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# **Introduction:**

## **How Scotland Translates**

Madeleine Campbell and Anikó Szilágyi

**T**his collection of essays and translations has been compiled to sample and reflect on contemporary Scotland's rich tradition of literary translation. The title is symbolic of how the anthology is to be read: as an offering, an act of kindness, an opportunity to gain insight into other cultures. "Quaich" is a term derived from the Scottish Gaelic word *cuach*, and it refers to a traditional two-handled drinking cup, usually made of wood or metal. The quaich has a special place in Scottish history; it was used to offer guests a cup of welcome, and the craft of quaich-making was held in high regard. Translation can sometimes be seen as an unfriendly, invasive, even treacherous, act, but this volume aims to celebrate what is good about literary translation, its power to bring together, rather than to separate. All the texts contained here have a vital connection to Scotland through their authors or translators, languages or themes. They are as diverse as Scotland is today, itself a plurality of languages and peoples. The publication of such a volume is timely, not just because in the lead-up to the Scottish independence referendum in 2014 the concepts of Scotland and Scottishness are the subject of renewed debate, but also because of the increased popularity of translation in today's international literary landscape. Translators have an important part to play in this changing context, and their contribution to this anthology is foregrounded to reflect their role as catalysts in the alchemy of cultural transfer, from selection of source material to collaboration with authors.

## Literary Translation Now

The twenty-first century has seen the interest in literary translation grow throughout the English-speaking world, accompanied by developments in the study of translated literature. This process did not just begin in the year 2000, of course. In the 1980s the discipline of Translation Studies took what is now referred to as “the cultural turn”, and scholars started to pay more attention to translation in its social and historical context. The expansion of the discipline continued into the next decade: in *Constructing Cultures* (1998), Susan Bassnett called Translation Studies “one of the fastest-growing interfields of the 1990s.” The twenty-first century has brought about new changes in the way translated texts are produced, published and read, as well as shifts in the discussions surrounding translation. For example, the focus of Translation Studies has expanded to encompass lesser-spoken languages, some of which are represented in this volume. The recent foregrounding of translation is noticeable in countries like the United Kingdom and the United States in particular, but it is also reflected in broader initiatives, some Europe-wide, others reaching into geographical and cultural areas we often define in opposition to “the West”. It would be impossible to list every recent development in the areas of literary translation and Translation Studies, therefore what follows is a brief and necessarily selective overview of new translation-related initiatives.

In the UK, well-established institutions like English PEN and the British Centre for Literary Translation have been joined by new organizations to continue raising the profile of translated literature nationwide and beyond. A case in point is Literature Across Frontiers (LAF), an organization founded in Wales in 2001 to promote cross-cultural conversation through literature in Europe, but which has since extended its activities to parts of Asia. LAF publishes *Transcript*, a unique, trilingual, online journal that makes European literature freely accessible in English, French and German. In the same year that LAF was born, Arts Council England decided to resurrect, after a five-year hiatus, the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, which celebrates the best of contemporary

prose fiction translated into English and published in the UK. The significance of this prize is manifold, but it is worth mentioning that the award is split equally between writer and translator, an important acknowledgement of the creative collaboration that translated works represent. Outstanding poetry translations are acknowledged, among others, by the annual Stephen Spender Prize, established in 2004. English PEN also support literary translation financially, but slightly differently. Their “Writers in Translation” programme was launched in 2005 to help publishers to promote translated literature, and since 2012 they also offer grants directly to translators through their “PEN Translates!” initiative. Another remarkable example of efforts to bring together contemporary pieces of world literature for the enjoyment of all is the European Literature Nights 2012-2014 project. Each year people gather together on the designated night in various European cities, from Lisbon to Malmö, to listen to public readings of literary works from other countries. Like access to *Transcript*, admission to these public readings is free.

