Ollscoil Mhá Nuad
Maynooth University

Now You're Talking... Old Irish

Towards a conversational approach to teaching Old Irish

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For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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March 2025

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Abstract

This thesis explores the possibilities of developing communicative approaches to the teaching of Old Irish to absolute beginners, also providing possible options to implement this practice. After an analysis of the communicative approaches applied to the teaching of Latin and Ancient Greek since the Renaissance (Chapter 1), the focus is switched to the Old Irish learning materials published since the first full description of the language (second half of the 19th century), which are reviewed one by one in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I introduce my own project for an Old Irish textbook based on the conversational approach and explain its main principles. Chapter 4 is instead focused on advanced beginners and their serious need for 'bridge texts', that is, reading texts that facilitate and foster the transition from the textbook to original literature. I will also discuss the option of producing such texts by translating existing literary works and the issues that this kind of translation may raise. Chapter 5 provides materials that exemplify my endeavours towards innovative approaches to Old Irish language teaching.

Introduction

As can be inferred from its title, inspired by a well-known modern Irish textbook from the 1990s,[1] the main focus of this thesis is exploring the possibilities of developing communicative approaches to the teaching of Old Irish to absolute beginners and also provide possible options to implement this practice (Chapters 1–3). I will then switch my focus to advanced beginners and their serious need for 'bridge texts' to help their transition from the textbook to original literature. I will also discuss the option of producing such texts by translating existing literary works and the issues that this kind of translation may raise (Chapter 4).

In Chapter 1 I will go through the main conversional approaches applied to the teaching of Latin and Ancient Greek from the Renaissance to our day, with a special focus on textbooks and various learning materials. Among the topics covered are the accessible and conversational version of the Grammar-Translation Method by H. G. Ollendorff and his followers in the 19th century, the notorious Direct Method experience of W.H.D. Rouse and his acolytes at Perse School, and the intense teaching and publishing activity of modern institutions such as Accademia Vivarium Novum (Italy), Cultura Clásica (Spain), and the Polis Institute (Israel). The aim is to show that historical languages can be taught actively and conversationally and that this approach, despite undoubtedly being more arduous for teachers, is worth the challenges that it involves and poses.

Since the conversational approach has never been applied to Old Irish, it is important to properly determine how this language has been taught so far. This is the aim of Chapter 2, in which I will review all the Old Irish learning materials published since the decoding of the language in the second half of the 19th century. Old Irish has always been taught through the grammar-based approach, and the first graded textbook appeared as late as 1974. The aim of this chapter is to show that this language is pedagogically still very young, and that there is room for further differentiation in its teaching and teaching materials, also with the aim of attracting a wider and less specialized audience.

In Chapter 3 I will introduce my own project for an innovative Old Irish textbook based on the conversational approach. In doing so, I will refer back to the different approaches and textbooks discussed in Chapter 1 for Latin and Ancient Greek to show what features of these I have decided to implement in my own endeavour and why. I will first list the features that I have selected along with their sources, before discussing them one by one. In the last section of the chapter, I will introduce the format of the exercises included in my textbook, and go in great detail into the principles behind them. In order to do so, I will also have to explain a number of grammatical features regarding the Old Irish nominal and verbal systems. Celticists will find these explanations oversimplified, to say the least, if not even trivial. I am fully aware of this. The reason for the simplification is, to be honest, my hope that this thesis will be of some interest not only to Celtic scholars, but also to teachers of other historical languages with no previous knowledge of Old Irish, for whom some of the very

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1 Éamonn Ó Dónaill & Deirbhile Ní Churraighín, *Now You're Talking: Multi-media Course in Irish for Beginners*. Gill and Macmillan, 1995.

distinctive principles governing Old Irish morphology and conjugation will have to be introduced.

Chapter 4 will discuss the importance of having bridge texts to allow learners to begin to read enjoyably in Old Irish, or in any other historical language, as soon as they finish their textbook, when reading original literary texts would still be hardly achievable. After briefly covering original 'bridge' texts produced for Latin and Ancient Greek starting from the end of 19th century, I will move to translated texts. Since scholarly theoretical literature about translation into historical languages is extremely limited, I decided to discuss several general issues regarding this practice. While discussing these issues, I will also hint at some specific Old Irish examples by using my own translation (2023) of *The Primer* by Treadwell and Free. In the last section of the chapter, I will further discuss translation issues, but this time starting from the experience of other translators into historical languages, who have kindly provided me with their perspectives and points of view through a questionnaire that I expressly created for this thesis. The aim of the chapter is to emphasize the importance of using original literature to produce engaging bridge texts and the need for more reflection on the theoretical issues related to this practice.

Chapter 5 includes appendices, among which are a sample lesson of my Old Irish textbook, a sample chapter of a digital textbook I am adapting to Old Irish for the American company TPRS Books, an excerpt from my Old Irish translation of The Primer and other materials I have been collecting during my years as an Old Irish teacher and translator.

To finish this introduction, just a word on terminology. Throughout this thesis, I deliberately chose not to use the expression 'dead languages'. Instead, I will use 'historical languages', 'unspoken languages', 'ancient languages', 'medieval languages', or 'ancient and medieval languages'. I strongly believe that languages, even without native speakers, are in no way dead as long as they are studied, taught, actively used, written, and moulded into translations. These are also things that, within my limits, I have been doing for years with Old Irish, which has always accompanied me in a lively and vibrant way.

18th July 2024

F. F.

Allow me then a memory about my parents, Lidio (1926–2000) and Pieranna (1931–2024), who always unconditionally supported and encouraged my studies without being able to see this achievement. Grazie, babbo e mamma. Grazie infinite, di tutto.

Disclaimer

Throughout this thesis, I will often be referring to my own language teaching experience. I have been teaching Old Irish at Maynooth University since 2019, as a Graduate Teaching Assistant, Assistant Lecturer and tutor. In the course of my PhD studies, I have been teaching the modules SG207 and SG208 (Old Irish 1 and 2) as a Graduate Teaching Assistant since 2019/20, in addition to teaching SG307 and SG308 (Old Irish 3 and 4) in 2023/24. In 2022-23 I also taught, as an Assistant Lecturer, the Intensive Old Irish modules SG601 and 604 to replace Prof. David Stifter, my PhD supervisor, who was on leave.

I have twenty years of language teaching experience, both in Italy, where I come from, and here in Ireland. I taught Old Icelandic, an introductory course, at the University of Pisa, Italy, my *alma mater*, for one academic year, and Italian for 10 years at two American colleges in Florence (Florence University of the Arts and Pepperdine University). I also have extensive experience outside the strictly academic setting. Since 2018 I have been teaching languages (Italian, Spanish, French, German) continuously in adult evening classes at Coláiste Chiaráin, Leixlip, and occasionally also in the Community Schools of Portmarnock and Palmerstown.

I have also a long experience as an editorial translator from Nordic languages into Italian. I have translated and published several books: one poetry collection from Danish, and seven novels, one from Norwegian and six from Finnish. My passion for translation is also what led me to explore this option as a means of producing Old Irish reading materials in Chapter 4.

Just three days before the submission of this thesis, I published, in collaboration with David Stifter, the Old Irish translation of the children's book *Bin ich klein?* by Philipp Winterberg (see Felici & Stifter 2024). *Bin ich klein?* is discussed in Chapter 4 for its Gothic translation and its value as a source for low-beginner texts in historical languages, but its Old Irish version is not mentioned. When the chapter was written, three months ago, the translation had not yet been planned, although, in the text, I refer to such a possibility as 'definitely advisable'. Now an Old Irish version exists.

Abbreviations

AHP: Mario Díaz Ávila, 2014: *Aleksandros. To Hellenikon Paidion*, Guadix (Granada): Cultura Clásica.

AOIP: Wim Tigges, 2006: *An Old Irish Primer*. Nijmegen: Stichting Uitgeverij de Keltische Draak.

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference

CI: Comprehensible Input

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

DGA: Santiago Carbonell Martinez, 2014: *Διάλογος. Prácticas de Griego Antiguo*. Granada: Cultura Clásica.

DIAS: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies

DM: Direct Method

FGC: William Henry Denham Rouse, 1906: *A First Greek Course*. London: Blackie & Son.

FGC11: Anne Mahoney, (after W.H.D. Rouse), 2011: *A First Greek Course*. Indianapolis & Cambridge, MA: Focus Publishing.

FOIGR: Kim McCone, 2005: *A first Old Irish grammar and reader: including an introduction to Middle Irish*. Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish.

FR: Hans H. Ørberg, 2013: *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata. Pars I: Familia Romana*. Roma: Edizioni Accademia Vivarium Novum.

GBH: William Henry Denham Rouse, 1909: *A Greek Boy at Home. A Story Written in Greek*. London: Blackie & Son.

GC: Johann Kaspar Zeuss, and Hermann Ebel (ed.), 1871: *Grammatica Celtica: e monumentis vetustis tam Hibernicae linguae quam Britannicarum dialectorum Cambricae, Cornicae, Aremoricae comparatis Gallicae priscae reliquis construxit I. C. Zeuss*. 2nd revised edition. Berlin: Weidmann.

GOI: Rudolf Thurneysen, 1946: *A Grammar of Old Irish*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

GTM: Grammar-Translation Method

IA: Luigi Miraglia, and Tommaso F. Bórri (eds.), 2015: *Athenaze. Introduzione al greco antico*. Roma: Edizioni Accademia Vivarium Novum.

IOI: Ruth Preston Miller Lehmann, and Winfred Philippe Lehmann, 1975: *An Introduction to Old Irish*. New York: Modern Language Association of America.

LLPSI: Hans H. Ørberg, 2013: *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata (Partes I & II).* Roma: Edizioni Accademia Vivarium Novum.

LNIS: Francesco Felici (ongoing): *Labrammar-ni in Sengoídilc! Living Old Irish for Absolute Beginners*

LSE: Living Sequential Expression

NAS: Noun-Adjective Sequence

NS: Naturmetodens Sproginstitut

OF: Orality First

OIP: John Strachan, 1905: *Old Irish Paradigms*. Dublin: Hodges, Figgis [for the] School of Irish Learning.

OIPG: Strachan, John, 1909: *Old Irish Paradigms and Selections from the Old Irish Glosses*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

OIW: Ernest Gordon Quin, 1975: *Old-Irish Workbook*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

OM: Ollendorff Method

ØM: Ørberg Method

ØU: Ørbergian Universe

PGL: Christophe Rico, 2015: *Polis: Speaking Ancient Greek as a Living Language. Level One, Student's Volume*. Jerusalem: Polis Institute Press.

PI: Polis Institute (The Jerusalem Institute of Languages and Humanities)

PM: Polis Method

PQA: Personal Questions and Answers

QA: Question-Answer exchange

QFS: Questions From Sentences

SCOI: Ranke De Vries, 2020: *A Student's Companion to Old Irish Grammar*. 2nd revised edition. Burlington, VT: Forgotten Scholar Press.

SENG: David Stifter, 2006: *Sengoídelc. Old Irish for Beginners*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

SGGD: Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, 1981: *Sean-Ghaeilge Gan Dua*. 2nd edition. Maynooth: An Sagart.

SL: Source Language of a translation

SLA: Seccond Language Acquisition

SMMD:, Rudolf Thurneysen (ed.), 1935: *Scéla mucce Meic Dathó*. Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series VI. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

TET: Translator/Editor/Teacher.

TL: Target Language of a translation

TPR: Total Physical Response, as described in: James J. Asher, 2012: *Learning Another Language through Actions*. Seventh expanded edition. Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oaks Productions.

TPRS: Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling, as described in: Karen Lichtman, 2018: *Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS). An Input–Based Approach to Second Language Instruction*. New York: Routledge.

UDT: Christophe Rico, 2022: *Unus, Duo, Tres. Latine loquamur per scaenas et imagines*. Jerusalem: Polis Institute Press.

VKG: Holger Pedersen, 1909–1913: *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen*. 2 vols: *I. Einleitung und Lautlehre. II. Bedeutungslehre (Wortlehre)*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

VL: Maria Luisa Aguilar, and Jorge Tarrega, 2024: *Via Latina: De Lingua et Vita Romanorum*. 3rd edition. Granada: Cultura Clásica.

1. Speaking Unspoken Languages: Literature Review

> Some people may think it chimerical, to expect that teachers of Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, should be able to commence their instructions in these dead tongues by conversation [...]. But in this judgement there is a great practical mistake involved. It is not the most difficult thing, or a difficult thing at all, to speak any language, whether living or dead.
>
> (John Stuart Blackie, 'On the Teaching of Languages', 1845: 183)

When John Stuart Blackie wrote the article cited above, he certainly did not suspect that Hebrew, which he lists among the 'dead' languages, would one day become a fully living language again. History seemed to want to confirm his idea that a language never loses its communicative nature, even if it has zero native speakers, and that as such it is always technically speakable whatever its condition.

This was vividly demonstrated commencing in the last two decades of the 19th century, when Hebrew had been an unspoken language for almost two thousand years. Then Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858–1922),[1] a linguist and journalist who had immigrated with the first wave of Jewish migration to then Ottoman Palestine, also known as The Land of Israel, initiated the path that would revitalize Hebrew and transform it from a sacred and literary language into the living language of a nation. Inspired by the Haskala, the European Jewish Enlightenment, during which the purest, classical form of the language had again begun to flourish in literature, Ben-Yehuda devoted his entire life to this project. He wrote a monumental, multi-volume dictionary that also included all the vocabulary to describe modern concepts, edited several newspapers in Hebrew, founded the Hebrew Language Committee (now The Academy of the Hebrew Language), and even raised his children in Hebrew, making them the first native speakers of this language in almost two thousand years. Although very different from its

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1 On Ben-Yehuda and the revival of Hebrew cf. also St. John 1952, Roth 1953, Fellman 1973a and 1973b, Hadas-Lebel 1992: 125–172, Saenz-Badillos 1993: 267–287, Nahir 1998, Stavans 2008, Coulmas 2016: 139–153, and Glinert 2017: 168–245.

Classical form,[2] Hebrew is now the national language of Israel and the mother tongue of millions of native speakers.

      If Hebrew could be revived for the sake of giving a living language to a nation, then it must be possible, although to an immensely lesser extent, to do a similar thing with any other ancient or medieval language, including Old Irish, for the sake of teaching it. Trying to teach ancient languages in a living and communicative way, as if they were modern—and, of course, alive—is, however, not a bizarre oddity of modern times. Much more bizarre is, instead, the fact of having reduced them, in many cases, to dead artefacts whose only *raison d'être* is to be dissected, decoded, analysed and translated; whose only *raison d'être* is, essentially, to be dead.

      Fortunately, however, this has not always been the case. In this section I am going to review, in chronological order, the main attempts made, starting from the Renaissance, by daring language teachers and textbook authors to teach unspoken languages in a lively and communicative—or at least dialogical—manner, as if they were alive. These teachers and authors made a choice, a passionate and deliberate choice to ignore the tradition and, along with it, the 'alleged' death of the 'allegedly' dead languages. These people were not, however, a legion of 'Dr. Frankensteins' in the throes of delusion of their omnipotence, but conscious, ardent, and also somewhat irreverent dreamers, always aware of the fact that a language, ancient or modern, spoken or unspoken, exists, or existed, as a communication and exchange tool, and that it is indeed through communication and exchange, which are the most fundamental reasons for its existence, that it is best taught and learnt.

      Unfortunately, although this chapter forms a section of a thesis about possible applications of active and communicative approaches to the teaching of Old Irish, Old Irish will hardly be mentioned here, for the simple reason that nothing along the lines of the approaches discussed in what follows has ever been applied to it. Therefore, we will have to content ourselves with the review of what has been done so far for Latin and, to a lesser extent, Ancient Greek, while treasuring this information and then using it to support and inform the possible applications of one or more of these approaches, or of a combination of them, to the Old Irish setting.

1.1. Latin in the Renaissance and the *Colloquia*

Although there were no native speakers left, Latin was a living language throughout the Middle Ages and up to the 1500s. It was taught through the medium of Latin, was actively used in schools and universities, in the writing of books, and in international communication (Macdonald 2011: 3; Manning 2021: 10). Tunberg (2011, 2012) highlights the spoken dimension of Latin in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. People

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2 Hebrew, as it is spoken now, is indeed *not* Classical Hebrew. Modern Israeli people do not converse in the pure language of the Bible, but a in a deeply different and deeply Europeanised version of it. The revitalisation of the language also meant the revitalisation of a process which is inherent in any living language, i.e. language change. Moreover, the Jewish people who migrated to Israel and learnt spoken Hebrew, were all native speakers of European languages which, in turn, heavily influenced the phonology, morphology and syntax of revived Hebrew, giving it the shape it has now. See also: Rabin 1983, Waldman 1989: 223–224, Wexler 1990, Hadas-Lebel 1992: 165–172, Zuckermann & Walsh 2011: 114, Zeldes 2013.

learned Latin not only to access academic sources or to attend colleges where, in the Middle Ages and throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, every single activity was conducted in Latin, but also to develop practical communicative abilities in it, i.e. to use it for what Latin first and foremost was and is: a language. As Tunberg points out:

> [...] nearly everyone in the Middle Ages and Renaissance who learned Latin did so not merely to be able to read and understand the written sources of the academic disciplines (virtually all of which were in Latin), but also to acquire the practical ability to use Latin themselves as a means of communication [...]

> (Tunberg 2012: 190)

Nevertheless, 'Latin in its late medieval phases had developed into a jargonized, scholastic language, more simplified in syntax and more particular in vocabulary than Classical Latin' (Butterfield 2011: 304). Therefore, until the advent of Humanism, the international language of Europe was a Latin that had basically lost all its classical purity, a kind of 'distinctive idiom, which was often very far removed in syntax, semantics and vocabulary from the norms of classical and even patristic Latin' (Tunberg 2020: 67), but which was instead cluttered up with 'the jargon of scholastic theology and speculative grammar', as well as with 'peculiar usages characteristic of sub-types of medieval Latin' (Tunberg 2011: 9). The Humanists set out then to purge this corrupted form of the language and restore the standards of the Roman authors. This was more easily said than done, as explained by Kristian Jensen:

> Much of the effort of humanist grammarians was directed towards purifying the Latin language of words which could not be found in classical authors. The aim was to banish medieval neologisms and replace them with classical equivalents. In the absence of a thorough lexicography of ancient Latin, this was no easy task and largely depended on an individual's assimilation of the classical idiom through extensive reading and memorization of approved authors. Even more difficult was the eradication of the unclassical use of classical words.

> (Jensen 1996: 69)

Nonetheless, most texts were written in this restored language by the end of the 16th century:

> The *renatae litterae* of Neo-Latin continued to provide a potent medium for displaying a writer's own erudition in a way that the employment of a given vernacular simply could not. It accordingly served as the written and spoken language for diplomatic correspondence throughout many regions of the world populated by Europeans, precisely owing to its generally fixed vocabulary and the fact that it enjoyed a wider cognisance among the intellectual elite than any single spoken language.

> (Butterfield 2011: 314)

However, it was not enough to just restore the written, formal Latin. The restoration was focused on spoken Latin as well, which also needed to be purified, not only from the jargon of scholastic law, theology and dialectic of the Middle Ages, but also from the

'macaronic phrases', 'the barbarous spoken Latin of students' (Tunberg 2020: 67), the ungrammatical and 'un-Latin' constructions that were the product of merely literal translations from the different vernacular languages (Macdonald 2011: 3). There was a need for a reliable and pure spoken standard, and where to find it if not in the original Roman authors? The *sermo cotidianus*, the everyday speech, had to be restored and modelled on classical authors as well.

This new strongly felt need triggered the explosion, starting from the late 15th century, of the so-called *colloquia*, also known as *colloquia familiaria* or *colloquia scholastica*, entertaining collections of dialogues based on the style of classical authors, mostly from the period between Cicero and Quintilian. These dialogues were meant to be used both as models for everyday conversation in good and pure Latin (Tunberg 2020: 68) and also as first readers for students who, having learnt the fundamentals of the language, were ready to start to read their first texts. Published in their thousands up to the early 17th century, they 'are short Latin dialogues, designed chiefly (though not always exclusively) for school use, which are distinctive for vocabulary pertaining to daily life, and often (though by no means always) daily life in a school setting' (Tunberg 2012: 189); these are 'aimed at teaching colloquial Latin by describing humdrum, daily events and thus providing pupils with a vocabulary for their everyday needs' (Jensen 1996: 72).

One of the most important of these collections was the *Colloquia familiaria*, first published in 1518 by Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), in which, following a very modern approach, the dialogues were presented in order of difficulty, from simple everyday exchanges to complex and challenging discussions involving deeper contents and advanced language structures (Miraglia 1996: 9).

Erasmus, however, was not the only one to produce high-level *colloquia*. Worth mentioning are also the *Exercitationes linguae latinae* (1538) by Juan Luis Vives (1493–1540), a series of dialogues on everyday situations that remained in use in seminaries until the last century, and the four books of *Colloquiorum scholasticorum ad pueros in Latino sermone exercendos libri quattuor* (1564) by Corderius (1479–1564) (Miraglia 1996: 9), who was apparently the first to start the custom of adding a facing vernacular translation to the dialogues (Kelly 1969: 121). The use of *colloquia* as accessible ideal 'first readers' was also emphasized by Iacobus Pontanus (1542–1626), a German Jesuit and humanist who, in the introduction to the first volume (1599) of his massive collection of dialogues, *Progymnasmata*, maintained that, since the content of such *colloquia* was familiar and 'appropriate for friendly gatherings' (cited in Tunberg 2020: 68), exposure to their dialogues—and, I would add, the active reuse of them in real life situations—would undoubtedly make students progress towards the written and spoken mastery of the language. Pontanus does not make a mystery out of his own preference, for early-stage Latin students, for *colloquia* over Cicero's letters, often used as beginner texts as well:

> One must admit that the affairs dealt with in Cicero's letters are understood by the youth and young minds with more effort and not as completely as the themes that occur in Dialogues – there is nothing more usual, better known, more apparent and familiar than the subject matter and situations <treated in> these dialogues.

> (Ibd.)

Latin as the European lingua franca survived approximately until the end of the 17th century and began to rapidly decline afterwards. *Colloquia* suffered the same fate:

> *Colloquia* continued to be written and published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though in much diminished quantities, which is hardly surprising since the active employment of Latin as the language of the learned world vastly contracted in the same period. It is reasonable to assume that the spoken use of Latin would have always been linked to the use of Latin as a language for written publication, and that as publication in Latin declined, so too the oral use of Latin would have received less and less attention.

> (Tunberg 2012: 200–201)

By the second half of the 18th century and the 19th century Latin had basically ceased to be a language of communication (Tunberg 2011: 9), not only as a result of the rise of grammar studies (Macdonald 2011: 3) and historical linguistics, but also as a consequence of the influence exerted first by the Enlightenment, and then by Positivism, that pushed towards the application of a rigorously scientific, systematic and rational approach to language education (Miraglia 2009: 10). The teaching of Latin became grammar-dominated, and the purpose of its learning had nothing to do with communication anymore; consequently, as Macdonald (2011: 3) points out, it became more and more difficult, if not impossible, for students to reach the active spoken mastery of the previous ages.

At that point, the only reason for studying Latin was to understand, dissect and translate the texts of classical authors with a grammar and a lexicon always at hand. This is what was later referred to as the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) which, despite the fact that it is said to be a method 'for which there is no theory' and that 'has no advocates' (Richards & Rodgers 2014: 7), dominated language teaching in Europe from the 1840s, when the works of its most popular authors were first marketed (see 1.2.), to the 1940s.

1.1.1. Posselius and his Διάλογοι

On the Classical Greek side, the situation was different. Unlike Latin, Greek was by no means an international lingua franca, so there was much less interest in gaining speaking fluency in it. Moreover, there is also 'no indication that educators, Catholic or Lutheran, saw in Classical Greek a language of oral communication on a par with Latin' (Johnson 2006: 192). Not even Erasmus, so strongly devoted to spoken Latin, seemed to be interested in conversational Ancient Greek:

> It is a curious fact that Erasmus, having researched and promoted a reconstructed pronunciation of ancient Greek considerably different from the pronunciation used by contemporary Greeks, did not have Greek conversation in mind in doing so.

> (Ibd. 193)

The main interest around Ancient Greek and available Greek study materials during the Renaissance was strictly attributable to its literature:

> [...] although the first grammars of Greek introduced to western Europe were those used by the Greek-speakers of Constantinople to introduce their own children to the ancient *paideia*, the grammars promoted fluency not in the spoken language but in the reading of the ancient texts. Students in western Europe wanted to access Euripides and Plato, not converse with Byzantine ex-patriots.

(Ibd.)

The principal exception to this trend was the work of Johannes Posselius the Elder (1528–1591), a German classicist and educator who was extremely active at the University of Rostock during the second half of the 16ᵗʰ century. Posselius, a strong advocate of the use of active Classical Greek on a par with Latin, authored three important pedagogical works for the Greek learner 'to be used by students at three different levels of Greek language acquisition' (Ibd. 189). The first-level book, called Οἰκείων Διαλόγων Βιβλίον Ἑλληνιστὶ καὶ Ρομαιστί. *Familiarum Colloquiorum Libellum Graece et Latine* (1588), was a collection of thematically arranged Greek *colloquia* with parallel Latin text. The book, written in 'elegant Atticizing Greek' and 'careful, humanistic Latin' (Ibd. 191) was completely bilingual, and therefore suitable for developing fluency in both languages, which Posselius deemed fundamental for the serious and dedicated young students, to whose lives, needs and daily language usage he accommodated the content of the dialogues. In his dedicatory letter at the beginning of the book, he is keen to emphasize the importance of an all-round philological education, maintaining that

> those students who join Latin and Greek together in order to be equally adept in both receive the most benefit in their philological studies. [...] If they will read them [the dialogues] studiously and also apply them to their daily activities, they will find that they will benefit much from the effort they make.

(Ibd. 192)

With Οἰκείων Διαλόγων Βιβλίον, 'Posselius thus challenges the humanistic expectations of Greek studies by adding a conversational aspect to the early years of language training' (Ibd. 194). The book was very successful and innovative, and 'went through at least ten posthumous printings in Germany alone' (Ibd. 191). What made it innovative was its strong focus on active conversational Classical Greek, a feature that shows that Posselius had a broader vision of language learning and teaching than many humanists, who, as seen above, considered Greek a language that only needed to be read. The excellence in philology that Posselius demanded from his students could only be attained through the complete mastery of both classical languages, not only one. Greek, like Latin, had to be spoken every day from the very beginning of the student's learning path, and Οἰκείων Διαλόγων Βιβλίον was the resource that would make this possible:

that Posselius put the Greek quite literally in the child's and teacher's face clearly demonstrates that he expected the Greek to be memorized and used as fluently as the Latin.

(Ibd. 193)

The other two books in the 'Posselius Classical Greek Series' were both written before the Οἰκείων Διαλόγων Βιβλίον. The second-level book was *Syntaxis Graeca* (1560), a short and to-the-point guide to Classical Greek syntax with a wealth of examples from ancient authors that students should use to model their own writing style. The final volume of the series, to be begun once Greek syntax had been mastered, was *Calligraphia Oratoria Linguae Graecae, ad proprietatem, elegantiam et copiam Graeci sermonis parandam utilissima* (1584), essentially an advanced manual, with even more examples drawn from the original literature, aimed at teaching the student to write elegantly in Classical Greek. Style was a fundamental issue for Posselius and had to be modelled on the works of the greatest authors. In the dedicatory letter to the book, he states:

> as we prefer Cicero's style to those of other Latin authors, so we accept Demosthenes, Isocrates and those most like them as preferable to the rest.

(Quoted in Johnson 2006: 196)

With its 616 pages, *Calligraphia* has much more content than the other two books in the series, offering the learners many valuable tools to bring their Greek training to the next level, as 'Posselius draws from his source authors some 1922 words, phrases, and concepts that the student will need to master adequately in order to perform in Greek' (Ibd. 197).

In his entire series, Posselius had a clear main goal: the active mastery of spoken and written Classical Greek, but not because the Renaissance learner needed it as a means of international communication or as the medium of instruction in universities— these two roles were already covered by Latin. Posselius's main aim was excellence in philology, which also meant excellence in classical languages. It was fundamental for the student to approach Greek through Greek and avoid Latin translations, as 'Greek is a language that must be treated on its own terms, for it is in its excellence completely untranslatable' (Ibd. 194). Posselius had understood that the best way to develop excellence in Greek was its active use and mastery, through which the student could not only approach Greek literature without having to rely on translations, but also, I would say, internalize its style, its richness, and maybe even a part of its literary excellence, and so become a first-class philologist, as 'there can be no doubt that anyone with the slightest pretence to a literary education must study Greek' (Ibd. 199).

1.1.2. *Colloquia* today: some examples

Despite their dismissal at the end of the Renaissance, Latin *colloquia*, or at least what might be called their 'descendants', never completely disappeared. Terence Tunberg (2012: 201), incidentally a passionate advocate of the use of spoken Latin, as well as the

author of a textbook partially based on the active approach to the language, mentions a few of them; among these are *Sprechen Sie Lateinisch?* (1890) by Georg Capellanus (see below), pseudonym of the German classicist Eduard Johnson (1840–1903), its English version by Kraus (1930), as well as the relatively recent publications *Nunc Loquamur* by Thomas McCarthy (2009) and John C. Traupman's *Conversational Latin for Oral Proficiency*, now in its fourth edition (2007). I own these two most recent books and, although they are based on the same principle, i.e. presenting everyday conversations arranged by topic, their outcomes are very different.

    Nunc Loquamur is much more of a workbook than *colloquia*-style book. It is based on very short and simple conversations about different aspects of everyday life that students, guided by the teacher, are supposed to use as a starting point to practise and internalize basic structures and vocabulary while orally interacting with their classmates. In the section of the preface called 'Prō Magistrīs', the author states:

> Each lesson begins with a complete conversation with parts underlined. Next, there are four variations with substitutions provided. Students gradually are required to write out more and more of the conversation. Finally students are invited to write a new variation of the conversation. This is a good opportunity to review material your class is working with or for students to pursue their own imaginations.

> (McCarthy 2009: 4)

So, as mentioned, this is more of an activity book to provide a grounding in basic spoken Latin than a reference work to use in preparation for a specific conversation on a given topic.

    Instead, this is what Traupman's book is, with its 411 pages against the 113 of McCarthy's. The 25 chapters cover a wide range of conversational topics in considerable detail, one per chapter: greetings, family, school, sports, health, food and drink, clothing, jewellery, house and furniture, buying and selling, professions, city, public buildings and government, animals and emotions, war and peace, the human body, geography, law and criminal justice, travel, teaching grammar in Latin. This is not a workbook, but a practical reference work that also provides motivated learners with all they need to master the relevant topic. In the introductory section 'How to Use This Book', the author very usefully outlines the relationship both across the chapters and across the sections within each of them, suggesting then a possible way to progress through the book:

> Unlike your usual textbook, this book allows you to start at any chapter that interests you. Why? Because the chapters are not arranged in the order of difficulty. On the other hand, the model conversations in each chapter are arranged in order of difficulty. That is, the grammatical structures of the conversations at Level 1 are simpler than those at Levels 2 and 3. Therefore it is quite possible to go through the entire book using only the conversations at Level 1 and then go through the book again, using Levels 2 and 3.

> (Traupman 2007: 9)

At the end of every chapter a topical vocabulary list is included, often very long, containing not only the words required to understand the dialogues themselves but

many more, so as to allow the learner to create new conversations on the same topic while expanding and practising their specific vocabulary:

> So the idea is to practice the model conversations until you have pretty well mastered them. One way to do this is for you to switch roles with your partner and repeat the dialogue again. Then you can proceed to the next stage. This is most easily done by drawing on the topical vocabulary in the chapter to form new Latin conversations of your own choosing on the topic at hand.
>
> (Ibd.)

When two topics are somewhat connected, their topical vocabulary lists are cross-referenced with each other, for example, the chapter 'School' is cross-referenced with the chapter 'Teaching Grammar in Latin', which offers students an extra path to follow, an additional option to further expand their conversational skills by combining two related topics within the same field, in this case 'education'.

Traupman's book, besides being extremely useful, practical and user-friendly, is an excellent example of how to properly collect, organize and harmonize an enormous number of dialogical materials and make them available to the motivated user of active Latin, not only for speaking, but also for creative or communicative writing purposes. It would be highly desirable to have collections such as this or the Johnson one for Ancient Greek (see below), for Old Irish as well. In his 2022 UCD Bergin Lecture titled 'Old Irish Slang and Jargon: a Grammatical Approach', David Stifter strongly highlighted the importance of having a similar corpus, in this case drawn from original, extant literature, including for Early Irish:

> And finally, quite independently from concrete sociolects and the chase for examples of slang and jargon, in our day and time of linguistic corpora, it would be immensely useful and interesting to not only [have] collections of medieval Irish texts in general, but specifically to have a diversified corpus of Old and Middle Irish dialogue. Yes, such passages may not be more than "artificial imitations of speech", but only when we have such a collection will we be able to tell if and how dialogue as a genre is different from other textual types.
>
> (Stifter 2022: 10)

Such a tool would be extremely valuable, not only to establish the extent of dialogue as a stand-alone genre in the corpus of literature, thus enriching the field by creating a new path worth exploring in Early Irish textual research,[3] but also for a more practical, pedagogical, and down-to-earth reason: the mere teaching of the Old Irish language. Such a resource would be pure gold for Old Irish teachers and tutors interested in introducing an oral element into their teaching. Moreover, such a collection could also be used as an archive from which to obtain reliable and attested spoken language samples to be used in the creation of Old Irish learning tools of any kind, especially for beginners and advanced beginners, such as textbooks, simplified graded readers, translations of already existing texts, practice materials for the classroom and so on.

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3 On the importance of such a corpus, cf. also Stifter 2025: 203.

The fact that the creation of an inventory of dialogical texts has been actively developed for centuries for Latin and, to a lesser extent, Ancient Greek, while for Old Irish such an undertaking has not yet been attempted should be sufficient reason for us to be open to this endeavour. It is my intent, upon completion of this PhD, to do my utmost to contribute to the beginning of such a project.

On the Ancient Greek side, it is worth mentioning the vivid German collection of Attic Greek expressions *Sprechen Sie Attisch?*, again by Eduard Johnson, this time hidden behind the pseudonym of Eduardus Joannides. The book was originally published in 1889, one year before its Latin counterpart, and basically remains one of a kind, especially for Attic, so much so that the German publisher Helmut Buske Verlag published a new updated edition of it in 2012. As Helmut Schareika, editor of the new edition, points out in the 'Einführung des Herausgebers' (Editor's Introduction, 8–10), the Greek text has essentially remained unchanged, and only the German has been, in some cases, slightly modified to adjust to the modern-day language. Apart from layout and typesetting, the major change is the addition of a 6-page appendix with a word list covering all the most common modern concepts, including words for computer, laptop, mobile phone and so on. For the rest, the format is very phrase-book style: eighty pages of sentences and expressions, mostly based on Aristophanes and, to a lesser extent, on Plato's *Dialogues*, arranged by topic with facing German translation. Included are greetings, school, commerce, family, society, politics, love, and even the card game Skat with all its technicalities! Apart from the self-indulgent virtuosity of the Skat section, this booklet, although not as comprehensive as Traupman's book for Latin, remains an excellent tool for the motivated learner interested in developing active and conversational skills in Attic Greek.

1.2. Ollendorff and the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) with a human face

Since the aim of this chapter is the review of living, communicative and conversational approaches applied to the teaching of ancient languages, a treatment of GTM in its strictest form would go beyond the scope of this section.[4] However, GTM, especially from the perspective of its own time, was not always worthy of all the criticisms that were (and are) often addressed to it:

> Although the grammar-translation method started out as a simple approach to language learning for young schoolchildren, it was grossly distorted in the collision of interests between the classicists and their modern language rivals. Intrinsically [...] the method is so ordinary that it is sometimes difficult to see what all the fuss was about. Each new lesson had one or two new grammar rules, a short vocabulary list, and some practice examples to translate. Boring, maybe, but hardly that horror story we are sometimes asked to believe. However, it also contained seeds which eventually grew into a jungle of obscure rules, endless lists of gender classes and gender-class exceptions, self-conscious 'literary' archaisms, snippets of philology, and a total loss of genuine feeling for living language. The really bad grammar-translation coursebooks were not those written by well-known names

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4 For more about GTM see, for example, Howatt 2004: 151–165, Siefert 2013, Richards & Rodgers 2014: 6–8, and Nielson 2018.

such as Ahn and Ollendorff, but those especially designed for use in secondary schools by ambitious schoolmasters.

Of the two 'well-known names' mentioned by Howatt, the German Heinrich Gottfried Ollendorff (1803–1865) deserves a mention here, not only because he is more or less directly related, either as the actual author or as an inspiration for other authors, to the production of ancient language textbooks based on a conversational and active approach, but also for his awareness of the fact that a language, be it ancient or modern, should be learnt in order to be spoken and used, and not only as pure 'brain gymnastics'.

This passionate language teacher was the initiator of what became known as 'Ollendorff Method', which best represents what we could call, if I am allowed to paraphrase the slogan of the Prague Spring, a 'Grammar-Translation Method with a human face'. To be honest, the Ollendorff Method, for which Ollendorff used to take all the credit, does not seem to be completely ascribable to him, but heavily inspired, instead, by the so-called 'Oral Method' developed between approximately 1810 and 1830 in the United States by the French teacher Jean (or John) Manesca (1778–1838) and published in New York in 1834 (Manesca 1834). Ollendorff seems to have discovered Manesca's method through the American utopian socialist Albert Brisbane (1809–1890) while teaching him German in Paris. Brisbane, by then a former student of Manesca's, gives a full account of this knowledge transfer or, perhaps, partial plagiarism, in his autobiography (Brisbane 1893: 59–62, 70–71). However, this is another story, and exploring this issue any further would exceed the scope of this thesis.

In any case, Ollendorff was the one able to achieve enormous success and popularity with that method, so much so that Howatt says: 'His books are massive, two-volume affairs and the Ollendorff industry must have been a large-scale international publishing operation' (Howatt 2004: 162).

After publishing primers for several modern languages in the 1830s and 1840s, whose countless editions and adaptations were the basis of what Howatt calls 'Ollendorff's industry' and, I would add, fortune, towards the end of his life he wrote the book *Nouvelle méthode pour apprendre à lire, à écrire et à parler une langue en six mois, appliquée au latin*, posthumously published in 1866, when he proposed, although in a GTM frame, a conversational approach to Latin. What gives this method a more human face than other contemporary GTM textbooks, especially those designed for schools, are the following features:

1) Grammatical explanations are generally not overwhelming; in some cases, they are reduced to a minimum, or are almost absent, a feature that was sometimes frowned upon at the time. As early as 1845, in an unsigned review, the classicist John Stuart Blackie criticized what in his opinion was an excessive focus of the Ollendorff Method on conversation:

> We must say, however, that [...] a method exclusively and entirely conversational will never satisfy strong minds; conversation and repeated talk are admirable as a part and as an

element, but they must never be looked upon as a whole, or as a substitute for every thing else.

(Blackie 1845: 186)

Charles Kroeh had both an indulgent and critical attitude towards this trend. After stating that the works of Ollendorff and his followers and imitators 'embody another protest against the grammar and dictionary method which I am happy to say now rests in peace', he adds:

> No grammatical aid is given except what may be gathered from an appendix and a few foot notes. The reaction against grammar was evidently too great. Sound instruction in language cannot be divorced entirely from grammar.

(Kroeh 1887: 170)

Still, the grammatical information provided sufficed for the adult learner to master the materials of the lessons.

2) Once the relevant grammatical structure is explained, it is followed by a large number of conversational sentences (in more modern terms: a large amount of *input*) demonstrating the rule just introduced. In this way, the reader is exposed to not only the structure, but also to model conversational sentences (positive, negative, interrogative) that can be adapted to everyday communication, although, to be frank, these sentences are not always so 'everyday', and in some cases they are even 'futile' (Howatt 2004: 165), so much so that Kroeh says that their authors (Ollendorff and some of his peers) 'have been subjected to much well-deserved ridicule for the puerility of their examples' (Kroeh 1887: 170); all these sentences, or groups of sentences, are presented side by side with their translations, which makes the sections much more user-friendly and less intimidating (again, in more modern terms: which makes the input *comprehensible*).

3) The actual translation exercises are only directed towards Latin and largely expand, both structurally and content-wise, upon the conversational sentences in the previous section. Moreover, the exercises are long, which provides considerable room for repetition and internalization of vocabulary and structure; this specific feature, which highlights the focus of the method on active language mastery, was particularly appreciated by an anonymous contemporary reviewer who, writing about Ollendorff's American edition of his German textbook in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, expresses all his appreciation for this approach:

> There is a feature distinguishing Mr. Ollendorff's method [...] which is too important to be passed by, viz.; that he causes his students from the beginning to translate English into German, rather than German into English, first giving them the words to be used, with a sentence as a model, and then causing them to frame such sentences themselves by imitation. The structure of the English language is known to them, that of the German is not. Therefore, in translating, as is commonly done, from German into English, the unknown is given to find the known; while in rendering English into German, the *known* is given, the *unknown* to be sought, and all the elements necessary for the solution are afforded. All

teachers are aware of the value of this exercise, but never before has provision been made, in a printed book, for carrying it on so thoroughly and completely.

(Anonymous 1846: 102)

4) A very dominant feature of Ollendorff's Method, both in model sentences and in translation exercises, is the continuous use of a question/answer approach (QA). I regard this as something very positive, as I have always been an ardent advocate of the QA in order to prompt students to start to interact in the target language almost from day one.[5] In the preface to his Latin textbook, Ollendorff clearly addresses this point:

> Mon système est fondé sur ce principe que chaque question contient presque complètement la réponse qu'on doit ou qu'on veut y faire. La légère différence entre la question et la réponse est toujours expliquée dans la leçon, immédiatement avant la question. L'élève n'épreuve donc pas la moindre difficulté soit à répondre, soit à s'adresser de semblables questions à lui-même. Cette parité entre la question et la réponse a un autre avantage : quand le maître énonce la première, il frappe l'oreille de l'élève qui naturellement a plus de facilité à reproduire les sons par ses propres organes. Ce principe est évident, il ne faut qu'ouvrir le livre pour se convaincre qu'il y domine. Le maître et l'élève ne perdent point de temps : l'un lit la leçon, l'autre suit avec ses réponses; l'un corrige, l'autre assiste en répondant. Tous deux parlent sans cesse.

(Ollendorff 1866: 5)

5) Another important point about Ollendorff's approach is sequencing, that is, the concern to organize his material in a truly progressive way, so as not to frustrate the learner or, as he says, the 'scholar':

> He was, as we saw earlier, the first language textbook writer to use a graded linguistic syllabus seriously. New points are introduced one-by-one and, unlike most of the other grammar-translation authors, he does not insist on covering the whole of a paradigm in one lesson.

(Howatt 2004: 162–163)

A very important feature indeed, although the sequence of the different grammatical topics throughout the book was not always considered the most practical one. The anonymous contemporary reviewer mentioned above, in his otherwise stellar review, mentioning what in his opinion were the downsides of Ollendorff's German textbook, had to say: 'nor is his arrangement of the matter by any means the best that could have been devised' (Anonymous 1846: 102).

Gradation and progression were vital for Ollendorff. Siefert (2013) quotes the English translation, by John Jewett, of the preface to the American edition of Ollendorff's French method (1848), where the author complains about textbooks that do not respect this feature:

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5. So much so that, in my Old Irish classes, my concern has always been to try to teach the basic interrogative structures (which, incidentally, in Old Irish pose a good number of issues) during the very first classes, so as to slightly start to make the language flow in the environment as soon as possible.

As to those which have lately appeared, the authors of which commence by giving examples from the best poets, they resemble the canvass on which a painter has begun at the feet to paint his picture; or rather they resemble one who appropriates to himself some characteristic features which he has borrowed from the great masters, and which he merely disfigures, while he arranges and exhibits them without a plan or a leading object.

(Cited in Siefert 2013: 81)

The importance of grading is also addressed in the preface to his Latin textbook:

Enfin, durant tout le cours du volume, les questions suivent une marche progressive, c'est-à-dire de la phrase la plus simple de toutes, à la période tout entière ; chaque leçon se rattache à la précédente par un mot ou un principe de grammaire dont l'élève sent déjà d'avance le besoin, voit la place, et désire la possession, ce qui, excitant sans doute la curiosité, ajoute encore un vif intérêt à l'étude.

(Ollendorff 1866: 5)

All the features discussed above clearly mirror Ollendorff's main concerns regarding language teaching, i.e. accessibility and communication, and are also the 'secret' behind the commercial success of his textbooks. A language, be it ancient or modern, had to be made accessible, and had to be presented in a manageable, digestible and non-intimidating way. Moreover, and most importantly, the focus had to be on its practical and communicative dimension. The emphasis on the spoken and conversational element of the language represented a clear departure from the original and more traditional—and also less human—GTM, whose main aim was to teach a language, even a modern one, in order to enable the learner to read its literature, and not to use it as a communication tool in spoken exchanges. Ollendorff reacted to this static vision of language and created a new, refreshed kind of GTM that, with all its strengths and weaknesses, gave language learning a more human face, the human face of communication.

1.2.1. Going Ollendorffian: G.J. Adler's 'Perpetual' Latin (1858)

Ollendorff's Latin textbook in French was not the first of its kind. Almost ten years before, George J. Adler (1821–1868), editor of the American edition of Ollendorff's German course (1845),[6] had already published an English language version of his own Latin textbook in the Ollendorffian style, titled *A Practical Grammar of the Latin Language; with Perpetual Exercises in Speaking and Writing. For the Use of Schools, Colleges, and Private Learners* (1858). Adler's book is not, as it had been the case twelve years before with his edition of the German course, a mere verbatim translation of the usual Ollendorffian format, although the main aim of the series, that is, to teach a language, any language, in a living and active way, remains unchanged. This was indeed

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6 Adler, professor of German at the University of New York between 1846 and 1854, was also the author of the pioneering *German and English Dictionary* (1848), the most widely used German dictionary for English speakers in the United States in the second half of the 19th century (Bradley 1934: 152, 155).

the challenge Adler had felt in undertaking his task. When speaking, in his preface, of the hurdles related to the genesis of his *Practical Grammar,* he is keen to highlight this point:

> The preparation of a textbook for the study of the Latin, similar to that edited by me, some twelve years ago, on the German, has since that time been repeatedly suggested to me by various persons interested in the progress of education. Years however elapsed before I could even think of entering on such a task, [...] partly because I felt, in common with many others, some hesitation to undertake the somewhat delicate part of treating a so-called dead language like a living organism, yet in vogue as an element of national existence.

> (Adler 1858: iii)

The basic structure of the book is typically Ollendorffian, thus similar to that of the 1866 French version, and so are the model sentences and the translation exercises into the target language, which are, Adler says, 'similar to those contained in my edition of Ollendorff's German Method' (Ibd.). Apart from that, Adler's course has its own individuality. As if to address the criticisms made by Blackie in 1845, Adler, in a move that would have set his Latin textbook considerably apart from the usual Ollendorffian trend, decided not to be afraid to be much more explicit about grammar. Let us hear what he has to say about this point in his preface:

> But although it was intended that the book should upon the whole pursue the course indicated by the methods of modern languages now almost exclusively in vogue, and to make constant repetition and the perpetual construction of connected sentences and phrases from English into the language to be acquired the chief exercise of the student, yet I could not make up my mind to surrender system to more empirical practice to the extent to which this is done by Mr. Ollendorff. My aim was rather to sacrifice nothing of the theory, to leave no point of grammar unexplained or unconnected, but to make the student advance with equal pace from practice to theory, and from theory to practice, until he makes himself the master and conscious possessor of the entire structure of the language, as far at least as this can be effected by a Grammar.

> (Ibd. iv)

Adler seems also to address Blackie's criticism about the teaching of what he calls 'prosody', that is, pronunciation. In his review, Blackie had urged textbook writers to follow the example of L. Eduard Peithmann, author of *A Practical Latin Grammar, adapted to the Natural Operations of the Mind, on the Plan pursued in the Public Schools of Germany* (1830):

> Dr. Peithmann, indeed, is the only English writer of a Latin grammar that has come under our notice, who has decidedly announced and acted on the principle, that prosody (or pronunciation, for it is nothing else) ought to be the first thing in the teaching of the ancient as of the modern languages, and not, according to the perverse practice of our schools, the last.

> (Blackie 1845: 186)

Adler's section about Latin pronunciation is indeed at the very beginning of the book, and it is very detailed to enable the learner to properly pronounce, as Blackie would put it, 'every syllable of a word — not merely certain syllables — with the proper quantity, from the beginning' (Ibd.). The trend of relegating pronunciation guides to the end of textbooks, especially for classical languages, mirrors one of the principles of the strictest GTM approach, according to which a language is not learned in order to be spoken or to be used in interactions, but 'in order to read its literature or in order to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development that result from foreign language study' (Richards & Rodgers 2014: 6). At the beginning of this section, I mentioned that the Ollendorffian approach represented a GTM 'with a human face', that is, with a human intent. That human intent is, simply, communication. Regardless of the language, whether spoken or unspoken, the Ollendorffian focus is always on communicative uses: speaking, listening, conversing, asking and answering questions. Hence the importance of being able to articulate the sounds properly. Hence the importance of tackling them thoroughly, and from the first day of study. This is something that Adler seems to be really proud of:

> In this respect I think I have rendered what I think is found in no other Grammar of the Latin, and am persuaded that this system, without which we can scarcely conceive of a correct pronunciation, will commend itself to the approbation of all competent to judge upon the subject.
>
> (Adler 1858: vi)

Adler does a good job on syntax as well, trying to fix one of the sore points of what Howatt calls 'parts of speech grammar':

> Ollendorff uses a traditional 'parts of speech' grammar. It is typical of such grammars that they concentrate their attention on the characteristics of word classes and neglect the syntactic relationships between them [...]. Important regularities in complete sentence units are overlooked. An approach of this kind encourages the construction of sentences on a word-by-word basis, each word 'arithmetically' added to the one before.
>
> (Howatt 2004: 164)

Adler, however, seems to be much more aware of this issue, and in his preface, he is keen to assure the would-be learner of this awareness:

> I have one word to add in reference to the syntax. That important part of grammar has been treated much more comprehensively than one might suppose from its somewhat disjointed appearance. The subject of agreement, the syntax of the oblique cases, the use of the infinitive, the somewhat complicated doctrine of the subjunctive and other equally important topics are developed as fully as in many Grammars of larger size or greater pretensions, and it is hoped that on this point nothing of any moment will be found omitted.
>
> (Adler 1858: vi)

Along with his 707-page textbook, Adler also published *A Key to the Exercises Contained in Adler's Practical Grammar of the Latin Language* (1858), where he gives

the Latin translation, sentence by sentence, of all the exercises, which basically makes 150 pages of graded Latin-only text based on a dialogic approach. Not only can the *Key* be used as a plain key, that is, a tool to check one's answers to the exercises, but also as effective review reading material, which allows the learner to comfortably go through and reinforce all the vocabulary and structures covered just by comfortably and confidently reading—and rereading!—pages and pages of comprehensible Latin.

1.2.2. Going Ollendorffian: A.C. Kendrick's Greek for young pupils (1851)

However, Ollendorff's GTM with a human face approach was applied not only to Latin, but also to Ancient Greek, not by Ollendorff himself, but by Asahel Clark Kendrick (1809–1895), an American professor of Greek at the University of Rochester, New York. In 1851, Kendrick published *Greek Ollendorff: Being a Progressive Exhibition of the Principles of the Greek Grammar: Designed for Beginners in Greek, and as a Book of Exercises for Academies and Colleges*, defined by Der Millner as 'probably the most accessible Classical Greek course in existence'.[7] Accessibility was indeed one of the main concerns of Kendrick while adapting the Ollendorff method to Ancient Greek, something to which he attached great importance, as repeatedly emerges in his 'Preface':

> It [the textbook] differs, on the other hand, from other excellent elementary works in Greek, which have recently appeared, in a more rigid adherence to the Ollendorff method, and the greater *simplicity* of its plan; in simplifying as much as possible the character of the Exercises, and keeping out of sight every thing which would divert the student's attention from the naked construction.

(Kendrick 1851: 5)

And further:

> The exceptions, and the more strictly idiomatic forms, it [the book] studiously leaves one side, and only aims to exhibit the regular and ordinary usages of the language, as the proper starting point for the student's further researches.

(Ibd. 6)

And

> the number of words introduced is purposely very small, in order that the pupil's attention may not be diverted from the principles of construction by an effort to remember unfamiliar words. It is, in fact, a marked feature of this book that it aims to present the leading principles of the Greek language through the medium of a very small number of words, and those words, in almost all cases, the names of very familiar, and through all the earlier part of the book, physical objects.

(Ibd. 7)

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7 www.latinum.org.uk/greek

Hence, the author

> [...] hopes, therefore, that his work will find its way among a younger class of pupils than have usually engaged in the study of Greek, and will win to the acquisition of that noble tongue many in our Academies and Primary Schools who have been repelled by the less simple character of our ordinary text-books. On this point he would speak earnestly. This book [...] has been yet constructed with a constant reference to the wants of the young; and he knows no reason why boys and girls of twelve, ten, or even eight years of age, may not advantageously be put to the study of this book, and, under skilful instruction, rapidly master its contents.
>
> (Ibd. 6)

For the rest, as the author states, the book is 'what its title indicates, strictly an *Ollendorff*' (Ibd. 5), including the conversational approach and the *perpetual*, as Adler called it, QA exchanges typical of this method, the only striking difference being the choice to also add translation exercises from the target language, and not only into the target language, as was the Ollendorffian custom.

1.2.3. The Ollendorff Method today

If seriously used, Ollendorffian materials, especially the most self-explanatory ones by Adler and Kendrick, have great potential, even for the modern learner. So much so that both books, also thanks to the countless possibilities offered by digital media as well as competent, reliable and passionate digital popularizers, are now enjoying a second youth.

Evan der Millner, an English Latin teacher, has taken full advantage of Adler's *Practical Grammar* by creating in 2006 a whole Latin learning website called *Latinum Institute*,[8] based mostly on this work, for which he recorded an audio version of all the Latin contained both in the main textbook (model sentences and dialogues), and in the *Key* (all the 150-page text). This labour took over two years (Larder 2017: 5). Der Millner has been adding new materials to his website since its foundation, and now, in his own words, *Latinum* is 'a multi-level and multi-year audio course for Latin language suitable for home study that is affordable and comprehensive' (Der Millner, website). All the books on which the website is based are old Latin readers or textbooks, mostly from the 1800s, out of copyright and in the public domain, and are readily available online in digitized form. What Der Millner provides is, instead, a subscription that gives access to their full audio versions. A very interesting and valuable feature of the website is that Der Millner has been able to organize all these materials into graded, constructive and effective learning or reading paths, all revolving around the main pillar, that is, Adler's textbook, to whose audio version thousands of users have already subscribed:

> [Der Millner] suggests the book [Adler's] be worked through whilst being supplemented with a large amount of easy extensive reading passages as well. Millner has also created

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8 https://www.latinum.org.uk

playlists divided by level so that beginners looking for extensive reading or listening practice might find something from the archived books and get audio as well. Locke and Hamilton's interlinear readers are included in his collections. [...] he notes that traditional approaches do not contain enough actual reading practice and he advocates massive amounts of reading and listening as well as oral practice drills.

<div align="right">(Larder 2017: 5–6)</div>

Der Millner's website is enormous, a real wealth of useful materials for the dedicated learner, but a deeper analysis of it would extend beyond the scope of this thesis.

Together with Adler's *Practical Grammar*, Kendrick's *Greek Ollendorff* is another old textbook enjoying a new lease of life in our day. *Textkit*, the most popular and active online forum about Latin and Ancient Greek learning,[9] has an impressive amount of threads dedicated to it, and hundreds of followers using this textbook as their first introduction to Attic. One of the moderators, Roberto Lionello (nicknamed Bedwere), an Italian astrophysicist living in San Diego, CA, even republished the book through lulu.com with corrections in 2012, adding also a missing page, a table of contents, and two indexes, one of Greek words and the other of English words. As a separate book, he also published *Greek Ollendorff Key* (2013), a full key to all the exercises included in Kendrick's 97 lessons, something that the original version of the textbook had never had before. Moreover, to complete the package, Lionello also recorded the audio for all the lessons and exercises and made it available for free on his Internet Archive page under the title *Ἀνάγνωσις τῶν ἀσκήσεων ἐν τῷ Greek Ollendorff* (2013), thus providing the motivated user with a full, all-in-one and extremely affordable Attic Greek self-teaching package.

Despite their limits, their at times dull sentences and somewhat questionable grading (Anonymous 1846: 102), incidentally all common issues in textbooks of this kind (Howatt 2004: 163–164), the three Ollendorffian works by Kendrick, Adler and Ollendorff himself were definitely innovative and ahead of their time, not only for daring to teach ancient languages in a conversational and active way, but also for their continuous emphasis on spoken interaction and for treating the language not as a means to develop the logical and analytical skills of the mind, but as a real everyday communication tool. As Kroeh put it: 'Their leading idea is practice before theory' and 'they mark an important advance in the art of teaching languages' (Kroeh 1887: 170–171).

1.3. Inductive Intermezzo: the Reform Movement

However, the GTM, with or without a human face, was not a *pensée unique*, and already in the middle of the 19th century some voices of dissent had begun to rise with new proposals. This led, at the beginning of the 1880s, to the birth of the so-called Reform Movement, a completely new sensibility in respect of language, its nature, its priorities and its teaching:

The discipline of linguistics was revitalized. Phonetics—the scientific analysis and description of the sound systems of languages—was established, giving new insights into

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9 https://www.textkit.com/greek-latin-forum

speech processes. Linguists emphasized that speech, rather than the written word, was the primary form of language.

<div align="right">(Richards & Rodgers 2014: 9–10)</div>

The principles of language teaching were also rethought according to the new conception of language, now primarily considered a speech process. The new reformed sensibility advocated:

> 1. the study of the spoken language; 2. phonetic training in order to establish good pronunciation habit; 3. the use of conversation texts and dialogues to introduce conversational phrases and idioms; 4. an inductive approach to the teaching of grammar; 5. teaching new meanings through establishing associations within the target language rather than by establishing associations with the native language.

<div align="right">(Ibd. 11)</div>

Regarding the teaching of ancient languages, one of the first products of this new perception was Harper's and Waters' inductive Ancient Greek textbook called *An Inductive Greek Method* (1888), as well as, in the same year, its Latin counterpart by Harper and Burgess: a very innovative pair of textbooks for the time.

The inductive approach subordinates grammar to language exposure, thanks to which learners, if properly assisted, should be able to figure out the grammatical rules by themselves before seeing them explicitly explained. Although the book by Harper and Waters was a novelty for the time, the approach was, in itself, not new, as it appears to date back at least to the Renaissance. Laura Manning (2021) mentions the case of the German Humanist Johannes Posselius the Elder (see also 1.1.1.), who had already proposed and practised some kind of inductive approach in his time:

> Posselius expected students to memorize the paradigms of declensions and conjugations after they had plenty of practice in using these forms in reading, writing, speaking and listening. This indicates that the method recommended by Posselius was an inductive study of these grammatical forms.

<div align="right">(Ibd. 12)</div>

Thus, in Harper's and Waters' inductive Greek course, the grammar is explained, but only after the learner has been able to extrapolate it from the context through intensive exposure to a large amount of text. The point of the explicit grammar description is not to teach the learner something completely new, but just to give him or her a more systematic and reference-friendly presentation of what has already been inductively grasped through exposure. Moreover, only the elements of grammar required for the comprehension of that particular text are provided, rather than comprehensive sections covering the topic in its entirety. This is an important departure from the GTM trend, especially from the extreme version of it, where textbooks were characterised by a 'stress on accuracy' and an 'obsession with completeness' (Howatt 2004: 153), and every grammar topic had to be covered completely, with all its rules and exceptions,

regardless of their actual relevance for the student. In this respect, the authors, in their 'Suggestions to the Teachers' at the beginning of the book, state:

> It is unnecessary, indeed harmful, to tell the pupil everything that may be said concerning a word or form, when it first occurs. Nor should one feel obliged, when a general statement is made concerning a given point, to indicate all the exceptions which exist.
>
> (Harper & Waters 1888: ix)

Even when grammatical rules, or 'principles', as they call them, are provided, mere rote memorization is never recommended, as structures need to be acquired through exposure, reflection and active reuse:

> Require the mastery of the paradigms, but not merely that they may be recited by rote. The pupil should study and compare them, with a view to ascertaining the principles in accordance with which they are constructed. As paradigms are commonly studied, they work more injury than benefit.
>
> (Ibd.)

The inductive method also leaves room for active practice, as acquisition takes place not only through inductive analysis, but also through production and reuse of the vocabulary and the structures repeatedly encountered during the exposure. Very relevant to this chapter about active approaches to ancient languages is the authors' recommendation to the teachers to actually speak ancient Greek in the classroom:

> Introduce conversation in Greek upon the text if possible; it relieves the monotony of a recitation; it fixes the text more firmly in mind; it teaches the pupil to think in the language which he is studying. Every teacher knows the common stock of interrogative words and phrases, or can get them from a grammar.
>
> (Ibd.)

In 72 lessons, this method teaches, sentence by sentence, the entire first book of Xenophon's *Anabasis* (or, in the case of its Latin counterpart, 69 lessons for Chapters 1–20 of Book I of Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War*), although not as joyfully and delightfully as the authors would like us to think. The inductive method still had a long way to go before it reached, almost a century later, the accessibility and effectiveness of Hans Ørberg's *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata* (see 1.5.1.).

I was keen to mention inductivity in this intermezzo as, after having experimented it on myself while learning Latin with Ørberg's book and having read much about its application, I decided to make it one of the key features of the Old Irish textbook I have in mind, whose structure and approach will be introduced in Chapter 3.

1.4. W.H.D. Rouse and the Direct Method

Louis G. Kelly sees the publication of Harper's and Waters' *An Inductive Greek Method* as a sign that the time was right for the Direct Method (DM) to take over (Kelly 1969: 41). However, the DM was more the product of the innovative climate around the Reform Movement than of the Reform Movement itself:

> But parallel to the ideas put forward by members of the Reform Movement was an interest in developing principles for language teaching out of naturalistic principles of language learning, such as are seen in first language acquisition. This led to what have been termed *natural methods* and then ultimately to the development of what came to be known as the Direct Method.
>
> (Richards & Rodgers 2014: 11)

Pioneered by Lambert Sauveur (1826–1907), a French immigrant in the United States, in the late 1860s (Howatt 2004: 217–221), and popularized beginning from 1878 by Maximilian Berlitz (1852–1921), another immigrant, this time German, who made it famous through his network of language schools, first in the United Stated and then in Europe (Ibd. 223–224), the DM is a monolingual approach to teaching. It is based on the natural learning principle that a language is best taught through its active use in the classroom rather than through grammar explanations and analysis (Richards & Rodgers 2014: 11). During this intensive monolingual teaching, 'oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes', while grammar, following a principle also advocated by the Reform Movement, 'was taught inductively' (Ibd. 12).

As can be inferred from the above principles, the DM was a highly intensive oral method, that required teachers capable of speaking relentlessly, comprehensibly, creatively and captivatingly in the target language. That is why, at least for the Berlitz schools, all the teachers had to be native speakers. But what if this same method had to be applied to ancient languages? Were there teachers daring and skilled enough to speak almost natively in Latin or Ancient Greek? The answer is a resounding yes. These teachers were William Henry Denham Rouse and his circle of dreamers.

In a 1907 introductory essay about the new teaching methodologies, written with his colleague William Henry Samuel Jones (1876–1963), W.H.D. Rouse (1863–1950), as he is usually known, traces back the new teaching approach not only to the Reform Movement, but also to the Humanist and classical tradition:

> The 'reformed' methods here adopted owe something to the admirable work done in recent years by modern language teachers, and something to the efforts of German schoolmasters. In Germany 'reform' has been in progress for some thirty years, and has produced excellent results. But the movement is not a new ideal; it is merely the restatement of an old one. The schoolmasters of the early Renaissance adopted it in all essential points, and it can be traced back to Quintilian himself.
>
> (Rouse & Jones 1907: 409–410)

To those opponents who set themselves up as defenders of tradition, he explains that the real tradition is not the one they have in mind:

> Opposition to reform arises both from within and also from without the ranks of classical teachers. Some of those who are at present engaged in teaching Latin and Greek hold that the current way [GTM] is better, having been evolved from centuries of experience. This view obscures the facts. Present methods are survivals from an age when the healthier and saner ideals of the early Renaissance had been forgotten. The reformed method is the older, and has the sanctions of psychology and of common sense.
>
> (Ibd: 411)

So, what they consider tradition, is something whose tradition is not that old:

> […] the current method [GTM] is not older than the nineteenth century. It is the offspring of German scholarship, which seeks to learn everything about something rather than the thing itself: the traditional English method, which lasted well beyond the eighteenth century, was to use the Latin language in speech.
>
> (Rouse & Appleton 1925: 2)

After his studies in classics and Sanskrit and a six-year fellowship at Christ's College, Cambridge, Rouse spent several years as a school classics teacher, and at last got his opportunity of a lifetime when, in 1902, he was finally appointed Headmaster of the Perse School, a grammar-school near Cambridge, 'which became the site of his 'Great Experiment': the revitalization of the nation through the reform of classical teaching' (Stray 1992: 17).

Rouse had already become aware of the new method a few years before, while a schoolmaster at Cheltenham College, whose 'staff included several modern language teachers who were enthusiasts for the use of the Direct Method in modern language teaching: that is, teaching a language by speaking it' (Ibd. 12). In the above-mentioned 1907 essay, Rouse and Jones are very keen to highlight the importance of teaching Latin and Greek by speaking:

> But for both languages, and indeed for any language, the mere reading of books is not enough: there must also be a mastery of the languages which will enable us to use them. The most effective way to teach this is by oral practice, reinforced and checked by writing afterwards; for the arguments which prove the need of oral practice in a modern language also apply to the ancient languages, that of practical utility excepted. By this means, although we do not make Greek composition a main object, we attain a great degree of facility in it by the way. In the early stage, free or original composition only will be practised; exceptionally an exercise in translation will be now and then taken, when a new and difficult construction has to be taught.
>
> (Rouse & Jones 1907: 409)

This is precisely what was done at the Perse School until Rouse's retirement in 1928. Latin and Ancient Greek were taught as spoken languages, conversationally, through a series of textbooks written by Rouse's colleagues, who mostly taught beginners. Rouse

himself, instead, looked after the most advanced pupils, from the Fifth and the Sixth Form, where original Latin or Greek texts were analysed and discussed in the target language, and never in English.

The achievements at Perse became widely known, not only in England but also abroad, including in the United States and Russia. Numerous visitors, including the inspector of the Russian Imperial education office, as well as many sceptics, went to Perse to see the new method in action (Stray 1992: 27), and the school, on the edge of bankruptcy at the time of Rouse's appointment, received funds from the Board of Education and became one of the most lively cultural centres of the time.

In the 1925 book that he co-wrote with Appleton, *Latin on the Direct Method*, Rouse explains in a few lines the essence of their teaching approach:

> As applied to the teaching of languages, the Direct Method means that the sounds of the foreign tongue are associated directly with a thing, or an act, or a thought, without the intervention of an English word: and that these associations are grouped by a method, so as to make the learning of the language as easy and as speedy as possible, and are not brought in at haphazard, as they are when children learn their own language in the nursery. It follows that speaking precedes writing, and that the sentence (not the word) is the unit. The method is largely oral, but not wholly so: on the contrary, all the practices of indirect methods are used, but not at the same time, nor in the same proportion. Language is an art, and we proceed from art to science, from idiom to accuracy; the idiom, the feeling for a language, is easily taught thus, and accuracy can wait. To begin with an attempt at exactitude is to make idiom always difficult, and with mediocre minds, impossible to obtain in the end. It will be seen that four senses are used to make the impression: hearing first, then speech, then touch (when the new matter is written), and lastly sight. We may even enlist taste on occasion. The simpler the vocabulary, the easier it is to practise accidence and syntax: one thing is done at a time. The process is: first imitation, next imitation with a difference, lastly the use of what has been so learnt.
>
> (Rouse & Appleton 1925: 2–3)

All the focus placed by Rouse and his colleagues on the spoken, or 'living', word, made the usual opponents think, in good or bad faith, that the DM was a grammarless method. In their 1907 essay, Rouse and Jones address this criticism as well:

> There is some confusion and uncertainty as to what is meant by the 'reformed' method, and it will be well to state distinctly the sense in which the expression is used in the present section. It does not mean neglect of grammar. It does not mean 'picking up' the classical languages. But it means that grammar is learnt, in the first instance, *pari passu* with the use of language, and that the pupil learns to understand and use Latin and Greek as spoken, as well as in written speech.
>
> (Rouse & Jones 1907: 409)

Apart from the pamphlets required by the English Board of Education as a condition of their grant, *Latin on the Direct Method* is the only full book written by Rouse about his teaching methodology, and it surprisingly appeared almost at the end of his career, just three years before his retirement. Rouse was an ardent advocate of what he called 'the living word', that is, the spoken word, the word created in the heat of the moment,

warmly fluctuating in the air and quivering with the passion and the creativity of the speaker, which is why he

> was reluctant to commit this [classroom] life to the passivity of print. For many years he resisted requests to write a textbook of his method; the course book *Latin on the Direct Method*, which he wrote with his colleague Appleton, appeared only in 1925.

> (Stray 1992: 27)

1.4.1. Some Direct Method textbooks

As was mentioned above, Rouse's colleagues, more pragmatic than him, had written a good number of textbooks covering the first two of the four years of Latin teaching; the second two of these were devoted to the study of original texts, which were mostly presented to the students in plain versions, that is, without any comment or note 'or, if notes and vocabulary are added, they should be in the ancient language' (Jones 1915: 69).

In his *Via Nova or the Application of the Direct Method to Latin and Greek* (1915), W.H.S. Jones, one of Rouse's colleagues and collaborators, gives a clear account of the Latin textbook situation:

> Suitable dictionaries have yet to be written, but the teacher on the direct method has now a fair choice of "courses" for the first and second years. Those which appeared during the earlier period of the reform movement do not reject translation, but merely supplement it by exercises of a different type. These are questions put in the foreign language to be answered in the foreign language, and sentences with missing words or missing endings to be supplied by the learner. This class includes Scott and Jones's *First Latin Course*, W. H. S. Jones's *First Latin Book*, and Professor E. A. Sonnenschein's *Ora Maritima* and *Pro Patria*. Later works apply the direct method with greater strictness, translation being either omitted altogether or reduced to a minimum. Such are Paine and Mainwaring's *Primus Annus*, Granger's *Via Romana*, Appleton and Jones's *Initium* and *Pons Tironum*.

> (Jones 1915: 68)

The above paragraph mentions all the key titles as well as all the key people of the golden years of the Perse DM (1902–1928). Some of them, such as *Primus Annus*, were part of a special collection commissioned by Rouse:

> Rouse persuaded Oxford University Press to publish a series of teaching books, *Lingua Latina*, 14 volumes appearing between 1912 and 1931, including a teacher's book, *Praeceptor*. (Some of the books were also published in the USA.)

> (Stray 2011: 6)

In Rouse and Appleton's *Latin on the Direct Method*, written ten years after Jones's book, these are still the recurring textbook titles. Worth noting, in this simple classification, is how the presence or absence of translation exercises is the measure of

judgement, the parameter used to evaluate to what extent a textbook adheres to the principles of the new method.

1.4.1.1. E.A. Sonnenschein, *Ora Maritima* (1902)

A Latin beginner's textbook worth discussing here is *Ora Maritima* (1902), by Edward Adolf Sonnenschein (1851–1929). It is noteworthy for the fact that the textual part does not consist of different, unrelated sections as, for example, in *Initium* (see 1.4.1.2.), but of:

> A continuous narrative from beginning to end, capable of appealing in respect of its vocabulary and subject matter to the minds and interests of young pupils, and free from all those syntactical and stylistic difficulties which make even the easiest of Latin authors something of a problem.

> (Sonnenschein 1909: iii)

The element of the continuous narrative is of great importance and is still very relevant nowadays, as it forms the foundation of some of the most popular alternative Latin teaching materials now in use. A continuous narrative is indeed the basis of all the textbooks based on the so-called Reading Method, mainly the *Cambridge Latin Course* and the *Oxford Latin Course*,[10] as well as of what is considered by many the most effective and rewarding Latin textbook available: *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata* by Hans Ørberg (see 1.5.1.).

Ora Maritima, as well as its second-year sequel *Pro Patria* (1903) by the same author, can be used in two possible ways, the first of which as a normal DM textbook for absolute beginners. The book has three main parts: the main story in fifteen chapters, a central grammar and vocabulary section that corresponds chapter by chapter to the story, and a final drill and question section with the same chapter subdivision. The grammar covered is very limited, as the author explains while criticizing the excesses of what he calls the 'traditional system':

> In my opinion, existing manuals are disfigured by a disproportionate amount of lifeless Accidence. The outcome of the traditional system is that the pupil learns a multitude of Latin forms (Cases, Tenses, Moods), but very little Latin. That is to say, he acquires a bowing acquaintance with all the forms of Nouns and Verbs — such as Ablatives in *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, 3rd Persons in *at*, *et*, *it*, and so forth — before he gets a real hold of the meaning or use of any of these forms […]. No doubt all the Declensions and Conjugations must be learned before a Latin author is attacked. But when a few of them have been brought within the pupil's ken, he finds little difficulty in mastering the others in a rapid and more mechanical fashion. In the present book I have dealt directly with only three declensions of Nouns and Adjectives and the Indicative Active of *sum* and of the 1st Conjugation [...]; but in connexion with this amount of Accidence I have treated very carefully the most prominent

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10 About the Reading Method, cf. also Reader 1978, Balme & Morwood 2003, Gay 2003, and Story 2003.

uses of the Cases with and without Prepositions, and the question of the order of words, which I have reduced to a few simple rules.

(Ibd. v–vi)

Ideally, the pupils, guided by the teacher's usual hyperactive oral preparation and oral work, should first go through the text, see the grammar features in action, and learn them inductively through intensive practice. Then they will go to the grammar and vocabulary section relevant to the chapter that has just been read, which includes a Latin-English wordlist to clarify any doubt about meanings, as well as all the grammar encountered in the reading, this time arranged in tables and furnished with extremely simple explanatory notes. The pupils can then move to the third section and do the oral and written drills, again while interacting with the teacher.

In the previously mentioned classification, Jones puts *Ora Maritima* in the group of older DM textbooks that 'do not reject translation' (see 1.4.1.). Yes, several translation exercises are indeed included, among other kinds of drills, in the third section of the book, but the sentences and the sections to be translated, always into Latin, are strictly related to the plot of the continuous narrative of the text, include exactly the same vocabulary and structures and are only used to check and reinforce the mastering of what has been studied. With such a purpose, translation does not go against the DM principles. As Jones himself puts it:

> But translation is a test and nothing more. It cannot teach the unknown; so if the results are unsatisfactory the right remedy is, not more translation, but more conversation, more exercises, both oral and written, until translation-tests show that the difficulties have been overcome.

(Jones 1915: 113)

As mentioned above, there are two possible uses for this textbook. We have just seen the first option, that is, to use it as a normal classroom text. However, thanks to its continuous-narrative format, this book can also be used as a simple reader that the learner can begin to work on at the end of an introductory course, once the basic declensions and tenses are learnt, or even while they are being learnt. It is important, rewarding and motivating, for the beginner, to be able to read a whole story, a whole book in Latin. With this intent, this book is experiencing what might be described as a second lease of life, as it has been included in an increasingly popular application for phones and tablets called *Legentibus*, created by Daniel Pattersson, the Swedish Latinist behind the Latin-teaching website *Latinitium* (for more about this project and its ever-growing number of resources, see also Pettersson & Rosengren 2021)[11]. The application, which includes a wealth of Latin texts macronized (or with updated macrons) as well as accompanied by full audio recordings to be listened to along with the reading, also has a section of beginner's texts, among which is *Ora Maritima*, which can now be fully enjoyed and mastered through reading and listening.

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11 https://latinitium.com

1.4.1.2. R.B. Appleton and W.H.S. Jones, *Initium* (1916)

Among the teaching materials mentioned by Jones in his *Via Nova*, *Initium. A First Latin Course on the Direct Method* by Jones himself and his colleague R.B. Appleton was, since its publication in 1916, probably the most common first-year textbook, at least at Perse. It went through two editions, the second expanded one published in 1926. It is a good example of a DM textbook, conceived mostly as a starting point for the skilled teacher to develop an intensive oral approach. In the DM, orality always came first: it was the main component of the whole teaching process. It was first through oral exchange that vocabulary and structures had to be introduced and practised. Only later on were they shown to the learner in their written forms and practised through intensive reading to foster their internalization:

> It has recently been maintained that before any passage is read from the reader, not only every construction and new form, but even every new word, ought to be thoroughly mastered in oral practice, so that the reading of a passage is uninterrupted by explanations. This is an ideal which every teacher ought to bear carefully in mind without, however, making a fetish of it or of any other rule.
>
> (Jones 1915: 114)

It was fundamental that the first contact of pupils with the language be oral, with basically no written word. In the preface to the first edition of *Initium*, the authors clearly emphasize this point:

> This book is intended for Latin beginners who have spent a fortnight on purely oral work without seeing any text-book. How the preliminary lessons are conducted will be found in the "Teacher's Companion to *Initium*" published along with this volume.
>
> (Appleton & Jones 1926: v)

The materials included in the *Teacher's Companion*, that is, the twelve oral lessons to be taught before the pupils even saw the textbook, were then reprinted verbatim in *Via Nova*, not as something to be specifically used before *Initium*, but before any DM textbook:

> The next lessons are so important that they are here printed almost verbatim from reports taken in September, 1914. But a printed account, however accurate, misses many essential points. It cannot give the minute care bestowed upon pronunciation, the exaggerated lengthening of all long syllables, the repetitions of words and phrases by the boys until they are said without stumbling.
>
> (Jones 1915: 91)

Every lesson has a text, in dialogue, prose or mixed form, which is focused on a given grammatical feature, for example, a declension or a verbal tense. Each text is then followed by the section 'Ars Grammatica', where the topic introduced in the text is given in paradigm forms, with basically no explanation, and by 'Exercitationes', which

include a series of questions in Latin to be answered in Latin, as well as some exercises where the grammatical feature introduced in the text is intensively practised in different ways, but never through translation. This is the skeleton upon which the relentless oral activity was to be developed. You cannot really see how the DM works just by looking at a DM textbook, be it *Initium* or any other one, as in this approach textbooks are to be considered guidelines, or outlines, for the teacher's oral skills and activities: 'Much oral work should accompany the reading of the text, and a great deal must necessarily be left to the initiative of the individual teacher' (Appleton & Jones 1926: vi). Most teaching methods are 'from print to word', that is they start from the print and then go to the spoken word. The DM is instead 'from word to print', which means that the spoken word, or better, as Rouse put it, 'the living word', is the foundation of everything. Every word, every structure, every piece of language should ideally be practised orally before it is even seen in print or practised in writing. Even when working on a printed text, that same text must be primarily used as a source for more and intensive oral work. In the preface, the authors are keen to emphasize how orality must always come first:

> Experience shows the necessity of insisting upon the importance of oral work in teaching on direct method lines. The early dialogues in this book should be run through orally before being read; they are really included in the book only as an indication of the sort of oral work recommended. And throughout the course new points should be introduced orally before they are encountered in the text.

> (Ibd. vi–vii)

Much is left to the teacher's talent and skills. The DM is a very teacher-centred method, and there is no DM without an inspired and inspiring teacher. It is only through the teacher's creativity and ability to harmonize his teaching with the personality of his own pupils that the 'living word' comes to be:

> But, of course, the efficient direct method teacher will avail himself of what he actually sees before his eyes in his own class-room. This may seem a small point, but it is an important principle of the direct method.

> (Ibd. vii)

1.4.1.3. C.D. Chambers, *The Greek War of Independence* (1906)

In their 1907 essay, Rouse and Jones also mention *The Greek War of Independence* (1906) by Charles Douglas Chambers and define it as 'an admirable book in nearly every respect' (Rouse & Jones 1907: 434). For some reason, however, W.H.S. Jones, when listing the available DM Greek teaching materials in his *Via Nova* (Jones 1915: 69), does not say a word about it. The book, the third in a collection edited by Sonnenschein called 'Ora Maritima Series', the first two being *Ora Maritima* and *Pro Patria*, is basically the Ancient Greek counterpart of *Ora Maritima*, as the beginning lines of the preface confirm:

This book is an attempt to apply to Greek the methods which Professor Sonnenschein has expounded in his *Ora Maritima* and *Pro Patria*. The main principle is that the systematic study of grammar should proceed side by side with the reading of a narrative.

(Chambers 1906: iii)

Therefore, Jones's omission is kind of weird, as in his section about Latin teaching materials, he had not hesitated to mention both Sonnenschein's Latin textbooks. In *The Classical Review*, an anonymous reviewer highlights this *Ora-Maritima* style as well:

The plan adopted is that of Prof. Sonnenschein's *Ora Maritima*. A historical story (and one of importance) is retold in simple Greek, the chapters being progressive in difficulty. The vocabulary and phrasing are modelled on Thucydides. Grammar and vocabulary are added.

(Anonymous 1906: 29)

The 'historical story' mentioned by the reviewer, i.e. the rebellion of the Greeks against Ottoman rule (1821–1829), is the one that gives the book its title, and has two advantages, as the author explains in the preface:

In choosing the subject of the narrative two considerations guided me. Firstly, Greece should be the scene and Greeks the actors in the drama; secondly, the narrative must be an account of real events. *The Greek War of Independence* fulfils both conditions, and has this advantage over more recent history that neither railways nor steamers disturb the scene.

(Chambers 1906: iv)

The use of a real historical event was not a novelty introduced by Chambers, but a feature common to all the three textbooks in the 'Ora Maritima Series', although in Sonnenschein's books the historical parts (Caesar's invasions of Britain in the first, and an overview of Britain under the Romans in the second) are always included in a contemporary frame narrative, which for *Pro Patria* is a story of the Boer War. In the preface to *Pro Patria*, Sonnenschein motivates the use of contemporary or relatively recent historical events in his series:

One of my young friends who was learning from this book made a criticism of it which will probably pass through the minds of other readers. "The Romans," he said, "knew nothing of South Africa." Exactly; but it is possible that the best way to learn an ancient language is to study it as written at the present day in connexion with a subject matter which is familiar or easily intelligible to the modern reader. This is, of course, only a means to an end; but there are many ends which are better attained indirectly than directly.

(Sonnenschein 1903: vii–viii)

The above-quoted review also mentions that the language style of this long narrative (55 pages of all-Greek text) is modelled on Thucydides' prose. The author is keen to explain the importance, for a valuable reading book, of teaching a particular style:

> The value of an introductory Reader depends on its success in enabling those who have used it to read an actual author. I have spared no pains in smoothing the path to the narrative portions of Thucydides […]. Not only in vocabulary but in sentence construction and turns of expression I have endeavoured to keep the narrative of Thucydides constantly in view.
>
> (Chambers 1906: iv)

The rest of the book has a similar structure to *Ora Maritima*. It has a detailed section of grammar and vocabulary notes for the whole text, then an exercise section with a large number of sentences and paragraphs to be translated into Greek. A detailed presentation of morphology is only available for the first part of the story, after which the author advises the 'boys' to 'familiarise themselves with the arrangement of a grammar' (Ibd. v). In this case the grammar Chambers makes constant reference to in the other sections of the book is Sonnenschein's *A Greek Grammar for Schools; based on the Principles and Requirements of the Grammatical Society* (1892–1894). The last section of the textbook is a comprehensive (over 60 pages) Greek-English and English-Greek glossary.

The Greek War of Independence, although in the style of *Ora Maritima*, does not appear as accessible, but, instead, much denser and much more intimidating and challenging than its Latin counterpart. Nevertheless, it remains an excellent book that could theoretically be used both as a primer, at least when in the hands of a skilled teacher, and as a graded reader for advanced beginners. Overall, it would be a very valuable tool even nowadays.

1.4.1.4. W.H.D. Rouse, *First Greek Course* (1906)

If for Latin there was a good a range of DM textbooks available, the same was not true for Greek, for which, instead, the choice was not as wide. As Jones put it in 1915:

> There is no satisfactory first Greek course, for Dr Rouse's book, published by Blackie, is not sufficiently direct in method, but the same author's *Greek Boy at Home* is an admirable reader, and may for the present be used with any Greek grammar. It is to be hoped that a first Greek book on direct lines will soon be written.
>
> (Jones 1915: 69)

Unfortunately, no Greek textbook 'on direct lines' was written until 1965,[12] when the golden era of Perse was long over, thus the non-ideal situation depicted by Jones in the above paragraph was bound to remain unchanged throughout Rouse's 'regency' and beyond.

Rouse's Greek textbook, the one that Jones deemed 'not sufficiently direct in method', was *First Greek Course* (FGC), first published in 1906. In the already quoted 1907 essay, in a subsection entitled 'The First Greek Book', Rouse describes how an ideal Greek textbook for absolute beginners should be, without mentioning the fact that he had already written it, or at least that he was about to publish it at the time of his

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12 Cf. Pecket & Munday 1965.

writing. Thus, what in the following excerpt is referred to as 'A book of the latter type' is nothing but Rouse's FGC, about which all the key points are highlighted:

> Taking Attic then as our standard, we must have a first Greek book specially prepared. This book may be of two kinds: either a continuous narrative composed to illustrate the grammar, or a series of shorter pieces composed or chosen for the same purpose. Both must contain the necessary grammar in full. The former is exemplified in the 'Greek War of Independence', by C. D. Chambers (Swan Sonnenschein), which is composed in the vocabulary and style of Thucydides; an admirable book in nearly every respect. A book of the latter type [i.e. *First Greek Course*] should contain many easy stories or extracts, passages for learning by heart (in poetry therefore by preference), specimen conversations, and the grammar. New points of syntax should be introduced gradually, and some means must be found to repeat the same words often, with their cognates [...]. Where extracts from Greek books are chosen, this repetition may be got by conversation. It is necessary, however, to avoid all such books as arrange the exercises according to the system of a formal accidence. The order should be a natural order; that is, the learner should acquire the language as far as possible as he learnt his own—common forms and constructions first, not the first declension first. Thus the article and part of the verb 'to be' must come at the very beginning; and we must give without delay a general view of declensions and the commoner parts of the conjugations.

> (Rouse & Jones 1907: 434)

Worth noting, for an 'ideal' textbook, is also the explicit choice of the Attic dialect as the best option for beginners, a choice that Rouse is keen to explain in a subsection entitled 'Attic or Homeric?':

> Our object in learning Greek is to understand and enjoy its literature; and the chief part of its literature is Attic; on the other hand, the books best suited for the beginner in subject-matter are Homer and Herodotus. Hence there are some who maintain that the Homeric dialect ought to be first learnt, and that Homer should be the first text-book. But the complexity of Homeric forms, not to mention his huge vocabulary, seems to me a conclusive argument against beginning with Homer. Attic, moreover, is the finest conversational dialect of all known languages, and if we are to make our oral work simple and natural, Attic must be our choice. It is also found that if Attic be learnt, Homer can be understood without great difficulty;

> (Rouse & Jones 1907: 433)

We can now move to the actual textbook, *First Greek Course*. In the preface, Rouse, always very attentive to the DM procedures that he himself was continuously moulding through his relentless classroom activity, takes the time to give some guidelines to the master teaching from his book:

> As regards the method of use, I assume that the master will do as much as possible *viva voce*. Specimens of this method are given here and there, but it is not intended that they be kept to slavishly: they are specimens only. The essence of any such method is, that it be fresh and spontaneous; and the master must be ready to use his material in conversation on the spur of the moment. But conversation is not meant to take the place of construing and writing. All three must go on side by side: construing, not to teach English (which is taught separately), but to make sure that the meaning of the Greek is understood; writing, to give

accuracy, and to fix new facts in the mind; conversation, as a means of practice. The place of conversation is to make the boys quick; to give them continued drill in using their material with slight but definite changes (*I* for *you*, *am* for *are*, etc.); and, not least, to bring the Greek into close connection with their lives. We use a great deal of conversation which is not hinted at here, carrying on much of the business of the class-room in Greek.

(Rouse 1906: iii—iv)

From what we can read, there is nothing in the above lines that contradicts Rouse's usual approach and his devotion to 'the living word'. So why did Jones consider FGC not to be sufficiently 'direct' and, consequently, less adequate? Let us have a look at the structure of lessons to find out. Every lesson begins with grammatical explanations, and these explanations are in English. In a strictly DM textbook, grammar would come only after intensive exposure to, and active practice with, the language, and it would be explained, albeit very simply, in Latin or Greek. Another weak point of Rouse's book, at least in Jones's eyes, was perhaps the fact that after the presentation of grammar would come a bilingual wordlist for the chapter, something that surely made the most dedicated direct-methodists turn up their nose, as it was another violation of the 'only-target-language' rule. Although it may seem that we are dealing with a GTM textbook, grammatical explanations in FGC are much more minimalistic and much less comprehensive than in GTM materials. Furthermore, the different topics are not arranged according to the traditional 'scientific order'. As the author puts it:

I have been guided by expediency, placing first the forms which are most wanted. A scientific order is not necessary in learning; once learnt, the matter can easily be revised in a scientific order by aid of the Compendium [...].

(Ibd. iv)

Thus, the author rearranges the grammar topics according to his own practical teaching aims: 'I think, therefore, that I may safely call it a practical book' (Ibd. v). What really sets FGC apart from the usual Greek textbooks of that (and also this!) time is what comes after the grammatical and vocabulary parts, that is, the 'Reading Lessons' and the 'Conversation Lessons'. Reading Lessons are placed exactly where a learner used to traditional GTM textbooks would have expected to find the usual disjointed sentences to translate, that is, right after the sections on grammar. There is, however, a fundamental difference: in FGC, what pupils found in the Reading Lessons were not disjointed sentences, but only slightly adapted portions of original Ancient Greek texts:

The reading extracts are all taken from Greek authors; it may be left as a pleasant exercise for those who use the book, to find out where they come from. A certain amount of compression or alteration has sometimes been necessary, and a few un-Attic constructions and words have been changed, for which changes I make no apology.

(Ibd. v)

Nevertheless, the most daring innovation for an Ancient Greek textbook was the 'Conversation Lesson'. After each reading text the author gives one or more model

conversations, mostly QA exchanges about the content of the reading itself, for the teacher to practise with the pupils. These were just models, 'specimens', as hinted in the excerpt quoted a few paragraphs above, upon which the master was expected to develop his own variants and that 'great deal of conversation which is not hinted at here'. For the first ten lessons or so, the author gives extensive model scripts for the conversational activities as well as other useful hints, such as lists of words or phrases to be used and built upon. After that, he just limits himself to very dry tips, leaving the rest to the creativity and, most of all, the skills of the master: '1. Tell the story in the present tense, and in the plural. 2. The usual question and answer, varying tense and person' (Ibd. 42), or 'Conversation Lesson on the above as usual, using active and passive constructions' (Ibd. 46).

In the hands of a skilled teacher with enough speaking fluency in Attic Greek, FGC could be an excellent and, incidentally, also concise and to-the-point (only 89 pages) Greek primer. The book, however, is not suited to self-teaching, and this may be the reason why, despite a physical printed version made available for order on lulu.com by Joel Eidsath, a very active member and administrator of the forum *Textkit*, this work is not enjoying the kind of digital second lease of life that other more old-fashioned, but also more self-contained, books are now enjoying. The digital audience is indeed made up mostly of self-learners, working on their own, without the guidance of a teacher, for which all-in-one materials, like Adler's and Kendrick's Ollendorffian textbooks, are much more attractive. As Joel Eidsath states in a *Textkit* thread about FGC:

> This is a terrible textbook for self-study. Without an instructor, you must read widely to make up for the lacks. However, it is pure gold for anyone trying to instruct others in Greek as a living language […]. The book needs a living teacher. I would steer anyone away from *First Greek Course* who really does need a first Greek course and is trying self-study.

