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Anatomical Metaphor in *Auraicept na nÉces*

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T HE grammatical compilation known as *Auraicept na nÉces* ('The Scholars' Primer') is a strikingly complex example of the medieval Irish commentary tradition. On the one hand, it is a work that can be firmly situated within the wider context of medieval European linguistic thought and pedagogical practice. Yet its authors can also be seen to respond to that model with no small measure of self-assurance and ingenuity, as evidenced in part by their well-known attempts to demonstrate the superiority of their native language over Latin.[1] The aim of this chapter is to explore the use of anatomical metaphor by the scholiasts of the *Auraicept* in their analysis of the linguistic features of Irish, a motif that sheds much light on their approach to comprehending and describing written and spoken language as an abstract system. In keeping with the theme of the present volume, this motif illustrates both the transmission of ideas — in this case from the authorities of Latin grammatical tradition — and their subsequent expression and adaptation within a medieval Irish scholarly milieu.

The most recent editor of the *Auraicept*, Anders Ahlqvist, has tentatively argued on linguistic grounds that the original and comparatively short core of the text, which he has attempted to reconstruct from the surviving witnesses, can be dated to 'a fairly early

stage of the Old Irish period' (*ca* AD 700–900).[2] The precise form and extent of this original composition is uncertain, however, since all extant copies of the *Auraicept* include a substantial quantity of accreted glossing and commentary, most of which was probably added to the compilation during the Middle Irish period (*ca* AD 900–1200).[3] In the preface to his earlier edition of the commentated *Auraicept*, George Calder had suggested that the bulk of this glossing 'was not completed before the middle of the tenth century, perhaps not till towards the end of the eleventh',[4] while Ahlqvist stated that 1100 'represents more or less the end of a common tradition for the Auraicept commentaries, but not, by any means, the end of material being added to the text'.[5] The quantity, order and content of this commentary vary considerably across the numerous extant manuscript witnesses, as do differences in script size and spacing that visually distinguish primary material from secondary or tertiary scholia. It is thus clear that *Auraicept* testifies, in the words of Pádraig Ó Néill elsewhere in this volume, to 'a process not just of passive transmission but of active appropriation' on the part of its medieval copyists.[6] As a manifestly didactic collection of material intended for the teaching of elementary linguistic precepts, this process of adaptation probably began at a very early stage in the development of the compilation, possibly in conscious imitation of Latin commentaries on the widely circulated *Ars maior* of Donatus.[7] In a study of the numerous Latin quotations found in the *Auraicept*, Erich Poppe persuasively argued that its glossators shared the same intellectual background and scholarly interests as the authors of several such commentaries written on the Continent in the ninth century, including those by Murethach, Sedulius Scottus and the anonymous

[2] Anders Ahlqvist, ed. and trans., *The Early Irish Linguist. An Edition of the Canonical Part of the Auraicept na nÉces*, Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 73 (Helsinki, 1983), p. 36.

[3] For a more detailed discussion of the problems associated with establishing a core text, see ibid., pp. 33–4.

[4] George Calder, ed. and trans., *Auraicept na nÉces. The Scholars' Primer* (Edinburgh, 1917), p. xxxi.

[5] Ahlqvist, *Early Irish Linguist*, pp. 31–2.

[6] See below, p. 121.

[7] On this theory see Rijcklof Hofman, 'Latin Grammars and the Structure of the Vernacular Old Irish *Auraicept na nÉces*,' in *Spoken and Written Language. Relations between Latin and the Vernaculars in the Earlier Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Garrison, Marco Mostert and Arpád Orbán, with the assistance of Wolfert S. van Egmond, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 24 (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 185–98.

author of the *Ars Laureshamensis*.[8] All of these Latin works are thought to derive from a lost commentary, quite possibly composed in Ireland, that dates from *ca* 800–*ca* 830.[9] Calder drew attention, moreover, to the *Etymologiae* of Isidore and the work of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus as probable sources for the *Auraicept*'s scholiasts.[10] The transmission of the vernacular text itself appears to have been confined to Ireland in the medieval period, though various stages of its growth may have occurred simultaneously in distinct centres of learning, and the circulation of this material amongst itinerant scholars resulted in the frequent conflation of different versions. It should therefore be noted that, although the following discussion draws principally on the commented text as it has been presented in Calder's 1917 edition of two separate recensions, there are many more full and fragmentary witnesses to the *Auraicept* that were not used by Calder, and that have not been studied in detail.[11] These witnesses may yet provide a great deal of insight into the development of the text, the geographical spread of ideas and the sources used by its compilers.

[8] Erich Poppe, 'The Latin Quotations in *Auraicept na nÉces*: Microtexts and their Transmission', in *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission/Irland und Europa im früheren Mittelalter: Texte und Überlieferung*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Dublin, 2002), pp. 296–312. For the Latin commentaries see Murethach, *In Donati Artem maiorem*, ed. Louis Holtz, CCCM 40 (Turnhout, 1977); Sedulius Scottus, *In Donati artem maiorem*, ed. Bengt Löfstedt, CCCM 40B (Turnhout, 1977); and *Ars Laureshamensis, Expositio in Donatum maiorem*, ed. Bengt Löfstedt, CCCM 40A (Turnhout, 1977). For further discussion of the *Auraicept*'s inheritance from Latin tradition, see also Erich Poppe, 'Die mittelalterliche irische Abhandlung *Auraicept na nÉces* und ihr geistesgeschichtlicher Standort', in *Theorie und Rekonstruktion. Trierer Studien zur Geschichte der Linguistik*, edited by K. D. Dutz and H-J. Niederehe (Munster, 1996), pp. 55–74; and id., 'Latinate Terminology in *Auraicept na n-Éces*', in *History of Linguistics 1996, Volume 1: Traditions in Linguistics Worldwide*, ed. David Cram, Andrew Robert Linn and Elke Nowak (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1999), pp. 191–201.

[9] See Holtz, *Murethach*, pp. xxxv and lxii; id., 'Sur trois commentaires irlandais de l'*Art majeur* de Donat au IXe siècle', *Revue d'histoire des textes* 2 (1972), 45–72; and Vivien Law, 'The Study of Grammar', in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 88–110, at 104.

[10] Calder, ed. and trans., *Auraicept*, pp. xxxi–l.

[11] For the manuscripts used by Calder, see his *Auraicept*, p. xiii, and also the discussion by Deborah Hayden, 'Some Notes on the Transmission of *Auraicept na nÉces*', *PHCC* 32 (2012), 134–79. The most recent summary of all catalogued copies of the text, including a preliminary discussion of their relationships, was compiled by Ahlqvist, *Early Irish Linguist*, pp. 22–32. To this list can be added the fragments in UCD OFM A10, fols 1–2, on which see Deborah Hayden, 'Two Fragments of *Auraicept na nÉces* in the Irish Franciscan Archive: Context and Content', in *Celts and their Cultures at Home and Abroad: A Festschrift for Malcolm Broun*, ed. Anders Ahlqvist and Pamela O'Neill, Sydney Series in Celtic Studies 15 (Sydney, 2013), pp. 91–124.

THE STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE

Given the scholiasts' evident familiarity with a range of Latin grammatical sources, it is not surprising to find that the use of anatomical metaphor in the *Auraicept* is strongly rooted in the metalanguage of classical linguistic tradition. This is certainly the case with regard to their treatment of the structural elements of language, including sounds, letters and syllables, which are the focus of a considerable proportion of the commentary associated with the compilation. Pedagogical manuals of the Latin language, including the *Ars maior* of Donatus, frequently began with a discussion of the *uox* ('speech, utterance'), which was sometimes described as a corporeal substance on the basis that it was formed of 'struck air' and produced effects on the sense of hearing (perception) and on the mind (cognition).[12] In his *Institutiones grammaticae*, for example, Priscian remarked on the comparison of *litterae* ('letters') with the physical elements of the world (*elementa*), by noting the widely held view that speech sounds (*uoces*) constituted a kind of body (*corpus*) characterised by the physical properties of depth, width and length, since they were 'struck' out of corporeal air by human lips:

> Literas autem etiam elementorum vocabulo nuncupaverunt ad similitudinem mundi elementorum: sicut enim illa coeuntia omne perficiunt corpus, sic etiam haec coniuncta literalem vocem quasi corpus aliquod componunt vel magis vere corpus. Nam si aer corpus est, et vox, quae ex aere icto constat, corpus esse ostenditur, quippe cum et tangit aurem et tripertito diuiditur, quod est suum corporis, hoc est in altitudinem, latitudinem, longitudinem, unde ex omni quoque parte potest audiri.

> But they call 'letters' by the term 'elements' from a similarity to the elements of the world: as the elements conjoin and make each corporeal thing, likewise conjoined elements make scriptible speech sound (*literalis vox*) as if they compose some corporeal entity. For if air is corporeal, then speech sound, which consists of struck air, is shown to be corporeal since it touches the ear and is divided in three

[12]Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture. 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory 350–1100* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 91–2.

ways which pertain to corporeal things, namely, in depth, breadth, and length. This being so, speech sound can be heard from every direction.[13]

This idea was not lost on Priscian's Irish glossators, who heavily annotated the section on letters in his Latin grammar. One scholiast commented on the tangible and divisible nature of a physical *corpus*, for instance, by glossing the word *quippe* in this passage with the remark, *.i. cani deithbir si dicatur corpus? Proprium est corporis tangere ⁊ tangi ⁊ dividi reliqua* ('i.e. is it not legitimate when it is called a body? It is a characteristic of a body to touch and to be touched and to be divided etc.').[14]

This sensory definition of corporeal speech sounds was a matter of some debate among early grammarians, whose use of descriptive terminology for linguistic features is far from consistent.[15] One point of ambiguity is illustrated by the frequent categorisation of common nouns as either 'corporeal' or 'incorporeal' according to the nature of their semantic content, a description that highlights the associated philosophical problem of distinguishing between material words and their external objects of reference. Isidore includes this definition in the grammatical section of his *Etymologiae*:

> Appellativa nomina inde vocantur, quia communia sunt et in multorum significatione consistunt. Haec in viginti octo species dividuntur, ex quibus corporalia dicta, quia vel videntur vel tanguntur, ut 'caelum' 'terra'. Incorporalia, quia carent corpus; unde nec videri nec tangi possunt, ut 'veritas' 'iustitia'.

[13]*GL* II, 6.14–20, trans. Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, p. 99. Priscian then specifies, however, that the *littera* is a *nota elementi*, i.e. a 'mark' or 'sign' of an element, and the *elementum* more properly a speech sound (*GL* II, 6.23–7.2). This accords with the typical definition of the *littera* in medieval grammars as a minimal unit of spoken utterance capable of being represented in writing, on which see also below, pp. 30–1. On the ambiguity of the term *littera* in early linguistic tradition, see David Abercrombie, 'What is a "Letter"?', *Lingua* 2 (1949), 54–63.

[14]Rijcklof Hofman, ed. and trans., *The Sankt Gall Priscian Commentary Part I*, 2 vols., Studien und Texte zur Keltologie 1 (Münster, 1996) I, 108 (text) and II, 16 (trans.).

[15]For a brief discussion of medieval grammatical terminology see Vivien Law, *Grammar and Grammarians in the Early Middle Ages* (Longman, 1997), pp. 260–8. For more detailed treatment of corporeal and incorporeal definitions in early grammatical works, see Anne Grondeux, '*Corpus dicitur quidquid uidetur et tangitur*: origines et enjeux d'une définition', *Voces* 14 (2003), 35–76, and Leslie Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions* (Toronto, 2011), pp. 228–80.

