

ON THE SEMANTICS OF IRISH WORDS  
DERIVED FROM IE \*g<sup>h</sup>her- 'HOT'<sup>1</sup>

INTRODUCTION

It was the late Professor D. A. Binchy who set out the principal lines of morphological and semantic interrelationship between many of the Irish words derived from the Indo-European root \*g<sup>h</sup>her- 'hot'. Writing with his customary lucidity and sureness, he considered them in the course of a short article on the Welsh and Irish legal terms associated with the *officium pietatis*, namely Welsh *gwar*, *mab anwar*, *gwaredd* and Irish *macc gor*, *macc ingor*, *goire*.<sup>2</sup> With regard to the phonology, Binchy points out that the *e*-grade of the IE root \*g<sup>h</sup>her- (which he writes *g<sup>w</sup>her-*) is found in *fo·geir* 'heats' and, he suggests, 'perhaps also in *gert* "milk and dung" (of cattle)'. *Gor* 'pious' represents the *o*-grade, as does the verb *guirid* 'broods, hatches; festers, suppurates', while the weak grade is contained in *grís* 'heat, ardour, inflammation' (which Binchy maintains corresponds to Welsh *gwres* 'heat'). For Irish, Binchy's article also lists the following derivatives of *gor*: the negative *ingor*, not merely 'impious', but also 'wicked, savage', the abstract *goire* (from \*g<sup>h</sup>horija) 'piety' and the Modern Irish phrase *ar gor* 'broody (of a hen)'. On the other hand, his semantic analysis, whereby, like Thurneysen before him,<sup>3</sup> he sees senses such as 'pious, piety' as originally having been figurative transfers of 'hot, warm, heat, warmth', leads him to dismiss Pokorny's listing of a separate Irish word *gor* 'fromm', which the latter had assigned to a different root, IE \*g<sup>h</sup>her- 'begehren, gern haben'.<sup>4</sup> As against this, Binchy's article makes no mention of the adjective *goirt* 'bitter' and its derivative abstract *gort(a)e* 'hunger' (which Pokorny derives from \*g<sup>h</sup>hortja), nor of Pokorny's inclusion of a Middle Irish *grith* 'Sonne, Hitze' (from \*g<sup>h</sup>hrtu-s), nor of his listing of OIr. *gorn* 'Feuer' as corresponding to Latin *fornus*.<sup>5</sup>

*fo·geir* AND *guirid* (*goirid*) IN THE CAMBRAI HOMILY AND THE GLOSSES

We are fortunate in that consideration of the semantics of Irish words derived from IE \*g<sup>h</sup>her- 'hot' is facilitated by their being quite well represented in the earlier of our extant Old Irish texts. The Cambrai Homily, dated by Thurneysen to the second half of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century,<sup>6</sup> may serve to introduce the two verbs

<sup>1</sup> A version of this paper was read at the Eighth International Congress of Celtic Studies, held in Swansea in July 1987.

<sup>2</sup> 'Some Celtic legal terms', *Celtica* 3 (1956) 221–31, pp. 228–31.

<sup>3</sup> 'Aus dem irischen Recht III', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 15 (1925) 302–376, p. 312 n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern 1959–69) 440–41.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, 493–4.

<sup>6</sup> Discussed in a review of J. Strachan, 'The verbal system of the *Saltair na Rann*', *ZCP* 1 (1897) 342–56, pp. 348–9; *idem*, 'Das Alter der Würzburger Glossen', *ZCP* 3 (1901) 47–54, pp. 53–4.

*fo-geir* I 'heats, inflames; (fig.) chafes, irritates, excites', II 'tempers; seasons' and *guirid* (*goirid*) 'warms, burns'. Following its quotation of the apostle Paul's verse to the Corinthians, *si patiatur unum membrum, compacientur omnia membra* 'if one member suffers, all members suffer together',<sup>7</sup> the Homily proceeds to illustrate its point:

- (1) *air iss ē a bees: ma beth na galar bec for corp duini, ma gorith locc cith ine chuis nu ine lāim nu ine mēraib, fo-geir a n-ggalar in uile corp. is samlith is comadas duun chanisin, fo-[n].gera cach n-oīn, oīre nundem membr uili du dea, nach cēssath ocus na-calar bess faire chomnessam* 'For this is its usage, if there be any little ailment on a man's body, if it burns a place, whether in his foot or in his hand or in his fingers, the ailment inflames the whole body. Thus it is fitting for us ourselves, that any suffering and any ailment that is on his neighbour should inflame each, for we are all members unto God'.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, although the two verbs *fo-geir* and *guirid* are used in this sermon to help illustrate a religious argument, both refer in the first instance to the burning pain visited by an ailment or a disease on the human body, while the second occurrence of *fo-geir* represents a figurative transfer to mental and emotional sharing of a neighbour's physical distress.

In the Milan Glosses *guirid* occurs:

- (2) *.i. guirit sōn* (gl. *fouent*) 'i.e. they warm' (Ml. 39 c 24):<sup>9</sup>

the glossed Commentary refers to birds keeping their young warm, while there is also an instance in *Turin* 106:

- (3) *.i. intan nonnquirtherni* 'when we are warmed',<sup>10</sup>

referring to the internal effect on us of a glimmer of knowledge of the Divinity.

As well as these few examples of the verb *guirid*, the Glosses also yield a fair number of instances of the adjective *gor* o, ā 'pious, dutiful, filial . . . later used in wider sense of fulfilling obligations in general' (*Dictionary of the Irish language [DIL]* s.v. 2 *gor*), one example of its substantival use, together with citations of its opposite *ingor*, both as an adjective, o, ā 'undutiful, unfilial, impious', and as a substantive, 'an impious person, an undutiful person', and the abstract formed from *gor*, *goire* iā, f. (a) 'piety, dutifulness, (familial) affection', (b) 'leg. care, attendance, maintenance of parents, foster-parents, etc. by a son, etc.' *Gor* is to be seen in

<sup>7</sup>1 Cor. 12:26.

<sup>8</sup>OIr. text based on W. Stokes and J. Strachan, *Thesaurus palaeohibernicus* I-II (Cambridge 1903, repr. Dublin 1975) [*Thes.*] II, 245.33-246.9; and R. Thurneysen, *Old Irish reader* (Dublin 1949) 35-6. Translation is based on *Thes.* II, 245-6.

<sup>9</sup>*Thes.* I, 104.

<sup>10</sup>*Thes.* I, 491.

