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As described by Thurneysen (1946:312 ff.),² relative clauses in Old Irish fall into three main descriptive classes:

1) *Prepositional relative clauses*. When the translational equivalent of a relative pronoun is the object of a preposition, the uninflected pronoun (*s*)*a*^N is attached to the preposition and the resulting group, variously realized, is prefixed as a conjunct particle to the verbal complex. Examples: *fua-tabarr* 'under which is brought', *cosa-tuidches* 'to whom it has occurred', *dia-ndllgid* 'to whom you forgive', *fris-tarddam* 'to which we can give', *arind-epur* 'for which I say it'.

2) *Leniting relative clauses*. When the translational equivalent of a relative pronoun is the subject or (optionally) the object of its clause, an abstract relative marker *REL_{len}* is inserted into the verbal complex after the last pre-tonic conjunct particle, or after the verb proper if no conjunct particle is present. In the former case *REL_{len}* is realized as lenition of the following consonant. Examples: *ind huli doini ro-chreitsset* 'all the men who have believed', *sillab nad-sluindi* 'a syllable that does not express', *na ni no-gigius* (lenited *g*-) 'whatever I shall pray for', *is hé nodon-nerta-ni* (lenited *d*) 'it is he that strengthens us'.³ Sequences of the type *V(erb) + REL_{len}* are discussed below.

3) *Nasalizing relative clauses*. Optionally in cases where the translational equivalent of a relative pronoun is the direct object of its clause, and obligatorily in many other embedded constructions (e.g., in reported speech, after (*h*)*óre* 'because', *a*^N 'when', *céine* 'as long as', etc.), an abstract marker *REL_{nas}* is inserted into the verbal complex according to the rule in 2). When infixated after a conjunct particle, *REL_{nas}* is realized as nasalization of the following consonant or vowel. Examples: *int ais as'mbeir* 'the people whom he mentions', *a forcital forndob'canar* 'the teaching whereby you are taught', *óre do'n-écomnacht* 'because he has imparted', *a n-as'mbeir* 'when he says'. *V + REL_{nas}* sequences are discussed below.

One of the distinctive peculiarities of Old Irish is the fact that sequences of the type *V + REL_{len}* and *V + REL_{nas}*, which for descriptive purposes can

¹ An oral version of this paper was presented at the Thirteenth East Coast Indo-European Conference, University of Texas at Austin, and at the Perceval Maitland Lawrence Colloquium, Cambridge University, in May, 1994. The latter event was also attended by my dear friend and former colleague Joki Schindler; I little suspected at the time that this meeting would be our last. Joki's comments were of great help to me in preparing the present version, as were those of Kim McCone, Craig Melchert and Calvert Watkins. Responsibility for what follows, of course, rests entirely with me.

² Subsequent references to „Thurneysen“, unless otherwise specified, are to this work.

³ Note that *REL_{len}*, like *REL_{nas}* in the examples below, is inserted immediately before class C infixated pronoun.

usually be treated together as *V + REL*, are realized as special relative verb forms. As a consequence of the synchronic rule of „*no*-support,“ which inserts the semantically vacuous preverb *no-* into the verbal complex to support infixing pronouns and relative markers, the use of such forms is confined to the third person and the 1 pl.⁴ Practical rules for the phonetic implementation of *V + REL* sequences are as follows:

In the 3 sg. active, the final *-(i)d* ([-δ']) of the non-relative absolute present indicative, the *ā*-subjunctive, and the reduplicated, long-vowel and *f*-futures is replaced by non-palatal *-s* (cf. *beres* 'who bears, whom (s)he bears, etc.' (non-rel. absol. *berid*), *móras* 'who magnifies' (non-rel. absol. *móraid*), *léices* 'who looses', *beras* 'who may bear', *cechnas* 'who will sing', *béras* 'who will bear', *léicfes* 'who will loose'). In the suffixless and *t*-preterites the non-relative (conjunct) 3 sg. is extended by *-e* (cf. *luide* 'who went', *berte* 'who bore'). The three sigmatic categories – the *s*-subjunctive, *s*-future and *s*-preterite – replace the *-(i)s* ([-s']) of the 3 sg. absolute by non-palatal *-s*: cf. *tías* 'who may go' (non-rel. absol. *téis*), *giges* 'who will pray' (non-rel. absol. *gigis*), *gabas* 'who took' (non-rel. absol. *gabais*).

In the 3 pl. active, the final (absolute) *-(i)t* ([-d']) common to all regular present indicatives, subjunctives and futures, is extended by *-e* (cf. pres. *bertae* < **beraite* (non-rel. *berait*), *mórtae*, *léicte*, subj. *bertae*, *tíastae*, fut. *cechnaite*, *gigsite*, *léicfite*, *s*-pret. *gabsaite*). The *t*-preterite, which ends in *-(a)tar* or *-(a)tir* in the 3 pl. absolute and *-(a)tar* in the conjunct, uses the conjunct form as a relative (*bertar*, *bertatar*). *-(a)tar* was probably also the ending in the suffixless preterite, although no instances are found in the Glosses.

In the 3 sg. and 3 pl. deponent and non-preterite passive, the relative forms all end in neutral *-r*, like the corresponding conjunct forms (cf. *suidigedar* 'who puts', pl. *-etar* (non-rel. absol. *-idir*, *-itir*), *léicther*, *-ter* (non-rel. absol. *-thir*, *-tir*), *berar*, *-tar* (non-rel. absol. *berair*, *-tair*), etc.). In the preterite passive, the 3 sg. absolute in *-(a)e* (cf. *mórthae*, *brethae*, *gesse*, etc.) is also occasionally used as a relative form.

