

KATHLEEN HUGHES MEMORIAL LECTURES 6

PAUL RUSSELL

‘Read it in a Glossary’:
Glossaries and Learned Discourse
in Medieval Ireland



HUGHES HALL
&
DEPARTMENT OF ANGLO-SAXON, NORSE AND CELTIC

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Hughes Hall was founded in 1885 as the Cambridge Training College (CTC) for graduate women schoolteachers. It is therefore Cambridge's oldest Graduate College, consisting currently of around 50 Fellows and some 400 student members, men and women, who study for doctoral or M.Phil. degrees or for the postgraduate diplomas and certificates offered by the University. We also have an increasing number of mature undergraduates in a variety of subjects. As a result, the academic community of Hughes Hall is now extremely diverse, including students of over 60 nationalities and representing almost all the disciplines of the University. Enquiries about entry as a student are always welcome and should be addressed initially to the Admissions Tutor, Hughes Hall, Cambridge, CB1 2EW, U.K. (<http://www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/>).

An important step in this transformation came with the granting of Cambridge degrees to women in 1948: the CTC was then given the status of a 'Recognised Institution', the crucial first move towards integration with the University proper. The College took the name of CTC's charismatic first Principal, the celebrated women's educationist, Elizabeth Phillips Hughes. Apart from Miss Hughes's Welsh heritage, there is no known connection between the College and the scholar now commemorated in this series of lectures.

Kathleen Winifred Hughes (1926-77) was the first and only Nora Chadwick Reader in Celtic Studies in the University of Cambridge. Previously (1958-76) she had held the Lectureship in the Early History and Culture of the British Isles which had been created for Nora Chadwick in 1950. She was a Fellow of Newnham College (and Director of Studies in both History and Anglo-Saxon), 1955-77. Her responsibilities in the Department of Anglo-Saxon & Kindred Studies, subsequently the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, were in the fields of Irish, Scottish, and Welsh history of the early and central Middle Ages. Her achievements in respect of Gaelic history have been widely celebrated, notably in the memorial volume *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe*, published in 1982. The Kathleen Hughes Memorial Lectures both acknowledge her achievements and seek to provide an annual forum for advancing the subject. Each year's lecture will be published as a pamphlet by the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic on behalf of Hughes Hall.

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© Paul Russell

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PREFACE

The Kathleen Hughes Memorial Lecture was initiated as an annual event by Hughes Hall as the result of an anonymous benefaction in her memory and to mark the establishment of the Welsh Assembly. This benefaction came to the College as a result of an initiative taken by our Fellow, Dr Michael J. Franklin, Director of Studies in History and in Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic.

Each lecture will be published, both on the College's web-site (<http://www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/>) and as a printed pamphlet, to coincide with the following year's lecture. Hughes Hall is grateful to the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic for acting as hard-copy publisher.

Hughes Hall hopes that this academic initiative will make a significant scholarly contribution in those areas which fall within the research interests of Kathleen Hughes, and that the series will continue for many years. We are pleased that it continues to be a fixed point in the College's calendar.

Sarah Squire
President
Hughes Hall

Tríath .i. rí, 7 mair, 7 torc. ut est in silentio¹
'Tríath, i.e. king, and sea, and boar, as in the "Silence"'

Ness .i. aurnisi críadh; leighe Sanais Cormaic 7 rí-²
'Ness, i.e. vessels of clay; read *Sanas Cormaic*, etc.'

... quam sententiam in suo silentio Cormaccus de hoc nomine disputando possuit.³
'...Cormac presented this view in his "Silence" in his discussion of this word'

We may begin this paper with an absence. This lecture is concerned with a particular and important area of early Irish learned activity – the glossaries – a topic which is striking in its absence from the scholarship on early Ireland in the middle decades of the twentieth century when Kathleen Hughes was working. Even in such work as 'Irish Monks and Learning', they are only present in the obliquest of allusions and then almost by accident.⁴ It may seem odd, therefore, to honour her work with a lecture on a subject on which she apparently did no work. But it can be argued that she was of a generation who circled uneasily around the vernacular exegetical tradition of medieval Ireland, unsure of how to

The original lecture was delivered at Hughes Hall, Cambridge on 30 April 2007. I am grateful to Hughes Hall, and in particular to the President, Sarah Squire, for the invitation to give this lecture, and for their ongoing support of this lecture series. The research for this paper arose in part out of the *Early Irish Glossaries Project*, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, University of Cambridge, a three-year project (1 July 2006–30 June 2009) involving Dr Paul Russell, Dr Sharon Arbuthnot, and Dr Pádraic Moran. This paper has benefited enormously from discussion with my colleagues on the project.

¹ DDC T1 (= *CIH* II.620.13), emending *im* to *in*. Reference to entries in glossaries uses the system adopted by the *Early Irish Glossaries Project*: glossary abbreviation, letter-block, and number; thus DDC T1 is the first entry in the letter block T in *Dúil Dromma Cetta*. Since the Project editions are not yet published (and the references provisional, as we may change our minds about the divisions of entries), this is then followed by a second reference to an existing published edition: for SC, we refer to the Y edition (Kuno Meyer (ed.), '*Sanas Cormaic*', *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, IV (Halle, 1912; repr. with Meyer's corrections added to the text, Felinfach, 1994)); for DDC, the texts in *CIH* (see p. 13 for details); for OM, the edition by Whitley Stokes, (ed.), 'O'Mulconry's Glossary', *Archiv für celtische Lexicographie*, 1 (1900), pp. 232–324. For cross-referencing to other versions of the entries, see Paul Russell and Pádraic Moran, *Early Irish Glossaries Database* (Cambridge, 2006): <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/irishglossaries/>.

² DDC N21 (= *CIH* II.618.30 (D¹)); cf. also the D² version at *CIH*, III, 1076b.11–12.

³ Whitley Stokes, 'The Prose Tales in the Rennes Dindshenchas', *Revue celtique*, 15 (1894), 222–336, 418–84, 16 (1895), 31–83, 135–67, 269–312, at 15 (1894), 277–80.

⁴ Kathleen Hughes, 'Irish Monks and Learning', in *Los Monjes y los Estudios*. IV Semana de Estudios Monasticos, Poblet, 1961 (Abadía de Poblet, 1963), 61–86. For further discussion, see pp. 25–30.

handle it, having been warned off such unsound material by the doyens of the subject. Furthermore, this attitude did not just affect glossaries but also discussion of legal commentaries and onomastic compilations, such as *Cóir Anmann* and *Dindshenchas Éirenn*.⁵ There may be many reasons for this but one aspect which is of importance for our present purposes has to do with a sense that the explanations and etymologies purveyed in these glossaries, and elsewhere in the commentary tradition, were simply wilful games with words which had nothing to do with the proper business of scholarship and had nothing to offer the scholar. This view seems to have emanated from Dublin in the 1930s, more specifically from scholars such as Osborn Bergin and R. I. Best, and it had a powerful influence on the subsequent generation of Irish scholars to which Kathleen Hughes belonged. In 1938 Osborn Bergin, commenting on the medieval application of Isidore's mode of analysis to Irish texts, remarked:

The same fantastic analysis was applied to Irish words, and patience of modern scholars is often exhausted in the endeavour to extract a few grains of real value to the lexicographer from the masses of 'etymological' glosses embedded in Middle Irish commentaries. Etymology was a game with no rules. It was a matter of guesswork, and one guess was as good as another.⁶

This view is also well captured by Daniel Binchy's comment about the value of the commentaries to law texts:

⁵ For *Cóir Anmann*, see now the new editions of the different versions by Sharon Arbuthnot, (ed.), *Cóir Anmann: A Late Middle-Irish Treatise on Personal Names* (Part 1), Irish Texts Society, 59 (Dublin, 2005), (Part 2), Irish Texts Society, 60 (Dublin, 2007), which replace the version by Whitley Stokes, 'Cóir Anmann (Fitness of Names)', *Irische Texte* 3.2 (Leipzig, 1897), 285–444, 557. Cf. also her other contributions to this field: Sharon Arbuthnot, 'Short Cuts to Etymology: Placenames in *Cóir Anmann*', *Ériu*, 50 (1999), 79–86; ead., 'Fíthal in *Cóir Anmann*', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 20 (2000), 197–200; ead., 'On the name Oscar and Two Little-Known Episodes Involving the *Fíán*', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 51 (2006), 67–81; ead., 'Medieval Etymology, Knives, Scone and Skene', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 23 (2007), 1–19. There is no modern edition of the *Dindshenchas*; for editions of the different recensions, see Whitley Stokes, 'The Bodleian *Dindshenchas*', *Folklore*, 3 (1892), 467–516; id., 'The Edinburgh *Dindshenchas*', *Folklore*, 4 (189), 471–97; id., 'The Prose Tales in the Rennes *Dindshenchas*'; E. J. Gwynn, *Poems from the Dindshenchas*, Todd Lecture Series, 7 (Dublin, 1900); id., *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, 5 vols, Todd Lecture Series, 8–12 (Dublin, 1903–35).

⁶ Osborn Bergin, 'The Native Irish Grammarian', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 24 (1938), 205–35, at p. 206 (= p. 4 in the separate publication).

nothing worse than a harmless, though occasionally absurd, form of pedantry ... Unfortunately, however, later jurists use it only too often as a cloak to hide their ignorance. An unfamiliar word is 'explained' by them in a series of alternative 'etymologies', one more fantastic than the other, the only condition being that the word-groups shall each bear some relation to the sound of the word glossed.⁷

He also quotes the famous spoof example, attributed to Bergin, of a commentary on a phrase of Shakespeare:

'Darraign your battle' (*Henry VI, Part III, II.2*): *Darraign*, that is *do ruin*, from its destructiveness; or *die ere you run*, that is, they must not retreat; or *dare in*, because they are brave; or *tear around*, from their activity; or *dear rain*, from the showers of blood.⁸

It beautifully captures the process and the plausibility of this kind of analysis. The obscure verb, *darraign* 'to arrange troops for battle', is analysed in four different ways, each of which not only captures some aspect of the semantic context of the verb, but also echoes its phonetic structure, particularly in terms of its consonantal structure of [D + R + N], whilst allowing for some flexibility between voiced and unvoiced consonants and in the vowels.⁹ That Bergin's Shakespearean example was also quoted by Kathleen Hughes in her introductory text-book on medieval Irish history is revealing of her attitude to his mode of analysis; she commented on legal commentators:

Sometimes the commentators have misunderstood a passage, and the glossators sometimes indulge in fantastic explanations ... [*here she quotes the Bergin example*] ... Such glosses show the lawyers at work. They seem to add little to our understanding of the text, though they sometimes help a

⁷ D. A. Binchy, 'The Linguistic and Historical Value of the Irish Law Tracts', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 29 (1943), 195–227, at p. 212 (= p. 20 in the separate publication); reprinted in *Celtic Law Papers*, ed. D. Jenkins (Aberystwyth, 1971), pp. 73–107, pp. 90–1.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ For discussion of how the consonantal framework is retained in the etymological process, see Paul Russell, 'Quasi: Bridging the Etymological Gap in Early Irish Glossaries', in *A Companion in Linguistics. A Festschrift for Anders Ahlqvist on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. B. Smelik, R. Hofman, C. Hamans, D. Cram (Nijmegen, 2005), 49–62.

modern editor restore a text which has been corrupted by later scribes.¹⁰

We may compare Bergin's parody with a real Irish instance from *Sanas Cormaic* 'Cormac's Glossary'. We take an example involving the three homonyms with the form *tríath*; it is etymologised in three different ways corresponding to its three different meanings, each preserving a consonantal pattern of [T + R + TH] and offering a plausible semantic account of how a conjunction of such elements could come to mean 'king', 'sea', and 'boar' respectively:¹¹

SC T5 (= Y 1202) (YMLa version) Tríath tra tréidi for-dingair .i. tríath rí, tríath muir, tríath torc. Deiligther didiu ina rémenaib .i. tríath rí didiu, tréith a réim, tríath muir .i. trethan a réim, tríath torc .i. tréithi a réim. Tríath .i. rí, tír síth a taithmech. Tríath .i. muir, tír úath a taithmech. Tríath .i. torc, tír sód a taithmech.