- (4) *.i. itseúit macc ngor* 'i.e. they are (the) treasures of pious sons' (Wb. 23 a 9),<sup>11</sup>

which refers to 'peace' and 'love with faith'. The substantival use of the plural is found at Ml. 44 b 33:

- (5) *donaiþ duthrachtib innangor* (gl. *uotís piorum*).<sup>12</sup>

The impious (*ingoir*) attract opprobrium at Ml. 76 c 1 and Ml. 56 b 9, where they are railed against as being in abundance and prosperity while the righteous (in this instance *infirien*) are in troubles and afflictions. Similarly,

- (6) *.i. archuingid innasoinmech imbiat ind ingoir . . .* 'i.e. because of seeking the prosperity in which the impious are' (Ml. 56 b 15)<sup>13</sup>

contains substantival use of *ingoir*. But in the end things will be evened out and the righteous man (*infirían*) will fare differently to the impious, there being a reference to

- (7) *med brithemnachtae dæ huandamnither int ingor is huant firinni inna brithemnachtae si conocabar infirían* 'the balance of the judgement of God whereby the impious is condemned, it is by the truth of this judgement that the righteous man is exalted' (Ml. 57 d 8).<sup>14</sup>

In the Christian context of the Glosses *goire* is the caring support which should be extended by the Church to a widow 'if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband; and she must be well attested for her good deeds, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, relieved the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way' (Paul to Timothy; 1 Tim. 5:9-10):<sup>15</sup>

- (8) *.i. is sí inso fedb asuisse dogoiri inæclis archuit óisa et bésa* 'i.e. this is the widow whom it is just to maintain in the Church as regards age and morals' (Wb. 28 d 24).<sup>16</sup>

Compare Wb. 29 a 10 and Wb. 28 d 19, where the maintenance of the elderly such as widows (*goire*) seems to be contrasted with the care of the young by older people, called *altram* 'fostering, fosterage'.

In sum, then, the Glosses provide us with examples of the following: *guirid* applied (i) to birds' physical caring for their young, and (ii) figuratively, to the effect of knowledge concerning the Divinity on humans. This second sense is close to the meaning of *guirid* and *fo-geir* in the

<sup>11</sup> *Thees.* I, 642.

<sup>12</sup> *Thees.* I, 127.

<sup>13</sup> *Thees.* I, 184.

<sup>14</sup> *Thees.* I, 190.

<sup>15</sup> *The Holy Bible* revised standard version, Catholic edition (London 1966).

<sup>16</sup> *Thees.* I, 685.

Cambrai Homily, but lacks the connotation of pain or distressing heat. Of course, the use of *gor*, *ingor* and *goire* has been taken over from the native Irish legal system. We have noted a cluster of occurrences of *goire* in the Würzburg glosses with respect to the maintenance or support due to a widow. Here the word has assumed the sense of institutionalized social welfare caring by the Church community, which contrasts with the inner-family and kinship organization of such maintenance in the native system. The concept of 'dutiful son' (*macc gor*) as opposed to 'undutiful son' (*macc ingor*) has been transferred to the religious sphere: those who knuckle under to the demands and precepts of Christian faith and morality are rewarded with the approbation inherent in *gor*, the recalcitrant earn the opprobrium of *ingor*.

(*Macc*) *gor*, (*macc*) *ingor* and *goire* may accordingly be added to the growing list of native Irish words, which are known to have been adopted by the new Christian religion and invested with the appropriate religious content. Prof. Binchy listed *Dia* 'God', *cretem* 'belief', *ires* 'faith', *crábud* 'piety', *érlam* 'patron (saint), founder', originally 'tutelar deity'.<sup>17</sup> Others are *fáith* 'prophet', *fáitsine* 'prophecy',<sup>18</sup> and *aithgne*, *etargne*, *engnae*, *ingnae*, *ecnae*, all of which acquired the sense of 'knowledge of God, (Christian) wisdom'.<sup>19</sup>

#### LEGAL CONTEXTS

Examples of the terms *gor*, *ingor* and *goire* are well represented in those legal tracts which have come down to us. Furthermore, the terms themselves have been the object of considerable attention by scholars. Already in 1886, H. d'Arbois de Jubainville reviewed their application in an article on the rights of fathers over their sons in Irish law, citing the law-tract *Córus béscnai*,<sup>20</sup> which sets out the reciprocal relationship between a *macc gor* and his father: neither can oppose a transaction which benefits the other, but must do so in the case of a detrimental arrangement. Contrariwise, the *macc ingor* has no such links with his father: he may have all legal transactions rendered null and void, and can be legally dispossessed of all his wealth (*seúit*) by his father.<sup>21</sup>

The moral connotations alluded to already are evident in the following instance from the early eighth-century *Críth gablach*,<sup>22</sup> where the

<sup>17</sup>'Patrick and his biographers: ancient and modern', *Studia Hibernica* 2 (1962) 7-173, p. 166.

<sup>18</sup>L. Mac Mathúna, 'The designation, functions and knowledge of the Irish poet: a preliminary semantic study', *Anzeiger der phil.-hist. Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 119. Jahrgang (Wien 1982) 225-38, p. 237.

<sup>19</sup>L. Mac Mathúna, 'An introductory survey of the wordfield "knowledge" in Old and Middle Irish', in W. Meid and H. Schmeja (ed.), *Philologie und Sprachwissenschaft* (Akten der 10. Österreichischen Linguisten-Tagung, Innsbruck, 23.-26. Oktober 1982, Innsbruck 1983) 149-57, pp. 153-5.

<sup>20</sup>*Ancient laws of Ireland* I-VI (ed. J. O'Donovan et al., Dublin 1865-1901) [*Laws*] III, 56, 58.

<sup>21</sup>F. Kelly, *A guide to early Irish law* (Dublin 1988) 80-81, should be consulted for a concise account of the categories of 'the son of a living father'.

<sup>22</sup>Ed. D. A. Binchy (Dublin 1941); date discussed on p. xiv.

honour-price of a son who evades his obligation of *goire* is stated to be half that of a normal son, just as the honour-price of a concubine (*dormuine*) is half that of a wife:

- (9) *leth díri cach gráid túaithe fora mnaí 7 a mac 7 a ingin, acht ma[d] dormuine nó mac bes élodach ria ngoiri – cethramthu for suidib.* 'Half the honour-price of every grade of the *túath* on his wife and his son and his daughter, except if it be a concubine or a son who evades his filial obligation – a quarter on these'.<sup>23</sup>

The accuracy of the derivation of the Irish legal terms *gor* and *ingor* from the primary notion of 'warming, keeping warm, heating' is underlined by the semantic regeneration of the opposition *pious* versus *impious* in a text on surety, *Berrad airechta*, by means of the regular adjectives *te*, *té* 'hot, warm' and *úar* 'cold', thus giving

- (10) *macc té* and *macc úar* 'dutiful son' and 'undutiful son',<sup>24</sup> respectively.