Appellative nouns are so called because they are common
and make reference to many things. They are divided into
twenty-eight types. Of these the corporeal nouns are so called
because they are either seen or touched, like 'sky', 'earth'.
The incorporeal nouns, because they lack a body, so that they
cannot be seen or touched, as 'truth', 'justice'.[16]

Isidore's description of noun categories, and his use of the words *ueritas*
and *iustitia* as examples of incorporeal nouns, are echoed in a Latin
quotation found some versions of the *Auraicept*.[17] In the vernacular text,
however, the definition has been conflated with a gloss on the subject of
nominal gender:

Ut est Pompeus dixit: Omnium rerum uocabaloum aut
corparailium [aut incorporalium Eg.] sexu naturaliter
carencium per arteim Graciam e[s]se ascribimus, hoc est
ne utrum i.e. nec masgolinum nec feimininum, ut est (?)
h[a]ec iusticia, h[a]ec ueritas.

As Pompeius said: we attribute to Greek art [i.e. grammar] a
noun of all things either corporeal [or incorporeal *Egerton*]
that naturally lack gender; that is, neuter, i.e. neither
masculine nor feminine, as for example *haec iusticia, haec
ueritas*.[18]

The attribution to Pompeius seems to be spurious,[19] but it is clear that
this Latin interpolation represents an attempt to explain that the gender
of a noun must be assigned arbitrarily (i.e. by grammatical convention)
if its referent does not possess 'natural' (i.e. male or female) gender

[16] *Isidori hispalensis episcopi etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols.
(Oxford, 1911), I, vii.3–4, trans. Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach and Oliver
Berghof, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 42.
[17] The passage forms part of a series of Latin quotations found only in the so-called 'Long
Text' recension of the *Auraicept* edited by Calder, though as Ahlqvist has noted (*Early Irish
Linguist*, p. 25), it also occurs in two shorter witnesses of the compilation that were not used
by Calder for his edition.
[18] Calder, *Auraicept*, p. 201, lines 3235–9 (my translation).
[19] Pomepius' version of this definition uses only the word *iustitia* as an example of
incorporeal nouns: see *GL* V, 143.18–19, *Corporale est quod videtur et tangitur, ut terra
humus ensis. Sunt incorporalia, quae nec videri nec tangi possunt, ut pietas iustitia dignitas* ('a
corporeal thing is that which is seen and touched, such as 'earth', 'ground', 'sword'. Those
things which can be neither seen nor touched are incorporeal, such as "piety", "justice",
"dignity"').

— a particular preoccupation of the *Auraicept*'s glossators that will be
considered in more detail in the second section of this chapter.[20] Here,
the concept of 'grammatical' gender is clarified by citing an etymology
of the neuter found in Isidore, i.e. *neutrum dictum quia nec hoc est nec
illud, id est nec masculinum nec femininum* ('a neuter (*neuter*, lit. "neither")
noun is so named because it is neither one nor the other, that is, neither
masculine nor feminine').[21]   The examples *iustitia* and *ueritas* that
follow this gloss on the neuter, however, are both 'incorporeal' feminine
nouns, and correspond to the illustrations given by Isidore in his
definition of noun species. The original motivation for including this
Latin material in the *Auraicept*, therefore, may have been the perceived
need to elucidate Isidore's definition of incorporeal nouns, perhaps
because it is not easily reconciled with the idea that all speech sounds
consist of corporeal elements. The implication seems to be that, since
incorporeal nouns are said to lack bodies, they must by definition lack
natural gender, which is considered to be a characteristic of corporeal
entities such as a man or a woman.

The relationship between word form and semantic content that is
indicated by the categorisation of nouns as 'corporeal' or 'incorporeal'
according to the nature of their referents lies at the heart of medieval
etymologia, the discursive practice involving a largely synchronic
analysis of word forms in order to access their meaning. Its use as an
explanatory technique throughout the *Auraicept* probably owes a great
deal to Isidore, but can also be set in the wider context of classical
and medieval strategies of exegesis as applied across other areas of
textual activity.[22] For example, the significance of the form-meaning
dichotomy is vividly illustrated by Augustine, who integrates this
grammatical problem into his theological discussion of the human soul
by distinguishing between the terms *uerbum* ('word-as-meaning') and
uox ('word-as-form'). Augustine saw the *uox* to be merely a corporeal
vehicle for the *uerbum*, and compared this twofold conception of the
'word' with the constitution of a human being:

[20] See below, pp. 40–51.
[21] Isidore, *Etymologiae* I, vii.28, ed. Lindsay, trans. Barney et al., *Etymologies*, p. 44; see also
Poppe, 'Latin Quotations', p. 307.
[22] On Isidore and the etymological method in an Irish context, see for example Rolf
Baumgarten, 'Creative Medieval Etymology and Irish Hagiography (Lasair, Columba,
Senán)', *Ériu* 54 (2004), 49–78; on the broader grammatical framework of etymological
practice see Mark Amsler, *Etymology and Grammatical Discourse in Late Antiquity and the
Early Middle Ages*, Studies in the History of the Language Sciences 44 (Amsterdam and
Philadelpha, 1989).

Cum ergo nomen ipsum sono et significatione constet,
sonus autem ad aures, significatio ad mentem pertineat;
nonne arbitraris in nomine, velut in aliquo animante, sonum
esse corpus, significationem autem quasi animam soni?

The word consists of sound and meaning. The sound belongs
to the ears and the meaning to the mind. Don't you think
then, that in the word, as in any living creature, the sound
is the body and the meaning is, as it were, the soul of the
sound?[23]

Augustine's analogy is echoed in the *Epitomae* of the seventh-century
grammarian Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, whose Irish origins have been
a subject of some debate,[24] but whose works, as noted already, appear
to have been used by at least some of the *Auraicept*'s commentators.[25]
In his description of the letter, Virgilius compares man's division into
soul and body with the division of language into meaning and sound.[26]
His explanation reflects the common definition of the letter in medieval
grammars as a unit consisting of three properties, which he takes to
constitute the letter's physical nature: a *nomen* 'name' for identifying
it in discussion or teaching; a *figura* 'shape' for its written character, and
a *potestas* 'sound-value' for its pronunciation:[27]

Et ut aliquid intimatius aperiam, littera mihi uidetur
humanae condicionis esse similis: sicut enim homo plasto
et affla et quodam caelesti igne consistit, ita et littera suo
corpore (hoc est figura, arte ac ditione uelut quisdam
conpagibus, arcubusque) suffunta est, animam habens in
sensu, spiridonem in superiori contemplatione.

[23] Augustine, *De quantitate animae* I, *PL* 32, col. 1072. The example is cited and discussed
further by Vivien Law, *The History of Linguistics in Europe. From Plato to 1600* (Cambridge,
2003), p. 107.

[24] See for example Michael Herren, 'Some New Light on the Life of Virgilius Maro
Grammaticus', *PRIA* 79 C (Dublin, 1979), 27–71; id., 'Virgil the Grammarian: A Spanish
Jew in Ireland?' *Peritia* 9 (1995), 51–71; and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'The Date, Provenance,
and Earliest Use of the Works of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus', in *Tradition und Wertung.
Festschrift für Franz Brunhölzl zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Gunter Bernt, Fidel Rädle and Gabriel
Silagi (Sigmaringen, 1989), pp. 13–22.

[25] See above, p. 25, and also Hayden, 'Two Fragments', pp. 116–20.

[26] For other examples of Virgilius' attempts to compare language with the constitution of
man, see Vivien Law, *Wisdom, Authority and Grammar in the Seventh Century. Decoding Virgilius
Maro Grammaticus* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 67–71.

[27] On this see Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 97–100, and Abercrombie, 'What is a
"Letter"?'.

To go into the matter more closely, it seems to me that the
littera is similar to the human condition: just as man consists
of a physical portion, a soul, and a sort of celestial fire, so
too the letter is permeated with its body — that is, its shape,
its function and its pronunciation, which are its joints and
limbs, as it were — and has its soul in its meaning (*sensus*)
and its spirit in its higher form of contemplation.[28]

Here Virgilius presents a tripartite vision of man, but his analogy is
otherwise similar to that offered by Augustine. Both authors express the
view that articulate speech could be conceptualized by comparison with
the physical properties of the humans that produce it, on the basis that
it consists of corporeal units that could be joined together like limbs
and infused with (incorporeal) meaning by the intellect.

The premise that language can be divided into physical parts that
might, in turn, be analysed and re-assembled is encapsulated in the
Auraicept's well-known reference to Irish as a *bérla tóbaide* (or *teipide*)
'selected' or 'cut-out' language:[29]

Cest, cia tugaid ara n-ebarar berla tobaide din Gædilg? Ni
ansa. Uair rotebedh as gach berla; 7 gach son fordorcha gach
berla, fo[fh]rith ined doib isin Gædelg ara forleithi seach
gach mbescna [...]

Query, what is the reason why select language should be said
of Gaelic? Not hard. Because it was selected from every
language; and for every obscure sound of every language a
place was found in Gaelic owing to its comprehensiveness
beyond every speech.[30]

In this example, the principal aim of the scholiasts is clearly to
emphasise the status of their vernacular by claiming that it was formed
by choosing elements of all the other languages at Babel and combining
them to create a new, more comprehensive, whole. However, the image
of 'cutting out' sound-elements from the fabric of other languages also
recalls the classical conception of articulate speech as something that

[28] *Virgilius Maro Grammaticus. Opera omnia*, ed. Bengt Löfstedt (Munich, 2003), pp. 109–10;
trans. Law, *Wisdom, Authority and Grammar*, p. 68.

[29] For the alternating forms *tóbaide* and *teipide* see DIL, s.vv. *do-fuiben*, 'cuts, cuts off, cuts
out' and *do-eipen*, 'excises, cuts out, forms, fashions'.

[30] *Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 2–3, lines 9–12.

consists of conjoined and divisible parts. It is uncertain whether the use of the phrase *bérla tóbaide/teipide* in the *Auraicept* has any direct basis in the idea that sounds were corporeal because they had been 'struck' out of corporeal air, though it is perhaps noteworthy that the scholiasts use the same terminology to define the 'essence' of the word *fid* ('letter' or 'vowel') as *in blog aoir tebide gebhes in fid i n-elluch focail* ('the fragment of cut off air which the vowel takes in the composition of a word').[31]

This metaphorical image of constructed language is also inherent in the scholiasts' use of the word *alt*, a term that could refer to either a human joint or to an interval between linguistic units, such as letters, syllables, words or stanzas. This dual meaning proved a useful avenue for the development of anatomical imagery in the text. For example, the scholiasts repeatedly claimed that 'poetic art' (*ai*) consisted of joints (*alta*) that were comparable to the joints connecting the limbs of man, e.g. *domiditer alta uad fri alta duine amal domiditer fri cach n-indsci* ('*alta*, "joints", of poetic art are measured with a man's joints as they are measured with every speech')[32] and *fo cosmaillius alta duini doniter alta huadh* ('the limbs of poetic art are made like the limbs of a person').[33] These glosses are clearly reminiscent of the analogies made by Augustine and Virgilius Maro Grammaticus between human form and the combination of corporeal linguistic elements.

The use of the word *alt* in Irish to describe an interval between either linguistic units or human joints may have some basis in the Latin grammarians' definition of the *uox articulata*, or 'articulate speech'. Donatus explained, for example, that *uox articulata* could be distinguished from nonsensical language (*uox confusa*) by virtue of the fact that it can be written:

> Omnis uox aut articulata est aut confusa. Articulata est, quae litteris conprehendi potest; confusa, quae scribi non potest.

[31] Ibid., pp. 67–9, lines 897–8 (my translation).

[32] Ibid., pp. 96–7, lines 1237–8 (cf. lines 1508–10).

[33] Ibid., pp. 140–1, lines 1826–7.   I have emended Calder's translation of the word *ai* (gen. *uath*) from 'science' to 'poetic art'.   On the meaning of this term see Calvert Watkins, 'Indo-European Metrics and Archaic Irish Verse', *Celtica* 6 (1963), pp. 194–249, at 215–16, who notes that the word is used in the *Bretha Nemed* material to refer to 'poetic inspiration'. A section of this text (ed. E. J. Gwynn, 'An Old-Irish Tract on the Privileges and Responsibilities of Poets', *Ériu* 13 (1942), 1–60 and 220–32, at 38ff.) deals with the 'origin and nature of *ai*', preceded by material relating to *séis* "musical art", *clúas* "ear, hearing", *guth* "voice, speech", and significantly *anál* "breath".

