

Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson 1909–1991

PROFESSOR KENNETH HURLSTONE JACKSON, Hon. Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, died on 20 February 1991. He had held the Chair of Celtic Languages, Literatures, History and Antiquities at the University of Edinburgh from 1950 until his retirement in 1979, and could have claimed to be a world authority on most of the varied subjects that the Chair, the most ambitiously named in the British Isles, called upon him to profess. It is certain that no previous holder of the Chair, distinguished as several of them were, could have made such a claim, and it is doubtful whether any future holder will make any pretence to it. Indeed, with the increasing extension and proliferation of the branches subsumed under the name 'Celtic Studies', it may very well be impossible in the future for any one to claim distinction in as many branches as Professor Jackson could. His achievements inspired unqualified admiration among colleagues of his own age and reverential awe in those who aspire to succeed them.

He was born on 1 November 1909 at Melville, Lavender Vale, Beddington, Surrey, the son of Alan Stuart Jackson and Lucy Jane Hurlstone. Alan Stuart Jackson came from a south London family, many of whose members had been in the past clergymen and latterly civil servants: he himself had gone into 'the City' on leaving school and became the head of a very conservative stockbroking firm. The Hurlstones are represented in the DNB by two artists, Richard Hurlstone (*fl.* 1768–80) who was great uncle to the other, Frederick Yeates Hurlstone (1800–69). F. Y. Hurlstone was elected President of the Society of British Artists in 1835 and again in 1840, retaining the office until his death. He married a fellow artist, Miss Jane Coral, by whom he had two sons, one of whom was also an artist. Lucy Jane Hurlstone, Professor Jackson's mother, had a brother, William Yeates Hurlstone, a composer of promise who died aged 30 from the effects

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K. H. JACKSON *Walter Bird*

of bronchitic asthma just after being appointed Professor of Harmony and Counterpoint at the Royal College of Music in London.

Professor Jackson inherited an interest in art: his sister who was older, was trained at the London College of Art, but he did not develop that interest. He also inherited or developed during his childhood a propensity for asthma and this meant that he was unable to attend the local primary school (Hill Crest, Wallington)—the family had moved by that time to Trelawn, 1 Sandy Lane South, Wallington—regularly during the winter and had frequent spells in bed. This meant that he received much of his early education from his mother who passed on to him her family's interest in music, art and literature. Naturally he was encouraged to read and he read extensively. His reading prompted him to write and apparently he compiled an illustrated 'book' on heraldry. He was also urged to go out in fine weather and to explore on foot and by bicycle the surrounding countryside and this he did to good effect with a small Brownie camera—apparently some exercise books have survived in which snapshots of local landmarks have been pasted with careful annotations in fading ink. Exploring the surrounding country remained one of his interests throughout his later life. As his friends can testify, he explored the Cambridge, the Bangor and the Dublin countryside as he was later to explore the Harvard, the Bermuda and the Edinburgh countryside. In *Who's Who* he gives his recreation as 'walking'. He continued to cycle well into his Edinburgh years. It is on record that he 'coxed' for one of the rowing boats at Cambridge during Lent Term 1930. In his younger days he also played some tennis. But 'walking' was his passion and preferably walking, or if that was too much, travelling to an archaeological site. It is not surprising that his son Alastair is a historian.

Jackson attended, albeit irregularly, Hillcrest School, Wallington, from May 1916 to December 1919. He then attended the County School, Surrey, from January 1920 to July 1920. He does not seem to have been happy there and he was transferred in September to Whitgift Grammar School, Croydon, where he remained until July 1928. As the name implies, Whitgift Grammar School had been founded in 1596 by Archbishop Whitgift and true to the tradition of the best grammar schools it gave Jackson a thorough grounding in the Classics. He must have been an excellent pupil for in June 1928 he was elected a scholar of St John's College, Cambridge, where he had a most distinguished career. He was placed in the First Class not only in the Classical Tripos, Part 1 (1930), but also, and with special merit, in the Classical Tripos, Part II (1931) when he graduated BA and was named 'Senior Classic'. In the meantime he had won the Sir William Brown Medals for Greek Ode and Latin Epigram in 1930 and for the Greek Ode in 1931.

