

Indo-European and Celtic

WOLFGANG MEID

A group of languages like the Celtic ones can be studied in various ways. We can take these languages by themselves and ask for their structural properties; we can take them together with other languages spoken in the same area, such as English, French or Basque, and ask for the typological similarities of these languages; we may finally look at them from a historical point of view and ask for their origin and for the various circumstances that formed them. None of these possible approaches will give a complete and satisfactory picture of the Celtic languages—a fact of which every sensible person is aware—but they all cover important aspects of the overall linguistic situation and so play essential parts in the comprehensive understanding of Celtic. Although they sometimes seem to overlap or even produce contradictory results they should be used to supplement rather than to exclude each other. But I do not wish to dwell on the respective merits (or demerits) of these various methods; I only wish—by way of introduction—to warn my audience in advance that what I am going to present now may seem—and, in fact, is—a very one-sided approach to Celtic, that of the comparative linguist whose main interest even lies outside Celtic, but who hopes that his incursions into Celtic, and vice-versa his excursions from Celtic into Indo-European,¹ will not be wholly without profit for both subjects concerned. And with this I turn to the subject of my paper, ‘Indo-European and Celtic’.

In this paper I propose to deal with the mutual relationship between IE and Celtic. Celtic is one of the daughter-languages of IE. IE, as we can reconstruct it from the corresponding traits of the attested daughter-languages such as Indic, Greek, Latin, Germanic, Slavic, etc., and also Celtic, can shed some light on Celtic and illuminate to some extent the darkness out of which these languages emerge into the light of history. On the other hand, Celtic is likely to tell us something about IE, too; something perhaps which no other IE language can. We shall try, therefore, to go into this complicated business of reconstruction; we shall try to illustrate, by the example of one particular IE language, even Celtic, this precarious, collapsible state of mutual dependence which exists between the constructed model of the proto-language and the attested languages on which it is based.

I may presume that we are agreed, at least for the moment, on the definition of IE and also on that of Celtic, although in the latter case things are by no means as easy as they may seem from the point of Insular Celtic. We know desperately little about ancient Continental Celtic, and what, in certain areas of Gaul and elsewhere, appear to be dialects of Celtic may in fact be indications of different languages. Thus the

language called Celt-Iberian may or may not be Celtic—I am by no means certain that it is; I rather think that it is not. The same applies to areas in Eastern Gaul, Belgica, Germania Superior and Inferior where scholars, on the whole, have been somewhat over-confident about the Gaulish character of certain linguistic materials.

However, the fact that we know so little about Continental Celtic need not really cause us concern, because Insular Celtic, and especially Old Irish, is not at all a bad substitute. Indeed, in many respects, owing to its remote position, Old Irish appears to be more conservative than Gaulish which most certainly was influenced by the various linguistic currents of ancient Central Europe as well as by direct contacts with Latin, Greek and Germanic, and thus was liable to be more easily and rapidly transformed in accordance with the general pattern of these languages. We may concentrate therefore, as far as morphological structure is concerned, on Old Irish, which, if it cannot testify for the whole of ancient Celtic, at least can testify for itself.

The reconstruction of previous stages of a language presents us with difficult problems. We are inclined to think of a reconstructed or even merely posited entity such as Proto-Celtic in terms of a uniform language spoken at a particular time in a particular area by a particular people. But this is a gross over-simplification which is especially apparent in the case of Celtic where we have practically no means of reconstructing such a proto-language except in a most rudimentary way and where it is more realistic to operate with dialect areas within an as yet undelimited Celtic, such as Insular Celtic, *p*-Celtic, Celt-Iberian, and so on.

The uncertainties multiply as we move on to IE, the proto-language and supposed ancestor of all the IE languages. It is often stated, or tacitly assumed, that IE has been, or can be reconstructed, with a high degree of certainty and completeness especially on the phonological and morphological levels. This view, however, is not, or no longer, correct. It is true that the reconstruction of IE seemed to be complete at the end of last century, but since the beginning of this century the discovery of previously unknown IE languages, Hittite and Tocharian, as well as general advances in knowledge and method, or revolutionary theories such as the so-called laryngeal theory, have completely changed our outlook, and what used to be the 'classic' model of IE is valid today only in a restricted sense, as a sort of dialect model at a particular stage of the internal history of IE; and it is only because Indo-Europeanists are somewhat at a loss as to how to replace it by a more adequate model of reconstruction, that the old idea of IE still prevails.

