

**Petra Poncarová, "Political Poetry of Derick Thomson", PhD Thesis
Supervisor's Report**

This thesis is unique in the history of our PhD programme. It establishes a new field of research, namely Gaelic Literature and Cultural Studies, not only at Charles University but in the whole Czech Republic. This valuable initiative, expanding the range of multicultural research at the Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures, is based on the proficiency of the author in the Gaelic language (also quite unique in this country), her reliable knowledge of the wider discipline of Scottish Studies and, last but not least, on her considerable international reputation among the Gaelic and Scottish Studies scholars. This has been proved by her presentation at the Second World Congress of Scottish Literatures in Vancouver (2017) and numerous international conferences, her participation in international publication projects, her independent editorial work (she has co-edited two special issues of the academic journal *Litteraria Pragensia*) and recently also the guest lecture she was invited to give at the University of Glasgow. Also, I have to mention her organizational work as the Secretary of the Third World Congress of Scottish Literatures which will take place in June at Charles University. In addition to her international activities, Petra has done pioneering work for the Czech culture: her annotated translation of Tormod Caimbeul's novel *Deireadh an Fhoghair* (*Konec podzimu*, Argo 2018) has opened a new dimension of the appropriation of Celtic cultures in this country and was awarded a prize of the Czech Translators Association.

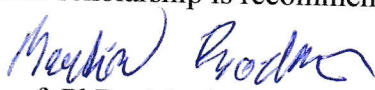
My role as a supervisor of the thesis consisted chiefly in providing the theoretical and methodological advice, as well as guidance in the wider area of Scottish Studies. Thanks to the invaluable work of Petra's consultant, a leading Gaelic literature scholar, Dr Christopher Whyte, the thesis now fulfils all standards of scholarship in Gaelic Studies.

The thesis opens with a succinctly formulated theoretical and methodological introduction; especially the part on the recent studies of nationalism is well-written and conceptually balanced, favouring the recent synthetic scholarship of Joep Leerssen over the earlier "modernist" approaches to nationalism. A valuable methodological initiative is Petra's attempt to combine the mainly sociologically and historically based methodologies of nationalism scholars with Vladimír Macura's approach to the Czech National Revival rooted in the cultural semiotics of Yuri Lotman. The use of Macura's methodology in the final assessment of Thomson's politics is very productive, since it persuasively demonstrates the internal tensions of Thomson's political and cultural activities between the unavoidable recourse to the strategies of nineteenth-century national emancipation movements and the untenability of these strategies in recent multicultural Scotland and late modernity in general.

The historical chapters on Scottish nationalism or the development of Scottish journalism are detailed and very informative. The whole second chapter of the thesis called "Contexts" provides a solid historical, political and cultural framework for a meticulous study of Thomson's political poetry dealing with all his eight collections of poems. Moreover, Petra expands the narrow approach to political poetry and journalism discussing Thomson's politics in a wider political and cultural framework and productively using stimuli from recent discussions about political meaning of poetry.

The thesis makes a very successful synthesis of literary critical and historical approaches with recent theoretical and methodological reflections in cultural history. Its capacity to combine a minute analysis of individual poems with a balanced assessment of large-scale developments in modern Scottish history and politics is unprecedented and may stay unrivalled for a long time. It goes without saying that a work of such a high-standard scholarship is recommended for defence.

Prague, 4 February 2020


prof. PhDr. Martin Procházka, CSc.
Supervisor