Proceedings of the Thurneysen Fanclub: issue 13

Records of the discussions in the conference room on 30-03-2017

In attendance: David Stifter (chair), Siobhán Barrett, Chantal Kobel, Nicole Volmering, Anne Harrington, Bernhard Bauer, Fangzhe Qiu, Lars Nooij (scribe and part-time scroller)

Apologies: Lára Ní Mhaoláin, Elliott Lash; routine apologies assumed for Elizabeth Boyle, Romanas Bulatovas, Deborah Hayden.

Practicalities
There are ample supplies of cookies, some of which look somewhat Christmassy.

David apologizes for the last-minute cancellation of last week's meeting.

Matters arising
Issues 7-12 of the proceedings have now been uploaded and have elicited many comments, especially on the twelfth issue. Because of some doubts about the reliability of academia.edu, comments made on the internet that provide significant contributions to the proceedings will be collected in separate documents from now on, and will also be uploaded. Short comments may just be included in future instalments of *Matters arising*.

Proceedings 7 (30-11-2016): during the meeting it was stated that *the linguistic features of Mod.Ir. dialects need not be informative for OIr.* Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh argues persuasively that one must be careful with statements such as these, as they might discourage very useful avenues of research. He notes that Middle Irish matters have recently been explained on the basis of the Modern dialects and that an early divergence of Scottish Gaelic and Irish (with obvious relevance to OIr.) can be argued on dialectal evidence as well. It is therefore rather a matter of the kind of questions one puts to the material and it should not be dismissed as such. We agree.

Proceedings 7 (30-11-2016): *on the matter of dialects in OIr.* Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh notes that this might also be the place to mention the sociolinguistic limits of our sources – the scribes are all likely to have been men, drawn from near-identical sociolinguistic backgrounds. This is valid.

Proceedings 8 (7-12-2016): *on the origins of the Wb. glosses* Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh thinks that it comes from Armagh, referencing an article by P. Ní Chatháin in *Irland und die Christenheit* where it is suggested that the Latin text of the Wb. codex shares a source with a Latin text in the Book of Armagh.

Proceedings 8 (7-12-2016): *on dictionaries of Mod.Ir. useful for the study of OIr.* Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh suggests that Broderick's *Dictionary of Manx* should also be mentioned, as Manx often retains meanings no longer current in Irish and Scottish Gaelic.

Proceedings 8 (7-12-2016): *on Ascoli's Glossario* Cormac Anderson mentions that the *Glossario* can actually be found on archive (https://archive.org/details/archivioglottol09salvgoog).

Proceedings 12 (9-3-2017): *on the phonological rendition in general* Cormac Anderson comments that one might prefer /μ/ over /β̃/ for ease of processing. David made the same argument during our last meeting, but it is generally agreed that it is not that much more of an effort to add diacritics nowadays.

Proceedings 12 (9-3-2017): *on the phonetic rendition of hiatus* Cormac Anderson comments that hiatus is written with a single dot in IPA (i.e. [bʲe.os], not [bʲeös]). He is of course right, and this is now corrected.

Proceedings 12 (9-3-2017): *on the nature of /f/ and /β/* Cormac Anderson states that these are generally describes as bilabials (with some variation) in the dialect surveys of Mod.Ir. and prefers to assume the same for OIr. We remain uncertain whether the issue (bilabial, labial, or labiodental) can be decided.

Proceedings 12 (9-3-2017): *on nasalized fricatives* Joseph Eska comments that 'fricatives that require a constriction anterior to the velopharyngeal port cannot be nasalized … In languages that are said to have nasalized fricatives, these segments actually bear no nasalization or a preceding vowel is nasalized'. Elliott notes that he did not actually make a claim for nasalized fricatives, but rather for voiceless nasals. The confusion arose out of a minuting mistake by the scribe, which has been corrected in the emended version of the proceedings.[1]

Proceedings 12 (9-3-2017): *on voiceless nasals* Elliott offers examples of voiceless nasals from Ó Cuív's 1924 book *The Sounds of Irish* for Modern Irish, where *n, l* and *r* are unvoiced when preceded by lenited *s* or *t*. Elliott suggests that voiceless *m* and *n*, or aspirated *m* and *n* may well have occurred in OIr. when *s* was lenited before *n* or *m*. He also notes that Ó Cuív refers to lenition of *sm-* in some dialects, contrary what is assumed for OIr. However, the existence of voiceless nasals in OIr. (at least for *n*) thus seems reasonable.

