula of "knowledge in the clouds." This symbolises the flight of the soul to the sky as expressed in the contrastive use of theonyms and mythopoetic language. The flight of the soul is suggested to be connected with the shamanistic journey practised by the pagan priests. Priest and poet share the perception and experience of the higher reality of the cosmos in shamanistic ritual, reflexes of which are believed to be still in evidence in Old Irish and Old Russian narratives.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Bondarenko's suggestion that the formula of "knowledge in the clouds" is likely to be a motif inherited from Indo-European times links his paper also with the category of genetic connection.

Nina Chekhonadskaya's paper contrasts the theme of inordinate appropriation of food leading to interethnic strife in Old Irish and Old Russian narratives. The outcome of quarrels at feasts over food is a different one in both cultures. The Irish tales underscore the permanent rift between the ethnic groups concerned, while in the Russian tales the young hero asserts himself as a full member of the heroic elite. Chekhonadskaya's typological approach is both anthropological and literary.

The six papers in this category of contrast/typology would encourage reflections on the overarching insights provided by the respective comparisons.

### **Contact**

Three papers belong to the category of contact between the Celtic and the Slavic languages, literatures and cultures.

The two contributions by Václav Blažek to the colloquium were concerned with the early contact between the Celts and the Slavs in the field of theonyms and place-names. Other than Viktor Kalygin (for whom see below in the category of 'genetic connection'), in his paper in the present volume, Blažek makes a case for Slavic borrowing of sacral lexicon from the Celts in a period when speakers of both peoples interacted in the area of the upper Dniester. At the conference, he also broached the problem of the "invisible Celts" in Bohemia, meaning that the Celtic place-names adduced by Ptolemy for those parts of Central Europe which are now Slavic speaking were first superseded by Germanic and then by Slavic names. Only very few Celtic toponyms remain in this area. This scenario has interesting parallels in England where the modern absence of Brittonic place-names in the South East and East suggested to the nineteenth century Anglo-Saxon scholars that the native Brittonic (i.e. Celtic speaking) population was either exterminated or expelled ('double X theory').<sup>13</sup>

On an entirely different plane, but also belonging to this category, is Frank Sewell's study of the impact of Russian literature on modern Irish writing, both in English and in Irish. The title of Paul Durcan's collection of poems, *Going Home to Russia*, appears to be symptomatic in this respect, because it replaces the Irish poets' search for "their" America by that of "their" Russia. This betrays current belief in an overlap of the

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the problem of the absence of Brittonic place-names and the large-scale survival of the ancient Britons, see the contributions to Nicholas Higham (fc.).



“Irish” (or rather “Celtic” soul) and the Russian soul, allowing a special relationship between the poets of both countries in matters of personal feelings as well as cultural and political issues.

### **Genetic Connections**

Three studies explicitly study the genetic connections of Celtic and Slavic and deal with a considerable time depth. Karl Horst Schmidt points out a number of grammatical features in the Celtic and the Slavic languages which are archaic and yet not inherited from the Proto-Indo-European base language. This includes inflected relative pronouns, thematic s-formations and the formation of future forms. Schmidt also allows for shared literary and mythological inheritance in both cultures. On the other hand, he affirms that the development of aspect in the Slavic and Celtic languages is late and not related, as the early marking of aspect was carried out by means of different stems while the later formations developed different stem endings. Viktor Kalygin’s posthumous contribution is dedicated to Karl Horst Schmidt and deals with parallels between the Continental Celts and the Slavs who entered into contact around the fourth century BC in the area between Silesia and Bohemia and the Carpathian Mountains. Shared future marking is discussed, as well as parallels in the formation of relative pronouns, ablaut grades, suffixation, aspect systems and palatalisation. Kalygin also refers to the problem of the relative linguistic chronology of the Celto-Slavic isoglosses. His assumption is that such isoglosses developed on the basis of inherited Indo-European structures, but were conditioned by the contact situation.<sup>14</sup>

Dean Miller talks about the heroic “Sohrab and Rustem” theme known from the Persian *Shahnameh* of Ferdousi, otherwise known as the “Father-son conflict.” This is an international theme which deals with the combat of father against son in heroic societies. Miller contrasts it with the reverse situation in the Oedipus theme of Greek mythology, where son kills father. He links this ‘Oedipal shift’ with the civic society of the Greek *polis*, while the figures of Cú Chulainn in medieval Irish literature and Il’ya of Murom in Russian tales represent the archaic Indo-European type of hero, who is of extraordinary physical size, has a ferocious temper and is essentially

<sup>14</sup> In this respect, Kalygin’s paper to a lesser extent also belongs to the category of ‘contact’. The difference between Blažek’s approach and that of Kalygin is that the former emphasises the contact condition while the latter stresses the viewpoint of common IE derivation.

mobile between peoples and tribes. The archaic character of the figure of Queen Medb as the sexually potent Sovereignty Goddess, for whom there are connections with the Russian context as well, is also compared with that of the virginal, political goddess, Athena. The Irish and Slavic evidence attests to the survival of these Indo-European male and female hero types in their respective medieval literatures.

