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MULTILINGUALISM IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLDS

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Greek in early medieval Ireland

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INTRODUCTION

This study explores bilingualism in the area of literary education, that is, the formal study of another language using written documents. Its focus is the study of Greek in early medieval Ireland, in the period from the seventh to the ninth century. Though never absorbed into the Roman Empire, by the seventh century Ireland had thoroughly embraced Christian culture, and with it the prerequisite of Latin literacy. In their study of the Latin language, using late antique school books and commentaries, the monastic schools of early medieval Ireland might be regarded to some extent as inheritors of the Graeco-Roman tradition, and in particular the late antique grammatical tradition. It has long been suggested that the Irish interest in classical languages was not limited to Latin (itself a foreign language), but extended also to Greek. Although the means by which such a knowledge may have been acquired has never been clear, this discussion presents new evidence for the study of Greek in Ireland, and explores how late antique manuals of bilingual Greek–Latin instruction were later reused in circumstances far removed from those of their origins.

Knowledge of Greek in the West is generally held to have declined sharply by the end of the fifth century,[1] when the compilatory efforts of Latin writers Boethius, Macrobius and Martianus Capella provided the main points of access to Greek literary culture for subsequent generations.[2] There are plenty of indications, however, that the Greek language maintained a special prestige. It was recognised as the language of the New Testament and featured on the *titulus* of Christ's cross.[3] Accordingly it was classed among the 'three sacred languages' (*tres linguae sacrae*) during the Middle Ages, along with Latin and Hebrew. Augustine regarded these as 'pre-eminent languages', and praised Jerome for his singular attainment in all three.[4] Greek learning was also acknowledged as the foundation of secular scholarship.[5]

The study of Greek among the early medieval Irish, both at home and abroad, has been the subject of a long and often lively debate since Ludwig Traube's seminal article 'O Roma nobilis' (1891), which identified circles of Irish scholars on the Continent in the ninth century, distinguished among other things by their shared interest in Greek. Traube remarked that 'anyone on the Continent who knew Greek during the time of Charles the Bald [King of the West Franks, 843–877] was either an Irishman or without question had acquired this knowledge from an Irishman, or else the report which surrounded the person with such renown was a fraud'.[6] This position found concord with a romantic view of medieval Ireland as a sanctuary for classical learning during the barbarian Dark Ages.[7] The inevitable critical reaction was first articulated by Mario Esposito (1912), who dismissed the methods of earlier writers, characterising knowledge of Greek in Ireland before the ninth century as 'almost non-existent',[8] while that of Irishmen in Carolingian circles (with the exception of Eriugena) was an 'inaccurate and uncritical smattering'.[9] Max Laistner took a more moderate position, concluding that 'Traube's thesis is still sound, if by Irish we understand those who came to the Continent from Columban's time on; for there is no satisfactory evidence that they could have acquired any Greek, apart from a few ecclesiastical terms, in their homeland'.[10]

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[1] When considering Greek in the West, my focus is principally outside Italy, which Bischoff (1967: 246) characterises as something of an exception.

[2] The principal survey is Berschin 1988a, with an overview for the early medieval period in Berschin 1988b. See also Laistner 1924 and Bischoff 1967, who emphasises the activities of medieval Irish scholars. Howlett 1998 and Herren 2010 have more recently surveyed Irish sources.

[3] John 19:19–20.

[4] *Tractates on John* (ed. Willems 1954) 117.4: *et erat scriptum Hebraice, Graece et Latine: rex Iudaeorum. hae quippe tres linguae ibi prae ceteris eminebant: Hebraea, propter Iudaeos in Dei lege gloriantes; Graeca, propter gentium sapientes; Latina, propter Romanos multis ac pene omnibus iam tunc gentibus imperantes*; *De ciuitate Dei* (ed. Dombart and Kalb 1955) 18.43.8: [*Hieronymus*] *homo doctissimus et omnium trium linguarum peritus.* The term *tres linguae sacrae* seems to have been coined by Isidore in *Etymologiae* 9.1.2–3.

[5] An Old Irish gloss on the St Gall Priscian comments on a remark in the grammarian's introduction: 'The Latins have such love for the Greeks that they follow even their errors' (Hofman 1996: vol. 1, 99; vol. 2, 5).

[6] Cited in translation by Berschin 1988a: 132, who endorses this position.

[7] Exemplified in Berschin 1988a: 95, citing Fermin-Didot 1875 (in translation): 'Hellenism, banned from the western reaches of the Continent, sought refuge further away on the island which had escaped the Roman conquest: Ireland . . . The mysticism which constitutes the basis of the Irish character disposed them to philosophical reveries, which explains their ardour for Plato. The study of the Greek language was thus one of the foundations of their education.'

[8] Esposito 1912: 683.

[9] Esposito 1912: 683. Coccia 1967 gives a scathing assessment of medieval Irish learning generally. Howlett 1998 has a more positive interpretation.

[10] Laistner 1957: 238.

Irish vernacular evidence has been all but ignored in this long debate.[11] This paper will focus on early Irish glossaries, texts compiled in Ireland from the eighth century, comprising etymological and other notes on several thousand Irish words, very often comparing these with similar-sounding words in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Welsh, Norse, English and (in one case) Pictish.[12] Paul Russell (2000) was the first to show that, in relation to the study of Greek, these texts contain evidence for the availability in Ireland of some of the same sources as those circulating on the Continent in the ninth century. I hope here to identify these sources more closely, and in the process show not only that Greek was indeed actively studied in Ireland, but *how* the language was studied, and to evaluate how well it was known. My focus here will be on O'Mulconry's glossary (OM), being the earliest such text and concentrating on Greek far more than any other.

2 EVIDENCE PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED

It may be instructive to outline in brief the evidence for the Irish knowledge of Greek discussed in previous assessments. In the first place, there is almost no reliable evidence for access to native speakers of the language. Mo-Sinu maccu Min, the abbot of Bangor who died in 610, is recorded as having learnt his computus from 'a certain learned Greek'.[13] However, nothing is known about this anonymous teacher, and in other cases the term *Graecus* can be merely synonymous with *sapiens*. The more significant figures are Theodore of Tarsus, the archbishop of Canterbury sent from Rome in 669, and his companion the abbot Hadrian, formerly of Naples. Bede, writing some sixty years later, tells us that Theodore's pupils spoke Greek as well as their native tongue,[14] and there were certainly close cultural contacts between Britain and Ireland throughout the period. However, there is little to corroborate Bede's testimony, and there is no evidence for any continuity of such proficiency in subsequent generations.