In the 1 pl. the relative endings follow the pattern of the 3 pl.: where the 3 pl. relative ends in *-(a)e*, the 1 pl. relative ends in *-m(a)e* (vs. non-rel.

⁴ A useful summary of the rules for *no-* and the conditions for its appearance in relative clauses is given by McCone (1987:13-18). Since *no-* is obligatory in the imperfect, conditional and past subjunctive when no other conjunct particle is present, the sequences *V + REL_{len}* and *V + REL_{nas}* cannot occur in these tenses.

absol. *-m(a)t*); where the 3 pl. relative ends in neutral *-r* (i.e., in the *t*-preterite, suffixless preterite, deponent), the 1 pl. relative, if attested, ends in *-mar* or (after palatals) *-mer*.

There are also special relative forms of the copula and substantive verb. The forms of the substantive verb are mostly regular: cf. consuetudinal pres. 3 sg. *bís*, 3 pl. *bíte* vs. non-rel. *bíid*, *bíit*; subj. *bes*, *bete* vs. non-rel. *beith*, *beir*; fut. *bias*, *bete* vs. non-rel. *bieid*, *bieit*; pret. *boíe*, *bátar* vs. non-rel. *boí*, *bátar* (*-ir*). Only in the non-consuetudinal present, where the 3 sg. *at-tá* and 3 pl. *at-taot* are both represented by the invariant relative form *fil(e)*, is there a significant departure from the normal pattern.⁵ The relative forms of the copula, like the forms of the copula generally, are mostly unstressed variants of the corresponding forms of the substantive verb: cf. subj. *bes* (*bas*), *beta* (*bete*); fut. *bes* (*bas*), *beta*; pret. *ba*, *batar*. In the present of the copula the relative forms *as* 'who, which is' (3 sg.) and *ata* 'who, which are' (3 pl.) are built on the same stem as the ubiquitous non-relative forms 3 sg. *is* and 3 pl. *it*. A notable grammatical peculiarity of *as*, *ata*, *bes*, *beta*, etc. is that these forms are regularly followed by lenition in leniting relative clauses (cf., e.g., *indí ata chumachtchu* 'they who are more powerful', *aní trá as chotarsne* 'the thing, then, which is contrary') and by nasalization in nasalizing relative clauses (cf. *óre ata ndech* 'since they are best', *foillsigthir as n-ísel in dofnacht* 'it is explained that mankind is lowly'). Here, then, and here alone, the relative markers *REL_{len}* and *REL_{nas}* are distinguished in postverbal position.

From a historical point of view, the organizing principles of this system are clear. It is widely agreed that the etymological source of *REL_{len}* was a particle **yo*, representing the nom.-acc. sg. neuter in *-d* of the PIE relative pronoun **H₁ió-* (cf. Ved. *yád*, Gk. *ῥ*).⁶ Infix after preverbs, **yo* lenited the initial consonant of the verb or class C infix pronoun which followed; in the special case of the preverbs *im(m)-* (< **imbi-*) and *ar-* (< **are-*), the combinations **imbi-yo* and **are-yo* yielded *imme-* and *are-*, the special forms assumed by *im(m)-* and *ar-* in relative clauses. When no conjunct particle was present, **yo* was assigned to the position immediately to the

⁵ The expected relative forms *taas* and *táte* appear in *oldaas*, *indaas* 'than (is)' and *oldáte*, *indáte* 'than (are)', used after comparatives.

⁶ So, e.g., Thurneysen 123; Watkins (1963:28, fn. 2) prefers to assume an undifferentiated stem form **yo*, which would have produced the same results. The reconstruction **H₁ió-* reflects Jochem Schindler's view (p.c.) that PIE **i₂ó-* would have given †*zó-* in Greek.

right of the verb.⁷ Direct evidence for the syntagma *Verb + *yo* is provided by the well-known Gaulish form *dugiiontiio* (i.e., *dugiionti-io*) 'who serve', which establishes **-onti-yo* (**-ānti-yo*, **-īnti-yo*, etc.) as the source – or at least a source – of the Old Irish 3 pl. rel. in *-(a)e*. Added to the copula (cf., e.g., 3 pl. *ata* < **ete* < **senti-yo*), **yo* caused lenition of the following word in leniting relative clauses. Other relative forms wholly or partly based on etymological sequences of *Verb + *yo* are the 1 pl. in **-m(a)e*, evidently from **-mesi-yo*, and the deponent endings *-thar* (3 sg.) and *-tar* (3 pl.), probably from **-tro-yo* and **-ntro-yo*.⁸ The passive relative endings *-ther* (*-thar*), *-ter* (*-tar*) and *-ar* are analogical to the endings of the third person deponent, as are the 1 pl. deponent in *-mar* (*-mer*) and the 3 pl. *t*-preterite in *-(a)tar*.