> Every spoken sound is either articulated or confused. Articulated is what can be comprehended in letters; confused is what cannot be written.[34]

Here *uox articulata* has the literal sense of speech that is separable or divided (cf. Lat. *articulāre* 'to divide into distinct parts', or 'joints'), and thus can be linked to rational meaning and recorded in writing. *Uox confusa*, on the other hand, refers to speech sounds that are undifferentiated (lit. 'mixed together') and cannot be directly translated in human language or writing, such as the utterances of animals. In his commentary on Donatus' *Ars maior*, Pompeius offers an etymology for the word *articulata* that invokes the dual meaning of the term *articulus* as either 'part, division' or 'joint (of the human body)', and in so doing links the act of speech with that of writing:

> Articulata est vox quae potest scribi; ut ecce hoc ipsum quod dixi potest scribi.   Ideo articulata dicta est, quod potest articulo scribi.   Artus enim dicimus membra maiora, articulos minora membra in omni corpore.   Nihil brevius digitis. Idcirco articulata vox dicta est, quod potest articulis conprehendi.   Digitis autem tenemus calamos.   Ideo ergo dicitur vox articulata, quod potest articulis scribi.

> (*Vox*) *articulata* is speech that can be written; this statement itself is an example of what I have said can be written. It is called *articulata*, therefore, because it can be written with a joint. In every body we call larger parts limbs (*artūs*) and smaller parts joints (*articulōs*).   Nothing is shorter than fingers. Therefore, it is called *uox articulata* because it can be understood in jointed parts. We hold pens with [our] fingers. Therefore, *uox articulata* is so called because it can be written with the jointed parts [of fingers].[35]

A similar explanation is also found in the Donatus-commentaries attributed to Remigius of Auxerre and Sedulius Scottus.[36] Both of these grammarians include an additional etymology of the word *articulata*,

[34] *GL* IV, 603.5–7; cited and trans. by Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, p. 92.

[35] *GL* V, 99; cf. the citation and discussion in Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 96 and 488.

[36] As noted by Irvine, ibid., p. 488, n. 21; see also *GL* VIII, 220–1, and Sedulius Scottus, *In Donati artem maiorem*, ed. Löfstedt, p. 5.

however, that recalls the comparison made by the *Auraicept*-scholiasts between the form of language and that of a human. Thus Remigius claims that *articulata, uox dicitur* [...] *ab artubus id est membris suis, uidelicet litteris syllabis et partibus, quibus instar corporis humani perficitur* ('articulated speech is so called from joints (*artubus*), that is its members, to wit, letters, syllables and parts, which are constructed like a human body').[37]

Both the scholia in the *Auraicept* and an entry in the glossary *Sanas Cormaic* testify to the extension of this analogy with regard to the *deach*, or 'metrical foot', of which there were understood to be eight types consisting of between one and eight syllables. In the *Auraicept*, the glossators describe a *dialt*, or monosyllabic verse-foot, by way of the etymology *.i. di fo dhiultadh co nach fil alt and* ('that is, *di*, to deny that any *alt*, joint, exists there'), while the name for a disyllabic verse-foot, *recomhrac*, is explained as *.i. re i comhraiget na di shillaib immon alt* ('that is *re*, the course in which the two syllables meet about the *alt*').[38] The anatomical association of the term is then made more explicit in the definitions given for hexasyllabic and heptasyllabic feet:

> Luibenchossach .i. in choss cona luibnibh .i. na coic meoir 7 in traigh in sessed. Claidemnas .i. claidebh *manus* .i. *manus* lamh 7 claidebh na laimi in slindean: 7 is e in sechtmad dialt.
>
> *Luibenchossach*, hexasyllable, that is, the foot with its digits, the five toes; the foot being the sixth. *Claidemnas*, heptasyllable, that is, sword-*manus*, to wit, *manus*, hand, and the sword of the hand is the shoulder-blade: and it is the seventh syllable.[39]

Here the association of the word *claidemnas* with *claidem* 'sword', and more specifically with the *slindean* 'shoulder-blade', may be intended as an allusion to the roughly triangular shape of that body part; the shoulder-blade would thus be conceived of as the sword's hilt, whereas the arm and hand, which contain the other six syllabic 'joints' of the *claidemnas*, would constitute its blade. This enumeration of metrical verse-feet according to the joints of the human arm, rather than the foot, is developed more consistently in *Sanas Cormaic*:

Luibenchossach .i. luibne na mér na lāime, 7 cos eissib sūas ind rig 7 in doe gusin n-alt na gūailne arsisidar, ar is fri sodain samailter in dēach sin i curp duine. Sē haisle di*diu* fil ōthā ind meōir co halt na gūaland. Sē dīalta di*diu* filet a luibenchos*ach*, ut est fīanamailecharad. Claidemnus in sechtmad dēach .i. claidem manus .i. na lāime .i. cloidem sōn ōthā ind na lāime .i. in meōir, corrici ind alt fil it*er* in imda 7 in maothán. Secht n-aisli di*diu* innsin. Seacht ndēalt da*no* fil i claidemnus, ut est fīanamaile*charadard.

Luibenchossach 'hexasyllable', that is, it consists of the stems of the fingers[40] and a stem (*cos*) coming up out of them, and the forearm (*rig*) and the upper-arm (*doe*) as far as the shoulder-joint, for it is to that, that that *deach* is likened in the body of a person. There are thus six joints from the tip of the finger to the joint of the shoulder. There are also six syllables in a hexasyllabic verse-foot, as for example *fían-am-ail-ech-ar-ad*. *Claidemnus* 'heptasyllable' is the seventh verse-foot, i.e. a sword-*manus*, i.e. of the hand, i.e. that sword that is from the tip of the hand, i.e. of the finger, as far as the joint that is between the shoulder-blade and the cartilage. Thus there are seven joints there. There are also seven syllables in a heptasyllabic verse-foot, as for example *fían-am-ail-ech-ar-ad-ard*.[41]

Similar doctrine concerning the types of *deach* occurs in the preface to a series of didactic verses on stylistic faults and correctives for the composition of a *trefocal*-poem, which have been appended to some versions of the *Auraicept*.[42] This preface includes a summary list of

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[37] *GL* VIII, 220.32–7. The etymology given by Sedulius Scottus, *In Donati artem maiorem*, ed. Löfstedt, p. 5.12–17, is nearly identical: *Articulata uox dicitur* [...] *ab articulis, id est membris suis, uidelicet litteris syllabis et partibus, quibus instar humani corporis perficitur.*

[38] *Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 110–11, lines 1417–19.

[39] Ibid., lines 1424–7.

[40] DIL, s.v. 2 *luibne*, suggests that this term might be a derivative of *luban*, defined as the 'name of some ornament of cloaks and mantles, perh. tassel'. Its metaphorical use in relation to fingers or toes seems to be restricted primarily to the *Auraicept* and the glossaries. In the etymology given for *luibenchossach* in the *Auraicept*, it clearly refers to the toes of the foot. Here, however, the *luibne* may have instead been taken to refer to the three joints into which each finger can be subdivided. This would allow the count to be based on the three joints of a single finger, plus the wrist (the hand being the 'stem', or *cos*, to which all the fingers are attached), plus the elbow and shoulder-joint, which attach the forearm and upper-arm respectively, for a total of six joints.

[41] Kuno Meyer, ed., '*Sanas Cormaic*', *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts* IV (Halle, 1912; repr. with Meyer's corrections added to the text, Felinfach, 1994), pp. 37–8, §447 (my translation).

[42] *Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 148–69, lines 1927–2255. On the *trefocal*, see Howard Meroney, '*Tréfhocal fócrai*' (Studies in Early Irish Satire, no. 3), *Journal of Celtic*

twenty-four correctives for stylistic errors, followed by an account of how syllables join to form larger metrical units. It then culminates in a repetition of the metaphorical analogy between linguistic and human anatomical structure:

Dia nditen-sidhe cethri cenela fichet [...]: a formoladh, a codut, a mallrugud, a diabul, a deiliden, a oen, a lan, a lugugud, a saerughudh, a daerugud, a aurard, a airisel, a dhichneadh, a dhoichnead, a chonnail, a chendfochrus, a airchill fuit, a airchill calaid, a thelgudh noe, a urlonn insce, a hinsce mod, a lanamna deimi, a demi thepidhe, a ngen-side, co ndath 7 tothucht, co tomus fri fidh 7 dech, reim 7 forbad, alt 7 insci 7 etargoire ar cach cenel labartha dotuisim ar beolu duine, ar is a dealt domiter recomhrac, a recomrac domiter iarcomrac, a hiarcomrac dno feles, a feles domiter claenre, a claenre domiter luibenchosach, a luibenchosach domiter claidemnas, a claidemnas domiter bricht: ar comititer alta uad fri haltaib in duine, ar ita coic alta sescat ar tri cet in duine, a coic sescat ar tri cet aisti archetail, 7 coic laithi sescat ar tri cet isin bliadain 7 a coic sescat ar tri cet du luibib tre thalmain [...]

To guard against these [faults] are twenty-four kinds [of corrective...]: its hyperbole, its hardening, its retarding, its reduplication, its inversion, its singleness, its full, its diminutive, its ennobling, its enslaving, its exaltation, its humiliation, its losing a final, its doubling a final, its internal division, its change of initial or final, its theft of long, its theft of hard, its man-throwing, its prefix of gender, its mod speech, its neuter couples, its selected neuters, their pairs, with colour and properties, with measure as regards letter, verse-foot, run, and accent, interval, gender, and comparison for every sort of speech that is produced on human lips: for it is from a syllable that a dissyllable is estimated, from a disyllable that trisyllable is estimated, from trisyllable in turn quadrisyllable, from quadrisyllable pentasyllable is estimated, from pentasyllable hexasyllable is estimated, from hexasyllable heptasyllable is estimated,

Studies 2 (1958), 59–130, and Liam Breatnach, 'Satire, Praise and the Early Irish Poet', Ériu 56 (2006), 63–84.

from heptasyllable octosyllable is estimated: for the limbs of science are equal to the limbs of man, for there are 365 limbs of man, 365 measures of poetry, 365 days in the year, and 365 herbs through the earth [...][43]

This passage expresses, in a highly intertextual way, the theme of articulate language as a divisible whole that can be described on analogy with human form. The symbolic status of the number 365 is attested in a range of other literary and pedagogical texts, including a Middle Irish tract on prosody which states that there are 365 alta ('divisions' or 'species') of poetic metre.[44] The association between herbs and joints made by the Auraicept-scholiast clearly parallels an episode from Cath Maige Tuired, where it is claimed that 365 medicinal plants grew over Míach's grave after his father, the physician Dían Cécht, slew him out of jealousy on account of his superior skills in leechcraft. The filicide occurred after Míach succeeded in generating an arm of flesh and blood for the wounded king Núadu, while Dían Cécht himself had only managed to conjure up a limb of silver. Míach had achieved this feat by reciting a charm over the king's amputated joints and sinews, which were said to correspond in number to the herbs that subsequently sprang from his grave:

Boí dano Núadae oga uothras, 7 dobreth láim n-argait foair lioa Díen Cécht go lúth cecha lámha indte. Nir'uo maith dano liaa mac-sium sen .i. le Míach. Atréracht-sim don láim 7 atbert, ault fri halt dí 7 féith fri féth; 7 ícuis fri téorai nómaidhe. [...] Ba holc lia Díen Cécht an freapaid-sin. Duleicc claidimh a mullach a meic go rotend a tuidn fri féoil a cinn. Ícais an gillai tre inndeld a eladon. Atcomaic aithurrach go roteind a féoil co rrodic cnáim. Ícais an gilde den indel cétnae. Bissis an tres bém co ránic srebonn a inchinde. Ícais dano an gille don indell cétnae. Bisius dano an cethramad mbém co nderba a n-inchind conid apu[d] Míoach 7 atbert

[43]Auraicept, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 148–150, lines 1944–59. For discussion of some of these faults and correctives, see the references in n. 69 below.