The role of translation and translations is changing in the cultural landscape of the United States, too. Edwin Gentzler has referred to the recent proliferation of translated literature on the American market as “the translation turn in creative writing,” a phrase that echoes the “cultural turn” in Translation Studies as well as the “translation turn” in cultural studies that Bassnett called for in 1998. The launch of the Three Percent website by the University of Rochester in 2007 can be considered a landmark in the history of translation in the US. The creation of this website was inspired by the claim that “only about 3% of all books published in the United States are works in translation.” This statement, although problematic and possibly imprecise due to the difficulties of data collection, has become a cliché in the discourse surrounding translation, so much so that it gave its name to LAF’s 2013 research report on the state of literary translation in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Although the phrase appears in the title of the report with a question mark (“Three Percent?”) and the report concludes that the figure in Britain is actually “consistently greater than 4%”, there is no doubt that the Three Percent website has been successful in highlighting the marginalized position of translated fiction in the

Anglophone world. Furthermore, in 2008 the website launched its own literary prize, the Best Translated Book Awards, which are very similar to the British Independent Prize for Foreign Fiction, although they include an award for poetry translations.

In the second half of the twentieth century, traditions outside of Western thinking came into the foreground of cultural studies in general, and of the study of translation in particular. As Brian James Baer writes in “Cultures of Translation” (2007), “the exploration of alternative, non-Western traditions – largely Asian but recently African, as well – has become increasingly visible in recent years as a reaction to hegemonic Western modes of translation and the general eurocentrism of contemporary Translation Studies.” The *Girona Manifesto on Linguistic Rights*, based on PEN’s 1996 *Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights* and ratified at PEN’s 77th Congress in 2011, is a crucial recognition of the *universal* need for linguistic diversity in the new millennium, and is aimed at securing the rights of linguistic communities worldwide.

In practical terms, the availability in English of texts from across the globe has been greatly facilitated by a number of new online initiatives, such as Words Without Borders, founded in 2003. “Our publications and programs open doors for readers of English around the world to the multiplicity of viewpoints, richness of experience, and literary perspective on world events offered by writers in other languages,” their manifesto reads. Words Without Borders have published several print anthologies, including *Literature from the “Axis of Evil”*: *Writing from Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and Other Enemy Nations* (2007), and *Tablet and Pen: Literary Landscapes of the Middle East* (2011). Another fascinating new translation project is *Asymptote*, a journal international not only in its scope but in its editorial board: “*Asymptote* is everywhere and nowhere. Our founder lives in Taipei, Taiwan, [but] the 30+ members of *Asymptote*’s team hail from all over the globe.” The journal’s quarterly issues focus on literature translated into English, and, similarly to many other initiatives mentioned here, online access to them is completely free. Making literature available in the world’s most widely used *lingua franca* is no doubt the best way to reach the widest possible readership, although this does not detract from the importance of translation into lesser-spoken

languages. Accordingly, any exploration of literary translation in Scotland must go beyond an examination of translation into English alone.

### **Translation and Scotland in the Twenty-First Century**

Scotland has been a multilingual, multicultural country for many centuries, but issues of language and translation have become increasingly prominent in recent years, in both literary and non-literary contexts. This interest is reflected in a range of areas from policy-making to grassroots initiatives. The fight to revive Scottish Gaelic gathered momentum with the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act in 2005, which reinstated Gaelic as an official language of Scotland, opening up new horizons in translation between Gaelic and English. Another recent top-down initiative focusing on translation was established by the UK's biggest funding body for the Arts, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), whose key research theme "Translating Cultures" has enhanced the analysis of translation and cultural transfer, not only by translators and Translation Studies scholars, but by researchers working in a range of fields across the Arts and Social Sciences. According to the AHRC, "in a world increasingly characterized by transnational and globalized connections, the need for understanding and communication between and across diverse cultures is stronger than ever."

It is in response to this need that a team of researchers at the University of Glasgow, led by Professor Alison Phipps, were awarded a major grant in 2013 to investigate problems of language related to migration. Their project, called "Researching Multilingually at the Borders of the Body, Language, Law and the State", draws on Professor Phipps and her colleagues' work through the Glasgow Refugee Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNet). "Researching Multilingually" brings together academics from the UK, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Arizona and Gaza and artists from Pan African Arts Scotland in order to better understand and represent what gets "lost in translation" in interactions between refugees and asylum seekers and the state. The assumption underlying this type of research is that translation is not a neutral activity, and researching it often requires

genuine engagement with social problems. The project is a collaboration between scholars and a variety of non-academic partners that include Oxfam, the Ethnic Minorities Law Centre, Creative Scotland and the Scottish Refugee Council, and serves as a powerful reminder of how effective the study of translation can be when theory and practice come together.