The Greek alphabet was certainly widely known, and was tabulated in computistical manuscripts along with its numerical values, the names of the letters and the names of the Greek numbers.[15] The Greek alphabet was also used in abbreviations for *nomina sacra*: ΔM (*deum*), IHC (IHCOYC), XPC (XPICTOC), the last example familiar from the illuminated carpet pages marking the opening of Matthew (*Christi autem generatio...*) in deluxe gospel books.[16] Over time the uses of Greek script were extended. The Irish scribe Dorbbéne, writing a copy of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* between 704 and 713, uses Greek script for words in Greek (e.g. ΠΗΡΙCΤΗΡΑ 'dove'), Latin (ΦΙΝΙΤUP CHKUNΔUC ΛΙΒΕΡ for *finitur secundus liber*) and even Irish (KOPKUPETI for Corcu Réti, a population group).[17] The trend of writing Latin in Greek script is further developed a century later in the Book of Armagh (*c.* 807), which has an entire Latin *Paternoster* written in Greek letters (fol. 36ra), as well as assorted explicits, page titles and similar notes.[18]

There are just two Irish examples of any continuous Greek written in Greek script, both of which have a liturgical origin.[19] The first is in the Schaffhausen manuscript (n. 17), which concludes (p. 137) with the Greek *Paternoster* in Greek script.[20] The second is an inscription on a stone monument at Fahan in Donegal, which has been dated to various points between the eighth and eleventh centuries.[21] It records the doxology: ΔΟξΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΙΜΕ ΠΑΤΡΙ ΚΑΙ ΥΙω ΚΑΙ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ ΑΓΙω 'Glory and honour to Father and Son and Holy Spirit'.[22]

Individual Greek or Greek-derived words occur frequently in Hiberno-Latin writings of the period, invariably in isolation and frequently in an ostentatious and rather superficial way. The smattering is small enough to allow us to list all the Greek words in an illustrative sample of texts.[23] The hymn *Altus Prosator*, attributed to Columba (died 597), contains the words

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[11] Ua Nualláin 1909 collects some interesting material in a study apparently unfinished.

[12] I list the languages in order of their frequency of citation. For an overview of early Irish glossaries, see Russell 1988.

[13] Cf. Ó Cróinín 1982.

[14] *Historia ecclesiastica* 4.2 (ed. Colgrave and Mynors 1969).

[15] These tables generally include the numerical letters digamma (in its medieval form resembling *stigma* ϛ = 6, labelled ἐπίσημον), koppa (ϟ = 90) and sampi (ϡ = 900, labelled ἐνακόσιοι). See for example, Jones 1943: 181.

[16] Latin *Christi* is given the hybrid abbreviation XPI. On *nomina sacra*, cf. Lindsay 1915: 403.

[17] Schaffhausen, Stadtbibliothek, MS Generalia 1, pp. 2a, 103b and 47a, respectively; ed. Anderson and Anderson 1961.

[18] Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 52. This use of script is generally characterised as 'playful' or similar. However, there is some consistency. In the Schaffhausen manuscript, Greek script is used both for emphasis (e.g. in explicits) and to mark foreign words, much as italics are used in modern typography. Similarly in the Book of Armagh, its *Paternoster* in Greek script emphasises a key passage in Jesus' own words, perhaps alluding to the original language of the Gospel.

[19] See Blom, this volume, on code-switching in liturgical texts.

[20] Reproductions of this page are in Berschin 1982: 503 and Berschin 1988b: Pl. 4.

[21] Edwards 1985: 395–396; Stevenson 1985: 92–94.

[22] Macalister 1945–1949: II 120. Photograph in Berschin 1982: Pl. 16. Confusion of η and ε (e.g. in τιμή) is very common in the sources discussed here. The Latin equivalent, *gloria et honor patri et filio et spritui sancto*, begins the last of a series of anthems following the *Gloria in excelsis* in the Antiphonary of Bangor (fol. 33v). It is the Mozarabic doxology prescribed in the Fourth Synod of Toledo in 633, and Warren (1893–1895: II 74–80) has shown that the anthem closely corresponds to the opening of the Ὄρθρος (Lauds) in the Greek *Euchologion*; cf. Hillgarth 1962: 193.

[23] I derive these lists from the indices to their editions.

apostatae, coenodoxia,[24] *protoplaustrum, poliandria*.[25] The Antiphonary of Bangor (680–691) contains the Greek or Latinised Greek words *agie, agius, bradium, migrologi, pantes ta erga, proto, protoplaustrum* and *zoen*,[26] the last used resourcefully to conclude an abecedarial poem on the abbots of Bangor. Muirchú's life of Patrick (*c.* 690) contains one Greek word: *antropi*.[27] Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* includes *agonotheta, lithus, machera, omonimum, onoma, protus, sophia, xenium*,[28] and his *De locis sanctis* discusses the Greek spelling of Thabor (Θαβώρ) with reference to 'books of Greek'.[29]

The group of texts whose style is labelled 'Hisperic' provides a different picture. These are characterised by an artificial vocabulary of neologisms and nonce words, many coined from Greek and Hebrew. Michael Herren has argued that the *Hisperica famina* derive from a mid seventh-century Irish milieu, on grounds of references to Irish speech and 'Irish oil', and a small number of coinages perhaps derived from Old Irish words.[30] He lists 117 Greek or Greek-derived words in the A-text of the *Hisperica famina*, and notes that words not derived from Isidore are found sporadically in 'some bits of *CGL*', concluding: 'What Greek or Hebrew glossaries would have been available to the faminators can only be a matter for the imagination.'[31] Herren (1987) also investigated Greek sources in his edition of other Hisperic poems: the *Lorica of Laidcenn, Leiden lorica, Rubisca* and *Adelphus adelpha meter*. The first of these is associated with Laidcenn of Clonfert-Mulloe (died 661).[32] Of over 120 words referring to parts of the body, 86 are traced to Isidore.[33]

There is considerably more evidence for active study of Greek among Irish scholars in ninth-century Carolingian schools. The most striking is a series of bilingual biblical manuscripts. Sedulius Scottus (at Liège from

c. 848) wrote a Greek Psalter with Latin interlinear translation.[34] This was more than an exercise in penmanship: Walter Berschin remarks that its supplementary material 'attests to the author's acumen in textual criticism'.[35] Similarly the Basel Psalter, the St Gall Gospels and the *Codex Boernerianus* (Pauline epistles) were all identified by Traube as belonging to the same circle of Irish scholars and associated by him with Sedulius.[36]

Other manuscripts contain grammatical material relating to Greek. Martinus Hiberniensis at Laon possessed a copy of the enormous Greek–Latin Harleian glossary,[37] in a manuscript also containing Greek idioms and paradigms, lists of Greek words in Priscian and in the poems of Martinus' contemporary Eriugena (John Scottus), and other notes.[38] A similar miscellany may be found in the anonymous scholar's notebook from Reichenau.[39] Its eight folios contain a short Greek–Latin glossary with declensional paradigms,[40] a paradigm of the Greek article (very faulty) and of the noun κιθαριστής, as well as Latin hymns, Irish poetry and miscellaneous notes on Latin grammar, exegesis and astronomy.