> (Eidsath 2015)

1.4.1.5. W.H.D. Rouse, *A Greek Boy at Home* (1909)

To accompany his primer, Rouse also published, as Jones says in the quotation a few paragraphs above, an 'admirable reader' called *A Greek Boy at Home* (GBH) in 1909, over 100 pages of continuous narrative in Greek, along with a separate booklet simply titled *Vocabulary* and containing a full Greek monolingual glossary to the main text. In the preface, Rouse states clearly the role of this reader in his teaching plan:

> This book is meant to be used with my *First Greek Course*, instead of the reading exercises given there: that is, the grammar is taken in the same order. The earlier chapters of the grammar are provided with a number of exercises, in which the same vocabulary is generally repeated: it is hoped that in this way the subject matter may be revised without the need of reading the same exercise over and over again *ad nauseam*.

> (Rouse 1909: iii)

The first 20 chapters of the book follow the corresponding chapters of FGC to allow the students to internalize the vocabulary and the structures introduced in the textbook

through intensive reading exposure, while chapters 21–45 and the appendices assume the knowledge of the whole textbook and 'would make for an engaging intermediate reader, with the first half [1–20] providing remedial material as needed. As these readings progress, they incorporate progressively more Greek from ancient authors, most of it unadapted' (Gresens 2011).

The book, however, is not meant to be used independently, but as a fundamental classroom teaching tool to which all the DM principles apply. In the preface section 'Hints for using the Book' (Ibd. v), a kind of forerunner of the nowadays extremely common 'How to Use this Book', Rouse takes the time to carefully instruct the teacher:

> I. Reading.—The book is meant to be read aloud and explained in class. The boys should have only the text before them, without the vocabulary, for the first reading. Progress is slow at first, until a few Greek words are quite familiar. It should be read first by the master, sentence by sentence, every new word being explained by him, in English at first, in simple Greek as soon as the necessary Greek words are known. The boys may then read it aloud in chorus, or alone in turn.
>
> II. Reproduction.—This is as essential as the reading. It may be done in three ways: (1) Questions on the text in Greek, answered in Greek (*a*) with books, (*b*) without books, both orally and in writing. (2) The same story retold in Greek, with the aid of an English translation (*a*) orally, (*b*) in writing. The English is to be used as a guide to help the memory, and the story as told need not represent it exactly. An excellent exercise. (3) The story re-written in Greek without this help. This exercise is found to be too hard before the third term. Similar subjects may later be set as themes.

> (Ibd. v)

As we can see, all the DM principles are there, especially the ones revolving around Rouse's 'living word' creed, that is, intensive spoken practice in all its possible forms before anything is written down. The combination FGC plus GBH remained in use throughout the golden era of the Perse school, despite Jones's mixed feelings about the former. In the end, the teaching of Greek could be driven at home anyway, as Rouse usually put it, and very well. Even when not used with the intensive oral approach recommended by Rouse, GBH, with its very long, graded and continuous text, remains an extremely valuable resource in our day as well. In 2010 Anne Mahoney republished the book along with its monolingual glossary in one single volume under the title *Rouse's Greek Boy*, thereby making available again this excellent teaching and learning resource.

1.4.1.6. Anne Mahoney's reworking of Rouse's *First Greek Course* (2011)

Although Rouse's FGC is not enjoying the same new digital lease of life as other old Latin and Greek textbooks, this does not mean that the value of this work is completely overlooked nowadays. Ann Mahoney, a professor of Greek at Tufts University, Massachusetts, recognized this value, and in 2011 published a considerably reworked version of it under the same title (FGC11). The first thing that strikes the reader when comparing the two editions of the book is the length: the 89 pages of Rouse's original

text have now become 262. In the first paragraph of her preface, Ann Mahoney accounts for the dramatic increase in length:

> This book is adapted from W.H.D. Rouse's First Greek Course (third edition, London, 1916). I have made the presentation of grammar more modern, removed the assumption that students know Latin before coming to Greek, fleshed out the conversation sections in the early chapters, added exercises, and added a great deal of more reading. I have retained the sequence of grammatical concepts and the division into chapters, so that this new book still matches Rouse's classic reader *A Greek Boy at Home*.

> (Mahoney 2011a: vii)

Only the fact of having 'removed the assumption' that students beginning the study of Greek already have a solid background of Latin, as was the case in Rouse's time, when pupils started Greek after three years of Latin, implies that no grammar concept can be taken for granted. Everything must be introduced and explained in full. Mahoney gives a clear example of this issue by mentioning the case of the genitive absolute:

> Rouse exploited this [Latin] background in his original textbook; for example, in chapter 8 we find: "The Absolute Case in Greek is the genitive: as ἐμοῦ λέγοντος 'as I was speaking.'" This is the entire discussion of the genitive absolute, and the Greek readings in the chapter contain no examples. For contemporary students, who may begin Greek before Latin, or relatively early in their study of Latin, this is inadequate, so I have replaced this one sentence with half a dozen paragraphs and two focused exercises.

> (Mahoney 2011a: vii)

Considering this approach to grammar, which, as the author honestly acknowledges, makes FGC11 'a grammar-heavy book' (Mahoney 2011b: 1), along with the considerable increase in reading, conversational and writing materials, it is easily understandable how 89 pages can become 262.

FLC11 is a first-year college textbook, much more self-contained than its predecessor, and strongly based on an active use of the language, both orally and in writing, of which its author, like Rouse, is a strong advocate: 'I have found that active language use engages students, it helps them learn and remember vocabulary and grammar, and it provides variety' (Mahoney 2011b: 1). Besides being grammatically comprehensive for its scope and offering much reading exposure, the expanded conversational sections, especially in the first chapters, unquestionably remain one of its strong points. In an ideal class setting, the teacher would have enough materials to begin introducing the students to spoken Greek by using the scripts and the prompts as starting points for the conversation, and the readings as conversation subjects. As the author states at the beginning of the first oral exercise:

> The goals of the conversation exercise are to verify that students have understood the reading and to provide extra practice on the new vocabulary and forms. In the first few chapters sample exercises are written out in detail, but teachers should improvise and elaborate as necessary. Practice first with the vocabulary list and the readings, then close the book and review.

> (Mahoney 2011a: 30)

As stated above, the oral sections of the first chapters have been considerably expanded (those of the advanced chapters are just prompts for the teacher to build upon, such as in the original FGC). For example, the first conversation section in FGC has fewer than six lines, while the same section in FGC11 has eighteen. Moreover, Mahoney's book also has an additional section called 'Chain Story Exercise', which works as follows: the first student says a sentence in Greek, while the second is supposed to turn that sentence into a relative clause and add a new element to it. A third student then does the same, and so on, until everybody in the class has given his or her contribution, each by relativizing the previous sentence and adding a new element, thus creating a story.

FGC11, like its original counterpart, makes no use of translation exercises, thus mirroring the DM principle that written production begins and ends in the target language. The author, in a case-study article aimed at showing her application of the oral approach, is keen to highlight this point: 'I avoid translation, because in my experience students who do a great deal of translating often get the idea that Greek does not make sense on its own: meaning only comes from English' (Mahoney 2011b: 1). Every chapter of FGC11 has a 'Writing' section with a variety of activities, from substitution drills to the creation of full sentences starting from a given element, from the rewriting of verses in straightforward prose to the composition of full paragraphs on a subject related to the previous readings and their vocabulary, but no translation.

Despite Joel Eidsath describing Mahoney as a 'maximalist' (Eidsath 2015) for having largely expanded the grammar sections of the original FGC, I find this book a very valuable introduction to Ancient Greek, when in the hands of a very motivated and motivating teacher. Although it may appear as grammar-heavy as many traditional GTM books, what the student finds after the dense grammar pages is not a series of disjointed pattern sentences to decode; instead, he or she is rewarded with a very large amount of connected text, of continuous language, first to be exposed to, and then to enjoy through active practice, both orally and in writing. This is certainly an important first step towards reading fluency:

> Of course no one comes out of one year of college Greek fluent in the language. On the other hand, I hope to have given them the tools they'll need to get there — basic grammar and vocabulary as a foundation, but also, and more important, the experience of hearing or reading a text that they can understand right away, directly in its own language.

> (Mahoney 2011b: 16)

1.5. Communicative approaches today

In the very first paragraph of the introduction to the recent and groundbreaking publication *Communicative Approaches for Ancient Languages* (2021), the editors, Mair E. Lloyd and Steven Hunt, state very clearly the reasons why such a book, whose title might well irritate the most conservative classics teachers, has come into being:

> This volume brings together accounts of a selection of current communicative practices that we hope will inspire wider exploration of their effects and subsequently enliven ancient language teaching. Although the skill of reading remains firmly at the forefront of our own pedagogical aims, we perceive the need to go beyond approaches that limit language development to this skill alone. We want to help students to experience reading ancient languages without having to painstakingly transpose texts into their own language in order to achieve comprehension. We want to escape the image of ancient languages as codes to be deciphered and to move towards students experiencing them as a normal means of communication in spoken as well as written form. In short, we hope to make ancient languages recognizable as languages and to make them lively and attractive to as wide a range of modern learners as possible.
>
> (Lloyd & Hunt 2021: 1)

The first point to clarify is the meaning of 'communicative' in the teaching of historical languages. Lloyd and Hunt rethink a description given by Howatt and adjust it to the teaching of ancient languages:

> Howatt (working in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL)) described a 'weak' and 'strong' form of 'communicative approach' (1984: 279). The first, 'weak', form comprised instruction about the target language leading to practice in using it to communicate. The second, 'strong', type rested on the premise that language is acquired through communication using the target language itself, which 'stimulates the development of the language system' (Howatt 1984: 279). Howatt described these two different forms of the approach as 'learning to use' and 'using [...] to learn' (1984: 279). In studying ancient languages, where our ultimate intent is the development of reading skills rather than broader communicative competence, the 'using to learn' version of CLT seems closer to our needs, though some element of 'learning to use' may be desirable as a prelude or accompaniment to the stronger form.
>
> (Lloyd & Hunt 2021: 2)

Leaving aside the pedagogical rationale, a balance between a strong and a weak version of CLT is probably the most suitable option, as 'the 'communicating to learn' environment requires native-like competence in the teacher' (Ibd.). As a matter of fact, very few teachers, at least in their early 'active' stages, have the fluency of W.H.D. Rouse, Milena Minkova and Terence Tunberg,[13] Luigi Miraglia,[14] or Christophe Rico.[15] What is truly groundbreaking in the use of CLT in the teaching of historical languages is the focus on the use of all the four language skills instead of just one, i.e. reading, as is the case in GTM:

> An important characteristic of communicative approaches is their emphasis on the goal of communicative competence across all four language skills: the receptive skills of reading and listening, and the productive skills of speaking and writing [...]. It might be claimed that students of ancient languages only really need reading skills and that sufficient 'input' to

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13 Founders of the pioneering *Conventiculum Lexintoniense* in 1996, the longest-running full-immersion workshop for active Latin run every summer by the University of Kentucky.

14 Founder of the Accademia Vivarium Novum in Italy, a prestigious world academy for living Latin and Greek.

15 Founder of the Polis Institute in Jerusalem, and fluent speaker of both Latin and Koine Greek.

promote them is all that is required. However, that suggests that learning a language through just one receptive mode is possible and desirable, a claim that the authors in this book and many modern language scholars would refute (Swain 1993: 159–60; Mitchell et al. 2013: 41).

(Ibd.)

It is indeed the inclusion of all four skills that makes teaching and learning active, living, interactive and effective:

Implementing 'active' or 'living' definitions in the classroom would imply introducing speaking, listening and self-expression in the target language, alongside the more usual emphasis on reading and explicit instruction in linguistic features. It is the inclusion of these additional oral/aural and productive skills that differentiates communicative approaches from others.

(Ibd.)

In his for the time groundbreaking book *When Dead Tongues Speak* (2006), John Gruber-Miller reflects upon the importance of the four skills from a more text-focused point of view:

The texts of Homer, Euripides, and Plato, Plautus, Cicero, and Vergil, through formulae, drama, and dialogue, beckon us to hear them spoken and to perform them, or at least to understand them as performance. Yet how can our students begin to comprehend these different modes of interchange without some experience of them as performance, without some experience of listening and speaking these texts as well as reading them? If students are to comprehend a text that was meant to be delivered to a live audience, then they need to feel comfortable with its rhythms and sounds. Too often, beginning language students read a text word by word without recognizing phrase units or the larger structures of meaning. But listening forces them to pay attention to the greater meaning of an utterance and to the broader discourse context. Speaking helps students hear and produce those units of meaning in phrases and clauses, not just word by word.

(Gruber-Miller 2006b: 11–12)

In this respect, Milena Minkova and Terence Tunberg, in a 2012 article about their own experience with their annual full-immersion Latin workshop, with little technicality and much acute common sense, humbly state:

In our view, adding activities to the classroom that involve actual usage of the language, as well as communication in the language, can only be beneficial. We should be bold enough to make the assumption that some active dimension from the very beginning which involves speaking and writing will normally be an aid to learning. After all, reading itself is communication, and it would seem reasonable that adding the other language faculties, as well as reading and memorizing, to the experience of learning Latin would have a good chance of expediting the process. […] Most people, we think, will grasp the language better,

or at least more quickly, if they have to use it, and speaking is even more intensive than writing in this respect, because one has less time to think about what one is going to say.

<div align="right">(Minkova & Tunberg 2012: 124–125)</div>

A similar view is also expressed by Melinda Letts, lecturer in Classics at the University of Oxford and a strong advocate of the application of communicative approaches to ancient languages, who explains as follows her colleagues' as well as her own endeavour to introduce the spoken and active element to the teaching of Latin and Greek at Jesus College:

> This stems from our commitment to giving our students the highest quality language teaching, and is based on the philosophy of active language acquisition which, in line with neuroscientific evidence on how languages are acquired, gives equal weight to four key elements of language learning: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

<div align="right">(Letts 2020: 4)</div>

Similarly, Federico Aurora, in his recent review of oral approaches to Latin and Greek, cites the latest findings of SLA (Second Language Acquisition) research to support the fact that fluent reading requires an internalized language competence, i.e. the ability of our brain to automatically and unconsciously process phonology, grammar and lexicon, and that such a competence is most effectively attained through a multi-skill learning process:

> How can we attain that? Is it through studying grammar and vocabulary and conducting intensive [i.e. decoding] reading of some passages, with the help of dictionaries, grammars and other reference works? This and other kinds of explicit learning, together with explicit instruction (grammar classes) are, indeed, seen by most Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories as beneficial—but *no theory* sees them as sufficient [...] to acquire a second language. The most effective way to learn a second language appears to be to receive a sufficiently large amount of *comprehensible input* in the target language, and to receive it as *communicatively embedded input* [...] through both aural (spoken input) and visual (written input) channels.

<div align="right">(Aurora 2022: 526–527)</div>

The focus on active skills will foster in the learner's mind a new perception of the language, which will gradually stop being an intricate code to be deciphered by relentlessly going back and forth along its segments; instead, it will begin to be perceived as a fluent and linear expression of thought. Aurora also emphasizes the importance of a linear perception of the language as a key to reading fluency:

> Only oral usage encourages a learner to understand that Latin and Greek, like all other natural languages, are linear phenomena. This means that a hearer must be able to decode the message in the order in which its constituents are uttered (or written), without analysing the sentence looking for predicate, subject, etc. This consciousness and ability can be transferred to reading and simultaneously lay the foundation for a better comprehension of linguistic phenomena associated with word order (e.g. information structure).

<div align="right">(Ibd. 528)</div>

Susan Thornton Rasmussen from the Paideia Institute, one of the leading American institutions for active Latin and Greek, also adds that intensive oral use not only dramatically contributes to reading fluency per se, but also to the development of a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the message conveyed by the text:

> Language students of communicative approaches demonstrate a familiarity and knowledge of the more subtle distinctions of the language when they speak it, which demands immediate production. [...] Even when one's goal is solely the ability to read and translate Latin texts fluently, developing communication abilities is vital to building these skills—a reader engages with the author in a communicative way in order to understand and interpret correctly the author's meaning. An understanding of subtle and nuanced writing can best be learned by developing communication skills.

> (Rasmussen 2015: 38)

Rasmussen also highlights the importance of oral practice as a means of greatly fostering and enhancing memorization of structures and vocabulary:

> Furthermore, second language learners who are accustomed to speaking that language generally learn and remember grammatical forms and vocabulary better than students who are not, because they are familiar with creating and repeating these words and forms—not to mention the fact that their accuracy and consistency in pronunciation, phrase grouping, and voice inflection is much greater.

> (Ibd.)

Wills had raised this same point as early as 1998, when replying to the criticism that ancient languages only need to be read, not spoken:

> To those who will say, "But they only need to learn to read Latin", I would respond that learning vocabulary is a basic prelude to reading, and that oral Latin drills and activities are demonstrably the best way to do that. Moreover, oral activities (even old-fashioned choral repetition) tend to involve more students and give each student more speaking time than our usual one-minute-per-hour average.

> (Wills 1998: 32)

Wills and Rasmussen also highlight another advantage of an oral approach to the language. The use of communication, and of oral activities in general, when conducted in a stress- and frustration-free setting, that is, with the students' affective filter lowered (Ibd. 32), is 'simply [...] enjoyable and fosters the joy of learning' (Rasmussen 2015: 42; see also Urbanski 2021: 17). Moreover, it is 'attuned to students' natural disposition to use language' and is 'a successful way to engage and motivate learners' (Hunt 2021: 58). Thus, for whatever reason students agree to use oral Latin, the outcome will always be the same: an improvement in their language skills, which, in the end, will make them better readers of original texts. As Wills very pragmatically points out:

> Perhaps some students enjoy oral Latin for its perceived absurdity or its value as a special code—that doesn't bother me, because they are also achieving my goal of increasing their language practice. […] Call me idealistic, but what I think students always most enjoy is the satisfaction of learning, and oral Latin composition gives them a challenge and the accompanying satisfaction of a challenge overcome.
>
> (Wills 1998: 32–33)

The communicative approach to Latin and Greek is slightly gaining support and stimulating various institutions to experiment with it: 'This trend shows that [...] the field is moving in the direction of greater use of active and communicative approaches in the classroom, particularly at the secondary level' (Manning 2021: 16). Aurora (2022: 531–535), in his up-to-date account of these trends in Europe and the United States for both online and in-person teaching, shares the same moderate optimism. Something is moving, a certain awareness has been reached, and changes are slowly taking place:

> I also hope to have made […] a point in favour of the integration of active, spoken practices as central elements of teaching and learning the [ancient] languages. This can happen gradually, but personally I believe this is the right direction for the future of Latin and Greek teaching. Publications like Lloyd and Hunt's edited volume [Lloyd & Hunt 2021] provide inspiring, concrete examples of possible, feasible, gradual paths to change, in a variety of educational contexts and situations.
>
> (Ibd. 538)

After all this talking about orality and communication, it is important to point out, however, that being 'living', 'active' and 'communicative' does not mean forsaking explicit instruction, as has been maintained in some cases (Marchi & Locastro 2015: 2). The point is, instead, to calibrate the extent of such instruction in order for it to gradually nourish and foster active learning and active skills, without engulfing them in a viscous marsh of grammatical rules. Gruber-Miller highlights the importance of finding the right 'place' for grammar, as its learning does not have to be an end in itself, but a way to support and enhance the active use of the language:

> Certainly grammar is a topic many of us teach most explicitly in a beginning language course. And certainly, adolescent and adult students ask for and can benefit from knowledge of grammatical rules and structures. But if grammar is the primary focus of a language course, then the course will be primarily about the language rather than using the language to interpret and express ideas, feelings, attitudes, and stories. It is important to put grammar in its place: it is a necessary tool, but not a sufficient one, to help language learners communicate effectively.
>
> (Gruber-Miller 2006b: 12)

Minkova and Tunberg, strong advocates of active Latin, also see the importance and the supportive role of the right amount of grammar study, and are keen to stress that explicit instruction and communicative approaches are by no means incompatible:

> Moreover, we ask, why should a focus on grammar and reading literature be incompatible with communicative activities? We argue that many of the approaches taken for granted by most teachers of the classical languages are not necessarily inconsistent with active approaches, and need not be abandoned, simply because a teacher or learner wishes to add an active and communicative dimension to her or his understanding of Latin. Grammar itself is not language acquisition, but it can help provide shortcuts to language acquisition.

> (Minkova & Tunberg 2012: 124)

A similar view was very recently expressed by Daniel Gallagher, the leading figure behind all the active Latin teaching at Cornell University, someone who always includes grammar-focused activities in his Conversational Latin I and II classes:

> In Conversational Latin, prompts are easily given during class that allow students to do grammatical drills entirely in Latin: '*verte hanc sententiam in numerum pluralem!*' (convert this sentence into the plural) or '*dic mihi hanc sententiam voce passiva*' (tell me how to say this in the passive voice)! Granted, this is not the kind of 'natural' exercise that can be done in modern languages, but it does give students a command of the language that they need to have to become better, more efficient speakers and readers.

> (Gallagher 2021: 109)

Jacqueline M. Carlon, from the University of Massachusetts, while a strong advocate of communicative approaches to Latin, also emphasizes the importance of explicit instruction:

> Perhaps the most widely known and publicized SLA research was done by Steven Krashen in the 1980s, whose results concluded that grammar should never be explicitly taught. He argued that, given sufficient comprehensible input, students would acquire an implicit knowledge of the grammatical rules of a second language, just as they did their first language. But subsequent research has disproven Krashen's theories, at least in some settings. The reality is that input can often be comprehended without attention to syntax, in which case grammar becomes invisible and thus is not learned. Students need to notice and use grammar, particularly complex structures, to acquire it.

> (Carlon 2013: 107)

However, this is not a thesis on SLA, and I am not an SLA specialist, nor researcher: I am a pragmatic teacher; as such, I need to rely on the findings of SLA specialists. The 'subsequent research' that Carlon mentioned are the seminal studies by Swain (1985, 2005) and Schmidt (1990), whose findings she summarises as follows:

> Of particular note are Richard Schmidt's work on the importance for acquisition of attention to form, and Merrill Swain's research with French immersion programs, which concludes that meaningful input alone does not insure mastery of syntax; her results led to her subsequent theory regarding the role of production in language acquisition, which posits that production forces the learner to process morphosyntactically rather than relying solely on semantics ("The Output Hypothesis").

> (Ibd.)

Swain's work was followed by other researchers focused on the effectiveness of the so-called Communicative Output. Carlon mentions in this respect Izumi (2002), Nobuyoshi & Ellis (1993), and Toth (2006), which she summarises as follows:

> Izumi, who concluded that guided output was more effective than visual enhancement of text (that is, highlighting specific elements of the text with varied fonts, colors, etc.) in drawing attention to grammar; Nobuyoshi and Ellis, who posit that pushing students to produce more accurate output contributes to acquisition of the language; and Toth, who finds that communicative output (CO) is as effective or better than processing instruction (PI) in helping students acquire forms.

> (Ibd. 108–109)

In what follows I am going to review some of the most relevant teaching materials and approaches that present ancient languages as if they were still in everyday use, that is, in a communicative, active and living way.

1.5.1. Hans Ørberg, *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata* (1954)

It is interesting to see that the most widespread textbook used in active, living and communicative Latin classes was actually never conceived with a communicative approach in mind. *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata* (LLPSI) was originally a textbook based on the inductive approach, or, to be more specific, on the inductive-contextual approach. I have already mentioned the use of this approach during the Renaissance (see 1.1.), and also reviewed two books from the late 19th century based on it (see 1.3.), although they did not even remotely reach the pedagogical level of LLPSI.

Written by the Danish language teacher Hans Ørberg (1920–2010) and first published in 1954 through the Naturmetodens Sproginstitut (Nature Method Language Institute), a then very active correspondence language school of Copenhagen, four years after the death of W.H.D. Rouse, of whose influence Ørberg never made a mystery (Miraglia 2009: III, Coffee 2012: 257), LLPSI went through several editions: 1981, 1983, 1989 and 1991. In 2010, the Accademia Vivarium Novum in Italy published an enhanced edition of the course with various ancillary materials, all of which are now available to international users as well. The present edition has two volumes, *Familia Romana* (FR) and *Roma Aeterna*. FR, on which we will focus here, is the introductory book for absolute beginners who have never seen a word of Latin before. It has 35 graded chapters, presenting a continuous narrative for about 300 pages of Latin-only text. Luigi Miraglia, editor of the Italian edition of LLPSI and a key figure in its dissemination, gives this short but to-the-point description of the work:

> Il corso LINGVA LATINA PER SE ILLUSTRATA è informato a un metodo induttivo, che parte da testi e contesti perché da essi il discente risalga a forme e costrutti e apprenda vocaboli e fraseologia. La morfosintassi, prima induttivamente assimilata mediante il riconoscimento di strutture ricorrenti e la riflessione su di esse, vien poi sistematicamente organizzata. *Ūsus* e *doctrīna* procedono così di pari passo per un più efficace apprendimento della lingua. Il sistema prevede un forte coinvolgimento attivo dello studente tramite letture,

esercizi di comprensione e produzione orale e scritta. La narrazione continua, oltre a fornire sostegni mnemonici a parole e costrutti da imparare, illustra con chiarezza la vita romana antica. Nella seconda parte del corso [*Roma Aeterna*] l'alunno è introdotto alla lettura diretta degli autori latini nei loro testi originali.

<div align="right">(Miraglia 2009: 39)</div>

These are the main principles of LLPSI:

1. The student reads the text, which is supposed to be understandable, since, beyond being carefully graded, it is also accompanied by clear and to-the-point notes in the margin of the pages and by effective illustrations, both clarifying the meaning of a new word, phrase or form:

> Excellent also is the system of putting all new words and phrases in the margin opposite the point of their first occurrence, with a series of symbols enabling the student to guess the meaning of the new word from information he already controls.

<div align="right">(Thomson 1972: 150)</div>

A full comprehension is then possible from the very first page of the textbook:

> La particolarità è che la comprensione è possibile, sin dalla prima pagina, senza bisogno di spiegazioni grammaticali, grazie all'assoluta gradualità e a un apparato di indicazioni extralinguistiche, come figure, schemi e a note assai calibrate, che spiegano il latino con il latino – cioè con sinonimi, contrari, circonlocuzioni, derivazioni – sempre usando vocaboli e costrutti già precedentemente incontrati e perciò noti al lettore-apprendente.

<div align="right">(Ricucci 2013: 37)</div>

2. Grammatical points are illustrated in context, that is, in the narrative, where they are repeated multiple times, until the learner becomes aware of them through the actual use of the language and intensive exposure to it. Only at the end of the chapter are they explained (in Latin) and rationalized in the section called 'Grammatica Latina'. The grammar section is not really there to teach grammar and rules, but to confirm, organise and systematise what the learner has already induced while reading the text:

> The purpose of the narrative is to introduce in context the forms and structures which will be formally taught in the section *Grammatica Latina*. Having met with them in use, the student will come to the lesson on grammar with at least a subliminal grasp of the principles involved.

<div align="right">(Thomson 1976: 12)</div>

3. Something similar is done for vocabulary. The main textbook has no bilingual lists, but just a full word index at the back with the indication of the first occurrence of each word. In this way, the student can return immediately to the specific line where a given word has been first introduced and review it in a fully meaningful context. At the end of

every chapter, there is a full list of all the new words introduced that the student can use as a practical vocabulary checklist.

4. Once the text section has been mastered, the student can do the three *pensa* located at the very end of every chapter and then go to the exercises, which are in the separate book *Exercitia Latina*. The exercises, organised to precisely match every section of the text, are of different kinds, but never translation. The learner is prompted to produce sentences and structures always starting from Latin. Translation is not an option.

The reason why I have decided to include LLPSI in the section about communicative approaches is that this textbook is now mostly used in this way. Originally, it was just focused on reading, its main goal being to help the student become a fluent reader. There is also a certain focus on written production, as all the exercises are in Latin, and the student is supposed to write all the answers in Latin. Nevertheless, the point is never really communication, but the internalization of Latin structures through active practice. The only self-expression exercise is the 'Pensum C' at the end of each chapter, where the student is asked to answer a series of questions about the text content in Latin. The textbook was never meant as a communicative course, so much so that Ørberg himself was a fluent Latin writer but not a speaker, that is, he was not able to hold a conversation in Latin, nor communicate in it (Rimbault 2012: 12).

> Nevertheless, LLPSI has become a standard for communicative Latin classes, an 'already classic book series' (Aurora 2022: 530), 'supported by enthusiasts from all over the world, some of whom have produced great resources' (Affleck 2021: 27). As early as 1976, describing his approach to LLPSI with his students, Thompson had emphasised the importance of the aural and oral elements in the teaching: 'It is important that students hear and speak a great deal of Latin' (Thompson 1976: 11). Cases also recognizes the value of Ørberg's textbook for a communicative approach:

> En relació a l'aprenentatge de la llengua llatina, l'anomenat mètode Ørberg, com acabem de dir, podríem considerar-lo un mètode comunicatiu encara que només se centra en la comprensió lectora, a diferència del mètode comunicatiu pur que s'enfoca a més a més en la comunicació oral. Per això, considerem que el LLPSI continua sent vàlid com a mètode de base per a l'ensenyament comunicatiu del llatí i, de fet, és el mètode majoritàriament utilitzat [...] per les escoles i pels professors que ensenyen el llatí de manera activa, és a dir, comunicativa: escoltant, parlant, llegint i escrivint.[16]

> (Cases 2021: 24)

Similarly, Avitus, in his 2018 review of the resources available for learning Latin actively and communicatively, acknowledges the effectiveness of the textbook in this respect, as well as its huge popularity:

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16 Regarding the learning of Latin, the so-called Ørberg Method, as we have just said, could be considered as a communicative method, although, unlike the pure communicative method, which is more focused on oral communication, it is only centred on reading comprehension. Therefore, we consider LLPSI to be still valid as a basic method for the communicative teaching of Latin, so much so that it is the method predominantly used by schools and teachers who teach Latin in an active, i.e. communicative, way: by listening, speaking, reading and writing. (my translation)

However, the method currently most widely and almost unanimously used internationally, both in Europe and in America, by all those interested in spoken Latin is the following: Hans H. Ørberg, *Lingua Latina per se illustrata* […]. This method teaches classical Latin grammar and the 3000 words most frequently found in the classical texts in a way that develops the linguistic instincts conducive to fluency.

(Avitus 2018: 47)

Another important aspect of the textbook is its focus on teaching the core classical Latin vocabulary, which is not only masterfully embedded in, and harmonized with, the storyline, but also keeps constantly recurring in the text through a calibrated spaced repetition, which effectively fosters its acquisition. Affleck so describes her experience with a group of Year 9 students learning from FR:

[…] many of the [words] did not even require translation or explanation, and my Year 9 students used the picture-help or Latin synonyms provided in the margins without seeming to notice how they were acquiring a powerful vocabulary. From the point of view of vocabulary acquisition, I believe *Familia Romana* works better than any other course I have used. Repetition of words at well-judged intervals means the core vocabulary expands comfortably, without need of much reinforcement.

(Affleck 2021: 30)

Much has been done by Luigi Miraglia, a passionate and devoted Latinist and Latin educator, to support Ørberg's textbooks series; his huge contribution to the cause of active Latin and Greek, for pedagogical reasons and beyond, has been widely acknowledged.[17] Miraglia is also the founder of the Accademia Vivarium Novum, the major Latin and Greek academy in Europe, through which he published the Italian edition of LLPSI with several ancillary materials: 'The enhanced version produced by the Accademia Vivarium Novum is supported by a tremendous wealth of resources' (Avitus 2018: 49). Miraglia, himself a brilliant Latin speaker, is also the author of *Latine Disco* (2009), a teacher's manual for LLPSI of over 300 pages, and the producer of a documentary called 'La via degli umanisti' (Miraglia 2008), which shows how different teachers use LLPSI in their classes, and how an intensive spoken interaction in Latin can be developed between teacher and students in a classroom setting. Miraglia's tireless work in spreading the message of the importance of teaching Latin actively and communicatively has largely contributed to the popularity of LLPSI, and many teachers from different countries now using that method have become fluent speakers thanks to the Accademia Vivarium Novum.[18]

As an LLPSI user myself, both as a learner and as a teacher, I find it important to point out, however, that the communicative use of the textbook has not to be understood as a replacement for its original intent, that is, the development of reading fluency. This is, and remains, the main target for teachers using this book, with the only difference being that, once the text has been worked through and mastered according to the inductive principles, i.e. when the student is able to read and understand it fluently, with no hesitation, it becomes then a rich, accessible and effective source for intensive

17 Cf., among others, Coffee 2012: 266–267, and Ricucci 2013a.
18 Cf., for example, Letchford 2021, and Affleck 2021.

spoken interaction. The texts are so well graded that, once mastered, it feels quite natural to try to use them as starting points for active production, as Ryan also points out: 'LLPSI may not demand Latin output, but when I talk to students about it, ask questions, or generally address them in Latin, they instinctively try to answer in Latin' (Ryan 2021: 115). Thus, even teachers with no skills in spoken Latin can begin to gradually develop fluency along with their students, just by teaching from this book. This shows how effectively inductive and communicative elements can complement each other: internalization of the language material provided by graded and repeated exposure to the text, as required by the inductive approach, gives learners enough self-confidence to start to produce the language and, in so doing, to build, step by step, their active proficiency. The importance of oral production is also highlighted by the French Latinist Claude Fiévet, another strong advocate of an intensive oral approach to Latin in order to reach reading fluency, as well as the author of a textbook based on a variant of Ørberg's method called *Manuel de Latin audio-aural* (1999):[19]

> L'utilisation orale du latin répond en effet parfaitement à notre objectif : elle contraint l'étudiant—contrainte acceptée de bonne grâce et toute pédagogique évidemment—à structurer immédiatement, dans le temps de la parole, un discours qu'il ne peut arrêter pour le dissocier ou le disséquer. Cette technique, qui élimine l'analyse comme les interférences avec le français, est conçue comme un entraînement intensif à la reconnaissance immédiate des structures élémentaires dans l'exercice de lecture compréhensive. La résurgence permanente du lexique et des structures syntaxiques, avec une fréquence élevée, entraîne nécessairement une familiarisation avec la langue et une intériorisation de ses mécanismes que ne saurait permettre une démarche analytique. Elle fait acquérir et réactive constamment un véritable savoir-faire dans le minimum de temps. L'utilisation orale du latin comme moyen de communication du maître à l'élève change d'ailleurs radicalement l'attitude de l'étudiant en face d'un texte : elle le désinhibe, lui donne une plus grande confiance en ses aptitudes. Une préhension plus globale du sens lui laisse une plus grande disponibilité d'esprit pour détecter d'éventuelles erreurs d'interprétation.

> (Fiévet 1989: 207)

1.5.2. The Ørbergian Universe

Hans Ørberg only wrote LLPSI and its basic ancillary materials. Nevertheless, his Latin course was so successful that it inspired other authors to produce new works strongly based on the same approach and principles, not only for Latin, but also for Ancient Greek. For the reader familiar with LLPSI, a quick glance at any of these works will suffice to say: 'Oh yes, it's like *Familia Romana*'. They all belong to that style; they all follow the same pedagogical beliefs; they all revolve around the same Ørbergian universe.

Three of these works will be chronologically reviewed in the following sections. The second one is produced by the Accademia Vivarium Novum, the other two by the Spanish association Cultura Clásica, the most important Spanish organization aimed at supporting the application of active and communicative methods to the teaching of Latin and Ancient Greek. Besides being the publisher of the Spanish edition of LLPSI

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19 Cf., in this respect, Gallego 2012.

and its ancillary materials, Cultura Clásica has also published original communicative textbooks, two for Ancient Greek and one for Latin.

1.5.2.1. M. Diaz Ávila, *Alexandros. To Hellenikon Paidion* (2014)

Three years after the reworking of Rouse's Greek textbook by Ann Mahoney (see 1.4.1.6.), Mario Díaz Ávila published the reworking of Rouse's reader with the title *Alexandros. To Hellenikon Paidion* (AHP) in 2014. While Mahoney's book is a reworking of *First Greek Course* (see 1.4.1.4.), Díaz Ávilas' *Alexandros*, of which an extensively corrected and expanded new edition in colour appeared in 2023, is a reworking of *A Greek Boy at Home*, as the subtitle in Latin confirms: 'E libro *A Greek Boy at Home* a W.H.D. Rouse anno 1909 conscripto, nunc aucto atque multis exercitiis imaginibusque locupletato' (Díaz Ávila 2014: 3).

The first intent of Díaz Ávila was to transform an original reader (GBH) meant to accompany a main textbook (FGC) into an independent introductory all-in-one classroom textbook. In so doing, he also took inspiration from another classic of the active approach to classical languages, i.e. Ørberg's LLPSI (Ibd. 12). AHP is then an interesting combination of Rouse's and Ørberg's works. In order to derive the maximum benefit from both works and to create a sufficiently manageable and not too overwhelming textbook for the absolute beginner of Greek, Díaz Ávila made first an abridged version of GBH. Out of the original 84 chapters, he selected 24, which were in turn reduced in length, resulting in a total of 5000 words, against the almost 30.000 of the original GBH (Nitz 2016: 60).

This updated, abridged and more student-friendly content was then arranged according to the principles of the Ørberg Method (see 1.5.1.), similar to what Miraglia and Bórri did to create the Italian version of the English textbook *Athenaze* (IA, see 1.5.2.2.). The result is Rouse's content with an Ørbergian outlook, that is, a very large number of marginal notes, illustrations, unglossed word lists, minimalistic grammatical notes and tables within each lesson, and exercises that promote the active use of the language, both orally and in writing. Apart from a 'Prólogo' in both Latin and Spanish, the book makes use of no other language than Ancient Greek, even for grammatical terminology.

The result is a very valuable textbook that in the hands of a skilled teacher can be profitably used in a communicative and active way. If we compare it with the book that inspired its format, LLPSI, we must make the same comment we made about IA. Neither of the two Greek spin-offs start as smoothly as Ørberg's book. They are not, to again quote Ricucci, 'understandable from the first page' like LLPSI, so students will need strong support from the teacher to go through the very first chapters. However, this is definitely not an insurmountable problem, especially for AHP, where the stories are much shorter and more limited in vocabulary and structures than in IA.

I certainly do not agree with Nitz when he says, in his otherwise very valuable review of AHP: 'Though the Greek is simple, a typical beginner would have much to learn before he or she could read the first stories with any degree of comprehension' (Ibd. 62). The dear old GTM principles die hard, even for those who have essentially left them behind. The idea that a certain grammar topic needs to be fully covered, and in

all its details, before you can move on to see or read some disjointed pieces of language was, and to some extent still is, a common GTM principle. What is included in the first lesson of AHP is perfectly functional to the text and is used in an effective and meaningful context. It does not matter if dative pronouns appear in a first lesson; they are there just because they are used to ask or state someone's name, something that the student will practice repeatedly, guided by the teacher, while doing the oral and written exercises. Moreover, they are clearly listed in one of the notes in the margin, next to their nominative counterparts. The teacher could also have the students focus on the list before starting to read the text or, even better, he or she could write them on the board, quickly explain their role in that specific context, and keep referring to them during the reading, for example, by pointing at them while changing or raising the tone of his or her voice. By the end of the first lesson, the student will have learnt some nominative and some dative forms, but not all. Is it a problem? Or is it such a problem that, before allowing students to read their first meaningful and rewarding text in ancient Greek, we need do drag them through 'a multitude of customized supplementary lessons' (Ibd. 64)? The remaining forms of the paradigm, if this is the concern a teacher may have, will surely be learnt in subsequent lessons, in fully meaningful contexts, and updated inflectional tables will be provided for reference and review. Or one can, in case of need, always check the grammatical appendix at the back of the book, where all the topics introduced in the course are presented in full tables.

AHP is meant to be a textbook, not a reader to accompany a textbook like its original counterpart GBH. A whole community of 'enthusiastic teachers' (Ibd. 59) is now using it, especially in Spain, although it is not an easy textbook for a teacher to use, just like LLPSI or IA. It can, of course, be improved, expanded and enriched, so much so that supplementary materials have been produced and made available through the Cultura Clásica website.[20] Nevertheless, AHP is and remains a textbook for beginners, and as such it is conceived to be used from the very first Greek class, and not to be put on hold, as suggested by Nitz in his review, while students go through 'a multitude of customized supplementary lessons' in order to get ready and become worthy enough to deserve the enjoyment of its stories.

1.5.2.2. The Italian version of *Athenaze* (2015)

Shortly after the output of Cultura Clásica reviewed in the previous section, Luigi Miraglia and his colleague Tommaso Francesco Bórri published another fundamental Ørbergian textbook for Ancient Greek. As is the case of *Alexandros*, it is not a brand-new textbook, but the reworking of an already existing one. The result of this endeavour saw the light of day in 2015 with the title *Athenaze. Introduzione al greco antico* (IA) and was the adaptation of the textbook *Athenaze. An Introduction to Ancient Greek* (1990) by Balme, Lavall & Morwood, which is very popular in the anglophone world. Before its adaptation, it was already a favourite of Miraglia's and his acolytes of the Accademia Vivarium Novum, as, even in its original English form, it was, and still is, the most modern-looking, student-friendly and least intimidating ancient Greek

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20 https://sites.google.com/view/alexandros-tohellenikonpaidion/p%C3%A1gina-principal

textbook for English speakers. In the teacher's guide to IA, Miraglia shares his impressions about the original version:

> […] una storia continua, adatta a catturare l'interesse di ragazzi di quattordici o quindici anni, una buona introduzione alla civiltà greca, soprattutto ateniese, note grammaticali funzionali alla comprensione della lingua, un ampio vocabolario perlopiù coincidente con quello frequenziale, una precoce, ma graduale introduzione di testi classici originali.

(Miraglia 1999: 3)

Every lesson begins with a narrative text with a full word list and the relevant grammar explanations. The texts grow longer over the lessons and, most importantly, are connected in a continuous narrative, while the grammatical sections are never overwhelming, and always aimed at the comprehension of the points introduced by the text. These are then followed by exercises at the end of each lesson, and more of them in a separate workbook. The general format of the lesson is similar to many teach-yourself-style textbooks for modern languages, so rather far from the grammar-dense pages of many GTM manuals.

However, for Miraglia, who was already a devoted user of LLPSI, something was missing:

> Si trattava soprattutto del materiale di lettura, che andava a mio giudizio ampliato e strutturato in maniera tale che, come nel corso dell'Ørberg, contenesse esempi di tutte, o almeno di tutte le principali nuove forme grammaticali che s'intendesse introdurre, inserite nel contesto, senza per questo spezzare il filo continuo della narrazione; nella sua edizione originale, infatti, il corso, conforme ai princìpi didattici degli autori, e soprattutto dovendo fare i conti col minor tempo a disposizione per lo studio del greco nelle scuole anglo-americane, tentava, attraverso la storia, solo di interessare il giovane studente, e proporre spunti, in genere con uno o più esempi, rimandando poi una più completa e definita introduzione degli aspetti morfologici e sintattici alla sezione a questo preposta. In questo modo il metodo risultava misto tra induttivo e deduttivo, mentre mi sembrava più opportuno, anche per un parallelismo coi testi dell'Ørberg, farne soprattutto un metodo di induzione contestuale.

(Ibd.)

Thus, *Athenaze*, in its original form, was not inductive enough. The texts did not provide the learner with enough repetitions of structures and vocabulary to foster effective inductive language exposure. The trend was there, but the amount of language was insufficient, and this is the reason why in the quotation above Miraglia defines the method as a mixture of inductive and deductive.

In order to make *Athenaze* truly inductive, language exposure had to be increased to a large extent, which, in practice, meant that the texts of *Athenaze* had to be considerably expanded, and that is what Miraglia and his colleague did. IA has doubled the amount of Greek text, while the layout has been modified and made similar to that of LLPSI, with the usual monolingual notes in the margins. Moreover, the new stories, written by Miraglia, are perfectly harmonized with the original continuous narrative and make the storyline even richer and more entertaining.

IA, of which a slightly revised edition was published in 2022, lends itself now perfectly to the inductive approach, and in the hands of a good teacher can become an excellent source for a large amount of spoken and communicative interaction. There are, however, two main differences between IA and LLPSI. The first is the fact that IA was not originally conceived as an inductive method textbook, and this is a noticeable feature. As Carbonell Martinez maintains, IA is not always as inductive as it should be: 'El principal problema de *Athenaze* es que no sigue siempre el modelo inductivo-contextual tal como hace rigurosamente el latino LLPSI' (Carbonell Martinez 2012a: 232). Moreover, its pace is not the same as that of LLPSI, especially in the first chapters, where the students have not yet developed any independence. While LLPSI is, basically, fully self-explanatory, IA is not:

> *Athenaze* avanza, en definitiva, a un ritmo más rápido del que desearíamos. En cada capítulo aparecen no pocos elementos gramaticales y vocabulario nuevo y no se mantiene de manera sistemática el principio pedagógico básico de la repetición.

> (Ibd. 236–237)

So, in the words of Ricucci quoted a few paragraphs above, IA is not fully comprehensible from the first page. Furthermore, the learning pace is much slower at the beginning, and the learner will need more support from the teacher to find his or her own way through the first sections of the book.

The second difference between IA and LLPSI is that the former has the grammar explained in Italian, which may be a hindrance for international learners, although the amount of Greek is now so large and effective that most people prefer this version to the original English one anyway, even if they do not know Italian. In fact, IA is now recommended and regularly used, in spite of its Italian background, by schools, academies and individuals interested in a living and communicative approach to Greek, as well as by YouTube channels devoted to this practice. Among them are the school Oxford Latinitas (Parga & Parker 2021), related to the Faculty of Classics of the University of Oxford, the Accademia Vivarium Novum that, although located in Italy, has many international students and teachers with no Italian background, and the online schools Argos Didaskei[21] and Agros Education.[22] Among the online schools, worth noting is the Ancient Language Institute,[23] which incidentally also offers Biblical Hebrew and Old English with the same communicative approach.[24] All these schools use both LLPSI and IA, which, after the Italian adaptation, is now an integral part of the Ørbergian universe. As for YouTube channels, 'Scorpio Martianus',[25] run by Luke Amadeus Ranieri, another fluent Latin speaker, is worth mentioning here. In one of his videos (Ranieri 2022: 8:41), Ranieri, who is also working on a new audio version of LLPSI and its main ancillary materials, definitely recommends the use of IA to English

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21 https://www.argos-didaskei.com
22 https://sites.google.com/view/agros-edu
23 https://ancientlanguage.com
24 Their Old English teacher, Colin Gorrie, has also written an Old English textbook for absolute beginners in full Ørbergian style called *Ōsweald Bera* (Gorrie 2024a). According to the author, a grammatical companion and workbook to accompany the textbook will be published in 2025 (Gorrie 2024b: 17:42). Regarding the work of Gorrie with the Ancient Language Institute, cf. Crawford 2023.
25 https://www.scorpiomartianus.com

speakers, regardless of their language background; for those who feel intimidated by the grammar explanations in Italian, he suggests reading them in the original English version of the book, but to always keep IA as the main text.

Through the continuous alternation between intensive inductive reading, intensive speaking, written production and the right amount of explicit grammar study and practice, the Ørberg Method, with both LLPSI and IA, is considered to be one the most effective approaches to ancient languages, both in the normal classroom[26] and in the total immersion setting,[27] and remains the favourite choice of teachers and learners of communicative Latin and Ancient Greek all over the world.

1.5.2.3. M.L. Aguilar and J. Tárrega, *Via Latina* (2022)

One of the latest additions to the Cultura Clásica catalogue is *Via Latina. De Lingua et Vita Romanorum* (VL, 2022), by Maria Luisa Aguilar and Jorge Tárrega, two Spanish university lecturers in classics, based in Valencia and Boston respectively. The book is now in its third edition (2024).

Aguilar and Tárrega basically produced a fully Ørberg-style textbook that can perhaps be considered a shorter alternative to FR, which is by no means a downside. The content is very original though: a continuous narrative on Roman history from Larentia (the mythical foster mother of Romulus and Remus) to the Gracchi. The story is shaped according to the usual Ørbergian principles and layout (both authors have a 20-year long experience in teaching with LLPSI), something that becomes immediately obvious at first glance. The most striking difference between the two textbooks is the length. There are 12 chapters in VL, while FR has 35. Moreover, the chapters of VL are much shorter than those of FR.

Just like the book that inspired it, and despite being shorter, VL lends itself very well to an active and communicative approach to Latin, for the same reasons that FR does. Where VL really departs from FR is in the exercise section. FR only offers three exercises per lesson, always of the same kind. If the student needs more practice and variety, the only option is getting the companion book *Exercitia Latina I*. VL instead offers eight to ten well-conceived exercises per chapter, and of a great variety, without the need for extra materials.

This book has, however, received two major criticisms, and these are worth addressing here. In a review published on his website *The Patrologist*, when comparing VL with FR, Seumas MacDonald maintains that VL's much shorter narrative unfortunately implies much less language exposure for the learner, much less vocabulary repetition, much less interaction with the language, and much less acquisition. Another issue, he adds, is the fact that, given the relative shortness of the text, there is less room to split the grammar topics into manageable chunks to be then digested through intensive repetition in the long continuous narrative. As a consequence, the grammar presence is heavier and more challenging, which 'moves the learner at a more rapid pace with less reinforcement' (MacDonald 2022). All this is true, but it does not mean that VL is not a very effective textbook—far from it. It will just

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26 Cf. Sergi 2010, Rimbault 2012, and Ricucci 2013a and 2013b.
27 Cf. Domagała et al. 2021.

require more teacher interventions to support students when the learning curve gets steeper. It could also be considered a reduced-power FR, which, as mentioned above, should not be seen as a downside. The reduced power of VL will allow its use in settings where Ørberg's original textbook would be extremely difficult to apply, exactly because the full-power version of VL is too powerful for some school or learning settings. For example, I could see myself using VL in my adult evening classes where, with just one or, in rare cases, one and half hour a week, the use of FR would be absolutely unthinkable.

The fact that VL has so many similarities with FR may lead some to think that it is aimed at replacing it, but this is not the case. As MacDonald puts it, 'Ørberg's *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata* is (mea quidem sententia) not simply the best textbook that exists for Latin, but the best textbook by far […]. VL is not an Ørberg-slayer, and I am unconvinced we will see one for quite a long time' (Ibd.). The authors never intended to create a replacement for FR. In a long interview in Latin with Irene Regini, the Latinist behind the website *Satura Lanx*, they clearly explain that what pushed them to create VL in the first place was a strongly felt need for a more manageable introductory textbook that would also be suitable for those school curricula, like the Spanish one, or teaching settings with a more limited number of contact hours, a feature that FR cannot offer (Regini 2022: 18:55). So the intention was not to replace a classic, but to make its renowned approach available to a wider audience.

VL can be finished in a shorter amount of time than FR, while giving a solid, basic foundation of Latin to keep building upon. Tárrega himself, when comparing the two textbooks, does not hesitate to affirm that 'Familia Romana praestat' (Regini 2022: 40:05). It is true, but only in the right conditions and with the right amount of time at the teacher's disposal. When such conditions cannot be fulfilled, then VL offers an excellent alternative to introduce Latin in an active, effective and communicative way.

Along these same lines, Santiago Carbonell Martínez, an extremely active exponent of Cultura Clásica, published *Logos, Lingua Graeca Per se Illustrata* in May 2023. As the subtitle unmistakably shows, it is another strongly Ørbergian textbook, but this time for Ancient Greek. The book, whose second corrected edition appeared in September 2023, comes with a separate workbook which, in the style of *Exercitia Latina* by Ørberg, provides the student with targeted practice for each reading and grammatical section of the chapter. Although it offers much less textual exposure and more limited grammatical coverage than IA (Macdonald 2023), *Logos* remains an excellent learning tool and a good Greek counterpart of VL.

1.5.3. Applying CEFR to Ancient Greek: Διάλογος (2014)

In an article on the communicative approach applied to Ancient Greek, Santiago Carbonell Martínez maintained that the new teaching approach should also be followed by a new kind of evaluation of students' skills. So, if we decide to teach Ancient Greek as a living language, then we should also establish communicative language goals as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR; see also Richards & Rodgers 2014: 165–170):

En los dos años de estudio de los que disponemos actualmente con un enfoque comunicativo dejaríamos de preparar filólogos en miniatura a marchas forzadas y pasaríamos a disfrutar de nuestras clases mucho más preparando usuarios principiantes del nivel A1.

(Carbonell Martínez 2012a: 247)

As if to put the above reflection into practice, he published *Διάλογος, Prácticas de Griego Antiguo* (DGA) two years later, in 2014, which is essentially an A1 Ancient Greek textbook. The book, now in its second, revised and expanded edition (2020), is aimed at both absolute beginners and more advanced students interested in adding a conversational element to their study and in developing active skills in Ancient Greek (Carbonell Martínez 2014: 6). In its 27 lessons, it teaches all the very basic conversational topics of level A1: greetings, introductions, origin and nationality, family, school, locating things and people, expressing feelings and emotions.

DGA, like AHP, is all in Greek and has a very simple structure. Every lesson begins with a dialogue that introduces the relevant conversational topic. After a listening exercise based on the included audio files, basic language structures are introduced. The grammar is given in very small amounts, always in tables, always with the intent not to overwhelm the student (Ibd.). The tables have no explanation or description. Everything is left to the teacher, but the main part of the lesson consists of oral exercises. Once the basic structure is given, the teacher can guide the students through a large variety of exercises: simple grammar drills to make students aware of the structure introduced, short dialogues to fill in, new dialogues to create according to a given model. New vocabulary is always introduced in pictures, and is then followed by several additional exercises.

This is another teacher-based textbook that, like AHP, is not suited to the independent absolute beginner. Every page of it is meant to be used and practised mostly orally, which means that, to derive the maximum benefit from these materials, the energetic guidance of a teacher is vital. When used properly, DGA can be a very effective tool to actively internalize the basic structures and vocabulary of Ancient Greek, allowing students to do what its author wished for in his 2012 article, that is, 'comunicarse, en situaciones cotidianas, con expresiones de uso muy frecuente y utilizando vocabulario y gramática básica' (Carbonell Martínez 2012a: 247), and thus giving them a solid foundation to build upon.

1.5.4. The Polis Institute

If the materials produced by both Academia Vivarium Novum and Cultura Clásica are basically all Ørberg-centred, those produced by Polis, The Jerusalem Institute for Languages and Humanities, commonly known as The Polis Institute (PI), are much more eclectic and diversified. Founded in 2011, as its website claims, by 'an international group of scholars' led by Christophe Rico, a French professor of Greek philology, the main goal of the institute 'is the renewal of Humanities (especially literature, philosophy, history and geography of the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East) through the [...] revival of the languages that are at the foundation of Western

civilization'.[28] It is indeed this language revival project that made the PI a leading institution in the application of conversational approaches to the teaching of ancient languages.

With this intent in mind, Rico and his team set out to produce textbooks presenting the ancient tongues of humanity as everyday modern languages. To date, PI has published two full introductory textbooks: one for Greek, called *Polis, Speaking Ancient Greek as a Living Language* (PGL, 2015), which is actually a thorough reworking of a 2009 Greek textbook in French by the same author, and one for Latin, entitled *Forum: Lectiones Latinitatis Vivae* (2017). Both textbooks are currently the standards for all the PI Greek and Latin introductory courses. We will focus here on PGL, as *Forum* offers exactly the same approach and the same features, with the only difference being that they are applied to Latin.

1.5.4.1. C. Rico, *Polis. Speaking Ancient Greek as a Living Language* (2015)

The first striking feature of this textbook is the setting. While all the Ørbergian textbooks are set in the time when the language was actually spoken, PGL has a fully contemporary setting. All its dialogues and texts are set in our time and follow the life of a group of well-defined characters, all students of Ancient Greek. This is a common feature of the Polis Method (PM), adopted in all their textbooks. As Rico himself explains:

> Il ne s'agit pas pour autant de revenir à un monde révolu, mais d'adapter les langues anciennes à la réalité contemporaine et quotidienne, ce qui permet de briser la distance entre la langue et l'étudiant. Voilà pourquoi les personnages de la méthode Polis ne relèvent pas du monde classique (un maître, un esclave, un rhéteur…), mais du monde actuel (un groupe d'étudiants d'aujourd'hui, différents corps de métiers : garçon de café, commerçant, policier, enseignant…).

(Rico 2019: 199–200)

The eclectic approach I mentioned above is immediately clear from the very beginning of the book, a kind of 'Lesson 0', which proposes a series of 159 very basic oral questions and commands to be used by the teacher during the first session, in a continuous and intensive interaction with students, until they reach a full aural understanding of them. No reading or writing is involved: aural exposure is the only focus. For learners working on their own, that is, outside the ideal classroom setting for which the book was primarily conceived, Rico has recorded three videos, available on the 'poliskoine' Youtube channel,[29] to allow them to participate in this first "classroom" sessions:

> During the first session, the student will proceed without written material. The focus will rather be on reacting to different commands in Greek (*total physical response technique*) [TPR], following the video. Whenever a student hears a Greek directive, such as [...] (*deixon moi kathedran*: 'show me a chair'), he or she is invited physically to respond to the

28 https://www.polisjerusalem.org/about
29 https://www.youtube.com/@poliskoine/videos

directive, even if a reply in Greek is not yet known. This first session familiarizes the student with the usual requests and object names he or she will face during the course. […] This will lead [...] to internalize the vocabulary in a very efficient way.

<div align="right">(Rico 2015: V)</div>

The above-mentioned TPR technique, first introduced by James Asher in his 1977 book *Learning Another Language through Actions*,[30] 'permet dès le premier jour d'immerger l'élève dans la langue enseignée. Grâce à la RPI [TPR], la langue enseignée peut d'emblée devenir langue véhiculaire' (Rico 2019: 205).[31] This strong focus on orality first (Rico 2014: VI, and 2019: 208), already a key element in W.H.D. Rouse's Direct Method, is a very distinctive feature of the whole textbook, where 'almost every lesson starts with some *total physical response* exercises' (Rico 2014: V), whose aim is to familiarize the learner, through an intensive oral interaction with the teacher, with the vocabulary, structures or paradigms about to be introduced in the new lesson. The TPR session prepares the students for the dialogue that comes right after it (usually one or two per lesson), where the TPR-introduced elements appear in a more meaningful context, and which, thanks to the previous oral practice, becomes fully understandable.[32] The dialogues are then followed by short and to-the-point grammatical explanations, often in tables. The grammatical progression follows what Rico calls 'ordre naturel', based on studies on the acquisition sequence of tenses in modern Greek children (Rico 2019: 204). Rico is also keen to highlight the fact that, despite the full immersion setting where everything is supposed to be first introduced through mere intensive language use, explicit grammar instruction remains fundamental:

> […] les explications grammaticales nous paraissent essentielles dans un cours d'immersion. S'il est vrai que l'enfant assimile sa langue sans recevoir au départ un seul cours de grammaire, l'acquisition des structures grammaticales n'est possible qu'en raison d'une longue imprégnation de la langue maternelle, le seul idiome connu des enfants monolingues. Les cours intensifs de langues anciennes ne sauraient reproduire ni la durée, ni le caractère absolu de l'immersion à laquelle l'enfant monolingue est soumis. Dans ces conditions, les explications grammaticales deviennent nécessaires pour permettre aux étudiants de consolider plus vite leurs acquis.

<div align="right">(Ibd. 206)</div>

Grammar points, however, as is the case for Rouse's DM and all the materials of the Ørbergian universe, must first be taught inductively and, desirably, explained then in the target language:

> […] la réflexion grammaticale doit toujours découler de l'intégration des nouvelles structures, loin de les précéder. D'autre part, pour préserver l'immersion complète, il nous paraît essentiel que le professeur continue de parler le grec ou le latin quand il aborde l'explication grammaticale. Les langues classiques offrent de fait un vocabulaire et une phraséologie grammaticale particulièrement riches. Notre expérience montre en effet que,

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30 Cf. Asher 2012.
31 For a detailed, and also critical, discussion of TPR, cf. also Larsen-Freeman & Anderson 2011: 103–114, and Richards & Rodgers 2014: 277–288.
32 For a more detailed description of the application of TPR, cf. also Rico 2021: 145–147.

pour peu que la réflexion morphosyntaxique découle d'une acquisition préalable, les étudiants suivent sans trop de mal l'explication donnée en grec ou en latin.

(Ibd. 207)

After the grammar explanations comes the exercise section, which is very rich and varied. There are both oral and written exercises. In the oral exercises, students are prompted to interact with each other by improvising a dialogue similar to that presented in the lesson. The PM places considerable emphasis on continuous oral exchanges among students as a means of reaching acquisition:

[…] à moins de s'exercer à la production de discours (*output*), l'étudiant ne saurait progresser dans l'acquisition du langage […] Il est frappant de remarquer à quel point ces exercices décuplent la vitesse à laquelle l'étudiant apprend à parler. La langue s'acquiert lorsque le message est reçu et qu'il peut être reproduit. Il n'est pas possible de parvenir à un *output* sans *input*, à une production de message sans réception préalable. L'entraînement à cette production est une phase essentielle qui permet d'assimiler la langue.

(Ibd. 209)

The written exercises are of different kinds and are based on morphology, syntax (transformation drills, fill in the blanks etc.), as well as on production, for example, when students are asked to answer questions in Greek about a dialogue or a text they have just read. In line with the Polis monolingual approach, no translation exercises appear in the whole textbook.

Every PGL lesson ends with a monolingual 'Λεξικόν' that, again, is consistent with the totally fully immersive nature of the textbook. What is really interesting about the Lexikon is that it does not define a word by using just one or two synonyms, as is the case, for example, of Rouse's GBH, but by using a complete, meaningful sentence where the glossed word appears in a clear context.

PGL is just the first volume of an announced series of three (volumes 2 and 3 are yet to be released), thus it is understandable why it covers only a relatively limited number of grammar topics and structures. Still, the book has nearly 400 pages. This means that the structures covered are used, practised and manipulated, both orally and in writing, through a very large amount of text and numerous exercises, where they occur repeatedly and in the most varied contexts and combinations. This, in turn, gives the student a very large amount of so-called 'sheltered' exposure to comprehensible language, while facilitating acquisition. 'Sheltering' is an important element in language acquisition, and this textbook, with the Greek grammar spread over three volumes and three levels of study (PI Level 4 is exclusively devoted to original texts), is a good example of it. 'Sheltering' essentially means limiting in a constructive, positive and learner-friendly way to prevent the learner from becoming confused by too many grammar topics at the same time. Keeping ('sheltering'), on the one hand, the number of morphological and syntactic elements under control in order to avoid their excess, and, on the other hand, permitting the flow of such a limited number of structures in a very large amount of text where those structures can be continuously and intensively seen and practised, is a very effective path towards mastery.

As can be understood from the above comments, PGL is ideally suitable for a full- immersion class guided by an expert teacher, and with enough contact hours to enable students to properly master the material. This is the feature that makes the book unsuitable and 'too slow' for some settings, for example, many grammar-dominated introductory college courses, where all the morphology and syntax are, at least officially, supposed to be covered within two terms (Ryan 2017: 41).

1.5.4.2. C. Rico et al., *Unus, Duo, Tres* (2022)

In his contribution to *Conversational Approaches for Ancient Languages*, Rico gives an update about the most recent developments of the PM:

> Building on the experience with this mode of teaching and combining Asher's *Total Physical Response* (TPR) technique with the insights of François Gouin, a French Latin teacher of the nineteenth century, a team of teachers at Polis has developed a new technique by the name of *Living Sequential Expression* (LSE). This technique aims at mapping regular tasks and events in order to cover, as far as possible, the whole spectrum of frequent activities. We consider that someone who is able to talk about all frequent activities in a specific language will have a certain degree of fluency in that language.

> (Rico 2021: 143)

Once the above-mentioned activities are mapped, each of them is then divided into two to five different tasks, each including four to seven related actions, whose sequential performance leads to the completion of the task:

> Thus, the task 'taking the bus' would entail the following sequence of actions:

> 1. Walk to the bus stop.
> 2. Wait for the bus.
> 3. Enter the bus.
> 4. Go towards the driver.
> 5. Buy your ticket.
> 6. Sit down.
> 7. Alight from the bus.

> (Ibd. 143–144)

Following and developing the path established by François Gouin in his *L'Art d'Enseigner et d'Étudier les Langues* (1880), Rico and his team identified an approximate total number of 2500 possible commands to be used for the different tasks. Of course, in order to be easily usable in a classroom setting, this huge amount of material required some organization. As early as 2021, Rico announced that 'a team of Polis teachers is currently working to prepare a series of visual books that will help instructors apply the LSE technique' (Ibd. 144). The first book of the series, for Coptic, was published in the same year. It was followed in 2022 by the Latin version, called *Unus, Duo, Tres. Latine loquamur per scaenas et imagines* (UDT), on which I will focus here, and in 2024 by its Koine Greek counterpart, titled Ἕν, δύο, τρία·

Ἑλληνίζωμεν δι᾽ εἰκόνων καὶ σκηνῶν. Both the Latin and Greek versions are by Christophe Rico.

Although Gouin's sequentiality was what originally prompted the creation of this new PI series, it is just one of the three sources on which this book is based, as Rico clarifies in his 'Intrōductiō'; the other two are the Graeco-Latin *Hermeneumata* (3rd/4th centuries AD), a collection of mostly short dialogues based on everyday life and used to teach Greek to Roman boys and, later on, also Latin to Greek adults,[33] and Comenius' Latin textbook for young pupils, *Orbis Pictus* (1657), 'probably the most renowned and most widely circulated of school textbooks in the 17th and 18th centuries' (Rico 2022: XV). The *Orbis Pictus* approach was revolutionary for the time for its combination of language, visual element, and context: the Latin key word is always given next to its picture and clearly contextualized in a full sentence:

> Contrary to many visual dictionaries of our time, the *Orbis* was certainly not a simple nomenclature, as words were inserted in a text. Comenius was aware that learning isolated words did not amount to learning a language, as the latter activity entailed associating full sentences to mental images and experiences.

> (Ibd. XV)

UDT is then a combination of the three above-mentioned principles, that is, communicativity, visuality and sequentiality. A chapter usually begins with the main topic being introduced through a very long series of micro-dialogues (two lines each). Every dialogue is fully illustrated, like a cartoon, so that the context of the exchange is always clarified by the illustration. The basic structure of the dialogue is repeated many times, and each time with a different lexical element. The micro-dialogues are then followed by a section especially focused on actions and sequentiality. According to the TPR principles, a key element of the PM, the actions are first introduced through imperatives (commands) and, again, in a fully illustrated and contextualized cartoon-like fashion. The actions introduced through the commands, however, are not presented randomly but, following the LSE approach, are always included within a specific task and are given in the specific logical sequence required for the completion of the given task, which greatly enhances the internalization of the vocabulary involved in the different actions that form the sequence.

To exemplify what has been outlined above, let us have a closer look at some sections of chapter 2, called 'Dēmōnstrātīva et Mōtūs et Partēs Corporis'. The opening section of the chapter, 'Dēmōnstrātīva Singulāria' includes a series of 22 micro-dialogues introducing the nominative singular forms of the demonstrative *hic* in the three genders. The question is invariably 'Quid est hoc?', and the answer 'Hic/Haec/Hoc …. est', with the demonstrative agreeing in gender with the noun being introduced. In this way, the three demonstrative forms are repeatedly practised in context, while 22 extremely common nouns, which will become part of the core, recurring vocabulary of the book, are introduced. The next section is called 'Aperīre, Claudere', and describes the tasks of opening or closing a window: 'Go to the window, open/close the window'. After that, the sequence is expanded with the verbs *intrāre* and *exīre*, and one of the possible sequences for entering a room is given: 'Go to the door,

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33 For a detailed account, cf. Marek 2017.

knock at the door, open the door, enter the room, close the door, open the door, exit the room' (Ibd. 48–49). Then more verbs are added, sequences are gradually expanded, or new ones are introduced.

Grammar is sometimes included after certain sections, in very condensed tables, and always at the end of the chapter, where all the topics covered in the dialogues and the sequences are summarised in detailed tables. Vocabulary lists, when given, are strictly thematic, for example, the body parts, and are always in the form word/illustration. Needless to say, no translation is given. The only translations are those of the titles of chapters and sections.

The book has 7 chapters, all based on the principles described above, and over 270 pages. Given the intensive focus on spoken and physical interaction required to really derive the maximum benefit from the LSE approach and the very limited number of explanations, UDT, like all the PI materials, is not suitable for self-learners. Nor it would be suitable as the only coursebook for a beginning Latin class either. Such a strong and intensive focus on TPR, sequentiality, commands, actions as the only teaching approach would in the end turn out to be very exhausting for the learner, who would end up crying out for a change. Instead, as Rico also points out in a PI video, UDT would be best used as a supporting tool to the PI main Latin textbook *Forum*, so as to increase and enhance the spoken interaction among students. Outside the strictly Polis context, UDT could also be a valuable tool for those Latin teachers who, although interested in teaching the language communicatively, have to keep using GTM due to *force majeure* (school trends, curricular and exam constraints, and so on). In such cases, with its short, quick and clear active sections, UDT would lend itself very well to being used, for example, at the end of a GTM class to help students refresh their minds and use the language actively.

1.6. Summary

Going through all these textbooks has been a fascinating and inspiring journey. Although the list is by no means exhaustive, I think it includes the most effective and daring materials for the teaching of ancient languages in a living, active and communicative way. As a passionate language teacher, self-learner, and language book junkie and collector, I was gripped, for one reason or another, by every single work I covered in my review, and from basically each of them I got ideas that enriched my extensive teaching experience and also helped me determine the main features that an Old Irish textbook based on a communicative approach might or should have.

In what follows, I am going to outline the key elements at the basis of the approaches or methods that have been analysed in my review and to briefly highlight their importance. These are the following: the Renaissance approach, the Ollendorff Method (OM), otherwise defined as the 'Grammar Translation Method with a Human Face', the Direct Method (DM), the Ørberg Method (ØM) and the Polis Method (PM):

- <u>Renaissance Approach</u> (1.1.): During the Renaissance, Latin and, although to a lesser extent, Ancient Greek, were taught and used actively, as if they were still spoken languages. *Colloquia*, collections of dialogues, such as those produced

by Erasmus for Latin and by Posselius for Classical Greek, formed the most common teaching basis and were used by students as models to develop their own conversational skills. This tradition teaches us a very simple but fundamental lesson: it is possible to speak an ancient language for the sake of teaching it, even if it no longer has any native speakers.

- Ollendorff Method (1.2.): Ollendorff was the leading exponent of what I have defined as the 'Grammar Translation Method with a human face', basically a GTM that does not overwhelm the learner with excessive and unmanageable amounts of grammatical information and that, most importantly, is aimed at teaching how to speak and communicate. This strong focus on conversational skills represents an important break with the most conservative GTM tradition, for which the only good reason to learn a language was to read its literature. Ollendorff himself applied his method to Latin in a textbook posthumously published in 1866, although other authors, strongly inspired by OM, had already applied it to both Latin and ancient Greek before him, with textbooks that are still very popular today (cf. Kendrick 1851, and Adler 1858). The OM experience teaches that a language, be it ancient or modern, spoken or unspoken, is primarily a communication tool that should be taught as such, and also that a serious, explicit teaching of grammar is not in contrast with a lively conversational approach to the language.

- Direct Method (1.4.): The DM is the teaching of the target language exclusively in the target language. It was first—and most notoriously—applied to Latin and Ancient Greek by the British teacher W.H.D. Rouse and his acolytes at the Perse School, near Cambridge, in the years 1906–1928. Students were exposed to the target language from their very first day of learning. The language points, both structures and vocabulary, were always introduced through intensive oral sessions, mostly based on Question/Answer (QA) exchanges. DM textbooks, however, had no hint about the content of these sessions, whose rough scripts were only published in teachers' guides. The first phase of learning had to be totally oral, and the relevant reading in the textbook was studied only when the grammatical point had been extensively practised orally. Grammar was taught inductively, i.e. it was given at the end of the intensive oral session, once students had at least partially discerned the rules behind a certain structure through active practice. The grammatical topic was then given mostly in tables, or with very dry explanations, if any. DM textbooks are not self-contained and work mostly as frames and scripts for the huge amount of oral activity that takes place in the classroom. They are essentially a printed reference that is mostly used for review rather than for actual learning, and they are basically ineffective outside a strict DM class without a strict DM guidance. The DM places the spoken word above any other thing, and in so doing emphasizes once again its primary nature as a communication tool: language is communication, and through communication it is best learnt.

- Ørberg Method (1.5.1. and 1.5.2.): This method, developed in Denmark in the 1950s, was first applied to Latin by Hans Ørberg in his textbook *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata*. Ørberg was strongly influenced by Rouse, of whose approach he retained two important elements, i.e. the large amount of language exposure and the inductive approach to grammar. ØM textbooks, now available for both Latin and Ancient Greek, offer, however, not only a much more systematic approach than DM textbooks, but are so fully and carefully self-contained that they can even be used independently, at least by very motivated learners. Lessons have long and excellently graded texts, which, as such, offer students a large amount of language exposure from day one, while grammatical features are explained, usually in the target language, at the end of the lesson, after the student has seen them repeatedly in context. The long texts also lend themselves very well as sources of QA sessions, depending on the skills of the teacher. However, given the well-graded progression of ØM materials, even teachers with no experience in spoken Latin or Ancient Greek can start to gradually develop their speaking skills—along with those of their students—by just teaching from these books. The ØM materials are nowadays by far the most popular ones used in language courses aimed at teaching Latin and Ancient Greek as living languages.

- Polis Method (1.5.4.): This method (PM), basically only used in courses organized by the Polis Institute in Israel and abroad, is a kind of modernized DM approach. They mostly teach Koine Greek and Latin in residential full immersion programs where the target language is the only means of communication, in and outside the classroom. Their textbooks are, however, more structured than DM textbooks, and although they are not ideal for independent use, students learning in a classroom setting have all they need, including the scripts for a wealth of teacher-driven oral activities, to which they can refer back anytime for review. Grammar is taught inductively like in the DM and the ØM, and also worth noting is the contemporary setting of the storyline of dialogues and readings, which aims at placing the ancient language in a more lively, familiar and captivating context. Although strongly based on the traditional DM, the PM has also integrated other newer approaches in its practice, among which the most widely used is Asher's Total Physical Response, during whose sessions students are asked, in the target language, to perform physical actions, one at a time or in sequences. No spoken interaction is required from students, who are just expected to understand and perform. The aim is to help them learn vocabulary and simple structures by associating the verbal stimulus with a concrete physical action. PM courses, with all their relentless spoken activities and TPR sessions, are best suited to full-immersion programs, with several contact hours a day for at least one or two terms, although they are also used in shorter programs. Nevertheless, they are still very inspiring, and some features of PM textbooks, such as the contemporary setting of dialogues and texts and the strong focus on oral activities, are worth implementing also in less intensive teaching settings.

A few of the features summarized above will be at the basis of my own Old Irish textbook, still a work in progress, called *Labrammar-ni in Sengoídilc!* ('Let's Speak Old Irish!'). These are the following: 1) A large amount of text exposure; 2) A strong focus on orality; 3) A focus on written production; 4) A contemporary setting for dialogues and readings; 5) Grammar taught inductively. These features will be discussed one by one in Chapter 3 and then presented in context in a model lesson included in Chapter 5.

Addendum

Just a few days before this thesis was submitted, I discovered, thanks to a personal email and an article by Oliver Traxel (Traxel 2018: 312, 314), that there are at least two textbooks that teach Old English as a living language. For the sake of completeness, I will mention them here, but I will not be able to go into further detail about them. The first one is *Learn Old English with Leofwin* (2013), by Matt Love. It was meant to be the first volume of a series, but due to the unfortunate passing of the author the following year, the second volume never appeared.

The other book is called *Wordwynn Wynsum. Weġ tō ealdum Englisce* (2021), and its author is Fritz Stieleke, a former librarian and occasional lecturer at the Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf. The book, as well as other works in Old English by Stieleke, are available for free from his website.[34]

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34 https://www.fritz-stieleke.de

2. Old Irish Textbooks for Beginners

Old Irish has always been mostly a university-taught language, that is, a language only learnt—and maybe also only learnable—in colleges. Even today, it is mostly studied in an academic setting. Nevertheless, after the spread of the internet and of social media platforms, many more people are now aware of it, at least of its mere existence. Some students with no linguistics background take it as an extra module to complement their main subjects, for example, geography or history, other people even attempt to study it on their own outside academia. There is now a broader awareness of it than there used to be, and this is what I want to build on. I want to extend the possibility for learners with and without a college background to follow their interest in Old Irish and to access it without any academic prerequisites, as if it were a modern, living language.

It is with this idea in mind that I focused my research on the exploration and development of possible approaches to teaching the Old Irish language in a communicative and active way to absolute beginners. Moreover, since this research is also the focus of this thesis, I wanted to find out if any of these principles had been applied, in one way or another, to Old Irish textbooks as well. An analysis of available Old Irish learning materials shows, however, that these approaches have never been applied to this language. All the textbooks published so far mostly follow the so-called Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), with which anybody who has ever studied Latin or Greek is, at least to some extent, familiar. The lack of Old Irish learning materials based on conversation and communication, however, is not a good reason to disregard all the instructional works published to date: despite the differences in their teaching approaches, their aim and the aim of my own research are exactly the same, i.e. making the Old Irish language accessible to people with no previous knowledge of it.

In what follows, I will try to identify, highlight and comment on the weaknesses and strengths of these works. Needless to say, my opinions of them are influenced by my own beliefs regarding the teaching of historical languages. These beliefs, which will begin to become clear in my book reviews, are then fully discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

For the sake of this chapter, I will consider graded method books only, that is, books intended to gradually guide the absolute beginners, through a step-by-step presentation of grammar alternating with application exercises of increasing difficulty, from zero knowledge to an acceptable working knowledge of the language.

Gradation is the golden feature. In whatever way it is used, applied or managed, it is what differentiates a method book, or textbook, from a reference work. A method book proposes a graded, guided learning path, and in order to to derive the maximum benefit from it, the learner is supposed to follow that path from beginning to end, as every new piece of knowledge introduced builds on the previous ones. Gradation is the ideal approach for beginners and non-specialists. It offers guidance and assistance, does

not take anything for granted, is not (or should not be) overwhelming, and it also has a tradition that confirms its value. Since the 19ᵗʰ century, most language textbooks for beginners have been graded. The GTM approach itself, even in its most extreme forms was—or was intended to be—graded, and it also produced interesting works for ancient languages that are still appreciated today (see section 1.2.). In some cases, gradation is intended but not really applied, or it is just misapplied, resulting in works formally aimed at beginners but which a beginner would find extremely daunting and inaccessible anyway. Such works also deserve analysis and will be reviewed here.

The fact that gradation is the golden feature for a handbook for beginners does not mean, however, that it is not possible to learn an ancient language from a lengthy and ungraded reference grammar. Indeed, with the right amount of experience, training, knowledge, motivation and devotion, it is. Many linguists and scholars did it and do it. However, the focus of my research is developing approaches for absolute beginners, not professional linguists. Learning a language from reference books only works for a minority, and we cannot impose a minority trend on the majority of learners. For this reason, reference grammars, or reference works in general, although briefly presented in section 2.0. for their historical importance, do not form part of my research, and will not be analysed in this chapter.

2.0. Before graded textbooks[1]

Up to 1975, learning Old Irish outside a strictly academic setting was a truly arduous challenge. The daring students who decided to undertake this task had to face a discouraging lack of introductory, graded textbooks. This is not really surprising, as Old Irish had only been properly understood, analysed, and first described in the mid-19th century, thanks to the work on the manuscript glosses of the German linguist and historian Johann Kaspar Zeuss (1806–1856).[2] Before him, 'the glosses had been identified as Irish but mistakes had been made in their interpretation' (Dillon 2017). Credited as the father of modern Celtic Philology, Zeuss published his findings in the groundbreaking and monumental *Grammatica Celtica* (GC, 1853), completely written in Latin. This work was later importantly revised and updated, in its second edition (1871)[3], by Hermann Ebel (1820–1875), who also made it more easily accessible and usable (Stifter 2025: 196). Old Irish had thus not the millennia-long teaching and learning tradition of Latin and Greek and, pedagogically speaking, all the groundwork had yet to be laid.

The very first attempt to produce an Old Irish learning tool was made by the German comparative linguist Ernst Windisch (1844–1918)[4] with his *Kurzgefasste irische Grammatik mit Lesestücken* (1879), a booklet overtly aimed at the beginner and mostly based on Ebel's second edition of GC, as well as on the writings of Whitley Stokes (Windisch 1879: iii–iv). If compared to the over 1000 pages of GC written in Latin, Windisch's short grammar (only 149 pages), with its reading texts and full

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1 For a lucid outline of the works discussed in this section, see also Stifter 2025: 196–200.
2 Cf. also Shaw 1956, Forssman 1989, Ó Lúing 2000, and Hablitzel & Stifter 2007.
3 Cf. Zeuss & Hebel 1971.
4 Cf. also Förster & Hultzsch 1919, Knott 1919, Macdonnel & Flower 1919, and Maier 2013.

glossary at the back, certainly appears to be a much more accessible work, at least for the motivated beginner. Despite its limited coverage and the fact that it would have been considered essentially obsolete already at the beginning of the 20th century (Vendryes 1908: vii–viii), it offered the only access to Old Irish for over twenty-five years, i.e. until the appearance of Strachan's *Paradigms* and *Glosses* (see below). So much so that the British scholar Norman Moore (1847–1922),[5] who had found the book 'so clear and well arranged a guide to the verbal forms of Irish' (Moore 1882: v), also following the encouragement of the renowned Celticist Whitley Stokes (1830–1909)[6] (Ibd. viii), decided to translate it into English. Windisch himself supported this project, also providing Moore with 'several corrections which he has made since his book was published' (Ibd. v). These corrections, along with those mentioned by Windisch in a kind of corrigendum included in the preface to the German edition, were all included in the translation, which is then to be considered a slightly revised and updated edition of the grammar. The book appeared in 1882, three years after the original version, with the title *A Concise Irish Grammar with Pieces for Reading*. In his translator's note, Moore is keen to highlight the unique character of Windisch's achievement:

> Prof. Windisch's work is the first exclusive Grammar of Irish in which the subject is begun on an Old Irish basis and treated in the method of modern philology, with the rudiments of which it presupposes an acquaintance. It gives a concise view of the knowledge of Old Irish as it stands after the labours of Zeuss and of Stokes with those of Windisch himself, of Hennessy, Ascoli, Ebel, Nigra and others.

(Ibd. viii)

In 1900, Reverend Edmund Hogan,[7] Irish-language scholar and historian, published the booklet *Outlines of the Grammar of Old-Irish*. His intentions were the most positive imaginable, as he wished to create an accessible tool 'for such as [...] fear the hardship of venturing into the by-ways and thickets of Windisch and Zeuss' (Hogan 1900: iii), and to allow the learner to enjoy the language and 'its fair features, without distracting and confusing him by unnecessary and patronizing remarks' (Ibd.). The result, however, did not live up the author's expectations. As Stifter points out, the book is essentially an extremely long list of forms 'gleaned' (Stifter 2025: 197) from the Irish glosses. There is no progression, no gradation, no exercises, and almost no explanation, apart from a few interspersed lines and some hints on word order, agreement and regency in the last two and a half pages. For instance, coverage of the Old Irish verb, with all its tenses and moods, is reduced to a raw six-page list of countless and virtually unexplained forms. This is not a book from which to learn Old Irish. It would be impossible to even begin to learn it. Apart from the author's laudable intentions to make an extremely complex language accessible to less experienced learners, which I, as a teacher, always deeply respect, these *Outlines* have pedagogically nothing to offer and remain 'basically unusable' (Ibd.).

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5 Cf. also Anonymous 1922, and Linnet 1947.
6 Cf. also Henebry 1909, Hull 1909, Boyle & Russell 2011, and Ó Cróinín 2011.
7 Cf. also Hyde 1917, MacErlean 1917, Hogan 1965, and Ó Raghallaigh 2009.

Pedagogically speaking, the situation of Old Irish would remain unchanged until the appearance of John Strachan's (1862–1907)[8] *Old Irish Paradigms* (1904) and *Selections from the Old Irish Glosses* (1905), later posthumously revised, enlarged and published in one volume as *Old Irish Paradigms and Selections from the Old Irish Glosses* (OIPG, 1909) by the Irish Celticist Osborn Bergin (1873–1950).[9] If the *Paradigms* were a pure reference work, basically a collection of tables with some short explanatory notes, the *Selections* had the ambition to actually teach Old Irish with a certain progression, by guiding the student 'who has mastered the nominal inflection' (Strachan 1909: iv) through a collection of original manuscript glosses arranged by verbal tense and accompanied by grammatical notes and a glossary. That same student was not told, however, how he or she was supposed to 'master' the whole Old Irish noun inflection without a structured progression and no reading practice. It was most probably implied that the different declensions had to be memorized from the tables included in the *Paradigms*. Regardless of its actual pedagogical value, effectiveness and accessibility, the OIPG system would remain the most practical option to study Old Irish for seventy years.

On the French side, 1908 saw the publication of *Grammaire du vieil-irlandais*, a very dense 430-page grammar by the Celtic linguist Joseph Vendryes (1875–1960),[10] a former student of Rudolf Thurneysen's at the University of Freiburg, as can be inferred from the dedication at the beginning of the book (Vendryes 1908: V). It is worth noting that with this work, which appeared just one year before the original German version of Thurneysen's grammar, the author intended to finally provide the beginner with a practical, accessible and updated learning tool so as to 'faciliter l'étude du vieil-irlandais', which, 'faute d'un manuel, reste encore pratiquement inabordable aux débutants' (Ibd. VII). Nevertheless, despite the practical aims of its author, the book remained a very imposing, detailed and completely ungraded work, which a beginner with no experience in language learning or linguistics would have hardly been able to use as a learning tool.

One year after his former student's attempt, the Swiss Celticist Rudolf Thurneysen (1857–1940)[11] published, as a two-volume set, his *Handbuch des Altirischen. Grammatik, Texte und Wörterbuch* (1909). These two books were also meant, at least by their author, as Old Irish introductory works, also for independent learners, with the reader functioning as a practice tool, as stated in the introduction: 'für solche, die sich auf Grund meines Handbuchs selbständig ins Altirische einarbeiten wollen' (Thurneysen 1909: X). The two parts of the original German work, i.e. the grammar and the reader, were subsequently slightly revised and translated into English by the Irish scholars Daniel Anthony Binchy (1899–1989)[12] and Osborn Bergin, who then published them as two independent books with the titles *A Grammar of Old Irish* (GOI, 1946) and *Old Irish Reader* (1949).

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8 Cf. also Conway 1907, and K. 1907.
9 Cf. also Murphy 1950, Vendryes 1950b, Anonymous, 1951, K. 1952, and Binchy 1970.
10 Cf. also Bataillon 1960, Ernout 1960, Y. M. 1960, Bachellery 1961, Vaillant 1961, and Christophe 1986.
11 Cf. also Ryan 1940, Brown et al. 1941, Knoch 1941, Weisgerber 1941, Vendryes 1950, and Weisgerber 1970.
12 Cf. also Garvin 2016.

The revision and English translation of the *Handbuch*, however, were not the work of Binchy and Bergin alone. In their preface (Binchy & Bergin 1946: v–viii), the two translators outline the story and the vicissitudes of the new English edition. In 1936, the Irish government asked Thurneysen for a new, updated edition of his grammar in English. After almost thirty years since its publication, it was about time, as 'considerable advance has been made in the investigation of the older language, much of it due to Thurneysen himself, and an up-to-date edition of the *Handbuch* has long been a desideratum of Irish scholarship' (Ibd. v). Thurneysen set to work with the assistance of one of his former students, Michael Duignan (1907–1988),[13] who spent two years in Bonn working on the translation of 'an interleaved copy of the German edition which contained far-reaching alterations and additions' (Ibd.). The draft of the translation was finished in 1938, and Thurneysen began to revise it. In 1939, when the revision was complete and Duignan was setting out to bring the manuscript to Ireland for the final stages of publication, the outbreak of war made international communications basically impossible, and the whole process was dramatically delayed. Thurneysen died in August 1940, without having had the chance to revise the galley proofs of the book. Six months later, in 1941, Duignan, with the consent of the Irish government, decided to offer both Thurneysen's interleaved copy and the two drafts of the translation to the newly founded Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS). These are the events that brought the materials which would become GOI into the hands of Binchy and Bergin, then members of the School of Celtic Studies of DIAS, who soon realized the extent of the challenge awaiting them:

> This task has proved more formidable than we anticipated. In the German version, on which our revised translation is primarily based, Thurneysen had obviously not yet said his last word on a number of points. In revising Mr. Duignan's draft translation, he had made several changes and additions, and had even rewritten entire sentences and paragraphs, sometimes in German, sometimes in English.

> (Ibd. vi)

The two translators are not exaggerating when defining the nature of their work: the original 700 pages of the *Handbuch*, most interleaved with sheets of Thurneysen's handwritten corrections and updates, had to be harmonized with the two drafts of the English translation, also full of Thurneysen's comments and additions, into the final form of GOI. This must have been a 'formidable' task indeed. Nevertheless, by reading their preface, one cannot help thinking that the English version of Thurneysen's seminal work could have been even better and much more updated than it actually is. The reason for this was certainly not a lack of competence on the part of Bergin and Binchy but, rather, the piety and reverence they felt towards Thurneysen, his memory and his heritage. From the tone of the description of their own interventions in the text (Ibd. vi–viii), they clearly had the knowledge to change, correct, and update much more than they actually did. However, when it came to questioning Thurneysen's choices, the two translators give the impression of having gone through continual hesitations and indecisions between what should have been done for the sake of the book, and what they did not dare to do out of reverence towards Thurneysen. The result of this

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13 Cf. also Ryan 1940, Jope 1981, and Anonymous 1987/88.

continuous see-sawing was that, in the end, many necessary changes and updates were only partially executed, if at all, and that the book was denied the full and unconditional academic support and dedication that a work of this stature deserves. Binchy and Bergin, for their part, were certainly aware of what they had denied the book, and this might be the reason behind their awkward attempt to justify their omissions, when they say that certain questions 'in any case belong to the province of a reviewer rather than a translator' (Ibd. vii).

Nevertheless, GOI remains a work of excellence and has since then been considered the fundamental reference grammar for Old Irish. It is, however, far from being an accessible and progressive learning tool for the absolute beginner, as it remains an extremely dense, detailed and intimidating 700-page pure reference work, with no gradation whatsoever, from which only a very experienced linguist would be able to actually learn Old Irish.

Other works, however, saw the light of day in the period between the appearance of the Thurneysen's original *Handbuch* and its English translation. In the years 1909–1913, the Danish linguist Holger Pedersen (1867–1953)[14] published a two-volume work titled *Vergleichende Grammatik der Keltischen Sprachen*, which was even less accessible to the inexperienced beginner, not only for its length (nearly 1400 pages), but also for its strong focus on historical and comparative linguistics. In 1914 it was the turn of *A Concise Old Irish Grammar and Reader*, a 2-booklet set by the leading Old-Austrian Indo-Europeanist and Celticist Julius Pokorny (1887–1970).[15] This was an ungraded reference work with a very limited coverage of grammar and syntax, but whose author not only showed a certain degree of awareness regarding the lack of accessible learning materials for the Old Irish beginner, at whom the grammar was explicitly aimed, but also expressed some reflective criticism of the works of his predecessors:

> This little book has been written in order to serve as an easy introduction to the scientific study of Old Irish. There is need for such a book; for the Manuals of Strachan and Thurneysen, excellent as they are, are not very well suited for beginners.

