Old Irish gniid ‘makes, does’, Middle Welsh gweinydaf ‘serve’, and i-presents

Zusammenfassung

Altirisch gniid und die damit verwandten britischen Äquivalente müssen auf *gni-je/o- zurückgehen, während der alternative Stamm *gni-je/o- eine sekundäre Entwicklung darstellt. Dies zeigt sich in der Existenz eines Verbalnoms *gni-mu- und eines Verbaladjektivs *gni-to- sowohl im Irischen als auch im Britannischen, die nur auf der Basis eines Präsensstamms *gni-je/o- entstanden sein können. Dieser Präsensstamm wiederum muss auf *ĝneh₁-je/o- zurückgehen, die Wurzel hat aber üblicherweise die Form *ĝenh₁-.


Old Irish gniid ‘makes, does’ and its Brittonic equivalents Middle Welsh gweinydaf ‘serve’, Middle Breton gounez (3sg.) ‘wins, obtains, conquers, cultivates’, Middle Cornish gonetheff ‘work’ are etymologically problematic in a number of ways.¹ To begin with, they seem to diverge in the length of the vowel in the root. Before another vowel long vowels were shortened in Irish, but forms like 1pl. gnimmi seem to require a reconstruction *gni-je/o-. By comparison, the Brittonic forms all point to a reconstruction *(uo-)gni-je/o-.² I briefly discussed this discrepancy in Zair (2009), where I suggested that the Proto-Celtic present stem was *gni-je/o- on the basis of the verbal adjective *gni-to- and the verbal noun *gni-mu-. In the first part of the present article I will explain the reasoning behind this argument at greater length, and show that these forms are exactly what is to be expected to correspond to a present stem *gni-je/o-, and that their formation cannot be plausibly explained if the Proto-Celtic present stem was *gni-je/o-. In the second part of the article I will suggest a way that the problems that arise from the commonly accepted connection of gniid etc. with the Indo-European root *ĝenh₁- could be explained in the light of Jasanoff’s (2003: 91–127) theory of ‘i-presents’.³

¹ I am grateful to Paul Russell for his advice on improving an earlier version of this article, and to the suggestions of an anonymous reviewer. Thanks to Valentina Lunardi for help in formatting and Harald Flohr for translation into German. All mistakes are of course my own.

² After stressed *-i- the following glide became *-d- in British Celtic, written <d>, <z> and <th> in Middle Welsh, Middle Breton and Middle Cornish respectively.