Eriugena[41] is credited with a knowledge of Greek far exceeding that of his contemporaries, as is evident in his translation from Greek of the theological works of Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus Confessor.[42] His achievement must have been facilitated in part by his study of Macrobius' comparative grammar *De differentiis et societatibus Graeci Latinique uerbi*, his extracts providing an important witness for its reconstruction.[43]

So the evidence points to a considerable disparity between the study of Greek in Ireland and that among Irishmen on the Continent, supporting Laistner's view of Greek in Ireland being almost non-existent. But how

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[24] The term is translated *uana gloria* 'vainglory' in Anglo-Saxon glossaries (cf. Stevenson 1999: 359); the substitution of *-oe-* for *-e-* (in the element κενο- 'empty') is a classicising hypercorrection, probably under influence of *coenobium* '(monastic) community'.

[25] Cf. Stevenson 1999, who assigns the poem to Iona in the second half of the seventh century.

[26] Warren 1893–1895. Found respectively in folios 12r, 15v, 16v, 6v, 12r, 5r, 6r, 36v. *Bradium*, according to Warren, is probably a mistake for *brabium*, Late Latin for βραβεῖον.

[27] Bieler 1979: 62–122.   [28] From the index in Reeves 1857.

[29] *huius orthographia uocabuli in libris Graecitatis est inuenta* (2.27). On this basis, Manitius 1911–1931: I 236 inferred that Adomnán had learnt Greek.

[30] Herren 1974: 32–39. Herren also cites its use in the *Lorica, Rubisca* and *Adelphus adelpha meter* to argue for an early circulation in Ireland.

[31] Herren 1974: 26–27.   [32] On his authorship, see Herren 1987: 42–45, 1973: 35–51.

[33] The dates and authorship of the *Rubisca* and *Adelphus adelpha meter* are a matter of speculation, with Herren suggesting Bobbio *c.* 800 and possibly Brittany in the ninth or tenth centuries respectively; given this uncertainty I will pass over them here.

[34] Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 8407 (Verdun).   [35] Berschin 1988a: 143.

[36] Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, MS A.vii.3 (imagaes at http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/ubb/A-VII-0003). St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 48 (images via www.e-codices.unifr.ch/). Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, MS Msc. A 145b (images at http://digital.slub-dresden.de/sammlungen/titeldaten/274591448/). A direct connection to Sedulius is no longer supported, and Berschin 1988a: 13–14 thought that this was tacitly revised by Traube in his later work.

[37] See p. 186 below.

[38] Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 444; *CGL* ii 213–483, 553.44–559. On Martinus and the school at Laon, see Contreni 1978.

[39] Sankt Paul im Lavanttal (Carinthia), MS 86b/1 (images at http://hildegard.tristram.de/schulheft/). Oskamp 1978: 385–391 identified the scribe as that of the Karlsruhe Priscian.

[40] 3r–4v; also found in Laon 444, 300r–306r, ed. Petschenig 1883; cf. Dionisotti 1988: 21–24. Goetz (*CGL* ii xxxvii) identified the first page of the Reichenau text (not present in Laon) as the earliest fragment of the bilingual glossary entitled *Glossae Seruii*.

[41] His name is a play on *Graiugena, Graecugena* 'Greek-born', substituting *Ériu* 'Ireland'.

[42] These translations in turn influenced his own philosophical work, the *Periphyseon*.

[43] *GL* v 595–630; de Paolis 1990.

much of this is down to disparity of evidence? In fact, very few manuscripts survive from early medieval Ireland at all. With a small number of exceptions, the extant manuscripts are mostly scriptural and liturgical books. However, we do have a large corpus of Irish-language material in later medieval manuscripts, much of which can be dated linguistically to the same period as that of the Carolingian manuscripts discussed above. And this evidence may help to bridge the gap.

3 GREEK IN IRISH ETYMOLOGICAL TRACTS

O'Mulconry's glossary is the modern title given to a work found in an Irish manuscript of 1572,[44] with three other fragmentary witnesses of similar date. The language of the core part of the text, however, has been dated to the late seventh or early eighth century.[45] The glossary presents etymologies for about 880 Irish words,[46] very frequently deriving these from Latin, Greek or Hebrew. It begins:

> incipit discreptio de origine Scoticae linguae quam congregauerunt religiosi uiri, adiunctis nominibus ex Hebr<ae>icano Hi<e>ronimi et tractationibus, i.e. Ambrosi et Cassiani et Augustini et Eisiodori. Virgili, Prisciani, Commiani, Ciceronis, necnon per literas Graecorum, i.e. Atticae, Doricae, Eolicae ling<u>ae, quia Scoti de Graecis originem duxerunt, sic et ling<u>am.[47]

> Here begins a description of the origin of the Irish language which religious men compiled, having combined Jerome's Hebrew names and [other] discussions, i.e. by Ambrose and Cassian and Augustine and Isidore, Virgil, Priscian, Commianus, Cicero; and also by means of Greek literature, i.e. in the Attic, Doric and Aeolic language, because the Irish derive their origin from the Greeks, and thus too their language.

The sources stated fall into three groups coinciding with the three sacred languages. Hebrew is accounted for by Jerome's tract on Hebrew names. Authorities given for Latin are four Church Fathers and then (dropping

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[44] The Yellow Book of Lecan: Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 1318 (H.2.16), cols. 88–122. The text was published, without translation, in Stokes 1900. Reference numbers, prefixed 'OM', are from this edition. Paul Russell, Sharon Arbuthnot and the present author have been engaged in editing this and related texts as part of the Early Irish Glossaries Project. Transcriptions and links to manuscript images, where available, can be accessed at: www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/irishglossaries/.

[45] Mac Neill 1930–1932. It is clear that the text suffered in transmission. Discussion of corruptions and problems of interpretation is avoided here, but will be treated in depth in the forthcoming editions (see previous note).

[46] It is not always clear where a glossary entry begins or ends, making any count somewhat arbitrary.

[47] adiunctis] adiunsis MSS; duxerunt] dixerunt v.l.

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the conjunction *et*) four secular authorities. By contrast, the sources for Greek are unnamed.

About 246 entries (about 28 per cent) contain etymologies for Irish words from Latin, and many of these posit relationships that are still borne out. Irish *aíminn* 'pleasant' is derived from Latin *amoenus* (OM 79) and *aíne* 'fasting' from *ieiunia* (OM 80), which are genuine borrowings from Latin into Irish. Irish *cáech* 'blind' from Latin *caecus* (OM 196) and *ingen* 'nail' from *unguis* (OM 720) associate words which we now regard as Indo-European cognates (PIE **kayko-*, **h₃noghu-*). Of the 192 entries (about 22 per cent) which provide etymologies from Greek words, very few identify any real linguistic relationships, not surprisingly given the absence of language contact between Greek and Irish, except through Greek words borrowed into Latin. The first example below recognises one such case, showing awareness of the original sense of *basilica* < βασιλική 'royal'. The second distinguishes the original Greek sense of the Latin borrowing *gymnasium*:

> **OM 182:** Baslec .i. a basil<i>ca Grece, eclesia Latine, tech rig nime.
>
> *Baslec* 'church', i.e. from βασιλική in Greek, *ecclesia* in Latin, house of the King of heaven.
>
> **OM 175:** Bádud ondí as batailia .i. gimnasia .i. nochtfrecorthid céill.
>
> *Bádud* 'a submerging, defeat', from *battualia*, i.e. γυμνασία, i.e. naked exerciser.[48]

More commonly, however, Irish and Greek words are paired on the basis of formal similarity, and some additional explanation is supplied to bridge the semantic gap. For example:

> **OM 222:** Cerd grece cires .i. manus . . . ar cach dán dogníat lámhae is cerd dongairther .i. lámdae.
>
> *Cerd* 'craft', in Greek χεῖρες, i.e. 'hands' . . . for every skill which hands perform is called a craft, i.e. handiwork.