      Elliott further adds that voiceless *l* may also have existed, citing forms of *do·sluindi*. This would 1) account for spellings such as *dorusluindet* (Ml. 90b17) in the same position where <ll> can be used, cf. *do-d-rolluind* (Tur. 118) and 2) the devoicing effect that the /l/ has on the /d/ after syncope: *-díltai*. It is briefly discussed whether the latter form developed to *-lt-* via *-l̥nd-* or *-hlnd-*.

Proceedings 12 (9-3-2017): *on the fortis vs. lenis distinction between* n, l *and* r we take note of Cormac Anderson's comments. And we also note that the suggestion to use small caps for the fortis series was actually made during our previous meeting, but not included in the minutes (the suggestion was dismissed at the time, for reasons not now recoverable).

Proceedings 12 (9-3-2017): *on the 'voiced' stops* Cormac Anderson and Joseph Eska both comment that there is good evidence to suggest that OIr. (and Celtic in general) was an aspirating, rather than a voicing language. As such one might wish to avoid the misleading term 'voiced stops'. One might therefore wish to adopt the transcription /pʰ tʰ kʰ/ rather than /p t k/. To us the latter seems too cumbersome for general use (when no specific phonetic point is being made), but it is certainly a matter which must be discussed in the section on phonetics and phonology. As to the terminology, one might consider 'aspirated' vs. 'unaspirated', or 'fortis' vs. 'lenis' (problematic), or perhaps 'tenuis' vs. 'media'.[2]

      David adds that he agrees that the Celtic languages are fundamentally aspirating rather than voicing. Various data from Gaelic, Brythonic and the Old Celtic languages points in this direction.

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[1] At this stage David makes a convincing effort at producing voiceless nasal sounds. [DS: Well, I'd rather say I made a convincing effort at producing a sound.]

[2] The observant reader will notice that we continue to use the traditional terminology in the remainder of the session.

The letters *c t p, g d b* (§32)
Again, Thurneysen was very unsystematic in this paragraph.

"*...c t p* represent voiceless stops in absolute anlaut and after *s*…'; this is essentially true, from the traditional point of view, but needs to be rephrased from a phonetic viewpoint.

"…after other consonants and after vowels they may represent either voiceless or voiced stops." Yes, but the distinction is not arbitrary. They are usually voiced between vowels and this must be mentioned. Within consonant clusters there are no clear rules. It should also be mentioned that they may represent voiced stops in initial positions due to initial mutations (with reference to the section on initial mutations further on in the grammar).

"…*g d b* represent voiced stops in absolute anlaut, in cases of gemination, and in the groups *nd ld mb*, but voiced spirants after vowels. After most consonants they may represent either voiced stops or voiced spirants." We would rather say fricatives than spirants. We wonder whether we should add *ng* – it is ambiguous in that it could either represent one, or two sounds. It should also be mentioned that <g>, <d> and <b> between vowels can also (albeit rarely) be found to represent voiced stops, rather than fricatives.

We note that this is the last time Thurneysen discusses the values of letters, whilst many graphs have been left undiscussed. Obviously, this should be treated comprehensively in a new grammar.

"In doubtful cases their precise value may be ascertained from the modern pronunciation; failing that, from the etymology or from the interchange of *g* and *c, d* and *t, b* and *p*." This warrants a paragraph of its own.

We should give some guidelines for the way the modern pronunciation may help to determine the OIr. pronunciation (and mention that this has been complicated by the reformed orthography). Variation and changes should be mentioned. That is to say, the modern pronunciation is helpful, but there are caveats and these should be made clear to the reader.

