

## In Memoriam Albert Bock

David STIFTER

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A tribute to Albert Bock, co-founder of *Brennos – Verein für Keltologie* and *Keltische Forschungen*, with a publication list.

Ein Nachruf auf Albert Bock, Mitbegründer von *Brennos – Verein für Keltologie* und *Keltische Forschungen*, samt Publikationsliste.



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## In Memoriam Albert Bock

David STIFTER

I still remember vividly my first encounter with Albert Bock in 1993. I know the precise spot where I was sitting in the Berggasse lecture hall of the Department of Linguistics while our lecturer in morphology, who was manifestly unburdened by any familiarity with the Welsh language, discussed examples of possessive constructions in Welsh. I corrected the lecturer's imprecisions and in this way revealed myself as a Celtophile. After the lecture, I was suddenly approached by a long-haired fellow student, with whom I had never talked before, and who addressed me in Welsh. From this encounter sprang a friendship of many years between Albert Bock and me. The present recollections, by necessity random, arbitrary and subjective, are nothing but a small tribute to Albert's academic achievements.

Our collaboration was fuelled by our common interest in languages, especially Celtic languages, and our desire to establish a Celtic Studies programme at the University of Vienna. We were of course not alone in this endeavour. Together with Raimund Karl and other friends and colleagues, we spent a large part of the 1990s pushing for this goal, inside and outside the University. One crucial step was establishing the Austrian Celtic society 'Brennos – Verein für Keltologie'. Albert was one of its founding members and for many years he played an integrative role in Brennos. The members of the society, those who were there from the start and those who joined in subsequent years, are grateful for our time with him and for many long evenings of spirited discussions.

One of our first activities was setting up a journal with the same name as the society – *Brennos*. It was a photocopied and hand-stapled journal, and the fact that the series started with issue -1 and that we managed to misspell the name of the journal in the footer was a dead giveaway of our insecurity and inexperience. Albert not only contributed articles about Breton and sociolinguistics, but for its first incarnation in 1995 he also created his alter ego of the *Esoterikinquisitor*, an alter ego that perfectly encapsulated

Albert's multifaceted inner persona: a compelling blend of cutting-edge Celtic scholarship with a dash of Viennese burlesque comedy, and scientific rigour coupled with missionary zeal. The journal did not make it past issue 2,<sup>1</sup> but the experience we gained proved invaluable a decade later when we embarked on a much more serious undertaking. In 2006, Albert was a member of the constituent editorial board (from 2010, a member of the review board) of our new and more professional journal *Keltische Forschungen*, to which he was also a regular contributor.

In the late 1990s, it was not all just pure academic interest. It is a less well-known episode that around 1998/9 Albert and I developed the idea of writing a guide to Austrian spas. We even had a meeting with the Falter Verlag, but the publishers ultimately found the topic too niche. Only a few years later the big spa boom started. If our timing had been a tiny bit more fortunate – or had we been better at marketing ourselves – we could have become wellness gurus. At another time, we experimented with brewing malt whiskey in the house of Albert's parents (suffice it to say that while a career as spa critics may have been a reasonably realistic option, one as whiskey brewers was not). Instead, we had to continue with linguistics and Celtic Studies.

In hindsight, it is astonishing how much fun we had in doing all this. At the same time, from today's perspective, it is almost unimaginable how a group of students, not anchored in university hierarchy, could get a study programme going, but in the more open atmosphere of the nineties this was still possible. In 1999, our efforts bore fruit and a trial phase for Celtic Studies started in Vienna. Albert left his indelible mark on the Wiener Keltologie as a captivating teacher of Breton, which he had taught himself while still at school, of Celtic sociolinguistics, and of the modern reception of Celtic culture. In his classes and in extramural activities he inspired his students through his openness and his commitment, as for instance by organising field trips and language courses in Brittany.