Scottish universities are playing an important role in both encouraging the study of translation and responding to the increased need for translator and interpreter training. In addition to more established Translation Studies programmes, such as those of Heriot-Watt University and the University of Edinburgh, the Universities of Stirling and Glasgow have recently launched their own postgraduate courses (in 2010 and 2012, respectively). Alongside teaching and training, these and other universities facilitate networking for Translation Studies scholars through a series of translation-themed academic events. These include the upcoming postgraduate conference at Glasgow, “Alternatives: Translation and the (Anti-)Canon”, co-organized with St Andrews and the British Comparative Literature Association with the support of Scottish PEN, and the “Translation Training Symposium in Your Subject in the Digital Age for Non-Linguists”, to take place at Stirling in the summer of 2014. The work of Scottish PEN is socially engaged, like much of current academic research on translation, but with a strong emphasis on literary translation. Scottish PEN’s Translation and Minority Languages group has focused in recent years on encouraging writing in Gaelic and Scots, and on workshops bringing together Scottish and overseas writers based in Scotland who have translated each other’s work. This type of cross-cultural collaboration is also something that many of the *Quaich* contributors make use of: Jennifer Williams’s rendition of Haris Psarras’s poems is one example, and Christine De Luca and Riina Katajavouri have also translated each other’s works.

Among all the translation activities taking place in Scotland today, literary translation stands out in two senses. Firstly, Scotland is becoming increasingly self-aware as an important centre for artistic production on the international literary scene. Edinburgh had the honour of becoming the first UNESCO City of Literature in 2004,

a title it now shares with Melbourne, Iowa City, Dublin, Reykjavík, Norwich and Kraków. Edinburgh's City of Literature Trust was founded to actively promote Scottish literature both at home and abroad, and as part of its international outreach programme, the organization represented Scotland as the Guest Country at the 2009 Kolkata Book Fair. The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, which calls itself "Scottish Literature's New International Voice", is also instrumental in the marketing of Scottish literature internationally, and their website conveniently lists the upcoming Scottish literary and linguistic conferences worldwide. Scotland is also doing well at keeping track of how its literature is "exported" to other countries, in spite of the difficulties of defining what constitutes Scottish literature. The Bibliography of Scottish Literature in Translation (BOSLIT), a freely accessible online database run jointly by the University of Edinburgh and the National Library of Scotland, is an invaluable research tool. BOSLIT is relatively up-to-date and, unlike most translation databases, enables searches of translations from Scotland as a whole, rather than from specific languages spoken in the country. Dennis Smith demonstrates the uses of BOSLIT in the present volume in his essay on the communication of ideas of modernity in Asia through translations of Scottish writing.

Secondly, translation into or between Scotland's languages occupies a prominent position in the vibrant Scottish literary scene. The most spectacular manifestation of this interest in world literature is no doubt the Edinburgh International Book Festival, one of the world's largest book festivals, which welcomes over 800 writers, poets, musicians and thinkers every year from all over the world, and which celebrated its thirtieth birthday last year. 2013 was significant for the Festival for other reasons, too: it saw the return of the Edinburgh World Writers' Conference to the city after its twelve-month journey visiting fifteen different countries, and it featured a series of events dedicated specifically to literary translation. These included "Translation Duels", where two translators presented and compared their versions of the same text, an all-day translation workshop led by Ros Schwartz, and a discussion of Adam Thirlwell's project "Multiples" with translator Daniel Hahn and novelists John



Banville and Nadeem Aslam. The events attracted unexpectedly large audiences, and many of them sold out.