This is, of course, typical of medieval etymology, and goes back to Varro and beyond to the Greek grammatical tradition.[49] As Mark Amsler points

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[48] The orthography of Latin words (e.g. *batailia* = *battualia*) is generally non-classical and very likely subject to textual corruption in places. I retain the manuscript spellings here, but for clarity give classical forms in translations. The Irish translation of γυμνασία is inaccurate, rendering it as though γυμναστής.

[49] See Amsler 1989 for a full discussion.

out, it is precisely this 'extra-systemic justification' that invokes the wrath of modern linguists.[50] The real value of this material in the present context is that, with nearly 200 such entries citing Greek words, we can treat them as a corpus with which to build some coherent profile of sources and to appreciate how these sources were used.

Isidore of Seville is the fourth Latin authority in the prologue, and his influence is very clear throughout the glossary. His *Etymologiae* was well known in Ireland soon after its completion in 636,[51] and his etymological method must have been a model for the Irish glossary compilers. Passages from Isidore are cited frequently in the text,[52] and two entries mention him by name.[53] One entry cites a passage which is corrupt in Isidore's manuscript tradition:

OM 126: Brat grece brathin lamminas a tenuitate.

Brat 'cloak', in Greek *brathin*, sheet, from [its] thinness.

cf. *Etym.* 16.18.2: brattea dicitur tenuissima lamina, ἀπὸ τοῦ βρεμε-τοῦ, qui est ὀνοματοποιεία crepitandi, ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ †βρατυντ† lamina.

The thinnest sheet [of metal] is called *brattea*, from βρεμετον [? cf. βρέμω 'clamour'], which is onomatopoeia for rattling, or from †βρατυντ†, a sheet.

It should be no surprise to find Isidore used, not least because his work circulated widely in the early Middle Ages, but also because he cites hundreds of Greek words in his text. About seventy Greek words cited in the glossaries may be traced to Isidore. However, the Irish compiler's enthusiasm for mining such words sometimes leads him astray. In the following entry he misidentifies an uncommon Latin word in his source as Greek:[54]

OM 415: Éraic grece erciscunda diuicio communis rei.

Éraic 'payment, compensation', in Greek, *erciscunda* [division of inheritance], division of common wealth.[55]

cf. *Etym.* 5.25.9–10: herciscunda enim apud ueteres diuisio nuncupa-batur.

For division was called *herciscunda* by the ancients.

Perhaps a more telling entry is the following:

OM 375: Égem, egemon Grece, dux Latine, quia est uox <quae> ducit omnes quo uadit. Vel égem ab ega .i. capra, quia clamat in morte, unde dicitur: Egium mare .i. di labrai thondi. Namm inter Tenedum <et Chium> saxum <est in> mare simile capre, quam Greci egam dicunt.

Égem 'a shout', ἡγεμών in Greek, leader *dux* 'leader' in Latin, because it is the voice which leads all to where it goes. Or *égem* from αἶγα i.e. 'goat', because it shouts in death: from which the Aegean Sea is named, i.e. from the sounds of a wave. For between between Tenedos and Chios there is a stone in the sea similar to a she-goat, which the Greeks call *egam*.

The second part of the etymology links Irish *égem* 'a shout' and Greek αἶγα (apparently on the basis some curious animal lore), and incidentally cites *Etym.* 13.16.5 on the name of the Aegean sea. The transcription *e* for αι reflects contemporary Greek pronunciation, which prevails in these texts.[56] Isidore cites the word αἴξ 'goat' in its accusative case. However, the compiler treats this as a first-declension Latin noun, and then goes on to hypercorrect Isidore by adding a Latin accusative ending -*m*. This indicates that not only was he unfamiliar with this basic word, but he was probably unaware of the morphology of Greek consonant-stem nouns.[57]

The second authority to feature prominently as a source for Greek in the glossaries is that named Commianus, which appears to be an error for Cominianus, under which name the grammarian Charisius was transmitted in Insular circles.[58] The author is also cited by name in the main text:

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[50] Amsler 1989: 28.

[51] On Isidore in Ireland, see Herren 1990. The *Etymologiae* was the authority most often cited in the corpus of 9,412 glosses in the St Gall codex of Priscian: cf. Hofman 1996: 1 70.

[52] E.g. OM 124 (*Etym.* 11.1.63), OM 167 (*Etym.* 11.1.35), OM 211 (*Etym.* 12.2.38), OM 291 (*Etym.* 5.27.24), OM 297 (*Etym.* 4.9.2–3), OM 375 (*Etym.* 13.16.5), OM 381 (*Etym.* 12.7.18), OM 404 (*Etym.* 14.6.36), OM 409 (*Etym.* 1.38.9).

[53] OM 154 (*Etym.* 14.8.23), OM 292 (*Etym.* 19.3.3). In the latter his abbreviated name was recognised in Mac Neill 1930–1932: 119.

[54] Similarly OM 393, referring to *merum* 'pure' (found in *Etym.* 3.42.4, etc.), and OM 731, referring to *elbum* (probably a late form of *heluum* 'bay (colour)') and citing *Etym.* 19.28.7. These Latin terms are not described as Greek by Isidore, though the Irish glossary compiler assumes them to be so. A similar confusion over *merum* occurs in the Munich Computus, an Irish computistical tract (as noted in Bischoff 1967: 249).

[55] Irish *éraic* is a legal term for compensation, sometimes due collectively from one's kin group.

[56] This must ultimately reflect contact with native speakers of Greek, though not necessarily directly; see Moran 2011. The first etymology, drawing on the tenuous parallels between *égem* and ἡγεμών, *dux* and *uox* may be an echo of Priscian (*GL* II 6.4–5): *uox autem dicta est uel a uocando, ut dux a ducendo, uel ἀπὸ τοῦ βοῶ, ut quibusdam placet.*

[57] Alternatively, the spelling *egam* may reflect the remodelling which took place in the Greek declensional system whereby an accusative ending -αν spread to consonant stems. I am grateful to Patrick James for this suggestion.

[58] Cf. Barwick 1925: xx; Law 1982: 18; Kaster 1988: 392–394; Hofman 1996: 1 54. The attribution is not entirely without foundation: Charisius' grammar is a compilation, Cominianus being frequently cited as one of his sources.

OM 519: Fer a uiro .i. uir a uirtute licet Cominianus dicit: uirus unde uir appellatur.