One set of relative forms that *cannot* easily be derived from the syntagma *Verb + *yo* are the 3 sg. actives of the type *beres*, *tías*, *gabas*. That **yo* was once employed as a relative marker in the 3 sg. active, as everywhere else, is shown by the preterite forms *luide*, *berte*, etc. (cf. above), and by the irregular 3 sg. *téte* 'who goes' < **tenti-yo*. It would thus seem only natural to assume that the 3 sg. relative corresponding to Common Celtic **bereti* 'bears' was **bereti-yo*, the regular reflex of which in Old Irish would have been **beirthe* (cf. *daltae* 'fosterling' < **-altiyos*, gen. sg. *túaithe* 'of a tribe' < **tōtiyās*, etc.). Although, as we shall see below, there is in fact some evidence for the existence of such forms in the prehistory of Irish, a direct derivation of *beres* from **bereti-yo* is impossible. Many scholars therefore favor the approach to the problem of *beres* suggested by Sarauw (1900:95), who saw the ending *-s* as an analogical transfer from *as*, the 3 sg. relative form of the copula. But this is no solution as it stands, since pre-Ir. **essi-yo* < **esti-yo* could only have yielded Old Irish dissyllabic **asa* (< **ese*), with the same treatment of final **-iyo* as in 3 pl. *ata* < **senti-yo*. The possibility of taking *as* from **asa* by a sporadic, fast-speech apocope rule is effectively ruled out by the absence of any comparable shortening of *ata* to **at*. Nor do the facts support Pedersen's view (1913:235 f.) that *ata* and *as* belong to different chronological levels – the former representing **senti-yo*, as above, and the latter representing younger **ess-o*, with apocopated **ess* < **essi* <

⁷ It follows from this that the initial lenition often attested in relative forms of the type *cheles*, *chechnas*, etc. is secondary and analogical. The same is true of the nasalization in forms like *mberes*, *mbís*, etc.; cf. below.

⁸ On the specifically deponent endings **-tro* and **-ntro*, which were systematically opposed to passive **-tor* and **-ntor* in Celtic, see now Jasanoff (to appear).

**esti* and **o* < **yo*. In fact, there is every reason to believe that Insular Celtic had a 3 sg. relative form **essi-yo*, striking support for which is furnished by the unique Middle Welsh form *y(s)syd* 'who is'.⁹

What, then, was the actual source of the 3 sg. rel. *as*? Since Common Celtic **essi-yo* 'who is' could not have yielded a monosyllable in Old Irish, the tacit assumption that *as* goes back to a construction containing the relative particle REL_{len} must be re-examined. In principle, at least, there is one other sequence that could reasonably have given rise to the surface form *as*, viz., **essi* + REL_{nas} , the construction that underlies the use of *as* in nasalizing relative clauses.¹⁰ REL_{len} and REL_{nas} , it must be remembered, were not identical. REL_{len} was almost certainly **yo*; REL_{nas} , whatever else, must have ended in *-*n* to produce the characteristic nasalization found in nasalizing clauses. After verbs other than the copula, the contrast between the two particles was eventually neutralized, so that in historical Irish the relative forms used in leniting and nasalizing clauses are everywhere the same. This situation, which could only have come about after the loss of final syllables, implies one of the following historical scenarios:

1) REL_{nas} and REL_{len} fell together everywhere by normal sound change, and their distinct mutation effects in word-final position – nasalization after REL_{nas} and lenition after REL_{len} – were analogically eliminated except after the relative forms of the copula.

2) $V + REL_{nas}$ and $V + REL_{len}$ sequences fell together by normal sound change in some, but not all, cases; such differences as remained between nasalizing and leniting relative forms, including mutation effects, were eliminated by analogy.

⁹ According to Breatnach (1980:1), certain archaic instances of the Old Irish sequence *asa*, which normally stands for the sequence *as* + possessive pronoun *a* (cf. Thurneysen 321), are in fact to be interpreted as genuine reflexes of Insular Celtic **essi-yo*. Under this hypothesis *asa* and *y(s)syd* would be exact cognates, but monosyllabic *as* would still be unexplained.

¹⁰ In imputing historical as well as synchronic reality to REL_{nas} , I differ from writers like Pedersen (1899:394 ff.) and, more recently, McCone (1980:21), who deny the existence of a nasalizing relative particle and regard nasalizing clauses as the outcome of a long and complicated series of inner-Irish analogies. I confess to seeing little merit in this approach so long as the possibility of finding a suitable particle remains open. Cf. the verdict of Thurneysen 324.

3) $V + REL_{nas}$ and $V + REL_{len}$ sequences yielded systematically different relative forms everywhere; one or the other form was generalized on a case-by-case basis, with loss of mutation effects as in 1) and 2).

Scenario 1) corresponds to the view that REL_{nas} was phonetically $*yon < *yom$. A particle of this shape could easily be interpreted, e.g., as the masculine acc. sg. of the relative pronoun; this would make excellent sense in clauses of the type *int aís as-mbeir* (cf. above), where REL_{nas} can be translated 'whom'. But there are reasons to distrust the evidence of such cases. For one thing, nasalizing relative clauses are also found with plural antecedents, where the historically correct forms of the relative pronoun would have been $*yons$ (masc.) and $*yās$ (fem. and nt.), neither of which would have caused nasalization. „Accusative“ relative clauses of the above type, moreover, seem to belong to the latest, rather than the most archaic stratum of nasalizing clauses. It is significant that the sense conveyed by *int aís as-mbeir* can equally well be expressed by a leniting relative clause. By contrast, nasalizing clauses are obligatory after $(h)óre$, a^N , and in other „adverbial“ constructions; cf. above and the more extensive survey given by Breatnach (1980:1-6). A priori, it is simpler to assume that REL_{nas} was originally proper to these syntagmas than to assume that it spread to adverbial clauses from relative clauses of the accusative type. A possible motivation for the extension of the nasalizing construction to accusative clauses would have come from the mutation behavior of the 3 sg. infixed pronoun. Since the lenition of the verbal root in cases like *a cenél as-beir* 'the race which he mentions' (leniting relative clause) agreed with the lenition of the root in *at-beir* 'he mentions it' (= *cenél*, nt.), it would have been a simple matter for a relative phrase like *int aís as-beir* 'the people whom he mentions' (leniting relative clause) to acquire a nasalized variant *int aís as-mbeir* 'id.' under the influence of the parallel *at-mbeir* 'he mentions it/him' (= *aís*, masc.). That the choice of the nasalizing rather than the leniting construction was partly linked to the behavior of the infixed pronoun is independently demonstrated by McCone's important discovery (1980:13 ff.) that nasalizing relative clauses of the accusative type are *excluded* after neuter singular antecedents: †*a cenél as-mbeir* is ungrammatical, evidently because the infixed pronoun corresponding to the neuter noun *cenél* was invariably followed by lenition.¹¹

¹¹ Compare McCone 1980:21.