Whenever there were two alternatives towards a goal, Albert could be relied on to choose the third path. It is little surprise, then, that the one subject within Celtic Studies that lay closest to his heart was the Cornish language. For mainstream Celtic scholars, Cornish may seem little more than the smaller sibling of the much more popular pair Welsh and Breton, and occupying oneself with it suggests a somewhat nerdy attitude. For Albert it was a congenial field of activity. Among his many profound and lasting contributions to the research on Middle and Late Cornish, it should be noted that he was one of the first to publish on the play *Bewnans Ke* (BOCK 2007a, and the

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<sup>1</sup> The three volumes of *Brennos* have been digitised and are openly available at <http://www.brennos.at/de-at/keltischeforschungen/archiv>.

reviews BOCK 2006 and BOCK & WEISS 2008) shortly after the unexpected discovery of its 16<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript in 1999: an article about code-switching, a topic of intrinsically general linguistic relevance. His master's thesis from 2008 was dedicated to vowel and consonant quantity in Cornish. It is a pity that he never finished his PhD on Cornish phonology, which he had been working on for several years after 2008.

Albert was a brilliant phonetician with an ear that was as perceptive to the subtle sounds of the human voice as it was to music. This proved crucially beneficial in what became his most important project. Albert's unique, linguistically grounded expertise in Cornish did not go unnoticed. In 2007, Cornwall Council appointed him to the Linguistic Working Group advising the *Cornish Language Partnership* (*Keskowethyans an Taves Kernewek*) on the standardisation of Revived Cornish orthography.<sup>2</sup> It was there that he met the American Celticist Benjamin Bruch. At the time, it seemed as if the job of the Commission overseeing the project was to choose between two alternative spelling systems, and it was expected that Albert and Ben would take opposing sides in this debate. Instead, they joined together to find a third way – a way of compromise that ultimately led to the creation of *Furv Skrifys Savonek*, the new *Standard Written Form* of Cornish or 'SWF,' which was formally adopted in 2008 and which is being taught in schools in Cornwall today.

In the following years, Albert became a prolific publisher and author in Cornish, and was on the team that prepared the first dictionary in the SWF. He helped edit the first Cornish translation of *Le Petit Prince* and published the satirical series of radio plays *Berdh yn Efanvos* 'Bards in Space,' which he co-wrote and performed with Benjamin Bruch. Albert also created and maintained websites that hosted Cornish language podcasts and made learning materials freely available to students online at a time when Cornish speakers were only starting to realise the potential of the Internet and to take advantage of digital resources for communication and education. He also adapted open-source software for the use in Breton and Cornish.

From the foregoing, no doubt will remain that Albert's scholarly work was of the first rank. He was never motivated by a desire for fame, wealth, or other accolades. He committed his prime years to supporting and preserving an endangered language, even though his specialisation in an ostensibly obscure niche within Celtic Studies did nothing to advance his career. Albert worked hard to ensure that after he had completed his work for the Cornish Language Partnership, Cornish would belong to the whole community of

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<sup>2</sup> The Partnership's slogan is *maga*, which means 'grow, nurture, develop'. I have no doubt that Albert was proud of this, years before those four letters acquired a much less wholesome meaning.

Cornish speakers. Therefore it is for his humility, patience, generosity of spirit, and strength of character, as much as for his linguistic talent and academic prowess, that Albert's contributions to Cornish scholarship and to the Cornish Revival deserve to be remembered as equal to those who started the process at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In recognition of his services to the language, Albert was made a Bard of Gorsedh Kernow in 2011.

But Albert's deep-rooted commitment to linguistic diversity did not end with Celtic. Among the many other languages, which he studied, Hebrew and Yiddish must be mentioned. For a time, he was editor of the Jewish cultural magazine *David*. He was also familiar with Japanese, and one evening he instructed me about the dialectal relationships of Lakota/Nakota/Dakota. There are so many other unforgettable facets of Albert that I can only mention in passing here: his gift for music, his outstanding excellence as a cook, and his humanitarian convictions that found their most conspicuous expression in his work for the charity *Licht für die Welt*. He was a teacher to me in many respects.