Fer 'man' from *uir* 'man', i.e. *uir* from *uirtus* 'virtue', though Comini-anus says: *uirus* 'noxious fluid, semen', from which *uir* is named.

cf. *Etym.* 10.274: *uir a uirtute* and Charisius (Barwick 1925: 40.12–13): *uirus* (ἰὸς ἢ ἐχίδνης δηγμός), *unde uir appellatur*.

Charisius compiled his *Ars grammatica* around the middle of the fourth century, and it is clear that his grammar was intended to teach Latin to Greeks. He frequently includes Greek translations in lists of Latin words illustrative of points of Latin grammar, as in the following extract discussing the genitive formation of certain Latin nouns:[59]

> sedes ['seat'] ἕδρα sedis, strages ['slaughter'] σύμπτωσις σωμάτων stragis, saepes ['fence, hedge'] φραγμός saepis, ualles ['valley'] φάραγξ uallis, uerres ['male swine, boar'] κάπρος βιβαστής uerris, rupes ['precipice'] ἀπόρρωγάς rupis, scrobes ['ditch'] βόθυνος φυτείας scrobis, torques ['collar'] μηνίσκος δέριον torquis.[60]

The pedagogical strategy extends beyond merely explaining unfamiliar Latin words. This kind of grammar contrasts significantly with Latin gram-mars written for Roman schoolboys, epitomised in the work of Aelius Donatus.[61] Donatus' work is spare, mostly concerned with explaining grammatical terminology, categorising the parts of speech, and providing clear examples of tropes, solecisms, barbarisms, and so on. In his *Ars minor*, he provides a paradigm for a single verb only (*lego*). After all, his pupils could already speak Latin, they just needed to learn to speak and write correct Latin. Greek students, on the other hand, needed to build their vocabulary and learn the morphology of a wide range of Latin words. The same situation later pertained in the early medieval West, and vocabulary-building was a particular imperative in those areas where learners did not already speak a variety of Late Latin or Proto-Romance as their native tongue.[62] Is it not surprising, therefore, to find Charisius being used in Ireland to teach Latin. What is more striking is to find him used to learn Greek.

[59] Barwick 1925: 46.14–18.

[60] Where the Greek translations comprise two words, the second word is sometimes a modifying noun in the genitive (σύμπτωσις σωμάτων 'collapse of bodies', βόθυνος φυτείας 'ditch for planting'), sometimes a synonym (e.g. μηνίσκος, δέριον [LSJ s.v. δέραιον], both with a sense 'neck ornament'). In the case of *uerres* 'male swine, boar', βιβαστής may serve to restrict the sense of κάπρος, which may refer to either gender, to masculine (LSJ explains the word 'stallion, *Gloss(aries)*', referring to *CGL* II, 480 βιβαστής *admissarius*).

[61] The definitive study and edition is Holtz 1981.   [62] Cf. Dionisotti 1984.

Charisius is the most likely source for about thirty or so Greek words. But here again, the glossary author's focus on the Greek in the text sometimes leads him astray. In the following examples, a Latin genitive occurs where we would expect a nominative. The simplest explanation may be eye-skip: Charisius supplies both nominatives and genitives, and the glossary author appears to have copied from the wrong side of the Greek word:[63]

OM 318: Doér grece doriforas .i. satilitess.

Doér 'base, unfree', in Greek δορυφόρος, i.e. attendant.

cf. Charisius 47.15: *satelles* δορυφόρος *satellites*.

But some more serious misunderstandings could arise as a result of the change of the text's intended use. Reverse-engineering a dictionary can be a fraught process, particularly when there is not an exact equivalence on both sides.[64] Two Greek words translating a single Latin term may be either synonyms or one coherent phrase. Word division can also be challenging, as in the entries below:[65]

OM 140: Béim grece bemandro .i. pasus.

Béim 'a beat, blow, strike', in Greek βῆμα ἀνδρός, i.e. a step.

cf. Charisius 55.7: *passus* βῆμα ἀνδρός *passus*.

OM 203: Caint Grece cantabato .i. sentes .i. deilggi . . .

Cáint[e] 'satirist' (?), in Greek *cantabato*, i.e. *sentes*, i.e. thorns . . .

cf. Charisius 35.3: *sentes* ἄκανθαι, βάτος.

Isidore and Charisius would together account for about a hundred, or roughly half, of the Greek words cited in O'Mulconry. The other authorities named in the prologue occasionally offer some parallels, but fail to fill the remaining gap, though one notable parallel occurs with a single short and enigmatic entry:

[63] Similarly OM 489 *Fán* ['slope'] *Grece faran .i. uallis* (cf. Charisius 46.15: *ualles* φάραγξ *uallis*) and OM 53 *Arge* ['herd'?] *Grece indolis* . . . (cf. Charisius 46.10: *indoles* ἀρετή *indolis*), though the sense of the latter entry is unclear.

[64] Compare Dionisotti 1988: 6–10 on the origins of the Latin–Greek Philoxenus glossary.

[65] The first pair of Greek words comprise a noun followed by a qualifying genitive, the second two synonyms. Mac Neill 1930–1932: 119 argued that *passus* 'a step' was here misunderstood by the glossary compiler as the perfect passive participle (of *patior*) 'having suffered' (based on the frequently violent connotation of *béim*). Alternatively, he may have had the beat of footsteps in mind: the context within a list of nouns in Charisius would reinforce this interpretation.

OM 160: Bríathor insce apud Eoles.

Bríathor, 'word' in Aeolic.

Bríathor and *insce* both mean 'word' in Old Irish. Stokes added the note: 'An Aeolic *βρήτρα seems intended; cf. El[ean] ϝράτρα'.[66] The attested Aeolic ϝρήτωρ 'orator' (Attic-Ionic ῥήτωρ) provides a closer formal match.[67] Latin grammarians tended to regard the digamma as characteristic of Aeolian Greek.[68] Priscian is the only one to note that in Aeolic texts β tends to be written for ϝ before ρ at the start of words:

> in b etiam solet apud Aeolis transire ϝ digamma, quotiens ab ρ incipit dictio, quae solet aspirari, ut [ϝ]ῥήτωρ βρήτωρ dicunt, quod digamma nisi uocali praeponi et in principio syllabae non potest.[69]

> The Aeolians change ϝ to β when a word begins with aspirated ρ; thus for [ϝ]ῥήτωρ they said βρήτωρ, because digamma can only be placed at the start of a syllable and before a vowel.[69]

Although the entry relies on a convenient blurring of the distinction between ῥήτωρ 'speaker' and ῥήτρα 'speech', it would appear to justify the prologue's claim not only to use Priscian, but that the Irish language derived from Greek dialects including Aeolic.

