

Studia Celtica Fennica III, 2006

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Xavier Delamarre

Prasutagus

D. Ellis Evans est revenu récemment, dans les *Mélanges Birkhan*, sur l'étymologie du nom du chef breton *Prasutagus*, roi des Icenis et époux de la reine Boudicca (Tacite, *Ann.* 14.31).¹ Il cite avec son mélange habituel d'érudition et de scepticisme les tentatives précédentes, apporte des compléments d'information sur des légendes monétaires qu'on relie à ce nom et conclue, de façon très typique, sur « les périls et sans doute la folie qu'il y a à s'adonner au jeu d'interpréter les noms propres ».²

Je reste pour ma part persuadé que les noms de personnes des sociétés traditionnelles sont susceptibles d'une interprétation sémantique et étymologique : ces noms « voulaient dire quelque chose », avaient un sens immédiatement perceptible pour des locuteurs donnés et étaient porteurs d'une qualification, elle-même d'ailleurs susceptible de varier dans le temps en fonction des circonstances (par ex., le chef gaulois *Vercingetorix* ne s'est probablement pas toujours appelé ainsi). D'où l'importance du nom et de son attribution dans les vieilles sociétés indo-européennes (cf. l'expression commune **nomn dhē-* 'donner un nom'), qui était bien plus qu'un simple référent social immotivé, le *gentilice* immuable qu'il est devenu historiquement, avec son spécificateur tout aussi immotivé, le *praenomen*.³

On s'est donc à nouveau adonné à cette pratique honteuse d'étymologiser un nom propre, car il me semble que le nom du Breton *Prasutagus* n'a toujours pas reçu d'interprétation satisfaisante. J. Pokorny le mentionne à l'entrée *tāg-* de son dictionnaire (*IEW* p. 1055), segmente *Pra-su-tagus* et indique qu'il s'agit d'un nom d'emprunt indo-européen pré-celtique (« vorkelt. idg. Lw. »). On voit la raison qui l'a amené à cette attribution : une segmentation *Pra-su-tagus* conduit à identifier un préfixe augmentatif indo-européide **pra-* (i.-e. **pro-*) qui ne peut être celtique en raison du maintien du *p-* initial et du vocalisme *a* ; on sait en effet que la continuation du préverbe i.-e. **pro-* en vieux-celtique est l'élément *ro-* de plusieurs composés : *PO-<AOICIABO*, *PO-BIOC*, *Ro-bilius*, *Ro-caballus*, *Ro-smerta*, *Romogill(i)us* etc.

Il me semble qu'une segmentation bi-membre *Prasu-tagus* et la comparaison avec d'autres anthroponymes permet de restituer ce nom au celtique.

¹ « Rex Icenorum Prasutagus » in *Ir sult sprechen willekomen. Grenzenlose Mediävistik. Festschrift für Helmut Birkhan zum 60. Geburtstag*. Berne 1998, pp. 99–106.

² « This study will, at the very least, have demonstrated once again the difficulty, the peril and, no doubt, some of the folly of indulging in etymological games in the interpretation of proper names », *ibid.* p. 104–5.

³ Voir, sur l'importance du nom chez les Indo-Européens, la biblio. essentielle à l'entrée *anuan* de mon *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise (DLG)*, p. 50.

I/ Prasu-

La clé est fournie par deux légendes monétaires britanniques⁴ et une sigillée gauloise :

- une légende monétaire attribuée aux Corieltauvi se lit *ESVPRASV* avec cette fois le terme *prasu(s)* en deuxième position et un premier membre *Esu-* qui est le théonyme connu (*Ēsu-* < *Aisu-*) bien attesté ailleurs dans cette position : *AESV* monnaies bretonnes, *Esu-aterus* (Lezoux, Oswald 117), *Esu-cnatio* (monnaie, M-170), *Esu-genus* (Toul, *CIL* XIII-4674), *Esu-magius* (Neuvy, *AE* 1954-239), *Esu-mopas* (Evreux, XIII-3199), *Esu-nertus* (fréquent).
- l'autre provient précisément de chez les Icenii et se lit *SVB RI PRASTO* bien qu'une lecture plus récente⁵ propose *SVB ESVPRASTO*, c'est-à-dire une variante manifeste de la légende précédente *ESVPRASV*, avec la graphie *-st-* qui note la sifflante forte du vieux-celtique représentée diversement selon les attestations (*tau gallicum* sous forme *đđ*, *θ* ou bien *-st-*, *-ss-*, *-xs-*, *-ds*). Cette sifflante forte est souvent réduite graphiquement, et probablement aussi phonétiquement, à une géminée *-ss-* et même à un simple *-s-* ; voir par exemple les alternances *Casticus* / *Cassicus*, *Brista* (Limoge, L-74) / *Combrissa* (III-14359.21), *Am-budsullus* en Norique (III-4724) / *An-busulus* (III-4854) / *Bussu-marus* / *buđđuton* sur peson de fuseau, *Messilius*, *Medđilius*, *Medsillus*, *Meθilos* etc.⁶
- Il y a en outre une sigillée *PRASSO* sur des poteries de Gaule du Nord⁷ trouvées en Grande-Bretagne (Kent, Cirencester, Londres) qui doit être une variante de notre thème *prasu-* / *prasto*. L'inscription se lit *PRASSO x OF* soit *PRASSO(NIS) OF(FICINA)* 'atelier de Prasso'. Le nom, déjà présent chez Holder (*AcS* II, 1041), est curieusement absent du recueil de sigillées d'Oswald (*Index of Potters' Stamps*). L'*s* géminée de *Prasso* doit être la continuation de *-st-* et le thème à nasale supposé par l'éditeur qui restitue un génitif **Prassonis*, n'est qu'une possibilité au regard de l'incertitude syntaxique de ce type d'inscriptions : il peut aussi s'agir d'un nominatif *Prasso*, évolution régulière d'un plus ancien **Prastus*.

⁴ Voir le catalogue très complet des monnaies bretonnes sur le site de Hooker & Perron *The Celtic Coin Index* < <http://www.writer2001.com/cciwriter2001/> >.

⁵ Voir < www.finds.org.uk/documents/port_antiquities_98_99Part2.pdf > : *Portable Antiquities. Annual Report 1998–99*, p.18 ainsi que la discussion d'Evans dans l'article cité.

⁶ Sur les variantes graphiques de cette sifflante forte spécifique au gaulois voir D. Ellis Evans, *Gaulish Personal Name : a Study of some Continental Celtic Formations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1967, 410–420.

⁷ H.B. Walters, *Catalogue of the Roman Pottery in the Department of Antiquities*, British Museum, 1908 Londres, p. 431, M2796 et Kay F. Hartley « Two major potteries producing mortaria in the

- Holder (*ibid.*) mentionne aussi à Brescia un nom *Prastina* (CIL V-4769) qu'on retrouve un peu partout en Italie, particulièrement à Ostie et à Pozzuoli où les noms gaulois sont fréquents et qui pourrait être une autre dérivation du même thème. De son côté J. Whatmough liste les noms *Pressu* (DAG 652) et *Pressus* (DAG 1139), cf. « *DM Pressus [P]ressi fil(ius)* » à Dijon chez les Lingons (ILTG-410) et un *Mummius Pressus* en Espagne (CIL II-5838) qui pourrait être une variante apophonique de *Prassu-* s'il ne s'agit pas du participe latin *pressus* 'pressé, chargé ; foncé'.⁸

Tout cela conduit à restituer un thème vieux-celtique (gallo-brittonique) **prastu-* que les lois phonétiques font sortir de **k^wrastu-*, évolution régulière d'un plus ancien **k^wr_̄stu-*, dérivation à suffixe celtique bien connu *-stu-* de la racine indo-européenne **k^wer-* 'fabriquer, faire, créer', ici au degré zéro⁹. En celtique comme en indo-européen, un des emplois connotés de la racine **k^wer-* s'applique à la création poétique, à la magie, aux incantations : irl. *creth* 'poésie', gallois *prydydd* 'poète', sanskrit *kārtram* 'ensorcellement', lituanien *kerai* 'charmes', etc.¹⁰. La racine est attestée en vieux-celtique continental dans le thème *Prit(io)-* (<**k^wr_̄ti-yo-*>) de plusieurs noms propres : *Prittius*, *Pritto*, *Prittillus*, *Pritmanus* qui doivent signifier plus ou moins 'Poète, Créateur' (cf. gall. *prydydd*). Le thème **k^wr_̄stu-* > *prastu-* > *pras(s)u/o-* doit quant à lui désigner probablement la résultante de l'action verbale, c'est-à-dire en l'occurrence 'l'incantation, la magie, le charme, la poésie'.

2/ -tagus

Le positionnement de *Prasutagus* par Pokorny sous l'entrée **tāg-* 'an den rechten Platz, ordentlich hinstellen' de son dictionnaire me semble par compte tout à fait justifié. Le thème *tag-*, loin d'être 'pré-celtique', est bien attesté en gaulois : il y a à La Graufesenque un mot *autagis* sur une assiette-bordereau qu'on a analysé avec vraisemblance *au-tāgis* 'compte, arrangement, bordereau', fait comme le grec *διά-τάξις* 'arrangement, disposition'. L'onomastique fournit les composés *Ito-tagus* (gladiateur à Pompéi, IV-2451), *Tio-tagus* (potier, Landréville, Oswald 316),

first century A.D.» in J. Dore et K.T. Greene, *Roman Pottery Studies in Britain and Beyond. Papers presented to G.P. Gillam*. 1977, Oxford, British Archaeological reports. International Series 30, pp.v 5–18. Je suis redevable à Paul Tyers de ces références.

⁸La forme *Pressus* pourrait être issue de **k^wre-stu-* dans la même alternance avec *Prasso* /*Prastu* que irl. *crann* < **k^wrsno-* avec le gaulois *prenne*, gall. *prenn* < **k^wresno-* 'arbre, bois' (cf. DLG 252).

⁹Sur le suffixe *-stu-* en celtique, voir H. Pedersen VKG II, 19–20, P. de Bernardo Stempel *Nominale Wortbildung des älteren Irischen*, Tübingen: Niemeyer 1999, 269 ; 389.

¹⁰Sur quoi LEIA C-232 à *creth*, C. Watkins *Celtica* 6 (1963), 214–215, X. Delamarre DLG 253 à *pritos*.

Taga-danus (Rimburg, Nesselhauf-255), *Taga-dunius* (Zierikzee, *AE* 1975-645), *Taga-matis* et *Tag-ar-minis* (Vindolanda Tablets), peut-être *Sin-taugus* (XIII-855, si **Seno-tāgo-*), *Ver-tacus* (*DAG* 1357), et les dérivés *Tagius* (XIII-3456), *Taccus* (XIII-10027.133) avec assourdissement et gémiation (*tago-* → *tacco-*, tout comme *dago-* → *dacco-*), *Tagonus* (potier, Mainz, Oswald 311), *Tagassus* (XII-3003). Une variante sigmatique *tāg-s-* semble être présente dans les toponymes *Marco-taxum* ‘Disposition-des-Chevaux (de la cavalerie)’ (Bretagne), *Tasi-nemetum* (**Taxi-*, Norique), et dans le nom du prince breton *Taxi-magulus* (César).

La racine verbale du grec *τάσσω* ‘placer, mettre en ordre’, *τάξις* ‘arrangement, ordre, dispositif militaire’, *ταγός* ‘chef, commandant’ est considérée comme « sans étymologie » par Chantraine (*DELG*) et semble avoir disparu du *LIV*, le nouveau dictionnaire étymologique des racines verbales indo-européennes. Elle avait pourtant acquis une certaine profondeur avec le rapprochement du lituanien *pa-togùs* ‘commode, confortable’, *su-togti* ‘faire accord’ (**iāg-*), et Van Windekens y avait adjoint le tokharien A *tāśśi* ‘chefs, commandants’ (**iāgio-*), forme très proche du grec *ταγός* de même sens. L’absence de la racine **iāg-* en néo-celtique insulaire ne doit pas nous empêcher de considérer sa présence comme possible en vieux-celtique.

Il semble donc bien qu’il y ait les thèmes *tāgo-*, *tāg-s(i)-* en vieux-celtique dont les sens pourraient être, au regard du grec *ταγός* et du tokharien *tāśśi*, ‘ordonnateur, administrateur, chef’ pour le premier et, au regard du grec *τάξις*, ‘disposition, arrangement, ordre’ pour le second.

Conclusion

Le nom du roi breton *Prasutagus*, que je restitue **k^w̥-stu-tāg-o-s*, doit donc avoir signifié plus ou moins ‘Ordonnateur-de-la-Magie’, ‘Chef-des-Incantations’. *Esuprasu(s)*, *Esuprasto* doit de son côté être un ‘Magie-d’Esus’ (c’est-à-dire ‘qui-agit-par-la ...’). On sait que dans ces époques anciennes les rois étaient des autorités autant religieuses que politiques et cette qualification « sacerdotale » ne doit pas nous étonner. J’ai montré ailleurs¹¹ que le roi séquane *Catamantaloedis* mentionné par César devait se comprendre comme « Celui qui conduit sur les Cent Chemins »¹², désignation tout à fait comparable au *pontifex* romain et au *pathik̥t* aryen, tous deux ‘faiseurs de chemins’ : il s’agit là des chemins que les dieux empruntent pour venir assister au sacrifice.

L’époux de la célèbre Boudicca était donc sans doute un druide, à tout le moins un chef à responsabilités sacerdotales, tout comme le chef éduen Diviciacus avec qui s’entretenait César.

¹¹ *ZcPh* 54 (2004), 127–29.

¹² Restitué comme **Canto-mantalo-(w)edi-*.

Abréviations bibliographiques

<i>AE</i>	<i>L'Année Epigraphique</i> (Paris).
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (Berlin).
<i>DAG</i>	Joshua Whatmough, <i>The Dialects of Ancient Gaul</i> , Harvard UP, 1970.
<i>DELG</i>	Chantraine P., <i>Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Grecque - Histoire des mots</i> , 1-II, Paris 1968-1980, Klincksieck.
<i>DLG</i>	Xavier Delamarre, <i>Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise</i> , Errance (Paris), 2e éd. 2003.
<i>ILTG</i>	P. Wuilleumier, <i>Inscriptions latines des trois Gaules</i> , Paris 1963.
<i>LEIA</i>	Joseph Vendryes & Alii, <i>Lexique étymologique de l'irlandais ancien</i> , Paris et Dublin (depuis 1959).
<i>LIV</i>	Helmut Rix (Leitung), <i>Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben</i> , Reichert (Wiesbaden), 1998.
<i>VKG</i>	Holger Pedersen, <i>Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen</i> , Göttingen 1909 (vol. I) ; 1913 (vol. II).
<i>ZCP</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie</i> .

Abstract

The name of the British king *Prasutagus* (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.31) has not yet received a satisfactory etymology. A segmentation *Pra-su-tagus* led Pokorny to see in it a «pre-Celtic Indo-European name». A bipartite segmentation *Prasu-tagus* and the comparison of the first member with British coin legends *PRASV*, *PRASTO* and Gaulish mortaria *PRASSO* allows us to reintegrate the name into the corpus of Old Celtic onomastics. The stem is **prastu-* and the root **kwer-* ‘to make, to create’, used metaphorically for the poetic creation and, by extension, for the practice of magic. The name *Prasutagus* denoted probably some sort of sacerdotal function : «Organiser of charms, spells, incantations ...» *vel sim.*

Alaric Hall

Folk-healing, Fairies and Witchcraft: The Trial of Stein Maltman, Stirling 1628

Introduction

Our first extensive and detailed insights into the traditional beliefs of Scotland's ordinary people concerning illness, health and healing come with the witchcraft trials which took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Our records of these are patchy, but with early modern Scotland seeing a high per capita rate of accusations—the recent *Survey of Scottish Witchcraft* project counted 3,837 (Goodare–Martin–Miller–Yeoman 2003), and was not quite complete (cf. Hall 2005, 25–26)—a large and important body of material has nonetheless come down to us. A reasonably large number of trials, moreover, include mentions of *fairies*.¹ A tradition has grown over the last two centuries that fairy-beliefs are characteristically ‘Celtic’ cultural elements in Western Europe, which is not an assumption to which I subscribe (not least because very few of our witchcraft trial records come from Highland, Gaelic-speaking regions; see Hall 2004, 91–92, 158, cf. 168–89; 2005, 20–21). But the similarities between the fairy-beliefs attested in our Scottish witchcraft trials and those both of later Highland cultures and medieval Ireland nonetheless establish the Scottish witch-trials as a crucial early glimpse of beliefs relevant to both sides of the Highland-Lowland divide (cf. Henderson–Cowan 2001, *passim*; Hall 2004, 162–65).

This article is the first full publication of a trial record which is particularly valuable in the history of Scottish popular belief, that of Stein Maltman, of Leckie, about twelve kilometres to the west of Stirling. Its importance was recognised by a scholar who published a detailed paraphrase and partial transcript in *The Stirling Sentinel* under the initials R. M. F., with the title ‘The Witch Doctor of Leckie’. This was reprinted in W. B. Cook’s collection *The Stirling Antiquary* (1893–1909), from which I cite here. R. M. F.’s article, however, is today hardly more accessible than the manuscript from which he took his material: Stirling, Stirling Council Archive Service, Stirling Presbytery Records CH2/722/5, which volume covers the period February 22nd 1627 to April 2nd 1640. R. M. F.’s text furnished some material for the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*—including, in one case, a

¹ The *Survey of Scottish Witchcraft* gave 113 cases a ‘fairies’ characterisation (though most cases offer too little evidence to be useful; see also Hall 2005).

misreading which seems to have provided the dictionary with a spurious record of a spelling variant (*boidilie* for *bodilie*)—and the case has also attracted some recent commentary, so full publication seems desirable.²

The text runs from page 18, line 11, to page 28, line 25, being part of a series of texts on pages 16–40 all copied in the same clear and tidy hand, possibly in one stint. My transcription preserves the original lineation and punctuation of the original, representing also a series of large, marginal notices of the different parishes to which accusations in the text pertain. Divergences from R. M. F.’s quotations are noted in footnotes. Abbreviations which are marked as such in the manuscript by the use of superscript letters or flourishes and similar marks are expanded in *italic* type. Although it is common in transcriptions of early modern material to replace the letters *b* (identical in form in the manuscript with *y*) with *th*, *β* with *s* or *ss*, and *z* with *z*, *y* or *g*, I have preserved *b* and *z* in my transcription, to preserve whatever textual and linguistic evidence which they may offer.

The *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland* (Burton *et al.* 1877–1933, second series II 353) records for July 3rd 1628 a

Commission under the Signet to the Sheriff deputes of Stirlin, or any of them, and the Lairds of Keir and Powmais, or either of them, with two of the said deputes, as justices, to hold courts and try Stevin Malcome, sometime in Leckie, and Agnes Hendersoun in the parish of St. Ninians, who are prisoners in the tolbooth of Stirlin on a charge of witchcraft, and of whose guilt “there is now ane cleere discoverie,” by several confessions and depositions given in against them.

As in so many other cases, the trail of evidence for Agnes Hendersoun appears to stop here. But although the difference of names between our records introduces an element of doubt, the *Survey of Scottish Witchcraft* record for Steven Malcome noted that ‘this is the same as Steven Maltman from Leckie who was investigated for charming and healing by the presbytery in 1628’, and is surely correct (being mistaken only in characterising the presbytery records purely in terms of charming and healing, when Stein in fact stood accused of ‘charming and wther pointes of witchcraft’, including some clear examples of *maleficia*). Moreover, Stein had already appeared before the Gargunnock kirk session in May 1626 over the healing of a cow (Henderson–Cowan 2001, 131, citing Stirling County Archives CH2/1121/1). The opening of the 1628 presbytery record concerning Stein Maltman indicates that the material which it contains derives from proceedings on March 6th and April 3rd, 10th and 17th, so it presumably reflects the written material which was sent to the privy council in order to get a commission for Stein’s criminal trial.