Tríath then has three meanings: *tríath* 'king', *tríath* 'sea', *tríath* 'boar'. They are distinguished by their declensions: *tríath* 'king' has a genitive *tréith*, *tríath* 'sea' a genitive *trethan*, *tríath* 'boar' a genitive *tréithi*. *Tríath* 'king' is

¹⁰ Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources* (Cambridge, 1977), 45–6. The hangover from this attitude seems to have lasted a long time; it is arguable that Watkins' dismissive account of Old Irish *orn* as a real word owes something to this view; see Calvert Watkins, 'Orn .i. orgon', *Studia Celtica*, 2 (1967), 99–100, at p. 100: 'Far from being the reflex of an Indo-European nominal form, Ir. *orn* is thus shown to be a pure invention of the Irish glossarial tradition, entirely in accord with its established technique of etymological analysis.' For a contrary view see Paul Russell, 'The Sounds of a Silence: the Growth of Cormac's Glossary', *CMCS*, 15 (1988), 1–30, at p. 19 and n. 80.

¹¹ The version presented here is preserved with minor variations in three manuscripts, Y, M, and La. In the B version the material appears slightly differently with the second element of the etymologies presented as verbs rather than as nominal compounds: SC T5 (B version (Whitley Stokes (ed.), *Three Irish Glossaries* (London, 1862 (repr. Felinfach 2000)), p. 41, ll. 31–5) *Tríath din tréde for-dingair: tríath rí .i. tír shídaigther; tríath muir .i. tír úathathar; tríath torc .i. tír soodathar. Deiligther tra ina rémennu: tríath didiu rí, tréith a réim, tríath muir .i. trethan a réim, tríath torc .i. tréithe a réim* 'Tríath then has three meanings: *tríath* "king", i.e. [*tír* 'land' + *sídaigid* 'make peaceful'] the land is made peaceful; *tríath* "sea", i.e. [*tír* 'land' + *úathaid* 'terrify'] the land is terrified; *tríath* "boar", i.e. [*tír* 'land' + *soid* 'turn over'] the land is turned over. They are distinguished by their declensions: *tríath* "king" has a genitive *tréith*, *tríath* "sea" a genitive *trethan*, *tríath* "boar" a genitive *tréithi*.' For a discussion of how *tríath* might be related to the Twrch Trwyth of the Middle Welsh tale, *Culhwch ac Olwen*, see John Carey, 'A Túath Dé Miscellany', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 39 (1992), 24–45, at pp. 32, 41–5; the meanings of *tríath* correspond tantalisingly with the characteristics of the Twrch Trwyth, a boar who was once a king and who then disappears into the sea.

analysed as *tír* 'land' + *síth* 'peace', *tríath* 'sea' as *tír* 'land' + *úath* 'terror', *tríath* 'boar' as *tír* 'land' + *soud* 'turning over'.

The three words are first distinguished grammatically by their declension which is indicated by giving their genitives, and then they are etymologised in three different ways. We may note also the term, *taithmech* (Old Irish *taidbech*), the verbal noun of *do-aithbig* 'dissolve, break up, untie', which is used here to refer to the process of analysis so derided by Bergin and Binchy. The semantics focus on the process of breaking up or separating out of the elements and are replicated in the other term used to describe this process, *bérta etarscartha* (lit.) 'the language of separating', which is found in *Auraicept na n-Éces*:¹²

it é cóic gné bérla tóbaidi .i. bérla Féne 7 fasaige na filed 7
bérla etarscarta 7 bérla fortchide na filed tríasa n-agallit cach
dib a chéle 7 íarmbérla.

there are five types of chosen language: the language of the Irish, the sayings of the poets, the separated language, the concealed language of the poets by which they speak to each other, and obscure (*or* unaccented) language.

The *Auraicept* goes on to explain the process using the example of the homonym *ros* which can mean 'wood', but also 'duckweed' and 'flax, linseed', and it makes explicit how the semantics can be distinguished by maintaining the same consonantal structure but varying the 'principal' vowels, thus respectively *ros* 'wood' < *róe* 2 'plain' + *os* 1 'deer', *ros* 'duckweed' < *ro-* 'great' + *fos* 'rest', *ros* 'flax' < *ro-* 'great' + *ás* 'growing' :

Ocus berla n-edarsgarta etar na fedaibh aireghdaibh .i. berla
tresá fuil deiliugud na fid n-aire[gh]da isin aenfhocul triana n-
inde taithmech, *ut est*, amal rogabh ros .i. roi oiss *quando*, .i.
intan, as rois caelli 7 rass iar lind intan as ros usce .i. rofhos
mad for marbusce no roidh as mad for sruth 7 ro as intan as
ros lin .i. ar a luas 7 ar a thigi asas.¹³

¹² George Calder, (ed. & transl.), *Auraicept na n-Éces: the Scholar's Primer* (Edinburgh, 1917), 100–1 (ll. 1302–4) = 244 (ll. 4619–21). On these terms, see also Paul Russell, "'What was Best of Every Language": the Early History of the Irish Language', in *A New History of Ireland*, vol. 1, ed. D. Ó Cróinín (Oxford, 2005), 405–50, at pp. 448–9; Bart Jaski, "'We are of the Greeks in our Origin": New Perspectives on the Irish Origin Legend', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 46 (Winter 2003), 1–54, at pp. 10–11.

¹³ *Auraicept*, ll. 1316–23 (= ll. 4635–40) (ed. Calder, pp. 102–3 (= p. 244)); the following translation is a modified version of Calder's.

And the language of separation among the principal vowels, i.e. language through which there is a distinction of the principal vowels in the individual word through analysing their meaning, as in, for example, *ros*, i.e. *roi oiss* ‘plain of deer’, when it is *rois caeilli* ‘copses of a wood’, and *rass* [‘duckweed’] over a pool when it is *ros* of water, i.e. *rofhos* (‘great rest’), if it be on stagnant water, or *roidh as* (moving from it’?), if it be on a stream, and *ro ás* (‘great growing’) when it is *ros lín*, ‘flax seed’, i.e. on account of the swiftness and thickness with which it grows.¹⁴

We may note the use of *taithmech* in this account, as well as the exploitation of ‘silent’, lenited consonants; thus *rofhos* ‘great rest’ where the initial *f-* of *fos* is lenited out of existence; something similar is also going on with *roidh as*, although the first element is unclear.

It is clear, then, that in medieval Ireland such modes of analysis had a higher status than they did among mid-twentieth-century scholars. It was only in the 1980s that a more enlightened approach to this material developed. An important milestone was a brief article by Rolf Baumgarten in 1983 on the etymological analysis of *Picti*, in which, in an open attack on the views discussed above, he appealed for a fresh approach to medieval etymology:

I wish to call into question orthodox notions such as ‘absurd’ or ‘pseudo’-etymology, ‘meaningless chevilles’, or ‘uncouth’ spelling, ... and call for a systematic appreciation of these, admittedly marginal, features of Irish literary tradition according to their own purpose and environment.¹⁵

A significant element in this was a serious and thorough exploration of the implications of the fact that the works of Isidore of Seville, and especially his *Origines sive Etymologiae*, seem to have been known in Ireland within a generation of his death in 673;¹⁶ for this ‘fanciful and playful’ etymological analysis so derided by Binchy and others is an essential element in the work of Isidore and other late antique scholars.

¹⁴ In my translation I tentatively take *íar lind* as an error for *tar lind*, and interpret *roidh as* as meaning something like ‘moving’, perhaps related to *roithid*, as is implied by the idea of moving water.

¹⁵ Rolf Baumgarten, ‘A Hiberno-Isidorean Etymology’, *Peritia*, 2 (1983), 225–8, at p. 226.

¹⁶ The standard edition remains *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, ed. J. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911); for a recent English translation, see *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, transl. S. A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, O. Berghof (Cambridge, 2006).

We may compare with the above examples from Irish the following analysis of the word *merula* 'blackbird' in Isidore:¹⁷

Merula antiquitus medula vocabatur, eo quod modulet. Alii merulam aiunt vocatam quia sola volat, quasi mera volans.

The blackbird (*merula*) was called *medula* in ancient times, because it 'makes music' (*modulare*). Others say the blackbird is so named because it flies alone, as if the term were *mera volans* ('flying alone').

The first explanation adjusts the form to bring it into line with the target etymology from *modulare* with the consonantal structure [M + D + L]; such a technique is often introduced elsewhere by *quasi*.¹⁸ The second analyses the words as *mera volans* 'flying alone' to account for the consonantal structure of [M + R + L].

Deriving from scriptural exegesis, a fundamental principle of such analysis is that, in Baumgarten's words, 'uniqueness of the etymology is not a postulate';¹⁹ in other words, no single etymological analysis is seen as exclusively correct but the variety of approaches is intended to allow one to get closer to the *vis nominis* 'the force of the word' – each analysis carrying its own germ of truth and highlighting a particular feature of the sense of the word.²⁰ Baumgarten's initial excursus into medieval

¹⁷ Isidore, *Etymologiae* (ed. Lindsay), XII.vii.69; translation based on that in *The Etymologies*, transl. Barney et al., p. 268 (changing 'merle' to 'blackbird').

¹⁸ For discussion of the use of *quasi* in Irish etymology, see Russell, 'Quasi'.

¹⁹ Baumgarten, 'A Hiberno-Isidorean Etymology', p. 226.

