

THE JOURNAL OF SCOTTISH NAME STUDIES

THE FUTURE OF THE JOURNAL

PUBLISHER

From its inception in 2007, *The Journal of Scottish Name Studies* has been published by Clann Tuirc. From next year (2020), it will be published by Celtic and Gaelic at the University of Glasgow.

EDITOR(S)

To date, the journal has been edited by Simon Taylor (Vols 1–3) and jointly by Simon Taylor and Richard A.V. Cox (Vols 4–13).

Vol. 14 is to be edited by guest editor Sarah Künzler, with Simon Taylor as consultant editor (Richard Cox has retired). It will contain articles resulting from a series of seminars led by Dr Künzler at the University of Glasgow on the overall theme of ‘Challenging perspectives: new approaches to the Scottish landscape through the study of place-names’.

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions are welcome as usual. However, while shorter varia will be considered for inclusion in Vol. 14, main articles will be held back and considered for inclusion in Vol. 15.

REVIEWS

Jacob King (ed.), *Scottish Gaelic Place-names: The Collected Works of Charles M. Robertson 1864–1927* (Sleat, Isle of Skye: Clò Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba, 2019), xxxvi + 554 pp. £19.99 paperback. ISBN 9781721806874

The publication of the collected works of Rev. Charles M. Robertson, edited by Dr Jacob King, makes a hitherto largely overlooked resource accessible to scholars with an interest in Scotland's place-names at a very reasonable price. Most of the material contained in the book can be found in its original form in the National Library of Scotland (NLS) (p. xxiii), but compiling Robertson's work in a published volume is an important step towards acknowledging the impact of his fieldwork on early Scottish toponymy. The first part of the book consists of a selection of ten essays, the majority of which remained unpublished in Robertson's lifetime. They include a wide range of topics which do not only address Gaelic place-names. A brief selection follows here: in the 'Topography and Traditions of Eigg' Robertson has collected traditions associated with ecclesiastical and other sites from a range of sources, both published and unpublished. In the essay on 'Biblical Place-names of Scotland' (which in fact mainly consists of Scots place-names rather than Gaelic ones), a selection of Scottish place-names which he has labelled 'Scripture names' are presented. Finally, in 'Studies in Place-names', as King states in the introduction, 'The published article as it stands is really on three topics' (p. 67), beginning with Names of Peoples, moving on to a discussion on the elements *Aber-* and *Pit-* and concluding with a discussion on Proper names of Streams and Valleys. The second part of the book, which is arguably where its true value lies, is comprised of regional place-name surveys of varying scope. The most detailed surveys cover 'Jura, Highland Perthshire and Wester Ross, with other surveys covering Islay, Mid Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, Argyll and the Southern Hebrides' (p. xxxii). The lack of coverage in the Western and Northern Isles reflects an emphasis on collecting first-hand material in areas where Robertson himself lived. The surveys typically consist of place-name entries given in the Ordnance Survey form, accompanied by the Gaelic pronunciation and other information deemed relevant (p. xxxii).

King's careful handling of the collections and an editorial policy which aims to present the source material as intact as possible, while maintaining the toponymic focus of the book and removing 'unnecessary text' (p. xxxvi), means that the reader has a solid basis from which to use Robertson's work. Any changes to the original source material and the reasoning behind it are clearly explained in the introduction. For example, as far as possible, overlapping material in Robertson's notebooks has been merged and this is explained in the introductory notes to each survey (p. xxxv). Both the introduction and notes preceding each essay and