The Stirling record is not itself the original notes concerning Stein’s case; moreover, it shows at least a degree of editing. The text does not indicate which

² *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*, s.vv. *Belyve*, *Bodily*, *Borrow*, *Dure*, *Codware*, *Elf-arrow*, *Fary*, *Hope*, *Kebbok*, *Langsattil*, *Particularlie*, *Poll*, *Quhin*, *Schot*, *Score*, *Sekenes*, *Set*, *Unerdly*, *Wicht*, *Well* and *Wyndo*. Henderson–Cowan 2001, 131; Miller 2002, 99; Hall 2005, 26–28.

³ *other* F. 185.

parts originate on which of the dates given for the proceedings against Stein. Rather, the material is organised by the parish from which witnesses came, and since five parishes are mentioned (Stirling, St Ninians, Logie, Kippen and Gargunnoch), there cannot be a one-to-one correspondence between date and place. Moreover, page 23 records that

it seames the said Stein transferred the said Jonet Chrysteis deseas vpon the *said* agnes dauidsoune as will moir cleirlie — appeir in the said agnes her depositioun in maner efter following .

AT Logye the first of aprile Mvi^c twentie and aught zeirs in *presens* of M^r Henry Schaw minister thair david leischmane and Thomas Chrystie twa of the Eldars and Malcolme Towar Reidar at the said kirk. Agnes dauidsoune in spittal ane publick spectacle to the haill parochin blind of her sight tyed to her bed in ane heavie agonie of seiknes not *commoune*, deponit...

it seems that the aforementioned Stein transferred the illness of the aforementioned Jonet Chrystie onto the aforementioned Agnes Davidsoune, as will more clearly emerge in Agnes's deposition, as follows.

At Logie, on April 1st 1628, in the presence of Mr Henry Shaw (the minister there), David Leischmane and Thomas Chrystie (two of the elders [of the Kirk]), and Malcolme Towar Reidar at the aforementioned kirk. Agnes Davidsoune, in the *spital* [defined by the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* as 'a house or place of refuge for the sick and destitute'], in public view to the whole parish, blind of sight and bound to her bed in a great, agonising bout of illness which was not usual, testified...

It is clear at this point at least that our existing text represents a conflation of sources—one of which is from an occasion not listed at the beginning of the record—which have been shaped to produce a cohesive final text.

Despite these limitations, however, our text remains of considerable value. Stein's investigation for witchcraft shows none of the hallmarks of a witch-craze: there is no hint that Stein was pressed to name accomplices, and the only other trial in the county that year seems to have been Agnes's. There is no mention of the Devil. In early modern witchcraft-trials, prosecutors' use of torture, leading questions and other devices to shape the confessions of suspects is infamous; such practices are well-attested for Scotland (cf. Larner 1981, 108–9; Goodare 2002; Levack 2002, 173–77), and our text's claim at one point that Stein 'Confessed frielie' gives no assurance that these devices were not used. But there is no hint that Stein's prosecutors were in search of evidence of diabolism rather than simply *maleficia*. This point is potentially important for our understanding of the attestations of fairy beliefs in the text. Mentions of fairies in Scottish witchcraft trials can usually be taken to at least some extent as attempts by accused witches to draw on their personal knowledge of folklore to provide satisfactory responses to interrogators keen to hear of their interaction with demons. Accordingly, Henderson and Cowan argued that 'in the case of Steven Maltman ... it was the all-important detail that he had acquired his skills of healing from the fairies that led to the more serious accusation of witchcraft, rather than the lesser crime of charming' (2001, 131). This is possible, but not certainly so. Stein was asked 'quhence he had his

skill of healling and how had learned the prattickes *quhilk* he vsed', which we might reasonably see as a leading question, and to which he 'Confessed þt he had thame of the fairye folk'. But the text shows no explicit attempt to link fairy-beliefs with diabolism, or any subsequent interest in the Devil. Mentions of fairies appear incidentally in witnesses' accounts of Stein's healing practices rather than as points explicitly having great significance in themselves, and while fairies are prominent in Stein's aetiologies of illness, they are only indirectly present in accounts of his *maleficia*. Stein's case, then, is surely representative of endemic rather than epidemic witchcraft-trials, and the mentions of fairies attributed to him and which he is himself recorded to make may closely reflect his professional construction of healing practices.

Besides their attestations of fairy-beliefs, Stein's confessions and the depositions against him provide evidence for a range of healing-practices (for parallels elsewhere in the Scottish witchcraft trials see generally Miller 2002), such as the charming of clients' clothes (e.g. p. 27 of the manuscript), the use of south-running water (p. 19), the transference of illness from people to animals (pp. 19–20), the use of magical words (p. 28), and the use of what the text calls *elf-arrow-stones*—apparently denoting neolithic flint arrow-heads, identified as being of elvish provenance (e.g. p. 22). Culturally meaningful divisions in space are also prominent—particularly when, as we are told on page 21, Stein

caused the said Patrik tak furth his sone being then seik in the night tyme to ane merche dyk at the pow of þe borrow milne of Stirling qr þe *said* Stein being *present* him self with the bairne and his father he caused the *said* patrik to stand on the on syd of þe merche dyk with the bairne in his armes and the said Stein him self on the wther syd of þe dyke and being on thair kneis he tuik the bairne out of his fathers armes over the dyk and *after* that he had prayed to god and to all vnearthliche creatures to send the bairne his health againe he delyvered the bairne bak againe to his father over the dyke.

had the aforementioned Patrik take his son—then suffering from nocturnal illness—out to a boundary ditch at the Stirling borough mill-pool, where the said Stein, himself being present along with the child and his father, caused the aforementioned Patrik to stand on the one side of the boundary ditch with the child in his arms, with the aforementioned Stein himself on the other side of the ditch. And, everyone being on their knees, he took the child from his father's arms over the ditch; and after he had prayed to God and all unearthy creatures to send the child his health again, he delivered the child back again to his father over the ditch.

Perhaps most striking, however, are the detailed accounts arising from a case concerning one Jonet Chrystie in Logie, about four kilometres north-east of Stirling, on pages 21–25 (see further Hall 2005, 26–28). Jonet's husband Andrew Kidstoune originally sent for Stein 'to haill or help' Jonet. Stein identified her illness as 'þe fairies schott'—a unique phrase, providing a parallel for the rare but historiographically prominent noun *elf-schot*, which seems to have had meanings potentially encompassing both the literal sense of 'a projectile from elves' and a more specialised medical meaning of 'a sharp internal pain caused by elves' (Hall 2005, 23–26). The detailed description of Stein's healing of Jonet includes

mention of an *elf-arrow-heid*; the participation of servants in healing and the associated manipulation of domestic space; and the use of cheese in healing, which does not seem hitherto to have attracted comment in an early modern Scottish context, but must relate to the skein of European beliefs linking witchcraft and cheese recently examined by Oates (2003). Moreover, one person in Jonet's house refused to participate in eating the bread and cheese which the household shared as part of Stein's ritual—and, as my quotation from this section above declares, Stein was believed to have transferred Jonet's illness onto Agnes in revenge. This development led to a deposition from Agnes, and a confession from Stein whose implications for the aetiology of Agnes's illness are rather different: Stein said that he 'desyered her to go furthe to ane whine busse *quhe*^r scho had contracted her diseas and thair seik her healthe from god and all vneardly creatures for scho had gotten ane blast of evill wind' ('desired that she go out to a gorse bush, where she had contracted her disease, and there to seek her healthe from God and all unearthly creatures, for she had received a blast of evil wind'), which suggests that Agnes had contracted the disease somewhere other than Jonet's house, and through a supernatural agency other than (or in addition to) Stein's. In this material, we can enjoy detailed insights into the practices and construction of healing in early modern Scottish culture; competing opinions about its place in society; and competing aetiologies of illness involving both members of the community (in this case Stein) and beings from outside it.

Text: examinations of Stein Maltman, March and April 1628

[page 18, line 11]

At Stirling the saxt of march
the thrid the tenth and sevin =
tenth of aprile 1628

In *presens* of the bretherein thair
assembled

The *quhilk* day compeired Stein Maltman
in Leckie parochine of Gargannock who
in *presens* of the bretherein their assembled
being accused for charming and wther³
pointes of witchcraft, Confessed frielie
that those⁴ aught or nyne zeirs bygaine
he had sett himself to charming sindrie diseases
and being demaunded quence he had his
skill of healling and how had learned
the prattickes *quhilk* he vsed Confessed þt
he had thame of the fairye folk quhom
he had sein in bodilie⁵ schapes in sindrie places

[p. 19]

Quhat⁶ he did in Stirling

The *quhilk* day the *said* Stein confessed that
Adam neilsoune burges in Stirling being seik
and hevilie diseased sent his sark to him
to be charmed be the said Stein, and that
he charmed it in this forme, God be betuix⁷
this man that aught this sark and all evils⁸

⁴ *these* F. 185.

⁵ *boidilie* F. 185.

⁶ *What* F. 186.

⁷ *betwixt* F. 186.

⁸ *evils* F. 186.

Sterling

in name of the father the sone and the holy
ghost, and put on this sark thryse in name
of the father etc, and that he gave him
directioun⁹ to wasche his body in southe
running well water And commandit that the
water wherwith¹⁰ the *said* adam wes wasched
should be cast furth in some desert place
*quhair*¹¹ no christen saule repaires, and that
he sent to the *said* adam ane napkin to
wype his body efter wasching commanding þt
the *said* napkin efter þt he had mad þis vse of¹²
it should be cast wnder the *said* adames¹³ bed
for the *quhilk* cuire he confesses he ressavit
ane furkatt of meale from Jhone¹⁴ Gurlay
in Glenturen.

The *quhilk* day adam neilsoune depones þ^t when
he desyred Stein maltman to hail his —
diseas the *said* Stein answered that his —
seiknes behuiffed to be laid on ather
beast or body, To whom the *said* adam
replied þ^t he wold not have his seiknes

[p. 20]

casten on any body or Christen creatur¹⁵
bot vpon¹⁶ ane beast and promised that he
should pay for the beast and depones þt
these speaches past betuix him & the *said*
Stein in wester leckie in october M =
vic twentie and sevin zeares
The *quhilk* day Stein confesses that he wes
with James glen in abbay zunger about sax
zeir since and promised to cuire him being
lunatik for the *quhilk* s...¹⁷ he confessed þt he

⁹ *directioun* F. 186.¹⁰ *wherewith* F. 186.¹¹ *where* F. 186.¹² *eftir that he had made his use of it* F. 186.¹³ *under the said Adam's* F. 186.¹⁴ *Johne* F. 186.¹⁵ The *r* added in different ink.¹⁶ *upon* F. 186.¹⁷ MS smudged; dots represent three obscured letters.

caused sett furth the *said* James glen his alon
 betuix¹⁸ nyne and ten in ane winter night
 and bad draw ane compas about the *said*
 James with ane drawin¹⁹ sword and that þe
said Stein went out his allon into the 3aird
 to hold affe the fairye from þe *said* James
 for²⁰ the *quhilk* he barganed²¹ to have ressaved
 fyve merks money grof²² he gave him the
 half þerof only and the *said* Stein meitting
 with the *said* James glen vpon²³ the last fair
 of Stirling and seiking the rest of the mo^{ey}
 the *said* James ansored he had gotten overmuch
 for any gud he had done him qrwpon²⁴ the
said Stein tuik the man be þe hand and *said*
 he should put him in his awin place and
 so it seimes²⁵ it fell out for that²⁶ same
 night the man hangid²⁷ him self .

[p. 21]

Quhat he did in S' ninianes

**Sanct=
 ninianes**

The *quhilk* day the *said* Stein confesses þt
 he had bein in Patrik wrights hous
 in calsey syd, and that he caused the *said*
 Patrik tak furth his sone being then
 seik in the night tyme to ane merche
 dyk at the pow of þe borrow milne
 of Stirling qr þe *said* Stein being *present*
 him self with the bairne and his father
 he caused the *said* patrik to stand on
 the on syd of þe merche dyk with the
 bairne in his armes and the *said* Stein

¹⁸ *alone betwix* F. 187.

¹⁹ *drawn* F. 187.

²⁰ *from* F. 187.

²¹ *bargained* F. 187.

²² *gross* F. 187.

²³ *upon* F. 187.

²⁴ *whereupon* F. 187.

²⁵ *seems* F. 187.

²⁶ *the* F. 187.

²⁷ *hanged* F. 187.

him self on the wther syd of þe dyke
 and being on thair kneis he tuik the
 bairne out of his fathers armes over
 the dyk and efter that he had prayed to
 god and to all vnearthliche²⁸ creatures
 to send²⁹ the bairne his health againe
 he delyvered the bairne bak³⁰ againe to
 his father over the dyke.

Quhat he did in Logye .

Logye

The *quhilk* day þe said Stein *confesses* þt he
 wes send for be androw kidstoune
 in nether craig to haill or help the said

[p. 22]

Androw his wyfe Jonet Chrystie being þen
 hevellie diseased that he brocht in some
 south running water seathed it in ane
 pan and put ane³¹ Elff arrow stone
 in the water becaus it wes ane remedie
 against þe fairies schott that he gave
 to the said Jonet Chrystie ane drink
þerof and Immediatlie efter the said
 Jonet had drunk *þerof* the said Stein
 caused þe haill³² servants to depairt
 out of the hous³³ for fear they sould³⁴
 ressave skaith of her and particular
 lie he bad³⁵ Elspet Steinsoune thair³⁶
 servand being lying bezond the said

²⁸ *unearthliche* F. 187.

²⁹ Corrected by the original scribe from *sed*.

³⁰ *delivered the bairne back* F. 187.

³¹ *one* F. 187.

³² *hail* F. 187.

³³ *house* F. 187.

³⁴ *should* F. 187.

³⁵ *had* F. 187.

³⁶ *their* F. 187.

Jonet Chrystie in ane longsettle cum
 furth and leave her for said he gif
 any evill cum on the³⁷ I will never
 gett mends for the³⁸ *after* that the said
 Stein having gone out of the housß
 for ane certaine space he came
 in againe and cutted some cheise &
 gave ane peace þerof to the *people* in the
 housß Bot it is alledgit that agnes
 davidsoune being thair *present* refused
 to tak ane pairt thairof from
 the said Stein maltman q'foir he said

[p. 23]

that the said agnes sould rew the refusall³⁹
 so as it seames the said Stein transferred
 the said Jonet Chrysteis deseas vpon the *said*
 agnes davidsoune as will moir cleirlye —
 appeir in the said agnes her depositioun⁴⁰
 in maner *after*⁴¹ following .

AT Logye the first of aprile Mvi^{c42} twen
 tie and aught zeirs in *presens* of M^r Henry
 Schaw minister thair david leischman^{e43}
 and Thomas Chrystie twa of the Eldars
 and Malcolme Towar Reidar at the said
 kirk. Agnes davidsoune in spittall ane
 publick spectacle to the haill⁴⁴ parochin
 blind of her sight tyed to her bed in ane
 heavie agonie of seiknes not *commoun*^{e45},
 deponit that sche wes in androw⁴⁶ kidstoune
 his housß in nether craightoune *quhai*^{r47} Jonet

³⁷ *thee* F. 187.

³⁸ *thee* F. 187.

³⁹ *refusall* F. 188.

⁴⁰ *dispositionne* F. 188.

⁴¹ *after* F. 188.

⁴² *ImVlc* F. 188.

⁴³ *Leaschmane* F. 188.

⁴⁴ *haill* F. 188.

⁴⁵ *common* F. 188.

⁴⁶ *Andrew* F. 188.

Chrystie his spous tuik ane great brasche
of seiknes and Stein maltman being
present with her the said agnes davidsoune
desyred androw kidstoune to cum to his
wyfe for scho⁴⁸ had taken ane great brasche
of seiknes Stein maltman ansored that
scho⁴⁹ might have bein at her awin home
gif scho⁵⁰ had ony⁵¹ for *perchance* scho⁵² might
rew it *þerefter* her being thair . And
thairefter the said Stein maltman

[p. 24]

wes going to his bed tuik ane kebbock of
cheise and cutted ane peace and⁵³ gave
to everie ilk *persoune* of the housþ with
ane peace of bread and cutted ane
peace cheise and bread⁵⁴ and gart lay
it on the duir head and window head
and desyred the said agnes davidsoune
to tak ane peace cheise and breid
also *quhilk* scho wtterlie⁵⁵ refused *quhe*^{wpon}⁵⁶
the said Stein maltman ansored that
scho⁵⁷ wald soir repent the refusall
of his breid⁵⁸ and cheise at her hart
The *quhilk* repentance as scho⁵⁹ alledges
scho hes fund *sincesyne* and the said Stein
of her haill⁶⁰ greif

⁴⁷ *where* F. 188.

⁴⁸ *she* F. 188.

⁴⁹ *sche* F. 188.

⁵⁰ *she* F. 188.

⁵¹ *only* F. 188.

⁵² *she* F. 188.

⁵³ *ang* F. 188.

⁵⁴ ‘and cutted ane peace cheise and bread’ omitted by F. 188.

⁵⁵ *utterlie* F. 188.

⁵⁶ *whereupon* F. 188.

⁵⁷ *sche* F. 188.

⁵⁸ *bread* F. 188.

⁵⁹ *sche* F. 188.

⁶⁰ *hail* F. 188.

The *quhilk* day the *said* Stein maltman
confesses he wes in James Chrysties housß
in cornetoune and thair charmed
ane seik bairne of his in the forme &
maner he had done with Patrik —
wrights in Calsey syd befor

The *quhilk* day þe *said* Stein *confessed* þt he wes
in Joⁿ Garrows housß in cornetoune and *quhe*ⁿ
the *said* Jhon wes seik he caused sett him out
in þe night his allon in þt place quhair
he thocht he tuik seiknes and bad the *said*
Jhone pray to god & all vneardlie wights
to send him his health againe

[p. 25]

The *quhilk* day Stein *confessed* þt he send word
to agnes davidsoune in spittall being for þe
present heavellie diseased with her brother M^ccolls
davidsoune and desyered her to go furthe
to ane whine busse *quhe*^r scho had contracted
her diseas⁶¹ and thair seik her healthe
from god and all vneardly⁶² creatures
for scho⁶³ had gotten ane blast of evill
wind

⁶¹ *buss where sche had contracted her disease* F. 188.

⁶² *uneardly* F. 188.

⁶³ *sche* F. 188.

The *quhilk* day Stein *confessed* þt he counselled
 david Ewin in west grange for helping of
 his sone who was then seik and had taken
 ane fray⁶⁴ in the night to tak the bairne
 out in þe nyt at ellevin or twell houres⁶⁵
 and lay his hand vpon⁶⁶ the bairnes head
 and directed him to draw his sword
 and schaik it about the bairne for
 said Stein the fairye wold not cume
quhar^r they saw drawin⁶⁷ swordis .

Quhat he did in kippen .

Kippen .

The *quhilk* day the said Stein confessed that
 being in Jhone forresters housß in kippen
 who being heavellie diseased desyered the
 said Stein to help him give he could
 to whom he answered that the said Jhone
 behuifed to go to the place *quher* he had
 contracted the seiknes and ask his health

[p. 26]

quhe^r wpon the said Stein tuik the said Stein⁶⁸
 Jhone foster and his brother Thomas foster
 twa severall nights about midnight to the
 place *quhair* the said Jhone had gottin his seiknes
 and when they wer cum to the place *quhair*
 the said Jhone had gottin his seiknes he
 caused the said Jhone and Thomas sitt
 doune on the grund wpon thair kneis
 and drew ane scoir about thame with
 ane drawin⁶⁹ sword⁷⁰ and that thairefter
 he went from thame and certaine⁷¹
 space and prayed to god and all wnearth=

⁶⁴ *frae* F. 189.

⁶⁵ Final *s* damaged.

⁶⁶ *upon* F. 189.

⁶⁷ *where they saw drawn* F. 189.

⁶⁸ Crossed out by original scribe.

⁶⁹ *drawn* F. 189.

⁷⁰ *s* corrected by original scribe from *d*.

⁷¹ *certain* F. 189.

lische wights to send the said Jhone his health againe, lykways that in these nights foirsaid he bad the said Jhone fosters wyfe steik boith dore and windo and fear nothing and speak nothing *quhat* ever scho hard or saw till they returned againe for nothing wold aill her .