The first recension of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* contains one instance of *goire*, which is worth quoting in this legal context:

- (11) *Buí icá gairi la húa hi Ráith Impail* 'He (namely Iliach) was being cared for with filial piety by his grandson (i.e. Lóegaire Búadach) in Ráith Immail',<sup>25</sup>

following Cecile O'Rahilly's translation. Iliach was the grandfather of Lóegaire Búadach. After Iliach was slain, Lóegaire Búadach was rewarded for his devotion by being presented with his grandfather's severed head!<sup>26</sup>

Apart from what may be termed the loose compound *macc gor*, there is also the close compound, made up of the same elements, *gormac*, (a) 'an adopted son (who is brought in to undertake the maintenance of the adopter)', (b) 'a sister's son (who would normally be adopted for this purpose)'. Although entered under (a) 'an adopted son', several of *DIL*'s examples clearly merge with its sense (b) 'a sister's son', e.g.

- (12) *screpall . . . gacha gar-meic, 7 gach meic sethar* 'a *screpall* for each *gormac* and each sister's son'.<sup>27</sup>

Instances of such glossing and explaining are not infrequent, while on other occasions the sense 'a sister's son' may be implicit, as in *Mesca Ulad*, when Cú Chulainn, who was the son of Conchobar's sister, is

<sup>23</sup>ibid., 5 lines 125–7.

<sup>24</sup>See Binchy, *Celtica* 3 (1956) 221–31, p. 229; and Kelly, *Guide*, 80.

<sup>25</sup>C. O'Rahilly, *Táin Bó Cúailnge Recension I* (Dublin 1976) [*TBC-I*] 102 line 3369.

<sup>26</sup>ibid., lines 3384–5.

<sup>27</sup>Charles Plummer, *Bethada náem nÉirenn : Lives of Irish saints I* (Oxford 1922, repr. 1968) 41 § 84.

called *in gormac*.<sup>28</sup> *DIL* also cites two examples of a compound *goringen* 'dutiful daughter', but it is to be observed that each is preceded by the more familiar *gormac*.<sup>29</sup>

The opening of the vowel /o/ to /a/ which is to be seen in citation (12), as well as in many of *DIL*'s Middle Irish forms of the words in question, is also the form which has survived into Modern Irish. Although Ó Dónaill ascribes the older senses of 'adopted son; sister's son' and 'adopted daughter; niece' to *garmhac* and *gariníon*, respectively (albeit with a 'Lit(erary)' proviso), the regular current usage corresponds to the other senses given, namely 'grandson' and 'grand-daughter'.<sup>30</sup> This of course represents a shift in meaning and entails the opening up of an extra generation gap. One surmises that this change would have been prompted by the abandonment of the precise legal arrangements which had obtained in the earlier period and which had given rise to the terms in the first place. In point of fact, the relationship involved in citation (11) from the *Táin* is just such as would have facilitated this semantic shift. It is also to be noted that *garnia* 'grandnephew' and *garneacht* 'grandniece' are to be found in Modern Irish.<sup>31</sup>

#### *DIL*'s 1 *gor*

So far we have been dealing for the most part with *DIL*'s 2 *gor* o, ā 'pious, dutiful, filial' and its derivatives. We may now turn our attention briefly to its 1 *gor* o, m. (a) 'Med. inflammation, pus, matter (gore?)', (b) 'Of the brooding of hens'. Although they are attested later than some of the examples of sense (a), it will be as well to take two of the instances of sense (b) first:

- (13) *da eisene déc ag gur* 'twelve unfledged birds brooding'<sup>32</sup>

and, in a transferred application:

- (14) *An Chloch 'na m-bí an ghorta ar gor* 'the stone fortress in which famine broods'.<sup>33</sup>

*Sanas Cormaic* provides two fine examples of sense (a):

- (15) *dourgbad foc[h]ētōir cnoc and lān do lindchrú 7 gur 7 foloisced in duine amail tene* 'it would immediately raise a lump full of gore and pus and it would burn the person like fire'<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup>J. Carmichael Watson, *Mesca Ulad* (Dublin 1941, repr. 1967) 14 line 324.

<sup>29</sup>W. Stokes, 'Poems ascribed to S. Moling', *Anecdota from Irish manuscripts* II (Halle 1908) 20–41, p. 34 § 4 (metre faulty); K. Meyer, 'Colum Cille cecinit in úair táinic Cormac hūa Līathāin cuige', *ZCP* 12 (1918) 390–92, p. 391 lines 29–30.

<sup>30</sup>*Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* (Baile Átha Cliath 1977) 614.

<sup>31</sup>*ibid.*, 614.

<sup>32</sup>Eugene O'Curry's law transcripts in the Royal Irish Academy, 882 (H.3.18, p. 394b), cited in *DIL* s.v. 1 *gor*.

<sup>33</sup>J. O'Donovan, *The tribes of Ireland* (Dublin 1852) 40 line 16.

<sup>34</sup>K. Meyer, 'Sanas Cormaic', *Anecdota from Irish manuscripts* IV (Halle 1912) 83 § 975 s.v. *nescōit*.

and the well-known account of the ugly youth includes:

- (16) *nothēged a thaosc di gur brēn for a dib culadaib* 'a gush of vile pus would go down on the nape of his neck'.<sup>35</sup>

In the *Irish Aeneid*, *gor* is 'mucous matter in the eye'.<sup>36</sup> *Gor* may be taken as a verbal noun in

- (17) *ar ngor a choise fair* 'when his foot had become inflamed'.<sup>37</sup>

Diminutives formed from *gor* in this general sense of 'inflammation' are *guirín* o, m. 'a pimple, a wen'<sup>38</sup> and *gorán* o, m. 'a pimple'.<sup>39</sup>

#### FURTHER ILLUSTRATIVE VERBAL CITATIONS

Limitations of space allow only an extremely cursory glance at other significant verbal usages. However, it is worth recalling that the verb employed when the youthful Cú Chulainn's belligerence is being cooled off in the third successive vat of cold water is *fo-geir*:

- (18) *In tress dabach . . . fosngert-side combo chuimsi dó a tess 7 a fuacht* 'The third vat . . . he heated it until its heat and its coldness were equable to him'.<sup>40</sup>

A figurative use is

- (19) *inn úair fot-geir do géd glan* 'when (the loss of) your lovely goose inflames your heart'.<sup>41</sup>

*Foigred* u, m. is apparently a late verbal noun of this verb, with the sense 'heating, burnishing', but the ordeal by boiling water, which was known as *fír fogerrta*<sup>42</sup> would have been older than the other examples cited.