[44]As also noted by Stephen N. Tranter, Clavis Metrica: Háttatal, Háttalykill and the Irish Metrical Tracts, Beiträge zur nordischen Philologie 25 (Basel and Frankfurt am Main, 1997), p. 89, and Roisin McLaughlin, 'Metres in Mittelirische Verslehren III', Ériu 55 (2005), 119–36, at p. 124. For the text see Rudolf Thurneysen, ed., 'Mittelirische Verslehren', in Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch, ed. Whitley Stokes and Ernst Windisch, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1891), III.i, pp. 66 (text) and 122–3 (discussion).

Díen *Cécht* nach-n-ícf*ad* lieig b*a*desin o[n]t [s]laithie-sin. Íar sin roadhno*cht* lia Díen *Cécht* Míoach 7 ásaid cóic lube sescut ar t*ri cét*uib tresin athno*cul* fo líon a altai 7 féthe.

Now Núadu was being treated, and Dían Cécht put a silver hand on him which had the movement of any other hand. But his son Míach did not like that. He went to the hand and said 'joint to joint of it, and sinew to sinew'; and he healed it in nine days and nights [...] Dían Cécht did not like that cure. He hurled a sword at the crown of his son's head and cut his skin to the flesh. The young man healed it by means of his skill. He struck him again and cut his flesh until he reached the bone. The young man healed it by the same means. He struck the third blow and reached the membrane of his brain. The young man healed this too by the same means. Then he struck the fourth blow and cut out the brain, so that Míach died; and Dían Cécht said that no physician could heal him of that blow. After that, Míach was buried by Dían Cécht, and three hundred and sixty-five herbs grew through the grave, corresponding to the number of his joints and sinews.[45]

The correlation between days of the year and joints of a human that is made in both this text and the *Auraicept* also occurs in a ninth-century table of penitential commutations, which describes the procedure involved in rescuing a soul from hell:

Arra tessairgne anma i iffurn .i. coic pr. ar tri .xxtib ar trib cétaib acus coic slechtain ar trib .xxtib ar trib cétaib accus .u. bemend ar trib .xxtib ar trib cétaib di abaind hi cach aen llau co cend mbliadnae acus troscud cach mis doessairc anmae a iffurn ar fo lin altae acus fethe fil hi corp duine dorronad a n-arrae-so fri hic inna hanmae adroilli piana asin corp-sin.

A commutation for rescuing a soul out of hell: three hundred and sixty-five Paters and three hundred and

[45] *Cath Maige Tuired. The Second Battle of Mag Tuired*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth A. Gray, ITS 52 (Naas, 1982), pp. 32–3. On the Indo-European context and parallels for Míach's charm, see Jaan Puhvel, 'Mythological Reflections in Indo-European Medicine', *Indo-European and Indo-Europeans*, ed. George Cardona, Henry M. Hoenigswald and Alfred Senn (Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 369–82, and Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon. Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 525–36.

sixty-five genuflexions and three hundred and sixty-five blows of the scourge every day for a year, and a fast every month — this rescues a soul out of hell.   For it is in proportion to the number of joints and sinews in the human body that this commutation to save a soul which has merited torments [while] in the body has been devised.[46]

The scholiast's association between human joints, the herbs that heal them and days in the year is also fully articulated in a poem inserted into a fifteenth-century manuscript of Irish provenance. In this instance, the yearly cycle was delineated according to the efficacy of different parts of healing plants gathered throughout the different seasons:

Cúic losa .LX. is 300,
is hé a n-airemh, ni himarbréc,
lus cech galair raidhit raind
boinghcter uile a n-ocht kalaind.

Five herbs, sixty and three hundred — that is their number
the herbs that heal all sicknesses, let them be gathered on
a. d. VIII Kal.[47]

These few examples demonstrate the multiple resonances that the passage of prose commentary on stylistic devices and the joining of linguistic units may have had for a scholiast of the *Auraicept*. As several scholars have demonstrated elsewhere, the human body served as a convenient metaphor for expressing ideas about cosmogonic and sociological order in other aspects of medieval Irish textual culture. This can be seen, for example, in the description of kindred units in legal tracts,[48] or in the pervasive focus on human anatomy which characterises literary compositions such as *Togail Bruidne da Derga* and *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. In the former text, Amy Eichhorn-Mulligan has read this focus as part of 'an extended discourse on the importance of a

[46] D. A. Binchy, 'The Old-Irish Table of Penitential Commutations', *Ériu* 19 (1962), 47–72, at §1, pp. 58–9.

[47] Ed. and trans. Robin Flower, 'Popular Science in Medieval Ireland', *Ériu* 9 (1921–3), 61–7, at 66, omitting translation of the cheville *raidhit raind* ('they speak verses'). These quatrains were added to London, British Library Add. MS 30512 (s. xv–xvi), fol. 11b, by Torna Ó Maoil Chonaire (d. 1532); see also Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Library [Formerly British Museum]*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1926) II, 470–3.

[48] On which see William Sayers, 'Fergus and the Cosmogonic Sword', *History of Religions* 25.1 (1985), 30–56, at 44–7.

king's behaviour, using the terms, images, and logic of the body'.[49] In the *Táin*, we see the hero Fergus mac Roích proclaim a ritual oath of dismemberment, in which he recounts the deeds that he would do if he recovered his sword by enumerating 'externally visible bodily parts marked off by the articulations of the skeleton'.[50] Analysis of the scholia to *Auraicept na nÉces* similarly reveals the potential for human anatomy to serve as a symbolic medium for relating abstract ideas to extra-verbal reality. The contents of the compilation are, in many respects, firmly rooted within the metalinguistic tradition of Latin grammatical sources, but the use of a widespread motif of numerical symbolism within commentary relating to the structure of language also suggests an attempt on the part of its scholiasts to situate their description of linguistic phenomena within this broader sphere of textual reference.

GENDER

The second part of this chapter considers in more detail an aspect of the scholia to *Auraicept na nÉces* that has been addressed only briefly in the previous section, namely the commentators' approach to describing natural and grammatical gender categories.[51] The discussion of gender in the compilation is an equally rich source of anatomical imagery, and offers much insight into the scholiasts' understanding of the relationship between linguistic form, semantic content and grammatical rules.

The *Auraicept*'s treatment of gender is relatively detailed, as is evidenced in part by the glossators' use of multiple sets of terms to refer to the grammatical categories of masculine, feminine and neuter.[52] Notably, gender was singled out by the scholiasts as the one linguistic category that was not derived from a *dialt*, or 'monosyllable':

> Dialt di*diu* bunad cacha Gaedelge acht mod 7 tod 7 troth.
> Cid fodera na*ch* bunadh doibh-sein? Ni ansa. Ar is dialt cach
> ai dhibh, 7 ni bunad in ræt do fen, no dono is bunadh cach

[49] Amy C. Eichhorn-Mulligan, '*Togail Bruidne Da Derga* and the Politics of Anatomy', *CMCS* 49 (2005), 1–19, at 18.
[50] Sayers, 'Fergus and the Cosmogonic Sword', pp. 32–4; see also Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, 'The Body in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*', in *Gablánach in Scélaigecht. Celtic Studies in Honour of Ann Dooley*, ed. Sarah Sheehan, Joanne Findon and Westley Follett (Dublin, 2013), pp. 131–53, at 150–3.
[51] See above, pp. 28–9.
[52] For a discussion of these see Paul Russell, '*Moth, Toth, Traeth*: Sex, Gender and the Early Irish Grammarian', in *History of Linguistics 1996*, ed. Cram et al., pp. 203–13.

*Gæd*elge dialt acht mod 7 tod 7 troth. Acht is momo lem and chena ni dat bunad *Gæd*elge acht is bunad ceilli.

Therefore *dialt*, syllable, is the origin of all Gaelic save *mod*, *tod*, and *trod*. What is the reason why it is not an origin for those? Not hard. Because each of them is a *dialt*, syllable, and a thing is not an origin for itself, or again *dialt* is the origin of all Gaelic save *mod*, *tod*, and *troth*. But I much prefer there certainly that they are not an origin of Gaelic but that it is an origin of meaning.[53]

Both Calder and Watkins have pointed to this passage as evidence that the glossators understood gender to be a grammatical category relating to inherent, immanent properties, and that it should therefore be distinguished from linguistic categories that can be expressed by overt morphemes (prefixes, suffixes, etc.), such as number, person, and case, which can be analyzed according to their constituent, 'jointed' parts (e.g. *dialta* 'syllables').[54] Thus it is recognised that although the gender terms *moth*, *toth* and *traeth* are monosyllabic words (*dialta*) on a formal level, it is their grammatical function to be 'an origin of meaning' (*bunad céille*), because in many cases the assignment of grammatical gender to a noun is determined by its semantic content. In this vein, Erich Poppe has detailed the scholiasts' tendency elsewhere in the *Auraicept* to describe gender as either 'natural' (*aicnetae*) or 'artificial/metaphoricial' (*saerda*) in their efforts to illustrate conceptual clashes between human and grammatical gender.[55] For example, the feminine noun *ben* 'woman' was seen to represent natural gender, and was therefore contrasted with the inanimate feminine noun *cloch* 'stone', a word which could only be considered feminine in a grammatical or metaphorical sense:

> Ferinnsci aicnid, is e in fer: ferinnsci særda, is e an neam.
> Baninnsci aicnid, is i in bean: baninnsci særda, is i in chloch.
> Deminnsci aicnid, is ed an neam: deminnsci særda, is ed in
> ceand.

[53] *Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 112–13, lines 1457–62.
[54] Calder, *Auraicept*, pp. xlvi–xlvii; Calvert Watkins, 'Language of Gods and Language of Men: Remarks on Some Indo-European Metalinguistic Traditions', in *Myth and Law among the Indo-Europeans*, ed. Jaan Puhvel (Berkeley, 1970), pp. 1–17, at 8–9.
[55] Erich Poppe, 'Natural and Artificial Gender in *Auraicept na nÉces*', *Studia Hibernica* 29 (1995–7), 195–203.

Natural masculine speech, 'he' is the man: artificial masculine speech, 'he' is the heavens. Natural feminine speech, 'she' is the woman: artificial feminine speech, 'she' is the stone. Natural neuter speech, 'it' is the heavens: artificial neuter speech, 'it' is the head.[56]

Poppe compared the scholiasts' interest in this problem with the discussion of gender in the Donatus commentary by Murethach, who described the masculine and feminine genders as 'natural' and primary (*genera naturalia*), and the neuter as a metaphorical (*artificialis*) usage 'generated' from these two primary categories. Murethach's comparison between natural procreation and the metaphorical derivation of grammatical gender categories stemmed from the common association of the grammatical term *genus* 'gender' with the verb *generare*, 'to beget, procreate', a point which the *Auraicept*-scholiasts also appear to have taken on board.[57] His version of this etymology also addresses the terminological problem of how 'incorporeal' words might be understood to generate:

Genera a generando dicuntur, eo quod generent et generentur. Quarendum est, cur nomina dicantur generare, cum incorporalia sint. Ideo, quia adherent corporibus, quae generant et generantur.

Genders (*genera*) are so called from *generando* 'generating', because they generate and are generated. It should be asked why nouns are said to generate, since they are incorporeal. It is because they are present in bodies, which generate and are generated.[58]

The glossators of the *Auraicept* clearly recognised Murethach's statement that the masculine and feminine were 'primary' gender categories which give rise to the metaphorical category of the neuter. However, they also argued that this order of precedence could be reversed, claiming that the masculine and feminine genders could likewise be derived from the neuter:

Mad íar n-urd chóir na ndúla, immurgu, niba ainm ferinsce no baninsce acht du neoch do-fuisim ⁊ ó tuisemar, ⁊ ba deme a n-aicned uile olchena. Do-epenar dano deminsce a ferinsci no a baninsci. Do-epenar dano ferinsce ⁊ baninsce a deminsci amal atá isnaib réimennaib ⁊ it é sin na deme thepide ⁊ na lánamna demi ⁊ a ngeni-side.