There is thus no reason to assume in advance that REL_{nas} was historically the masculine (and/or feminine) accusative counterpart of REL_{len} (= $*yo(d)$). A more sophisticated analysis of nasalizing relative clauses was proposed by Breatnach (1980:8 f.), who upheld the phonetic equation $REL_{nas} = *yon$, but took $*yon$ to be an all-purpose relative adverb ('where', 'when', etc.), with a final nasal comparable to that in Lat. *tam* 'so', *iam* 'now', etc. and Gk. *vūv* 'now'.¹² This approach can be generalized and extended. The best way to think of the nasalizing relative particle, in my view, is as a semantically attenuated conjunction or complementizer similar, e.g., to Engl. *that* in expressions like *at the time that*, *by reason that*, *older when that*, *for that*, etc., or to Proto-Romance *quo(d)* in complex conjunctions like Fr. *afin que* 'in order that', *parce que* 'because', *lorsque* 'when', etc. Elements like *that* and *que* in such cases are often derived from older relative and/or demonstrative pronouns. But $*yo-$ was not the only relative or demonstrative stem available for this purpose in Common Celtic; another pronoun with the required range of functions was $*so-$ ($*se-$), the source of the Old Irish prepositional relative $(s)a^N$, the definite article $(s)in(d)-$ (nt. $(s)a^N$), and a variety of deictic and anaphoric expressions in every Celtic language (cf. OIr. $(in)so$ 'this (thing)', MW *hynn*, Gaul. *sosin* 'id.', etc.). In principle, $*son$ is just as likely a preform for REL_{nas} as Breatnach's $*yon$.¹³

The advantage of deriving REL_{nas} from $*son$ rather than $*yon$ is that the choice of $*son$ opens the door to a solution to the problem of *as* – and hence to the problem of *beres* – along the lines of scenario 2) above. In general, the loss of intervocalic $*-s-$ was so early in Irish that $*-son$ and $*-yo$ would have fallen together almost everywhere: $*beronti-son$, like $*beronti-yo$, would have given the attested 3 pl. rel. *bertae*; $*lude-son$ and $*lude-yo$ would both have given 3 sg. rel. *luide*; $*sek^wetro-son$ and $*sek^wetro-yo$ would both have given 3 sg. rel. *seichethar*. By the same token, $*essi-son$, the 3 sg. nasalizing relative form of the copula, would under the normal sound laws of Old Irish have fallen together with $*essi-yo$ and yielded *asa*. But here there would

¹² See in this connection Bader 1973:68 ff.

¹³ Cf. Thurneysen 323 f. Note that I envisage $*son$ as a particle more or less equivalent to Breatnach's „adverbial“ $*yon$; it will not be useful to speculate here on the details of the relationship between this $*son$, the prepositional relative marker $(s)a^N$, and the neuter definite article $(s)a^N$, all of which are ultimately connected through the demonstrative stem $*so-$. The use of $*son < *som$ as a synchronically autonomous clitic may well be old; a suggestive parallel is afforded by the Hittite local particle $-ššan$ ('there', etc.) and the compound adverb *kuššan* 'when', which exhibits the same structure as OIr. $a^N + REL_{nas}$ (Craig Melchert, p.c.).

have been another possible treatment as well. A number of IE languages show a tendency to haplogogize sequences of the type **-sVs-* to **-s-*, especially in cases where the intervening vowel was **-i-*. Well-known examples include older Lat. *dīxtī* 'you said', *dūxtī* 'you led', etc. beside classical *dīxistī*, *dūxistī*; and, within Celtic itself, superlatives of the type **treksamos* 'strongest' (OIr. *tressam*, MW *trech*) and **ouksamos* 'highest' (MW *uchaf*) for earlier **treksisamos*, **ouksisamos* (cf. Cowgill 1970:131). An inner-IE instance of this phenomenon is attested in the so-called „*si*-imperatives“ (type Ved. *vákṣi* 'convey', *śróṣi* 'hear', etc.; OIr. *tair* 'come' (< **-ink-si*), *at-rá* 'arise' (< **-reg-si*), etc.), which represent reduced and specialized 2 sg. *s*-aorist subjunctives in **-sesi* (cf. Szemerényi 1966, Jasanoff 1987:103 f.). I would suggest here that the same process of haplology converted Insular Celtic **essi-son* to **esson*, which in turn yielded OIr. *as*.