The main difficulty is this: We realise (or at least any sensible linguist does) that IE must have been a real language; and like any other real language it had a history of its own; and before it finally disintegrated, its area had probably been expanding for a long time, so that we may confidently say that IE was a language which had dimensions in space and time, in other words: that it was not always and everywhere the same, that it had periods and dialects. Our reconstructions, however, which are by themselves isolated bits and which we must try to arrange into coherent systems, have one great disadvantage: they lack dimension. They aim—so to speak—into empty space, and we

do not know at what place or at what time of prehistoric reality we may assemble them. It may happen that we construct a system from pieces which in reality were parts of different systems, or that we assemble pieces from different periods or from different areas, or that we attribute some feature to Common IE which perhaps was only a dialect feature (such as, for example, the so-called augment *e-* in past-tense formations which is attested only by Indo-Iranian, Armenian and Greek). And often enough we find it difficult to make up our minds about the relation of certain features within IE, about which the IE languages offer conflicting evidence. So, for instance, we have two IE words for 'man' (Greek *ἀνήρ*, Latin *vir*), two for 'fire' (Gr. *πῦρ*, Lat. *ignis*), several forms of the Gen.Sg. of *o*-stems, two sets of terminations for the middle (Gr. *ἔπεται*, Lat. *sequitur*), and much else of this kind. These problems, ever present, have increased in number and, indeed, have become acute to the point of tantalizing us ever since the discovery of Hittite. This language, the earliest recorded of all the IE languages (records date almost from the beginning of the second millennium B.C. and are thus considerably older than those of Greek and Sanskrit on which the traditional reconstruction of IE is mainly based), this language which one would have expected to be closer to reconstructed IE than any other IE language, was quite unexpectedly found to differ so considerably from the model of IE (and also, of course, from all the other IE languages) that it could be, and indeed was, very much doubted if an adequate reconstruction of IE was now possible at all.

This is a real dilemma out of which only a new method of reconstruction can lead us. Such a method must be at once dynamic and complex, it must provide for the chronological and spatial stratification of IE and must, with the help of both external and internal criteria, set up a framework of the *relative chronology and topography of IE*, a model of IE in space and time. This sort of reconstruction will reveal terrible gaps which must be bridged by constructive thinking; it will therefore be more hypothetical than ever, but that cannot be helped. An attempt must be made.

The first step would be to break down the present concept of 'IE'. What is commonly termed IE, ranges from the most archaic primitive IE to those late dialect stages which are the immediate precursors of the attested IE languages. Thus IE spans a period of at least 3,000, perhaps 5,000 years. Think of Greek, which has a known history up to the present day of more than 3,000 years, press all this together into one undifferentiated mass and call it just Greek, and you have an illustration of what IE means. What we must do then, is to distinguish Primitive, Archaic, Early, Middle and Late IE, and also make distinctions according to geographical position which can be combined with the temporal ones, with resulting subdivisions like Early, Middle or Late Western IE, which then would have to be further differentiated according to the evidence. This is what archeology and prehistory do, and I do not see why Comparative IE Linguistics should not do the same.

It is obvious—to give just a few illustrations—that a reconstruction on the basis of Celtic, Latin and Sanskrit as in the case of *rēx* 'king' aims at a much earlier stage of IE

and may be said to have had a much wider currency in IE than that of **teutonos* (same meaning) which can be reconstructed on the basis of Germanic and Illyrian and where even the concept from which it is derived, the word **teutā* (meaning 'a small political unit', Old Irish *tíath*), is of limited occurrence; so that all we can say about **teutonos* is that it belongs to a subdialect of Late Western IE.