If it may be according to the proper order of things, however, masculine or feminine would not be a proper label except for something that generates or from which there is generating and all their natures besides would be neuter. Thus neuter is derived from masculine or feminine. Thus masculine and feminine are derived from the neuter, as it says in the declensions, and these are the derived neuters and the pairs of a neuter and their derivations.[59]

The cross-reference *amal atá isnaib réimennaib* ('as it is in the declensions') in this passage is significant, since a more detailed illustration of this idea occurs in a tract that forms part of the *Auraicept*-compilation, and is designated in some versions by the heading *Do bhunadhaibh na remend andseo sis* ('Of the origins of the declensions here below').[60] The tract consists mainly of a list of inflectional forms for paradigm-nouns, including the masculine word *fer*, 'man', the feminine word *ben* 'woman' and the neuter word *nem* 'heaven'. These paradigms were extended to include not only 'grammatical cases' in the strict sense, but also a series of word form mutations that generally fall under the umbrella of stylistic devices.[61] The last three 'devices' given in this list are *deime tebede* 'selected neuter', *lánamain* 'couple', and *gein* 'birth, child, progeny' respectively, and can thus be identified with the trio of cross-referenced terms at the end of the passage from the main text of the compilation, where they are understood to denote to instances in which a noun of the neuter gender could 'generate' the masculine or feminine.

In the section of the compilation headed *Do bhunadhaibh na remend*, the terms *deime tebede*, *lánamain* and *gein* are illustrated in some detail

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[56] *Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 44–5, lines 595–8; possibly one could read *a nneam* for *an neam*, with preservation of the neuter article.

[57] Poppe, 'Natural and Artificial Gender', pp. 199–203.

[58] Murethach, *In Donati Artem maiorem*, ed. Löfstedt, p. 79 (my translation).

[59] Ed. and trans. Ahlqvist, *Early Irish Linguist*, p. 49. Cf. *Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 42–3, lines 564–70.

[60] Ibid., pp. 136–45, lines 1759–1892 (= pp. 254–7, lines 4961–5055).

[61] For the development of the declensional tables, see Ahlqvist, *Early Irish Linguist*, pp. 29–31; id., 'Notes on "Case" and Word-Boundaries', *Ériu* 25 (1974), 181–9.

by the scholiasts using anatomical imagery, as is shown here by way of commentary on the word *fer* 'man':

> Ceand cridi fulang a dhe demi tebidhi in fhir. Suil 7 fiacail lanamain in chind. Srebann 7 cru lanamain (lanamain in srebuinn .i. bainne 7 glaiss, lanamain in chru .i. ruaidi 7 dergi) in cridi. Lurgu 7 traigh lanamain ind fhulaing. Gene dno na lanamnaide deme .i. ebrachtur .i. abhrochtur (no imcained) 7 malu, lanamain (no gene) na sula. Bun 7 lethet lanamain (no gene) na fiacal. Croiceann 7 feich lanamain (no gene) na lurgan. Lith 7 tond lanamain (.i. gene) na traiged.

> Head, heart constituting the man's two neuter selected attributes. Eye and tooth the couple of the head. Membrane and gore the couple of the heart. (The couple of the udder, that is, milk and streamlet: the couple of the gore, that is, redness and crimson.) Leg and foot the couple of supporting. A pair, too, of the correlated neuter, that is, eyelashes and eyebrow, i.e., *abhrochtur*, upper eyebrow (or *imcainead*, treating superciliously) couple or pair of the eyes. Root and breadth, the couple or pair of the teeth. Skin and sinew the couple or pair of the shins. Activity and surface the couple, i.e., pair of the feet.[62]

[62] *Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 138–41, lines 1808–16; cf. pp. 255–6, lines 4994–5004. In the first line of this excerpt, Calder translated *fulang*, the verbal noun of *fo-loing* 'to bear, sustain, support', as 'constituting', leaving only *ceand* 'head' and *cridi* 'heart' as types of *deime tebede* 'selected neuter'. On the basis of the examples that follow in the passage, however, it seems reasonable to understand the word in a concrete sense as 'legs', i.e. that part of the human body which does the supporting, and thus as a third example of an anatomical *demi tebidhi*; the first line of the passage should thus probably be read as *ceand, cridi, fulang, ad hē demi tebidhi in fhir*, 'head, heart, supporting (i.e. legs), they are the selected neuters (i.e. attributes) of the word *fer* "man"'. The plural form *geine*, which Calder translates as 'pair', might be better rendered as 'offspring' or 'progeny', to emphasise its meaning as the 'accompanying or resultant parts or properties' that are generated from the *lánamain deme* 'neuter couple': cf. *DIL*, s.v. 1 *gein* (d). In the Book of Ballymote copy of the text (fol. 178vb6–12), the words given in parentheses in Calder's edition have been added interlinearly; *geine* has consistently been written over the word *lánamain* in order to distinguish between a 'couple' and its associated properties, or 'progeny', suggesting that the distinction between the technical terms was not always clear to the scholiasts themselves. Calder (*Auraicept*, pp. 140–1, lines 1810–11) gives the first gloss as *lánamain in srebuinn .i. bainne 7 glaiss; lanamain in chru .i. ruaidi 7 dergi*, and translates it as 'the couple of the udder, that is, milk and streamlet: the couple of the gore, that is, redness and crimson': thus deviating from his translation of *srebann* as 'membrane'

The same pattern was developed to a lesser extent for the feminine and neuter genders, likewise following an illustration of declensional forms for each category:

> [Bean] Cich 7 glun a ndemi thepide, fair 7 sridit a llanamnai: blass 7 millsi a ngeni-side. Almnae 7 ecsait lanamnai in gluini. Cnaim 7 feoil a ngeni-side. No hit he a ngene a forbthe amal rom-ebhartmar. Bandialt conigi sin. *Incipit* do deim-dialt andseo sis [...] [Ni] airecar a deimi teipidhi, ar is deiminsci fadhesin. Nel 7 tuagh nimi a lanamnai demi: dath 7 airdi a ngeni-sen: no it he a fuirbhthi a ngeni. Nemdialt co sin.

> [Woman] Pap and knee their selected neuter, *fair* bearing, and *sridit* the passage of milk from the breast, their couple; taste and sweetness, their pair [i.e. progeny]. Cap and hollow of the knee, the couple of the knee. Bone and flesh their pair. Or these are their pair, their accents, as we have said. Feminine declension thus far [...] Its selected neuter is not found, for it is itself neuter gender. Cloud and bow of heaven its neuter couple: colour and height their pair, or it is their accents that are their pair. Neuter declension thus far.[63]

These passages suggest that the scholiasts understood *deime tebede*, *lánamain (deme)* and *gein* to be technical terms referring to the semantic properties of a given substance. In the case of the masculine declension, *deime tebede* was exemplified by three words denoting parts of the male body, namely the head (*cenn*), heart (*cride*) and legs (*fulang* or *fulach*).[64] These are all attested as neuter nouns,[65] possibly indicating that this part of the commentary was added to the compilation before the loss of the neuter gender toward the end of the Old Irish period, a date that would support previous hypotheses regarding the principal period of glossatory activity for the *Auraicept*.[66] Given that the very purpose of the

immediately before this gloss. 'Membrane' is arguably a better fit for the overall pattern of human anatomical reference in this passage; moreover, the Book of Ballymote witness reads *báine 7 glaisi*, 'whiteness and greenness', both of which could be colour-properties of *srebann* 'membrane', and would therefore demonstrate the consistency of the doctrine here.

[63] *Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 142–5, lines 1852–8 and 1876–9; cf. pp. 256–7, lines 5033–7 and 5052–4.

[64] For the earlier form *fulach*, see *Auraicept*, ed. Calder, p. 255, line 4994.

[65] Cf. DIL, s.vv.

[66] On the loss of the neuter gender see *GOI*, p. 154, and *SnG*, pp. 93–4, 239 and 241; on the growth of the commentary see above, pp. 23–5.

commentary in question is to outline the semantic properties of neuter nouns, however, it is not impossible that later scholiasts would have been conscious of the archaic usage of these examples, which would have provided a convenient Irish equivalent for the discussion of the neuter gender found in manuals of the Latin language.

The first sub-set of the *deime tebede* is referred to as the *lánamain*, a term that denotes nouns understood to co-exist on a semantic level within the same neuter whole, as for example the eye (f. *súil*) and the tooth (m. and f. *fiacail*) as a *lánamain* of the head. The scholiasts may have originally intended to cite pairs consisting of one masculine and one feminine noun, reflecting the widely attested meaning of the word *lánamain* as a 'married couple'.[67] The term *lánamain* is usually modified by the word *deme*, however, which links it to the preceding technical term *deime tebede*, 'selected neuters', of which each *lánamain* is a sub-set.[68] The *lánamain* was then itself subdivided into word pairs, referred to as *geine*, or 'progeny'. This term was used to denote a pair of accompanying or resultant parts or properties of each word included under the heading of a *lánamain*, e.g. 'the eyelash and eyebrow' (*abhrochtur 7 malu*) as properties of the eye (*geine na sula*).

The terms *deime tebede*, *lánamain deme* and *gein* also occur in the separate tract on metrical faults and correctives for the composition of a *trefocal*-poem, where they are accompanied by illustrative quatrains.[69]

[67] DIL, s.v. *lánamain*. The term is also used in relation to animals in the Ark; the primary meaning thus seems to be a pair consisting of both male and female genders.

[68] See for example *Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, lines 570, 1812, 1949, 3257, 5079 and 5406.

[69] Copies of this tract occur in LL and RIA MS D ii 1 ('The Book of Uí Mhaine'). It was published by Calder alongside his edition of the *Auraicept* (pp. 258–69, lines 5057–5415). Though its content is similar, the tract is distinct from the didactic poems and related prose material added to the Book of Ballymote version of the *Auraicept* compilation, as discussed above, pp. XX. For analysis of the some of the faults and correctives listed in the tract, see Kaarina Hollo, 'Metrical Irregularity in Old and Middle Irish Syllabic Verse', in *Celtica Helsingiensia: Proceedings from a Symposium on Celtic Studies*, Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 107, ed. Anders Ahlqvist, Glyn Welden Banks, Riita Latvio, Harri Nyberg and Tom Sjöblom (Helsinki, 1996), pp. 47–56, and Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Person-Switching in Celtic Panegyric: Figure or Fault?' in *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition. A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford*, ed. Joseph Falaky Nagy and Leslie Ellen Jones, CSANA Yearbook 3/4 (2005), pp. 315–26. For further commentary on the text and its date, see also Liam Breatnach, 'An Edition of *Amra Senáin*', in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers. Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, Maynooth Monographs 2, ed. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone (Maynooth, 1989), 7–31, at 20–3, and id., 'Satire, Praise', p. 69, n. 23, where Breatnach has suggested that the tract may have been the work of Cináed Úa Con Mind, who died in 958.

These quatrains are preserved only in fragmentary form, but it is clear that the stanza included as an illustration of *deime tebede* corresponds to that found in the commentary to *Auraicept na nÉces* as an example of what was called *deimhindsge for ferindsge*, 'neuter gender for masculine gender'. In the *Auraicept*, this stanza forms part of a discussion concerned with natural versus grammatical gender, where it was invoked to illustrate the circumstances in which a grammatically neuter noun served to reference metaphorically something which was naturally masculine:

> Fedhair dano deimindsge for ferindsge no four banindsge
> intan isberar 'is*s ed* in cend,' sech is cend fir no mna.
> Deimhindsge for ferindsge *quidem, ut est*:

> Is e in daigh d*e*rg dighe dath
> Fris nach gap*ar* cath no cioth;
> Iss ed cend is caoime cruth
> Fil go mbrath for braoine in bith.

