Proceedings of the Thurneysen Fanclub: issue 24

Records of the discussions in the conference room on 20-11-2017

In attendance: David Stifter (chair), Elliott Lash, Fangzhe Qiu, Bernhard Bauer, Theodorus Fransen, Tatiana Smirnova, Romanas Bulatovas, Lars Nooij (scribe)

Apologies: Ekaterina Derevianchenko

Practicalities
David learnt on the weekend (Tionól 2017) that Nicole Volmering cannot attend these sessions in this semester due to conflicting meetings in TCD. Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh cannot attend either, due to a glosses reading group in DIAS that is held on Monday mornings.

In other news, the scribe has now started using a dip pen, instead of a fountain pen, which led David to take a picture.

At his toilsome labour like a scribe of yore…

Finishing up from last week (§74)
"The above changes, together with those described §75 f., make it often impossible, on the evidence of Irish alone, to decide whether a word originally contained *i* or *e*, *u* or *o*." This is an important, fundamental point: indeed, one cannot often distinguish the original quality of these vowels on the basis of Irish alone. It has been suggested by some that these vowels merged entirely, or their opposition was neutralised, in Irish. David would however argue that the quality of the vowel can still be reconstructed on Irish evidence when the next syllable contained an **ĕ*, since he does not believe that **ĕ* lowered **u* > *o* (as Schrijver argues). However, such forms are rare in nominal endings, although they do occur more frequently in the verbal system.

Moreover, Irish has a general tendency – throughout its history – of neutralising distinctions between short vowels (in Modern Irish even under the stress). And although we distinguish a 5-way short vowel system for Old Irish, there must have been structural pressure within the language to reduce these distinctions. This is not all that unexpected, since Irish has a large amount of distinct consonant phonemes and such languages tend to have poorer vowel inventories. This is quite unlike the British languages, where the vowels are relatively stable.

"For the vowel changes in the Ogam inscriptions… see Pokorny…" This is of course outdated and also diachronic; we would leave this out.

Raising (§75)
Again, where Thurneysen writes "**i** and **u** for **e** and **o**", we would rather say 'raising'.

"Hessen: Zu den Umfärbungen der Vokale im Altirischen…"; this is of course outdated. For the most part, these things can be found summarised in McCone's 1996 book.

Elliott remarks that we should distinguish between two different types of raising; 1) the diachronic raising under discussion here and 2) the synchronic, pretonic raising, e.g. *ro- / ru-*. David agrees, but refers this to later (perhaps alongside §77).

We note that Thurneysen was far more cautious in his 1909 *Handbuch*; clearly, his confidence had grown by the time he was working on *GOI*, perhaps due to Hessen's 1912 dissertation.

"Original *e* and *o* frequently become *i* and *u* when the following syllable contains or formerly contained *i* (*i̯*) or *u*." This is basically correct. It should be noted at the outset that raising is much more restricted than lowering and, most importantly, it only applies to stressed vowels. [If it did operate also in unstressed syllables, it would probably still be impossible to find a trace of this change in Old Irish since unstressed vowels ultimately all became schwa.]

"As a general rule this change takes place when *e* or *o* is separated from the influencing vowel only by a single (lenited) or geminated (unlenited) voiced consonant, or by *cc*, or by certain consonant groups of which *nd, mb, ml, mr, db* (= *β*), *ddr*, *ggl* (written *tr, cl*) are well attested." First, we should say 'a single voiced consonant', rather than the clumsy "a single (lenited) or geminated (unlenited) voiced consonant". Thurneysen's convoluted wording seems to have been triggered by an expansion of the original German.

