Thurneysen Fanclub: topics for further research (Proceedings 1-21)

**Proceedings 3:**

* Regional differences?
  + Milan/Sg. vs. Würzburg?

Given this regional slant to the sources ‒ with both the Milan and St. Gall glosses possibly deriving from the very same centre ‒ one may wonder whether the differences between the language of Milan and St. Gall on the one hand and the Würzburg glosses on the other are due to distance in time, or space. The orthodox position is that the Würzburg glosses are simply earlier, but the Milan glosses are often strikingly archaic in their own right. The matter deserves further reflection.

* Temporal differences?
  + Milan vs. Sg. vs. Würzburg, cf. Blathmac
  + *inna* vs. *na* in Ml.

As mentioned above, although some forms look late (there is some neutralization of final vowels ‒ although this might also be scribal) the Milan glosses are generally quite conservative in comparison to, for example, the Blathmac poems, which may be dated to c. 750 AD. Also, the division between the forms of the article *inna* and *na* is much stricter in Milan than it is in Würburg, whatever the implications of that may be. The upshot of this is that the dating of the Milan glosses appears much less certain than has been thought. The Milan and St. Gall glosses need to be closely compared and also contrasted to more securely dated texts.

**Proceedings 6:**

* 8th vs. 9th century OIr

It is noted that a study of the Minor Glosses thought to derive securely from the 9th-century might be valuable to demonstrate the developments of the language relative to that of the 8th-century.

* older forms in the two later manuscripts of the *Vita Columbae*?

The *Vita Columbae* was probably written in the early 690’s (on text-internal grounds). The chief manuscript of the text (‘the Schaffhausen Columbanus’) was written by Adomnán’s pupil Dorbbéne, who died in 713 AD. The text is also found in two later manuscripts, but these are not usually much regarded on account of Dorbbéne’s unique closeness to the original. However, David has looked at these manuscripts in passing and thinks they might sometimes include forms that are older than those found in the Schaffhausen Columbanus.

**Proceedings 7:**

* Lambeth commentary:
  + dating?
  + deponent verbs elsewhere only attested as active verbs

The Lambeth commentary is suggested: it includes deponent verbs which are later only attested as active verbs and it is generally archaic. Bieler and Carney dated it to the 720’s, but as it is found as flyleaves in a 12th-century manuscript, the date is uncertain; it could be earlier still (although not before the 650’s, most likely, as Isidorus’ *Etymologiae* is mentioned). There is nothing to suggest that it is not an original text.

**Proceedings 10:**

* ligature *æ*

In some manuscripts it is also used quite often to represented word-final *-ae* (or, by the Middle Irish period, any word-final *-ə*). Indeed, the ligature is found most often after non-palatal consonants, a fact left unmentioned by Thurneysen.

* value of <h>

“…[it] is arbitrarily prefixed to words beginning with a vowel…”; this is too strong a statement. There are patterns to the practice – some words are regularly written with *h-* and others are not. Moreover, as stated in the preceding, motivations [Schrijver: reflex of \*p; Ó Muirchertaigh: graphic parallelism with Greek and Latin] have been proposed.

According to David all words starting in *u-* generally are relatively often prefixed with this *h-*, except after *-d* and *-n* (i.e. after the article), but words starting in *ui-* and *ua-* may be prefixed even under these circumstances. However, David notes that, for some reason or other, *uisce* ‘water’ is never written as *huisce* in the Milan glosses. The present scribe would briefly like to add that in the Stowe Missal *huisque* is the common spelling for *uisce*.

“There are only isolated cases of its use as a mark of hiatus in the interior of words…”; indeed, this is rare and – as Thurneysen notes – most often found in foreign names (e.g. *Israhel*). In native words it is extremely rare. It would be interesting to examine the statistics of this, at some point.

“In archaic **menmnihi** gl. *animositates*… *h* stands for spirant *ch*.”; is this the only example of this? If so, might it be a spelling mistake and an example of Hiberno-Latin orthographical interference (e.g. in the Latin *Vita Columbae* one often finds *michi* for Classical Latin *mihi*).

(from Proceedings 11) In relation to the proceedings of the previous meeting Elliott comments that there is another example of <h> apparently being used to write /χ/. This is to be found in an inscription in roman script: *lie luguaedon macci menueh*.

**Proceedings 13:**

* *punctum delens* to mark nasals

“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.

Dagmar Bronner has recently published an article about the orthography of nasalization in the Book of Armagh (where one finds <.n.>) which was also written around 800 AD. This shows that there was some orthographical experimentation in how to write these sounds around this time.

**Proceedings 16:**

* gemination as a reflex of \**eti*

There are good arguments in favour of there having been a particle and it being PIE \**eti* “and”, which was then turned into a general ‘main-clause particle’. The British languages provide some visible evidence for the existence of the particle itself (e.g. Middle Welsh *nyt* vs. *ny*), but it has left no direct trace in Irish. Elliott comments that in the Book of Armagh – in the *Additamenta* – one finds that verbal forms in initial position are geminated and that gemination, rather than devoicing is the expected result of a cluster *\*hC* in this position. This needs to be looked into further, but offers further support for the particle theory.

**Proceedings 18:**

* use of the fada over short, pretonic vowels

“It may be that words with an original long vowel sometimes retained their quantity in pretonic position and at other times were shortened.” This does not solve the quoted examples, as almost all of them had an originally short vowel. We wonder whether the fada’s might somehow be used here to distinguish the pretonic part from the tonic part of the word (i.e. by marking the vowel directly before the stress). An allusion is made to another non-phonetic use of the fada in both early British and Irish manuscripts, namely the use of fada’s to indicate that a word is in the vernacular, rather than in Latin. It is also suggested that they might just be misplaced fada’s, as length marks are often found placed over bordering consonants – these might therefore just be more extreme cases of such a displacement. Another suggestions is that the scribes might sometimes have used fada’s to mark *a* in a manner similar to *i*, simply to make it stand out on the manuscript page. All this warrants further investigation of the exact scribal practices of the manuscripts.