Also neuter gender may be used for masculine gender or for feminine gender when it is said, 'it is the head', whether it is the head of a man or of a woman. Neuter gender for masculine gender, as for example:

> He is the red flame, a prayer of colours (?)
> over whom neither battle nor shower prevails;
> he is a leader of fairest form
> who is with fervour, upon whom the world rains.[70]

Placing a noun in a sentence of the structure *Is + PRONOUN (+ article) + NOUN* was, of course, a particularly convenient way of highlighting its gender, since the pronoun can provide a clue to the gender of the noun if this is not known. Here it is explained that the neuter noun *cenn* 'head', the gender of which is clearly indicated by the coreferential pronoun *ed*, can be used in reference to either a man or a woman, and the first quatrain given illustrates a circumstance in which a semantically masculine referent is intended ('leader'). This is followed in the text by another quatrain that illustrates *deimindsge for banindsge*, 'neuter gender

[70] *Auraicept*, ed. Calder, p. 199, lines 3173–9. Compare the *trefocal* examples at ibid., pp. 268–9, lines 5402–15, and in *LL*, ed. Best, et al., I, 165–72, at 172, lines 5212–16. See also the equivalent excerpt from the shorter recension of the text at *Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 40–3, lines 543–63, where the illustrative verses occur in a different order.

for feminine gender', i.e. an instance in which the head belongs to a woman.[71] The use of examples involving the word *cenn* are frequent in the scholia, as is perhaps most dramatically illustrated in a gloss on the distinction between natural and metaphorical gender:

> Cate insce særda fogabar co n-aicned? Ni ansa. Is ed in ceand air is særda a radh 7 se for in duine. Is aicenta immorro a radh fris iarna buai*n* de.

> What is artificial speech which is found with nature? Not hard. 'It' is the head, for it is artificial to say 'it' while it is on the man. It is natural, however, to apply 'it' to it after striking *cenn* off him.[72]

The problem at issue here evidently relates to the gender relationships that obtain between a conceptual whole and the various parts or properties that can be related to it metaphorically. As Erich Poppe has observed in relation to this particular passage:

> The problem again arises from a clash between linguistic and non-linguistic categories, between gender and sex/animateness respectively. The latter is perceived as a characteristic feature of the (male) referent of *duine*, which then reflects on this referent's parts of body, but is also expected to be reflected in the gender of the nouns denoting these parts of body. According to this line of thought, the neuter noun *cenn*, when it refers to a man's head, is an example of artificial (grammatical) gender, but it acquires its proper natural gender when severed.[73]

In the LL copy of the tract on faults and correctives for the composition of a *trefocal*-poem, the terms *deime tebede, lánamain (deme)* and *gein* may have been included as correctives by association with the word *éccenélas*, 'false gender', on the basis that the examples given to illustrate this fault are accompanied by a gloss that reads, *cen ecenelus .i. na dertar* [*ł derntar*] *ferinsci do baninsci, no baninsci dferinsci* ('without false gender, i.e. do not let masculine gender be used for feminine gender, or feminine

[71]Ibid., p. 199, lines 3180–4; cf. pp. 40–1, lines 546–9.

[72]*Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 132–3, lines 1717–20; cited in Poppe, 'Natural and Artificial', p. 199.

[73]Poppe, 'Natural and Artificial', p. 199.

gender for masculine gender').[74] This bears comparison with two stanzas in a separate bardic tract on metrical faults, which are cited under the identical headings *ferindsgi do bainindsgi* ('masculine gender for feminine gender') and *bainindsgi dferindsgi* ('feminine gender for masculine gender'). Although not explicitly referred to as examples of *éccenélas*, these stanzas likewise illustrate instances of non-agreement of gender between a noun and its coreferential pronoun.[75] In one of the didactic poems on verse faults and correctives that are appended to some versions of the *Auraicept* compilation, the 'cure' for *éccenélas* is referred to as the *airlann indsce*, '"prefix" or "marker" of gender' (*ecenel airmidir a*nd / *is luath non-anaigh aurland*, '"False gender" is taken account of there / quickly *aurland* "prefix" defends it').[76] The technical sense of the term *airlann* is discussed at greater length in the main body of the *Auraicept* compilation:[77]

> Aurlond dno ainm d'oreill gæ .i. ind adarc dub bis mon gai, is di arsisidar in gai, imtha is amlaid arsisidar in indsce don trediu-sa .i. ise isi ised: no dona deich n-urlandaib-sea .i. se da tri cethre .i. urlanda ferinsci sin .i. ise .i. in fear, da .i. da fear, tri .i. tri fir, ceithri .i. cethri fir: no urlonn indsci slondud reimmi .i. ferinsci 7 baninsce 7 deiminsci. Inunda immorro urlann ferinsce 7 baninsce o sin amach. Is aire nach indister seach a ceathair.

> Si di teora cetheora urlanna baninsce andsin. Is i .i. in bean, di .i. di mnai, teora .i. teora mna, ceitheora .i. ceitheora mna. It e 7 at iat immorro urlanna coitcheanda eter banindsci 7 ferindsci. Is ed immorro urlann demindsci *ut dicitur* is ed a cheann. Fri hurlainn ferindsci do*no* æntaigis demindsci a n-urlandaib ilair .i. da nem *ut dicitur* da fear 7rl. No urland indsce .i. ferindsce 7 banindsce 7 demindsce.

[74]*Auraicept*, ed. Calder, p. 258, line 5060 and pp. 262, lines 5201–11 (my translation).

[75]Osborn Bergin, ed., 'Irish Grammatical Tracts V. Metrical Faults', supplement to *Ériu* 17 (1955), 259–93, at 264, §§29–30.

[76]Ibid., pp. 162–3, lines 2173–4. The *erlond indsci* is also listed among the correctives in the LL tract on *trefocal*, though no illustrative examples are given thereafter: see *Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, p. 258, line 5077.

[77]See *DIL*, s.v. 2 *airlann*, and also the various applications of 3 *airlann* 'correspondence, analogy, parallel'. On the etymology of the term see Anders Ahlqvist, 'Latin Grammar and Native Learning', in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers*, ed. Ó Corráin, et al., pp. 1–6, at 3–4, and Russell, 'Sex, Gender', pp. 203–4, n. 2.

Now *urland,* haft, is the name for a spear-bed, to wit, the black horn that is round the spear, it is that on which the spear rests, even as gender rests on these three, he, she, it: or on these ten *urlaind,* to wit, *sé* he, *dá* two, *trí* three, *cethir* four men. That is, these are *urlanda,* prefixes, of masculine gender, to wit, *is é,* it is he, the man, *dá* two men, *trí* three men, *cethri* four men: or *urlond indsci* is a sign of declension, masc., fem., and neuter. Masc. and fem. *urland* are, however, the same from that onward. Therefore they are not mentioned beyond four.

Sí she, *dí* two, *teora* three, *cetheora* four women, are feminine *urlanna,* leading words, there. *Is í,* it is she, the woman, *dí* two women, *teora* three women, *ceitheora* four women. *It é* and *it iat,* they are, however, are common *urlanna* both fem. and masc. *Is ed,* it is, however, is neuter *urlann, ut dicitur,* it is his head. With masculine *urland,* again, neuter coincides in plural *urlanda,* to wit, two heavens, *ut dicitur,* two men, etc. Or *urlann indsci,* that is, masc., fem., and neuter gender.[78]

From this it is clear that the word *airlann* was understood to denote pronominal markers that identify the gender of a following noun, as well as the different gender forms of numerals. Ahlqvist, who has suggested that the term may have been 'coined ad hoc' by the scholiasts of the *Auraicept* for the purpose of explaining the grammatical problem of gender agreement, has aptly considered the pedagogical context which may have given rise to it:

> I find it easy to imagine a mediaeval classroom, in which the teacher asks a student about the gender of a given word, finds that the student cannot provide an answer and then urges him on by telling him to remind himself of the *airlann insce* of the word in question. Carelessness about words' gender is something that is rightly condemned by literate users of languages that have this distinction. Problems in this respect were probably felt rather keenly by speakers of Old Irish, principally when they were trying to handle Latin, but also to some degree in their own language, which was, perhaps even as early as the time of composition of the Auraicept,

[78] *Auraicept,* ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 124–7, lines 1621–36.

beginning to undergo the changes that led to the ultimate loss of the neuter gender in Irish.[79]

The terms *deime tebede, lánamain (deme)* and *gein* do not feature in the didactic poems as correctives for the fault *éccenélas,* and one wonders whether their addition to the LL tract on rules for the composition of a *trefocal*-poem was motivated in part by the desire to identify a total of twenty-four correctives, i.e. two for each of the twelve faults listed. They constitute the final three correctives listed at the beginning of the tract, following the *airlann indsce.*[80] This arrangement, and the quatrains given subsequently to illustrate each of the three terms, suggest that they may have been incorporated to provide more specific technical descriptors for problems relating to gender agreement in metrical composition, in particular gender incongruities that might exist between a given noun and its constituent parts. An understanding of the formal grammatical relationships that obtained between semantically related words would, of course, have been an important objective in teaching correct metaphorical usage. If a poet were to employ synecdoche in a composition, for example, it would be necessary to recognise that the grammatical gender of the word *cenn* 'head' is not the same as that of the *ben* 'woman' to which it refers, and any pronominal markers used in relation to these words would need to adhere to the usual rules of gender agreement, even if the gender must be understood as 'artificial' rather than 'natural'. Such a basic pedagogical motivation would suffice to explain the inclusion of these technical terms in the similar list of stylistic devices within the section of the *Auraicept* headed *Do bhunadhaibh na remend.* Whether intended as a deliberate allusion or not, however, the scholiasts' choice of *fer* 'man' and *ben* 'woman' as paradigm words for the masculine and feminine genders in this context, and their enumeration of human anatomical properties in an attempt to illustrate the meaning of the terms *deime tebede, lánamain (deme)* and *gein,* creates a fitting symmetry with the claim made elsewhere that *cosmaillius alta duini doniter alta huadh* ('the limbs of poetic art (*aí*) are made like the limbs of a person').[81]

[79] Ahlqvist, 'Latin Grammar', pp. 2–3.
[80] *Auraicept,* ed. and trans. Calder p. 258, lines 5077–80.
[81] See above, pp. 33–5.

ACCENTS

The final example of anatomical metaphor in the *Auraicept* to be examined in this chapter concerns another passage of commentary found in the section of the compilation entitled *Do bhunadhaibh na remend*. This relates to the three *forbaidi*, or 'accents', of Irish, which are claimed to constitute additional properties (*geine*) of the word *fer*. The term *forbaid* seems to have been understood elsewhere in the text as an equivalent for the Latin grammatical concept of an 'accent' (*accentus* or *tonus*). It is cited, for example, as one of the seven things according to which the Irish language should be analysed;[82] though this heptadic list does not seem to have any exact correpondence in known Latin grammatical sources, it may reflect an attempt on the part of the scholiasts to imitate the section headings of such manuals, which typically included a chapter on accents.[83] Moreover, the *forbaid* is explicitly equated with the Latin word *accentus* in the commentary that follows this list, and the etymologies given for both this general term and for the names of the three different types of accents suggest that they were understood by the scholiasts to denote signs written above a letter in order to indicate vowel quantity.[84] A discussion of diphthongs in the compilation also attests to the glossators' familiarity with Latin doctrine on this subject:

> Ceinmota di*diu* in fid conicc comardugud fuit 7 gair indib,
> amal asbert in Laitneoir: [circumplex] forsna silla*baib* fotta
> amal ata *do*, *si*; 7 am*al* atberat acuit forsna silla*baib* cuimri *ut
> est pax* .i. bacc.[85] Is fon indus [s]in dobeir in Gaedel forshail

[82]*Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 54–5, lines 739–40: *seachta frisa toimsiter Gaedhelg .i. fid 7 deach, reim 7 forba[i]dh, alt 7 indsci 7 etargoiri* ('seven things according to which Gaelic is measured, letter and verse-foot, declension and accent, syllable and gender, and inflection').

[83]For discussion see Ahlqvist, *Early Irish Linguist*, p. 44.

