

## Preface

In a world apparently dominated by what Pascale Casanova has called “*la langue mondiale*”, i.e. English, the question that scholars outside the anglosphere may ask themselves is what contribution they make to the debates and study of Anglophone literature. The present volume addresses this issue through the presentation of recent essays on the poet Louis MacNeice. Adolphe Haberer, whose “Personal MacNeice A-Z” reflects on his relationship with the work of the poet, was the first academic in any language to devote his doctoral thesis to the Belfast born poet. Published in two volumes by the Presses universitaires de Bordeaux in 1986, *Louis MacNeice (1907-1963): l’homme et la poésie*, is a monumental work that laid the groundwork for much of the scholarship in MacNeice studies that was to follow.

Adolphe Haberer’s thesis was written under the regime of the “*thèse d’état*” a second major thesis that academics in France had to write before being eligible to apply for posts as full professor. The length of the *thèse d’état* (over 1000 pages) and its duration (an average of 8 years, with some taking more than 15 years to complete) were factors that led to its abolition in 1984. But while the *temps long de la recherche française* may have been foreshortened, the *agrégation*, that other French institution which has led to much interest being focussed on MacNeice, continues to function. In recent years MacNeice’s final collection *The Burning Perch* was on the programme from 2014-16. It led to the reappraisal of MacNeice’s work in the French context. Some of the essays collected in this volume bear witness to a French flavour in MacNeice studies. Articles like those of Mélanie Lebreton, Yann Tholoniati or Xavier Kalck deploy the French approach to close reading. Others, like that of Thomas Dutoit or Joanny Moulin, explore MacNeice’s work via French theory. Lacy Rumsey examines MacNeice’s poetics in a detailed analysis of metrics that takes account of MacNeice’s engagement with formal constraints and his simultaneous desire to escape from their clutches. The sonic dimension of MacNeice’s poetry is echoed in Claire Davison’s article on the poet’s radio plays. Robert Jordan examines his personal proximity to the classical education received by Louis MacNeice and decodes the connections to Byzantine Greece. The influence of the classics is also addressed in the article written by Florence Impens. The poet Michael O’Loughlin offers a reading of Louis MacNeice’s rapport with Galway and its hinterland. He

explores the idea of generational trauma proposing an innovative reading of some of MacNeice's autobiographical poetry. Anne Karhio translates "Budgie" into Finnish and her article explores the challenges and revelations encountered in the process. Bernard O'Donoghue's poem is testament to the connection between poets and their readers, rendering tribute to Adolphe Haberer, hinting at his embodiment of MacNeice's ideal reader.