³ I am no longer convinced by my suggested connection with *ĝneh₁- ‘know’ (ZAIR

DOI10.1515/zcph.2015.008
At first sight, the discrepancy between the length of the vowel in the verb stem between Irish and British is easily resolved by recourse to analogical re-modelling in Irish, on the basis of other verbs which did contain an etymological long vowel (on the proportion 3sg. *bā-ie-ti > baid ‘dies’: 1pl. *bā-io-mosi > bāmni : ‘gni-je-ti > gniid : X, where X is gnimmi instead of expected *gnemmi < *gni-jo-mosi). But such a reconstruction is highly problematic. Firstly, it is difficult to motivate. It is generally agreed that this verb goes back to a root *ĝenh₁- ‘produce, generate’, found very widely in other Indo-European languages (e.g. Greek γίγνομαι ‘be born, become’, Vedic jāyate ‘is born’, Latin gignō ‘beget, produce’; LIV 163–5). But neither *ĝenh₁-ie/o- nor *ĝnh₁-ie/o- will give *gni-ie/o-directly (*ĝnh₁-ie/o- is in fact attested in Celtic in e.g. Old Irish · ginnedar ‘comes to life, is born’; *ĝenh₁-ie/o- would give Old Irish *geinid). For this reason Schumacher (2004: 339–47) supposes that the forms represent a new Proto-Celtic formation; the ‘root’ *gn- was abstracted from environments where *ĝnh₁-C- had given *ĝnāC-, and a new present *gn-ie/o- was formed. At this stage the Proto-Indo-European rules of syllabification (which would result in *gni[e/o- > *ganie/o-) had been lost, and the result of *gni[e/o- was *gni[e/o-. While such a process is not impossible, it is hard to see why such a formation would have been created: the idea is completely ad hoc, and quite unattractive. Some further evidence makes this reconstruction even more difficult: the verbal noun and adjective which go with this verb both point to a long vowel rather than a short vowel. Thus we have a verbal noun *gni-mu-, as shown by Old Irish gním ‘be born’, Middle Welsh gnif ‘labour, toil’, and, with the preverbs *ambi-u-̯o-, Old Breton imguognim ‘grammatical construction’, and an original verbal adjective *gni-to-, preserved in the Old Irish 3sg. preterite passive relative ro-ńgníth. In the case of neither of these forms is it likely that *gni- reflects the original formation. The well-attested category of verbal adjectives in *-to- was formed to the zero grade of the root in Proto-Indo-European, so we would expect to find *ĝnh₁-to- > *gnàto- > Old Irish *gnáth (cf. Latin (g)nátus ‘born’, Greek -γνητος in e.g. κασίγνητος ‘brother’). Verbal nouns in *-mu- are a much less well-attested formation, whose extra-Celtic Indo-European connections are uncertain (Schumacher 2000: 128–9). However, they may also have originally had the root in the zero grade, if Middle Welsh llif ‘stream, flow’ < *limu- < *liH-mu- is anything to go by (the root is *lejH-; LIV 405–6), in which case we would again expect *ĝnh₁-mu- > *gnámü-; but even if they were full-grade, this would have been *ĝenh₁-mu-, which would not give *gni-mu-. A possible analogical explanation for the verbal adjective and noun does lie to hand, if we accept that the present stem was *gni-ie/o-, by proportional analogy with *liH-e/o- > *-li-ie/o- > Middle Welsh dillyd (3sg.) ‘flows, floods, pours’ (Schumacher 2004: 451–2), whose verbal noun *li-mu- we have already...
seen. We could then posit an analogy *lī-i/e/o- : lī-mu- : *gṇī-i/e/o- : X : Y, where X is *gṇī-mu- and Y is *gṇī-to-.⁵ The basis for the influence of *lī-i/e/o- is, however, rather weak: why should a semantically basic and consequently frequent verb like *gṇī-i/e/o- ‘make, do’ be analogically remodelled on the basis of such a marginal verb as *lī-i/e/o- ‘flow’? The analogical models could be strengthened by also including *sneḥ₁-i/e/o- → *snī-i/e/o- > Middle Welsh nydu, Middle Breton nezaff ‘to spin’, which has a verbal noun *snī-mu- in Middle Irish snīm ‘twisting, bending, shaping’, *kom-snīmu- > Middle Welsh kynnif ‘toil, labour, effort’ and a verbal adjective *snī-to- > Old Irish 3sg. preterite passive rel. ru-snīth.⁶ Since the root is *sneḥ₁- (cf. Greek γη ‘spins’; LIV 571–2),⁷ if we assume that the present was *sneḥ₁-i/e/o- → *snī-i/e/o- in Proto-Celtic, it could have generalised the ‘root’ of the present stem to the verbal noun and adjective (in place of *sṇh₁-mu- and *sṇh₁-to- → *snā-mu- and *snā-to- respectively), prior to its becoming *snī-i/e/o- by the same means as envisaged by SCHUMACHER for *gṇī-i/e/o-. But the possibility of analogy with *snī-i/e/o- requires us to extend the same ad hoc change of *snī-i/e/o- to *snī-i/e/o- as for *gṇī-i/e/o-. Furthermore, while an analogical proportion can be mechanically set up in the way just outlined, this does not mean that this is what happened: first we should look to see whether it fits in with other evidence for analogical processes which affected the same linguistic elements in the language, and we should favour explanations which match the general changes affecting the language over ad hoc analogical proportions.