A simplex verb *gerid* 'warms' seems to be preserved in

- (20) *gerthiut gorthiut robruth rígh*,<sup>43</sup>

as does the genitive singular of its verbal noun \**gerud* as *gerta* (also *gertha*, *giarta*, *giartha*) in

<sup>35</sup>ibid., 91 § 1059 s.v. *prúll*.

<sup>36</sup>G. Calder, *The Irish Aeneid* (Ir. Texts Soc. VI, London 1907 for 1903) 12 line 175.

<sup>37</sup>Facsimile edition of *Leabhar Breac* (Dublin 1876) [LB], f. 146 b 49-50.

<sup>38</sup>Cf. W. Stokes, *Irish glosses, a mediæval tract on Latin declension* (Dublin 1860) 9 line 255; and Royal Ir. Academy ms 23 K 42, 53.3, cited *DIL* G-175 s.v. *guirín*.

<sup>39</sup>Cf. Royal Ir. Academy ms 23 K 42, 35.22, cited *DIL* G-137 s.v. *gorán*.

<sup>40</sup>R. I. Best and O. Bergin, *Lebor na hUidre* (Dublin 1929) [LU] 163 lines 5203-4.

<sup>41</sup>G. Murphy, *Early Irish lyrics* (Oxford 1956) 88 § 37.2d.

<sup>42</sup>*Laws* V, 456.23, 470.34-5; cf. the description of *coire fír*, in W. Stokes, 'The Irish ordeals, Cormac's adventure in the Land of Promise, and the decision as to Cormac's sword', *Irische Texte* III/1 (Leipzig 1891) 183-229, pp. 191-2.

<sup>43</sup>E. Knott, *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (Dublin 1936, repr. 1963) 10 lines 317-18.

- (21) *sét (seóit) gert[h]a* defined as 'a gift or presentation from fosterer to foster-child on termination of the fosterage as an earnest of the claim of the fosterer to future maintenance'.<sup>44</sup>

We may follow J. Strachan<sup>45</sup> in understanding *guirid* as 'hatches' in

- (22) *Slebe gainme 7 grian it e guirte in ogh* 'Mountains of sand and gravel are what hatch the egg'.<sup>46</sup>

The primary sense of *guirid*, that of providing physical warmth, is to be seen in relation to humans in

- (23) *Robud ferr dún brosna crínaig do thabairt díar ngorud fris andás a tucaís* 'It would have been better for us had a bundle of dried wood been brought to warm us with than what you have brought'.<sup>47</sup>

and has continued in use. However, figurative applications were just as plentiful in the earlier stages of the language, e.g.

- (24) *ingrian glúair goires cachnigair* 'the bright sun who warms every . . .',<sup>48</sup>

said of Nimrod.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore *guirid* means 'causes to blush'<sup>50</sup> and perhaps even 'blisters (?)'.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, in this section, we may note that a compound *airgoirid* joins with *loiscid* to 'bake and burn' the souls of sinners in *Fís Adomnáin*,<sup>52</sup> while its verbal noun occurs in the *Triads* as

- (25) *tírad co n-aurgorad* 'kiln-drying with scorching'.<sup>53</sup>

A second verbal compound, *tergorad* 'warming, cherishing', has rather more pleasant connotations. With the appropriation of *goire* as a technical term by the lawyers, the need to regenerate a verbal noun indicating caring and warm affection was evidently felt. So *tergorad* came to be

<sup>44</sup>Cf. R. Thurneysen, 'Cáin Lánamna "die Regelung der Paare"', in *Studies in early Irish law* (ed. R. Thurneysen et al., Dublin and London 1936) 1–80, p. 10; and K. Mulchrone, 'The rights and duties of women with regard to the education of their children', *ibid.*, 187–205, p. 190. See *DIL* G-76-7 s.v. *gerta*.

<sup>45</sup>'Miscellanea celtica', *Revue Celtique* 28 (1907) 195–207, p. 205.

<sup>46</sup>W. Stokes, 'The Evernew Tongue', *Ériu* 2 (1905) 96–162, p. 120 § 58.

<sup>47</sup>K. Mulchrone, *Bethu Phátraic, the Tripartite Life of Patrick* (Dublin and London 1939) 6 lines 127–9.

<sup>48</sup>W. Stokes, *The Saltair na Rann* (Oxford 1883) 40 line 2735.

<sup>49</sup>Cf. Mulchrone, *Bethu Phátraic*, lines 646–7 and 3068–9, for a similar metaphor based on fire and its warming and heating embers.

<sup>50</sup>A. Cameron, *Reliquiæ Celticæ* II (Inverness 1894) 228 line 7.

<sup>51</sup>*Laws* I, 10.x.

<sup>52</sup>Best and Bergin, *LU*, 71 lines 2103–4.

<sup>53</sup>K. Meyer, *The Triads of Ireland* (Todd Lecture Series XIII, Dublin 1906) 18 § 140.

used, as for instance, in describing the providing of a professor of traditional lore with a good piece of meat *dia thurgorudh* 'in order to cherish him'.<sup>54</sup>

*goirt, gortae, gortach, gortaigid* AND *gortugud*

The words which have been considered so far have spanned the full semantic range open to senses centred on 'hot' – both the beneficial and adverse aspects of 'hot' and 'heating', as well as the central, unmarked, neutral ones. However, almost all of the group of words which radiate from *goirt* bear negative senses. The adjective *goirt* itself means (a) 'hungry, starved', (b) 'bitter, sour, salt, sharp, keen' according to the editors of *DIL*. Semantically, the latter sense was undoubtedly primary, the link with *gor* and the other words discussed above presumably being provided by 'searing, piercing pain', the pain of fire and burning being equated with the 'stinging, biting effect' of salt on human skin. Application would then have been extended to a variety of substances producing similar effects, as well as being transferred to secondary, figurative contexts. The specific sense of 'hungry, starved' is to be explained by the pangs of hunger, felt internally in the stomach, and interpreted as being similar to pain inflicted externally on the body.

Sense (a) 'hungry, starved' may be illustrated by

(26) *Ni aurberta bith comat goirt* 'Do not consume till thou be hungry',<sup>55</sup>

and

(27) *cú goirt elscothach* 'a starving, greedy dog'.<sup>56</sup>

*Goirt* is opposed to *sáithech* 'full, satisfied, filled (of physical appetite)' (*DIL*) (or in the more elegant language of *The concise Oxford dictionary* 'replete with food'). There is ample evidence of the wide application of sense (b) 'bitter, sour, salt, sharp, keen'. Furthermore, the semantic linking of *gor* 'hot' to *goirt*, just proposed, is rendered all the more plausible by

(28) *tene . . . langoirt* 'a fully piercing fire'.<sup>57</sup>

Also described as *goirt* are the blades of spears,<sup>58</sup> food,<sup>59</sup> the wind,<sup>60</sup>

<sup>54</sup>Royal Irish Academy facsimile introd. R. Atkinson, *Yellow Book of Lecan* (Dublin 1896) 419 b 13.