> (Pokorny 1914: 1)

Nevertheless, the *Concise Grammar* is really too concise, and apart from a 50-page long introduction on phonology, in which the author was keen to show his own findings, the remaining part of it, called 'Accidence', is essentially a sequence of inflectional and conjugational tables with not many more comments or explanations than OIPG; so much so that, in a later edition of the work, the author cut out the whole grammatical section and republished only the reader, this time as a stand-alone book, with the title *A Historical Reader of Old Irish* (1923), for which, in the preface, he recommends the use of OIPG as a complement (Pokorny 1923: 2). The reader, although very short, was indeed the more valuable of the two booklets that formed the original 1914 edition. Besides what he calls 'some of the more interesting glosses' (Pokorny 1914: 1), the author offered a more varied reading selection than OIPG, also including texts preserved in Middle Irish manuscripts, both in prose and poetry, which he made an

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14 Cf. also Koerner 1989.
15 Cf. also Ó Dochartaigh 2000, 2003, and 2004.

attempt to restore to their initial Old Irish form. The texts are followed by explanatory notes and a full glossary, which make this reader a possible choice for the advanced beginner to start to deal with original texts. The author had indeed the beginner in mind, as, to facilitate his or her work, he even recommends some kind of progressive reading order for the six sections of the book (Ibd. 2). Pokorny later published another reference grammar, this time in German, titled *Altirische Grammatik* (1925; second edition in 1969), which is even shorter and more concise than his 1914 booklet. Moreover, its strong focus on comparative linguistics and the extensive use of reconstructed forms makes it even less accessible to the absolute beginner, even if only as a reference tool.

Worth at least noting is the niche endeavour *Llawlyfr Hen Wyddeleg* (1935), an Old Irish grammar written completely in Welsh. The author is the Welsh Celticist Grafton Melville Richards (1910–1973),[16] who had studied in Dublin with Osborn Bergin and in Paris with Joseph Vendryes, Antoine Meillet and Émile Benveniste. It is a short book, 136 pages in total, of which only 60 are devoted to the coverage of grammar. The paradigms are essentially taken from OIPG, while the grammatical explanations are strongly based on the German edition of Thurneysen's *Handbuch* (G.M. 1935: 694). The book also includes a selection of prose from the Old Irish Glosses and the *Book of Armagh*, and of poetry mostly from *Saltair na Rann*, which shows a certain degree of confusion between Old and Middle Irish. The last section of the book includes a full Old Irish-Welsh glossary. This is probably not a widely known work, but remains a laudable effort to explain the intricacies of Old Irish grammar through the medium of Welsh.

To finish this survey, it is worth returning briefly to Holger Pedersen who, together with the Welsh linguist Henry Lewis (1889–1968),[17] published a shorter version in English of his *Vergleichende Grammatik* in 1937, titled *A Concise Comparative Celtic Grammar*. The reason of this re-edition is clearly stated by the two authors in their preface:

> This book is not intended to replace the *Vergleichende Grammatik der Keltischen Sprachen*, but rather to serve as a sort of preparation for it, giving in condensed form as much of the material in the greater work as seems to suffice for university courses in the Celtic countries. We have therefore retained the same arrangement as in VKG, and have given, at the top of every page, references to the corresponding paragraphs of VKG.

(Lewis & Pedersen 1937: III)

Although this update and the pedagogical concerns behind it made Pedersen's work definitely more accessible, it remains a comparative grammar, in which Old Irish is covered in continuous comparison with Indo-European, British Celtic, and other ancient languages, which makes this book as inaccessible to the inexperienced learner as was its predecessor in German. Lewis then republished it in 1961, eight years after Pedersen's death, with a supplement 'in which statements in the main text no longer acceptable have been modified and new material added' (Lewis & Pedersen 1961: V).

Such was the pedagogical situation of Old Irish until the 1970s, when the first graded textbooks began to appear. Among all the works discussed above, the only ones

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16 Cf. Foster 1975–1976, and Roberts 2010.
17 Cf. also Bachellery 1968, and Lloyd 2001.

that have remained in common use until today are GOI and OIPG, both published in the first decade of the 20th century: GOI as the standard Old Irish reference work, and OIPG, at least until 1975, as the only relatively manageable introduction to the language for the motivated beginner. After 1975, the role of OIPG changed, but the booklet remains in use, not only as a supporting resource to Quin's *Old-Irish Workbook* (see 2.2.), but also as a handy collection of inflectional tables and as an annotated reader for advanced beginners. Pedersen's *Vergleichende Grammatik* and its English translation by Lewis have also remained in print and are still valuable reference works for comparatists. The value of the remaining grammars mentioned in this section, instead, is now mostly historical.

2.0.1. Postscript

In what follows I will briefly introduce the—very few—reference works that appeared after the phase discussed above. Although they do not really belong to the main topic of this chapter, I find it fitting to nevertheless provide a full chronological overview of them up to this day. The first thing worth noting is that, excluding comparative and historical grammars and the various re-editions or revisions of the older works that continued to appear until at least the late sixties, between the publication of the last original Old Irish reference grammar of the 20th century in 1925, i.e. Pokorny's *Altirische Grammatik*, and the appearance of the following one in 2009 by Stifter, there was a hiatus of almost 85 years. That says it all, not only about a certain lack of focus among Old Irish scholars on producing practical and really updated reference materials, but also about the need to dramatically increase that focus in order to make the Old Irish world and its language more accessible.

For the sake of chronological completeness, Kim McCone's very long book chapter 'An tSean-Ghaeilge agus a réamhstair' (Old Irish and its prehistory, 1994) should be mentioned here, although it is not intended as an introductory essay, or as a practical reference tool for the Old Irish learner or reader. It is, instead, a very strongly diachronic grammar from an Indo-European perspective, which would certainly turn out to be much more useful to the comparative linguist.

Also by McCone, the book *The Early Irish Verb* (1997) cannot be overlooked here. Although it does not cover Old Irish in its entirety, it is still a complete reference grammar of the Old Irish verbal system, of which it offers a very detailed and insightful description. It is an excellent tool for those who wish to increase their potential as Old Irish researchers or readers by going more deeply into the mechanics and nuances of this complex system.

The first introductory and synchronic description of Old Irish after Pokorny's 1925 booklet is instead by David Stifter. It is not an independent book, but a chapter in the second edition of the imposing 800-page *The Celtic Languages* (2009), published by Routledge in their Language Family Series. The chapter, titled 'Early Irish', does not aim to be exhaustive, as its author states: 'Only the broad outlines of Old Irish grammar can be sketched here. Subtle details—in which the language abounds—have to be glossed over' (Stifter 2009: 60). After a brief historical introduction, in which Primitive Irish is also outlined, the author completely focuses on classical Old Irish, and offers, in

approximately 60 pages, a condensed, lucid, and useful introduction to all its main features. In the words of Stifter himself: 'It's a short, compact survey grammar of OIr., in which I try to position OIr. typologically for the benefit of readers who come from other linguistic traditions'.[18] Particular attention is given to the verbal system, which takes up 20 pages of the whole essay, a rather extensive coverage if compared with the 6 pages devoted to the nominal morphology. As Stifter is keen to point out, 'what is best called the 'verbal complex' [...] is the most difficult and most challenging section of Old Irish grammar' (Ibd. 84). 'Early Irish', like all the chapters in this book series, is not, however, intended as a simple outline for the general reader, but rather as an introductory academic essay for people with at least a basic background in linguistics, who could then use it as a starting point for research or for a more systematic study of the language. Another possible audience are people who, instead, have already studied Old Irish from graded textbooks, where the different topics are spread over different chapters and explained with fewer technicalities. These people, like me, could find in this essay a large number of more theoretical, detailed and inspirational insights that may turn out to be extremely useful, not only to adjust, improve and enrich the perception they have of a certain grammatical point, but also to correct the possible misconceptions developed during their study.

In 2013, Anders Ahlqvist (1945–2018),[19] the renowned Finnish Celticist, published the booklet *Grammatical Tables for Old Irish*, essentially a reproduction of Strachan's *Old Irish Paradigms* (OIP), as the author himself confirms:

> The present work is fundamentally nothing more than an attempt to modernise OIP, notably by adding fuller indications concerning initial mutations, and references to more recent vital scholarship, as found in grammars and more extensive textbooks [...]

(Ahlqvist 2013: vii)

The most innovative part of this booklet are indeed the references. Every section is cross-referenced not only to GOI and some of the other older reference works, but also to newer ones, including, among others, OIP itself, OIW, as well as McCone's *Stair na Gaeilge* and *The Early Irish Verb*. The section 'Spelling and Reading' (Ibd. 8–16), a very brief survey of Old Irish orthography and pronunciation, is another novelty introduced by Ahlqvist, as the original OIP has no coverage of this topic. Apart from this, *Grammatical Tables for Old Irish* does not offer anything new, and basically remains a very little-known publication, always bound to remain obscured by Strachan's original and classic counterpart.

In 2019, in the framework of a major project of the University of Göttingen coordinated by Götz Keydana and Saverio Dalpedri and aimed at producing over 150 instructional videos on 12 ancient Indo-European languages, Aaron Griffth and David Stifter produced an introductory series of 18 videos on Old Irish (Griffith & Stifter 2019). The series is divided into 5 sections: 1) 'Introduction' (3 videos, total running time 36:59), covering the prehistory of Old Irish, its place within the Indo-European and Celtic language families and its archaic writing system, *Ogam*; 2) 'Sounds' (3 videos, total running time 50:09), covering Old Irish phonology, spelling and pronunciation; 3)

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18 Private communication, 24 March 2024.
19 Cf. also Auroux 2018, Sjöblom 2018, and Hayden 2020.

'Words' (4 videos, total running time 68:01) covering nominal and verbal morphology; 4) 'Structures' (4 videos, total running time 56:49), covering syntax as well as a text sample from *Táin Bó Froích*; 5) 'Texts' (4 videos, total running time 24:23), covering one colloquial warm-up sentence and 3 more samples from *Táin Bó Froích*. The length of the videos varies from approximately 5 to 25 minutes, for a total of almost 4 teaching hours. The videos are obviously not intended as a full language course. They are more an all-round survey of the main features of Old Irish grammar. Stifter and Griffith are both good communicators. They speak pleasantly and comprehensibly, and the slides they use are extremely clear and rich in authentic language examples. Moreover, all the slides are freely downloadable for later restudy, review and reference. The section titled 'Texts' is a very welcome conclusion, as it offers learners a well-deserved sense of accomplishment by enabling them to read and understand excerpts from original Old Irish literature.

Griffith and Stifter are also publishing a grammar, in book-chapter form (forthcoming), to accompany the videos. This will dramatically enhance the digital learning experience by providing the learner with a more solid and comprehensive reference resource. Moreover, the new text will also be a valuable tool in itself, as it will be the most updated Old Irish grammar since at least 2009 and will include all the most recent findings by both Griffith and Stifter with respect to morphology and syntax.

The fact that the list of works mentioned in this section is rather limited shows how Old Irish, pedagogically speaking, is still a young language, and that there is not so much focus on its pedagogics and teaching. Stifter and Griffith seem to be almost the only ones really aware of this problem, and who are trying hard to contribute a solution, as their fundamental and most welcome efforts show. Nevertheless, much is yet to be done, and many more endeavours are still needed to keep increasing the accessibility of Old Irish for a potential, and less specialized, broader audience. This language cannot only open doors to a rich, multi-faceted, intriguing and fascinating culture, but is also a treasure in itself, a linguistic treasure of incommensurable beauty that deserves to be disclosed.

2.1. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, *SeanGhaeilge gan Dua* (1974)

A first attempt to fill the complete void of graded Old Irish teaching materials was made in 1974 by Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, who published *SeanGhaeilge gan Dua* (SGGD), 'Old Irish without toil', an introductory textbook for speakers of Modern Irish, whose slightly improved second edition (1981) is here under review. In his preface, the author clearly states that the objective of the book is to be accessible enough to allow those studying on their own to learn the basics of the language, and so enable them to read simple texts in Classical Old Irish (Ó Fiannachta 1981: 5). SGGD is intended as a graded and soft GTM textbook, the first ever for Old Irish, and so tries to audaciously break a long teaching and learning tradition dominated by lengthy and ungraded reference grammars and readers.

Although the aim of the book was extremely laudable, the result, judging from both contemporary as well as more recent reviews, falls short of the expectations created in the learner. The author was so focused on keeping his approach '*gan dua*' that he overly simplified the presentations of grammar and took many details for granted:

> Die Darstellungen sind bemerkenswert sorglos und unkritisch. Sie vereinfachen so sehr, daß teilweise die Kenntnis grammatikalischer Regeln in den Übungen vorausgesetzt wird, ohne daß diese vorher eingeführt wurden. Begleitende Grammatikverweise hätten notgetan.

> (Tristram 1978: 261)

Furthermore, the fact that the book is aimed at Modern Irish speakers seems to have led the author to the wrong understanding that parts of the grammatical information could be easily left to the intuition of the 'Celtic-trained' mind of the learner. As David Stifter points out:

> Morphologische und syntaktische Eigenheiten des Altirischen werden nur im Vergleich zum Neuirischen besprochen. Manche Besonderheiten wie z.B. die wesentliche Unterscheidung zwischen Kopula und Verbum Substantivum, die es in den meisten europäischen Sprachen nicht gibt, oder der Gebrauch der Personalnumeralia, in deren Gebrauch es durchaus Unterschiede zwischen Alt- und Neuirisch gibt, werden als bekannt vorausgesetzt und folglich überhaupt nicht thematisiert.

> (Stifter 2003: 47)

However, intuition is not an exact process, its boundaries may be very unstable and volatile, and the information within them fragmentary, incomplete, unsorted, and even deceptive. Thus, language teaching should not be driven by intuition alone. As the inductive teaching approach at the basis of the textbooks inspired by Hans Ørberg shows (see 1.5.2.), intuition is fundamental to push the brain to independently elaborate and reconstruct a syntactical or morphological pattern through a large amount of language exposure, but this by no means guarantees that the information that learners work out is accurate or complete. The inductive process, fundamental as it is, must be followed by a clear and formal presentation of the grammatical points to which the learner has been exposed. This presentation has two main aims: a) to explicitly confirm, adjust or correct the intuitions of the learner by presenting the grammatical information more systematically and formally; b) to make learners fully aware of the points they have learnt through exposure, and so enable them to actively and correctly reuse the patterns, for example, in exercises based on translation into the target language. Without grammatical awareness, the information remains vague, confusing and unusable, and the whole learning process is compromised. As also stated by the two quoted reviewers, this is essentially what happens in SGGD.

Thus, contrary to the author's aims, his overwhelming tendency to simplify left the book with many omissions and inconsistencies, not only in the presentation of

phonology, morphology and syntax, but also in the exercises.[20] The result is a booklet that, at best, is hardly usable by independent learners without strong teaching guidance and, at worst, ends up being unusable in every setting. As Tristram puts it:

> So didaktisch wertvoll die Konzeption und der Aufbau des Lehrganges für die irische Zielgruppe erscheinen mag, so erweist er sich für den Eigengebrauch und leider auch für den Unterricht als unbrauchbar.

(Tristram, Ibd.)

Stifter essentially agrees:

> Alles in allem stellt SGGD ein wenig gelungenes Beispiel für ein Lehrbuch des Altirischen dar, das [...] einer grossen Anzahl an Kritikpunkten kaum positive Aspekte entgegensetzen kann.

(Stifter, Ibd.)

As mentioned above, the oversimplification that plagues this book and makes it unusable is most probably due to the author's misconception that contemporary Irish speakers could learn Old Irish 'without toil'. After having taught Old Irish to Modern Irish speakers for four years, I can say that this is not so. Irish speakers can have exactly the same problems as speakers of other languages, and even more, as in some cases the mere fact of knowing Modern Irish can foster in them the illusion that the two languages are fundamentally the same, and so engender further confusion. For example, Old Irish phonology and pronunciation, if not properly studied, practised and constantly reviewed, can be a minefield for modern speakers. A good textbook aimed at such an audience should help develop the awareness that the two systems are different, and that Old Irish can by no means be pronounced as if it were Modern Irish. Unfortunately, SGGD does not help the learner develop such an awareness, as Old Irish pronunciation is only partially covered and, as David Stifter points out, the complete lack of phonological transcriptions 'kann Lernende dazu verleiten, unbewusst die air. Wörter neuirisch auszusprechen' (Ibd.).

Contrary to a common misconception, teaching a second language related to the native one of the targeted audience is no easy task. If the differences are not properly highlighted, the learner's mind may tend to fill the gaps in the target language by using elements—be they morphological, syntactical or lexical—unconsciously adapted from the native language. A textbook teaching Old Irish through the medium of Modern Irish should then be written with this concern in mind, and keep the boundary between the two languages clearly visible at all times.[21] It should also avoid gaps that can give rise to ambiguities or confusion and, most importantly, should not deceive the learner into thinking that an Irish speaker can learn Old Irish 'without toil' since, as Tristram puts it, 'bei einer so komplex morphosyntaktisch strukturierten Sprache wie dem Altirischen

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20 For more on this issue, see also: Stifter, Ibd., and Tristram, Ibd.

21 In this respect, David Stifter shared this anecdotal piece of information with me: in the 1980s and early 90s, when Kim McCone was still teaching Old Irish through Modern Irish in Maynooth, he nevertheless insisted that students translate into English in the exams, since otherwise they could have merely substituted old by new forms, without understanding their meaning.

kann man nicht *gan dua* arbeiten' (Ibd.). It is true that a knowledge of Modern Irish may be helpful to identify some basic constructions as well as a considerable number of nominal and verbal roots, but not much more than that. A modern speaker is in no way facilitated when learning the five cases and the many classes of nominal inflection, the three classes of infixed pronouns, the different kinds of relative clauses, and the rich and complex verbal system, with absolute/conjunct and deuterotonic/prototonic pairs, preterites, augmented forms, and subjunctive present and past, not to mention all the variants of the future tense. All these topics cannot be oversimplified and should be properly covered, in one way or another, whatever the language of the audience. A short explanation of a few lines and a paradigm, as is mostly the case in SGGD, just creates more confusion than actual learning.

This does not mean, however, that one should not try to make Old Irish more accessible, but accessibility cannot be achieved through omission. For example, if a grammatical topic is too complex to be presented in one lesson, it can be split into more manageable chunks and covered over several lessons, with every chunk supported by practice materials and exercises. This will make the learning less intimidating and more rewarding for the student, who will enjoy the completion and the mastering of every single grammatical portion as a small, and further motivating, achievement. Even with this approach, however, in the end all the relevant grammatical information must be provided, and the learner must be offered serious training. Unfortunately, this does not happen in SGGD, in which the information is simply omitted and ignored, and the learner is given, to say the least, an approximative, deficient and by no means reliable Old Irish instruction.

Nevertheless, despite its failure as an effective Old Irish learning tool, SGGD still deserves much respect, as it was the first attempt ever to create a graded textbook for this language. Nothing of this kind had been attempted before it, and the first somewhat successful graded Old Irish textbook, by E.G. Quin, would only appear one year later. After decades of teaching and learning based on hundreds of pages of grammar and original texts only, even just developing an effective graded sequence for the grammatical topics must have been an extremely arduous work, not to mention deciding the amount of information to include for each topic. With no previous graded model or tradition to follow, it is not surprising that ineffective and unpractical choices were made, or that the author, buoyed by excessive optimism, may have ended up thinking that contemporary Irish speakers could learn a language like Old Irish from a tiny booklet like SGGD. Even so, regardless of its results, the daring act remains. The daring act of a teacher who, for the first time, tried to innovate the study of Old Irish by making it less intimidating and more accessible.

2.2. Ernest Gordon Quin, *Old-Irish Workbook* (1975)

The didactic situation of Old Irish really changed in 1975, when Ernest Gordon Quin (1910–1986), linguist, Sanskritist, as well as renowned Celtic scholar at Trinity College Dublin,[22] published his *Old-Irish Workbook* (OIW),[23] whose appearance Kim McCone,

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22 Cf. also Mac Cana 1987.
23 Cf. also Tristram 1976.

as late as 2005, greeted with a 'finally': 'Gordon Quin's *Old-Irish Workbook* […] has finally made a graded course available to learners' (McCone 2005: 10). The title perfectly mirrors both the scope and limits of the book. OIW is not meant to be an all-in-one textbook, nor is it meant to be used as the only resource to study the language. As Quin himself states in the 'Introductory Note', 'This book is intended as a companion' (Quin 1975: unnumbered), namely to OIPG, 'to which reference should be made throughout' (Ibd.). Strachan's book, however, is not the only one regularly cross-referenced in every lesson. Quin also recommends, although to a lesser extent, the use of both Thurneysen's and Pokorny's reference grammars. The structure of the book is clearly presented by the author:

> Each lesson begins with a short grammatical explanation, but most of the forms should be sought in Strachan and/or the other two works. This is followed by twenty sentences for translation out of old Irish and twenty for translation into old Irish. For the latter a key is provided. The two sets of sentences use the same vocabulary, only the grammar being different.

> (Ibd.)

With its very practical and, at least from a first impression, learner-friendly approach, OIW is indeed a step forward when compared to the other learning materials available at the time of its publication. First of all, this is because it gives some kind of method-like, very graded progression, although not always the most logical and, in some cases, really questionable. Stifter (2003: 49–50) mentions, for example, adjectives, which basically inflect like nouns, being only covered in Lesson 24, and the future tense (Lesson 27) being covered before the preterite (Lesson 34), which is easier and more common than the future.

Grammatical topics are broken down and presented in small chunks that are then practised throughout the forty sentences provided. Usually, no more than one declension and/or verb conjugation per lesson is given. The reading/translation sentences are included starting from Lesson 1. This allows the student to begin to read immediately in the target language, which is, in itself, very rewarding and motivating. Once the first set of sentences is mastered, the student can easily translate the sentences of the second set, this time into Old Irish, as these are just very slight variations of the previous ones, where basically only the morphology needs to be adjusted. In so doing, the learner is prompted to use Old Irish actively from the very beginning and to actually produce his or her own pieces of language, which is extremely beneficial to the learning process. Stifter is rather critical regarding the content of the sentences, whose style he describes by using the word 'Weltfremdheit' (Ibd. 50), 'unworldliness, quixotism', while McCone defines them as 'rather wooden and artificial' (McCone 2005: 10). They are absolutely right, but from the point of view of methodology, this is not an issue, as long as the sentences allow me to see forms and structures in context and play around with the language. A notable problem is instead, as Stifter highlights, Quin's affection for regularity. He essentially tends to use forms that perfectly match the patterns introduced, and when these are not available, he does not hesitate to create unattested ones without marking them as such, with the risk of teaching the unaware beginner something non-existent:

> Die Vertrautheit mit den in OIW auftretenden Formen kann auch dazu führen, dass im authentischen air. Textkorpus marginale oder gar unbelegte, von QUIN nur konstruierte Formen als geläufige air. Formen in der Erinnerung hängen bleiben.

<div align="right">(Stifter 2003: 50)</div>

At the back of the book, solutions are included for the second set of sentences (English to Old Irish), but not for the first one. This is a downside, as an absolute beginner working alone needs to make sure to have properly understood the sentence in the first set before attempting to translate its slightly varied version into Old Irish. It would also have been very useful to have a full glossary of the words used in the sentences, the lack of which compels the student to refer to Anthony Green's booklet *Old Irish Verbs and Vocabulary* (1995),[24] one of OIW's "stepchildren".

Another lack concerns the phonological transcription of the sentences. Until Lesson 12, it is given in full for the first set of sentences, but starting from Lesson 13 it disappears completely, which is not wise for a language with such a complex phonological system. As David Stifter puts it, 'the rules of orthography cannot be repeated often enough' (Stifter 2006: xii).

The grammar sections are, unfortunately, also rather problematic, as they are extremely limited and by no means sufficient. They provide merely a few hints, sometimes not even all the forms of an inflection or conjugation, leaving the student with no other option than to consult the cross-referenced works. Moreover, they are not really conceived with the layperson in ancient languages in mind, as Stifter (2003: 49) points out.

Thus, the real problems with OIW are not its own principles, which, as we saw above, reveal a pedagogical attention and concern previously unseen in the field, but in the mere fact of it being a 'companion', that is, an accompanying tool whose usability is bound to, and dependent on, the support of works that are not only based on a completely different approach, but also rather inadequate for beginners and beyond their reach.

OIPG is mostly a list of paradigms arranged by category, inflection and conjugation class, with just some occasional explanatory notes. It is undoubtedly not easy for an absolute beginner with limited or no language background to swallow those inflectional lists essentially without guidance. If then, following Quin's recommendation, that beginner should decide to know more, he or she would most probably end up lost in the over 700 pages of Thurneysen's grammar, with all its forms and technicalities.

Nevertheless, the issues related to the inadequacy of these reference works for the beginner could be easily overcome in a class setting with a teacher who, being aware of the limitations of Strachan's and Thurneysen's books for that specific purpose, would decide to put them aside and proceed differently. This teacher could, for example, rethink the grammar of each OIW lesson and repropose it in a learner-friendly, jargon-free, organic, but at the same time also relatively exhaustive manner, to spare the learner the frustration of having to continuously jump from one book to another. In such a case,

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24 Cf. Eska 1998.

by optimizing the grammar section and by just following the progression and the exercises of OIW, it is possible to give an absolute beginner a good foundation upon which to keep building.

It is conceivable that the teachers using OIW as their main textbook have adopted this approach over the years. In 2005, Kim McCone, in the first chapter of his textbook *A First Old Irish Grammar and Reader* (see 2.4.), suggested, among other things, that his book be used as a 'supplement' to Quin's (McCone 2005: 12). Although much more accessible than the Old Irish reference works published until then, McCone's textbook still retains a heavy reference-like approach, and is by no means a graded method, although it includes graded readings. Chapters are extremely dense, and not easily manageable, nor digestible, by an absolute beginner. One example here will suffice: the whole Old Irish noun declension, with all its classes, that is, all the vowel and consonant stems, is covered in one single chapter, in this case Chapter II. Thus, it is still a relatively hard to follow and heavy book. Moreover, it was not specifically written to match or supplement Quin's.

This was the case, instead, for another book, whose main original intent was indeed to enhance the usability of OIW and make it accessible also to students with no linguistics background. That is how *A Student's Companion to Old Irish Grammar* (SCOI, 2022) by Ranke de Vries, now in its second revised and expanded edition, was born in the first place. As the author explains in the foreword, the book was created starting from a series of handouts she had written for her Old Irish classes, based on OIW, at Trinity College Dublin, as 'it became clear quite early on that students wanted more information about grammatical subjects than was found in the books that we were working with' (De Vries 2020: x). SCOI is not a method in itself, as the topics are arranged like in a normal reference grammar. Nevertheless it is a kind of reference grammar whose main concern, as can be inferred from the title, is the student, not the scholar. The style is very informal, concise, dialogical, and jargon-free. Grammar concepts are often introduced by using very simple English examples that perfectly exemplify and contextualize the Old Irish point to come. The focus is on giving the learner main structures and forms only, leaving aside the jungle of variants and exceptions with which Old Irish is extremely prodigal. In the foreword, the author states very clearly and honestly the scope and limits of her book:

> In this book, you will find a general overview of the most important grammatical themes and concepts. There are in fact many exceptions to the overview given here, but if I were to discuss them here, I fear it would only confuse the reader, which would be counter-productive.

> (Ibd.)

With SCOI as a grammar source, OIW is much easier to use. Once the learners have read the few introductory lines of the grammar section at the beginning of each OIW lesson, they proceed to study the same topic in SCOI, going then back to OIW to work on the sentences.

Personally, I find the combination OIW/SCOI much more accessible to the absolute beginner than the old combination OIW/OIPG/GOI, and the best alternative

after David Stifter's *Sengoídelc* (see 2.6.). Nevertheless, teaching choices and preferences are very personal, and certainly not set in stone. As the survey in Appendix 5.6. shows, approaches to the teaching of Old Irish may vary greatly.[25]

Despite all its flaws and, as Stifter (2003: 51) puts it, its 'inhaltliche Eintönigkeit' ('content monotony'), until 2006, when *Sengoídelc* came out (see 2.6.), OIW would remain the most graded and accessible option for the absolute beginner to be introduced to the Old Irish language.

2.3. R.P.M. and W.P. Lehmann, *An Introduction to Old Irish* (1975)

The textbook *An Introduction to Old Irish* (IOI),[26] by the University of Texas linguists Ruth Preston Miller Lehmann and Winfred Philippe Lehmann, saw the light of day in 1975, the same year as Quin's OIW. The first thing one notices is that this book is neither a reference grammar like GOI (or it would not be reviewed in this section), nor a GTM-based primer like OIW. The very first line of the preface, while being very clear about the intent of the book, reveals an approach that I consider ineffective for the absolute beginner with no training in grammar or linguistics. It reads: 'This handbook was produced with the aim of providing students with an introduction to Old Irish literature as well as to the language' (Lehmann & Lehmann 1975: v). Talking about my own experience as an Old Irish learner, I was not able to even touch an original literary text in the language before having finished a whole year-long intensive Old Irish module, i.e. 5 hours a week for two terms. Consequently, I was very curious to find out more about a method that claimed to teach Old Irish from scratch through original literature from day one. The IOI approach, however, is not an invention of the Lehmanns. It is actually very reminiscent of some commented readers with glossary published before the textbook era, for example, Strachan's *Selections*, although none of those readers was ever proposed as a structured and graded introduction to Old Irish, as was the case, instead, for IOI.

The 20 chapters all follow the same structure. They begin with a section of text, always followed by a glossary including the translation of the entry as well as very detailed information about the word form, and end with grammatical commentaries related to some of the aspects encountered in the text. Starting from Lesson XI, the authors also include cultural sections of various kinds before or after the grammar, thus briefly introducing topics of interest to the Old Irish learner: the Indo-European language, the place of Old Irish and Celtic within the Indo-European family, the different Celtic languages, the Ogam writing system, the role of Irish monasteries, some notion of palaeography with a special focus on the Book of Leinster, and various aspects of Old Irish literature (background, transmission, literary cycles).

Thus, IOI uses a text-centred approach, and its declared intent, as was seen above, is to actually teach Old Irish through that text, in this case the saga *Scéla Muicce*

Meic Dathó (SMMD), known in English as 'The Story of Mac Dathó's Pig'.[27] This is not a common approach for absolute beginners, and David Stifter is rather sceptical about its effectiveness:

> Mit der Lektüre einer air. Sage gleich in der ersten Lektion zu beginnen erscheint problematisch. Durch die ausführliche Erläuterung sämtlicher Wortformen des Texts im beistehenden Kommentar wird den Lernenden jegliche eigene Arbeit mit Grammatik und Wörterbuch abgenommen; es ergibt sich nur ein geringer Lerneffekt.

(Stifter 2003: 51–52)

Simply put, the student is given a portion of text and a word list to decode it. Is this language teaching? Detailed glossaries such as these are useful when the students themselves create them on the basis of already acquired language knowledge that, on the one hand, allows them to see what they have studied mirrored in a real text and, on the other hand, enables them to manipulate the reference tools (grammars, dictionaries, textbooks) they need in order to reach a full or partial comprehension of the text. However, this is something that absolute beginners cannot do, just because they do not have enough language knowledge to do it. Moreover, such word lists are too advanced, too detailed, and also too confusing for someone with no previous experience. Ultimately, the most motivated learners would surely be able to use them to decipher the meaning of the text, but the learning effects would remain negligible.

In IOI everything revolves around the text, and all the information given, both lexical and structural, is aimed at decoding the relevant portion of text. There is no exercise whatsoever, nor any other kind of language practice apart from the mere decoding. One cannot help wondering how students are supposed to internalize the endless amount of ungraded information thrown at them by the text. The impression is really that the main goal of the book is more to have learners, in one way or another, go through the entire SMMD and, in the last two chapters, a few Old Irish poems, than to really teach them the language.

The sections on grammar also pose problems. First of all, being mainly aimed at the decoding of the text, they are also limited to that. All the past tense classes, for example, are covered in just a couple of paragraphs, where not even all the forms are given, and the absolute conjugation is completely omitted (Lehmann & Lehmann 1975: 37–38). This is not, however, the only example where key grammatical features are reduced to fragments just because those fragments are the only ones relevant for the decoding of the text.[28] The second issue about the grammar sections in IOI is gradation: unfortunately, there is none. It could not be otherwise, since the core text around which everything revolves is by no means a graded text. SMMD was composed for native speakers, not for beginners, so there is no gradation in its grammatical progression. Any morphological or syntactical feature, of any difficulty, can show up anytime. Here is a taste of what absolute beginners will have to face at the very beginning of their Old Irish journey, that is, in Section 1a of Chapter I (Ibd. 3): preterite of the substantive verb (and the present?? It will come in Chapter VII...), past tense of the copula, imperfect,

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27Cf. Windisch 1880: 93–112, Meyer 1894: 51–64 (updated translation in Koch 2003: 68–75), Thurneysen 1935, Gantz 1981: 179–187.

28 For a more detailed description of similar issues, cf. also Stifter 2003: 52–53.

combination of prepositions with possessive forms and articles, conjugated prepositions, emphasizing particles, o-stem inflection, preterite forms, preterite passive forms, and augmented preterite forms. Although all these elements are glossed in the relevant word list, they are not organized into any graded learning path, but remain a swarm of scattered and fluctuating fragments buzzing around the mind of the learner. This absence of gradation across the different grammar topics is also true within the topics themselves. In some cases, too much information is given in a single section. For example, Chapter VII gives all the forms of the substantive verb in the present, habitual present, imperative, present and past subjunctive, future and preterite. Then comes the copula, for which are given imperative, past (the present was covered in an earlier chapter), present and past subjunctive along with their combinations with the conjunctions *cía*, *má* and *mani*, and future (Ibd. 52–55)—all this in one chapter. There is no gradation, no digestibility, no internalization, no practice, and no exercise.

According to my own experience both as a learner and as a teacher, IOI is not a textbook suitable for absolute beginners. I would not even call it a proper textbook, as there is no learning gradation. However, it could be very valuable as a guided and commented first Old Irish reader, to be used, for example, upon completion of the OIW/SCOI combination or of Stifter's *Sengoídelc* (see 2.6.), in preparation for the reading of uncommented texts. Once the student has covered all the basic grammar with a real textbook and is supposed to start working on original texts, IOI could be a good 'bridge'. First of all, because it presents the first original text that students usually read upon completion of the textbook, i.e. SMMD, which, being accurately glossed, spares the still inexperienced learners the time-consuming glossing work, thus allowing them to focus, instead, on its actual reading and mastery. Moreover, while working through the long, glossed sections, students can learn how to gloss a text themselves, a skill that may prove to be useful when facing the more challenging readings that await them on their Old Irish learning path. The grammatical explanations could then be used as a review of topics already studied, and their flaws would become less relevant for the more experienced student, who, moreover, would also be able to better appreciate the various sections on culture, history, philology, metrics, palaeography, and even general and historical linguistics that the authors often squeeze in between the grammar sections, as if trying to teach a language like Old Irish from scratch by using an unadapted literary text as a the only source of information were not enough.

The overall problem of this book is that the authors, driven by some kind of multidisciplinary intent, want to cover too much, and one gets the impression that, at times, the teaching of the language itself is relegated to the background. About the multidisciplinary ambition of IOI, Stifter comments:

> So positiv dieser Gedanke an sich sein mag, erhält man von IOI den Eindruck, dass der Unterricht der air. Grammatik tatsächlich nur ein Aspekt des Buches sei, und dass der eigentliche Hauptzweck in der Vermittlung air. Kultur im weitesten Sinne liege.

> (Stifter 2003: 52)

All in all, we could maybe say that IOI is, in the end, a good text with a very misleading title. Therefore, it is not an introduction to the language but, much more properly, an Old Irish reader for advanced beginners, enriched by a grammar review as well as useful cultural and linguistics insights.

2.4. Kim McCone, *A First Old Irish Grammar and Reader* (2005)

After a first analysis of Kim McCone's *A First Old Irish Grammar and Reader* (FOIGR, 2005), I wondered if it should be included here. The reason behind its potential exclusion was simple: the focus of this chapter is textbooks, and I did not initially consider FOIGR as belonging to this category. In my opinion, it was a reference grammar with readings, certainly more accessible than the older Old Irish reference works, but still a reference grammar. After all, the author himself basically defines it as such in his introduction:

> The present work has been produced with the primary aim of supplying learners of Old Irish with a relatively slim but self-contained reference grammar interspersed as frequently as practicable with suitably graded readings drawn from original sources and accompanied by a comprehensive vocabulary at the end of the book.

> (McCone 2005: 12)

The same definition is used by one of his reviewers, who first describes FOIGR as 'being essentially a reference book' (McQuillan 2008: 244), and then goes so far as to compare it with GOI:

> This can be seen in the arrangement of the material, which, unlike [...] textbooks [...], is laid out so as to keep information on a given grammatical category together as much as possible for ease of reference. In that sense this book is most welcome, as it offers the learner a convenient and manageable alternative to Thurneysen.

> (Ibd. 244–245)

After further reflection on the possible exclusion of McCone's work, however, I decided to make another attempt and take a closer look at it before making the final decision. Thus, I went back to FOIGR, analysed it more closely and deeply than I had done before, found other reviews, and soon realized that my first judgement had clearly been too hasty. FOIGR was primarily intended to be a textbook, and although it 'follows the model of a traditional grammar', it is 'adapted to be a pedagogical text rather than simply a reference work' (Isaac 2008: 140). Towards the end of the introduction, McCone clearly states the pedagogical aim of his book, which 'has been designed with Old and/or Middle Irish courses [...] in mind, either as the basic course book or as a supplement to, say, Quin's *Workbook* or Strachan's *Paradigms and Glosses*' (McCone, Ibd. 12). Thus, even if not conceived for the self-learner, FOIGR can be a 'basic course book', that is, a 'self-contained' text that offers the student a full learning path, and not just a reference work to consult in case of need. Wodko also confirms the all-in-one nature of the book: 'Das Buch kann ohne Rückgriff auf eine weitere Grammatik oder

ein Wörterbuch benutzt werden' (Wodko 2008: 229). Nevertheless, despite the author's aims and beyond the fact that he defines it as such at least twice in his introduction (McCone, Ibd. 9, 12), there are good reasons to mistake this book for a reference grammar, as will be seen below.

For the sake of this review, it is more convenient to consider FOIGR as following two main teaching paths that would more appropriately be analysed separately. These are: 1) grammatical teaching, and 2) reading practice. Such a twofold analysis is motivated by the fact that these two paths are unequally balanced and unequally graded, and so pedagogically rather conflicting. Teaching path 1), i.e. the presentation of grammar, is the part that, pedagogically speaking, creates greater problems. If FOIGR, which is meant to be an introductory textbook to Old Irish, has been called a 'reference grammar' by its author himself, and then a 'grammar' (Isaac, Ibd.), and 'essentially a reference work' (McQuillan, Ibd.) by at least two other scholars, it is not surprising that it may actually be mistaken for such a book. What makes it appear as a reference work rather than as a textbook is the way in which the subject matter is presented. The grammar is indeed not arranged into graded units, or 'lessons', as in OIW or in David Stifter's *Sengoídelc* (see 2.6.), but into very dense thematic chapters. For example, the nominal inflectional classes, which in Stifter's book are gradually introduced, one or two at a time, over several lessons, are all covered in Chapter II by McCone. This means that, immediately after the section on spelling and pronunciation, the learner is challenged, in one single chapter, by the full Old Irish inflection, with all its vocalic and consonantal stems, for both nouns and adjectives, after which, as if this were not enough, the complete declension of the article is also given. This kind of arrangement may easily result in being extremely overwhelming and intimidating, if not even confusing, for the absolute beginner, and can hardly be considered suitable for an introductory textbook, even when used under the guidance of a skilled teacher. Chapter III presents the two verbs for 'to be', i.e. the copula and the substantive verb, in all their tenses and moods, and also discusses some peculiarities of word order, including cleft sentences. There is obviously nothing wrong in having all the forms of 'to be' in the same chapter for good reference, but such an arrangement would be suitable for a reference grammar, not a textbook. For the sake of comparison, in Stifter's *Sengoídelc* the two verbs 'to be' are first introduced in two different lessons, and only in the present tense, with the other tenses and moods only given later in the book, each in a different lesson. Chapter V covers instead the present tense of all the classes and subclasses, i.e. weak verbs, classes 1 and 2, strong verbs, classes 1, 2 and 3, and hiatus verbs. Still in this same chapter, the learner is asked to deal with compound verbs, imperative mood, and infixed pronouns of class A, B and C. All these topics are covered by Stifter over ten different lessons.

However, the arrangement of the grammar in reference-style thematic chapters is not the only feature that makes this book extremely daunting for the absolute beginner. As Isaac points out, the accessibility of FOIGR is also compromised by its very format:

> I cannot help but feel that the book could have been twice as long, not in respect of content, but in respect of layout. The book is printed so densely that students are daunted by the mere

> look of it. The paradigms are as accurate as one would expect [...]. However, some are placed on the page in such a way that it requires some effort to glean the appropriate grammatical pattern from the visual clues given.
>
> <div align="right">(Isaac 2008: 140)</div>

Reading all those grammatical details in such a small and dense print is tiring and off-putting even for an advanced reader, let alone an inexperienced Old Irish learner.

Teaching path 2), as mentioned above, is the reading practice. As its title says, FOIGR, besides teaching grammar, is also aimed at providing learners with a good amount of reading material to allow them to practise all that grammar in context. Isaac praises this feature of the book and the choice of texts:

> A valuable feature is the exclusive use of real Old Irish texts, a mixed bag of prose and poetry from a variety of genres, as reading exercises [...]. The book thereby not only has the advantage of giving the beginner access to actually extant material (lightly edited in places, and normalized if extant in Middle Irish transmission), but also, in contrast with what has been usual till now, introduces the student to the impressive variety of Old Irish texts from the very start.
>
> <div align="right">(Ibd.)</div>

Apart from their variety and literary value, these texts also have a fundamental feature that is typical for a textbook: they are graded. Every text is preceded by an introductory note about its cultural and linguistic context, and if it happens to include elements not yet covered by the grammar, these are explained in the note. The arrangement of the readings is also worth noting, as it is a clear indication that FOIGR, despite its daunting layout and heavy reference-like appearance, is not meant to be just a reference work, but a textbook in its own right. Readings are distributed throughout the chapter, right after the coverage of each grammatical point, and are not only graded, but also carefully selected and 'geared to those topics already covered by the stage in question' (McCone 2005: 9). The fact that graded readings are interspersed throughout the relevant chapter, and not gathered together at the end of it—or at the end of the book—implies that there is an intended gradation in FOIGR. Graded readings must be read in the given sequence, and in order for the student to be prepared for them, the grammatical topic that precedes each text must be studied first. This means that the fact of having to follow the order of the graded readings forces the order in which the grammar is studied. The problem is, however, that while the readings are well-graded and suited to the absolute beginner, the intimidating and heavy grammatical presentation, as well as the disheartening layout in which they are immersed, make FOIGR a rather inaccessible learning resource, especially for inexperienced learners, i.e. the audience at which the author was primarily aiming.

Nevertheless, FOIGR is not as unsuited for practical purposes as, say, SGGD. Its value as a reference work remains, and as such it is certainly much more accessible than GOI, and thus more suitable for an advanced beginner, as 'the basic facts of Old Irish grammar are presented with admirable concision and precision' (Isaac, Ibd.). The book is also valuable as a first graded reader, as the title says, and can be used as such by advanced beginners, who could just go through the readings with the help of the full glossary at the back, using the grammatical sections for optional reviews.

Regardless of its value as a reference work and as a reader, the book was originally not conceived as either of the two, but rather as a harmonized combination of both, so as to provide the beginner with a 'self-contained' learning path to be followed under the guidance of a teacher. Unfortunately, the strong pedagogical imbalance between the grammatical and textual teaching lines makes the overall presentation rather disharmonious and hardly manageable as a whole. In the end, the heavy reference-like approach to grammar strongly prevails, and largely compromises the value of the book as an all-in-one learning tool.

2.5. Wim Tigges, *An Old Irish Primer* (2006)

After the appearance of OIW and IOI in 1975, no other Old Irish grammar or textbook saw the light of day until thirty years later when, in 2005, McCone's textbook was published. The next year two new works followed, both intended as introductory, graded textbooks for complete beginners: David Stifter's *Sengoídelc* (see 2.6.), and Wim Tigges' *An Old Irish Primer* (AOIP), which will be reviewed first.

The intent of the book is clearly stated in the first sentence of the preface: 'This *Primer* aims to be a pragmatic introduction to Old Irish' (Tigges 2006: 3). As for structure and approach, instead, it openly follows the style of IOI, of whose influence the author makes no mystery, although he admits that the Lehmanns' work 'may be felt too comprehensive for the beginner student and too academic for the interested layperson', as well as being, in some respects, 'not always reliable' (Ibd.).

AOIP is divided into twelve chapters, each including three sections on grammar interspersed with one or more thoroughly glossed texts which, following the author's choice, are exclusively based on unadapted original poetry. Every chapter ends with three 'Assignments', of which two are based on morphology (nouns to inflect or verbs to conjugate), while the third always refers the student to an additional reading in the section 'Additional Texts' at the back of the book, which contains fifteen more poems. The author motivates his focus on poetry in the preface:

> […] a choice has been made here in favour of lyrical texts, which on the whole are linguistically relatively simple but at the same time substantially sophisticated and therefore hopefully more challenging than the syntactically informative but otherwise not terribly exciting Old Irish glosses which have often been the beginning student's main alternative.
>
> (Ibd.)

This appears to be a rather radical choice, especially for a textbook for beginners that calls itself 'a pragmatic introduction'. One wonders if it is really wise to teach a language like Old Irish, moreover to absolute beginners or 'interested laypersons', just by using poetry, without even trying to show them two or three consecutive lines of normal narrative prose. Prose and poetry do not really work in the same way, as Ranke De Vries points out:

Tigges maakt voor zijn voorbeelden uitsluitend gebruik van gedichten. Ik denk dat het verstandig was geweest als er ook proza bij had gezeten, omdat er nu eenmaal andere grammaticale regels voor gedichten gelden dan voor proza.[29]

(De Vries 2007: 33)

Thus, just like its main inspiration, IOI, with which it shares both the pros and cons, AOIP is another text-based book, whose aim is essentially to teach the language starting from original texts. In this respect, however, there is a slight difference between the two works. While IOI revolves around a long narrative text, with no gradation whatsoever across its different sections, the poems and poetry excerpts selected for AOIP are, instead, meant to be in order of increasing difficulty. Nevertheless, this does by no means make AOIP a graded textbook. The texts are graded, but the grammatical information they presuppose, and which needs to be explained in the relevant chapters, is not. In this respect, while discussing the use of original texts to teach a language, De Vries maintains:

Dit [...] is leuker voor de lezer, maar brengt problemen met zich mee: men moet immers de behandeling van de grammatica aanpassen aan de inhoud van de oorspronkelijke tekst.[30]

(Ibd.)

Moreover, due to the fact that Tigges intends his book just as a primer and does not want it to be 'too comprehensive', explanations are often lacking or covered too quickly, and 'af en toe worden er zaken weggelaten [...]', says De Vries, who also finds 'sommige beschrijvingen (zoals de behandeling van het suffixpronomen) niet helemaal duidelijk'[31] (Ibd.). Even if the grammatical information is basically focused on what is needed to understand the text, original Old Irish poetry was not composed with absolute beginners in mind, so the number of topics showing up in a single poem, although short and simple, is by no means 'sheltered', i.e. voluntarily and pedagogically limited to suit the needs and the skills of an inexperienced reader. The example of Chapter 2 (Chapter 1 is mostly about phonology) will suffice. Although the chapter only has two very short and simple 4-line poems, it ends up being quite crowded with grammar anyway. The topics are the following: o- and io-stem singular nouns and adjectives, both masculine and neuter, ā- and iā-stem singular nouns and adjectives, independent personal pronouns (both regular and emphatic), possessive adjectives, three fully conjugated prepositions, and definite articles, in all cases and genders, including the variants. We have already seen all this in IOI, and the main issues of the Lehmanns' book are also true for this one. Just like the Lehmanns, Tigges seems to be much more concerned with giving learners instructions on how to decode and read the texts than with actually teaching them the

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29 For his examples, Tigges makes exclusive use of poems. I think that it would have been wise to also include prose, just because poetry follows other grammatical rules than prose. (my translation)
30 This [...] is more enjoyable for the reader, but brings problems along: the treatment of grammar needs indeed to be adapted to the content of the original text. (my translation)
31 Some things are at times omitted [...]; a few descriptions (like the treatment of suffixed pronouns) not completely clear. (my translation)

language. He himself confirms this when he says that 'the main aim of this *Primer* is to provide the interested layperson with enjoyable texts of great antiquity' (Tigges 2006: 58).

What was said at the end of the section about IOI is also very true here. AOIP is not a book for beginners, as De Vries confirms:

> […] ik denk daarom dat dit boek [...] prima geschikt is als zelfstudie voor mensen die al eerder een cursus Oud Iers gehad hebben, maar nog niet veel gedichten gezien hebben, om zo een goede indruk te geven van vroege Ierse dichtkunst.[32]

> (De Vries 2007: 33)

Like its predecessor, AOIP should perhaps be recontextualized, and moved from inadequate language primer to an adequate kind of 'Old Irish Introductory Poetry Reader', to be then paired with an also recontextualized IOI as introductory prose reader, and so provide advanced beginners or early intermediate students with enough original materials to allow them to begin their path as independent readers of Old Irish literature.

2.6. David Stifter, *Sengoídelc* (2006)

David Stifter's *Sengoídelc. Old Irish for Beginners* (SENG), as mentioned above, was published in 2006, providing would-be Old Irish learners with, at last, a comprehensive, all-in-one, and very well graded introduction to the language. The materials that were to later form SENG were originally developed as supplements to Quin's textbook, which the author used as a basis for his first Old Irish classes at the University of Vienna (Stifter 2003: 55). Thus, SENG, just like SCOI and, to a lesser extent, FOIGR, is, originally, another reaction, a very strong one in this case, to OIW's incompleteness and inadequacy.

The book looks imposing at first sight, both for the format and the number of pages, but a look inside bodes very well. The use of the heading 'Lesson' at the beginning of each unit is encouraging, as this tells us that we are most probably dealing with a graded textbook, which, in fact, is the case. Gradation always implies more accessibility, and accessibility was indeed one of the main concerns the author had in mind while writing the course, as can be clearly inferred from the 'Preface/Remrád':

> It has been my aim to compile a book that ideally allows even an absolute beginner to learn the language on his or her own, without the guidance of a teacher. This is not to say, of course, that tutorial guidance should not be sought in the first place!

> (Stifter 2006: xi)

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32 [...] I think therefore that this book is excellently suited to self-study for people who have already taken an Old Irish course previously, but have not seen many poems yet, so as to get a good idea of the early Irish poetry. (my translation)

SENG has a total of 58 lessons, out of which 2 introduce the Old Irish and Celtic linguistic and cultural context (1 and 2), 39 are devoted to the actual teaching of the language, 16 are review, reading and practice lessons, and one (Lesson 58) is a very valuable and quick introduction to early Irish metrics. At the back of the book comes a series of appendices, among which are the keys to all the exercises (D), a complete glossary of all the words used in the translation sentences and in the text excerpts (E), as well as a rich inventory of grammatical reference tables (F). The book ends with a full grammatical index.

The structure is very straightforward. A regular lesson introduces one or more grammatical topics. In some cases there is a morphology drill at the end of the section, just to have the learner become more aware of the pattern newly introduced, which will then be extensively shown in context in the sentences of the relevant review lesson. Review lessons sometimes contain text excerpts and/or what the author defines as 'tests that aim at the recognition of verbal and nominal forms' (Stifter 2006: xi), but the core part of every single one of these lessons are the 40 translation sentences, 20 from Old Irish to English and 20 from English to Old Irish. The sentences of the second set use exactly the same vocabulary as their Old Irish to English counterparts, but require slight adjustments in noun and verbal morphology, so as to push the students to put actively into practice what has been newly learnt. The importance of the active use of the language is stressed by Stifter:

> Although [translating into Old Irish] may seem an unnecessary task, it has been my personal experience when learning Old Irish that the language is best acquired by forming sentences in it by oneself.
>
> (Stifter 2006: xi)

We had already seen this twenty-and-twenty feature in Quin's OIW, the book that the author used to teach himself the language at the very beginning of his career (Stifter 2003: 55), and to which now he also wishes to pay homage: 'Die Wahl von zwanzig Übungssätzen pro Lektion und das Übersetzen in zwei Zielsprachen ist auch als Reverenz an OIW zu verstehen' (Ibd. 58). Homages apart, this feature is undoubtedly also included because it is a very valuable one indeed, so much so that Stifter not only adopted it in full, but also improved it by adding to every Old Irish to English set both the phonetic transcription (OIW only provides it for the first 12 lessons), and a full solution in Appendix D (OIW does not give any solutions for this set, but only for the English to Old Irish one). All this makes SENG even more user-friendly, especially for the independent learner.

Also in terms of content, the sentences in SENG are all good quality. Even those created by the author are perfectly meaningful and plausible and do not suffer from the extreme artificiality that affects, instead, Quin's sentences. Moreover, while OIW only offers a dozen (Ibd. 50) original sentences, SENG has plenty of them. The more you progress, the more the constructed sentences are gradually replaced by authentic language, and by the time learners reach the end of the book, they have read excerpts from several important Old Irish literary works.

Regarding the value of phonetic transcriptions, used also for text excerpts and morphology tables within the grammar sections, Stifter is very keen to highlight their importance:

> Old Irish phonology and spelling are notoriously difficult, and it has been my experience while teaching that the rules of orthography cannot be repeated often enough. I hope that with many transcriptions I can offer guidelines to beginners of Old Irish that help them come to terms with the sounds and alphabet of this language.

> (Ibd. xii)

In older textbooks and reference grammars, it was a common habit, when explaining morphology and syntax, to make continuous reference to Latin, as to allow students to match an unknown feature of Old Irish with a Latin structure with which they were already familiar and, in so doing, simplify the learning process. Back then it was basically unthinkable that someone wanting to learn Old Irish had not already learnt, at least, Latin, if not other ancient languages as well. This situation has now dramatically changed, so much so that in our days it would not be advisable to take Latin for granted. Keeping accessibility in mind, Stifter had, of course, to address this new *status quo*:

> With the rapid decline of Latin in modern schools and with the number of students who have had their fair share of classical languages ever dwindling, it has become practically impossible to explain the peculiarities of Old Irish by simply referring to similarities with or differences to Latin (not to mention Greek or Sanskrit).

> (Ibd. xi)

Another key point of SENG is the importance that the author places on the overall appearance of the book and on the way in which its content is presented. He considers this point fundamental:

> Das Layout und die Art der Darstellung haben eine unmittelbare psychologische Bedeutung. Von ihnen hängt es ab, ob ein Lehrbuch auf den Benutzer anregend und interessant oder langweilig und demotivierend wirkt. Einige Besonderheiten von *Seng.*, die es von den anderen air. Lehrbüchern unterscheiden, beruhen gerade auf dieser simplen, aber oft vernachlässigten Einsicht.

> (Stifter 2003: 114)

In line with this principle, lessons are well balanced, and basically never too long, 'I have been careful not to pack too much material into the lessons at once' (Stifter 2006: xi), as the author is also aware that the sense of accomplishment experienced by the learner upon finishing a whole lesson has very positive effects on motivation and learning. That is why lessons need to be manageable: 'Der geringere Umfang der Lektionen hat aber nur den psychologischen Zweck, die einzelnen Lerneinheiten den Lernenden leichter bewältigbar erscheinen zu lassen' (Stifter 2003: 58).

In the presentation of grammar, the author is always careful to avoid dullness by continuously alternating between nominal morphology, verbal conjugation, and syntax,

so as to ensure that an engaging diversity remains a key feature of the book, both within and across the lessons. Grammar is explained carefully, always with the inexperienced beginner in mind, and nothing is taken for granted. In many cases, the author introduces the topic by using clear examples in English or German[33] before even addressing Old Irish. He is never dry nor sparing with words and does all it takes to gradually accompany the learner through the new grammar point. Linguistic terminology is used to some extent, but it is always explained upon its introduction. The tone is communicative and informal, the author is always careful to remain in contact with the learners, their needs, and their uncertainties, and never lose the occasion to be encouraging and motivating. Irslinger also notices the importance of 'Ermunterungen zur Motivation der Lernenden, die Stifter […] regelmäßig einfließen läßt' (Irslinger 2007: 1).

Despite all this, small doubts are occasionally raised about this textbook. The issue mentioned is essentially always the same. Once a fellow student coming from a college where this book was not used, and so with no direct knowledge of it, told me: 'You really need to be an expert in Indo-European linguistics to use that book.' The reference was to the fact that, in inflectional tables, next to the actual Old Irish inflectional forms, Stifter also provides, for the sake of comparison, reconstructed Primitive Irish, Proto-Celtic and Proto-Indo-European forms. These forms are just an extra, and they are there because the original SENG materials were used to teach mostly students of Indo-European linguistics (Stifter 2003: 55). One can totally ignore those forms without jeopardizing the learning of Old Irish. Recently, in a web interview, an American Old Irish scholar (see Crawford 2022: 1:04:14) said that the use of SENG requires a good linguistics background, before honestly admitting that she had never used it. She had certainly seen those detailed tables with reconstructed forms while perusing it and drawn her conclusions from there. The fact is that Stifter's concern while developing his materials was exactly the opposite, that is, to make his textbook accessible to people with no linguistics background; judging from the number of motivated undergraduate students I see progressing relatively easily through SENG, I also believe he was successful. This does not mean, however, that SENG is not a challenging book: it is indeed. This is especially so in its second half, as soon as the present tense is left behind and the other tenses and moods begin to draw the learner into their intricacies and variants. It is when students working on their own might feel a bit overwhelmed, not by the difficulty of the explanations or the presentation, but just by the amount of information they must manage. Maybe a further splitting of some of the longest lessons of the second part of the book might help to keep the motivation higher.

One last point to mention is that, although SENG is a graded textbook for beginners and certainly not a reference grammar, its coverage of morphology and syntax is comprehensive enough and its index sufficiently detailed to make the book a manageable and to-the-point first reference work, to which one can keep referring even years after its completion. Before checking GOI, I always take a chance on SENG.

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33 The original materials out of which the book was developed were meant for a German-speaking audience.

Nevertheless, SENG is and remains the most learner-friendly way to introduce the absolute beginner to Old Irish, offering to the truly motivated learner excellent access to this language.

2.7. Summary

All the works covered in the review above are intended to be textbooks, at least in the intentions of their authors, which means that they should offer, ideally, a graded, manageable, and progressive step-by-step introduction to the Old Irish language, and that they are conceived to be fully studied from beginning to end, and not to be used as occasional reference works. However, depending on the authors' background and their ideas of 'gradation' and 'progression', these two features may greatly vary and, consequently, diversely affect the learning paths proposed.

What follows is a brief outline of the approach proposed by each of the reviewed works:

- 1974, SGGD (2.1.): this book is the very first attempt, after a century-long tradition exclusively dominated by daunting reference materials, to provide the learner with a graded and accessible introduction to Old Irish. The fact that it was aimed at Modern Irish speakers, however, may have led the author to think that parts of the grammar could be taken for granted. The explanations of many grammatical points and features are, indeed, oversimplified, if not completely ignored, which probably reflects the author's understanding that a Modern Irish speaker would just be able to grasp the grammatical point intuitively. Intuitions, however, are of no value if they are not supported and confirmed by structured and explicit grammatical explanations. This is also true for gradation, which should be based on the effective distribution of the subject matter, not on its omission. An effective gradation should have the grammatical information arranged into manageable learning blocks that very progressively build upon each other until the end of the established learning path is reached. This does not mean, however, that the information has to be oversimplified, dramatically reduced, or ignored. An introductory book for absolute beginners should not leave students wondering or guessing.

- 1975, OIW (2.2.): here gradation is well achieved, especially if one considers that this is only the second attempt ever to apply this approach to Old Irish. The amount of grammar covered in each lesson is manageable, and reading and translating practice abounds. Worth noting are the exercises of translation into Old Irish, which push learners to use the language actively, a fundamental feature of this book. The main problem with OIW is that it is just a workbook, and not an all-in-one textbook. This means that for grammatical explanations it relies on other resources, which are regularly cross-referenced in each lesson. These resources, mainly OIPG and GOI, are, however, not easily usable by an absolute beginner. OIPG has essentially no grammatical explanation, and GOI is so detailed and comprehensive that it can turn out to be overwhelming for an

inexperienced learner. The situation for OIW changed in 2013, with the publication of Ranke de Vries' *A Companion to Old Irish Grammar*, which the author originally wrote to support her OIW-based Old Irish introductory module. In the *Companion*, all the required grammatical points are explained in a much more user-friendly way, always with the inexperienced learner in mind. The pair OIW plus De Vries' book now offers a manageable Old Irish learning path for absolute beginners.

- 1975, IOI (2.3.): the approach here is totally different from the one used in OIW. The aim of IOI is to teach the language by having the student read through a whole Old Irish saga, in this case *Scéla Muicce Meic Dathó*. The saga is divided into sections, each covered in a different chapter of the textbook. Every section is thoroughly glossed and followed by the explanations of the main grammatical points. The problem is that the saga is an original text conceived for Old Irish native speakers, not for language learners. This means that nothing is graded in this book, neither the grammar nor the vocabulary. Any nominal or verbal form can occur anytime, leaving the absolute beginner dealing with advanced grammatical features even from the very first chapter. More than an Old Irish course, it is a course to learn how to read—or rather decode—that particular saga. However, a language cannot really be learnt by just reading a glossed ungraded text. The student would need, instead, a much more systematic, organized and progressive way to learn the grammar, as well as a series of graded reading texts especially aimed at the intensive practice of the grammatical points introduced. Nothing of this kind is to be found in IOI, which would work much better as a well-commented and well-glossed intermediate reader.

- 2005, FOIGR (2.4.): this textbook, now no longer available, is easily mistaken for a reference grammar. Indeed, the grammatical information is arranged in a thematic and reference-like manner and is fully ungraded. Moreover, chapters are extremely dense, each covering a large number of grammatical topics, and this makes them extremely daunting for the beginner. The reading texts interspersed in the grammatical sections are, instead, very well graded and also accurately glossed and introduced. These are meant to be read by following their order of occurrence in the book, right after the coverage of the grammatical topics on which they are focused. It is indeed this graded and progressive arrangement of the readings that clearly shows that FOIGR is intended to be a textbook and not a reference grammar. Nevertheless, inexperienced beginners working with this book would risk being overwhelmed and put off, not only by the large amount of ungraded grammar covered in each chapter, but also by the disheartening format of the book. Although intended as an introductory textbook, FOIGR would be more suitable and effective as a reference grammar for intermediate students, or even as a graded reader for advanced beginners learning the language from a more graded and user-friendly resource.

- 2006, AOIP (2.5.): as the author states in his preface, the main inspiration behind this textbook is IOI, on whose approach it is strongly based, with the main difference that AOIP aims to teach the language by making exclusive use of original Old Irish poetry. All the issues mentioned about IOI are also true for AOIP, which, like its predecessor by the Lehmanns, seems more concerned with instructing the reader on how to decode the poems than with really teaching the language. The grammar is ungraded and basically limited to what is needed to decode the texts. Moreover, the use of poetry imposes its own limits. The grammatical rules that govern the language of poetry are different from those that govern prose, as De Vries also maintains (see 2.5.). The language of poetry, with its clipped forms, its broken rules, its freely subverted word order, its simpler syntax, its urgency of expression, its dependence on metrics, is the product of a creative and artistic manipulation of the constraint-free flow of the prose language, from which, instead, the learning should start. In order to really appreciate the strength of the poetic invention and to understand how it has been achieved, it is important to become first familiar with the 'full' form of the language, in which all its highly complex morphological and syntactical features are in clear display. Only then can one mentally fill the gaps left by the changeable and fragmentary rules of the poetry language, see the extent to which the features of the prose language have been creatively altered, and so appreciate the artistry behind their alteration. Moreover, learning a language only through verse does not train learners to read complex and longer flows of text, leaving them unprepared to face prose literature.

- 2006, SENG (2.6.): this is by far the best graded and most effective Old Irish learning tool. SENG is an all-in-one textbook, which means that it provides learners, in only one resource, with all they need to build a solid Old Irish foundation. The very well-graded grammatical lessons alternate with review lessons, in which students are required to practise all the grammar previously learnt by reading and translating well-conceived and meaningful sentences. Like OIW, from which Stifter drew inspiration, SENG places importance on the active use of the language, providing the learner with a very large number of sentences for translation into Old Irish. Grammatical topics are introduced in a simple, jargon-free language, always with the absolute beginner in mind, although the more advanced lessons may prove to be rather challenging. SENG is a good example of a well-structured textbook, in which gradation, practice, and comprehensiveness are harmonized into an effective learning tool.

Among the Old Irish textbooks discussed in this chapter, SENG and, to a lesser extent, OIW are essentially the only ones currently used as introductions to the language. Although they are both based on the GTM approach, SENG offers a very modern, effective, accessible, learner-friendly and updated version of that traditional method, and these features, along with its self-contained nature, are what makes this book the best choice available. As mentioned in the reviews and in this summary, the other works, although they can still be used as good supporting reference or reading materials, have now become basically obsolete as introductory Old Irish textbooks.

Given this shortage of introductory materials, it is important to keep supporting Old Irish by producing more and more accessible learning tools of different kinds. What has been done so far by applying active and conversational approaches to Latin and Ancient Greek (see Chapter 1) is for me a great inspiration and, as will become clear from the project introduced in the next chapter, is also the path I intend to follow for Old Irish.

3. *Labrammar-ni in Sengoídilc!*: Old Irish as a Living Language

3.1. Introduction

One of the aims of this thesis is to present a model lesson that will form a part of a still ongoing project to develop a new Old Irish textbook, whose working title is *Labrammar-ni in Sengoídilc! Living Old Irish for Absolute Beginners*. Both the title, which means 'Let's speak Old Irish!', and the subtitle are very explicit as to the kind of teaching approach I have in mind: the aim of LNIS is to offer the absolute beginner with no linguistics background whatsoever a very graded and manageable introduction to the Old Irish language through an active, living and conversational approach.

LNIS is aimed at both independent learners working on their own, without the assistance of a teacher or tutor, and students in a classroom setting, and it is meant to be a self-contained textbook, where even very inexperienced beginners will find all they need to start their journey through Old Irish. Nevertheless, given the focus of the book on conversation and interaction, students working in a classroom setting under the guidance of a motivated teacher will clearly have greater opportunities to further develop the communicative active skills, which, in turn, will increase their learning potential.

In addition to the advantages of such an approach, already discussed in the Literature Review, there is one other point that deserves to be raised. From my practical experience of teaching Old Irish, it has become clear to me that the conversational approach applied to ancient languages is not only important for its actual positive effects on the learning process, but also for the kind of perception it can give of it. The mere awareness that a given historical language can actually be presented and practised conversationally makes it immediately appear more approachable and human, and is, per se, a psychologically encouraging factor for potential learners and their motivation. It is then the textbook author's and, to some extent, the teacher's duty to measure up to the expectations created and not to disappoint the learner. An approach is not of much use if potential learners are not motivated enough to try it, and presenting a language usually considered dead as if it were alive and well can be, in itself, a stimulating element for those who usually feel intimidated by the traditional approaches to historical languages.

The perception one has of the difficulty of a language, although not properly a key element, is still an important factor, not only in the very early stages of learning, but also, and maybe even more, before the learning begins. Ancient or medieval languages are very often seen as overwhelming, demotivating and unapproachable, and for a simple reason: they are not perceived as languages anymore, but just as elephantine and suffocating burdens of paradigms and inextricable rules which many potential learners would not even dare to approach. In such 'elephantoids', the concept of language as

language, that is, as an interaction and communication tool, is completely gone. This is not necessarily a bad thing per se, as many scholars do prefer to approach ancient languages this way. Nevertheless, if the aim is to broaden the audience for historical languages by making them more accessible, then the scholar, of whatever field, should not be the only target of textbooks. These should aim, instead, at a wider, and also less specialized, audience, including the usual undergraduate student, the curious layperson with an interest in the relevant language for whatever reason, or even the self-learner. These less specialized categories, sometimes intimidated by the mere idea of approaching an ancient language, usually react positively and productively when they realize that such languages can also be taught and learnt actively and conversationally, just like French, German or Japanese. This is shown, for example, by the growing popularity of the Latin and Greek learning materials produced by Accademia Vivarium Novum in Italy, the association Cultura Clásica in Spain and the Polis Institute in Israel, as well as by the adoption of these same materials by organizations such as Oxford Latinitas, related to the Faculty of Classics of the University of Oxford (see 1.5.2.2.). There is no reason why what is being done for Latin and Greek could not be attempted for Old Irish, despite the fact that it is morphologically much more complex and challenging. Although communication is not the prime aim for learning Old Irish, such an approach will open up new horizons for casual learners, who will realize that it is a language like any other, a language in which they can learn to say and understand things, and in which they can have communication exchanges in and about their own contemporaneity. These are the kinds of learners to be kept in mind when creating new learning and teaching materials, if Old Irish is to be made more accessible and its audience broadened. If ancient languages are considered unapproachable because they are not perceived anymore as languages, we should then remind learners that what they consider frightening and overwhelming systems of rules are, indeed, and first and foremost, languages, and not burdens of academic heaviness.

3.2. Main features of the textbook

The works discussed in the Literature Review have all been, in one way or another, sources of inspiration for the LNIS project, not to mention the research findings regarding the effectiveness of the conversational approach applied to ancient languages (see 1.5.), which essentially confirmed what many Latin and Ancient Greek teachers from the Renaissance to our days have already realized through common sense: a language, be it ancient or modern, spoken or unspoken, is and remains a language, and its active use, both orally and in writing, is and remains the most effective way to internalize its system.

While analysing, in the Literature Review, textbooks based on Rouse's Direct Method (DM) (see 1.4.), on the Ørberg Method and the Ørbergian Universe (ØU) (see 1.5.2.), on Rico's Polis Method (PM) (see 1.5.4.), and, to some extent, even on the Ollendorff Method (OM) (see 1.2.), I have identified a series of key features that I intend to implement and develop in my own textbook. Here are these features, along with, between parentheses, their main source(s) of inspiration:

- Very large amount of text exposure (ØU)
- Strong focus on intensive oral exchanges (DM, PM, ØU, OM)
- Considerable focus on written production (ØU, PM)
- Contemporary setting for dialogues and texts (PM)
- Grammar presented only after extensive language exposure (DM, ØU, PM)
- Grammar taught explicitly (DM, ØU, PM, OM)
- Grammar taught in small manageable chunks (DM, ØU, PM)

In what follows I am going to consider all these features and explain how I intend to implement them in LNIS.

3.2.1. Large amount of text exposure

The importance of a large amount of what is commonly called, especially in the US language teachers' circle, Comprehensible Input (CI), is, in one way or another, now widely recognized. CI was first introduced as Input Hypothesis by the American linguist Stephen Krashen (1982: 20–30) and was initially criticized by scholars in Second Language Acquisition because it was not properly testable. Nevertheless, its main principle (see below), albeit with the proper adjustments, proved ultimately valid.[1]

Interestingly enough, this principle was essentially already and very successfully applied as early as the 1950s, long before its theorization in the US, not only to Latin by Ørberg himself, but also to a wide range of modern languages by the authors of all the books produced by the Danish Naturmetodens Sproginstitut (NS), which remain very valuable language teaching resources. However, it is also true that strict CI teachers, who are against the use of textbooks (what they call 'untextbooking'),[2] would not avail themselves of the NS materials, nor of any other kind of textbook.

Anyway, whatever we call it, be it CI, Ørberg Method, Nature Method or NS Method, its basic principle is the same: a large amount of language exposure, i.e. a large amount of input, is fundamental to foster language acquisition. In order to be effective, this input must be 'mostly' comprehensible, as an unintelligible flow of language would not contribute to acquisition. That 'mostly' is now approximately established as 95–98% (Lichtman & VanPatten 2021a: 296) of the input. So, basically, in order to foster acquisition, the language flow, written or spoken, to which the learner is exposed, needs to be understandable at that percentage. The remaining 5% will be easily extrapolated from the context. Moreover, the amount of input provided by the teaching materials must be very large, as the brain needs to be exposed to its structures and vocabulary multiple times, in a continuous and meaningful flow of language where all the elements relentlessly combine and recombine with each other in as many ways as possible. This continuous repetition and recombination of all the language elements in play is what allows the brain to gradually start to acquire what it is exposed to.

This principle, which I have experienced myself with *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata*, first as a learner and then as a tutor, will be fundamental in LNIS. It is vital to

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1 For an up-to-date discussion and evaluation of Krashen's main hypotheses, cf. Lichtman & VanPatten 2021a and 2021b.
2 Cf. Ash 2019.

give the learner as much exposure to the language as possible. The learner must see very large portions of text almost from day one, and that text needs to be basically comprehensible, but also redundant, repetitive and meaningful so as to increase the amount of flow of vocabulary and structures through the channels of the student's mind. Vocabulary and structures need then to be 'sheltered', which means that their number must be kept under control to ensure that the text remains comprehensible, and acquisition is not jeopardized. This language exposure will be carried out first through the mere book materials, i.e. an extremely large number of extensive texts, dialogues, questions in the target language, as well as a variety of exercises aimed at language manipulation and production, then through intensive oral sessions with the teacher. Given the oral usability of most book activities, the teacher will easily be able to expand on them orally, and so further increase their benefit for the students.

After all the talking about language exposure, language flow, large amount of text etc., something should be said about how this exposure will be provided. As mentioned above, lessons will revolve around dialogues and texts, both aimed at the developing of a communicative skill and at the mastering of given grammatical structures and vocabulary. Texts and dialogues will be related in the sense that, in some cases, they will focus on very similar content so as to increase vocabulary exposure. Redundancy, although with variation, will be a common element of LNIS. Every dialogue and text will contain the largest number of words that its limited vocabulary will allow, which means that learners will read a long portion of language with a reduced—sheltered—vocabulary, whose items will occur multiple times, repeatedly, to foster their internalization.

3.2.2. Strong focus on oral exchanges

A strong focus on oral exchanges is now applied both to the teaching of Greek through the PM textbooks (Rico 2019, 2021), and to the teaching of Latin through LLPSI and all the ØU materials, as exemplified by the documentary 'La via degli Umanisti' (Miraglia 2008). Thus, there is no reason why a similar approach should not be attempted for Old Irish as well.

An extensive, comprehensible text, once its structures and vocabulary have been basically mastered, can be an excellent starting point for oral exchanges. When the students feel comfortable enough with the materials and do not have to worry about decoding vocabulary or structures, they can more easily focus on language production and let communication happen, provided that the exchanges are at the right level. That is why it is important, especially in the early stages of learning, to base oral exchanges on materials that have been properly covered and with which students feel confident enough. Moreover, the mere fact of using extensive texts is an effective way to foster conversation and interaction. A long text, once mastered, can be an almost inexhaustible source of simple Question/Answer (QA) exchanges, and so of conversational training with all the advantages that this brings in terms of language acquisition.

According to my own experience in language teaching (see also 5.3.), QA exchange is the first important kind of exchange to implement in the classroom.[3] It is

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3 Cf. also Patrick 2015a.

always advisable to start with extremely simple and comprehensible questions. This will keep the so-called affective filter, or emotional barrier, low, as Krashen explains in his Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen 1982: 30–32), allowing students to relax and focus on the language exchange in a stress-free environment. In LNIS every text or dialogue will have an appended series of questions in Old Irish to be answered in Old Irish, first orally, and then in writing (see also 5.1.). In a classroom setting, for early sessions, the teacher asks the questions, and the students answer, but once the practice is established, the QA activity should be fully left in the hands of the students, with the teacher just acting as a listener and giving assistance in case of need. This would also allow for a dramatic increase in student participation and, most importantly, their number of oral exchanges and language exposure, as they will be all practising at the same time, in pairs, without having to wait in silence for one-to-one turns with the teacher (Rico 2019: 209). It is important that questions revolve around the piece of language (be it a text or a dialogue) that the students have been working on, and that the QA session begins only once the relevant material has been understood.

Starting the oral QA session from the questions appended to every LNIS text will grant students, especially in the early stages of learning, an extra help in case they do not understand the question when asked orally. When this happens, the teacher can draw the student's attention to the written form of the question and thus facilitate its understanding. Once all the questions appended to the text have been used, the teacher can then expand on them and create more combinations and variants, always making sure to try to avoid frustration and to keep the students' emotional barriers low, as Krashen recommends. The point here is not to have students exchange real information, but to allow them to easily use the language in interpersonal (although somewhat artificial) interactions. For this reason, questions are initially very silly, repetitive, redundant, and apparently pointless, and so are the answers. I am aware, however, that some SLA research would consider this approach limited and not ideal. Benati, for example, maintains that oral exchanges, although used for mere language practice, should always be based on the necessity to fill a real information gap or to perform a real task (Benati 2020: 71). However, this is not about trying to speak Old Irish to become able to perform tasks in Old Irish society; this is, instead, about applying Howatt's 'using to learn' principle (see 1.5.), i.e. speaking Old Irish in order to learn Old Irish, to internalize its structures and vocabulary through their actual use, and to become, in the end, better Old Irish readers and researchers. Regardless of the nature of the QA exchanges, my experience has shown that students always react very positively when they realize that they are actually using the language, and while they begin to internalize some basic vocabulary (including interrogatives) and structures, their motivation and confidence grow. The exchange is initially between teacher and students in order to establish a model, but once the model is established, the teacher can step back and let the students lead their own QA exchanges and enjoy the language they are learning. Questions can also move away from the text and be used for more direct exchanges in which students ask about each other's name, role and so on. Such questions are usually called Personal Questions and Answers (PQA), an added dimension to the conversational exchange that, as Patrick maintains, allows 'for more repetitions of targeted vocabulary, increase student engagement, and assure that the learning is happening without the learner being aware of that' (Patrick 2015: 114). QA

and PQA, with all their variants, will always remain a central strategy, or at least a central starting point, in oral exchanges, although, as the learning progresses, they can be combined with more complex activities, such as summarising a simple text and then interacting about it with classmates.

Learners working independently will have to be motivated enough to practise the QA activity on their own, talking to themselves, to their pets or to the walls, which for some might not be really ideal. However, as I always tell my students, talking to the walls, although boring or frustrating, is still much, much better than not talking at all.

3.2.3. Written production

As mentioned in section 1.5., the importance for students of active language production, both oral and written, is stressed by several authors. Oral production, a key point of LNIS, was covered in the previous section. The focus here will instead be on written production or, more specifically, on creative written production, that is, the kind of text that the student him- or herself creates following a few guidelines given by the teacher. The production of sentences as the result of the prompts of exercises will not be considered.

Since it is the aim of LNIS to be manageable by self-learners working outside the classroom setting, it cannot have too much focus on open writing activities such as composition. It would be counterproductive to ask absolute beginners working on their own to produce a text that they do not have the skills to check, nor the means to correct. Although it is true that the book will have the solutions to the exercises, the outcomes of open compositions cannot be fully predicted. Even if the author of such a course added an option for the students to check, this would just be his or her option, and just one of all the possible acceptable options the student might create. Moreover, giving only one version in the solutions would make learners feel frustrated because their version would hardly be the same as the 'official' one. This would also risk completely nullifying their attempt, which would be perceived as inadequate and not even worth a correction. Such practices are then best left for the classroom setting, where a teacher can evaluate and appreciate every single effort as valuable, laudable and worth all the possible attention.

This, however, does not mean that written production must be completely forsaken just because there is not enough control of it. Here compromise will be required. A good compromise would be to use the series of questions attached to each text for written production as well. The answers to the questions, which should include one or more full sentences, could be more easily covered in the solutions, at least as a model, although students will have to be clearly warned that these are just basic models, and that other correct and acceptable options might be possible. In this way there would at least be a guide for learners working on their own, while those in a classroom setting could use the questions more freely, first in oral interactions and then in writing, and, under the guidance of the teacher, even manipulate or expand on them, for example, by using them as a starting point for the production of a more complex text.

3.2.4. Contemporary setting

Given the strong focus of LNIS on providing learners with a very large amount of text, both in dialogue and narrative form, a decision had to be made as to when to set the stories and the life events of the fictional characters involved.

ØU textbooks always set the storyline in the time when the language they teach was actually spoken, that is, in ancient Rome or Greece; PM textbooks, instead, which have a stronger focus on everyday conversation, have all their texts and dialogues set in modern times (see also 1.5.4.1.). I believe that if the intent is to teach a language conversationally, which means having students interact in the target language here and now, then using a contemporary and familiar storyline as the basis of their interactions will instil more life into the whole learning experience, while also making it more real and engaging. As Christophe Rico points out (Rico 2019: 199–200), a modern setting is felt nearer and more relevant by many students, who are likely to become more motivated and engaged when they can learn to interact in contexts related to their own daily life. This is the reason why the path established by the PM Greek and Latin textbooks was chosen, and all the dialogues and texts of LNIS will be set in our own contemporaneity.

The first lessons of LNIS are centred on the college life of a group of students studying Old Irish in a fictional university. The aim is to provide people attending an Old Irish class in any teaching setting with the skills needed to communicate simply, not only about their normal everyday lives, but also about the common issues that such a learning context involves. However, with LNIS aimed at any kind of learner and not exclusively at college students, other daily situations and settings will be also covered in the subsequent lessons so as to make the learning experience and the conversational and reading skills acquired as varied and captivating as possible.

Moreover, this kind of setting also has another advantage: the mere awareness that the book is set in modern times can make the language appear less intimidating. Since what is everyday and modern is usually perceived, whether this is right or wrong, as less challenging than what is old and out of use, why not exploit this general perception as well? Students are once again reminded that, if, beyond being taught conversationally, Old Irish can also be put in a fully contemporary setting, then it is really a language like many others in actual use and, maybe, it is not so inaccessible and impossible to learn.

3.2.5. Presentation of grammar

Following the practice of ØU textbooks, grammar structures are taught inductively, i.e. they are formally explained only after the learner has encountered them multiple times during text exposure. The explanations will be practical and to the point, with only the elements introduced in the previous texts being covered. This means that grammar points will be given in small chunks, that sections will be short, and also that the progression will be much slower than, for example, in SENG. This is just the nature of LNIS: a very large amount of text and language exposure in order to introduce a limited number of grammar points and foster their acquisition.

Despite the fact that my research endeavours to find alternative and less formal ways to teach Old Irish, I still strongly believe that grammar should be taught explicitly. Like other advocates of conversational approaches applied to ancient languages,[4] I consider explicit grammar hints not frustrating burdens for the student, but effective shortcuts that, when properly contextualized, can foster and support the gradual mastery of language structures. As works such as the OM textbooks[5] and the reworking of Rouses's Greek course by Mahoney (2011a) had already shown, explicit grammar teaching, in some cases an even intensive one, can be productively combined with a conversational approach, and they are by no means mutually exclusive.

I also strongly believe, however, in the inductive approach promoted by the ØU and the PM works, in which grammatical rules are given only after the student has been exposed to enough language to be able to start to discern them intuitively. In this case, the grammar sections are not heavy bricks of disjointed knowledge to be thrown at students for brute and rote memorization, but useful pieces of information, this time much better grounded in experience, whose main function is to adjust, confirm and systematically reorganize the learner's intuitions (in this respect, see also 1.5.1.).

On this basis, the grammar sections of LNIS always follow, and not precede, extensive language exposure, which allows students to see the key elements in use in meaningful texts that they can easily understand. Moreover, in order to help learners to notice and process the elements forming a part of the grammar topic on which the lesson is focused (for example, the different forms of a verb), two pedagogical interventions, referred to in SLA research as 'input enhancement' and 'input flood', are used. In input enhancement, the features that the learner should notice are highlighted in the text, in the case of LNIS in bold, but other options are possible, so as to allow him or her to notice and identify them as key elements and to start to develop some kind of awareness from the very first reading (Benati 2020: 133–136). Input flood, instead, 'is a more implicit pedagogical intervention to grammar instruction. The input learners receive is saturated with the form that we hope learners will notice and possibly acquire' (Ibd. 135). Both these strategies are extensively applied to both the texts and the dialogues of LNIS.

Another fundamental point regarding grammar presentation is manageability or, less formally put, 'digestibility'. It is important, both pragmatically and psychologically, that learners perceive the feasibility of the grammar section awaiting them. Since pages and pages of theory may put off some less experienced language learners, a graded textbook such as LNIS, whose target audience is broader than just linguists and grammatically educated people, must take this into account. Grammar topics are then split into digestible chunks that the learner can begin and finish in one go, without having his or her motivation drowned in an insidious sea of rules. Beyond making the language structures much more accessible and digestible, this kind of subdivision also has a psychological advantage, as the mere fact of being able to reach the end of a grammar point in one session will also result in a sense of achievement and accomplishment that, in turn, will strongly support motivation (Stifter 2003: 58). This splitting also means that one grammar topic will have to be spread over several lessons, but this is not a problem as such, provided that every portion be properly covered

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4 Cf., for example: Minkova & Tunberg 2012: 124.
5 Cf., for example: Kendrick 1851, and Adler 1858.

through the right amount of exposure and active practice, and that a general summary of the whole topic be given (in a table form or other) upon its completion for easy reference.

As for the progression of the different grammar topics, LNIS will basically follow the same order as SENG, with just two major differences that are worth mentioning here. The two verbs for 'to be', i.e. the copula (*is*) and the substantive verb (*at·tá*), and the interrogatives, covered respectively in lessons 24 (119–121), 28 (136–137), and 38 (190–191) by Stifter, are instead introduced from the very first lessons. This choice is dictated by the mere nature of LNIS, whose strong focus on conversation means that it is fundamental for learners to start to interact orally as soon as possible. Identifying and locating things is one of the simplest language acts that absolute beginners can perform, so it is important to enable them to do it by providing all the necessary language tools from the very beginning. However, stating the identity or the location of someone or something is not a real conversational act, unless such information is given as an answer to someone else's question. Thus, in order to properly equip learners with all the tools they need to start an oral interaction in the target language from day one, the most common interrogatives 'what', 'who' and 'where' (*cid*, *cía*, *cía airm*) need to be immediately introduced as well. These five elements, i.e. the two verbs for 'to be' and the three interrogatives, will not, however, be all presented at the same time. This would go against one of the main LNIS principles, i.e. the teaching of grammar in small, manageable chunks. This means that these elements will be organized and combined into different teaching blocks, with each block belonging to a different lesson with all the relevant textual and practice material.

Devoting the very first lessons of the book to copula structures, as Ó Fiannachta does in his *Seanghaeilge gan Dua* (see 2.1.), may also offer a kind of 'side' advantage to the student. Since the nouns involved in a copula sentence are always in the nominative case, the student will be able to focus on the learning and use of that key structure without worrying too much about noun inflection which, when presented from day one, may be rather daunting for the least experienced language learners. The substantive verb, on the other hand, will facilitate an initial and manageable taste of Old Irish inflection in structures such as 'he is in...', 'we are on...' etc. The use of the prepositions *i* 'in' and *for* 'on' require here the prepositional case (in other textbooks called 'dative'), to which the learner's attention will need to be drawn, while the verb form *fil*, the suppletive stem used for the negative and interrogative forms of *at·tá*, takes instead the accusative case, which will also need to be mentioned. This will give learners, as mentioned, a very first taste of inflection, which the teacher could use to simply introduce the general issues related to this fundamental Old Irish feature. Needless to say, a more systematic presentation of these and the other inflectional cases and classes will follow in the subsequent lessons of LNIS.

Regarding how grammar is covered in LNIS, instead, a reflection has to be made. Given the strong focus of the book on extensive language exposure rather than on an intensive grammar pace, I deem it much more realistic to conceive of LNIS as a two-part, i.e. two-volume, work. This would allow the introductory part of the course to be put into the hands of the absolute beginner within a shorter period of time. In the end, the driving idea behind the creation of LNIS is to provide inexperienced absolute beginners with an accessible and manageable tool, a 'door', to begin their journey

through the Old Irish language, and this is what I would like to achieve in a relatively brief time frame. I want that 'door' to be open as soon as possible. Trying to create a comprehensive single-volume textbook with the approach I have in mind would risk dramatically delaying the opening of that door. In broad terms, as far as the grammar is concerned, each volume of LNIS would cover, approximately, one half of SENG. Indicatively, LNIS 1 could include the topics that SENG covers in the first 40 lessons, i.e. the entire noun inflection, full present tense indicative and imperative conjugation, including copula and substantive verb, infixed pronouns, interrogatives, and relative clauses. I would, instead, leave for LNIS 2 all the other tenses (preterite, imperfect, future, augmented forms) and moods (subjunctive present and past, conditional). The focus of the present thesis will exclusively be the first volume of LNIS.

To finish this section about grammar, a few words about the tone of its presentation are worth adding. In a textbook based on a user-friendly approach like LNIS, the tone of grammar explanations will obviously need to be, needless to say, informal, communicative, and devoid of academic jargon. However, this does not mean trivial. The basic linguistic terminology will have to be used and mastered by the learner but will never be taken for granted. Every new concept will be introduced and explained as simply as possible upon its first occurrence, and at least one example in plain English will be provided to properly contextualize it. Both Stifter with SENG and De Vries (2013) are very good examples of this approach, although to different extents. A communicative tone is important to make learners feel that behind the wall of written words there is a person who really cares about their learning and understands the problems they may have to face, another point on which Stifter and De Vries do a good job. The informal and colloquial tone, however, has nothing to do with the quality of the linguistic information given, which must remain clear and rigorous, although always manageable and by no means overwhelming.

3.2.6. Exercises

In a textbook with a strong focus on language exposure and on active language use such as LNIS, it is important to provide the learner with a considerable number of exercises aimed at enabling him or her to manipulate the structures and vocabulary encountered in the texts of the lessons to the greatest extent possible, and in so doing foster their learning process.

After going through the exercise sections of all the textbooks discussed in the Literature Review, I have identified the approach of ØU books and, when available, of their related workbooks, as the most suitable for the teaching aims of LNIS. The reason is that most ØU exercises basically follow the same basic principles as their related textbooks, i.e. language exposure and meaningfulness, and so are based on rather long portions of text whose narrative is strictly related to the main reading of the respective lesson (see below). This means that learners, while doing these exercises, not only practise the relevant grammatical topic, but also do it while actively interacting with additional, meaningful narrative sections that, in the end, will further contribute to developing their reading skills.

The format of such exercises, however, was originally conceived with classical languages in mind, and is therefore not always transferable to Old Irish without adjustments. The Old Irish nominal and verbal systems are indeed based on—sometimes radically—different principles to those of Latin and Ancient Greek, and, as will be seen below, in order to be mastered, they require a broader vision, awareness and approach from the learner.

In his preface to *Latine Disco*, the volume containing most ancillary materials to Ørberg's *Familia Romana* (FR), including Ørberg's own workbook *Exercitia Latina*, Miraglia highlights that the latter, just like the main textbook, has three main types of exercises: one to reinforce morphosyntax, one to reinforce vocabulary and one with comprehension questions in Latin to be answered in Latin. In addition to these main types, there are also other exercises focused on transformation, completion and manipulation of structures (Miraglia et al. 2014: 5–6). What Miraglia says about FR is basically also true, although with variants, for the other ØU books, including, for example, the Italian version of *Athenaze* (IA), its workbook, as well as the new *Via Latina* (VL), published by Cultura Clásica. The exercises of the third kind, i.e. the comprehension questions and answers in the target language, are, however, not considered mere 'exercises' in LNIS, but rather an integral and fundamental part of the oral, conversational teaching approach that the textbook strongly promotes. This is why they have already been covered outside this section (see 3.2.2.).

In what follows, I am going to discuss the first two kinds of exercises regularly found in ØU textbooks, that is, those on morphology and vocabulary, and also explain how they are being adapted to LNIS and to some of the challenging peculiarities of Old Irish grammar. In so doing, it will also be necessary to briefly outline a few basic rules on inflection and conjugation to provide enough background to both clarify and justify the adjustments required by the application of the original ØU-format to Old Irish. The aim of such adjustments is to make the exercises functional, effective and productive for Old Irish learners, and so allow them to get as much extensive reading exposure and intensive active practice as possible. I have largely experienced these kinds of exercises myself while going through the entire FR, thus my comments may also be based on experience as an Ørbergian Latin learner.