²⁰ For discussion of the *vis nominis*, see *inter alia* Russell, 'The Sounds of a Silence', p. 25; Rolf Baumgarten, 'Creative Medieval Etymology and Irish Hagiography (Lasair, Columba, Senán)', *Ériu* 54 (2004), 49–78; at pp. 56–7. We may compare the rhetorical force of modern etymologies such as the feminine analysis of history as 'his story' or Jesse Jackson's observation in a presidential election in the 1988 that for the Republicans justice means 'just us' (*The Independent*, 7 March 1988). We might also observe the specifically Irish character of this mode of analysis. I know of only one example elsewhere in another Celtic language, and that is the Isidorean-style analysis of Welsh *cyfraith* 'law' preserved in one of the prologues (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS, 454 (saec. xv¹)) of Latin Redaction E of the Welsh laws: *Keureith est legis disputacio et determinacio per iudicem inter interrogantem et respondentem. Et dicitur keureit, id est, communis necessitas amborum per iudicii equitatem; uel keureit quasi keureint, quia ibi quilibet suum breint equaliter habebit. Kychviaut dicitur kan ystlys keuerith ut quod disputacione non potest discuti prouidencia proborum possit terminari* 'Cyfraith is the disputation and determination of the law after question and answer. And *cyfraid* is said [*< cyf-* 'joint' + *rhaid* 'need'], i.e. common necessity of both (*sc.* parties) through fairness of judgement, or *cyfraith*, as if *cyfrait* [*< cyf-* 'joint' + *braint* 'privilege'], because there anyone will have his own privilege (*braint*) equally. *Kychviaut* (? recte *Cydfrawd* 'joint judgement' or *Cychwant* 'joint desire') is said [*< cyd-* 'joint' + *brawd* 'judgment' or *cyf-* 'joint' + *chwant* 'desire'] alongside the

etymology was followed over the next decades by a series of important articles exploring aspects of medieval Irish etymology, mainly in relation to place-names and personal names.²¹

The mid-eighties also saw a revival in interest in early Irish glossaries. In 1987, for example, Mahon completed a Harvard PhD on the glossaries, and in the following year I produced the first of a number of articles on the glossaries.²² One consequence of a gap of some fifty years in the scholarship on early Irish glossaries and similar types of texts, is that in many cases we are still using nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century editions of the texts, particularly those by Whitley Stokes and Kuno Meyer. Many were excellent in their time and have continued to provide sterling service, but progress in other areas, notably in lexicography, has made them appear very dated.²³ The aim of the

law, so that that which cannot be discussed by disputation can be ended by the good sense of honest men' (Hywel D. Emanuel (ed.), *The Latin Texts of the Welsh Laws* (Cardiff, 1967), p. 434, ll. 17–21 (my tentative translation)); cf. also Paul Russell, *The Prologues to the Medieval Welsh Lawbooks* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 32–3.

²¹ Rolf Baumgarten, 'Placenames, Etymology, and the Structure of *Fianaigecht*', in *The Heroic Process: Form, Function and Fantasy in Folk Epic*, ed. B. Almqvist, S. Ó Catháin, and P. Ó Héalaí (Dun Laoghaire, 1987), 1–24; id., 'Etymological Aetiology in Irish Tradition', *Ériu* 41 (1990), 115–22; id., 'Creative Medieval Etymology'.

²² W. Mahon, 'Contributions to the Study of Early Irish Lexicography', unpublished Harvard dissertation, 1987; Russell, 'Sounds of a Silence'. For further contributions, see W. Mahon, 'Old-Irish Verse Fragments Attributed to Fer Muman mac Echtain', *Studi Celtici* 4 (2006), 223–56; Paul Russell, 'Notes on Words in Early Irish Glossaries', *Études celtiques*, 31 (1995), 198–204; id., 'Brittonic Words in Early Irish Glossaries', in *Hispano-Gallo-Brittonica. Essays in honour of Professor D. Ellis Evans on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday*, ed. J. F. Eska, R. G. Gruffydd, N. Jacobs (University of Wales Press, 1995), 166–82; id., 'Dúil Dromma Cetta and Cormac's Glossary', *Études celtiques*, 32 (1996), 147–74; id., 'Laws, Glossaries and Legal Glossaries', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 51 (1998), 85–115; id. 'Moth, Toth, Traeth: Sex, Gender and the Early Irish Grammarian' in *History of Linguistics 1996. Volume 1: Traditions in Linguistics Worldwide*, ed. D. Cram, A. Linn, E. Nowak. Studies in the History of the Language Sciences, 94 (Amsterdam, 1999), 203–13; id., 'Graece ... Latine: Graeco-Latin Glossaries in Early Medieval Ireland', *Peritia*, 14 (2000), 406–20; id., 'Quasi: Bridging the Etymological Gap in Early Irish Glossaries'; id., 'Welsh *cynnwgl and related matters', *Studia Celtica* 39 (2005), 181–8; id. 'Poets, Power and Possessions in Medieval Ireland: Some Stories from *Sanas Cormaic*', in *Law, Literature and Society*, ed. J. Eska, CSANA Yearbook 7 (Dublin, 2008), pp. 9–45.

²³ Note, for example, the following editions in chronological order: John O'Donovan and Whitley Stokes (ed. & transl.), *Cormac's Glossary* (Calcutta, 1868); Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries*; id., 'O'Mulconry's Glossary'; id. (ed. & transl.), 'On the Bodleian Fragment of Cormac's Glossary', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1901, pp. 149–20; Meyer, '*Sanas Cormaic*'; id. (ed.), 'Cormacs Glossar nach der Handschrift des Buches der Uí Maine', *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie*

current AHRC-funded project in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic is to produce modern editions of the three main early Irish glossaries: *Sanas Cormaic* [SC], *Dúil Dromma Cetta* [DDC], and O'Mulconry's Glossary [OM].²⁴ Already on-line is the *Early Irish Glossaries Database*, a flexible database where it is possible to search the glossary headwords, create concordances, and link to the *eDIL*; in due course, for each version of each glossary, it will be possible to access and search the diplomatic texts of the entries and, where possible, link to the digital manuscript images.²⁵

We have already seen some examples of entries from these glossaries above, but it at this point it may be worth summarising what we know about them.²⁶ Essentially, they are lists of words, each of which is followed by an explanation. The lists are preserved in alpha-order, that is, ordered by the first letter only, with only occasional ventures into more complex alphabetical ordering, such as, for example, in parts of OM (especially block *E*). For our purposes the advantage of this ordering scheme is that we can often detect early, or indeed original, blocks of entries which arrived in the glossary together thus allowing us to understand something about the genesis of these glossaries.²⁷ The entries themselves are explanatory, but that explanation can take a number of forms and can vary in size and details from a simple 'A, i.e. B' to a

der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, phil.-hist. Kl., 1919, pp. 290–321. Discussions of glossaries have been even thinner on the ground: Kuno Meyer, 'The Sources of Some Middle-Irish Glossaries', *Archiv für celtische Lexicographie* 3 (Halle, 1907), 138–44; Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Zu Cormacs Glossar', in *Festschrift Ernst Windisch* (Leipzig, 1914), 8–37, at pp. 13–23 (repr. in R. Thurneysen, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band II, ed. P. de Bernardo-Stempel and R. Ködderitzsch (Tübingen, 1991), 188–217); John Fraser, 'A Note on Cormac's Glossary', in *Féiligríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill*, ed. J. Ryan (Dublin, 1940), 37–41; for later glossaries, see Eleanor Knott, 'O'Clery's Glossary and its Forerunners. A Note on Glossary-Making in Medieval Ireland', in *Measgra i gCuimhne Mhíchíl Uí Cléirigh. A Miscellany of Historical and Linguistic Studies in Honour of Brother Michael Ó Cléirigh, O.F.M., Chief of the Four Masters, 1643–1943*, ed. S. O'Brien (Dublin, 1944), p. 65–9; most recently Pádraic Moran has recently taken discussion of Greek and Hebrew entries much further in his unpublished PhD thesis, 'Sacred Languages and Irish Glossaries: Evidence for the Study of Latin, Greek and Hebrew in Early Medieval Ireland' (Galway, 2007)

²⁴ See below, pp. 11–15, for details.

²⁵ Russell and Moran, *Early Irish Glossaries Database*; see above, n. 1, for the URL.

²⁶ For a preliminary survey, see Mahon, 'Contributions', pp. 1–53; Russell, 'Sounds of a Silence'.

²⁷ For discussion of some of the implications of this, see Russell, 'Laws, Glossaries and Legal Glossaries', pp. 111–14.

complete narrative of several thousand words in length.²⁸ In some cases the explanation amounts to no more than a dictionary definition of a type familiar from modern dictionaries, e.g. SC C4 (= Y 207) *cobthach .i. búadach* ‘i.e. victorious’, but they can contain Isidorean-style analysis, e.g. SC C29 (= Y 233) *conair .i. cen fér, cen ar* ‘conair “path”, i.e. without grass, without ploughing’. The elements are typically linked with *.i.* ‘i.e.’, but such link words are by no means necessary; it is possible simply to set the words side by side: e.g. to supply a meaning: SC G49 (= Y 718) *guba suspiria .i. osnad* ‘guba “sighing”, i.e. sighs, i.e. sighing’, or an etymology: SC G48 (= Y 717) *guin gone hebraice, hostis latine* ‘guin “wounding”, Hebrew *gone*, Latin *hostis* “enemy”. As in the last example, it is possible to explain an Irish word by reference to words in other languages, usually Latin, but also Greek or Hebrew or British, and in one instance Pictish; e.g. SC A17 (= Y 16) *arged ab argento*; SC A23 (= Y 22) *adamra .i. ab admiratione*.²⁹ In some cases the matrix of the entry can be entirely Latinate, using phrases such as *ab eo quod est* (in an Irish guise as *dindí as, óndí as*), e.g. SC A65 (= Y 64) *áiminn ab eo quod est amoenum .i. áibind* ‘áiminn “pleasant”, from Latin *amoenum*, i.e. pleasant’; SC A14 (= Y 13) *ar ab eo quod est aro .i. airim* ‘Ar “ploughing” from the word *aro*, i.e. I plough.’; SC A12 (= Y 11) *aicher ab eo quod est acer .i. lainn no tind no trén* ‘Aicher “sharp” from *acer*, i.e. keen, or sick, or strong’. If the etymological match is not quite as close as the glossator would like, a certain amount of ‘tweaking’ was permitted, marked by *quasi* ‘as if’: Y 852 *máthair quasi mater, is ed rotrúailned and ‘máthair* “mother” as if *mater*; it has been corrupted there’;³⁰ SC I10 (= Y 742) *imbliu quasi umbliu ab umbilico ...*; SC F70 (= Y 643) *fúal quasi fuil ar a dath, vel quasi búal .i. uisce ‘fúal* “urine” as if *fuil* “blood” on account of its colour, or as if *búal* “water”, i.e. water’. We may note in the last example that an alternative is offered and this reflects the other aspect of Isidorean etymology noted above, that there is no such thing as a unique etymology; multiple etymologies are not only possible but seem even to be encouraged. The following example incorporates a number of the features exemplified above:

²⁸ On different types of entry, see Russell, ‘Sounds of a Silence’, pp. 16–27; Mahon, ‘Contributions’, pp. 9–13; for the longer more narrative entries, see Russell, ‘Poets, Power and Possessions’.