Or the word *isarnom* 'iron' which we can posit on the basis of Celtic and Germanic and which even has post-IE phonological features, is no doubt of later origin and of more restricted occurrence than the word **ayos* which meant 'copper' or 'bronze' and which is attested by Indo-Iranian, Italic and Germanic. Here we also have the assistance of the prehistorian who tells us that the use of iron is not very old; it arises in Europe with the so-called Hallstatt and La Tène cultures (from about 800 B.C.) whereas the use of bronze goes back into the third millennium B.C., about which time therefore the unity of IE seems to have been still relatively intact. Reconstructing solely on the basis of some Western IE languages (most of which are attested only late) will lead us normally not further than the second millennium B.C., a period in which Old Indic, Greek, Hittite were already very individual languages. This late, or rather post-, IE period in Central Europe has been termed 'Ancient European' (*Alteuropäisch*) by Hans Krahe who considered it—on the evidence of a uniform system of hydronymy—to be an intermediate stage between IE and the Western IE languages, a stage at which at least the phonological appearance of the language was still rather uniform and where there could not yet be any question of individual languages such as Celtic or Germanic, nor even of dialects with potential Celtic or Germanic features. Everything was in a fluid state and open to various possibilities of development.²

This view has met with some challenge, justly so. For already at this stage there must have been considerable differences in morphology (especially of pronouns and verbs) and in vocabulary, so that one is not justified in thinking only in terms of dialects. There must already have existed individual languages, and the fact that the Western IE languages, apart from the aforementioned system of hydronymy, the spread of which may at least be partly attributed to migrations, do not show any common innovations of importance, is sufficient proof that there never existed anything like a Western IE or Ancient European linguistic unity. This period is rather one of dissolution and re-arrangement; and it is only on the outer fringe of Western IE, in Celtic, that the remains of the older linguistic order are more numerous than elsewhere, so that it is from here that we can connect up with Greek, Hittite, or Indo-Iranian on the opposite side of the IE territory.

I shall now try to point out the various stages of the internal linguistic history of IE as they are reflected in Celtic. But let me first say a word about some of the outward characteristics of Celtic. As everyone knows, Celtic is characterised by the loss of IE *p* (O.Ir. *athir*, Lat. *pater*) which was subsequently compensated on part of its territory by the transition of the IE labiovelar *q^w* into *p* (Welsh *pedwar*, compare Lat. *quattuor*); hence the traditional division into *q*-Celtic (which has preserved the labiovelar or at

least its guttural component) and *p*-Celtic (which has innovated). We see that Irish, although later attested, is more conservative than Ancient Continental Celtic which, for the most part, is *p*-Celtic.

It is a well-known fact that the Italic languages show a similar behaviour with regard to IE *q^w*: retention in Latin, change into *p* in Osco-Umbrian; but it would be rash to think of a prehistoric connection between *p*-Italic and *p*-Celtic, for the simple reason that the change from *q^w* to *p* in Celtic cannot be earlier than the loss of IE *p*, and this loss of *p* can itself be hardly earlier than the fifth century B.C., for the following reason: the huge expanse of dense mountainous forest which in ancient times separated Northern from Southern Germany, is known to us by two names, one Celtic, one Germanic. *Hercynia silva*, or *Ἄρκύνια ὄρη*, *Ἐρκύνιος δρυμός* (attested since Aristotele) is the Celtic form, Old High German *Firgunna* (further connected with Gothic *fairguni* 'mountain') is the Germanic form. They can only be derived from an original form **perkunyā* with retention of IE *p*. This name (the etymon of which is IE **perkūs* 'oak'³) must have been common to Celtic and Germanic people (or their respective ancestors), who lived in neighbourly contact in that region; and it must have undergone the respective sound-changes of their languages, that is, the loss of *p* in Celtic and the change of *p* to *f* in Germanic (as part of the so-called Germanic sound-shift). The latter can hardly be earlier than 500 B.C., and the same may be said about the presence of Celts in those regions (if we may believe the prehistorians). Therefore we must conclude that—at least in this part of the Celtic territories—IE *p* was not lost before the fifth or fourth centuries. In other words: Proto-Celtic still had IE *p* as well as IE *q^w*.