In view of his achievements in Greek and Latin verse we are not surprised to find him writing poetry in his native language. A few of his poems were published in *The Eagle*, but he probably wrote more. We venture to say this because the best, 'Two Partings', is a kind of love-poem addressed, we assume, to the young lady whom he had met through mutual friends in Cambridge and whom he was to marry in 1936, Janet Dall Galloway of Hillside, Kinross, Scotland. Another poem, 'Mount Caburn', reflects the author's interest in prehistory. Two prose articles are of special note. 'A Forgotten Painter' is on the Belgian artist, Antoine Joseph Wiertz, and is written with the authority of one who has studied painting and can compare the work of one artist with that of another. 'The Cambridge Cottage' which includes an illustration, testifies to the fact that its author, true to the habit formed in childhood, had explored Cambridgeshire. There are also translations which reflect the author's wide-range of interests, e.g., 'Coming Night. From the Rig-Veda'. Of particular interest to us are the 'Irish Translations', 'The Drowning of Coning Mac Aedan' (c.720 AD), and 'Autumn Song' (c.850 AD) in *The Eagle*, June, 1931.

In his Classical Tripos, Part II, Jackson specialized in Comparative Philology and we would have expected him to proceed with Classical Studies and Comparative Philology. Instead of that he switched over to Celtic Studies. When asked the reason he would answer that he thought at the time that the Classics were overworked: the implications of the discovery of Hittite, etc., had not been realized, although it is interesting to note that Pedersen turned his back on Celtic to devote attention to Hittite, Tocharian, etc. Jackson never attended the lectures of A.E. Housman. The textual work done by the latter, brilliant though it was, held no attractions for him. More congenial was the work done by his tutor M.P. Charlesworth, not so much on the history of the Roman Empire as on the history of Roman Britain. One can readily believe that he eagerly joined and enjoyed immensely the visits to Roman sites organised by Charlesworth.

There must have been other reasons for the switch to Celtic Studies. On one occasion he remarked on his discovery that Old Irish *sechitir* corresponded exactly to the Latin *sequuntur*, thereby illuminating for him at one stroke the Indo-European character of Old Irish. On the same occasion he said that he must have been about nine years old when he read Alfred Nutt's *Cuchullain. The Irish Achilles* (1900) and Eleanor Hull's two books, *The Cuchulinn Saga in Irish Literature* (1899) and *Cuchullain. The Hound of Ulster* (1909), to find them all enthralling, 'marvellous stuff'.

The importance and the influence of H.M. Chadwick at Cambridge

during Jackson's years as a graduand no doubt had more than a little to do with the switch from Classical Studies to the Archaeological and Anthropological Tripos, Section B, to study Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic. It will be recalled that Chadwick had succeeded W.W. Skeat in the Elrington and Bosworth Chair of Anglo-Saxon in 1912 and that he was fond of reminding his students of the founder's wish that the subject should not be Anglo-Saxon only but 'the languages cognate therewith together with the antiquities and history of the Anglo-Saxons'. In pursuit of this ideal, Chadwick had transferred English studies from the school of modern languages, and at the same time had reshaped the study of the origins and the background of English literature so as to make philological scholarship serve the knowledge of history and civilization. In 1927 he had transferred his department to the new Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology where his group of studies, like the Classics, could constitute an independent discipline. Eventually it came, in Jackson's words, to be 'an investigation of the total range of history and literatures of the British Isles in the period between the Roman and Norman Conquests.'

All this was very much to Jackson's taste as a scholar. Naturally, he went for the languages, but one paper in Archaeology was compulsory, and he attended the lectures on anthropology as well. Some will recall that a few of Jackson's earliest papers were published in the anthropological journal *Man*.

Jackson has written of the course:

the Chadwicks' pupils all testify to the intellectual excitement of this course. After the then comparatively narrow range of the Classical Tripos, in which, having specialized in comparative philology, not in 'Literature', I came away wholly ignorant of, for example, Classical manuscripts and palaeography, Section B was a most thrilling and liberating experience. Four new languages and literatures, together with the history and the archaeology of their speakers. As for the rest, the pre-Roman and Roman archaeology of Britain has remained, I am sure, with all 'Chadwickians' as an abiding life long interest.