²⁹ See Russell, ‘*Graece ... Latine*’; id., ‘Brittonic Words’; Moran, ‘Sacred Languages and Irish Glossaries’; on Pictish *catait* (SC C99 (= Y 301)), see now Graham Isaac, ‘A Note on Cormac’s Pictish Brooch’, *Journal of Celtic Linguistics*, 9 (2005), 73–82; Colmán Etchingham and Catherine Swift, ‘English and Pictish Terms for Brooch in an 8th-century Irish Law-Text’ *Medieval Archaeology*, 48 (2004), 31–49.

³⁰ For the notion of ‘corruption’ here, see Russell, ‘Brittonic Words’, pp. 169–70; id., ‘*Quasi*’, pp. 57–8.

SC C145 (= Y 344) *cúal* .i. óna *cúailib* bís inte asberur, vel quasi *gúal* .i. ón *gúaland*, ar is fuirre bis a truma, vel quasi *caol* a *calon* latine (*recte* graece).

cúal 'bundle of sticks', i.e. it is so called from the sticks which are in it, or as if *gúal*, i.e. from the shoulder upon which its burden is, or as if *caol* from Greek *κᾶλον*'.

The first etymology simply relates *cúal* to Irish *cúaille* 'stick', while the second uses *quasi* to indicate the shift from *cúal* to *gúal*, which is associated with the word for 'shoulder', and the last provides a Greek explanation. In many cases the headwords are not particularly complex or difficult, and it is likely that it is the process of explanation, the learned discourse itself, which is at least as important, as the outcome. However, in addition, an important source of headwords seems to have been difficult words, perhaps unfamiliar to the glossator, which had been encountered in texts; in such cases the source text is frequently quoted as part of the entry, often introduced by *ut dicitur*, *ut dixit*, or the like; for example, SC C100 (= Y 300) offers an explanation of *coic* which is attested in a difficult phrase in another SC entry (G29 (= Y 698) *gaire*):

Cuic .i. rún, *ut Néide mac Adna dixit*, 'ní chúala cuic núin,' ol mé, 'Caíar gáir'

Coic 'secret, advice', i.e. secret, *as Néide mac Adnae said*, 'You did not hear an evil secret', I said, 'short-lived Caíer'.

The advantage of this example for our purposes is that we can identify the source, and it also illustrates the way in which a glossary can grow on its own resources. However, in many cases, the quotation cannot be traced elsewhere and the glossary entry thus provides our only evidence for the particular fragment of text. SC G29 (= Y 698) *gaire*, from which this quotation is derived, is a long narrative entry which tells of the satire uttered by Néide against his uncle, Caíer, and the disastrous consequences.³¹ The narrative is constructed to explain the headword, *gaire*, apparently meaning 'short life', a key word in the satire which Néide delivers. Structurally, however, these long narratives provide the same pattern of explanation as in shorter entries, even though at the same time they are offering raw material for new entries within the glossary tradition. That said, it is also clear that these glossaries were incorporating material from many different sources, and it is the relationship between the glossaries and those sources, both internal and external, which forms the main focus of this paper.

³¹ For discussion and translation of this entry, see Russell, 'Poets, Power and Possessions', pp. 9–10, and 34–5 respectively.

So far, then, we have considered the general structure of entries in these glossaries without being specific about the glossaries themselves. This lecture, and indeed the *Early Irish Glossaries Project*, deals with three of the main early Irish glossaries, and it may be useful to summarise what we know about them.³²

The biggest of the glossaries is *Sanas Cormaic* ‘Cormac’s Glossary’ [SC]. It is preserved in five full copies, B, M, Y, H^{1a}, and H^{1b}, and two substantial fragments, L and La, and contains some 1300 entries.³³ Details of the versions are as follows:

- B Leabhar Breac (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 P 16), pp. 263–72 = W. Stokes (ed.), *Three Irish Glossaries* (London, 1862 (repr. Felinbach 2000)), pp. 1–44 = J. O’Donovan and W. Stokes (ed. and transl.), *Cormac’s Glossary* (Calcutta, 1868) (= Stokes’s version A).
- H^{1a} T.C.D., MS 1317 (H.2.15b), pp. 13–37 (= Stokes’s version C).
- H^{1b} T.C.D., MS 1317 (H.2.15b), pp. 77–102 (= Stokes’s version C).
- L T.C.D., MS 1339 (H.2.18) (The Book of Leinster), p. 179 = R. I. Best, M. A. O’Brien (ed.), *Book of Leinster*, IV (Dublin, 1965), pp. 780–1 = W. Stokes (ed.), *Three Irish Glossaries* (London, 1862 (repr. Felinbach, 2000)), pp. 44–45 (incomplete = Y 1224–34 (T) and Y 1268–75 (U) = Stokes’s version F).
- La Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud 610, fols. 79r–84r = W. Stokes (ed. and transl.), ‘On the Bodleian Fragment of Cormac’s Glossary’, *TPhS*, 1901, pp. 149–206 (incomplete = Y 756–1224 (I–T) = Stokes’s version G).
- M The Book of Uí Maine (Dublin, R.I.A., MS D.ii.1), pp. 177–84a = K. Meyer (ed.), ‘Cormacs Glossar nach der Handschrift des Buches der Uí Maine’, *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, phil.-hist. Kl., 1919, pp. 290–321 (incomplete; only up to Y 1224).
- Y T.C.D., MS 1318 (H.2.16) (The Yellow Book of Lecan), pp. 255a–283a = K. Meyer (ed.), ‘*Sanas Cormaic*’, *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, IV (Halle, 1912; repr. with Meyer’s corrections added to the text, Felinbach, 1994) = O’Donovan and Stokes, *Cormac’s Glossary* (especially for YAdd) (= Stokes’s version B) [reference by the numbering of items in Meyer’s edition].

³² For more detailed discussion, see Russell, ‘Sounds of a Silence’; Mahon, ‘Contributions’, pp. 29–41; cf. also Russell and Moran, *Database*.

³³ For the manuscript abbreviations and details of published texts, see below and p. 32.

YAdd The additional material in Y, H^{1a} and H^{1b}, which partially corresponds to H², not found in the other versions of the glossary [reference by the numbering of items in Meyer's edition].

It is the most encyclopaedic of the glossaries containing both long and short entries. It is also preserved in a shorter version (in B, M, L, and La) and in a longer version (in Y, H^{1a}, and H^{1b}) in which there is extra material on the end of each letter block (YAdd). There is a mixture of different types of entry (especially when we take YAdd into the account which contains a very high proportion of short etymological entries), but there are many more long and complex entries in SC than in the other glossaries. In short, it gives every impression of being a much more developed version of the glossary-type.

The term *sanas* 'glossary' is used only of SC;³⁴ it is attested in the headings of La and B, but is also found in the cross-reference to SC found in DDC and presented at the beginning of this paper: *leighe Sanais Cormaic* 'read SC';³⁵ in this case the SC entry to which the DDC scribe is directing the reader offers a much fuller discussion as it provides four different meanings of the headword *ness* which seem to have been brought together within the tradition of SC.³⁶ There are also two instances of the term *Silentium* 'silence' being used to refer to SC, both of which also preface this paper.³⁷ More generally, *sanas* seems to mean 'whisper, secret', but it also has a very specific sense as 'secret council of the king of Cashel', and it may imply that SC originally contained learned and obscure material. I have also suggested that the use of *sanas* in a title may be modelled on the use of *Apocriphus* as the title of a continental glossary, *Scholica Graecarum Glossarum*, where it is justified as follows:³⁸

Apocriphus Graece, Latine dicitur secretalis; quo nomine censetur liber aliquid secreti in se continens, propter quod non est recitandus in publico, sive quia auctoris nomine non praetitulatur, ut sunt libri quorundam veterum, libri quoque hereticorum mendacia in se continentes, propter quod secretius sunt legendi, qui et apocriphi vocantur. Apo quidem Graeca praepositio est, crisis vero polysemum nomen non

³⁴ For further discussion, see Russell, 'Sounds of a Silence', pp. 10–14; Russell, 'Graece ... Latine', pp. 416–18.

³⁵ See p. 1 above.

³⁶ For discussion of the editing together of distinct entries, see below, p. 16.

³⁷ See p. 1 above.

³⁸ Russell, 'Graece ... Latine', pp. 416–19; see also M. L. W. Laistner, 'Notes on Greek from the Lectures of a Ninth-Century Monastery Teacher', *Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library*, 7 (1923), 412–56: p. 426 (*Scholica Graecarum Glossarum*, A1).

unum eundemque sensum semper retinens; dicitur enim crisis aurum, dicitur et secretum.

Greek ἀπόκρυφος means in Latin *secretalis*; a book containing something secret in it is so called, and so it is not to be read out in public, or because it does not contain its author's name in the title, as are the books of certain ancients, books too which contain the lies of heretics in them, and so they are to be read more secretly; they too are called *apocriphi*. *Apo* indeed is a Greek preposition; *crisis*, however, has many meanings and does not always retain the same sense; for *crisis* means 'gold', and also 'secret'.

We may note not only the concern with secret information, but also the Isidorean analysis of the word, which incidentally has merged χρυσός 'gold' with -κρυφος 'hidden'.

Dúil Dromma Cetta [DDC] is much smaller containing some 640, mainly short, entries, many of them related to SC.³⁹ It is preserved in two full versions and two fragments. The details are as follows:

D¹ Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1337 (H.3.18), pp. 63–75 = *CIH*, II, 604.39–622–12 = W. Stokes (ed.), 'Irish Glosses', *TPhS*, 1859, pp. 170–97 (partially = Meyer's H² (*Anecdota*, IV, viii)).

D² T.C.D., MS 1337 (H.3.18), pp. 633a–638b = *CIH*, III, 1069.21–1078.14.

D³ London, British Library, MS Egerton 1782, fol. 15 (incomplete, *D–M* only) = Russell, 'Dúil Dromma Cetta', 166–8.

D⁴ T.C.D., MS 1287 (H.1.13), pp. 361–2 (incomplete, *I–M* only) = Russell, 'Dúil Dromma Cetta', 168–70.

DAdd The additional material in D¹ not found in the other versions of *DDC*.

The entries are often much slighter and thinner than SC and some entries seem to reflect an earlier stage of compilation than that found in SC. Like SC there is a longer version (D¹) and a shorter version (D²), and the entries common to D¹ and D² are mainly explanatory, while DAdd is mainly etymological in nature.

The third main glossary under consideration is O'Mulconry's Glossary [OM]. It contains some 880 entries, and is preserved in one full version and three fragments. The details are as follows:

³⁹ For a full discussion dealing with the relationship of the manuscripts and the connections between DDC and SC, see Russell, 'Dúil Dromma Cetta'.