The etymology (and also: loanwords attested in other languages – *Nebenüberlieferung*) is informative, but not accessible to most users of the grammar, especially given the lack of a solid etymological dictionary of OIr. It should therefore be made the last point in this proposed paragraph.

The interchange of consonants is very helpful, especially now that one can look the word up in eDIL (if one finds e.g. <b> <p> as variants, it is generally a stop, whereas if there are later attestations with <bh> it is a fricative – although this is not always entirely reliable).

After this, but before the etymology, mention must be made of the usefulness of poetry in determining pronunciation, due to the strict requirements of metre.

The *punctum delens* (§33)
"The *punctum delens* over a consonant is used as a regular symbol in certain positions." This is correct, but vague. What is the exact meaning of 'regular'? And one should explain the use of the term 'punctum delens', as its usage here does not reflect that of deletion as such. We might want to add that (in pre-reform spelling times) this was called *buailte* in Mod.Ir.

"1. It is frequently found over nasals inserted between a nasalizing final and the following initial…"; this is true. It is found in Ml., Wb., Sg. and many other manuscripts. But how often is meant by 'frequently'? It would be good to be able to qualify this by means of statistics. It should also be noted that this dot is rarely transcribed in modern editions (certainly not when the orthography is normalized).

"2. It is also found over nasals in medial position between consonants…"; this is really the same as the first practice and merely reflects a difference of position. The two should be combined as 1.a and 1.b. It is an interesting practice though, as it shows a linguistic awareness of the linguistic status of nasals on the part of the scribes.

"3. In Sg. and later manuscripts it is placed over *f* and *s* to denote the 'lenition' of these consonants." Why did he add inverted commas around 'lenition' in this instance? Chantal notes that there is one example of this in Wb. 33c9, although – as it appears over *f* – this could be a *punctum delens* in the literal sense (indicating the silent *f*). It is also noteworthy that it occurs in the section that was written by the *tertia manus*, the apparently latest of the three scribes of Würzburg. However, the gloss is actually marginal and rather worn (see illustration, 2nd line) so that a final decision if this is a deliberate dot cannot be made. Lars adds that this practice is also found (although not in regular use) in the Stowe Missal (c. 800 AD).
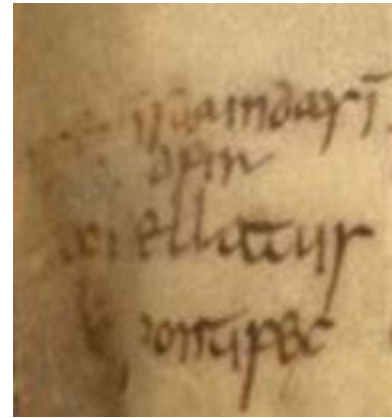
Dagmar Bronner has recently published an article ('Nasalierung im Buch von Armagh: Überlegungen zu altirischen Schreibkonventionen', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 63 (2016), 29–48) about the orthography of nasalization <·n· ·m·> in the Book of Armagh which was also written around 800 AD. This shows that there was some orthographical experimentation in how to write these sounds around that time.

It is noteworthy that Thurneysen makes no mention of the use of the *spiritus asper* in this paragraph, although he does mention it briefly in §28. It should be discussed in this context as well, as it was later, already in Sg., used for similar purposes.

As to the footnote on *morḟeser*, this is a unique case and one wonders if it should be mentioned here at all.

Mention the use of the *n*-stroke in this paragraph? Probably not, as the *punctum delens* and *spiritus asper* have some morpho-syntactic function, whereas the *n*-stroke is essentially an abbreviation.

Division of words (§34)
"In general all words which are grouped round a single chief stress and have a close syntactic connexion with each other are written as one in the manuscripts." We wish to stress that this is indeed a general tendency, but with many exceptions. This also ties in with the issue of what a 'word' is; definitions suggested within ChronHib so far have included 'intuitive unit' or 'an independent linguistic unit with an independent meaning', and similar attempts. The key factor for writing semantic groups as one unit is clearly the stress, but it is hard to phrase.