<sup>55</sup>E. Gwynn, *The Rule of Tallaght* (Dublin and London 1927) 78 § 56.

<sup>56</sup>E. Windisch, 'Die altirischen Hymnen', *Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch* I (Leipzig 1880) 41 line 9; = *avidus*, E. Hogan, *The Latin Lives of the saints* (Todd Lecture Series V, Dublin 1894) 69 line 20.

<sup>57</sup>E. Windisch, 'Fis Adamnán', *Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch* I (Leipzig 1880) 191 lines 12–13.

<sup>58</sup>In *Cathcharpat Serda*: R. I. Best and M. A. O'Brien, *The Book of Leinster* IV (Dublin 1965) 834 lines 24901–2.

<sup>59</sup>Meyer, *Triads*, 8 § 70.

<sup>60</sup>In *Fis Adomnán*: Best and Bergin, *LU*, 73 line 2184; and Windisch, *Irische Texte* I, 26.

the sea<sup>61</sup> and music,<sup>62</sup> while that bane of the Ulster warriors, Bricriu, is addressed as *briathargoirt* 'of the bitter words'.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, the bitterest satirist in Ireland of another period earns the superlative *ba gortiu*.<sup>64</sup> *Goirt* is also used of crying bitterly.<sup>65</sup> The compounds *goirtbíad* 'salt food',<sup>66</sup> *goirtbriathrach* 'sharp-tongued',<sup>67</sup> and the reference to sound, *goirtgréchad*<sup>68</sup> 'bitter screaming' are worth noting. The regular adjective *serb* 'bitter' often occurs alongside *goirt*.<sup>69</sup>

*Gortae* iā, f., the abstract based on *goirt*, meaning 'hunger, famine', frequently occurs together with *ócht* 'cold' and *nochtae* 'nakedness' in contexts of extreme want, e.g.

- (29) *.i. issumecen precept armetiuth et mothoschid manipridag atbél arócht et gorti* 'i.e. it is necessary for me to teach for my raiment and my sustenance: unless I preach I shall perish of cold and hunger' (Wb. 10 d 24;<sup>70</sup> *ócht* and *gortae* are to be found again as syntagmatic pairs at Wb. 10 d 25<sup>71</sup> and 15 d 29,<sup>72</sup> while *gortae* is joined by *nochtae* at Wb. 16 a 8 and 9<sup>73</sup>).

That this pairing of *gortae* and *ócht* goes back far in the language is to be inferred from their occurrence together as a dvandva compound in *Saltair na Rann*:

- (30) *Húair rombatar imbochtai / dochúatar in-huachtgortai* 'After they were in poverty, they fell into cold and hunger',<sup>74</sup>

although here the long *o* of *ócht* has given way to its later, diphthongized form. In the attractive charm preserved on the cover of the Reichenau Beda, *gortae* is to be found alongside another word for 'hunger', namely *nóine*, a variant of *núna* f. 'famine':

- (31) *Dithólu æchtrann et námat et geinte . et fochide . diphlágaib tened et nóine . et gorte et galræ nile nécsamle* '(Save us

<sup>61</sup>E. O'Curry, 'The *Tri Thruaighé na Scéalaigheachta . . .*', *Atlantis* 4 (1863) 113–240, p. 136 line 36.

<sup>62</sup>R. Atkinson, *The passions and the homilies from Leabhar Breac* (Todd Lecture Series II, Dublin 1887) 268 line 8138.

<sup>63</sup>W. Stokes, 'The violent deaths of Goll and Garb', *Revue Celtique* 14 (1893) 396–449, p. 424.

<sup>64</sup>K. Meyer, 'The excuse of Gulide's daughter', *Hibernica Minora* (Anecdota Oxoniensia, Oxford 1894) 65 § 1.

<sup>65</sup>Atkinson, *Passions and homilies*, 60 line 682.

<sup>66</sup>W. Stokes, *Lives of saints from the Book of Lismore* (Anecdota Oxoniensia, Oxford 1890) 310 line 11.

<sup>67</sup>W. Stokes, 'Cóir Anmann', *Irische Texte* III/2 (Leipzig 1897) 398 § 263.

<sup>68</sup>E. Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn* (Todd Lecture Series IV, Dublin 1892) 84 line 16.

<sup>69</sup>Atkinson, *Passions and homilies*, lines 682, 7247, 8138; *LB* 159 a 22–3.

<sup>70</sup>*The*. I, 564.

<sup>71</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>72</sup>*ibid.*, 604.

<sup>73</sup>*ibid.*, 605.

<sup>74</sup>Stokes, *Saltair na Rann*, 22 lines 1477–8.

from a flood of foreigners and foes and pagans and tribulations: from plagues of fire and famine and hunger and many divers diseases'.<sup>75</sup>

That *gortae* is frequently a prelude to death is clear from a passage about Máel Ruain of Tallaght<sup>76</sup> (where it is yet again coupled with *úacht*) and the Laud genealogies,<sup>77</sup> while there are many Modern Irish examples of the intransitive expression

(32) *téit do gortae* 'starves to death' (lit. 'goes to starvation'),<sup>78</sup>

and the transitive

(33) *cuirid do gortae* 'starves' (lit. 'puts to starvation').<sup>79</sup>

Theologically interesting is Keating's use of *gortae* in religious contexts:

(34) *ag éagcaoine na gorta spioradálta 'na mbíd i n-ífreann* 'bemoaning the spiritual hunger in which they are in hell'<sup>80</sup>

and

(35) *gorta ghrás nDé 7 a ghrádha do bheith orra* 'their enduring hunger for the grace of God and His love',<sup>81</sup>

but there is also an earlier figurative example in the *Passions and Homilies*.<sup>82</sup>

As the foregoing semantic discussion clearly indicates, *DIL*'s separate listing of a *gorte* iā, f., also derived from *goirt*, and meaning (a) 'bitterness, intensity', (b) 'an acrid taste or smell (?)', is unwarranted. The range of senses simply corresponds to those grouped together under (b) for *goirt* itself, namely, 'bitter, sour, salt, sharp, keen', and represents the more general uses of the word, those not specifically relating to the absence of food. One example of *gorte*'s sense (a) is a figurative reference to the intensity of the sorrow of repentance:

(36) *co ngorti cride 7 déraib* 'with intensity of heart and with tears'.<sup>83</sup>

Another strongly suggests a semantic link to *gor* 'inflammation, pus':

(37) *Ba dermair tra iumad aicenta na crécht sin .i. mét a neme 7 a ngori* 'Great indeed was the natural extent of those wounds,

<sup>75</sup> *The*. II, 256.11–12: 8th or 9th century.

