

DAVID STIFTER

Old Irish

Morphology – Part 4: Verbal Stem Formation



ERC Consolidator Grant 2015
H2020 #647351

Roadmap

- Verbal stem formation
 - Suffixal stem formation
 - Root modifications
- Formation of new verbs

Verbal stem formation

- ‘Weak’ verbs
 - Predictable, productive stem formation based on default (present) stem
 - Stem formation by suffixation only
- ‘Strong’ verbs
 - Unpredictable stem formation based on root
 - Stem formation by suffixation and ‘root modifications’ (reduplication, vocalic alternations, infixation, truncation)

	weak	strong
present stem	*ā, *ī	*e/o, *īe/o, *n-infix
subjunctive stem	a	s, a, e
future stem	f	s, é, reduplication
preterite stem	s	s, t, ‘suffixless’, reduplication, long vowel
passive preterite	pres. + -th	ablaut + dental

Verbal stem formation

- Root suppletion is rare

- (but 8 different root variants of 'to go':

**teig-e/o-* < PIE *(s)teig^h-

**ti-n-g-* < PIE *(s)teig^h-

**erg-e/o* < PIE *h₁erĝ^h-

**rig-e/o-* < PIE *h₁erĝ^h-

**lud-e/o-* < PIE *h₁leud^h-

**uēt-e/o-* < PIE *uēt-

**i-to-* < PIE *h₁ei-

**dal-u-* < PIE *d^helh₁-)

- Verbal stem formation moves from root-based Early Old Irish system to a system based on invariant ('default') stems in Middle Irish

Suffixation: weak verbs

- Exclusive formational strategy of weak verbs, for

- 1. Formation of present stem = default stem of verbs, e.g.
 - *mór* 'big' + *-ā- → *marbaid* 'praises' (W1)
 - *rím* 'number' + *-ī- → *rímid* 'counts' (W2)
 - *follus* 'clear' + *-aig- → *foilsigidir* 'reveals' (W2)

Suffixation: weak verbs

- Exclusive strategy of weak verbs, for

- 2. Formation of basic tense & mood stems, e.g.
 - a-subjunctive: default + **-ā-* (*móra-*, *rímea-*, *foilsigea-*)
 - f-future: default + **-efā-* (*móirfea-*, *rímfear-*, *foilsigfear-*)
 - s-preterite: default + **-s-* (*móras-*, *rímis-*, *foilsigis-*)
 - pret. passive: default + **-th-* (*móraith-*, *rímeth-*, *foilsigeth-*)
 - verbal noun: default + **-thu-* (*móraith-*, *foilsigiuth-*)

Suffixation: strong verbs

- Limited relevance for strong verbs (one option among many), for
- 1. Formation of present stem \neq default stem, e.g.
 - **kel-* ‘to hide’ + *-e- \rightarrow *ceilid* ‘hides’ (S1)
 - **gab-* ‘to take’ + *-je- \rightarrow *gaibid* ‘takes’ (S2)
 - **nad-* ‘to bind’ + *-ske- \rightarrow *nascaid* ‘binds’ (S1)
- 2. Formation of tense and mood stems for specific root shapes, e.g.
 - a-subjunctive (**kel-* + *-ā- \rightarrow *cela-*)
 - t-preterite (**dar-* ‘to bull’ + *-t- \rightarrow *dart-* ‘bulled’)
 - and other very marginal types

Root modifications

- Cover term for several unrelated, but interacting phenomena among strong verbs
 - Infixation (present)
 - Overt reduplication (present, future, preterite)
 - Root truncation (subjunctive, future, preterite)
 - Root vowel alternations (present, subjunctive, future, preterite, preterite passive)

Infixation

- Limited to present stem formation of a few strong verbs, partly with synchronically intransparent morphology, e.g.
 - **bug-* ‘to break’ + **-n-* → *bongaid* ‘breaks’ (S1)
 - **bal-* ‘to throw’ + **-n-* → *at·baill* ‘dies’ (S1)
 - **k^wrī-* ‘to buy’ + **-n-* → *crenaid* ‘buys’ (S3)

Reduplication

- Reduplication is historically very important process
- Synchronically overt reduplication has been somewhat depleted by a variety of sound changes
- This depletion has fed root vowel alternating types