He proceeds:

I well remember, forty years since, the excitement of cycling the dark and windy miles down the Newmarket Road to the Paper Mills, penetrating the inner fortress, crossing the bridge, negotiating the 'savage' dogs and listening entranced for an hour while 'Chadders' gave his evening lectures on Early Britain and 'Mrs Chadders' sat at the epidiascope projecting pictures of Bronze Age leaf swords . . . The same excitement extended to the reading of works like the *Growth of Literature*, the excitement of finding likenesses and connections between subjects where none had been thought of before.

Needless to say, Jackson was placed in the First Class, with special

distinction, in the Archaeological and Anthropological Tripos, Section B, and was awarded the Allen Research Student Scholarship for 1933 and 1934.

Notwithstanding his enthusiasm for the course Jackson must have been aware from the beginning of its weakness for he seems to have taken steps to compensate for it. The weakness was in the teaching of the languages involved. Chadwick had apparently taught himself German as a schoolboy on the eight mile journey to school at Wakefield and back every day and he expected his pupils to teach themselves the four languages required for the course. When Jackson went to him for a reading list he was told that he would probably find Welsh easier than Irish and he rather dumbfounded him when he returned to say that he found Irish easier than Welsh, not surprisingly, if the experience of others is taken into account. Apparently some help was given by the Department in Old Irish. Mrs Chadwick prepared *An Early Irish Reader* (C.U.P., 1927), an edition and translation, with introduction, notes and glossary, of the Old Irish 'Story of Mac Dathó's Pig'. It was savagely reviewed by Professor Osborn Bergin, but, as he himself informs us, Jackson 'must have been one of the earlier students in the famous Chadwickian "Section B" . . . who cut his first Celtic teeth on this edition.'

However, he was not to be handicapped by the deficiencies of the Department. He has described how he read Wade-Evans, *Welsh Medieval Law*, with the help of a Modern Welsh-English Dictionary (?Spurrells) where the obsolete words were marked with a dagger. If he had not been convinced before, the experience must have convinced him that he had to go to places where Welsh and Irish were spoken languages. He spent a month in Ireland and a month in Wales in the Summer of 1932. Pontargothi in the old Carmarthenshire was the place where he spent the month in Wales, and it was there that he collected the 'Coracle Fishing Terms' which he published in the *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, vol. VI, part iv (May, 1933). He had spent the previous month in the Great Blasket. Although the first two stories he published ('*Dhá Scéal ón mBlascaod*') in *Béaloideas*, IV, iii (1933) were taken down from the lips of Peig Sayers in June 1933, he had started recording her tales the previous year, as his note appended to *Scéala on mBlascaod*, published in *Béaloideas*, VIII, explains:

The foregoing stories and poems were collected between the years 1932 and 1937 on the Great Blasket Island, Kerry. With the exception of nos 18, 20, and 35, they are all from Peig Sayers, the Blasket *seanchaidhe* who has become famous recently through her autobiography *Peig* . . . It was originally planned by Dr. Flower and myself to publish the present material jointly with his own famous collection of her stories recorded on

the ediphone, as the complete *Tales of Peig Sayers*; but as pressure of other work is likely to prevent Dr Flower's part in this being ready for some time to come, it has been decided to bring out my stories separately.

Jackson acknowledged his debt to Robin Flower in the interview he gave to Patrick Sims-Williams and some of the latter's students: Flower, he said, had made it much easier for him to learn Irish. Flower lived at Croydon where Jackson was then living and they may have come to know each other as neighbours or through M. P. Charlesworth or through the British Museum where Flower was deputy keeper of MSS as well as being honorary Lecturer in Irish at the University College of London. Flower's connection with the Great Blasket is too well-known to be more than mentioned here and we can take it for granted that it was he who introduced Jackson to the Great Blasket Island and its people. In the interview already referred to, Jackson described how he and Flower went once to the island together but in separate coracles, dipping and rising with the strong Atlantic waves, Flower sitting up with the inevitable cigarette dangling from his mouth, himself crouching back and held tightly by the powerful arms of the island's schoolmistress, so tightly indeed that he woke up next morning with aching ribs. However, he seems to have coped well with the primitive conditions on the island and to have established excellent rapport with Peig Sayers, then quite old. There is a charming photograph of the old Gaeltacht lady and the young Cambridge graduate in Bo Almqvist, *Viking Ale* (1991).