Lykways confessed that efter the said Jhone wes something convaescit, and the said Jhone seamed to be somthing vnkyndlie to him that in menassing forme said that the wand that struik⁷² him befoir wes ȝet to the foir *quhilk* seames to be accomplisched for within few days the said Jhone cumming out
of

p. 27 of his awin⁷³ hous in the morning and being in gud health at his awin doore he lay downe and presentlie died

The *quhilk* day the said Stein confessed þt he wasched nicole campbell in kippen being seik, and þt he gott ane codwair with ane peck of meale⁷⁴ for his paines

Lykways confesses that he wes at Walter millar in Glentirren þt he tuik him furth in the night to the place *quhair* he gott his seiknes and prayed to god and all vnearthlich wights to send him his health, and efter þt, laying his hands on the *said* walter he rubbed his breist and his bak with ane Elffarrow stone

⁷² *struck* F. 189.

⁷³ *ain* F. 189.

Gargonnok

Quhat he did in Gargonnok
 The *quhilk* day Stein maltman confesses
 that James Stewarts sark⁷⁵ in the tyme⁷⁶
 of the said James his seiknes wes brocht to
 to⁷⁷ him in Gargannok⁷⁸ be Thomas Stewart
 and þt he charmed the sark as he had
 done wthers⁷⁹ .

Lykways confesses þt he charmed ane sark
 of Thomas m^cleheis his dochter who then
 wes

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dumbe wttering⁸⁰ these words put it on
 thryse⁸¹ in the name of god the father the
 soune and holy ghost⁸² I hoip in god the bairn
 will speak belyve *quhilk* the bairne did
 accordinglie

Lykways confesses that he said to Jhone Moir
 in Bochlyvie⁸³ þt he wes able to cuire þe
said Jhone his soune gif he gott truble be þe
 fairie, and þt he tuik out the bairne
 in the night saying he had some cumpany⁸⁴
 to meit with þt he drew ane compas about
 the bairne being þerout with ane sword, and
 efter he returned to the hous, and he had
 not mett with his companie the fairies
 As also that þt he caused the bairnes mother
 to sett on þe fyer ane pann full of water
 and that he cuist ane Elffarrow stone
 thairin of purpois⁸⁵ to wasche þe bairne
 thairwith

⁷⁴ *meall* F. 190.

⁷⁵ *s* corrected by original scribe from *S*.

⁷⁶ *time* F. 190.

⁷⁷ This repetition is evidently a scribal error.

⁷⁸ *Gargunnoch* F. 190.

⁷⁹ *uthers* F. 190.

⁸⁰ *uttering* F. 190.

⁸¹ *thrys* F. 190.

⁸² *the Sone, and the Holy Ghost* F. 190.

⁸³ *Buchlyvie* F. 190.

⁸⁴ *company* F. 190.

⁸⁵ *purpoiss* F. 190.

Lykways þe said Stein confessed that for
 helping of ane seik boy in Jhone⁸⁶ dune
 his hous he bad bring to himself twa
 pecks of meall twa peaces of beif
 for he behuifit⁸⁷ quyetlie some night
 to cast thame over the Binne craige

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⁸⁶ *Johne* F. 190.

⁸⁷ *behuifit* F. 190.

”Barbaariset riitit ja oudot menot” Antiikin roomalaisten näkemyksiä kelttien uskonnosta

Tässä artikkelissa esittelen antiikin roomalaisten käsityksiä kelttien uskonnosta. En edes aio ottaa kantaa siihen, miten paljon tai vähän roomalaisten käsitykset vastasivat ns. historiallista todellisuutta. Pohdin pikemminkin roomalaisia ja heidän kuvaansa kelttien uskontoelämästä kuin kelttejä itseään¹.

Otsikon sitaatti ”barbaariset riitit ja oudot menot” on vapaa suomennos roomalaisen runoilijan Lucanuksen säkeistä, joissa hän kuvaa kelttien uskontoa: ”ja te, druidit, laskettuanne aseenne palasitte barbaarisiin riitteihin ja pyhien toimitusten nurjaan tapaan” (Lucanus, *Pharsalia* 1.450–451: *Et vos barbaricos ritus morem-que sinistrum / sacrorum, Dryadae, positis repetistis ab armis*).² Lucanuksen luonnehdinnat runoteoksessa *Pharsalia* sisältävät ne olennaiset piirteet, jotka toistuvat roomalaisten kirjoittajien käsityksissä kelttien uskontoelämästä. Lucanus tuntee joidenkin kelttiläisten jumalien nimiä sekä mainitsee druidit, joista hän käyttää muotoa *Dryadae* ja jotka hän yhdistää kreikkalaisiin metsänymfeihin, dryadeihin. Nämä druidit oleilevat lehdoissa ja luolissa ja opettavat sielunvaellusta. Nämä opit sielunvaelluksesta ovat runoilijan mielestä erehdyttä, mutta niihin uskovat ovat onnellisia erehdyksessään, koska tällöin he ovat vapaita kuoleman pelosta (Lucanus, *Pharsalia* 1.453–454; 1.454–457; 458–460). Hän myös toteaa, että druidien tietämys jumalista on oikeastaan tietämättömyyttä (Lucanus, *Pharsalia* 1.452–453).

Lucanus nostaa esiin kelttiläisen uskontoelämän erityispiirteenä ihmisuhrit ja korostaa kelttiläisen uskonnon outoutta ja raakuutta. Gallialaiset lepyttävät ankaraa Teutatesta hirvittäväällä verellä – todennäköisesti viittaus ihmisuhreihin – ja hirmuista Esus-jumalaa kolkoilla alttareilla. He kunnioittavat alttarilla Taranista, joka ei ole skyyttiläistä Dianaa lempeämpi (Lucanus, *Pharsalia* 1.444–446: *Et quibus inmitis placatur sanguine diro / Teutates horrensque feris altaribus Esus / et Taranis Scythicae non mitior ara Dianae*). Skyyttiläinen Diana eli Tauriin Artemis on antiikin kirjallisuudessa toistuva viittaus ihmisuhreihin, sillä antiikissa vallitsevan käsityksen mukaan myyttisinä aikoina Tauriin Artemiille oli suoritettu ihmisuhreja. Runokielen voimakkaat ilmaukset korostavat kelttiläisen uskonnon kauhistuttavuutta.

¹ Artikkelin perustuu esitelmään Suomen keltologisen seuran seminaarissa 5.11.2005.

² Ks. myös Lucanuksen kuvaus kelttien pyhän lehdon tuhoamisesta (*Pharsalia* 3.399–451). Lucanuksen runoteos *Pharsalia*, joka tunnetaan myös nimellä *Bellum civile*, kertoo roomalaisten sisällissodista. Nimi *Pharsalia* viittaa Farsaloksen taisteluun, jossa Julius Caesar voitti Pompeiuksen joukot vuonna 48 e.a. Lucanus (39–65 j.a.) oli stoalaisen filosofi Seneca nuoremman veljen-

Roomalaisten suhteet keltteihin

Antiikin kreikkalaiset ja roomalaiset tulkitsivat keltit yhdeksi ryhmäksi tai kansaksi yhden kielen ja sen murteiden perusteella. Kreikkalaiset kutsuivat heitä nimityksillä *kelttoi* ja *galatai*, roomalaiset puolestaan yleensä nimityksellä *Galli*, mutta myös kreikkalaisilla lainasanoilla *Celtae* ja *Galatae*.³ Keltit olivat yksi niitä kansoja tai heimojen ryhmittymiä, joiden kanssa roomalaiset olivat hyvin varhain tekemisissä, sotaisesti mutta myös rauhanomaisesti. Roomalaisten oma historiankirjoitus korostaa vihollisuuksia erityisesti Pohjois-Italian kelttien kanssa Gallia Cisalpinassa, Po-joen laaksossa. Roomalaisten suhde Pohjois-Italian keltteihin oli traumaattinen, sillä roomalaisen historiankirjoituksen mukaan gallialaiset hyökkäsivät Roomaan ja valtasivat sen Capitoliumia lukuunottamatta vuonna 387 e.a.a.⁴ Gallialaisia kohtaan tunnettu pelko, *metus Gallicus*, leimasi roomalaisten suhtautumista keltteihin.⁵ Roomalaisten seuraava kohtaaminen kelttien kanssa oli Gallia Transalpinassa, nykyisen Ranskan alueilla, ensin nykyisen Provencen alueella (Gallia Narbonensiksessa eli Gallia Provinciassa) ja myöhemmin, Julius Caesarin aikana 58–52 e.a.a, pohjoisempana, kun Caesar valtasi Gallian ja osan Britanniaa. Varsinainen Britannian valtaus alkoi kuitenkin vasta Claudiuksen aikana vuonna 43. Keltit olivat siis roomalaisten mielissä pitkään viholliskansa, ja tällä oli oma vaikutuksensa myös kuvaan heidän uskontoelämästään.

Roomalaisten suhde muihin uskontoihin

Roomalaisia on perinteisesti pidetty suvaitsevaisina ja sallivina suhteessaan valloitetujen kansojen uskonnollisiin traditioihin.⁶ Mielestäni roomalaisten suvaitsevaisuutta ei pidä erehtyä romantisoimaan tai modernisoimaan, sillä heidän suhtautumistaan muihin kansoihin voidaan parhaimmillaan luonnehtia lähinnä pragmaattiseksi joustavuudeksi ja vallanpitäjien käytännön reaali politiikaksi. Vallanpitäjät sallivat erilaisten uskontojen ja kulttien harjoittamisen valloittamallaan alueilla. Roomalaisilla ei kuitenkaan ollut mitään yhtenäistä poliittista linjaa suhteessa val-

poika ja teki itsemurhan osallistuttuaan salaliittoon keisari Neroa vastaan. Tommasi Moreschini (2002, 182–183 ja 2005, 143–144) esittää, että, vaikka Lucanus saattoi tietää jotakin kelttien uskonnosta, hän käyttää antiikin kirjallisuudessa laajalle levinneitä kliseitä korostaakseen roomalaisten ylemmyyttä.

³ *Galatai* asettuivat 270-luvulla e.a.a Vähän-Aasiaan seudulle, jota antiikissa alettiin heidän mukaansa kutsua Galatiaksi.

⁴ Vuoden 387 e.a.a. Rooman hävityksestä syntyi myytti roomalaisessa historiankirjoituksessa, jossa gallialaisten päällikön Brennuksen nimi liitettiin Rooman hävitykseen. Brennus-niminen kelttipäällikkö esiintyy myös kuvauksissa Delfoin hävityksestä 279 e.a.a. Williams (2001, 166) katsoo Delfoin hävityksen vaikuttaneen kuvaan Rooman hävityksestä.

⁵ Tätä pelkoa ja roomalaisten gallialaisviholliskuvaa analysoi Kremer (1994, 62–66).

⁶ Esimerkiksi vielä Chadwick (1993, 26–42: 29) toteaa: ”the maximum of social cohesion was achieved by serene toleration”.

loitettuihin kansoihin, vaan käytännöt saattoivat vaihdella huomattavasti eri alueilla ja eri tilanteissa.⁷

Roomalaisten vallanpitäjien suvaitsevaisuudella oli rajansa ja sallittujen ja kiellettyjen tapojen ja rituaalien harjoittamisen rajoja määriteltiin lainsäädännössä. Eräät kultit, joihin vallanpitäjät aluksi olivat suhtautuneet vihamielisesti ja epäluuloisesti, sallittiin myöhemmin ja jopa otettiin mukaan roomalaiseen uskontosysteemiin; esimerkiksi Magna Materin kultti nivottiin osaksi valtiollisen uskontoa. Myöhäisen tasavallan aikana ja keisarikaudella Bacchuksen kultti ja Isiksen kultti, joita roomalainen eliitti tasavallan aikana halveksi ja jopa piti uhkana järjestyneelle yhteiskunnalle, vähitellen löysivät paikkansa roomalaisten hyväksytyjen kulttien joukossa.⁸

Roomalaiset vallanpitäjät eivät hyväksyneet kaikkia uskonnollisia liikkeitä. Suhtautuminen vaihteli eri aikoina, ja uskontoasiat nivoutuivat poliittisiin kiistoihin, lojaalisuuskysymyksiin, roomalaisten keskinäisiin valtataisteluihin ja erilaisiin kriiseihin. Välillä jokin uskonnollinen suuntaus tai kulttikäytäntö jäi sallitun ulkopuolelle: tiedämme esimerkiksi roomalaisten vallanpitäjien epäluuloisesta ja välillä vihamielisestä suhtautumisesta kristinuskoon, juutalaisuuteen ja druideihin. Juutalaisten ja druidien tapauksessa vihamielisyys ja epäluulo vierasta uskontoa kohtaan yhdistyivät poliittisten kumousten pelkoon ja epäluuloon. Nämä pelot olivat vallanpitäjän näkökulmasta ymmärrettäviä, sillä eri puolilla valtakuntaa syntyneissä mellakoissa ja kansannousuissa, joissa vastustettiin roomalaista valtaa, oli toisinaan johdossa paikallinen uskonnollinen johtaja.

Historiankirjoittaja Tacitus (55–120 j.a.a.) yhdistää druidit valtakunnan vuoden 69 kriisiin. Tänä nk. neljän keisarin vuonna, kun Nero syöstiin vallasta, Rooma oli sisäisten valtataistelujen takia kaaoksessa. Kaiken lisäksi Rooman Capitoliumilla riehui tulipalo (joka ilmeisesti sai alkunsa vahingossa eikä siis ollut tarkoituksettisesti sytytetty). Tacitus (*Historiae* 4.54) kertoo, että druidit ennustivat tämän merkitsevän jumalten vihaa, Rooman tuhoa ja Alppien pohjoispuolisten kansojen eli gallien nousua maailman valtiaiksi. Tacituksen kertomus kertoo ennen kaikkea roomalaisten peloista ja traumaista. Capitoliumilla syttynyt tulipalo muistutti heitä gallien vuonna 387 tekemästä Rooman hävityksestä. Saman vuoden 69 aikana muutamat gallialaiset heimot ja germaaniheimot kapinoivat roomalaisia vastaan. Kapinan johtajat olivat ainakin päällisin puolin roomalaistuneita, sillä heillä oli roomalaiset nimet ja Rooman kansalaisuus. Osa gallialaisista pysyi lojaaleina roomalaisille ja osallistui kapinan kukistamiseen.

⁷ Yleensäkin viime aikojen tutkimuksessa (esim. Lintott 1993) on korostettu roomalaisen hallintosysteemin epäyhtenäisyyttä ja sekavuutta aikaisempaan tutkimukseen verrattuna, jossa Rooman valtakunnan hallintoa on tarkasteltu varsin anakronistisesti modernien hallintosysteemien näkökulmasta.

⁸ Tätä Rooman uskontokehitystä ovat käsitelleet mm. Beard, North & Price 1998, North 1979, North 1992 ja Wardman 1982.

Druidit

Kuuluisin kuvaus gallialaisten uskontoelämästä on Julius Caesarin selonteko teoksessa *Gallian sota* (16.13), jossa hän tulkitsee druidit vaikutusvaltaiseksi pappisluokaksi. Druidien tehtävänä on huolehtia jumalallisista asioista (*rebus divinis*) ja niin julkisista kuin yksityisistäkin uhreista sekä tulkita uskonnollisia toimituksia (*religiones*). Lisäksi he toimivat tuomareina. Heillä on yksi korkein johtaja. Druidit pitävät määrättyinä aikana vuodesta istuntoja pyhässä paikassa karnuuttien alueella (keskellä Galliaa, lähellä nykyistä Orléansia). Caesar pitää druideja oppineitten luokkana ja yhdistää heihin kreikkalaisen kirjaimiston omaksumisen, suullisen perimätiedon ja sielunvaellusoppiin, joka poisti galleilta kuolemanpelon. Tämä teki gallialaiset rohkeiksi taisteluissa (Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 16.14).⁹

Sielunvaellusoppi ja pelottomuus esiintyivät myös alussa esittelemäni Lucanuksen kelttikuvauksessa. On arveltu, että Caesarin käsitykset perustuvat ehkä osittain omiin havaintoihin, osittain kreikkalaiseen kirjalliseen traditioon, jonka merkittävin edustaja oli stoalainen filosofi Poseidonios (135–50 e.a.a.).¹⁰ Roomalaiset ja kreikkalaiset kirjoittajat arvelivat, että druidien oppi sielun kuolemattomuudesta ja sielunvaelluksesta olisi periytynyt pythagoralaisilta. Esimerkiksi 300-luvulla kirjoittanut historioitsija Ammianus Marcellinus (*Res gestae* 15.9.7) vielä toistaa ajatuksen, että druidit, joita hän kutsuu sanalla *Drysidae*, opettivat sielun kuolemattomuutta ja tekeutuivat Pythagoraan auktoriteettiin.¹¹

Plinius vanhempi (23–79 j.a.a.) mainitsee druidit *Luonnonhistoria*-teoksessaan (*Naturalis historia* 16.95.249–251) käsitellessään misteliä kasvien esittelyjen yhteydessä. Druidit, joiksi gallialaiset kutsuvat maagejaan, pitävät pyhimpänä kasvina misteliä (*viscum*) ja tammipuuta (*robur*), jossa se kasvaa. Nämä liittyvät Pliniuksen mukaan druidien riitteihin. Plinius esittää, että druidi-nimitys tulee tammipuuta tarkoittavasta kreikan sanasta (*drys*). Druidit palvovat kuuta ja uhraavat kaksi valkoista härkää tammipuun alla. Valkoisiin vaatteisiin pukeutunut pappi (*sacerdos candida veste*) nousee puuhun leikkaamaan kultaisella sirpillä (*falx aurea*) mis-

⁹ Selostaessaan britannialaisten kansannousua vuonna 61 keisari Neron aikana Tacitus (*Annales* 14.30) kuvaa, miten sotajoukon ympärille kerääntyneet druidit valoivat taistelumieltä britannialaisiin huutaen hirveitä kirouksia kädet taivasta kohti kohotettuina.

¹⁰ Poseidoniuksen tuotannosta on säilynyt vain mainintoja muilla antiikin kirjoittajilla, erityisesti maantieteilijä Strabonilla ja historiankirjoittaja Diodoros Sisilialaisella. Poseidoniuksen kirjoituksesta ks. Malitz 1983. Piggott (1994, 97 ja 120) katsoo, ettei Caesar ollut 'aivan ajan tasalla' eikä kiinnostunut etnografiasta, vaan lähinnä seurasi antiikin historiankirjoitukseen kuuluvaa perinnettä, johon kuului sijoittaa väliin kansa- ja maantieteellisiä kuvauksia. Kremerin (1994, 203) mukaan etnografiset kuvaukset eivät todennäköisesti sisältyneet Caesarin senaatille vuosittain lähettämiin sotareportteihin, vaan Caesar lisäsi ne myöhemmin toimittaessaan *Gallian sotaa* kokonaisuudeksi.

¹¹ Ajatus druidien kuolemattomuuskäsitysten periytymisestä pythagoralaisilta esiintyy mm. Diodoros Sisilialaisella (*Bibliothèque historique* 5.28.6).

teliä, jonka uskotaan edistävän hedelmällisyyttä ja auttavan lääkkeenä kaikkiin myrkkyyhin. Kuvauksensa lopuksi Plinius toteaa, että niin suuri on kansojen *religio* usein mitättömissä asioissa: *tanta gentium in rebus frivolis plerumque religio est.*

Pliniuksen kansojen uskontoelämästä käyttämän termin *religio* voi suomentaa uskonnoksi, mutta myös tunnollisuudeksi, kunnioitukseksi, jumalienpeloksi tai hurskaudeksi. Pliniuksen halveksiva sävy kuvaa hyvin roomalaisen eliitin suhtautumista muiden kansojen uskontoihin ja kansanomaisiin uskontomuotoihin. Roomalaiset kuvasivat suhdettaan muihin kansojen uskontoihin ja vieraisiin kultteihin usein käsitteillä *religio* ja *superstitio*. *Religio* voi tarkoittaa paitsi pyhiä asioita ja toimituksia, myös tunnollisuutta, velvollisuudentuntoa, sopimusta ja valaa. Yleensä roomalaiset viittasivat sanalla *religio* omaan uskontoonsa, joka heidän mielestään oli kaikista uskonnoista ylivoimaisin¹², mutta toisinaan myös muiden kansojen uskontoja saatettiin kutsua *religioksi*, kuten Plinius edellä. *Superstitiolla* roomalaiset kirjoittajat usein viittasivat kielteisessä sävyssä muiden kansojen uskontoihin ja oman uskonnollisen tradition piirissä halveksittuihin kansanomaisiin tapoihin ja uskomuksiin.¹³ *Superstitio* käännetään usein taikauskoksi. Tacitus (*Historiae* 4.54.4) kutsui druidien uskonnollisia toimituksia joutavaksi taikauskoksi, *superstitio vana*.