The same applies to other distinctive phonological features of Common Celtic. IE *ē* which became *ī* (*rix* 'king') is at least partially preserved (thus in Celtiberian). The different treatment of IE *g^w* and *g^wh* in Insular Celtic shows that at an early stage Celtic still distinguished the IE *mediae* and the *mediae aspiratae* which in historical times have fallen together. We can see therefore that what is Common Celtic, is not necessarily Proto-Celtic, too. The farther we go back, the more IE Celtic becomes; which is only natural.

Turning now to morphology, we see that a great number of features, indeed the whole basic formal structure, is inherited from IE. Thus, in the field of word-formation, Celtic preserves most of the devices of composition and derivation current in IE; the system of nominal declension is virtually that of IE; there are even remains of heteroclitic inflection (which was already an archaism in IE time, having remained productive only in Hittite). It is true, the eight-case-system of IE seems to have been reduced already to five cases in Gaulish, but the presence of the variants *-bo* and *-bi* (*matrebo/gobedbi*, cf. also Old Irish *-aib*) both functioning as dative plurals, shows that dative (IE *-bhos*) and instrumental (IE *-bhis*) were originally kept apart. The locative case seems to have existed in Celtiberian; Old Irish, too, has preserved forms of the locative, but again functioning as datives.

In the domain of the verb, we find the reflexes of most of the important IE present-stem formations, for instance that in *-nā/-nā-* (O. Ir. *crenaid* 'he buys' = Old Indic

k r i ŋ ā t i). The preterite comprises IE perfect and aorist formations. The original perfect formations are partly reduplicated (O.Ir. *cechan* 'I sang', Lat. *cecini*), partly unreduplicated, but with lengthened root-vowel (O.Ir. *ráith* 'he ran', from *rethid*). There is a similar formation in Germanic in the so-called sixth class of strong verbs (Goth. *faran*, *fōr*). The original aorist formations are, for the minor part, isolated forms of the thematic (or 'strong') aorist (O.Ir. *luid* 'he went', Gr. ἤλυθε); the dominant role, however, is played by the *s*-aorist which in Insular Celtic is the regular formation of the weak verbs and which is also attested in Gaulish (*legasit*). The origin of the *t*-preterite is disputed; a form resembling O.Ir. *do-bert* is attested in Gaulish (*toberte*); but of course this third person singular form does not tell us anything about the Gaulish paradigm. Besides the *s*-subjunctive which is an offshoot of the *s*-aorist there is an *ā*-subjunctive with cognates in Latin and Tocharian.

Of special interest is the deponent with its terminations characterised by *r*. This has its nearest parallel in Italic (O.Ir. *-sechethar*, Lat. *sequitur*) but again is also known from Tocharian and, in addition, from the languages of Asia Minor, *i.e.* from Phrygian (*αββερετορ*) and particularly from Hittite. This *r*-middle is an IE dialect variant of the type which we have in Indo-Iranian and Greek (Gr. ἔπειται, O.Ind. *sácate*) and also in Germanic, where it functions as a passive (Goth. *bairada*). Note that the *ā*-subjunctive is attested from partly the same area as the *r*-middle.

As regards other verbal endings, we note that the distinction between IE primary and secondary endings (*-ti/-t*) is reflected in Celtic (albeit in a different manner). There are also reflexes of the separate class of perfect endings.

Of Celtic syntax it is claimed that it is largely influenced by non-IE substratum languages, an influence which would seem even more marked today than it was in early times. While conceding that this substratum influence, or rather the prevailing mentality of the population whose ancestors spoke non-IE languages, may be in large measure responsible for the transformation of the Celtic languages (and also of English) into the state in which we see them today, I am not convinced that this influence was already predominant at the time of Old Irish or even Common Insular Celtic. I would say it had only just begun to show its effects. Old Irish, and especially Archaic Old Irish, still have many traits which are definitely IE in origin. Thus, the phenomenon called 'tmesis'—that is, separation of preverb and verb by other parts of the sentence—, well known from ancient IE languages such as Greek, Sanskrit and Hittite, is still common in early Irish poetry and in the Laws. A very common feature of IE languages is the tendency of unaccented elements to occupy second place in the sentence—a phenomenon called 'Wackernagel's Law'. In Celtic, this law governs the use of infixes and suffixed pronouns with verbal forms: the pronoun, being unstressed, takes second place; it is thus either put in after the preverb (*do-s-beir* 'he brings them', from **to sons bheret*), or placed after the verb itself, if this opens the sentence (*beirthius*, from **bhereti sons*). Compare the following constructions from other languages:

Type <i>do-s-beir</i>	Type <i>beirthius</i>
Goth. <i>ga-u-va-sēh</i> (‘if he saw something’)	Goth. <i>qip-uh-þan</i> (‘but I tell you’)
Hitt. <i>n(u)-an-kan kuemin</i> (‘and I killed him’)	Hitt. <i>uizzi-ma-uar-as</i> (‘but he comes’)

(Compare also Gaulish *to-med-eclai*, comparable in structure to O.Ir. *do-m-essoirc*, *do-m-adbat*.)

Let me now point out some of the *archaisms* of Celtic. Where Celtic agrees with Indo-Iranian or Sanskrit, and particularly where there are exclusive correspondences between these two groups which in historical times are in such extreme positions, such features must necessarily be of great antiquity. They must belong to the earliest stage of IE which is reconstructible by external comparison. To this class belong:

- (1) A particular type of *dvandva* (or ‘copulative’) compound which grammatically appears as neuter singular. This type is common in Sanskrit, and there is at least one example from Old Irish: *gaisced*, meaning *gaí ocus sciath* ‘spear and shield’ and representing earlier **gaiso-skēto-n*.
- (2) The formation Skt. *rāj-nī*, Old Irish *rígain* ‘queen’; IE **rēg-nī*.
- (3) The use of simple *s* (without preceding vowel) as the ending of the genitive singular of neuter *n*-stems, which is quite regular in Old Irish (*anme* ‘of the name’ from **anmen-s*) but already archaic in Indo-Iranian.
- (4) Special feminine forms of the numerals ‘3’ and ‘4’.
- (5) The Old Irish reduplicated and *s*-future which has its exact counter-part in the Indo-Iranian desiderative formation characterised by reduplication and an *s*-suffix.
- (6) The peculiar perfect-formation Old Irish *-ánaicc*, Skr. *ānámśa* from IE **ōn-onk-e*.
- (7) From the field of syntax the elliptical construction *conránatar ocus Dubthach* ‘they met, (he) and Dubthach’ which has striking parallels in Vedic Indic, besides being attested also from Old Norse.

To sum up: these features, and many others, show that Celtic is firmly established within IE; it reflects for the greater part the more recent stage of Common IE, but at the same time it is deeply rooted in early or even archaic IE. In addition and more specifically, Celtic participates with the *r*-medium in a greater dialect area of IE to which also belonged the ancestors of the Italic languages, of Hittite and Tocharian. This area seems to have been in a somewhat central position; it separated Germanic from Indo-Iranian and Greek which have the other type of middle. I would like to call this dialect area ‘Middle IE’, both as regards position and time.

Let us now have a look at the European connections of Celtic. Here we can see Celtic-Germanic relations mainly in the field of vocabulary, which for this and other reasons must be quite recent. Older are the Italo-Celtic relations because they have left their traces in grammar. Other features are common to Celtic, Italic and Germanic (such as the prepositions *ad* and *kom*, the abstract suffix *-tūt-* or lexical items such as Lat. *caecus*,

O.Ir. *cáech*, Goth. *haihs*, Lat. *vērus*, O. Ir. *fír*, Germ. *wahr*). There are also connections with Baltic, Slavic and Illyrian. Celtic has part in the above mentioned system of hydronymy which is an innovation of Late Western IE; it also shares with the other western languages the term **tentā* which had acquired a political meaning in Western IE (O. Ir. *tíath*, Goth. *þiuda*, Oscan *touto* etc.)