Flower must have had a far greater command of the Irish language at that time than Jackson, but it is both significant and revealing that whereas the former recorded Peig's stories on an ediphone, the latter took them down orally in a modification of the International Phonetic Script, and indeed recommended the use of phonetic script not only as a means of recording tales but also as a means of learning the language. He used to take down the 'chatter' of the Blasket women whom he found much more talkative and articulate than the men, and then checked what he had written by reading it back to them. This must have been most effective, for, as he admits, it gave the impression that he knew more Irish than he did. The tales he took down from Peig he afterwards published in a simplified Irish orthography based on the traditional spelling but adapted to the dialect. He must have had complete confidence in this method for he took down and published in much the same way Gaelic stories later in Nova Scotia and later still in Harris, Scotland. The results justified the method, but Jackson must have had a very good ear and very good training if not an innate aptitude for this effective use of the International Phonetic Script.

The *Scéalta ón mBlascaod* included Romantic Tales and Adventures, Anecdotes, Moral Tales, Saints and Miracles, and tales of the Supernatural, and it is worth emphasizing that Jackson never lost interest in folktales and

folklore. He lectured on them while he was at Harvard and also published on them, his most substantial contribution being perhaps *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition* (1961).

To resume our account of Jackson's academic career. He spent his first year as Allen Research Student in Bangor at the University College of North Wales attending the lectures of Professor Ifor Williams on early Welsh poetry and those of his assistant Thomas Parry on the Mabinogion and Dafydd ap Gwilym. It was an exciting time to be at Bangor University College. Ifor Williams was preparing his edition of *Canu Llywarch Hen* (1935). Jackson was quick to see its importance and rendered English scholars a service by writing an article on it, 'The Poems of Llywarch the Aged', in *Antiquity* IX (1935). He was to render a similar service when he wrote on Ifor Williams' *Canu Aneirin* in 'The Gododdin of Aneirin' in *Antiquity* XIII (1939). But in addition to attending lectures Jackson was pursuing research with Ifor Williams' assistance on a subject suggested to him by H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, Celtic Nature Poetry, and succeeded in publishing the results of his research work at Bangor and Dublin in the two volumes which appeared in 1935, *Early Welsh Gnomical Poems* and *Studies in Early Celtic Nature Poetry*.

It was rumoured that Jackson went first to Bangor rather than to Dublin because of the savage review by Bergin on N. K. Chadwick's *An Early Irish Reader*. However, as a classics scholar, he must have been welcomed by Bergin with open arms, for, as I well remember, Bergin used to preface his course on Old Irish with the remark that to study the subject successfully one should have at least a sound knowledge of Greek and Latin and ideally some Sanskrit as well. And I should not be at all surprised that Jackson for this reason got from Bergin, if not more, at least as much as any of his other students, for in the introduction to his edition of *Cath Maige Léna*, he acknowledges his debt: 'I wish to record here my best thanks to Professor Osborn Bergin who read the whole book partly in MS and partly in proof, for his generosity in giving me the benefit of his great learning and for his invaluable help in correcting the many errors which were made'.

As one who, like Jackson, studied at the feet of Ifor Williams and Bergin, I should like to endorse Jackson's judgment that they were both great scholars and to add that had they lived to see Jackson's achievements they would have derived great satisfaction from them.

After the second year as Allen Research Student in Dublin Jackson returned to Cambridge where he was elected Fellow of St John's College and appointed first assistant, and then full Lecturer in Celtic in the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology.

In December 1938 he was appointed Lecturer in Celtic in the University of Glasgow but for some reason did not take up the appointment. The

following year, however, he was made Lecturer in Celtic at Harvard where he was soon promoted to be Associate Professor 1940–8 and finally Professor (1949–50).

He seems to have been almost as much at home in Cambridge, Mass., as in Cambridge, England. He found the students there tremendously enthusiastic and intellectually curious although not very well prepared by their previous education. His best attended course was that on the International Folk Tale. In the more linguistic courses students found his demands rather exacting and the majority withdrew after the first few classes. Eric P. Hamp, perhaps his best known student, although not among the earliest, found it impossible to read all the texts prescribed by him, especially in conjunction with all those prescribed by Joshua Whatmough, and when he telephoned Jackson to say so, the only reply was a laconic 'Oh! that is very unfortunate!' On the other hand, the company of some of the staff was most congenial. F. N. Robinson, the well-known editor of Chaucer's work and the not less well-known author of 'Satirists and Enchanters in early Irish Literature', used to hold 'Celtic Conferences' regularly.

