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CELTIC LANGUAGES

I. WELSH STUDIES
LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

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1. General

J. T. Koch, ‘On Celts Calling Themselves ‘Celts’ and Related Questions’, SC, 43:73–86, elaborates on arguments for the self-designation of ancient Celtic-speaking peoples as Celts, putting forward the hypothesis that the medieval rupture in the use of ‘Celt’ as a group identifier resulted from a deliberate move to reject notions of common Celtic origins in favour of an identity constructed within a biblical framework. Edward Lhwyd. Archaeologia Britannica: Texts and Translations, ed. Dewi W. Evans and Brynley F. Roberts, Aberystwyth, Celtic Studies Publications, xii + 262 pp., is a significant contribution to the history of Celtic scholarship that brings together the prefaces to the various sections of Lhwyd’s Archaeologia along with an English translation of the W., Cornish and Irish prefaces and a selection of related texts. The introduction discusses the genesis and composition of this seminal work, placing it in its broader intellectual context. Dewi W. Evans and Brynley F. Roberts, Edward Lhwyd 1660–1709 Llyfryddiaeth a Chyfarwyddiadur / A Bibliography and Readers’ Guide, Aberystwyth, UWCASWC, vi + 41 pp., is a comprehensive bibliography of titles relating to the life and work of Lhwyd, which, in conjunction with the abovementioned volume, sets Lhwydian studies on firm foundations. A. H. Blom, ‘The Welsh Glosses in the Vocabularium Cornicum’, CMCS, 57:23–40, analyses the 15 W. glosses in a Latin-Old Cornish glossary surviving in a 13th-c. MS of W. provenance. B. concludes that the glossator did not regard Cornish and W. as distinct languages but rather as dialects differing mainly in vocalism. Markku Filppula, Juhani Klemola and Heli Paulasto, English and Celtic in Contact, NY, Routledge, 2008, xix + 312 pp., is a comprehensive survey challenging the received view, based on the relative paucity of Celtic loan words in
English, according to which the traces of Celtic influence in English are negligible. The volume is divided into two parts, the first exploring contact between the Celtic languages and English in the medieval period, the second focusing on the emergence of varieties of English in Celtic speaking areas in recent times. Demonstrating that evidence of language contact is found in core areas of English grammar and morphophonology, the authors argue for a reassessment of the history of English, taking account of this influence.

2. Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Etymology

G. M. Awbery, ‘Variation in a Traditional Welsh Commemorative Verse: the Role of Syntactic Ambiguity’, SC, 43:175–200, analyses variants of a four-line commemorative verse widely attested on gravestone inscriptions across South Wales, showing that, in addition to lexical, morphological and orthographic variants arising from literary preference or the use of dialectal forms, other variants are the result of semantic ambiguity. The ambiguous forms in question are buo, 1st sg. past inflection of bod in the South-East, which is understood in the South-West as the 3rd sg. past inflection owing to the loss of word-final dd; and cofia, interpreted as either imperative or indicative. A. concludes that semantic ambiguity has a basis in language structure as opposed to being a construct of linguistic analysis. Id., ‘Welsh Place-Names and the Syntax-Semantics Interface’, JCLin, 12:1–16, contends that semantic criteria must be taken into account in order to explain why ordinary rules for definite and indefinite noun phrases do not apply to place-name noun phrases, which, irrespective of their internal structure, are all treated as definite and cannot follow mewn nor appear following the complementizer yn in copular sentences. Awareness of interaction between the syntactic and semantic, it is argued, is essential for any formal description of Welsh. B. M. Jones, ‘The Core and the Periphery: The Syntax of the Welsh ‘Genitive of Respect’, ib., 39–86, analyses the ‘genitive of respect’ construction, composed of adjective + clitic + noun. J. concludes that it is a non-canonical clause which has the distribution of an adjective phrase, thereby placing it on the periphery of W. grammar. S. Rodway, ‘Pastard, Pastardiaeth’, LIC, 32:193–94, suggests that the initial p of pastard might be explained as a secondary development based on the form pastardaeth, a hypercorrected variation of bastard(i)aeth. P. W. Thomas, ‘(-th-): Tystiolaeth Beirdd y Tywysogion a’r Uchelwyr’, Dwned, 15:11–32, considers the evidence afforded by the work of the Poets of the Princes and the Poets of the Nobility for the distribution