- Overt reduplication is found
 - In obscured present stem formations:
ibid 'drinks' < PIE **pi-ph₃-eti* (synchronic root *ib-!*)
·sissedar 'stays, remains' < **si-sth₂-e-*

Reduplication

- Overt reduplication is found in
 - Future stem with underlying vowel *i*, e.g.
 - gainithir* ‘is born’ (root *gen-*) → fut. *gignithir* ‘will be born’
 - renaid* ‘sells’ (root *rī-*) → fut. *ririt* ‘they will sell’
 - canaid* ‘sings’ (root *can-*) → fut. *cechna* ‘I will sing’
 - Preterite stem with various vowels, e.g.
 - e*: *ligid* ‘licks’ (root *lig-*) → pret. *lelgamar* ‘we licked’
 - i*: *ciid* ‘to weep’ (root *ci-*) → pret. *cich* ‘wept’
 - o*: *in·loing* ‘to occupy’ (root *lung-*) → pret. *in·lolaig* ‘occupied’
 - a*: *canaid* ‘to sing’ (root *can-*) → pret. *cachnae* ‘who sang’

Truncation

- Arose through phonological reduction processes in Primitive Irish
- Truncation of consonants in s-subjunctive
- Most consequential in 3sg. conjunct, leads to almost complete reduction of root
- Formation: root **CV(R)C* → subj. stem **Ce(R)s-*, e.g.
 - *saidid* ‘sits’ (root *sed-*) → subj. stem *sess-*, 3sg. conjunct *·sé* ‘may sit’
 - *fo·loing* ‘suffers’ (root *lug-*) → subj. stem *lōs-*, 3sg. *fo·ló* ‘may suffer’, unstressed *·ful*
 - *as·boind* ‘to refuse’ (root *bud-*) → subj. stem *bōs-*, 3sg. *as·bó*, unstressed *·op*
 - *con·ric* ‘meets’ (root *ic-*) → subj. stem *īs-*, 3sg. *con·rí*, unstressed *·comuir*

Truncation

- Truncation plus reduplication
 - in future, e.g.
 - renaid* ‘sells’ (root *rī-*) → fut. *ririit* ‘they will sell’
 - guidid* ‘prays’ (root *ged-*, subj. stem. *gess-*) → fut. *gigiis* ‘will pray’, *ní·gig* ‘will not pray’
 - in preterite formations (esp. of roots ending *-i*), e.g.
 - ciid* ‘to weep’ (root *ci-*) → pret. *cich* ‘wept’

Root vowel alternations

- Pervade all strong stem formations
- Consist synchronically of root vowel variation compared to other stems
- Diachronically and formally a very mixed and unsystematic bag fed by
 - Reflexes of inherited PIE ablaut, e.g.
subj. *meraid* < PIE **merh₂-* beside pres. *marnaid* ‘betrays’ < **m_{r̥}nh₂-*
pret. *táich* < PIE **tōk^w-* beside pres. *teichid* ‘flees’ < **tek^we-*
 - Laryngeal effects, e.g.
pret. pass. *·críth* < PIE **k^wrih₂to-* beside pres. *crenaid* ‘buys’ < **k^wrinh₂ti*

Root vowel alternations

- Vocalisation of syllabic sonorants, e.g.
pret. pass. *brethae* < PIE **b^hrto-* beside pres. *beirid* ‘carries’ < **b^here-*
- Compensatory lengthening after loss of fricatives, e.g.
fut. *gíulait* < **giyli-* beside pres. *glenaid* ‘sticks’ < PIE **gli-n-H-*
pret. *·cúalae* < **kukloue* beside pres. *·cluine^htar* (root PIE **k^hleu-*)
- Contraction, e.g.
pret. *fích* < **fi.ich-* < **ui-uik-* beside pres. *fichid* ‘fights’ < **u^hike-*
- Analogy, e.g.
fut. *béraid* beside pres. *beirid* ‘carries’
- ...