3.2.6.1. Exercises on nominal morphology

One of the main concerns of ØU textbooks is to provide the learner with as much textual exposure as possible, and this is not only true for the main texts of the lessons, but also for the exercises. An exercise is never conceived as mere morphological gymnastics, but rather as a full textual experience through which the learner is also strongly encouraged to actively engage with the content. This is why ØU-style morphological exercises are not based on unrelated sentences, but on continuous narratives. This provides the learner with a much more meaningful and captivating context to work on. The text is given with nouns, adjectives or verbs (depending on the grammatical topic covered in the lesson) in their naked root form followed by a blank space, in which the student is asked to provide the relevant nominal or verbal ending. The whole section is focused on one single grammatical topic, for example, an

inflectional case, a tense or a mood, so the practice is always targeted at one specific pattern at a time. Moreover, the texts of the exercises are rather long, and thus offer the learner a good amount of additional reading exposure. The narrative is strictly connected to the main reading of the lesson and uses exactly the same vocabulary and structures, so learners, while developing grammatical awareness by actively using the endings, also read rephrased portions of a text that they already know, and this also contributes to the internalization of all the elements involved. Exercises of this kind have a primary role in FR, its additional workbook by Roberto Carfagni (2015) and, although with slightly different formats, both in VL and in the IA workbook, written by Carmelo Consoli and called Μελετήματα (2015).

When the correct answer strictly depends on the student's full understanding of the context, the active insertion of endings fosters acquisition better than just drilling decontextualized and disjointed forms, as learners are continuously reminded not only about the form itself, but also about its role and use in the transmission of meaning. This kind of practice is easily applicable to languages such as Latin or Ancient Greek, since they have not only full sets of well-defined endings for every inflection, but also a clear boundary between root and ending, which allows the two elements in question to be treated as two clearly distinguishable building blocks of a full form. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about Old Irish. In this language, most inflectional endings originally inherited from Proto-Indo-European are lost, and the marking of cases requires a much broader approach, with strategies that go beyond the simple root/ending duality. As David Stifter points out:

> It is not entirely appropriate to speak of case 'endings' [...]. Inflection is achieved by a complex interaction of morphophonemic processes of which the addition of overt endings is only one and perhaps not the most important aspect. Equally important, or more so, are the mutational effects that case forms exact on following words, and the patterns of alternations in the quality of final consonants. Metaphonic changes within inflected words are rather concomitant in nature.

(Stifter 2009: 71)

Some endings do exist, however, but their number is very limited. So, since the absence of formal endings represents a major trend in the language, it is advisable, also in order to make the beginner's task less daunting, to adjust the format of these exercises on inflection to this trend, and so avoid the focus on the strict root/ending interplay. Following this, the learner using LNIS is not given a plain root to which a given ending simply needs to be attached, but a full nominative singular (or basic) form between parentheses that, instead, must be completely rewritten with all the changes required by that specific case and number. As mentioned above, root changes, that can take place both in presence and in absence of an ending, are fundamental in Old Irish inflection. For example, in the o-stem class (Stifter 2006: 43–49), depending on case and number, a final root consonant can be palatalised or non-palatalised, or even an extra -u- can be inserted before it (u-infection), while a root vowel can instead be modified through raising (e > i, o > u), lowering (i > e, u > o) or diphthongization (é > éu or íu).[6] Another

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6 Cf. also Stifter 2009: 67.

important element of the inflection are mutations.[7] Most inflected forms trigger a specific mutation on the first sound of the word that comes right after them within the same phrase. In Stifter's textbook, and also in LNIS, the mutations triggered are indicated by superscript letters at the end of inflected forms. These superscript letters should also be considered part of the inflection, as in some cases the mutational effects that they cause on the next word are a key element in identifying the role of a form in the sentence. As if all this were not enough, a word, even when in a non-nominative position of the sentence, can also appear with no inflectional marking whatsoever, as some inflectional cases, besides having no ending, do not undergo any root change either. All these changes—including 'non-changes'—are what makes an Old Irish nominal stem a fundamental and integral part of the inflection.

The outline provided above, although by no means comprehensive, should highlight the fact that a focus on the ending alone, like the one commonly found in ØU Latin and Greek textbooks, would not be advisable or productive for Old Irish, whose high degree of root-centredness requires a focus on the whole inflected form, not just on a part of it. This is the reason why the morphological exercises in LNIS require the learner to fully manipulate a nominative singular form by a) modifying the stem, b) adding the relevant ending (when available), c) writing the superscript letter that anticipates the mutation, d) writing the mutation itself out orthographically at the beginning of the next word (when applicable). These four steps, however, are not all of the same nature. While a), b) and d) concern the actual—although normalised—Old Irish orthography, c) does not, as the superscript letter is obviously not part of the word, and appears in grammatical explanations and in glossaries only, not in sentences or texts. Nevertheless, writing it down in exercises is a good prompt for the learner to think about it, to link it to the right case and number, to correctly apply the effects of the relevant mutation to the next word and, most importantly, to start to develop an all-round inflectional awareness. However, in order for this awareness to be really 'all-round', c) must necessarily be followed by d), i.e. by the explicit marking of the mutation. This, again, poses some issues, mostly due to the fact that Old Irish mutations, although they are meant to be applied when the language is read or pronounced out loud, are in many cases not indicated—i.e. they are invisible—in the orthography, in which the letter representing the mutated sound is left fully unchanged. It is therefore very important for the learner to become aware of this issue and get used to the fact that the absence of orthographical marking does not necessarily indicate the absence of mutation. An effective way to develop this kind of awareness in learners, at least in the early stages of learning, is to have them first reflect upon the changes, and then actively apply these changes to the relevant word. This is why, in the morphological exercises of LNIS, if a noun is followed by an adjective, both the noun and the adjective are given between parentheses in their basic form, that is, fully uninflected and unmutated, leaving to the student the task of applying inflection and mutation on both elements, that is, the entire noun-adjective sequence (NAS), through the following steps:

1. <u>Identification of the syntactical function of the NAS</u>: before applying any inflectional changes, the learner analyses the role of the NAS by studying its context in the sentence and establishes the case and number required. As

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7 Cf. also Stifter 2006: 29–34, 2009: 65–66, and Thurneysen 1946: 140–153.

mentioned, the exercises of LNIS are always based on exactly the same vocabulary and structures as the main readings of the lessons, and do not introduce any new element. This means that the learner, having mastered these readings, should be able to easily understand the texts of the exercises and to focus on the required task without being distracted or frustrated by an insidious linguistic context. The full comprehensibility of the text around the task is also extremely important to keep the learner's interest and motivation high. The fact of being able to read and basically understand the sentence of the exercise at first glance is already a very rewarding experience in itself. This makes learners feel more confident, and thus gives them the determination to willingly face the challenge of the inflection.

2. <u>Inflection of the first element of the NAS</u>: after having identified the case and number required by the NAS in that specific context, the learner applies all the relevant inflectional changes to the first element of the sequence, i.e. the noun. According to the patterns of Old Irish inflection, several scenarios are possible. A noun can be inflected by: a) modifying its root alone; b) modifying its root and attaching an ending; c) only attaching an ending; d) leaving it completely unchanged. In the case of d), it is vital for the learner to gradually become aware that even the absence of marking can be a marking in itself, and that an endingless noun with no root changes should not be automatically analysed as a nominative singular. This is why it is very important, both in the readings and in the exercises, to expose the learner to a good number of unmarked forms which are not in the nominative. A whole awareness of all the possible Old Irish inflectional changes is gained not only by actually 'seeing' those changes as mere modifications of a word, but also by being mentally open to the various interpretations of their absence.

3. <u>Explicit marking of the mutation triggered by the first element of the NAS</u>: after having inflected the noun, the learner is required to clearly mark the mutation that it triggers by adding the relevant superscript letter at its end. As mentioned above, superscript letters are by no means part of the actual Old Irish spelling, and are used for pedagogical purposes only. In LNIS, they are meant to function as mutation reminders and trainers. The fact of requiring learners to clearly anticipate the mutation that is about to take place by adding that small letter pushes them to: a) develop a mutational awareness, i.e. to become aware that after most nominal forms there is a mutation that must be taken into account; b) get used to considering mutations parts of the inflection and not just secondary changes; c) gradually memorize what mutation comes after a certain case and number. In case a form triggers no mutation, the learner is instructed to add a superscript 'Ø' for 'zero'[8] after it. Since the absence of mutation is a distinctive feature of certain forms anyway, its non-marking should not be overlooked, taken for granted, or just dismissed as negligible or irrelevant. It should, instead, be considered an integral part of the inflectional system and, as such, a feature

8 This feature is not found in any of the Old Irish textbooks published so far and was first introduced by me.

that requires the language user to be fully aware of it. The addition of 'Ø' is then meant to help the learner to consciously perceive this zero-change as a functional change like any other.

4. <u>Application of the mutation to the second element of the NAS</u>: once the triggered mutation has been established and properly marked with the relevant superscript letter at the end of the first element of the NAS, the learner is required to apply it by actually mutating the initial sound of the next word. Sound, rather than letter, is the right word to use here, as some mutations, although always meant to be applied in pronunciation, are not shown in the orthography. This means that in some cases the initial letter of the mutated word, although it represents a mutated sound, does not undergo any orthographical changes. Two scenarios are then possible when a mutation is applied: a) the mutation is orthographically visible, i.e. the change in orthography clearly mirrors a change in pronunciation; b) the mutation is not orthographically visible, i.e. the sound does change anyway, but its change is not mirrored by the orthography, which remains fully unchanged. While the application of a) is more straightforward, b) may be more ambiguous and puzzling for beginners. This is the reason why it is important to clearly state the triggered mutation at the end of the previous word. Once they have marked the superscript letter themselves, learners cannot help being aware of—and also ready for—the change awaiting them, which in turn becomes more manageable regardless of its orthographical issues. Moreover, learners are also clearly instructed and strongly encouraged to pronounce the entire sentence, including the newly inflected NAS, out loud, even more than once, until all those inflectional and mutational changes come out naturally. This is not only a good way to start to internalize mutations in context by using and hearing them (although from one's own voice) at the same time, but also good training for the conversational use of Old Irish, on which LNIS is based.

5. <u>Inflection of the second element of the NAS</u>: once the mutation is applied, the learner has to inflect the adjective of the sequence by applying the principles discussed in step 2. The inflection of the adjective will have to match in gender, number and case that of the previous noun.

6. <u>Explicit marking of the mutation triggered by the second element of the NAS</u>: when the adjective is inflected, the learner is once again required to add the relevant superscript letter after it, this time to mark the mutation that it would trigger if followed by an additional adjective. In a simple NAS, with only one adjective, the mutation triggered by it actually remains 'suspended', as there is nothing to which it can be applied. Nevertheless, learners are strongly encouraged to mark it anyway to foster and increase their mutational and inflectional awareness.

For the sake of clarity, the procedure described above applies to a very basic NAS, i.e. a NAS that only includes one noun and one adjective. Such sequences, however, can be

longer than that. A basic NAS can actually be expanded on both sides: on the left side with a definite article, and on the right side with an additional adjective. In Old Irish, definite articles not only inflect, but also cause similar mutations as nouns and adjectives. This means that, in a sequence expanded on the left side, the learner will have to apply all the inflectional and mutational changes described above starting from the article, and that the noun, in turn, will not only be inflected, but also mutated. Similarly, if the sequence, instead, is expanded on the right side with a second adjective, this will also be mutated by the adjective that comes right before it. Needless to say, whatever the length of the sequence, the upcoming mutation should always be clearly marked by adding the relevant superscript letter at the end of the word that triggers it. In order for learners to foster their acquisition of the inflectional system, this approach should be applied to all the mutations involved, even the 'suspended' ones, i.e. those potentially triggered by the last element of the sequence.

3.2.6.2. Exercises on verbal morphology

The same kind of exercise outlined above for nominal morphology is used in LNIS for verbal morphology as well. The format is similar: verbs are given between parentheses in their third singular present form and the learner is required to conjugate them according to the subject of the sentence. Since Old Irish has no infinitive, the third singular present also functions as citation—or 'basic'—form, i.e. the form in which the verb is listed in glossaries or dictionaries, and this is the reason why it is used as the starting form in exercises. In the Old Irish present tense, verbs can be conjugated by a) adding an ending, b) modifying the root (by raising, lowering or *u*-infection), c) combining a) and b). Apart from very few exceptions, verbal forms do not trigger any mutations to following words, so the learner will not have to worry about them when conjugating. The Old Irish verbal system is much richer in endings than the nominal system, and the number of endingless verbal forms is more limited. Nevertheless, it is an extremely complex system, and its different features should be carefully practised without overwhelming the learner. For example, as soon as simple verbs are introduced, learners are faced with a very unusual feature, i.e. the fact that every Old Irish verb can be conjugated according to two different, and by no means interchangeable, patterns, each with its own set of endings. These two sets of endings are called 'absolute' and 'conjunct'. Absolute endings are used when the verb is not preceded by any particle modifying its meaning, while conjunct endings are used every time the verb is preceded by a particle. The language has many of these particles, usually called 'conjunct particles', but there are three most likely to be encountered by a beginner: the negative particle *ní·*, the interrogative particle *in^N·*, and the interrogative negative particle *innád^N·*. So, for example, in forms like *car<u>aid</u>* 'he loves' or *car<u>mai</u>* 'we love', we have to use absolute endings, but in forms like *ní·car<u>a</u>* 'he does not love', *ní·car<u>am</u>* 'we do not love', *in·/innád·car<u>a</u>* 'does/doesn't he love?' or *in·/innád·car<u>am</u>* 'do/don't we love?', conjunct endings must be used instead. To avoid the confusion that may arise when this dual system is encountered for the first time, the focus of the exercises of LNIS is graded according to the following three steps:

1. <u>First exercise: absolute endings only</u>: in this section all the verbs are in their affirmative form, i.e. with no particle whatsoever preceding them. Verbs to be conjugated are given between parentheses in their citation (third singular) form, and the learner is required to conjugate them to match the context of the sentence. Forms have to be rewritten in full, in order to have the learner practise both the stem (which is also important as a vocabulary item), and the ending. When the required form is a third singular, that is, identical to the one between parentheses, it must be rewritten anyway, as learners need to become aware that they are now using it as a real third singular form, and not as a conventional 'basic' form.

2. <u>Second exercise: conjunct endings only</u>: after having practised absolute endings in a meaningful and comprehensible context, the learner is asked to do the same with the conjunct set. This means that each sentence is now introduced by one of the three conjunct particles mentioned above, to which the correct form of the verb must be attached. As for the textual context, one might think that it would be practical to reuse the first exercise of the sequence, the one already used for absolute endings, with just different instructions like, for example: 'Do exercise 1 again, but now put all the sentences in the negative'. Such an option, however, has a serious downside, as the learner might end up just focusing on the already conjugated absolute forms and change them to conjunct, with no meaningful interaction with the text. One of the main aims of LNIS is to give learners as much language exposure as possible, and have them practise the grammar while interacting with the text. Exercises, beyond having a grammatical training purpose, should also offer the learner additional exposure to meaningful portions of language with which to actively interact. It is then important that the manipulation of grammar be closely connected to a meaningful context, and that the choice of the correct grammatical form be subject to the full comprehension of the portion of text around it. This is the reason why the text of the second exercise should differ from the text of the first. The comprehension of an identical text would not be a challenge anymore, only minimally engaging the learner's brain, which would then risk ending up focusing on the transformation of the verbal forms only. In such a case, what was meant to be a meaningful process of grammatical application would in the end become a mere transformation drill. A brand new text, instead, fully challenges learners by requiring them to put the whole process of reading, comprehension, interaction and manipulation in place. One last important point for this second step is the approach to conjunct particles. Two scenarios are possible: a) conjunct particles are already included in the text of the exercise along with their middle dot (*ní·, in·, innád·*), and the learner is only required to attach the correct conjunct form to them; b) conjunct particles are not included in the text, and the learner is required to actually write them down along with the verbal form. Although both strategies may be effective, a) is actually more limiting. If the particle is already given, learners may unconsciously end up focusing on the core verbal form only, doing basically the same thing they did with the absolute forms in the previous exercise. However, the aim of an exercise completely based on conjunct forms

should not only be the mere practice of conjunct endings, but also the development of a 'conjunct awareness'. It is important that learners become aware from the very beginning that a conjunct form has at least two elements and does not consist of the verb alone, and also that conjunct endings are always used in 'conjunction' with something that modifies the basic meaning of the verb. A good way to foster this kind of 'conjunct awareness' is having the learner write down in full all the elements involved, i.e. both the particle and the verb form, multiple times. However, so as not to overload the exercise and risk creating frustration, the learner is given a clear hint as to which particle is required for each sentence. This indication is given in parentheses, just before the verb to conjugate, by using the abbreviations N (negative), I (interrogative) and NI (negative interrogative). This kind of guidance also guarantees an equal distribution—and so an equal practice—of all these three fundamental particles. With the approach outlined above, by writing down the full conjunct form with both elements, learners practise the particle, the mutation triggered by it (if any), and the conjunct verbal ending, while fostering, at the same time, their conjunct awareness that, for a language like Old Irish, is certainly of great usefulness.

3. Third exercise: absolute and conjunct endings together. After having practised the two sets of endings separately, the learner is now asked to use them within the same exercise and also within the same sentence. The aim is to increase the ability to comfortably switch from one set to the other and to gradually gain fluency in basic Old Irish conjugation.

The discussion so far has been limited to simple verbs, that is, verbs that only consist of a root and an ending in their basic form. Old Irish, however, also has an extremely large number of compound verbs, whose root is always preceded by at least one preverb. One very common compound verb is *do·beir*, 'to give, to bring'. In this case '*do·*' is the preverb, and '*·beir*' is the root. In Old Irish a preverb has the same effects as a conjunct particle. This means that compound verbs always take conjunct endings, and that absolute endings are never an option. In a morphological exercise about compound verbs, the learner is given the full verb between parentheses and asked to conjugate it by using the correct personal ending.

Compound verbs, however, can also take conjunct particles, which, for example, must be used to make them negative or interrogative, and this poses some vexing issues for the absolute beginner. In order to understand the challenge faced by learners, a few points need to be clarified here. What follows is a simplified—if not trivialised—explanation that aims by no means at completeness. This is approximately what I say when I first introduce my absolute beginners to compound verbs. In Old Irish, a compound verb in its basic form, that is, with no conjunct particle before it, is stressed on its second syllable, that is, the one that comes after the preverb, like in *do·beir*. Such forms are usually called 'deuterotonic', i.e. 'stressed on the second', in Old Irish grammar. In a deuterotonic form, the preverb is said to come in 'pretonic' position, that is, before the stress. The pretonic position has only one available slot. If we want to make the verb negative to say, for example, 'he/she does not give', we need to use the conjunct particle *ní·*. Conjunct particles, as seen above, always occupy the pretonic

position. The problem is that the pretonic position has only one slot available, and that this slot is already taken by the preverb. The pretonic position, however, always prioritizes the particle over the preverb, which is then pushed rightward, and joins the root in 'tonic', i.e. stressed, position. 'Orthographically' speaking, we can say that the conjunct particle takes the pretonic position before the raised dot (·) and pushes the preverb beyond it, where the stress falls. Something like *do·b<u>ei</u>r* > **ní·d<u>o</u>beir* (* means that the form is not attested as such and is only used for explanatory purposes). Now the pretonic position is taken by *ní·*, and the whole verb form, i.e. both the preverb and the root, is in tonic position, with the stress on its first syllable (*do*). This is the reason why such forms are called 'prototonic', i.e. 'stressed on the first'. The problem is that prototonic forms, because of the repositioning of the stress, usually undergo several phonological changes that often make them unrecognizable, or in any case essentially impossible to predict by beginners (and not only by them). For example, *do·beir*, when preceded by a particle, will never go to **·dobeir* but, instead, to *·tabair*. Thus, 'he/she does not give' is *ní·tabair*, something not really identifiable as derived from the basic form of the verb. Unfortunately, 'prototonic transformations' can be much more extreme than that, like, for example, in the verb *do·sluindi* 'to deny', whose prototonic counterpart is *·díltai*. For this reason, prototonic forms should be memorized or internalized through constant practice. Compound verbs are then best learnt in deuterotonic/prototonic pairs, like '*do·beir, ·tabair*', or '*do·sluindi, ·díltai*', and a good introductory Old Irish textbook should always give them in this format in glossaries and word lists. This is a fundamental practice for absolute beginners, as it can reduce the amount of frustration that may arise when compound verbs are first introduced. David Stifter's *Sengoídelc* has this practice applied throughout, and LNIS, taking inspiration from it, does the same.

As mentioned above, Old Irish has a very large number of compound verbs, and many of them express everyday actions like 'to give', 'to say', 'to see', 'to do', 'to visit', 'to play', 'to count'. Thus, an active approach to Old Irish, such as the one proposed by LNIS, should offer as much focus as possible on compound verbs, as the learner is not just expected to decipher their prototonic forms with the help of a glossary, but also to actively use them, both orally and in writing. As far as morphological exercises are concerned, it is fundamental that learners get as much training as possible in producing the required prototonic forms starting from the deuterotonic ones. After a first section with deuterotonic forms only, a second exercise is then completely devoted to prototonic forms. The format is similar to the one already used for conjunct forms of simple verbs, with parentheses including both the hint to the conjunct particle and the basic deuterotonic forms which, once converted into prototonic, also need to be conjugated to match the relevant subject. In some cases, just adding an ending (when required) implies even more phonological changes in the already puzzling prototonic form, and this is another good reason to have learners practise extensively with these variants. Old Irish compound verbs can be a huge challenge for an absolute beginner and are best learnt through a large amount of text exposure and of active use, two things that LNIS is certainly committed to offering.

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3.2.6.3. Exercises on vocabulary

Another common exercise in all ØU books is the one focused on vocabulary. This does not pose any particular issue when used for Old Irish, and the original format can be adopted without any adjustments. The text of the exercise has blanks to be filled in by using words from a list given in the margin. Words are listed in their basic forms, i.e. nominative singular for nouns and adjectives, and third person singular present for verbs. Compound verbs are given along with their prototonic forms. Besides choosing the right word, the learner is also asked to adapt it to the morphosyntactic context of the sentence, i.e. to inflect it or conjugate it accordingly. This makes the exercise on vocabulary an exercise on inflection and conjugation as well. It is thus very important that all the verbs, nouns and adjectives listed in the margin be given along with their relevant class and gender indicated between parentheses, so as to allow learners to immediately identify the inflectional pattern to follow. This can save them not only time, but also the frustration of having to constantly go back and forth in the book in order to retrieve—or at least to double-check—the morphological information they need.

As for the textual context, the approach is the same as the one used for the morphological exercise: the text aims to be fully comprehensible for those who have mastered the lesson materials on which it is based and does not introduce any new grammatical points or vocabulary. This will allow learners to go through the whole exercise without having to stop to decipher anything, and thus fully and consciously enjoy their newly acquired knowledge. At the same time, the text also aims to offer supplementary language exposure to the learner who, once the exercise is completed, is also encouraged to use it as additional reading.

3.2.6.4. Transformation drills

Exercises based on continuous narratives, however, are not always the best option. They work well when the task required from of learner does not disrupt the whole structure of the text and its narrative continuity, that is, when the interventions required are strictly morphological and based on the production and insertion of missing forms only. When, instead, the exercises revolve around the change of larger portions of text, other formats are more suitable. In such cases, ØU materials, and especially the workbooks, make large-scale use of more traditional transformation drills based on individual sentences rather than narratives. This format, also adopted by LNIS, is preferable when the task is focused on syntactical topics that require the manipulation of entire sentences, for example, in exercises on Old Irish relative clauses, in which the learner is asked to combine two simple main clauses into a complex relative sentence. In syntactical drills of this kind, too much textual context around the clauses to be combined would risk being distracting for the learner, if not even confusing or frustrating, and could nullify the potential benefits of the exercise. It is then more advisable, when practising specific points of syntax, to use a shorter and a more compact format to allow the learner, especially in the early stages of learning, to exclusively focus on the textual units directly involved in the manipulation. Needless to say, the same principle used for

narrative exercises is applied here as well, which means that the sentences of the drills are not disconnected from the main reading of the lesson, and still mirror its content and vocabulary to keep the exercise fully comprehensible and thus foster the learner's focus and motivation. These kinds of drills, although with less textual context, are extremely useful to develop targeted competencies on complex syntactical points, whose active mastering is fundamental to the approach proposed by LNIS.

3.3. Limits and weaknesses of LNIS

In the sections above I have discussed the principles at the heart of LNIS. These are principles in which I strongly believe and that I consider effective when regularly and seriously applied to language teaching and learning. I hope to have been able to highlight their benefits well enough, so I am not going to insist on them here. What I am going to do, instead, is briefly mention the limits and weaknesses that LNIS, despite being strongly focused on offering learners an accessible introduction to Old Irish, inevitably will have, and of which I am fully aware. For all the reasons discussed in this chapter and briefly summarized below, LNIS will be a lengthy book, with two strictly related weaknesses: 1) working through it will be time-consuming and, as a consequence, 2) the textbook will not be suitable for normal university courses. Basically, the same features that make LNIS an innovative textbook also betray its limits. These are:

- <u>Very large amount of text</u>: the lengthy texts of the lessons will make the book long and its study time-consuming. Rushing through it would be of no use, as this not only would go against its fundamental principles, but would also dramatically compromise its potential as a learning tool. All that text is there to give the learner as much language exposure as possible and to be gradually absorbed and digested through multiple readings.

- <u>Strong focus on language use</u>: understanding the long readings is just the first step. Then the large amount of text should ideally be used as a starting point for intensive language practice, so as to enable learners, with the help of the teacher, to produce their own pieces of language, both orally and in writing. This means that, once the text has been fully understood, a considerable amount of time should be spent on oral interaction about its content, first between teacher and students, and then among students in pairs or triads. This activity will further increase the time required to cover a lesson.

- <u>Length of the exercises and 'Orality First' (OF)</u>: exercises in LNIS are very long and should be basically regarded as additional readings whose aim is not only to have learners practise grammatical points, but also to offer them additional textual exposure. Moreover, in order to keep the learner focused on orality even during the exercises, in the directions I strongly recommend using what I called the 'Orality First' principle: learners are requested to go through each exercise orally first, even more than once, until they are able to fill in all the blanks in

sequence and without interruptions. Only then should answers be written down. This intensive practice will further foster the internalization of grammar, vocabulary and phonology. Needless to say, the considerable length of the exercises and the application of the OF principle will also greatly increase the time required for each lesson.

Unfortunately, all the features mentioned above, which can be seen exemplified in my sample lesson (see 5.1.), are what makes LNIS unsuitable for swift-paced college modules, in the course of which students are usually required to cover a considerable number of grammatical topics in a very limited number of contact hours. For example, at Maynooth University, a regular full Old Irish course comprises 4 24-hour modules, for a total of 100 contact hours including the tutorials. This barely suffices to cover all the required grammatical topics. There is basically no time for reading exercises, which students are required to do on their own.[9] It is therefore not by chance that textbooks based on very large amounts of texts and language practice, such as ØU- or PI-books, are mostly used in private institutions, such as Accademia Vivarium Novum, Cultura Clásica, and the Polis Institute, or in online schools such as the Ancient Language Institute, where the usual standard academic constraints are not an issue, and courses are tailored so as to derive the most benefit from the teaching materials. For example, at the Polis Institute, to cover their introductory Greek textbook *Polis: Speaking Ancient Greek as a Living Language*, 'you need 120 hours of instruction. We typically cover the book at Polis either during a full intensive month (6 hours per day) or during a full academic year (4 hours a week)'.[10] Similarly, at the Accademia Vivarium Novum, the introductory Latin textbook *Familia Romana* is allocated at least 150 contact hours. This is because the ultimate goal in such institutions is fluency in the language, whereas in the university context learning Old Irish is just one of many goals of a study programme. Unfortunately, institutions devoted to the intensive teaching of Old Irish do not yet exist. Nevertheless, I still hope that the innovative approach promoted by LNIS, along with its aim to make Old Irish more accessible to less experienced language learners, will also inspire the creation of suitable teaching settings for it.

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9 I experienced this kind of constraints myself, as a student, when I took the Ancient Greek module (4 hours a week) at Maynooth University, a few years ago. The course textbook, called *Reading Greek* (2ⁿᵈ edition, Cambridge University Press), was very good, and strongly based on reading, with very large amounts of texts in each lesson. The first term went rather smoothly, but in the second term, when the grammar was more advanced and the readings much longer and more complex, it became basically impossible, despite the 4 hours, to cover the lessons properly. The teacher was so concerned with covering the long list of required grammatical topics that the pace of the class was dramatically increased to the detriment of reading, which was completely left in the hands of students. Even with a huge motivation, and considering that Greek was not the only module that I was taking, I was not able to read the texts of the lessons more than once, which definitely compromised the benefits of a textbook based on textual exposure.

10 Private email exchange with Christophe Rico (28 June 2024), author of the book and dean of the Polis Institute.

4. Producing Texts in Historical Languages

Although the main focus of this thesis is the teaching of Old Irish to absolute beginners, I deem it fitting to devote a chapter to advanced beginners as well, i.e. those learners who, having completed their first introductory textbook, find themselves facing the challenge of beginning to read original texts in Old Irish or in any other historical language. The problem, as I discussed in my review of the Lehmanns' textbook (see 2.3.), is that authentic texts were originally aimed at native speakers, not at language learners whose only reading experiences are strictly based on their textbook. This means that such texts are not limited in terms of morphology, syntax and vocabulary, and that an advanced beginner would in most cases end up having to painfully decipher them word for word, as I myself did at that stage.

It would be very beneficial for Old Irish learners to have 'bridge texts', i.e. texts that can work as 'bridges' between the textbook and the original literature. These texts should be complex enough to push learners to activate and reinforce their grammatical and lexical knowledge, but at the same time manageable enough to allow a relatively continuous reading without the frustration of decoding. Such texts are extremely common for modern languages,[1] but much less so for historical languages. The reason is obvious: historical languages have no native speakers able to write effortlessly in them. Writing in a historical language requires not only good active competencies and skills, but also huge motivation to undertake projects seen by many as completely pointless. Nevertheless, a significant number of bridge texts have been produced at least for Latin and, to a lesser extent, Classical and Koine Greek, while for other languages the production has remained very limited, although, as will be seen later in this chapter, surprisingly striking in some cases.

Bridge texts can be produced mainly in two ways: by composing them from scratch, as original texts, or by translating already existing works into the target language. As a long-time translator myself, I will focus in this chapter on the latter option. Nevertheless, I deem it opportune to also give at least a brief outline of the production of original texts, to show that composing in historical languages is not the taboo that some uncompromising scholars would like it to be.[2] In doing this, I am going to focus on works produced for educational use only, that is, created to support language learning, and will not touch upon what are called Neo-Latin and Neo-Ancient Greek literatures[3], whose coverage would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, the outline below is not meant to be comprehensive, including merely a selection of some of the most relevant works.

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1 Cf., for example, Sheehan 2015.
2 Cf. Ball & Ellsworth 1996
3 Cf. Moul 2017, and Van Rooy 2023.

4.1. Original bridge texts

Accessible reading materials in both Latin and Greek were produced as early as during the Renaissance by authors such as Erasmus, Posselius and other Humanists (see 1.1.), whose texts were aimed at preparing their learners to read the classics. Moving to the 18ᵗʰ century, worth mentioning is also *Epitome Historiæ Sacræ* (1784), a rather popular and relatively accessible reader based on sacred history, by the French abbot and educator Charles François Lhomond (1727–1894). Carlo Carfagni republished it in 2009 through Accademia Vivarium Novum in a fully Ørbergian format, with a wealth of marginal notes and exercises in the style of LLPSI materials. For those who are learning Latin with Ørberg's textbooks, the reading of *Epitome* is recommended upon completion of *Familia Romana*.

Among the countless readers produced in the 19ᵗʰ century and based on the retelling of classical myths or historical events, worth mentioning is Francis David Morice's *Stories in Attic Greek* (1878), for which the author composed 263 equally long (ca. 100 words) stories, supported by notes and a comprehensive Greek-English glossary at the back. The objective of this reader is to accompany learners from the end of the textbook to their first original text, which was usually Xenophon's *Anabasis*. In the preface, Morice highlights the 'bridging' role of this book:

> Thus the beginner who passes from this book to Xenophon, Thucydides, and Demosthenes, and to the composition of Attic prose on his own account, will have little or nothing to unlearn. On the contrary, he will, it is hoped, find his memory stored with a good stock of precisely those words and phrases which will most often stand him in stead. At the same time, care has been taken not to perplex the beginner with long sentences or difficult idioms.
>
> (Morice 1878: vii)

This book was made available again in 2006 by Anna Mahoney, who republished it with the title *Morice's Stories in Attic Greek*.

On the Latin side, Francis Ritchie published *Fabulae Faciles* in 1884, based on an approach similar to Morice's text. The book retells the stories of four Greek myths in 100 short and manageable sections and is aimed at preparing the learner for the reading of Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*. *Fabulae Faciles* was then updated and republished in 1903 by John Copeland Kirtland as *Ritchie's Fabulae Faciles*, a version that has remained in use up to this day. The 'bridging' character of Richie's reader is highly praised by its editor:

> Indeed, I know nothing better to introduce the student into the reading of connected narrative, and to bridge the great gulf between the beginner's book of the prevailing type and the Latinity of Caesar or Nepos. They are adapted to this use not merely by reason of their simplicity and interest, but more particularly by the graduating of difficulties and the large use of Caesarian words and phrases to which Mr. Ritchie calls attention in his preface.
>
> (Kirtland 1903: vii)

Given its popularity, however, other more recent editions were published, among which is that by Geoffrey Steadman, now in its second edition (2024). The book, again titled *Ritchie's Fabulae Faciles*, has very handy, learner-friendly, and comprehensive facing vocabulary lists and commentaries, and is also available in free digital format from the author's website.[4] Furthermore, Daniel Pettersson, from the very active Latin teaching website *Latinitium*,[5] also made a full professional audio recording of it, thus increasing its potential as a learning tool.

In 1888, Francis Henry Colson published another Greek reader called *Stories and Legends: A First Greek Reader, with Notes, Vocabulary and Exercises*. The book includes stories of different length, this time arranged into 8 different topics, among which are fables, mythology, Athenians, Spartans, Alexander and philosophers. The style is similar to Morice's book, but the stories may be somewhat longer and provide the learner with a wealth of reading practice.

A great contribution to original texts was made by W.H.D. Rouse and his colleagues in the golden era of the Perse School (see 1.4.), with books such as Paine and Mainwaring's *Decem Fabulae Pueris Puellisque Agendae* (1912), Appleton and Jones' *Puer Romanus* (1913) and *Pons Tironum* (1914), Appleton's *Ludi Persici* (1921), all aimed at supplying accessible 'reading material for a stage where Latin authors are of little use' (Paine & Mainwaring 1912: 4), and, on the Greek side, the already discussed Rouse's *A Greek Boy at Home* (1909; see 1.4.1.5.). In his introduction to *Ludi Persici*, Appleton is very keen to highlight the importance of accessible reading materials to foster learning, enjoyment and motivation:

> But it is hoped that they will help to fill a gap which must often have worried all classical teachers, namely the lack of simple Latin texts which can be read at a pace quick enough to provide interest to those who have only a moderate acquaintance with the Latin language. It is high time that we gave up spending weary hours in stumbling through a few chapters of Caesar and Livy; let us postpone the reading of these authors until they can be read quickly enough to be enjoyed, and meanwhile let us give our boys something which, while providing a good preparation for the reading of the classical authors themselves, will, instead of producing a premature weariness of the classics, so enliven the hours of classical teaching that boys will have acquired a love for the language even before they come to read the great authors who wrote in it.

(Appleton 1912: 7)

Worth mentioning are also original novels written in Latin. One of the most popular is Herbert Chester Nutting's *Ad Alpes: A Tale of Roman Life* (1923), which comes with a full Latin-English glossary. In the intentions of its author, this novel was aimed at facilitating the transition from Caesar to Cicero (Nutting 1923: 3–4), a feature that makes it an unusual example of a 'bridge'. Unlike most bridge books, which are conceived to help the transition from the outside to the inside of the original literature, i.e. from textbooks to real authors, this one is intended to work from within the literary corpus, assisting and fostering the learners' passage to the next level of knowledge. The

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4 https://geoffreysteadman.com/ritchies-fabulae-faciles
5 https://latinitium.com

value of this book as an intermediate reader is still recognized today, so much so that Daniel Pettersson published a brand-new edition of it in 2017, along with a complete professional audio recording.

Other original novels in Latin were *Julia* (1923) and *Camilla* (1926) by Maud Reed, *Carolus et Maria* (1933) by Marjorie Fay, and *Cornelia* (1933) by Mima Maxey. While *Camilla* is a second-year book, the other three are all aimed at first-year pupils. This clearly shows an already existing awareness of the importance of accessible texts based on continuous narrative, primarily as a means of gradually developing learners' reading fluency starting from the very early stages of learning. Worth noting is also the setting of two of these novels. While Reed's stories are both set in ancient Roman times, the other two books have a contemporary setting. Fay and Maxey were, in fact, colleagues, and both taught in the Department of Latin of the University High School of Chicago. Their books appeared in the same year and are clearly based on the same teaching principles, among which is the importance of setting the story in a time familiar to the pupil so as to avoid burdening the learning process. Maxey supports this choice in her preface:

> The acquisition of the language itself is a sufficiently large task for the beginner. He should not be called upon to deal with situations outside his own experience or to acquire knowledge through the new medium;
>
> (Maxey 1913: vii)

In their 'Author's Foreword to Pupils', both Maxey and Fay seem then to be keen to reassure their pupils that, while reading the stories, they will not risk getting lost in an unfamiliar world:

> This is the story of a little American girl named Cornelia. Her life was different from yours, but not very different. You will readily understand the things that she did.
>
> (Ibd. xi)

> Charles and Mary, an American boy and girl, wish to share with you some of their experiences and to present a few of their friends.
>
> (Fay 1933: iv)

Interestingly enough, this focus on the contemporary setting is perfectly in line with what Christophe Rico from the Polis Institute implemented almost 100 years later in his Greek and Latin textbooks (see 1.5.4.), which, incidentally, inspired me to use the same feature in LNIS.

I was not able to locate a copy of *Daimon: An Adventure Story for First Year Latin Students* (1971) by Richard D. Case. Nonetheless, since it seems to be one of the very few original Latin texts for beginners published in the 1970s, I think it is worth mentioning here anyway.

Going back to original works based on the retelling of Greek myths, in 2018 Luigi Miraglia published *Fabulae Syrae*, an outstanding all-Latin 140-page illustrated book in A4 format in full Ørbergian style. *Fabulae Syrae* was written to complement the

final chapters (26–34) of Ørberg's *Familia Romana* and provides additional reading materials to reinforce what has been learnt in the related chapter of the main textbook. In his 'Praefātio', Miraglia strongly emphasizes the pedagogic importance of these stories:

> Spērāmus igitur vōs quoque, quī eās lectūrī estis, hīs Graecīs Rōmānīsque fābulīs dēlectārī posse. Quae certē ūtilēs erunt: nam quī hās pāginās leget, nōn modo rēs grammaticās et vocābula Latīna, quae in capitulīs XXV–XXXIV librī, cui titulus est FAMILIA ROMANA, iam cognōvit, certius discet ac memoriā retinēbit, sed etiam nōn pauca verba alia facile discere poterit.[6]

(Miraglia 2018: 5)

The same year saw also the appearance of *Pugio Bruti: A Crime Story in Easy Latin*, another important contribution by Daniel Pettersson, this time together with Amelie Rosengren. The book, which comes with a full Latin-English glossary at the back, is conceived for 'lower-intermediate' learners, for whom 'there are too few well-written stories' (Petterson & Rosengren 2018: vii) available. As stated by Pettersson in his preface, the story attempts to give the learner as much comprehensible exposure as possible without using an overwhelming amount of vocabulary:

> *Pūgiō Brūtī* has a vocabulary of approximately 350 unique words. The story is over 9,000 words long, thus providing intense exposure to the items in the basic selection.

(Ibd. viii)

Basing a long reading on the repetition of a limited number of words, and thus increasing the learner's language exposure while keeping the text understandable, is another key feature I too have implemented in my own LNIS (see 3.2.1.). Besides a full audio version of the book, Pettersson has also created a video course completely based on it to help low-intermediate learners to develop their reading and speaking fluency.

The same concept behind *Pugio Bruti* is also used to create what are usually called 'beginner novels' (Piazza 2017). Although originally developed, mostly in the United States, by teachers of modern languages, these kinds of books quickly inspired Classics teachers as well, and 'in just the past few years, there has been a flood of Latin novels which follow the same pedagogical principles as their modern language counterparts' (Ibd. 154).[7] In his programmatic essay, Piazza, himself an author of beginner novels, attempts a definition of this genre:

> A beginner novel is a chapter book containing anywhere from 20 to 100 or more pages, which has been written specifically with students in their first two years of language study in mind [...]. The vocabulary has been selected to represent high-frequency words [...]. Most

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6 We hope therefore that you, who are about to read them, will also enjoy these Greek and Roman tales. They will certainly be useful, since he who will read these pages will not only more confidently acquire and retain in his memory the grammatical points and the Latin vocabulary that he has already learnt in Chapters XXV–XXXIV of the book entitled *Familia Romana*, but he will also be able to easily learn many other words. (my translation)
7 For a study on application of beginner novels to college teaching, cf. also Shelton 2021.

of the novels in this category contain fewer than 250 unique words [...]. While vocabulary is always limited in these novels—a practice which ESL educators refer to as "sheltering"—grammatical complexity is generally not.

(Ibd. 155)

The main principle of a beginner novel is the same applied to *Pugio Bruti*, i.e. to use a limited number of words to offer a large amount of exposure. For most books, two word counts are usually provided, the 'unique word count' (count of 'types'), and the 'total word count' (count of 'tokens'), on the basis of which the novel is deemed more or less suitable for a certain learning context. For example, *Pugio Bruti* is 350/9000. The unique word count and the total word count, however, 'may be estimated, and reflect different approaches which may exclude different forms, cognates, proper names, etc.' (Ibd. 160) and may also largely vary. Just to give some examples, Lance Piantaggini's *Rufus Lutulentus* (2017) is 20/1200, Andrew Olimpi's *Filia Regis et Monstrum Horribile* (2017) is 125/3371, Ellie Arnold's *Cloelia: Puella Romana* (2016) is 200/4000, and Robert Patrick's *Itinera Petri: Flammae Ducant* (2015) is 347/4281.

In some cases, beginner novels are even adapted and translated into other languages. I know at least three of them that are translations into Latin of original Spanish versions. These are the following: *Brando Brown Canem Vult* (Slochum Bailey 2016) [*Brandon Brown quiere un perro,* 2013] (125/3700) by Carol Gaab, *Marcus et Imagines Suae Bonae* (Piantaggini & Bracey 2022) [*Berto y sus buenas ideas*, 2018] (143/1794), by Magaly Rodriguez, and *Dominus Quixotus: Eques Ultimus* (King 2017) [*Don Quijote, el último caballero*, 2014], by Karen Rowan. Translating beginner novels can be an effective strategy to make simple texts available to learners in a reasonable amount of time. The template is already set, the limited vocabulary already selected, and the basic structures are already in place. I made such an attempt myself a few years ago, translating the Brandon Brown novel into Old Irish with the title *Is Accobor la Bréndan mBrown Cú*. The author seemed to be interested in its publication initially, but then, unfortunately, the publisher who owns the rights decided that there was not enough market for it, and thus the project was abandoned. I have included the full draft of that translation in 5.4.1. Despite my unsuccessful attempt to publish my version, I still think that translating such books is a very good way to produce texts for learners. I will certainly make other attempts in the future.

Although they are also published by companies such as TPRS Books or Wayside Publishing, beginner novels are predominantly an independent phenomenon, and usually self-produced. The authors are mostly schoolteachers using a communicative approach to Latin. One of the most prolific is Lance Piantaggini, who has written over 30 fully illustrated novels, all set in ancient Rome and arranged into four levels, from Early Beginner to Low Intermediate. Worth mentioning is also Andrew Olimpi, who, with his series 'Comprehensible Classics' based on the retelling of classical myths, has already published 20 books. On his website,[8] Lance Piantaggini tries to keep track of all the published beginner novels, and the list is, so far, thirty pages long.[9] Beginner novels

8 https://magisterp.com
9 https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bF8hZuxTDtgNMSSdonEX112JJaVYqoPH7w27Oju9ETs/edit

are an effective tool to get students approach continuous—although at times trivial—narrative from the very early stages of learning, and the option of creating such texts also for Old Irish should not be ruled out.

4.2. Translating into historical languages: a few reflections

The other way to produce 'bridge' texts for historical languages is by translating already existing materials (books, short stories etc.) into them. This is, however, a much less common application of translation, for which a specialized academic interest within the field of Translation Studies is yet to emerge, as is attested by the extremely limited number of outputs dedicated to this topic. Nevertheless, translating into ancient and medieval languages does raise a considerable number of issues and therefore merits further reflection. This is what I am going to attempt in what follows.

4.2.1. Reasons

The first important point to clarify is the reasons for translating into a language that has no more native speakers. Clarifying these reasons will consequently clarify the target audience as well, which may not be clearly identifiable at first, as 'without the obvious choice of the first-language audience, it is quite uncertain who the TL [target language] receiver is' (Lúkács 2007: 2). Usually, translations are aimed at making a text written in a given source language (SL) accessible to native speakers of a given target language (TL). In this case, the SL can be either historical, i.e. with non-native speakers, or modern, while the TL is always modern. In translations into a historical TL, however, the opposite is true. Such translations are not aimed at native speakers, or at disclosing the beauty of literary works that would otherwise remain inaccessible. Translators who undertake such a task simply aim, for different reasons, at providing their potential audience, that is, 'anyone who has a command of a TL on a certain level' (Ibd.), with a piece of language to read. The reasons behind their wish to produce such texts may vary, as well as the peculiarity of the audience that they have in mind. Some of the reasons may be related to purely individual fulfilment, as Lúkács points out:

> [...] translations into a dead language are quite often considered 'self-contained'. They are born not to satisfy TL receivers' request but rather as a result of a SL receiver's passion towards the TL and the practice is often for self-motivated reasons such as entertainment or a demonstration of skills.

> (Ibd. 3)

In many cases, however, the main reasons behind such undertakings are pedagogical, and the aim of the translator, who is usually a teacher, is to provide learners of a certain historical language with accessible bridge texts. This is why I will henceforth define this kind of translator, and also editor of his or her own work, as translator/editor/teacher (TET). In what follows I am going to focus my reflections on this kind of 'bridging' approach, i.e. on translating into historical languages to fill what Meyer calls the

'literary chasm' (Meyer 2020: 1) between textbooks and original literature. Mark Walker, the translator behind the Latin version (2012) of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, is keen to emphasize the importance of such literary bridges:

> There is, as anyone who has taken the trouble to study Latin knows, a curious gap in the available reading material. On the one hand are simplified stories for classroom use, on the other the glories of high Latin literature—but remarkably little in between. What is there for the intermediate reader, who is tired of the textbook but not quite ready to grapple with the stately poetry of Virgil or the grand rhetoric of Cicero? What for the accomplished reader who wants to escape from Ancient Rome's marbled halls from time to time? What for the reader who just wants to read Latin—the very idea!—for fun?

> (Walker 2012: V)

4.2.2. Managing the variation of language level in source texts

Before choosing a text to translate for educational purposes, it is important to be aware that the literary works among which the choice can be made were not originally written for language learners, but for the native speakers of the relevant SL. TETs, who are also teachers of the TL, should therefore not expect to find the 'perfect' book or story for the level they have in mind. Relying on original works guarantees high-quality and enjoyable literary content, but also requires compromises from the TET's side. Unfortunately, no novel or story conceived for native speakers will match the exact language level and needs of the category of learners at which its translation is aimed. Vocabulary and grammar are not 'sheltered' (Piazza 2017: 155), i.e. deliberately limited to avoid overwhelming the reader, as is the case in original beginner novels (see 4.1.). In a translated work, any morphosyntactic feature or vocabulary item can occur anytime, with the risk of leaving less-experienced readers puzzling over the roles of such elements in the text. This is why translations into historical languages come most of the time with a glossary that, in the best case, includes all the inflected forms and also cross-references them to the relevant main entries.

This kind of 'unsheltered' occurrence of morphosyntactic and lexical elements can cause some kind of 'abrupt language level surges' in the text. For example, a work intended for low beginners can abruptly introduce elements that are more consistent with a higher level, and thus temporarily spring from low to advanced beginner, or even low intermediate.

Two examples of 'abrupt language level surges' come to my mind here. The first surge, although rather moderate in nature, occurs in Philipp Winterberg's *Bin ich klein?* (2013), a world-famous German children's book that has already been translated into over 200 languages. It is beautifully and colourfully illustrated, but only has around 30 short and simple sentences of text. This very limited amount of text makes it a very good candidate, once translated, for a low-beginner book aimed at learners who are still far from finishing their introductory textbook. Most sentences of the book are common copula constructions of the kind 'I am...', 'am I...?', 'you are...', usually accessible even to early beginners. On the third page, however, a comparative form is introduced. Comparatives are a more advanced topic than the simple verb 'to be', and usually come later in textbooks. This means that learners who have studied all the forms of 'to be'

may not have necessarily studied comparatives. Just to give an idea, in David Stifter's *Sengoídelc*, copula forms are introduced in Lesson 24, while comparatives do not appear until Lesson 43. On the classical side, in Ørberg's *Familia Romana* (see 1.5.1.), 'to be' is already covered in chapter 1 and comparatives in chapter 12; in Miraglia's Italian version of *Athenaze* (see 1.5.2.2.), they appear, respectively, in chapter 1 and 14 (the book has 16 chapters), while in the grammar book of JACT's *Reading Greek*, they are introduced in sections 44 and 156, that is, 100 pages apart. One single 'abrupt language level surge', however, does in no way compromise the level of *Bin ich klein?*, which remains a fully low-beginner reading. The comparative can just be glossed or, if the book is read in a classroom setting, the teacher could very quickly mention the point and say that it will be properly studied later on.

The second, and more striking, example of 'abrupt language level surges' is my own *Auraicept na nÉicsíne* (The Primer of the Young Scholars, 2013),[10] which is the Old Irish translation of Harriette Taylor Treadwell's and Margaret Free's *The Primer* (1910), an old reading primer for English-speaking pupils. *The Primer* retells well-known traditional stories in extremely simple English. The vocabulary is limited, the sentences are very short, and the stories are extremely redundant and repetitive, which greatly fosters vocabulary and structure retention. My translation comes with a comprehensive glossary, which also includes and cross-references all the inflected and conjugated forms. Given the features of the original work, before beginning to work on the translation, I intuitively thought that this booklet would make an excellent reader for Old Irish low beginners, i.e. those who have studied the language for 2 terms. Then I began to translate, and by the time I reached half of the very first page, I had already realized that I was wrong. Although the structure of the sentences is elementary, the use of tenses is definitely not, at least when the book is read in Old Irish. Presents, preterites, futures, imperatives and, to a lesser extent, even augmented forms and subjunctives of simple and compound verbs appear throughout the 9 stories that form *Auraicept na nÉicsíne*. The problem is that the preterite tense is covered in *Sengoídelc* starting from Lesson 41, which is usually studied at the end of the third term. The other tenses are even more advanced, as they do not even appear before Lesson 50, usually covered in the second half of the fourth term. This makes my translation only suitable for fully advanced beginners, that is, those who have studied the language for at least four terms, and not for a lower level, as I had previously thought. Although the sentence structure is low beginner, the regular and frequent occurrence of more advanced tenses and moods causes a continual sequence of countless 'abrupt language level surges' that could turn out to be not only tiring, frustrating and off-putting, but also pedagogically ineffective for most low beginners.

Occasional 'abrupt language level surges' are normal in works originally conceived for native speakers but should never become a hindrance for the reader of the translation. The important thing is to try to match the translated text with the right category of learners: a low-beginner elementary text with just few sporadic surges, if properly managed by the TET, remains low beginner; on the other hand, an apparently low-beginner text with a series of regular and frequent surges that continuously create abrupt steep peaks in the reading flow of the elementary learner, should not be

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10 The title is inspired by the text *Auraicept na nÉces* (Primer of the Scholars), a programmatic handbook about Old Irish written by an Irish scholar in the 8th century.

categorized as 'low beginner' but, at least, as 'advanced beginner'. I know from my own extensive experience as a reader of foreign languages how such surges may ultimately result in becoming discouraging and off-putting for some learners, who then risk beginning to feel unequal to the reading task they have undertaken. Therefore, it is important for the TET to provide the reader with enough support to overcome these difficulties and transform them into enriching moments of learning.

4.2.3. Choosing the text to translate

Choosing the right book to translate is no easy task. Original works are not arranged in order of difficulty, nor do they carry a CEFR sticker to indicate whether their level is A2, B1 and so on. Although information of this kind is not available, it is usually clear who the target audience of a book is. Children's books and books for young readers are two clearly identifiable categories, easily distinguishable from books for adults in every publisher's catalogue and in every bookshop. A quick visit to the Blackwells's website shows them very clearly listed as 'Children's' and 'Teen and YA'. These two categories are a good starting point to locate potential candidates for translation. In the end, both children and young adolescents are in a similar situation to advanced beginners or intermediate language learners. They are all readers with a more limited experience, whose reading competencies, still in the phase of development, cannot manage the range of textual language usually accessible to native adults or very advanced and experienced second language users. It is therefore important for young readers and language learners to keep developing their reading skills gradually, without being overwhelmed by excessive amounts of language with which they still cannot cope.

Children's and young readers' books are conceived with these issues in mind, thus their original versions should be as accessible to young SL native speakers, as their translations should be accessible to TL learners at the appropriate level. Although this reflection is and certainly remains a good starting point to select the right book to translate, it is, to be honest, also somewhat idealized and unrealistic. Without full-immersion experience, and solely reliant on the textbook, the linguistic competencies of an advanced beginner or intermediate learner of a historical language are hardly comparable with those of a young native SL speaker who has spent his or her entire life fully immersed in that language. This is why a translation into a historical language should always come with at least a full glossary to make sure that the reader never feels at a loss. A good 'bridge' book should be a solid, stable and reliable bridge, during whose crossing learners can feel safe enough to know that they will reach not only its end, but also what awaits them on the other side. What a 'bridge' book should not be, instead, is an old, run-down and oscillating rope bridge suspended on an abyss and at the mercy of the wind. Its crossing would then become a nightmare and, most importantly, an experience that the learner would not want to repeat.

Fortunately enough, however, translating into historical languages is a very common practice, so that a sort of tradition has already been established. This means that TETs wishing to produce high-quality bridge texts for historical languages now have a good selection of well-established 'standard' source texts from which they can draw to begin their activity. Worth mentioning among them for low beginners are

Philipp Winterberg's *Bin ich klein* (2013) and the slightly more complex *Egbert wird rot* (2009), while for the advanced-beginner and low-intermediate levels, Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902) and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince* (1943) are good candidates; for upper-intermediate learners, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), while for advanced readers, A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1925) and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)[11] may be good options. For those among both TETs and learners who are willing to instead challenge themselves with verse, the two favourites are definitely Heinrich Hoffmann's *Der Struwwelpeter* (1845) and Wihelm Busch's *Max und Moritz* (1865). Many other famous works have also been translated, but those mentioned above are the most recurring ones.

4.2.4. Importance of appeal

The fact that most of the works mentioned above are very well known raises another key point regarding translations into historical languages, that is, the importance of appeal. A widely known and widely read story set in a time that is much nearer and more familiar to the reader than the far-removed and still foreign setting of original works may be a strong pedagogical catalyst. It not only appeals to potential readers who feel intrigued by the challenge of reading a story they already know and love in the ancient or medieval language they are learning with dedication, but also effectively fosters the overall learning experience. David Stifter, in his groundbreaking 'Remrád' (Preface) to my Old Irish translation of Treadwell's and Free's *The Primer*, strongly highlights this point:

> For beginners, the appeal of modern texts translated into historical languages lies in the fact that through them they can engage with topics and story-lines that they already know and in world settings that they are familiar with. No foreign environment or exotic world-view of an ancient or medieval text distracts the learners. Being able to anticipate the twists and turns of the plot, they can rather concentrate on the fundamental structures of the language. This makes it easier to pick up the core vocabulary of the target language along the way and it reduces the tediousness of drilling morphological and syntactical structures.

> (Stifter 2023: viii)

Moreover, the very familiar and 'living' content of the plot is an effective feature to contrast the misconception that a historical language is definitely 'dead' and should only be read and analysed in its original texts. The language is not dead if it can be used to tell engaging stories from our time, if there are TETs working on it with passion to make

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11 In the field of Celtic Studies, a very promising attempt at a Medieval Irish translation of *Alice* was made over a decade ago by Elizabeth Boyle and Liam Breatnach. Unfortunately, the translation was later abandoned and never published, but before this happened Boyle had explained their approach and choices in Volume 1 of the three-volume work *Alice in a World of Wonderlands* (Boyle 2015). The translation was meant to be set in medieval Ireland, and the language form chosen aimed at representing 'the transitional stage between Old and Middle Irish, that is, roughly the form of the language as it would have been written during the tenth century' (Ibd. 384).

it live in those stories, and to beautifully mould it into more accessible plots that can help even less-experienced learners and readers to better see, enjoy and acquire its mechanisms. The death of a language is something else, as David Stifter points out:

> Languages are only ever truly extinct when they pass into oblivion and when the books about them have been closed for the last time, never to be opened again, and when all passion for them has vanished.

(Ibd. xi)

This is not the case of historical languages, which continue to be studied, taught and even actively used to create new reading materials. Translations into them are a shiny example of this vitality. Vibrant, contemporary literature makes the language as vibrant and contemporary, thus offering the learner the living and engaging reading experience of a modern language:

> Modern translations into ancient languages [...] encourage young readers to engage with the languages in genres they are familiar with and interested in. In this way, they increase the amount of text read in that language, hopefully fostering a command of it.

(Meyer 2020: 22)

It is important for learners to stop considering a language 'dead', as this would greatly benefit their approach to it. A dead language is often perceived as an untouchable and immutable monumental artifact, which one should not dare to manipulate. Such a rigid notion may result in intimidating some students, and thus prevent them from clearly seeing the primary role of the historical language they are learning, i.e. the transmission of meaning. The reading of engaging stories set in a familiar world and, very importantly, the awareness that someone—the TET—has actually manipulated and moulded that seemingly untouchable language in order to produce them, conveys an important message in itself. Practically showing the learner that the language is actually freely and creatively usable will remove from it that intimidating halo of sacredness and immobility, making it appear as a language to learn, use and enjoy like any other. The learner will then feel encouraged to do with that ancient or medieval language what is usually done with a modern language. This more relaxed attitude will inevitably result in a more daring, living and productive approach to the language that, consequently, will foster the entire learning process. Ultimately, this ought to be the objective of every TET.

4.2.5. The issue of neologisms

The fact that the source texts of the translations are very far removed from the time when the TL was still spoken raises an important issue. Translating modern literature into ancient or medieval languages means going linguistically backwards, that is, transposing a modern culture into an ancient one, in which a large number of concepts and objects that are regular parts of the everyday life mediated by the SL did not even exist, 'either because they had not been discovered or invented yet or because people

had not yet defined or isolated a specific phenomenon' (Stifter 2023: ix). When such 'alien' lexical elements occur in the SL—and only when it is strictly necessary—'the translator's academically creative imagination is required to fill a lexical gap' (Ibd. ix).

Some strategy needs then to be applied not only to create the missing element, but also to make it harmoniously merge with the rest of the text. Strategies may vary and also depend on the nature of the TL. Moreover, as Fritz Kemmler points out in the detailed account of his translation of *Le Petit Prince* into Old English, 'on the basis of their [i.e. modern names and terms] meaning and use in specific contexts, a single method for their transfer into Old English was found to be impossible' (Kemmler 2022: 179). This is also true for the other historical languages: one single strategy hardly suffices. TETs need to be very flexible, open-minded and daring enough to manoeuvre among all the tools they have at their disposal and should not hesitate to use them to create the best possible option to fill the gap. Those 'tools' are primarily the ones offered by the morphosyntax of the TL itself, but also by the linguistic background of the TET. Knowing German, for example, may turn out to be very useful when translating into Old English, as both languages are very productive in noun composition, and compound nouns in German may be of great inspiration to create compound nouns in Old English. In general, knowing a modern language related to the TL may provide the TET with a relatively useful support to create the required neologisms. In some cases, if the historical background of the TL makes it plausible, a fictional loanword can also be created. For example, through the church, monastic and manuscript tradition, Old Irish had close contacts with Latin and incorporated a number of Latin loanwords. This is the background of which I took advantage in my Old Irish translation of *The Primer*. One of the characters of a story is a cricket. I needed the word for 'to chirp', which in Old Irish is not attested. After evaluating a few options, I decided to create a fictional loanword from the Latin verb *strīdere* 'to chirp', by combining the Latin root '*strīd*-' with the Old Irish verbal ending '*-aid*'. The result was *strídaid*, a weak verb of class 1 (W1), usually the class into which borrowed Latin verbs were incorporated (such as, for example, *scríbaid* 'to write', from Latin *scrībere*, which is structurally very similar to *strídaid*, or *légaid* 'to read', from Latin *legere*). This new verb, although unattested, is consistent with the Old Irish spelling, phonology and morphology, which makes it a plausible loanword.

However, as David Stifter wonders, 'from a rigorous academic point of view, is it legitimate to invent new words for dead languages at all?' (Stifter 2023: x). This is, as Stifter himself puts it, a 'straw-man question' (Ibd.), as a language which is actively manipulated to create new texts in it should not be considered 'dead'. Therefore, the answer to the above question is yes: it is legitimate, because in languages that are not dead, new words are continuously created to express new things and concepts. Furthermore, and now I am going to ask a question myself, what harm does it do? If neologisms are created with academic care and awareness, are consistent with the intrinsic logic of the TL,[12] and smoothly and harmoniously merge with the rest of the text, they do not do any harm, either to the learner or to the learning process. My fictional Old Irish loanword *strídaid*, for example, can be pronounced by applying the regular Old Irish pronunciation rules, analysed as any other W1 verb, and conjugated in

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12 On the importance of creating academically reliable and consistent neologisms, cf. also Owens 2016: 516–519.

all the Old Irish tenses and moods to produce a myriad of other plausible forms. Therefore, by pronouncing, analysing and conjugating it, learners will just keep practising regular and consistent Old Irish features and thus foster their learning, which will in no way be compromised or disrupted by the new word. In his article about the use of spoken Latin in the classroom, Jeffrey Wills reacts to the criticisms of his oral approach, strongly asserting the importance of language use and manipulation— including the use of neologisms—in order to foster learning:

> We applaud the classics to others because of their role in promoting broad humanistic culture and learning to think critically, but in practice our major activity is to ask students to engage in the usually mechanical task of translating a text into English. [...] Students have ideas, and it seems natural to use the language to express them. [...] Perhaps some students enjoy oral Latin for its perceived absurdity or its value as a special code—that doesn't bother me, because they are also achieving my goal of increasing their language practice. Likewise for neologisms: in any sentence like *Magister, heri tecum per telephonum colloqui temptavi*, whatever you think of *telephonum*, the student still has to deal with plenty of ordinary classical lexemes and morphemes.
>
> (Wills 1998: 32–33)

In the end, the fuss regarding the legitimacy of neologisms does not appear to be motivated by genuinely pedagogical reasons, but rather by a perception of historical languages as untouchable sacred monuments whose reality should remain unaltered.[13] I agree with Federico Aurora, who sees a certain fruitlessness in this debate:

> In my opinion, the importance of the whole matter, although obviously interesting from a theoretical point of view, is overestimated. The preserved vocabulary in Greek and Latin covers most of the actions, beings, objects and concepts that we need to refer to in a conversation, and the presence of a few neologisms in our dialogues, even if they are not properly formed, will not significantly alter the character of the vocabulary we acquire, let alone grammatical structures.
>
> (Aurora 2022: 536)

In translations into ancient and medieval languages, as well as in original texts or dialogues created for educational purposes, for example, for my own LNIS, consciously and reasonably created neologisms do not damage or compromise anything. Their role is just to bring a text home and make it available to learners so that they can enjoy it and use it to practise and improve their language skills.

4.2.6. Benefits for the TETs

Thus far I have been discussing translations into historical languages as a valuable tool for language learners, but learners are not the only ones who benefit from such texts. In the end, in any practice related to these translations, everybody is a learner: actual

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13 For a severely critical, disparaging and deriding view of any active use of Latin, cf. Ball & Ellsworth 1996.

learners because they learn from reading them, and TETs because they learn from producing them. No TET is a native speaker who can just sit down and start to fluently translate and write into an ancient or medieval language. Even experienced scholars will have to struggle considerably if their objective is to produce a good-quality and reliable translation from which students can really learn. Translating also means following the path established by the original text, with all its twists and turns, without deviating from it, where possible. This means that TETs may encounter diverse linguistic issues that cannot be avoided, and for which an adequate and satisfactory solution must be found. Such challenges push TETs to thoroughly investigate a particular grammatical point, or to further delve into the corpus of extant original texts in search of attestations that could shed light on a particular word, idiom or expression, or at least partially confirm the possible solution they have in mind. Translating a complex text into a historical language demands research and reflection, but with an approach that is different from the one required, for example, when editing an original text. Scholars who analyse an original text need to focus on a piece of language that has already been produced. It is in front of them, with its morphology, syntax and vocabulary. Their job is to discern the roles of all those elements by using their knowledge and expertise, not to create new ones. If they encounter the word for 'table', they just need to identify it as 'table', and do not have to worry if the language also has a word for 'drawer'. They are not concerned with what is *not* there. TETs, instead, are in a different situation, and *do* have to worry about what is *not* there. If they need the word for 'drawer' and do not have it readily available in the TL, they need to search the corpus, find possible attestations, and see if that word, or an acceptable alternative for it, is available. If their research remains fruitless, they will then have to create a neologism. However, in order to do it properly and to avoid 'poorly-formed' or 'faulty' neologisms (Owens 2016: 507, 517), they will have to do more research, which may involve, among other things, etymology and word formation. This means that, in the end, the neologism will be the product of serious academic research, while the TET who undertook that research will be a better scholar. This continuous 'reverse' search for parts of the language which are needed to bring the text home has great advantages, as David Stifter points out:

> It forces us to focus on what is not there, whereas in the academic study of historical languages we are usually preoccupied with the words that are found in the extant texts. And it stimulates the creation of mental maps of the semantic fields of the target language and its relatives. On the other hand, digging into the old language in order to find a good translation will occasionally produce unexpected treasures.

> (Stifter 2023: ix)

Furthermore, the simple fact of writing tens of pages in the TL will also allow TETs not only to develop a much more thorough and deeply-rooted feeling for the language, but also to master a large amount of vocabulary and structures which, in turn, will make them more fluent readers of original texts and, not least, much better TL teachers.

4.2.7. Limits of bridge texts

Regardless of the fundamental importance of these translations as 'bridges' to prepare and support the students' transition from the textbook to the original texts, one point should be made clear: bridge texts can in no way replace original texts and should never be used with this goal. Whatever approach is used to learn a historical language, the final objective will always be to access its literary heritage, without which our language knowledge would remain artificial, incomplete, and totally disjointed from the reality of its culture. Bridge texts aim at providing learners at different stages with very large portions of relatively accessible text into which they can delve to enjoyably augment their reading skills. Nonetheless, those reading skills, although developed through the reading of hundreds of pages of bridge texts, will not reach their full maturity until they are applied to original materials set in their original time, context and culture. No TET is, or will ever be, a native speaker of any historical language, or will ever reach the mastery that native speakers had. Thus, his or her language will never be able to convey the exact feel, spontaneity, freshness and nuances found in original texts. David Stifter strongly highlights this point about Old Irish:

> I don't want to be misunderstood: actively used Old Irish of the 21st century is a different language from the historically attested early-medieval one. It is based on the latter, but it also draws its inspiration and life from other sources, not least from the living environment of contemporary students. In order to immerse oneself in the historical minds, cultures and worlds, modern translations are no substitutes for engaging with the authentic thing, and it is vital to study original texts. But modern translations into historical languages can be a first step in the right direction.

> (Ibd. xi)

This does not mean, however, that once learners are able to read original materials, they should just dispose of all their bridge texts, never to return to them. When the source texts are valuable works of literature and the translations are seriously made and academically reliable, bridge texts cease to be 'bridge texts', and just become good books to enjoy in a language that the reader loves. As Mark Walker points out, it is good to have an alternative to original texts to practise the language (Walker 2012: V). Advanced readers could also enjoy translations which were not originally produced for educational purposes, but rather to demonstrate dexterity or virtuosity in an ancient or medieval language, or even for pure personal satisfaction (Lukács 2007: 3). Such books would be far too difficult for advanced beginners or intermediate learners, but remain a very valid alternative for a more experienced and specialized audience. These readers, who are often scholars or TETs themselves, can then use such books to further increase and sharpen their reading and linguistic skills. Furthermore, the particular syntactical or lexical strategies and choices implemented in the translation of advanced texts can also inspire and foster more academic research into specific grammatical aspects.

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4.2.8. Guaranteeing the quality of the translation

Regardless of the level of learners at which they are aimed, it is fundamental for translations into historical languages to offer the highest academic quality possible. Inexperienced learners who decide to read such books trustfully put their learning in the hands of the TET who has produced the translation, and their trust should by no means be betrayed. As TETs, we do have a duty, and our duty is to deserve the trust that has been placed in us. It is therefore *our* job and *our* responsibility to provide learners with quality texts that not only support and foster their learning without creating confusion, but also increase their interest in the language and further motivate them to keep studying it. It is thus essential that we do anything within our ability and competencies to ensure the linguistic quality and reliability of our product. Lukács, while highlighting the importance of this point, reminds the TET of a few possible strategies to guarantee quality:

> However, the translator is not left entirely alone: (s)he has the chance to discuss with specialists as well as to consult — albeit fully unidirectionally — with the native authors of the past. If a large number of texts shaped in a dead language are available, then it is likely possible to find more or less similar sentences to the sentences of the translation to be created. This can be considered as a sort of guarantee for the correctness of text. This process was once long and tiring work, but now goes much quicker and more easily due to the corpora.

> (Lukács 2007: 6)

Among the strategies suggested above, the interaction with 'specialists' should absolutely be stressed. It is vital that TETs approach their task with great humility and open-mindedness, and do not hesitate to consult the more experienced scholars and colleagues around them; none of us is a native speaker of any historical language, and none of us should undertake the task of producing dozens of pages in the TL without sharing his or her experience with people who have the skills to improve its quality and increase its reliability. As already mentioned above, we *do* have a responsibility towards our readers. Before its publication, my own *Auraicept na nÉicsíne* was thoroughly revised by five people, all leading scholars in the field, from four universities in three different countries. Each of them actively contributed to increase the quality of my endeavour, the very first of its kind, both linguistically and academically. I think this is an excellent example of a harmonious academic community at work.

Community is fundamental, even more so when we write in a language with no available native speakers to inform us. Isolation, instead, is deleterious. Doing all the jobs on one's own, without looking for any feedback from more experienced and competent people, may completely nullify the great potential of the undertaking. This is what happened, unfortunately, with the Latin translation of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* by Mark Walker (2012).[14] Moreover, such a behaviour would also betray the trust that learners have placed in us and in our skills, and all our efforts would be completely lost.

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14 For a full and critical review of this translation, cf. Ziomkowski 2021.

4.2.9. Need for specialized scholarly literature

The discussion above, which by no means aims to be exhaustive, has only been able to cover a very limited number of reflections on the process of translation into historical languages. Many more points should be raised, and many more issues analysed, but this would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, I still hope that these reflections will contribute to foster a much-deserved interest in this field, to which, as a passionate TET, I am determined to return.

Unfortunately, only Lúkács (2007) and Stifter (2023) are focused on general theoretical issues relating to these kinds of translations. Most other articles available, for example, Görlach (1986), Baker (2015) or Kemmler (2020), are by the translators themselves, and mostly discuss specific issues regarding their own translation experiences, without any focus on more general principles. For the field of Translation Studies, it would be highly desirable to develop a branch devoted to translation into historical languages and the specific issues that may arise in this kind of practice. This would not only result in an enrichment of the field itself, but also for the research in ancient and medieval languages. Moreover, also TETs, the vast majority of whom are not specialized traductologists, would benefit enormously from such a specialized niche: they could finally count on competent and focused studies, and thus provide their learners and readers with academically more informed and reliable texts.

4.3. In the words of the TETs

In this last section I am going to mention a few works translated into various historical languages, mainly to show that this field is alive and well, and that there are passionate people who believe in this practice. It is not my aim here to provide a comprehensive review of all the available translations, as this would go beyond the scope of this chapter and this thesis.

The different translations, however, will be covered in an unusual way. During the research for this chapter, I had the privilege to be in touch with a number of TETs, most of whom accepted my request to answer a questionnaire I had prepared about their translation experience. In what follows, I am going to briefly introduce these TETs or, in some cases, just 'translators' and 'editors', in alphabetical order. I will then let them speak in their own words about their works, experiences and views regarding this kind of translation, and I will also try to 'interact' with them about the points they raise. The questionnaires I received from them vary considerably in length, and so will my 'discussions' with them.

The excerpts from the answers are cited with this format: (Surname: relevant subsection of 5.5., Q+number of the question). For example, (Taverdet: 5.5.9., Q2), which means section 5.5.9., the one devoted to Taverdet, question number 2. For the full questionnaire of each TET, see 5.5.

4.3.1. Peter Baker

Peter Baker is a professor at the Department of English at the University of Virginia and has been teaching Old English for over 40 years. In 2015 he published an Old English translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, titled *Æðelgýðe Ellendǽda on Wundorlande*. Among the standard texts commonly used to begin to produce translations into historical languages, *Alice* is certainly the most challenging one, given the very large number of puns and the strong focus on creative manipulation of language. Here is how Baker answered my question about the challenges he had to face during this undertaking:

> The greatest challenge arose from the fact that there is no tradition of instruction in either speaking or writing Old English (why should there be, when very few people speak or write it?). Our grammars are geared towards reading, not writing, and there is no English-to-Old English dictionary (or at least, not a good one). So I had to devise a method of looking up words in our existing dictionaries, which did not usually provide a method of searching within definitions. And I had to rely on my own memory and "feel" for the language to find appropriate constructions and idioms. (In the absence of aids, it helped to have spent many years teaching and writing about Old English.)

> (Baker: 5.5.1., Q1.1.)

He has also translated the first half of the first Harry Potter book, which unfortunately was never completed and thus remains unpublished. In the questionnaire, he interestingly illustrates his approach to neologisms. He actually had to create 'a number of them (listed at the back of the book)' (Ibd. Q2.4.):

> I took two approaches: one was to simply make up words, usually modelling them on words in German or Icelandic; the other was to use attested Old English words with modern meanings related to their original meanings. Sometimes I avoided the problem by changing the text (e.g. the mad tea-party became a mad beer-party).

> (Ibd.)

Baker is also an extremely active Old English teacher, as well as the author of one of the most widely used Old English introductory textbooks (2012), for which he created a website with additional materials and exercises called 'Old English Aerobics'.[15] His article about writing Old English (2015) is still a useful guide for those who wish to devote themselves to this practice.

4.3.2. Juan Coderch

Juan Coderch is a Senior Language Tutor in Latin and Ancient Greek at the University of St. Andrews and also a very active TET. In 2010 he published a book with a title that says it all about its content: *Don Camillo and Sherlock Holmes... in Classical Greek*. The book includes two short stories translated into Attic Greek, 'The Procession' (1948)

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15 https://www.oldenglishaerobics.net

by the Italian writer Giovannino Guareschi (1908–1968), and 'The Adventure of the Three Students' (1905) by Arthur Conan Doyle. The stories are based on the most popular character of each author. In 2017 Coderch self-published an Ancient Greek version of Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*, and in 2021 Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) in both Latin and Ancient Greek, in one volume. Both the *Prince* and *Earnest* are in full Ørbergian format, that is, with a large number of marginal notes in the target language. This is what the author says about this kind of approach:

> I like *Familia Romana* and *Roma Aeterna*, a system of improving the language without going out of the language (although a dictionary is many times unavoidable).[16]

Coderch, who is a proponent of the living method, provided that it is supported by a 'strong grammatical base' (Coderch: 5.5.2., Q2.8.) for teaching Latin and Ancient Greek, sees in translations into historical languages an effective way to foster learning:

> Offering the students something to read out of the usual corpus of classical authors, for some kind of amusing way of practising the language; if reading that text you end up knowing that the aorist of ὁράω is εἶδον, does it matter that you have learnt this aorist reading Sherlock Holmes instead of Plato? And at the same time proving that Greek and Latin are languages that can be used out of that corpus, to show that the language can go out of it, that it can have its own life.
>
> (Ibd. Q2.5.)

This view perfectly mirrors what was said earlier in this chapter: a language that can be actively used and manipulated to produce translations of literary works, is a language 'that can have its own life', and that must not be considered dead.

4.3.3. Edmund Fairfax

Edmund Fairfax is an independent Canadian scholar who specializes in Old English and Gothic. I contacted him for his Gothic renditions of the two most famous Philipp Winterberg's children's books *Bin ich klein?* and *Egbert wird rot*, both published in 2015 as, respectively, *Im leitila?* and *Agjabairhts wairþiþ rauþs*. Among the titles mentioned earlier in this chapter as the 'standard' source books, these two are the only ones that can be approached by low beginners, i.e. those who have still not finished their first textbook. An Old Irish version of these two books would definitely be advisable. Fairfax's answers to my questionnaire are very detailed and competent, and offer interesting insights into his translation work, not only regarding Winterberg's books, but also other interesting projects on which he is working. Since Gothic is mostly preserved in one text, the Gothic Bible (4th century), which was in turn a translation from Koine Greek, the modern user of the language is faced with a considerable number of issues:

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16 Personal email exchange, 7th July 2024.

The Gothic corpus consists mainly of translated sections of the *Bible*, mostly from *The New Testament*, wherein the original Greek word order is followed very closely, and so attempting to determine the principles of Gothic word order is fraught with difficulty. Was it fundamentally a SVO or SOV language? Was the closeness of the translation possible because as an early Indo-European language it followed many of the same word-order principles as Biblical Greek? And so it was a balancing act between relying on patterns in the Gothic translation as well as on patterns in other early Germanic languages (with the assumption of at least some inheritance from Proto-Germanic) to come up with something that seemed "native." Moreover, the corpus of surviving Gothic-language material is small, and so another major challenge was dealing with lacunae in the lexicon, often very common words. The word for 'dream,' for example, is not extant. But even when a given word is extant, the limited number of its attestations can create the impression of a small semantic field, which may well be misleading.

(Fairfax: 5.5.3, Q3)

Interestingly, in case of lexical lacunae, Fairfax relied on his skills as a comparative linguist but was also very attentive not to abuse of neologisms. This last thing, I think, is a golden principle that should always be applied when translating into historical languages:

Where possible, a circumlocution using known words was preferred to inventing a word. When a neologism, however, was unavoidable, the new element was essentially a reconstruction of the expected word following the historical comparative method.

(Ibd. Q4)

Fairfax, who has also provided me with two very interesting translation samples, one from *The Hobbit* in Old English (his other historical language), and the other from the German medieval epic poem *Das Nibelungenlied* in Gothic (see 5.5.3.), considers translating into historical languages an effective process to develop the translator's semantic awareness:

I think translation into a historical language from a modern language is an excellent pedagogical tool in language acquisition. [...] In regard to a historical language as an object of study, especially from the point of view of semantics, one is forced to ask questions, in attempting a translation, that might not otherwise occur to the researcher. [...] Seldom do words from different languages share the same semantic field, and so questions of usage and nuance more readily arise in a serious translation endeavour.

(Ibd.)

Also, regarding the role that translations into historical languages can have in language teaching and learning, Fairfax is extremely positive:

The surviving texts of not a few historical languages can leave something to be desired as reading material. Texts on religious ritual in Hittite, for example, do not really make for fun reading, leastwise for many folk, I suspect. And even when quality literature does exist, it can be fragmentary. [...] I think for most who come to Old English, reading *The Hobbit* translated into Old English would be more appealing than perusing a surviving sermon in

the same language lauding the virtues of celibacy. [...] And so in the interest of creating interest in historical languages, and thereby ensuring a healthy survival of some language programs at universities, translations of classics into dead languages (cf. Lenard's Latin translation of *Winnie-the-Pooh*) should be strongly encouraged, at all levels, even if not actually used as course material.

(Ibd.)

4.3.4. Brent Niedergall

On the opening page of his blog, Brent Niedergall defines himself as a 'pastor, grammarian, and runner'. Besides working in a non-profit publishing house specializing in Bible studies in North Carolina, he is also following a PhD program through the Sydney College of Divinity, and Biblical Greek is one of his focuses. Niedergall, along with his colleague Joey McCollum, has published two translations, *Max and Moritz in Biblical Greek* (2019), and *The Tale of Peter Rabbit in Koine Greek* (2021). The main aim of Niedergall and McCollum has always been educational. As Niedergall himself says: 'I wanted to provide a unique and fun resource for Greek language students' (Niedergall: 5.5.4., Q2). This goal is also clearly stated in the introduction to their *Peter Rabbit*'s version:

> Almost no one writes anything, especially works of fiction, in the language of the New Testament anymore. Almost no one has for centuries. This is why students of Koine Greek are largely limited in their selection of reading material to the New Testament, Septuagint, and Apostolic Fathers. Take the perspective of a learner, not a scholar or exegete, and consider this question: wouldn't it be nice if Greek students could immerse themselves more fully in the language? If students had access to a wide variety of reading materials, ancient and modern, they would have even more opportunities to read and learn how the language works.

(Niedergall & McCallum 2021: v)

The two translations, however, show two different approaches. While the *Peter Rabbit* text is just a traditional translation of the original, although based on the vocabulary of the New Testament and the Septuagint, *Max und Moritz* 'should be considered an adaptation' (Niedergall & McCallum 2019: xi), for different reasons:

> First, this is technically a daughter translation because we consulted the 1875 English edition *Max and Maurice: A Juvenile History in Seven Tricks*, by Charles T. Brooks, but developed our own wording based on the GNT [Greek New Testament] and LXX [Septuagint] idioms. [...] this version does not rhyme as does the original. [...] the vocabulary we selected is limited by design in order to better serve the interests of students of biblical Greek. Therefore, we have adapted the text to use only words, phrases, and idioms found in the GNT and LXX (including the Apocrypha).

(Ibd. xi–xii)

The objective of the two TETs is to make these books accessible to students who, having completed four terms of Koine Greek, 'will be able to read this work without the aid of a lexicon' (Ibd. xii). Niedergall also reacted positively to my questions about the benefits of such undertakings for TETs, and the need for more theoretical literature:

> Translating into historical languages forces the translator to think about the historical language in ways they had not before. This should help the translator become more adept at working in the historical language.
>
> If traductologists could empirically point to benefits and methodology of translating into historical languages, it would result in wider acceptance, more translation work, and better quality translations.
>
> (Niedergall: 5.5.4., Q5 & 7)

In his answer about specialized literature devoted to translation into historical languages, Niedergall raises an important point which has still not been mentioned in this chapter: acceptance. It is true that, as Niedergall maintains, a more targeted and developed interest in these languages from the academic field of Translation Studies would certainly foster the acceptance of these kinds of translations from other fields as well. Unfortunately, there is still considerable scepticism about this translation practice. Many scholars, lecturers and teachers still see any active use of a historical language, both orally and in writing, as an offence to academic integrity, to the culture to which the historical language belongs, and to the language itself (Ball & Ellsworth 1996). I believe that this scepticism, very disparaging at times, is based on a misunderstanding. It should be made clear that we TETs, who actively use historical languages in the classroom or in the production of texts, do not do this out of disrespect for them, or because we are unaware of their importance. We do know what these languages represent, so much so that we have devoted our professional lives to them. And we do know that, no matter what we do with them, we will never be able to equal the level of original sources. It has never been our aim to do that. The goal of our production is not to replace original sources, but to help learners to gradually reach the skills they need to enjoy them.

4.3.5. Richard B. Parkinson

Richard Bruce Parkinson, professor of Egyptology at the University of Oxford, was the main translator of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit, the Hieroglyph Edition* (2005). His answers to my questionnaire (sent as an audio file) were extremely exhaustive, and full of very interesting facts as well as engaging and thought-provoking views. For example, reading Parkinson's account made me reflect upon issues that may make the never easy task of accomplishing a translation into a historical language even more challenging and arduous:

> The methodological problems were, I would say, quite intense. [...] Middle Egyptian is a language attested in a wide variety of documents, but the literary ones in particular are governed by culturally shaped decorum and style. That means that certain things are not

talked about in literary discourse; the styles and the genre system are radically different from European genre systems: there is no term for a narrative, there is nothing resembling a novella, anything like that. [...] It is quite extreme [...] especially as the written corpus, apart from ritual texts and administrative texts, is relatively limited. So the idea of taking a modern narrative, novella, and translating it into Middle Egyptian meant that, for me, the process was trying to rethink the story into the narrative style of a Middle Egyptian poem, and then to rephrase the translation, so that every sentence was as closely modelled as possible on an ancient original, using the established literary formulae. [...] The whole cultural background is entirely different, and the literary language and style are so deeply culturally embedded, that it is very difficult to translate a modern European text into that language. [...] Ancient Egyptian, because of the cultural alterity, because of the chronological difference, and because of our uncertainties about the various phases of the language that remain, poses those issues in an extreme form.

(Parkinson: 5.5.5., Q4)

For the reasons he has just mentioned, Parkinson is extremely sceptical about using Middle Egyptian to translate more complex texts as, in his opinion:

Anything like a passage of Jane Austen or Virginia Woolf would be absolutely unthinkable and impossible to achieve with any success or style. And so it made me realise quite how culturally and stylistically and genetically embedded a language is.

(Ibd., Q6)

Nevertheless, despite all the difficulties, Parkinson was always perfectly aware of the responsibility that TETs have when they present inexperienced learners with a new translation. Therefore, he did not agree to translate the book into 'schoolboy' Middle Egyptian, as the co-translator John Nunn had originally proposed. This was a concern that turned then out to be fully justified, as can be seen in the two following excerpts:

I was concerned at the idea of it being done into a schoolboy Middle Egyptian, because, in my experience, amateur reading groups reading hieroglyphic Middle Egyptian often run out of easily accessible Middle Egyptian texts to read together. [...] And I was slightly alarmed at the thought that people trying to teach themselves Middle Egyptian would turn to a conveniently published familiar text like Peter Rabbit in hieroglyphs, and be confronted with something that was no more than schoolboy Middle Egyptian, and so would be basically reading an incorrect passage of the language. So, at that point I stepped in, chatted with John and the publishers, and we decided that I would revise it into as grammatically and stylistically correct Middle Egyptian as we possibly could manage.

[...] I felt extremely smug after the publication, because my worst fear turned out to be entirely realistic, in that, groups of amateur Egyptologists have indeed used *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* as an exercise in reading Middle Egyptian, and so I feel justified that we did take it seriously, and that we did try and cast it into a correct Middle Egyptian style.

(Ibd., Q3 & 9)

The quotations above clearly show that Parkinson is an extremely reflective scholar, always determined to deliver academically consistent and reliable outputs. It is therefore not surprising that he finds it desirable and beneficial for the field of Translation Studies to develop a special branch devoted to historical languages:

> I think studies of translation into historical languages could very usefully be expanded, and I myself would be very interested to see how scholars of different languages and different cultures responded. As I made clear, my own impression is that Middle Egyptian is a particularly hard example, but that may be personal bias! More recent historical languages like Latin and Greek are much closer in culture, and in language family to English, and so for English students, I think, translating into them is a very different process. So there's differentiation to be drawn between different ages, different backgrounds and families of languages, and that issues of cultural and chronological alterity have great relevance to translation studies there. That is something I suspect, would repay further study.

(Ibd., Q8)

Despite his deep analysis of the translation process of *Peter Rabbit* into Middle Egyptian and his satisfaction at having accomplished such an undertaking, Parkinson shows a certain scepticism regarding the value of such translations. When asked about the possible benefits of this practice, he answered:

> I think they are extremely limited in some ways. For such an ancient language as Middle Egyptian and one with such cultural alterity, it becomes little more than an academic or didactic exercise.

(Ibd., Q6)

Also, for the reasons mentioned in his first excerpt cited here, above all the 'alterity' of the Egyptian culture, he seems to wonder why we should bother with producing such texts in the first place (Ibd., Q9). In the end, they will never be able to fully mirror the original literary styles and contexts, not to mention the linguistic norms and conventions of the Ancient Egyptian language and discourse. These claims are undoubtedly true, and I completely agree with them. Nevertheless, I still think that they are not good reasons to give up producing new texts. The aim should not be the creation of texts that fully match the literary and linguistic conventions of ancient Egypt. This is not possible, because the literary forms of modern source languages did not exist in that culture. This means that the TL will have to be moulded into styles, forms, genres and formulae that do not belong to it. It is an artificial process, but by no means harmful. Our aim as TETs is not to increase historical literatures by adding new masterpieces to them, but to simply provide learners with portions of accessible, enjoyable and familiar texts through which to improve their language skills. Even though those texts are deeply decontextualized, they will nonetheless foster the learning of morphology, syntax and vocabulary. This will equip learners with more linguistic competence and confidence which, in turn, will support their transition to real texts, this time fully contextualized in their original style, genre, and culture.

4.3.6. Hrothja Missaleiks (Roel)

Hrothja Missaleiks is the alias of one of the two Gothic translators of *Le Petit Prince*, the other one being Christian Peeters. Unfortunately, I do not know his real full name. Judging from his emails, his first name is Roel, and he lives in the Netherlands. Roel is very devoted to the Gothic language, and has also created a website called *Himma Daga*,[17] in which he gives news in Gothic. In collaboration with David Alexander Carlton, whom I was not able to reach, he is also working on a new Gothic version of *Alice* (one is already available, by Carlton himself, with Evertype) and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass*, both with the publishing house Evertype. The Gothic version of the *Prince* came out in 2021 with the title *Sa Leitila Frauja*, and was published by the German publishing house Tintenfaß. Roel's answers are based on an older, shorter and less relevant version of the questionnaire. I tried to contact him to have him answer the updated questions, but I was unfortunately not successful. In his text, he mentions some general issues regarding translation into Gothic, but these have already been discussed in the section about Edmund Fairfax, with whom, incidentally, Roel collaborated for the translation of Winterberg's children's books. I will cite here what Roel says about the creation of Gothic neologisms:

> Creation of new words is indeed necessary. [...] I have been helped by Edmund Fairfax and several other experts and linguists with new words (which you can see in the dictionary on the site), we mostly calque words either by a loanword from Greek, or Gothic versions of modern words and their etymological origin, think of computer (com: together + calculator) which can be converted to *ga-rahnjo*.

(Missaleiks: 5.5.6., Q3)

4.3.7. James Rumford

James Rumford is a self-taught American Latinist living in Honolulu. He did not tell me what his main occupation is, but his passions are languages and books, as he says in the introductory page of his website: 'I have made books since I was a little boy. I drew the pictures and wrote the words. I still like doing that'.[18] Rumford has so far translated seven books into Latin, all published through his own publishing house, Mānoa Press, 'a private press, publishing only my own creative efforts'.[19] These are, in chronological order, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (*Pericla Thomae Sawyer*, 2016), Jane Austin's *Sense and Sensibility* (*De Corde et Mente*, 2020), Margery Williams' *The Velveteen Rabbit* (*Velvetinus Cuniculus*, 2020), Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* (*Siddhartha*, 2021), Stephen Crane's *The Red Batch of Courage* (*Virtutis Color*, 2022), Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (*Et Oritur Sol*, 2022), and Jane Austin's *Persuasion* (*De Persuasione*, 2023). Rumford is a completely independent translator and publisher, in the sense that he is apparently the only person in charge of every single

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17 https://airushimmadaga.wordpress.com/
18 https://www.jamesrumford.com/me.html
19 https://www.jamesrumford.com/manoapress.html

production stage of his books. As he himself declares: 'I make paper, set type, print, and bind books.' This is also true for the translation process itself, for which Rumford has devised a very personal approach:

> The biggest problem with a dead language is verifying what I write. There are, of course, no native speakers to ask. Fortunately, the internet allows the ancient Roman to speak. Almost all Latin written by native speakers is online. And much of this has been translated into English. This allows me to use the internet as an immense English-Latin, Latin-English dictionary. Not only that, the internet allows me to verify what I write in Latin. I put quotes around phrases and do a search. More often than not, I will find the phrase or one very similar in an ancient Roman text. There are caveats. I shy away from Latin written after 500 AD and Latin written now by AI.