"**ibair** nom. pl. 'yews', Gaul. *Eburomagus*, O.Britann. *Eburacum*…" Do the placenames refer to yews or boars? *ebur-* is reflected in Irish *ibur* and Welsh *efwr*, which never mean 'boar'. The 'boar'-meaning is based on an etymological connection with the Germanic: German *Eber* and Dutch *ever(-zwijn)*, Old English *eofor* 'boar', Old Norse *jǫfurr* 'prince, ruler', which go back to **ebura-*. However, it looks like reconstructing the meaning of 'boar' for Celtic is a folk-etymology on the part of modern-day scholars, influenced by the word's apparent formal similarity to the Germanic.[1]

"**rind** 'star', gen. **renda**, stem **rendu-*." This is a bad example, as the etymology of *rind* is uncertain. It could, for example, also be reconstructed with **rand-*, with raising of **a* to **æ* before the cluster of nasal plus stop.

"**fuirib** 'on you' (pl.) beside **foirib** (**for** 'on')"; there are issues with the reconstruction of this word. Reconstructing **u̯or-su̯isu̯*$^{e}/_{i}$ requires at least some analogy for it to yield the attested forms. *fuiri* 'on her' < **u̯or-iu̯ai̯* would be the better example to support Thurneysen's point.

"**truip** gen., **trup** dat. of **trop** (*p* = *b*) 'tropus';" this is hardly a word that would be used in everyday speech, as such it is not certainly reliable to show a 'natural' regular development. *locc* 'locus' also seemed a bit bookish at first sight, but actually turned out to have a number of secondary meanings and is quite well attested. The word *cucann* < **koggīnā* < Brit. Lat. *coquina* also looks like a genuine example of the reality of the rule in loanwords. However, it all goes to show that we must be careful in choosing examples when establishing sound laws; one must always consider the possibility that analogy has distorted the facts.

Elliott brings up the word *pop(p)* 'a shoot, tendril (of a plant)', which is also found with *-u-*. Might it be a loanword from Latin *pampinus* 'tendril of a vine'? Relating it to *pampinus* would be difficult though, given the unexpected loss of the nasals.

[1] Outside of the context of this specific word David remarks that he does not personally mind translating placenames as meaning 'boar-X', given that he himself is from *Weppersdorf*, an originally Slavic settlement containing *vĕprъ*, the Slavic word for 'boar', and a Germanic word for 'village'. The correctness of this etymology is borne out by the fact that even today the woods around Weppersdorf teem with boars.

“**mucc** ‘pig’, stem *moccu-*, W. *moch*, cp. Gaul. (*Mercurius*) *Moccus*, *Mocco*, etc.” This (along with Breton *moc’h* and presumably Cornish *moch*) is a genuinely problematic form. The Irish word *mucc* is a feminine *ā*-stem, but this cannot be its original stem class as *ā*-stems have lowering in the nom. sg. (e.g. *cell, cille*; *tol*, *tuile*). The solution is that *mucc* originally belonged to the one missing class within the Old Irish nominal system: it was a feminine *ū*-stem. Another example must be *deug* ‘a drink, draught’. These would have been some of its original (i.e. Proto-Celtic), underlying endings:

nom. sg.	*-*ū*	<	PIE *-*uh₂*
gen. sg.	*-*u̯ās*	<	PIE *-*u̯eh₂s*
dat. / loc. sg.	*-*u̯ai*	<	PIE *-*u̯eh₂ei̯*

Now, these forms would have been identical to the *ā*-stem paradigm outside of the nominative and this must have led to its ultimate loss and merger with the *ā*-stems. The Gaulish forms alone establish that the original word must be reconstructed as **mokkū*. It should be noted that the British forms can equally well be reconstructed as **mukkā*, due to the effects of *a*-affection (**mukkā* > **mokkā* > W. *moch*). Of course, this solution is still problematic, as **mokkū* should not become *mucc* in Irish; you do not want raising in this position, i.e. before **-kk-*. Perhaps it is due to secondary raising after a nasal? Or perhaps it ties in with the problem of *croch* ‘cross’?