It is very clear that remodelling of the verbal noun in *-mu- and verbal adjective in *-to-, when it took place in Proto-Celtic, was consistently due to paradigmatic levelling. For the verbal nouns, there are few examples where the similarity must be due to remodelling, but it is evident in Middle Welsh gwaesaff ‘guarantee’, Old Irish fōessam ‘protection’ < *yo-si-stā-mu-, based on the present stem seen in Old Irish fo-sissedar ‘protects’ < *yo-si-stā-i/e/o-. In almost all cases of remodelling of the verbal adjective, it has been altered to be identical to the present stem, as shown in the following table.⁸

---

⁵ The verbal adjective *lī-to- is not actually attested in Celtic.
⁶ The length of the vowel is not marked in the text from which this form is taken, but *snī-to- would have given Irish *ro-sneth by lowering of short *-i- to *-ē- when followed by *-o- → *-a-.
⁷ According to JASANOFF (2003: 110), the root is actually *sneḥ₂- on the basis of Latvian snāju ‘twist, spin’, with all forms pointing to *snē- reflecting the strong form *snēḥ₂- of a Narten present. The usual reconstruction will be followed here, but can be replaced by *snēḥ₂- without difficulty.
⁸ Forms taken from SCHUMACHER (2004). The derivational history of Old Irish sennait (3pl.) ‘strike’ and to-sēssa (3pl. pret. pass.) are too complex for them to be used as evidence (SCHUMACHER 2004: 558–60).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present stem</th>
<th>Verbal adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RECONSTRUCTED</strong></td>
<td><strong>ATTENDED</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>beg-e/o-</em></td>
<td>-baig 'plucks'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>g</em>edef-je/o-</td>
<td>guidid 'prays'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*sek&quot;e/o-</td>
<td>sechid 'asserts'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*h₂eği-e/o- &gt; *ag-e/o-</td>
<td>·aig 'drives'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*med-e/o-</td>
<td>midithir 'judges'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*org-e/o-</td>
<td>orcaid 'kills'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*h₂reği-e/o- &gt; *reg-e/o-</td>
<td>·raig 'raises oneself'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*ret-e/o-</td>
<td>rethid 'runs'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*ued&quot;e/o-</td>
<td>fedid 'brings'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*üeg-je/o-</td>
<td>·figther 'is woven'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*üet-e/o-</td>
<td>fethid 'goes'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*aneg-e/o-</td>
<td>aingid 'saves'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*d₃h₂-e/o/ &gt; *dam-e/o-</td>
<td>·daim 'endures'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*h₁lmH-je/o/ &gt; *lam-je/o-</td>
<td>·laimethar 'dares'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*prk-ske/o- &gt; *ark-e/o-</td>
<td>Middle Welsh archaf 'ask'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*h₁d-ed &gt; *ed-</td>
<td>estir 'eats' (subjunctive)¹⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*semH-e/o- &gt; *sem-e/o-</td>
<td>do-essim 'sheds'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

9 Old Irish, unless otherwise specified.
10 Old Irish 3sg. preterite passive, unless otherwise specified.
11 In 3sg. relative pret. pass. nad-n-airchós < *ari-kom-üed-to-.
12 In 3sg. pret. pass. do-cúas.
13 The prehistory of this verb is complex. It was originally probably a compound, and as such would not have had a verbal adjective (Schumacher 2004: 198-200).
14 The verb 'to eat' formed a Narten present *h₁ē̆d- (LIV 230). The lengthened grade in the strong forms is apparently reflected, with some remodelling, in Old Irish itherd 'eats' (Schumacher 2004: 377-80).
The only exception to this principle is in a small group of verbal adjectives, associated with verbs whose synchronic roots were of the shape *CeL(C)-, where the relationship between the present stem and the verbal adjective is no longer clear due to the different developments of laryngeals in different environments. The examples consist of 3sg. preterite passive Old Irish fo-cress < *krid-to- < *krd-to- for expected *krā-to- < *krH-to-, based on the present stem *kerd- in Old Irish fo-ceirt ‘throws’ < *kerd-e/o- < *kerH-dʰh₁-e/o- (Schumacher 2004: 401–3); *mli-to- < *ml̃-to- (← *ml̃-to- < *ml̃H₂-to-) in pret. pass fo-rollo-mled to Old Irish melid ‘grinds’ < *mel-e/o-; and ro-sreth < *stri-to- (← *strā-to- < *strH₂-to-) to Old Irish sernait (3pl.) ‘strew’ < *ster-na-. The model is *bʰr̥-to- > *bri-to- > ·breth beside *bʰer-e/o- > Old Irish beirid ‘bears’. This remodelling may have taken place only in Irish: the original past participle of *strH₂-to-, *strā-to-, was substantivised, and preserved as Old Irish srath ‘grass, sward, valley’, Middle Welsh ystrad ‘valley, vale’, Middle Breton strat ‘bottom, vale’, and the full grade root in *ster-na- on which the remodelling is based seems to be a secondary Irish development, the original zero grade being preserved in Middle Welsh gwassarnu ‘to strew straw etc. under beasts’ < *uo-starna- < *-str-n-h₃- (Schumacher 2004: 42–5, 601–3). The same is true of Old Irish melid, since the zero grade is found in Middle Welsh malu ‘to grind’ < *mal-e/o- < *mlH₂-e/o- (Schumacher 2004: 470–2).