[84]Ibid., pp. 60–1, line 810: *forbaid dno .i. aiccentus lasin Laitneois, a bunad onni is* firmarius *.i. ilghnuiseach : forbid (.i. forin focul) no for fut no for cumair* ('now as to *forbaid*, i.e. *accentus* with the Latinist, from the root of the word *formarius*, i.e., many-faced : "it is upon" (to wit, on the word) either on a long or a short'). See also the description given on pp. 120–3, lines 1560–76, and DIL, s.vv. *forbaid* and *forbbaid*.

[85]Cf. *DIL*, s.v. 2 *becc*, and *Sanas Cormaic*, ed. Whitley Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries* (London, 1862), p. 36; trans. John O'Donovan, *Sanas Chormaic. Cormac's Glossary* (Calcutta, 1868): *póc .i. pác quasi pax .i.e. a páce. arisairidhe sida inphóc*, '*póc* ('a kiss'), i.e. *pác quasi* [similar to] *páx* i.e. *a páce*, for the kiss is a sign of peace'. On the use of *quasi* in glossary entries, see Paul Russell, '*Quasi*: Bridging the Etymological Gap in Early Irish Glossaries', in *A Companion in*

for fot amal rogab sron 7 slog 7rl. *et* ernin arding dead amal rogab leacc 7 ceand 7rl.

Besides, too, the vowel is able to adjust itself to long and short in them as the Latinist said: a circumflex is on the long syllables such as *do*, I give; *si*, if; and in the same way they say an acute accent is upon the short syllables, *ut est, pax*, a kiss. Thus the Gael puts *forsail* on a long, such as *srón*, nose, *slóg*, host, etc.; and *ernin* which compresses a final such as *leacc*, stone, *ceand*, head, etc.[86]

Here the scholiast alludes to a Latin quotation found elsewhere in the text, ultimately drawn from Donatus's discussion of letters in his *Ars maior*, which explains that *Latinae uocales omnes et produci et corripi possunt* ('all Latin vowels can be either lengthened or shortened').[87] This concept formed the basis for the scholiasts' description of quantity and accents, which is itself strongly reminiscent of the account given by Donatus, who described their names, function and written characters:

> Toni igitur tres sunt, acutus, gravis, circumflexus [...] Gravis
> poni in eadem dictione vel cum acuto vel cum circumflexo
> potest, et hoc illi non est commune cum ceteris. Ergo
> monosyllaba, quae correptam vocalem habebunt, acuto
> accentu pronuntiabimus, ut fax, pix, nux; quae productam
> vocalem habebunt, circumflexo accentu pronuntiabimus, ut
> res, dos, spes. [...] Acutus accentus est nota per obliquum
> ascendens in dexteram partem /, gravis nota a summo in
> dexteram partem descendens \, circumflexus nota de acuto
> et gravi facta ˆ [...]

Thus there are three accents: the 'acute', the 'grave' and the 'circumflex' [...] A grave can be put in the same word along with an acute or a circumflex, but never with both. Therefore monosyllables, which will have a shortened vowel, we will pronounce with an acute accent, as in *fax* 'torch', *pix* 'pitch', *nux* 'nut', while those which will have a lengthened vowel, we will pronounce with a circumflex accent, as for example

Linguistics: A Festschrift for Anders Ahlqvist on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday, ed. Bernadette Smelik, Rijcklof Hofman, Camiel Hamans and David Cram (Nijmegen, 2005), pp. 49–62.

[86]*Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 104–5, lines 1352–8.

[87]*Donati ars maior* I, 2.12 (De littera), ed. Louis Holtz, *Donat et la tradition de l'enseignement grammatical. Étude sur l'Ars Donati et sa diffusion (IVᵉ-IXᵉ siècle)* (Paris, 1981), p. 604.

res 'thing', *dos* 'dowry', *spes* 'hope' […] An acute accent is a character going upwards in an oblique fashion to the right; a character which descends from the top towards the grave is a character which descends from the top towards the right; the circumflex is the character made from an acute and a grave symbol together.[88]

While Donatus treated polysyllabic word accents in some detail, the *Auraicept*'s scholiasts seem to be primarily concerned with the characters and function of accents in monosyllables. The Irish 'equivalents' of the acute, circumflex and grave accents described by Donatus are referred to in the compilation by the names *dinin disail*, *forsail* and *arnin* respectively:

> Dinin disail a forbaidh .i. a aicnid lasin Laitneoir; air it e teora fuirbhthe dochuisnet .i. arnin 7 dinin dishail 7 forsail .i. arnin arding [d]ed, forsail for fot fedair, dinin disail for gair gabhaidh. Arnin, *ut est* glonn 7 donn 7 crann 7 glenn: forsail, *ut est*, sron 7 slog 7 mor: dinin disoil, *ut est*, fer 7 cor 7 ler 7 tor 7 cach timarta ar chena. Intan scribthar int ainm ogaim[89] is and scribtar na forbaidesea uasu fri realadh fuid 7 gair no fri tennad, ar ni tuigfidhea cheana: uair amal dobeir in Laitneoir acuit forsna sill*abaib* cuimre, *ut est*, *pax* 7rl., 7 circumplex forsna sill*abaib* fota, *ut*, *res*, *sic* dobeir in Gaedel di*n*e dishoil arna cuimribh, *ut est*, fer; 7 for[sh]ail forna fodaib amal rogab lamh; 7 amal bis gra*ib* in gach aenebert ilfoclaig la acuit no la circumplex, sech is arnin aræn re di*n*e disail no aræn ri forsail i n-ænfocul *ut* ceann 7 srón.

Dinin disail, its accent, to wit, *accentus* according to the Latinist; for these are the three accents which exist, to wit, *arnin*, *dinin disail*, and *forsail*, to wit, *arnin* compresses a final: *forsail* on a long is borne: *dinin disail* on a short takes

(effect). E.g. *arnin*, *ut est*, *glonn* 'deed', *donn*, 'dun', *crann*, 'tree', *glenn*, 'glen': *forsail*, *ut est*, *srōn*, 'nose', *slōg*, 'host', *mōr*, 'great': *dinin disail*, *ut est*, *fer*, *cor*, *ler*, *tor*, and all short words whatsoever. When the Ogham inscription is written there are written these accents above them to make clear long and short or to express tension, for they would not be understood otherwise: because as the Latinist puts an acute on the short syllables, *ut est*, *pax*, etc., and a circumflex on the long syllables, *ut est*, *rês*, so the Gael puts *dinin disail* on the short, *ut est*, *fer*; and *forsail* on the long, e.g. *lāmh*, hand; and as there is a grave in every single dictum of many words with an acute or a circumflex, that is to say *arnin* is along with *dinin disail* or along with *forsail* in one word, *ut*, *ceann*, 'head', and *srōn*, 'nose'.[90]

Dinin disail was thus understood to indicate short quantity and *forsail* long quantity in a vowel; that the terms are being compared to Latin accents here is clear from the glossators' use of terminological borrowings, such as *acuit* and *circumplex*, to describe equivalent examples from that language. The transposition of Latin doctrine to Irish was more problematic with regard to the term *arnin*, however. Donatus' somewhat unsatisfactory definition of a grave accent merely states that it can occur along with either an acute or a circumflex within a single word. This description is also echoed in the *Auraicept*, as the scholiasts similarly explain that an *arnin* can occur in words alongside either of the other two accents (*amal bis gra*ib* in gach aenebert ilfoclaig la acuit no la circumplex, sech is arnin aræn re di*n*e disail no aræn ri forsail i n-ænfocul*, 'as there is a grave in every single dictum of many words with an acute or a circumflex, that is to say *arnin* is along with *dinin disail* or along with *forsail* in one word').[91] However, the commentator clarifies that this third category of length is to be associated with syllable lengthening before tense consonants (*intan scribthar int ogaim is and scribtar na forbaide-sea uasu fri realadh fuid 7 gair no fri tennad*, 'when the Ogham inscription [i.e. word] is written there are written these accents above them to make clear long and short or to express tension').[92] Most examples given in illustration of this are monosyllables ending in a heavy consonant (*-nn*, *-ll*, *-rr*, *-ng* and unlenited *–m*), typically

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[88]Ibid. I, 5.5–17 (ed. Holtz, *Donat et la tradition*, pp. 609–10).

[89]Calder's translation of the term *int ainm ogaim* as 'an Ogam inscription' accords with the frequent use of this expression to denote funerary inscriptions consisting of a name of the deceased: see J. Vendryes, 'Sur un emploi du mot *ainm* "nom" en irlandais', *ÉC* 7 (1955–6), 139–46, and McManus, *Guide to Ogam*, pp. 152–62. In this context, however, it seems more probable that the term carries the more general meaning of written (as opposed to spoken) Irish attested in the Bardic Grammatical Tracts, 'in which important distinctions are noted between the way a word is written and its pronunciation for riming purposes' (McManus, *Guide to Ogam*, p. 153). Thus the intended meaning of the term in this case is probably just 'a (written) word'.

[90]*Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 120–1, lines 1544–59 [= pp. 248–9, lines 4767–88].

[91]Ibid., lines 1557–9 [= p. 249, lines 4786–8].

[92]Ibid., lines 1550–2.

–nn, e.g. *glonn* 'deed', *crann* 'tree' and *ceann* 'head'.[93] The tripartite delineation of short, long and middle quantity was a commonplace of prosodic tracts stemming from the bardic school tradition, in which the length-mark was referred to as the *síneadh* (qualified as *gearr* 'short', *meadhónach* 'middle' or *fada* 'long').[94] The description of accents in the commentary to the *Auraicept* reflects this doctrine, offering similar examples for each category; however the scholiasts' use of terminology and definitions is, as in other aspects of their linguistic analysis, markedly more resonant of the Latin tradition, suggesting a more conscious attempt to compare the two systems.

At first glance, the scholiasts' claim that the three *forbaidi* constitute a kind of *gein*, or set of properties belonging to the anatomy of a man, seems extraneous to the rest of the commentary included under the heading *Do bhunadhaibh na remend*:

> Alailiu dano, it e gene na lanamaide demi a forbhthi, air it hi tri gne[95] dochuisnet gein forcomeda 7 gein daghchometa [7] gein fricometa. Gein forcometa cetamus, ut est, ailmne for glun, immta samlaidh, ar is fair annuas ata gai ind [fh]ir forsail 7 is leis fochetoir geindir as do beolaibh i fut 7 i nn-airdi. Dinin disail biit amal rogabh fuil arrad feola 7 is isin feoil. Is amlaidh dinin dishail co ngaib lasin focul o thosuch gu dereadh gan urgabail gan airditin. Arnin amal roghabh cnaim mullaich 7 leicni 7 cnuicc 7 find, 7 na hai nad genat lasin duine fochetoir, uair fo cosmaillius alta duini doniter alta huadh. Ni taidbet dno int airnin lasin focul fochetoir forsa tochradar co mbi fo deoidh arding in focul.

> In another respect,[96] too, these are the pairs [i.e. offspring] of the correlated neuter [i.e. couples], its accents, for there are three kinds that are in existence, one [i.e. *gein*] for

[95]Ibid., lines 1548 and 1559.

[94]See for instance Osborn Bergin, ed., 'Irish Grammatical Tracts I. Introductory', supplement to *Ériu* 8 (1916), p. 1, lines 22–6; Parthalán Mac Aogáin, ed. *Graiméir Ghaeilge na mBráthar Mionúr*, Scríbhinní Gaeilge na mBráthar Mionúr 7 (Dublin, 1968), pp. 87–8; and Douglas Hyde, ed., 'Prosodia na Gaedhilge', in *Lia Fáil: Irisleabhar Gaedhilge Ollsgoile na hÉireann* 4 (Dublin, 1932), pp. 139–66, at 152. On the *síneadh meadhónach*, see David Greene, 'Middle Quantity in Irish', *Ériu* 16 (1952), 212–18.