> (Rumford: 5.5.7., Q3)

On his website, when describing his approach to the translation of *Sense and Sensibility*, he emphasizes what he calls 'linguistic reverse engineering' as an important tool to recreate stylistically good Latin:

> I based my translation on the English translations of classical Roman authors done by twentieth-century scholars for the Loeb series. In this way—and with the help of the computer—I was able to see how terse Latin was turned into scholarly English and, by some kind of linguistic reverse engineering, distil Miss Austen's Georgian English into Augustan Latin.[20]

On his blog, in a post about his translation of Tom Sawyer, in which he also defines translation as 'a crossword-puzzle-ly thing to do', Rumford gives examples of this approach:

> For instance, if I needed the expression 'stifling hot,' I looked for it until I found it. As it happens the expression occurs in Treasure Island, and thus I could find it in Avellanus' *Insula Thesauraria* as *aestu ad suffocationem*. I also made use of the many English translations of major classical works in Latin. If I needed 'one of the company of thieves,' I searched until I found an equivalent. Luckily in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* I found: *quidem de numero latronum*. Of course, this method of translating is slow going, but so is doing a crossword puzzle—until you get the hang of it.

> (Rumford 2016)

This particular approach to translation, however, is based only on the work of one single person. Rumford does not seem to even consider the option to use any kind of external assistance. This is also true for the editing process. Earlier in this chapter, it was pointed out how important external and collaborative editing is. None of us is a native speaker of a historical language, none of us can be always sure about the correctness of the text we are producing. A community is fundamental to reduce possible mistakes and misunderstandings, and to provide the reader with texts that are as linguistically reliable as we possibly can manage. This is more easily achieved when different individual experiences collaborate and support each other. In a Reddit post discussing the quality

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20 https://www.jamesrumford.com/sense.html

of Rumford's *Pericla Tom Sawyer*, a user nicknamed NomenScribe attached a document including a number of issues he found in the first chapter of the book.[21] The issues seem mainly to show that Rumford's mechanical 'crossword-puzzle-ly' approach very often produces mismatches that easily compromise not only the rendering of the source text into Latin, but also, consequently, the overall quality and reliability of the Latin text itself. The comment of another user named JimKillock perfectly encapsulates the nature of the problem:

> Perhaps employing a Latin editor with sufficient skill isn't commercially justifiable, but would be well worth solo authors such as this considering; we're all bound to need help with a second language.[22]

4.3.8. David Stifter

David Stifter is a professor of Old and Middle Irish at Maynooth University, Ireland, and is a leading scholar in his fields. Besides his intense academic activity, he is also a person who greatly enjoys the creative use of knowledge. As an expert in ancient Celtic metrical systems (cf., for example, Stifter 2016), he often devotes himself to composing poetry in ancient Celtic languages:

> Translating texts into Old Irish is only one part of my 'creative' work with these languages. I am also actively creating new literary texts in the languages of my research, namely mostly poems and song lyrics in Gaulish and poems in strict metres in Old Irish.

> (Stifter: 5.5.8., Q1)

Although he does not often publish his poetry, David Stifter can nevertheless be defined as a talented 'Neo-Ancient Celtic poet'. His both academic and creative interest in metrical forms also includes the most popular version of them, i.e. modern song lyrics. Starting from 2016, he has been translating lyrics of the British post-punk band Joy Division into Old Irish, as a way, he says 'to combine two things that are important to me, Old Irish and the songs of Joy Division, especially the lyrics written by Ian Curtis' (Ibd., Q3). Translating lyrics, however, is not like translating prose. Since a lyric is at least partially bound to its own structure, and makes use, at times, of a less common and more abstract vocabulary than prose, the translator is here faced with considerable challenges:

> [...] my own regular endeavours to translate the lyrics of Joy Division songs into Old Irish [...] has taught me time and again that notions that are so trivial to us that they have filtered through into the most casual everyday parlance, often find no adequate counterpart in Old Irish at all, or that the medieval Irish were not even aware of the concept.

> (Stifter 2023: x)

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21 See the document here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LcWCRdXN2CvOyGaPXC8r7fIMvtshQZxhK0oHY6Ja_ds/edit
22 https://www.reddit.com/r/latin/comments/1co2bop/james_rumford_latin_translations/

In his contribution to this chapter, Stifter discusses a very intriguing example of this particular challenge:

> [...] in 2018 I was confronted with the fact that there are no words that correspond to "acting" (as an actor in theatre) in Old Irish. It made me wonder whether that whole notion of behaving as someone who you are not was completely alien to the people at the time. In turn, thinking about this could have interesting repercussions on our modern obsession with multiple identities. My search for a word to render "acting" also reminded me of a great short story by Jorge Luis Borges, *Averroës' Search*, which is concerned with the attempt of that great Arabic translator to find adequate Arabic terms for Aristotle's 'comedy' and 'tragedy'.

(Stifter: 5.5.8., Q3)

In this reflection, Stifter raises a very intriguing issue, i.e. the absence of a certain 'notion' from a culture. When there is no notion, no tradition, the action cannot be formalized, defined, identified or conceptualized. In short, it cannot be given a name. Nevertheless, I would say, this does not mean that the action itself, in one form or another, or in a certain indefinable and evanescent nuance, variant, or disguise, is necessarily and totally absent from the speakers' behaviour.[23] Regardless of this issue, the fact that what is for us a common everyday notion was not developed in a certain historical language undoubtedly deserves further reflection.

The first thing I did after reading Stifter's contribution was obtain a copy of Borges' short story mentioned in the quotation above, whose original title is 'La busca de Averroes'. First published individually in 1947, it was then included in the fundamental collection *El Aleph* (1949). As its author says at the end of it:

> En la historia anterior quise narrar el proceso de una derrota. Pensé, primero, en aquel arzobispo de Canterbury que se propuso demostrar que hay un Dios; luego, en los alquimistas que buscaron la piedra filosofal; luego, en los vanos trisectores del ángulo y rectificadores del círculo. Reflexioné, después, que más poético es el caso de un hombre que se propone un fin que no está vedado a los otros, pero sí a él. Recordé a Averroes, que encerrado en el ámbito del Islam, nunca pudo saber el significado de las voces *tragedia* y *comedia*.[24]

(Borges 1997: 103–104)

Averroes fails in his attempt to properly translate the two basic notions expressed by Aristotle, because in his culture they have no formal tradition, no practice, no name. The

23 I will stop this reflection here. I do not wish to touch fields that are not mine, and this would also exceed the scope of this chapter. However, this would deserve a much deeper discussion by traductologists and philosophers of language, and it is certainly a point that I will further research in the future.

24 In the preceding tale, I have tried to narrate the process of failure, the process of defeat. I thought first of that archbishop of Canterbury who set himself the task of proving that God exists; then I thought of the alchemists who sought the philosopher's stone; then, of the vain trisectors of the angle and squarers of the circle. Then I reflected that a more poetic case than these would be a man who sets himself a goal that is not forbidden to other men, but is forbidden to him. I recalled Averroës, who, bounded within the circle of Islam, could never know the meaning of the words *tragedy* and *comedy* (Borges 2004: 77).

concepts of theatre and acting are 'forbidden' to him by his own heritage. Nonetheless, they are also in front of him, before his own eyes, in the events of the everyday life of common people:

> Miró por el balcón enrejado; abajo, en el estrecho patio de tierra, jugaban unos chicos semidesnudos. Uno, de pie en los hombros de otro, hacía notoriamente de almuédano; bien cerrados los ojos, salmodiaba *No hay otro dios que el Dios*. El que lo sostenía, inmóvil, hacía de alminar; otro, abyecto en el polvo y arrodillado, de congregación de los fieles. El juego duró poco; todos querían ser el almuédano, nadie la congregación o la torre.[25] (Ibd.95)

Although Averroes witnesses this clear and living expression of 'acting', he still cannot see its connection with Aristotle's notions, because 'acting' is not codified in his mind, hence his 'defeat' in translating it. Translators can hardly translate what they cannot conceptualize or visualize in their own mind, what they have no awareness of. Stifter, instead, was luckier than Averroes, because he knew precisely the notion he had to recreate in Old Irish. Going from a SL in which the notion is present to a TL in which it is absent is much easier than the other way around. Once translators have a clear notion and mental representation of the idea that must be linguistically and culturally transferred, they just need to apply their creative and linguistic skills to make the transfer happen. The difficulty of such processes of transfer may vary greatly, but a talented translator will in the end devise an effective solution. In the case of Stifter's 'acting', the solution was both conceptually and etymologically adequate: 'I used the verbal noun *aige* "act of driving, racing; celebrating", not least because it is etymologically related to "acting"'.[26]

In his contribution to this chapter, Stifter also gives interesting insights regarding the common issue of neologisms. Knowing about his writing activity in Gaulish, a language with an extremely limited inventory of words, I had always been intrigued by the approach he uses to face this apparently insurmountable problem. Here is the answer:

> This is more of an issue for Gaulish than it is for Old Irish. Since the attested vocabulary of Gaulish is so small and limited, my usual approach there is to either project words from younger attested Celtic languages (mainly Old Irish, Middle Welsh) back to what they would have looked in Proto-Celtic, and from there to Gaulish, or to start from Proto-Indo-European and construct a word as it would have looked like by regular sound change.

> (Stifter: 5.5.8., Q4)

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25 He looked out through the bars of the balcony; there below, in the narrow earthen courtyard, half-naked children were at play. One of them, standing on the shoulders of another, was clearly playing at being a muezzin: his eyes tightly closed, he was chanting the muezzin's monotonous cry, There is no God but Allah. The boy standing motionless and holding him on his shoulders was the turret from which he sang; another, kneeling, bowing low in the dirt, was the congregation of the faithful. The game did not last long—they all wanted to be the muezzin, no one wanted to be the worshippers or the minaret (Ibd. 70–71).
26 Personal email exchange, 12th July 2024.

Regarding Old Irish, instead, the process is 'relatively' more manageable, as 'there we do have a very rich lexicon' (Ibd.) that can offer different starting points for the creation process. These are the strategies that David Stifter uses to take full advantage of this lexicon:

> [...] either take an attested word and simply use it in an extended, more modern sense; or I create a word on the model of Modern Irish (or more rarely modern Scottish Gaelic); and thirdly, since Old Irish has a very rich derivational and compositional morphology, it is not difficult to create new expressions using existing material.

> (Ibd.)

Another important point that Stifter is keen to highlight is that the practice of the creation of new words is by no means a whim of some irreverent modern TETs, but was already in use when Old Irish still had native speakers:

> Creating new words in this way is in fact not doing any violence to the language. The earliest Old Irish texts in contemporary manuscripts that have survived are the so-called Old Irish glosses from the 8th and 9th centuries. They are short interlinear comments and translations to the main text of the manuscripts which is in Latin. Many of the words that we find in those glosses do not have any parallels in original literature from Ireland. It is obvious that those words were created by the Irish-speaking glossators themselves in order to find native equivalents to the Latin that they were translating. Evidently the glossators were very often confronted with exactly the same problems that I face when I am trying to write in Old Irish about modern concepts. The linguistic strategies that those medieval scholars employed are exactly the same as the ones outlined by me above, plus borrowing lexical bases from Latin.

> (Ibd.)

This is a fundamental point that confirms what was discussed earlier in this chapter. The creation of neologisms is not an act of violence perpetrated by TETs without scruples, but a normal strategy that native translators already used to expand the expressivity of their own language. As long as a language is used, it is alive, and when it is alive, it naturally aims to express itself. Word creation is a natural consequence of this need for expression.

To my question about the importance of a more developed branch of Translation Studies devoted to historical languages, Stifter answers very positively, and also expresses his hope for such a branch to develop in the future:

> [...] I think the difficulty of transferring cultural items and concepts from one language to another is a common theme. But this discourse is probably mostly limited to two cultures of roughly the same chronological frame. If anything, historical and contemporary languages are even more incommensurable. Looking into this disparity will probably lead to a much greater theory of translating.

> (Ibd.)

This is a development that all we TETs should hope for, as we would undoubtedly take advantage of more specific theoretical studies. These would greatly contribute to improving our work, our perceptions for translation issues, our overall competencies as translators, and, most importantly, our reliability towards our students and readers.

4.3.9. Gérard Taverdet

Gérard Taverdet, now retired, used to be a professor of French linguistics, dialectology and onomastics at the University of Dijon, France. With Tintenfaß, he has published two translations of the *Prince*, one into the French Burgundian dialect, and the other into Old French. The latter, titled *Li juenes princes* (2017), is the reason why I contacted him. Taverdet's translation is based on the language of Chrétien de Troyes (1160–1191), medieval poet and author of a number of Arthurian romances. Taverdet, a De Troyes expert, has also published an extremely detailed glossary of his language (Taverdet 2004). Although the glossary is Old French to Modern French only, he was able to use it in the opposite direction as well, thus solving what appeared to be the main hindrance to his translation:

> Il est impossible de traduire sans dictionnaire de thème (langue de départ vers la langue d'arrivée). Ce genre d'ouvrage est très répandu pour les langues étudiées au Lycée et à l'Université pour les langues très étudiées (comme l'anglais ou le latin), mais il n'existe pas en ancien français. Mais, avec l'informatique, il m'a été facile d'utiliser le glossaire de Chrétien de Troyes comme un dictionnaire de thème.

> (Taverdet: 5.5.9., Q2)

To my question about the challenges posed by his translation, Taverdet simply answered: 'Pas de problèmes particuliers dans cette traduction' (Ibd., Q3). It seems that, at least for a French specialist of the medieval form of his native language, going from Modern to Old French is a rather smooth process. Regarding the usefulness of such translations for educational purposes, Taverdet does not appear to be very convinced at first. Nevertheless, at the end of his answer, as if in an afterthought, he mentions an important point:

> Intérêt pédagogique: assez faible, semble-t-il. Personnellement je n'ai jamais essayé (puisque je suis retraité). Cependant certains collègues peuvent les utiliser, tout simplement à cause de la régularité grammaticale (ce qui n'est pas le cas des textes médiévaux originaux).

> (Ibd., Q7)

Grammatical regularity is indeed a fundamental element, especially when translations into historical languages are used as learning tools. In original materials, even within the same text, there can be a high degree of orthographical and grammatical inconsistency. This means that variants of a morphological, syntactical or lexical form can appear anytime without any specific reason. A jungle of variants can be very confusing and off-putting for inexperienced readers. When TETs produce translations, instead, they

usually try to normalize their texts. When there are variants, only the one that mirrors—and thus reinforces—the 'standard' grammatical rule is chosen and used throughout the text. All the other variants are momentarily put aside. Students need first to become confident with the 'standard' rules of the language, the ones perfectly consistent with what they have just learnt in their textbook. Only later on should they begin to face—and gradually learn—all the grammatical variants and inconsistencies which usually abound in ancient and medieval original texts.

4.4. A word on publishers

Thus far I have been focusing on TETs and their 'temerarious' undertakings to adapt ancient and medieval languages to the modern world through their translations. However, TETs with no self-publishing skills would not go very far without serious, open-minded and reliable publishers willing to publish and support their works. Fortunately, such publishers do exist, and I was and will be honoured to collaborate with the two most important and active ones. These are, in alphabetical order, Michael Everson from Evertype, who has published my own *Auraicept na nÉicsíne* (2023), an Old Irish translation of *The Primer* by Treadwell and Free, and Walter Sauer from Edition Tintenfaß, with whom I will soon be starting a collaboration for the Old Irish translation of *Le Petit Prince*.

4.4.1. Michael Everson and Evertype

Michael Everson is the founder and sole owner of the publishing house Evertype, now based in Dundee, Scotland. The biographical information on his website says, among other things:

> Michael Everson [...] is an expert in the writing systems of the world. He is active in supporting minority-language communities, especially in the fields of character standardization and internationalization. He is one of the co-authors of the Unicode Standard, and is a Contributing Editor [...] to ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2/WG2, the committee responsible for the development and maintenance of the Universal Character Set. He is a linguist, typesetter, and font designer who has contributed to the encoding of many scripts and characters.[27]

His dedication and passion for languages are well represented by his publishing activity, through which he made available a multitude of translations into historical, minority and even artificial languages.[28] He also publishes original literature, essays, and also re-editions of old scholarly works. A strong focus of his activity are undoubtedly Celtic languages, including revived Cornish.

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27 https://www.evertype.com/misc/bio.html

28 My very first experience with Evertype dates back to many years ago, when I ordered from Everson his entire Volapük catalogue: the newly re-edited classical grammar and dictionary by Arie de Jong (1865–1958), and a collection of short stories translated by my former Volapük teacher Ralph Midgley. Later on I also bought the Esperanto version of *The Hobbit*, which remains the only version I have ever read of that book.

Everson is a passionate admirer of Lewis Carroll, and his website section called 'Wonderland and Carrolliana'[29] lists around 150 books by or about this author and the world that he created. One of the strongest points of Evertype is indeed the enormous number of translations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. As for historical languages, Carroll's book is available in Gothic, Latin, Middle English, Old English, and Old French. I have already discussed the Old English translation by Baker earlier in this chapter. Unfortunately, I have not been able to reach the translators of the Gothic and Old French versions, thus I could not ask them to share some of their first-hand translation experiences with me. As for the Latin translator, he died in 1980.

The Latin version is titled *Alicia in Terra Mirabili*, and was first published in 1964. The translator was Clive Harcourt Carruthers (1894–1980), a Canadian professor of classics at McGill University, who devoted himself to translation into Latin after his retirement. The Latin text of this version is widely regarded as good and 'rendered [...] with sensitivity and skill, occasionally with genius' (K.G. 1965: 32). It is particularly appreciated for skilfully managing the countless puns and linguistic traps with which the original text is studded:

> To render English nonsense prose and verse into Latin, that most lucid of languages, must have been a formidable task: the translator has solved it with conspicuous success, and the result is altogether delightful.

> (Schnur 1965: 378)

Another reviewer shows appreciation for Carruthers's choice not to strictly follow the classical usage. In his opinion, this makes the text fresher, more readable and, possibly, even partially understandable for a potential ancient reader:

> The translator wisely has not restricted himself to classical usage and vocabulary, thus in many instances avoiding cumbrous paraphrase. Complete literalness, on the other hand, was neither possible nor desirable, since it would have resulted in a text that no ancient reader could have understood. Such a reader, confronted with Professor Carruthers' sprightly Latin, would form as accurate an idea of the original as his mentality and experience allowed.

> (Bruère 1965: 149)

The original book came with a very limited and 'too scanty' (Schnur 65: 378) glossary of 23 words, whose uselessness strongly irritates K.G.:

> A book which uses words like *veverrae* and *silus* should either have a pretty complete glossary or else dispense with one altogether; a glossary of twenty-three items, among them *telescopium*, *thea*, and *tulipa*, is nothing short of an insult.

> (K.G. 1965: 32)

Michael Everson and the Swedish Latinist Johan Winge republished this translation in 2011 with a very large number of improvements and corrections (mostly based on

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29 https://www.evertype.com/carrolliana.html

Bruère 1965), orthographic updates, including macrons on all vowels, and also several appendices containing additional materials. Then, as if reacting to the criticism cited above, they also expanded the glossary:

> The Latin-English glossary at the end has been greatly enlarged. Instead of treating only a few Neo-Latin words and phrases peculiar to this book, the extended glossary now also covers over two hundred less common classical words. It is our hope that this will enable a much larger group of our readers to enjoy Carruthers' translation without having to resort to external dictionaries.

<div align="right">(Everson & Winge 2018: XX)</div>

In 2018 Everson and Winge released a further updated and corrected version of the book, of which, 'following a number of requests' (Ibd. VIII), they also made available a bilingual edition. The excellent job done by these two editors made this book much more accessible to Latin learners than it was before. Although *Alicia* remains an advanced reading, it is now an advanced reading perfectly suitable for advanced learners still in the process of learning, rather than just for advanced readers with no further learning goals.

 Alice's Gothic translation is called *Balþos Gadedeis Aþalhaidais in Sildaleikalanda* (2015). The translator is David Alexander Carlton, an accomplished linguist of the University of Western Ontario, Canada. In his foreword, he mentions all the difficulties related to such an undertaking, and particularly emphasizes the fact that Gothic is a very under-documented language, that 'all the extant texts are incomplete' (Carlton 2015: V), and that 'there is much which remains unknown about Gothic' (Ibd. VI). Nevertheless, he enthusiastically explains his choice to translate *Alice* into this language:

> Why translate "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" into such an ancient and idiosyncratic language? In part, because Alice—itself a textbook of idiosyncrasies—lends itself well to linguistic flights of fancy, and in part because the dearth of available Gothic reading material has occasioned the production of new literature in this important East Germanic language. "Aþalhaids" is to date the longest text written in Gothic in more than a thousand years.

<div align="right">(Ibd.)</div>

He then goes on to describe the long process of recreating such a complex text in Gothic. As an experienced historical linguist, Carlton did not hesitate to rely on his training to reconstruct the neologisms he needed (Ibd. VII–XII). Another interesting point is that the story of the Gothic *Alice*, or Aþalhaidais, is not set in the original time and place of Lewis's work. Instead, it is transported to the Germanic early medieval world, at the time when the Gothic Bible was translated (4th century). This also allowed Carlton to derive the most benefit from the linguistic context offered by the original Gothic sources. Given the extreme 'dearth' of original Gothic texts, this book, like any book translated into this language, is a blessing and a gem. As is usual with *Alice*, it is a very advanced text, thus learners are advised to begin their Gothic reading path from the Gothic *Prince*, which is a more accessible option. Carlton is now working on a new

translation of *Alice*, this time in collaboration with Roel, one of the translators of the *Prince*. The new text will closely follow Carroll's original 19th century setting, and thus raise new engaging challenges for the translators.

The other *Alice* translations made available by Evertype are, along with their translators, *The Aventures of Alys in Wondyr Lond* (Middle English, Brian S. Lee, 2013), the already discussed *Æðelgýðe Ellendæda on Wundorlande* (Old English, Peter S. Baker, 2015), and *La geste d'Aalis el Païs de Merveilles* (Old French, May Plouzeau, 2016).

The other historical language in the catalogue of Evertype is Old Irish, with my already mentioned *Auraicept na nÉicsíne* (The Primer of the Young Scholars) which, as David Stifter wrote on the day of its publication, is 'the first ever printed book in Neo-Old Irish'.[30] And it is also another one of the many achievements of Michel Everson and his Evertype.

4.4.2. Walter Sauer and Tintenfaß

Tintenfaß is a family-run German publishing house based in Neckarsteinach (Rhineland-Palatinate), Germany. It was established in 2001 by Walter Sauer, a retired scholar of English linguistics and Medieval Studies at the University of Heidelberg, and his American-born wife Nadine. The couple's daughter and son, Alison and Philippe, are also professionally active in the business. On their website, Walter and his family clearly state the aims of the company:

> Our program includes over 450 titles in more than 210 foreign, regional, minority and historical languages and (not only German) dialects. With our monolingual, bilingual and multilingual books, our readers can learn new languages and dialects, refresh their knowledge, or remember how their ancestors spoke. Languages from all continents are represented. In addition to books in dialect, there are titles in languages of the Global South. In some cases, they represent the very first writing of a language, in others possibly the last chance to document a dying idiom.[31]

One of the main focuses of Tintenfaß are classic children's books, in whose literary value and message Sauer strongly believes:

> In our selection of titles, we focus on visually strong classics with great recognition potential and themes such as otherness, tolerance and friendship. [...] Our name and logo go back to Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter*. We believe that (children's literature) classics should be read with consideration for their historical context and regret that many works celebrated as progressive at the time of their publication with a new form of illustrated children's book are little appreciated.

> (Ibd.)

Thanks to the dedicated and valuable work of the Sauer family, many of these books are now enjoying a new lease of life through their translations in languages that would have

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30 Post on X, 20th September 2023.
31 https://editionTintenfaß.de/en/edition

seemed unthinkable only a few years ago. Their most recurring titles are Heinrich Hoffmann's *Der Struwwelpeter* (1845; *Slovenly Peter*, 1849), Wilhelm Busch's *Max und Moritz: Eine Bubengeschichte in sieben Streichen* (1865; *Max and Moritz: A Story of Seven Boyish Pranks*, 1871), Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902), Sybille von Olfers' *Etwas von den Wurzelkindern* (1906; *The Story of the Root Children*, 1908), Albert Sixtus' *Die Häschenschule* (1924; *A Day at Bunny School*, 2009), Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince* (1943; *The Little Prince*, 1943), and Janosch's *Wie schön ist Panama* (1978; *The Trip to Panama*, 1990). The most famous of these works is *Le Petit Prince*, which is also Tintenfaß's flagship, and is available in an astounding range of historical languages. The versions are: *The litel prynce* (Middle English, Walter Sauer, 2008), *Daz prinzelîn* (Middle High German, Helmut Birkhan, 2008), *Dher luzzilfuristo* (Old High German, Regine Froschauer, 2009), *Be þam lytlan aeþelinge* (Old English, Fritz Kemmler, 2010),[32] *Li juenes princes* (Old French, Gérard Taverdet, 2017), Hieroglyph version (Ancient Egyptian, Claude Carrier, 2017), *Elli Amirellu* (Mozarabic, Pablo Sánchez, 2020), and the already discussed *Sa Leitila Frauja* (Gothic, Christian Peeters & Hrothja Missaleiks, 2021).

As is clear from the list above, Walter Sauer is not only the founder and owner of Tintenfaß, but also its translator for Middle English texts. As I had already been in touch with him regarding our common book project, I also decided to ask him to answer my questionnaire. Since he was very busy, however, instead of directly answering my single questions, he kindly shared with me the foreword to his Middle English version of *Der Struwwelpeter*, titled *Piers Dischevele. Myrie tales and gladde ymages* (2010), which answered all the main points of my questionnaire anyway. From the light-hearted tone that opens his foreword, it is very clear that Sauer undertook this task out of pure passion and love for his field:

> Not even facetiously can I talk you into believing that the most famous German children's book actually had a medieval English predecessor. Instead, I would like to offer you an example of 21st century "medievalism": Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter*, translated from 19th century German into Chaucer's language of late 14th century London. All just for the fun of it, with compliments to both authors, Geoffrey Chaucer (c1340 to 1400) of Canterbury Tales fame, and Heinrich Hoffmann (1809-1894), Frankfurt physician, politician and writer of satirical poems and children's books, among which *Der Struwwelpeter* (1845) ranges foremost.

(Sauer: 5.5.10.)

Enjoyment, passion, and love for one's field are absolutely vital in undertakings like this. The powerful, rewarding, emotional push that TETs feel from within their body and soul every time a new sentence in the TL takes shape before them is something indescribably intense and enjoyable. Every completed sentence fuels motivation, determination to do well, to be accurate, to deliver a text that learners and readers can trust, and to deserve their trust. The text keeps growing, and so the enjoyment, along with an exhilarating feel of accomplishment. Let us just say, for once, something that is not really academic: doing translations into historical languages is fun; reading

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32 Cf. also Kemmler 2022.

translations into historical languages is fun; enjoying an ancient or medieval language we love without having to decipher every single word is fun. Everything related to this deeply engaging and formative process is a wonderful world of fun.

It is interesting to see how Sauer compares this translation experience with his previous one, that is, the Middle English version of the *Prince*:

> Translating *Struwwelpeter* into Middle English, while being quite a challenge, has given me much pleasure. Admittedly, it was not the work of a rainy Sunday afternoon. In order to achieve a high degree of poetic and linguistic consistency, it needed much scrutiny, verification, revision, and polishing. Compared to my rendering Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*, a prose work, into Chaucer's language [...], it was the constraints of meter and rhyme which were added to the demands of language and style.

> (Ibd.)

This chapter has been exclusively focused on the translation of prose works rather than of verse works. The reason is simple: in a language like Old Irish, which is in such a great need for bridge texts, we need first and foremost to fill the low-/advanced-beginner gap. It is indeed at that level that learners, still unable to manage original materials, can gain the greatest possible advantage from such texts. However, for low and advanced beginners, verse texts would be far too advanced, for the same reason that writing in them is a much more challenging task even for a specialist like Walter Sauer:

> In this, my best guide proved to be Chaucer's poetry itself, its language, phraseology and rhythm, which I had thoroughly "imbibed" over the years, even to the degree of knowing many passages by heart. To it I turned frequently during the translation process. And yet I could not have accomplished the task without the help of, and constant reference to, various dictionaries and online corpora of Middle English literature.

> (Ibd.)

Nevertheless, the translation of verse into a historical language remains a wonderful linguistic achievement for the TET, and the products of these efforts can provide upper-intermediate to advanced learners with additional reading materials with which to challenge themselves, and thus further increase their language skills. At the end of the contribution he sent me, Sauer also added a full list, in table form, of all the neologisms he had to create for his translation of the *Prince*. This interesting and inspiring table is included in 5.5.10.

We TETs from every field should just be grateful for the work that Walter Sauer and his family are doing. During the last 23 years, they have been producing books that only dream-driven passion could produce. We do need publishers with such visions and dreams, and we do need books that seem impossible to publish, because those apparently 'improbable' books are actually powerful and much-needed learning tools.

In this chapter I have only been able to discuss—or in many cases just mention—a limited number of translations into historical languages. It would have been impossible,

and also beyond the scope of this thesis, to aim at being comprehensive.[33] Since my main focus is the production of texts based on extensive, continuous narrative, I did not discuss, for example, the Latin or Ancient Greek translations of comic books like *Asterix*. Comics books are fundamental in helping the learner acquire the spoken register of a language, thus their importance is considerable, especially in conjunction with conversational approaches applied to the teaching of historical languages. This would deserve a specific study and research, which is certainly one of my future priorities.

While doing my research for this chapter, I realized that there were many more books translated into historical languages than I would have ever thought. This, in a sense, made me feel disappointed: my focus on this practice was not so innovative, after all. This feeling, however, was just momentary. In reality, the fact that there is at least a certain tradition for this kind of translation is an extremely positive thing. The path is traced; it is now up to us TETs to keep following and developing it, to make it wider and more accessible, but always with the caveat of quality and reliability. As I said, we are responsible towards our learners, and even more so towards the trust they place in the printed work that we put into their hands. Old Irish is a complete newcomer in this field, with only one single published translation so far. Almost everything is yet to be done. Many projects are in the air, starting from the Old Irish *Little Prince* with Tintenfaß. We need to begin to fill the large gap between the Old Irish textbook and the original texts. It is fundamental to give students the chance to realize as soon as possible that, beyond its intimidating and off-putting morphology and syntax, the Old Irish language can be a wonderful and fascinating storyteller.

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33 For a list of books and comic books translated into historical languages, see this constantly updated page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_modern_literature_translated_into_dead_languages

5. Appendices

5.1. *Labrammar-ni in Sengoídilc*: 'Forcetal 1'

This is the first lesson (*forcetal*) of my in-progress Old Irish textbook *Labrammar-ni in Sengoídilc!* ('Let's Speak Old Irish!'). All the teaching principles behind it are explained in detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis. In the textbook, this lesson will be preceded by an introductory section about Old Irish pronunciation, orthography, and mutations. Some basic terminology will be also introduced for the benefit of people with no particular linguistic background.

A very special thank to Elliott Lash, University of Göttingen, for kindly proofreading the draft of the lesson and providing me with with insightful corrections and with extremely detailed and competent feedback.

Forcetal 1

Cid só?
Cía sin?

forcetal (o, n) – lesson

cid[L] – what is?
só (after cid/cía) – this
cía[H] – who is?
sin (after cid/cía) – that

Cid só? Is sí Ériu in só.
Cid só? Is ardscol in só.
Cid só? Is faithche in só.
Cid sin? Is catt in sin.
Cid sin? Is cú in sin.
Cid sin? Is ech in sin.
Cid só? Is tech forcetail in só.
Cid sin? Is dorus in sin.
Cid sin? Is seinester in sin.
Cid sin? Is clár in sin.
Cid só? Is cathaír in só.
Cid só? Is lebor in só.
Cid só? Is forcetal in só.
Cid só? Is sí int Ṡengóídelc in só.
Cid sin? Is lebor línech in sin.
Cid sin? Is penn in sin.
Cid sin. Is tíag in sin.
Cid só? Is rímaire in só.
Cid sin? Is cíantechtaire in sin.
Cid sin? Is findchlár in sin.

is – is
sí – she
Ériu (n, f) – Ireland
in só – this
ardscol (ā, f) – university
faithche (iā, f) – parc
catt (o, m) – cat
in sin – that
cú (n, m) – dog
ech (o, m) – horse
tech (s, n) forcetail – classroom
dorus (u, n) – door
seinester (ā, f) – window
clár (o, n) – table, board, desk
cathaír (ā, f) – chair
lebor (o, m) – book
int[L], Nsg.f – the
Sengóídelc (ā, f) – Old Irish
lebor línech – notebook
penn (ā, f) – pen
tíag (ā, f) – bag
rímaire (io, m) – computer
cíantechtaire (io, m) – phone
findchlár (o, n) – whiteboard

Cid Ériu? Is inis Ériu.
Cid Manu? Is inis Manu.
Cid int Ṡengóídelc? Is bélrae int Ṡengóídelc.
Cid Albu? Is inis Albu.
Cid a Saxanbélrae? Is bélrae a Saxanbélrae.
Cid in catt? Is míl in catt.
Cid in cú? Is míl in cú.
Cid int ech? Is míl int ech danó.

Manu (n, f) – Isle of Man
inis (ī, f) – island
bélrae (o, n) – language
Albu (n, f) – Britain
a[N], Nsg.n – the
Saxanbélrae (io, n) – English
míl (o, n) – animal
danó – also/either

macc (o, n) – boy

Cía só? Is macc in só.
Cía só? Is ingen in só.

macc (o, n) – boy
ingen (ā, f) – girl
fer (o, m) – man
macc léigind – student (male)
ingen léigind – student (female)
forcetlaid (i, m) – teacher

Cía só? Is fer in só
Cía só? Is ben in só.
Cía sin? Is macc léigind in sin.
Cía sin? Is ingen léigind in sin.
Cía sin? Is forcetlaid in sin.

in, Nsg.m – the
ind^L, Nsg.f – the
cía ainm – what is the name?
in^L maicc, Gsg. – of the boy
ainm (o, n) – name
a^L – his
inna^H ingine, Gsg. – of the girl
a^H – her
ind^L forcetlado, Gsg. – of the teacher

Cía in macc? Is macc léigind in macc.
Cía ind ingen? Is ingen léigind ind igen.
Cía ainm in maicc? Is Conall ainm in maicc.
Cía a ainm? Is Conall a ainm.
Cía ainm inna ingine? Is Eimer ainm inna ingine.
Cía a ainm? Is Eimer a ainm.
Cía in fer? Is forcetlaid in fer.
Cía ainm ind forcetlado? Is Fergus ainm ind forcetlado.
Cía a ainm? Is Fergus a ainm.

in^L chaitt, Gsg. – of the cat
in^L chon, Gsg. – of the dog
ind^L eich, Gsg. – of the horse

Cía ainm in chaitt? Is Méone ainm in chaitt.
Cía ainm in chon? Is Ailbe ainm in chon.
Cía ainm ind eich? Is Núadu ainm ind eich.
Cía Méone? Is catt Méone.
Cía Ailbe? Is cú Ailbe.
Cía Núadu? Is ech Núadu.

dath (u, n) – colour
dub (o, ā) – black
bán (o, ā) – white
derg (o, ā) – red
int, Nsg.m – the

Cid dath in chaitt? Is dub dath in chaitt. Is dub in catt.
Cid dath in chon? Is bán dath in chon. Is bán in cú.
Cid dath ind eich? Is derg dath ind eich. Is derg int ech.

II

in – is...?
ní^H – is not

In sí Ériu in só? Tó, is sí Ériu in só.
In sí Ériu in sin? Náthó, ní sí Ériu in sin. Is sí Albu in sin.
In sí int Ṡengoídelc in só? Tó, is sí int Ṡengoídelc in só.
In sí int Ṡengoídelc in sin? Náthó, ní sí int Ṡengoídelc in sin. Is ed a Saxanbélrae in sin.
In dorus in sin? Tó, is dorus in sin.
In dorus in só? Náthó, ní dorus in só. Is seinester in só.
In cathaír in sin? Tó, is cathaír in sin.
In cathaír in só? Náthó, ní cathaír in só. Is clár in só.
In lebor in só? Tó, is lebor in só.
In lebor in sin? Náthó, ní lebor in sin. Is lebor línech in sin.
In rímaire in só? Tó, is rímaire in só.
In rímaire in sin? Náthó, ní rímaire in sin. Is cíantechtaire in sin.

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In cíantechtaire in só? Tó, is cíantechtaire in só.

In cíantechtaire in sin? Náthó, ní cíantechtaire in sin. Is rímaire in sin.

In catt in só? Tó, is catt in só.

In catt in sin? Náthó, ní catt in sin. Is cú in sin.

In cú in só? Tó, is cú in só.

In cú in sin? Náthó, ní cú in sin. Is ech in sin.

In ech in só? Tó, is ech in só.

In ech in sin? Náthó, ní ech in sin. Ní cú in sin danó. Is catt in sin.

In inis Ériu? Tó, is inis Ériu.

In inis Albu? Tó, is inis Albu.

In inis Manu? Tó, is inis Manu.

In bélrae int Ṡengoídelc? Tó, is bélrae int Ṡengoídelc.

In bélrae a Saxanbélrae? Tó, is bélrae a Saxanbélrae.

In belrae Ériu? Náthó, ní bélrae Ériu. Is inis Ériu.

In bélrae Manu? Náthó, ní bélrae Manu. Is inis Manu.

In inis int Ṡengoídelc? Náthó, ní inis int Ṡengoídelc. Is bélrae int Ṡengoídelc.

In bec Manu? Tó, is bec Manu.

In mór Manu? Náthó, ní mór Manu. Is bec Manu.

In mór Albu? Tó, is mór Albu.

In bec Albu? Náthó, ní bec Albu. Is mór Albu.

In ansae int Ṡengoídelc? Tó, is ansae int Ṡengoídelc.

In assae int Ṡengóidelc? Náthó, ní assae int Ṡengoídelc. Is ansae int Ṡengoídelc.

In assae a Saxanbélrae? Tó, is assae a Saxanbélrae.

In ansae a Saxanbélrae? Náthó, ní ansae a Saxanbélrae. Is assae a Saxanbélrae.

In mór in lebor? Tó, is mór in lebor.

In bec in lebor? Náthó, ní bec in lebor. Is mór in lebor.

In mór in rímaire? Tó, is mór in rímaire.

In bec in rímaire? Náthó, ní bec in rímaire. Is mór in rímaire.

In bec in cíantechtaire? Tó, is bec in cíantechtaire.

In mór in cíantechtaire? Náthó, ní mór in cíantechtaire. Is bec in cíantechtaire.

In dub in catt? Tó, is dub in catt.

In bán in catt? Náthó, ní bán in catt. Is dub in catt.

In bán in cú? Tó, is bán in cú.

In dub in cú? Náthó, ní dub in cú. Is bán in cú.

In derg int ech? Tó, is derg int ech.

In bán int ech? Náthó, ní bán int ech. Is derg int ech.

bec (o, ā) – small
mór (o, ā) – big

ansae (io, iā) – difficult
assae (io, iā) – easy

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In macc léigind in macc? Tó, is macc léigind in macc.

In maith in macc léigind? Tó, is maith in macc léigind.

In olc in macc léigind? Náthó, ní olc in macc léigind. Is maith in macc léigind.

In ingen léigind ind ingen? Tó, is ingen léigind ind ingen.

In maith ind ingen léigind? Tó, is maith ind ingen léigind.

In olc ind ingen léigin? Náthó, ní olc ind ingen léigind. Is maith ind ingen léigind.

In forcetlaid Conall? Náthó, ní forcetlaid Conall. Is macc léigind Conall.

In forcetlaid Eimer? Náthó, ní forcetlaid Eimer. Is ingen léigind Eimer.

In macc léigind Fergus? Náthó, ní macc léigind Fergus. Is forcetlaid Fergus.

In oäc Conall? Tó, is oäc Conall.

In sen Conall? Náthó, ní sen Conall. Is oäc Conall.

In fer Conall? Náthó, ní fer Conall. Is macc Conall.

In oäc Eimer? Tó, is oäc Eimer.

In sen Eimer? Náthó, ní sen Eimer. Is oäc Eimer.

In ben Eimer? Náthó, ní ben Eimer. Is ingen Eimer.

In macc Fergus? Náthó, ní macc Fergus. Is fer Fergus.

Forcetal inna Sengoídilce

Is sí Ériu in só. Is ardscol in só. Is mór ind ardscol. Is faithche in só. Is mór ind ḟaithche danó. Is sí faithche inna ardscuile in só. Is mór faithche inna ardscuile. Is catt in sin. Is míl in catt. Is dub in catt. Ní bán, 7 ní derg danó. Ní bán. Ní derg. Is dub. Ní mór in catt, acht ní bec danó. Is gnáth in catt. Is é catt inna ardscuile in sin. Is sí ind ardscol tech in chaitt. Is Méone ainm in chaitt. Is Méone a ainm. Is sí ind ardscol a thech.

Is tech forcetail in só. Ní mór a tech forcetail, acht is mór ind ardscol. Is dorus in só. Is find a ndorus. Ní dub a ndorus, 7 ní derg danó. Is find. Is seinester in sin. Ní mór a tech forcetail, acht is mór int ṡeinester. Is bec a tech forcetail, acht ní bec int ṡeinester. Ní mór a ndorus, acht ní bec danó. Is gnáth a ndorus. Is gnáth dorus in tige forcetail.

Is macc in sin. Is Conall ainm in maicc. Is Conall a ainm. Is macc léigind Conall. Is oäc Conall. Ní sen Conall. Is oäc, ar is macc. Is ingen in sin. Is Eimer ainm inna ingine. Is Eimer a ainm. Is oäc Eimer danó. Ní sen Eimer. Is oäc, ar is ingen. Is clár in só. Is bec a clár. Is ed clár nEimire in só. Is bec clár nEimire. Is penn in só. Is dub in phenn, ní derg. Is cathaír in só. Is sí cathaír Eimire in só. Is clár in sin. Is bec a clár. Is ed clár Conaill in sin. Is bec clár Conaill. Is penn in sin. Is sí penn Chonaill in sin. Is dub penn Chonaill danó, ní derg. Is cathaír in sin. Is sí cathaír Chonaill in sin.

Is forcetal in só. Is ed forcetal inna Sengoídilce. Ní ed forcetal int

Ṡaxanbélrai in só. Is bélrae int Ṡengoídelc 7 is bélrae a Saxanbélrae danó. Acht is ed forcetal inna Sengoídilce in só. Is sen int Ṡengoídelc, ní nuë. Is nuë a Saxanbélrae, ní sen. Is assae a Saxanbélrae, acht ní assae int Ṡengoídelc. Is ansae int Ṡengoídelc. Is lebor in sin. Is é lebor Eimire. Is nuë in lebor. Is nuë lebor Eimeire. Ní sen lebor Conaill. Is nuë lebor Conaill danó. Is é lebor inna Sengoídilce in sin. Is mór lebor inna Sengoídilce. Is ansae lebor inna Sengoídilce danó. Is mór lebor inna Sengoídilce, ar is ansae int Ṡengoídelc. Is bec lebor int Ṡaxanbélrai, ar ní ansae a Saxanbélrae. Acht ní é lebor int Ṡaxanbélrai in sin. Is é lebor inna Sengoídilce in sin. Is é lebor inna Sengoídilce, ar is ed forcetal inna Sengoídilce in só. Is clár in sin. Is mór a clár. Is ed clár ind ḟorcetlado in sin. Is mór clár ind ḟorcetlado. Is penn in só. Is sí penn Ḟergoso in só. Ní dub penn Ḟergoso. Is derg penn Ḟergoso. Is derg a phenn. Is derg a phenn, ar is forcetlaid Fergus. Is derg penn ind ḟorcetlado. Is findchlár in sin. Is ed findchlár in tige forcetail. Is mór a findchlár, ní bec. Is find a findchlár, ní dub. Is é in forcetlaid in sin. Is fer in forcetlaid. Is lebor in sin. Is é lebor ind ḟorcetlado in sin. Ní nuë lebor ind ḟorcetlado. Is sen lebor ind ḟorcetlado. Is Fergus ainm ind ḟorcetlado. Is Fergus a ainm. Is sen lebor Fergoso. Is é forcetlaid inna Sengoídilce Fergus. Is erlam Fergus. Is erlam Conall. Is erlam Eimer. Is ed tossach ind ḟorcetail in só!

int Ṡaxanbélrai, Gsg. – of English

nuë (io, iā) – new

Fergoso, Gsg. – Fergus'

erlam (o, ā) – ready

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Labrammar-ni!

In the classroom: answer the following questions orally in pairs or triads.
Individually: make sure you are able to answer all the questions orally first, one after the other, without major interruptions. Then, and only then, write down the answers.

1. In bec ind ardscol?
2. In mór ind ḟaithche?
3. In sí faithche in tige in só?
4. In bec faithche inna ardscuile?
5. Cid in catt?
6. In mór in catt?
7. Cid dath in chaitt?
8. In Ailbe ainm in chaitt?
9. Cía ainm in chaitt?
10. Cid in cú?
11. Cid dath in chon?
12. In Núadu ainm in chon?
13. Cía ainm in chon?
14. Cid int ech?
15. Cid dath ind eich?
16. In Méone ainm ind eich?
17. Cía ainm ind eich?
18. In é catt in tige in sin?
19. In sí ind ardscol tech in chaitt?
20. In tech in só?
21. In mór a tech forcetail?
22. In bec ind ardscol?
23. In gnáth seinester in tige forcetail?
24. In gnáth dorus in tige forcetail?
25. In dub a ndorus?
26. Cía ainm in maicc?
27. Cía Conall?
28. In sen Conall?
29. Cía ainm inna ingine?
30. Cía Eimer?
31. In oäc Eimer?
32. In bec clár nEimire?
33. In mór clár Conaill?
34. In gnáth in chathaír?
35. In derg penn Eimire?
36. Cid dath peinne Eimire?
37. In find penn Chonaill?
38. Cid dath peinne Conaill?
39. In forcetal in só?
40. In ed forcetal int Ṡaxanbélrai in só?
41. Cid int Ṡengoídelc?
42. In nuë int Ṡengoídelc?
43. Cid a Saxanbélrae?
44. In nuë a Saxanbélrae?
45. In assae int Ṡengoídelc?
46. In ansae a Saxanbélrae?
47. In mór in lebor?
48. In lebor int Ṡaxanbélrai in só?
49. In assae lebor inna Sengoídilce?
50. In mór lebor int Ṡaxanbélrai?
51. In bec lebor inna Sengoídilce?
52. In nuë lebor Conaill?
53. In sen lebor Eimire?
54. In macc Fergus?
55. In forcetlaid Fergus?
56. In é forcetlaid int Ṡaxanbélrai Fergus?
57. In mór clár ind ḟorcetlado?
58. In dub penn ind ḟorcetlado?
59. In bán penn ind ḟorcetlado?
60. In sen in forcetlaid?
61. In nuë lebor ind ḟorcetlado?
62. In findchlár in sin?
63. In ed findchlár ind ḟorcetlado

in sin?

64. In ed findchlár in tige
    forcetail in sin?
65. In dub a findchlár?
66. In find a findchlár?

67. In erlam in macc léigind?
68. In erlam ind ingen léigind?
69. In erlam in forcetlaid?
70. In ed tossach forcetail int
    Ṡaxanbélrai in só?

Grammatach

1. The verb 'to be': the Copula *is*

Copula is the Latin for 'bond', 'connection', and connections are what it expresses. In particular, it expresses connections between the <u>subject</u> of the sentence and its <u>predicate</u>, i.e. the word that says what, who or how the subject is, like in 'John is a <u>student</u>', or 'Mary is <u>tall</u>'.

In an Old Irish copula sentence, word order greatly differs from the word order of an English sentence of the same kind, and may even look a bit exotic at first. In English the order is Subject-Verb-Predicate (SVP), like in 'Mary (S) is (V) tall (P)'. In Old Irish, instead, it is **V**erb-**P**redicate-**S**ubject (**VPS**), kind of '*is tall Mary*'. The predicate, like in English, can be a <u>noun</u> or an <u>adjective</u>:

is <u>macc</u> Conall – Conall is a boy (P: noun)
is <u>Éirennach</u> Eimer – Eimer is Irish (P: adjective)

When the subject is <u>not</u> a noun or a proper name, that is when in English you would use a pronoun (I, he, she...), the copula form alone will suffice. No pronoun is necessary in Old Irish to indicate the subject of a copula sentence:

is macc – [he] is a boy
is mór – [he/she/it] is big
in forcetlaid? – is [he/she] a teacher?
ní bán – [it] is not white

1.1. Third singular forms

In this lesson we will learn the third singular (3sg.) forms of the copula, in their affirmative, negative and interrogative variants. In English you can make negative any form of 'to be' by just adding 'not' after it, for example 'it is', 'it is *not*'. Similarly, to make the same sentence interrogative, we just need to invert the subject/verb order, as in 'is it?'. Whatever happens, 'is' is

always there and its form never changes. Very simple, right? Well, this is not the case in Old Irish, where there are three different sets of copula forms that have to be learnt independently:

Person	Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
3sg.	**is** he/she/it is	**ní**^H he/she/it is not	**in** is he/she/it?

is forcetlaid Eimer – Eimer <u>is</u> a teacher
ní forcetlaid Eimer – Eimer <u>is not</u> a teacher
in forcetlaid Fergus? – <u>is</u> Fergus a teacher<u>?</u>

As you can see, *ní* and *in* are not recognizable variants of the affirmative *is*, which is, so to say, invisibly embedded in them. This is true for all the other negative and interrogative forms of the copula, which are never predictable starting from the affirmative ones. This means that we will have to learn all 18 of them, but do not worry, we will do it step by step.

1.2. Definite predicate

When the predicate of the copula sentence is definite, it must be preceded, in the singular, by one of the following pronouns: **é** (msg.), **sí** (fsg.), **ed** (nsg.). The pronoun is placed between the verb and the predicate, and always matches the gender and the number of the latter. A predicate is <u>definite</u> when it is:

1) the proper name of a definite unique individual (person or thing):

*is **sí** <u>Ériu</u> (f) in só* – this is Ireland
*ní **sí** <u>Eimer</u> (f) in sin* – that is not Eimer
*in **é** <u>Fergus</u> (m) in só?* – is this Fergus?

2) a noun preceded by the article:

In Old Irish, language names are always preceded by the article: ***int Šengoídelc**, **a Saxanbélrae***.

*is **é** <u>in forcetlaid</u> (m) in só* – this is the teacher
*ní **sí** <u>int Šengoídelc</u> (f) in sin* – that is not Old Irish
*in **ed** <u>a Saxanbélrae</u> (n) in só?* – is this English?

3) a noun followed by a proper name in the genitive:

*is **é** <u>catt (m) Conaill</u> in só* – this is Conall's cat
*ní **ed** <u>clár (n) nEimere</u> in sin* – that is not Eimer's table
*in **sí** <u>cathair (f) Ḟergoso</u> in só?* – is this Fergus' chair?

Notice that the pronoun <u>matches</u> the gender of the <u>noun in the nominative</u>, not of that in the genitive.

4) a noun followed by another noun in the genitive with the article:

*is **é** <u>lebor (m) inna Sengoídilce</u> in só* – this is the book of Old Irish
*ní **sí** <u>faithche (f) inna ardscuile</u> in sin* – that is not the park of the university
*in **ed** <u>clár (n) ind ḟorcetlado</u> in só* – is that the table of the teacher?

Again, the pronoun matches the gender and the number of the noun in the nominative.

2. Interrogatives

Interrogatives are words used to ask questions, like English 'what', 'who', 'how' and so on. In this lesson we have met two of them. These are:

cid[L] – what (is)?:

cid in só? – <u>what</u> is this?
is lebor in só – this is a book

cid in sin? – <u>what</u> is that?
is rímaire in sin – that is a computer

cía[H] – who (is)?:

cía Conall? – <u>who</u> is Conall?
is macc Conall – Conall is a boy

When used in conjunction with a noun, *cid* and *cía* mean 'which, what kind of':

cía ainm in maicc? – <u>what is the name</u> of the boy?
cía ainm inna ingine? – <u>what is the name</u> of the girl?
cid dath in chaitt? – <u>what is the colour</u> of the cat?

Most Old Irish interrogatives have a 'built-in' 3sg. copula form (*is*), which is not visible but always implied. That's why their translations are given as 'what (is)' and 'who (is)'.

3. Nouns

In Old Irish a noun always has a grammatical gender, and can be masculine, feminine or neuter. Grammatical gender is not predictable, nor can it be

determined by looking at the noun. Unfortunately, it just needs to be memorized along with it. Nouns are also inflected, i.e. they change their form according to the role they have in the sentence, and are arranged into different inflectional classes, with every inflectional class following a specific inflectional pattern. It is therefore fundamental to know to which class a noun belongs to, if we want to be able to inflect it. This is why every noun is always listed along with its class and gender. For example:

fer (o, m)

This means that *fer*, 'man', is an o-class (o), masculine (m) noun. In this lesson we have met nouns of all the three genders, i.e. masculine (m), feminine (f) and neuter (n), and from different inflectional classes, including o-class (o), ā-class (ā), io-class (io), iā-class (iā), i-class (i), u-class (u), n-class (n) and nt-class (nt), but there are many more. You will learn all of them in due time, and you will also get used to all these abbreviations, step by step. Don't worry about them for now, they are there just for future reference.

3.1. The nominative singular

Almost all the nouns in this lesson are in the nominative (N) singular (sg.). The nominative is the case used to express the subject and, in copula sentences, also the predicate:

is forcetlaid in fer – the man is a teacher
is ingen Eimer – Eimer is a girl

In these sentences both the subjects (*fer* and *Eimer*) and the predicates (*forcetlaid* and *ingen*) are in the nominative singular.

As for the inflection, you do not have to worry. Just use the citation form of the noun, i.e. the one found in the margin of the text or in the glossary at the end of the lesson, as citation forms are always in the nominative singular.

4. Articles

Old Irish has no indefinite articles. So, for example, to say 'a book', it is enough to say *lebor*:

is lebor in só – this is [a] book
is catt in sin – that is [a] cat

Definite articles, i.e. like English 'the', are, instead, a well-developed category, and inflect according to gender, number and case. In this lesson we will learn the nominative singular forms of the three genders. These are:

Masculine

in – before consonant: *in macc*, *in catt*
int – before vowel: *int ech*

Feminine

in[L] – before *b, d, g, p, t, c, m*: *in chathaír, in phenn*
ind[L] – before *vowel, l, n, r, f*: *ind ingen, ind ardscoil, ind ḟaithche*
int[L] – before *s*: *int Ṡengoídelc, int ṡeinester*

Neuter

a[N] – everywhere: *a forcetal, a ndath, a mbélrae, a ndorus, a n-ainm, a lléigend*

Notice the mutations! Feminine forms always lenite, while neuter forms always nasalize.

a^L (msg.) – his
a^H (fsg.) – her
a^N, Nsg.n – the
Ailbe (io, m) – male's name
ainm (o, n) – name
Albu (n, f) – Britain
ansae (io, iā) – easy
ar – since, as
ardscol (ā, f) – university
ardscuile, Gsg. < ardscol
assae (io, iā) – difficult
bán (o, ā) – white
bec (o, ā) – small
bélrae (io, n) – language
ben (ā, f) – woman
cathaír (ā, f) – chair
catt (o, m) – cat
cía^H – who (is)
cíantechtaire (io, m) – phone
cid^L – what (is)
clár (o, n) – table, board, desk
con, Gsg. < cú
Conall (o, m) – male's name
Conaill, Gsg. < Conall
cú (n, m) – dog
danó – also/either
erlam (o, ā) – ready
dath (u, n) – colour
derg (o, ā) – red
dorus (o, n) – door
dub (u) – black
é – he (msg.)
ech (o, m) – horse
ed – it (nsg.)
eich, Gsg. < ech
Eimer (ā, f) – female's name
Eimire, Gsg. < Eimer
Éirennach (o, ā) – Irish
Ériu (n, f) – Ireland
faithche (iā, f) – park
fer (o, m) – man
Fergus (u, m) – male's name
Fergoso, Gsg. < Fergus
frithgnam (u, m) – exercise
gnáth (o, ā) – usual, ordinary
findchlár (o, n) – whiteboard
focal (o, n) – vocable
forcetal (o, m) – lesson; class
forcetail, Gsg. < forcetal
forcetlado, Gsg. < forcetlaid
forcetlaid (i, m) – teacher

forus (o, n) – foundation
forus focal – glossary, word list
in, Nsg.m – the
in^L, Nsg.f – the
in chaitt, Gsg. – of the cat
in chon, Gsg. – of the dog
ind^L, Nsg.f < in^L
ind eich, Gsg. – of the horse
ind forcetlado, Gsg. – of the teacher
ingen (ā, f) – girl
ingen léigind (ā, f) – student (female)
ingine, Gsg. < ingen
inis (ī, f) – island
in maicc, Gsg. – of the boy
inna^H ardscuile, Gsg. – of the university
inna^H ingine, Gsg. – of the girl
in sin – that
in só – this
int^L, Nsg.f < in^L
in$^{(L)}$ tige forcetail, Gsg. – of the classroom
lebor (o, m) – book
lebor línech – notebook
léigend (o, n) – act of reading, studying;
text
léigind, Gsg. < léigend
macc (o, m) – boy
macc léigind (o, m) – student (male)
maicc, Gsg. < macc
maith (i) – good
Manu (n, f) – Isle of Man
Méone (io, m) – cat's name
míl (o, n) – animal
mór (o, ā) – big
náthó – no
Núadu (nt, m) – male's name
oäc (o, ā) – young
olc (o, ā) – bad
penn (ā, f) – pen
rímaire (io, m) – computer
Saxanbélrae (o, n) – English (language)
seinester (ā, f) – window
sen (o, ā) – old
Sengoídelc (ā, f) – Old Irish (language)
sí – she (fsg.)
tech (s, n) – house
tech forcetail – classroom
tíag (ā, f) – bag
tige, Gsg. < tech
tó – yes
tossach (o, n) – beginning

Frithgnabae

For exercises, I strongly recommend to apply two fundamental principles. These are:

Mastering First (MF): Start the exercises only when you have mastered all the readings of the lesson, i.e. when you are able to read and understand them fluently and completely without looking at the notes in the margin, as if they were written in your native language.

Orality First (OF): Go through every exercise orally first. Read it out loud, articulate properly the sounds of the language. Take your time, there is no rush. Accuracy is much more important than speed. Your aim is to be able to read the whole text of the exercise out loud while filling in all the answers without having to stop and think. You may need to go through the text more than once before you achieve this but, as I said, there is no rush. This will greatly foster your learning process.

Frithgnam 1

Fill in 3sg. copula forms. When the moment comes, i.e. after the OF phase, I recommend to write the exercise in your notebook. Rewrite the full text, not only the answers. The more language you use and manipulate, the more you learn.

(1)__ macc Conall. (2)__ forcetlaid Conall? Náthó, (3)__ forcetlaid Conall. (4)__ macc léigind Conall. (5)__ forcetlaid Eimer? Náthó, (6)__ forcetlaid Eimer danó. (7)__ ingen léigind Eimer. (8)__ macc léigind Fergus danó? Náthó, (9)__ macc léigind Fergus. (10)__ forcetlaid Fergus. (11)__ é forcetlaid int Ṡaxanbélrai? Náthó, (12)__ é forcetlaid int Ṡaxanbélrai, (13)__ é forcetlaid inna Sengoídilce. (14)__ sen Conall? Náthó, (15)__ sen Conall. (16)__ oäc Conall, ar (17)__ macc. (18)__ oäc Eimer danó, ar (19)__ ingen. (20)__ mór dorus in tige forcetail, 7 (21)__ bec danó. (22)__ gnáth. (23)__ gnáth int seinester danó? Náthó, (24)__ gnáth int ṡeinester. (25)__ mór int ṡeinester. (26)__ gnáth a ndorus, acht (27)__ mór int ṡeinester. (28)__ mór a tech forcetail? Náthó, (29)__ mór a tech forcetail. (30)__ bec a tech forcetail. (31)__ bec ind ardscol? Náthó, (32)__ bec ind ardscol. (33)__ bec ind ḟaithche? Náthó, (34)__ bec ind ḟaithche. (35)__ mór ind ardscol, 7 (36)__ mór ind ḟaithche danó. (37)__ sí faithche inna ardscuile in só. (38)__ mór ind ḟaithche, ar (39)__ mór ind ardscol.

(40)__ forcetal in só. (41)__ assae a forcetal? Náthó, (42)__ assae a forcetal. (43)__ assae a forcetal, ar (44)__ ed forcetal inna Sengoídilce in só, 7 (45)__ assae int Ṡengoídelc. (46)__ bélrae int Ṡengoídelc, 7 is ansae. (47)__ assae. (48)__ ansae. (49)__ ansae a Saxanbélrae danó? Náthó, (50)__ ansae a Saxanbélrae. (51)__ ed bélrae a Saxanbélrae danó, acht (52)__ ansae. (53)__ assae. (54)__ é lebor inna Sengoídilce in só. (55)__ ansae int Ṡengoídelc, 7 (56)__ ansae lebor inna Sengóidilce danó. (57)__ erlam ind ingen léigind? (58)__ erlam in macc léigind? (59)__ erlam Ferguis? Tó! (60)__ erlam Eimer. (61)__ ed tossach ind ḟorcetail!

is
ní^H
in

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Frithgnam 2

Rewrite in your notebook the following nouns preceded by their definite article. Remember to apply the mutation triggered by the article (if any) on the first letter of the nouns. Also explicitly mark the mutation required by each article (art) as follows:

1. superscript L (art^L), if it lenites;
2. superscript N (art^N), if it nasalizes;
3. superscript Ø (art^Ø), if it does not trigger any mutation.

Remember that Ø is as important as L or N, as the absence of mutation is also a morphological indicator in itself, and is as relevant as its presence. This explicit marking will develop your 'mutational awareness' which, in turn, will foster your gradual mastering of Old Irish morphology.

Nsg. Articles		
M	**F**	**N**
in	in^L	a^N
int	ind^L	
	int^L	

1. ainm; 2. ardscol; 3. bélrae; 4. ben; 5. cathaír; 6. catt; 7. cíantechtaire; 8. clár; 9. clár; 10. cú; 11. dath; 12. dorus; 13. ech; 14. faithche; 15. fer; 16. findchlár; 17. focal; 18. forcetal; 19. forcetlaid; 20. forus; 21. ingen; 22. inis; 23. lebor; 24. léigend; 25. macc; 26. míl; 27. penn; 28. rímaire; 29. Saxanbélrae; 30. seinester; 31. Sengoídelc; 32. tech; 32. tossach.

Frithgnam 3

Fill in with the words listed in the margin. Some of them occur more than once. If the word right before the blank has a superscript letter, make sure to apply the correct mutation to the word you fill in. In some cases there may be more than one option. Provided that your sentence is correct, any option is acceptable. When looking for the answer, don't just fucus on the blank. Check also what comes before and after it. You my find hints. As for the previous exercises, apply OF first, then rewrite the full text in your notebook.

a
ainm
ar
ardscol
ansae
assae
bec
bélrae
ben
catt
cía
cid
cú
danó
derg
dorus
dorus
dub
ech
faithche
fer
find
findchlár

Is sí Ériu in só. (1)__ Ériu? Is (2)__ Ériu. Is mór ind inis. In (3)__ Albu danó? Tó, is (4)__ Albu (5)__. Is inis Manu. Is mór Ériu, 7 is (6)__ Albu danó. In (7)__ Manu? Náthó, ní mór Manu. Is (8)__. Is macc in só. Cía ainm (9)__? Is Conall (10)__ in maicc. Is Conall a (11)__. In fer Conall? Náthó, is (12)__ Conall, ní (13)__. Is ingen in sin. (14)__ ainm (15)__? Is Eimer ainm inna ingine. Is Eimer a^H (16)__. In ben Eimer? Náthó, is (17)__ Eimer, ní (18)__. Is fer in só. (19)__ a ainm? Is Fergus (20)__ ainm. In macc Fergus? Náthó, ní (21)__ Fergus, is (22)__. In oäc Eimer? Tó, is (23)__ Eimer, ní (24)__. Is oäc, (25)__ is (26)__. In sen Fergus? Náthó! Is fer Fergus, acht ní (27)__. Is oäc (28)__. In forcetlaid Conall? Náthó, ní (29)__ Conall. Is (30)__ Conall. In ingen léigind Eimer? Tó, is (31)__ Eimer. Ní (32)__ Eimer danó. In é forcetlaid (33)__ Fergus? Náthó, ní é forcetlaid (34)__ Fergus. Is é forcetlaid (35)__. Is lebor in sin. Is é lebor (36)__ in sin. Ní é lebor (37)__. In nuë lebor Eimire? Tó, is nuë (38)__ Eimire, 7 is (39)__ lebor Conaill danó. Acht ní (40)__ lebor Fergoso. Is (41)__ lebor Fergoso. (42)__ a Saxanbélrae? Is (43)__ a Saxanbélrae. In bélrae int^L (44)__ danó? Tó, is bélrae int Ṡengoídelc (45)__. In (46)__ int Ṡengoídelc? Náthó, ní (47)__ int Ṡengoídelc. Is (48)__. Ní ansae a (49)__. Is (50)__. Is ed (51)__ forcetail in só. Ní mór a (52)__. Is (53)__. In (54)__ ind ardscol danó? Náthó, ní bec ind^L (55)__. Is (56)__. Is dorus in sin. In ed (57)__ inna

ardscuile in sin? Náthó, ní ed dorus (58)__ in sin. Is ed (59)__ in tige forcetail in sin. Ní bec a^N (60)__, ⁊ ní mór a ndorus (61)__. Is (62)__ a^N (63)__. Is gnáth dorus (64)__. Is seinester in sin. Ní gnáth int^L (65)__. Ní gnáth (66)__ in tige forcetail, ⁊ ní (67)__ danó. Is mór. Is mór seinester (68)__. Is tíag in sin. Is bec in^L (69)__. In sí tíag Eimire in sin? Tó, is sí (70)__ Eimire. In bec (71)__ Chonaill danó? Náthó, ní (72)__ tíag Chonaill. Is mór. Is mór (73)__ Ḟergoso danó. Is penn in só. In sí (74)__ ind ḟorcetlado in só? Náthó, ní sí penn (75)__ in só. Is sí (76)__ Chonaill in só. In dub in^L (77)__? Tó, is (78)__ penn Chonaill, ⁊ is dub penn Eimire (79)__. In derg penn Ḟergoso? Tó, is (8)__ penn Ḟergoso. Is derg a^L (80)__, (81)__ is forcetlaid Fergus. Is derg penn (82)__. Is findchlár in sin. Is find a^N (83)__. Ní dub, ⁊ ní (84)__ danó. Is (85)__. Is forcetal in só. Is ed (86)__ inna Sengoídilce in só. Ní ed forcetal (87)__. Is tossach in só. Is ed (88)__ forcetail inna Sengoídilce in só.

Is faithche in sin. In sí (89)__ inna ardscuile in sin? Tó, is sí faithche (90)__ in sin. In mór ind^L (91)__? Tó, is mór faithche (92)__, ⁊ is mór ind^L (93)__ danó. Is catt in sin. Is é (94)__ inna ardscuile in sin. Cía ainm (95)__? Is Méone ainm (96)__. Is Méone a^L (97)__. In sí ind^L (98)__ tech in chaitt? Tó, is sí ind ḟaithche (99)__ in chaitt. (101)__ in catt? Is (102)__ in catt. Cid (103)__ in chaitt? Is dub dath (104)__. Is dub (105)__ dath. In derg (106)__ in chaitt? Náthó, ní derg a^L (107)__. In (108)__ in cú? Tó, is míl in (109)__ danó. Cía (110)__ in chon? Is Ailbe ainm (111)__. Is Ailbe (112)__ ainm. (113)__ dath in chon? Is bán dath (114)__. Is bán a^L (115)__. Is bán in cú. Ní dub in (116)__, ⁊ ní derg. Is (117)__. In míl int ech? Tó, is míl int (118)__ danó. Cía ainm ind eich? Is Núadu ainm (119)__. In Núadu ainm ind eich? Tó, is Núadu (120)__ ainm. In dub dath (121)__? Náthó, ní dub (122)__ dath. Ní dub int ech, ⁊ ní bán (123)__. Is (124)__. Ní sí faithche inna ardscuile (125)__ in chon. Ní sí (126)__ inna ardscuile tech ind eich. Is sí faithche inna ardscuile tech (127)__!

forcetal
forcetlaid
in chon
ind eich
ind ḟorcetlado
ingen
ingen léigind
inis
in maicc
inna ardscuile
inna ingine
inna Sengoídilce
int Ṡaxanbélrai
lebor
macc
macc léigind
míl
mór
nuë
oäc
Saxanbélrae
seinester
sen
Sengoídelc
tech
tech forcetail
tossach

5.1.1. A first attempt at 'Forcetal 1'

This is my very first attempt at 'Forcetal 1'. It was presented at the Early Irish Departmental Research Day, Maynooth University, on 22 June 2021. The title of the talk was 'A Sample Lesson for a Communicative Approach to Teaching Old Irish'.

I still like this attempt, but it does not fully mirror my teaching principles anymore. My main problem with it is that it introduces too much material with too little text, and too little repetition. There is no focus on extensive text exposure, which I now deem fundamental, and the very limited amount of text does not allow for much repetition of structures and vocabulary. Moreover, too many grammar topics are, albeit only partially, introduced. I believe that I somewhat lost control of them while writing the dialogues. There are still too many grammatical details for a very first Old Irish lesson aimed at absolute beginners with no particular linguistic background.

The fact is that, back then, when I wrote this lesson, although I had started to read the literature for my thesis, I had not started to write anything. I was guided more by my extensive experience as a language learner than by what I was reading for my research. Only when I started to write, did my new concepts and perception gradually take shape, develop and become part of my own knowledge. Up to that point I had not actively mastered them, thus I did not use them when I wrote the first version of my lesson.

Nevertheless, although I will not use this lesson as it is now, I will probably use its textual parts, which could be further developed to offer more exposure and repetition, for later lessons of LNIS.

Forcetal 1

Cía th'ainm?

Léigend 1

Meisse 7 Ériu Glas

Día do bethu! Is Fergus m'ainm. Is di Éirennchaib dom. Am macc. Am macc léigind. Am macc léigind i n-ardscuil Maige Núadat. Is cathair Mag Núadat. Is cathair álaind Mag Núadat. Is cathair álaind i n-Érinn Mag Núadat. Is tír Ériu. Is tír nglas Ériu. Is tír mmór Ériu. Is tír mmór n-áiland Ériu. Is mór Ériu. Is mór 7 is álaind Ériu. Is tír mmór n-álaind. Is inis Ériu. Is inis glas Ériu. Is inis glas álaind Ériu. Am Fergus. Is Fergus m'ainm. Is m'inis Ériu. Is m'inis glas Ériu. Is mo thír Ériu.

Forus Focail 1

7^L (ocus^L) - and
álaind (i) - beautiful
am, 1sg. < is
ardscol^L (ā, f) - university
ardscuil, Psg. < ardscol
bethu (t, m) - life
cathair (k, f) - city
Día (o, m) - God
Día do bethu - hello (to one person)
di^L (+ P) - from, of
do^L (+ P) - to
dom, 1sg. < do^L
Éirennach (o, m/ā, f) - Irishman, Irishwoman
Éirennchaib, Ppl. < Éirennach
Érinn < Ériu, Psg.
Ériu (n, f) - Ireland
focal^N (o, n) - word
forus focal - glossary, word list
forus^N (o, n) - foundation

glas (o, ā) - green
grammatach^L (ā, f) - grammar
i^N (+ A/P) - in
inis^L (ī, f) - island
is - to be (3sg.)
Is di Éirennchaib dom - I am irish
léigend^N (o, n) - the reading, the studying; text
léigind, Gsg. < léigend
m' (before a vowel) < mo^L
macc (o, m) - boy, son
macc léigind - student
Mag Núadat - Maynooth
mag^N (s, n) - field, plain
Maige, Gsg. < mag
meisse - me
mo^L - my
mór (o, ā) - big
tír^N (s, n) - land

Grammatach

1. The verb 'to be': the Copula *IS*

- *Copula* is the Latin for 'bond', 'connection', and connections are what it expresses. In particular, it expresses connections between the <u>subject</u> of the sentence and its <u>predicate</u>, i.e. the word that says what, who or how the subject is, like in 'John is a <u>student</u>', or 'John is <u>tall</u>'.

- Word Order: **V**erb - **P**redicate - **S**ubject (**VPS**). The predicate can be both a <u>noun</u> and an <u>adjective</u>:

  is macc Conall - Conall is a boy

  is Érennach Conall - Conall is Irish

- When the subject is <u>not</u> a noun or a name, that is when in English you would use a pronoun (I, he, she...), the copula verb form alone will be sufficient. <u>No pronoun</u> in Old Irish:

  Is macc - [he] is a boy

  Is mór - [he/she/it] is big

  am macc léigind - [I] am a student

- is di Éirennchaib dom: this weird construction is what we use to say 'I am Irish'. Literally: 'it is of the Irish to me'. All its parts are listed in the Forus Focal. See the section 'Interrogatives' for more detail.

2. Nouns and adjectives

We are not going to touch noun and adjective classes yet [LINK TO THE INTRODUCTURY SECTION ABOUT NOMINAL CLASSES IN GENERAL]. I just want you to notice a couple of features:

- Neuter nouns in the Nsg. always nasalize the beginning consonant of the adjective (or the noun) that follows:

  is tír^N mmór Ériu - Ireland is a big country

- Adjectives <u>follow</u> the noun the modify, and are <u>NOT invariable</u> as in English. Instead, they agree in gender, number and case with the noun they describe. So, after a masculine noun, the adjective will be in its masculine form, while after a neuter noun it will take up the neuter form. Moreover, adjectives have basically the same mutational effects as nouns, so a neuter adjective, already nasalized by a neuter noun, will in turn nasalize a second adjective that comes after it. Like in

is tír^N mmór^N n-álaind Ériu - Ireland is a big, beautiful country

Immacaldam 1

Maicc ⁊ Ingena Léigind

Fergus:	Día do bethu!
Líadain:	Día do bethu!
Fergus:	Cía th'ainm?
Líadain:	Is Líadan m'ainm. Fáilte friut. ⁊ t'ainm-siu?
Fergus:	Is Fergus m'ainm. Fáilte friut.
Líadain:	Can duit?
Fergus:	Is ó Áth Chlíath dom. ⁊ can duit-siu, á Líadain?
Líadain:	Is ó Maig Núadat dom.
Fergus:	At ingen léigind danó...
Líadain:	Am éicin! Am ingen léigind danó.

Another couple enters the classroom...

Líadain ⁊ Ḟergus:	Día for mbethu!
Aífe ⁊ Chormac:	Día for mbethu!
Aífe:	Adi maicc léigind inna Sengoídilce danó....
Líadain:	Ammi éicin! Ammi maicc léigind inna Sengoídilce!
Aífe:	Is Aífe m'ainm, ⁊ is Cormac a ainm, fáilte frib!
Fergus:	Am Fergus, am fáilid frib!
Líadain:	⁊ am Líadain, am fáilid frib!
Cormac:	Is di Éirennchaib dúib...
Fergus:	Tó! Is di Éirennchaib dúnn!
Cormac:	Is de Éirennchaib dúnn danó!

They start to get ready for the class...

Fergus:	Cid in sin?
Líadain:	Is mo lebor in só.

Fergus:	Is lebor inna Sengoídilce...
Líadain:	Is éicin.
Fergus:	Is nuäe do lebor.
Líadain:	Is éicin. Is nuäe mo lebor.
Fergus:	Ní nuäe mo lebor. Is sen.
Líadain:	Is mór lebor inna Sengoídilce.
Fergus:	Is éicin! Ní bec!
Líadain:	Is mór int Ṡengoídelc 7 is mór lebor inna Sengoídilce!
Fergus:	Tó! Is mór 7 tromm! Amal in Sengoídilc...
Líadain:	Náthó! Ní tromm int Ṡengoídelc! Is álaind!
Fergus:	Tó... Is álaind... acht is ansae danó!
Líadain:	Is éicin. Ní assae... ach is álaind danó!
Fergus:	Cid in sin?
Líadain:	Is mo rímaire in só. Is sen...
Fergus:	Is sen acht is álaind.
Líadain:	Náthó... Ní álaind... Is dochraid mo rímaire.
Fergus:	Ní dochraid. Is álaind 7 étromm.
Líadain:	Cid?? Étromm?? Náthó! Is tromm!! Is mór 7 tromm 7 dochraid!!
Fergus:	Ó, is mór 7 tromm 7 drochaid... amal in Sengoídilc!!
Líadain:	Náthó! Ní tromm int Ṡengoídelc! 7 ní dochraid!! Eirg dochum n-ifern!

Forus Focal 2

-siu (2sg.) - emphasizing particle
acht - but
adi, 2pl. < is
a^H - her (poss.)
a^L - his
$á^L$ - vocative particle used to address people
éicin - indeed
am fáilid friut - nice to meet you
$amal^L$ (+ A) - like, just like
ammi, 1pl. < is
ansae (o, ā) - difficult
assae (io, iā) - easy
at, 2sg. < is
áth (u, m) - ford
Áth Clíath - Dublin
bec (o, ā) - small
can - whence, from where (is)
$cía^H$ - what/which (is)
cid^L - what (is)
Cormac (o, m) - male name
danó - also
Día for mbethu - hello (to more than one)
dochraid (i) - ugly
$dochum^N$ (+ G) - to, towards

do^L (2) - your (2sg.)
dom, 1sg. < do^L
duit, 2sg. < do^L
emilt (i) - boring
erg! - go!
étromm (o, ā) - light (not heavy)
fáilid (i) - happy, pleased
fáilte (iā, f) - happiness, welcome
for^N - your (2pl.)
frib, 2pl. < fri^H
fri^H (+ A) - towards, against
friut, 2sg. < fri^H
ifern (o, m) - hell
n-ifern, Gpl. < ifern
immacaldam (ā, f) - dialogue
in sin - that
in só - this
ingen (ā, f) - girl, daughter
ingen léigind - student
ingena, Npl. < ingen
in^L - the (Nsg.f)
inna, Gsg.f < in^L
int^L, Nsg.f (before s) < in^L
lebor (o, m) - book

Líadain (ā, f) - female name
maicc, Npl. < macc
nathó - no
ní^H, 3sg. neg. < is
nuäe (io, iā) - new
ó^L (+ P) - from
rímaire (io, m) - computer

sen (o, ā) - old
Sengoídelc (ā, f) - Old Irish (language)
t' (before a vowel and after 7^L) < do^L (2)
th' (before a vowel) < do^L (2)
tó - yes
tromm (o, ā) - heavy

Grammatach

2. The verb 'to be': the Copula *IS* (II)

- Forms: here are all the six <u>affirmative</u> forms of the copula:

Copula Forms	
1sg. (I)	**am**
2sg. (you)	**at**
3sg. (he/she/it)	**is**
1pl. (we)	**ammi**
2pl. (you)	**adi**
3pl. (they)	**it**

- Negative, 3sg. form: The negative form for *is* is just **ní^H**:

    is tromm mo lebor - my book is heavy

    ní tromm mo lebor - my book is not heavy

    So, just *ní*, NOT *ní is*. The verb is already "included" in the negative particle. We'll learn the other negative forms later.

3. Interrogatives

Interrogatives are words used to ask questions, words like 'what', 'who', 'how' and so on. So far we know the following Old irish interrogatives: **cía^H**, **cid^L**, **can**.

- Most Old Irish interrogatives have a 'built-in' 3sg. copula form (*is*), which is not visible but always implied. That's why they are listed as 'cía[H] - what (is)' or 'cid[L] - what (is)'.

- **cía**[H] (m): who (is), which/what (is). Used before a masculine noun or name and, exceptionally, before the neuter *ainm*, 'name':

   cía th'ainm? - which/what is your name?
   is Conall m'ainm - my name is conall

   cía Conall? - who is Conall?
   is macc Conall - Conall is a boy

- **cesí**[L] (f): who (is), which/what (is). Used before a feminine noun or name:

   cesí Líadain? - who is Líadain
   is ingen Líadain - Líadain is a girl

- **cid**[L] (n), which/what (is). Used as the usual generic 'what' or before a neuter noun:

   cid in só? - what is this?
   is lebor in só - this is a book

   cid in sin? - what is that?
   is rímaire in sin - that is a computer

- **can**, whence, from where (is). Notice that the question is constructed by using the so-called 'conjugated' forms of the preposition **do**[L], 'to':

   can duit-siu? - where are you from? (lit. whence is to you?)

   There are two possible ways to aswer this question:

   a) Origin from a country:

   is di[L] + Ppl. of the <u>noun of nationality</u> + conjugated form of **do**[L], 'to':

   is di Éirennchaib dom - I am Irish (lit. 'it is of the Irish to me')

b) Origin from other places:

is ó^L + Psg. of the <u>place name</u> + conjugated form of **do^L**, 'to':

Is ó Maig Núadat dom - I am from Maynooth

Conjugated prepositions will be dealt with later on, don't worry about them now. Just start to familiarize yourself with the forms of *do^L*, 'to', which you will need for this interaction: **dom** (1sg., 'to me'), **duit** (2sg., 'to you'), **dó** (3sg.m/n, 'to him'), **dí** (3sg.f, 'to her'), **dúnn** (1pl. 'to us'), **dúib** (2pl., 'to you'), **doïb** (3pl., 'to them').

4. The emphasizing particle **-siu**

Emphasizing particles are used to... emphasize pronominal elements, i.e. words of the "pronoun family".

In this lesson we will look at the second singular particle **-siu**, used to emphasize second singular pronominal elements. Study the following exemples:

a) 7 **t'**ainm-**siu**? - and *your* name?

-siu emphasizes the 2sg. possessive *t'* (< do^L, 'your').

b) 7 **duit-siu**? - and *you*? (lit. 'to you'?)

-siu emphasizes the 2sg. conjugated preposition *duit*, 'to you'.

Emphasizing particles have an enormous importance in Old Irish and are extremely widespread. In the next lessons we will learn the rest of them.

Immacaldam 2

Can dúnn??!!

Emer:	Día do bethu, is Emer m'ainm.
Conall:	Fáilte friut! Is Conall m'ainm.
Emer:	Am fáilid friut! Can duit?
Conall:	Is di Éirennchaib dom!

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Emer:	Tó! At éicin! Acht cesí do chathair?
Conall:	Ó, mo chathair! Is Gaillem mo chathair! Is ó Gaillim dom!
Emer:	Is ó Gaillim do Chormac danó!
Conall:	Ó, is ó Gaillim dó... Can do Líadain 7 Ḟergus trá?
Emer:	Is ó Áth Chlíath doïb.
Conall:	Náthó... Ní ó Áth Chlíath doïb....
Emer:	Is éicin!
Conall:	Náthó... Is ó Áth Chlíath dó... acht is ó Maig Núadat dí!
Emer:	Can do John 7 Mary trá?
Conall:	Ní di Éirennchaib doïb. Is di Saxanchaib doïb!

Forus Focal 3

as < is

c'indas - how

c'indas as - how is?

cesí^L - who/what/which (with a feminine noun)

citné - who (pl.)

Conall (o, m) - male name

dó, 3sg.m/n < do^L

doïb, 3pl. < do^L

dúnn, 1pl. < do^L

Emer (ā, f) - female name

Ferguis, Gsg. < Fergus

Gaillem (ā, f) - Galway

gnímrad (ā, f) - work

Saxanach (o, m/ā, f) - Englishman, Englishwoman

Ceisti

Once you have fully mastered the text and the dialogues, answer the following questions in Old Irish.

a) Léigend 1

1. Cía ainm in maicc?
2. Can dó?
3. Cesí a gnímrad?
4. Cid Mag Núadat?
5. C'indas as Mag Núadat?
6. Cid a thír?
7. C'indas as Ériu?
8. Cesí Ériu?
9. C'indas as inis Éirenn?
10. Cía Fergus?

b) Immacaldam 1

1. Cesí Líadain?
2. Cesí a gnímrad?
3. Can dí?
4. Cía Fergus?
5. Cesí a gnímrad?
6. Can dó?
7. Citné Aífe 7 Chormac?
8. Cesí a ngnímrad?
9. Can doïb?
10. C'indas as lebor Ferguis?
11. C'indas as lebor Líadaine?
12. C'indas as int Ṡengoídelc?
13. C'indas as rímaire Líadaine?

d) Immacaldam 2

1. Can do Chonall?
2. Cesí chathair Conaill?
3. Can do Líadain 7 Ḟergus?
4. Cesí cathair Líadaine?
5. Cesí cathair Ferguis?
6. Can do John 7 Mary?

e) Personal questions

1. Cía th'aimn?
2. Can duit?
3. Cid do thír?
4. C'indas as do thír?
5. Cesí do chathair?
6. Cesí do gnímrad?
7. C'indas as do gnímrad?
8. C'indas as do lebor?
9. C'indas as do rímaire?

5.2. *Look I Can Talk Old Irish*: 'Lesson 1'

What follows is the first full lesson of the Old Irish adaptation of a digital course called *Look, I Can Talk* (LICT) by Blaine Ray and produced by TPRS Books, a publishing company founded by Blaine Ray himself. TPRS Books promotes a language teaching approach called Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS),[1] developed by Ray in the 1990s. LICT was originally developed for Spanish, but is now being adapted to many languages, including several minority languages.

The main principle is to introduce the language in very small chunks and by using extremely limited vocabulary. After introducing the words required for the session, and making sure that they are fully understood, the teacher guides the class through a long series of slides. The sequence of slides tells a story, a very simple one, but always with humorous elements. Characters always do very weird things, such as travelling the world just to get a drink they like, for example. The odd element makes the stories, and also the language pieces they introduce, more memorable. Each slide has an illustration accompanied by one or two sentences in Old Irish along with their English translations. The teacher reads the sentence, then prompts the class to orally interact about it through intense QA (Question/Answer) sessions. When the class is comfortable with the structure and vocabulary introduced by the sentence, the teacher moves to the next slide. During the story, learners are continuously prompted to speak, answer questions, and retell what happens to the characters. The spoken activity is relentless. There are also very short sessions of grammar (Lichtman 2018: 24), shown in tables on the slides, during which one point is quickly highlighted. At the end of the slides, the story is retold by the teacher or by the learners in working groups, always with the aim of further practising the target structures and vocabulary learnt during the slide session.

The next step is classroom reading. Learners must read stories based on the same vocabulary and structures practised during the slide session. While reading the stories, they are also expected to orally interact about them in the target language, and thus, again, further reinforce what has been learnt in the main story.

What is included here is Lesson 1 of Chapter 1, with all the slides for the 2 stories, all the readings and the assessment materials. LICT is divided into 12 chapters, and every chapter has 3 lessons, each approximately of the same length as the one presented here. According to the TPRS website,[2] every lesson is allocated 15–29 hours of teaching, while 3 chapters should be covered in an entire school year.

This approach could be a nice, alternative way to introduce learners more informally to Old Irish, for example, in an intensive summer session, and thus enable them to face the upcoming formal academic course with more confidence.

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1 For more information about TPRS, cf. Lichtman 2018, and Blaine & Seely 2019.
2 https://www.tprsbooks.com/portal-english-1-2/?_portal_filter_button=chapter-1-portal

Caiptel 1 - Scél 1

Cid^L? What (is)?

Cía^H? Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·? Where?

Cid leth^{RN}? To where?

at·tá there is

is s/he is

téit s/he goes

7 [ocus^L] and

at·tá ... leë/leis she/he has

is accobor leë/leis she/he wants

as·beir frië/fris s/he says to her/to him

Cía indas^{RN}? How?

Cis lir? How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}? Why?

202

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

At·tá macc.
There is a boy.

Is Giurg in macc.
The boy is George.

am	I am
at	you are
is	s/he is

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

203

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

At·tá-som i Cailifoirn.

He is in California.

at·táu	I am (there)
at·taí	you are (there)
at·tá(-si)	she is (there)
at·tá(-som)	he is (there)

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

204

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

At·tá odb.
There is a problem.

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

205

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

At·tá odb la Giurg.

George has a problem.

at·tá … lemm	I have
at·tá … lat	you have
at·tá … leë	she has
at·tá … leis	he has

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

206

Cid[L]**?**
What (is)?

Cía[H]**?**
Who (is)?

Cía airm i[N]**·?**
Where?

Cid leth[RN]**?**
To where?

Ní·fil Cóca-Cólai la Giurg.

George doesn't have a Coca-Cola.
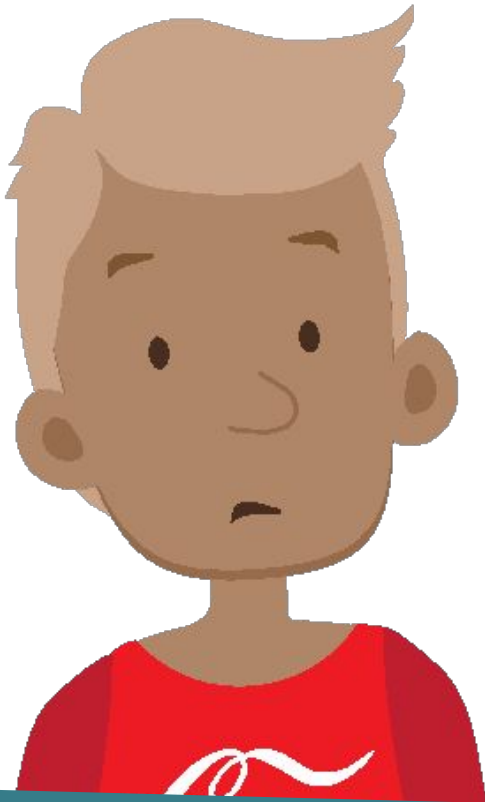
ní·fil … lemm	I don't have
ní·fil … lat	you don't have
ní·fil … leë	she doesn't have
ní·fil … leis	he doesn't have

Cía indas[RN]**?**
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·[N]**?**
Why?

207

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

Is accobor la Giurg Cóca-Cólae.
George **wants** a Coca-Cola.

is accobor lemm	I want
is accobor lat	you want
is accobor leë	she wants
is accobor leis	he wants

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

208

Ní fáilid Giurg.

George isn't happy.

nída^L	I am not
nída^L	you are not
ní^H	s/he is not

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

Téit Giurg do Ṡiccácait.

George goes to Chicago.