Whether or not the second type of remodelling is late, it clearly only affected a particular group of roots of a particular shape. In all other cases, where a verbal adjective has been remodelled, its ‘root’ becomes identical to that of the present stem. It is likely that, in cases where zero grade in the verbal adjective resulted in sequences of *CC-to-, where both consonants were plosives and hence unsyllabifiable, an e-grade had already been introduced in Proto-Indo-European itself: this will explain the correspondence between the root of the present and the verbal adjective in forms like *gʷed-e/o- ~ *gʷed-to- (Kuryłowicz 1968: 210). However, no such process applied in cases where the root contained a sonorant (or probably fricative), and the analogical remodelling after the verb in these cases, which make up the great majority of the above table, must have been a Proto-Celtic development. This having been established, given that neither *gni-mu- nor *gni-to- can come regularly from zero grade formations, it follows that the most parsimonious explanation is that they underwent the same type of remodelling that affected the other verbal nouns and adjectives: that is, they were remodelled on the basis of the verb. Therefore, the verbal noun *gni-mu- and verbal adjective *gni-to-, rather than being explained by setting up a proportional analogy, are far more likely to have generalised the ‘root’ of the present stem, which should therefore be reconstructed as *gni-ie/o- in Proto-Celtic rather than *gni-ie/o-, whose appearance in Brittonic must be secondary.¹⁶ It must be admitted that the cause of this shortening is still

¹⁶ Another possible indirect piece of evidence for a stem *gni-ie/o- is found in the Middle Welsh verbal noun gwniau and Middle Breton verbal noun gruyat ‘sew’. These may
somewhat mysterious. Shortening in hiatus in British seems to be ruled out (Griffith 2009: 157–8). I have earlier argued that in British the frequency of *bi-ie-o* → Middle Welsh byd ‘is’, where the short vowel is in fact regular, alongside the marginal *li-ie-o*, may have led to the shortening (Zair 2009: 218), but I must admit that a direct analogical proportion cannot be drawn up.

The only plausible explanation for a present stem *gni-ie-o* is to reconstruct *ĝneh₁-ie-o*, which would give *gnē-ie-o* and then *gni-ie-o*, since *-ē* became *-i- in Proto-Celtic.¹⁷ This reconstruction appears to be undermined by the fact that it involves an apparently unmotivated Schwebeablaut: when in the full grade this root normally has full grade I, as demonstrated by forms like Latin gens ‘family’, Greek γένεσις ‘birth’ < *ĝenh₁-ti-. But in this regard *ĝneh₁-ie-o* matches strikingly well with the behaviour of a class of ‘i-presents’ posited for Proto-Indo-European by Jasanoff (2003: 91–127).¹⁸ According to Jasanoff, i-presents were formed only to roots ending in a laryngeal, and the root was always in full grade II, even when normally in full grade I. Except in Hittite the i-presents were thematised, falling together with *-*e/o- presents. Due to this development, most of the evidence presented by Jasanoff for this type of formation comes from Hittite, and in fact, the forms which show full grade II instead of full grade I in the other languages are rather limited, and their explanation not at all straightforward. Jasanoff uses as evidence verbs in Vedic and Greek which show problematic short vowels, such as Vedic hvāyati ‘calls’, which he reconstructs as coming from *ghueH-ie-o*, and Greek δράω ‘perform’ < *dreh₂-ie-o-. This development is explained by Jasanoff by means of the so-called ‘-AHIHA- rule’, an Indo-European rule whereby in a sequence vowel – laryngeal – high vowel – laryngeal – vowel, the first laryngeal was lost by dissimilation. Jasanoff sees his i-presents as having endings belonging to the ‘hi-conjugation’ of Hittite, which have a 1sg. in *-h₂e. Consequently, in a form like *ghuH-i-h₂e, the first laryngeal was lost by the -AHIHA- rule, resulting in a short vowel which could be generalised through the paradigm. A major part of this scenario is the very doubtful -AHIHA- rule,¹⁹ and it is also not completely certain that the roots