World War II supervened and Jackson was sent to do war service in the British Imperial Censorship, Bermuda, in the 'Uncommon Languages' section (1942–4) and in the U.S. Censorship (1944). His knowledge of the Celtic languages was not greatly exercised: only one letter in Welsh appeared, and that written by a Patagonian, but his knowledge of the Romance Languages was extended to include Rumanian, and he was asked to learn Yiddish, only to find that there were already four persons in the section who knew the language. (Oliver Padel has written that Jackson qualified as a censor in 23 languages, and once said that he had learnt Japanese in three weeks.) True to the habit formed in childhood, Jackson explored the countryside thoroughly, but he must have been glad to return fully to the academic work he had managed to continue in his spare time.

His appointment to a full professorship at Harvard in 1949 was soon (1950) followed by appointment to the Chair of Celtic in Edinburgh. In those days, as in these, it was unusual for a scholar to relinquish a Chair at Harvard for another, and Jackson's decision to leave excited some curiosity among the local journalists, but he guarded his privacy with his usual tenacity, as we can gather from the comment by one Frank Oliver, the *Daily Record* Correspondent in Washington: 'Since coming to America, [Professor Jackson] has wrapped himself completely in his work at Harvard and has consistently shunned all publicity.'

Jackson had taken an interest in Scottish Gaelic before his appointment to the Edinburgh Chair. He had published notes on the Gaelic of Port

Hood, Nova Scotia, and tales from Port Hood, in *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, but the appointment meant that he had to take a far deeper interest.

Naturally he introduced changes in the Department. His successor in the Chair, William Gillies tells us that in the early 1950s,

There was little demand for the teaching of Gaelic to learners at University level. Gradually that pattern was to change, and from the late 1960's demand was such that Kenneth and Willie Matheson . . . took two steps which transformed the numbers and the consistency of the student body when they introduced 'Celtic, Type II', one of the first intensive beginners' courses in a modern language at Edinburgh; and, for postgraduates, the M.Litt. in Celtic Studies, which was shrewdly designed to give access to Celtic to the increasing numbers of home and overseas students who had solid grounding in some allied subject but had not been able to take Celtic as their primary degree. This transformation brought Kenneth great satisfaction, despite the greatly increased workload—a satisfaction, which he retained until his last days as he followed the successful careers of his ex-students, many of whom also became fast friends.

If as an outsider I may add a gloss on Professor Gillies' remarks, it was characteristic of Jackson that he shouldered the extra-workload for the most part himself. I cannot believe that there were many departments in the University of Edinburgh that, like the Celtic Department, did not take advantage of the extra money available during the 60s to increase the number of staff appreciably.

Naturally Jackson took part in the activities of those societies which dealt with the wider aspects of Celtic, e.g. the International Congress of Celtic Studies of which he was President from 1975 to 1984, the English Place-Name Society of which he was Vice-President from 1973 to 1979 and Honorary President from 1980 to 1985, and the Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland. His enthusiasm for the study of place-names was intense; until recently the volumes of the English Place-Name Society were offered to him for comment before publication and the Celtic material in such volumes as those on Cheshire place-names benefited greatly from his detailed criticism.

As a life-long student of Roman and Pre-Roman Britain Jackson was naturally appointed one of H. M. Commissioners for Ancient Monuments for Scotland and served from 1963 to 1985.