- OM¹ T.C.D., MS 1318 (H.2.16) (The Yellow Book of Lecan), cols. 88–122 = W. Stokes (ed.), 'O'Mulconry's Glossary', *Archiv für celtische Lexicographie*, 1 (1900), pp. 232–324.
- OM² T.C.D., MS 1317 (H.2.15b), pp. 43–4 (frg. E–G only).
- OM³ T.C.D., MS 1317 (H.2.15b), pp. 104–6 (frg. A–C only).
- OM⁴ Franciscan Library, Killiney (now Dublin, U.C.D.), MS A 12, pp. 41–2 (frg. A only).

While the survival of only one full version prevents us from determining whether there were short and long versions, within the letter blocks of OM¹ it is possible to detect strata of entries which would suggest a similar mode of compilation as the other glossaries.⁴⁰ Support for this view comes from the fragment, OM², which seems also to contain a shorter version of the entries for the letter blocks E–G.⁴¹ This glossary is notable in that proportionally it contains many more Greek, Latin, and Hebrew explanations, which is consistent with the programmatic statement at the head of the glossary where a more continental and classical content is implied than in the other glossaries:⁴²

Incipit discreptio de origine Scoticae linguae quam congregaverunt religiosi viri, adiunctis nominibus ex Hebraeicano Hironimi et tractationibus, i.e. Ambrosi, et Cassiani et Augustini et Eisdori, Virgili, Prisciani, Commiani, Ciceronis, necnon per literas Graecorum, i.e. Atticae, Doricae, Eolicae linguae, quia Scoti de Graecis originem duxerunt, sic et linguam.

Here begins an account of the origin of the Irish language compiled by religious men by joining together names/nouns from the Hebrew etymologies of Jerome and from the biblical commentaries, namely those of Ambrosius, Cassianus, Augustine, Isidore, Virgil, Priscian, Cummean and Cicero, and particularly from Greek literature, i.e. the Attic, Doric and Aeolic dialects, since the Irish derive their origin from the Greeks, and thus too their language.

In addition to the three main glossaries a smaller fragmentary glossary has emerged as significant as it allows us to see the compilation of a glossary in action. It is currently known as H² (= TCD 1337 (H.3.18)), pp.

⁴⁰ See Eoin MacNeill, 'De Origine Scoticae Linguae', *Ériu*, 11 (1930–32), 112–29; Mahon, 'Contributions', pp. 35–6.

⁴¹ I hope to discuss this text in detail elsewhere.

⁴² For discussion of this passage, see Russell, 'Sounds of a Silence', pp. 5–6; Jaski, "We are of the Greeks in our Origin", pp. 11–12.

76–83 = *CIH*, II, 622.13–633.33).⁴³ It is in fact a two-part glossary: the first part (pp. 76–79b) is mainly an independent version of YAdd for letters *L–U*, while the second part (pp.79c–83) is a layered glossary partly related to OM: the upper layer overlapping with YAdd and OM, and the lower layer mainly with OM.

So far, little has been said about the date of these glossaries and that is partly because with compiled texts it is not clear what we think we are dating; while it is possible to date a particular entry on linguistic or historical grounds, it is not clear how far one can generalise any dating to the rest of a glossary, since it is clear that they continued to have additions made to them all the way up to the date of the extant manuscripts. Linguistically, therefore, they contain a mixture of forms from Old Irish to Late Middle Irish or indeed early Classical Modern Irish. Furthermore, the occurrence of early forms is not necessarily diagnostic of the date of the glossary as the forms may have been taken from some other text or compilation. Even so, it has been suggested, for example, that certain blocks of entries in OM may well date from the seventh century.⁴⁴ It has also been suggested that SC is to be associated with Cormac mac Cuilennáin, king of Munster and bishop of Cashel who died at the Battle of Belach Mugna in 908.⁴⁵ While that remains a plausible connection, it is not clear what precisely it signifies: Cormac was famed for his learning and it is plausible that he may have initiated the compilation of SC, a link which is made all the stronger by the Munster and Cashel associations of the term *sanas*.⁴⁶ If so, all the evidence suggests that SC was compiled from pre-existing glossary entries, not from a fresh culling of texts.⁴⁷ Hence Cormac's association with the enterprise may only mark one stage in the process of creating the glossary which carries his name. In relative terms, the core of DDC seems to be earlier than SC, as entries in DDC are often less developed than the corresponding entries in SC; for example, SC, uniquely among the glossaries, contains a number of entries which begin ... *déde / tréde / cethardae fordingair* '... has two / three / four different meanings' which

⁴³ For a brief discussion, see Russell, 'Dúil Dromma Cetta', pp. 150–1.

⁴⁴ Mahon, 'Contributions', pp. 34–7.

⁴⁵ For discussion, see Russell, 'Sounds of a Silence', pp. 10–11; id., 'Dúil Dromma Cetta', pp. 161–5; for his bibliographical details, see Paul Russell, 'Cormac mac Cuilennáin (d. 908)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6319>, accessed 8 April 2008].

⁴⁶ See Russell, 'Sounds of a Silence', pp. 10–15.

⁴⁷ For further discussion, see Russell, 'Laws, Glossaries and Legal Glossaries', pp. 109–14; for the earlier stages of the process, the extraction of glosses from texts and commentaries, see Russell, 'Sounds of a Silence', pp. 27–30; id., 'Laws, Glossaries and Legal Glossaries', pp. 88–90; Mahon, 'Contributions', pp. 18–20.

	OM	DDC	SC
1000			
1100			
			1186–9 L (frg.)
1200			
1300			
			1393–4 M
1400			1408–11 B
			1453–4 La
1500			
		1517 D ³	
	16 th c. OM ⁴	16 th c. D ¹ , D ²	[16 th c. also H ²]
	1572 OM ¹		1572 Y
1600			
			pre–1643 H ^{1a}
	1643 OM ²		
	1640s OM ³		1640s H ^{1b}
1700			
		1746 D ⁴	

Table 1: The dates of manuscripts containing early Irish glossaries

seem to be the outcome of the editorial bringing together of homonyms. The individual items can be found separately in other glossaries, notably DDC.⁴⁸ The crucial point about dating glossaries was made earlier in this paragraph, namely that they are ongoing compilations which seem to have had material added to them even as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the case of some manuscripts. In other words, the learned discourse continued for centuries although admittedly with time it probably became more of an antiquarian pursuit, and it is worth reminding ourselves how much we are indebted to the early modern Irish antiquaries for the survival of many of the glossaries. Table 1 above lists the manuscripts of the three main glossaries in chronological order. While the dates of the manuscripts of SC provide evidence of an ongoing tradition, no manuscript of OM or DDC is attested before the sixteenth century, despite the strikingly archaic nature of some of their contents. A notable cluster of copies occurs in the period from the mid-sixteenth century into the seventeenth, much of which can be associated with Clann Fhir Bhisigh, and in particular with Dubhaltach mac Fírbhisigh (*ca* 1600–

⁴⁸ See above, p. 4, for the example of *triath*, for further discussion and examples, see Russell, ‘Sounds of a Silence’, pp. 29–30.

71).⁴⁹ A useful illustration of his significance can be gained by looking at the contents of one manuscript which he compiled and partly copied. Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1317 (H.2.15b) is an important collection of glossary materials (two copies of SC, two fragments of OM and other glossaries besides) in addition to other learned texts, and its contents well illustrate the importance of Dubhaltach mac Firbhisigh in the preservation of learned texts from medieval Ireland. The contents are as follows:⁵⁰

pp. 11–12	glossary fragment (<i>acuis a causa, .i. on cuis</i>)
pp. 13–39	<i>Sanas Cormaic</i> (H ^{1a})
pp. 41–42	<i>Dúil Laithne</i> (glossary) ⁵¹
pp. 43–44	O’Mulconry’s Glossary (frag. D–G; OM ²)
pp. 45–60	O’Davoren’s Glossary ⁵²
pp. 61–78	<i>Fis Adamnáin</i> ⁵³
pp. 79–104a	<i>Sanas Cormaic</i> (H ^{1b})
pp. 104a–106	O’Mulconry’s Glossary (frag. A–C; OM ³)
pp. 107–130	<i>Auraicept na n-Éces</i> ⁵⁴
pp. 131–156	<i>Bretha Nemed</i> material ⁵⁵
pp. 157–312	<i>Dinnshenchas</i> ⁵⁶

⁴⁹ See Nollaig Ó Muraíle, *The Celebrated Antiquary Dubhaltach mac Firbhisigh (c. 1600–71). His Lineage, Life and Learning* (Maynooth, 1996, repr. 2003). For a study of a later family of scribes, the Uí Longáin, see Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, *The Scribe in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Ireland. Motivations and Milieu* (Münster, 2000).

⁵⁰ For details, see T. K. Abbot and E. J. Gwynn, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin, 1921), pp. 92–4; Ó Muraíle, *The Celebrated Antiquary*, pp. 78–86.

⁵¹ For an edition of *Dúil Laithne*, see Whitley Stokes (ed.), ‘*Dúil Laithne*’, *Goidelica* (London, 1872), pp. 71–83; cf. Russell, ‘Sounds of a silence’, pp. 7–8; Ó Muraíle, *The Celebrated Antiquary*, pp. 78–80.

⁵² O’Davoren’s Glossary is legal glossary largely based on glosses and commentaries to legal texts; see Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, Early Irish Law Series, V (Dublin, 2005), pp. 100–59. It is preserved in two copies: the fragmentary one noted here (ODav²), and London, British Library, MS Egerton 88, fols 79a–92c (ODav¹) which is printed in *CIH*, IV, 1466.11–1531.24, and edited by Whitley Stokes, ‘O’Davoren’s Glossary’, *Archiv für celtische Lexicographie*, 2 (1904), pp. 197–504, and id., *Three Irish Glossaries*, pp. 47–124.

⁵³ Ernst Windisch (ed.), ‘*Fís Adomnáin*, in *Irische Texte*, 5 vols, ed. W. Stokes and E. Windisch (Leipzig, 1880–1905), I, p. 165–96.

⁵⁴ *Auraicept* (ed. Calder).

⁵⁵ Printed at *CIH*, III, pp. 1111–38; for *Bretha Nemed*, see Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, Early Irish Law Series, III (Dublin, 1988), pp. 246, 268–9; Breatnach, *Companion*, pp. 184–91.

⁵⁶ For details, see n. 5 above.

The conjunction of glossaries, a *grammatical* text, legal material, a place-name text, and an eschatological text offers us a microcosm of medieval Irish learning all in one manuscript – probably the only item missing is a text of *Cóir Anmann*.

An important theme in the discussion so far has been the processes of compilation of glossaries. However, we should not be drawn into thinking that all glossaries involve compilation, even though the evidence points overwhelmingly in that direction. Dublin, Trinity College MS, 1337 (H.3.18), pp. 540–1, preserves a single folio glossary which seems to contain excerpts from a number of learned sources, mainly glossaries. More work needs to be done on this, but on a provisional assessment it has extracted material from SC (probably a recension containing YAdd), the Lecan Glossary,⁵⁷ the H³ Glossary,⁵⁸ *Auraicept na n-Éces*,⁵⁹ and the commentary to Sanctán's Hymn.⁶⁰ At present the rationale for the excerption remains unclear.

