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British Celtic influence on English phonology

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British Celtic Influence on English Phonology

Stephen Laker

British Celtic Influence on English Phonology

PROEFSCHRIFT

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Preface

Very few publications have considered what influence, if any, British Celtic had on the development of English sounds. Owing to recent interest into British and Anglo-Saxon relations – not only from linguists but also from historians, archaeologists and even geneticists – such a study is timely. Writing on a new topic presents many challenges, but it has the advantage of allowing one to look at the data afresh, and one is not forced too much into long discussions about the ideas and theories of earlier scholars. Fortunately, a large number of books and publications, while not directly concerned with the question of Celtic influence on English, have in fact been very adaptable to the needs of this investigation. By using research not directly associated with Celtic influence on English it has been possible to maintain the required level of impartiality throughout.

My interest in historical linguistics and the topic of Celtic influence on English began when I was a student at the University of Munich. There I came under the inspiring influence of Theo Vennemann, who has had a great influence on my subsequent work and therefore also on this dissertation. I am grateful for his guidance and support over many years. With the arrival at the same university of Peter Schrijver, I was able to receive the best possible training in Celtic historical linguistics that I needed to initiate and ultimately complete this project. I am grateful for his help and input, both as a student in Munich and later during my occasional visits to Utrecht. While much of my linguistic training was received in Munich, the place did not however necessarily provide the ideal working conditions for me to write a doctoral dissertation. Circumstances changed when Rolf Bremmer took me under his wing as a PhD student in a funded position at Leiden University. I have been immensely fortunate to have profited from his expertise while writing this dissertation. His support and criticism have been indispensable to the completion of the project.

Leiden provided me with an excellent base to do research in an amicable environment surrounded by many talented linguists with diverse interests. Many friends and colleagues at Leiden, especially in the English Department and the Centre for Linguistics, helped me in many ways during my time there. These are too many to thank individually, but I do wish to record my special thanks to Rob Goedmans, Vincent van Heuven, Gea Hakker-Prins and Jeroen van de Weijer for much help especially in the early stages of my appointment. I am also grateful for the support and encouragement of my former colleagues at Manchester University, especially Eva Schultze-Berndt, David Denison, Nuria Yáñez-Bouza, and to my new colleagues at Kyushu University, in particular Nobuaki Nishioka and Taras Sak. Furthermore, I have benefitted from the assistance of numerous scholars who have often generously sent me their publications, provided feedback on queries or offered other help. Among many others, I here wish to thank Andrew Breeze, Nick Higham, Petri Kallio, Angelika Lutz, Donka Minkova, Patrizia Noel, Guto Rhys, Karling Rottschäfer, Patrick Stiles, Hildegard Tristram, Peter Trudgill, Michiel de Vaan and David White.

I am particularly indebted to those who helped me in the process of writing up this dissertation. Robert Mailhammer read and commented on earlier drafts of each chapter. The corrections and comments of Rolf Bremmer, Peter Schrijver and, later, the reading committee – Cor van Bree, Richard Coates, Colin Ewen and Alexander Lubotsky – greatly improved the quality of the final version. For the faults that remain I must of course accept full responsibility.

Finally I wish to thank my parents, family and friends for their continuing love and support.

Stephen Laker

6 August 2010

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