If this interpretation of **as* is correct, it would be natural to assume that *REL_{len}* and *REL_{nas}* were originally represented in all environments by the particles **yo* and **son*, respectively. In most contexts the difference between the two elements was lost by ordinary sound change; the expected lenition effects of **yo* and nasalization effects of **son* in word-final position (i.e., in specifically relative forms) were largely eliminated by analogy. The case of the copula, however, was exceptional. Here the phonologically regular mutations were retained: the lenition or nasalization that canonically follows the 3 pl. rel. *ata* is a direct reflection of whether the Insular Celtic preform was **sentī-yo* or **sentī-son*. In the 3 sg. even the segmental reflexes of **essi-yo* and **essi-son* were at first distinguished, the former giving **asa* with lenition, and the latter giving *as* (< **esson*) with nasalization. Classical Old Irish eventually regularized the anomaly of having two separate 3 sg. relative forms by generalizing *as* to both nasalizing and leniting clauses, the choice of mutation being determined by the syntactic context. Other Celtic languages resolved the tension between **essi-yo* and **esson* in different ways. Middle Welsh, as we have seen, retained **essi-yo* as *y(s)syd* but lost all trace of **esson*. Breton, on the other hand, appears to preserve a reflex of **esson* in the still current relative form *so* (*zo*).¹⁴

¹⁴ According to Fleuriot 1964:231 and Hemon 1975:203, Br. *so* may go back to an unattested Old Breton **iso*, to which it stands in the same formal relationship as MBr. *si* (in *sigoaz* 'alas!' < **'what is worse'*) to OBr. *isi* (= MW *y(s)syd*). The failure of **esson* to lose its final syllable in Common Brittonic implies an irregular final stress – probably because the initial vowel, both here and in **essiyo*, was reinterpreted as a relative particle (cf. Modern Welsh *y sydd*, *sydd*, presupposing MW end-stressed *y(s)syd*).

The elimination of the difference between **asa* (< **essi-yo*) and *as* (< **esson*) was thus no doubt a comparatively recent development. Some time before the distinction between the two relative forms was lost, the existence of **esson* (or its pre-Irish continuant **esan*) was exploited in Goidelic to create a whole new series of nasalizing 3 sg. relatives in **-sson* (later **-san*). Perhaps the original locus of the spread of the new ending was in the subjunctive, future and consuetudinal present of the verb 'to be', where the relationship of **esson* to the corresponding 3 pl. nasalizing relative form **eddiyon* (< **senti-son*) could easily have been generalized via the proportion

3 pl. nas. rel. pres. **eddiyon* : 3 sg. nas. rel. pres. **esson* : : 3 pl. nas. rel. subj.

**beddiyon*, fut. **beyāddiyan*,¹⁵ consuet. pres. **bīddiyan* : X,

where X was solved as 3 sg. nas. rel. **besson*, **beyāsson*, **bīsson* (> OIr. subj. *bes* (*bas*), fut. *bias* (*bes*, *bas*), consuet. pres. *bís*). From the verb 'to be' the ending **-sson* (**-san*) was extended to all verbal stems – present, subjunctive and future alike – in **-e-*, **-ǎ-* and **-ǐ-*. The result was the creation of the familiar 3 sg. relatives in *-es* and *-as* (*beres*, *móras*, *léices*, etc.), which were originally confined to nasalizing relative clauses but eventually generalized, like the 3 sg. rel. *as* itself, to leniting clauses as well.

as (< **esson*) is not, however, the only such form that goes directly back to an Insular Celtic prototype. The *s*-subjunctive, *s*-future and *s*-preterite all have 3 sg. relatives in neutral *-s* (*tías*, *giges*, *gabas*), which contrasts with the palatal *-s* of the corresponding absolute forms (*téis*, *gigis*, *gabais*). Such forms in *-s* cannot be explained by the same analogical mechanism as the „normal“ relatives in *-es* and *-as* of vowel-final stems; the process that led to the creation of *beres*, *móras*, *léices*, etc. would have produced **téises*, **gigses* and **gabsas* in the three sigmatic categories.¹⁶ If analogical at all, *tías*, *giges*, *gabas* would have to have been created on the direct model of the present of the copula, where the palatal *-s* of the non-relative 3 sg. *is*

¹⁵ I follow McCone 1991:115 ff. in deriving the Old Irish subjunctive of the verb 'to be' from an invariant stem **be-*, continuing Insular Celtic **be/o-*. For the future **beyā-* < **besā-* see Jasanoff 1994:217 ff.

¹⁶ The spread of *-es* (*-as*) was mediated by the fact that all 3 pl. nasalizing relative forms ended in sequences of the form **-V-ddiyan*. We should therefore have expected a proportion of the type 3 pl. **beroddiyon* : 3 sg. **beresson* :: 3 pl. **tēssoddiyon* (> OIr. *tíastae*) : X, with X solved as **tēssesson* (> **téises*).

(< **essi-s*) was synchronically replaced by non-palatal *-s* in the corresponding relative form *as*. To be sure, it is by no means obvious why the 3 sg. of the *s*-subjunctive, *s*-future and *s*-preterite should have been influenced by the present of the verb 'to be' in this way. In fact, however, no analogical explanation of the forms *tías*, *giges*, *gabas* is necessary. The *s*-preterite was historically an athematic category, with an inherited 3 sg. in **-ssi* < **-s-ti*. This ending, as is well known, was extended in Irish to the *s*-subjunctive and *s*-future, where it replaced the earlier thematic complex **(-C)-seti*.¹⁷ *gabas* can thus be referred directly to a nasalizing relative form **gabasson* < **gabassi-son*, while *tías* and *giges* can be taken from the corresponding (remodeled) preforms **tēsson* and **g^wig^wesson*, respectively. Under the assumption of a haplology-inducing particle **son*, the explanation of *tías*, *giges*, *gabas* follows mechanically from that of *as*.