Siccáco
Chicago, IL

tíagu	I go
téigi	you go
téit(-si)	she goes
téit(-som)	he goes

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

210

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

At·tá ingen i Siccácait.
There is a girl in Chicago.
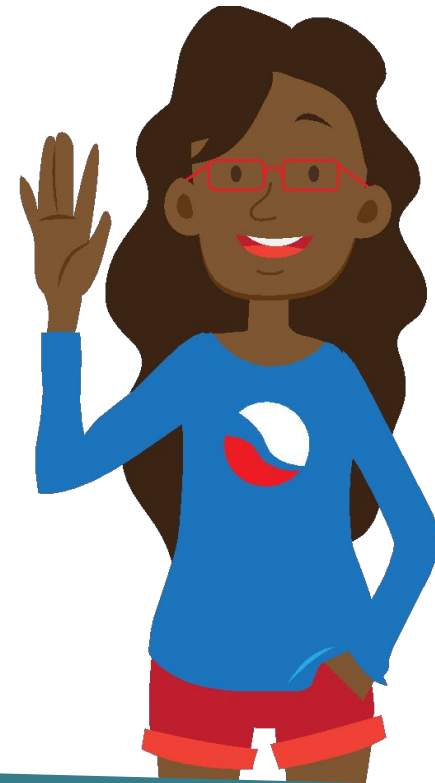
Siccáco
Chicago, IL

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

As·beir in macc frië:

The boy says to her:

> In·fil Cóca-
> Cólai lat?

as·biur	I say
as·bir	you say
as·beir(-si)	she says
as·beir(-som)	he says
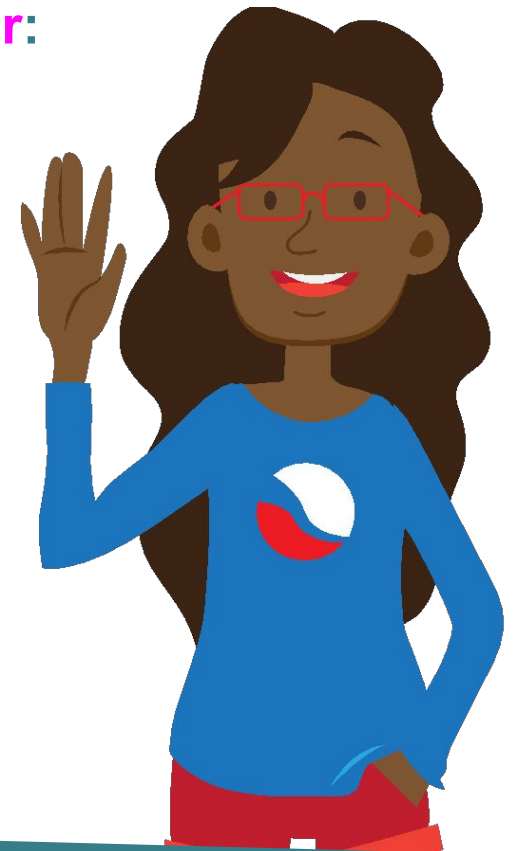
Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

212

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

As·beir ind ingen ó Ṡiccácait fris:

The girl from Chicago says to him:

> Ní·fil Cóca-Cólai lemm.

as·biur	**I say**
as·bir	**You say**
as·beir(-si)	**She says**
as·beir(-sem)	**He says**
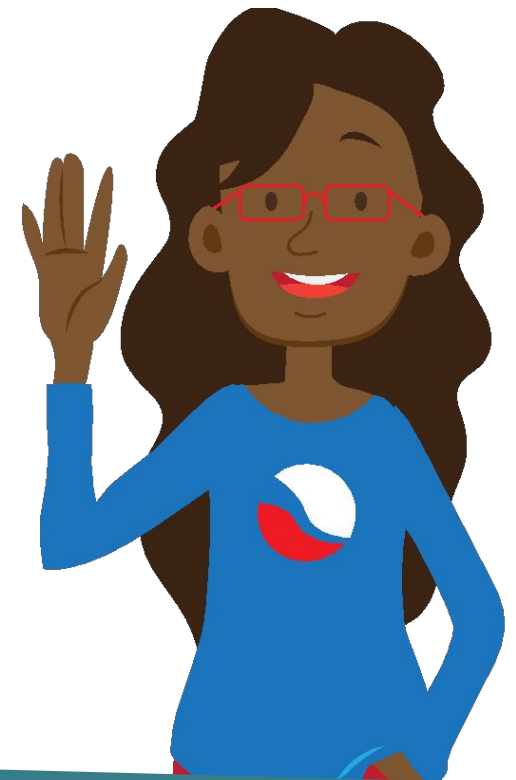
Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

213

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Ní fáilid Giurg.
George isn't happy.

nída^L	I am not
nída^L	you are not
ní^H	s/he is not

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

214

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

Ní·fil Cóca-Cólai la Giurg
George **doesn't have** a Coca-Cola

7 is accobor leis Cóca-Cólae.
and he wants a Coca-Cola.

ní·fil … lemm	I don't have
ní·fil … lat	you don't have
ní·fil … leë	she doesn't have
ní·fil … leis	he doesn't have

is accobor lemm	I want
is accobor lat	you want
is accobor leë	she wants
is accobor leis	he wants

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

215

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Téit Giurg do Brucclindi.
George goes to Brooklyn.

tíagu	I go
téigi	you go
téit(-si)	she goes
téit(-sem)	he goes
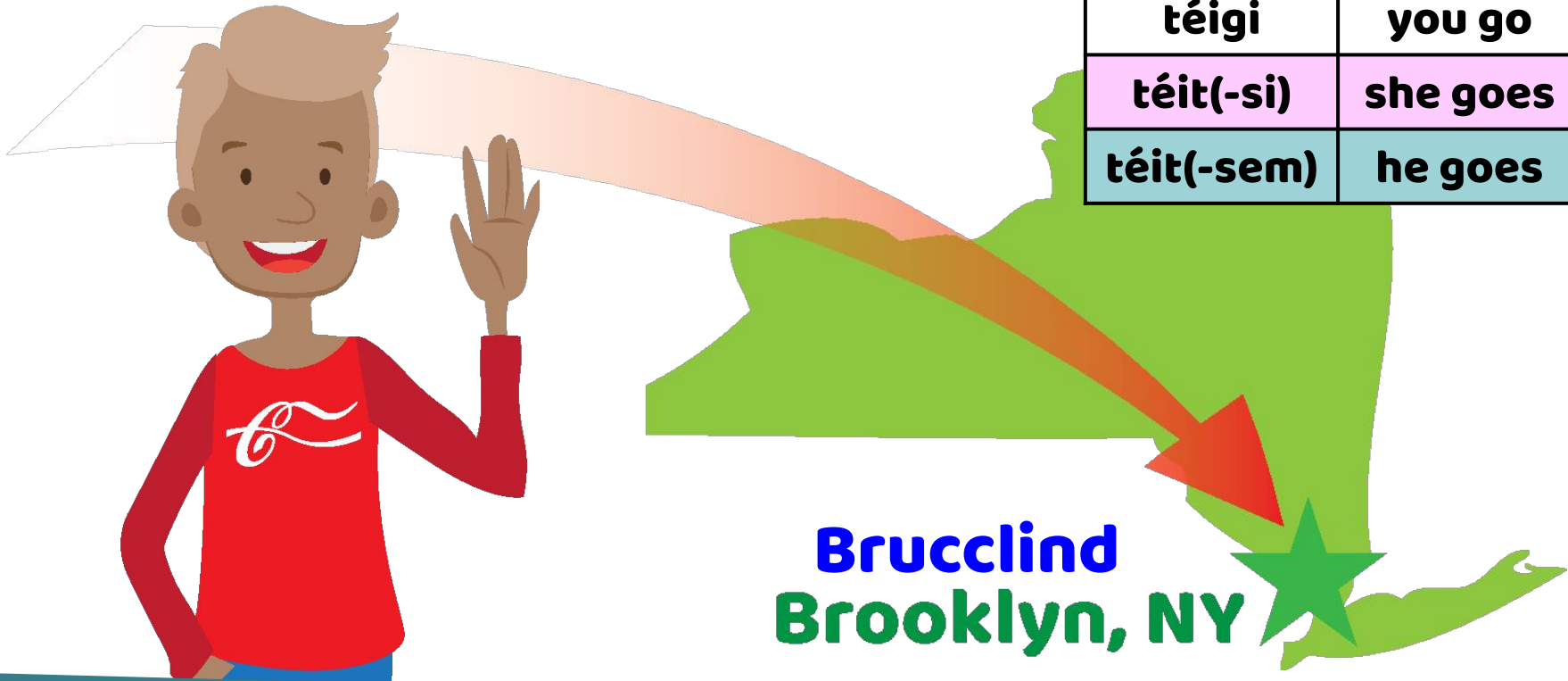
Brucclind
Brooklyn, NY

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

216

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

At·tá Cóca-Cólae i mBrucclindi.
There is a Coca-Cola in Brooklyn.

Brucclind
Brooklyn, NY

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

217

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

At·tá Cóca-Cólae lasin mmacc indossa.
The boy has a Coca-Cola now.

at·tá ... lemm	I have
at·tá ... lat	you have
at·tá ... leë	she has
at·tá ... leis	he has

Brucclind
Brooklyn, NY

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

218

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Is **der**f̓áilid Giurg **ar**

George is **very** happy **because**

at·tá Cóca-Cólae **leis**.

he has a Coca-Cola.

am	I am
at	you are
is	s/he is

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

219

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

As·beir in macc:

The boy **says:**

Amrae! At·tá Cóca-Cólae lemm. Am fáilid.

as·biur	**I say**
as·bir	**you say**
as·beir(-si)	**she says**
as·beir(-som)	**he says**

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

220

Caiptel 1 - Scél 1

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

boí
there was

boí ... leë/leis
she/he had

ba^H
s/he was

ba accobor leë/leis
she/he wanted

luid
s/he went

as·bert frië/fris
s/he said to her/to him

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

222

Cid[L]?
What (is)?

Cía[H]?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i[N]·?
Where?

Cid leth[RN]?
To where?

Boí macc.
There was a boy.

Ba Giurg in macc.
The boy was George.

basa	I was
basa	you were
ba[H]	s/he was

Cía indas[RN]?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·[N]?
Why?

223

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?
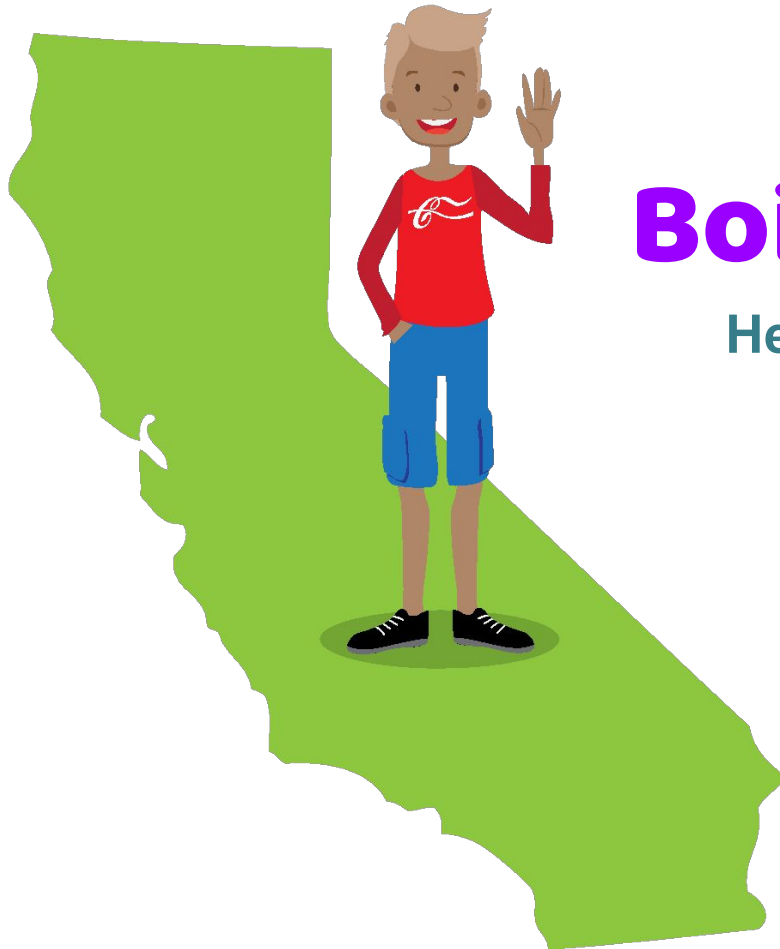
Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Boí i Cailifoirn.

He **was** in California.

bá	I was (there)
bá	**you were (there)**
boí	**s/he was (there)**

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

224

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?
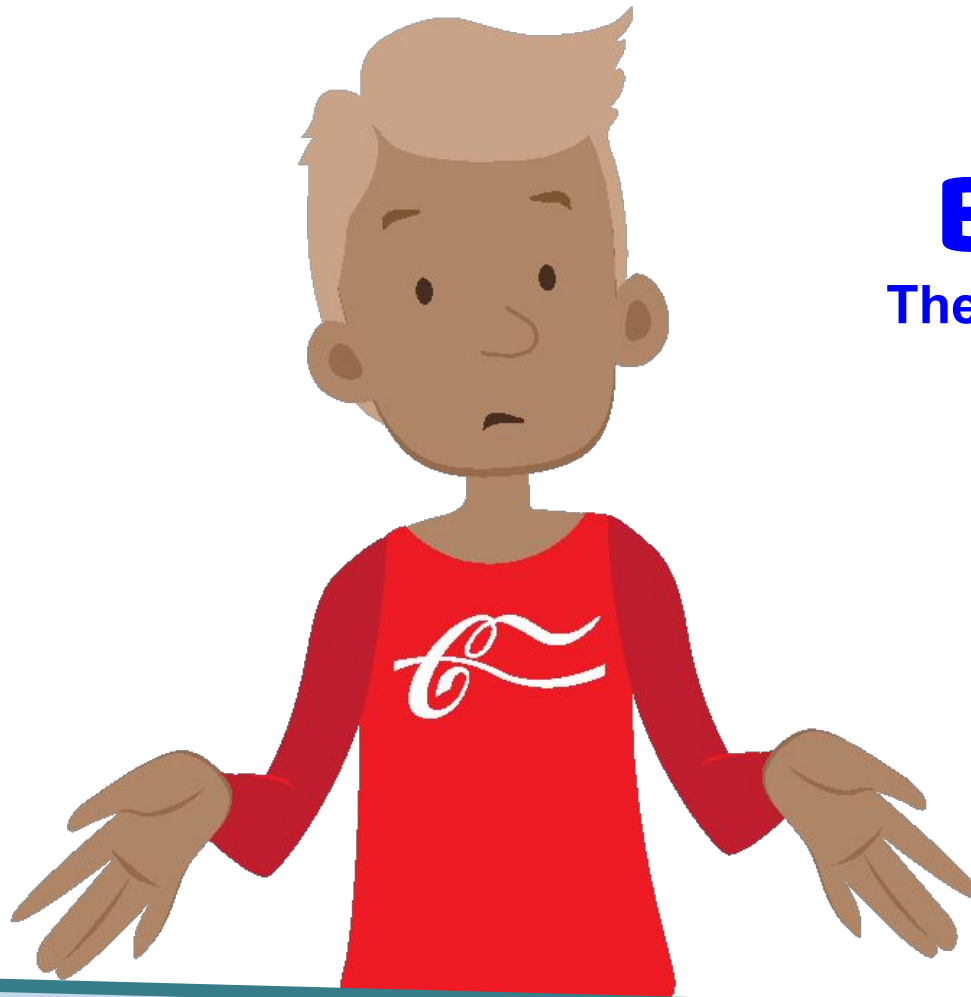
Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Boí odb.
There was a problem.

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?
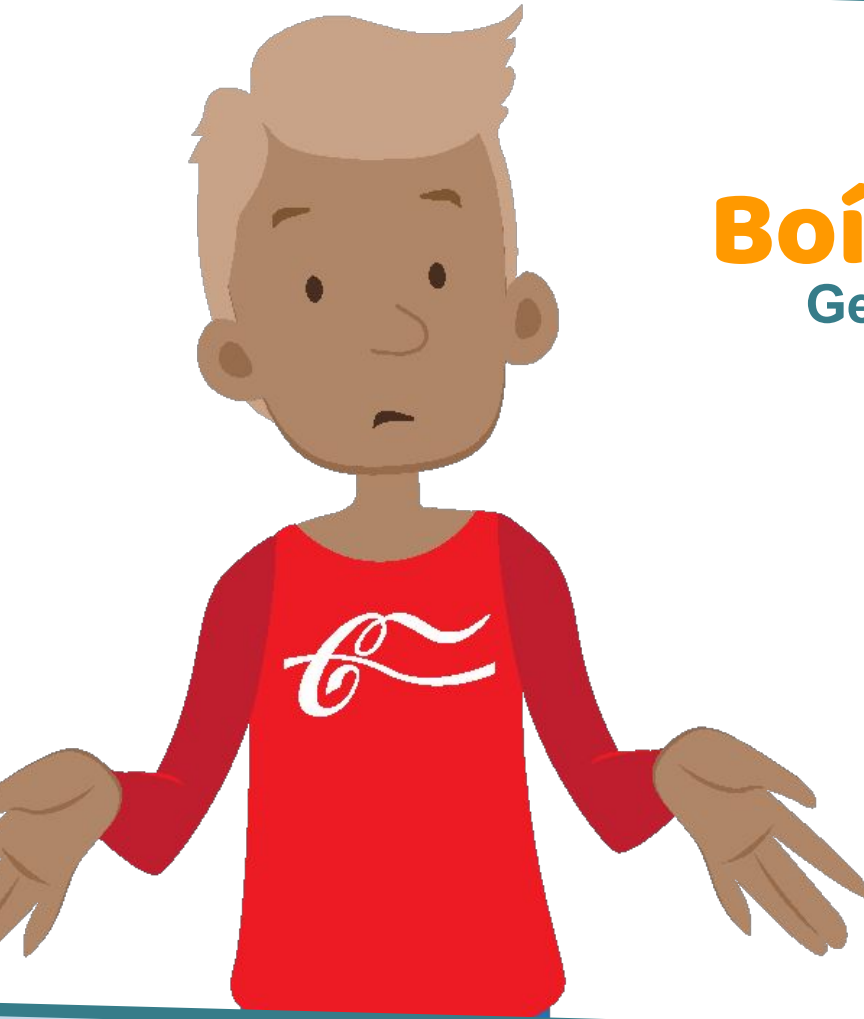
Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Boí odb la Giurg.
George had a problem.

boí ... lemm	I had
boí ... lat	you had
boí ... leë	she had
boí ... leis	he had

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

226

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

Ní·boí Cóca-Cólae la Giurg.

George didn't have a Coca-Cola.

ní·boí ... lemm	I didn't have
ní·boí ... lat	you didn't have
ní·boí ... leë	she didn't have
ní·boí ... leis	he didn't have

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

227

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Ba accobor la Giurg Cóca-Cólae.
George wanted a Coca-Cola.

ba accobor lemm	I wanted
ba accobor lat	you wanted
ba accobor leë	she wanted
ba accobor leis	he wanted

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

228

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Níbo ḟáilid Giurg.
George **wasn't** happy.

níbsa^L	I wasn't
níbsa^L	you weren't
níbo^L	s/he wasn't

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

229
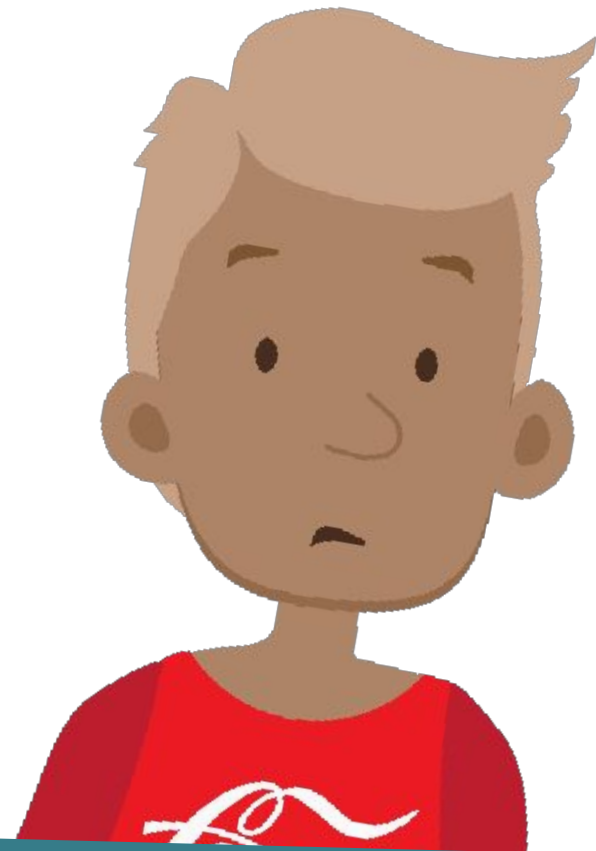
Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Luid Giurg do Ṡiccácait.

George went to Chicago.

Siccáco
Chicago, IL

lod	**I went**
lod	**you went**
luid(-si)	**she went**
luid(-som)	**he went**

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

230

Cid[L]?
What (is)?

Cía[H]?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i[N]·?
Where?

Cid leth[RN]?
To where?

Boí ingen i Siccácait.
There was a girl in Chicago.
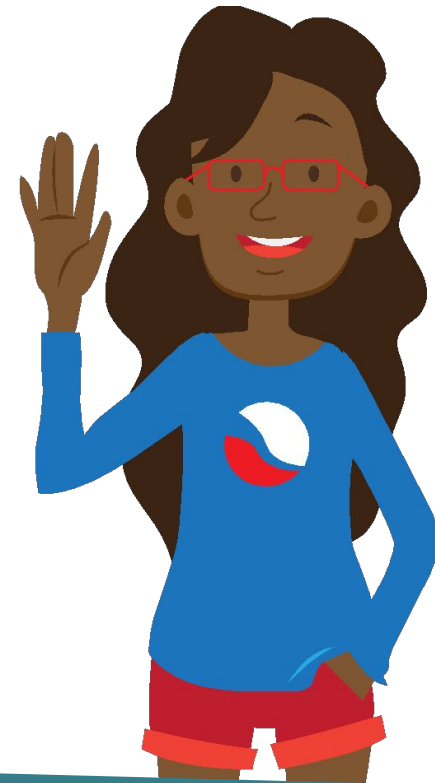
Siccáco
Chicago, IL

Cía indas[RN]?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·[N]?
Why?

231

CidL?
What (is)?

CíaH?
Who (is)?

Cía airm iN·?
Where?

Cid lethRN?
To where?

As·bert in macc fríë:

The boy **said** to her:

In·fil Cóca-
Cólai lat?

as·biurt	I said
as·birt	you said
as·bert(-si)	she said
as·bert(-som)	he said
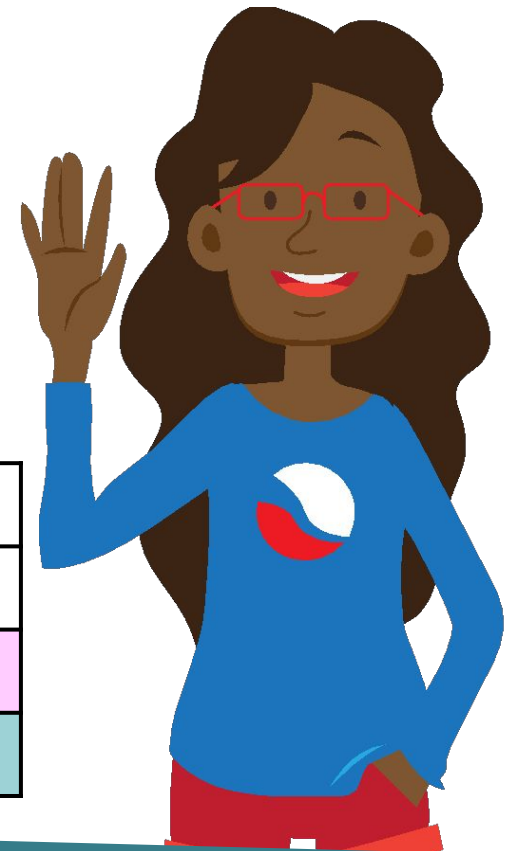
Cía indasRN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·N?
Why?

232

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

As·bert ind ingen ó Ṡiccácait fris:
The girl from Chicago said to him:
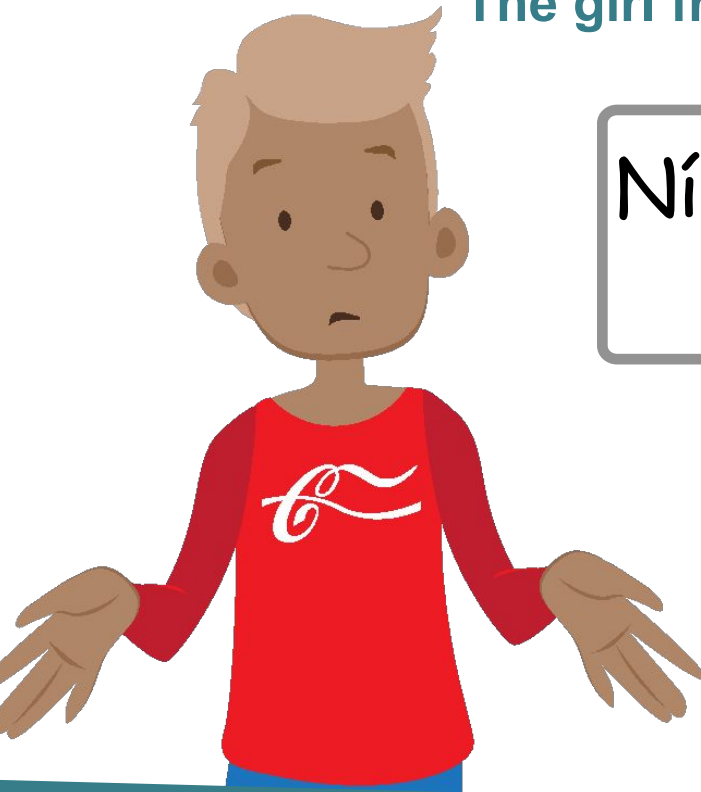
> Ní·fil Cóca-Cólai lemm.

as·biurt	I said
as·birt	you said
as·bert(-si)	she said
as·bert(-som)	se said

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

233

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Níbo ḟáilid Giurg.
George wasn't happy.

níbsa^L	I wasn't
níbsa^L	you weren't
níbo^L	s/he wasn't

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

234

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Ní·boí Cóca-Cólae la Giurg
George didn't have a Coca-Cola

7 ba accobor leis Cóca-Cólae.
and he wanted a Coca-Cola.

ní·boí … lemm	I didn't have
ní·boí … lat	you didn't have
ní·boí … leë	she didn't have
ní·boí … leis	he didn't have

ba accobor lemm	I wanted
ba accobor lat	you wanted
ba accobor leë	she wanted
ba accobor leis	he wanted

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

235

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Luid Giurg do Brucclindi.

George went to Brooklyn.

lod(-sa)	**I went**
lod(-su)	**you went**
luid(-si)	**she went**
luid(-som)	**he went**

Brucclind
Brooklyn, NY

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

236

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

Boí Cóca-Cólae i mBrucclindi.

There was a Coca-Cola in Brooklyn.

Brucclind
Brooklyn, NY

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

237

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Boí Cóca-Cólae lasin mmacc íarum.
The boy has a Coca-Cola then.

boí ... lemm	I had
boí ... lat	You had
boí ... leë	She had
boí ... leis	He had

Brucclind
Brooklyn, NY

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

238

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Ba derḟáilid Giurg ar
George **was** very happy **because**

boí Coca-Colae leis.
he had a Coca-Cola.
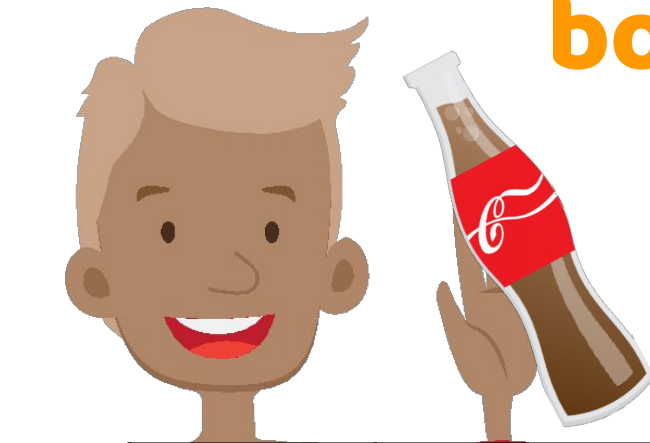
bá	I was (there)
bá	you were (there)
boí	s/he was (there)

boí ... lemm	I have
boí ... lat	you have
boí ... leë	she has
boí ... leis	he has

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

239

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

as·bert in macc:

The boy said:

> Amrae! At·tá Cóca-Cólae lemm. Am fáilid.

as·biurt	I said
as·birt	you said
as·bert(-si)	she said
as·bert(-som)	he said

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

240

Caiptel 1 – Forcetal 1

Guide Words

ad·cota – gets, receives
Afraicc – Africa
aimser (ā, f) – time, tense
as·beir – says
at·tá … leis – has
at·tá macc – there is a boy
belscél (o, n) – oral story
caiptel (o, m) – chapter
cauradmír (n, n) – hamburger
forcetal (o, n) – lesson

freicndaircc (o, ā) – present
gerr (o, ā) – short
is accobor leis – wants
is … in macc – the boy is
léigend (o, n) – reading
sechmadachte (io, iā) – past
slicht (u, m) – version
téit – goes
Tulsae (iā, f) – Tulsa

Bélscél – Aimser Freicndaircc

Is accobor la Giurg Cóca-Cólae (91 bríathar)

At·tá macc. Is Giurg in macc. At·tá-som i Cailifoirn. At·tá odb.

At·tá odb la Giurg. Ní·fil Cóca-Cólai la Giurg. Is accobor leis Cóca-Cólae. Ní fáilid-som.

Téit in macc do Ṡiccácait. At·tá ingen i Siccácait. As·beir in macc frië:

"In·fil Cóca-Cólai lat?"

As·beir ind ingen ó Ṡiccácait fris:

"Ní·fil Cóca-Cólai lemm."

Ní fáilid Giurg. Ní·fil Cóca-Cólai leis ⁊ is accobor leis Cóca-Cólae. Téit in macc do Brucclindi. At·tá Cóca-Cólae i mBrucclindi. At·tá Cóca-Cólae lasin mmacc indossa. Is derfáilid Giurg ar at·tá Cóca-Cólae leis. As·beir in macc:

"Amrae! At·tá Cóca-Cólae lemm. Am fáilid."

Bélscél – Aimser Ṡechmadachte

Ba accobor la Giurg Cóca-Cólae (91 bríathar)

Boí macc. Ba Giurg in macc. Boí-som i Cailifoirn. Boí odb.

Boí odb la Giurg. Ní·boí Cóca-Cólae la Giurg. Ba accobor leis Cóca-Cólae. Níbo fáilid-som.

Luid in macc do Ṡiccácait. Boí ingen i Siccácait. As·bert in macc frië:

"In·fil Cóca-Cólai lat?"

As·bert ind ingen ó Ṡiccácait fris:

"Ní·fil Cóca-Cólai lemm."

Níbo fáilid Giurg. Ní·boí Cóca-Cólae leis ⁊ ba accobor leis Cóca-Cólae. Luid in macc do Brucclindi. Boí Cóca-Cólae i mBrucclindi. Boí Cóca-Cólae lasin mmacc íarum. Ba derfáilid Giurg ar boí Cóca-Cólae leis. As·bert in macc:

"Amrae! At·tá Cóca-Cólae lemm. Am fáilid."

Léigend ngerr 1.1 – Slicht A

Is accobor la Etbard pitsae (85 bríathra)

At·tá macc. Is Etbard in macc. At·tá Etbard i nAfraicc. Ní fáilid Etbard. Ní·fil pitsai leis. Is accobor la Etbard pitsae.

Téit Etbard do Bostun. At·tá macc i mBostun. As·beir Etbard fris:

"Día do bethu. At·tá odb lemm. Is accobor lemm pitsae."

"Ní·fil pitsai lemm. At·taät buirred ⁊ chauradmír lemm."

Téit Etbard do Atlantai. At·tá ingen i nAtlantai. Is Susannae-si. As·beir Etbard frië:

"Día do bethu, a Ṡusannae. Is accobor lemm pitsae."

"At·tá pitsae lemm. Is dermaith."

At·tá pitsae la Susannai. Ad·cota Etbard pitsai. Is fáilid Etbard.

Léigend ngerr 1.1 – Slicht B

Is accobor la Riccard Comrar-X (164 bríathra)

At·tá macc. Is Riccard in macc. At·tá Riccard i Cansus.

Ní fáilid Riccard. Ní·fil Comrair-X leis. Is accobor leis Comrar-X. Téit-som for Gúcal ar is accobor leis Comrar-X. Is accobor leis Comrar-X i Cansus. Ní fáilid-som ar ní·fil Comrara-X di immḟorcraid i Cansus.

Téit Riccard do Ómmachai. At·tá macc i nÓmmachai. As·beir Riccard fris:

"Día do bethu. At·tá odb lemm. Ní·fil Comrair-X lemm. Is accobor lemm Comrar-X. In·fil Comrair-X di immḟorcraid lat?"

"Ní·fil Comrair-X di immḟorcraid lemm. At·tá Comrar-X lemm, acht ní·fil Comrair-X di immḟorcraid lemm."

Ní fáilid Riccard. Is accobor leis Comrar-X. Ní·fil Comrair-X di immḟorcraid i nÓmmachai. Téit Riccard do Thulsai. At·tá ingen i Tulsai. Is Findabair ind ingen. As·beir Riccard frië:

"Día do bethu, a Ḟindabair. At·tá odb lemm. Ní·fil Comrair-X lemm. Is accobor lemm Comrar-X. In·fil Comrair-X di immḟorcraid lat?

"Tó, at·tá Comrar-X di immḟorcraid lemm. Is Comrar-X dermaith."

At·tá Comrar-X la Findabair. Ad·cota Riccard in Comrair-X. At·tá Comrar-X la Riccard ⁊ téit-som do Chansus. Is derḟáilid Riccard ar at·tá Comrar-X leis.

5.2.4. Story 2

Caiptel 1 - Léigend 1
Is accobor la Bartholom catt

CidL?
What (is)?

CíaH?
Who (is)?

Cía airm iN·?
Where?

Cid lethRN?
To where?

At·tá macc.
There is a boy.

Is Bartholom-som.
He is Bart.

Cía indasRN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·N?
Why?

248

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Is macc Bartholom.

Bart is a boy.

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

250

In ingen Bartholom?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Ní ingen Bartholom.

Bart isn't a girl.

Is macc-som.

He is a boy.

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

252

Cía Bartholom?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

At·tá Bartholom i Cailifoirn.

Bart is in California.

Cailifoirn

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

254

Cía airm i·tá Bartholom?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

Ní·fil Bartholom i Serraigiu.

Bart isn't in China.

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

256

In·fil Bartholom i Serraigiu?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

At·tá da macc.

There are two boys.

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Is Bartholom in cétmacc.

The **first** boy is Bart.

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

259

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Is Balduin in macc aile.

The other boy is Baldwin.

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

260

In·fil óenmacc and?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

At·tá Balduin i mBostun.

Baldwin is in Boston.

Bostan

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

262
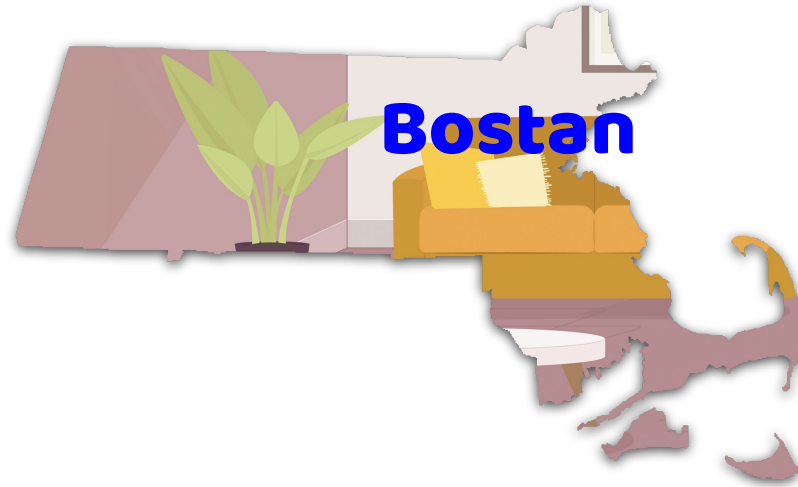
Cía airm i·tá in macc aile?

Cid[L]?
What (is)?

Cía[H]?
Who (is)?
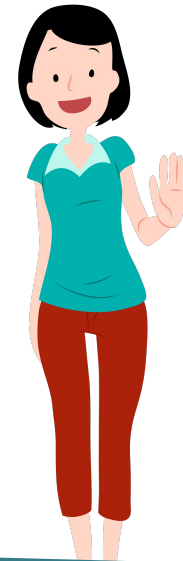
Cía airm i[N]·?
Where?

Cid leth[RN]?
To where?

At·tá da macc.
There are two boys.

Cía indas[RN]?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·[N]?
Why?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

In·fil ingin and?
Is there a girl?
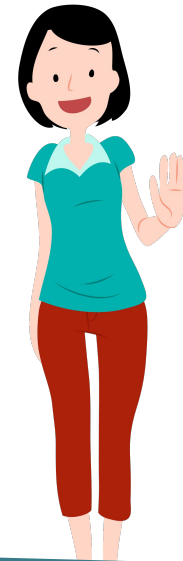
Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

In·fil óenmacc nó in·fil da macc and?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

At·tá ingen.
There is a girl.

Is Órḟlaith-si.
She is Gladys.

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

267

In·fil ingin and?

Cía ind ingen?

269

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

At·tá Órḟlaith i n-Atlantai.

Gladys is in Atlanta.

Atlantae

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

270

Cía airm i·tá Órlaith?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

272

273

Cía airm i·tá Balduin?

Cía airm i·tá Órḟlaith?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Is accobor la Bartholom catt.

Bart wants a cat.

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

276

Cid as accobor la Bartholom?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Ní fáilid Bartholom ar ní·fil catt leis.

Bart isn't happy because he doesn't have a cat.

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

278

Cía **nád** fáilid?

279

In·fil catt leis?

Cid^L**?**
What (is)?

Cía^H**?**
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N**·?**
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}**?**
To where?

Téit Bartholom do Bostun.

Bart goes to Boston.

At·tá Balduin i mBostun.

Baldwin is in Boston.

Cía indas^{RN}**?**
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N**?**
Why?

282

Cid leth téite Bartholom?

Cía fil i mBostun?
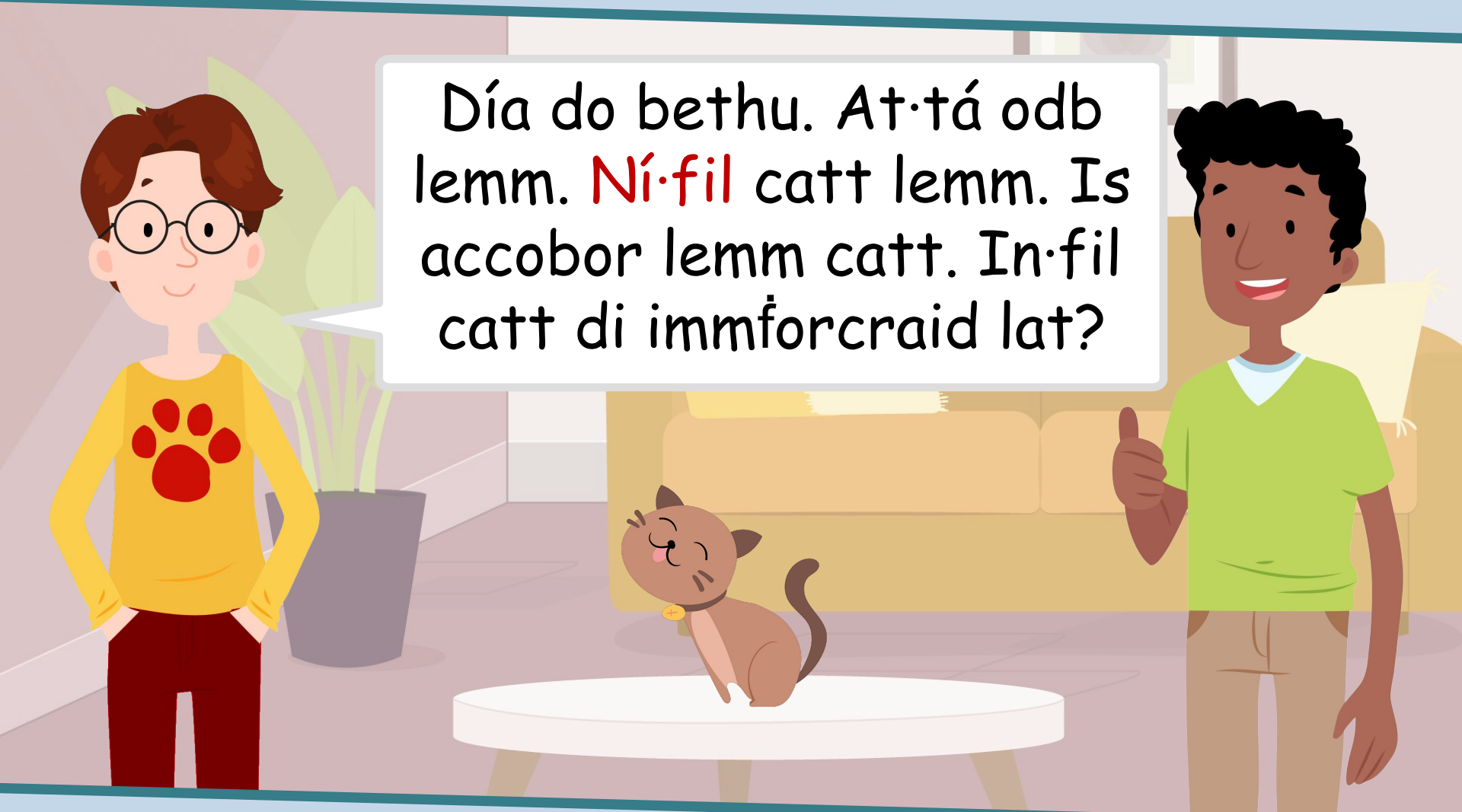
Cid^L?

Cid^{L}? — What (is)?

Cía^{H}? — Who (is)?

Cía airm i^{N}·? — Where?

Cid leth^{RN}? — To where?

> Día do bethu. At·tá odb lemm. Ní·fil catt lemm. Is accobor lemm catt. In·fil catt di immḟorcraid lat?

Cía indas^{RN}? — How?

Cis lir? — How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}? — Why?

285
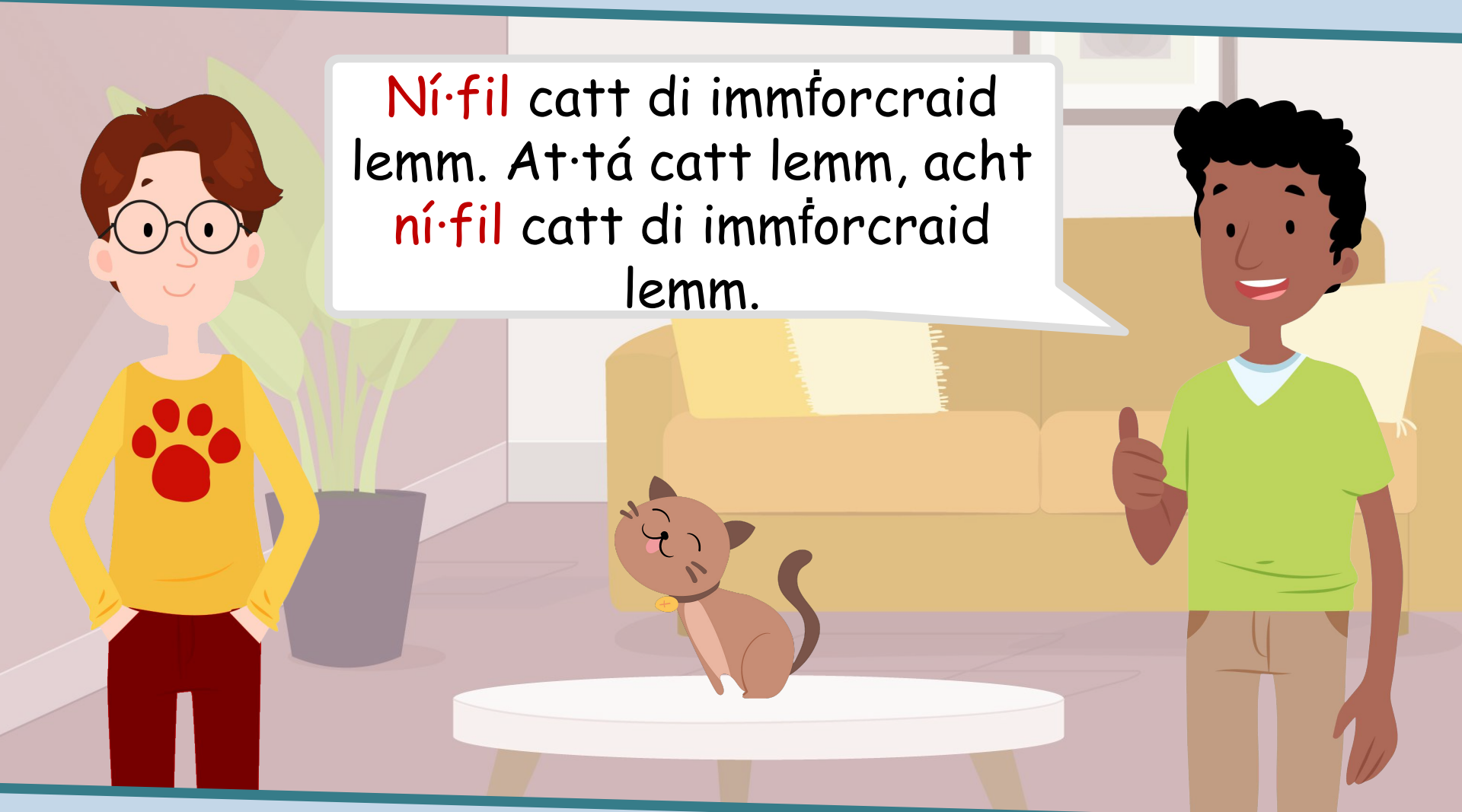
Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

Ní·fil catt di immḟorcraid la Balduin.

Baldwin doesn't have an extra cat.

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

287

In·fil catt
di immforcraid
la Balduin?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

Téit Bartholom do Atlantai.

Bart goes to Atlanta.

At·tá Órḟlaith i n-Atlantai.

Gladys is in Atlanta.

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

289
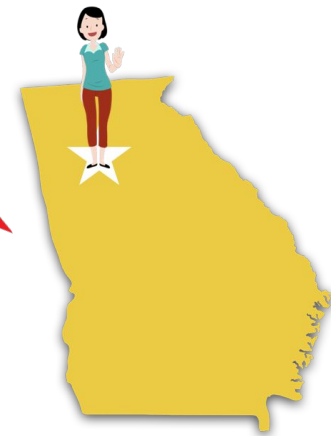
Cía téite?

Cid leth téite Bartholom?
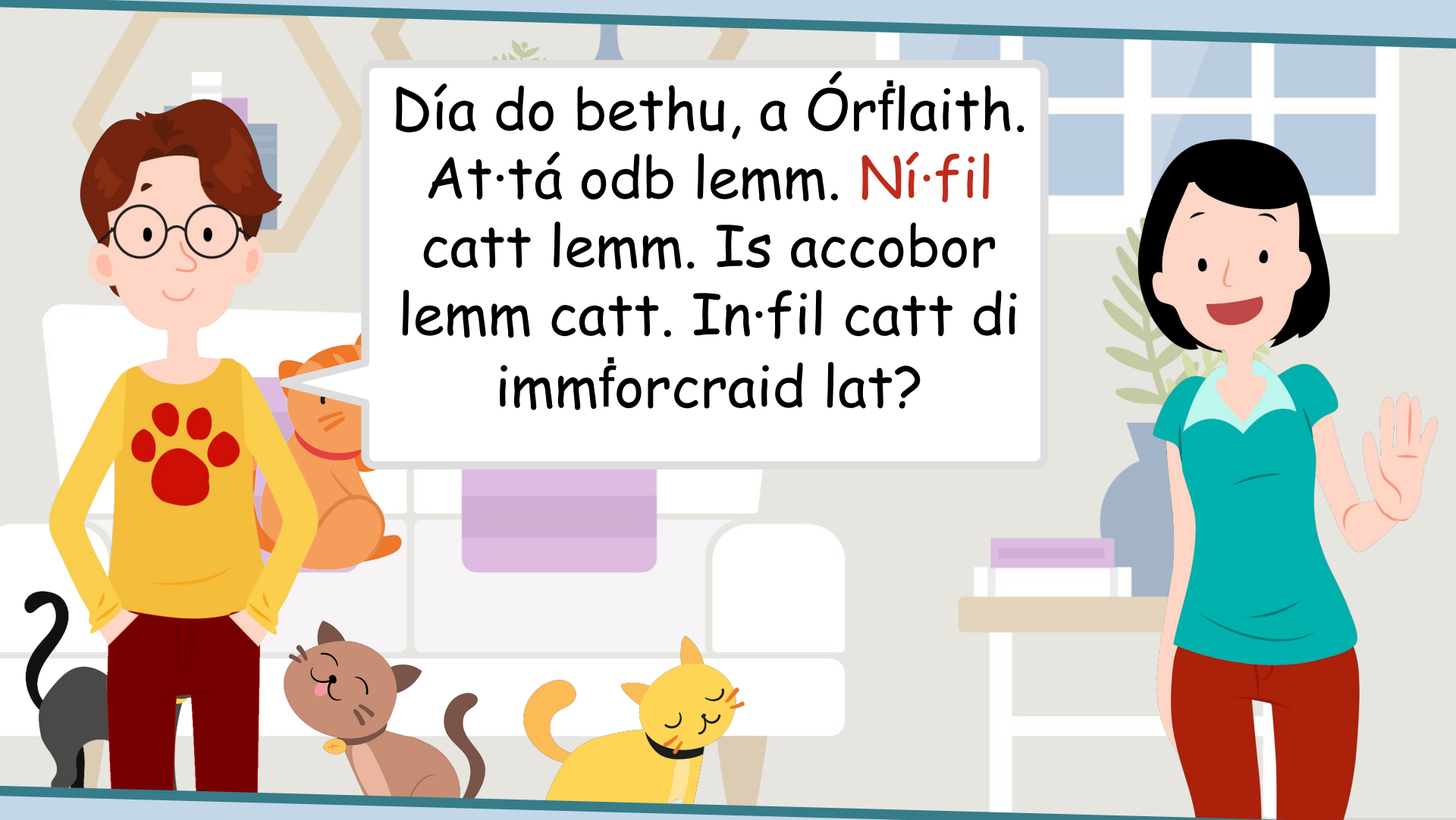
Cía fil i n-Atlantai?

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Día do bethu, a Órḟlaith. At·tá odb lemm. Ní·fil catt lemm. Is accobor lemm catt. In·fil catt di immḟorcraid lat?

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

293

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

Tó, at·tá catt di immḟorcraid lemm. Is Derg mo chatt. Is in catt foirbthe-som.

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^{N}?
Why?

294
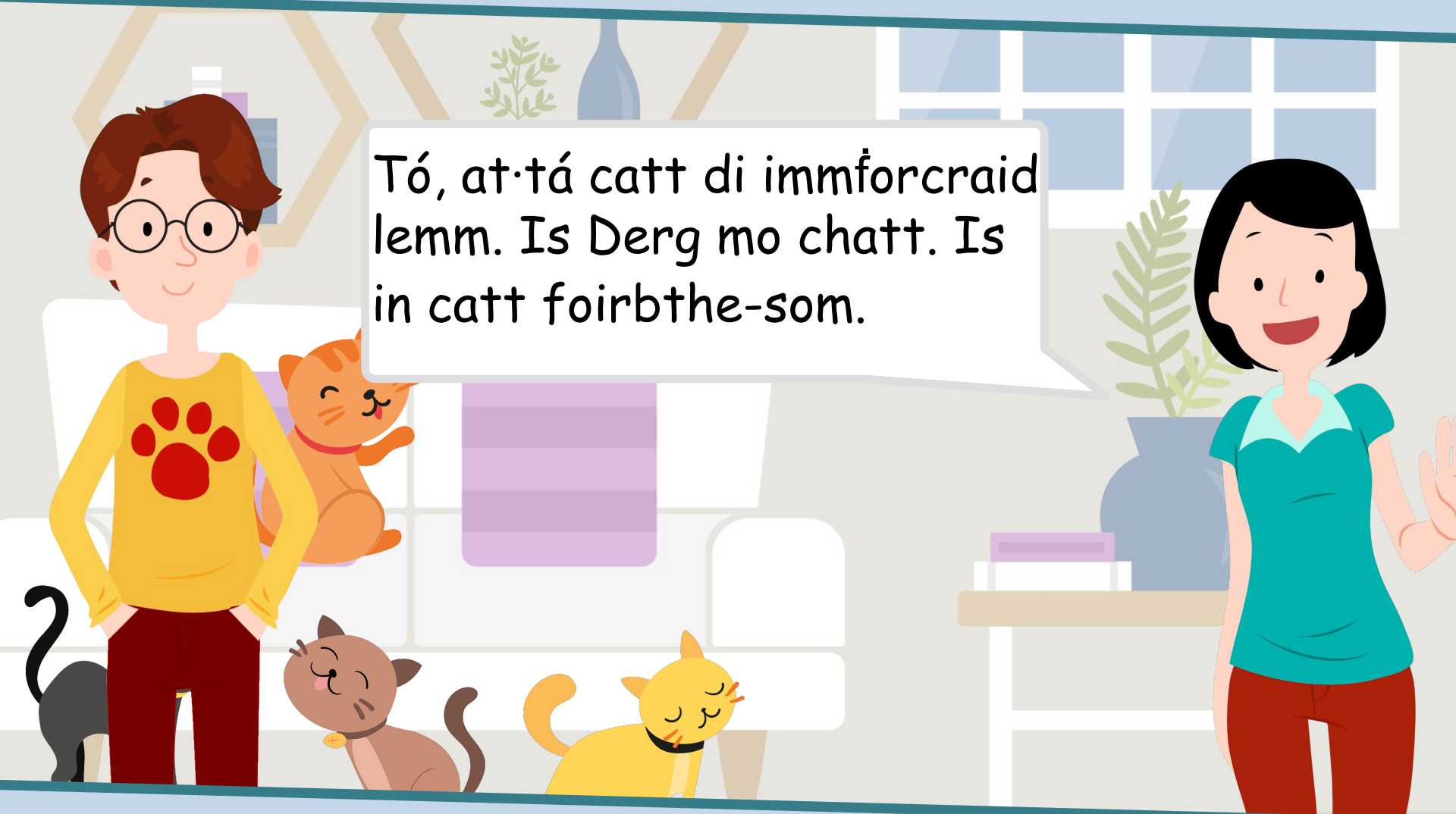
Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^{RN}?
To where?

At·tá catt di immḟorcraid la Órḟlaith!

Gladys has an extra cat!

Cía indas^{RN}?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

295

CidL?
What (is)?

CíaH?
Who (is)?

Cía airm iN·?
Where?

Cid lethRN?
To where?

Ad·cota Bartholom in catt.

Bart **receives** the cat.

ad·cotaim	**I receive**
ad·cotai	**you receive**
ad·cota(-si)	**she receives**
ad·cota(-som)	**he receives**

Cía indasRN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·N?
Why?

296

Cid^L?
What (is)?

Cía^H?
Who (is)?

Cía airm i^N·?
Where?

Cid leth^RN?
To where?

At·tá catt la Bartholom.

Bart has a cat.

Cía indas^RN?
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·^N?
Why?

297

Cid[L]**?**
What (is)?

Cía[H]**?**
Who (is)?

Cía airm i[N]**·?**
Where?

Cid leth[RN]**?**
To where?

Is derḟáilid Bartholom.
Bart is very happy.

Cía indas[RN]**?**
How?

Cis lir?
How many (are)?

Cid ara·[N]**?**
Why?

298

Cía indas as mBartholom indossa?

299

Cid arndid fáilid?

INDID

A SCÉL!
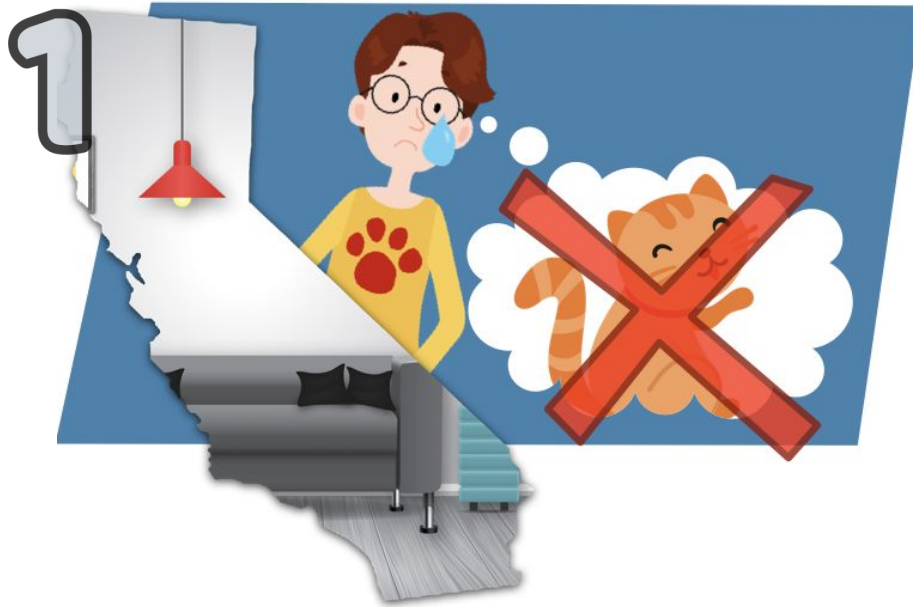
Caiptel 1 – Forcetal 1

Prímléigend 1.1 – Aimser Ḟrecndaircc

Guide Words

ad·cota – gets, receives
Alascae (iā, f) – Alaska
as·beir – says
at·tá … la (leë/leis) – has (she/he)
Barstob (o, m) – Barstow
Canatae (iā, f) – Canada
do thaig (+ G) – to the house of…

Is accobor la (leë/leis) – wants (she/he)
tech n-ego – igloo
prímléigend (o, n) – main reading
Slíabdae (io, m) – Montana
tech (s, n) – house
téit – goes
tige – houses (Npl. < **tech**)

Is accobor la Bartholom catt (184 bríathra)

At·tá macc. Is Bartholom in macc. At·tá Bartholom i Cailifoirn. At·tá Bartholom i mBarstub inna Cailifoirne. Ní fáilid Bartholom. Ní·fil catt leis. Is accobor leis catt. Téit for Gúcal ar is accobor leis catt. Is accobor leis catt i Cailifoirn. Ní fáilid ar ní·fil cattu di immḟorcraid i Cailifoirn.

Téit Bartholom do Bostun. At·tá macc i mBostun. Is Balduin-som. Téit Bartholom do thaig Balduin. As·beir fris:

"Día do bethu, a Balduin. At·tá odb lemm. Ní·fil catt lemm. Is accobor lemm catt. In·fil catt di immḟorcraid lat?"

"Ní·fil cattu di immḟorcraid lemm. At·tá catt lemm, acht ni·fil catt di immḟorcraid lemm."

Ní fáilid Bartholom. Is accobor leis catt acht ní·fil catt di immḟorcraid la Balduin. Téit Bartholom do Atlantai. At·tá ingen i nAtlantai. Is Órḟlaith-si. Téit Bartholom co Órḟlaith ⁊ as·beir frië:

"Día do bethu, a Órḟlaith. At·tá odb lemm. Ní·fil catt lemm. Is accobor lemm catt. In·fil catt di immḟorcraid lat?"

"Tó, at·tá catt di immḟorcraid lemm. Is Derg mo chatt. Is in catt foirbthe-som."

At·tá catt la Órḟlaith. Ad·cóta Bartholom in catt. At·tá catt la Bartholom ⁊ téit-som do Chailifoirn. Is derḟáilid Bartholom ar at·tá catt leis.

Answer the following questions in English based on the story.

1. Who is the boy?
   _____

2. Where is the boy?
   _____

3. Is the boy happy?
   _____

4. What does Bartholom want?
   _____

5. Where does Bartholom go?
   _____

6. Does Balduin have an extra cat?
   _____

7. Who is in Atlanta?
   _____

8. Does Órḟlaith have an extra cat?
   _____

9. Is Derg a great cat?
   _____

10. Is Bartholom happy?
    _____

Personal questions. Answer the following questions about you in Old Irish.

1. Cía airm i·taí?

   _____

2. In·fil catt lat?

   _____

3. In accobor lat catt?

   _____

4. In accobor lat elifaint?

   _____

5. Cid as accobor lat?

   _____

Prímléigend 1.1 – Aimser Ṡechmadachte

ad·cotadae – got, received
boí …la (leë/leis) – s/he had
ba accobor la (leë/leis) – s/he wanted
luid – s/she went
as·bert – s/he said

Ba accobor la Bartholom catt (184 bríathra)

Boí macc. Ba Bartholom in macc. Boí Bartholom i Cailifoirn. Boí Bartholom i mBarstub inna Cailifoirne. Níbo ḟáilid Bartholom. Ní·boí catt leis. Ba accobor leis catt. Luid for Gúcal ar ba accobor leis catt. Ba accobor leis catt i Cailifoirn. Níbo ḟáilid-som ar ní·bátar caitt di immḟorcraid i Cailifoirn.

Luid Bartholom do Bostun. Boí macc i mBostun. Ba Balduin-som. Luid Bartholom do thaig Balduin. As·bert fris:

"Día do bethu, a Balduin. At·tá odb lemm. Ní·fil catt lemm. Is accobor lemm catt. In·fil catt di immḟorcraid lat?

"Ní·fil cattu di immḟorcraid lemm. At·tá catt lemm, acht ni·fil catt di immḟorcraid lemm."

Níbo ḟáilid Bartholom. Ba accobor leis catt, acht ní·boí catt di immḟorcraid la Balduin. Luid Bartholom do Atlantai. Boí ingen i nAtlantai. Ba Órḟlaith-si. Luid Bartholom co Órḟlaith ⁊ as·bert frië:

"Día do bethu, a Órḟlaith. At·tá odb lemm. Ní·fil catt lemm. Is accobor lemm catt. In·fil catt di immḟorcraid lat?"

"Tó, at·tá catt di immḟorcraid lemm. Is Derg mo chatt. Is in catt foirbthe-som."

Boí catt la Órḟlaith. Ad·cotadae Bartholom in catt. Boí catt la Bartholom ⁊ luid-som do Chailifoirn. Ba derḟáilid Bartholom ar boí catt leis.

Forléigend 1.1

Is accobor la Béinen tech mmór n-ego (210 mbríathra)

At·tá macc. Is Béinen in macc. At·tá Béinen i Canatai.

Ní fáilid Béinen i Canatai. Ní·fil tech mmór n-ego leis. Is accobor leis tech mmór n-ego. At·tá tech mbec n-ego leis acht ní·fil tech mmór n-ego leis. Is accobor leis tech mmór n-ego i Canatai. Ní fáilid-som ar ní·fil tige móra ego di immḟorcraid i Canatai.

Téit Béinen do Ṡlíabdu. At·tá macc i Slíabdu. As·beir Béinen fris:

"Día do bethu. At·tá odb lemm. Ní·fil tech mmór n-ego lemm. Is accobor lemm tech mmór n-ego. In·fil tech mmór n-ego di immḟorcraid lat?"

"Ní·fil tech mmór n-ego di immḟorcraid lemm. At·tá tech mbec n-ego lemm, acht ní·fil tech mmór n-ego di immḟorcraid lemm."

306

Ní fáilid Béinen. Is accobor leis tech mmór n-ego. Ní·fil tige móra ego di immḟorcraid i Slíabdu. Téit Béinen do Alascai. At·tá ingen i nAlascai. Is Rachnat ind ingen. As·beir Béinen frië:

"Día do bethu, a Rachnat. At·tá odb lemm. Ní·fil tech mmór n-ego lemm. Is accobor lemm tech mmór n-ego. In·fil tech mmór n-ego di immḟorcraid lat?"

"Tó, at·tá tech mmór n-ego di immḟorcraid lemm. Is tech dermaith n-ego."

At·tá tech mmór n-ego la Rachnait. Ad·cota Béinen a tech mmór n-ego. At·tá tech mmór n-ego la Béinen ⁊ téit-som do Chanatai. Is derḟáilid Béinen ar at·tá tech mmór n-ego leis.

True or False?

1. _____ The boy is Béinen.
2. _____ Béinen has a big igloo.
3. _____ Béinen wants a big igloo.
4. _____ Béinen goes to Montana.
5. _____ In Montana, the boy has an extra, big igloo.
6. _____ In Montana, the boy has a small igloo.
7. _____ Béinen is happy in Montana.
8. _____ Béinen goes to Alaska.
9. _____ The girl, Rachnat, doesn't have a big igloo.
10. _____ Béinen is very happy because he has a big igloo.

Rearrange the words to make complete sentences.

1. Béinen | is | macc

   _____

2. n-ego | tech | leis | mmór | is | accobor

   _____

3. téit | Slíabdu | do | Béinen

   _____

4. tech | in·fil | mmór | lat | n-ego | di immḟorcraid

   _____

5. n-ego | lemm | at·tá | lemm | tech | tech | acht |n-ego | mmór | ní·fil | mbec

   _____

6. Béinen | ní | fáilid |

   _____

7. ingen | at·tá | i | nAlascai

   _____

8. lemm | mmór | di immḟorcraid | n-ego | tó | tech | at·tá

   _____

9. Béinen | mmór | at·tá | tech | ⁊ | la | Chanatai | do | n-ego | téit-som

   _____

Caiptel 1

5.2.6. Assessment 1

1.1 Quiz

A. Éitsem! - Listen and choose the best translation for each word or phrase. (8 points total)

1. _____   a. the boy goes   b. s/he says to the boy   c. there is a boy
2. _____   a. s/he has   b. s/he is in   c. s/he goes
3. _____   a. s/he is   b. s/he wants   c. s/he has
4. _____   a. s/he says   b. s/he goes   c. there is
5. _____   a. the girl is   b. the girl has   c. there is a girl
6. _____   a. s/he is in   b. s/he wants   c. s/he goes to
7. _____   a. s/he goes   b. s/he is in   c. s/he goes to
8. _____   a. with   b. because   c. but

B. In·tuccai-siu? - Match the Old Irish words with their **English** meanings. (12 points total)

1. _____ **at·tá/at·taät**   a. s/he had
2. _____ **at·tá i**   b. s/he says
3. _____ **at·tá leis/leë**   c. s/he has
4. _____ **as·beir**   d. I have
5. _____ **is … in macc**   e. s/he wanted
6. _____ **is accobor leis/leë**   f. there is/are
7. _____ **téit do/co**   g. s/he is in
8. _____ **at·tá lemm**   h. the boy is
9. _____ **is accobor lemm**   i. s/he goes to
10. _____ **boí/bátar**   j. I want
11. _____ **boí leis/leë**   k. there was/were
12. _____ **ba accobor leis/leë**   l. s/he wants

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C. Légam! - *Answer the questions based on the reading. (10 points total)*

At·tá macc. Is Iacób in macc. Ní accobor la Iacób pitsae. Ní accobor leis tech n-ego. Ní accobor leis cauradmír.

Is accobor la Iacób carae mór. Is tróg Iacób ar ní·fil carait mmór leis.

Téit Iacób do thaig ingine. Ní mór ind ingen. Is bec-si. Is Ordnat-si. As·beir Iacób fri Ordnait: "Día do bethu, a Ordnat. Am Iacób-sa. Is accobor lemm carae mór. In·fil carait mmór lat?"

As·beir Ordnat fri Iacób: "Am Ordnat-sa. Ní·fil cartea móra lemm. It bic mo charait."

Ní fáilid Iacób ar ní·fil carait mmór leis.

1. _____ **True/False** The boy doesn't want pizza.
2. _____ **True/False** Iacób wants a big igloo.
3. _____ **True/False** Iacób is sad because he has multiple big friends.
4. _____ **True/False** Iacób goes to the computer.
5. _____ **True/False** Iacób goes to a big girl's apartment.
6. _____ **True/False** Iacób says to the girl, "Do you want a big friend?"
7. _____ **True/False** Iacób says to the girl, "I don't have big friends."
8. _____ **True/False** Ordnat says to Iacób, "My friends are small."
9. _____ **True/False** Iacób is happy because he doesn't have a big friend.
10. _____ **True/False** Iacób isn't happy because he doesn't have a big friend.

5.3. Attempts and failures of an Old Irish teacher

What follows is an informal discussion of my own attempts to introduce active oral and written elements into my Old Irish classes. It was originally written for Chapter 3 but, given its very anecdotal nature, it was more appropriate to use it as an appendix. Nevertheless, I think that it is still of some interest, as it clearly demonstrates the continuous challenges facing teachers.

5.3.1. Trying to speak

The experience described above[1] was mostly based on my adult evening classes in French, Spanish, German and Italian, for which there is no lack of teaching materials that facilitate oral exchanges. For Old Irish, however, the current situation in a college setting is totally different. The curriculum requirements are the first issue: in relation to the available teaching hours, the number of grammatical topics to be covered both in our undergraduate and postgraduate courses is rather extensive. This results in a fast class pace that hardly leaves time left for additional language activities, such as, for example, the implementation of the oral element. The second issue concerns the currently available teaching materials. Although David Stifter's SENG is the best and most accessible Old Irish beginner textbook published so far, it was never meant, nor conceived, to be used in a setting where the oral element could be an option.

This was the situation when, four years ago, I was allowed the honour, and the pleasure, of teaching Old Irish in Maynooth. However, since the focus of my PhD research was developing ideas for a conversational Old Irish textbook, I did not want to miss the opportunity to try to introduce an oral element, albeit minimal, into my classes, experiment with it, and see how far I could go with this.

The first thing to do was very straightforward. Since there were no Old Irish conversational materials available, I had to create some myself. I set to work, and within a few weeks I had the first draft of what I usually call 'The 9 Dialogues' (T9D, see 5.3.3). As the name implies, T9D are a series of 9 more or less graded dialogues set in a college context (Maynooth) and grouped under the title *Maicc 7 Ingena Léigind* ('Students'). The characters involved are all students of Old Irish with Old Irish names, and the conversation topics covered go from simple greetings to giving some details about everyday life and studies. There are no grammar notes, although a full glossary with some grammatical information is provided at the end.

My intention was to devote to T9D the last 10/15 minutes of each class, and use them to help students internalize some very basic Old Irish constructions and vocabulary through conversation in an entertaining manner. Nevertheless, this did not prove ultimately possible in that given context, and for a number of reasons:

- Lack of time: this was the main issue, which also made the other issues worse. 2 hours a week are not enough to add extra activities to the formal requirements of

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1 This section originally followed some 'Teacher's Notes' about my teaching experiences as an adult education teacher. After a thorough restructuring of the chapter, however, the 'Notes' turned out to be irrelevant to the updated content, and thus were removed.

the curriculum. The absolute priority of the class is to properly cover the set number of SENG lessons for the term, which takes its time. Explanations cannot be rushed. In many cases there was no time left at the end of the class to devote to T9D, or the amount of time was so limited that it was pointless to begin a new activity. Moreover, as the end of the class approaches, students start to become restless: they repeatedly check the time; some have to run to their next class, and the focus is lost.

- Too large a gap between SENG and T9D: SENG and T9D are two very different things, two very different kinds of materials with extremely different structure and goals; SENG is a college textbook, while T9D is just an informal list of dialogues with glossary. They each require their own space and cannot truly be merged, not least during the rushed last minutes of class.

- Perceived irrelevance: the student's mind is usually exam-targeted, which means that the main aim is to pass the exam. Students will then focus on the materials that will allow them to reach this target. SENG is the official textbook, and its study is the key to the exam. An extra activity, whose relation to the exam is not immediately clear to the student, can be perceived as irrelevant, if not a complete waste of time, especially when proposed after an intense and challenging session on Old Irish grammar. This explains the poor participation in the last-minute T9D activities.

- T9D required more time than I thought: the conversational elements introduced by the dialogues could not be taught through intensive oral exchange, leaving explanations of the grammar for later, à la W.H.D. Rouse. This was firstly due to the setting I had at my disposal, in which I had neither the time to do it, nor, for the reasons already mentioned, the required participation from the students' side. Thus, since every dialogue, although simple, introduced new grammatical features, many of which not yet formally covered, there was the need to take some time to at least draw the students' attention to these elements. The problem was that, after the brief focus on the grammar, I had already run out of time, the class was over, and the actual conversational session could not even be started.

Trying to squeeze the T9D element into the last minutes of a formal Old Irish class was a failure. The conversational approach needs its space, air, time, independence, mood and awareness, and a setting where to develop all of this gradually and in a relaxed manner, i.e. one or more designated class slots. The T9D materials will in the end merge with LNIS, to which they are much more suited.

After the failure of the T9D experience, however, I did not want to give up. I wanted to find a way to introduce the oral element into my classes, but this time in a feasible manner, without having to deviate from the main textbook. The new attempt had to be based on SENG and make use of its vocabulary and structures, although with all the relevant adjustments. But how? SENG itself gave me the answer. Although it had never been conceived as a starting point for oral activity, it did have elements that, to some extent, could be developed orally. These elements are the reading exercises in Old

Irish contained in each review lesson, starting from Lesson 9. The twenty sentences that every exercise includes are very well thought out (in the case of the ones created by Stifter), or very well chosen or adapted (in the case of the original or partially original ones), and effectively exemplify the structures studied up to the relevant review lessons in which they are contained. So why not use them as starting points for simple oral exchanges?

The first attempt of this kind was made during the spring term 2022 in an SG208 (Old Irish 2) class. It was a very particular class, with only two, but extremely enthusiastic, students, Michelle Doyle and Oisín Farrell,[2] who had already achieved good results even with a part of T9D. They were, in fact, able to interact with each other in spoken Old Irish for a couple of minutes on very simple identity and college matters, which made me define them as 'The First Old Irish Speakers in over One Thousand Years'.

It was in this same setting, with Michelle and Oisín, that I started to experiment with the new approach. While they were working on Lesson 20, I asked them to go back to Lesson 9 and read its sentences again. By then, having read all the sentences in Lessons 9, 13, 16 and, partially, 19, Michelle and Oisín found those of the first review lesson less difficult and more accessible than when they had read them for the first time in the previous term. I then asked the two students to prepare them again for the next class, which they did. As soon as they felt confident enough with their content and structures, we started to apply the new approach. First, the sentence was read out loud and then, once I had made sure it had been properly understood, I started to ask questions about it in Old Irish. Starting from very simple yes/no (*tó*/*náthó*) questions, I moved then to 'what', 'who' or 'where' (*cid*, *cía*, *cía airm*), always by manipulating the same vocabulary and forms introduced by the relevant sentence. It was not like a real conversation, but it was still a fully oral exchange, where the students were prompted to produce alternative forms of the sentence by activating a part of their passive Old Irish knowledge while, at the same time, trying to think in Old Irish. This approach, that, to avoid confusion with other questioning techniques, I will call Questions from Sentences (QFS), proved, within certain limits, useful, also in developing an increased morphological and structural awareness of the language.

Moreover, QFS also permits the downsizing of the problems discussed above, which used to arise while trying to squeeze the T9D activities into the last minutes of class. Let us see how:

- Time issue: being QFS based on the review lessons of SENG, and SENG being the textbook on which the class is fully based, the new activity is not an "outsider" anymore, but an integral part of the class. So, although it is usually put after the formal grammar presentation, it does not need to be relegated to the very last minutes of class but, instead, can be allotted some more time.

- Gap issue: this issue is completely solved, as the two activities perfectly merge into each other, being QFS directly and clearly aimed at reinforcing the formal rules learned in SENG.

2 I thank Michelle and Oísin for giving me permission to mention their names in this section.

- Perceived irrelevance issue: this issue has been completely solved as well. Students do not perceive the QFS activity as irrelevant, as was the case for T9D, since they are constantly reminded that SENG sentences are fundamental to their preparation, and that the more they read and manipulate them, the easier it will be for them to translate them properly in the exam. This awareness keeps the students much more focused, and as soon as they realize that the QFS oral activity gives them a firmer grasp of vocabulary and forms, their motivation grows.

However, although QFS is rather feasible and appreciated by most students, it remains a secondary activity in the class, which remains mostly focused on explicit grammar teaching and training. As a consequence of this, the teacher must be realistic and not expect too much. In a perfect world, the students would read all the sentences many times on their own and then would come to class with a full understanding of them. The teacher would then just have to prompt the class to manipulate them orally. Since students would basically already know the vocabulary and the structures involved in the sentences, they could just focus completely on the oral exchanges and get the most out of them in full enjoyment. However, this is not a perfect world. No student comes to class with all the sentences of a relevant review lesson under his or her belt. Some of them may have read a few; some of them have read none. Thus, since it is pointless to start QFS about sentences that are not fully understood, some time needs to be devoted to reading out loud and understanding, which, of course, reduces the amount of time that could be used on oral activities. By the way, in that same perfect world mentioned above, there would be one or two hours a week completely devoted to Old Irish practice, which in my case would mean intensive QFS activities on a large number of sentences. In such a setting, students could, if necessary, be gently pushed to come more prepared to the practice sections, for example, by telling them that their preparation and participation results will constitute a percentage of their final grade. In this imperfect world, instead, the teacher must be realistic and content him- or herself with what can be done and try to get the most out of it but, at the same time, he or she should also never give up trying to improve, increase, and broaden the teaching setting.

Regardless of its limits, QFS is proving a rewarding activity, both for my students and for myself. There is, of course, much room for improvement, for example, regarding time, which is still a major problem. Moreover, some more planning from my side and, at some point, the creation of some specific supporting materials, are issues worth addressing in the future, the in-depth analysis of which would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

5.3.2. Trying to write

I have been experiencing the use of creative written production in my intensive Old Irish SG601/241 class at Maynooth. The intensive class meets 4 hours a week, in two 2-hour sessions, which means that it has two more contact hours than the regular SG207/208 class, although its students are supposed to cover twice as much material as their colleagues in the basic module. Regardless of double the material, however, a 2-

hour session allows better time management, which, in turn, can result, although not on a regular basis, in a good amount of room for practice. In such a setting, I was able to allot the QFS some more time, always after the formal teaching, and students had many more opportunities to manipulate the sentence used as a starting point and to ask each other questions about it. Seeing the relatively good confidence they were gaining with some basic vocabulary and structures, I tried to push them one step further by asking them to write a short paragraph in Old Irish based on the sentences of a given review lesson. The results were really rewarding and encouraging, with some of the students even attempting to write very simple stories set in medieval Ireland, and then questioning their classmates, in Old Irish, about the content of what they had just read. Of course, communication about an unseen text, or set of sentences, was not easy, firstly because the content of the story was hardly comprehensible to the rest of the group after the first reading. Consequently, sentences had to be broken up into shorter segments, and every segment slowly repeated several times, with me in some cases, reminding the class of the meaning of some key words. Once the text had been understood, questions were relatively easy to understand, and short, correct answers were usually given by the classmates.

As for the written texts, however, some more attention from my side was required, as, in some cases, things seemed to get out of hand. Driven by the enthusiasm of producing a text in a language in which no more text was produced, the students sometimes lost contact with the limits established by the sentences they were using as a starting point, getting stuck by trying to say things they were not able to say, and for which they did not yet have the required background. In such cases, they started to proceed by trial and error, blindly, and basically left the learning path I had in mind for them, i.e. producing a text based on the vocabulary and structures already studied in order to develop awareness and foster acquisition. This departure, in itself, was by no means a negative or counterproductive thing to do, but in a class whose curriculum and exam are based on grammar knowledge and grammar skills, it was my duty not to let students get distracted from the target they were supposed to reach. Whatever extra activity they did with the language, both orally and in writing, had to be aimed at helping them master the skills they would need for the exam. Thus, I realized I had been a bit too vague when instructing them to produce a paragraph based on the sentences of the review lesson of the book. I had to be more specific, and to give stricter instructions. So, while praising their dedication to the language and their creativity, I reminded them that, being bound to a set curriculum, we should not, in that specific classroom context, deviate too much from the required institutional goals. I then encouraged them to try to strictly stick to the morphology, syntax and vocabulary on which the review sentences were based, and never lose sight of the fact that, whatever they did with Old Irish, their final goal had to be to increase, through language use, the mastery of what had been learned with SENG. The students understood the point, and from their next attempt on, they began to focus less on creative plots and more on grammatical accuracy. For example, using Lesson 32, focused on deponent verbs, as a starting point, they produced a sequence of sentences with as many deponent forms as possible. I also tried to do my part to increase focus and accuracy, and, once the sentence had been given orally and basically understood by the other students, I wrote it on the board, made sure that it was

fully clear to everyone, and then prompted the students to use it as a basis for QFS with some guidance from me.

I think that what has been described above is a good example of a sometimes unpleasant, but also vital, element with which we necessarily must deal if we really want to start to introduce some oral, active and (half)communicative activities in a language teaching setting usually foreign to such practices. This element is called compromise. With compromise we can at least test the feasibility of our ideas, see to what extent they can be applied to a certain setting, and how they can be developed to fit a larger context that, hopefully, will require less compromise.

5.3.3. The 9 Dialogues

These are The 9 Dialogues (T9D) mentioned in 5.3.1. They were written a few years ago. I have only changed *c'airm* to *cía airm* 'where', and *c'indas* to *cía indas* 'how' according to the updated Neo-Old Irish use. The rest has not been revised.

Maicc 7 Ingena Léigind

Immacaldam 1

- Día do bethu!
- Día do bethu!
- Cía th'ainm?
- Is Cormac m'ainm. 7 t'ainm-siu?
- Is Aífe m'ainm-se.
- Ceilebrad duit.
- Ceilebrad duit.

Immacaldam 2

- Cía tussu?
- Am Cormac-sa. 7 tussu?
- Am Aífe-se.

Immacaldam 3

- Día do bethu, á Chormaic!
- Día do bethu, á Aífe!
- Cía indas at·táthar ocut indíu?
- At·táu im maith, biru buidi friut. 7 ocut-su?
- At·táu im maith danó, biru buidi friut.
- Ceilebrad duit!
- Ceilebrad duit!

Immacaldam 4

- Á Chormaic, can duit-siu?
- Is ó Áth Chlíath dom-sa. 7 duit-siu, á Aífe?
- Is ó Maig Núadat dom-sa.

Immacaldam 5

- Cía port i·tá do thech?
- At·tá mo thech i mMaig Núadat. 7 do thech-su?
- At·tá mo thech i mMaig Núadat danó.

Immacaldam 6

- Día do bethu! Cía airm i·taí indossa?
- At·táu im thig. 7 tussu? Cía airm i·taí-siu?
- At·táu isin scuil.
- Isin scuil? Cía port i·tá do scol?
- At·tá mo scol i mMaig Núadat.
- Cía ainm inna scuile?
- Is ainm inna scuile 'Cú Chulainn'!!

Immacaldam 7

- Cid do·gní-siu it bethaid?
- Am macc léigind-se. 7 tussu?
- Am ingen léigind-se danó!
- Cía airm i·ndénai-siu do ḟoglaimm?
- Do·gníu mo ḟoglaimm i mMaig Núadat.
- Cid a foglaimm do·ngní-siu?
- Do·gníu foglaimm inna Sengoídilce.

Immacaldam 8

- Cía é-som?
- Is carae Líadaine.
- Cía a ainm?
- Is Conall a ainm.
- Can dó?
- Is de Gaillim dó.
- Cid do·gní-sem sund?
- Do·gní a ḟoglaimm.
- In·dénai-sem a ḟoglaimm isin scuil?
- Isin scuil?? Náthó! Do·gní-sem a ḟoglaimm isind ardscuil!
- Isind ardscuil? Cesí ardscol i·ndénai-sem a ḟoglaimm?
- Do·gní-sem a ḟoglaimm i n-Ardscuil Maige Núadat.

Immacaldam 9

- Cía sisi?
- Is bancharae Cormaic.
- In ingen léigind-si danó?
- Tó. Do·gní-si a foglaimm inar n-ardscuil danó.
- Cía a ainm?
- Is Líadain a ainm.

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- In de Gallim dí danó?
- Náthó. Is de Luimnich dí, acht do·gní-si a foglaimm co Cormac sund.
- In·dénat a foglaimm immallé?
- Tó. Is de Gaillim dó, is de Luimnech dí, acht do·gniät a foglaimm immallé.
- In·dénat foglaimm inna Sengoídilce?
- Do·gní Líadain-si foglaimm inna Sengoídilce. Ní·dénai Cormac-som.
- Innád·cara Cormac in Sengoídilc?
- Náthó. Ní·cara-som in Sengoídilc... Ní·cara inna senbélrae!
- Cid caras trá? In·cara inna nuebélrae?
- Tó. Caraid Cormac inna nuebélrae 7 do·gní foglaimm inna nnuebélrae.

-sa - 2sg. emph. part., after non-pal.
-sem - 3sg. emph. part., after pal.
-siu - 2sg. emph. part., after pal.
-su - 2sg. emph. part., after non-pal.
·dénai, 2sg./3sg. dep. < do·gní
·dénat, 3pl. dep. < do·gní
7: ocus^L - and
ainm^N (n, n) - name
am, 1sg. < is
ardscol* (ā, f) - university, college
ar^N - our
at·tá - to be (Substantive Verb)
at·táthar, impers. < at·tá
at·táu, 1sg. < at·tá
bancharae (nt, m) - female friend
bélrae (io, n) - language
bethu (t, m) - life
biru buidi friut - thank you
cía airm - where (is) (what place is)
cía indas - how?
can (+ do^L) - whence (is)
carae (nt, m) - friend
caraid (W1) - to love
caras, 3sg. rel. < caraid
ceilebrad duit - bye (to you)
cesí^L (f) - which (is)
cía port - where (is) (what locality)
cía^H - who (is)
cid - what (is)
danó - too, also
de^L - from
dó, 3sg.m < do^L
do·gní, ·dénai (H2) - to do, to make
do·gniät, 3pl. < do·gní
do·gníu, 1sg. < do·gní
do^L - to (+ P)
do^L (2) - your (2sg.)
dom, 1sg. < do^L
duit, 2sg. < do^L

é-som - 3sg.m emph. indep. pron.
focal (o, n) - vocable
foglaimm (n, n) - study
forus (u, n) - foundation
i^N· - 'in which'
i·tá - 'in which is' < i^N + ·tá (3sg.)
i·taí - 'in which you are' < i^N + ·taí (2sg.)
im < i^N + mo^L
Immacaldam (ā, f) - dialogue
immallé - together
in^H, 3sg. interr. < is
inar^N < i^N + ar^N
indíu - today
ingen (ā, f) - girl, daughter
ingen léigind - student (f)
innad^N· - neg. interr. part.
is - to be (Copula)
m' < mo^L - my
macc (o, m) - boy, son
macc léigind - student (m)
mag (s, n) - field, plain; as in Mag Núadat
maig, Psg. < mag
maige, Gsg. < mag
maith (i) - good
mo^L - my
náthó - no
nuebélrae (io, n) - modern language
oc - at (+ P)
ocut, 2sg. < oc
scol (ā, f) - school ('s' never lenited)
senbélrae (io, n) - ancient language
Sengoídelc (ā, f) - Old Irish
sisi - 3sg.f emph. indep. pron.
sund - here
t', th' < do^L (2)
tech (s, n) - house
tig, Psg. < tech
trá - then
tussu - 2sg. emph. indep. pron.

5.4. Neo-Old Irish texts

5.4.1. *Auraicept na nÉicsíne*: 'Int Ṡenben 7 in Mucc'

'Int Ṡenben 7 in Mucc' ('The Old Woman and the Pig') is one of the nine stories included in my book *Auraicept na nÉicsín*e (2023, Evertype), the Old Irish translation of *The Primer* (1910) by Harriette Taylor Treadwell and Margaret Free. The book also has a full glossary at the back, with all the inflected and conjugated forms cross-referenced to their main entry.

Int Ṡenben 7 in Mucc[1]

Ar·ánaic senben screpull.
Ba mucc a n-accobor leë.
As·bert-si: "Ro·crenaimm muicc. Ro·crenaimm muicc cosin scripull."
7 nos·cíuir.
Ro·ánaic in mucc céimm.
As·bert int ṡenben "A mucc, a mucc, eirg tarsa céimm."
As·bert in mucc: "Ní·reg-sa tarsa céimm."
7 ráith-side úadi. Ráith ónt ṡenmnaí.

Ar·ánaic int ṡenben coin.
As·bert-si: "A chú, a chú, gaib in mmuicc!
Ní·rega in mucc tarsa céimm,
7 ní·riciub-sa mo thech innocht."
As·bert in cú: "Ní·géb-sa in mmuicc."

Ar·ánaic int ṡenben slaitt.
As·bert-si: "A ṡlatt, a ṡlatt, ben in coin!
Ní·géba in cú in mmuicc,
ní·rega in mucc tarsa céimm,
7 ní·riciub-sa mo thech innocht."
As·bert int ṡlatt: "Ní·biü-sa in coin."

Ar·ánaic int ṡenben teinid.
As·bert-si: "A theine, a theine, loisc in slaitt!
Ní·biï int ṡlatt in coin,
ní·géba in cú in mmuicc,
ní·rega in mucc tarsa céimm,
7 ní·riciub-sa mo thech innocht."
As·bert in teine: "Ní·loisciub-sa in slaitt."

Ar·ánaic int ṡenben uisce.
As·bert-si: "A uisci, a uisci, báid in teinid!
Ní·loiscfea in teine in slaitt,
ní·biï int ṡlatt in coin,
ní·géba in cú in muicc,
ní·rega in mucc tarsa céimm,
7 ní·riciub-sa mo thech innocht."
As·bert int uisce: "Ní·báidiub-sa in teinid."

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1 Included in Felici 2023: 25–38.

Ar·ánaic int ṡenben dam.
As·bert-si: "A daim, a daim, ib in n-uisce!
Ní·báidfea int uisce in teinid,
ní·loiscfea in teine in slaitt,
ní·biï int ṡlatt in coin,
ní·géba in cú in muicc,
ní·rega in mucc tarsa céimm,
7 ní·riciub-sa mo thech innocht."
As·bert in dam: "Ní·íb-se in n-uisce."

Ar·ánaic int ṡenben féoldénmaid.
As·bert-si: "A ḟéoldénmaid, a ḟéoldénmaid, marb in ndam!
Ní·íba in dam in n-uisce,
ní·báidfea int uisce in teinid,
ní·loiscfea in teine in slaitt,
ní·biï int ṡlatt in coin,
ní·géba in cú in muicc,
ní·rega in mucc tarsa céimm,
7 ní·riciub-sa mo thech innocht."
As·bert in féoldénmaid: "Ní·mairbiub-sa in ndam."

Ar·ánaic int ṡenben lomain.
As·bert-si: "A loman, a loman, tacht in féoldénmaid!
Ní·mairbfea in féoldénmaid in ndam,
ní·íba in dam in n-uisce,
ní·báidfea int uisce in teinid,
ní·loiscfea in teine in slaitt,
ní·biï int ṡlatt in coin,
ní·géba in cú in muicc,
ní·rega in mucc tarsa céimm.
7 ní·riciub-sa mo thech innocht."
As·bert ind loman: "Ní·tachtub-sa in féoldénmaid."

Ar·ánaic int ṡenben lochaid frangcaig.
As·bert-si: "A luch ḟrangcach, a luch ḟrangcach, cnaí in llomain!
Ní·tachtfa ind loman in féoldénmaid,
ní·mairbfea in féoldénmaid in ndam,
ní·íba in dam in n-uisce,
ní·báidfea int uisce in teinid,
ní·loiscfea in teine in slaitt,
ní·biï int ṡlatt in coin,
ní·géba in cú in muicc,
ní·rega in mucc tarsa céimm,
7 ní·riciub-sa mo thech innocht."
As·bert ind luch ḟrangcach: "Tabair gruth dom
co·cná-sa in llomain."

Fo·fúair int ṡenben gruth.
Da·mbert-si dond lochaid ḟrangcaig.
Gabais ind luch ḟrangcach cnám inna lomnae,
gabais ind loman tachtad ind ḟéoldénmado,
gabais in féoldénmaid marbad in daim,
gabais in dam oöl ind uisci,
gabais int uisce bádud in teined,
gabais in teine loscud inna slaitte,
gabais int ṡlatt béimm in chon,
gabais in cú gabáil inna muicce,
luid in mucc tarsa céimm,
7 ro·ánaic int ṡenben a tech in n-aidchi-sin.