Ihmisuhrit ja magia

Caesar esittää *Gallian sodassa* (16.6) että druidit uhrasivat jumalilleen ihmisiä, lähinnä rikoksista tuomittuja. Joillakin gallialaisilla oli suunnattoman suuria jumalankuvia, joiden sisällä he polttivat ihmisiä. Ihmisuhrit olivat vakiintuneet kiinteäksi osaksi roomalaisten kulttikuvaa tasavallan ajan lopussa ja keisarikaudella, sillä ihmisuhrin mainitsevat Caesarin lisäksi myös esimerkiksi Lucanus, Plinius, Tacitus, Pomponius Mela, Cicero ja Livius (*Ab urbe condita* 38.47).¹⁴ Cicero (*Pro Fonteio* 31) toteaa, että gallialaiset luulivat, että jumalia parhaiten lepytettiin ihmisten verellä. Tacitus (*Annales* 14.30) kertoo, että, kun roomalaiset kukistivat britannialaisten kansannousun vuonna 61, he hävittivät ”julmille taikauskaisille menoille pyhitetyt lehdot”. Tacitus selittää, että britannialaisten uskonnon mukaan oli näet oikein peittää alttarit sotavankien vereen ja tiedustella jumalien tahtoa ihmisten sisälmysten avulla. Pomponius Mela (*De chorographia* 3.18) kertoo gallien olevan taikauskaisia (*superstitiosi*) ja niin hirmuisia (*immanes*), että he uskovat ihmisen olevan paras ja mieluisin uhri jumalille.

¹² Näin esimerkiksi Cicero, *De haruspicum responsis* 19.

¹³ *Superstitio* ei kuitenkaan ollut aina ollut välttämättä pejoratiivinen, vaan oli viitannut henkilökohtaiseen uskontoon julkisen uskonnonharjoituksen, *religion*, vastapainona. *Religion* ja *superstitio* vaiheista antiikissa, ks. Sachot (1991, 355–394) ja Kahlos 2006 (tulossa).

¹⁴ Ihmisuhrin mainitsevat myös kreikkalaiset Strabon, *Geografika* 4.4 ja Diodoros Sisilialainen, *Bibliothēke historike* 5.32.6 lähteenään todennäköisesti Poseidonios.

Ihmisuhrit olivat toistuva topos antiikin kirjallisuudessa poliittisten vastustajien mustamaalaamisessa tai vieraiden kansojen kuvauksissa.¹⁵ Roomalaiset halusivat nähdä ihmisuhrin ei-roomalaisena ilmiönä, vaikka roomalaiset itse olivat virallisen julkisen uskontonsa puiteissa suorittaneet ihmisuhrreja erilaisissa kriisitilanteissa, erityisesti puunilaisotien aikana. Esimerkiksi vuonna 216 e.a.a roomalaiset uhrasivat kaksi gallialaista ja kaksi kreikkalaista hautaamalla nämä elävinä (Livius *Ab urbe condita* 22.57.6). Myös roomalaisten verisiä gladiaattoritaisteluseityksiä voidaan pitää eräänlaisina ihmisuhrereinä, vaikka roomalaiset eivät niitä tällaisiksi mieltäneetkään, ainakaan myöhäisen tasavallan aikana ja keisarikaudella.

Roomalaiset kirjoittajat leimasivat druidien uskonnolliset toimitukset magiaksi. Magiaan viittasivat ennen kaikkea druidien ihmisuhrin, joiden katsottiin olevan magian tunnuspiirre. Edellä mainitussa kuvauksessa Plinius vanhempi kutsuukin druideja maageiksi (*magi*). Valtiovallan kiellot osallistua druidien menoihin liittyvät tähän magiaksi leimaamiseen, sillä magian harjoittaminen oli kielletty roomalaisessa lainsäädännössä aina tasavallan ajoista myöhäiseen keisarikauteen saakka.¹⁶ Keisari Augustus kielsi osallistumisen druidien toimintaan Rooman kansalaisilta. Myöhemmin osallistuminen kiellettiin Gallian provinseissa keisari Tiberiuksen ja/tai keisari Claudiuksen aikana. Claudiuksen todettiin hävittäneen gallialaisten keskuudesta perin pohjin druidien julmat epäinhimilliset menot (Suetonius, *Vita Claudii* 25.5). Plinius vanhempi (*Naturalis historia* 30.4.13) kirjoittaa: ”Magia joka tapauksessa vallitsi Gallian provinseissa ja aivan meidän aikoihimme saakka. Sillä vasta keisari Tiberiuksen hallinto nujersi heidän druidinsa ja tämän lajin enustajat ja parantajat (*hoc genus vatum medicorumque*). ... Vielä nykyään Britannia hulluudessaan harjoittaa magiaa niin suurin menoin, että voisi luulla Britannian opettaneen magian persialaisille”. Sitten Plinius lisää juhlavasti, ettei voida edes laskea miten suuressa velassa maailman kansat ovat roomalaisille siitä hyvästä, että roomalaiset ovat lakaisseet pois nämä hirvetydet eli ihmisen uhraamisen.¹⁷ Roomalaiset esittivät kelttien uskonnon raakalaismaisena ja halusivat nähdä itsensä maanpiirin rauhoittajina ja kesyttäjinä. Gallialaisen uskonnon raakalaismaisuus paitsi korosti omaa sivistystä, myös oikeutti roomalaisen vallan, joka puhdisti maanpiirin ihmisuhrista. Roomalla oli ennaltasinetoity tehtävä kesyttää ja yhdistää villit bar-

¹⁵ Esimerkiksi syytökset ihmisuhrista olivat osa Catilinan mustamaalausta tasavallan ajan lopussa (Sallustius, *Coniuratio Catilinae* 22.1–2). Kreikkalaisessa kirjallisuudessa ihmisuhrin yhdistettiin mm. taurislaisiin, skyytteihin, keltteihin, lusitanialaisiin ja albanialaisiin. Roomalaisessa kirjallisuudessa puolestaan viitattiin karthagolaisten, gallialaisten, juutalaisten ja kristittyjen suorittamiin ihmisuhrisiin. Kristityt kirjoittajat vuorostaan syyttivät polyteististen uskontojen harjoittajia ihmisten uhraamisesta. Rives (1995, 69–70) analysoi ihmisuhriteeman käyttöä antiikin keskustelussa barbaarisuudesta ja sivistyksestä. Ks. myös Grottanelli (2000, 276–292).

¹⁶ Tästä esim. Barb (1963, 105) ja Beard, North & Price (1998, 372).

¹⁷ Pliniuksen kohta liittyy pitkään pohdintaan magiasta, jonka hän arvelee tulleen Persiasta Rooman valtakuntaan.

baarikansat roomalaisen rauhan alaisiksi. Uskonnollisten tapojen pehmentäminen oli osa roomalaisten suurta tehtävää.¹⁸

Roomalaiset vallanpitäjät halusivat siis esittää ja nujertaa druidit magiikan harjoittajina.¹⁹ Varhaisen keisarikauden kirjoittajat antavat ymmärtää, että druidien menot hävitettiin perin pohjin, mutta, kuten edellä näimme, vuonna 69 druidit nousivat esiin ennustuksineen. Druidit esiintyvät myös 200-luvun tapahtumista kertovassa 300-luvulla kirjoitetussa historiateoksessa *Historia Augusta*, jossa druidien ja druidinaisten kerrotaan lausuneen ennustuksia yksittäisistä keisareista, näiden tuhoutumisesta tai valtaannoususta.²⁰

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¹⁸ Vergiliuksen *Aeneis* (esim. 12.830) on hyvä esimerkki roomalaisten itseymmärryksestä maailman valtina. Plinius vanhemman (*Naturalis historia* 3.39.93) mukaan roomalaisten maailmanvallan saavutuksia oli kerätä kansat kanssakäymiseen ja sivistykseen (*conloquia et humanitatem*) ja pehmentää uskontoelämä (*ritusque molliret*). Roomalaisten käsityksistä yhtenäisyydestä ja uskonnosta, ks. Buchheit (1998, 36–43, erityisesti 36).

¹⁹ Beard, North & Price (1998, 341) arvioivat, että nämä yritykset pikemminkin saattoivat vahvistaa druidien omaa identiteettiä.

²⁰ *Historia Augusta, Vita Aureliani* 44.3–5 kertoo keisari Aurelianusuksen kysyneen ennustuksia druidinaisilta: *consuluisse Druidas*; *Historia Augusta, Vita Severi Alexandri* 60.6 kertoo druidinaisen ennustaneen keisari Alexander Severuksen tuhon: *mulier Druias exclamavit Gallico sermone*; *Historia Augusta, Vita Cari* 14.2 kertoo druidinaisen ennustaneen Diocletianukselle tämän keisariksi tulon: *Druidade quadam muliere; Druias dixisse fertur*. *Historia Augusta* on keisarielämäkertojen kokoelma, joka kulkee kuuden 200- ja 300 -lukujen taitteessa eläneen kirjoittajan nimissä, mutta nykytutkimuksen teos on todennäköisesti yhden kirjoittajan tuotos 300- ja 400 -lukujen vaihteesta. Keisarielämäkertoja pidetään yleensä varsin epäluotettavina lähteinä, mutta nämä maininnat ainakin viestivät kirjoittajan kiinnostuksesta druideihin.

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Abstract

This article discusses the Roman conceptions of Celtic religious life. Thus, it does not take any stand on whether these ideas had any equivalency in historical reality. Instead, the Roman attitudes towards Celtic religion are analysed as a part of the Roman image of the Celts as an enemy. Furthermore, the Roman views, for example, on Druids are set within the ethnographic tradition of Graeco-Roman literature. Human sacrifice was one of the most widespread ideas connected with the Celts in Graeco-Roman literature. In the Roman discussion on civilization and barbarity, human sacrifice was always an attribute of the other and it was regarded completely un-Roman. Mainly because of its connection with the human sacrifice, Celtic religion was labelled and consequently suppressed as magic. When depicting the ferocity of the Gauls and human sacrifice of the Druids, the writers of the Roman elite underlined Roman superiority and the pre-eminent role of the Romans as the tamers of the savage barbarians and the benefactors of humankind.

Atina L.K. Nihtinen

Towards a more complex language identity?

An investigation of opinions on Scots in a sample of
policy makers and others*

Background to this survey

In a recent study on language policy in Britain and Ireland in a book called “Multilingual Europe” (Battarbee 2005, 131–146), it is argued that the definition and status of Scots are still considered to be controversial in spite of recognition by the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages (EBLUL)¹, the Scottish parliament and at a UK government level. Battarbee (2005, 140) points out that virtually nothing has been done to enhance the status of Scots apart from some cosmetic² use in the Scottish Parliament.

It has been stated several times that whether Scots is seen as a language or a dialect (or dialects for that matter) is dependent on a political point of view. Defining present-day Scots as a language has been difficult for both linguistic and historical reasons (See e.g. Leith 1983, 164 and McArthur 1998). In any case, it was only after the Union of the Crowns (and, even more markedly, after the Union of Parliaments) that Scots gradually came to be regarded as a corrupt form of English and the language lost its status as a result of political events. Had the political situation been different, it can be argued that Scots would have been a national language through the centuries in a similar fashion to many national languages in Europe. On the other hand, contemporary Scots is “certainly distinct enough to be dealt with separately” (Dossena 2005a, 9) and a terminological distinction between Scots and Scottish Standard English “has to be drawn very clearly and explicitly to avoid confusion” (Dossena 2005a, 13).

One of the important issues until recent times was the need for confidence building amongst Scots speakers in order to remove the effects of “centuries of stigmatisation and cultural colonisation” (Kay 1993, 11). Since Scots was perceived as inferior or as bad English and its use was even punishable in schools, these attitudes and practices led to its severe decline. Even today many people are insecure in their usage of language, which is a major educational challenge. Attitudes have changed to some extent during recent decades due in large part to the efforts of various institutions, language groups and individual enthusiasts.

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¹ All abbreviations are listed at the end of the paper.

² By cosmetic language policy is meant policy which has only a symbolic value.

Although attitudes have become more positive, it is still the case in present day Scotland that some speakers will interpret the label of the language as Scots and others as Scottish English and different people may perceive their own language and the language spoken in their region in different ways. However, even the language of the largely English-speaking middle class is not totally anglicised and the presence of Scots is clearly discernable not only in phonology, but also in syntax and vocabulary (Dossena 2005a). In contemporary spoken language Scots and English are closely intertwined and this has been seen as an obstacle in collecting reliable data on the number of Scots language speakers.³

In recent times, several important studies on the connection between Scots and Scottish identity and, on the other hand, between Scots and political views were carried out in Scotland (See Nihtinen 2005). They clearly showed that there are regions with a particularly high percentage of Scots-speaking people, that Scots is indeed closely associated with national identity and that language policy could be a more important factor in the choice of political party than is usually assumed (See e.g. Murdoch 1996, LIP 1995 and Horsburgh & Murdoch 1997).

Since the completion of many of these surveys, the political situation has changed. With the devolution of political power to the new Parliament in Edinburgh policy expectations were raised regarding all aspects of Scottish life. However, according to most recent research, the first years of the government's existence have given rise to more feelings of dissatisfaction and disillusionment than of change or success in language policy (McClure & Dossena 2002). The Scottish government has indeed given formal recognition to its duty to support and develop the indigenous languages, but has failed to make a difference in the case of Scots. Where Gaelic is concerned, some positive measures, including a Gaelic Language Act, have been initiated. Some Gaelic activists and campaigners have argued that these are insufficient. However, they constitute a significantly greater commitment from government than is the case for Scots where very little has been done.

My aim in this paper is to consider how the language situation and language policy are affected by the present-day attitudes to language of policy makers and others. For this purpose, during the autumn of 2005, I collected some new data by sending letters to policy makers and other relevant groups. I was interested to find out what these attitudes are and how they are reflected in opinions on support for, or opposition to, measures designed to enhance the status of a particular language or encourage its use. I was especially interested in attitudes to Scots, which, in the light of earlier studies, were clearly seen as a more problematic issue than the case of Gaelic.

³ There has not been a question on the Scots language in the Census yet, but estimates are available, see Murdoch (1996) and GRO(S) 1996. There is also an ongoing campaign for an inclusion of a Scots language question in the 2011 Census.

Method for collecting the data and selecting the respondents

The data used in this article consists of responses received to letters and questionnaires which were sent to all Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs)⁴, Scottish members of European parliament (MEP)⁵ and to non-MSP members of the Cross Party Group on Scots (CPG). One member of the European parliament answered the questionnaire over the phone. In addition to these, I have used the comments of language activists and the Scots Language Resource Centre (SLRC) to the UK authorities' second periodical report on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the document itself as well as information on Cross Party Groups and their activity.⁶

Contact information for both groups of MSPs and MEPs was found on the Internet and the non-MSP members of the Cross Party Group on Scots were contacted through SLRC. One of the non-MSP members of the CPG circulated the questionnaire further and in this way I was also able to gather information from people outside the group. This group consists, however, of people who are more knowledgeable and more interested in language matters than the average voter. The latter included among others a number of academics from the Department of Scottish and Celtic Studies of Edinburgh University.

MSPs were contacted first in August 2005 and two reminders were sent by email at a later stage. The other respondents were contacted in November 2005. Regarding the letters my method is that of qualitative analysis. I am looking primarily at the inferences that can be drawn from the figures and at the personal views of politicians and others. My main interest is in expressed opinions and the ways in which policy makers and others consider language matters. Some questions are designed to inform me if their answers are based on considered

⁴ Parties represented in the Scottish Parliament, September 2005 (in order of number of seats):

Labour Party – Centre-left, unionist – 50 MSPs

Scottish National Party – Centre-left, pro-independence – 27 MSPs

Conservative and Unionist Party – Centre-right, unionist – 18 MSPs

Liberal Democrats – Centre, federalist – 17 MSPs

Scottish Green Party – Environmentalist, pro-independence – 7 MSPs

Scottish Socialist Party – Far-left, pro-independence – 6 MSPs

Scottish Senior Citizens Party – pensioners' rights party – 1 MSP

Independent – 4 MSPs

No Party Affiliation – 1 MSP

Presiding Officer – 1 MSP

⁵ Scotland has 7 MEPs. These are Alyn Smith (SNP), Struan Stevenson (Conservative), John Purvis (Conservative), Catherine Stihler (Labour), David Martin (Labour), Elspeth Attwooll (Lib. Dem.) and Ian Hudghton (SNP).

⁶ The Cross Party Group on Scots is one of several Cross Party groups in which members of the Scottish Parliament meet regularly with non-members. The latter group consists of people with expertise in the field. The aim of those meetings is to discuss Parliamentary policy on a specific issue and to share opinions and information. See Dossena 2005b and <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp/crossPartyGroups/groups/cpg-scots.htm>.

understanding of the issue or gut feeling. These questions include their familiarity with scholarship pertaining to the Scots language and their familiarity with their political parties' official position on Scots. Questions sent to the Scottish members of European parliament were altered to include a European angle and the group of non-MSP members were asked for their views on the ways in which Scots should be promoted and encouraged.

The low response rate in the group of MSPs was disappointing. This might be interpreted as a reflection of the general lack of interest in the issue, which is not surprising given the fact that little has been done to enhance the situation of Scots and against the background of earlier research (e.g. Dossena 2005b⁷, Horsbroch 2002, 21–42, Husom 1999⁸). The comments of language activists and the SLRC to the UK second ECRML report also confirmed my expectations of low interest in language issues.⁹

Moreover, it has to be taken into consideration that those MSPs who replied had probably more knowledge or more interest in language issues than the whole group of MSPs. First of all, they expressed their interest in the survey by replying and secondly, many of them expressed a personal interest in language issues, although not necessarily an interest in Scots (in some cases this took the form of a general interest in culture or heritage or an interest in Gaelic).

The reasons behind the low response rate are of course complex and it has to be mentioned that several MSPs or their personal assistants sent their apologies for not having the time to reply to this survey or, for example, explained that they have given priority to questions asked by their own constituents. The replies of the second group (non-MSP members of the CPG and others), on the other hand, often pointed in the direction of conscious attempts by politicians to avoid dealing with “the reality of the language question wherever possible.”

⁷ An interesting development in the structure of the CPG is that “while the interest of non-MSPs appears to have increased and extended its scope to academics outside Scotland, that of MSPs seems to have declined dramatically” (Dossena 2005b).

⁸ Husom attempted to include Members of Parliament in his survey in 1999, but due to a low response rate (only five of 24 returned the questionnaire) he later decided to exclude the group of MPs (1999, 48).

⁹ Comments by Colin Wilson, Bob Fairnie and Michael Hance to Antonio Bultrini, August 2005. The document itself had flaws in its description of the situation of the Scots language and above all in terms of the manner in which the Scots language was not separately and properly named in the report. Michael Hance, the manager of the SLRC stated in his reply “the assertion that the Scots language and Scottish English are the same thing is absurd in a report that purports to list the various ways in which the UK government and the relevant devolved territorial administration support the Scots language. This assertion betrays the careless attitude, which the Scottish Executive and its officials have consistently shown towards the language. One of the biggest problems the Scots language faces is lack of linguistic consciousness amongst its speakers. The continued tendency of the Executive and its officials to refuse to name the language contributes to this problem. It underlines the lack of status from which the language suffers and underscores the popular view that Scots is just bad English.”

Another point worth mentioning, which also has an impact on the reliability of the results, is the wording of the questions, but in this task I had the chance to consult several experts. Only 19 politicians and 22 other informants participated in this survey, which is not a large or representative sample. The results in the first group should not be taken as being representative of all Scottish politicians and neither should the results in the second group be seen as representative of all people with an active interest in language matters. It is, however, useful to look at the individual opinions expressed in replies, because these can be seen as indicative of the political climate in which decisions on language policy are expected to be made.