According to an academic adage, first-class people hire first-class staff, and second-class people hire third-class staff. The fact that Albert could not find a foothold in academia says nothing about his quality as a scholar but a lot about the academic environment in which he found himself. The demise of Celtic Studies in Vienna in the early 2010s after a very successful decade meant a bitter personal disappointment that affected Albert close to his heart. This must have been aggravated by the knowledge that there was no academic justification for the demise of the discipline, but that it was 'collateral damage' of university and department politics. Albert's withdrawal from academia in the early 2010s was sorely felt, but my hope was always that it was only temporary. He had the potential to add many more fundamental contributions, especially to the linguistic development in Cornwall – where his loss was met with shock and sadness, so great was the esteem that he enjoyed there – but insights also to the research of Breton and other languages, and to linguistics in general.

Mag. Albert Bock was born on 19 November 1974 and passed away on 17 August 2018. He leaves his wife Julia Weiss, his son Tristan, and his daughter Salome.

*Meur ras dhis, Albert, a buptra re wruss'ta.  
Gwynn agan bys dha aswon jy ha dyski kemmys genes jy.  
Re dhokko dha gemmynro frut.*

#### PUBLICATIONS AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The following list of publications and academic activities is based on Albert Bock's personal website,<sup>3</sup> with additions in places.

#### EDITORIAL ACTIVITIES

- 1995–1996 co-editor of *Brennos – Studia Celtica Austriaca*.
- 1997–1998 editor of the journal for Jewish culture *David*.
- 2006–2009 member of the publication board of *Keltische Forschungen*.
- 2008–2018 co-founder and webmaster for [www.kernewegva.com](http://www.kernewegva.com).
- 2010–2018 member of the review board of *Keltische Forschungen*.
- 2010–2018 editor-in-chief of the *Standard Cornish Dictionary* of the Cornish Language Partnership.
- 2012–2018 member of the orthographic commission of the Cornish Language Partnership.

#### BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

- 2000 *Die keltischen Sprachen heute – was bleibt nach Jahrhunderten kulturellen Widerstands?* [= Kleine Schriften der Keltologie an der Universität Wien 3], Wien: Brennos – Verein für Keltologie 2000.
- 2000 gemeinsam mit Theresa Illés, Julia Weiss, Regina Kaufmann, *Keltisch schimpfen und fluchen* [= Kleine Schriften der Keltologie an der Universität Wien 4], Wien: Brennos – Verein für Keltologie 2000.
- 2000 gemeinsam mit Regina Kaufmann, *Keltisches Essen* [= Kleine Schriften der Keltologie an der Universität Wien 5], Wien: Brennos – Verein für Keltologie 2000.
- 2007 together with Benjamin Bruch, *Kernewek Dasunys: Proposals for a Standard Written Form of Revived Cornish*. URL: [www.dasunys.net](http://www.dasunys.net) (published 15<sup>th</sup> May 2007).
- 2008 *Die 'Prosodic Shift' – Vokal- und Konsonantenquantität im Kornischen*, unveröffentlichte Magisterarbeit, Universität Wien 2008.
- 2008 together with Benjamin Bruch, *An Introduction to Standard Written Cornish. A description of the new standard orthography for Revived Cornish, including general principles, spelling rules, and a list of basic vocabulary*, Cornish Language Partnership 2008.
- 2010 together with Benjamin Bruch, Neil Kennedy, Daniel Prohaska, and Laurence Rule, *An English – Cornish Glossary in the Standard Written Form*. Version 14/08/2010, self-published 2010.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://homepage.univie.ac.at/albert.bock/index.html>

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unfinished *Cornish-English and English-Cornish Dictionary in the S[standard] W[ritten] F[orm]*, Truro: Maga/Cornish Language Partnership.