### 6. Excursus: Other Research on Genetic Connections

In addition to the contributions to this volume, I will now briefly summarise five recent studies by Alexander Falileyev and Graham R. Isaac on the linguistic interface between the Celtic languages and the Slavic languages. They also belong to the category of genetic connections and illustrate different *types* of genetic links arrived at by the authors' investigation of lexical material. I think that such studies are central to the research project of Celto-Slavica, as they illustrate the *linguistic* connection by means of a cogent methodology.

The Welsh word *gweryd* 'earth, soil, mould, humus, sward, land; *fig.* grave'; also 'dung, manure,' with parallels in other Celtic languages, is related by Alexander Falileyev (1997) to Russian *vereteya* 'a small plot of cultivated land', 'dry plot of land, especially among the moors or close to the bank of the river.' Both words reflect an Indo-European *\*uer-* stem. This stem could be *\*uer-* 'erhöhte Stelle' (high ground), *\*uer-t* 'drehen, biegen, wenden' (turn) or *\*uer-* 'verschließen, bedecken; schützen, retten, abwehren' (cover, protect). Falileyev does not exclude the possibility of a contamination of all three base forms. In the same article, Falileyev finds a match for Welsh *hyd(d)er* 'very stubborn' in Slavic words for 'health' and 'healthy', derived from IE *\*su-doru-os*. This lexeme is considered to be compounded by IE *\*su-* (*sū-*) 'wohl, gut' (good, well) and *\*deru-* 'Baum' (tree), the basic semantics being 'good and solid or hard as wood'. In another study (Falileyev 1998), he derives Old Cornish *cudin* 'hair, lock', evidenced in the *Vocabularium Cornicum*, from the IE root *\*keu-* 'biegen' (bend) and relates this to Common Slavic *\*kyka*, based on a *-k-* derivative of this IE base. Both word pairs in Welsh and Slavic are thus taken to represent shared modern reflexes of IE roots.

The article "Leeks and Garlic: The Germanic Ethnonym *Cannenefates*, Celtic *\*kasn-* and Slavic *\*kesn-*" (Falileyev & Isaac 2003) makes a case

for the shared derivation of the word for ‘leek, onion, garlic’ in the Celtic languages and the Slavic languages from the Indo-European verbal root *\*kes-* ‘scrape, comb, peel’ and its adjectival derivative *\*ks-no-* ‘scraped, combed.’ It is suggested that this genetic relationship may not necessarily go back to Proto-Indo-European itself, as this form for the related plant names may be a semantic innovation shared in a period of Celtic-Slavic proximity on the Continent before the expansion and spread of Germanic as an intervening Central European language block. This paper thus proposes a Celtic-Slavic contact situation rather than a common Proto-Indo-European inheritance. The evidence is founded on the assumption of the regular adherence of the respective lexical reflexes to the sound laws, clear morphological rules and a transparent semantic motivation.

In their article “Welsh *cabl* ‘calumny, blame, blasphemy’” (Falileyev & Isaac 1998), the authors suggest an IE root *\*kob-*, the primary semantics of which are “speaking in a certain ritual or religious context” (Falileyev & Isaac 1998: 205). Reflexes of this root are attested in Slavic, Germanic and Celtic with the semantics of ‘fateful speaking.’ This then yielded *cabl* in Welsh, *cob* ‘victory’ in Old Irish, in Old Russian кобъ ‘foretelling, premonition, fate,’ Serbo-Croatian *kôb* ‘(good) omen, (bad) premonition, (evil) fate,’ etc. Again, both the phonology and the semantics of the Celtic and Slavic reflexes are interpreted not to relate to the Indo-European (proto-)language, but to a later state of development. For this they propose a contact scenario where ritual and religious contexts were shared by the speakers of all three language families (Slavic, Germanic and Celtic), with Slavic and Celtic as the eastern and western reflexes of a continuum of cultural exchanges which had Germanic in its centre, geographically speaking.

In his article “Celto-Slavica II” (Falileyev 1999), the author discusses the Celtic words for ‘beard, bristles; eye-brows’ and the Slavic words for ‘chest, bosom’. He relates them to the same Indo-European proto-form *\*gher-* ‘stick out, protrude.’ The respective reflexes of this root in Celtic relate to hair and in Slavic to protruding body parts. Falileyev’s interesting interpretation of this hypothesis is that this also does not go back to the proto-language, but was an independent or parallel development in the two language families “or even a fossilisation of a model that was inherent in the parent language” (Falileyev 1999: 123).