To summarize, a form like 3 sg. rel. *beres* can be seen as the analogical replacement of two etymologically „correct“ relatives – **beretiyo* < **bereti-yo*, originally proper to leniting relative clauses, and **beretiyon* < **bereti-son*, originally proper to nasalizing clauses. Both **beretiyo* and **beretiyon* (< **-son*) would regularly have given **beirthe* in Old Irish, a form of which there is no trace in any actual Irish text. Interestingly, however, there does seem to be evidence for the survival of an indirect reflex of **beretiyo*, not in the standard inventory of 3 sg. relatives described by Thurneysen and McCone, but in a small group of irregular passives whose puzzling shape has drawn attention away from their preponderant use in relative clauses. These now require discussion.

In his treatment of the inflection of the passive, Thurneysen (370) briefly alludes to the forms *i-n-égthiar* 'wherein is cried out' and *molthiar* 'who is praised', which appear to exemplify an archaic 3 sg. passive ending *-thiar* (*-thier*). A total of seven such forms are recorded in the Old Irish corpus. All are associated with the archaic *Amrae Coluimb Chille* („Eulogy of St. Columba“): three (*-égthiar*, *dringthiar*, *rigthier*) occur in the *Amrae* proper, while the rest (*molthiar*, *aerthiar* (2x), *súgthiar*) are found in a short poem

¹⁷ The 3 sg. of the *s*-subjunctive, and presumably also of the *s*-future, was still thematic in Insular Celtic, as shown by forms of the type MW 3 sg. subj. *gwares* 'may help' < **-resset* < **-ret-seti*. The beginnings of the morphological merger of the three sigmatic categories go back to the Insular Celtic period, where the originally athematic *s*-preterite was thematized outside the 3 sg. (cf. MW *kereis* 'I loved' < **karassū*, matching OIr. *gabus* < **gabassū*).

quoted in the Introduction to the Amrae and attributed to St. Columba himself. The poem in the Introduction is worth reproducing in full:¹⁸

Cormac cain buich neóit,
nua a molta, crina seoit,
iss ed ro legus roth cr[a]eth
céinmair molthiar maigr aerthiar, Aed.

Cain súg a saer[š]aighthib súgthiar,
maigr in iath eclaircc aerthiar,
árad clod cain reim, radit bii,
dofuairthét molta maini.

'Fair Cormac destroyed niggardliness:
fresh are his praises, faded his treasures.
This is what I have read in the circle of science:
blessed is he who is praised, woe to him who is satirized, O Aed.

Fair the sap that is sucked from noble sayings:
woe to the inconspicuous land that is satirized!
A ladder of hospitalities, a fair course: the living say:
the treasures of praise still exist.'

The forms *molthiar* (v.l. *moltair*) 'who is praised', *aerthiar* (2x) 'who/which is satirized' and *súgthiar* 'which is sucked' all appear in leniting relative clauses, where they play the same syntactic role as classical Old Irish 3 sg. rel. and conj. *molt(h)ar* (: *molaithir*, A I), *aerthar* (: *áeraid*, A I) and *sú(i)gther* (: *sú(i)gid*, A II). In *súgthiar* (present stem /su:γ'i-/) the difference between *-thiar* and *-ther* need not in principle be significant, since *-ia-* is occasionally employed as an archaic spelling for the vowel, non-contrastive in classical Old Irish, which stands between a palatalized and a neutral consonant in unstressed syllables (cf. Thurneysen 1923, Greene 1972). Just such an interpretation of *súgthiar* is advanced by Cowgill (1983:100 f.),¹⁹ who here and in the case of *-éigthiar* (: *é(i)gid*, A II) takes *-thiar* as a writing for pre-classical [-θ'ar], the source of later *-ther* [-θ'er]. But *molthiar* and *aerthiar*, with non-palatal *-th-*, cannot be so explained; Cowgill's suggestion that these forms „are the creation of a poet who knew the *-éigthiar* of the Amrae, and thought to give his composition an archaic appearance by using the ending *-thiar* indiscriminately for *-ther* and *-thar* of real Old Irish“ is simply not credible. Likewise arguing against a purely

¹⁸ The text is as given in Stokes 1904:250 f.; translation is after Stokes 1899:45.

¹⁹ Subsequent references to „Cowgill“, unless otherwise specified, are to this work.

orthographic/phonetic interpretation of *-thiar* are the remaining forms in the Amrae proper, which present major difficulties of interpretation but furnish information unavailable elsewhere.

As pointed out by Watkins (1963:228), §§67-70 of the Amrae form a well-defined metrical unit, with hexasyllabic lines of the structure [3 | 3]:²⁰

grés ro fer fechnachu
 fri arthu archathru
 co domun dringthiar
 ar deo doenachta
 a rassaub righthier

The sense of these verses is in large part obscure. Stokes' translation („He made an advance (that was) most prosperous / By the great City's ladders / he climbed to the height (of heaven) / For God he was humane / For delights (in heaven) he is crowned“) is obviously inadequate. But from a formal point of view one cardinal fact is clear: *dringthiar* (v.l. *-thier*) and *righthier* (v.ll. *ríghthier*, *rigthiar*, *rightiar*) are trisyllabic.²¹ If the *-thiar* of these forms is morphologically the „same“ as the metrically ambiguous *-thiar* of *molthiar*, *súghthiar*, etc., then *all* instances of this ending must originally have been dissyllabic – a conclusion inconsistent with Cowgill's view of *-thiar* as a pre-classical realization of standard *-ther*.