More immediately connected with his Chair was his work for the Linguistic Survey of Scotland. This was initiated under the late Professor Myles Dillon during the session 1949–50 when he was at the University of Edinburgh. Jackson took over in 1950 and began collecting material, with the help of a questionnaire to elicit phonological and morphological data. By 1959 all areas other than the Outer Hebrides had been covered and

by 1963, 192 points had been researched. In 1960 Magne Oftedal (Oslo) was appointed co-editor of publications, and Jackson undertook to write a history of the dialects. Oftedal who resigned in 1969 was succeeded by Máirtín Ó Murchú who resigned in 1970 to be succeeded in turn by D. Clement. Jackson did not give up his work on the Survey until his retirement from the Edinburgh Chair, and, as was said at the time, after making a greater contribution than any one until then to the Survey. His Sir John Rhŷs Memorial Lecture, *Common Gaelic: the Evolution of the Gaelic Languages* (1951), may be said to have cleared the way for the Survey and his *Contributions to the Study of Manx Phonology* (1955), no.2 in the Monograph Series of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland, was an indirect contribution. His paper on 'The Pictish Language' in F. T. Wainwright, ed., *The Problem of the Picts*, can also be reckoned as a contribution to our knowledge of the linguistic history of Scotland.

But it is an indication of the extent of Jackson's contributions to scholarship that he, followed by us, regarded all these publications as *parerga*. His first *magnum opus*, *Language and History in Early Britain*, appeared in 1953. He had planned it as early as 1944 as a work which would describe the development of Brittonic Celtic into the later languages, Cumbrian, Welsh, Cornish and Breton, and would ascribe dates to the various stages in the development, and which would, by correlating these changes with the changes in Anglo-Saxon and Irish, give an overall picture of the language and history of early Britain. The linguistic changes in Brittonic Celtic which had produced Welsh, Cornish and Breton were broadly known thanks to Pedersen's monumental *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen* but these changes had to be more minutely identified, analysed, and described in their various stages in the light of more recent knowledge, and, above all, they had to be dated with the help of facts which were not easily accessible even after the most thorough research. With characteristic perspicacity, Jackson had seen the relevance of Mac Neill's articles on the Latin loanwords in Irish and had become aware of the crucial importance of the evidence of place-names. It must have come as a considerable shock to him to find that another scholar had been working on that evidence and had already published an epoch-making volume. That scholar was Max Förster and his volume was *Die Flussname Themse und seine Sippe. Studien zur Anglisierung keltische-Eigennamen und zur Lautchronologie des Altbritischen*, 1942. Unfortunately, owing to wartime circumstances it was not until 1947 that Jackson was able to obtain a copy. By that time his own researches were far advanced and his preliminary conclusion already formulated. He realised that in some matters Förster had anticipated his own results, in others they differed fundamentally in their conclusions, while yet in others he had answered questions which Förster had ignored.

Jackson called Förster's work 'monumental' and it is a shame that it has not received the attention that it deserves, but on the other hand it must be said that Jackson took a wider field to research than Förster and carried his research much further. One has to agree with every word of D. A. Binchy's tribute to the volume:

Language and History in Early Britain is one of the most important contributions to Celtic scholarship that have appeared in our time. Its main purpose is to trace the historical phonology of the British dialects of Celtic from Roman times down to the twelfth century. A formidable task, indeed, owing to the scanty and scattered nature of the evidence, but one to which Professor Jackson brings unique qualifications. Almost every page illustrates his wide and accurate knowledge not only of all the Celtic languages but of Vulgar Latin and Anglo-Saxon, a combination which no other scholar has hitherto possessed. When one finds allied to all this a profound historical sense and a highly developed critical faculty, it is safe to conclude that the book supersedes all previous contributions to the subject and will long remain the standard work of reference.

Although several *parerga* were to appear before Jackson's second *magnum opus*, *A Historical Phonology of Breton* (1967),—in addition to those already named one should mention *The Oldest Irish Tradition. A Window on the Iron Age* (1964)—it must have been started immediately after the first had been completed. In a way it was an offshoot of the first, the second volume, as it were, based on the foundations laid in the first, but the more one studies it, the more one realizes that it was much more difficult to write, and although the author does not make much of the difficulties, he touches upon them. Primitive Breton is virtually unrecorded. For the earlier period of Middle Breton, down to the middle of the 15th century, our information consists almost solely of names in cartularies and such documents. There is controversy as to when Middle Breton became Modern Breton. And the most important source for our knowledge of the Breton dialects, Le Roux's great *Atlas linguistique de la Basse Bretagne* in six parts, 1924, 1927, 1937, 1943, 1953, 1963, excellent though it is for the study of present day dialects, should be used sparingly and with the greatest caution as a basis for speculation about their history in the past. However, in spite of these and other difficulties, Jackson succeeded in achieving what he set out to do, in producing,

a consistent and methodical framework in which all the chief historical problems are raised and discussed; and within the scope of which it may be possible for future research to lead to criticisms, additions, subtractions, adaptations, removals of error, and other improvements in the course of time, until by the collaboration of many scholars a fairly definitive and generally agreed picture is finally agreed. Nothing like an overall treatment

of Breton phonology throughout its history has been tempted before, and it seems evident that such a work is needed and that the time is now ripe for a first essay in this direction.