Scotland is also home to the international poetry festival, StAnza, which takes place annually in St Andrews, and showcases the best of contemporary Scottish writing as well as poetry from over 40 countries worldwide. In 2010, StAnza introduced a new regular feature, Border Crossings, where poets from different countries writing in different languages share a platform. Readings are in the poets' native tongues as well as in English translation. In 2013, Anna Crowe introduced her new set of translations in *Six Catalan Poets*, part of Arc's *New Voices from Europe* series. Crowe had previously co-translated Catalan poems with Christopher Whyte, which were published in *Light Off Water* in 2007. In 2014, StAnza also featured a public discussion on translation with poets Menna Elfyn (Welsh), Tomica Bajsić (Croatian), Arjen Duinker (Dutch), and Marco Fazzini (Italian). In addition to its international literary festivals, as of April 2013 Scotland has its own journal dedicated solely to the translation of poetry, *Scottish Poetry in Translation*. The Glasgow-based journal accepts submissions in any of Scotland's languages, and the first issue featured the works of students alongside pieces by established poets and translators, including Aonghas MacNeacail, Alan Riach and John Purser. As the journal's title suggest, translation is integral to this new project, as it is to all of the initiatives mentioned above. However, translation is present even when it doesn't take centre stage: the Scottish Writers' Centre runs a Scots-English and a Gaelic Writing Group, which have no explicit translation component, but exemplify what it means to live and write multilingually in Scotland today. Of course, Scotland's engagement with translation is not a new phenomenon, and the history of Scottish literature cannot be discussed independently of the history of Scottish literary translation.

### **“Our Ane Language”**

Translation has formed an integral part of the Scottish literary tradition for a very long time. Centuries before Sir Walter Scott decided to collect and preserve the ballads in the tongue of the borders – which in turn represented an ancient oral and musical

tradition – another Scot set out to translate Virgil’s *Aeneid* while “keeping nae southern, but our ane language”. The Middle Scots *Eneados*, written in 1513, was first published in 1553 (the c.1525 Cambridge manuscript version was reprinted in 1839 by the Bannatyne club, founded by Sir Walter Scott). Its author, Gavin Douglas, clergyman and poet, prefaced *Eneados* with a remarkably modern outlook on translation:

Weel at ae blenk slee poetry nocht taen is  
And yet, forsooth, I set my busy pain  
As that I should, to mak it braid and plain,  
Keeping nae southern, but our ane language,  
And speaks as I learnit when I was a page.  
Nor yet sae clean all southern I refuse,  
But some word I pronounce as neighbour does,  
Like as in Latin been Greek terms sum,  
So me behovit whilom (or then be dumb)  
Some bastard Latin, French or English use  
Where scant were Scots I had nae other choice.

The reader will be more struck by the consonance between the language of Douglas’ poem and the songs collected in Sir Walter Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, published in 1802-1803, or Robert Burns’ *Ayrshire Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* – whose first Kilmarnock edition, dated 1786, is separated from the Douglas manuscript by over two centuries, not to mention the geographical spread of these texts. Further, a glance at the Scots translations featured in *Quaich* suggests a remarkable continuity in the cadence, tonality and diction of the idiom to this day. Stewart Alexander Sanderson, poet and editor of *Scottish Poetry in Translation*, credits Douglas, who was educated at the University of St Andrews, with setting the standard for modern translation into Scots: “This [introductory poem] quite literally sets out Douglas’ twin intentions: to write in the vernacular tongue and through translation into it to enlarge its range and vocabulary.”

Yet the Lallans or Lowland Scots we can trace back to Douglas and his contemporaries forms but one geo-historicist trope in the

complex web of dialects and languages that make up the tongues from which Scotland's expression, past and present, is spun: "We grow up in a web of language to which feelings are attached", as Iain Crichton Smith (or Iain Mac a'Ghobhainn) once observed. And while, according to Wilson McLeod, "modern perceptions of relations in the Gaelic world can often be clouded by nostalgia or nationalism," the same could be said of Lowland Scots and its ideological appropriation by Hugh MacDiarmid and the Renaissance poets in the early twentieth century. Thomas Owen Clancy's illuminating 1998 *The Triumph Tree*, which brings together poems from Latin, Welsh, Gaelic, Anglo Saxon and Norse in English translation, is a welcome illustration of the early mix of languages that prevailed between the sixth century CE and the fourteenth century in the region we now call Scotland. *The Triumph Tree*, together with Clancy's *Iona: The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*, reminds us that Gaelic was the language of early "Goidelic" Christianity. *Quaich* celebrates this early connection with Brian Johnstone's poem sequence on Celtic saints, *Cothan/Reliquary*, translated into Gaelic by Christopher Whyte (Crisdean MacIlleBhàin).