dringthiar is universally held to be a form of the B I strong verb *dringid* 'climbs, ascends'. The precise meaning of the phrase *co domun dringthiar* was obviously unknown to the Middle Irish glossator, who rendered *dringthiar* by the deponent *s*-preterite *ro dringestar* 'climbed'. This mistake was reproduced by Stokes in his 1899 translation of the Amrae (cf. above), but silently corrected by him a few years later to the present passive 'is climbed'. No twentieth-century commentator, however, has been able to show how this interpretation yields an acceptable translation of the passage; Cowgill's tentative gloss 'there is climbing, ascenditur' (98) is too contrived to be convincing. I suggest here that *dringthiar* is best taken as a relative form, with the immediately preceding noun *domun* as underlying subject. The sense of *grés ro fer [...] co domun dringthiar* is thus 'he made an

²⁰ I give the text as printed by Watkins, who reads *a rassaub* (or *ar rassaub*), with alliteration, for Stokes' *ar assaub* 'for delights'(?). Watkins provides no translation; I again follow Stokes 1899 (261 ff.).

²¹ So already Thurneysen 1923; Cowgill's doubts on this score are unfounded. Note that the orthographic variant *-thier* constitutes a further argument for dissyllabicity, unless we recognize *-ie-* as yet a third spelling for the vowel normally written *-e-*.

advance [...] to the world *which is ascended* – i.e., to heaven, as opposed to the world here below or to the nether world. There are three advantages to this reading: 1) it explains the unexpected shift from the past tense, used for narration, to the present, used for description; 2) it respects the semantics of *domun*, which means ‘world’, not ‘heaven’; and 3) it brings *dringthiar* into perfect functional alignment with *molthair*, *aerthiar* and *súgthiar*, which are likewise employed as relatives.

In the case of *righthier* we are on much less certain ground. The very identity of the verb is in doubt, despite Cowgill’s formal arguments (98 f.) for preferring *rigid* (B I) ‘binds’ to **regid* (B I) ‘stretches’ or *rígaid* (A I) ‘installs as king, crowns’. In the last analysis, nothing can be settled about the meaning of *righthier* so long as the phrase *a rassaib* (or *ar rassaib*) remains obscure. But given the self-evident formal and metrical parallelism of *righthier* and *dringthiar*, there is good reason to suspect that *a(r) rassaib righthier*, like *co domun dringthiar*, contains a relative clause. I would propose a schematic translation of the type ‘who/which is bound/stretched/crowned *a(r) rassaib*’, with either *deo* ‘God’ or *doenachta* ‘humanity’ as the antecedent of the underlying relative marker.

Thus, with the single exception of *-égthiar*, the attested instances of the passive in *-thiar* all occur in syntactic environments where a relative interpretation is either probable or certain. This is not likely to be an accident. The *non*-relative 3 sg. passive endings (absol. *-thir*, *-thair*, *-air*, conj. *-ther*, *-thar*, *-ar*) have an unproblematic history reaching back to Common Celtic **(t)or* and beyond;²² it would be surprising indeed if the regular development of **-tor* to OIr. *-thar* (> *-ther*) had been interrupted by the sudden advent, followed by the almost equally abrupt loss, of a functionally unmotivated variant *-thiar* < **-tiyor* (vel sim.). By contrast, the *relative* passive endings, which are homophonous with the conjunct endings in classical Old Irish, are, as we have seen, clearly analogical and secondary. The pre-Irish relative forms of the passive are not directly attested, but there is every reason to suppose that the 3 sg. would originally have ended in **-toriyo* (< **-tor* + *yo*) in leniting clauses and in **-torron* (< **-tor* + *son*) in nasalizing clauses. The nasalizing relative in **-torron*, which would have given **-tharr* ([-θaR]) in Old Irish, may well have played a role in the ultimate selection of *-thar* (*-ther*) as the standard relative ending. The non-standard relative in

²² The fact that the 3 sg. passive ending normally appears after vowels as *-thirl-ther*, with palatalized *-th-*, rather than as *-thairl-thar*, as might have been expected, is convincingly shown to be secondary by Cowgill (93 ff.).

-thiar, however, is best explained as a transformation of the leniting ending **-toriyo*.

The 3 sg. rel. in **-toriyo*, which would have yielded OIr. **-th(a)ire* or **-thrae* depending on word-particular syncope effects, was eventually lost and replaced by the generalized conjunct ending *-ther* (*-thar*). But this replacement was apparently not a single-step process. So long as **-toriyo* remained a productive ending in early pre-Irish, its phonetic shape would have been subject to analogical pressure from related endings, notably those of the 3 sg. non-passive relative and the 3 sg. non-relative passive. To understand how such pressure might have made itself felt in early pre-Irish, it may be helpful to consider some representative forms of the weak verb **sūgī-* 'suck':

	3 sg. non-rel. (conjunct)	3 sg. rel. (leniting clause)
active	<i>*sūgīt</i> ²³ 'sucks'	<i>*sūgītiyo</i> 'which sucks'
passive	<i>*sūgītor</i> 'is sucked'	<i>*sūgītoriyō</i> 'which is sucked'

Both here and elsewhere in the verbal system, the passive and (leniting) relative functions in early Goidelic were marked by the sequences **-or* and **-iyo*, respectively. In the case of forms like the doubly characterized relative of the passive, the order of occurrence of these elements was *passive + relative*, reflecting the historical origin of **yo* as an independent particle. From the point of view of a synchronic language learner, the rule that **-or* preceded **-iyo* would have to have been acquired on the basis of relatively limited speech data. Errors would have been inevitable; juvenile speakers would have been led by the apparent derivation of **sūgītor* 'is sucked' from **sūgīt* 'sucks' to construct a passive relative **sūgītoriyō* 'which is sucked' on the basis of the active relative **sūgītiyo* 'which sucks'.²⁴ It was from such „scrambled“ forms, I would suggest, that the new ending **-tiyor*

²³ I assume the Insular Celtic apocope of **-i* described by Cowgill (1975).