So what are the types of genetic relationship between the Celtic and Slavic words discussed by Falileyev and Isaac, which could also hold for other shared parts of the lexicon? First, we have shared preservation of Indo-European roots, as in the Welsh word for ‘very stubborn’ and the Slavic words for ‘health’ and ‘healthy’ or the Welsh word for ‘earth’ and the Russian word for ‘cultivated land’. Second, we have shared Celtic and Slavic innovation in a period of cultural contact between these two emerging ethnicities on the Continent, as evidenced by the related words for ‘leek, onion and garlic’ which are ultimately derived from the IE verbal root *\*kes-* ‘scrape, comb, peel’. This contact is suggested to have taken place before the expansion of the Germanic languages.<sup>15</sup> Third, there is evidence for reflexes of IE *\*kob-* ‘speaking in a certain ritual or religious context’ in Slavic, Germanic and Celtic, which suggests an innovation involving all three languages families during or after the expansion of Germanic. Fourth, independent parallel development in Celtic and Slavic is suggested for the use of the IE root *\*gher-* ‘stick out, protrude’. Fifth, there is the possibility of Slavic words having been borrowed from Celtic when speakers from both languages families lived in close cultural contact before the expansion of Germanic, such as was suggested by Shakhmatov (1911, cf. Vasmer 1953: 584) for the Slavic and Celtic reflexes of IE *\*kob-* ‘speaking in a ritual context’. These five scenarios within the category of genetic connections should be tested for other lexical items as well, so as to put the hitherto only exemplary lexical relationships between Slavic and Celtic on a sound basis.

### 7. History of Celtic scholarship in the Slavic Countries

As my article contains an account of the contents of the Conference and partly of the Proceedings, I will not fail to also point out here the aforementioned papers by Professors Séamus Mac Mathúna and Piotr Stalmaszczyk. Their papers on ‘The History of Celtic Scholarship in Russia and the Soviet Union’ and ‘Celtic Studies in Poland: Recent Themes and Developments’ are pieces on the history of Celtic scholarship in their respective countries of study. As such they contain combinations of the various elements of my four Cs.

<sup>15</sup> See above the positions of Kalygin and Blažek in this respect.

### 8. Present Day Mediation Between the Celtic and Slavic Cultures

Two important contributions to the Conference were on the subject of the transfer of knowledge between the Celtic and Slavic cultures. Natalia O'Shea's personal experience as a translator of early Irish epic prose narrative into Russian lead her to make a plea for more drastic realism in the translation of epic so as to reach the targeted readership on its own terms and therefore allow for more direct access to the texts. The 1985 translation of the *Táin Bó Cuailgne* by Tatyana A. Mikhailova and Sergej V. Shkunayev was modelled on the archaising and heightened diction of the ancient Greek epics. The language was pseudo-epic and imitated the beautifully speaking heroes in the *Iliad*. The prose of the medieval Irish tales, however, varies between three different registers, a downright colloquial diction being used in the passages of direct speech. Therefore, "translators should pay more attention to the division of registers and, mostly, to the liveliness of the people's speech, and should not artificially enhance the epic features of the sagas" (cited from Fomin 2005: 43). Such a flexible use of language was the aim of the new collection of Ulster Cycle tales translated from Irish into Russian and published in 2004 (Mikhailova 2004).

The present state of the production of digital resources for Celtic scholars in the Slavic countries was presented by Maxim Fomin. The Research Institute for Irish and Celtic Studies at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, is currently engaged in the digitisation of the Royal Irish Academy's *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (eDIL), supported by a three year grant from the UK Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC). An important spin-off project is the creation of an Old and Middle Irish - Russian Glossary based on eDIL, either in its full form or in a more user-friendly abridged version. The existence of such a research tool on CD Rom would greatly facilitate the direct access of Russian students to early Irish literature in the original language. Thus, between translation and direct access to the original language, students of Celtic in Russia will, in the future, have much greater research opportunities in order to partake in the great storehouse of early Irish language and thought than any time before in history. It is to be hoped that similar learning and research tools will be created in the not too distant future for the other Slavic speech communities.

### **9. Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would like to emphasise the great efforts undertaken by Professor Séamus Mac Mathúna and his colleagues in order to bring together scholars of Celtic Studies from the Celtic countries and Slavic countries, as well as scholars from other countries interested in the interface between Celtic and Slavic. This effort will surely receive the wide academic recognition it deserves. The opening up of a new field of research, the creation of international links between scholars working in this field and the salience of the research undertaken, are bound to awake the interest of scholars working in fields other than Celtic Studies as well. As long as methodological discussions, or rather methodological considerations, accompany Celtic-oriented research, the excellence of the research results will not fail to be internationally appreciated.

University of Freiburg i. Breisgau