It will be necessary here to say a few words about the Italo-Celtic relationship. The term 'Italo-Celtic', at the time when it was first coined, was conceived as a genealogical term, implying an original Italo-Celtic unity as a subdivision of the genealogical tree, a unity which was subsequently broken up into Celtic and Italic, Celtic being then further divided into *q*- and *p*-Celtic, and so on. Today we do no longer visualize linguistic relationship exclusively in terms of pedigree, but also, or rather, as the result of very complex and ever varying processes of assimilation and differentiation within a given area. Admittedly, the linguistic evidence for Italo-Celtic may have been sufficient at the time. It included the deponent with *r*-endings and the genitive singular of *o*-stems in *ī* both of which were *then* known only from Italic and Celtic, but which afterwards turned up in other languages as well, the *r*-medium in Tocharian and Hittite, the *ī*-genitive in Messapic, a dialect or sister-language of Illyrian. These features are therefore now proof *against* an Italo-Celtic unity; but they still show that both languages were closely related. Only this relationship must be seen against a wider background, each feature having its own individual distribution. Thus, the *ī*-genitive is attested, on the Italic part, only from Latin, on the Celtic part it occurs in Insular Celtic and in Gaulish, but *not* in Celt-Iberian where the genitive singular ending of *o*-stems is *-o* of which there is as yet no satisfactory explanation.⁴ (This is, by the way, one of the points which raise doubt as to the celticity of so-called Celt-Iberian). The *ī*-genitive, as such, is an innovation of this particular western area which included Celtic, Italic and Illyrian and possibly also other dialects about which we have no information; but the morpheme *ī* is deeply rooted in IE where it was used to express relation in word-formation. Compare with Lat. *lupus*, *lupī* the derivational relation of Skt. *vṛka-* 'wolf', *vṛkī-* 'she-wolf', that is 'one who belongs to the wolf'. *vṛkī-* is a separate word which can be inflected (gen. *vṛkīyas* etc.) while Lat. *lupī* 'belonging to the wolf' has been taken into the paradigm of *lupus* to supply the missing genitive.

A very vexing question is whether the *b*- or *f*-future attested by Latino-Faliscan on the one hand and Old Irish on the other, has a common origin. The arguments in favour or against are almost equally balanced. The point usually made is that Old Irish *f* could not be the result of IE *bh* (as it should if the equation was to be upheld). But I would not regard this as the main difficulty; actually the problem was solved long ago.⁵ More difficult to account for is the difference in stem formation: thematic formation in Latino-Faliscan (*-bhuv-e/o-*), *ā*-formation in Old Irish (*-bhuv-ā-*). Old Irish *-labrafannur* 'we shall speak' resembles the Latin imperfect (*hortabāmur*) rather than the future (*hortabimur*). Whatever the solution (and I suggest that it may lie in the missing links between Italic and Celtic) I think there is undeniably an obvious connection between

the two formations. In this case, Latin is nearer to Irish than is Sanskrit; and in my opinion Watkins' recent attempt⁶ to explain the Old Irish *f*-future as derived from a desiderative adjective in *-su-* attested in Sanskrit is too artificial to be of any merit.

In another paper,⁷ Watkins, in his endeavour to demonstrate that Italo-Celtic unity is a myth, has taken great pains to show that the assimilation of the sequence $p-q^w$ to q^w-q^w which we must assume for Italic (or at least Latin, because the position of Osco-Umbrian is not clear) and Celtic and of which the numeral '5' (IE $*penq^we$) is an example (Lat. *quinque*, O.Ir. *coic*, Welsh *pym*)—that this assimilation is independent in both groups. I, for one, do not think he has succeeded; in any case this point has no relevance for Italo-Celtic. The assimilation of $p-q^w$ to q^w-q^w is attested from a much wider area occurring in a great number of geographical and tribal names derived from IE $*perq^wus$ 'oak' which are distributed over Central, South-Eastern and Southern Europe, names such as *Quarquerni*, *Κορκοντοί*, *Κερκίνη*, *Κόρκυρα*, etc. There is also the reverse assimilation of $p-q^w$ to $p-p$ in Proto-Germanic (Engl. *five*, Germ. *fünf*, from $*pempē$) to show that there was once a large assimilation area with varying conditions and results, of which Italic and Celtic were only a part.