<sup>76</sup> R. I. Best and M. A. O'Brien (ed.), *The Book of Leinster* V (Dublin 1967) 1246 lines 36964–5.

<sup>77</sup> K. Meyer, 'The Laud genealogies and tribal histories', *ZCP* 8 (1912) 291–338, p. 313 lines 3–4.

<sup>78</sup> E. Mac Neill, *Duanaire Finn* I (Ir. Texts Soc. VII, London 1908 for 1904) 86 line 1; U. Bedel, *Leabhair na Seintiomna . . . : The books of the Old Testament translated into Irish* (London 1685), Isa. 5:13, Prov. 10:3.

<sup>79</sup> Mac Neill, *Duanaire Finn* I, 86 line 25.

<sup>80</sup> O. Bergin (ed.), *Trí bior-ghaoithe an bháis* (Dublin 1931) 200 lines 6351–2.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, 288 line 9233.

<sup>82</sup> Atkinson, *Passions and homilies*, 185 line 5190.

<sup>83</sup> *LB* 256 b 70.

i.e. the degree (lit. amount) of its poison and its bitterness/intensity'.<sup>84</sup>

*DIL*'s sense (b) is supported by citations of evil-smelling clothes and bodies,<sup>85</sup> while its final example provides a semantic link to the range of senses of the verb *gortaigid*:

- (38) *dá ghéire 7 dá ghoirte chuirfeas rinn* 'no matter how sharply and how hurtfully/bitterly he puts the point'.<sup>86</sup>

With regard to the adjective based on *gortae*, that is *gortach* *iā*, f., 'hungry, starving', pressure of space allows us merely to observe that it occurs at *ML*. 76 d 14<sup>87</sup> and is an appropriate epithet of Suibhne, who is described as being a rough and starving *geilt*.<sup>88</sup> A nice instance of the substantival use of *gortach* is

- (39) *IS e dobereadh biadh dona gortachuibh* 'It was he who used give food to the hungry'.<sup>89</sup>

*Gortach* is used of the consequence of a poor harvest, recorded for AD 858:

- (40) *Foghmur gortach isin bhliadhain si* 'An autumn of famine this year' (lit. 'a hungry autumn').<sup>90</sup>

It is transferred to 'a hunger-inducing environment' in

- (41) *ar in díthrub n-essuthach ngortach n-accorach* 'for the infertile, hunger-inducing, hungry desert'.<sup>91</sup>

As *DIL* itself points out, *gortaigid* and its verbal noun, *gortugud*, are based on *goirt*. An instance of the primary sense of this verb, I 'salts, pickles', demonstrates the semantic link with the adjective:

- (42) *gortigim .i. idem significat 7 sallio* (gl. *sallo*) (*Sg.* 187 a 6).<sup>92</sup>

Sense II 'inflicts pain, vexes, hurts, embitters, injures' is clearly an extension of the particular, biting type of sensation one associates with 'salting, pickling'. But, as it happens, even in *DIL*'s earliest examples, the figurative senses of 'annoying, vexing, mentally hurting' and 'having adverse moral effects' predominate. Perhaps the most telling illustration of this tendency is the occurrence of the verb in *Féilire Óengusso*:

<sup>84</sup> *LB* 142 b 51–2.

<sup>85</sup> *LB* 155 a 3 and 5.

<sup>86</sup> Bergin, *Trí bior-ghaoithe*, 258 line 8221: said of God as surgeon.

<sup>87</sup> *Theas.* I, 262.

<sup>88</sup> J. G. O'Keeffe, *Buile Súibhne* (Dublin 1931, repr. 1952) 26 line 716.

<sup>89</sup> Stokes, *Lismore Lives*, 145 lines 4886–7.

<sup>90</sup> J. N. Radner, *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (Dublin 1978) 104 § 261.

<sup>91</sup> E. Hogan, *The Irish Nennius from L. na hUidre and homilies and legends from L. Brecc* (Todd Lecture Series VI, Dublin 1895) 35 lines 8–9; = *LB* 256 b 53–4.

<sup>92</sup> *Theas.* II, 178.

in order to satisfy the acquisitive zeal of a poet who was an avid collector of saints' relics, the saint Máedóc felt compelled to cut off his little finger; this the cleric did, and he was upset. And it is for this troubling of the cleric, rather than for any physical pain suffered by him that *gortaigid* seems to be used.<sup>93</sup> The same verb carries the sense of being harmed morally by the devil,<sup>94</sup> while physical hurt seems to be involved elsewhere.<sup>95</sup> An example from a medical comparison in Keating's writings is worth quoting:

- (43) *aní is gortughadh lé neach, gurab leigheas dó é* 'what one deems painful, may it be a source of healing to him'.<sup>96</sup>

Of rather more interest than the foregoing to speakers of Modern Irish are, one would imagine, three instances from the Life of St Rúadán, *Betha Rúadháin*. In two cases the verb is used of damage caused to a bell by striking it,<sup>97</sup> while, perhaps most arresting of all, it refers in the third instance to the piercing of the ground:

- (44) *Clannais . . . a bachaill i ttalmain . . . go ro gortaigh an talmain 'ga cor inn* 'He fixed his crozier in the ground, so that he broke up the ground as he put it in'.<sup>98</sup>

It is possible that the use of the verb *gortaigid* here has been facilitated by the common perception in Irish of the surface of the earth as its skin (cf. *tonn*, which may be applied to both land and sea, as well as human skin), but this is to surmise. Until such time as more examples approximating to the senses found in this saint's Life come to light, it would be unwise to attach too much significance to them: we may have to do here with a peculiarity of the writer's idiolect or a restricted dialect feature.

#### *grís* AND DERIVATIVES

*Grís* ā, f. is ascribed the two senses I 'heat, fire, embers, hot ashes' and II 'Fig. glow, ardour, valour, passion' by *DIL*, although many of the examples it offers of the first sense would seem to anticipate the figurative range of its second sense. References to the primary sense I are

- (45) *hi tellach . . . coratgori a gr̄iss* 'on a hearth so that its embers may warm you',<sup>99</sup>

and of the heat of the sun,

<sup>93</sup>W. Stokes, *Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé* (London 1905, repr. Dublin 1984) 70 line 9.

<sup>94</sup>Cf. Plummer, *Bethada náem nÉreann* I, 56 § 60.