Most discussions of the glossaries have so far focused on issues of structure and make-up of both individual entries and of complete glossaries, and more generally on the processes of glossary compilation. Part of that has involved exploration of sources; for example, I have suggested that a number of the entries which base the explanation on Greek may derive from Carolingian Graeco-Latin glossaries.⁶¹ Likewise the relationship between legal entries in the glossaries and Irish law tracts has been considered;⁶² in this case it has been proposed that legal glossaries, similar perhaps to O'Davoren's glossary or the glossary to *Bretha Nemed Déidenach*, may have acted as intermediaries, and that some of the explanations preserved in legal commentaries also find their way into glossaries.⁶³ Even so, a broad-ranging exploration of the relationship between the glossaries and other learned texts and

⁵⁷ Book of Lecan (T.C.D., MS 1319 (H.2.17)), pp. 331–35; printed in Whitley Stokes (ed.), 'The Lecan Glossary', *Archiv für celtische Lexicographie*, 1 (1900), pp. 50–100; cf. Russell, 'Sounds of a silence', p. 7.

⁵⁸ See A. I. Pearson, 'A Medieval Glossary', *Ériu*, 13 (1940–42), 61–87; cf. Russell, 'Sounds of a silence', pp. 6–7.

⁵⁹ *Auraicept* (ed. Calder).

⁶⁰ Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901–3), II, pp. 350–3.

⁶¹ Russell, '*Graece ... Latine*'; see also now Moran, 'Sacred Languages and Irish Glossaries'.

⁶² Russell, 'Laws, Glossaries and Legal Glossaries'.

⁶³ For O'Davoren's Glossary, see n. 51 above. Two sets of *glossae collectae* in TCD MS 1337 (H.3.18) are identified respectively as *A brethe neime deidhinach so* (CIH II 603.16–604.38) and *incipit don brethaib nimhi deighinach fech* (CIH II 725.7–726.20).

commentaries remains a desideratum.⁶⁴ Looked at from the other direction, some scholars have commented on the parallels and possible links between other learned texts and the glossaries; for example, Sharon Arbuthnot has noted close parallels between entries in *Cóir Anmann* and the glossaries;⁶⁵ Deborah Hayden has considered the relationship between the SC entry on *deach* (SC D48 (= Y 447)) and a similar passage in *Auraicept na n-Éces*.⁶⁶ The central methodological issue here is whether the one has influenced the other or whether they are both dependent on some other common source. Unless the correspondences are exact, the latter is often the most likely possibility; for example, the differences between the SC narrative entry on *greth* (SC G21 (= Y 690)), in which Athairne first encounters the infant Amairgen and attempts to kill him, and a similar narrative preserved in the Book of Leinster can only be explained by assuming that they both derive from some third version which is no longer extant.⁶⁷

In what follows I intend to consider three examples of increasing complexity where we can observe similar material being used in glossaries and other learned texts. We may begin with a relatively clear example where it is even possible to determine the direction of dependency. The SC entry on Manannán mac Lir (SC M46 (= Y 896)) is as follows:⁶⁸

Manandán mac Lir, cendaige amra ro·boí i nInis Manann. Is hé lúam as dech ro·boí i n-íarthur domuin. Ro·findad trie nemgnacht .i. tria déicsin gné in nime, .i. ind aeoir, ind airet no·mbíth ind tshoinend 7 in donend 7 in tan con·claochlobad cechtarde a rré. *Inde Scoti et Britones eum deum uocauerunt maris, et inde filium maris esse dixerunt .i. mac lir. De nomine Manann insule Manannán dictus est.*

⁶⁴ One area which is in need of exploration is the relationship between learned commentary surrounding *Amra Choluimb Chille* and the glossaries; Sharon Arbuthnot is proposing to undertake a study of this.

⁶⁵ *Cóir Anmann* (ed. Arbuthnot), Part 1, pp. 45–7.

⁶⁶ Deborah Hayden, ‘Old Irish Syllabic Terminology’, unpublished M.Phil. dissertation (Cambridge, 2006); a revised version is to appear in the *Journal of Celtic Studies*.

⁶⁷ For discussion and translations of this entry, Patrick Ford, ‘The Blind, the Dumb, and the Ugly: Aspects of Poets and their Craft in Early Ireland and Wales’, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 19 (1990), 27–40, at pp. 28–30, and John T. Koch and John Carey, *The Celtic Heroic Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe and Early Ireland and Wales*, 4th edn (Aberystwyth, 2003), pp. 65–6; Russell, ‘Poets, Power and Possessions’, pp. 18–19, 35–6.

⁶⁸ The text is edited from the manuscripts of SC, but based on the Y version. For the significance of the Latin in this entry, see Russell, ‘Poets, Power, and Possessions’, p. 19.

Manannán mac Lir, he was a wonderful merchant in the Isle of Man. He was the best helmsman in the western world. He would know through his knowledge of the weather, i.e. by examining the aspect of the sky, i.e. of the atmosphere, how long the good weather and the bad weather would last and when each one of the periods would change. *As a result the Irish and the Britons called him a god of the sea, and so said that he was the son of the sea*, i.e. mac Lir. From the name of the Isle of Man he was called Manannán.

It is almost identical to the earliest *Cóir Anmann* version, even to the extent of having the same text in Latin, except that the latter has at the end of the entry: *Oirbsiu proprium nomen eius. Allæi nomen patris eius* ‘Oirbsiu was his proper name. Alla was his father’s name’.⁶⁹ The later redactions of *Cóir Anmann* show modifications: in CA1 a drastic abbreviation, and in CA3 the moving of *Oirbsiu* to the beginning of the entry, both of which are explicable and have parallels within the tradition of *Cóir Anmann*.⁷⁰ But, as Arbuthnot has noted, in this instance the line of development from SC to *Cóir Anmann* is clear.⁷¹

The third quotation at the beginning of this paper from the Rennes *Dinnshenchas* contains a cross reference to SC, referring to it as a *Silentium*. The passage from which that is taken provides a slightly more complicated example of the possible relationships between glossaries and other learned texts. The passage provides four different explanations of the name of Tara:⁷²

§1. Temair didiu múr Tea ingine Lugdech ...; §2 No Temhair .i. Teipe múr, .i. múr Teiphis ingine Bachtir rí Espainia ...; §3 Temhairu. anmanda Temrach indsin; §4 vel ita: Temair a verbo graeco *temorio* quod latine interpretatur *conspicio*. Huius oppidi quod Temoriam vocamus nomen esse derivatum auctores affirmant; omnisque locus conspicuus et eminens, sive in campo, sive in domo, sive in quocumque loco sit, vocabulo quod dicitur Temair nominari potest. Sic in

⁶⁹ *Cóir Anmann* (ed. Arbuthnot), CA2, § 148 (Part 1, pp. 111–12 (text), p. 147 (transl.).

⁷⁰ *Cóir Anmann* (ed. Arbuthnot), CA1, § 36 (Part 1, p. 183 (text), p. 190 (transl.), and CA3, § 160 (Part 2, pp. 45–6 (text), p. 119 (transl.); for discussion, see Part 1, pp. 19–20 and more generally on the relationship between SC and *Cóir Anmann*, pp. 45–7. For a similar example, see below, p. 24.

⁷¹ *Cóir Anmann* (ed. Arbuthnot), Part 1, pp. 19–20.

⁷² Stokes (ed.), ‘The Prose Tales in the Rennes Dindshenchas’, pp. 277–80; for clarity of presentation, the first three entries are abbreviated; see also Russell, ‘Sounds of a Silence’, p. 15.

proverbio scotico reperitur, ut dicitur *temair na túaithi* et *temair in toighi*, quam sententiam in suo silentio Cormaccus de hoc nomine disputando possuit ...

§1 Tara then, the rampart of Tea daughter of Lugaid ...; §2 Or Tara, i.e. the rampart of Teiphe, i.e. the rampart of Teiphis, daughter of Bachter, king of Spain ...; §3 Tara ... one of the five names of Tara ...; §4 Tara comes from the Greek verb *temorio* which is translated in Latin by *conspicio* ‘I catch sight of’.⁷³ (From this) the authorities claim that the name of this town which we call *Temoria* is derived; and every place which is visible and high, whether in the plain, in the house, in whatever place, can be named by this word, namely *Temair*. Thus it is found in the Irish proverb, ‘*Temair* of the people’ and ‘*Temair* of the house’; this view Cormac presented in his ‘Silence’ in his discussion of this word.

The corresponding entry is SC T15 (= Y 1212):

Temair .i. té múr .i. múr Téa ingine Luigdech maic Ithae.
 Temair .i. Gréc rotrúailled and .i. teomoro i.e. conspicio.
 Temair didiu cech locc as mbí aurnam déicsi iter mag 7 tech,
ut dicitur temair na túaithe 7 temair in tige.

Temair ‘Tara’ [< *Tea* PN + *múr* ‘rampart’] the rampart of Tea, daughter of Lugaid mac Íthae. *Temair*, i.e. Greek has been corrupted there, i.e. *teomoro* (? θεωρέω ‘look at’), i.e. *conspicio*. *Temair* then is every place from which a view is provided whether a plain or a house, as is said ‘*Temair* of the people’ and ‘*Temair* of the house’.

The SC entry begins in the same way with the explanation of *Temair* by reference to Tea, daughter of Lugaid, but the explanation is simply etymological and lacks the longer narrative of the other version. It then offers a version of what in the *Dinnshenchas* is the fourth explanation which relates it to a putative Greek verb meaning ‘see’. It is also shorter, but it is also in Irish, as opposed to the Latin of the *Dinnshenchas*. Elsewhere, I have suggested that where the narrative of a glossary entry resorts to Latin we should be on the alert for something interesting, but here a complete section of the *Dinnshenchas* entry is in Latin and it would be reasonable to assume that it derives from a different source from the rest which is in Irish.⁷⁴ In this case it is difficult to see how the

⁷³ The Greek verb ‘*temorio*’ may be a rendering of θεωρέω ‘look at’; see Russell, ‘Sounds of a Silence’, p. 15; id., ‘*Graece ... Latine*’, p.410.

⁷⁴ Russell, ‘Poets, Power, and Possessions’, pp. 18–20.

SC entry could derive from the *Dinnshenchas* entry or vice versa; if the former, then there is no reason why the second and third explanations would have been omitted; if the latter, the translation of Irish into Latin would be unprecedented in these texts as the usual line of translation is from Latin into Irish. It is reasonable, therefore, in this case to suppose that behind these entries there was an entry similar to that in SC but probably with the second explanation, at least, in Latin, and that within the tradition of the *Dinnshenchas* it was merged with other accounts. Alternatively, given the propensity of SC to compile entries and explanations, it is possible that separate explanations were brought together in different ways in the two texts.