Presentation of the results

Perceptions of the languages spoken in Scotland: group of MSPs and MEPs v. group of non-MSP respondents

To the question of whether one perceives Scotland as largely monolingual, bilingual, trilingual or multi-lingual a great variety of replies was given by both groups (see Table 1). Most MSPs and MEPs (13 of 19) perceived Scotland as largely monolingual (although some of them stated that this was largely but not exclusively the case), whereas there were more perceptions of Scotland being bilingual, trilingual or indeed multilingual in the group of non-MSP members and others (only 9 of 22 considered Scotland to be largely monolingual). Of the latter group, many of those who perceived Scotland as monolingual stated, however, that Scotland is monolingual in one sense, but multilingual in another and people explained their views extensively, which showed some significant consideration of this issue.

When asked about what they consider to be their native language most MSPs and MEPs (12 of 19) replied English. The description of native language seemed in some cases to be a political issue – those who were members of ‘nationalist’ parties more often described their language as Scottish English, Scots-English or a mixture of the two, while those who were members of ‘unionist’ parties considered their language to be English, but, on the other hand, it is probable that some of them did not understand the question. There seems to be some degree of confusion about the term native language. In the second group of respondents most stated that their language was Scots or that they were bilingual in English and Scots or spoke a mixture of the two: one was bilingual in English and Gaelic, one had Scottish English as native and four considered their language to be English. Another four respondents had different nationality and/or another native language (these were native speakers of American English, Italian and German and one of the respondents was English).

As far as region or constituency is concerned the three members for Highlands and Islands clearly defined the three languages spoken in their region: one of them stated that mainly English is spoken, but also some Gaelic and Scots and the others defined the languages of their region as a mixture of English and Gaelic and mixture of English and Scots or as a mixture of English and Gaelic and Scots dialects in Caithness, Orkney and Shetland.

English was stated to be the language spoken in their constituency or region by the MSP for Clydebank and Milngavie, North-East Scotland, Glasgow, Mid Scotland and Fife, South of Scotland and for Eastwood (English, very little Gaelic). One MSP for South of Scotland described the language spoken as English, whereas the other for the same region as a mixture of English and local Scots. The MSP for Central Scotland described the local language as a mixture of English and Scots and the MSP for Lothians, stated that English, some Gaelic and several local accents are being used.

Some of the views were in contradiction with the existing estimations on the number of Scots language speakers and for example it was surprising not to see Scots even mentioned in the case of the respondent from North-East Scotland. The replies on the languages spoken in Scotland regionally and nationally were more extensive in the replies of the second group, but, although personal perceptions varied to some extent, most respondents in the second group were currently from Edinburgh or other big cities. Class issues and social distinction between SSE and Scots were stressed in some replies.

The respondents in the second group were asked to summarize how they think Scots is perceived in present-day Scotland. The majority of respondents thought that Scots is seen as a dialect only suitable for colloquial speech or as something of an anachronism (everyday use very limited, but used in poetry and folk music). Many added that this is *sad* or *unfortunate*. The existing attitudes were perceived to be a result of insufficient knowledge or feelings of embarrassment or linguistic insecurity. Some respondents pointed out that there is no consistent perception. Scots can be regarded by some as a linguistic remnant and an obstacle to economic progress, and by others as a valuable aspect of cultural identity.¹⁰ Along the same lines it was stated that some perceive Scots as a language (as a dialect that was once a language or as a low prestige language) and some as a dialect, but that many people do not ever think about it. If people do not know what the language issues actually are, it is difficult to change an attitude which has been present in all areas of society for so long.

¹⁰ Undoubtedly, there are people in Scotland for whom Scots is essential and they perceive language as central to their identity. Scots is a great source of expression and pride in local culture. It is not clear, however, how many of them actually use Scots in everyday life or just in performance and whether they consider language as a *linguistic* issue of greater importance. See e.g. TV documentary "The Big Scots Road Trip" (2005).

Table 1. Perceptions of Scotland in terms of language situation (MSPs and MEPs)

Political party + Region/ Constituency	Native language + other languages	Opinion on languages used by people in constituency/region	Perception of Scotland as monolingual, bilingual, trilingual or multilingual
Green, North-East, MSP	English	English	Largely monolingual
Labour, MEP	No response to this question	No response to this question	Largely monolingual (but not exclusively)
Conservative, MEP	English, Scots and Lallans (when in Scotland). English the only native (when in Europe)	No response to this question	No response to this question
Conservative, MEP	English + Italian, French	Monolingual*	Monolingual
SNP, Highlands and Islands, MSP	Scottish English	Mixture of English and Gaelic, Scots dialects in Caithness, Orkney and Shetland	Tri-lingual
Labour, Clydebank and Milngavie, MSP	English + some French	English	Monolingual
Conservative, South of Scotland, MSP	English + little French	Mixture English and local Scots	Monolingual
Green, Highlands and Islands, MSP	English + French, some Gaelic	Mainly English, some Gaelic, very little Scots	Largely monolingual (with pockets of minority languages)
SNP, MEP	English + French, German	In an European context English the most important, Scots and Gaelic important as specific to Scotland**	Monolingual or bilingual
Conservative, Lothians, MSP	English + French	No response to this question	Multilingual
Conservative, Glasgow, MSP	English	English	Monolingual + some bilingual speakers of many languages
Liberal Democrats, Mid Scotland and Fife, MSP	English + little French	English	Largely monolingual
Labour, Eastwood, MSP	English + little French	English, v. little Gaelic	Monolingual
Presiding Officer, elected as SNP member, Ochil, MSP	English (easy switch to Scots) + French, Russian, some Gaelic	English and simultaneously Scots dialect. Small number of Gaelic speakers	Largely monolingual, but also areas where Gaelic is the first language and in most of the Lowlands people switch between English and Scots
SNP, Central Scotland, MSP	English (modified by Scots)	Mixture of English and Scots	Largely monolingual
Green, South of Scotland, MSP	English + some French, Spanish and Scots	English	Multilingual
Green, Lothians, MSP	English, Scots + French, German, little Swahili	Several local accents, Gaelic medium school	Many are bilingual

Socialist, South of Scotland, MSP	English + little French	English	Monolingual
SNP, Highlands and Islands, MSP	Scots-English	Mixture of English and Scots; Mixture of English and Gaelic	Effectively trilingual

* In the case of Members of European parliament this question was modified to include their perception of Scotland from a European perspective.

** These results are based on a phone interview, 28th November 2006.

Perceptions of 'indigenous' languages and the need to support them: group of MSPs and MEPs v. group of non-MSP respondents

The perceptions of what constitutes Scotland's indigenous languages varied to a great extent (see Table 2). In some cases these perceptions were clearly influenced by the respondent's view on whether Scots is a language or a dialect. Familiarity with research also appeared to have an influence on the respondent's views. In the group of MSPs and MEPs six persons perceived English and Gaelic to be indigenous, in four responses these languages were Gaelic and Scots and in three responses English, Gaelic and Scots. The other responses varied: one MSP saw English as the only indigenous language, one Gaelic, one a dialect or variation of English and in one response it was stated that English and Scots dialects are indigenous. There were two responses with no reply to this particular question.

In the second group of informants eleven people named Gaelic and Scots as indigenous as opposed to one person who saw only Gaelic as indigenous and seven people who counted all three as indigenous. One respondent pointed out that this is not a matter of consideration, but of knowledge, one response was that the indigenous language of Scotland is unknown and one that this was probably Pictish. Interestingly, on the other hand, one person said that in some cases immigrant languages could also qualify.

I asked all MSPs and MEPs to say whether it would be a good thing if Scots and Gaelic died out and if the state should support indigenous languages. The Scottish National Party's MSPs, one of the Green Party's MSPs and the Socialist Party's MSPs had the most positive attitudes to both languages. Some MSPs expressed the opinion that the state should support these languages without specifying how. Some of the Conservative members stressed the importance of Gaelic and the fact that Gaelic should be supported and that it is supported. The Liberal Democrat MSP and Labour members also said that Gaelic should be supported. Many MSPs did not make any statement at all regarding support for Scots. Two of the respondents did not reply to this question.

In the second group, not surprisingly, nearly all respondents (20 of 22) stated that the state should support Scots and Gaelic with some suggesting that it is absolutely obvious that the state should support these languages and that it has a moral and political obligation to do so. One respondent did not reply to this question and one respondent expressed the opinion that only Gaelic should be supported by the state

(this person was, however, from outside the Cross Party Group on Scots and his judgment was based on the belief that Scots is extinct). There were, however, other comments as well. A comment to the questionnaire made outside the group that was surveyed was that “they should put money into providing proper cycle paths and healthcare before trying to save a dead language”. One respondent pointed out that future developments depend above all on the community who use the language and that “you can fund development all you like, but at the end of the day languages are dependent on communities for survival”.

Table 2. Perceptions of ‘indigenous’ languages and importance of language matters (MSPs and MEPs)

<i>Political party + Region/ Constituency</i>	<i>Perceptions of ‘indigenous’ languages and state support for them</i>	<i>Perceptions of the importance of language matters to the people of Scotland</i>	<i>Importance of a clear policy on Scots</i>
Green, North-East, MSP	Gaelic. The State should provide support for languages when necessary	Matter to few	Important
Labour, MEP	Happy to see support given to Gaelic, Scots and dialects	No response to this question	No response to this question
Conservative, MEP	No response to this question	No response to this question	No response to this question
Conservative, MEP	English and Gaelic. Gaelic to some extent and it does	Not a lot except among Gaelic speakers	Important to have a clear policy on Gaelic
SNP, Highlands and Islands, MSP	Gaelic and Scots. The state should support them	Small numbers passionate, many just use their particular tongue	Very important to support people’s self esteem
Labour, Clydebank and Milngavie, MSP	English and Gaelic. Some support for Gaelic is required	Not much	Not at all
Conservative, South of Scotland, MSP	English and in some parts Gaelic. Yes particularly Gaelic	Good English important with pride local accents	Left to individuals
Green, Highlands and Islands, MSP	Gaelic, Scots, English. The state should support them	Very important to Highlands and Islands	Important
SNP, MEP	Gaelic and Scots. The state should support them	Not overly high, but the situation is changing	Very important, fundamental. SNP has one for Gaelic and Scots
Conservative, Lothians, MSP	English and Gaelic. Support should be given	A great deal	No response to this question

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Conservative, Glasgow, MSP	English, Gaelic, Scots. The Scottish government supports Scotland's minority languages*	Not made aware of constituents concerns over language	Scottish Conservatives support Scotland's diverse traditional culture and heritage.
Liberal Democrats, Mid Scotland and Fife, MSP	A dialect or variation of English. It would be a bad thing for Gaelic to be lost	Not a great deal which is a pity	Of some importance
Labour, Eastwood, MSP	English and Gaelic. Gaelic should not be allowed to die out. There should be support for indigenous languages	Personally – Gaelic matters very much. Not made aware of constituents concerns over language	Personally – clarity important. Not as much concern over Scots than over Gaelic.
Presiding Officer, elected as SNP member, Ochil, MSP	English and Gaelic. Scots is today used in a dialect form. There is general support to the use of Gaelic.	Matter, but not in the list of top priorities.	Important to support diversity in language use everywhere.
SNP, Central Scotland, MSP	Scots and Gaelic The state should support them	Matters a lot to Gaelic speakers, the Scots issue to fewer	Not terribly important On a personal level important
Green, South of Scotland, MSP	English. The state should support languages	To a certain extent	Important
Green, Lothians, MSP	English and Scots dialects. Education should encourage children to write in the language they speak.	Not enough	Quite important and we do have a policy
Socialist, South of Scotland, MSP	Gaelic and Lowland Scots. The state should support them	Not much	Very important
SNP, Highlands and Islands, MSP	English, Broad Scots and Gaelic. Duty of the state	Vital, defines who we are, adds to quality of life, self-esteem and other crucial issues	Vital

* This response includes a great deal of exact information on support given to Gaelic.

Views on the importance of language matters: views of non-MSP respondents

Views on how important language matters are to the people of Scotland were divided in this group as follows:

Table 3. Importance of language matters (non-MSP respondents)

Opinion on importance of language matters (non-MSP respondents)	Number of replies
Language issues do not matter much to most of the population	8
Attitudes vary greatly	3
Vital	2
Matter a lot to some	2
Should matter more	2
Fundamental to any society	1
Not much, but this is changing	1
Minority interest, but matter a lot to the Gaels	3

One respondent in this group pointed out that "generally there seems to be widespread apathy, punctuated by determined efforts by small groups of keen language supporters. A widespread problem seems to be the reduction of language to something that is only relevant in economic terms." Another informant also stated that there is a great deal of indifference. On the whole, especially amongst those who were not members of the Cross Party Group the view was expressed that most people in Scotland give very little thought to language issues. Some respondents from the Cross Party Group supported this view also. Respondents tended to blame the educational system and the media for this state of affairs but there was also expressed the view that many people had more pressing issues of material well-being to consider and language was not seen as important as other concerns.

In addition to these views one respondent expressed the view that Scots is under attack by the establishment.¹¹ Another respondent complained that "Scotland continues to be treated as an English colony, with the compliance and active collaboration of most of its *supposedly* independent institutions." The fact that the Scottish parliament is only "semi-independent" was mentioned frequently.

Views on language and identity: group of MSPs and MEPs v. group of non-MSP respondents

As far as the relation between language and identity is concerned the opinions expressed represented a relatively unified front (see Table 4). Most respondents

¹¹ He wrote that the normal way to denigrate the language is to deliberately anglicise it e.g. by the addition of apostrophe marks in inappropriate places such as *e'e*, or by mistranslating it to make it appear little different from English in, for example, the use of the expression *wey oot* as a substitute for the English word exit (rather than the purportedly correct Scots form "*ootgang*").

claimed that Scottish identity is not based on language or, in any case, not on one particular language. In the group of MSPs and MEPs there were eight replies to the effect that all three languages (Gaelic, Scots, English with a Scottish accent) are an expression of Scottish identity. Of this group two respondents added that Scottish English is the most common or that a Scots accent is considered to be the prime identifier of a Scot. Five respondents stated that one can express Scottish identity in any language, including recent immigrant languages or in general in any language spoken in Scotland today. Four other respondents answered differently (see Table 4). In one reply it was stressed that although Gaelic and Scots can be considered as expressions of Scottish identity, identity in Scotland is not based on language, but on distinctive institutions and on history. One respondent stated that he would not call Scots a language, but a tongue. Two respondents did not reply to this question.

When compared to other replies from the same people, these responses show that Scots can mean significantly different things to different people with respondents sometimes meaning Scottish English by Scots or Scots by Scottish English. Sometimes contradictory ways of naming Scots and varieties of Scots were present in the same sentence.

In the second group of respondents, replies could largely be divided into two main groups: those who thought that all three languages are an expression of Scottish identity (12 of 22) and those who felt that only Scots and Gaelic are a mark of distinct identity (4 of 22). However, in this group there were three respondents who stated that Scottish identity could be expressed in any language (the three mentioned and many other languages) or this was seen as a divisive question.¹² One respondent felt that only Scots qualified as a mark of identity and two responses implied that Scots is the most important.

¹² These respondents were not members of the Cross-Party Group.

Table 4. *Language and Identity (MSPs and MEPs)*

<i>Political party + Region/Constituency</i>	<i>Views on what language or languages are considered to be an expression of Scottish identity (Scots, Gaelic, English with a Scottish accent, other?)</i>
Green, North-East, MSP	Gaelic, Scots, Doric
Labour, MEP	No response to this question
Conservative, MEP	No response to this question
Conservative, MEP	Scots, Gaelic and English
SNP, Highlands and Islands, MSP	All three
Labour, Clydebank and Milngavie, MSP	All could be, but a Scottish accent is probably the most common expression of identity
Conservative, South of Scotland, MSP	English with Scottish accent
Green, Highlands and Islands, MSP	All three
SNP, MEP	All these languages are an expression of identity, but in different ways
Conservative, Lothians, MSP	All three
Conservative, Glasgow, MSP	Can be expressed in any language
Liberal Democrats, Mid Scotland and Fife, MSP	Any Scottish dialect
Labour, Eastwood, MSP	All three
Presiding Officer, elected as SNP member, Ochil, MSP	Gaelic and Scots mark a specific Scottish identity, but identity in Scotland is not based on language.
SNP, Central Scotland, MSP	All noted plus English with both Scottish accent and another, e.g. Scots-Italian, or Scots-Asian
Green, South of Scotland, MSP	Significance of other minority languages should be remembered – Urdu, Hindi, Chinese etc.
Green, Lothians, MSP	In any language. Most people see a Scots accent as being a prime identifier of a Scot.
Socialist, South of Scotland, MSP	Scots
SNP, Highlands and Islands, MSP	All of them and others from the New Scots who express their affinity with Scotland and its values in many tongues

Views on how Scots should be promoted: non-MSP respondents

Most respondents supported the view that Scots should be given full recognition and used widely in all areas, although there were also people who felt that the language should be encouraged mainly as a cultural issue or in some specific areas. Only one respondent stated that he was not sure about the ways to protect and encourage the language, because of the problems connected with changing attitudes. Some respondents expressed the view that the state should support the promotion of a unified orthographic convention and that Scots should be promoted in the same way as other minority languages in the UK (e.g. the Celtic languages) such as: a proper service of radio and TV programmes; taught as a subject in schools; and used as a teaching medium where there are families who want this.

Others stressed that it should be recognized as the first use language of a very large minority – possibly even a majority of the indigenous population. One respondent argued that there should be a question on the language in the next census. Other respondents made the following points:

- Should be used on radio and TV and in school – but I would hesitate to require people to speak more than one language.
- Promoted as a majority language and as a cultural issue.
- Taught at all levels of schooling.
- Learnt and accepted in a full range of educational, cultural and social context.
- Recognising and supporting Scots in schools would help the pupils with their English and their modern languages as well.
- Encouraged mainly as a cultural issue.
- Promoted in the correct fora.
- Promoted as a part of an overall strategy to protect and encourage the languages of Scotland.
- Encouraged through Scots medium education and open access learning.
- Taught in schools and an ending to the Anglicisation by authority and media and the use of multilingual signs.
- Encouraged in different situations, not just in poetry and family.
- Promoted as an important language resource supported by language rights legislation.
- Encouraged in schools and home environment.
- Taught as a separate, closely related linguistic system from English.
- To begin with, encouraged as a minority language with great cultural value. Greater linguistic awareness might then lead to more widespread use.
- Taught and used in schools.
- Cultural: in the arts, film and television.

Familiarity with scholarship and with party's language policy in relation to other replies

Nearly all MSPs and MEPs stated that they were not familiar with any scholarship pertaining to the Scots language (see Table 5). The familiarity with scholarship in the second group of respondents was significant in the case of non-MSP members of the Cross Party Group. This was not surprising, because some members are in fact leading contributors to it and others are knowledgeable and well informed on various issues concerning both the history of Scots and its present situation. This was visible in responses to other questions in this group and confirmed the

impression that these responses are based on a considered understanding of the questions concerned.

Almost all MSPs and MEPs stated that they were familiar with the language policy of their party. Conservative members stressed that their party is supportive of Scots. However, this seemed to be more of a general statement of positive attitude considering all of the expressed views. The only Liberal Democrat MSP who replied to my survey was not familiar with his party's language policy on Scots, because in his opinion this was not a major issue in the Lowland area he represents. Interestingly, in a similar fashion, the only person who was a supporter of the Liberal Democrats in the second group of informants was not interested in the party's language policy on Scots. An informant who supported Labour also stated that language issues do not affect his vote. These were only individual opinions, but on the basis of all the replies there seemed to be a relatively strong connection between interest in Scots and party affiliation.