<sup>95</sup>W. Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook of gynaecology and midwifery', *Ir. Texts* 5 (1934) 28 lines 18–19.

<sup>96</sup>Bergin, *Trí bior-ghaoithe*, 257 lines 8209–8210.

<sup>97</sup>Plummer, *Bethada náem nÉreann* I, 318 § 10 and 323 § 36.

<sup>98</sup>*ibid.*, 326 § 47.

<sup>99</sup>K. Meyer, *Aislinge meic Conglinne* (London 1892) 95 lines 25–6.

- (46) *γ-o-gríis imurcrach na-gréine* 'and from the excessive heat of the sun'.<sup>100</sup>

It is also applied to the searing of fetters<sup>101</sup> and the burning of fever.<sup>102</sup> However, transfers to figurative applications occur quite early:

- (47) *grís goirthe*, 'warming embers' (lit. 'embers of warming') and *teine thaidlech* 'shining fire' are stock characterisations of saints' sustaining of 'the sons of life'.<sup>103</sup>

On the other hand, 'the piety of the wealthy churl is a flame without fire, whose embers warm thee not' (*nít goire a grís*).<sup>104</sup> The frequency of the occurrence of *grís* alongside *guirid* is noteworthy. *DIL*'s second sense is to be seen in complimentary references to Colum Cille<sup>105</sup> and others.<sup>106</sup> The sense 'valour' is found in *Saltair na Rann*.<sup>107</sup>

The verb *grísaid* has the senses I, 'causes to glow, causes to blush', and II, 'incites, eggs on'. An example of I is

- (48) *aní an ferg do-gríos a grúaidhe* 'is it anger that made his cheeks glow?'.<sup>108</sup>

The second, transferred, sense seems to have arisen in the Middle Irish period. It is used in relation to Cú Chulainn in the Modern Irish 'Battle of Rosnaree'<sup>109</sup> and in

- (49) *ro gab Laogh ag gríosadh agus ag glámadh Conculainn* 'Laogh started to egg on and to satirize Cú Chulainn',<sup>110</sup>

while resort to the quill rather than to the sword was urged on Keating:

- (50) *do gríosadh mise do chum na stáire seo do scríobhadh* 'I was stimulated to write this history'.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>100</sup>G. Dottin, 'Le *Teanga Bithnua* du manuscrit de Rennes', *Revue Celtique* 24 (1903) 365–403, p. 378 lines 10–11.

<sup>101</sup>E. Gwynn, *The metrical Dindsenchas* III (Todd Lecture Series X, Dublin 1913) 370 line 55.

<sup>102</sup>Meyer, *Triads*, 28 § 224.

<sup>103</sup>Mulchrone, *Bethu Phátraic*, 37 lines 646–7 and 152 lines 3068–9; and Plummer, *Bethada náem* I, 20 § 44 and 42 § 88.

<sup>104</sup>K. Meyer, 'Anmchairdes Manchāin Lēith so', *ZCP* 7 (1910) 310–12, p. 311 § 16.

<sup>105</sup>K. Meyer, 'Neue Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften', *Archiv für celtische Lexikographie* 3 (1906) 215–46, p. 217 § 3.

<sup>106</sup>T. O'Donoghue, 'Cert cech rīg co réil', *Miscellany presented to Kuno Meyer* (ed. O. Bergin and C. Marstrander, Halle 1912) [*KMMisc.*] 258–77, p. 266 § 34.

<sup>107</sup>Stokes, *Saltair na Rann*, 27 line 1881.

<sup>108</sup>E. C. Quiggin, 'A poem by Gilbride MacNamee in praise of Cathal O'Conor', *KMMisc.*, 167–77, p. 172 § 21.

<sup>109</sup>E. Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn* (Todd Lecture Series IV, Dublin 1892) 92 § 35.

<sup>110</sup>E. Windisch, *Die altirische Heldensage Táin Bó Cúalnge* (Leipzig 1905) 555 lines 3866–7.

<sup>111</sup>D. Comyn, *The History of Ireland by Geoffrey Keating* (Ir. Texts Soc. IV, London 1902 for 1901) 76 line 51.

The examples collected under the verbal noun *grísad* u, m. 'the act of injuring, blistering (by satire), the act of causing to blush, burning', include

- (51) *éiric in grísta truim* (gl. *na greise truime*) 'the compensation due for heavy injuring'.<sup>112</sup>

The phrases *grísad gruad* (*gruaidi*) 'blister-satirizing cheeks (cheek)' occur in the commentary to the Laws<sup>113</sup> and, with reference to agitated feelings, in an early prose tale.<sup>114</sup> One of the torments of hell is

- (52) *gríosadh gacha galair* 'the kindling, stimulating of every disease'.<sup>115</sup>

This section can just mention two non-verbal derivatives of *grís*, namely the substantival 1 *grísach* ā, f. 'burning embers, fire' and the adjectival 2 *grísach* o, ā 'fiery, ardent'. Figurative uses of the substantive are given pride of place in *DIL*, and interestingly, some of these refer to the colour of embers coming to cheeks.<sup>116</sup> Another refers to love,<sup>117</sup> while the primary sense is met with elsewhere.<sup>118</sup> The adjective yields a fine figurative example in conjunction with the sun and *guirid*, in an early verse:

- (53) *Ān grían gríssach / goires brēoda Bresuail* 'flaming Bressal is a glorious fiery sun who heats',<sup>119</sup>

the primary sense being found in

- (54) *berb iat fo luaith grisaig* 'coquatur sub cinere calido'.<sup>120</sup>

#### MODERN IRISH EVIDENCE

Hopes of doing full justice in this paper to the Modern Irish evidence have had to be reluctantly abandoned. Instead, a rather impressionistic survey, drawing in particular on twentieth-century Southern dialect sources, will be attempted. According to Donnchadh Ó Drisceoil one of the functions of the farmyard cocks in the old days was to ensure

<sup>112</sup>*Laws* I, 66.32.

<sup>113</sup>*Laws* IV, 346.1.

<sup>114</sup>J. O'Donovan, *The banquet of Dun na n-Gedh and the battle of Magh Rath* (Dublin 1842) 196 line 3.

<sup>115</sup>Bergin, *Trí bior-ghaoithe*, 128 line 4066.

<sup>116</sup>W. Stokes, 'The Death of the sons of Uisnech', *Irische Texte* II/2 (Leipzig 1887) 109–184, p. 144 line 570; O. Bergin, 'Irish grammatical tracts', suppl. to *Ériu* 8–10 (1916–28) 86 ex. 953.

<sup>117</sup>*Ériu* 9 (1921–3) 10 line 113.