²⁴ We can set this up as a slightly inexact proportion: **sūgīt* : **sūgītor* :: **sūgītiyo* : X, where X, strictly speaking, should have been solved as **sūgītiyōr*, with **-ō-*. In fact, however, the pressure of the other passive endings, including the dentalless 3 sg. in **-or* (**beror* 'is borne', etc.), would virtually have guaranteed **-tiyōr*, rather than **-tiyōr*, as the fusion product of **-tiyo* + *-or*. It is just possible that the creation of this ending goes all the way back to Insular Celtic, and that the Brittonic counterpart to OIr. *-thiar* survives in the isolated Middle Welsh form *llemittyor* 'is leapt (upon)'. But *llemittyor* does not have the required relative meaning, and MW *-(t)tyor* can be otherwise explained (cf. Cowgill 96 f.).

gradually spread at the expense of the „correct“ relative passive in **-toriyō*. **sūgūtiyōr* itself eventually yielded (originally trisyllabic) *sūgthiar*; similarly, the A I form **molātiyōr* ‘which is praised’ gave *molāthiar*, with neutral **-th-*. Strong verbs acquired forms in **-tiyōr* as well: **dringetiyo* ‘who climbs’ triggered the creation of a passive relative **dringetiyo* (> *dringthiar*), which supplanted earlier **dringoriyo* (cf. OIr. 3 sg. pass. *-dren-gar*).²⁵

The one passive in *-thiar* that fails to conform to this analysis is *-égthiar*, which occurs in a prepositional relative clause and thus stands in lieu of the normal non-relative conjunct *-éigther* (*Dia nime nim-reilge hil-lurgu i n-égthiar ar muichtea meit* ‘May the God of heaven not leave me in the band wherein there is outcry on account of the greatness of the sorrowing’, §3).²⁶ But although *-égthiar* in this context in no way strengthens the case for taking *-thiar* as a relative ending, it hardly constitutes a serious argument to the contrary. As Cowgill points out (99), the metrical structure of the invocation of the Amrae specifically disfavors a trisyllabic scansion *-égthiar*. It is thus perfectly possible that the graphic interpretation of *-thiar* as a spelling for [-θ’ar] – the interpretation expressly rejected above for *dringthiar*, *rigthiar*, *molthiar*, *sūgthiar* and *aerthiar* – may in fact be the correct one here. The selection of *-thiar* rather than *-ther* would, of course, have been favored by the „genuine“ *-thiar* of *dringthiar* and *rigthiar*.²⁷

²⁵ Cowgill (97) sees the *-th-* of *dringthiar* as lending support to his view that the Insular Celtic 3 sg. passive of B I verbs ended in **-tor* rather than **-or*; he regards the dentalless ending of 3 sg. *drengair*, *-drengar* as a late, purely Irish innovation. Under the theory presented here, *dringthiar* is ultimately a derivative of the 3 sg. active *dringid* (non-rel. **-eti* → rel. **-etiyo* → rel. pass. **-etiyo*), and as such sheds no light at all on the original form of the non-relative passive ending.

²⁶ Transcription and translation are after Stokes 1899:154 f.

²⁷ The only other non-relative passives in the Amrae proper are *-marthar* (read *-már-thar*) ‘is magnified’ (A I; cf. Cowgill 100) and *-aiccestar* ‘is seen’, which lend support to the view that the non-relative, non-dissyllabic *-thiar* of *-égthiar* is simply a graphic variant of standard Old Irish *-ther*. But it is not inconceivable that *i^N* ‘in which’, which conspicuously lacks the prepositional relative particle *(s)a^N*, was originally followed in Irish by a clause in which *(s)a^N* occupied its familiar position within the verbal complex – in short, by a nasalizing relative clause. It is thus at least possible that *i-n-égthiar*, despite appearances, contains a genuine relative form. A further case of *-ia-* for standard OIr. *-e-* in the Amrae appears in the peculiar trisyllabic form *foidiam* (= *foidem*) ‘messenger’ (§ 15), on which see Greene 1972:233 f. The derivational history of this word is obscure. Since agent nouns in *-em* < **-i(s)amon-* are otherwise based on underlying abstracts (cf. *brithem* ‘judge’ < *breth* ‘judgment’, etc.),

The relative passives – or rather, passivized relatives – in *-thiar* (< **-tior*) thus bear indirect witness to the former existence of a 3 sg. leniting relative active in **-tiyo*. Both **-tior* and **-tiyo* were eventually replaced, the former by the 3 sg. conjunct in *-ther* (*-thar*), and the latter by *-es* (*-as*), with the *-s* of the corresponding nasalizing relative form of the copula. It was only by chance that the elimination of the type **beirthe* ‘who carries’ (< **beretiyo*) was completed before the date of our earliest literary texts, while the type **beirthiar* ‘who is carried’ (< **beretior*) maintained a tenuous existence into the Old Irish period.

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there is reason to suspect that *foidiam* may be a modernization of **foítiam*, itself a derivative of the archaic verbal noun *foít* ‘sending’, from a stem **woiðeθu-* or **woiðeθi-* with generalized syncope (gen. sg. **foíto* < **woiðeθōs*). A pre-syncope nom. sg. **woiðeθiam* would have lost its second syllable and given Old Irish trisyllabic *foítiam* perfectly regularly.

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