**Proceedings 19:**

* non-diphthongisation of *ē* in final position when part of a paradigm

“Elsewhere it does not seem to have been diphthongized; cp. 3 sg. subj. ·**té** (in Wb. ·**tei**, §56), 1 sg. ·**tías** (indic. **tíagu**) and the like (§ 625). For the comparatives **sía** ‘longer’ (= W. *hwy*) and **lía** ‘more’ see § 375.” But there is no fundamental difference between the underlying forms of ·*té* and *cía* (or *sía* and *lía* for that matter, if Jasanoff’s preforms are correct). The only significant difference is that *·té* is part of a paradigm, whereas the other forms are not. If we were to postulate a rule that the ‘first *é*’ is not diphthongised in the third person singular, we could state that this *é* otherwise diphthongises in final position. At any rate, it would seem that it is *·té* that warrants further explanation, rather than the other forms.

* *éu/éui* spellings for *é*

“On the other hand, in final syllables this *é* is generally written *éu*, *éo* or *íu* when it precedes *u*-quality or palatal *l r n*. Before palatal *l r n* the spelling *éiu* (cp. *éi* above) also occurs.” We would replace ‘*u-*quality’with *u*-infection. Many questions are raised as to the exact nature of this development. Elliott suggests phrasing it as an allophone / phoneme-discussion. Fangzhe asks to what extent these *-u-* spellings reflect spellings from later sources. David notes that in Scottish Gaelic spellings with *-u-* diphthongs take over completely; this reflects a different development, but it is interesting to note that they use the same vowel which sometimes occurs in Irish, as seen here. David also notes that one does find early variation of this kind within the verbal system, presumably with analogy then setting in. He wonders whether Strachan might have collected the relevant forms.

“A similar development before *t* is confined to a few words (see § 209); e.g. **ét** ‘jealousy’, dat. **éut**, gen. **éuit éoit**.” In the German version this is compared to *cét*, dat. *cét*, gen. *céit*. Formally, these forms should behave the same ( < \**i̯antu*- and \**kanto-* respectively). David suspects that *éuit*, *éoit* is analogical in some sense. Fangzhe notes that the change from Old Irish *rét* ‘thing’ to Modern Irish *rud* is also odd; in that case, perhaps the u-stem inflection of the word had something to do with it.

“Such words also show diphthongization in non-final stresses syllables when the following syllable contains -*u* or -*i*… Unstressed vowels, on the other hand, are not diphthongized… Diphthongization does not occur in words which have no form ending in a palatal or *u*-quality consonant…” This is essentially correct. It is noted that the English version has dropped the example *nél*, relative to the German original. The distinction between *-iu-* and *-eu*- spellings should be more carefully distinguished. In general, David notes that the behaviour of these dipthongs warrants further (and quite extensive) research. There are probably very subtle conditioning factors in play here.

**Proceedings 20:**

* breaking/non-breaking of *ō* as a regional marker?

“Whereas this *ó* is preserved in archaic texts, by the time of Wb. it has generally been diphthongized to *úa* under the accent, except before a guttural (*g, ch*). In Ml. and Sg. *úa* has developed before gutturals also, though not consistently.” This is basically correct, but as the following shows the reality is very messy and still poorly understood.

Thurneysen generally seems to propose that the diphthongization started in stressed position and spread over time.

It should be noted that the breaking of *ó* is an example of where Würzburg, Milan and the St. Gall glosses show serious differences. It is not certain whether this is – as traditionally assumed – a chronological, or actually a dialectal distinction.

* intermediate *óa* < *ō* as a dating criterium?

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* contraction of *oö* > *ó*

Another source is found in *oöl* ‘drinking’, which was disyllabic in Early Old Irish, but was contracted to *ól* in Classical Old Irish (possibly this is what Thurneysen meant with his opening lines of §60). Another example: *loön* ‘provision, food’ > *lón*. This happened in the 8th century at the earliest and was therefore too late for diphthongisation.

* breaking of *ó* and the quality of *ó*

It may be that – rather than Thurneysen’s suggestion that the influence of related words affected the system – the following consonant also had some influence on the realisation of the vowel.

It seems likely that there were two, or more distinct long *ó*’s in Early Old Irish, which behaved differently. This may be compared to the two, or perhaps three types of long *é* discussed last week. This clearly requires further investigation.

**Proceedings 21:**

* the word *áes/oís* as a dialect marker?

“Thus the Irish word for ‘people’ (collective) is variously written **aís, áes, oís óes**, sometimes in the same text.” We would like to know which texts Thurneysen had in mind. Both forms (*aes, Ois*) occur in the Poems of Blathmac, albeit on some rather worn pages of the manuscript, but Thurneysen did not know of the existence of this text. However, the occurrence of these forms does not appear to be random. In Würzburg one finds *oís*, in Milan *áes*. The difference is structural, but only for this one, particular word. Are we dealing with a case of dialect?

* the effect of nasals (and nasal-V-other\_consonant) on vowels

**Proceedings 37:**

* which syllable(s) to omit in complex pretonic strings, e.g.

*arnarap, annarbu, comma·airic*, etc. Is there any pattern in where the squishing / syncope takes place?