So far, we have traced only about half of the sources for Greek words in the Irish glossary. In going further, we might recall that the actual stated source for Greek is not a named author at all, but a rather vague reference to *litterae Graecorum* (recalling Adomnán's reference to *libri Graecitatis*). This is compatible with the use of anonymous Greek–Latin glossaries. Such texts are often invoked as a last resort in source analysis, and the genre tends to be treated by scholars as something of an amorphous mass. While the tradition of glossing and glossary-compiling goes

back at least to Hellenistic times, the medieval transmission of bilingual Greek–Latin glossaries appears to have its roots in the early centuries AD.[70] The surviving corpus may be divided into two well-defined groups. The first, known as *idiomata*, lists peculiarities in the comparative grammar of Greek and Latin.[71] *Idiomata* focus in particular on the nominal class, and are grouped into categories listing nouns with different genders in Latin and Greek (*idiomata generum*), verbs which govern different cases (*idiomata casuum*), and defective nouns (*singularia/pluralia tantum*).[72] The categories are in turn subdivided under headings such as *apud Latinos masculina, apud Graecos feminina* (e.g. *hic aduentus* ἡ παρουσία), *apud Latinos feminina, apud Graecos neutralia* (e.g. *haec aqua* τὸ ὕδωρ), and so on. Such lists are also associated with Latin grammarians such as Charisius, who makes references to *idiomata* being among his sources.[73]

The second major category of Greek–Latin glossarial material is known as *hermeneumata* (Latin *interpretationes*).[74] These derive from late antique classroom texts intended for elementary bilingual instruction.[75] Carlotta Dionisotti divided their constituent parts into four main elements.[76] The first two are word-lists, one alphabetical with a particular focus on verbs (including inflected forms), the other organised into class lists (*capitula*) covering topics, such as names of pagan gods and goddesses, the heavens, houses and temples, feast days, spectacles, winds, parts of the body, and so on. The third, perhaps most characteristic, element is a colloquium between master and pupil, consisting of rudimentary exchanges on topics

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[66] Stokes 1900: 241.

[67] Going on the date of O'Mulconry, it is possible that *bríathor* would originally have been written (and pronounced) *brēthor*. This early form of the word also occurs in the Irish Priscian glosses: cf. Strachan 1903.

[68] E.g. Pompeius' commentary on Donatus (*GL* v 105.3–4): *quid est digammos? Graeci habent varias linguas, item est una lingua quae dicitur Aeolica. apud istos Aeolicos est una littera quae appellatur digammos, quasi duo gamma superposita.* 'What is digamma? The Greeks have various dialects; moreover there is one dialect which is called Aeolic. Among those Aeolians there is a letter which is called digamma, like two gammas superimposed.'

[69] *GL* II, 18.5. In his edition, Hertz did not print the digamma before ῥήτωρ, which I give in brackets here and I think makes more sense in the context. This is also the reading found in the Irish St Gall manuscript, and the same passage is paraphrased by the glossator: cf. Hofman 1996: I 126/II 43. Allen 1968: 48 notes that this spelling (β for ϝ) is found in texts of Sappho and other Lesbian poets.

[70] On Hellenistic scholarship, see Dickey 2007. For a broad overview of the Latin tradition, see Hessels 1910. On bilingual glossaries, see Goetz, *CGL* I 12–47, and especially Dionisotti 1988.

[71] For a discussion of this material in glossaries and Latin grammars, and Bede's use of it, see Dionisotti 1982a.

[72] The most important manuscript witnesses are Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat. 7530 (Monte Cassino, 779 × 797), printed in *CGL* II 549–553; Naples, Biblioteca nazionale, MS IV.A.8 (Bobbio, s. VIII, Irish minuscule), *CGL* II 537–548, also printed in Barwick's edition of Charisius, 379–386, 450–463; London, British Library, MS Harl. 5792 (*c.* 800), *CGL* II 487–506 = Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 444 (Laon, 858 × 869).

[73] E.g. *sed C. Iulius Romanus ea uerba idiomata appellauit* (332.21). Kaster (1988: 424–425) suggests that Julius Romanus may date to the third century AD.

[74] St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 902 (s. IX), was one of the first manuscripts to be rediscovered by Humanists. As the manuscript also contains Dositheus' bilingual grammar, the text became known as *Hermeneumata Dositheana*. This authorship was rejected by Krumbacher 1883, who referred to the author as *magistellus nescioquis*. (High-quality images of the St Gall manuscript are now available on-line via www.e-codices.ch.)

[75] The question of whether they were composed to teach Greek to Latin speakers or vice versa is a matter of debate. Dionisotti (1982b: 91) has argued that they were used to teach Greek in Roman schools on the basis of a Western manuscript transmission.

[76] Dionisotti 1982b: 86–88.

concerning the classroom environment and daily routine. A final part comprises extracts of texts for reading practice.[77]

Besides the *idiomata* and *hermeneumata*, two major dictionaries survive from the early medieval period. The Harleian Greek–Latin glossary is a massive lexicon, running to about 270 pages in Georg Goetz's edition.[78] It is found in an eighth-century Italian manuscript that once belonged to Nicholas of Cusa;[79] nothing is known of its history between the eighth and fifteenth centuries. A copy, however, is preserved in Laon 444, the manuscript owned by Martinus Hiberniensis.[80] Joseph Vendryes 1904 observed that this manuscript contains misplaced quire signatures written in Old Irish, indicating that its exemplar was organised by an Irishman, and raising at least the possibility that it might have been written in Ireland. The second major dictionary, known as Pseudo-Philoxenus, is the only Latin–Greek lexicon to survive from this period, originally compiled for Greek speakers needing to read Latin.[81]

Russell noted that the rigidly formulaic citation of Greek in Irish glossaries (*X Grece, Y Latine*) has affinities with the format of Greek–Latin glossaries.[82] He observed that the bilingual glossaries published in *CGL* II offered a potential source for many entries that could not otherwise be traced, and in particular the large Harleian glossary. Russell suggested that there was a 'strong likelihood . . . that a version of this glossary, or material closely related to it, was available to the compilers of the material which ended up in the early Irish vernacular glossaries'.[83]

Was the Harleian glossary available in Ireland? The implications are not small: the Harleian glossary has been described as the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* of its day;[84] if such a resource were really available in Ireland as early as the seventh century it would substantially change our picture of the knowledge of Greek in Ireland at that time.

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[77] Goetz published five major *hermeneumata* in vol. III of *CGL*: Hermeneumata Leidensia, Amploniana, Monacensia, Einsidlensia, Montepessulana. He also included, under the heading *hermeneumata uaria*, several fragments, extracts and other material derived from lost texts, including lost fragments printed by Stephanus. For a very useful table of contents and manuscripts, see Dionisotti 1982b: 87, revised in Dionisotti 1988: 26–28. The Leiden version was recently edited in Flammini 2004. A new edition and study is soon to be published: see Dickey 2012; this book appeared too late for me to consult it.

[78] *CGL* II, 213–483. It is also referred to (after Stephanus) as Pseudo-Cyril or the Cyrillus glossary, to be distinguished from the Byzantine lexicon of the same name.

[79] London, British Library, MS Harl. 5792 (images at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay. aspx?ref=Harley_MS_5792).

[80] Cf. Dionisotti 1988: 9–13, 45–54.

[81] Printed in *CGL* II 3–212; edited, with source analysis, in Lindsay *et al.* 1926–1931: III 138–291.