5.4.2. A beginner novel in Old Irish: *Is Accobor la Bréndan mBrown Cú*

This is the full draft of the Old Irish translation of the beginner novel *Brandon Brown Quiere un Perro* ('BB wants a dog', 2013), by Carol Gaab, who published it through her then website fluencymatters.com. The fact that it was one of the most famous beginner novels available, and that it had already been translated into Latin, prompted me to challenge myself by creating its Old Irish version. I translated the book in 2019, as my very first attempt to use Old Irish actively. I decided to do the translation *before* proposing it to the author, as I did not want to risk becoming demotivated by a probable lack of interest in my endeavour. I felt that this challenge was fundamental to my own development as an Old Irish scholar and teacher, thus I wanted to undertake it in the most optimistic and productive mood possible. When I finished the draft, I contacted Carol Gaab, who appeared to be rather open to the idea of having her book also in Old Irish. However, precisely in those months, fluencymatters.com was acquired by the bigger company Wayside Publishing, which is much more focused on teacher training and digital solutions for teaching and learning than on expanding their catalogue of beginner novels. Although they authorized me to use the draft in my teaching, they declined my proposal to publish it.

Despite the fact that I was not able to publish it, this translation remains for me a groundbreaking and formative experience, a watershed, a 'before' and an 'after' in my own Old Irish knowledge. By working and struggling through it, I learnt immensely, also becoming aware of the challenges awaiting me not only as an aspiring Old Irish translator, but also as a developer of communicative teaching materials.

The text included here is the fully unchanged 2019 version. It has holes, mistakes and question marks. I am not going to touch it for now, maybe because I like to keep as it is, as a landmark in my struggles towards active Old Irish.

Is Accobor la Bréndan mBrown Cú

Caiptel 1
Is Accobor la Bréndan Cú

[1]² Is accobor la Bréndan cú. Is accobor leis cú mór. Is accobor leis cú dermór! Is accobor leis cú dermór amal Chlifford, in Coin mMór nDerg,³ acht ní accobor leis cú derg, amal Chlifford. Ní accobor la Bréndan cú derg, is accobor leis cú gnáthdattae. Is accobor leis cú bán nó cú dub. Is accobor leis cú mór!

[2] At·tá luch oca ṡier, Cáit, acht ní accobor la Bréndan luch. It grándai inna lochaid. Ní accobor la Bréndan luch grándae. Is accobor la Bréndan cú!
At·tá corr oca bencharait, Jamie, acht ní accobor la Bréndan corr. It grándai inna corra danó. Ní accobor la Bréndan corr grándae. Is accobor la Bréndan cú!
At·tá cú oca charait, Sémus. Is mór cú Sémuis, 7 is glicc danó. Is accobor la Bréndan cú amal choin Sémuis. Is accobor leis cú mór

[3] 7 glicc. Nítat glicci inna corra. Nítat glicci inna lochaid danó. Acht it glicci in choinsem, 7 is accobor la Bréndan cú glicc! Is accobor leis cú mór 7 glicc!
At·taät ilchoin isind ḟaithchi. Ad·cí Bréndan inna cona 7 gairid: «Is accobor liumm cú!» Ad·cí coin dub 7 gairid: «Is accobor liumm cú dub!» Ad·cí coin mbán 7 gairid: «Is accobor liumm cú bán!» Ad·cí coin mmór 7 gairid: «Is accobor liumm cú mór!» Ad·cí

[4] coin mbec 7 gairid: «Is accobor liumm cú acht ní accobor liumm cú bec! Is accobor liumm cú mór!»
Ad·cí Bréndan ilchona forsin chíanṡenchu danó. Ad·cí Bréndan *Messe 7 Marley* isind Ombar 20. Gairid Bréndan: «Is cú foirbthe Marley! Is accobor liumm cú amal Marley». Ad·cí Bréndan *Beethoven* isind Ombar 30. Gairid Bréndan co-inntinnech: «Is accobor liumm cú amal Beethoven!» Ad·cí Bréndan ilchona isind ombar Bith inna mMíl. Ad·cí cona móru 7 becu. Gairid Bréndan: «Uch uch uch! Is accobor liumm cúúúúú!»

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2 The numbers in square brackets indicate the original page numbering and were intended to simplify the work of the editors.
3 *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, a popular children's book series by Norman Bridwell.

Caiptel 2
Coin? Náthó!

[5] «Á mátharnait», as·beir Bréndan, «Is accobor liumm cú. Is accobor liumm cú mór!»

«Á Bréndain, íarraid cú ilaltramm», fris·gair a mátharnat.

«Tó, á mátharnait. Am conn-sa.»

«Á Bréndain, it 8 (ocht) mbliadnai file it áes nammá. Is aire anmor cú do macc ata lána a 8 (ocht)

[6] mblíadnai.»

«Coäir», fris·gair Bréndan dí co glicc. «Tó, is aire anmor cú do macc ata lána a 8 (ocht) mblíadnai, acht ní aire anmor do macc ata lána a 9 (noí) mblíadnai.»

«Ó, ó, ó... Á Bréndain, at derglicc-siu», as·beir a mathárnat fris.

«Tó, á mathárnait. 7 am conn-sa danó!»

It 8 (ocht) mblíadnai i n-áes Bréndain, acht bit 9 (noí) mblíadnai ina áes ellma.

Is a laë tuisten ... 3 july. Is accobor la Bréndan cú ara láu tuisten. Is dán laí thuisten foirbthe cú!

«Á mátharnait, is accobor liumm cú armo láu thuisten.»

«Cú ardo láu tuisten?»

[7] «Tó, á mátharnait!», gairid Bréndan co inntinnech. «Is accobor liumm cú mór armo láu thuisten.»

«Á Bréndain, it derodbaich in choin.»

«Odbaich?» as·beir Bréndan frie .....

«Tó, á Bréndain. Ar·áilet in choin odbu. It derodbaich-sem.»

Is derglicc Bréndan. Imm·ráidi bríathra a mátharnait 7 fris·gair dí:

«Á mátharnait, cenita accobor lat cú, fo bíth it odbaich in choin?»

«Coäir. Ní accobor liumm cú, fo bíth it odbaich in choin, it derodbaich-sem!» fris·gair a mátharnat dó.

«Acht it odbacha inna lochaid danó. Is odbach luch Cháit, 7 is luch oc Cháit...»

«Á Bréndain, ar·áilet inna lochaid odbu becu, 7 ar·áilet in choin odbu móru!» as·beir a mátharnat fris.

[8] «Ní·táirci cú Sémuis odbu. Is coimétaid inna muintire cú Sémuis. Is amrae a chú!»

Is fíaránach mathárnat Bréndain. Ni accobor leë cú 7 ní accobor leë labrad beus. Acht labraithir Bréndan co intinnech beus:

«Á mathárnait, is accobor liumm-sa cú amal choin Sémuis. Is accobor liumm cú mór.»

«Do·áircet in choin móir odbu móru», fris·gair a mathárnat dó co fíaránach. «Íarraid cú ilaltramm.»

[9] «Á mathárnait, it 9 (noí) mblíadnai im áes ellma. Is airlam liumm dond altrammain. Am conn-sa.»

Ní·frecair mathárnat Bréndain dó, 7 labraithir Bréndan beus:

«Ní accobor liumm Xbox, 7 ní·accobor liumm cíanguthán danó. Is accobor liumm cú nammá. ......, á mathárnait, is accobor liumm cú armo láu tuisten!»

Brisid cíanguthán in comrád isind aibrithiud-sin. Ding, ding, ding. Is accobor la Bréndan llabrad beus, acht ní accobor lia mathárnat. Téit-si gabál in chíangutháin 7 as·beir «Mochen...» isin cíanguthán. Léicid-si Bréndan i n-éislis 7 ní fáilid Bréndan. Is accobor leis cú co deimin!

Caiptel 3
Cúán do Bréndan

[10] Téit Bréndan fora ....
«......, á Bréndan», as·beir a mátharnat fris. «Tair ......»
«..., á mátharnait. Do·tíag .... »
As·beir Bréndan '....' fria mátharnat 7 téit co tech Sémuis. Ad·cí a charait 7 a choin,

[11] Tigir, i ndorus in taige.
«Dia do bethu, á Ṡémuis. Dia do bethu, á Thigir», as·beir Bréndan friu.
«Dia do bethu, á Bréndan», fris·gair Sémuis dó.
Lingid Tiger 7 gairid: «....» co inntinnech. Is Bréndan ..... 7 as·beir:
«Babb! Is derglicc Tiger!»
«Tó», fris·gair Sémus. «Is cú derglicc Tiger.»
«In·táirci Tiger odbu?»

[12] «Náthó, ní·táirci odbu», fris·gair Sémus dó co finditech.
«As·beir mo mátharnat do·n-áircet in choin ilodbu.»
«Gúach! Nítat in choin uili do·aircet odbu. Ní·táirci Tiger odbu. Is cú foirbthe!» as·beir Sémus fris.
«Is accobor liumm cú amal Thigir!» gairid Bréndan.
Tíagait in dá macc cosin faithchi ....
«.......!» as·beir Tiger.
«........, á Thiger» as·beir Bréndan fris.

[13] At·taat ildoíni isind ḟaithchi, 7 ilchoin danó. Ad·ciät Bréndan 7 Ṡémus cona móru 7 chona becu. Tíagait tresin faithchi .... Prapp tarmi·tét cúán ara mbélaib. Ad·cí Bréndan in cúán

[14] 7 gairid:
«Décce! Cúán!»
At·tá ard buide lasin cúán. Gaibid Bréndan in cúán 7 as·beir fris:
«Dia do bethu, á chúáin. Cia ainm?»
Déchait Bréndan 7 Ṡémus in n-aird, acht ní·fil nach n-eól lasin n-aird. Ní·fil na ainm leë, ní·fil nach rrím cíangutháin leë.
«Ní·fil nach n-aimn lia aird», as·beir Bréndan.
«Ní·fil nach rrím cíangutháin leë danó»,

[15] as·beir Sémus.
«Óóóó... Cía airm i·tá do mátharnat?» fris·gair Bréndan don chúán.
Do·écet in dá macc inna cona isind ḟaithchi. Do·écet cona móru 7 chona becu, acht ní·accat mátharnat in chúáin. Do·melat Bréndan 7 Ṡémus tricha (30) mómint cosin chúán. Gairid Bréndan íarum:
«....... indossa. Tíagam!»

«7 in cúán?» fris·gair Sémus dó. «Innach·tabair-siu dot thig?»

«Nom·thabur... dom thig???» fris·gair Bréndan dó co moth.

«Tó!» ....Sémus. «Da·mbeir dot thig!»

Is dúthracht la Bréndan a thabairt da thig, acht is snímach. Ní accobor lia mátharnait cú.

«Á Bréndain, in n-accobor lat cú fa nacc?» fris·gair Sémus dó co fíaránach.

[16] «Mmm...tó.... acht mo mátharnat, ní...» fris·gair Bréndan dó co snímach.

«Á Bréndain, na·mbeir-sem!» brisid Sémus. «Ní cú ocut-su 7 ní macc ocin chúán-sa. Is bal foirbthe. Na·mbeir-sem!» gairid Kake.

I forciunn, sáraigid Sémus ar Bréndan. Cinnid Bréndan tabairt in chon dia thig. Cinnid a thabairt... ós ísiul. Gaibid Bréndan in cúán 7 con·slá .... co snímach.

[17] Do·tét Bréndan dia thig .... Téit isin tech co toí. Ní·accai a šiäir. Ní·accai a mátharnait danó, ní a athair. Do·beir Bréndan in cúán ina imdai co dían. Is derṡnímach!

[18] «Á Brééndaaain», cot·ngair a máthair. «Cía airm i·taí?»

«Im imdu», fris·gair Bréndan snímach.

«In mmaith bal i·taí?» at·comairc a máthair finditech.

«Tó, á mátharnait», fris·gair Bréndan dí. «Is dermaith bal i·tó. Hi hi hi.»

Dúnaid Bréndan dorus a imdai, do·écai a chúán 7 is derfáilid.

Caiptel 4
Cúán Bréndain

[19] Do·beir Bréndan a chúán isa llige. Con·tuili in cúán ind lúath. Con·tuili Bréndan ind lúath danó. Con·tuilit in dá 7 it derḟáilti.

5... isin maitin, fo·ceird in cúán fúaimmenn 7 do·fíuschi Bréndan. Do·écai Bréndan a chúán. Fo·ceird in cúán fúaimmenn, acht ní·diuschi. Fo·ceird in cúán fúaimmenn 7 con·tuili.

[20] Do·écai Bréndan a chúán 7 is fáilid. Da·n-écai .... móminti 7 con·tuili do-ridisi íarum.

7... isin maitin, fo·ceird in cúán fúaimmenn do-ridisi. Do·fíuschi in cúán 7 do·fíuschi Bréndan danó. Do·écai Bréndan a chúán 7 ad·cí as fliuch a llige! Fégaid Bréndan a llige 7 ad·cí as nderfliuch! Is fliuch a chulaid aidche danó. Día do odb! Lingid Bréndan asa llingid 7 gairid:

«Uch, uch , uch! Ro·lá in cúán immáilse isind ligiu!»

[21] Do·écai in cúán Bréndan 7 fo·ceird fúaimmenn. Fo·ceird mór fúaimmenn! "Mmmm... ...."

«In n-accobor lat ithe?... in n-accobor lat grán?» ad·comairc Bréndan dé.

Is la Bréndan is accobor grán dairírib. Gaibid a chúán, da·mbeir isin ..... 7 dúnaid a ndorus. Fo·ceird in cúán fúaimmenn 7 as·beir Bréndan fris:

«Tá! Tíagu gabál in gráin. Do·tíag-sa ellma ar ais.»

Téit Bréndan gabál in gráin. Dúnaid a ndorus a imdai, ar fo·ceird in cúán ilfúaimm. Is Bréndan snímach. Ní accobor leis co·ndiuschea in cúán in mmuintir. Gaibid Bréndan a ngrán ind lúath 7 da·beir ina imdae.

[22] Na·féga a máthair 7 téit-si co imdae mBréndain co·n-eclé. Téit ina imdae. Ata·cí Bréndan 7 is dersnímach-som, ar fo·ceird in cúán ilfúaimm. At·tá ícc la Bréndan: fo·ceird-som fúaimmenn amal chúán:

«Mmmm ......» as·beir Bréndan.

«Á Bréndain, cid ara·cuirther fúaimenn amal chúán?» at·comairc a máthair.

«Hóre as n-accobor liumm cú. Hi hi hi. Am cú-sa. Mmmm... mmm» fris·gair Bréndan dí.

«Hi hi hi. Á Bréndain, at·tá smúained béodae lat-su.»

Ní·airigedar máthair Bréndain fúaimmenn in chúáin, acht airigidir-si as fliuch a llige. Téit cosa llige condid·eclé 7 airigidir as nderfliuch-som!

«Á Bréndain», gairid a máthair co moth. «In·rralais immáilse isind ligiu?»

[23] Is snímach Bréndan. Ní accobor leis faísitiu file cúán isin.... Is accobor leis dolbud scéil ḟoirbthi, acht ní·fil. Fris·gair Bréndan didiu dí co guth chúáin:

«Ó... mmm... .... Tó, á mátharnait.»

«Óóóó» as·beir a máthar fris co nguth réidigtiu. «Do·eccat míthapaid do ilmaccaib. Is coitchenn in-so.»

Is nár la Bréndan. Fo·sisedar fo·ceirded-som immáilse isind ligiu, in tán mbatar lána a 7 (ṡecht) mblíadnai, acht nád·cuirethar immáilse indossa. Nád·cuirethar-som immáilse isind

[24] ligiu indossa! Ní accobor la Bréndan epert ro·llá-som immáilse, acht ní accobor leis faísitiu file cúán leis isin..... danó. Fo·ceird in cúán ilfúaimmenn 7 fo·ceird Bréndan didiu ilfúimmenn danó.

«Mmmm....mmmm...mmm» as·beir Bréndan i n-ilnáiri.

Isind aibrithiud-sin, at·tá fúaimm n-aill isin thig... "ding, ding". Is cíanthechtaire-som. Téit a máthair gabál in chíanthechtairi, 7 dúnaid Bréndan dorus a imdai ind lúath. Téit-som co ...... ara·ngaba a chúán. In tán nond·ngaib, ad·cí-som ro·llá in cúán immáilse isin... danó. Uch, uch, uch!

Caiptel 5
Codnach Bréndan

[25] At·tá Bréndan ina imdu. Cinnid conná·té asa imdae a llaë n-uile. Ní·tét ass hóre nád n-accobor leis déirge a chúáin. Is accobor leis anad cona chúán a llaë n-uile.

Is smúained béodae la Bréndan. Do·gní dún 7 smúainid as codnach-som

[26] in dúin 7 as coimétaid in dúin in cúán. Dairírib, ní·comai a chúán a ndún. Con·tuili a chúán! Con·tuili-som in mór!

......12:00, gairid a máthair Bréndan:

«Á Brééndaaain, á Cháááit.... In n-accobor lib ithe?»

[27] «Tó, á mátharnait», fris·gair siür Bréndain dí.

Is accobor la Bréndan ithe, achr ní accobor leis ithe cona ṡieir; is accobor leis ithe cona chúán ina imdu. As·beir fria máthair:

«Á mátharnait, is accobor liumm ithe im imdu. Is accobor liumm ithe im dún. In mmaith in-so?»

«Hi hi hi.... Is maith, á Bréndain. Is smúained béodae lat.»

«Is accobor liumm ithe co Bréndan ina dún», as·beir Cáit fria máthair.

Uch, uch, uch! Ní fáilid Bréndan. Ní accobor leis ithe cona ṡieir. Ní accobor leis co·n-accathar a ṡiur a chúán. Is rún a chúán!

«Á mááátharnaaaaait» as·beir Bréndan ind f̂iaránach, «Ní accobor liumm ithe co Cáit. Is accobor liumm ithe i n-úathad. Am codnach-sa in dúin 7 ní·ith in codnach cosnaib ingenaib becaib.»

«Is maith, á chodnaich» as·beir a máthair fris.

[28] Ithid Cáit cona máthair 7 ithid Bréndan cona chúán ina dún. Ní·tét asa imdae a llae n-uile.

6:00, do·tét athair Bréndain do thig ar ais 7 gairid in máthair Cáit 7 Bréndain do-ridisi:

«Á Brééndaaain, á Cháááit... At·tá aithreán-som i tig. In n-accobor lib ithe?

Téit Cáit aicsiu a athar, acht ní·tét Bréndan. Ní·tét Bréndan asa imdae. Ní accobor leis déirge a chúáin, 7 gairid-som didiu a máthair:

[29] « Á mááátharnaaaaait, is accobor liumm ithe im dún.»

«Náthó, á Bréndain. Ithi-siu cosin muntir» as·beir a máthair fris co nguth f̂ossad.

«Acht á mááátharnait, am in codnach-sa» as·beir Bréndan frie ind f̂iaránach.

«7 is in rí t'athair-sem. Ithi-siu cosin ríg. Hi hi hi.»

Gaibid Bréndan a chúán 7 do·tét asa

[30] dún. Do·beir a chúán isin ...... 7 dúnaid a ndorus. Ní fáilid in cúán 7 ḟo·ceird ilḟúaimm: "Mmmmm ... ." Dúnaid Bréndan dorus a imdai 7, int ṡnímach, téit ithe cosin muntir.

Ní·ith Bréndan in mór, hóre as snímach-som. Fo·ceird in cúán ilḟúaimm: "Mm... mmm... .....". Fo·ceird Bréndan fúaimenn chúain danó: "Mmm... mmm... .... mmm".

«Á Bréndain, cid ara fo·ceird-siu fúaimmenn amal chúán?» at·comairc a atahir finditech.

«Hi hi hi.... Hóre as cú Bréndan-som.» fris·gair a máthair dó.

[31] «Ha, ha, ha... Dia do ṡmúained!» gairid a athair.

«Is smúained noíden la Bréndan» as·beir Cáit co fíaránach.

Isind aibrithiud-sin, fo·ceird in cúán fúaimm nderard: "Mmm.... ...." Prapp in·samlathar Bréndan in cúán 7 ḟo·ceird fúaimm nderard danó: "Mmm... ....". Fo·ceird cechtar fúaimenn ard beus: "Mmmm ... mmmm ... mmmm ...."

«Is lór in-sin, á Bréndain! An! Ní fúaimmenn mó, dot toil!» as·beir Cáit fris co fíaránach.

[32] «Mmm... Is accobor liumm techt.... mmm... cosa ndún ar ais... ... dot toil, á mátharmait» as·beir Bréndan frie co nguth chúáin.

«Tó, dot toil!» gairid Cáit. «Erg cosa ndún ar ais!»

«Is maith, á Chodnaich» as·beir a máthair fris. «Erg cosa ndún ar ais. Hi hi hi»

Prapp téit Bréndan cosa imdae ar ais, lase fo·cierd fúaimmenn chúáin co·n-immcorathar muntir. Ní·fitetar-som a cubus file cúán i n-imdu Bréndain. Ní·fitetar-som a cubus file cúán fír oc cor fúaimmenn danó. Dúnaid Bréndain dorus a imdae 7 as·beir-som fri féin: "Mmm... ..... hi hi hi".

Caiptel 6
Rún Odbach

[33] Gaibid Bréndain a choin asin ..... 7 da·mbeir cosa ndún. Tíagat isa ndún, 7 ro·cluinter fúaimm tricc. Téit Bréndan asa ndún co·n-eclé a fúaimm. Ad·cí Sémus tarsin senistir.

[34] «C'indas at·táthar ocin chúán?» at·comairc Jake.
«In díchretmech!» fris·gair Bréndan dó.
Téit Sémus isin n-imdae mBréndain tresin senestir. Is derḟuirside Sémus, 7 téit ind tresin ṡenistir i gnáth.
Téit cechtar isa ndún. Ad·cí Sémus in cúán 7 as·beir fris:
«Dia do bethu... mmmm... á chúáin. Á Bréndain, cía ainm do chúáin?» at·comairc Sémus ind ḟinditech.
«Mmm... is... is... mmm... Is Dever a ainm-som!»
«Dia do bethu, Á Denver» as·beir Sémus frisin cúán.
«Mmm... mmm» as·beir in cú.

[35] «Hi hi hi. Is derglicc Denver» as·beir Sémus.
Ní·cuirethar in cú fúaimenn indossa. Con·tuili nammá. Gaibit Sémus 7 Bréndan mílthea cluichi 7 smúainit file oc comét in dúin. It fáilti-som.

[36] Tricc, do·tét a máthar Bréndain isin n-imdae. Dia do dásacht! Téit Bréndan ind lúath asa ndún.
«..., á mátharnait?» fris·gair Bréndon dí co ndásacht.
«Á chodnaich, do chotlud!»
«Is maith» as·beir Bréndan frie.
Is accobor liumm do thecht co ..... ara·sile-siu» do·lína-si. «Ní accobor linn-ni míthapad aile isind ligiu» as·beir a máthar fris co nguth fossad.

[37] Is nár la Bréndan hóre ro·sloind a máthair a llige fliuch ar bélaib Sémuis. Téit a máthair asin n-imdae 7 dúnaid Bréndan a ndorus.
«In·silis-siu isind ligiu?» gairid Sémus ina ingnad.
«Náthó!» fris·gair Bréndan ina athmultas. «Sinis in cúán-som isind ligiu... 7 isin ....»
«Úúúú» gairid Sémus. «7 isin dún!»
Is fliuch in triubus Sémuis, 7 ní fáilid Sémus. Téit Sémus asa ndún 7 as·beir .... fri Bréndan. Téit Sémus ass tresin senistir 7 téit dia thig ar ais. Téit Bréndan isa ndún 7 ad·cí a llinn mbuide forsind lár. Cinnid Bréndan conná·cotlea in cúán isind

[38] ligiu. Téit Bréndan isin ..... 7 téit cosa n-imdae ar ais. Dúnaid-sem a ndorus 7 .... Con·tuili Bréndan ind lúath. Con·tuili in cúán isin dún 7 chon·tuili Bréndan isind ligiu.

... 7 ... isin maitin, fo·ceird in cúán

[38] ilf̂úaimm. Do·fiuschi Bréndan 7 ad·cí-som in cúán. Ní·fil in cúán isin dúin indossa. Téit Bréndan gabál in chúáin, acht at·tá odb. At·tá odb grándae. Forsind lár, ad·cí Bréndan.... conloän! "Uch.. náthó!" as·beir Bréndan fri féin. "Mmm ...." as·beir in cúán. «Á Brééndaain» do·gair a máthair.
Dia do odb! Lingid Bréndan asa llige, gaibid in cúán 7 da·mbeir co .... Dúnaid-som dorus ...... 7 téit a máthair ind tricc.
«Uch!» gairid a máthair in tán ad·cí-si a llár. «Á Bréndain, cid do·rránac?»

[40] Dia do mélae! Ní fíriánugud nech la Bréndan 7 ní·frecair-som dia máthair.
«Á Bréndain» ad·eirrig a máthair, «cid do·rránac?... Cid ara·ndéirgenis ferad forsa llár? Inda galrach-su?»
«Mmm... Tó... am... galrach-sa...» fris·gair Bréndan dé co ilmélu. «Is tróg liumm, á mátharnait.»
«Is maith in-so, á Bréndain» as·beir a máthair fris. Téit-si ass íarum ara·togra-si in lliäg.

Caiptel 7
Tadall do Liäig

[41] «Tó, á liäig» as·beir máthair Bréndain isin cíantechtaire. «Is galrach Bréndan. Ro·sili isind ligiu, 7 ro·sili 7 do·rigni ferad forsind lár! Acht at·tá mó... Smúanid as cú-som 7 ḟo·ceird fúaimenn

[42] cúáin a llaë n-uile. Ní accobor leis tuidecht asa imdae 7 do·meil a llaë n-uile a óenur... isa imdu... oc cor fúaimenn cúáin.»
Is dernár, dernár, la Bréndain. Ní accobor leis techt do liäig, ní accobor leis epert ro·siled 7 do·rrigned-som ferad forsind lár. Dia do mélae! .... a máthair: do·áircet in choin mór n-odb.

[43] «Tó, á liäig» as·beir a máthair tresin cíantechtaire. «Tó... tó... is maith... 4..... Biru buidi friut, á liäig. .....»
At·tá Bréndan isind ligu 7 at·tá in cúán isin ... . Fo·ceird in cúán fúaimenn 7 in·samlathar Bréndan in cúán: Mmmm... ... mmm". Téit máthair Bréndain ina imdae-som 7 is derṡnímach-si.

[44] «Á Bréndain, téigi-siu dond liäig.»
«Is maith, á máthairnait» as·beir Bréndan dé, dimbraig.
«As·beir in liäig as n-éifechtach in cotlud. Ní·téig-siu asin n-imdae-se.» as·beir a máthair fris co nguth ṡnímach.
Fo·ceird in cúán fúaimenn arda indossa. In·samlathar Bréndan in cúán fo chétóir, 7 ḟo·ceird-som fúaimenn arda danó: "MMM ..... MMM ....."
«Á Bréndain, not·réidigthe!» as·beir a máthair snímach fris. «Cotail, á Bréndain!»
«Tó, á máthairnait. Is accobor liumm cotlud.»
«Cotail maith» as·beir a máthair fris 7 íarum téit-si asin n-imdae.
«Á máthairnait» do·gair Bréndan, «dún a ndorus, ...»
Dúnaid a máthair a ndorus 7 lingid Bréndan asa llige. Téit cosin .... ara·ngaba-som in cúán. Na·ngaib 7 téit isa ndún. Do·melat-som a llaë

[45] n-uile isin dún. .....3:45, do·gair in máthair Bréndan.
«Á Bréééndaaan... tíagmai dond liäig.»
Gaibid Bréndan in cúán 7 da·mbeir co ....
«......, á Denveir, do·tíag-sa ellma ar ais.» as·beir Bréndan fria chúán.
Is snímach Bréndan. Ní accobor leis déirge a chúáin. Ní accobor leis techt dond liäig, 7 ní accobor leis epert fri duine n-aile ro·siled 7 do·rrigned ferad forsind lár. Dia do mélae!
.... do·gní in liäig comcaiseinn n-óg dó. Fo·ceird in liäig mór ceiste de Bréndan 7 dia máthair.

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[46] Ad·cí Bréndan forgell ind lego ⁊ is dernár leis. As·beir a forgell: "It lána noí mblíadnai file i n-áes Bréndain Brown re ciunn dá llaë. Ro·sili ⁊ do·rigni-som ferad forsind lár. Is snímach a máthair. As·beir-si nád coitchenn in-so i mBréndan." Dia do mélae!

[47] con·aicci in liäig beus ⁊ as·beir fo deüd:
«Is folaid bes nneim la Bréndan.»
«Neim?!» gairid a máthair.
«Is folaid. Acht ní lommneim in-so.»
«Eblaimmi aigi laí thuisten Bréndain... re ciunn dá llaë.» as·beir máthair snímach Bréndain dó.
«In·dílegam-ni in n-aigi nó in·fil leiges nnach ara ḟrepaid-som ind lúath?»
«Náthó, ní·fil leiges nnach. Is... cotlud int ḟrepaid-si!»
«Fo·ácbat Bréndan ⁊ a máthair in lliäig co toí. Is snímach a máthair ⁊ is dimbraig Bréndan. Ní accobor leis dílgend a aigi laí thuisten, ⁊ ní accobor leis cotlud danó. Is glédimbraig-som! Ba coäir a máthair: do·áircet in chúáin mór odb daíririb!

Caiptel 8
Cinnti

[48] Tíagait Bréndan 7 a máthair do thig ar ais co toí. In tán téite Bréndan isin tech, at·tá in cúán oc cor ilḟúaimmenn n-ard! Fo chétóir, fo·ceird Bréndan fúaimenn arda danó: ".... MMMMmm... ....".

[49] Fo·ceird Bréndan fúaimenn chúáin beus: "MMMmm... ... Mmmm...", acht in tán téite-som ina imdae, ní·cuirethar fúaimenn chúainn mó. Fo·ceird fúaimenn dásachte! "Uch uch uch!"
Is turbaid imdae Bréndain, turbaid imlán! At·tá a ndún i n-éccruth, 7 ní·fil in cúán i.... At·tá forsind lár oc coscrad a lennáin triubuis! At·tá fúal 7 ḟerad forsind lár danó! Dia do odb! Dúnaid Bréndan a ndorus ind lúath. Is derṡnímach-som. Ní accobor leis techt a máthar ind 7 aicsiu a imdae-som i n-éccruth leë. Ní accobor leis a techt ind 7 aicsiu a chúáin leë!

[50] ...., gaibid Bréndan in cúán 7 da·mbeir co ...... Íarum gaibid-som in ferad co mboimm páipéir 7 ..... a imdae.
Is díthre Bréndan indossa. Is accobor leis daíririb cotlud, acht fo·ceird in cúán fúaimenn aithirriuch: "Mmmm... .... mmmm". Téit

[51] Bréndan co .... ara·ngaba in cúán. Isind aibrithiud-sin téit Sémus isin n-imdae tresin senestir.
«Dia do bethu, á Bréndain. C'indas at·táthar oc Denver?» ad·comairc Sémus dó.
«Ind úathach!» fris·gair Bréndan dimbraig dó.
«Cid do·n-icc?»
Réidigidir Bréndan a n-uile do Ṡémus 7 as·beir fris fo deüd:
«Á Ṡémuis, is accobor lam máthair dílgend mo aigi laí thuisten!»

[52] «Uch, náthó!» fris·gair Sémus dó.
«Uch, tó!» gairid Bréndan. «Do·áirci Denver mór n-odb. Ba ...... mo máthair: íarraid cú ilaltramm.»
«Cani a accobor lat mó?» ad·comairc Sémus dó meraigthe.
«Is, is accobor liumm ....., acht is aire dermór. It ocht mblíadnai file im áes nammá...»

[53] «Bit lána 9 (noí) mblíadnai it áes re ciunn dá llaë.» fris·gair Sémus dó co intinnech.
Ad·cí Sémus as nderdimbraig Bréndan, 7 at·tá ícc leis.
«Á Bréndain, id ...... liumm. Tabair in cúán dond ḟaitchi!»
«In·tabur Denver dond ḟaitchi? 7 íarum...?»
«Íarum, at·cichi nech macc aile 7 da·mbéra do tig» as·beir Sémus fris co intinnech.
«Ní·ndérus-som!» gairid Bréndan.

«Ní·déirgsem Denver. Na·ngéba nech macc aile. Is .... foirbthe in-so!»
Fo deüd sáraigidir Sémus ar Bréndan 7 chinnid Bréndan tabart in chon dond ḟaithchi. Is airec rúndae lasin dá macc.

Caiptel 9
Int Airec Rúndae

[54] ...19:15, téit Sémus do thig Bréndain ar ais. Is meraigthe Sémus hóre file Bréndan ina chulaid aidche cene. At·tá Bréndan ina ligiu, 7 at·tá in cúan isin ...... oc dénum fúaimmenn. Is Bréndan derṡnímach. Ní imrádud leis techt ass ós isiul, 7 ní imrádud leis téit ass isa chulaid aidche danó! Acht ní·fil ícc aili. Gaibid Bréndan in cúan 7

[55] téit ass ina imlúad tresin senestir cosin chúáin.
Tíagait in dá macc co ...... dochum inna faithche. Fo·ceird in cú fúaimenn: "Mmm... mmm... mmm...". Do·écai Bréndon a chúán 7 is derṡnímach-som.
«Á Ṡémuis, am snímach-sa imm Denver.»
«Not·réidigthe, á Bréndain» fris·gair Sémus dó. «Is tuicsiu airegdae mo thuicsiu.»

[56] «Am snímach-sa fo bith mo máthar. Má théit-si im imdae 7 ad·cí nacham·fil isind ligiu.... Uch uch uch!»
Ní·frecair Sémus dó. Is snímach-som danó. Tíagait in dá macc dochum inna faithche co toí.
Oca techt-som isin faithchi, is derṡnímach Bréndan. Do·écai a chúán 7 as·beir fris:
«Is tróg liumm, is derthróg liumm.»
Tric, gairid ind ingen co intinnech:

[57] «Mo chúán! Mo chúán! At·tá mo chúán-sa lat!»
Is meraigthe Bréndan! Ad·cí in n-ingin 7 f̂ris·gair dí:
«Aaa... In lat-su in cúán-so?»
«Tó! Is súaichnid in-so! In·n-accai a aird buidi?»
«Ad·cíu... acht ní·fil ainm in chúáin lasin n-aird, 7 nach rrím cíanthechtairi danó.»
«Ro·memaid in rann-sin dí» réidigidir ind ingen dó.
At·tá rann inna airde lasin n-ingin 7 nos·cengla-si dond aird ar ais. Indossa ad·cí

[58] Bréndan ainm in chúáin. Is Lucky a ainm-som.
«Biru buidi friut! Biru buidi friut dot thesargain mo chúán amrai.»
Gaibid ind ingen in cúán 7 is derf̂áilid-si.
«..., á Denv... mmm... á Lucky» as·beir Bréndan frisin cúán.
«Biru buidi friut aithirriuch» as·beir ind ingen fris, 7 chon·slá-si cosin chúán.

[59] Tíagait Bréndan 7 Sémus asin faithchi 7 tíagait do hig ar ais .... Is derṡnímach-som. Co toí, téit ina imdae tresin senestir.
Dúnaid in senestir 7 tricc.... ar·oslaicther dorus a imdai... 7 téit máthair Bréndain ind.

[60] «In mmaith bal i·taí, á Bréndain?» at·comairc a máthair snímach.

«Is, á mátharnait, is maith bal i·tó.»

«Is maith, á Bréndain... Cotail maith.»

«Biru buidi friut, á mátharnait» fris·gair Bréndan snímach dé.

Téilt a máthair asin n-imdai, acht dos·ngair Bréndan aithirriuch.

«Á mátharnait.»

«Tó?» fris·gair a máthair, a téite-si isin n-imdai aithirriuch.

«Is tróg liumm. Is tróg liumm ar uiliu.»

«Is maith, á Bréndain. Cotail indossa. Cotail maith.»

Téit a máthair Bréndain ass aithirriuch 7, in derluath, con·tuili Bréndan.

Caiptel 10
Laë Tuisten Bréndain

[61] ...8:00 isin maitin, do·fíuschi Bréndan. Is derḟáilid-som. Ní·fil aire n-anmor con leis festa. Ní·fil leis festa cúán do·áirci odbu dó. At·tá a cúán-si

[62] la ingin faithchi indossa. Is sí lia·tá aire con indossa! Is maith uile. Ina ḟáilti, téit Bréndan asin n-imdai.
«C'indas at·táthar ocut, á Bréndain?» fris·gair a máthair snímach dó.
«At·táu-sa im maith, á mátharnait. At·táu-sa im dermaith. At·táu-sa im airegdu! At·táu-sa im amru!»
«Cenita glarach mó?» fris·gair a máthair dó a na·féga-si.
«Níta, níta glarach-sa. Atáthar maith ocum. Atáthar dermaith oc uiliu!»
Fris·gair Bréndan in derinntininnech ara·sáraigedar-som a máthair, conná·dílega-si a aigi laí thuisten. Airigidir-som file a máthair oca ḟégad 7 is derṡnímach-som indossa. Ní accobor leis dílgend a aigi laí thuisten lia máthair.
«Á mátharnait...» as·beir Bréndan frie co nguth, «In·díleigfe-siu mo aigi llaí thuisten?»

[63] «In·dlegar a dílgend?»
«Náthó, á mátharnait! Is dermaith mo indas indossa.»
«Amal ṡodain, ní·dílegam do aigi» fris·gair a máthair dó.
Do·melat Bréndan 7 a máthair a llaë n-uile oc dessagud in taige ar aigi laí thuisten. Scíamaigitir a tech 7 do·gniät .... Is der-, derḟáilig Bréndan. Dia do laë n-amrae!
I ciunn ind laí, téit Bréndan ina imdae 7 con·tuili ind lúath. Con·tuili-som dermaith... 7 in tán do·fíuschi ní·fil fúaimenn chúáin ná odbu. Ba coäir a máthair: do·áircet in choin mór n-odb. Ní·fil odbu la Bréndan indossa 7 ní·fil airiu leis danó. Is derḟáilid.
Tricc, as·oilgther dorus ind imdae 7 téit in muinter uile ind.

[64] «Diusaig, á Bréndain» as·beir a máthair fris co intinnech. «Laë tuisten subach!»
«Laë tuisten subach, á bráithráin» as·beir a ṡiür fris.
«Laë tuisten subach, á Bréndain» gairid a athair.
Is derḟáilid Bréndan. Do·meil in muinter uile in mmaitin oca fochell dond aigi. Is airlam uile ellma.

[65] Tricc, ro·cluinter son... "din-don". As·oilgi Bréndan a ndorus 7 téit a ṡenmáthair ind a mbeires aiscid mmóir.
«Laë tuisten subach, á Bréndi» as·beir a ṡenmáthair fris.
«Biru buidi friut, á ṡenmátharnait» fris·gair Bréndan dí a ngaibes-som aiscid a ṡenmáthar.
"Din-don". As·oilgi Bréndan a ndorus aithirriuch 7 ad·cí-som a bencharait, Jamie. Téit Jamie isa tech.

«Dia do bethu, á Bréndain» as·beir Jamie fris. «Laë tuisten subach.»

[66] «Biru buidi friut, á Jamie» fris·gair Bréndan dí.
Íarum tíagait ilcharait isa tech. Fo deüd téit Sémus ind, cona chairtib Samuel 7 Manuel.
«Laë tuisten subach» as·berat a charait.
«Biru buidi frib!» as·beir Bréndan friu co inntinnech.
At·taät ilcharait ocind aigi. Is aige amrae in-so! Do·gniät in maicc mór rrétae 7 ethait in mór. Ethait cona ...

[67] 7 ethait ......! Íarum gairid máthair Bréndain:
«Aiscidi!»
Is tudrachtae Bréndan. At·tá mór n-aiscide 7 is accobor la Bréndan a n-oslucud! As·oilgi aiscid mbic; is ... cáiréisech in-so.
«Is amrae in-so!» gairid Bréndan. «Biru buidi!»
Íarum gaibid Bréndan aiscid ndermóir. Ata·oilgi Bréndan 7 is gitart-si!
«Biru mór mbuide!» as·mbeir Bréndan.

[68] As·oilgi Bréndan aiscidi amrai. As·oilgi aiscidi móra 7 aiscidi beca. Íarum ní·fil aiscidi mó, 7 deissigitir carait Bréndain ara techt-som.
Tric, téit a athair ind a mbeires-som aiscid n-aili. Gairid-som:
«At·tá aiscid aile!»
Gaibid Bréndan in n-aiscid dochum a osluctho. Da·n-écat a carait uili. As·oilgi Bréndan in n-aiscid 7 ad·cí... cúán! "Mmmm... ...." as·beir in cúán.
«Uch uch uch!» as·beir Bréndan.

Cenn

5.5. The TETs speak

This section includes all the complete questionaries that 11 TETs have answered as their own personal contributions to this thesis. With the exception of Peter Stork's one (see 5.5.11.), they are all discussed in section 4.3., in which I 'interact' with their authors by using some of their views as starting points for further reflections.

5.5.1. Peter Baker

Professor, Department of English, University of Virginia
URL: https://english.as.virginia.edu/people/profile/psb6m

Language: Old English

Translation:

- 2015: *Hloðwig Carroll: 'Æðelgyðe Ellendæda on Wundorlande'*. Portlaoise: Evertype.

I contacted Peter Baker twice. The first time in 2021, with a much shorter and less relevant version of the questionnaire, the second time in 2024 with the updated version. He was kind enough to answer both versions, which I include below.

Questionnaire 2: 27 June 2024

2.1. Briefly describe your background in the language of your translations.

I wrote my Ph.D. Thesis on an Old English topic and taught the language for 34 years before beginning to translate Alice in Wonderland. I had also translated (but never published) about half of Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.

2.2. What were the reasons that prompted you to translate Alice in Wonderland into Old English?

I was asked to undertake the translation by the head of the North American Lewis Carroll Society as part of the 150th anniversary celebration of the publication of Alice in Wonderland.

2.3. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

There is no competent English-to-Old English dictionary, and the available grammars and textbooks are geared towards helping people read the language, not write it.

2.4. Did you have to create new words? How did you approach this process?

Yes, a number of them (listed in the back of the book). I took two approaches: one was to simply make up words, usually modelling them on words in German or Icelandic; the other was to use attested Old English words with modern meanings related to their original meanings. Sometimes I avoided the problem by changing the text (e.g. the mad tea-party became a mad beer-party).

2.5. In your opinion, what are the benefits to translating into historical languages?

For me it was simply a lot of fun. Many people say it is a useful exercise for students to translate from modern to Old English, but I'm not sure about that.

2.6. Can such texts be useful in language teaching and learning?

A number of people consider my Alice a useful pedagogical tool for persons learning Old English, and I believe it has been used in classrooms here and there. But I don't have any first-hand experience of its usefulness to students of Old English.

2.7. The literature about translation into historical languages is extremely limited, almost non-existent. Do you think this practice would deserve more attention from traductologists? Why?

For Old English, there is definitely a market for practical tools like grammars and English-Old English vocabularies (a good many people try their hand at translating or composing in Old English). I would guess that there's an even bigger market for more widely studied languages like Latin and ancient Greek. I don't know about the need or demand for scholarly works on translating modern literature into ancient languages.

You're welcome to use my name in your thesis.

Questionnaire 1: 19 November 2021

1.1. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

The greatest challenge arose from the fact that there is no tradition of instruction in either speaking or writing Old English (why should there be, when very few people speak or write it?). Our grammars are geared towards reading, not writing, and there is no English-to-Old English dictionary (or at least, not a good one). So I had to devise a method of looking up words in our existing dictionaries, which did not usually provide a method of searching within definitions. And I had to rely on my own memory and "feel" for the language to find appropriate constructions and idioms. (In the absence of aids, it helped to have spent many years teaching and writing about Old English.)

1.2. Did you have to create new words? How was your approach to do it?

A great many new words (for which I created a glossary, printed at the end of the book. What I did most often, to help create these words, was look at how a concept was handled in a kindred language (usually either Icelandic or German). Or I might repurpose an existing word, extending one of its meanings in what seemed a reasonable direction.

1.3. Do you know of any literature on the subject of translating into ancient languages?

No. As far as I could tell, I was on my own.

1.4. Did you get any funding for your translations? If yes, how?

No funding, aside from an assurance that the publisher who had agreed in advance to publish the translation would pay royalties (it didn't work out that way, but that's another story). I think it would be reasonable to look for funding, if you can show that your activities either have a pedagogical purpose or add to the stock of useful knowledge—and it sounds as if you are thinking in those terms.

5.5.2. Juan Coderch

Senior Lecturer, University of St. Andrews, Scotland
URL: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/classics/people/jc210

Languages: Latin and Ancient Greek

Translations:

- 2013: *Don Camillo and Sherlock Holmes... In Classical Greek*. Thessaloniki: Methekis.
- 2017: *Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: 'The Little Prince'... In Ancient Greek*. South Carolina: CreateSpace.
- 2021: *Oscar Wilde: 'The Importance of Being Earnest'... In Ancient Greek and Latin: translation of Oscar Wilde's original text, with vocabulary help*. Seattle, WA: Kindle Direct Publishing.

Juan Coderch also answered two questionnaires.

Questionnaire 2: 19 July 2024

2.1. Briefly describe your activity and background in the language of your translation.

I teach both languages at the University of St Andrews, UK, for total beginners (four classes a week with them) and for students who come with the basics of the language already learnt (one class per week with them for language reinforcement).

2.2. What were the reasons that prompted you to translate Giovannino Guareschi, Arthur Conan Doyle and Saint-Exupéry and Oscar Wilde?

Well, I wanted to translate something into Ancient Greek. About why Guareschi, the main reason was that Guareschi was the first author I read when I was very young, when I moved from comics to books, and about why Sir Conan Doyle, because he wrote a case about three students of Classics who are competing for a scholarship, one of them steals the text of a future unseen exam that will decide who gets the scholarship, and Sherlock Holmes must find out who has tried to cheat, I thought it was the ideal case to translate into Ancient Greek.
Well, the Little Prince because it is so well known all over the world and I had read it during my primary school years, and I had a good memory of it, and the Oscar Wilde one because I had read it years ago and I found it really funny, and this one I translated it into both languages.

2.3. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

Basically, dealing with modern vocabulary and modern expressions, and also dealing with proper names.

2.4. Did you have to create new words? How did you approach this process?

Yes, I had to create some. Obviously, in Ancient Greece they didn't have machine-guns, etc., so I had to take them from Modern Greek and make the necessary adaptation of the word to make it look classic. In other words: I had to deduce how they would have called that in ancient times. For example, for "airplane" I took the Modern Greek word ἀεροπλάνο and I modified it into ἀεροσκάφος. For Latin, there are dictionaries of Latin for modern words.

2.5. In your opinion, what are the benefits to translating into historical languages?

Offering the students something to read out of the usual corpus of classical authors, for some kind of amusing way of practising the language; if reading that text you end up knowing that the aorist of ὁράω is εἶδον, does it matter that you have learnt this aorist reading Sherlock Holmes instead of Plato? And at the same time proving that Greek and Latin are languages that can be used out of that corpus, to show that the language can go out of it, that it can have its own life.

2.6. Can such texts be useful in language teaching and learning?

I would say that they are useful for practising, and of course practising is part of the learning process.

2.7. The academic literature about translation into historical languages is extremely limited, almost non-existent. Do you think this practice would deserve more attention from traductologists? Why?

In Latin there is quite a lot, in Ancient Greek there is less. Maybe we would need some more titles translated into Ancient Greek.

2.8. Feel free to expand on any of the topic of the above questions and do not hesitate to discuss any other point that comes to your mind.

I just would like to add that, although I have enjoyed translating these books into Greek and Latin and I support the learning of the two languages by the live method, I go on thinking that a strong grammatical base is important. I think that the ideal method is a medium step, a combination between learning the grammar and at the same time practising the language in an amusing and live way as with those modern texts. I think that students would like reading my translation of *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Oscar Wilde) into Greek and Latin (the only book I have translated into both languages) and see Lady Bracknell speaking in Greek and Latin.

Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?
Yes, of course.

Questionnaire 1: 2 December 2021

1.1. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

In fact nothing in concrete, maybe the vocabulary that we use nowadays that did not exist then. In any case, a good decision to take, rather than a problem, was the matter of "traduttore traditore": do you keep your translation close to the original or do you translate more freely to make it sound more natural in your language but then you get away from the original?

1.2. Did you have to create new words? How was your approach to do it?

Well, I took them from Modern Greek and I modified them as I supposed that they would have been in antiquity. For example, for "airplane" I took the Modern Greek word ἀεροπλάνο and I modified it into ἀεροσκάφος.

1.3. Do you know of any literature on the subject of translating into ancient languages?

No, I know other translations, but not books about translations of this kind.

1.4. Did you get any funding for your translations? If yes, how?

No, I did not need any money, all I needed was time, the book to be translated and my computer.

5.5.3. Edmund Fairfax

Independent scholar, Toronto, Canada
URLs: https://edmundfairfax.com/
https://independent.academia.edu/FairfaxEdmund

Languages: Gothic, Old English

Translations:

- 2015: *Philipp Winterberg: 'Im Leitila?'*. Münster: Philipp Winterberg.
- 2015: *Philipp Winterberg: 'Agjabairhts wairþiþ rauþs'*. Münster: Philipp Winterberg.

Questionnaire: 22 June 2024

1. Briefly describe your background in the languages of your translations.

My academic background was English literature and German (BA level) and theoretical linguistics (MA level). Classes in Old English language and literature and the history of the English language during my undergraduate years led to a strong interest in early Germanic historical linguistics, and I also studied Old Norse during the MA years. None of the institutions that I attended, however, offered courses in the Gothic language, and so the latter was approached solely through private study. My background in theoretical and historical linguistics, not to mention the nearness of a good university library, meant that the task was not onerous.

2. What were the reasons that prompted you to translate Winterberg's books into Gothic?

I became involved in a Gothic-language online group, the members of which were keen on "writing" in Gothic. Many of them, however, had obviously little academic background, in any field, or had minimal access to the necessary up-to-date scholarly materials, which would have likely been too specialized for them in any case, and so not surprisingly, the level of ability was generally quite low, and their output marred with many errors in morphology and word-choice. For one particular individual, I became a kind of "prof," and he eventually contacted Winterberg on his own in order to see if the latter was interested in a Gothic language translation of two of his children's book. I was sent translation drafts, which were riddled with errors, and in correcting the mistakes, I ended up essentially producing a virtually independent translation, and consequently was acknowledged as the main translator.

3. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

The Gothic corpus consists mainly of translated sections of the Bible, mostly from The New Testament, wherein the original Greek word order is followed very closely, and so attempting to determine the principles of Gothic word order is fraught with difficulty. Was it fundamentally a SVO or SOV language? Was the closeness of the translation possible because as an early Indo-European language it followed many of the same word-order principles as Biblical Greek? And so it was a balancing act between relying on patterns in the Gothic translation as well as on patterns in other early Germanic languages (with the assumption of at least some inheritance from Proto-Germanic) to come up with something that seemed "native."

Moreover, the corpus of surviving Gothic-language material is small, and so another major challenge was dealing with lacunae in the lexicon, often very common words. The word for 'dream', for example, is not extant. But even when a given word is extant, the limited number of its attestations can create the impression of a small semantic field, which may well be misleading. The word *stols* (cf. Modern English 'stool'), for example, is extant only three times, used to translate the 'throne' or 'high seat' of God, but comparanda from the other early Germanic languages suggest that the Gothic word likely meant broadly 'something for one person to sit on, i.e., a 'chair, stool', not merely 'throne'. But in Germanic antiquity, the chair appears to have been something rather special and was commonly used as a seat of honour, while those of lesser rank might sit on benches or lounge on futon-like bolsters. Cf. "Hit is swiðe gewunelic ðætte domeras & rice menn on setelum sitten" (the Old English translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care* lvi. 435) 'it is very common that judges and powerful men sit on seat-furniture'. And the specialness of the chair in ancient northern Europe is also suggested by archaeology.

Furthermore, some of the expressions in the Bible translation are arguably not idiomatic to Gothic, and so the question of style emerges. Did the Gothic Bible translation strike a native speaker of Gothic as quite 'literary' or even 'poetic'? The usual word for 'to circumcise' was apparently *bimaitan* (*bi-mait-an* being an element-by-element calque on Latin *circum-cis-are*), but the expression *uslûkan qiþu* (lit. 'to open a womb') is also found, but this is a literal rendering of a biblical idiom, and yet it is not out of the question that in Gothic Christian circles the latter phrase may have become established as a (new) bona fide Gothic expression.

A logistical problem was and still is the absence of a proper dictionary of Gothic, comparable to the ongoing *Dictionary of Old English,* as well as a proper English-Gothic dictionary. I ultimately ended up creating my own English-Gothic dictionary, with many examples to show usage.

4. Did you have to create new words? How did you approach this process?

Where possible, a circumlocution using known words was preferred to inventing a word. When a neologism, however, was unavoidable, the new element was essentially a reconstruction of the expected word following the historical comparative method. Thus, for 'to dream', one would expect a Gothic **draumjan*, on the basis of early Germanic

cognates, all from a late Proto-Germanic *draumijana(n)*. A further option would be semantic broadening, i.e., the process whereby the semantic field of an existing word is broadened, and then disambiguated, if necessary, by the use of a modifier. A theoretical example would be using the extant Gothic word *riqis* 'darkness' to refer to a solar eclipse, disambiguated in *sunnons riqis* (lit., 'sun's darkness'), cf. Old Norse *sólmyrkvi* 'eclipse' (lit. 'sun-darkness'). But admittedly, for me at least, inventing rather than reconstructing words is more fun, especially when it comes to objects or concepts that have no ancient parallel: e.g., **luftuskip* (lit., 'air-ship') for 'aeroplane,' **hamaraharpa* (lit., 'hammer-harp') for 'piano,' **razdakunþi* (lit., 'language-knowledge') for 'linguistics,' and **biluftus* (lit., 'around-air') for 'atmosphere,' but none of these were in fact used in the translations of the Winterberg books. Ultimately, one must decide whether the translation is to be in a known language or in a partly invented or artificial language.

5. In your opinion, what are the benefits to translating into historical languages?

In regard to a historical language as an object of study, especially from the point of view of semantics, one is forced to ask questions, in attempting a translation, that might not otherwise occur to the researcher. It is easy (and sort of non-committal) to give nothing more than a one- or two-word gloss when defining a given lexeme, or worse, to give a "definition" such as the following from Köbler's *Gotisches Wörterbuch* (1989: 86) for the preposition *bi:* "by, at, around, near, round about, about, over, concerning, approximately, within the time of, before the lapse of, in the number of, on account of, because of, on, upon, against, off of, off from, onto, upon, from." The string of – even contradicting – glosses ("on ... off of") makes the preposition almost meaningless. Seldom do words from different languages share the same semantic field, and so questions of usage and nuance more readily arise in a serious translation endeavour.

6. Can such texts be useful in language teaching and learning?

I think translation into a historical language from a modern language is an excellent pedagogical tool in language acquisition. In my experience, passive reading of an ancient language is apt to lead to a weaker grasp of the language. This is especially apparent when one compares the outcomes from studying a modern language with the goal of being at least somewhat fluent (in both active and passive capacities) versus those in a more traditional passive read-and-translate-into-the-mother-tongue approach. Of course, this depends on how well the historical language is generally understood, but certainly in the cases of Classical Latin, Ancient Greek and Sanskrit, a generative approach to learning is realistic, while it would be largely unworkable in such cases as the more poorly understood languages of Hurrian or Etruscan, for example.
The surviving texts of not a few historical languages can leave something to be desired as reading material. Texts on religious ritual in Hittite, for example, do not really make for fun reading, leastwise for many folk, I suspect. And even when quality literature does exist, it can be fragmentary. *Gilgamesh,* for example, is still incomplete, despite several archaeological finds over the years which have helped to fill lacunae. I think for most who

come to Old English, reading *The Hobbit* translated into Old English would be more appealing than perusing a surviving sermon in the same language lauding the virtues of celibacy. I have been led to believe that translations of classics into Modern Irish have contributed significantly to whatever success the revival of Irish has had. And so in the interest of creating interest in historical languages, and thereby ensuring a healthy survival of some language programs at universities, translations of classics into dead languages (cf. Lenard's Latin translation of *Winnie the Pooh*) should be strongly encouraged, at all levels, even if not actually used as course material. (There is life after academe!)

7. The literature about translation into historical languages is extremely limited, almost non-existent. Do you think this practice would deserve more attention from traductologists? Why?

I am too little acquainted with the study of translation per se to have an informed opinion.

8. Feel free to expand on any of the topic of the above questions and do not hesitate to discuss any other point that comes to your mind.

Nothing further comes to mind at the moment.

Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes. (I would hope that you would distribute a copy of the dissertation once completed.)

Would you be able to provide me with a sample of your translations?

I include here two samples, neither of which comes from the Winterberg translations, but I think they are more interesting, since the source texts are linguistically more complex and offer different challenges.

The Hobbit

This is a rendering into Old English of a passage from the first chapter of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. The challenge here was dealing with the idiom "good morning," which is a more recent innovation in the history of English (the Old English greeting upon meeting and leaving was broadly the equivalent of 'be whole / sound'). Since the function of "good morning" in the novel was to give expression to Bilbo's desire to distance himself politely from Gandalf, by using a formal expression which is ambiguous (it can also mean 'good-bye', of course), I rendered this instead as an innocuous comment about the weather ('it's a nice morning'), one which does not encourage any serious exchange. And this has the advantage of still being close to the original:

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"God morgen," cwæð Bilba, and he hit mænde. Seo sunne scan, and þæt gærs wæs swiðe grene. Ac locode Gandalf wið hine, under bruwum langum and þiccum, þe furðor ut scorodon þonne his scadihtan hættes brerd.

"Hwæt mænst þu?" cwæð he. "Wysct þu þæt hit me sie god morgen, oððe mænst þu þæt hit god morgen sie, wille ic oððe nelle ic, oððe þæt hit þe sie god morgen, oððe þæt hit sie god morgen god on to beonne?"

(Literally, "'[It's] a good morning," said Bilbo ... "Do you wish that it be a good morning for me, or do you mean that it be a good morning, whether I want it or not, or that it be a good morning for you, or that it be a good morning to be good on?'')

Tolkien's Text:

"Good morning!" said Bilbo, and he meant it. The sun was shining, and the grass was very green. But Gandalf looked at him from under long bushy eyebrows that stuck out further than the brim of his shady hat.

"What do you mean?" he said. "Do you wish me a good morning, or mean that it is a good morning whether I want it or not; or that you feel good this morning; or that it is a morning to be good on?"

Das Nibelungenlied (1.15-18)

This is a rendering into Gothic of a passage from the famous Medieval German poem. Only a prose version has been attempted, since we know really nothing for certain about how Gothic poetry worked. And so the approach was to create first a freer and slightly archaizing Modern English prose rendering of the Middle High German verse, and then translate the English into Gothic:

15 "Why do you speak to me of a *man*, mother dear? Never do I wish to have the love of a man. Thus fair I wish to be until death and never ever suffer the trouble of a man's love."
16 "Now do not cast it aside so keenly!" answered then the mother. "If you are ever to be truly happy in this world, that will come of a man's love. A fair woman you will be if God yet grants you a very good man."
17 "Let us speak no more of this," said the maiden. "To many a woman it has often been made clear how in the end love is repaid with sorrow. Both will *I* shun so that no ill befall me."
18 In her mind Kriemhild wholly turned away from love, and afterwards the good maiden had many a pleasant day, knowing of no-one whom she might want to love.

15 "Du hwe *wair* qiþis mis, aiþei meina walisei? Ni hwanhun wiljau wairis frijaþwa haban. Swa skauns wiljau wisan und dauþu jah ni hwanhun aiw nauþ frijaþwos gawinnan wairis."

16 "Nu ni uskius þo swa usdaudo!" andwaurdida þan so aiþei. "Jabai in þizai manasedai sunjaba faginon skalt, þata wairþiþ af wairis frijaþwai. Skauns qino wairþis jabai fragibiþ þus nauh Guþ wair filu godana."

17 "Ni þana seiþs rodjaima bi þata," qaþ so magaþs. "Qinom managaim gabairhtjada ufta hwaiwa und andi frijaþwa saurgai fragildada. Bajoþs biwandja *ik* ei mis ni wairþai ubil."

18 Greimahildi in ahin afwandida allis af frijaþwai, jah afar þata so godo habaida managans dagans galeikaidans, ni ainnohun kunnandei þanei wildedi frijon.

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5.5.4. Brent Niedergall

Pastor and educator, North Carolina. PhD candidate at Sydney College of Divinity, Australia.
URL: https://niedergall.com/

Language: Koine Greek

Translations (always with Joey McCollum):

- 2019: *Wilhem Busch: 'Max and Moritz' in Biblical Greek*. Wilmore, KY: GlossaHouse.
- 2021: *Beatrix Potter: 'The Tale of Peter Rabbit' in Koine Greek*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.

Questionnaire: 15 June 2024

1. Briefly describe your background in the languages of your translations.

I studied Koine Greek in seminary (4 semesters). Since publishing those two books, I have started a PhD in biblical studies in which I have continued to work in Koine Greek.

2. What were the reasons that prompted you to translate *Peter Rabbit* and *Max and Moritz* into Koine Greek?

I wanted to provide a unique and fun resource for Greek language students. I was also looking for works that were in the public domain to avoid licensing. In hindsight, it was also helpful to add some publications to my CV.

3. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

We limited our potential target language words to only those words occurring in the Greek New Testament and Septuagint. For me, accentuation was also a challenge because this was not something that I received much training in.

4. Did you have to create new words? How did you approach this process?

Apart from transliterating some proper names, we created a new word in at least one instance that I can recall. We created a new word for "Cottontail" in the Peter Rabbit translation. In general, the challenge was finding suitable equivalents from the Greek New Testament and Septuagint.

5. In your opinion, what are the benefits to translating into historical languages?

Typically, we translate from the historical language into a modern language. Translating into historical languages forces the translator to think about the historical language in ways they had not before. This should help the translator become more adept at working in the historical language.

6. Can such texts be useful in language teaching and learning?

I believe so. My hope is that interested students who want to further develop their abilities will pick up resources, such as my translations, on their own to invest in their learning. I could also see an instructor assigning a modern translation as outside reading.

7. The literature about translation into historical languages is extremely limited, almost non-existent. Do you think this practice would deserve more attention from traductologists? Why?

Certainly. If traductologists could empirically point to benefits and methodology of translating into historical languages, it would result in wider acceptance, more translation work, and better quality translations.

8. Feel free to expand on any of the topic of the above questions and do not hesitate to discuss any other point that comes to your mind.

One issue that I alluded to above was licensing. Copyright should be an important consideration for the translator. Reaching your intended market is another challenge. Publication of historical language texts is a niche market that publishers may be reluctant to enter.

Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes

5.5.5. Richard B. Parkinson

Professor and Ancient Egyptian, University of Oxford
URL: https://www.ames.ox.ac.uk/people/richard-bruce-parkinson

Language: Middle Egyptian

Translation (with John F. Nunn):

- 2005: *Beatrix Potter: 'The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Hieroglyph Edition'*. London: The British Museum Press.

Questionnaire: 1 July 2024

1. Briefly describe your background in the language of your translation.

I'm talking about the *The Tale of Peter Rabbit, the Hieroglyph edition*, which was published in 2005 and was done by me and a gentleman called John Nunn, who was a clinical anaesthetist (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Nunn), who was also an amity Egyptologist. He was not a fully trained philologist, but he had worked on ancient Egyptian medicine. I was involved because I was then a curator in the British Museum's Egyptian Department. I was trained as a philologist in Egyptian, and I specialise in Middle Egyptian literature, and at the time of the publication I was the curator of written culture at the British Museum, in charge of curating and publishing papyri and inscribed materials.

2. What stage of Egyptian did you choose for your translation? Why?

Middle Egyptian was chosen initially not by me but by John Nunn, and I believe what happened – John Nunn is now, I'm afraid, deceased – is that John Nunn approached British Museum Press, I think, or British Museum Press approached John Nunn (I suspect it was John who approached them) with the idea of doing *Peter Rabbit* into hieroglyphs, and Middle Egyptian is the standard classical form of the Egyptian language. As such, it is used for formal literary genres and monumental discourse throughout Egyptian history, but more importantly here, it is the phase of the language that most people learn first, and through works such as Alan H. Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar* which discusses Middle Egyptian (1957), and it so is also the phase of the language that is most often used in amateur reading groups, of which there are a considerable number. So, Middle Egyptian was the chosen language. It was entirely appropriate for a literary text like *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, and it was something, of course, that I welcomed because it is the phase of the language in which I have the most expertise.

3. What were the reasons that prompted you to translate *Peter Rabbit* into Middle Egyptian?

I had no reason to want to translate *Peter Rabbit* into Egyptian, and I understand that initially, as far as I can remember, it's quite a long time ago, John Nunn proposed it to British Museum Press, really as a sort of Easter egg joke, for publication that Easter. He thought it could be done into schoolboy Egyptian, and really it was done in quite a light-hearted manner. British Museum Press approved the idea, and so it was passed on to me as a curator to act as a consultant, and in effect to give the department's approval for this project. And I thought it was the fun idea, but I was concerned at the idea of it being done into a schoolboy Middle Egyptian, because, in my experience, amateur reading groups reading hieroglyphic Middle Egyptian often run out of easily accessible Middle Egyptian texts to read together. I knew this in part through Carol Andrews, who was an Egyptological colleague of the British Museum, who was the person who had advised John Nunn on the textual side of his studies of Ancient Egyptian medicine, and who ran such groups. And I was slightly alarmed at the thought that people trying to teach themselves Middle Egyptian would turn to a conveniently published familiar text like Peter Rabbit in hieroglyphs, and be confronted with something that was no more than school-boy Middle Egyptian, and so would be basically reading an incorrect passage of the language. So, at that point I stepped in, chatted with John and the publishers, and we decided that I would revise it into as grammatically and stylistically correct Middle Egyptian as we possibly could manage. Unfortunately, by that point the production schedule for the book had been fixed and was very tight, and so what happened, as far as I can remember, is that John would finalise his translation of one page of the story, he would then fax it to me at the British Museum, I would then rewrite it into what I consider to be correct Middle Egyptian, usually within 48 hours, and then we would fax it straight to the typesetter who was a specialist colleague for typesetting Egyptian hieroglyphs. The whole process was unpleasantly rushed. And I think there is – if I remember correctly, though I cannot, at the moment, recall which page it was – there is a major mistake on one of the pages where, due to this rushed procedure, one phrase of the hieroglyphs was accidentally omitted by the typesetter.

4. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

The methodological problems were, I would say, quite intense. To begin with, rabbits do not exist in ancient Egypt, and that is the least of the difficulties. Middle Egyptian is a language attested in a wide variety of documents, but the literary ones in particular are governed by culturally shaped decorum and style. That means that certain things are not talked about in literary discourse; the styles and the genre system are radically different from European genre systems: there is no term for a narrative, there is nothing resembling a novella, anything like that. I realise that this is similar to other ancient and other dead languages, but it is quite extreme, I think, with Ancient Egyptian, especially as the written corpus, apart from ritual texts and administrative texts, is relatively limited. So the idea of taking a modern narrative, novella, and translating it into Middle Egyptian meant that, for me, the process was trying to rethink the story into the narrative style of a Middle Egyptian poem, and then to rephrase the translation, so that every sentence was as closely

modelled as possible on an ancient original, using the established literary formulae for 'when the next day dawned' and the like. In that sense, the methodological problems were extremely interesting, and had the process not being such a commercially-driven rush, it would have been fascinating to consider the issues in more detail. There are things I remember striking me at the time: When Peter Rabbit crosses the garden, I realised that in actual fact, nowhere in ancient Egyptian literature does anybody cross a garden in that sort of way. The whole cultural background is entirely different, and the literary language and style are so deeply culturally embedded, that it is very difficult to translate a modern European text into that language. Again, I realise that other languages such as Japanese and Chinese pose the same problems. Ancient Egyptian, because of the cultural alterity, because of the chronological difference, and because of our uncertainties about the various phases of the language that remain, poses those issues in an extreme form.

5. Did you have to create new words? How did you approach this process?

We did indeed have to create new words, but very often it was a matter of grasping at synonyms, and there are some footnotes in the published edition noting these out, simply as a matter of fun. And the first one is of course the fact that there was no such thing as a rabbit in ancient Egypt, so it became Peter the Hare, 'Cotton-tail' had to be translated into 'linen-tail', Mr MacGregor became simply the patronymic *sa-gregor*, or 'son of Gregor', 'pie' became 'warm bread', 'umbrella' simply became 'sun shade', 'blackberries' (entirely unknown in Egypt), became 'sweet fruits' (which is actually a term for 'dates', so that wasn't scarcely an accurate translation), and so on. I think a lot of these equivalents were suggested by John Nunn from his experience with Ancient Egyptian medical texts (which mention a lot of plant-names). 'Blackcurrant bushes', on page 59, became 'bushes of fruit that was black'. And a final one: the 'wheelbarrow' that features in the story was replaced by a 'sledge': wheels didn't exist in Middle Kingdom Egypt at all, so we couldn't even say it was a sledge with wheels. So that is how the difficult unknown words were done.

6. In your opinion, what are the benefits to translating into historical languages?

I think they are extremely limited in some ways. For such an ancient language as Middle Egyptian and one with such cultural alterity, it becomes little more than an academic or didactic exercise. It was a revelatory experience, in that it forced me to confront the fact that literary Middle Egyptian really can only express the ideas, emotions and actions of Middle Kingdom literature, and the idea of translating even a fairly straightforward narrative such as *Peter Rabbit*, a form that does in fact translate to some extent in terms of genre and style, was doable but difficult. Anything like a passage of Jane Austen or Virginia Wolf would be absolutely unthinkable and impossible to achieve with any success or style. And so it made me realise quite how culturally and stylistically and genetically embedded a language is.

7. Can such texts be useful in language teaching and learning?

I think it's an excellent way of making people think of a dead language in the terms they would think of a living language. So the classic reference work Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar* has exercises taking English sentences and telling the student to translate them into Middle Egyptian, and this is a practice. As part of the Oxford Undergraduate Egyptology course we continue to do this, but only in the first term, where people are working their way through a grammar book. And these sentences are always in the style of an Egyptian text. At the end of the first year, there are exam questions with selected English sentences, to be translated into Middle Egyptian; most of the Preliminary exams consist of unseens, set texts translating out of Middle Egyptian, and essays on grammar. And I think this process of translating into Egyptian can have a transformative effect, because it forces people to think in the language as opposed to only thinking about how to get things out of the language. But again, it is something, I think, that has benefits only in terms of learning language and learning acquisition. However, having said that as a translator and a commentator, when I'm reading set texts with students, I will often tell students to consider what are the nuances of a particular phrase in the original text by asking themselves: What else might the author have said here, what other ways could he have expressed this idea? At this point, why did the author choose this particular phrasing as opposed to other alternatives? And so having that background of trying to think into the language can also be extremely useful when dealing with issues of translation and interpretation later in the course. But I would never encourage anybody to translate massive parts of English prose or poetry into Egyptian, except as that sort of didactic exercise.

8. The literature about translation into historical languages is extremely limited, almost non-existent. Do you think this practice would deserve more attention from traductologists? Why?

I think studies of translation into historical languages could very usefully be expanded, and I myself would be very interested to see how scholars of different languages and different cultures responded. As I made clear, my own impression is that Middle Egyptian is a particularly hard example, but that may be personal bias! More recent historical languages like Latin and Greek are much closer in culture, and in language family to English, and so for English students, I think, translating into them is a very different process. So there's differentiation to be drawn between different ages, different backgrounds and families of languages, and that issues of cultural and chronological alterity have great relevance to translation studies there. That is something I suspect, would repay further study.

9. Feel free to expand on any of the topic of the above questions and do not hesitate to discuss any other point that comes to your mind.

One thing to say is that I felt extremely smug after the publication, because my worst fear turned out to be entirely realistic, in that, groups of amateur Egyptologists have indeed used *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* as an exercise in reading Middle Egyptian, and so I feel justified that we did take it seriously, and that we did try and cast it into a correct Middle Egyptian style. It turned out to be quite a free translation in some respects, not only in matters of lexicography, and we played slightly freely with the text, trying to capture some of the elements of wit in the original. It was conceived as a joke but we took it quite seriously, and the seriousness with which we considered the methodological issues of translation has paid dividends: otherwise, there'd be plenty of amateur reading groups really thinking they were reading good Middle Egyptian, when they were actually reading bad schoolboy Middle Egyptian. It is a book on my CV which I slightly regret, simply for the reason that it was done in such an unnerving and unpleasant rush, and had there been more time to do it in a more considered fashion, it would have been a highly stimulating, thought-provoking, and enjoyable experience.

What also worries me is that so much attention is focused on this publication, and I don't mean in this questionnaire, but in reading groups. I worry that people are trying to read a Middle Egyptian translation of a modern work, as opposed to trying to read one of the great works of Ancient Egyptian poetry in the original language. If you are learning a language, I wonder why then you don't turn your attention to real original works of art. Thinking of *Winnie-the-Pooh* in Latin and works like that, it strikes me as slightly strange that it is often a work of children's literature that is so often chosen for translation – as if translation was a childish process, or these ancient cultures were childish! (That is a real general issue in the reception of Ancient Egypt). Obviously, if such a translation is being used as an educational process, all well and good, but I don't know: something bothers me about the fact that translating into an ancient language, taking the ancient language seriously, somehow attaches itself to the idea of children's literature, and not of real adult literature.

John Nunn was a charming gentleman, and his level of Egyptian was pretty good. He certainly was a great expert on Egyptian medicine, so I enjoyed the project immensely for those reasons and it really was a lesson that I learned that comes to mind quite a lot. However, recently when a graduate student said she was trying to translate a bit of a Virginia Wolf into Middle Egyptian, and would I like to see it, I said immediately: No, not at all; the most valuable thing you learn from such an exercise is that it's actually impossible to translate into an ancient culture and an ancient style from English, which is a different culture, such a different style. It calls into question the very translatability of ancient cultures.

I hope those answers are in some way useful and helpful. I'm extremely happy to be mentioned and quoted, and please don't hesitate to let me know if there is anything unclear, incoherent, or raises further questions. Many thanks.

5.5.6. Hrothja Missaleiks (Roel)

Independent scholar, The Netherlands
URL: https://airushimmadaga.wordpress.com/

Language: Gothic

Translation (with Christian Peeters):

- 2021: *Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: 'Sa Leitila Frauja'*. Neckarsteinach: Edition Tintenfaß.

Roel only answered the old version of the questionnaire. He was not able to answer the updated version due to other commitments.

Questionnaire: 18 November 2021

1. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

One of the biggest difficulties in the case of Gothic is the fact that it is mostly a literal translation from the Greek vorlage, yet, it is not an exact reproduction. The way how I approach it, though, is that the best way to deal with it is to mimic the word order in the Bible, which still deviates from literal Greek at points, indicating that it's more written as a style like how the old bible translations in English were different from the vernacular language, but it isn't wrong. One indispensable tool for this as wulfila.be, a website which enables to easily find words in context to learn how words are used in certain phrases and what their classes and conjugations are, you'd need something similar for Old Irish. I know it exists for Hittite, Akkadian and Gothic.

2. Did you have to create new words? How was your approach to do it?

Creation of new words is indeed necessary, for old Irish I can imagine this incredibly easier with the existence of modern concepts in the modern Irish language (although I read some scholars disagree even calling it Irish due to the many Anglicisms which have gotten into it). I have been helped by Edmund Fairfax and several other experts and linguists with new words (which you can see in the dictionary on the site), we mostly calque words either by a loanword from Greek, or Gothic versions of modern words and their etymological origin. Think of computer (com ; together + calculator) which can be converted to ga-rahnjo.

3. Do you know of any literature on the subject of translating into ancient languages?

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Unfortunately I don't know of any sources, the only ones present are the literature which looks at the Hebrew revitalization and on the Old English wikipedia article you can find a source to a paper analysing the internet use of Old English.

4. Did you get any funding for your translations? If yes, how?

I don't get any funding for my translation work online, although I do get a financial compensation for my book translations into Gothic. I am also, due to a lack of income sources, considering to set up monetized content in the future, which is translated into Gothic, but this needs to be of higher value than the free content, and approachable to purchase, as not everyone has a big budget who is involved or interested in language revival, so I need time to figure that out.

5. Which publisher will release your Petit Prince translation?

The publisher is Tintenfass Verlag. They approached me for it, I will send a mail if they are interested in an old Irish translation. I think that they acquired the rights to publish these translations.

5.5.7. James Rumford

Publisher and independent scholar, Honolulu, Hawaii
URL: https://www.jamesrumford.com/index.html

Language: Latin

Translations:

- 2016: *Mark Twain: 'Pericla Thomae Sawyer'*. Honolulu: Mānoa
- 2020: *Jane Austin: 'De Corde et Mente'*. Honolulu: Mānoa Press.
- 2020: *Margery Williams: 'Velvetinus Cuniculus'*. Honolulu: Mānoa
- 2021: *Hermann Hesse: 'Siddhartha'*. Honolulu: Mānoa Press.
- 2022: *Stephen Crane: 'Virtutis Color'*. Honolulu: Mānoa Press.
- 2022: *Ernest Hemingway: 'Et Oritur Sol'*. Honolulu: Mānoa Press.
- 2023: *Jane Austin: 'De Persuasione'*. Honolulu: Mānoa Press.

Questionnaire: 12 June 2024

1. Briefly describe your background in the language of your translations.

I'm self taught.

2. What were the reasons that prompted you to translate books into Latin?

Just for the fun of it.

3. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

The biggest problem with a dead language is verifying what I write. There are, of course, no native speakers to ask. Fortunately, the internet allows the ancient Roman to speak. Almost all Latin written by native speakers is online. And much of this has been translated into English. This allows me to use the internet as an immense English-Latin, Latin-English dictionary. Not only that, the internet allows me to verify what I write in Latin. I put quotes around phrases and do a search. More often than not, I will find the phrase or one very similar in an ancient Roman text. There are caveats. I shy away from Latin written after 500 AD and Latin written now by AI.

4. Did you have to create new words? How did you approach this process?

I don't create new words. Wikipedia often supplies neologisms. I look up, for example, 'automobile,' in Wikipedia. Then I find the corresponding page, if there is one in Latin.

5. In your opinion, what are the benefits to translating into historical languages?

There are no real practical benefits. I just hope that a reader of one of my translations will get as much enjoyment out of it as I had in making it.

6. Can such texts be useful in language teaching and learning?

These translations can be useful tools for learners but there is one huge caveat. The translations into a dead language must always be suspect. Were a Roman alive, he or she would find hundreds of errors in word choice, in style, and in register. Awkwardness would be immediately evident to the Roman, just as awkwardness is evident to me in English written by non-natives.

7. The literature about translation into historical languages is extremely limited, almost non-existent. Do you think this practice would deserve more attention from traductologists? Why?

Usually learning an historical language comes with a steep learning curve. Thus, there are very few, if any at all, readers of ancient Egyptian who would have the time or the desire to translate something into a language very few people can read and which has demanded hours and hours of study.

8. Feel free to expand on any of the topic of the above questions and do not hesitate to discuss any other point that comes to your mind.

Apart from the linguistic aspect, I enjoy designing books and doing the illustrations. Also, I like typography. The shapes of the letters we use was designed over the centuries just for Latin. This means that a page in Latin looks right. The interplay of ascenders (the tall parts of the letters), descenders (the parts that go below the line), and the middle letters create a visual harmony that cannot be matched in any other language. English looks jumbled. French too. Even Italian…and all the rest. Because of this, book designers use a fake Latin text called 'lorem ipsum' when laying out a page.

Yes, of course, you can use my name.

5.5.8. David Stifter

Professor of Old and Middle Irish, Department of Early Irish, Maynooth University, Ireland
URL: https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/faculty-arts-humanities/our-people/david-stifter

Languages: Old Irish, Gaulish

Translation:

- Joy Division Lyrics (still unpublished)

Questionnaire: 7 July 2024

1. Briefly describe your activity and background in the languages of your translations.

I am Professor of Old and Middle Irish. My area of research is especially the linguistics of Early Irish and of Ancient Celtic languages. Translating texts into Old Irish is only one part of my 'creative' work with these languages. I am also actively creating new literary texts in the languages of my research, namely mostly poems and song lyrics in Gaulish and poems in strict metres in Old Irish.

2. What were the reasons that prompted you to translate Joy Division's songs into Old Irish?

My primary motivation was purely personal: I wanted to combine two things that are important to me, Old Irish and the songs of Joy Division, especially the lyrics written by Ian Curtis. I started with this in 2016, shortly after I had joined Twitter. Unlike today, at that time it was a congenial platform to disseminate unusual ideas like that.

3. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

Speaking specifically of my Old Irish translations, my main problem is that there do not seem to be words for concepts that are so fundamental to our daily lives that we would not even be able to imagine a world without thinking with those concepts and in those categories. For example, in 2018 I was confronted with the fact that there are no words that correspond to "acting" (as an actor in theater) in Old Irish. It made me wonder whether that whole notion of behaving as someone who you are not was completely alien to the people at the time. In turn, thinking about this could have interesting repercussions

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on our modern obsession with multiple identities. My search for a word to render "acting" also reminded me of a great short story by Jorge Luis Borges, *Averroës' Search*, which is concerned with the attempt of that great Arabic translator to find adequate Arabic terms for Aristotle's 'comedy' and 'tragedy'.

4. Did you have to create new words? How did you approach this process?

This is more of an issue for Gaulish than it is for Old Irish. Since the attested vocabulary of Gaulish is so small and limited, my usual approach there is to either project words from younger attested Celtic languages (mainly Old Irish, Middle Welsh) back to what they would have looked in Proto-Celtic, and from there to Gaulish, or to start from Proto-Indo-European and construct a word as it would have looked like by regular sound change. The situation is different in Old Irish. There we do have a very rich lexicon, but in the surviving texts we may still not find words for the precise modern meaning that we need. In such cases I have two or three strategies: either take an attested word and simply use it in an extended, more modern sense; or I create a word on the model of Modern Irish (or more rarely modern Scottish Gaelic); and thirdly, since Old Irish has a very rich derivational and compositional morphology, it is not difficult to create new expressions using existing material.

Creating new words in this way is in fact not doing any violence to the language. The earliest Old Irish texts in contemporary manuscripts that have survived are the so-called Old Irish glosses from the 8th and 9th centuries. They are short interlinear comments and translations to the main text of the manuscripts which is in Latin. Many of the words that we find in those glosses do not have any parallels in original literature from Ireland. It is obvious that those words were created by the Irish-speaking glossators themselves in order to find native equivalents to the Latin that they were translating. Evidently the glossators were very often confronted with exactly the same problems that I face when I am trying to write in Old Irish about modern concepts. The linguistic strategies that those medieval scholars employed are exactly the same as the ones outlined by me above, plus borrowing lexical bases from Latin.

5. In your opinion, what are the benefits to translating into historical languages?

Speaking only from the point of view of the translator now, the main benefits are the necessity to reflect much more intensively what is *not* there in the historically attested language, which then leads to questions as to *why* a word or concept is not there, and what this potentially means in the wider cultural-historical context of that language. A benefit of creating new words is that I have to reflect about the morphology, the lexicon and the semantics of the language. Simply searching through the dictionary for suitable words has the additional advantage that one is almost bound to make some serendipitous finds along the way. I am sure there are many more benefits, but these are the three that I can think of off the top of my head.

6. Can such texts be useful in language teaching and learning?

From my answers to point 5 above it follows that this type of engagement adds to the active command of the teacher and to his or her awareness of the peculiarities of the language. It also creates a better awareness of what we do *not yet* know about the language, and in what areas it would be advisable to do research in the future.

7. The academic literature about translation into historical languages is extremely limited, almost non-existent. Do you think this practice would deserve more attention from traductologists? Why?

Yes. I am not a traductologist myself, so I do not know what discourses they normally have, but I think the difficulty of transferring cultural items and concepts from one language to another is a common theme. But this discourse is probably mostly limited to two cultures of roughly the same chronological frame. If anything, historical and contemporary languages are even more incommensurable. Looking into this disparity will probably lead to a much greater theory of translating.

Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.5.9. Gérard Taverdet

Professor Emeritus of French Linguistics and Dialectology, Université de Bourgogne, France.
URL: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%A9rard_Taverdet

Language: Old French

Translation:

- 2017: *Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: 'Li juenes princes'*. Neckarsteinach: Edition Tintenfaß.

Questionnaire: 8 July 2024

1. Briefly describe your activity and background in the languages of your translations.

Ma carrière professionnelle a été uniquement l'enseignement et la recherche universitaire (pour plus de détails, voir la fiche Taverdet, wikipedia).
Puis je suis parti à la retraite.
Un jour, un ancien étudiant m'a demandé de traduire un album de Tintin en patois bourguignon (les Bijoux de la Castafiore). Ce fut un grand succès local.
Peu de temps après, un groupe de patoisants m'a demandé de traduire *Le Petit Prince* en patois bourguignon (le Prince est devenu Duc dans la traduction, puisque nous n'avons jamais eu de princes en Bourgogne). Cette traduction a été publiée par les éditions Tintenfass.

2. What were the reasons that prompted you to translate Le Petit Prince into Old French?

M. Sauer (Tintenfass) m'a demandé un jour si je connaissais quelqu'un qui pourrait traduire le Petit Prince en ancien français.
Or j'avais déjà publié le Glossaire de Chrétien de Troyes (que je vous ai communiqué). Il est impossible de traduire sans dictionnaire de thème (langue de départ vers la langue d'arrivée). Ce genre d'ouvrage est très répandu pour les langues étudiées au Lycée et à l'Université pour les langues très étudiées (comme l'anglais ou le latin), mais il n'existe pas en ancien français. Mais, avec l'informatique, il m'a été facile d'utiliser le glossaire de Chrétien de Troyes comme un dictionnaire de thème. Je pense que je devais être la seule personne en France à posséder ce genre de document. J'ai donc accepté la proposition de Tintenfass et j'ai entrepris la traduction.

3. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

Pas de problèmes particuliers dans cette traduction. Il est vrai que j'avais eu dans ma jeunesse une grande expérience de ce genre d'exercice avec les thèmes latins (*translatio*) (j'ai fait des études de lettres classiques). D'autre part, j'avais à ma disposition mon glossaire de Chrétien de Troyes en version électronique.

4. Did you have to create new words? How did you approach this process?

Il a fallu créer parfois de nouveaux mots ; par exemple, je n'ai pas trouvé de renard (*fox*) chez Chrétien ; le français *renard* n'apparaît jamais ; et même chose pour l'ancien français *goupil* ; j'ai trouvé dans les noms de lieux de la région la forme **vorpil** (cas-sujet *vorpix*). Pas d'*avion* non plus ; j'ai donc créé la périphrase **nef volant**.

5. In your opinion, what are the benefits to translating into historical languages?

Je ne pense pas que ces traductions puissent faire avancer la connaissance que nous avons des langues anciennes. Elles sont surtout achetées par des collectionneurs (il existe quelques centaines de personnes qui collectionnent toutes les éditions du *Petit Prince*). Les éditions de Tintin sont dans le même cas. Ces éditions sont aussi un merveilleux moment de détente pour le traducteur.

6. Can such texts be useful in language teaching and learning?

Intérêt pédagogique : assez faible, semble-t-il. Personnellement je n'ai jamais essayé (puisque je suis retraité). Cependant certains collègues peuvent les utiliser, tout simplement à cause de la régularité grammaticale (ce qui n'est pas le cas des textes médiévaux originaux).

7. The academic literature (articles, essays) about translation into historical languages is extremely limited, almost non-existent. Do you think this practice would deserve more attention from traductologists? Why?

Intérêt académique et scientifique ; assez faible ; cependant M. Sauer m'a transmis le texte (en français) d'une chercheuse polonaise. Je vais essayer de le retrouver et je vous l'enverrai ultérieurement.

8. Feel free to expand on any of the topic of the above questions and do not hesitate to discuss any other point that comes to your mind.

La question des droits d'auteurs n'est pas posée ; je dois dire qu'il n'existe rien de prévu, si ce n'est quelques volumes pour mes petits- enfants.

Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Of course, vous pouvez utiliser librement mes réponses pour vos travaux de doctorat.

5.5.10. Walter Sauer

Owner of the German publishing house Tintenfass, Neckarsteinach, Germany
URL: https://www.editiontintenfass.de

Language: Middle English

Translations:

- 2008: *Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: 'The litel prynce'*. Neckarsteinach: Edition Tintenfaß.
- 2010: *Heinrich Hoffmann: 'Piers Dischevele: Myrie tales and gladde ymages'*. Neckarsteinach: Edition Tintenfaß.

Instead of answering the questions, Walter kindly shared with me the very interesting introduction to his Middle English translation of Max und Moritz, and also the list of neologisms he created for his version of the Little Prince. I include all his materials as they were sent to me.

Answer: 9 June 2024

To the Reader:

Not even facetiously can I talk you into believing that the most famous German children's book actually had a medieval English predecessor.

Instead, I would like to offer you an example of 21st century "medievalism": Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter*, translated from 19th century German into Chaucer's language of late 14th century London. All just for the fun of it, with compliments to both authors, Geoffrey Chaucer (c1340 to 1400) of Canterbury Tales fame, and Heinrich Hoffmann (1809-1894), Frankfurt physician, politician and writer of satirical poems and children's books, among which *Der Struwwelpeter* (1845) ranges foremost.

I confess to be a great friend of all three: Middle English, Chaucer and Struwwelpeter. Teaching medieval English for many years has given me a thorough familiarity with Chaucer's language and his works. Indeed, *The Riverside Chaucer* would be one of the three books I would take to a desert island. And the same is true for my favourite children's book, although I would have a hard time choosing a particular copy from my collection. For the third book, see below.

Translating *Struwwelpeter* into Middle English, while being quite a challenge, has given me much pleasure. Admittedly, it was not the work of a rainy Sunday afternoon. In order to achieve a high degree of poetic and linguistic consistency, it needed much scrutiny, verification, revision, and polishing. Compared to my rendering Antoine de Saint-

Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*, a prose work, into Chaucer's language (*The litel prynce*. Neckarsteinach: Edition Tintenfass, 2008), it was the constraints of meter and rhyme which were added to the demands of language and style.

In this, my best guide proved to be Chaucer's poetry itself, its language, phraseology and rhythm, which I had thoroughly "imbibed" over the years, even to the degree of knowing many passages by heart. To it I turned frequently during the translation process. And yet I could not have accomplished the task without the help of, and constant reference to, various dictionaries and online corpora of Middle English literature. A Chaucer Glossary by Norman Davis et al. was most helpful. I also gratefully acknowledge the use of the electronic version of the Middle English Dictionary, as well as constant reference to the Oxford English Dictionary. Aiming at historical lexical consistency, the latter dictionary was a handy tool to make sure that a particular word or phrase, if not actually occurring in Chaucer's works, was still, or already, in use by 1400. Finally, my knowledge and love of the Bible (the third book I would take to a desert island, see above) occasionally enabled me to find Middle English equivalents for German words. A German Bible concordance helped me locate these in the so-called Wycliffe Bible, translated during Chaucer's lifetime.

Overall, the subject matter treated in Hoffmann's ten cautionary stories is not restricted to modern times. We may safely assume that the Middle Ages knew little boys who hated to have their fingernails cut and their hair combed, rascals mistreating animals, girls who played with fire, little thumb-suckers, fidgety Philips and Johnnys Head-in-air. On the other hand, it comes as no surprise that a 19th work contains some words and concepts unknown in 14th century England. And yet there were only a few instances, where I actually had to coin new expressions or give Middle English words a modern meaning in order to render a specific idea. These were Christkind, Feuerzeug, Hölzchen, Sonnenschirm, Flinte, Gewehr, Regenschirm, and Brezel, none of which had been current or invented by the late Middle Ages. For these I came up with Christchild, chiste of brondes, (fire-)brond, coverture, shetyng-stikke, wepne and raine-shelde. And instead of having Iasper bring along a modern pretzel to the scene, I equipped him with a twies-baken panne-cake.