#### ARTICLES

- 1995 'Der Esoterikinquisitor. Loki, Frigg und Fußpark', *Brennos* -1 (1995), 43.
- 1996a 'Linguizid am Bretonischen', *Brennos* 1 (1996), 17–25.
- 1996b 'Der Esoterikinquisitor. Kornkreise, Steinkreise und kosmische Barbapapas', *Brennos* 1 (1996), 38.
- 1996c 'Der Esoterikinquisitor. Großer Amadán-Orden für 'Rettet den Wald'', *Brennos* 2 (1996), 29.
- 2002a 'Bretonisch', in: *Sprachkulturen in Europa. Ein internationales Handbuch*. Herausgegeben von Nina Janich und Albrecht Greule, Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag 2002, 15–19.
- 2002b 'Kornisch', in: *Sprachkulturen in Europa. Ein internationales Handbuch*. Herausgegeben von Nina Janich und Albrecht Greule, Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag 2002, 126–128.
- 2004 'Notizen zur prosodischen Phonologie des Kornischen um 1600', in: *Keltologie heute – Themen und Fragestellungen. Akten des 3. Deutschen Keltologensymposiums*, Marburg, März 2001, hrsg. Erich Poppe [= Studien und Texte zur Keltologie 6], Münster: Nodus Publikationen 2004, 143–152.
- 2005a 'History of Cornwall – Timeline', in: *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Helmut Birkhan Herausgeber, Wien: Edition Praesens 2005, 205–206.
- 2005b 'Geschichte der Bretagne', in: *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Helmut Birkhan Herausgeber, Wien: Edition Praesens 2005, 207–213.
- 2005c 'Cornish (Kernewek, Kernowek, Curnoack, Kernuak)', in: *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Helmut Birkhan Herausgeber, Wien: Edition Praesens 2005, 257–262.
- 2005d 'The Breton Language (Brezhoneg, Brezoneg, Brehoneg)', in: *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Helmut Birkhan Herausgeber, Wien: Edition Praesens 2005, 263–266.
- 2005e 'Cornish Literature', in: *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Helmut Birkhan Herausgeber, Wien: Edition Praesens 2005, 349–351.
- 2005f 'Breton Literature', in: *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Helmut Birkhan Herausgeber, Wien: Edition Praesens 2005, 352–356.
- 2007a 'Der polyglotte Artus. Zum Codeswitching im mittelkornischen Drama *Bewnans Ke*', in: *Kelten-Einfälle an der Donau. Akten des 4. Symposiums deutschsprachigen Keltologinnen und Keltologen. Philologische – Historische – Archäologische Evidenzen. Konrad Spindler (1939–2005) zum Gedenken. (Linz/ Donau, 17.–21. Juli 2005)*.

Herausgegeben von Helmut Birkhan unter Mitwirkung von Hannes Tauber, Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 2007, 39–50.

- 2007b ‘Das Personennamensystem im Bretonischen’, in: *Europäische Personennamensysteme. Ein Handbuch von Abasisch bis Zentralladinisch*. Herausgegeben von Andrea Brendler und Silvio Brendler [= Lehr- und Handbücher zur Onomastik 2], Hamburg: Baar-Verlag 2007.
- 2009 Contributions, i.e. revisions of existing articles and new articles about Breton and Cornish literature, to *Kindlers Literatur Lexikon. 3., völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage*. Herausgegeben von Heinz Ludwig Arnold, Stuttgart – Weimar: Metzler 2009: ‘Hervelina Geraouell’ + ‘Biogramm Abeozen’; ‘Gwiniz hepken’ + ‘Biogramm Marianne Abgrall’; ‘Beunans Ke’; ‘Buhez Santes Nonn’; ‘Roparz Hemon – Das lyrische Werk’ + ‘Biogramm Roparz Hemon’; ‘Beunans Meriasek’ + ‘Biogramm Dominus Hadton’; ‘Itron Varia Garmez’ + ‘Biogramm Youenn Drezen’; ‘Anjela Duval – Das lyrische Werk’ + ‘Biogramm Anjela Duval’; ‘Gwerziou Breiz-Izel’; ‘Marh al Lorch’ + ‘Biogramm Per-Jakez Helias’; ‘Kammdro an Ankoù’ + ‘Biogramm Loeiz Herriou’; ‘Mowth on un like Dolcoath Shaft’ + ‘Biogramm Pol Hodge’; ‘Ar an Deulinn’ + ‘Biogramm Yann Kalloc’h’; ‘Barzaz Breiz’ + ‘Biogramm Théodore La Villemarqué’; ‘Enez ar Rod’ + ‘Biogramm Xavier de Langlais’; ‘Nikolazig’ + ‘Biogramm Joseph Le Bayon’; ‘Ordinalia’.
- 2009 together with Benjamin Bruch, ‘Nucleus Length and Vocalic Alternation in Cornish Diphthongs’, in: Robert Nedoma und David Stifter (eds.), *\*h,nr. Festschrift für Heiner Eichner* [= *Die Sprache. Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 48 (2009)], Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2010, 23–43.
- 2010 ‘Representation of intervocalic single /l/ and geminate /ll/ in *Sacrament an Alter*’, self-published 2010. URL: [https://www.academia.edu/283409/Representation\\_of\\_intervocalic\\_single\\_l\\_and\\_geminate\\_ll\\_in\\_Sacrament\\_an\\_Alter](https://www.academia.edu/283409/Representation_of_intervocalic_single_l_and_geminate_ll_in_Sacrament_an_Alter)
- 2012a ‘Rechtschreibungen im Vergleich: Ein Blick über den Tellerrand’, in: Anna Adaktylos, Maria Götzinger-Hiebner [Hrsgg.], *Rechtschreibprobleme – Problem Rechtschreibung* [= Schulheft 146], Innsbruck – Wien – Bozen: StudienVerlag 2012, 33–43.
- 2012b together with Benjamin Bruch, ‘New Perspectives on Vocalic Alternation in Cornish’, *Keltische Forschungen* 5 (2012), 55–97.
- 2012c ‘Nucleus licensing, government, and liquid metathesis in Cornish’, in: *Ilteangach, Ilseiftiúil. Féilscríbhinn in ómós do Nicholas Williams. A Festschrift in Honour of Nicholas Williams* in eagar ag Liam Mac Amhlaigh agus Brian Ó Curnáin, Dublin: Arlen House 2012, 396–409.