Silke Stroh's 2011 analysis of the socio-cultural forces that shaped Scottish Gaelic poetry, entitled *Uneasy Subjects*, provides a fascinating account of how Gaelic, Scottish and British identities later came to be drawn along linguistic lines. What we have come to refer to as Scotland's polyglot status has been the case "from the earliest times", as John Corbett relates in his lucid exposé on literary translation into Scots (1999). He charts the arrival of the "Scoti", who crossed over from Ireland in to Argyll or *Dàl Riata* in the fifth century CE, speaking an ancient version of today's Scottish Gaelic, while to the South a Brythonic Celtic related to Welsh was the dominant language, as was Pictish to the North. According to Stroh, by the eighth century, though it was the language of the royal court, "the Gaelic language co-existed with Pictish, Cumbrian, Norse and Anglo-Saxon". By the tenth century it was spoken by much of the Scottish population, "reaching its maximum currency during the eleventh and early twelfth century". Stroh observes that it wasn't until the fourteenth century that a "Highland Line" distinction was made between the "gaelophone and anglophone populace" and the terms "Highlands"

and “Lowlands” started to be recorded. Clancy, however, notes earlier signs of this divide in *Fergus of Galloway*, composed in Old French in the early thirteenth century, and even in the twelfth-century *The Song on the Death of Somerled*, an account of the 1164 battle of Renfrew.

Noting that French arrived at the court of Gaelic King Malcolm III after the Norman Conquest, Corbett relates that by the twelfth century, the main languages in Lowland Scotland were Gaelic, English and French, together with Latin and some Norse. At the risk of simplifying, Latin and French tended to be the languages of religious and legal officialdom, but they gave way to “Inglis” in the Lowlands of medieval Scotland, “a distinctive variety of northern English” later known as “Scots”, and from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century this came close to a “national language”. While Latin remained the language of academic discourse well into the seventeenth century, Inglis gradually infiltrated all genres. Initially through the agency of translating from the incumbent languages of authority, its development was led principally in the domain of literature through the translation and adaptation of French romances, from which Inglis borrowed vocabulary to extend its register. Centuries later the legacy of the Auld Alliance, though put to bed politically when Scotland signed the Union with England Act in 1707, continues to inspire Scotland’s poets past and present. Richie McCaffery’s essay in this volume, for example, reviews creative approaches of post-war second wave poets of the Scottish Literary Renaissance, Tom Scott, William J. Tait and Norman Cameron, in their versions of fifteenth-century French poet François Villon.

During the High Middle Ages, Gaelic expanded eastward, then “receded west then north”, continues Corbett. It was to travel as far as Caithness and span a region now commonly referred to as the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (though it didn’t reach Orkney and Shetland). McLeod describes the period of “the ‘Lordship of the Isles’, the dominant political force in Gaelic Scotland from c.1150 to c.1550 [...], as *Linn an Aigh*, the age of joy (or prosperity)”, though scholars lament that there are few extant literary traces of the golden age of Gaelic Scotland, in contrast with the Bardic Poetry of Gaelic Ireland.

Orkney and Shetland had been colonized by Scandinavians in the ninth century and according to Clancy, Old Norse extended for some time the length of the West Coast of Scotland. Noting that for Gaelic and Norse, the cultural centres were Ireland and Scandinavia, criteria for the selection of poetry which could be attributed to Scotland in *The Triumph Tree* had to be based on the origins or place of residence of poets rather than genre or style, though there were exceptions. These ancient linguistic ties and their continuing relevance are represented in *Quaich* through contemporary poets Aðalsteinn Ásberg Sigurðsson (Iceland) and Thor Sørheim (Norway). Their verse is translated into Shetlandic by poet Christine De Luca, who also offers Shetlandic versions of poems by Riina Katajavuori (Finland), while Donald Adamson translates Eeva Kilpi, also from Finland, into English.