Since some of the little protagonists' names were unfamiliar in Chaucer's England I took the liberty of renaming some, but not all, of the characters. In my version, Friedrich lived in medieval London as Watte, Gretchen as Malle, Paulinchen has become Criseyde, Konrad Geffrey and Philipp Lowis. Shock-headed Peter himself, of course, was allowed to keep his name and appears, redivivus, as Piers Dischevele.

The reader will judge whether my tongue-in-cheek attempt at medievalising Struwwelpeter has been successful. Perhaps it will at least provide pleasure to some. To quote "maister Chaucer" (as John Lydgate called him) verbatim: "Now preye I to hem alle that herkne this litel tretys or rede, that if ther be any thyng in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken oure Lord Jhesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse. And if ther be any thyng that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of

my unkonnynge, and nat to my wyl, that wolde ful fayn have seyd better if I hadde konnynge." (Chaucer's Retraction, X (I) 1081f.).

 Heere taketh the makere of this book his leeve.

Let me also quote from my appendix to may ME translation of LE PETIT PRINCE: 'Exposycioun of sondry newe wordes and straunge'.

In Englissh speche	In Frenssh langage
apes mete tree	baobab
Cathay	Chine
iren-chaar	train
charyeter	homme de la locomotive
chaunger of pathes	aiguilleur
contrees of the Antipodes cow-naddre	Nouvelle-Zélande et Australie serpent boa
eir-ship	avion
erthe lore	géographie
goute artetik	crise de rhumatisme
greete desert of Auffrike	Sahara
gyn	machine
instrument of astronomye	télescope
light artificial	électricité
lond of the Grete Chane Changuys	Sibérie
Newe World the southren part	Amérique du Sud
Newe World the northren part	Amérique du Nord
prynce of chivalrie	général
route of marchauntz with cameles	caravane
see occian	Pacifique
shetyng-iren	Revolver
smokyng stikke	cigarette
stake of iren	boulon
swifte iren-chaar	rapide
loondes beyonde the see	États-Unis

 Of course you can quote me.

5.5.11. Peter Stork

Retired, University of Leiden

Language: Attic Greek

Translation:

2020: *A.A. Milne: 'Winnie-the-Pooh*. Φίννι-ὁ-Φῦ'. Leiden: Primavera Pers.

Due to a series of technical hitches, I received Peter Stork's questionnaire just a few days before this thesis was submitted. Thus, unfortunately, I was not able to 'interact' and discuss Peter's answers in section 4.3. I am deeply sorry for this. Nevertheless, I was at least able to include his answers in this appendix. Peter's contribution is really enlightening, as he describes in great detail every single linguistic issue that he had to solve during his translation. I think that all TETs, regardless of the historical languages they are working on, have much to learn by reading these very competent and clever notes.

Questionnaire: 18 July 2024

1. Briefly describe your background in the language of your translation.

1962–1970: Read Classics (Greek and Latin Languages and Literature) in Groningen University.
1970–2005: Member of the Department of Classics of Leiden University, teaching Ancient Greek mainly in the Bachelor-curriculum.
1982: PhD in Ancient Greek in Groningen University (*The Aspectual Usage of the Dynamic Infinitive in Herodotus*).
2005–: retired, but currently engaged in editing the fragments of Eudemus of Rhodes, and in compiling an index of the Greek text in *Strabons Geographika. Mit Übersetzung und Kommentar* herausgegeben von Stefan Radt Göttingen, 2002–2011

2. What were the reasons that prompted you to translate Winnie-The-Pooh into Ancient Greek (Attic or Koiné? Feel free to expand on the reason of your choice)?

In the beginning of my career at Leiden University I was active in the field of (developing new) schoolbooks for Ancient Greek in the secondary schools. The market for schoolbooks is extensive and the royalties were substantial. My wife, who had received from a friend an English edition of *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1970) said to me "Why don't you translate *Winnie-the-Pooh*, then we'll get rich!" I promised to do so, but never did, until I was 78.

The Latin version, A.A. Milnei, *Winnie Ille Pu. Liber celeberrimus omnibus fere pueris puelisque notus nunc primum de anglico sermone in Latinum conversus auctore Alexandro Lenardo*, Novi Eboraci: Sumptibus Duttonis MCMLX, at the time was a bestseller in the U.S.A.

Ancient Greek for me is Attic Greek. I taught it my whole life. I didn't even consider using Koiné, and I am not at all familiar with this phase of Ancient Greek.

3. What problems and methodological challenges did you have to face while translating your texts?

One would expect that the main problem would be words and notions of the modern world that are non-existent or unknown in the Classical World. In the case of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, however, that was considerably less of a problem than I expected. My main "problem and methodological challenge" was the rendering of the idiomatic English text in a comparably idiomatic Ancient Greek text.

The main challenge of the English text was the character of Milne's English: he is very fond of playing with the English language, and it is very hard sometimes to come up with Ancient Greek equivalents. Moreover, the text has a lot of dialogue, and that doesn't make matters easier, especially where colloquial phrases are involved; Ancient Greek is rich in dialogue-structuring particles, and to get thse right is a major challenge. My problems, therefore, were mainly of a technical nature and the challenge was more that of solving puzzle's. The most frequent technical puzzle's involved:

names: apart from Winnie-the-Pooh the names were relatively easy:

Winnie-the-Pooh Φίννι-ὁ-Φῦ was the main challenge. The Latin *Winnie ille Pu* is brilliant, but I did not have an Ancient Greek equivalent. The W is a problem in Ancient Greek; in Modern Greek e.g. William = Γουλιέλμος and Modern Greek β is something between Dutch v and w. Finally I decided to use the Ancient Greek *wau* or *digamma*, which is written on inscriptions as a capital F. In Classical Greek it has disappeared, but it is etymologically found in words like *wine* = Latin *vinum* = Ancient Greek οἶνος. So I decided on Φίννι for *Winnie*. 'the' = the article ὁ. Pooh I made into Φῦ. Milne has a little etymological joke about this name on p. 18: 'and whenever a fly came and settled on his nose he had to **blow** it off. … that *that* is why he was always called **Pooh**': ἠναγκάζετο ἂν αὐτὴν ἀπο**φυσᾶν** αὐτὸν … διὰ ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν ἀεὶ **Φῦ** καλεῖσθαι, where 'blow off' in Ancient Greek is ἀπο-**φυ**-σᾶν.

Bear Ἄρκτος, Owl Γλαῦξ, Piglet Χοιρίδιον, Rabbit Κύνικλος are no problem because they are names of animals.

Kanga Κάγκου and Baby Roo Παιδίον Ῥώ are made, as is done by Milne, by splitting up Kanga-roo in Kanga Κάγκου and Roo Ῥώ (Modern Greek has καγκουρώ).

Eeyore Ἰώρ is clearly onomatopoeic, so I have made Ἰώρ of it, which has the same sound.

Christopher Robin Χριστόφορος Ἐρίθακος: Ancient Greek has Χριστοφόρος 'Christ-bearing' and as a personal name (with withdrawn accent) Χριστόφορος. Ἐρίθακος: ἐρίθακος, ὁ is *robin-redbreast* in Ancient Greek.

Edward Bear: Edward is Εδουάρδος in Modern Greek and Bear is Ἄρκτος.

The Chestnuts Τοῖς Καστάνοις 46: κάστανα, τά is *sweet chestnuts* in Ancient Greek.

Sanders Σανδάνου 2, 75: in English 'sanders' = sandalwood = σάνδανον, τό, perh. *sandal-wood*.

the North Pole 107: literally translated as Πόλος ὁ Ἀρκτικός.

Six Pine Trees 55: literally translated as Ἓξ Πεύκας 55

100 Aker Wood: literally translated as ἡ Ὕλη Τῶν Ἑκατὸν Πλέθρων 45, 54, 63, 78, 144; not until after I finished the translation I read a passage in Nancy Mitford, *Our Village* (published in 1824–1832), p. 77: 'The Hundred Acres, alias the Poor Allotment, alias the Burnt Common (do any or all of these titles convey any notion of the real destination of that many-named place? – a piece of moorland portioned out to serve for fuel to the poor of the parish)'. I found that interesting: did Milne mean something like that?

Peter Stork Πέτρος Πέλαργος: Πέτρος for Peter is clear; πελαργός is 'stork' in Ancient Greek, as a personal name (with withdrawn accent) Πέλαργος.

riddles: the most difficult riddle was:

TRESPASSERS W ΠΑΡΑΒΑΤΑΙ Δ 32: the W clearly is to be supplemented as W<ILL BE PROSECUTED> or something like that. Milne gives a clue in the text by means of Piglet's 'Trespassers William'. In Ancient Greek the full text of the sign would read ΠΑΡΑΒΑΤΑΙ Δ⟨ΙΩΧΘΗΣΟΝΤΑΙ⟩. To give the reader a clue in the text as Milne did, I translated 'Trespassers William' as Παραβάται Διώνυμος, where **Διώ** is, as **Will**iam, the clue to find **διωχθήσονται**.

distortions of English words: there are a lot of distortions of English words and more often than not they were quite hard to turn into Ancient Greek. Some examples are:

ἐχστόρτευμα 109 Expotition: "We are all going on an Expedition," said Christopher Robin … "Going on an Expotition?" said Pooh eagerly … "Expedition, silly old Bear. It's got an 'x' in it." 109: It took me a long time to understand what is the joke about the 'x' in it, but I finally decided it has something to do with the pronunciation of the ex- in expedition. Phonetically expedition = ekspɪdɪʃ(ə)n differs from exposure = ɪkspəʊʒə(r) in the difference between eks and ɪks, and 'x' is pronounced as eks, not ɪks. So I decided to change the normal Ancient Greek equivalent of 'expedition' ἐκστράτευμα into εχ for εκ, a reading of the κ that is actually found in inscriptions. With -po- I could not do anything (has it something to do with 'drink'?), so I just changed -στρα- into -στορ-, wich incidentally is quite phonologiaclly correct in Ancient Greek.

Heffalump Ἐφέλογκος 54: That was a terrible one: the illustration on p. 62 shows that Pooh is thinking about something that looks like an *elephant*, as apparently Piglet is doing too (illustration p. 65). Heffalump is as a matter of fact explained as a child's way to (mis)pronounce 'elephant'. 'lump' is significant because (1) it fits an elephant quite nicely, and (2) because it comes back in the discussion between Piglet and Christopher Robin 54: "What was it doing?" asked Piglet. "Just lumping along," said Christopher Robin. So I needed to do something with 'lump', and that is why I translated '-lump' into -ογκος: "Τί ἐποίει;" Χοιρίδιον ἤρετο. "**Ὀγκ**οτάτῃ δὴ βάσει ἦν βαδίζων," Χριστόφορος Ἐρίθακος ἔφη. The first part Ἐφελ- firstly looks like a transposition of Ἐλεφ- (in Ancient Greek ἐλέφας = 'elephant') and secondly reminds one of -ελ- of ἑλεῖν to 'take, seize' (cp. Heff-a-lump).

The word Heffalump comes back on p. 67 where Piglet is trying to pronounce the word Heffalump: 'Help, help, a Herrible Hoffalump! Hoff, Hoff, a Hellible Horralump! Holl, Holl, a Hoffable Hellerump!' where I had to make comparable nonsensical changes: Ἐπάρηγε, ἐπάρηγε, Ἐχθαδοπὸς Ἐφόλογκος! Ἐφό, Ἐφό, Ἐπαδοπὸς Ἐχθέλογκος! Ἐπό, Ἐπό, Ἐφοδοπὸς Ἐπάλογκος!

Two very nice (and difficult) examples of distortion of English words are found on p. 46 and 80. In both cases I had to distort the Greek words too with enough clues (in the words themselves and in the context) for the reader to understand what is meant, just as Milne did in the English:

PLES RING IF AN RNSER IS REQIRD ΧΡΕΣΘΑΙ ΤΩΙ ΚΟΔΩΝΙΟΙ ΕΑΝ ΑΠΚΡΙΣΕΣ ΔΕΗΤΙ 46
PLEZ CNOKE IF AN RNSR IS NOT REQID ΧΡΗΣΘΙ ΤΟΙ ΠΟΡΤΡΩΙ ΕΑΝ ΜΗ ΑΠΟΚΕΩΣ ΔΕΤΑΙ 46, and
HIPY PAPY BTHUTHDTH THUTHDA BTHUTHDY ΚΕΛΑ ΛΑΛΑ ΓΝΕΘΑ ΓΝΟΘΛΘ ΝΟΘΑΙ ΓΝΟΘΛΑ 80

In the following case it is more a matter of capitals at the right places: NorTH PoLE DICSovERED By PooH PooH FounND IT ΠόΛΟΣ ὁ ἈΡΚτιΚΟΣ ΕΥΡεΘΕΙΣ Ὑπὸ ΦΘ Φῦ ΠρῶτΟΣ ΕΥΡετΗΣ 125, where Konstantine Panegyres in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2023.05.22 nicely reminded me that I overlooked the transposition DICSovERED and suggested reading ΕΥΘεΡΕΙΣ instead of ΕΥΡεΘΕΙΣ.

Some more simple examples are:

'customary procedure' of Owl is made into 'Crustimoney Proseedcake' by Pooh 48. I translated 'customary procedure' as νομιζομένη μέθοδος and 'Crustimoney Proseedcake' as Νομισμαμένη Μάζοδος, where νόμισμα is 'money' and μάζα is 'cake'.
βαλάνους acorns μαλάνους haycorns 58, where I could do nothing with 'hay-'.
HUNNY instead of 'honey' ΜΕΛΛΙ instead of ΜΕΛΙ 59.

interjections: interjections are a pest for the translator. The following examples show that I did not try to be consistent in using the same translation all the time, but tried to adapt my rendering to the context in which the interjections occur:

Ah! Βάβαι! 60, 150 — Ah, yes νὴ Δία 78 — Aha! Δηλαδή! 91, 101 — All right Μὴ φοβηθῇς 121 — All right, then Εἶέν δή 76 — Bother! Ἡράκλεις! 22, 62, 64, 78, 133, 155 — +Fancy! Νὴ τὼ θεώ, δαιμονίας ἐννοίας 97 — Hallo! Ἰαῦ! 13 (cp. Aristophanes, *Ranae* 272), Ὠή! 34, Χαῖρε 46, 75, 96, 108, 110, 150 — Hey! Εἶα! 114 — Hooray! Ὑπέρευ! 12 — Hullo Ὠή 124 — Dear, dear Τάλαν, τάλων 43, 77, 84 — H-up Λ-λύγκ! 154 — I say Ἀλλὰ 137 — I see, I see Μανθάνω, μανθάνω 48 — Now Ἄγε δή 104 — Now then Φέρε δή 139 — Oh! Ἔα! 23, 72, 74, 76, 93, 94, 109, 122, Οἰμοιμοῖ! 30, Τοῦτ' ἄρα! 61, Πάπαι! 95, 97, Ἰού! 110, Μανθάνω 111, Ὤ 112, Ἔστιν ἄρα! 125, Τοῦτ' ἄρα! 140, Ἦ γὰρ 146, Νὴ Δία 154, Βάβαι! 156 — Oh, and Eeyore Καὶ Ἰὼρ μέντοι 88 — Oh, Bear! Ὦ Ἄρκτε! 69 — Oh, bother! Ὤ, Ἡράκλεις! 25 — Oh, dear Ὦ τάλαν! 66, 82 — Oh, help! Οἴμοι, τί πάθω; 6, Οἴμοι! 25 — Oh, I see Πάνυ γε, μανθάνω 81, Ἀλλὰ μανθάνω 90, Ἔα! Μανθάνω 109 — Oh, Kanga Ἄκουσον, Κάγκου 96 — Oh, no Οὐδαμῶς 86 — Oh, Pooh! Ὤ, Φῦ! 34, 138 — Oh, there you are Ἔνθ' ἄρα πάρει 124 — Oh well, then Τούτου οὕτως ἔχοντος 24 — Oh, yes, Ἀλλ'ἀκούσομαι 97 — Oh, yes, yes Τοῦτ' ἄρα 95 — Oh, you're not Piglet Ἀλλ, οὐ Χοιρίδιον εἶ 105 —Ow! Οἴμοι! 17, 26, 30, 103 — Quite so Πάνυ γε 118— Very well Ταῦτ'ἔσται 59 — Well Ἀλλ' 24, Ἔγωγε τοίνυν 58, Ἀλλ' 82, Φέρε δή 48, τοίνυν 80, Ἀλλά 100, Νὴ τὼ θεώ! 105, Ἀλλ' 114, Ἀλλά 119, τοίνυν 120 — Well, then Φέρε δή 49 — Why! Ἀλλὰ μήν! 86, Ἀλλὰ 95 — Yes! 120 Μάλιστά γε!

Phrases: some phrases that are used in daily speech are sometimes hard to translate. Some examples are:

And that's that Τοῦτ' οὖν πέπρακται 109.
Good afternoon Χαῖρε τῇδε τῇ δείλῃ καλῇ 96.
How's things? Πῶς ἔχει τὰ πράγματα; 46.
Never mind Μηδὲν μελέτω σοί 90, 92, Ἀμέλει 124.
Six o'clock Ἒξ ἑωθινοῦ 61.
That's all right Καλῶς ἔχει 137.
That's bad Χαλεπόν γε τοῦτο 108.

That's it Τοῦτ' ἔστιν 95.

That's right Εὖ γε 73.

There it is Οὕτως Ἔχει 72.

This is serious 132 Τόδε Δεινόν ἐστιν!

Well, there you are, that proves it 32 Τοῦτ' ἄρα ἦν ὅπερ ἔδει δεῖξαι.

Particularly difficult are those cases where the translator does not know what actually is meant in the English text, such as:

Cottleston, Cottleston, Cottleston Pie Αἱ Ἡδοναὶ Τραγημάτων Πεπεσμέναι (ἡδοναὶ τραγημάτων *sweetmeats* Sopater 17) 72; I have not the slightest idea what a Cottleston Pie is (nobody does, I think), so I took ἡδοναὶ τραγημάτων, which literally means 'pleasures of dried fruits *or* sweetmeats, as desert' and added Πεπεσμέναι 'baked'.

Here we go gathering Nuts and May Ἰδού, συλλέγομεν Κάρυα καὶ Ἔαρ 73, 113

Here we go round the mulberry bush Ἰδού, περιερχόμεθα τὴν μορέαν κύκλῳ 72

These two appear to refer to English customs that are unknown to me, so I had to translate them as literally as possible.

noises/sounds:

BANG!!! 81 ΠΑΤΑΓΓ!!!

Pop! Ποπ! 30

splashed ῥόθῳ … βαδίσας 132

spluttered ἐσύριζεν 105

squeaked ἔκραξε 96

stumped off ἀπεβάδιζε κτύπῳ ποδῶν 59

soundeffects:

Issue a Reward Ἐξίει Κόμιστρα 48: Owl: "Issue a Reward" … Pooh: "You sneezed just as you were going to tell me." 'Issue' gives Pooh the impression that Owl sneezes. I made 'issue' into ἐξίει with a ξ (= ks) which has the same effect.

songs, ditty's:

liedjes: 5, 6, 15, 21, 53, 61-2, 72-3, 97-8, 107, 108, 114, 147-8

Umty-tiddly, umpty too Φλαττοθραττοφλαττοθρατ 73 from Aristophanes, *Ranae* 1295

These songs and ditty's are sometimes quite nonsensical and therefore hard to translate. An additional problem was (1) that I had to use **rhyme**, something Ancient Greek does not have, and (2) that I had to make them as metrical as possible, mainly iambic, for instance:

Αἱ Ἡδοναὶ Τραγημάτων Πεπεσμέναι 72 ˘ – ˘ –, ˘ – ˘ –, ˘ – ˘ –

οὐκ ὄρνις πτηνὴ μυῖα δή, ὄρνις δ' ἔχει πτῆναι 72 – – – –, – – ˘ –, – – ˘ –, – –

Πρόβαλλ, οὖν αἴνιγμά τι, ἐγὼ δ' ἀμείβομαι 72 ˘ – – –, – ˘˘ ˘ –, ˘ – ˘ –

τί κίκκα μινυρίζει, οὐ τοδὶ ἐπίσταμαι 72 ˘ – ˘ –, ˘ – – –, ˘ – ˘ –, ˘ –

illustrations:

A very technical problem were the illustrations with English words and letters in them. My publisher Evelyn de Regt of Primavera Press solved that problem in a brilliant way: she scanned the English illustrations, enlarged the scans, electronically erased the English words and letters, printed the scans, and then I could write in the Greek words and letters, and she reduced the scan to the original format again. The writing is a bit clumsy, but that is exactly what was the intention.

Evelyn de Regt made a wonderful little book of it, in all respects as similar to the original English edition as possible

In translating I used the following dictionaries;

W. Pape's *Handwörterbuch der Griechischen Sprache. In vier Bänden. Vierter Band. Deutsch-Griechisches Handwörterbuch*. Dritte Auflage, bearbeitet von M. Seugebusch. Braunschweig 1875.

English-Greek Dictionary. A Vocabulary of the Attic Language, Compiled by S.C. Woodhouse, Second impression (with a supplement), London 1932.

Dictionnaire Français-Grec. Nouvele Édition entièrement révisée, corrigée et augmentée par E.G. Carathanos, Athènes 1932

LSJ = A Greek-English Lexicon, compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, Revised and augmented throughout by Sir Henry Suart Jones with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie. With a Supplement, Oxford 1968

4. Did you have to create new words? How did you approach this process?

Not often, really. I approached this process as a puzzle to find as many Ancient Greek words or parts of words that would fit in. Examples are:

For Heffalump Ἐφέλογκος 54 see **3** under **Distortions of English words**

Woozle Ϝείλιγγος 32 and Wizzle Ϝίλιγγος 37: for these non-existent beings ἴλιγγος *spinning round* and ἰλιγγιάω *become dizzy, loose one's head* from Plato came to my mind, again with a wau or digamma.

balloon ἀερόσφαιραν 9 posed a problem. I had concocted σφαῖρα ἀεροφόρητος *ball upborne by air*, both words being attested in Ancient Greek, but found that a bit cumbrous. In Modern Greek *balloon* is αερόστατο, but I did not want to use that. Then I found in the dictionary of Carathanos (see under **3**) the word ἀερόσφαιρα, and that was exactly the word I needed.

MEASLES 46 ΕΞΑΝΘΗΜΑΤΑ *effloresence*, *eruption*, *pustule*. Pape's dictionary gives ἐξανθήματα as Masern. I didn't know that.

BUTTERED TOAST 46 ΕΣΧΑΡΙΤΗΣΒΟΥΤΥΡΟΝΩΤΟΣ: ἐσχαρίτης = *bread baked over the fire*, βούτυρον = *butter*, and ΒΟΥΤΥΡΟΝΩΤΟΣ is made on the analogy of χρυσόνωτος *bronze-backed*.

5. In your opinion, what are the benefits to translating into historical languages?

First, simply for the fun of it. That was essentially my starting-point.

Secondly, in the field of Latin, speaking and writing Classical Latin has become a kind of 'cult.' I do not know of anything like that in the case of Ancient Greek. It was not relevant in my case.

Thirdly, it is of course a challenge to test one's own knowledge of Ancient Greek, and at the same time it is a way of showing the reader the differences between the idiomatic structure of texts in historical langauges and the modern languages.

6. Can such texts be useful in language teaching and learning?

I would say yes: my Ancient Greek text could be used, if the pupil has an English text of *Winnie-the-Pooh* by heart or in printed form, to teach that pupil Ancient Greek. One could imagine an edition with a vocabulary and a concise grammar of Ancient Greek that would enable any child that knows *Winnie-the-Pooh* to learn Ancient Greek by it. There is

enough phonological, morphological, syntactical and semantic material in the text to make that possible. By that was not my main intention in making the translation.

7. The literature about translation into historical languages is extremely limited, almost non-existent. Do you think this practice would deserve more attention from traductologists? Why?

I simply don't know. The few translations I know were made, I think, simply for the fun of it. But I am sure that a specialist in that field could make some pertinent observations that would help to focus on the differences between historical texts and the translations thereof, which would deepen and broaden our understanding about the essential differences between these two types of text.

8. Feel free to expand on any of the topic of the above questions and do not hesitate to discuss any other point that comes to your mind.

I have the feeling that *Winnie-the-Pooh* is a special case and I would interested in knowing what has been the experience of the translator of, for instance, ΑΡΕΙΟΣ ΠΟΤΗΡ καὶ ἡ τοὺ φιλοσόφου λίθος J.K. Rowling. Translated by Andrew Wilson. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, London 1997, translation into Ancient Greek of the English text of: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6. The Old Irish teachers speak

This section includes the results of a survey conducted between February and March 2025, for which I contacted twenty-four Celticists with experience in Old Irish instruction. The contributors, three of whom wished to remain anonymous, were kindly requested to briefly answer nine questions regarding their teaching approaches. All the answered questionnaires are included below.

5.6.1. Questionnaires

5.6.1.1. Anonymous 1

Lecturer in Celtic, United Kingdom

Questionnaire: 27 February 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

A run-through of all of the basics of the grammar, supplemented by reading some original text at the end of the class if we have time. (By basics, I mean I've covered most of the noun declensions, word order including copula word order & cleft sentences, how to form all of the tenses and moods of the verb, places where the subjunctive is used, and how to mark relative clauses.) If the students are undergraduates doing the Old Irish optional paper for finals, they usually have zero Irish experience, and many won't have anything beyond a French GCSE or A-Level. If they are Celtic MPhil students or doing the Celtic options through the linguistics masters course, they usually have beginners to intermediate modern Irish but no Old Irish.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

This depends: in the past (before the Celtic MSt/MPhil was revived at Oxford) it was 12 1-hour classes to cover the grammar and metrics. Now with the Celtic MPhil and a full lectureship in Medieval Irish, there is time to have an hour a week for three terms (at least this year), so 24 1-hour classes in total. With this new structure, we still covered all of the basics of the grammar in 14 classes.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

Yes: Lehmann, because it gives a (fairly) good phonetic transcription and glosses every single word, which is ideal for students with no background in other languages as a starting text. However, I only start using the textbook after about six grammar classes (basically, until they cover what the verb is and how it changes for absolute/conjunct forms and what a prototonic/deuterotonic verb is).

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

Lehmann for reading texts, but not for teaching. I use de Vries and Stifter as the main point of reference for students: de Vries for non-linguistic students, Stifter for linguistics students.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Yes, I make handouts on a single topic for each week (e.g. o-stem and ā-stem nouns; the imperfect tense; the preterite; relative marking, etc). They include page references to all the major textbooks, and then I usually include many more English examples of grammatical concepts like e.g. conditional clauses, subordinate clauses, relative clauses. If students have other languages (e.g. French, German, Greek), I will also include examples in those. I also break down how verbs change in prototonic/deuterotonic forms via tables, so students can see how the prefix do/to change in e.g. do-beir > ní tabair

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

Pronunciation! Students don't feel confident reading it aloud so they don't read the words properly and carefully, and there's usually not enough time to practice the pronunciation as well as sufficiently cover the grammar. Enough easy materials to get them started reading. I learned Latin and Greek through adapted readers for students and it is so helpful to learn the basics through repetitive, simple reading. Quinn meets some of that need but the fact it only has a key for half of the answers is infuriating.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

The verbal system, for obvious reasons.
Mutations, especially if they don't have another Celtic language.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

Some sort of IPA reader where I get students to put in the transcriptions from Lehmann or Stifter and they could hear (at least an approximation) of what it should sound like would be incredibly helpful. A reader of adapted, easier Old Irish: something like Benjamin D'Ooge's *Easy Latin For Sight Reading* but for Old Irish, especially with Old Irish vocab glossed with other similar Old Irish words.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

Yes, I think so. If you mean the 'direct method', I have tried some active Latin in the past and found the approach to be very helpful for learning, but especially the materials used in such classes e.g. D'Ooge mentioned above.
Readings out loud of Old Irish material would be VERY helpful.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

No.

5.6.1.2. Anonymous 2

Lecturer in Celtic, United Kingdom

Questionnaire: 1 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

1) A biennial pair of honours courses that run side-by-side across the academic year (we alternate beginners' Old Irish with beginners' Middle Welsh. Depending on students being in either the third or fourth year of their degree when they begin, they will have the opportunity for a second year in one of those languages).

2) Students entering honours may have modern Gaelic or another Celtic language to good conversational fluency (occasionally native fluency), and they will normally have studied medieval Irish literature in translation already. A vanishingly small number of students beginning Old Irish will already have studied Latin or another medieval language. Relatively often, a student beginning Old Irish will have no prior language experience other than a secondary level modern language.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

1) Every second year, two two-hour seminars each week for eleven weeks, in each semester of the year (i.e., both). Total classroom contact time per year of delivery: 88.

2) If students are able to enter a second year (as 1), that second 'advanced' year includes one two-hour seminar per week across both semesters (contact time: 44 hours).

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

Neither, directly. We have a departmental 'Introduction to Old Irish' developed by former colleagues and revised in the mid-2000s. This is supplemented by Strachan's *Paradigms and Glosses* and, initially, sample sentences as new grammatical concepts are introduced. Finally, towards the end of their first semester of classes, we begin to read the opening sentences of one of *Stories from the Táin*, which students continue to translate independently into the second semester. After that, we move on to other tales, normally in DIAS edition (e.g., *Fingal Rónáin*). Relevant sections from Thurneysen's *Grammar* will be introduced slowly alongside those later texts.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

Strachan, *P&G*, and his Old Irish workbook (know and use). Stifter's *Sengoidelc* (have begun to use; time to develop new materials when the course is delivered biennially is very short).

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

As (3); we have a departmental set of introductory materials that I inherited and have since supplemented with class slides on each new concept (e.g. verbal system, nominal system). Students sometimes created flashcards together in class, to write down verb paradigms as new vocabulary is encountered in a text.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

Students' increasing lack of familiarity with learning other older languages before coming to an ancient Celtic language, since so few schools now teach Latin. Due to UK school curricula, we cannot even depend on students having studied any modern language before, unless their schooling occurred in a European country. Local managerial curriculum-squeezing reducing classroom time to read texts (we rarely finish even something of *Fingal Rónáin* length in a semester). And too little time to develop full enough understanding and confidence in teaching Old Irish, since so many of us barely emerge from PhD before, if we're lucky, having opportunities to teach, and thereafter there's so little time for developing new materials amid everything else one must also teach and develop competence in.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

Pretty much everything, in my experience. The case system even creates difficulties if students have only English (and even if they've already studied Middle Welsh, when this is barely an issue); the verbal system causes ongoing muddles &c. Most students reach some level of reading competence by the end of the year, but this is usually dependent on being able to use an edited glossary. In 15 years, I've known two students with astonishing competence and seemingly effortless ability to learn it thoroughly, both of whom went on to PhD in institutions with a dedicated ancient language department.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

Sengoídelc is excellent, it's having the time to develop materials based on it.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

Perhaps, and it is something that students have asked about. I haven't tried this because I've only ever taught ancient languages myself, not a modern one for which spoken or aural competence is the goal. Younger colleagues are very interested in this approach and enthusiastic for it. I'd love there to be a course designed for nervous Old Irish teachers in which multiple approaches could be considered.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

No.

5.6.1.3. Anonymous 3

Lecturer in Celtic, Maynooth University

Questionnaire: 28 February 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

I have taught beginners' Old Irish classes at Maynooth University where typically the students (2nd year BA) had no background knowledge of Old Irish, although many of them knew Modern Irish to varying degrees.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

Both semesters, 24 teaching hours each.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I mainly used David Stifter's *Sengoídelc*.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I know Quin, Strachan, Ó Fiannachta but mainly use Stifter, as more recent, easier to access and to use and preferred by students.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Not much.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

Apart from the fact that it is a difficult, complex language (especially the verbal system), one of the problems I found in teaching Old Irish is that many students don't have a good grounding in basic linguistic terminology.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

It is a complex language and requires quite a bit of work by the student.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

I suppose more interactive materials to engage the students would be helpful.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I haven't tried it in the past but I think this would be a great approach and I would certainly be willing to try it in the future.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

No.

5.6.1.4. Irene Balles

Lecturer in Celtic, University of Bonn
URL: https://www.iaak.uni-bonn.de/keltologie/en/abteilung-keltologie/personalseiten/irene_balles

Questionnaire: 3 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

Third year students of B.A. minor, no previous knowledge of Old Irish (or Modern Irish).

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

It's a one-term-module (15 weeks), 5 hours per week, two for literature and three for grammar and translation.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I start reading an original Middle Irish text, usually one well edited with notes and glossary. The reason I don't use a textbook (or at least not systematically) is lack of time. So I present a very condensed crash course for the most important grammatical issues, such as mutations, conjugated prepositions, the verbal system. Then we start translating and I introduce all the tools you can use in working with Old or Middle Irish texts.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I know David Stifter's *Sengoídelc*, W.P. & Ruth Lehmann's *Introduction to Old Irish* (vel. sim.), Tigges/Ó Béarra's poem-based book (I use it for presenting some of the poems from time to time), Old Irish Online of the University of Texas at Austin, Mc Cone's *First Old Irish Grammar and Reader*, Quin's *Old Irish Workbook*, Pokorny's Göschenheft [i.e. *Altirische Grammatik*], Thurneysen's *Old Irish Reader*: I don't use them most of the time, again because of lack of time, but at times I present parts of them, if it is suitable for a certain question or point.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

I have created some Handouts to present the things you really should know for translating Old/Middle Irish in a very condensed and somewhat simplified form. The students are allowed to use these sheets even in the exam, as well as all other tools. (I would prefer them to KNOW the things by heart, but this turned out to be not working (since Celtic studies is only a minor in Bonn, most of them have no ambition nor enthusiasm).

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

- very complex grammar
- broad variance in orthography, writing (sometimes non-writing) conventions
- several layers of time/registers in the texts, mixture of Old, Middle and Early Modern Irish language
- lacking knowledge about the background of the texts
- hard to define a basic vocabulary which can be used as a "starter kit" for any text

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

- basically the same points as under 6.
- the very short span of time we have for introducing the students to language AND literature in one term only

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

- perhaps a digital "lemma finder" which suggests for difficult or oddly written verb forms where they could belong to (as these are often not in DIL or In Dúil Bélaí, nor in the Wiktionary list of Old Irish Verbs (both seem to be based on DIL)
- in addition to DIL: a reliable etymological dictionary (for all Celtic languages) (that is more a wish of mine than of my students!)

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

Yes, this would be of great benefit for the students. Unfortunately it is not workable for us, at least not as long as we have only the minor and only one term to teach Old Irish. I have to emphasize that this approach has not been chosen because I believe it to be the best, but simply for pragmatic reasons, in order to give the students as much of the Old Irish language and literature as possible, and to give them as much insight as possible into the problems, approaches and issues involved in working with Old Irish texts.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.5. Bernhard Bauer

Assistant Professor in Digital Historical Linguistics, Department of Digital Humanities, University of Graz
URL: https://homepage.uni-graz.at/de/bernhard.bauer/

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

I was teaching a complete beginners' course at the department for antiquity studies. My students either had a background in classical philology or English studies.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

Unfortunately, I only had 1 semester with a total of 21 hours of teaching.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I have used David Stifter's *Sengoídelc*, because the students had no background in any Celtic languages whatsoever.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

David Stifter's book; Antony Green's *Old Irish Verb and Vocabulary*; the Old-Irish paradigms [by John Strachan]; the editions in the Maynooth Medieval Irish Texts series; Ranke de Vries' *Student's Companion to Old Irish Grammar*.
I have used Stifter's book and editions of the MMIT-series

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

No

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

In my environment it was a complete lack of previous knowledge of Celtic languages. In an Anglo-phon speaking area it is difficult for the students to grasp the function of the different casus (and their existence in general).

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

The complex morphology makes it hard for students to learn Old Irish.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

Online resources (including videos, quizzes, apps, etc.); more teach yourself resources.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I think it can be very useful, however, I have not tried it myself so far.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.6. Alderik Blom

Professor of Celtic, Department of Celtic Studies, University of Marburg
URL: https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/fb10/iksl/faecher/keltologie/fach/personen/blom

Questionnaire: 6 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

I teach an introductory course every other year (2 semesters) followed by a year of text reading / more advanced Old Irish.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

Two hours a week for 14 weeks per semester.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I recommend Stifter's *Sengoídelc* and Ranke De Vries' Student Guide [*A Student's Companion to Old Irish Grammar*], but students are (I find) unwilling to buy books these days; Ranke de Vries is the most popular. Every now and again I use McCone, but it assumes too much philology for most students. Anyway, I use my own set of handouts and exercises (conflated over the years from Stifter and Quinn). I only start reading authentic texts toward the very end of the second semester – and onward from there.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

See above.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

See above. Mostly potted grammar handouts and weekly sentences for practice.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

Several! In Marburg, most students come with practically no grammatical knowledge; if you're lucky they've done some Latin in school. The fist hurdle is orthography vs. pronunciation, then the verbal system takes a lot of getting used to (some also struggle with nominal morphology, but less so) and then things like relative syntax, cleft sentences etc.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

See above.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

I think our present materials are practicable on the whole, but then I can see the rift between the level of knowledge assumed, even by Ranke de Vries, and what students actually bring along is growing. A method more akin to how modern languages are taught might be an option, even if I wouldn't know what that could be like.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

It's an experiment worth taking! I have not tried such an approach but would be interested.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.7. Gregory Darwin

Associate Professor in Irish, Department of English, Celtic Section, Uppsala University
URL: https://www.uu.se/en/contact-and-organisation/staff?query=N21-731

Questionnaire: 4 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

Uppsala university offers Old Irish I, Old Irish II, and a reading course, each worth 7,5 credits. Background knowledge varies: many students have a background in linguistics or historical languages, some have a background in modern Irish; nearly all students have studied at third level for at least a year or two, and some already have completed university degrees.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

The Old Irish classes are taught as distance courses. Old Irish I and II are taught at 50% pace and together take up one semester. The reading course is taught at 25% and takes up one semester. Each course consists of roughly 50 clock hours.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I use introductory textbooks for the first two courses, gradually introducing more authentic texts in the second course. The reading course focuses on authentic Old Irish. This is mostly due to the inertia of tradition and not having adequate hours assigned for substantial revisions of the course.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I know of Strachan and Quin's *Paradigms* and *Workbook*, Ó Fiannachta's *SeanGhaeilge gan Dua*, Stifter's *Sengoídelc*, McCone's *Grammar and Reader*, and Tigges & Ó Béarra's *Primer*. I am also aware of Felici and Stifter's contributions, although I have not yet had the opportunity to examine them.
For Old Irish I and II, I primarily use the *Paradigms* and *Workbook*, supplemented by material from *Sengoídelc*, and selections from authentic texts. For the reading course, we read a text throughout the course supplemented by exercises on grammar and palaeography. I continue to use the *Paradigms* and *Workbook* out of a combination of

inertia/lack of time for pedagogical development, and because it is possible to complete the *Workbook* within one semester.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Yes. Vocabulary lists, pronunciation guides, audio recordings of sentences from the *Workbook*, and grammatical quizzes.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

A wide range of student backgrounds and needed supports, and the extremely short range of courses in Uppsala. The difficulty of the language itself, and of its orthography, is another major factor. In Sweden, the fact that students are extremely unlikely to have any modern Irish or be familiar with any elements of early Irish tradition.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

There are, quite simply, a lot of "moving parts" to take into account when first approaching the *Workbook*, especially for contemporary students who do not have the experience with grammar-translation approaches to Latin and Greek that the *Workbook* assumes. As most of my students aren't proficient in Modern Irish, the vocabulary is largely new. The *Workbook* takes a long time to introduce some of the most common features in the language (e.g. preterite forms and compound verbs), which makes approaching authentic materials difficult.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

Ideally, materials which introduce the mostly frequently encountered vocabulary and linguistic forms first, so as to make students able to access (glossed) authentic texts sooner. Jesse Byock's *Viking Language* comes to mind as a model. Resources which place a greater emphasis on pronunciation – a shocking number of scholars are incapable of pronouncing even the titles of texts correctly. While I do not teach in Ireland, I think that the lack of materials (as far as I am aware) which take advantage of the potential for transfer from modern Irish is a missed opportunity.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar

to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I do involve active written production of Old Irish in my assessment of Old Irish I and II. Oral production is more difficult, given that all Old Irish courses at Uppsala are distance courses. In general, I find the idea of a conversational approach with emphasis on oral production intriguing (and if it prevents me from having to hear ad-UM-nawn ever again, so much the better), although I worry that most universities simply do not assign enough contact hours for such approaches to be feasible.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.8. Aaron Griffith

Assistant Professor, Department of Languages, Literatures and Communication, Utrecht University
URL: https://www.uu.nl/staff/AMGriffith

Questionnaire: 27 February 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

We have a one-block introduction (seven teaching weeks) for students of varying backgrounds (Celtic majors together with non-Celtic students; most are BA students but there are usually a small number of MA students as well). The course introduces the entire grammar and the literature. This is followed up with a further course for reading Old Irish prose and poetry. The first two are mandatory for Celtic BA students. There is an optional third course for Celtic students.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

The first class meets for 56 hours (42 hours of language and grammar and 14 of literature and culture). The second and third classes meet for 42 hours.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

We use Ranke de Vries' introductory textbook. We don't read authentic Old Irish from the start, since it is simply too difficult. We have some workbook-type sentences, but I have also taken part of *Táin bó Froích* and adapted it as an introductory text (simple but increasingly difficult morphology and syntax; see below).

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

Stifter, the workbook [by John Strachan], de Vries, Tigges, McCone.
Stifter and de Vries are the only ones really useful for learning Old Irish, though de Vries does not have exercises. Being that Ranke developed her book for use in Utrecht and I'm there, institutional momentum keeps us using it. I find it informal, but quite good.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Yes, sentences for translation into Old Irish (together with some grammatical explanation of the topic of the day); also the adapted version of TBF, which is also English to Old Irish. Further, Peter Schrijver has a very abbreviated morphological and phonological overview of the language that we use as a supplement to the other materials.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

The block system of Utrecht forces us to teach everything in seven weeks, which is simply too short a time to learn everything.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

The usual: large numbers of forms and very opaque categories and morphophonological changes. Also, they tend to not have a great knowledge of traditional school grammar, which makes learning almost any older language quite difficult.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

Perhaps on-line resources for helping students check whether they have learned the forms properly?

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I have used about ten minutes of each class in the first week or two for conversational Old Irish, but only to a very limited degree. We also use English to Old Irish exercises for the first four weeks of the block. Then comes the midterm and we start reading from *Stories from the Táin* (beside learning further grammar).
I myself learned Ancient Greek with a (somewhat) conversational approach, which is why I tried it somewhat with Old Irish as well.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.9. Deborah Hayden

Professor of Old and Middle Irish, Department of Early Irish, Maynooth Univeristy
URL: https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/faculty-arts-humanities/our-people/deborah-hayden

Questionnaire: 19 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

I have taught Old Irish beginners' classes to both undergraduates and postgraduates in various contexts. Sometimes students had no knowledge of the language whatsoever (e.g. foreign students), while in other cases students might have quite an extensive knowledge of Modern Irish grammar and vocabulary, which was at least a help to them in understanding certain concepts like initial mutations or basic vocabulary. When I taught in Cambridge and Oxford, students sometimes had a grounding in classical or other medieval languages that could help them understand the grammatical structures of Old Irish, but in Maynooth my experience has generally been that beginner students have no knowledge of grammar at all (but again, this can depend on where they are from; exchange students from other European countries often have more experience of studying other languages and secondary level and therefore can apply some of the grammatical concepts they have learned from those to the Old Irish context).

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

In Cambridge and Oxford, there were 3 terms per year, 2 of 8 weeks and one slightly shorter than this (6 weeks, if I remember correctly). We would usually have 1-2 contact hours of teaching per week for each class. In Maynooth, a single module of (non-intensive) Old Irish involves 12 weeks x 2 contact hours per week (or 24 hours of lectures over the semester), plus 1 contact hour of tutorials per week for 10 weeks – so about 34 contact hours altogether per semester.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

In Cambridge, we started with Quin's *Workbook* and Strachan's *Paradigms*, and read the blue book version of *Scéle Muicce Meic Dá Thó* alongside it. I did something similar when teaching students in Oxford (using different texts, usually the blue book versions from the DIAS Mediaeval and Modern Irish series). In Maynooth, I followed David Stifter's *Sengoídelc* textbook (which hadn't been available before I started teaching there).

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

Primarily Quin's *Workbook*, the *Paradigms and Glosses*, and Stifter's *Sengoídelc*. I like the last of these for teaching beginners, because it allows you to introduce grammatical concepts and vocabulary gradually, and provides ready-made practice sentences to work with (I used to have to make up a lot of my own sentences, paradigms and so forth before it was published, and would usually tailor these to the level of whatever class I was working with – which was very time-consuming!) It's also useful to use Stifter's book in the teaching system at Maynooth, where the full course is divided up into 4 semesters (for the non-intensive level) and 2 semesters (for intensive level) – so it's easy for a different lecturer to just pick up where the previous one left off if necessary.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Yes, I have – mainly practice sentences and vocabulary lists.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

The biggest problems I've encountered tend to be in teaching students the intricacies of the grammar, largely because a lot of them don't have much of a reference-point for this: they struggle to learn how to describe the grammatical system alongside learning the forms themselves. From a teaching perspective, though, the most challenging thing I've had to face in recent years was dealing with such a diverse cohort of students in a single class – we would typically have quite a mix of foreign students (who might have some familiarity with certain grammatical structures from other languages, e.g. the concept of declensions or cases) and then Irish students who have some familiarity with the Irish language, but not necessarily grammar as such. So I just have to teach everything with no assumed knowledge at all (which, to be honest, is usually a good way to go about it anyway!)

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

Understanding grammatical structures/definitions and the verbal system. Often students struggle initially with the phonology and orthography, but I make a point of spending some time on this so that they understand it as a (fairly regular) system. I often use comparisons from English or Modern Irish grammar (or even other languages) when I'm explaining concepts, as this can be a help to students more familiar with those languages.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

Lots of ready-made practice sentences would be good – this can be rather time-consuming thing to have to prepare. Vocabulary-building exercises would also be useful, and maybe basic introductions to 'how (medieval) languages/grammar work'. When I taught in Cambridge (in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic, which offers a few different medieval languages as part of its programme), we did an introductory class for first-year students that was all about English grammar, just to help them get a sense of how grammatical structures work and what certain technical terminology means, before they would dive into the grammar of less familiar medieval languages as part of their course. I had the sense that a lot of them found that really helpful.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I don't have direct experience of this myself, but I could see it being useful in certain contexts, to a limited extent. The difficulty I foresee is if a student is trying to learn Old Irish by themselves (something that is rather common in our discipline) – there's a danger that they could internalise something the wrong way and then just repeat that over and over again. I think the 'spoken languages' approach could work if you have a teacher with a very strong grasp of the phonology of Old Irish and can pass this on to students – but this is just not the case for many (even very experienced) teachers of the language, unfortunately. I guess it would work okay with very basic vocabulary building and grammatical structures, but it would get a lot trickier once one moves into the intermediate and advanced level (at which point, students often also start having to grapple with complex questions of textual transmission/evidence/attestations, etc., so there are increasingly severe limitations on the teaching time available).

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes, sure.

5.6.1.10. Jan-Niklas Linnemeier

Research Assistant, Chair of Comparative Philology, University of Würzburg
URL: https://www.phil.uni-wuerzburg.de/en/vgsp/team/jan-niklas-linnemeier/

Questionnaire: 10 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

Within a loose rotation of "western Indo-European languages" for the BA and MA programmes in Indo-European studies. That's typically also the background of the students, though we do get some interested learners from adjacent fields, too.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

Only one semester at 30 teaching hours.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I try to start with authentic texts or snippets as early as possible and leave them as unchanged as I can. I believe reading original material and encountering variations and strange forms is a key part of philology.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I like Stifter 2006 for its clarity and didactic concept. I follow a roughly similar structure and recommend it to students of Indo-European who want to continue with Old Irish on a self-study basis. De Vries 2013 is a decent companion piece. I have rarely worked with McCone 2005 or older books like Quin 1975, but I still like to hand out copies of Strachan's *Old-Irish paradigms* for quick reference.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

I have created some exercises to apply the more complicated parts of inflection like infixed pronouns, though I often take or adapt them from Stifter as well. For reading, I use my own selections from the glosses to suit the topic of each session.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

Mostly time constraints. With only one semester, I have yet to figure out a well-rounded selection of parts of the phonology and morphology to teach without leaving out other crucial elements.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

The complex verbal morphology and especially the high degree of suppletion. Figuring out which forms belong in one paradigm synchronically is neither easy nor satisfying to most students. Some struggle with the writing system as well, though this usually settles after doing some reading.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

More annotated versions of longer narrative texts would be great for reading sessions, basically CorPH for Middle Irish. The editions by Meid are good, but quite unwieldy in their printed form.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

In my experience, reversing perspectives occasionally and translating into an old language can greatly increase the learning effect. (A former teacher did this in a Baltic class and I can still recall the sentences to this day.) I have not dabbled in the concept for Old Irish, but similar exercises like switching sentences into a different mood or reformulating them as questions were always stimulating.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.11. Anna Matheson

Associate Professor of Medieval Literatures, Universities of Tours and Brest
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Questionnaire: 28 February 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

I teach master's students who have no previous knowledge of Old Irish but who do have some Modern Irish.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

1.5 hours per week for 10 weeks; 3 semesters (a semester is 10 weeks of class).

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I use textbooks and then, by week 7 of semester 1, we start reading short poems in class in addition to the assigned homework from the textbook (see syllabi attached).

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I know them all, including Stifter's which is excellent. I use Strachan and Quin and I explain on day 1 that it may be an old coursebook but it is part of a longstanding tradition that we become a part of by using it (I introduce the students to its important historical context). I also explain that, although it is old, it is still the current textbook used in Cambridge and TCD. However, I refer them to Stifter's book when further/better information is needed. We rely on Stifter's excellent work as well.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

On week 2 I give them a handout concerning prepositions; I have another two handouts on verbs. I will send them to you.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

The verb. It's taken me ages to draft (and I still haven't finished) a definitive handout on the verb. I am also not confident about pronunciation.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

You would have to ask them, but those that have difficulty in my experience are those who do not pay close attention when reading the Workbook and preparing their homework. Old Irish is not something you can wing. It takes focus.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

I would like *Stair na Gaeilge* to be translated into English. Scandal, I know.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

No, I have not tried that. My aim in class is not conversational Old Irish. I tell the students they should memorise their Latin paradigms, but as the Irish language changes so drastically (Old vs Middle vs Classical) my aim is that they understand the grammar of Old Irish and know how to use *Old Irish Paradigms* and *Workbook* to translate a text.

N.B. We do Old Irish in 1st year master's; Middle and Classical Irish in 2nd year

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.12. Tatyana Mihailova

Professor of Celtic, Institute of Linguistics, Moscow State University
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Questionnaire: 10 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

In the years 2011-2015 and 2015-2019 in the Moscow State University small groups of students with Modern Irish as the first language. I did teach Old Irish during two semesters of the second year. It was after the course Introduction to Celtic Philology and before the course – History of Irish. Now we have no regular classes of Old Irish, but many students are interested in this subject.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

Two semesters, two hours per week.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

Many years ago I did prefer to start with reading some texts, for example – *Pangur bán*, with translation and commentary. But later I began to prefer systematic studies.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I know (and I have) many. Thurneysen Grammar, Strachan and Bergin (*Paradigms*), Quin's *Workbook*, Lehmann *Introduction to Old Irish*, Chadwick, *An Early Irish Reader*, McCone, *A First Old Irish Grammar*, Tigges, *An Old Irish Primer*, O Fiannachta, *SeanGhaeilge gan dua* and surely the brilliant book by Stifter!

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Yes, I did. It is an introduction to the language and literature and culture, with illustrations. Each lesson was composed with: grammar, text with glossary, some archaeological or historical description.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

The lack of time! To study language, it requires deep immersion in the subject.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

The same.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

May be some on-line courses in English? I know, it was some experiments.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I don't think so. Old language is a dead language.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.13. Kristen Mills

Associate professor of Medieval Studies, Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo
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Questionnaire: 28 February 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

One introductory course. It is currently offered to both BA and MA students. The background varies – some are linguistics students, or have studied case languages in the past. Some know only Norwegian and English. Occasionally an exchange student might have studied a modern Celtic language, Scottish Gaelic being most common, because of UiO's exchange agreements with Celtic Studies departments in Scotland.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

14 weeks of class, two hours a week, 28 hours of instruction total. In some semesters there is a TA to give additional instruction.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I use introductory textbooks. I feel that jumping right into the grammar in an authentic Old Irish text would be too challenging for the level that most of the students are at when they start.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I am familiar with Ranke de Vries' *A Student's Companion to Old Irish Grammar*, John Strachan's *Old-Irish Paradigms*, Quin's *Old-Irish Workbook*, and David Stifter's *Sengoídelc*. I currently use De Vries, Strachan, and Quin. I have considered using Stifter's *Sengoídelc*, but am concerned that the linguistic framing of the material might not be suitable for the majority of my students. The students love De Vries' book.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Powerpoints, handouts.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

Convincing students to stick with it in the beginning, when everything is new and they feel overwhelmed by how different OI grammar and orthography are in comparison to what they are used to.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

The intricacy of the grammar is very challenging for them, even if they've studied Latin or German (for example). The cases do not look as regular in OI as they do in many other languages, and navigating the verbal system is a bit like playing Tetris (this moves here, which causes this, but that triggers something else...).

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

An updated version of Quin's workbook, with more varied subject matter for the sentences, would be appealing.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I have not tried such an approach but would be delighted to try if the teaching materials were available.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.14. Joseph Nagy

Professor of Irish Studies, Department of Celtic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University
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Questionnaire: 4 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

Students in our PhD program in Celtic, some graduate students pursuing Medieval Studies or Linguistics, some adventurous college students.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

It's a four-semester sequence; three hours each semester, about twelve-thirteen weeks.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

In the first semester I take the students through Thurneysen's GOI, with some help from the Strachan/Bergin and Ranke De Vries's book.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

For students who are studying the language independently, I recommend the very user-friendly Stifter.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

No. Once we've gone through the grammar, we start with *Stories from the Táin* and go from there to other texts, in the MMIS series or from DIAS.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

The fact that it is a wonderfully complex language, very different from say English.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish

See the above.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

More glossed editions like MMIS and its successors published by DIAS.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I have not tried such approaches, but I'm sure in the right hands they could be effective.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.15. Andrea Nuti

Associate Professor of Celtic and Linguistics, Department of Philology, Literature and Linguistics, University of Pisa
URL: https://www.fileli.unipi.it/dipartimento/persone/?p=andrea-nuti

Questionnaire: 27 February 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

A limited sample of Old Irish texts, within the frame of a more general course of Celtic linguistics. At best, students know Latin and, sometimes, Greek.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

A course in a semester, every year (36 hours…).

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I start with an Old Irish text. Simply, no time to cover extensively a grammar (only a few parts of it).

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I know several, but I use the old Quin's *Workbook* and Strachan-Bergin's *Paradigms and Glosses*, because of their simplicity and schematic character. They're also small, so they don't scare students off…

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Tables with commented nominal paradigms of Old Irish (*fer*, *ben*…)

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

Lack of a fixed graphic standard.

8. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

Pronunciation.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

Simply, more hours…

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I never tried. Consequently, I must admit I am simply agnostic about it.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.16. Aideen O'Leary

Lecturer in Celtic, School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture, University of Aberdeen
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Questionnaire: 3 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

I teach language classes for Honours students (3rd- and 4th-year students) as part of our Celtic & Anglo-Saxon Studies degree. Students' knowledge varies from complete beginners to a few who have studied Scottish Gaelic and/or Modern Irish language. Obviously those with previous language study, or knowledge of linguistics, have some advantage.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

2 semesters, usually every other year, 2 hours per week for 11 weeks, on 3 different days.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I use textbooks, but usually we start reading 'Mac Dathó's Pig' in the last few weeks of the first semester.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I tend to use the *Old Irish Paradigms* and the *Workbook*, because of their clear structure (although they are far from perfect!) and then 'Mac Dathó's Pig' from the Lehmanns' introductory book, which students love.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

I create my own explanations by using the board in class. We emphasise reading aloud from the textbooks which really helps the students and fosters a good group dynamic, even though some take a few weeks to get used to that.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

Some students have difficulties if they have never studied a Celtic language or if they have learning differences.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

Some find the grammar quite complex … Some students forget much of the material during the break between November/December and late January.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

I think an updated version of Strachan and Bergin's work would be good, and/or maybe audio-visual materials (see below on Old English).

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

Not sure – our published Aberdeen *Learning Old English* course book (with audio-visual CD) uses modern language approaches but that's a course I re-edited into multimedia format; I did not create if myself. Yes, some kind of play would probably work well, as long as it didn't take too much time.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.17. Pamela O'Neill

Lecturer in Celtic Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Sidney
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Questionnaire: 14 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

3rd-year undergraduate unit in a BA. Students generally have no exposure to any Celtic language – some have basic linguistics, literature or history.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

One semester made up of 39 teaching hours.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

We start with short extracts of authentic texts and work up to a *Táin Bó* text. None of the currently available textbooks are suitable for the level of understanding of our students, particularly with regard to Euro-centric assumed knowledge.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I have and use for my own reference, because each of them is useful in different ways: Antony Green, *Old Irish Verbs and* Vocabulary, E G Quin, *Old-Irish Workbook*, David Stifter, *Sengoídelc: Old Irish for Beginners*, John Strachan, *Old-Irish Paradigms and Selections from the Old-Irish Glosses,* Rudolf Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish*, Wim Tigges & Feargal Ó Béarra, *An Old Irish Primer,* Ranke de Vries, *A Student's Companion to Old Irish Grammar.* I have but don't use, because I find its approach unhelpful: R P M & W P Lehmann, *Introduction to Old Irish*

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Yes, I have made up paradigms with extra explanatory notes which I provide to students. I also prepare selected extracts of texts which illustrate use of the parts of speech, to be read as I introduce the relevant grammar.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

I don't identify any major problems. It is a bit awkward because I teach it without the context of a wider Celtic Studies program.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

My students generally have no idea of grammar at all, and many would be hard-pressed to find Ireland on a map – but since I teach on that basis they mostly manage quite well.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

A book on similar lines to Stifter's, but less European in its outlook, would be helpful. I do generally prefer to create my own materials, though.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I do a little bit of this to reinforce grammatical rules and the use of paradigms, and find it helpful. I do believe that the aim of my teaching of Old Irish is to equip students to read texts, so I consider a conversational approach to only have a limited role. I focus more on training students to understand that what we see written is scribal attempts to represent a spoken language, so I think it's more valuable to work on recognising when variations are meaningful and when they are simply alternative representations of sounds. I think working too much on active or conversational approaches could tend to make my focus harder to convey.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.18. Simon Rodway

Senior Lecturer in Celtic, Department of Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth University
URL: https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/cymraeg/staff-profiles/listing/profile/syr/

Questionnaire: 25 February 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

I have three beginners' Old Irish modules, one English-medium for undergraduates, one Welsh-medium for undergraduates and one English-medium for masters students.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

The modules either run for two semesters with one hour a week or for one semester with two hours a week. Either way, there are 20 contact hours per module.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I use my own course which has extracts from genuine texts.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I use my own course which I created with an intention to publish in the early 2000s. I never published it because (a) the research assessment criteria in the UK changed to exclude 'pedagogical research' and (b) Old Irish courses by Kim McCone (2005) and David Stifter (2006) appeared making mine largely redundant. I have a plan to eventually publish the Welsh version.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Yes. See above.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

Some students find the grammar difficult, others thrive on it.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

The grammar is complicated. This can be off-putting or stimulating, depending on the interests and ability of the student.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

I think there are plenty of resources now available (courses, online dictionary, edited texts etc.).

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I am not a big fan of made-up sentences in Old Irish, although I concede that some students find them helpful. I do have a short 'Old Irish phrasebook' with useful phrases ('What is your name?' 'Goodbye' etc.) taken from genuine texts, and the students seem to like this.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.19. Elisa Roma

Associate Professor, Department of Arts, University of Pavia
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Questionnaire: 27 February 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

I teach to a small class of 2 to 10 students each year, almost all of which are students of the MA Programme in Linguistics. They have background in linguistics and sometimes some bases of Indo-European comparative studies, but in general no previous knowledge at all on any Celtic language. I have taught courses in Celtic Philology in Italian and then Celtic Linguistics in English for about 20 years now.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

Half a semester, in fact, 36 hours, for a couple of years with additional 10 hours tutoring by a PhD student. Next year the course will be 48 hours.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I use my own lecture notes, and after presenting some basics regarding spelling and mutations and showing paradigms for nominal and verbal inflection, I read authentic Old Irish texts. I do this because as a student of ancient languages that was what was most interesting to me and I think that is the most exciting part of studying an ancient or medieval language. Besides, reading texts is how I learnt Old Irish on my own. I also give my students reference to Thurneysen's GOI, Stifter's *Sengoídelc* and Bergin and Strachan's *Old Irish Paradigms and Selections*, and from time to time I show and comment on pages of these sources.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

Besides the aforementioned ones, I know J. Pokorny, *Altirische Grammatik*, 1969; E. G. Quin, *Old-Irish Workbook*, Dublin 1975; Kim McCone, *A first Old Irish Grammar and Reader*, Maynooth 2005; Ranke De Vries, *A Student's Companion to Old Irish Grammar*, Burlington 2020 (1st edition 2013); R. P. Lehmann & W.P. Lehmann, *An introduction to Old Irish*, New York 1975. Not really a textbook, but I include in my notes reconstructions of paradigms from Kim McCone, 'An tSean-Ghaeilge agus a Réamhstair', in *Stair na*

Gaeilge in ómós do Phádraig Ó Fiannachta, Maigh Nuad 1994 [my Italian translation, 2005]. The reconstruction part is useful for students in historical linguistics.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Yes, I create my own teaching materials. 1) lecture notes with introduction to the Celtic languages, including continental documents, basic reconstruction issues (what is a Celtic language), synthetic description of the morphology of Old Irish with some syntactic observations and some diachronic hints to later (Modern Irish) developments, a selection of texts to be read, i.e. Glosses, poems (short poems and quatrains from Félire), Cambrai Homily, narratives (TBC, SMMD or TBFr, during Covid Noínden Ulad), some Triads, some lines from Bechbretha... (I don't read them all!). 2) Exercises, either translation exercises with grammar questions, as above, or interactive grammar exercises in the university learning application (e.g. match nominal or verbal forms with the correct headword or the correct morphological analysis, identify the correct emphatic particle or infix in forms that contain one; the application may show the solutions during or after completing the exercise). 3) summary and clarification slides (e.g. chronology of documents, how mutations came about, structure of the verbal complex, how to search words in eDIL).

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

My course is too short for most students to be able to become autonomous in the study of Old Irish. Sometimes they quit during or after the course because they find Old Irish is too difficult. Some students are interested in poetry, some others in narratives, but, linguistically, poetry is difficult as a learning material and narratives contain Middle Irish forms that complicate matters. The glosses are the best from the linguistic point of view, but are not very interesting for students.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

As far as I can tell, they apply categories of other languages and do not realise that they can and should master Old Irish syntax before its morphology. Morphology is overwhelming and discouraging. Many students comment that my course is too brief (I have not been allowed to extend it up to now given the small number of students), so some problems experienced by my students could depend mainly on that.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

Many interactive exercises as the ones I created (they took me a lot of time), especially similar matching and correspondence exercises on real texts rather than single words, that help students to become autonomous in searching eDIL.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I have tried and used translation exercises from Old Irish to Italian (or English), similar to those in Quin's *Workbook* or Stifter's *Sengoídelc*, adding questions such as: identify mutations, tell whether the verb form is absolute or conjunct, but I have never asked to translate whole sentences into Old Irish (maybe single phrases orally, such as if *mo charae* is 'my friend' what is 'your friend'?). The course is too short, in the first place, but I also doubt whether I would do that even in a longer course. I have experienced translation from Italian into Latin as a young student and I don't think it was helpful beyond the first two or three grammar lessons. Certainly it was much more boring than reading Latin and Greek literature.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.20. Duncan Sneddon

Lecturer in Celtic, Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies, The University of Edinburgh
URL: https://edwebprofiles.ed.ac.uk/profile/dr-duncan-sneddon

Questionnaire: 27 February 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

I have only taught OI once – last year – so I don't have a lot to draw on, but most of our students are doing Celtic degrees and will have at least two years of modern Scottish Gaelic behind them before they start OI. Some will have more, if they have Gaelic from home and/or school, and last year we had a student doing a Maths degree but who has pretty good Modern Irish, and he did very well. I think we sometimes get Linguistics students doing it as well, and they won't usually have any Celtic-language background as such.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

Two semesters, with four hours per week. The structure is a bit complicated, because it's technically two courses that run through both terms, but four hours a week over two terms is what it amounts to. There is also an advanced OI class which is two hours a week over the two terms, but we don't often have enough students to run it. In practice most of those doing OI with us do two semesters.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

We start with grammatical instruction for the first semester, and then move onto authentic texts either at the end of the first semester or at the start of the second, depending on progress. Last year we did *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* and the Boyhood Deeds from *Stories from the Táin* as the authentic texts, and the year before, when the advanced class ran, it was *Fingal Rónáin* that was used for that.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

Stifter's *Sengoídelc* and Quin's *Workbook* are the two textbooks I know, but we don't use either of them. We basically have a set of documents which we've inherited from whoever

taught OI here before my time (Abi Burnyeat, I think), and I don't know which if any textbooks were used in compiling them. It's sort of an in-house coursebook, I suppose.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

I haven't done yet, but I would like to create some materials designed especially for those with modern Gaelic.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

Grammatical instruction is still very traditional, which is fine for those who can do that well, but really addresses the education norms of a bygone age.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

As above.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

Materials in the modern Goidelic languages themselves (e.g. glossing OI texts).

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

We haven't tried this yet, but I would be very open to it. I've found that my own learning of Latin has benefitted immensely from C.I. [Comprehensible Input] methodology, and if resources could be produced to help us do something similar for OI I would jump at the chance to use them. Using C.I. I was able to move from trying to decipher Latin like a code or set of rules to being able to use it like a language, and anything that helps us do the same in OI I would welcome with open arms, absolutely.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.21. Nike Stam

Assistant Professor, Department of Languages, Literatures and Communication, Utrecht University
URL: https://www.uu.nl/staff/NStam

Questionnaire: 3 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

We teach Old Irish 1, 2, and 3 (currently) as part of our BA programme in Celtic Studies. Some of these students will have chosen our BA as their BA programme, and others may come from other programmes because they are interested in the topic or in languages in general. Therefore, background knowledge may be very diverse: some students may have done Latin or Greek and may therefore have experience with case-systems and complex verbal systems, but others may not, and start 'blanco' as it were. Some may have knowledge of the Middle Ages, and others may not at all. We also occasionally get students from Ireland who are familiar with Modern Irish but not with Old Irish.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

We work in a block system of roughly 4 blocks of 10-11 weeks; of these weeks we teach 7 weeks. Old Irish 1 has 8 contact hours; Old Irish 2 and 3 both have 6 contact hours (the regular amount); this generally amounts to two-hour classes either 3 times a week or one block of 4 hours and one block of 2 hours a week.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

In Old Irish 1 we use the *Paradigms* and Ranke de Vries' *Students' Companion to Old Irish Grammar.* Towards the end of Old Irish 1, we start reading from *Stories from the Táin*. In Old Irish 2, we introduce eDIL and various early Irish poems while also continuing to read to *Stories from the Táin*. Previously, we have also used *Táin Bó Fraích* in this class. For language acquisition, we really like Ranke's book, but we find it important to start reading Old Irish texts already in the '1' course, although of course whether you can consider these 'authentic' is another kettle of fish!

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

Ranke's textbook is clear and full of humour. We like it very much, and so do the students. We have tried Wim Tigges' book one year, but we didn't like it as much as Ranke's *Companion*. I wasn't teaching that time, so I'm not sure why, because his idea is nice (some grammar + original text).

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

I have not, so far, but perhaps my colleague Aaron Griffith has, as he has been teaching Old Irish at UU much longer than I have.
I do sometimes use Quizlet as an additional tool, and ask students to create a vocabulary of material together, so that they can use this tool to practice their memorisation.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

The grammar is incredibly complex, we never have enough time to ease the students into it.
Added to this is the diverse background of students: we have tried to even this out somewhat in the first week with a cheat sheet on grammatical terminology (what is a subject, object, verb etc), but this slows teaching down too.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

The amount of (new) structures and material they have to learn off by rote in a very short period of time. The fact that syntax is so different from what they're used to; the difference between substantive verb and copula.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

Perhaps an interactive online tool to practice verb conjugation/noun cases with or sth? (Although I think Dennis King has something like that) Although now we do this on Quizlet, but we have to build the material ourselves, and there are always problems of consistency. Or perhaps more practice in translating into Old Irish, like the *Workbook*, but creating more 21st century sentences, in which men and women appear, and in which not everyone is killing each other. We have started creating these for Welsh, I think, but not yet for Old Irish due to time constraints and work load in our teaching model.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar

to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I think active language learning definitely helps in memorising certain things, and creating more awareness of, for example, mostly unknown grammatical features such as the mutations (which may be invisible in written texts) as well as pronunciation.
The *Workbook* offer the possibility to translate into Old Irish, and we generally use some of these exercises to activate knowledge. I remember doing these when I started to learn Old Irish, and finding these very difficult (and useful) because they forced you to look at all the elements necessary to correctly construct a sentence.
I know my colleague Aaron Griffith sometimes begins Old Irish 1 with a conversational approach, but only for one class as an introductory element, but you'd have to ask him how he evaluates this!

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.22. David Stifter

Professor of Old and Middle Irish, Department of Early Irish, Maynooth University
URL: https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/faculty-arts-humanities/our-people/david-stifter

Questionnaire: 6 March 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

In the last years, I have only been teaching classes for postgraduate students at Maynooth University, typically without much or any linguistic background, and rarely with any knowledge of other ancient or medieval languages. When they are of Irish background, they usually are familiar with a bit of Modern Irish, but that doesn't usually extend to a real and reflective linguistic competency.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

My Intensive Old Irish course extends over 2 semesters with 4 hours of lectures per week plus one hour of tutorials. This equates to approximately 100 contact hours in the main course, plus 20–24 tutorial hours taught by somebody else.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I start with an introductory textbook. I think it would be possible to start with an authentic text in the case of very well-trained students of historical linguistics, who have a broad knowledge of other languages, but even in those cases I think starting with an authentic text only leads to a patchy and unsystematic acquisition of the language. I prefer a structured approach to teaching the language where the grammar is presented as a cohesive system.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I know Quin's *Workbook* well because I used it myself to learn Old Irish (its inadequacies were in fact the reason why I decided to write my own textbook). I also know Ó Fiannachta's, the Lehmanns', McCone's and Tigges' books a bit, but I never used them for teaching. I use my own textbook *Sengoídelc*, because I think it is the best structured from the point of view of a graded textbook, and because I am most familiar with it.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

I did so from 1996–the early 2000s. This material became *Sengoídelc*.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

The complexity of the verbal morphology. Simply keeping up with all the different levels of morphology and dimensions of semantics and syntax is challenging to students, especially if they have no experience with learning complex languages. I don't think that dumbing down the learning experience would be advisable, i.e. not to expose beginners' students to all the complexities of the verbal system. I am strongly convinced that the entire grammar needs to be covered in a beginners' course so as to give the students a full picture of the language. This of course implies that I have to enter some details that they may find overwhelming. It is a challenge to find the right balance where to stop talking about very specific variation in orthography or the textual philology of the language.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

I am not sure that it is possible to make general, swiping statements. It depends on the abilities of the individual students. Some are capable of absorbing all the details, while the weaker ones struggle even with basic concepts, especially at the beginning of the course. Typical challenges are recognising verb or noun forms that involve complex phonological and morphological alternations, and translating sentences (word order, creating meaningful sentences out of individual words). Some of these problems clearly reflect on the way how I teach the language, namely with a focus on morphology. Maybe students would have less issues with translating sentences (or texts) if more time were spent on that in the classroom.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

E.g. online, interactive exercises for the analysis of forms and easy reading pieces, e.g. bridging texts.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

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I have not tried such an approach myself. I think it can be helpful to train aspects such as word order and to allow students to develop a feeling for the overall sentence structure, and, if done properly, it will help to anchor phonology better in the minds of the students. Since, in ordinary language use, copula constructions are very frequent, but the copula is introduced only relatively late in my book, this approach is, at the moment, not easily reconcilable with the way and the sequence of topics how I teach the language. I think there are limits to the usefulness of an oral approach: as soon as very complex verbal morphology is being taught, the time investment required for teaching it orally would not warrant the learning outcome, and it would become a question of diminishing returns.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.23. Karin Stüber

Professor of Celtic Studies, Institute for the Interdisciplinary Study of Language Evolution, University of Zürich
URL: https://www.isle.uzh.ch/en/staff/stueber.html

Questionnaire: 27 February 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

I have taught students of historical linguistics that typically came with a knowledge of Latin and Greek and perhaps also Sanskrit. Others came from other language departments like English or German.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

Just one semester, teaching 90 minutes per week for 14 weeks.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

I use introductory textbooks. I started in the 90s with Quin's *Workbook* and later used Stifter, *Sengoídelc*. I think authentic Old Irish texts are too complex to start directly with those.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

See answer 3. Quin was the only one available at the time. Stifter is much more helpful and I appreciate that he includes original sentences. For a one semester course, however, it is too exhaustive and not easy to shorten.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

I used my own script with excerpts from Quin and simple original sentences as soon as possible. I also added a phonemic transcription in the early lessons, just like Stifter does.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

The morphology is complex and atypical when you come from ancient languages like Latin and Greek. Some verb forms especially (prototonic ones) are difficult to recognise.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

Paradigms can seem somewhat abstract because there are often no 'proper' endings. Finding the head word in the dictionary can be a great challenge – for that reason I worked with vocabulary lists. Of course, with eDIL that is easier now.

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

A shortened version of Stifter with fewer details would be ideal for linguists who want to understand how the language works but do not expect to go on reading original texts.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I think that could help, it certainly helped me when I learned Old Irish with Quin. I never used this approach in classes, simply because there was not enough time.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.1.24. Michael Weiss

Professor of Indo-European Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, Cornell University
URL: https://linguistics.cornell.edu/michael-l-weiss

Questionnaire: 27 February 2025

1. What kind of Old Irish beginners' classes do or did you teach? What is the typical background knowledge of your students?

The course is offered at the graduate level. Most students are interested in Indo-European linguistics. A few come from Medieval Studies and there are occasional undergraduates too.

2. How many semesters and teaching hours per semester do you have for your classes?

I teach two 14-week semesters at 3 hours per week. Next time I teach it, it will be 4 hours per week. We get through 50 chapters or so in the first semester and finish the rest in the second. Then we go on to read some short prose texts like *Táin Bó Froích*, *Loinges Mac n-Uislenn*, *Mac Dathó's Pig* and then the *Infancy Gospel* of Thomas and Blathmac.

3. Do you use introductory textbooks or do you start reading an authentic Old Irish text from the start? If so, why?

We use *Sengoídelc*! I think it's crazy to start directly with Old Irish.

4. Which Old Irish textbooks do you know, and which one/s do you use and why?

I know Quin (which I learned from), Stifter (which I have taught from 5 times or six times), I have looked at Lehmann and Tigges. Stifter is the best for the linguistic-oriented clientele I mainly teach. I still like Quin and sometime supplement Stifter with poems from Tigges.

5. Do you also create your own teaching materials? If yes, please describe them briefly.

Yes, mainly vocabulary lists per lesson classified by stem type, and glossed and commented additional readings.

6. What are, according to your experience, the major problems in teaching Old Irish?

It is hard to achieve the right balance for a mixed audience of linguists and medievalists.

7. What are the major problems that students experience while learning Old Irish?

It's hard and there isn't enough time to drill so that the students acquire the morphology (as they would traditionally have done in a beginning Latin class).

8. What kinds of materials would you like to be available for the teaching and learning of Old Irish in the future?

Maybe some more exercises beyond what's in Stifter, though I don't have time to get through all of those.

9. Do you think an active and conversational approach to Old Irish, for example, translations into Old Irish or any kind of simple oral or written production, similar to the one applied to Latin and Ancient Greek, could contribute to a better learning of it? Have you ever tried such an active approach? Feel free to comment.

I have never tried such a thing, but I think it would be fun and would certainly add to the tools of instruction. I'd be happy to test some things in class, next time I teach.

10. Do you give me permission to mention your name in my PhD thesis?

Yes.

5.6.2. Comments

I conducted this survey on the advice of one of my Viva examiners, who deemed the approach to the teaching of Old Irish across a wide range of universities worth investigating. In fact, the results of this survey reveal great variety in the various teaching approaches, not to mention the high degree of passion, involvement and dedication, by which one cannot help being further inspired and motivated.

This survey, which I intend to develop in greater depth in an article in the near future, is not an end in itself: it should be considered the beginning of research that warrants additional time and analysis. For the time being, I will restrain myself to briefly commenting on some of the points that emerged in the survey.

- Teaching approaches: For a strongly textbook-based teacher like me, it was interesting to see that the choice to use an introductory textbook to teach Old Irish cannot always be taken for granted. Some teachers simply do not use it and introduce students to the language by following other paths, for example, by using their own grammatical handouts, original texts or a combination thereof. In one case, students are taught the language by using GOI as the main tool, after which they delve into original texts. I am strongly convinced, like other contributors, that using a graded textbook is a softer way to introduce students to such a complex language but, as I mentioned in Chapter 2 of this thesis, teaching approaches are also very personal and not set in stone. As a teacher, I never dismiss other teachers' approaches completely, even when they are radically different from mine. I know that if I look more closely, if I take some time to reflect upon them and the reasons why they are used, I will always be able to find some points of interest, and even of inspiration, to enrich my own teaching.

- Textbook choices: This was another unexpected result. I assumed that most people using an Old Irish textbook would use David Stifter's *Sengoídelc*: it has graded grammatical instruction, exercises, reading sentences, excerpts from original texts, and a full glossary (see 2.6.). Nevertheless, it is not always the first choice. The pair Strachan 1909 – Quin 1975 seems to be more in use than I had thought. Some teachers also use departmental (and unpublished) textbooks or, rather, lecture notes. The Ranke de Vries *Companion* seems to be popular as well, although I would not consider it a textbook in the strict sense. It is certainly a very good and very accessible reference tool, but it is not graded and has neither readings nor exercises. I would see it more effective, for example, when used in conjunction with Quin's graded approach. In some cases, choices are dictated by a sense of loyalty towards the department or the author of a certain resource. For example, the contributor from Edinburgh uses departmental lecture notes 'inherited' from a previous departmental tradition, while lecturers at Utrecht University prefer De Vries' *Companion* because of the bond between that college and its author. Lehman's textbook is in some cases still in use as well, although not as an independent language textbook, but rather as a fully annotated reader to be used as the first approach to original texts (see, in this respect, what I wrote in my review in 2.3.). The reasons behind the choice of a certain textbook may be rather

complex: they are not always related to the effectiveness of a resource but may also mirror the professional history of a teacher, the traditions of an institution and its relationships to the field of Celtic Studies, as well as the evolution and vitality of the field itself. These are aspects that merit further investigation.

- <u>Lack of time</u>: one of the most frequently mentioned problems in the teaching of Old Irish is the lack of sufficient time to cover the language properly. Several teachers feel that this is an issue. In some cases, it is this lack that forces teachers to use less graded approaches and to focus on original texts from the first day of teaching. It is also true, however, that a textbook such as *Sengoídelc* requires time. In Maynooth we are very lucky to have four full semesters to complete it (two semesters for the intensive class), but this is not the case in every college. Time constraints of colleges are also the reason why I consider my ongoing textbook LNIS unsuitable for the college setting, as explained in 3.3.

- <u>Conversational approach</u>: most contributors showed a positive or partially positive attitude towards the application of a conversational approach to the teaching of Old Irish. Two of them experienced it themselves when learning Latin and Greek and found it very useful. In some cases, such an approach is found useful only to a limited extent, especially considering the nature of Old Irish verbal morphology. As David Stifter points out, when the verbal morphology becomes very complex, trying to master those forms orally and use them in conversational exchanges will require very time-consuming training, which may transpire to be counterproductive and jeopardize the learning process. This is a real risk and an issue to consider. This is also the reason why LNIS is intended to be not only conversation-based, but first and foremost exposure-based. Its aim is always to provide the learner with very large amounts of graded and accessible text into which to delve. Ideally, the text, as well as its exercises, should work as a starting point for active language production, first oral, and then written. However, should oral activities and conversational exchanges become too slow, strenuous, and cumbersome because of the complexity of the grammatical topic covered, learners can still choose to use the lesson materials differently: instead of struggling to produce the answers to content questions or exercises orally, they will be able to do so in writing, thus having the time to reflect upon each form and structure without the pressure of an oral exchange. This will not compromise the effects of language exposure, and active written production will foster internalization in a less stressful and tiring manner anyway.

Taking this survey was something of a last-minute adventure, immediately before submitting the final version of this thesis. Nevertheless, this adventure transpired to be very enriching and re-invigorating. It made me feel by how much energy and didactic dynamism the teaching of Old Irish is supported. I am also both privileged and proud to be part of a dedicated and creative teaching community, which strongly encouraged me to keep endeavouring to make a lasting contribution to my field.

5.6.3. Tables

In what follows I include four summarizing tables for questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9.

Scholar	Gender	Institution	Country	Semesters	Teaching Hours per Semester
Anonymous 1	F	—	GB	3	8
Anonymous 2	F	—	GB	2	44
Anonymous 3	F	Maynooth University	IE	2	24
Irene Balles	F	University of Bonn	DE	1	45
Bernhard Bauer	M	University of Graz	AT	1	21
Alderik Blom	M	University of Marburg	DE	2	14
Gregory Darwin	M	Uppsala University	SE	1	roughly 50 (distance course)
Aaron Griffith	M	Utrecht University	NL	1 7-week block	42
Deborah Hayden	F	Maynooth University	IE	2	24
Jan-Niklas Linnemeier	M	University of Würzburg	DE	1	30
Anna Matheson	F	University of Brest	FR	3	15
Tatyana Mihailova	F	Moscow State University	RU	2	roughly 24
Kristen Mills	F	University of Oslo	NO	1	28
Joseph Nagy	M	Harvard University	US	4	roughly 36
Andrea Nuti	M	University of Pisa	IT	1	36
Aideen O'Leary	F	University of Aberdeen	GB	2	22
Pamela O'Neill	F	University of Sidney	AU	1	39
Simon Rodway	M	University of Aberystwyth	GB	1	20
Elisa Roma	F	University of Pavia	IT	1	36
Duncan Sneddon	M	University of Edinburgh	GB	2	44
Nike Stam	F	Utrecht University	NL	1 7-week block	42
David Stifter	M	Maynooth University	IE	2	44
Karin Stüber	F	University of Zürich	CH	1	21
Michael Weiss	M	Cornell University	US	2	42

Table 1: Questions 1 and 2

Scholar	Uses		
	Introductory Textbook	**Own Teaching Materials**	**Authentic Texts**
Anonymous 1	✓	✓	✓
Anonymous 2		✓	✓
Anonymous 3	✓		
Irene Balles		✓	✓
Bernhard Bauer	✓		
Alderik Blom		✓	
Gregory Darwin	✓	✓	✓
Aaron Griffith	✓	✓	
Deborah Hayden	✓	✓	✓
Jan-Niklas Linnemeier		✓	✓
Anna Matheson	✓	✓	
Tatyana Mihailova		✓	✓
Kristen Mills	✓		
Joseph Nagy	**GOI**		
Andrea Nuti		✓	✓
Aideen O'Leary	✓		✓
Pamela O'Neill		✓	✓
Simon Rodway		✓	
Elisa Roma		✓	✓
Duncan Sneddon		✓	✓
Nike Stam	✓		
David Stifter	✓		
Karin Stüber	✓	✓	
Michael Weiss	✓	✓	

Table 2: Questions 3 and 5

Scholar	AOIP		FOIGR		IOI		OIPG		OIW		SCOI		SENG		SGGD	
	Known	Used	Known	Used	Known	Used	Known	Used	Known	Used	Known	Used	Known	Used	Known	Used
Anonymous 1					✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		
Anonymous 2							✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		
Anonymous 3							✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	
Irene Balles	✓		✓		✓				✓				✓			
Bernhard Bauer							✓				✓		✓	✓		
Alderik Blom			✓								✓		✓			
Gregory Darwin	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	
Aaron Griffith	✓						✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			
Deborah Hayden					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		
Jan-Niklas Linnemeier			✓				✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			
Anna Matheson	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Tatyana Mihailova	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Kristen Mills							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Joseph Nagy							✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			
Andrea Nuti							✓	✓	✓	✓						
Aideen O'Leary					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Pamela O'Neill	✓				✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
Simon Rodway			✓										✓			
Elisa Roma	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Duncan Sneddon									✓				✓			
Nike Stam	✓						✓	✓			✓	✓				
David Stifter	✓				✓				✓				✓	✓	✓	
Karin Stüber									✓				✓	✓		
Michael Weiss	✓				✓				✓				✓	✓		

Table 3: Question 4

Scholar	Conversational approach to Old Irish deemed			
	Useful	Useful to a limited extent	Not useful	No opinion
Anonymous 1	✓			
Anonymous 2	✓			
Anonymous 3	✓			
Irene Balles	✓			
Bernhard Bauer	✓			
Alderik Blom	✓			
Gregory Darwin	✓			
Aaron Griffith	✓			
Deborah Hayden		✓		
Jan-Niklas Linnemeier	✓			
Anna Matheson			✓	
Tatyana Mihailova			✓	
Kristen Mills	✓			
Joseph Nagy	✓			
Andrea Nuti				✓
Aideen O'Leary			✓	✓
Pamela O'Neill		✓		
Simon Rodway		✓		
Elisa Roma			✓	
Duncan Sneddon	✓			
Nike Stam	✓			
David Stifter		✓		
Karin Stüber	✓			
Michael Weiss	✓			

Table 4: Question 9

Conclusion

In this thesis I have explored the possibility and potential of applying modern language teaching strategies to the teaching of Old Irish. I started from the reflection that, regardless of the fact that it has no native speakers, Old Irish is a language, and that, as such, it must be possible, at least to some extent, to apply living and conversational approaches to its teaching.

Although such approaches have never been applied to Old Irish before, other historical languages, mostly Latin and Ancient Greek, have a long tradition of active, communicative teaching, as Chapter 1 of this thesis clearly shows. The experiences of W.H.D. Rouse and the Perse School, Luigi Miraglia and the Accademia Vivarium Novum, Christophe Rico and the Polis Institute have widely demonstrated that Latin and Greek can be living, vibrant and communicative languages. However, conversation in Latin and Greek is obviously not—or at least should not be—an end in itself, but a means of attaining a more solid mastery of grammar and vocabulary, thus enabling learners to become much better and more fluent readers of original texts. There is no reason why what has been successfully done with Latin and Greek should not be attempted with Old Irish.

I am aware, however, that, unlike Latin and Greek, Old Irish has no active or conversational tradition in modern times. This means that such a tradition must be created gradually. Latin and Greek have excellent materials upon which to base an active approach, for example, Ørberg's *Familia Romana*, Miraglia's Italian version of *Athenaze*, the other textbooks from the Ørbergian Universe produced by Cultura Clásica, or any publication by the Polis Institute. These are all textbooks that, in the hand of a well-prepared and skilled teacher, can offer effective and engaging learning paths based on large amounts of text exposure and intensive spoken practice. Unfortunately, Old Irish has nothing of this kind. As shown in Chapter 2, none of the Old Irish textbooks published so far proposes a conversational approach, and only two of them, Stifter's *Sengoídelc* and, although to a lesser extent, Quin's *Old Irish Workbook*, offer a truly graded approach suitable for absolute beginners. *Sengoídelc* is now the best textbook available, but it would be useful to also have an alternative to it. In the same way as a Latin learner can choose between *Wheelock's Latin* and *Familia Romana*, or a Greek learner between Rico's *Polis* or Miraglia's adaptation of *Athenaze* and Mastronarde's *Introduction to Attic Greek*, it would be a good thing if also Old Irish learners could choose, according to their needs and preferences, between a more grammar-based and a more conversation-based approach.

This is what prompted me to undertake the task of developing a new Old Irish textbook called *Labrammar-ni in Sengoídilc!* (LNIS), details of which are provided in Chapter 3 of this thesis. In LNIS, which is still very much a work in progress, I am trying to combine some of what I consider to be the most effective features of both the Ørbergian and the Polis books. From the Ørbergian universe, I took the use of very large amounts of text to offer the learner as much language exposure as possible from the very first day of learning. The readings are also very redundant, with the same vocabulary and structures occurring repeatedly to foster learning. Ørbergian books also inspired me in the use of notes in the margins to ensure that learners can follow the text

without interruptions and without having to continually go back and forth between the reading and the glossary at the end of the lesson. The inductive presentation of the grammar, which always appears after the learner has seen it exemplified multiple times in the text, is also based on Ørberg. From the Polis books, instead, I took the modern setting of dialogues and readings and also the extremely large number of questions to be used in the classroom for oral interactions. The exercises are also inspired by Ørberg and are very long to provide additional text exposure and practice. Unlike Polis and Ørbegian books, however, LNIS is bilingual, in the sense that grammatical explanations are in English, and new words are always glossed. This feature comes from more traditional textbooks. I believe that giving translations and immediately understandable explanations allows learners to save time and to focus more on the main texts. All these features are exemplified in the sample lesson (see 5.1.). LNIS is strongly based on relentless language use, and grammatical explanations are simple and to the point. The aim is also to help absolute beginners with no academic background in grammar and linguistics to approach Old Irish and begin to learn it and enjoy it as effectively and smoothly as possible.

The needs of absolute beginners, however, were not the only ones on which I focussed in this thesis. In Chapter 4, I explored the option of producing accessible reading texts for advanced beginners. Such texts, often called 'bridge' or 'bridging' texts, have the fundamental role of 'bridging' the gap between the adapted reading excerpts of the textbook and the original texts, and thus smooth learners' transition towards real literature. One of the possible ways to create 'bridge' texts is by translating well-selected literary texts into Old Irish, as has already been done with Latin, Ancient Greek, Old English, Gothic and other historical languages, also thanks to the support of daring publishing houses such as Evertype and Tintenfass. Translating literature into historical languages, however, poses a series of issues that deserve reflection and analysis in order to be properly managed, also with a view to producing high-quality and reliable texts for the learners who decide to use them. Nevertheless, the field of Translation Studies has never really developed a specialized scholarly branch to research this less usual translation process, and the number of publications discussing general theoretical issues about it is extremely limited. This is why, in this chapter, I tried to make my own contribution to this analysis. I did it not only by developing my own reflections, but also by 'interacting' with the reflections provided by other TETs (translators/editors/teachers) through a questionnaire I had prepared. Interacting with them has been very productive and also engendered new reflections on which I felt keen to comment, thus expanding and enriching my previous views and perceptions. It was an enlightening experience, but I feel that this is only a humble beginning. There is still a world of issues that deserve further research and reflection, and to which I intend to contribute in the future.

I have reached the end of this thesis with a wonderful treasure chest overflowing with dreams and projects. Before I started to work on it, I had but a few of them, very confused and untidily scattered in my mind. Then, my research gave me the skills to

properly rearrange them and, almost without noticing, even to create new ones. At some point I saw myself compelled to get a large chest to hold them. Now it is there, before me. The lid is open, all the dreams and projects engendered by the 5 chapters of my work are colourfully shining.

Chapter 6: Fulfilling the dreams.

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