Thus we may finally agree with C. Watkins 'that Italo-Celtic is a myth', but his other statement that 'the only common language from which both Italic and Celtic can be derived is Indo-European itself' requires modification. The general structure of course is Common IE, but the special affinities of Italic and Celtic have their basis in Late Western IE, or rather in a post-IE dialect of that area.

We have dealt so far with the contribution of IE and the IE languages to a better understanding of Celtic. Let us now finally ask what special contribution Celtic can make towards the reconstruction of IE, or rather of IE linguistic history.

The importance of Celtic in this respect lies in its archaism. Celtic, and especially Old Irish, preserves—embedded in more recent structures—petrifacts from earliest times which, if freed from their later accretions and placed into their original context, can tell us a great deal about archaic IE linguistic structure.

I wish to illustrate these possibilities by briefly touching upon one rather complex problem, that of the Old Irish absolute and conjunct inflexion which both Watkins and myself have been working upon in recent years.⁸

As is well-known, the Old Irish verb is characterised by two parallel sets of endings which are in complementary distribution according to whether the verb itself is prefixed or not (*berid: do-beir*). This distinction goes through the entire verbal system with the exception of the original perfect formations (which is significant). By both external and internal comparison it can be established that the system of absolute and conjunct inflexion has spread from the present active, and that the absolute and conjunct endings are equivalent to the IE primary and secondary endings which in 'classical' IE are associated with the distinction of present ($*bhére-ti$) and imperfect ($*é-bhere-t$) or aorist.

We may therefore equate structurally Old Irish *berid* and *do-beir* (representing $*bhereti$

and **to-bheret*) with Skt. *bhárati* and *ábharat* (representing IE **bhéreti* and *ébheret*). It would seem therefore, that the use of secondary endings (here *-t*) had something to do with prefixation. But this is only so in Celtic; from all other IE languages we have compounded present forms which like the uncompounded ones show primary endings (Skt. *pra-bharati*), and it is only in the imperfect and aorist with 'augment' *e-* that a prefix goes together with secondary endings. Thus it is obvious that the reconstruction based on Celtic which posits an alternation **bhereti/to-bheret* and the reconstruction based on the other IE languages which does not show any such difference, yielding a uniform couple **bhereti/tobhereti*, do not agree. But that does not mean that one is correct and the other not. It would be too easy to apply the majority test and rule out Old Irish. Both reconstructions are correct, but—and this is the point—at different levels of IE linguistic history.

Fortunately we have the clue to this matter. It is preserved in Indo-Iranian, specifically in Vedic Indic, in the form of an obviously archaic verbal category which is usually, but not very fortunately, called 'injunctive'. It would be better called 'primitive', because this formation is the basis of all other formations within the present/aorist-system. This injunctive is a verbal form of the type *bharat*, that is with secondary endings. The important thing is that it can refer to almost any situation in temporal or modal contexts without actually denoting tense or mood. It is a *general* form. Thus, in the *Ṛg-Veda*, we have oppositions of the type

<i>bharati</i> : <i>bharat</i>	actual present—general present
<i>abharat</i> : <i>bharat</i>	actual past—general past,

and it is obvious from such comparisons that *bharati* is composed of *bharat+i* as is *abharat* of *a+bharat*, *i* and *a* being the distinguishing temporal marks of actual present and past. Similarly the Sanskrit imperative third sg. *bharatu* and the prohibitive *mā bharat* may analysed as the general form *bharat* and the respective particles as the semantic exponents.

If we transpose this into IE we can posit an original injunctive **bheret* which could be either used by itself or which could combine with prefixes or particles to express certain semantic notions. These particles would later become firmly attached to the injunctive and would thus give rise to new, better marked categories: a 'present' **bhereti*, an 'imperative' **bheretu*, an 'imperfect' **ebheret*, and so on. This is the stage which Sanskrit, Greek and other IE languages attest and which therefore must be IE, though probably not early nor even common IE, especially as regards the 'imperfect' **ebheret* which seems of limited occurrence.