[82] Russell 2000: 411. The invariable abbreviation in manuscripts of *Gr(a)ece, Latine* further underlines this formulaic character. I expand *.g.* and similar here with the medieval spelling *Grece*.

[83] Russell 2000: 413.

[84] Dionisotti 1988: 13; Bischoff 1967: 266, referring to the lexicon published by Stephanus in 1572.

Table 8.1 *Glossaries in CGL II–III with most entries matching O'Mulconry*

Glossary	*CGL*	Pages	Matches	Avg/page
Harleian (Cyrillus) glossary	II 213–483	270	78	0.3
Herm. Monacensia	III 119–220	101	52	0.5
Philoxenus glossary	II 3–212	209	48	0.2
Herm. uaria: Glossarium Leidense	III 398–421.21	23	45	2.0
Herm. Montepessulana	III 283–343	60	43	0.7
Herm. Leidensia	III 1–72.45	71	34	0.5
Herm. Einsidlensia	III 223–79	56	33	0.6
Herm. Stephani	III 347–90	43	33	0.8
Herm. uaria: Stephani 1	III 438–67.1	29	32	1.1
Herm. uaria: Glossae Bernenses	III 487–506.1	19	28	1.5
Herm. Amploniana	III 72–94	22	26	1.2
Herm. uaria: Glossae Vaticanae	III 506–31.31	25	23	0.9
Herm. uaria: Frag. Bruxellense	III 393–98.39	5	21	4.2
Glossae Seruii Grammatici	II 507–33.28	29	17	0.6
Idiomata (Harl. 5792)	II 487–506	19	16	0.8
Herm. uaria: Stephani 2	III 467–74.48	7	12	1.7
Herm. Medicobotanica Vetustiora	III 535–633	98	12	0.1
Glosses from Laon 444	II 553.44–59	6	12	2.0
Idiomata (Naples IV.A.8)	II 537–48	11	9	0.8

Russell found that about half of the Greek words in Irish glossaries occur in this text. In addition, he discussed a number of entries in Irish glossaries that might be explained by reference to entries that occur in the Harleian glossary uniquely. However, the high degree of correspondence is perhaps not surprising given the monumental scale of this work, containing, at a rough estimate, some 18,000 entries. Indeed, it would be surprising if many of these Greek words did *not* occur in such a work. Taking the Harleian glossary as a vast compilation, perhaps the material available to the Irish author was one or other of its sources. More interesting, then, are smaller bilingual glossaries which contain a higher proportion of common entries relative to their size.

In Table 8.1 (ordered by number of correspondences), this proportion can be roughly gauged in the column listing the average number of correspondences per page. The Harleian glossary has on average only 0.3 corresponding entries per page (i.e. three entries in every ten pages), and the large Philoxenus glossary even fewer. By contrast, some of the shorter hermeneumata have a much higher rate of correspondence. The most notable are the texts named by Goetz as Glossarium Leidense, which has more than half the number of Harleian entries (forty-five against

Table 8.2 *Glossaries in CGL II–III with most entries matching O'Mulconry (untraced sources)*

Glossary	CGL	Pages	Matches	Avg/page
Herm. uaria: Glossarium Leidense	III 398–421.21	23	32	1.4
Harleian (Cyrillus) glossary	II 213–483	270	29	0.1
Herm. Monacensia	III 119–220	101	27	0.3
Herm. Montepessulana	III 283–343	60	20	0.3
Philoxenus glossary	II 3–212	209	19	0.1
Herm. Leidensia	II 1–72.45	71	13	0.2
Herm. Stephani	III 347–90	43	12	0.3
Herm. uaria: Stephani 1	III 438–67.1	29	12	0.4
Herm. uaria: Glossae Bernenses	III 487–506.1	19	12	0.6
Herm. Amploniana	III 72–94	22	11	0.5
Herm. uaria: Glossae Vaticanae	III 506–31.31	25	9	0.4
Herm. Einsidlensia	III 223–79	56	8	0.1
Herm. uaria: Frag. Bruxellense	III 393–98.39	5	8	1.6
Herm. uaria: Stephani 2	III 467–74.48	7	4	0.6
Idiomata (Harl. 5792)	II 487–506	19	3	0.2
Glossae Seruii Grammatici	II 507–33.28	29	3	0.1
Glosses from Laon 444	II 553.44–59	6	3	0.5
Herm. Medicobotanica Vetustiora	III 535–633	98	2	0.0
Idiomata (Naples IV.A.8)	II 537–48	11	2	0.2

seventy-eight) even though it is less than one tenth of its size (twenty-three pages), and Fragmentum Bruxellense, which shares twenty-one entries in under five pages.

I have already argued that both Isidore and Charisius were used directly by the compiler of O'Mulconry, and these sources furnish about half of the Greek words found in that glossary. Many of these words also occur in the Greek–Latin glossaries, and it is of course very possible that our author came across the same terms in more than one source. But where words occur in Isidore or Charisius, they hardly constitute useful evidence for the use of Greek–Latin glossaries. Accordingly, Table 8.2 lists correspondences for words otherwise not accounted for (ordered by number of correspondences).

In this context, the Glossarium Leidense, already noted above, appears to be far more significant. It contains more of these entries than any other (including the Harleian glossary), despite being one of shortest glossaries in *CGL*. The text is found in Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS VLF 26 (Amiens, s. VIII), the earliest surviving manuscript of any of the

hermeneumata. In fact, it represents the partial reworking of a *hermeneumata* text into a conventional alphabetical glossary, and its original form is preserved in a later manuscript, Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS 1828–1830 (s. x).[85] This is the text printed by Goetz as Fragmentum Bruxellense, and although the shortest text printed in *CGL* II or III (fewer than five pages), it has the highest average correspondence of any. It seems likely, then, that the *hermeneumata* text available to the author of O'Mulconry was much more similar to that represented in Goetz's Glossarium Leidense/Fragmentum Bruxellense than to the Harleian lexicon. It may be significant that the Brussels manuscript was written in England, the only *hermeneumata* manuscript with an Insular provenance.

If the use of Isidore, Charisius and the Brussels Hermeneumata together provides the most economical account of the sources for O'Mulconry, this still leaves about forty-five entries (roughly a quarter) untraced. Some of these occur in various parts of *CGL*, without any particular pattern evident. Some could potentially have been derived from the works of Servius, Martianus Capella and other authors, although cumulative evidence pointing to dependence on one or other work is similarly lacking. I have been unable to trace a few words to any printed Latin source. This is perhaps not surprising. Of all genres of text, glossaries may have suffered the vicissitudes of manuscript transmission more than most, generally lacking the authority either of a named author or a non-generic title (other than *glossae*, *interpretamenta*, or similar). We can be sure that many early glossary sources no longer survive. Indeed, the Brussels Hermeneumata is partially a case in point. The elements that survive are fragments, lacking the usual colloquia or reading passages, and an earlier, more complete, version may well have accounted for several more entries in the Irish glossary.