As to *deug*, why was this not raised to ***diug* as expected (cf. **tegu-* > *tiug*), esp. since the genitive *dige* shows regular raising? Its etymology is uncertain. Welsh has *diod*, which looks like it goes back to **degāt-*, whatever that may be. Perhaps it was lowered to *deug* by means of analogy with the *ā*-stems (why then did this not happen for *mucc* also)?

“**cutrumme** (*t* = *d*) ‘equal’”. This form shows that it must go back to **trummo-*, cf. Welsh *trwm*.

“**cugligi** (*cl* = *gl*), dat. sg. ‘shaking’ LU 7457.” This looks like a formation related to *cluiche*; in this case, it is the verbal noun of the verb *con·clich*.

In the German, two paragraphs (§71 and 72) correspond to GOI §75 and a number of good examples have been dropped in the English. It is noted that Thurneysen stated that forms like *cugann* and *luic, locc* “beweisen zwar nicht viel”, ‘offer rather little proof’; why even bring them up as evidence then? In general, Thurneysen gives more attention to the existing problems in the German. The smallprint to *Handbuch* §72 corresponds to GOI §76.

He also mentions the native Irish word *ord* ‘hammer’ in the German, but this does not have an underlying *-u-*, as it is also reflected in the ancient British tribal name *Ordovices* ‘the Hammerfighters’. One would expect that *-rd-* would block raising.

Raising continued (§76)
This paragraph is very diachronic indeed.

“…the mutation…”, we would much rather say ‘alternation’, given that ‘mutation’ has such a specific meaning within Celtic.

“…**oillu** Wb. 13^{b}2 beside **uilliu**…” This shows that reorganisation and levelling of raising was already underway by the time of the Würzburg glosses. The way this was resolved may perhaps turns out to be a marker of dialect.

“…the mutation *o* > *u* seems to have spread to cases outside those covered by the rule…” This is a very important point and new insights are still to be had on this issue. As an example of a recently acquired insight, there is the following problem:

nom. sg.	*orc*	<	PIE **porḱos* ‘the speckled one, pig’

gen. sg.	*uirc*
acc. pl.	*urcu*

David (and Schrijver) had proposed that we must here be dealing with a general sound change **oRC* > **uRC* before lowering, thus explaining the above paradigm. However, Elliott proved that this is actually wrong, by closely studying the Old Irish evidence.

nom. sg.	*folt*		*folt*
gen. sg.	*fuilt*	vs.	*foilt*
dat. sg.	*fult*		*folt*

The paradigm on the left turned out to be younger; the oldest paradigm is the one on the right. This clearly shows that we must instead be dealing with a secondary change, caused by analogy (in specific cases and phonological contexts) with e.g. *fer, fir, fiur*. In turn, the fact that there are cases of secondary change also renders forms like *dord*, *duird* and *ord, uird* suspect – one needs to establish the oldest forms before using them as evidence. It is also briefly noted that one must take the effects of syllable boundaries into account; e.g. ·CR is a consonant cluster proper, but R·C is not.

"**oirdnid**", this should be ***uirdnid* < Lat. *ordināre*, if raising had been possible across *rd*. As such it constitutes good proof against the assumptions that forms like *uird*, *duird* etc. are old; instead they must be due to analogy. It was suggested that this might be compared to *bongaid* < **bungeti*, but this is not the case. As discussed last week, Schrijver solves the problem of *bongaid* by allowing for lowering of **u* before **ĕ*, while Stüber solves it by positing the rule that **u* was lowered to *o* before a cluster of a nasal and another consonant. These solutions both deal with a different context from that of *oirdnid*, unless Stüber's admittedly *ad hoc* rule should be extended (but, although *ad hoc*, Stüber's rule has no known counterexamples and therefore appears rather solid). There are, at any rate, not many verbs with historic **u* in the verbal root. There are quite a lot of verbs which have a *-u-* in the root in Old Irish, synchronically speaking, but mostly before a palatal consonant[2] (the result of raising; in most cases before a non-palatal consonant the distinction between *o* and *u* would have been lost due to lowering before **a* and **o* – lowering and a lack of palatalization of course tend to coincide).