### **From Salt Herring to *Sovpoems***

Today in Scotland the Gaelic language is mainly spoken in the Inner and Outer Hebrides as well as Argyll and Bute. Although, as noted earlier, the status of the language has gained cultural recognition since the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, only some 58,000 could speak Gaelic in 2011, a number that dwindled from the c. 289,298 who spoke Gaelic as their first and main language in 1755, the date of the first census of Scotland. This linguistic marginalization is reflected in Kevin MacNeil's characterization of the "modern" poets from the Scottish Islands assembled in his 2011 *These Islands We Sing* as the "the sidelined of the sidelined."

In contrast, according to the 2011 Scotland Census, some 1.5 million people spoke Scots "regularly". This disparity is reflected in the corpus of Scottish literary translation, where the predominant direction of translation, other than into English, is into Lowland Scots, urban or synthetic, rather than Gaelic. When considering the value or relevance of a lesser-spoken language, however, statistics on numbers of speakers or texts hold little sway. The heritage of the Gaelic language is ubiquitous in the Scottish cultural landscape, in its place names, loanwords, myths and legends. Though not all possess an understanding of Gaelic, its melodic quality, rich singing

traditions and poetry, whether classical or contemporary, form part of this nation's cultural history from the Early Middle Ages, and this is reflected in a strong will to nourish and nurture the language. Contemporary challenges and controversies associated with the role and perception of Gaelic in translation are discussed in McLeod's essay in this volume.

When the aforementioned Crichton Smith's Gaelic-speaking protagonist first went to school in *Thoughts of Murdo*, he was confronted with the English language in the form of "a starved looking very tall thin woman". The eponymous Murdo turned half-red, half-black: "There was a smell of salt herring from the black half, and a smell of bacon from the other half." He used his right hand to write in Gaelic and his left to write in English, though "later these physical processes were reversed." The physical symptoms were so intense that "in periods of stress he was completely immobilised, i.e he could not write at all." Although Crichton Smith refers here to the physical act of writing, there is a clear allusion to the psychological, cultural and literary implications for the writer (and hence the translator) of straddling several cultures, or speaking two or more languages.

In his review of Linda MacDonald-Lewis' conversations with Alan Riach and Alexander Moffat in *Arts of Resistance: Poets, Portraits and Landscapes of Modern Scotland* (2009), Neal Ascherson reminds us that Crichton Smith was "surely one of the most marvellous of Scottish poets". He was also a consummate storyteller of ferocious humour, and turned the early trauma of enforced bilingualism to considerable creative advantage. He was equally at home in "Scotland's three languages," and could slip seamlessly between English, Lowland Scots, and Gaelic, sometimes in the same poem, as in "A Bilingual Poem By Murdo (With Analysis)". That he calls this a bilingual, rather than trilingual, poem betrays the widespread perception in Scotland that people generally "don't really think of Scots as a language – it's more just a way of speaking", an opinion held by 64% of those interviewed in the Scottish Government's report on Public Attitudes to the Scots Language in 2010.

But translation from Gaelic was also important to Crichton Smith, and in 1971 his English versions of the *Dàin do Eimhir* (*Poems to Eimhir*)

brought the Hebridean Gaelic poet Sorley MacLean (Somhairle MacGill-Eain) to a wider audience. Maclean had previously been translated into Scots by Robert Garioch, Sidney Goodsir Smith, and Douglas Young; and J. Derrick McClure “owerset” him in 2011, commenting that if Scots can offer a “hameilt tung tae sing wi” to poets from Homer to Akhmatova, “an mony anither forbye, it can bode a wordie welcome tae Sorley MacLean”. Although MacLean wrote in Gaelic, he provided his own cribs in English, and also translated Gaelic poems for Hugh MacDiarmid’s 1940 anthology *The Golden Treasury of Scottish Verse*, while Hugh MacDiarmid, who first wrote in Scots Lallans, gradually turned to English as his language of expression.