area survey contain helpful detective work which will be a great aid to scholars seeking to make use of the original sources in the NLS. Several of the issues outlined below are addressed by King in the introduction. Additionally, in a source which is so intrinsically linked to the author's own experiences, the account of Robertson's life is helpful (pp. xiii–xxiv). It is difficult to criticise any aspect of the editing. However, whilst recognising the vast amount of work required to provide grid references for each entry, the addition of spatial information, at least for important place-names in the surveys, would be highly beneficial, particularly in a book which is explicitly aimed towards toponymists. It is worth highlighting that the title *Scottish Gaelic Place-names* may lead readers to believe that this is a comprehensive, authoritative work on Scotland's Gaelic place-names; this is not the case. This is a work which, to be used efficiently, requires readers to have (as Dr Simon Taylor puts it on the back cover) 'a serious interest in Scottish place-names'. In consideration of this, the subtitle, *The Collected Works of Charles M. Robertson*, may have been more appropriately used as the title of the book. Otherwise, there is little to remark on, except for a misplaced footnote on p. 402.

The wealth of place-names collected by someone who knew and lived in the areas surveyed presents the reader with a wonderful resource. Despite this, the significance of these collections has generally been overlooked in toponymic circles and Robertson himself remains relatively unacknowledged compared to other Gaelic scholars of his time. This becomes particularly obvious when considering that, 'If published today, [W. J. Watson's 1904] *Place Names of Ross and Cromarty* would certainly be considered a co-authored work. Much material covering the West of Ross-shire is lifted largely verbatim from Robertson's notebook' (p. xix). We may conclude that some if not a significant amount of Watson's information here originally derived from Robertson or was at least influenced by him. Torridon (Applecross) may provide an example of this. In 1902, Robertson objected to 'Mr Watson's Norse derivation of it', instead proposing a Gaelic one, partially based on the local pronunciation (p. 148). In *The Place Names of Ross and Cromarty* (p. 210), published two years later, there is no trace of a Norse interpretation for this place-name. In light of this, these collections are not only an important source for individual place-name forms. They can also allow us to trace the development of traditions that have become embedded in our understanding of Gaelic Scotland from the early twentieth century. As remarked by Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart (p. ix), the place-name surveys provide a wealth of local Gaelic pronunciations, which will be of great assistance to scholars compiling future surveys in the areas covered. They also contain otherwise unrecorded name-forms and, in some instances, place-names that do not appear on any of the OS maps, the importance of which is obvious. Despite its title, the book is not only of value for scholars studying Gaelic place-names. A large number of the place-names collected by

Robertson contain formations that are ultimately of Norse origin and many of the name forms are useful to anyone with an interest in Scandinavian Scotland. The name which appears on the OS maps (modern and first edition six inch) as Leac Earnadail NR445665, containing a Norse coining with ON *dalr* 'dale, valley', will suffice to demonstrate this. Robertson provides the form *Leac Eārradail* (p. 397) which may indicate that the specific element in the original Norse place-name may be of a rather different derivation than the OS map forms suggest. Finally, much can be made of the value of the folklore present in Robertson's work, which can improve our understanding of the history and development of micro-toponyms. The merit of using folklore as a tool in place-name studies is becoming increasingly acknowledged and there is no doubt that this work will provide an excellent resource for name scholars. The stories also provide intriguing and sometimes humorous reading. An example of this is the story of the cave named Uamh na Corpaich (Jura) where coffins were kept overnight by funeral parties from Colonsay:

On one occasion whilst the party was passing the night in the cave the coffin was seen to move [...] one of the party on this occasion stretched out his hand, took up a loaded gun and aimed and fired at the coffin. He knew well what he was about, however, for when they gathered about the coffin to see the effects of the shot they found an otter *béist dubh* killed by the shot. The animal had been pulling at the coffin and so caused the movements observed by the watchers. (p. 389)