The Old Irish distribution of **bhereti/*to-bheret* however derives from the earlier stage of IE when the only verbal category was that of the injunctive and when the only existing endings were the secondary ones. To this verbal form prefixes and other particles could be loosely attached. Their use would be governed by rules of position and stress.

Watkins has shown in a brilliant paper,⁹ that in IE the position of the verb with regard to its satellites was either in front or after these elements. If we tabulate this in a very simplified fashion, allowing for one or two such elements, we get the following pattern (P = preverb, E = enclitic, V = verb):

P V
P E V
V E
V E E.

This pattern is valid at all periods of IE and can be traced into most of the historical IE languages. If we apply it, as we may, to the injunctival period of IE where V (the verb) is the injunctive of the type **bheret*, we can say, quite simply, that the injunctive could either be preceded or followed by particles, but not both. Thus we could have

**to bheret* (do-beir)
**to me bheret* (do-m-beir)
**bheret i* (berid)
**bheret i me* (beirthium) etc.,

but not

**to bheret i.*

The IE dialect which was to become Old Irish has stopped at that; it has clung to this old distribution on the basis of the injunctive, whereas the other IE dialects, after running together **bheret i* into a new form **bhereti*, would now simply add prefixes to this new form instead of the older **bheret*; the result (Skt. *pra-bharati*) would still fall under the formula PV.

Outside Celtic the old injunctival principle has but left few morphological traces, such as the already mentioned opposition of present **bheret-i* and imperfect **e-bheret* which also applies to the middle endings:

middle injunctive <i>*seq^weto</i>	pres. <i>*seq^weto-i</i>	imperf. <i>*e-seq^weto,</i>	or
	<i>*seq^weto-r</i>	<i>*mi-seq^weto;</i>	

thus exemplified by Gr. *ἐπεται/εἵπτο* and Lat. *sequitur*, O. Ir. *-sechethar/no-seched*. More could be said about Hittite and Tocharian, but I must leave it at that. What I wanted to show was that Celtic, and by this I mean particularly Old Irish, almost by its sole testimony helps to reconstruct an earlier stage of the IE verbal system and of IE verbal syntax than is possible on the basis of any of the other IE languages. Celtic is therefore of unique importance for the reconstruction of internal IE linguistic history.

NOTES

- 1 Henceforth abbreviated IE.
- 2 Of the numerous publications by Krahe dealing with these problems I shall mention only those addressing themselves primarily to the non-specialist: *Sprache und Vorzeit* (Heidelberg 1954), especially pp. 48-71; *Unsere ältesten Flussnamen* (Wiesbaden 1964), especially pp. 32-86) where further references can be found. For an account of British river-names possibly belonging to this stratum see W. Nicolaisen, "Die alteuropäischen Gewässernamen der britischen Hauptinsel". *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 8 (1957) 211-68.
- 3 A by-form of, and developed from, *perq^wus (attested by Latin *quercus*, about which see below).
- 4 On this genitive ending see J. Untermann in: *Beiträge zur Indogermanistik und Keltologie, Julius Pokorny zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet* (Innsbruck 1967) 281-8.
- 5 See A. Walde, *Über älteste sprachliche Beziehungen zwischen Kelten und Italikern* (Innsbruck 1917) 30-31, and—more recently—J. Kuryłowicz, *The Inflectional Categories of Indo-European* (Heidelberg 1964) 48-9.
- 6 *Ériu* 20 (1967) 67-81.
- 7 'Italo-Celtic Revisited', in: *Ancient Indo-European Dialects* (University of California 1966) 29-50. See my review in *Die Sprache* 13 (1967); 70-73.
- 8 See my monograph *Die indogermanischen Grundlagen der altirischen absoluten und konjunkten Verbalflexion* (Wiesbaden 1963) and Watkins in *Celtica* 6 (1963): 41-8.
- 9 "Preliminaries to a Historical and Comparative Analysis of the Syntax of the Old Irish Verb." *Celtica* 6 (1963): 1-49.