Jackson had two other *magna opera* in mind, a 'Historical Grammar of Irish' and an edition of the 'Vision of Mac Conglinne', and when he retired from his Chair in 1979, having published in the meantime *The Gododdin* (1969) and *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer*, it seemed that he could finish both works. Indeed, when he was presented with a second *Festschrift* in the form of volumes XIV/XV of *Studia Celtica* (1979/80)—the first was composed of articles written by former pupils and presented to him in a bound typescript volume to mark the completion of his 25 years' tenure of the Chair of Celtic at Edinburgh—both he and his friends were looking forward with confidence to their completion. Unfortunately ill-health supervened—he suffered a stroke in 1984—and in the event he was only able to publish *Aislinge Meic Conglinne* (1990) with the help of friends, in particular Professor Brian Ó Cuív, at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. The Appendix on the language of the text is an excellent introduction to Middle Irish, and the Glossary, far from being a mere vocabulary, is a concordance of the language and the key to the whole. It fully deserves to be called Jackson's third *magnum opus*.

It goes without saying that Jackson's amazing achievements compelled international recognition. In addition to being a D.Litt. of the University of Cambridge he had honorary doctorates conferred upon him by the National University of Ireland, the University of Wales and the University of Haute Bretagne. He was made a Fellow of the British Academy in 1957, and Honorary Member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1965. He was appointed CBE in 1985.

Faced with such prodigious achievements in scholarship and publications, one would like to find an explanation in extraordinary energy, tremendous industry, exclusive application to work or such. No doubt Jackson had both energy and industry but his working life was very much like that of other scholars. He used to work on his research in the mornings; he lectured or went for walks in the afternoons and he spent the evenings in reading scholarly books and journals with an occasional dip into a detective story. He was always available to his two children, Alastair and Stephanie, and delighted not only in telling them stories from his vast knowledge of folklore but also in taking them with Janet his wife to visit places of historical interest. Janet and he loved to entertain friends and students and many recall with gratitude their generous hospitality. No; energy, industry, application to work do not provide a satisfactory explanation. Jackson must have had quite exceptional ability, a brain of unusual power and a strong character to make the best use of it.

He was never less than a demanding teacher. A perfectionist himself he could be harshly critical of incompetence while at the same time deeply appreciative of excellent work by a student or by a colleague.

There was an old-fashioned aspect to his character and behaviour. One student wishes me to stress that he treated his women students with the chivalry of a world long-dead.

In his memorable address at the funeral service, Gordon Donaldson, H. M. Historiographer in Scotland, said that he knew Jackson almost exclusively as a friend, that he had known little of his scholarly achievements until then, but that he had been always impressed by his modesty; his courtesy, his kindness and his generosity. He concluded his remarks: 'Kenneth Jackson of course leaves the work he has done. But, what is dearer to his friends, with the fever of life over and his work done, he goes, as Ecclesiasts has it, to his long home, but he leaves in his friends' minds memories that will endure.'

Great scholar as he was, one of the greatest ever among Celtic scholars, Professor Kenneth Jackson would have appreciated that tribute. *Suaimhneas sfórai dá anam.*

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Fellow of the British Academy

Note. I gratefully acknowledge the help given me in the preparation of this Memoir by Professor Jackson's widow, Mrs Janet Jackson, her son, Alastair, his former pupils, Miss Margaret Bird, Dr Kay Muhr, Dr A. T. E. Matonis, Professor William Gillies and Dr Oliver Padel. I am especially indebted to Dr Patrick Sims-Williams, Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, who in recent years kept Professor Jackson in touch with his Alma Mater and enjoyed his friendship and respect. A list of Professor Jackson's published works will be found in *Studia Celtica*, XIV/XV (1979–80) with 'Addenda' in *Studia Celtica*, XXVI–XXVII (1991–92).