

pro in Old Irish

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0. Background

This analysis of *pro* in Old Irish builds on that of McCloskey and Hale (1984) for Modern Irish and McCloskey (1986, 1991) for Old Irish. Here, the analysis for Old Irish will be broadened to cover more data than have hitherto been examined.

Basic argument in MH:

- *pro* must appear in MnIr where there is person and number agreement.

Evidence:

- long distance relatives, where verbs with agreement (2) show the comp a^N used with overt pronouns (1), not a^L used with gaps (exx. from MH (498)):

(1) *na daoine a^N raibh mé ag dúil go^N gcuirfeadh siad isteach ar an phost sin*
the people COMP was I expect.PROG COMP put.COND they in on that job
the people that I expected (that they) would apply for that job

(2) *na daoine a^N raibh mé ag dúil go^N gcuirfidis isteach ar an phost sin*
the people COMP was I expect.PROG COMP put.COND.3PL in on that job
the people that I expected (that they) would apply for that job

- prepositional inflection, possessor inflection in NP, coordination
- particles that attach to pronouns or *pro* in certain cases (see further below):
 - contrastive clitic set, reflexive / emphatic *féin*, deictics *seo / sin / siúd*

1. Old Irish descriptive facts: background to the argument

Basic facts:

- OIr generally disallows resumption, so exx. like (1) and (2) are unavailable
- OIr has two different sets of pronominal clitics (GOI 252-3, 302-3)
 - *notae augentes*, have person and number forms but no case distinctions
 - deictic clitic set is 3rd person and inflects defectively for case / number

notae augentes:

1SG	-sa / -se	1PL	-nai / -ni
2SG	-so, -su / -siu	2PL	-si
3SG MASC / NT	-som, -sum / -seom, -sium	3PL	-som, -sum
3SG FEM	-si		

deictic clitic set:	NOM	ACC	GEN
3SG MASC	-side	-adi	-sidi / -ade
3SG FEM	-ade	-sidi / -ade	-ide / -idi
3SG NT	són / ón	són / ón	-sidi / -(a)de
3PL	-(s)idi	-(s)idi	-adi / -ade

distribution of the clitics:

- after a noun, agreeing with a preceding possessive pronoun
- after a personal pronoun or a conjugated preposition (prepositional inflection)¹
- after a copula + noun / adjective sequence, serving as the subject
- after a verb, agreeing with either the subject or the infix / suffixed object

¹ The deictic set occurs only rarely after a conjugated preposition (Sg 199^a5 *fuiri-sidi* “on it”). More commonly the stressed form *suide* appears after a simple preposition: *for suidi* “on it”.

Though always optional (see below), the clitics in these sets are found only in those positions where pronouns or pronominal affixes are already present.

The Old Irish correspondents of *féin* will enter the discussion further below, while the correspondents of *seo* / *sin* / *siúd* are not of interest here.

2. Old Irish *pro*

The basic facts concerning *pro* in Old Irish appear to be the same as in MnIr. A number of indicators show that a *pro* must appear wherever there is person and number agreement in Old Irish:

- coordination effects (McCloskey 1991):

- (3) Thes ii 241.5 *con-ráncatar ocus Dubthach*
meet.3PL.PERF and Dubthach.NOMSG
“he and Dubthach met”
- (4) LU 8389 *etorro ocus talam*
between.3PL and ground.NOMSG
“between it and the ground”
- (5) Wb 10^d1 *dún-ni ocus Barnaip*
to.1PL-1PL and Barnabas.NOMSG
“to me and Barnabas”

- the *notae augentes* (and deictic clitic set) may not appear with a full NP or a *wh*-trace (i.e. when *pro* is also not allowed).

- (6) *ad·cí (*-som) in- fer in- mnaí*
see.3SG.PRES (-3SG) DET- man.NOMSG DET-woman.ACCSG
“the man sees the woman”
- (7) *is in- fer ad·chí (*-som) in- mnaí*
COP.3SG.PRES DET-man.NOMSG see.3SGREL.PRES (-3SG) DET-woman.ACCSG
“it is the man who sees the woman”

- The *notae augentes* in possessor phrases (8) and copular sentences (9) appear in the same position as a full NP: after adjectives.²

- (8) MI 23^e15 *a- gnímai sainemlai- som*
3SGPOSS-works.NOMPL wonderful.NOMPL-3SG
“his wonderful works”
- (9) MI 35^e26 *ba- imchomarc n- espach- som*
COP.3SG.SUBJ- question.NOMSG idle.NOMSG-3SG
“it would be an idle question”

- After verbs with “infixing pronouns”, two clitics may appear:

² The *notae augentes*, however, appear before qualifying genitives in copular sentences:

- (i) Wb 18^d1 *rombo- discipul- som apstal*
COP.3SG.PERF-disciple.NOMSG-3SG apostle.GENPL
“that he was a disciple of apostles”
- (ii) Wb 33^a5 *rubu- fer- som muintere maith*
COP.3SG.PERF man.NOMSG-3SG household.GENSG good. NOMSG
“he was a good servant”