<sup>118</sup>W. Stokes, *On the Calendar of Oengus* (Royal Ir. Academy Irish Manuscripts series I, Dublin 1880) xxxii line 26; and Meyer, *Aislinge*, 128 line 11.

<sup>119</sup>M. A. O'Brien, *Corpus genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin 1976) 71.

<sup>120</sup>Wulff, *Ir. Texts* 5 (1934) 84 line 2.

- (55) *nach uibhe glogair a gorfaí sa Mhárta* 'that it would not be addle-eggs which would be hatched in March'.<sup>121</sup>

According to S. Mac Clúin the core of an abscess is

- (56) *máthair ghuir*.<sup>122</sup>

Ó Dónaill's *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* has some interesting examples of *gorán*, which usually means 'pimple':

- (57) *Siúl ar do ghoráin sál* 'to walk on one's heels',<sup>123</sup>

a second sense of 'ball, lump' being ascribed to *gorán*. A separate entry is devoted to a homonym, said to mean 'froth, foam':

- (58) *Tá goráin ar an bhfarraige* 'There are patches of foam on the sea'.<sup>124</sup>

The sense of *gorán* in (57) presumably derives ultimately from 'inflammation, swelling', that in (58) from froth or foam being likened to such a skin inflammation. An tAthair Peadar Ua Laoghaire's 1904 edition of *Séadna* has

- (59) *Thug sí a h-aghaidh ar an dteine agus do leath sí a d[h]á lámh agus í féin, ag glacadh an ghoradh* 'She turned to the fire and she stretched out her two hands and her whole body, taking the heat (i.e. warming herself)',<sup>125</sup>

- (60) *gheabhaidh sí bás do'n ghorta!* 'she will die of (the) hunger!',<sup>126</sup>

while a horse is disparaged in this telling manner:

- (61) *ar do bhraimín giobalach, gorta, droich-mhianaigh* 'on your shaggy, starved, ill-bred, little colt'.<sup>127</sup>

*Leabhar Sheáin Í Chonaill* advises on a novel method of tempering a razor:

- (62) *í ghorra (suas) lé cac na bhfranncach* 'to temper it (up) with the excrement of rats'!<sup>128</sup>

This was to allow the devil to shave himself! An Seabhac describes a miser:

- (63) *Bhí fear ar an mbaile seo againne fadó agus bhí an donas dearg air le gorta* 'There was a man in our district long ago and he was the world's worst for stinginess'.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>121</sup> *Aistí ó Chléire* (Baile Átha Cliath 1987) 90.3.

<sup>122</sup> *Réilthíní óir I* (Baile Átha Cliath 1922) 252.

<sup>123</sup> Ó Dónaill, *Foclóir*, 660 s.v. *gorán*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.* s.v. *gorán*<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>125</sup> P. Ua Laoghaire, *Séadna* (Baile Átha Cliath 1904) 172.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, 207.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, 146.

<sup>128</sup> S. Ó Duilearga, *Leabhar Sheáin Í Chonaill* (Baile Átha Cliath 1948, 1964) 259.

<sup>129</sup> *Seoda an tSeabhaic* (Baile Átha Cliath 1974) 75.

*Goradh* seems to be used of a tinker's solder in the same work.<sup>130</sup> From the many fine examples of our words to be read in *Sean-chaint na nDéise*<sup>131</sup> only one can be cited here,

(64) *ligint do gor* 'let (a lamp) heat up'.<sup>132</sup>

As our first citation contained the verb *fo·geir*, it is nice to be able to provide an appropriate *dúnad*. In a section headed '*Faghairt* (tempering)' (the Modern Irish verbal noun successor of *foigred*), *Seanachas Amhlaoibh Í Luínse* speaks first of allowing a soft scythe to be hardened by being left for several months to benefit from the excrement in the henhouse,<sup>133</sup> which had the advantage of not causing rust – this of course recalls citation (62) – and concludes with these examples of the use of the word:

(65) 'A' bhfuil an rán déanta agat?' adéarfí le gabha. 'Tá sí críochnaithe agam ach í fhaghairt'. 'Tá sí faghartha'. 'Duine beag cruaiú faghartha a b'ea é'. 'Bhí faghairt 'na shúilibh' – a shúile ar lasa. '“Have you the spade made?” the smith would be asked. “I have it finished except for tempering it”. “It is tempered”. “He was a little, hard, fiery (mettlesome) person”. “His eyes flashed fire” – his eyes (were) aflame (with anger)'.<sup>134</sup>

And so *faghairt* reaches back over a thousand years and continues to maintain side by side both primary and vivid, transferred senses; in this it is quite a typical member of the large, extended family of Irish words descended from the IE root \*g<sup>h</sup>her- 'hot'.

#### CONCLUSION

It remains now just to attempt a summary evaluation of the efficacy of the lexical approach adopted in this paper. The study of a group of Irish words sharing the common ancestry of a single Indo-European root places it somewhere between (i) the standard mono-lexeme methodology of most dictionaries (including *DIL*), as well as the wider joint treatment of head-lexemes and their regularly generated derivatives (as in *Lexique étymologique de l'irlandais ancien*, for example) and (ii) the utopian impossibility of being able to address all items of vocabulary and all senses simultaneously. Vocabulary study has to be manageable, systematic and elucidating. Lexical field studies in the tradition of Jost Trier and Leo Weisgerber have many of the virtues desired by lexicologists,<sup>135</sup> but evidently not all. The words descended from IE \*g<sup>h</sup>her- show interesting parallels and contrasts, such as the varying mix of neutral, positive

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*, 95, the ambiguity no doubt being intentional.

<sup>131</sup> R. B. Breatnach, *Sean-chaint na nDéise* II (Dublin 1961) 227–9.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*, 227.

<sup>133</sup> D. Ó Cróinín (ed.), *Seanachas Amhlaoibh Í Luínse* (Baile Átha Cliath 1980) 96.

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> For a study of their application to Irish see L. Mac Mathúna, 'Tilling some Irish lexical fields', *Teanga* 9 (1989) 84–99.

and negative connotations, but they also, importantly, display an overall cohesion of senses, with regular and frequent application to the physical and emotional heating of human beings, and specifically of human skin. It may well be that the ability of the approach attempted here to take due cognisance of all the senses of a group of words with a common core of meaning would allow it to become a complementary aid to lexical field studies in vocabulary research. For lexical field studies of their nature arbitrarily limit their attention to particular semantic areas. They are thus especially liable to ignore metaphorical sense transfers. It would certainly seem worthwhile for other investigations of groups of words descended from individual Indo-European roots to be undertaken. For their part, lexical field studies might profitably pay more attention to metaphorical transfer. At any rate, all the signs are that lexical research would benefit not merely from more labourers, but also from a greater diversity of approach.

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