Following the Scottish Renaissance led by MacDiarmid and subsequently taken up by the post-war poets, translation into Scots continued to be a source of inspiration and a medium against which to test the possibilities of the language in a modern context. When researching the “second generation Renaissance poets (c. 1940-1981)”, Sanderson noted that “clearly, to translate poetry into a minor, frequently unrecognized language is to make a risky and emphatically political statement about the role and nature of language in the modern world.” His statement on Garioch and Goodsir Smith’s translations of French Modernist poetry probably still stands for much translation into Scots today: “They test the possibilities of a non-official, synthetic language, which is both oral and historicist in its vocabulary and grammar; medieval and modern experienced not as a smooth chronological progression but two extremes thrust together in the act of translation.”

The late twentieth century saw a continued revival of translation into Scots, notably through Edwin Morgan’s prolific verse translations, which spanned most of his writing life, starting with his celebrated 1961 *Sovpoems* featuring the great Russian poets Boris Pasternak, Marina Tsvetayeva, and Vladimir Mayakovski. James McGonigal relates how Morgan’s consuming interest in translation, with his “defiantly un-parochial internationalist leanings,” initially alienated established Scottish poets. Though he enlisted Glaswegian Scots to render Edmond Rostand’s *Cyrano de Bergerac: A New Verse Translation* (1992), Morgan wasn’t averse to a purely English medium

when he judged it appropriate for the source text. In August 1983 he wrote of his earlier adaptation of the anonymous fifteenth-century French farce *Master Peter Pathelin*, in a letter to Carl Heap, director of the Medieval Players: “The English version sits very loosely to the text, has continuous omissions, dilutes the luxurious religious oaths, and bowdlerizes the whole vocabulary, especially that of bodily functions. I have restored the outspokenness and I hope the pungency.” For the set piece he refers to as the “feast of languages”, he tells us in his Translator’s Note that he substituted “Scots, German, Italian, Russian, and Latin’ for the farce’s “seven garbled tongues”, namely “Limousin, Picardy, Flemish, Norman, Breton, Lorraine and Latin”. Throughout Morgan’s writing life, translation proved a means of both expanding his own expression and pushing at national boundaries beyond the restrictions of a potentially narrow, inward-looking gaze.

### **Soon an Sense?**

Translation continues to hold the power to help our poets rediscover their language. Liz Lochhead, whom Margery Palmer McCulloch considers the successor of Edwin Morgan, following Hugh MacDiarmid, as Scotland’s Makar, adapted Molière’s *Tartuffe* by the poolside on a trip to California. In an interview with *The Herald* on 3 January 2006 she commented: “*Tartuffe* speaks theatre. It gave me the language for *Mary Queen Of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*. It gave me Scots. I didn’t know I had it in me.” And Corbett tells us in his review of the essays edited by Bill Finlay in *Frae Ither Tongues* (2004) that

there is a strong feeling, typical of Scots translators [...], that the pressure of adapting a classic source text results in an extended spoken medium that promises to establish a norm for written Scots. This promise is never satisfied because each translation (however aesthetically pleasing) is too idiosyncratic to serve as a model for general usage. As [Brian] Holton argues, the act of translating is one of endless reinvention of one’s own language – a process peculiarly visible in many contemporary Scots translations.



To this day, regional diversity has continued to reflect the socio-historical conditions that shape the nation's many voices and, alongside English, contemporary writing ranges widely from the urban vernaculars or demotics of Glasgow, to those of Edinburgh, Dundee or Aberdeen, from "synthetic" Lallans to Shetlandic, from traditional Doric to varieties of Scottish Gaelic. Scotland's feelings are thus woven of many tongues, and translation into or out of these has a role to play in articulating the nexus of interrelations that make up what we have come to call Scottish literature.

The best of contemporary Scots translation has kept up with this multi-ethnic horizon as do, for example twin brothers Brian and Harvey Holton's 2005 translations of the dissident Chinese poet Yang Liang *Whaur The Deep Sea Devaults*. In Harvey Holton's "Sixteeners", the poem entitled "STILL" achieves a remarkable modernity in the subtle evocation of the source poem's lexical and auditory landscape without compromising the authenticity of the Scots:

still is a palindrome            cawsey fuu o leein bairns  
 still is oan the thin edge o the lotus-leaf o the yird  
 clood nibbling a wee eraser thoomb  
 Different kinds o still            there's still  
 a cocoon      cooryin a lover's reek like cooryin doun wi  
                  a piano solo  
 dauncin      wame in daith thraws in the daunce-steps  
 still listenin tae the telegram's soond French-neckin the past  
                  intae a  
 private maitter  
 [...]