What about other bilingual texts? I have noted above (pp. 176–177) the existence of bilingual ninth-century Irish manuscripts of the Psalter, Gospels and Pauline epistles, as well as an early eighth-century *Paternoster* in Greek only (p. 175), which might relatively easily have been converted into such a bilingual. Could the remaining Irish glossary entries have been derived from the study of such a text? The very restricted range of words cited in the Irish glossary would indicate that these were not culled from a continuous text, however. There is a preponderance of nouns in particular (about 70 per cent), with the remainder mostly verbs, and a handful of adjectives, adverbs and prepositions. The grammatical forms are similarly

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[85] Goetz printed the Brussels *capitula* only under the heading (*CGL* III 393–398.39).

restricted, nouns being almost always in the nominative singular, verbs in the first person singular present indicative active, with a smaller number of imperatives, infinitives and present participles. If we argued that the Greek words cited are normalised versions of oblique forms found in running text, we would need to demonstrate a knowledge of Greek grammar which the glossaries do not support. And there are no indications of declensional errors, or other grammatical mistakes that might be expected in any such process of normalisation.[86] The evidence instead points to the use of vocabularies and Latin texts citing Greek words in isolation.

4 CONCLUSIONS: KNOWLEDGE OF GREEK

Based on the sources identified above, how do we assess the knowledge of Greek evident in the work of the glossary compiler? On the face of it, 192 words in O'Mulconry's glossary does not seem to amount to very much. The original tally may have been somewhat higher, allowing for its faulty transmission and in particular the fact that only the first half of the glossary appears to have survived (the number of entries falls off very sharply after letter I).

Even so, this is to miss the point. For the author did not set out to write a text about Greek at all, but instead to produce an etymological tract exploring the origins of *Irish* words. As mentioned, these etymologies draw in not just Greek, but Latin and Hebrew, and also all of the languages spoken in Britain and Ireland in the early medieval period. At a time when medieval Irish historians were attempting to reconcile traditional accounts of Irish history with received Christian and classical traditions (by positing a Greek origin for the Irish race, for example), students of language were trying to understand the relationship of Irish to classical and biblical languages, as well as those of their neighbours. The Irish glossaries might thus be considered as an early stage in the history of comparative linguistics.

Accordingly, the compiler cites only Greek words that suit his purpose, that is, Greek words that correspond roughly with Irish words in both sound and sense. We may take it that not every Greek word known would answer to an Irish word in this way (even allowing for the broad parameters of ancient etymology), and that the compiler must have drawn on a stock of Greek many multiples greater than that cited in the text.

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[86] The exception being the treatment of αἶγα discussed above (p. 181), which is clearly in this case derived from Isidore.

To build a truer picture of the extent of Greek known to the compiler, we must extrapolate from the evidence of the sources. Isidore and Charisius both contain large amounts of Greek vocabulary.[87] Neither source, however, was intended to teach Greek. Isidore aimed to provide enough Greek to explain the etymology of Latin words, while Charisius supplied Greek words as a crib to those who knew the language already, in order to aid their study of Latin vocabulary. We have seen, in both cases, that confusion could arise in the use of these texts by Irish scholars for a purpose for which they were not designed.

Certainly, with the range of vocabulary in these sources being largely restricted to nouns in the nominative singular, the potential to read continuous Greek would have been very limited. The evidence for the availability of *hermeneumata*, however, suggests that some more progress in the language may have been possible. After all, these were texts written specifically for language learners. Whether originally composed for Greek-speaking students of Latin or vice versa, the parallel texts in both languages closely correspond, and could therefore have been applied to either scenario. Their word-lists were intended specifically to supply common vocabulary, and the conversation texts were pedagogically oriented: simple sentences, repetition and variation, introduction to basic grammar.

The overall picture, therefore, points to some passive knowledge and at best very basic reading ability. Dionisotti warns against evaluating such knowledge in absolute terms: 'We should beware of . . . creating a strange antithesis between the "use of glossaries", on the one hand, and "real knowledge of Greek", on the other – as if a Westerner could wake up in the morning knowing the meaning of Greek words without learning them from somewhere'.[88]

The main challenge for anyone attempting to acquire a reading knowledge of Greek in this period was the absence of sources for grammatical information, particularly in relation to the verbal system. This was later discovered in Macrobius' comparative grammar of the Greek and Latin verb, excerpted by Eriugena in the ninth century, and the contemporary interest in producing bilingual biblical manuscripts suggests that this was another avenue into a more advanced study of Greek. The etymological

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[87] A search of the text of Isidore on the CETEDOC CD-ROM returns about 1,000 passages citing Greek words.

[88] Dionisotti 1988: 2. Vendryes (1913: 221) expressed a similar point (referring to Cormac mac Cuilennáin, to whom the related Irish glossary *Sanas Cormaic* is attributed): 'Et que veut dire M. Esposito quand il soutient que Cormac ne savait pas *le* grec? . . . qu'il n'en possédait pas l'histoire et la littérature autant qu'un Budé ou Wilamowitz? C'est certain. Mais s'il ne savait pas *le* grec, il est indubitable que Cormac savait *du* grec.' (Italics as printed.)

tracts compiled in Ireland in the seventh and eighth centuries show a very resourceful use, and minute study, of all available material containing information on Greek, and provided a foundation of learning on which later Irish scholars were to build.[89]

CHAPTER 9

An habes linguam Latinam? Non tam bene sapio
Views of multilingualism from the early medieval West

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I CAROLINGIAN GAUL AND IRELAND

When Charlemagne came to power in the second half of the eighth century AD, he rewrote the existing written laws, had the unwritten laws of the Germanic tribes and their ancient barbaric poems written down, and began the composition of a grammar of his native language; Einhard, his biographer, writing *c.* 817–836, relates:

> post susceptum imperiale nomen, cum aduerteret multa legibus populi sui deesse – nam Franci duas habent leges, in plurimis locis ualde diuersas – cogitauit quae deerant addere et discrepantia unire, praua quoque ac perperam prolata corrigere, sed de his nihil aliud ab eo factum est, nisi quod pauca capitula, et ea inperfecta, legibus addidit. omnium tamen nationum, quae sub eius dominatu erant, iura quae scripta non erant describere ac litteris mandari fecit. item barbara et antiquissima carmina, quibus ueterum regum actus et bella canebantur, scripsit memoriaeque mandauit. inchoauit et grammaticam patrii sermonis.

> After assuming the imperial title [Charles] realizing that there were many deficiencies in the laws of his own people – for the Franks have two sets of laws that differ tremendously at a number of points – decided, therefore, to fill in what was lacking, to reconcile the disagreements, and also to set right what was bad and wrongly expressed. He did nothing more about this than to add a few items to these laws, but even those in an imperfect state. But he did direct that the unwritten laws of all the peoples under his control should be gathered up and written down. [Charles] also [ordered] that the very old poems, in which the deeds and wars of ancient kings were sung, should be written down and preserved for posterity. He began [as well] a grammar of his own language.[1]

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[1] Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni* §29 (ed. Holder-Egger 1911: 33; translation in Dutton 1998: 34). This probably refers to when he assumed sole power in 771 rather than when he came to joint power

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