This all goes to show that a lot of the evidence had already been obscured by the Old Irish period. And as later Irish only confuses the evidence further, we are forced to rely on the oldest data. This does mean that – for certain positions – we might sometimes have too little evidence to establish with certainty what happened.

In order to illustrate how important it is to evaluate the entire evidence before postulating a sound law, David brings up an article by McCone on the word *amnair* 'maternal uncle', which is very sparsely attested in Old Irish, before turning up in the Modern Irish of Tory Island. The word must derive from Proto-Celtic **au̯n-* (cf. Latin *avunculus*, with a slightly different preform) and McCone argued that this means that there was a change **u̯* > *u̯* before an *n* in Proto-Celtic, thus also explaining Irish *omun* 'fear'. However, when David closely examined the evidence for his first mythical article, he noticed that there are actually about half a dozen examples of **u̯* not turning into *u̯* in this position. The rule was actually more subtle: the change happened when *a* and *o* preceded the **u̯*, but not when it was preceded by *e*. This has wider significance: it is the first evidence that Proto-Celtic retained a distinction between *a* and *o* on the one hand and *e* before **u̯*.

All in all, for raising and lowering we are still in the stage before the full evidence – with all its attendant implications – has been closely examined.

"It is therefore uncertain whether the form **cuis** Cam., dat. of **coss** 'leg', for normal **cois(s)** is analogical, dialectal, or archaic." This is indeed unknown. It cannot be the regular outcome of raising, but would constitute a very early example of secondary raising of the type Elliott discovered.

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[2] E.g. *guirid* < **gᵘorīti*; as an example of a *-u-* before a non-palatal consonant we have *do·lugai* < **logīt*.

For both *cuchtar* ‘kitchen’, Middle Irish *cuchtair*, and *cucht* ‘shape’, LEIA has offered suggestions. *cuchtar* might have been influenced by *cugann* ‘kitchen’ and *cucht* by *tucht* ‘shape’. Therefore, these examples do not prove raising across the cluster **χt*.

It is unknown what to make of the further examples of *futhu* Cambrai, acc. pl. of *foth* ‘equivalent’ and *fus* beside *fos* ‘rest’ (< **u̯osto-* which should not cause raising). Their raising is probably to be explained through analogy as well.

Problematic forms such as these do not disestablish the basic sound laws of raising, which are based on thousands of examples. However, they do show that one can never depend entirely on any single source or individual form, no matter how old (e.g. Cambrai) – one must always look at the grand scheme and all the relevant examples when establishing sound laws. Forms such as Cambrai *cuis* are essentially regularising; as such, they are analogical and analogy may always set in, causing exceptions to arise even at a very early date.

All in all, undiscovered exceptions to the actual sound laws of raising itself are likely to be very subtle, such as the one recently discovered by Aaron Griffith, which shows that there is no raising over **μ* (e.g. **eμi* does not raise).

“pret. sg. 1 **do·biurt**, 2 ·**birt**, attracted by pres. sg. 1 **do·biur** ‘I give’, 2 **·bir**.” No, this has a different explanation.[3] The form *do·biurt* regularly develops out of **do·bīrstū*, not out of – as Thurneysen must have supposed – **do·berstū*, so the *i* is original in this form.

“But **cretid** (*t* = *d*) ‘believes’ always has *e*, not *i*, although, since it is an *i*-verb, most of its forms must have had *i* after the dental; influenced by Lat. *crēdere* or by Britannic (W. *credu*)?” Yes, this is a real unknown and a problem. It should have been ***critid* < PIE **kr̂ed dʰeh₁-*. The Latin (via the Vulgar Latin shortening of *ē*) or Welsh influence might explain it. Or perhaps there is some subtle, unknown sound-change at work here.

Pages read in this session: 1

[3] Which we will treat more fully when we get to the verbal inflection in about 50 years’ time. [David: No, I said 15 years.]