- (10) Sg 16^a8 *nī- sn- arróetmar- ni- sídi*
 NEG-3SGFEMOBJ·accept.1PL.PERF- 1PL- 3PL
 “we have not accepted it”

The implication is that there are two *pros* associated with verbs containing an infixed pronoun, and that both *pros* may license a clitic.³

- restrictions on the presence of stressed pronouns fall out under this analysis
 - stressed pronouns allowed only where there is no agreement
 - analytic inflection does not exist in Old Irish.
 - stressed pronouns only allowed as predicate nominatives after copula, as subjects in verbless sentences or after bare interrogatives (GOI 254)

Summary: The *pro* advocated for MnIr is also present in OIr

- Coordination of conjugated preps and verbs with NPs must assume a *pro*
- Lack of *nota augens* with a full NP or *wh*-trace implies lack of host *pro*
- Noun-adj-*nota* order in possessor phrases and copular sentences explained
- Verbs with infixed pronouns allow two clitics, implying two *pros*
- The distribution of the stressed personal pronouns is straightforward.

3. Old Irish clitic doubling

The argument above assumes that the inflectional subject, the infixed pronoun (Eska, forthcoming), the pronominal possessor, and the inflectional object of prepositions are not arguments. OIr allows clitic doubling of full NPs. Thus, infixed pronouns (see Lucht 1994) and pronominal possessors (GOI 279) may be accompanied by case-bearing full NPs:

- (11) MI 51^d7 *at- roilli dia a- aigsin*
 3SG.NTOBJ-deserves.3SG.PRES God.NOMSG 3SGPOSS-fear.ACCSG
 “God deserves to be feared”
- (12) Wb 1^d7 *nertit a- dénum in- maid- sin*
 encourage.3PL.PRES 3SGPOSS-doing.ACCSG DET-good.GENSG-that
 “they encourage the doing of that good”

- Infix pronouns and pronominal possessors are agreement markers, as in a Bresnan and Mchombo (1987)-style analysis.⁴ The same is always implicitly assumed for the verbal endings and subject agreement.
- Zwicky and Pullum’s (1983) tests for affix vs. clitic also suggest that the infixed pronouns and pronominal possessors are affixes.

³ There are severe restrictions on the clitics’ appearance. For verbs with an infixed pronoun, only one *nota augens* may appear, and it must agree with the verbal argument (i.e. subject or object) which is higher on the scale 1st person > 2nd person > 3rd person human > 3rd non-human (Griffith 2008a). A second clitic (from the deictic clitic set) may also appear following the *nota* if it agrees with the object.

⁴ MH (512-13) argue this for possessors in MnIr. One difficulty in OIr is that the clitic possessor also precedes the few inflected adjectives that occur pronominally: lower cardinal numbers and all ordinals, *uile* “all”, *cach* “each”, *nach* “any”, *aile* “other, second”, and *sain* “separate”. The possessor agreement must then occur higher up in the structure than on the noun.

Advantages to this analysis:

- infixed pronouns and pronominal possessors are agreement not arguments; *pro* is the argument; coordination facts show the same for prepositions
- clear typological description: Old Irish is head-marking with pronominal arguments and dependent-marking (or double-marking) with NP arguments (as in the taxonomy in Nichols 1986, 1992).

4. What are the *notae augentes*?

Syntax: MnIr clitics seem to make strong pronouns out of weak ones and are required:

- for *pro* or a pronoun to be coordinated
- for *pro* or a pronoun to serve as the head of a relative clause

In Old Irish, this syntactic function of the *notae* is not generally present:

- no convincing examples of stressed pronouns heading a relative clause (all possible cases are copula sentences):

(13) MI 44^d21 *is- é con-airleci*
 COP.3SG.PRES-3SG permit.3SGREL.PRES
 “it is He who permits”

(14) Wb 5^b17 *is- mé as- apstal geinti*
 COP.3SG.PRES-1SG COP.3SGREL.PRES apostle.NOMSG Gentile.GENSG
 “it is I who am the apostle of the Gentiles”

- stressed pronouns often (15) but not always (16) have *notae* when coordinated

(15) Thes ii 293.14 *me- sse ocus Pangur Bán*
 1SG-1SG and PN
 “I and Pangur Bán” (opening line of a poem)

(16) Thes ii 293.25 *faelid- sem... os me chene am faelid*
 happy.NOMSG-3SG... and I without.3SG COP.1SG.PRES happy.NOMSG
 “he is happy... and I, too, am happy” (later line in same poem)

- *pro* may head relative clauses without a *nota*

(17) Wb 32^a22 *at-tá pro immurgu as-béer*
 is.3SG.PRES (3SG) however say.1SGREL.PRES
 “there is something which I will say”

(18) CIH II 596.19 *ma-ni- taisilb[h]er do pro bes*
 if- NEG-ascribe.3SG.PASS.SUBJ to.3SG (3SG) is.3SGREL.SUBJ
fiado pro do-gnether
 in the presence of.3SG (3SG) do.3SG.PASS.SUBJ
 “unless it (testimony) be ascribed to him who is present at what was done”

- *pro* may be coordinated with an NP without a *nota* (exx. (3)-(5) above)

Conclusion: The *notae augentes* in OIr do not create strong pronouns.