Subjunctives

*‘Má ro·fessid phort i·mbé
tísid conda·radar-se.’*

‘If ye find the place in which he may be,
may ye come so that I can adore him.’ (Blathmac 55-6)

- Four subjunctives:
 - *ro·fessid* = s-subj. of *ro·finnadar* ‘to find out’ (root *uid-*)
 - *·bé* = e-subj. of *at·tá* ‘to be’ (suppletive root *bī-*)
 - *tísid* = s-subj. of *do·ic* ‘to come’ (root *ic-*)
 - *·radar* = a-subj. of *ad·ora* ‘to adore’ (pseudo-root *or-*)

Verbal nouns

- All verbs have a nominal abstract of the verbal action
- Many weak verbs form the verbal noun with the suffix *-ad/-ed/-iud*, e.g.
 - *léicid* ‘lets’ → *léiciud* ‘letting’, *anaid* ‘waits’ → *anad* ‘waiting’
- For all other verbs, no rule exists, e.g.
 - *gaibid* ‘takes’ → *gabál* ‘taking’
 - *imm·diben* ‘circumcises’ → *immdibe* ‘circumcision’
 - *do·beir* ‘brings’ → *tabart* ‘bringing’
 - *cingid* ‘steps’ → *céimm* ‘step’
 - *do·fich* ‘avenges’ → *dígal* ‘revenge’
 - *caraid* ‘loves’ → *serc* ‘love’ ...

Productive verb formation

- 2 major productive strategies for creating new verbs:
 - Suffixation from a nominal base → secondary, denominal ‘weak’ verbs
 - Compounding a pre-existing verb with preverbs → strong verbs

Productive verb formation: suffixation

- Most important suffix to create new, denominal verbs is *-aig-*, which turns a noun or adjective into a verbal stem, e.g.
 - *slán* ‘whole, safe, sound’ → *slánaig-idir* ‘heals, makes whole’ (W2)
- Productive in the Primitive Irish period is suffixation with **-ā-* (W1) or **-ī-* (W2), e.g.
 - *mór* ‘big’ → *móraid* ‘praises’ (W1)
 - *rím* ‘number’ → *rímid* ‘counts’ (W2)

Productive verb formation: compounding/prefixation

- Up to four lexical preverbs in front of a verbal stem
- Massively productive in Primitive Irish, limited productivity in Old Irish
- The semantic link between base and derivative extends from very close to tenuous, e.g.
 - *soïd* ‘turns’ (root *soṽ-*)
 - *in·soí* ‘turns, returns’ (*inde-soṽ-*)
 - *do·intai* ‘turns, returns’ (*to-inde-soṽ-*)
 - *benaid* ‘to strike’ (root *bī-*)
 - *fris·ben* ‘to heal’ (*fris-bī-*)
 - *imm·díben* ‘to circumcise’ (*ambi-dī-bī-*)
 - *do·forban* ‘to arrive, reach’ (*to-for-bī-*)

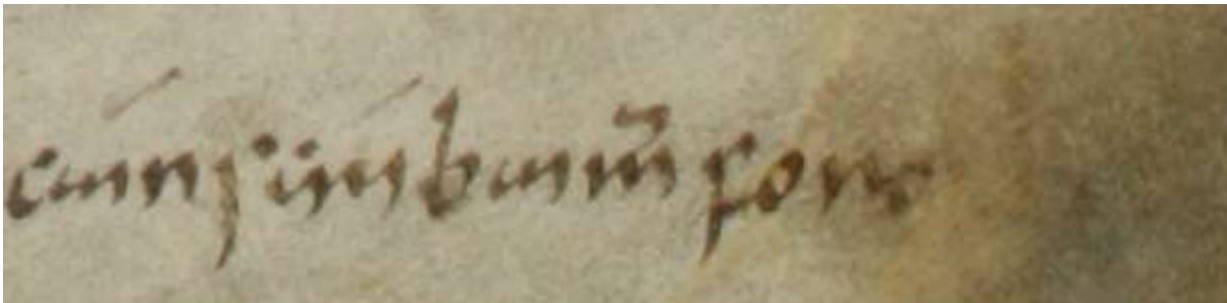
Adverbial compounding

- Adverbial compounds are restricted to fixed expressions and poetry, e.g.

caín·scríbaimm fo ro[ída ross]

‘I write well under the wooded head-land’

(St Gall Stiftsbibliothek MS 904, p. 204)



© e-codices

Ad·tlochur indithim dúib!



ERC Consolidator Grant 2015
H2020 #647351