---

¹⁷ The analogical explanation proposed by LIV (164, fn.21) is highly implausible.

¹⁸ Note that Jasanoff’s proposed theory of i-presents is quite different from that of Schrijver (2003).

¹⁹ Apart from the forms under discussion, the only evidence for the -AHIHA- rule which is put forward by Jasanoff is a derivation, attributed to Jochem Schindler, of the respective Vedic and Slavic ā-stem instrumental singulars -ayā and -oį from *-eh₂-ih₂-ēh₁, consisting of the instrumental ending added to the stem formants of both the devī-stems and the ā-stems. It is not clear why only the instrumental singular of the ā-stems should have undergone the addition of the devī-stem formant, and further evidence would be welcomed before accepting this rule.
adduced by Jasanoff are intrinsically full grade I. For the root reconstructed by Jasanoff as *g²heuH, the earliest Vedic evidence hávate ‘summons’ suggests full grade I, but LIV (180–81) prefers *gʰyeH-, on the basis of forms like Young Avestan zbátár- ‘caller’. For ōpáo, LIV (127) reconstructs *dreh₂-, and indeed there seems to be no comparative evidence to decide in favour of either *dreh₂- or *dreh₂. A better example, in that it shows the expected long vowel from a sequence *uiēr₁-je/o-, is perhaps Latin uiēre ‘weave together’, whose full grade I is demonstrated by Lithuanian vejū ‘wind’ < *uejhi₁-e/o-, Gothic waddjus ‘wall’ < *uojh₁-u-.²⁰ According to Jasanoff, the long vowel here reflects the expected result of e.g. the 3sg. *uiēh₁-i-e, in which the laryngeal was not lost, resulting in a long vowel, which was generalised in Latin uiēre.

Even if one accepts the existence of Indo-European i-presents in the form envisaged by Jasanoff, there remain certain difficulties with his proposal. It is also clearly the case that by no means all roots ending in a laryngeal which form je/o-presents can be traced back to an i-present of this sort: cf. *h₂erh₂-je/o- ‘plough’, which is certainly old, being attested in Middle Irish airid, Greek ἀρόω, Latin arō, Old High German erien, Lithuanian ārti, Old Church Slavonic orati ‘plough’ (LIV 272–3), but has full grade I rather than II.²¹ Nonetheless, even if one does not accept the whole edifice built by Jasanoff it does seem that at the very least he has identified a particular class of je/o-presents to roots ending in a laryngeal, and there is a suggestive possibility that they may appear exceptionally in full grade II. In light of this possibility, Proto-Celtic *gni₁-je/o- < *γnēh₁-je/o- seems a very strong supporting example, not suggested by Jasanoff himself.²² It is, moreover, not the only one. Old Irish do-slí ‘deserves,

---

²⁰ Jasanoff does not address the Vedic thematic aorist ávyat ‘wrapped’, which is taken by LIV (695) to prove a full grade I *uiēh₁-. Presumably he would see the sequence vy- as analogical on the present vyāyati, which comes, according to him, from *uiēh₁-i-h₂-e.

²¹ Although if Hittite ḥarrai ‘grinds, splinters, crushes’ belongs here, as suggested by Kloekhorst (2008: 300–301), which is not an i-present, it may suggest that the *je/o- present in ‘core’ Indo-European is a secondary development.