Semantics: the contrastive clitics in MnIr appear to have contrastive or possibly emphatic meaning. Determining the meaning of the *notae augentes* in OIr is difficult.

- the *notae* occasionally appear to have contrastive emphasis

- but contrast and emphasis usually expressed differently:
 - by *féin* (see Ó Cuiv 1974)
 - via a cleft sentence (for focus)
- the *notae* and deictic set used almost identically (Griffith 2008b), except:
 - the deictic set may resume a left-dislocated topic; *notae* do not
 - *notae* may refer to the (broader) discourse topic; deictic set does not

What are the *notae augentes*?

- McCloskey (1986: 248-9) denies that the contrastive clitics are pronouns in MnIr. They are “enclitic elements... which attach to the basic pronouns to make other kinds of pronouns” (MH 493).
- Greene (1973: 122) declares that the *notae augentes* are pronouns in Old Irish.

Best evidence for MH analysis and against the *notae augentes* as pronouns:

- They attach to the stressed pronouns: *mé / me-sse, tú / tu-ssu*, etc.
- Straightforward for MH, not for Greene: *me-sse* must be a concatenation of stressed pronoun and clitic pronoun

But:

- It is possible that the *notae augentes* and *pro* are in complementary distribution: the *notae* could then be the phonetic counterparts of *pro*.
- possible support comes from *féin*, which in OIr cannot be shown to be reflexive (19); its distribution is like that of the *notae* and deictic clitic set, plus that it also appears after definite nouns (20):

- (19) Wb 11^d8 *na· ngladad*
 3SGOBJ· purify.3SG.IMPV
 “let him purify himself!”
- (20) MI 36^d16 *l. ind- idail fadesin*
 or DET- idol.NOMPL FÉIN.3PL
 “(that the men worshipping the idols would die) or the idols themselves”

Interestingly, *féin* can appear in conjunction with the *notae* and deictic clitic set:

- (21) Wb 30c17 *nī- s· tuirmi recht act*
 NEG-3PLOBJ·record.3SG.PRES law.NOMSG but
a- senchas- som fadesin
 3SG-tradition.NOMSG- 3SG FÉIN.3SG
 “the Law doesn’t record them (their names), but his own tradition (does)”
- (22) Tur 33 *robu- foirbthe- side fadesin*
 COP.3SG.PERF- perfect.NOMSG- 3SGMASC FÉIN.3SG
 “he himself was perfect”

- if these clitics are pronouns, can argue that *féin* must follow *pro* / pronouns.
- if, however, the *notae*, the deictic clitic set, and *féin* all are simply elements that follow *pro*, as in MnIr, we must explain their relative ordering.⁵
- The former possibility appears simpler to me. Thus (21) and (22) offer a small degree of support for the *notae augentes* as pronouns.

⁵ There is at least one example where *féin* appears to be separated from *pro*:

Wb 15^a4 *ru- n· sluinfem- ni didiu cene fanisin*
 ASPECT-1PLOBJ·name.1PL.FUT-1PL then without.3SG FÉIN.1PL
 “we ourselves will then be able to name ourselves without it”

At present, I am not sure what to make of this example.

That the *notae* are pronouns runs up against the evidence of *me-sse, tu-ssu, etc.*, for which I do not yet have a good explanation. Still, however, I lean toward seeing the *notae* as phonetic counterparts to *pro*, although it is probably impossible to prove.

5. Conclusions

It is clear that Old Irish has the same type of inflectional argument (*pro*) with the same distribution as is found in Modern Irish. The OIr evidence is found in coordination, clitic doubling phenomena, and distributional restrictions on the stressed pronouns and the *notae* themselves. This evidence shows that there must be a *pro* that appears whenever there is person and number agreement. Less certain is whether the *notae augentes* are clitic to *pro*, as in MnIr, or are rather phonetically realized counterparts of *pro*.

Abbreviations

- CIH = *Corpus iuris hibernici*. 1978. Ed. D.A. Binchy. 6 vols. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.
GOI = Thurneysen, Rudolph. 1946. *A Grammar of Old Irish*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.
LU = *Lebor na hUidre*. 1929. Eds., R.I. Best and Osborn Bergin. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.
MI = Milan Glosses, in *Thes i*.
Sg = St Gall Glosses, in *Thes i*.
Thes = *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*. 1903-5. Eds., Whitley Stokes and John Strachan. 2 vols. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.
Tur = Turin Glosses, in *Thes i*.
Wb = Würzburg Glosses, in *Thes i*.

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