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#### REVIEWS

- 1995 Fr. Colmán Ó Huallacháin, *The Irish and Irish – a socio-linguistical analysis of the relationship between a people and their language*, Baile Átha Cliath 1994, in: *Brennos* -1 (1995), 42.
- 2006 *Bywnans Ke*. Edited by Ken George. Liskeard: Kesva an Taves Kernewek 2006, in: *Keltische Forschungen* 1 (2006), 241–144.
- 2008 together with Julia Weiss, Nicholas Williams and Graham Thomas, *Bewnans Ke: The Life of St Kea*, Exeter 2007, in: *Keltische Forschungen* 3 (2008), 264–267.
- 2009 Iwan Wmffre, *Breton Orthographies and Dialects. The Twentieth-Century Orthography War in Brittany* [= Contemporary Studies in Descriptive Linguistics 18 and 19], Oxford – Bern – Berlin – Bruxelles – Frankfurt am Main – New York – Wien: Peter Lang 2007, in: *Keltische Forschungen* 4 (2009), 269–275.

#### TRANSLATIONS AND EDITORIAL WORK

- 2003 Translating Breton wax cylinder phonograph recordings by Rudolf Trebitsch into English, Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 2003.
- 2010 together with David Stephens, Benjamin Bruch, Daniel Prohaska und Tony Snell, *An Pennsevik Byhan*, Neckarsteinach: Verlag Tintenfass 2010. [Cornish translation of Antoine de St. Exupéry's *Le petit prince*]
- 2015 Wolfgang Meid, *The Romance of Froech and Findabair or The Driving of Froech's Cattle. Táin Bó Froích. Old Irish Text, with Introduction, Translation, Commentary and Glossary*, critically edited by Wolfgang Meid, English-language version based on the original German-language edition prepared with the assistance of Albert Bock, Benjamin Bruch and Aaron Griffith. [= Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Neue Folge 10], Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität Innsbruck 2015.

#### LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

- 2001 'Ausgewählte Probleme der kornischen Phonologie um ca. 1600', 3. *Deutschsprachiges Keltologiesymposium*, Marburg/Lahn, März 2001.
- 2003 'Sprachenvielfalt – Belastung oder Reichtum?', Club Interdisziplinär, Wien, 15.1.2003.
- 2005 'Der polyglotte Artus: Zum Codeswitching im mittelnornischen Drama *Bewnans Ke*', 4. *Deutschsprachiges Keltologiesymposium*, Linz/Donau, 19.7.2005.
- 2006 'Interkulturelle Universalien zur Schnittstelle zwischen Tod und Kunst', zur Eröffnung der Ausstellung *Der Tod, oh Mensch, ist dir verboten...* von Zos de Witt (Michael Sperlhofer) im Pathologisch-Anatomischen Bundesmuseum Wien, June 2006.