So far, the discussion has dealt with cases where we have two versions of an entry. There are also more complicated examples involving more than two versions. A particularly complex example, which is worth discussing in detail, involves the SC entry on the name *Gaileng* (G16 = Y 685):⁷⁵

Gaileng .i. gae lang .i. cac ar enech .i. fri Cormac mac Taidg maic Céin as·rubrad. Do·rigni side fleid do Thadg .i. dia athair. Cét cech cenéle anmand oca inge bruic nammá. Do·cúaid didiu Cormac do broicenaig. Roba mall lais anad fri a togail, cota·gart amach for fír enich a athar .i. Taidg. Do·lotar som in bruic. Ros·marb dano Cormac cét díb, 7 dodus·árfen oc in fleid 7 ro·gráin cride Taidg frie 7 ata·robaid. Ro·fitir íarom a ndo·rigned and, 7 ro·ainmnigestar a mac ab hoc nomine .i. Cormac Gaileng, unde Gaileng nuncupantur. Gaileng .i. gáei lang .i. cen cennach. Gaileng din .i. gail seng íarsinní senggaiter indala n-ai

Gaeleng (name), [< *gae* 'spear' + *lang* 'treacherous'] i.e. treacherous spear, i.e. excrement on honour, i.e. it was applied to Cormac mac Taidg mac Céin. He made a feast for Taidg, i.e. for his father. A hundred of every kind of animal at it except badgers alone. Then Cormac went to a badgers' set. He thought it slow to wait for it to be destroyed, so he called them

⁷⁵ The text here is based on the Y version; for a text and translation, see A. Mac an Bhaird, 'Varia II: Tadhg mac Céin and the Badgers', *Ériu*, 31 (1980), 150–5, at p. 151, and for a translation only J. T. Koch, 'A Swallowed Onomastic Tale in Cath Maige Mucrama?', in *Ildánach, Ildírech. A Festschrift for Proinsias Mac Cana*, ed. J. Carey, J. T. Koch, P-Y. Lambert (Andover & Aberstwyth, 1999), pp. 63–80, at p. 72; for a translation and discussion, see Russell, 'Poets, Power, and Possessions', p. 34. The text presented above varies in detail from that of Mac an Bhaird: it maintains a row of preterite and perfect verbs in *do·lotar ... ros·marb ... dodus·árfen ... ro·gráin ... ata·robaid*, rather than making the second and third present.

out under the protection of the honour of his father, Tadhg. The badgers came. Cormac killed them then, a hundred of them, and he displayed them at the feast, and the heart of Tadhg shuddered at it and he refused it. Afterwards he found out what had been done there, and he named his son *from this name*, i.e. Cormac Gaileng, *from whom the Gaileng take their name*. Gaileng, i.e. [*< gáu* ‘falsehood’ + *lang* ‘treacherous’] treacherous falsehood, i.e. without a transaction. Gaileng, then, i.e. [*< gal* ‘ardour’ or ? *gáel* 3 ‘wound’ + *seng* ‘thin’] thin ardour (or wound), on account of the fact that each one of them grew thin.

Mac an Bhaird is almost certainly correct in seeing the narrative as involving the dietary taboo of a person eating the animal after which he himself is named: he demonstrates that *Tadhg* etymologically means ‘badger’ and so it is a taboo for him to eat badger meat.⁷⁶ Different versions are found in each of the three extant texts of *Cóir Anmann*.⁷⁷ There is also another long and detailed account preserved in Dublin, T.C.D. MS 1337 (H.3.18), p. 42.⁷⁸ There is also a brief version in Irish and Latin, not noted by Mac an Bhaird, preserved in the genealogies which attempts a rationalization of the narrative:⁷⁹

Cormac Gaileng didiu mac Taidc .i. dia ruc gae Taidg leis dochum na mbrocc co táncatar side for enech Taidgc immach unde Gaileng nominantur. Ego autem puto eos immanitate fumi uel caloris igniti cogente foras tunc et nec mirum si gentiles putarent eiusdem foras praeclari illius viri veritate esse vocatos 7 postquam foras egressi sunt statim occidit eos Cormaccus, et ideo exulatus est a Tadc et hinc in proverbium venit nomen generis eius, id est Gaileng.

Cormac Gaileng then, son of Tadhg, i.e. when he took the spear of Tadhg with him to the badgers and they came out under his protection. However, I think it was the unpleasantness of the smoke and the heat of the fire which forced them out then,

⁷⁶ Mac an Bhaird, ‘Varia II’; cf. also J. T. Koch, ‘A Swallowed Onomastic Tale’, where the idea is developed in relation to other examples. On badger-hunting in medieval Ireland, see Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, Early Irish Law Series, IV (Dublin, 1997), pp. 282, 353.

⁷⁷ *Cóir Anmann* (ed. Arbuthnot), CA1 §25 (Part 1, p. 180 (text), p. 187 (transl.) (shortened from CA2); CA2 §136 (Part 1, pp. 108–9 (text), p. 145 (transl.); CA3, § 247 (Part 2, pp. 63–4 (text), p. 136 (transl.) (expanded from CA2).

⁷⁸ Printed and translated in Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries*, pp. xlii–v.

⁷⁹ M. A. O’Brien (ed.), *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, 1 (Dublin, 1962), pp. 246–7 (from Rawl. B 502, 154a4–11 = LL 329c10–40).

and that is not surprising if pagans think that they had been called out on the honour of that noble man and after they came out Cormac immediately killed them. As a result he was exiled by Tadg and from this the name of his kin, i.e. Gaileng, became proverbial.

This last version shares with the *Cóir Anmann* a clear reference to the spear where it is used as the token of the *fír enich* of his father, Tadg, and a reference to Cormac's exile. The spear is presupposed in the SC narrative where it is required to explain the *gae leng* 'treacherous spear' etymology at the beginning and is implied by the *fír enich* phrase, but it is not mentioned explicitly, nor is there any mention of exile.

The development of the tale has been analysed in several ways. Stokes suggested that the SC version was an abridgement of the longer version preserved in TCD 1337.⁸⁰ Mac an Bhaird, on the other hand, argues for a linear development from SC to *Cóir Anmann* to the detailed TCD 1337 version.⁸¹ Neither took into account the short version in the genealogies nor were they aware that *Cóir Anmann* preserves three different versions, although it can be plausibly argued that CA1 and CA3 derive from the earliest version found in CA2, and so that variation belongs within the tradition of *Cóir Anmann*.⁸² None of the Irish versions of the tale seems to have been aware of the dietary taboo underlying the tale; for them Tadg is simply a personal name. Each version of the narrative represents interestingly different attempts to account for the basic train of events. The simplest and sparest account is that preserved in the first sentence of the text in the genealogies which is then followed by authorial comment in Latin.⁸³ The SC version seems to follow a similar narrative line. However, the version in the genealogies also includes in the Latin comment the point that Cormac was exiled by Tadg which is not mentioned in SC but is found in *Cóir Anmann*. The text preserved in the genealogies may therefore be composite, as suggested by the variation in language, and so it may not be a reliable guide to early versions of the story. What is less clear is whether the *Cóir Anmann* versions are based on SC or on a version closer to the genealogies in which the spear and the exile are prominent; the latter seems more likely. The TCD 1337 version seems significantly later in that it introduces a large cast of other characters (Mac an Bhaird describes it as 'being inflated in to a small-

⁸⁰ Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries*, p. xlii,

⁸¹ Mac an Bhaird, 'Varia II', p. 150.

⁸² See above, p. 21.

⁸³ Cf. Russell, 'Poets, Power, and Possessions', pp. 18–20. The authorial comment itself is interesting for the implication that the conventional way of catching badgers was to smoke them out.

scale romance’), and attempts to account for the significance of the badgers by explaining them as transformed humans.⁸⁴ It also has Tadhg instructing Cormac to go and find badgers for the feast; the effect of this is to put greater emphasis on the breaking of trust by using Tadhg’s spear as the bargaining tool. In a sense the direction of influence is immaterial to the point of the present discussion. What is significant is the presence of this narrative in a number of learned texts and the way in which each version was adapted to provide a plausible narrative of the events.

In exploring the relationship between the glossaries and other learned texts we have considered three examples of increasing complexity. The last case should give us pause for thought in that the complexity arises because we have many more versions of the narrative attested. Furthermore, because the central point of the narrative, the dietary taboo, had been lost at an early stage, each version was negotiating its own way towards a understanding of the story. One is left wondering whether the clearer cases provided by the first two examples are not really mirages; that is, they seem clear and comprehensible simply because other versions of them have been lost and, if we had as many versions of the Manannán story or the explanations of Tara as we did of the Gaileng narrative, matters would be equally complicated.

We began this paper by considering the significance of the analytic and etymological tools which Isidore offered the Irish and by observing that their importance has only recently been fully appreciated. The paper itself has focused on the connections within Ireland between glossaries and other learned texts, and how those Isidorean tools have been deployed in a range of different learned contexts. It is appropriate, therefore, that we end with Isidore.

In the paper cited at the beginning of this lecture, as befitting a lecture delivered and published in Spain, Kathleen Hughes devoted a few pages to Isidore of Seville, of whom she comments in the spirit of her time: ‘his interest in words and etymological definitions gave authority to their most pedantic inclination’.⁸⁵ By way of an example, she quotes Isidore’s etymologies of the different words for ‘cat’:

Musio appellatus, quod muribus infestus sit. Hunc vulgus cattum a captura vocant. Alii dicunt, quod cattat, id est videt. Nam tanto acute cernit ut fulgore luminis noctis tenebras

⁸⁴ Mac an Bhaird, ‘Varia II’, p. 150.

⁸⁵ Hughes, ‘Irish Monks and Learning’, pp. 69–70.

superet. Vnde a Graeco venit catus, id est ingeniosus, *apo tou kaiesthai*.

The mouser (*musio*) is so called because it is troublesome to mice (*mus*). Common people call it the cat (*cattus*) from 'catching' (*captura*). Others say it is so named because *cattat*, that is, 'it sees' – for it can see so keenly (*acute*) that with the gleam of its eye it overcomes the darkness of night. Hence 'cat' comes from Greek, that is, 'clever' from *καίεσθαι* ("lit up", i.e. the passive of *καίειν* "kindle").⁸⁶

She goes on to 'wonder if the ninth century Irish scholar had been reading Isidore before he wrote about his own cat', and she quotes in Flower's translation some verses (in fact, the first, fifth, and sixth stanzas) from what is probably the most famous of Old Irish poems, *Messe ocus Pangur Bán*, preserved in a small manuscript in the monastery of St Paul, Unterdrauberg, in Carinthia (southern Austria), and dating from the ninth century:

I and Pangur Ban my cat,
'Tis a like task we are at:
Hunting mice is his delight,
Hunting words I sit all night.

'Gainst the wall he sets his eye
Full and fierce and sharp and sly;
'Gainst the wall of knowledge I
All my little wisdom try.

