

REVIEWS

Anders Ahlqvist and Pamela O'Neill (eds), *Germano-Celtica: A Festschrift for Brian Taylor* (Sydney: Sydney Series in Celtic Studies 16, 2017); 271 pp.; ISBN 978-1-74210-422-5; paperback.

THIS affectionate tribute to Brian Taylor is a collection of interesting and diverse articles on a range of Germanic and Celtic subjects, prefaced by three personal messages from his son Alasdair Taylor, and colleagues Aedeen Cremin and Sybil Jack. The volume showcases talents that have been nurtured at the University of Sydney in fields including Anglo-Saxon Studies: the Director of the Medieval and Early Modern Centre, Daniel Anlezark, contributes a fine piece, 'The Soul in the Old English Soliloquies and Ninth Century Neo-Platonism,' and Helen Appleton's (Balliol College Oxford) 'The Psalter in the Prose Lives of St Guthlac' reflects well on her time as a Sydney doctoral graduate. Former colleagues of Taylor Geraint Evans (Swansea University) and Helen Fulton (University of Bristol) earn praise for their chapters, 'Welsh Antiquarianism and Proto-Nationalism in Elizabeth Hardy's *Owen Glendower* (1849)' and 'Caerleon and Cultural Memory in the Modern Literature of Wales,' both of which connect medieval Wales with contemporary understandings of medieval Wales. Wales also appears in comparative terms in Karolina Rosiak's 'Literary Translations Between Polish and Welsh: An Overview.'

For those interested in Scottish history and literature there are three substantial chapters that are of particular significance. First is William Gillies' 'The Mavis of Clan Donald': Engaging with John MacCodrum', which is a study of the North Uist poet's self-identification as a mavis or song-thrush. This self-designation conveys 'the idea of the poet as a spokesperson whose role it was to sing on behalf of his island and its people' (p. 123). Gillies traces the critical reception of MacCodrum by critics, but more importantly his involvement with the Gaelic language poets of the eighteenth century, including Alastair mac Mhàighstir Alastair and James MacPherson. Michael Graham Nelson's 'Scottish and German Connections' is an examination of the perceptions that Germans have about Scotland (tourism and mysticism) and the historical links that were crafted by the Hanoverian dynasty, the friendship of Walter Scott and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich von

Schiller's play *Mary Stuart*, the composer Felix Mendelssohn, and the experience of two World Wars. The third chapter is Pamela O'Neill's fascinating 'A Possible Early Medieval Route across Scotland' which chronicles a contemporary attempt to recreate a journey 'from the Firth of Tay in the east to Iona and Islay in the west, based on the locations of sculptured stones along waterways' (p. 213). O'Neill and her companions walked this route in August and September of 2017, an important modern attempt to recreate or enter into the experience of the medieval subject, a desire which drives much scholarly work, however difficult it is to admit or justify in the present academic climate.

Other chapters include such gems as Anders Ahlqvist's '*Hast du mir gesehen*', which investigates an almost untranslatable German idiom, Wallace Kirsop's 'Studying in Continental Europe: The Experience of Australian Postgraduates,' Nicola McLelland's 'From Phonetics to Phonograph: Teaching Spoken German in the 1930s,' and Katherine Spadaro's 'The Death of the Dictation,' an Australian anecdote about the notorious language test that was ignobly used to exclude migrants of non-English speaking background during the period of the White Australia Policy. Lynette Olson's 'Otherness in the Writings of St Patrick' is worthy of particular notice; it is an intensely idiosyncratic and insightful discussion of the writings of Patrick, direct sources for the religious life in the fifth century, not to mention among the earliest Christian autobiographical texts and ethnographical accounts of 'others,' in this case the pagan Irish Patrick sought to convert to Christianity.

Germano-Celtica: A Festschrift for Brian Taylor is a worthy addition to the Sydney Series in Celtic Studies, an academic publishing endeavour that continues to chronicle the work of many under-appreciated and even unsung champions of the University of Sydney's research life. This edited volume is warmly commended to scholars of Celtic and Germanic studies and to those interested in the flourishing of the broadest possible range of Humanities research fields.

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