The collections presented as a whole suffer from the wide range of areas and topics covered. This is a reflection of the original source material, especially the area surveys, which are transcribed from Robertson's original notebooks. In some cases, these appear to have remained a work in progress for much of his lifetime (see for example his survey of Perthshire, p. 253). The surveys also differ widely depending on Robertson's own familiarity and experience of each area. For instance, despite living on Islay for over ten years (p. 399), the survey here is very brief and he provides almost no etymologies for the place-names. It is crucial to remember that in some respects Robertson's scholarship is dated and, unsurprisingly, it is necessary to approach it as a work of its time. Our understanding of several of the topics and place-names discussed has progressed significantly. Notably, in the case of Grulin (p. 19) Dr Alasdair Whyte's recent work ('Gruline, Mull, and Other Inner Hebridean *Things*', *JSNS* 8 (2014), 117, 147), in which he argues that Grulin(e) place-names denote a compound with ON *grjót* '(rough) stone(s)' and ON *þing* 'assembly-place', has provided a substantial contribution to our understanding of these place-names. In the essays, the methodology and presentation of place-name analysis at times require a fresh methodological

perspective. For instance, in the essay on Biblical place-names, names as varied as Mount Pisgah (Stonehouse Parish), Jacob's Well (Uddingston) and Hell's Glen (Argyll) (pp. 49–51) are discussed under the label 'Scripture names'. Although the re-analysis of Celtic and Norse names which originally had nothing to do with the Bible is addressed (p. 52), a modern name scholar would undoubtedly analyse the very different contexts in which such names were coined and include a discussion on the validity of labelling place-names such as the Deil's Beef Tub (p. 50) a 'Scripture name'. In some of the areas, particularly the Isle of Skye, Robertson has frequently provided his interpretation of place-names of Norse origin with varying efficiency. Here he followed contemporary scholars such as Watson in often simply providing his translation of the name with no further explanation of its etymology and analysis. This is especially problematic considering the often complex nature of Old Norse place-names in Western Scotland. They generally only survive through a lens of Gaelic, often requiring careful and lengthy analysis. However, alternative explanations are occasionally provided when he found the etymology to be especially uncertain, as in Eilean Trodday: "E[ilean] Throddaidh" [Norse] Thron'd's Isle (or pasture trödh isle)' (p. 197).

There can be no doubt of the profound value of this book as a resource for scholars in several fields, including toponomastics, oral culture and linguistics. King's acknowledgement that 'many of the forms from [Robertson's] notebooks have dictated Gaelic place-name forms of bilingual road and train station signs across Scotland' (p. xi) speaks for itself. The careful editing makes an important resource more accessible to scholars. Although the source material cannot be approached as a work following the standards of current onomastic scholarship, particularly with regards to etymological analysis and methodology, this publication undoubtedly provides an excellent resource for Gaelic pronunciations and folklore. It will ensure the appropriate recognition of Robertson's work in the years to come.

SOFIA EVEMALM, *University of Glasgow*

Guy Puzey and Laura Kostanski (eds.), *Names and Naming: People, places, perceptions and power* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2016), 258 pp. ISBN 9781783094905

In its introduction, *Names and Naming: People, Places, Perceptions and Power* states that the volume 'seeks to contribute to the growing field of critical onomastic theory' and highlights the drive towards critically analysing names in a social and political context. The edited volume is split into three sections dedicated to issues of identity, attachment and power relations, respectively. Each section contains five chapters dealing with a mixture of personal and place-names.

Part I is entitled 'The Varied Identities of People and Places' and focuses on identity formation through naming. The first chapter, by Katarzyna Aleksiejuk, offers a succinct and clear introductory overview to the coining of internet personal names and the research which has thus far been conducted in this field. The second chapter, by Ian D. Clark, examines how Aboriginal toponyms were perceived by nineteenth-century colonialists in Australia by examining the writings of British travellers. He reports that the three most prolific writers on the subject find new English toponyms to be 'semiotically incongruous' with the Australian places they name (p. 18). The third chapter, by Michael Walsh, remains in Australia but shifts away from place-names as he explores the changing personal names of Australian Aborigines, both those imposed on and chosen by the community from the first period of continued European contact to the present day. Walsh's chapter not only covers the social and linguistic aspects of these names through time but also signposts sources for further inquiry into this intriguing topic. In the following chapter, Ellen Bramwell reports on her research conducted on the personal naming practices of a small community on the Western Isles. In examining both official and unofficial names, as well as the motivations behind each, Bramwell's chapter provides an interesting insight into the interaction between society and naming. In the final chapter of the first section, Peter Mühlhäusler and Joshua Nash report on how the previously stigmatised Norf'k [*sic*] language is now being used to attract visitors to the tourism dependent Norfolk Island and raise concerns over how genuine this language revitalisation is.