When a mouse darts from his den
O how glad is Pangur then!
O what gladness do I prove
When I solve the doubts I love!⁸⁷

What has clearly caught her attention is the emphasis on the intense and focused gaze of a cat hunting a mouse. However, other versions of this poem render the relevant lines, 'his eye full and fierce and sharp and sly', rather differently, and one might wonder whether Hughes has been misled into making the link between this poem and the passage from Isidore by Flower's translation. In Gerard Murphy's translation the line is rendered

⁸⁶ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* (ed. Lindsay), XII.ii.38; transl. *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, transl. S. A. Barney, et al., p. 254.

⁸⁷ Robin Flower, *The Irish Tradition* (Oxford, 1947), pp. 24–5.

rather differently; the following are the corresponding lines of the poem in his edition and translation:⁸⁸

Messe ocus Pangur bán,
cechtar nathar fria saindán:
bíth a menma-sam fri seilgg,
mu menma céin im sainceirdd.

...

Fūachaidsem fri frega fál
a rosc, a nglése comlán;
fūachimm chēin fri fēgi fis
mu rosc rēil, cesu imdis.

Fāelidsem cu ndēne dul
hi nglen luch inna gērchrub;
hi tucu cheist ndoraíd ndil
os mē chene am fāelid.

...

I and white Pangur practise each of us his special art; his mind is set on hunting, my mind on my special craft.

He directs his bright perfect eye against an enclosing wall. Though my clear eye is very weak I direct against keenness of knowledge.

He is joyful with swift movement when a mouse sticks in his sharp paw. I too am joyful when I understand a dearly loved difficult problem.

The crucial phrase is the line edited by Murphy above as *a rosc, a nglése comlán*. This is by no means as clear as it might be and has been subject to different interpretations depending on how the words are to be divided. Murphy follows Stokes and Strachan in segmenting *a nglése*, and treating *a* as the neuter article with following nasalisation referring to *rosc*, and their note also implies that they thought that the final *-se* was the

⁸⁸ Gerard Murphy (ed. and transl.), *Early Irish Lyrics* (Oxford, 1956), pp. 2–3. See also Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus*, II, pp. 293–4; Kuno Meyer, *Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry* (New York, 1911), pp. 81–2; Rudolf Thurneysen, *Old-Irish Reader*, translated by D. A. Binchy and O. Bergin (Dublin, 1949), pp. 40–1; David Greene and Frank O’Connor, *A Golden Treasury of Irish Poetry, A.D. 600 to 1200* (London, 1967), pp. 81–3; Proinseas Mac Cana, ‘The Scholar and his Cat’, in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, ed. S. Deane, 5 vols (Derry/Cork, 1991–2002), I, pp. 44–5.

demonstrative particle, thus literally, ‘his eye, this full bright one’, although their translation, ‘this glancing full one’, seems to be rendering *glé* as ‘glancing’.⁸⁹ Thurneysen offers a different reading and interpretation: *a rosc anglése comlán* ‘his eye full of darkness’, treating *anglése* as the abstract noun (based on the negative adjective, *anglé*), preposed before *comlán*.⁹⁰ If we accept the latter interpretation as closest to an Old Irish understanding of the phrase, then it is unlikely that the poet had Isidore in mind, since he seems to be thinking of the darkness of a cat’s eye rather than its brightness or gleam. On the other hand, the use of the article with an adjective after a noun which is qualified by a possessive adjective is well attested especially in verse; we may compare in particular a line from another Old Irish poem: *úas mo lebrán ind línech* ‘(lit.) above my little book, the lined one’.⁹¹ In other words, it still remains possible that our poet was influenced by Isidore rather than Kathleen Hughes by Flower’s translation. We might wish to argue about whether a passage of Isidore need necessarily be the trigger for such an idea, but it is a characteristically subtle and thoughtful point on her part.

Be that as it may, what I suspect she did not know, because she had been warned off such trivial and pedantic texts by her teachers, is that this passage of Isidore was the source of an entry in O’Mulconry’s Glossary. It may be helpful to present the two passages together:

Isidore, *Origines*, XII.ii.38: Musio appellatus, quod muribus infestus sit. Hunc vulgus cattum a captura vocant. Alii dicunt, quod cattat, id est videt. Nam tanto acute cernit ut fulgore luminis noctis tenebras superet. Vnde a Graeco venit catus, id est ingeniosus, *apo tou kaiesthai*.

OM C19. Cat Graece catos dicitur apa toi catesta; *nam tanto acute cernit ut fulgore luminis noctis tenebras superat*.⁹²

Cat ‘cat’, [< Greek *katesta* (καθῆσθαι ‘sit’, perhaps rectius *καίεσθαι* ‘to be lit up’)] Greek *catos* (? recte Latin *catus*) is so

⁸⁹ Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus*, II.293, n. b. A similar reading of the Irish, *a rosc a nglé-se comlán*, is given by Greene and O’Connor, *A Golden Treasury*, p. 81, though their translation, ‘his bright clear eye’, avoids the issue of the nasalizing *a*; with similar renderings, cf. also Meyer, *Selections*, p. 81: ‘his full shining eye’, and Mac Cana, ‘The Scholar and his Cat’, p. 45: ‘his clear and faultless eye’.

⁹⁰ Thurneysen, *Old-Irish Reader*, p. 40 (and p. 61 s.v. *anglése*); cf. also Rudolf Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish*, translated by D. A. Binchy and O. Bergin (Dublin, 1946), p. 159.

⁹¹ Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus*, II, p. 290, l. 7; cf. Thurneysen, *Grammar of Old Irish*, p. 298.

⁹² ‘O’Mulconry’s Glossary’, § 211 (ed. Stokes, p. 244).

called ἀπὸ τοῦ καίεσθαι (apo tou kaiesthai) ‘from being lit up’;
*for it sees so acutely that it overcomes the darkness of the night
 with the gleam of its eye.*

OM derives *cat* from a Greek *catos* on account of the fact that its eyes blaze. In his edition of OM, Stokes, prints καζεσθαι for the MS *katesta*, but it is likely that either in the process of transmission and transliteration there was a scribal misreading of *ι* or *i* as *τ* or *t*, or in a more thoroughgoing confusion the verb was understood as coming from καθῆσθαι ‘to sit’ rather than καίεσθαι ‘to be lit up’, despite the fact that the explanatory *nam* signposts the link between the verb and the explanation.⁹³ There are important and interesting differences between the etymologising in Isidore and OM. Isidore presents several different etymologies of *cattus* in quick succession. First, *cattus* is explained as from *captura* ‘catching’ (presumably mice, which follows from the preceding sentence). Secondly, it is so called because *cattat* ‘it sees’;⁹⁴ that account is then explained by reference to its ability to see in the dark which also includes a consonantal link to *acute* [C + T]. Thirdly, a different Latin word, *catus* ‘clever’, is brought in, and derived from Greek; it is worth noting that this last sentence derives word for word from Servius’s commentary on Virgil, *Aeneid*, I, 423, a useful reminder that Isidore’s *Etymologiae* is also a compilation.⁹⁵ The OM entry has read the passage in a different order (assuming his text of Isidore was the same as ours): the first two etymologies have been ignored, and the *nam* clause comes after the ‘blazing’ explanation. The change of order brings about a change in the logic: in addition to the consonantal link between *cattus* and *acute*, the explanation then seems to revolve around *fulgore luminis* ‘the gleam of its eye’. This provides an important example of how an Irish glossator felt free to modify and rephrase Isidore and take from it what he wanted. One outcome of this is that the OM entry with its emphasis on

⁹³ *ibid.*; for letter confusions, see Russell, ‘*Graece ... Latine*’, 408–10; *id.*, ‘On Reading Ptolemy: Some Methodological Considerations’, in *Ptolemy. Towards a Linguistic Atlas of the Earliest Celtic Place-names of Europe*, ed. D. N. Parsons and P. Sims-Williams (Aberystwyth, 2000), 179–88, at pp. 181–3.

⁹⁴ As we are told from the gloss; clearly the verb *cattare* was unfamiliar both to the intended audience who needed the gloss and to scribes who, to judge from the manuscript variants, *captat*, *cautet*, *catat*, attempted to turn it into something else. The verb is in fact only attested in Isidore although there seem to be later Romance reflexes, e.g. Spanish *catar* ‘see’; for discussion, see J. N. Adams, *The Regional Diversification of Latin 200 BC – AD 600* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 427. If this is correct, then it is interesting to observe Isidore resorting to his own local dialect of Latin for etymological purposes.

⁹⁵ G. Thilo and H. Hagen (ed.), *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Carmina Commentarii*, 4 vols (Leipzig, 1878–1902), I, p. 423.

fulgor luminis might have provided a better stimulus, if one were needed, for the image of the cat than the original passage of Isidore.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ I am grateful to Charlene Eska for reading a late draft of this and making numerous suggestions and corrections.

ABBREVIATIONS

For further details on the glossary manuscripts and published texts, see above, pp. 10–14.

- B SC: Leabhar Breac (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 P 16), pp 263–72.
- CIH D. A. Binchy (ed.), *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, 6 vols (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978).
- D¹ DDC: Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1337 (H.3.18), pp. 63–75.
- D² DDC: T.C.D., MS 1337, pp. 633a–638b.
- D³ DDC: London, British Library, MS Egerton 1782, fol. 15.
- D⁴ DDC: T.C.D., MS 1287 (H.1.13), pp. 361–2.
- DAdd The additional material in D¹ not found in the other versions of DDC.
- DDC *Dúil Dromma Cetta*.
- DIL Quin, E. G., et al. (*Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1913–76; compact edition: Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1990); an electronically searchable version is now on-line at <http://www.dil.ie/>).
- eDIL Electronic version of *DIL*, q.v.
- H^{1a} SC: T.C.D., MS 1317 (H.2.15b), pp 13–37.
- H^{1b} SC: T.C.D., MS 1317 (H.2.15b), pp 77–102.
- L SC: T.C.D., MS 1339 (H.2.18) (*The Book of Leinster*), p. 179.
- La SC: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud 610, fols 79r–84r.
- M SC: *The Book of Uí Maine* (Dublin, R.I.A., MS D.ii.1), pp 177–84a.
- OM O’Mulconry’s Glossary.
- OM¹ OM: T.C.D., MS 1318 (H.2.16) (*The Yellow Book of Lecan*), cols. 88–122.
- OM² OM: T.C.D., MS 1317 (H.2.15b), pp. 43–4.
- OM³ OM: T.C.D., MS 1317 (H.2.15b), pp. 104–6.
- OM⁴ OM: Franciscan Library, Killiney (now Dublin, U.C.D.), MS A 12, pp. 41–2.
- SC *Sanas Cormaic* ‘Cormac’s Glossary’.
- TPhS *Transactions of the Philological Society*.
- Y SC: T.C.D., MS 1318 (H.2.16) (*The Yellow Book of Lecan*), pp 255a–283a.
- YAdd The additional material in Y, H^{1a} and H^{1b}, not found in the other versions of the glossary.

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