Table 5. Familiarity with scholarship and party's language policy (MSPs and MEPs)

<i>Political party + Region/ Constituency</i>	<i>Familiarity with scholarship pertaining to the Scots language</i>	<i>Familiarity with party's language policy</i>	<i>Other comments</i>
Green, North-East, MSP	No Aware of support for the study of Gaelic	Yes	Sad that for most of us Scots, our native indigenous language (Gaelic) is completely unknown to us and we are not able to pronounce even the most basic words.
Labour, MEP	No response to this question	No response to this question	No comments
Conservative, MEP	No response to this question	No response to this question	No comments
Conservative, MEP	No	No	No
SNP, Highlands and Islands, MSP	Yes	Yes (Policy described)	Gaelic and Scots are great boost to self- esteem and distinctive Scottishness. They are unique and an essential part of the world's diversity of cultures and ideas.
Labour, Clydebank and Milngavie, MSP	A little, very dry and boring	Yes	No
Conservative, South of Scotland, MSP	No	No	Important English becomes Europe's predominant language.
Green, Highlands and Islands, MSP	No Aware that studies exist	Not sure about policy	No

SNP, MEP	No	Yes	Many of our people are deeply interested in this issue. Positive developments.
Conservative, Lothians, MSP	No response to this question	No response to this question	No response to this question
Conservative, Glasgow, MSP	No	Yes (Supportive policy)	No
Liberal Democrats, Mid Scotland and Fife, MSP	No, but aware that studies exist	No, because it is not a major issue in the Lowland area represented	The biggest danger to the Scottish language comes from American TV programmes.
Labour, Eastwood, MSP	No	Yes. (We are supportive of Scots).	No
Presiding Officer, elected as SNP member, Ochil, MSP	Yes, but not in any great depth	Yes	Stressing that language is not the main channel of identity in Scotland.
SNP, Central Scotland, MSP	No	Yes	No
Green, South of Scotland, MSP	No	Yes	No
Green, Lothians, MSP	No	Yes	No
Socialist, South of Scotland, MSP	No	We don't have one	No
SNP, Highlands and Islands, MSP	No, but open to hearing more and to helping via the Scotland Funds and the Ireland funds	Yes	No

Views on the importance of language policy in the choice of political party

In the group of non-MSP respondents, nearly all supporters of the SNP (10 of 11 supporters of the SNP) knew the language policy of their party. They were familiar with either the exact policy or what it is supposed to be. Opinions were divided on whether the language policy of the SNP should be clearer or if the party should campaign more actively for it. Some respondents felt that a clearer policy would be important only after independence and that no change should be expected at present. A number of respondents either had no political affiliation or did not mention any preference for a single political party (see Table 6). One respondent in this group expressed the view that none of the political parties had a viable policy on Scots, which may be considered to have some justification in view of the fact that even the SNP policy is based merely on the promotion of a positive attitude towards Scots. One respondent also argued that if a policy promises support without funding, then it is useless.

Table 6. Importance of language policy in the choice of political party (non-MSP respondents)

<i>Views on how important language policy is in the choice of political party (non-MSP respondents)</i>	<i>Number of replies</i>
Important	5
Very important	2
Should have a clearer language policy	2
Some importance	2
Current policy sufficient	1
Not important	4
Not a party matter	1
None has a viable policy	1
No strong support for any party	4

Some concluding observations

Some of the views expressed in the survey showed that questions surrounding Scots are being considered from various angles in the group of non-MSP respondents. On the basis of all the replies it can be concluded that language matters are indeed a political question in Scotland. It is also clear that the re-convening of the Scottish parliament has not changed the attitudes of policy makers dramatically. In general language issues are not considered to be a constituency matter or an issue of interest to most constituents. In replies from both groups of informants it was stressed that Scots matters above all to a few, very passionate language activists and to people in the cultural sector, but most politicians and a number of the other informants felt either that Scots matters little to the general population or that it should matter more. Some informants in the second group expressed the view that language does matter, but that for many people this was often felt at some subconscious level.

Earlier research on language is familiar to a very small number of MSPs and MEPs. However, there is a clear correlation between attitudes and familiarity with research in both groups. This shows that opinions can change if and when people become aware of the existing information. Gaelic is still considered as more important in terms of support, whereas opinions on Scots are more divided. Mobilising public sympathy rose as one of the key issues for the future of Scots – in this respect some informants in the second group felt that attitudes are a result of the lack of knowledge and thus could be changed, but others stressed that it would be “difficult to change persistent attitudes”.

In the light of the opinions expressed in the survey carried out among non-MSP members and others, the political party which has or would have the biggest role in language policy is the SNP, not only because it regards both languages as very important, but because it also seems to be the party supported by many of the people with an interest in the language. Although some would like to see an even

more clearly expressed policy, some respondents regard the party's positive attitude as very important and sufficient at this stage. It should be mentioned, however, that there were people among the respondents who did not see language as a party political issue and thought that it should not be considered in that way.

I paid attention to some of the key words used in replies in the group of non-MSP members – among the most frequently used words and expressions were 'pay lip service' (used in a few responses) and awareness, self-esteem and confidence. The latter group of words was also to be found in the replies of SNP MSPs, which suggests that in terms of attitudes these two groups are close to each other. One non-MSP respondent pointed out, however, as a somewhat disapproving comment, that all parties are content "to pay lip service to the idea of parity with Gaelic".

There seem to be individual MSPs in all parties who take an interest in language issues and, for example, Kenneth Macintosh, Labour MSP, who is also a member of the Cross Party Group on Gaelic, stated that he wishes "there was clarity for everyone's sake". Undoubtedly, one of the best ways to bring about more clarity would be by establishing through a census question the exact number of Scots speakers. Even if the results were based more on self-perception than on real ability, this would certainly make a difference.

Only a small number of politicians and other informants participated in this survey. However, the survey was successful in collecting information which included opinions of politicians of all political parties and representatives of different parts of Scotland. The inclusion of a second group of informants brought a useful and interesting basis for comparison. Although the results should not be taken as being representative, they can be seen as revealing complex and interesting details of the general political climate regarding languages and language policy.

Towards a more complex and diverse language identity?

Recently, a growing concern in the area of language policies in Europe is the question of the ever-growing role of English. Sometimes English is seen as an expression of cultural imperialism, sometimes as a language, which can give a status of equality in situations where it is a foreign language for both parties. Some new concerns are also expressed. If in the very near future everyone in Europe speaks at least two languages, one of which is English, what would happen to the relationship between national identity and language, what would happen to the English language itself and to monolingual English speakers? It has been suggested that language identity will become increasingly complex and diverse and that much more variation will be acceptable in language use. Could monolingual English speakers become isolated from the more complex linguistic identities, which are emerging, ending up as "prisoners of one language"? (Chesterman 2005, 115–129).

The importance of English in a Scottish and indeed European context was either explicitly or implicitly expressed in the opinions of most politicians. The differences of political views seemed to be reflected in support for either a monolingual or trilingual (or multilingual) society. As Scotland has always been multilingual, it seems only natural to value this view. It was this “diversity of language and origin” that disposed the Scots to association and intercourse with other countries (Scott 1998, 98). In fact, what has defined the Scots through the ages has been to a great extent the diverse nature of its inhabitants and their interaction with other countries and languages.

In the present-day language situation in Europe both the significance of English and the existing perceptions of language identity and distinctiveness are increasingly seen as equally important. If one pursues to protect and develop the Scots language, the best approach is probably the one already employed. The language is perceived as a mark of distinctiveness, although not necessarily in conflict or in contest with other languages, but as something unique and typical for Scotland and, as one MSP put it, “an essential part of the world’s diversity of cultures and ideas”.

List of abbreviations

CPG	Cross Party Group
EBLUL	European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages
ECRML	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
GRO(S)	General Register Office (Scotland)
Lib.Dem.	Liberal Democrats
LIP	Language in Politics – survey
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Member of Scottish Parliament
SLRC	Scots Language Resource Centre
SNP	Scottish National Party
SSE	Scottish Standard English

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Letters: replies to the questionnaire

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Report

The UK authorities' second periodical report on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Comments to the second ECRML report

Bob Fairnie, August 2005
Michael Hance, August 2005
Colin Wilson, August 2005

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¹³ I would like to thank all of them for their assistance and in particular prof. M. Dossena. Special thanks to Michael Hance for his assistance during the whole project.

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Appendix. Questionnaires used in the study

Questionnaire sent to all MSPs (129 seats) and to all Scottish MEPs (7)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently working on a project on Language and Politics in contemporary Scotland. In part the project will consider how the language situation and language policy are affected by the attitudes of policy makers and others. I would like to find out how these attitudes are reflected in support for, or opposition to, measures designed to enhance the status of a particular language or encourage its use. I will be considering this matter in relation to both Scots and Gaelic but I am especially interested in your attitude to Scots. I am interested in the views of different political parties on the Scots and Gaelic languages as well as in your personal view. My report will be for publication.

My key questions are:

1. Would you describe Scotland as largely monolingual, bilingual, trilingual or multi-lingual?
2. What do you consider to be your native language? What other languages do you speak?
3. What languages are used most by people in your constituency/region – English; Scots; Gaelic; mixture of English and Scots; mixture of English and Gaelic; mixture of Gaelic and Scots; other? Please specify*
4. What do you consider to be Scotland's "indigenous" languages?
5. Would it be a good thing for the Scots language or for the Gaelic language to die out? Should the state support Scotland's indigenous languages?
6. What language (Scots, Gaelic, English with a Scottish accent) do you consider to be an expression of Scottish identity?
7. In your opinion how much do language issues matter to the people of Scotland? And to the people of your constituency/region?
8. How important is it for your party and for you personally to have a clear policy on the Scots language?
9. Are you familiar with any scholarship pertaining to the Scots language? If so, what? (for example GRO(S) *A Report on the Scots Language Research*, Edinburgh, 1996; S. Murdoch *Language Politics in Scotland*, Aberdeen, 1996)
10. Are you familiar with your party's official policy on Scots?
11. Would you like to make any other comments on this issue?

I hope that you will be able to assist me by answering these questions. I look forward to receiving your reply. I would much appreciate a reply from you by 10 October at the latest.

Yours Sincerely,
Atina Nihtinen

* In the case of Members of European Parliament (MEPs) this question was altered to include a European angle and the whole country instead of particular region or constituency. My question was: from a European perspective and from the perspective of future developments would it be important that Scotland is monolingual, bilingual, trilingual or multi-lingual?

Questionnaire sent to non-MSP respondents (these were contacted through SLRC)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently working on a project on Language and Politics in contemporary Scotland. In part the project will consider how the language situation and language policy are affected by the attitudes of policy makers and others. I would like to find out how these attitudes are reflected in support for, or opposition to, measures designed to enhance the status of a particular language or encourage its use. I will be considering this matter in relation to both Scots and Gaelic but I am especially interested in your attitude to Scots. My report will be for publication.

My key questions are:

1. Would you describe Scotland as largely monolingual, bilingual, trilingual or multi-lingual?
2. What do you consider to be your native language? What other languages do you speak?
3. What languages are used most by people in your region (In your place of birth? In your place of residence?) – English; Scots; Gaelic; mixture of English and Scots; mixture of English and Gaelic; mixture of Gaelic and Scots; other? Please specify
4. What do you consider to be Scotland's "indigenous" languages?
5. Should the state support Scotland's indigenous languages?
6. Please summarize (in a couple of sentences) how you think Scots is perceived in present-day Scotland (as a language? a dialect? only suitable in colloquial speech? only appropriate to poetry?)
7. And the ways in which Scots should be promoted and encouraged? (as a majority or a minority language, as a cultural or a linguistic issue or both, in traditional or in new areas of use etc.)
8. What language (Scots, Gaelic, English with a Scottish accent, other? please specify) do you consider to be an expression of Scottish identity?
9. In your opinion how much do language issues matter to the people of Scotland? And to the people of your region?
10. What political party do you support? How important is it for you to support a party, which has a clear policy on the Scots language?
11. Are you familiar with any scholarship pertaining to the Scots language? If so, what?
12. Can you summarize your party's official policy on Scots in a few sentences?
13. Would you like to make any other comments on this issue?

I hope that you will be able to assist me by answering these questions. I look forward to receiving your reply. I would much appreciate a reply from you by 20 December at the latest.

Yours Sincerely,
Atina Nihtinen

Katja Ritari

Images of ageing in the early Irish poem *Caillech Bérrí*¹

The Irish poem *Caillech Bérrí*, also known as ‘The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare’, was written in Old Irish possibly around 900.² The narrator of the poem claims to be the old woman of Beare, a peninsula in West Cork in Ireland, lamenting her lost youth and the pains of old age. It is not known, however, whether the author of the poem actually was a woman or a man adopting a female persona. Nevertheless, the poem was included in the volume IV of *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, titled as *Irish Women’s Writing and Traditions*. For clarity’s sake I am here going to refer to the poem’s author as a she, although the question of her gender has not been conclusively solved. Despite the poem’s popularity as one of the best known and most loved poems of early Ireland, the interpretation of its meaning still entails several problems.³

The poem is written in a highly literate style with frequent use of alliteration and repeated words and motifs. It has survived to us with a very unusual transmission history. The poem exists in five manuscripts, four from the 16th century and one from the 17th. It is typical for early Irish texts to survive in much later compilations, but it is quite unusual for an early Irish poetic text to be preserved in multiple copies. All five manuscripts are very close textually, but the stanzas occur in a different order, which distinguishes the two manuscript traditions. The editors have also dismissed certain stanzas as interpolations, but it seems safer to treat the medieval evidence as it stands, with the possible exception of §27, to which I will return later.⁴

Several attempts have been made to interpret the poem from different perspectives ranging from folkloristic to mythological and historical. There is no consensus, however, either on the exact dating, author, or meaning of the poem. One aspect of the poem that has not been discussed in detail, although it is taken as an obvious fact in all the studies, is that the poem’s main topic is the feelings

¹ A version of this paper was given in 20.8.2005 at ‘Aging, Old Age and Death. Passages from Antiquity to Middle Ages II’ –conference, Tampere. The writing of this article has been funded by Academy of Finland project 1211006.

² There exist several editions and translations of the poem. The most widely used currently is Ó hAodha 1989, he also lists the earlier editions in p. 308 and discusses the dating of the poem in p. 310.

³ Many of the ideas in this paper came originally from the participants of a seminar on *Caillech Bérrí* at the Department of Old Irish at University College Cork during term 2002–3. I wish to thank all the participants of the seminar and especially Caitriona Ó Dochartaigh who organized it.

⁴ I am greatly indebted to Harriet Thomsett who let me have a copy of her paper ‘Reassessing the Poem of the Caillech Bérré’ given in the Irish Conference of Medievalists in Kilkenny in June 2005.

connected with being old. The poem is a lament of old age, and thus it is natural to consider it from the viewpoint of what it means to be an old woman in early medieval Ireland. This means taking the literal level of the poem and the feelings expressed in it seriously, instead of using a specific interpretative mode to read some kind of deeper meaning into the words. The problem is that none of these interpretative modes have been able to satisfactorily explain the poem as a whole. I will start, however, by evaluating the different approaches used by scholars in reading this poem and then return to the feelings of old age expressed in it.

The first problem affecting the interpretation of the poem as a whole is caused by the translation of the word *caillech* in the first line of the second stanza where the speaker identifies herself saying *Is mé Caillech Bérré Buí*, ‘I am the *Caillech Bérrí* (or Old Woman of Beare) of Buí’. Buí is the name of Dursey island located right at the end of Beara peninsula.⁵ The word *caillech* is derived from Latin *pallium* meaning ‘veil’ and its primary meaning is ‘veiled one’. However, in Old and Middle Irish it has a range of meanings from ‘old woman’ to ‘nun’ or ‘hag’ (Ní Dhonnchadha 1994–5, 71). Thus it is not clear whether the poem should be seen in a religious context reading *caillech* as a nun or as a purely secular text with possible mythological allusions.

There are few overtly Christian stanzas in the poem, namely stanzas 7, 24, 31 and 33, where either Jesus or God is mentioned. In stanzas 31 and 33 Jesus is cited as *Mac Muire*, ‘son of Mary’. In stanzas 7 and 33 there is a reference to a deposit which is due to be paid back to Christ. The word used for deposit is a legal term, *aithne*, but the image is biblical, from 2. Tim. 1:14 ‘Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.’ The idea of a soul being a deposit from God also occurs in hagiographical writings, including the well-known Latin translation of *Vita Antonii* by Evagrius (20(15)) and *Vita Columbae* of Adomnán (iii.23).⁶ Also stanza 26 includes biblical allusion and a reference to the Christian afterlife alongside with legal terminology. There the reference to the eyes that have been taken in order to secure the ownership of land is an allusion to Matt. 18:9 ‘And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.’⁷ Other Christian allusions in the poem include a reference to a chapel or oratory in stanza 22, and possibly the reference to the

⁵ Buí as a place name is discussed in Ó hAodha (1989, 318). The other approach is to take Buí as a personal name. That is the name of the wife of the ancient Celtic god Lugh and it is also connected with the megalithic monument in Knowth, Co. Meath. See Ó Cathasaigh (1989, 27–38) and MacCana (1968, 92). There is also a variant reading of this line: *Is mé Caillech Bérré boi* ‘...Caillech Bérrí that was to be found in Ní Dhonnchadha (2002, 111).

⁶ The identification of 2. Tim. 1:14 as the source of this idea was also made in Ó hAodha (1989, 321). The association with *Vita Columbae* and *Vita Antonii* was also noted in Carey (1999, 36).

⁷ For a brief discussion of the legal terminology used here see Ó hAodha (1989, 327–328). See also DIL: *diles*. The reference to the biblical passage was also noted in Carey (1999, 36). For the use of legal language in another poem put into the mouth of a woman, *Isucán*, see Clancy (1996, 61–64).

veil, *caille*, over the speaker's head in stanzas 11 and 12, which could mean a nun's veil. References to kings in stanzas 6 and 21 could also possibly be understood as referring to God. This interpretation seems especially plausible in stanza 21, where the reference to a king spreading a green cloak over the hills and thus replacing a coarser one could be taken as meaning the change of seasons from winter to summer.

B.K. Martin has interpreted the poem as representing *de contemptu mundi* – type of literature thus connecting it to themes known from patristic and classical literatures. According to him the temporal kingdom of the world is opposed to the true and eternal kingdom of God in the poem. Thus its main theme would be contempt towards the present world, which is shown to be 'transient, mutable, and false' (Martin 1969, 245–261). In my mind, however, the contrast in the poem is rather between the present and the past of the narrator than between the worldly present and the future kingdom of God. The author is not denying her past or giving a moral lesson on the transient nature of worldly goods, but rather fondly remembering her youth and contrasting it with her miserable state at the present as can clearly be seen from stanzas 2 to 5 and 23. The aspect of Christian afterlife seems to be phrased in the poem by the allusions to the soul as a deposit. The waiting for heaven is expressed especially clearly in stanza 7: 'My body desires to go fiercely, to a dwelling where it is known, when it is timely with the Son of God, he may come judging his deposit.' The theme of afterlife, however, is not present in most of the stanzas, and the author's focus is not directed forward towards it but rather towards the lost past. Thus I cannot see *contemptus mundi*, or any other clearly Christian themes for that matter, as explaining the meaning of the poem as a whole. As Christian themes can be found in some of the stanzas the poem can be said to be a Christian one but not a religious poem as such.

A second approach to the poem includes folkloristic and mythological readings. This approach has been brought about by the fact that there exists in later folklore both in Ireland and Scotland a figure known as *Caillech Bérrí*.⁸ She is an extremely complex figure with a multiplicity of forms and functions and her cluster of roles includes those of a divine ancestress, an epitome of longevity in passing repeatedly through the cycle of youth and age, a sovereignty symbol, and a geotectonic role in landscape formation. As it is not at all clear how this figure relates to the woman with the same name in the poem, scholars have tried to consolidate these two in various ways.

⁸ Many of the folklore traditions pertaining to *Caillech Bérrí* are related in Hull (1927, 225–254). She does not discuss the poem at length, but nevertheless she sees the *Caillech Bérrí* of the poem as a pagan goddess who reappears in later days as a Christian nun. Krappe also discusses the folklore traditions pertaining to *Caillech Bérrí* using comparative material from other Indo-European cultures (1936, 292–302).

Proinsias MacCana sees the poem as a product of a monastic literati who has adopted the persona of *Caillech Bérrí*, the mother-goddess, shaper and guardian of the land, and a consort of kings. According to him the monastic author avails himself of the semantic ambiguity of the word *caillech* inventing the fiction that the legendary figure had taken a nun's veil at the end of her days. In MacCana's view the real subject of the poem is 'the deep incompatibility between Christianity and the world of pagan belief and the inevitable outcome of their conflict in the conquest and impoverishment of the latter' (1968, 92–93).