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- 2008a together with Benjamin Bruch, ‘Nebes Geryow a-dro dhe’n *Furv Skrifys Savonek*’ [‘A few words about the official Standard Written Form’], Cornwall County Hall, Truro, July 2008.
- 2008b ‘Vokal- und Konsonantenquantität im Kornischen’, *Österreichische Linguistiktagung*, Wien, 7.12.2008.
- 2010a together with Benjamin Bruch, ‘Die kornische Standard Written Form – Orthographiedesign im Spannungsfeld zwischen Sprachwissenschaft und Ideologie’, Vortragsreihe der Wiener Sprachgesellschaft und von Brennos – Verein für Keltologie, Wien, 19.1.2010.
- 2010b ‘Die alte Sprache der Vorväter? Keltenbegriff und Identitätskonstrukte in der kornischen Sprachbewegung’, 4. *Gespräche zu Interpretierten Eisenzeiten*, Keltenmuseum Hallein, 9.11.2010.
- 2012 ‘Gallische Dörfer. Warum die Wiederbelebung toter Sprachen Konjunktur hat’, Otto-Mauer-Zentrum, Wien, 22.5.2012.

ARTICLES IN DAILY NEWSPAPERS

- 2010a ‘Tote Sprachen und Wiedergänger’, *Wiener Zeitung*, 19.11.2010.
- 2010b ‘Und sie schrieben ja doch’, *Wiener Zeitung*, 9.12.2010.
- 2011a ‘Würziges aus dem Ursprungsland des Kaffees’, *Wiener Journal*, 25.2.2011.
- 2011b ‘Babys lernen anders’, *Wiener Zeitung*, 25.3.2011.
- 2011c ‘Vom Sicherheitsrisiko zur Chance’, *Wiener Zeitung*, 7.4.2011.
- 2011d ‘Die Gene und die Phoneme – über Glasperlenspiele’, *Wiener Zeitung*, 28.4.2011.
- 2011e ‘Von Meerschweinchen, Knollen und rohem Fisch’, *Wiener Journal*, 20.5.2011.
- 2011f ‘Keine Angst vorm ‘Heidenfest’’, *Wiener Zeitung*, 29.10.2011.
- 2012a ‘Zwischen Fiedel und Bierglas’, *Wiener Zeitung*, 17.3.2012.
- 2012b ‘Arche Noah Internet’, *Wiener Zeitung*, 12.7.2012.

EXPLANATIONS, WORKING MATERIALS AND ARTICLES ABOUT THE  
GRAMMAR OF CORNISH FOR THE FURTHER EDUCATION OF TEACHERS,  
TOGETHER WITH BENJAMIN BRUCH

- 2008 *Avoiding overdetermination*, December 2008.
- 2009a *Basic Cornish affixes and clitics*, April 2009.
- 2009b *Adding Emphasis*, April 2009.
- 2009c *Open and Closed Compounds*, April 2009.
- 2009d *Bos – Long and Short Forms*, May 2009.

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2010 *The vowels of Cornish (version for KK speakers)*, August 2010.

#### SOFTWARE LOCALISATIONS

2003 Contributed to the Breton version of *Google*'s user interface.

2008a *Songbird* plus the most important plug-ins (Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, Linux, OSX), November 2008.

2008b *Wormux* (Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, Linux, OSX), December 2008.

2010 *SumatraPDF* (Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7), February 2010.

unfinished *Ubuntu Linux*.

unfinished *Abiword 2.6*.

unfinished *VLC*.

#### RADIO PLAYS

2009 together with Benjamin Bruch, *Berdh yn Efanvos* ['Bards in Space'], broadcast on *Radyo an Gernewegva* from February 2009.

unfinished *Sowjet-Unterzögersdorf*.

David Stifter  
Maynooth University  
david.stifter@mu.ie