²² It should be noted that gniid < *γnēh₁-je/o- is entirely compatible with the existence of *γngh₁-je/o- in Old Irish -ginedar ‘comes to life, is born’, Vedic jāyate ‘is born’: Jasanoff sees ‘i-presents’ as having full grade in the root in strong parts of the paradigm (1–3 sg.) and zero grade in the weak parts (1–3 pl.). Since the medio-passive in Indo-European normally shares the same ablaut grade as the weak active stem, *γnēh₁-i-je/o- (active) and *γngh₁-i-je/o- (medio-passive) is exactly the pattern one would expect. It looks as though Celtic has uniquely preserved a very old pattern. Originally, as noted by Schumacher (2004: 342–4), there would only have been a single paradigm of non-present parts of the verb built to *γngh₁-, but as a result of the very different present stems which developed from active *γnēh₁-je/o- and medio-passive *γngh₁-je/o-, paradigm split occurred, with *gni₁-je/o- forming an entirely new paradigm. This was mostly based on analogy with *sni₁-je/o-, but in Irish the subjunctive stem *gne₁-, as found in Old Irish 3pl. rel. gnete, is based on that of the verb ‘to be’, as in 3sg. beith. This development at least must have taken place in a fairly late stage of primitive Irish, after shortening in hiatus, since before this *biē₁-e/o- and *gni₁-je/o- had different vowel
merits, earns’ < *tu-slī-je/o-, Middle Welsh derllyd (3sg.), Middle Breton dellez (3sg.) ‘deserves’ < *tu-ari-slī-je/o- shows the same pattern of long vowel in Irish and short vowel in Brittonic as *gni-je/o-. It is generally agreed that it is to be assigned to the root *selh₁- ‘take’ (LIV 529; SCHUMACHER 2004: 588–91), but just as with gniid, it seems to be in an unexpected and unexplained full grade II *sleh₁-. Although, unlike as for gniid, we do not have the supporting evidence of a verbal noun or verbal adjective conclusively demonstrating the root *slī-, the similarity of the root shape and the pattern of long vowel in Irish to short vowel in Brittonic as *gnī-i e/o- shows the same pattern of long vowel in Irish and short vowel in Brittonic as *gnī-i e/o-.

It is generally agreed that it is to be assigned to the root *selh₁- ‘take’ (LIV 529; SCHUMACHER 2004: 588–91), but just as with gniid, it seems to be in an unexpected and unexplained full grade II *sleh₁-.²³ Although, unlike as for gniid, we do not have the supporting evidence of a verbal noun or verbal adjective conclusively demonstrating the root *slī-, the similarity of the root shape and the pattern of long vowel in Irish to short vowel in Brittonic as *gnī-i e/o-.²³ It is generally agreed that it is to be assigned to the root *selh₁- ‘take’ (LIV 529; SCHUMACHER 2004: 588–91), but just as with gniid, it seems to be in an unexpected and unexplained full grade II *sleh₁-.²³ Although, unlike as for gniid, we do not have the supporting evidence of a verbal noun or verbal adjective conclusively demonstrating the root *slī-, the similarity of the root shape and the pattern of long vowel in Irish to short vowel in Brittonic as *gnī-i e/o-.

Another possible, but inconclusive, example is found in the verbal adjective *u̯rī-to- in the Gaulish personal name Ateuritus and in Old Irish fo-frith ‘has been found’, to which no present stem is found, since the verb has a suppletive present in Old Irish fo-gaib ‘finds’. However, since the adjective should have been *u̯rīh₁-to-, it must, as already established, have been analogically remodelled on a present which began *u̯rī-. The root is reconstructed by LIV as *u̯reh₁- (LIV 698), though the only evidence it presents for the full grade II is Celtic *u̯rī-to- itself, which it traces back to *u̯reh₁-to-. Since this could have been analogical on an ‘i-present’ *u̯reh₁-je/o- with secondary full grade II, it does not provide any evidence for the original position of the vowel in the root. Nor do any other verbs which come directly from this root seem to show a clear full grade *u̯reh₁-: reduplicated aorists with zero grade of the root are found in Old Avestan, Greek and perhaps Celtic, a nasal present *u̯re-h₁- in Old Avestan (LIV 689; KÜMMEL 2015 s.v. *u̯reh₁-)...