The second section of the book, 'Attitudes and Attachment', contains chapters focused on attachment to and attitudes towards names. The first chapter, authored by Laura Kostanski, gives an analysis of attitudes towards reviving indigenous names for the Grampians National Park, Victoria, as well as for areas within it. Through this analysis, Kostanski suggests ways in which authorities may more effectively deal with name restoration. The next chapter moves to Finland as Terhi Ainiala reports on her interviews with Helsinkians into their attitudes towards the street names in their neighbourhood. Ainiala analyses attitudes towards the names and name elements as well as the reasoning behind the attitudes, concluding that street names are judged on their 'lexical appearance', descriptiveness and memorability. The third chapter, by Maimu Berezkina, examines the Linguistic Landscape of Oslo and conducts socio-onomastic surveys in order to investigate how the city's multicultural population use and perceive place-names and commercial names. Berezkina notes the different language choices made in official and unofficial names and the strong correlation between connection to place and toponymic attachment. In the following chapter, Maggie Scott examines the perception of Scots in both the onomasticon and lexicon. Her findings suggest Scots to be more readily accepted in onomastic contexts than in the lexicon. In the

final chapter, Erzsébet Gyórfy discusses her survey conducted with students at the University of Debrecen regarding slang toponyms. Her findings reveal the form and motivation for these slang toponyms as well as the contexts in which they are likely to be used, highlighting slang toponyms as an interesting and fruitful avenue for further study.

The final section of the book, 'Power, Resistance and Control', turns attention to the power that naming brings and the impact of power inequalities. In the opening chapter, Guy Puzey uses a Gramscian framework to examine the Nynorsk language movement's impact on place-names within Norway. He also assesses the situation in northern Italy where the promotion of dialectal spellings for toponyms has strengthened the Lega Nord's cause. Puzey's work highlights the power of naming to signal belonging and exclusion. In the following chapter, Staffan Nyström gives an overview of the work carried out by the Name Drafting Committee of Stockholm with regards to parks, footpaths and bridges and discusses name planners' treatment of multiculturalism and social issues. In the third chapter of this section, Justyna B. Walkowiak systematically examines personal naming policies within a language policy and planning framework. Her work encompasses a number of countries and considers policy changes throughout time and provides an excellent insight into naming policies and their impact. In the next chapter, Aud-Kirsti Pedersen reports on the implementation of the Norwegian Place-Name Act and the issues it faced with regards to Sami and Kven place-names as well as farm name spellings. The final chapter by Kaisa Rautio Helander compares the official recognition of Sami place-names in Finland with that in Norway and discusses how effective each legislator has been in promoting these names.

Overall, the book provides a decent range of works addressing issues of identity, attachment attitudes and power within onomastics. The impact of these varied threads, however, might have been aided by the inclusion of an introduction and/or conclusion to each of the three sections, to give a cohesive and more detailed discussion of the major themes of the chapters within as well as to define some of key terms (e.g. attitude in Part 2). Additionally, the book's chapters focus primarily on a limited number of European countries, namely Norway, Finland and Scotland, with some forays into Hungary and Italy and, outside Europe, in Australia. It would have been more comprehensive and indeed intriguing, had chapters been included that looked at a more diverse range of countries and continents, particularly considering the broad themes explored. Nevertheless, the volume contains a number of politically and socially aware works and offers a solid contribution to the expanding field of critical onomastics.

KATHERINE CUTHBERTSON, *University of Glasgow*