[95]At *Auraicept*, pp. 140–1, line 1017, Calder translates *gne* as 'kind' (see DIL, s.v. *gné*), but this may be an error for *geine* 'progeny', i.e. 'there are three offspring': cf. *Auraicept*, ed. Calder, p. 256, line 5006.

[96]I.e. 'according to another tradition/source'.

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warding upon, one for good warding, and one for warding against. *Gein forcométa*, for warding upon, first, *ut est*, *ailmne for glún*, cap on knee, similarly, for on it from above stands the spear of the true *forsail*, and it is therewith at once it is produced out of thy lips in length and in loudness. *Dinin disail* are in use as, for example, *fuil* 'blood', which is along with *feóil* 'flesh', and blood which is in the flesh. It is thus that *dinin disail* permeates the word from beginning to end without arresting it, without stretching it. *Arnin* such as *cnáim mullaich* 'top bone', *leicni* 'jaw-bones', *cnuicc* 'knuckles', and *find* 'hair', and those that do not originate with man at first, for under the likeness of a man's limbs are the limbs of science [i.e. poetic art] made. Now the *arnin* does not at once appear with the word on which it falls so that it is at the end that it compresses the word.[97]

In reference to this passage, Calder rightly noted that a 'tendency to personification appears in the suggested distinction among *forcomét*, *frecomét* and *degcomét*; *forcomét*, defensive armour, as kneecap on knee; *frecomét*, armament of offence, as knuckles; and *degcomét*, that which protects by supplying life and vigour'.[98] The scholiast describes the *forsail*, or mark of long quantity, as a *gein forcométa*, i.e. a *gein* 'for guarding over' or 'preserving'.[99] The word *forsail*, which is etymologised elsewhere as the Ogam letter 's' (*sail*) written above a syllable to indicate long quantity,[100] is visualised as a 'spear' (*gáe*) that stands above a kneecap (*ailmne for glún*). The inspiration for choosing the word *glún* to illustrate this accent may stem in part from the fact that, on a formal level, it is a monosyllabic word with long quantity, while on a semantic one it is a human anatomical property, and therefore accords with theme of the preceding commentary in this section; indeed the *ailmne for glún* is included as one of the anatomical attributes of the word *ben* 'woman'.[101] The association between the 'defensive armour'

[97]*Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 140–1, lines 1816–28.

[98]Ibid., p. l.

[99]See DIL, s.v. *for-comai*.

[100]*Auraicept*, ed. and trans. Calder, pp. 120–1, lines 1562–5: *Forsail dano sail fair air i[s] sail scribt[h]ar ig incosc na forbaide sin ar is for fut bis forsail, 7 i[s] siniud na haimsire do forin sail* ('*Forsail*, too, means *sail* ['s'] upon it, for it is **s** that is written to denote that accent, for it is upon a long that *forsail* rests, and there is a lengthening of the time by it upon the **s**.')

[101]Ibid., pp. 142–3, line 1854. The term *faircle for glún* is used in some versions of the text: see ibid., p. 256, lines 5008 and 5035, and DIL, s.v. *forcle* ('top, cover, lid').

of the kneecap (which, as Calder notes, is the part of the body that protects the knee) and the *forsail* probably also had an etymological dimension, deriving from the element *for* 'on, upon' common to this word and the expression *ailmne for glún*. Yet the analogy is more subtle than this: for the glossator also explains that the long quantity indicated by a *forsail* occurs from the moment a syllable begins to be uttered (*is leis fochetoir geindir as do beolaibh i fut 7 i nn-airdi*, 'it is therewith at once it is produced out of thy lips in length and in loudness'). The scholiast's analogy between the 'spear' of the *forsail* and the pronunciation of a long syllable is obscure, but it may have to do with the notion that this weapon, when held by a human, would be positioned above the knee, just as a long accent is written over a letter. When thus situated, the spear can also be produced immediately if needed for self-defense, just as the sound of a vowel with long quantity was understood to be produced from the very start of the syllable.

In contrast, the *dinin disail*, associated with short quantity elsewhere in the *Auraicept*, is described in this passage as a *gein daghchométa*, or 'the *gein* of good guarding', and is illustrated in the passage by the word *fuil* 'blood'. In keeping with the use of *glún* as a monosyllabic word of long quantity to which a *forsail* would be applied, the word *fuil* itself illustrates short quantity. Furthermore, it is specified that blood runs within *feóil* 'flesh', and that *is amlaidh dinin dishail co ngaib lasin focul o thosuch gu dereadh gan urgabail gan airditin* ('it is thus that *dinin disail* permeates the word from beginning to end without arresting it, without stretching it').[102] The analogy intended here seems to be that blood and flesh are both features of the human body that are present at birth and remain constant properties throughout life; similarly a mark of short quantity, which does not lengthen a syllable in any way, might be understood to indicate sound that is present from the inception of a syllable and not subsequently altered.

This description of the *dinin disail* is rendered somewhat more transparent by comparison with the analogy offered for the *arnin*. Referred to in the passage above as the *gein fricometa*, or property 'for warding against', the scholiast compares this third type of 'accent' to the words *cnáim mullaich* 'cranium', *leicni* 'jaw-bones', *cnuicc* 'knuckles' and *find* 'hair'. These are all parts of human anatomy *nad genat lasin duine fochetoir* ('that do not originate with man at first'), i.e. those features which are not present during infancy but evolve at a later stage,

102 Ibid., lines 1822–4.

typically to serve as protection from injury.[103] Thus the bones which structure the cranium are not yet fused together at birth, allowing the skull to pass through a narrow birth canal; similarly certain joints of the human body, such as the knuckles, only evolve at a later stage in growth. This is also the case for the teeth, which will be encased in the cheeks or jaw-bones (*leicni*), and the hair, which serves a range of protective functions, including insulation and shielding from the sun. The cranium, jaw-bones, knuckles and hair thus contrast with the anatomical features associated with a marker of short quantity (*dinin disail*), i.e. flesh and blood, in that they are not always present in a human. Like the marker of long quantity (*forsail*), the *arnin* represents an 'added' sound that is produced when lengthening a syllable; however it is also the case that *ni taidbet dno int arnin lasin focul fochetoir forsa tochradar co mbi fo deoidh arding in focul* ('the *arnin* does not at once appear with the word on which it falls so that it is at the end that it compresses the word').[104] In other words, it is understood that while short and long quantity are produced immediately at the inception of a syllable, the *arnin* indicates that a syllable begins short and starts to become long, but is compressed (*ar-ding*) into middle quantity by the pronunciation of a heavy consonant at the end. This concept of the 'compression' of a double consonant is also evident from the description of *arnin* elsewhere in the *Auraicept*, which explains that *in baile a rreagar a leas da thæbomna geibidh greim indala n-ai arnin*, ut est *ceand 7rl., ar ni bhi eamhnad in n-ogam* ('where two consonants are required, *arnin* takes the force of one of them, e.g. *ceann*, etc.; for there is no doubling [of letters] in Ogham').[105]

The *Auraicept*'s anatomical depiction of the three *forbaidi* would seem to be a product of creative invention on the part of an imaginative Irish grammarian, probably inspired by the anatomical imagery of the surrounding commentary on the words *deime tebede, lánamain (deme)* and *gein*. Some clues to its origins are provided by the description of the word *arnin*, however, for which non-grammatical parallels can be identified in medieval literary tradition. Observations concerning parts of the body which developed only after birth are attested in early sources for medical knowledge, such as a triad in the medieval Welsh compilation *Meddygon Myddveu*, which states that *tri asc6rn yssyd y my6n*

103 Ibid., lines 1825–6.
104 Ibid., lines 1827–8.
105 Ibid., pp. 34–5, lines 437–9.

dyn or torrant ny chyfannant byth, ac ny enir un ohonunt gan dyn pan aner ef.
Deint, a phedellec, a iat ('There are three bones in the human body which
never rejoin if they are broken, and none of them exist in man at his
birth: the teeth, the kneecap and the skull').[106] A medical compendium
assembled by Beatons of Mull in the sixteenth century likewise includes
a catechism on anatomical matters of a more or less practical nature,
amongst which a similar triad immediately precedes an example of the
motif concerning the '365 joints of the human body' discussed in the
first section of this chapter:

> Ca lin cnaim*h* a corp duine gineas ar na geineam*h*ain 7 na
> geineann rei*m*e? Ni *ansa*. A tri, et on land bat*h*aisi 7 fiacail 7
> fa*ir*cli gluine. Ca lion alt fil a corp duine 7 ca lion do loisaib*h*
> airiti da nentar a leigeas? Ni *ansa*. .5. ailt seasgad ar t*ri céad*
> 7 a coim*h*lion si*n* do gallruib*h* et in lion cena do loisuib*h* da
> nentar a leig*h*eas.

> How many bones are formed in the body of a person after
> birth, and are not formed before it? Not difficult. Three,
> that is, the fontanelle (lit. 'the plate of baptism'), the teeth
> and the kneecap. How many joints are there in the body of
> a person and how many specific herbs are there to heal them?
> Not difficult. 365, and the same number of illnesses, that is,
> the same number of herbs to heal them.[107]

Such observations were probably commonplace, and it is difficult
to draw any firm conclusions regarding the scholiast's knowledge
of elementary medical doctrine on the basis of this evidence alone.
However, it can be argued that the commentary on the three types
of *forbaid* in the section of the *Auraicept* entitled *Do bhunadhaibh na*
remend testifies to an attempt on the part of the scholiasts to model their
account of the Irish language on Latin grammatical manuals, while also
addressing very practical didactic concerns of pronunciation, meaning
and style. As an apparently idiosyncratic reworking and expansion of
the anatomical analogies found elsewhere in the compilation, it is is
revealing of their approach to describing features of both written and
spoken language.

[106]Pol Diverres, ed. and trans., *Le plus ancien texte des Meddygon Myddveu* (Paris, 1913), §48,
p. 48 (my translation). Diverres' edition is based on British Library, Additional MS 14912,
produced in Wales at the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century.
[107]Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. 72. 1. 2 (Gaelic II), fols. 59r1–64vz, at
62r10–17 (my translation). See also above, pp. 37–40.

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The eighth and ninth centuries, during which the first seeds of the
Auraicept's scholia were probably sown, was a fruitful period for the
writing of grammatical commentaries in the Latin language, not least in
circles of Insular association. The various discursive strategies employed
in these commentaries attest to a renewed attempt to challenge the
established authority of grammatical tradition, and help us to gain
insight into the transmission and adaptation of linguistic doctrine
during the early medieval period, particularly amongst scholars whose
native language was not that of their elementary grammatical textbooks.
Though they wrote mainly in the Irish vernacular, the scholiasts of
Auraicept na nÉces were willing participants in this wider phenomenon,
and the compilation that resulted from their endeavours can be seen to
encapsulate the processes of textual reworking and the transmission of
ideas on many levels: from the grammars of Late Antiquity to those of
the early medieval period, from Latin to the vernacular, and from one
Irish scholarly community to another. This study has focused on the
glossators' description of language using various forms of anatomical
metaphor: a thematic strand of the work that, in many respects,
transcends the more immediate pedagogical concerns of grammar as a
scholarly discipline. For as Vivien Law has remarked,

> By showing how a linguistic phenomenon had its
> counterpart in human, or better still spiritual, reality, a
> writer could provide extra-linguistic rationale for what might
> otherwise be dismissed as beneath notice, arbitrary and
> caught up in continual flux. Such comparisons imparted
> universality to phenomena uneasily balanced on the
> boundary between universal and particular, natural and
> arbitrary. By the same token any such parallel has the power
> to reveal, beneath a seemingly casual exterior, a deeply held
> belief about the nature of the world.[108]

When examined from the complementary perspectives of grammatical
metalanguage, literary allusion, pedagogical practice and textual
transmission, the use of corporeal imagery to explain abstract linguistic
concepts by the scholiasts of *Auraicept na nÉces* sheds something of its
peculiarity, and affirms the place of the compilation within the wider
context of linguistic thought during the early medieval period.

[108]Law, *Wisdom, Authority and Grammar*, p. 58.