As John Purser suggests in his Foreword to *Quaich*, these tongues are to be heard like different instruments. In today's voices, whether Gaelic or demotic Scots, it is perhaps even more true to say that "*It's soon, no' sense, that faddoms the herts o'men*" (MacDiarmid, "Gairmscoile", 1926, author's italics). Yet in this manifesto poem, MacDiarmid also called for the "*rouch auld Scots I ken*" with a dubious incantation to "the spirit o' the race", a concept that reflects the dangerously fascist

*zeitgeist* of his time but one which is much out of place in today's multi-ethnic Scotland. Returning to the 2011 Scotland Census, we find that after English the ten most widely used languages were, in descending order, Scots, Gaelic, Polish, Urdu, Punjabi, Chinese, French, British Sign Language, German and Spanish, all with over 10,000 speakers (at 54,000, there are nearly as many Polish as Gaelic speakers in Scotland today). Many of these languages are represented in this volume, and, as the reader will discover, their sound and sense are rich and varied.

In this volume, Colin Donati's Scots version of a passage from Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* translates a late nineteenth century urban setting that wouldn't be out of place in Morgan's Glasgow:

*Sanct Petersburg in the swaltry simmer o 1865. The ex-student Raskolnikov, on the mornin efter cairryin oot his premeditated murder o a local pawnwife, is waukent in bumbazement in his attic lodgins – the fouty chaumer he canna afford to pay the rent on – by the unexpectit delivery o a summons to cry in at the local bureau o the polis for his side o the city. Forbye his confusion, and teeterin wi the onset o a fever, the young murderer walks oot in the switherin city heat to obey the fearfu summons....*

A C Clarke, Sarah Paterson, and Christine DeLuca present poems twice translated, with the source texts appearing alongside both an English and a regional Scots translation. The sad death last year of the Irish Nobel laureate poet Seamus Heaney, and the many public readings and tributes in homage to him, have reminded us once again of the strong cultural ties that link Ireland and Scotland, and Morna Fleming celebrates Heaney's contribution to Scottish poetry in his rewriting of Robert Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*.

These and other texts selected for *Quaich* either illustrate or serve to establish links between diverse linguistic communities living in Scotland today. Sarah Paterson's translations from Māori in New Zealand, traditionally a popular emigration destination, reflect her experience in recent decades of the increased recognition and nurture of the Māori language and reverse the diaspora, linguistically

at least, by bringing something of Māori culture into Scots. Immigration and multiculturalism are also prominent issues in Monica Cantieni's *The Encyclopaedia of Good Reasons*, translated from Swiss German into English by Donal McLaughlin, in an extract that explores topical issues of "foreignness", politics and referendums. Donald Adamson's translation from "Voices from an Old People's Home" by Eeva Kilpi, Chair of Finnish PEN and featured writer of Scottish PEN, remind us that "the need for understanding and communication between and across diverse cultures" refers not just to the cultures of different countries but to the voices of different generations, too.

Is diversity, then, both in the languages and dialects of Scotland and in their interplay with other languages, what defines Scottish culture? Is Alan Riach right in claiming that "our distinction" is "in a sense of our own multiplicity in languages, voices, geographies"? If so, *Quaich* contributes a contemporary anthology to this vision of Scotland through new translations of texts from a spirited kaleidoscope of "languages, voices, geographies" – and epochs. Just as this introduction could only hint at the tangled web of emerging and established authors, poets and translators who have come to shape how Scotland translates, this eclectic assemblage hints at, without being comprehensive, fresh and fluid literary currents in a hybrid cultural context. The comments and insights cited here attest to the vibrant, even urgent, sense that translation, whether version or theme, continues to offer perennial opportunities for inventiveness and renewal in contemporary Scotland.

### Further Reading

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