²³ For full grade I of this root cf. Greek εἰλὼν (aor.) ‘took’ < *e-selh₁-o-m, Gothic saljan ‘offer’ < *solh₁-eye/o-, Old Irish selb ‘property’, Middle Welsh helw, elw ‘profit’ < *selh₁-weh₁.

²⁴ For the full grade I, cf. Armenian eli ‘went up, went out’.

---

Lengths in their root (ZAIR 2009). In British Celtic, the non-present parts of the verb are largely replaced by reflexes of the root *yerg- ‘make, do’ (SCHUMACHER 2004: 707–11); the Middle Cornish 3sg. preterite dynythys ‘created, produced’ is simply created by adding the preterite suffix -ys- to the present stem dynyth < *dī-gni-je/o-.
find’). According to Klingenschmitt (1978: 6–7), the creation of Proto-Baltic *rādī- lying behind rōdyti is analogical on the normal pattern of e-grade verb roots corresponding to o-grade causatives (> *e- and *a- in Proto-Baltic): the *-ā- of rōdyti is based on an extension of this pattern to roots with *-ē- < *-eh₁-, so that *-ē- in the rest of the verb corresponds to *-ā- in the causative, in place of regular *-ō- < *-oh₁-. It follows that beside rōdyti there must have been a full grade verb root *rēd- < *ureh₁-d⁽ʰ⁾-. This Baltic evidence is simply too indirect to be relied on for the existence of full grade II *ureh₁- as the underlying state of this root, and the *-t- found in Slavic is by no means a commonplace extension to a verb root, which leads LIV (501) to reconstruct an entirely separate root *reh₁t- for the Slavic forms. Even if both the Slavic and Baltic forms are derived from the root being discussed here, and point to *ureh₁-t- and *ureh₁-d⁽ʰ⁾-, it is possible that the extensions themselves caused the root to be in full grade II. In short there seems no strong evidence in favour of *ureh₁- rather than *yerh₁- as the underlying full grade of this root. Conversely, there is a piece of evidence which seems to point to *yerh₁-, which is Armenian gerem, usually translated as ‘take prisoner’.²⁵ However, Praust (2005), has argued that gerem really means ‘lead away’, and derives the verb from the root *yed⁽ʰ⁾-, as seen in e.g. Lithuanian vedù ‘lead’ (LIV 659). The semantics certainly seem plausible; the etymology relies on the Armenian sound change *-d⁽ʰ⁾ > -r- word-medially, the correctness of which I am not equipped to judge. This etymology has been accepted by Kümmel (2015, s.v.v. *yed⁽ʰ⁾-, *ureh₁-). Consequently, it is not possible to say whether the root is underlyingly *yerh₁- or *ureh₁-; if it were the former, Proto-Celtic *yēri-to- would support the reconstruction of a - subsequently lost - present *yēri-je/o-, going back to an original i-present *ureh₁-je/o-.

To conclude: examination of the relationship between the verbal noun and adjective and the verb stem in Proto-Celtic shows that the underlying long vowel found in Old Irish gniid ‘makes, does’, is the most reliable reflection of the Proto-Celtic situation, and we can consequently reconstruct a present stem *gni-je/o-, which can only go back to *gnēh₁-je/o-. The unexpected full grade II of the root corresponds to the Schwebeablaubt identified by Jasanoff as a feature of his hypothesised Proto-Indo-European i-presents - and gniid, and perhaps some other Celtic verbs of the same type, provides a rather more straightforward instance than most of the cases suggested by him in Vedic and Greek.

References


²⁵ The full grade I is assumed to be secondary by LIV.


McCONE, Kim, 1996: Towards a relative chronology of Ancient and Medieval Celtic sound change. Maynooth: Department of Old Irish, St. Patrick’s College.


Peterhouse Cambridge CB2 1RD
naz21@cam.ac.uk

Nicholas ZAIR