It is not always clear whether there is a space between words in the manuscripts.

"Thus conjunctions and pronouns affixed to them are written with the following verb, the article and attached possessives with the following noun, the copula with the following predicate, prepositions and affixed pronouns or article with the following verb or noun, enclitics with the preceding stressed word, etc.…'; Thurneysen is generally correct, but all of it needs to be stated much more exactly.

It is suggested that 'phrase' might be a suitable term for these 'intuitive units', but although the term might have some use within this context, it is felt to be unsuitable for general use as it has a very specific meaning within syntax and would therefore be liable to cause confusion.

"Occasionally, however, some of these elements are written separately." This is vague. In the *Handbuch* this was expanded a little by means of some examples – this was unfortunately left out of *GOI*.

In this context one should also mention the linguistically arbitrary divisions of words in glosses on the basis of constraints of space, the sometimes unusual divisions in the Cambrai Homily (the copyist of which spoke no Irish). In later manuscripts 'unintuitive' divisions may also be found, but the feeling is that the orthography is somewhat more systematic at that stage (compared to the glosses).

"This writing of word-groups rather than single words is a characteristic feature of Old Irish." Compared to what? The later language (but it is also a feature of Middle Irish), or other languages (but it is also found in Old British)? It has been claimed that the Irish were the first to separate words in manuscripts consistently.

Intriguingly, in the Gaulish inscriptions in the Latin script, the Lepontic inscriptions and the Celt-Iberian inscriptions word-divisions were regularly maintained (which was not the general practice in Roman or Greek inscriptions).

"In the present work, apart from close compounds, words are separated so far as is consonant with general orthographical rules." This is vague unto meaninglessness; he probably has general orthographic practices in modern Western languages in mind. In what follows, he essentially describes those practices that are by and large the current standard. One could, however, be much more specific. David aims to write a comprehensive guide to the normalization of OIr. within ChronHib. In a future grammar, reference should be made to this.

Abbreviations (§35)

"Owing to the limited space at their disposal, the glossators often employ quite capricious abbreviations." Why 'capricious' – what concrete examples is he thinking of? And why limit this discussion to the glossators? Abbreviations were actually relatively rare in the glosses – they are *far* more common within the prose texts of the period and in the later manuscripts. Also, why this focus on 'limited space'? Abbreviations are also commonly found in luxury manuscripts for which space cannot have been a significant factor. Other motivations (e.g. ease of writing) and abbreviations simply having become part of the established orthography seem equally valid.

Thurneysen lists a number of abbreviations, which certainly include those most commonly found in the glosses. He mentions that "some of them [are] of Roman origin", but one can again be more specific, there being Tyronian notes, abbreviations/suspensions, and contractions.

The abbreviations <.t.> for *trá* and <imr̄> for *immurgu* strike us as particularly rare (we do not recall ever encountering them).

We should add far more abbreviations to this list, including those found in later manuscripts, as many sources of OIr. are preserved in these very manuscripts. It may also be added that quite a number of abbreviations are also already found in the few OIr. prose texts attested in manuscripts from the OIr. period (e.g. in the Stowe Missal Tract on the Mass).

"*.i.*, the Latin symbol for *id est*, was often read by Irish scribes simply as *id*, and rendered in Irish by **ed-ón** 'that'. Sometimes, notably in Ml., it is followed by a complete sentence prefaced by **sech is** or **noch is**, the Irish equivalent of *id est*… in such cases *.i.* is nothing more than a graphic symbol." We wish to stress that <.i.> is often a purely graphic symbol. The *Handbuch* is much more detailed on the usage of <.i.> and the points raised there should certainly be mentioned.

Thurneysen then concludes with <cs.> for *ceist* and <nī> for *ní ansae*; are these ever found in the glosses? They would rather seem to belong to the legal tradition. This makes their inclusion in this paragraph very random, which is in itself – in a sense – a fitting conclusion to this chapter of *GOI*.