Tomás Ó Cathasaigh concludes that the woman's apparent promiscuity in the poem is of the political kind and thus it reflects the *caillech*'s role as a goddess of sovereignty. According to him 'she is a *caillech* who is destined to die because she will never again be transformed into a beautiful young woman.' Ó Cathasaigh adds that the poem clearly has a Christian dimension in addition to the mythico-political one, but does not explicate the relationship between the two further (1989, 36–37).

Gearóid Ó Cruaíoch sees the ideological ambiguities between *Caillech Bérrí* as the lingering representation of a profane, native eternity and as the Christian nun finally embracing the prospect of the heavenly eternity as the key to understanding the poem. He states that it is clear that the Old Woman of Beare has been the consort of kings and thus the embodiment of the sovereignty of the kingdom as can be seen from stanzas 8 and 23.⁹ This tradition forms the literate, learned level of traditions pertaining to *Caillech Bérrí*. According to Ó Cruaíoch there is also a separate popular and unlearned level of traditions which contains a range of manifestations of an ancient divine with general characteristics of the Old European *magna mater*. At the level of popular tradition the connotations of *Caillech Bérrí* are primarily those of a wilderness figure which has associations with the storms of winter, the storm clouds, the winter sea, and other manifestations of wild nature.¹⁰

Also Katharine Simms sees *Caillech Bérrí* as the embodiment of the sovereignty principle. According to her the message of the poem is that her association with kings is past and she has now uneasily been recruited into the Church. She finds a historical context for the poem in a revolt between 793 and 803 when the Corcu Duibne, the people with whom *Caillech Bérrí* is associated with in a prose introduction of the poem, rose against their overlords, the Eoganacht. Therefore the poem would call to mind the glories of a decayed local sovereignty that has been eclipsed by another dynasty.¹¹

⁹ Also Kim McCone touches upon *Caillech Bérrí* in his discussion of the sovereignty principle; albeit he finds for it biblical models in Isaiah 54 and Lamentations 1.1. in addition to the native Irish tradition (1990, 154).

¹⁰ Ó Cruaíoch (1988, 153–178). See also Ó Cruaíoch (1994, 147–162).

¹¹ Simms (1988, 400–411). The dynastic connections have also been discussed in Ó Coileáin (1974, 108–110).

John Carey connects the poem with Irish flood legends where a land that is now under water is recalled by a survivor. He sees a similar kind of temporal opposition between the Old Woman's youth spent in the plain and her present by the sea as there exists in the legends between what used to be a plain and now is covered with water. He finds evidence for the association of the Old Woman of Beare with the Gaelic flood-legends in the later folklore where her age is expressed by statements that she has witnessed momentous transformations of the landscape, including the replacement of the land by sea. According to Carey the poet has taken the Old Woman as her persona but changed the perspective by making her into a Christian who looks forward to death instead of cyclical renewal as in nature. In Carey's view the poem touches on the Christian doctrine of the resurrection, the expectation of a future realm of blessed ever-living ones, which is contrasted with the lost antediluvian kingdoms and the otherworld hidden under water (1999, 30–37).

The characteristic of *Caillech Bérrí* that clearly features both in the poem and the folklore traditions is her extreme old age. It is her longevity that explains why she would be the plausible voice for a poem about the pains of old age. Her association with longevity is clearly expressed in a proverb which states that the longest-lived creatures are the yew tree, the eagle, and the *Caillech Bérrí*. In the Irish legends her longevity, however, is finite with a beginning and an end (Ó Cruaíoch 1994, 156–158).

Some traditions about her must have existed prior to the poem for the audience to be able to recognise her name right away and to see the connection between her figure and the message of the poem. She is mentioned as one of the famous figures in Armagh in the 12th century tale *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne*, but we do not have any earlier evidence for traditions pertaining to her.¹² Therefore the poem gives the earliest evidence for her existence and it has to serve as our primary evidence for the early traditions of *Caillech Bérrí*.

The later folklore can give us clues that help in interpreting the much earlier poem, but there is a danger of circular argumentation when the poem is interpreted in the light of the later tradition resulting in scholars superimposing their own ideas based on much later evidence on the early material. Therefore I would suggest taking the poem as our starting point and trying to read it as it is instead of starting with a preconceived idea of its meaning.

Usually *Caillech Bérrí* is interpreted as a supernatural character in one way or another, but is there anything in the poem itself that would require this mode of interpretation? In my mind *Caillech Bérrí*'s supernatural character is far from clear. For example stanza 8, which has been used as the primary evidence for the sovereignty theory, does not necessitate any kind of supernatural meaning but can be taken as referring to her youth in the royal court. The same can also be said of

¹² Carney has even tentatively suggested that the author of the poem is the *Caillech Bérrí* of *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne* (1970, 237).

stanza 23. I do not see any evidence either to support the view that she has led an unnaturally long life and experienced cycles of renewal finally coming to the end of her time in the poem. This theory is supported only by the prose introduction, where it is stated that she passed into seven periods of youth outlasting in the process seven husbands in age and becoming the progenitor of several peoples. The prose introduction, however, cannot be taken as part of the original poem since it is found only in one of the manuscripts.¹³ The poem itself contrasts the cyclical time of nature and the linear time of man without giving any clues that the Old Woman would have previously experienced renewal herself. Thus there is no evidence in the poem that she would be like the sovereignty figures that are renewed from hideous old hags into beautiful young maids with the coming of a new king. The Old Woman of the poem is rather stating the fact that a man's time is finite unlike nature's where the decay of winter is followed by renewal in spring as can be seen from stanza 13 where a reference is made to the crops yellowing at the plain of Femen, and stanza 19 where the ages of man are paralleled with the seasons of nature.¹⁴ As there is nothing necessitating a supernatural reading of the poem I would suggest that perhaps we should read it as it is as a lament of an old woman. I am not denying the fact that *Caillech Bérrí* as a folkloristic and mythological figure has supernatural dimensions, but rather suggesting that the poem can be read in many ways and has several layers of meaning, including the genuine feelings of an old person.

When we look at the sentiments connected with ageing expressed in the poem we find them to be very human and very universal. The physical symptoms of age in the poem include skin turning yellow, thinness, bony and thin arms, hair being sparse and grey, need to wear clothing even in the sun, grey hair growing through the skin, and loss of eye-sight. Already this list of physical symptoms should alert us to the fact that we are dealing with the genuine feelings of an old person, although there may be a mythological dimension to the poem as well.

The poet is using some repeated terms and images to express ageing throughout the poem. The first of these can be found already in the first stanza, where the poet is watching the sea ebbing away and paralleling the movement of the sea with her life which she feels to be similarly running out. The image of ebb is repeated towards the end of the poem in stanzas 28 and 29 where it is paired with the floodtide. These stanzas can be grouped together with stanzas 27 and 30 that all feature the image of flooding. Stanza 27 is commonly taken as an interpolation since it also appears in the Irish place name lore, *dindshenchas*, and in *Acallam na Senórach* from 12th century (Ó hAodha 1989, 328). It would appear to have been incorporated into the poem from an external pre-existing source because of its first line which reads *Tri*

¹³ The prose introduction is found in Dublin, Trinity College, MS H.3.18. There is also a shorter version of it in the Book of Lecan. The introduction is edited and translated with some discussion in Ó hAodha (1989, 309–310). On the introduction see also Carney (1970, 236–237).

¹⁴ The poetic images used here are discussed in Martin (1969, 250–257).

thuile, ‘Three floods’, fitting it well together with the three following stanzas which all start with the words *Tonn tuili*, ‘Wave of flooding’. The poet returns to the image of the sea right at the end of the poem in stanzas 32 to 35. Stanza 34 explicitly states the connection between the sea-images and ageing, as well as between the cyclical time of nature and the linear time of man, when the poet says: ‘Happy the island of the great sea, the flooding comes to it after its ebb, as for me, I do not expect to come to me, the flood after the ebb.’

Another recurring motif in the poem is the image of clothing that is in some cases used as a metaphor for the body. In stanza 2 the speaker says that she used to wear an ever-new tunic, but now her body is so thin that she cannot wear out even a threadbare garment. The words for wearing clothing are *do-meil* in line 2 and *meilid* in line 4 of the stanza. These words are repeated throughout the poem both in the meanings of wearing clothing and spending time.¹⁵ The verb *meilid* also has the meaning of grinding and crushing in the *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (DIL). This range of meanings and the repeated use of these words bring into mind the idea of time being a mill that crushes everybody eventually. Similar sentiments are also expressed in stanza 1 where the poet says that old age devours her body joyfully. In stanzas 11 and 12 the Old Woman says that there is a poor white veil over her head: an image which is usually taken to refer to a nun’s veil. A plausible context for this would be a woman who has led a secular life and joined a monastery only at old age.¹⁶ This idea is supported by stanza 22 where her previous life feasting in brightly lit halls is contrasted with her present in the darkness of a chapel. In stanza 13 she says that she has worn out her old covering, which can be taken as a metaphor for her skin. In stanza 18 she states the need to wear a cloak even in the sun, and in stanza 21 cloaks are used as a metaphor for grass covering the plains. In stanza 25 a cloak is again used as a surrogate for the body, when the poet states that she sees on her mantle spots of age and compares her skin with the bark of an old tree. There is a similar use of a cloak also in stanza 20: ‘First I consumed my youth, I am glad that I so decided, although my leap over the wall was small, the cloak would still not be new.’ Here she states that even if she had spent her youth differently, her body would still not be young. Thus she is not regretting anything she did, but accepting the fact that there is time for everything and that age comes to everybody eventually. Similar sentiments are also expressed in stanza 12 where she states that her present state is not bad with her because once things were differently and stanza 19 where she says that youth is eventually followed by old age as surely as summer is followed by autumn and winter.

The author is not quite so resigned in all the stanzas, however, but her feelings seem to alternate between acceptance and miserable self-pity. In stanzas 10 and 11

¹⁵ For a brief discussion of the use of these verbs in the poem see Ó hAodha (1989, 318–319).

¹⁶ Women who joined monastery later in life are discussed with a reference to *Caillech Bérrí* in Harrington (2002, 158–163).

for example she is comparing her state with that of young girls and stating that grief and a poor veil across her hair are fitting for her since she is a miserable old woman. There is a sense of nostalgia about the past when she was feasting with kings as in stanzas 8, 9, and 23, as opposed to her present when she is drinking whey-water with old women instead of mead and wine. Nostalgia is also present in stanzas 3, 4, and 5, where she acts as a *laudatrix temporis acti*, contrasting the good old days when people were generous and did not boast, with the present time when people are boasting and love riches.

The linear timeline of the poem is completed by the glimpses of the resurrection offered by stanzas 7 and 26. Here we get the Christian dimension to the poem's time frame. Although the miserable Old Woman has nothing more to expect from her earthly existence, as stated in stanzas 11 and 15, she still has a reward awaiting her in the Christian heaven of the Son of Mary.

This is a very complex poem with different layers of meaning and some metaphors and references that do not readily open to a modern reader. At the level of emotions, however, it is a surprisingly modern and universal poem that can be appreciated by audiences of all times. This must have been the case also in the 16th and 17th centuries when it was copied into the manuscripts for it to have survived for us in as many copies as it did. This emotional identification also explains why it is such a popular poem in modern anthologies. Ageing is expressed in the poem through the image of the body, which makes it immediately universal since the bodily and mortal condition of man is a universal state and thus it is possible for all men to identify with the poet's alienation from her body and her ambivalent feelings towards ageing and approaching death.

If we take the poem as a starting point without any preconceived idea of its meaning based on the later evidence of folklore and look at it as a whole instead of concentrating on certain stanzas that are open to a mythological interpretation, it can be read simply as a lament of an old woman. It seems that the reason the author has adopted the persona of *Caillech Bérrí* is her connection with longevity, but she has used the persona to convey her genuine feelings of ageing. The sentiments portrayed in the poem are mixed. She is both lamenting her lost youth and accepting the fact that age comes eventually to everybody. Furthermore her vision is directed at the same time longingly back towards her youth and almost joyously forward towards the Christian hereafter. What connects the vision of the past and the future is the feeling of liberation, being free of the ailing and ageing body in which she is currently trapped. It is the mixed feelings in the poem that make it so readily accessible to modern readers at an emotional level and explain its allure, although we may not be able to understand the meaning of every single image in it.¹⁷

¹⁷ Martin repeats the old image of the passionate and imaginative Celts in his assessment of the literary appeal of the poem: 'It is at least partly in the Irish literary genius for the dramatic, the concrete, and the passionate that the success of the poem lies' (1969, 255).

There has been some consideration of the author's gender. Sometimes it has been suggested that the author is a male who has adopted a female persona,¹⁸ while some scholars have taken the author to be a woman.¹⁹ The strongest argument supporting the suggestion that the author would be a male is obviously the fact that men were more likely to write, although there is some evidence for the existence of female poets in early medieval Ireland.²⁰ I am not going to speculate here on how likely it would be for a female poet to work in early medieval Ireland and for her poem to survive. My modest contribution to the discussion is just to consider if there are any internal grounds in the poem for determining the gender of the author. The poem is written from the point of view of a woman but the gender aspect is not overtly pronounced in it. The metaphor of clothing and the image of the ageing body are not gender specific and the feelings expressed in it seem to be universal. I cannot find in the poem anything that would be applicable only to the female gender since men could also join the monastery in old age after spending their youth in the court. Therefore we can ask why a male author would adopt a female persona if he was going to write a poem about his own feelings of ageing. If the author's message concerns both sexes equally and not specifically women, why would a male author choose a female persona? The only obvious reason for this would be the author's desire to use the persona of *Caillech Bérrí* to convey his message. However, if we accept that the poem concerns genuine feelings connected with ageing, it seems more likely that the author is writing from her own point of view and thus from the point of view of her own gender.²¹

I will finish with the words of the poet that seem to me to sum up the sentiments of the poem in a beautiful way. This is stanza 19: 'Summer of youth in which we were, I have spent with its autumn, winter of age drowns everybody, its harvest has come to me.'

¹⁸ See for example MacCana (1968, 92); Carney (1970, 236). Carney, however, presents a contradictory opinion in (1967, xxiv–xxvi).

¹⁹ See for example Clancy (1996, 46–47, 64–67) and Ni Dhonnchadha (2002, 111).

²⁰ The prose introduction of the poem names the author as a woman called *Dígde*. There are also three other famous old women or nuns of her family named, two of which we know from other sources to have been poets. For this and other evidence of female poets working in early medieval Ireland, see Clancy (1996, 43–72).

²¹ Clancy has come to the same conclusion in his assessment of the poem stating that 'it is hard to avoid the sense of a person behind the persona in this poem: it seems too heartfelt, too much an internalized meditation. Once one has discarded the legendary figure from the persona in the poem, it is difficult to see why a man would choose this particular character...' (1996, 64–65).

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*Caillech Bérrí**

1

Aithbe damsá bés mara;
sentu fom-dera croan;
toirsi oca ce do-gnéo,
sona do-táet a loan.

Ebb to me in the manner of the sea
old age causes me to be yellow
although I may grieve at it
it comes to its food joyfully

2

Is mé Caillech Bérré Bui;
do-meilinn léne mbithnuí;
indíu táthum dom shémi
ná melainn cid athléni.

I am the *Caillech Bérrí* beside Dursey
I used to wear an ever-new tunic
today I have for my thinness
that I may not wear out even a worn-out garment

3

It moíni
charthar lib, nidat doíni;
ind inbaid i mmarsamar
batar doíni carsamar.

It is riches
that are loved by you, not men
the time when we lived
it was people we loved

4

Batar inmaini doíni
ata maíge mad-ríadam;
ba maith no meilmis leo,
ba bec no moítis íaram.

They were excellent people
in whose fields we ride happily
it was a good time we spent with them
it was little they boasted afterwards

5

Indíu trá cain-timgarat,
ocus ní mór nond-oídet,
cíasu bec do-n-idnaiget,
is mór a mét no-moídet.

Today indeed, well they claim
and it is not great what they grant us
although it is little they bestow
its magnitude is great that they boast of

6

Carpait lúaith
ocus eich do-beirtis búaid,
ro boí, denus, tuile díb:
bennacht ar ríge roda-úaid.

Swift chariots
and horses that used to bring victory
for a while it was abundance to them
a blessing upon king who granted it

7

Tocair mo chorp co n-aichri
dochum adba diar aichni;
tan bas mithig la Mac nDé
do-té do breith a aithni.

My body desires to go fiercely
to a dwelling where it is known
when it is timely with the Son of God
he may come judging his deposit

8

Ot é cnámacha cáela,
ó do-éctar mo láma –
ba hinmainiu, tan, gnítis:
bítis im ríge ána.

And they bony, thin
when my arms are seen
it was dearer what they used to do
they used to be around glorious kings

* This edition is that of Donncha Ó hAodha in *Sages, saints and storytellers: Celtic studies in honour of professor James Carney* (Eds. D. Ó Corráin, L. Breathnach & K. McCone. Maynooth: An Sagart 1989, 308–331). It is reprinted here by his kind permission. The translation is based on a collective effort made during a seminar on *Caillech Bérrí* at the Department of Old Irish at University College Cork during term 2002–3.

9

Ó do-éctar mo láma
ot é cnámacha cáela,
nidat fiú turcbáil, taccu,
súas tarna maccu cáema.

When my arms are seen
and they bony, thin
they are not worth lifting indeed
up over the beloved boys

10

It fáilti na hingena
ó thic dóib co Beltaine;
is deithbiriu damsá brón:
sech am tróg, am sentaine.

The girls are joyful
when it comes to them to Beltaine
sorrow is more fitting for me
moreover, I am miserable, I am an old woman

11

Ní feraim cobra milis;
ní marbtar muilt im banais;
is bec, is liath mo thrilis,
ní liách drochcaille tarais.

I do not pour our sweet speech
rams are not killed for my wedding
it is sparse, my hair is grey
a poor veil over it is no cause for sorrow

12

Ní holc lim
ce beth caille finn form chinn;
boí mór meither cech datha
form chinn ic ól daglatha.

It is not bad with me
although there may be a white veil on my head
there was a great many-coloured covering
on my head at drinking good ale

13

Nim-geib format fri nach sen
inge nammá fri Femen;
meisse, ro melt forbuid sin,
buide beus barr Femen.

I am not envious of anything old
except only of Femen
me, I have worn out an old covering
still yellow is the hair of Femen

14

Lia na Ríg i Femun,
Cathair Rónán i mBregun:
cían ó ro-síachtsat sína
a llecne, na senchrína.

The stone of the kings in Femen
dwelling of Rónán in Bregon
a long time since storms have reached
their cheeks (that are not) old and weathered

15

Is labar tonn mara máir,
ros-gab in gaim comgabáil;
fer muid, mac moga, indíu
ní frescim do chéilidiu.

The wave of the great sea is noisy
the winter-storm has begun raising it
a man of office, a son of a slave, today
I do not expect to visit

16

Is éol dam a ndo-gniat,
rait ocus do-rraat;
curchasa Átha Alma,
is fúar in adba i faat.

It is known to me what they do
they row and they row back
the reeds of the ford of Alma
the dwelling in which they sleep is cold

17

Is mó láu
nát muir n-óited ima-ráu;

testa mór mbliadnae dom cruth,
dáig fo-rromled mo chétluth.

It is more than a day
that it is not the sea of youth on which I row
around
many years of my beauty are lacking
because that my wantonness is used up

18

Is mó dé
damsa indíu, ce bé-de;
gaibthium étach cid fri gréin,
do-fil áes dam, at-gén féin.

It is more than a day
for me today, however it may be
clothing upholds me even if it is under sun
age is coming to me, I myself know it

19

Sam oítid i rrabamar
do-melt cona fhogamur;
gaim aís báides cech duine,
domm-ánic a fhochmuine.

Summer of youth in which we were
I have spent with its autumn
winter of age drowns everybody
its harvest has come to me

20

Ro milt m'oítid ar thuus,
is buide lem ro-ngleus;
cid bec mo léim dar duae,
níba nuae in brat beus.

First I consumed my youth
I am glad that I so decided
although my leap over the wall was small
the cloak would still not be new

21

Is álainn in brat úaine
ro scar mo Rí tar Drummain;
is saer in Fer rod-lúaidi,
do-rat loí fair iar lummain.

The green cloak is splendid
that my king had spread out over Drummain
it is a craftsman the man who fulfilled it
he has put a woollen cloak on it after a coarse one

22

Aminecán morúar dam
- cech dercoin is erchraide -
íar feis fri condlib sorchaib
bith i ndorchaib derrthaige.

Woe indeed to me
all acorns are perishable
after feasting against bright candles
being in the darkness of a chapel

23

Rom-boí denus la ríga
ic ól meda is fína;
indíu íbim medcuisce
itir sentanaib crína.

I have had a time with kings
at drinking mead and wine
today I drink whey-water
among withered old women

24

Robat mo chuirn coidin midc,
ropo toil Dé cecham-theirp;
ocot guide-si, a Dé bí,
do-rata cró clí fri feirg.

May my ale cups be cups of whey
may it be the will of God, whatever hinders me
praying to you, O living God
may it give a body wound against anger

25

At-chíu form brat brodrad n-aís;
ro gab mo chíall mo thogaís;
líath a finn ásas trim thuinn,
is samlaíd crotball senchroinn.

I see on my cloak stains of age
my sense has begun to deceive me
grey is the hair which grows through my skin
the bark of an old tree is thus

26

Rucad úaim-se mo shúil des
dá reic ar thír mbithdíles;
ocus rucad int shúil chlé
do fhormach a fhoirdíle.

My right eye has been taken from me
for its selling for land to be owned perpetually
and the left eye has been taken
to increase its complete ownership

27

Tri thuile
tascnat dún Arda Ruide:
tuile n-ooch, tuile n-ech,
tuile mílchon mac Luigdech.

Three floods
approach the fort of Ard Ruide
a flood of warriors, a flood of horses
a flood of hounds of the sons of Lugaid

28

Tonn tuili
ocus ind í aithbí áin:
a tabair tonn tuili dait
beirid tonn aithbí as do lám.

Wave of flooding
and that of the swift ebb
that which the flood-tide brings to you
the ebb-tide carries out of your hand

29

Tonn tuili
ocus ind aile aithbí:
dom-áncatarsa uili
conda éolach a n-aichni.

Wave of flooding
and the other ebb
all have come to me
so that I know how to recognize them

30

Tonn tuili,
nicos-toir socht mo chuili;
cid mór mo dám fo-déine,
fo-cres lám forru uili.

Wave of flooding
so that it will not reach the silence of my pantry
although my own retinue was great
a hand was put on them all

31

Ma rro-feissed Mac Muire
co mbeth fo chlí mo chuile:

cinco ndernus gart chena,
ní érbart 'nac' fri duine.

If the Son of Mary had known
that he would be under the house-post of my
pantry
although I have not done hospitality without it
I have not said 'no' to anyone

32

Tróg n-uile
dairib dúilib, do duine,
ná déccas a n-aithbesi
feb ro-déccas a tuile.

Everything miserable
(compared to) ignoble creatures for man
that this ebb was not seen
as the flood had been seen

33

Mo thuile,
is maith con-roíter m'aithne;
ro-sháer ísu Mac Muire
conám toirsech co aithbe.

My flood-tide
it is well that it has guarded my deposit
Jesus, son of Mary has delivered it
so that I am not sorrowful until the ebb

34

Céin-mair ailén mara máir,
dos-n-ic tuile íarna tráig;
is mé, ní frescu dom-í
tuile tar éisi aithbí.

Happy the island of the great sea
the flooding comes to it after its ebb
as for me, I do not expect to come to me
the flood after the ebb

35

Is súaill mennatán indiu
ara tabrainnse aithgne;
a n-í ro boí for tuile
atá uile for aithbe.

There is hardly a dwelling today
that I would recognize
that which was in flooding
is all in ebb

Tom Sjöblom

The Great Mother

The Cult of the Bear in Celtic Traditions¹

Introduction

In his classic discussion of totemism, the famous French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss declared that animals are “good to think” because their perceptible reality permits the embodiment of ideas and relations conceived by speculative thought to be attached to them (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 89). One area where our cognitive affinity with animals is especially salient is in religious symbolism. Animals have, from the earliest time to the present, had a major presence in religious beliefs, practices and images. Religious traditions engage with animals at multiple levels but one of the more prominent is to use representations of animals as symbolic tools in communicating fundamental insights (Waldau 2005, 355–356). As Stanley Walens declares:

Wherever they appear, animal symbols are used to convey the deepest and most abstruse dimensions of human existence. They are symbols of core values and categories, representations of the most fundamental ideas and images of a culture. As core symbols, they are multivalent, complex, antimonic, used simultaneously to capture and display many different image and meanings at many different levels. As core symbols, they also serve to link other domains of symbolic discourse, creating juxtapositions and contrasts of images from which people derive meaning and from which they generate narrative forms. The natural realm of animals is an important part of the way in which people project their knowledge and experience through symbolic discourse (Walens 1987, 291).

The Celtic traditions of Iron Age Western Europe present a typical case of the importance of animals in the communication of religious ideals. Visual representations of animals are much more frequent in Celtic traditions than those of humans, for example, and animals also played an important role both as sacrifices in rituals and narrative actors in Celtic stories (See Green 1989; Maier 1997, 16). Because of this pervasive role played by animals in Celtic symbolism, it has been suggested that their religious beliefs were fundamentally animistic and that they believed in the sanctity of the natural environment in all its manifestations (Green

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1989, 131). However, we should be careful in making claims like this, because the symbolic use of animals can be explained simply as a matter of cognitive naturalism. Human cognition is built so that when we deal with metaphysical or abstract information, our minds anchor this information with mundane images hijacked from our everyday environments (See e.g. Kosslyn 1994; Barsalou 1999, 577–660). The Iron Age Celts lived in a society based on herding and hunting, so animals would have worked as obvious anchors for dealing with religious and other metaphysical data present in the traditional lore.

Indeed, a sizeable proportion of Celtic animal symbolism deals with domesticated animals. Dogs, for example, are frequently depicted in Celtic art, and young warriors, functioning as the guardians of the tribal lands, are frequently equated with dogs in the early Irish narratives. The horse was the most crucial animal for the Celtic way of life. It was associated especially with those of high rank and functioned therefore as a symbol for the warrior class and of prestige. Bulls and cows also symbolized prestige and wealth, as they functioned as the basic unit of value in Celtic societies (see Green 1989, 144–151; Kelly 1997, 27–101).

Of the wild animals, those preferred in symbolic presentation were the big game animals, like stags and boars, but also birds and snakes were used. The bear, which in this case is the ordinary brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), was also among the hunted animals, and it was admired because of its strength and ferocity. However, although hints of bear-symbolism emerge here and there in Celtic mythology, actual bear-imagery is surprisingly rare. One reason for this is that in Ireland, where our main textual evidence comes from, the bear had been hunted out already during the Neolithic, or the early Bronze Age, so the Celtic tribes living there had no direct experience of bears. Nonetheless, even the Irish sources show a good deal of acquaintance with the bear and at least among the Continental Celts it also acquired a clear mythical importance (see Green 1987, 134; Kelly 1997, 190; Maier 1997, 32).

Searching for the Celtic bear

There are two native words for bear in Celtic languages. The older one of these is **artos*. The use of this word seems to go far back into the Common Indo-European times and closely related forms are found from other Indo-European languages. The second word for bear is **matus*. This word is derived from the root **matu-* meaning “good” and can be translated as “the good one”.² Thus, it appears to be an eponym that the Celts used of the bear, maybe because it was on some occasions a taboo to call the bear by its real name. This interpretation would at least be in line

² The asterisk before the words denote that they are modern scholarly constructions – a kind of Common Celtic idealizations based on the variety of bear-words in the known Celtic languages. For example, the words used for bears in Irish and Welsh are *art(h)* and *mat(h)*, while in Breton the word is *arzh* (See Delamarre 2003, 36).

with what we know of the hunting practices of such North European traditions as the Germans, Balts, Finns, and the Slavs (see Delamarre 2003, 55–56; 221).

The importance of bear-symbolism in Celtic traditions has frequently been mentioned by earlier authors but the actual essence of this symbolism has seldom been explored. One reason for this is that the largest body of evidence related to bear-symbolism comes from data on the basis of which it is hard to make very far-reaching observations. For example, representations of bears are found on Gaulish coins (MacKillop 1998, 32). We do know that **artos* and **matus* were among the complementary metaphors used in the Celtic traditions of warriors. The bears on coins could thus refer to the strength and warrior identity of the ruler distributing the coins. However, the same words were frequently used also as roots for many Celtic personal names (e.g. *Art*, *Artán*, *Artacán*, *Artgal*, *Artrí*, *Math*, *Mathgemain* and *Mathgen* or *Matugenus*) and most likely the bear-representations could simply refer to and identify a ruler who had this type of a name (See DIL sv. *art*; sv. *math*; Maier 1967, 32).

Indeed, because of this connection between bears and warriors, it is from the nomenclature where we find the strongest evidence for the importance of the bear in Celtic traditions. While bear coins and bear names in themselves do not as such allow us to make any further assumptions of any religious aspects of bear symbolism, it is possible to suggest that bears functioned – or at least had functioned – as totemic ancestor animals for at least some Celtic tribes. The existence of totemism in Celtic traditions is a debated issue and, if it ever existed, the exact nature and importance of it for the Celtic tribal societies remains an open issue (See MacSuibhne 1961; Maier 1997, 270). However, allusions to some kind of beliefs that a person or his kin, or tribe, is associated with an animal can be found, for example, in the early Irish literature dealing with taboos. The best known example comes from a medieval tale called *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (TBDD), where Conaíre Mór, one of the prototypical mythical rulers of Ireland, is forbidden through a taboo to hunt birds, because he is related to them both from his father's and his mother's side (TBDD §§ 7, 13, 16; Sjöblom 2000, 156–179).

As far as I am aware, we do not have similar types of stories about bears in the Celtic sources, but we do know that in many traditions names are often thought to be linked with the very essence of its bearer and, in such traditions, a man and his namesake had a close connection often highlighted by taboos (Holden 2000, 187–190). If we take, for example, the above mentioned Matugenus, this name means “A descendant of a bear”. It invokes the idea that the totem animal of this particular man would have been a bear (Maier 1997, 32). Moreover, in addition to Conaíre Mór, we have in the early Irish tradition another famous ruler as well – indeed the most famous of them all – whose name is Cormac mac Airt. Cormac is the central figure in a whole cycle of tales and anecdotes, all written down in the early medieval period. He is the first king to have occupied Tara, the hill that became the centre of the cult of sacred kingship in Ireland, and he was described as the wisest

man living (See Ó Cathasaigh 1977; Dillon 1994, 15–29). My present concern with Cormac is his name, or more specifically his patronymic dedication. Cormac mac Airt can be translated as “Cormac son of a bear”. Connected with evidence from personal names like Matugenus and the evidence provided by TBDD, this patronymic dedication can be taken to allude to some kind of totemistic belief. If Conaire was a descendant of birds and his reign was described as a bird-reign (TBDD §16), then Cormac could be descended from bears and his reign might be described as a bear-reign.

It would still be quite adventurous to suggest that some kind of bear-cult existed among the Celts on the basis of this alone. After all, both Cormac and Conaire are fictional characters and it is possible, maybe even likely, that the name of Conaire’s father was chosen just because of the qualities that bear-derived names alluded to in Celtic traditions. However, another group of nomenclature connected with bears is place-names. From France we can find such places as *Artobriga* and *Artodunum* (today Arthun), both having the meaning “a fort of the bear”, and *Andematunnum* (Langres) meaning “the fortress of the great bear” (D’Arbois de Jubainville 1905, 196–199). While such place-names could simply refer to a king or warrior responsible for the construction of the fort in question, we do know that Celts had a tradition of naming fortresses with a reference to the local deity. Indeed, this is understandable, because many of the tribal centers were also temples and cult-places for the local deities (Brunaux 1988, 5–7). The most famous case for such divine fortresses is the common place-name *Lug(u)dunum* (e.g. Lyon), which is usually adduced as evidence for the cult of the famous Celtic god Lugus (See Maier 1997, s.v. *Lugus*).

Nomenclature alone would leave us with very little else than scholarly guesswork in our hunt for the Celtic bear-cult. Fortunately, we do not have to rely on names alone. We can also use the evidence from iconography. Bear representations are found on many Celtic statuettes. For example, a series of little jet bears have been found from Malton, which is situated north-east from York in Britain (Ross 1967, 435). It appears that humans had been buried with them and they have been interpreted by Miranda Green as being some kinds of amulets (Green 1986, 184). A similar finding has been made in Armagh in present-day Northern Ireland. Here stone animals, including two bears, were recovered during the rebuilding of the protestant Cathedral of Armagh in 1840. Under the Cathedral was a pre-Christian Iron Age burial ground and the statues were clearly connected with these burials. Many more animals were found than what survives today, but it is possible that more than two of the original score represented bears (Ross 1967, 435). This find suggests that images of bears, together with images of other animals, were used as some kind of votives for gods or ancestors in burial rituals. It might even suggest that individuals of a certain totemic affinity were buried with an idol marking his or her totemic relationship. Such idols could be thought to function as guides for the deceased on their journey to the other world.

Bear Gods and Bear Goddesses

Nevertheless, the strongest evidence for a bear-cult existing in Celtic traditions is found when we turn to the gods of the Celts. The Celtic world can be described as a network of tribal societies who shared a common cultural background (Moscati *et alii*. 1991; Green 1995). They did not have same religious beliefs or same divinities in all parts of the network, but following the wording of Venceslas Kruta, they can be said to draw their religious beliefs and practices from the same mythical pool (Kruta 1991, 499). The Celtic gods were usually local divinities, attached to certain geographical areas or natural features in the landscape. The first thing that strikes a present-day observer is thus the multiplicity of the names of gods that modern scholars have been able to establish among the Celts. Among the Continental Celts alone, 374 different names have been found. However, as Celts had the habit of calling their gods with complementary titles suitable for the immediate concerns of the worshipper, it is possible that at least some of the different divine names occurring in inscriptions and dedications refer actually to the same god. Moreover, although we have nearly four hundred names of gods, over three hundred of them occur only once (Sjoestedt 1994, 14–15). The actual information concerning the nature of the gods and their cults is, therefore, very limited.

Gods with bear names appear to be both male and female. Thus, we have from Beaucaumont in modern day France a male patron of bears known as Artaios. As he is equated in the dedication with the Roman god Mercury, he might have been a god of money-making and plenty (Green 1989, 139; McKillop 1998, 290). Unfortunately, besides this one dedication we do not know anything more about this Gaulish bear-god. A little bit more can be said about a bear-god called Matunos, worshipped among the British Celts at Risingham, north of Hadrian's Wall. Here a whole shrine seems to have been dedicated to the worship of the Bear (Ross 1967, 435), and a second altar erected for Matunos has been identified at High Rochester. The name of this divinity may be derived from the proto-Celtic **Matu-on-os* meaning a "male ursine spirit".³ Again, this could be interpreted as referring to Matunos as an ancestral spirit or tribal totem.

This worship of the ursine spirit in the North of Britain also has some interesting implications for the much later tradition of King Arthur. Most of the modern scholars today agree that there has never been a historical king named Arthur. Indeed, in the earliest references to Arthur he was not described as a king, but as a military leader, and even these early references imply that Arthur was a generic name under which memories about old heroes and legendary battles were recollected in order to make them survive in the oral memory of the British Celts (See e.g. Bromwich, Jarman & Roberts 1991; Padel 2000; Snyder 2000; Higham 2002). While most Arthurian

³ More information about Matunos is available from the internet encyclopaedia Wikipedia. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matunos>.

scholars today dispute the Celtic origins of Arthur – and I myself belong to these skeptics – a bear-cult in Britain might explain why the name Arthur, whatever its origins, was selected for this generic hero. Arthur's name, of course, can be derived from *arth*, the Welsh word for bear and the ending (*g)wr* (hero), making him the “Bear Hero” (McKillop 1998, 23). Indeed, at least in one 12th century poem called the *Dialogue of Arthur and the eagle*, this British hero is characterized, among other things, as “bear of the host” (*arth llu*) (Sims-Williams 1991, 58). Before drawing too strong conclusions from this, we should keep in mind that the Arthurian tradition is a young tradition that seems to have developed during the early Christian period, and it is to the early Christian traditions that most of its symbolism and the spirit of the tales can be derived⁴

There are more representations connecting the Bear with a goddess than with a god. For example, seven votive inscriptions to the goddess Andarta (“the Great Bear”) have been found from in or around the town of Die, in Southern France (Maier 1997, 16). Again, not that much is known of this goddess, but she appears to have been the patron goddess of the Vocontii tribe. Geographically the Vocontii occupied the South-Western slopes of the Alps and it is here, in the Alpine areas of the Celtic world, where the strongest evidence for a Celtic bear-cult comes from. This evidence comes in the form of a small statuette dedicated to the goddess Artio, i.e. “She-Bear” (Delamarre 2003, 55–56). Indeed, according to some scholars, Andarta and Artio might actually be different names for the same local goddess (e.g. McKillop 1998, 14).

The cult of Artio is attested as far up north as around the German town of Trier, near the borders of modern-day Luxemburg (Green 1992, 139). However, the centre of her cult was clearly in Muri, near modern-day Bern in Switzerland, and this is why the goddess is often referred to as Artio of Muri. The bear has even today important associations with the areas around Bern. According to the legend, the city itself, founded in 1191 AD, got its name from the bear, which was the first animal that Berchtold V, Duke of Zähringen, killed during a hunting trip. Thus, the bear also appears in Bern's coat of arms. However, during the Iron Age, this region was occupied by the Celtic tribe of the Helvetii. They were among the more powerful of Gaulish tribal coalitions and known to be fierce warriors. From this perspective, a cult of a bear-goddess appears as a relatively natural choice.

The statuette of Artio, now in the Historisches Museum in Berne, is itself a beautiful artifact. It is made of bronze and is about 20 cm high. It shows the

⁴ Note that the name “Arthur” might also be a local British derivation from the Roman name Artorius. This is the preferred interpretation of most contemporary scholars. Artorius is, of course, a derivation from the Latin word for bear, and thus it would be functionally compatible with its Welsh cognates. However, if this is the case, the legend of king Arthur does not provide any strong support for any kind of bear-cult in Northern Britain (See Littleton & Malcor 2000, 72–73 for a concise discussion of this topic).

goddess in seated position offering a bowl of fruit to a bear (Meier 1997, 25). Some interpretations of this statuette argue that it describes an event where the goddess is sacrificed to the bear. However, a more likely interpretation is that the statuette is a pictorial representation of the goddess in her two different aspects as a bear and a woman (D'Arbois de Jubanville 1905, 196–199; Green 1992, 28). This was a rather typical feature of Celtic iconography and it can imply that Artio had a dual function as protector of bears against hunters and of humans against bears. However, the bowl of fruits in the hands of the goddess suggests that connections with fertility symbolism were her most important framework. She was most likely an earth goddess and the personification of the tribal territories of the Helvetii. These types of territorial goddesses are well established in Celtic traditions and one of the more important rites connected with them was the symbolic marriage – i.e. the so-called *hieros gamos* – between the goddess and the tribal king (See e.g. Ross 1986, 124–125; Green 1986, 72–102).

In conclusion

In this presentation I have been describing the traces of bear-cults in the Celtic traditions. While the bear as an animal was common enough in order to become a part of Celtic iconography and symbolism, the actual significance of the bear and the beliefs connected with it are not easy to trace. However, a benign reading of the available evidence suggests that the bear may have had religious importance at least on two different levels.

First, the bear statuettes used as talismans and grave-goods, together with the additional indirect evidence like the use of bear in patronymics, suggests that at least during some earlier phase, the bear might have been some kind of totemic animals for the Celts or their ancestors. This evidence comes mainly from Britain and from Ireland, but as at least some of the bear statues found in Britain seem to have been imported from the Rhineland, totemistic associations of the bear might well have been a common Celtic feature.

Secondly, there is strong evidence for the existence of bear-gods and bear-goddesses among the Celts. The evidence for a cult of bear-divinities is especially strong in southern and eastern Gaul and the Alpine region. The association of the bear with the earth goddess is particularly well established and while the evidence does not allow us to say anything specific about the actual beliefs connected to her, we have enough evidence to argue that for the Alpine Celts, at least, the bear was foremost the Great Mother, the spirit of the land from which all life originated.

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