pp. 159–237) is an excellent example of how this should be done. He skill-fully pieces together the background and biography of Murtaí, a smuggler from the Béarra Peninsula and former colonel in Lord Clare's regiment of Wild Geese, culminating in his death after a gun-battle on the night of 4 May 1754. Breatnach presents editions of two elegies (pp. 183–85; pp. 200–204) on Murtaí Óg from the MS tradition. The editions are accompanied by critical apparatus, textual notes and a discussion of questions of author-ship, textual traditions, and metre. A third elegy (pp. 212–13) drawn from the oral tradition and attributed to Murtaí's lieutenant, Domhnall Ó Co-naill, is also printed, together with notes on the various versions of the text and consideration of the tune to which it was sung.

It is further argued in the foreword that: *is gnó do stairí na litríochta an téacs cóirithe a thagairt don oidhreacht liteartha i gcoitinne, agus é a mheas ina cháilíocht mar chuimhniú míos ar ealaín, saol intleachta, agus pearsa an chumadóra* 'it is the business of the literary historian to consider the edited text with reference to the literary heritage in general, and to assess it in terms of its quality as a memorial of the art, intellectual life and character of the composer' (p. vii). All of the essays in Breatnach's book demonstrate how this theory can be put into practice.

*Téamaí Taighde Nua-Ghaeilge* is an exemplary exposition of the riches of Irish literary tradition. My only reservation about this work is that chapters 1 and 2 may arguably have been enhanced by concluding summar-ies. As against this, the theories of the author are consistently sustained by clearly presented textual evidence drawn from the medieval to modern periods, and that evidence is subjected to meticulous analysis. Pádraig Breatnach's book is a work of innovative and exciting scholarship which offers a most convincing insight into the continuity and richness of Irish literary tradition.

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ANNA BLOCH-ROZMEJ: *Element Interactions in Phonology – A study in Connemara Irish*. Lublin: Catholic University of Lublin, 1998, 281 p., Gr. 8°, ISBN 83-228-0641-8.

The book under review is unfortunately nothing less than a travesty. It is an insult to Celtic studies and linguistics in general and to the study of Irish in particular. Anna Bloch-Rozmej (henceforth AB) purports to investigate, within the framework of Government Phonology, the internal structure and external relations of the sounds of Connemara Irish with particular emphasis on the vowels. The best section is AB's discussion of the anoma-lous behaviour of *s* in initial clusters, a particularly important topic in Gov-ernment Phonology. The semi-independent status of *s* in (initial) clusters

in many languages is incorporated within Government Phonology; Irish provides further evidence of this semi-independence in the non-lenition and, to a lesser extent, the non-palatalisation of *s* in such clusters.

AB's analysis is found lacking in all essential aspects, casting serious doubt on her knowledge of (Connemara) Irish and linguistic theory. Most previous descriptive and theoretical work is ignored. This combination of double ignorance can only lead to a trail of woes. The remainder of this review will point out some of the most blatant blunders.

The dialect is nowhere geographically defined nor are sources for Con-nemara Irish listed. Data are given within the work itself from Ros Muc (LFRM)[1] and west, central and east Cois Fharraige (e.g. ICF, LI)[2]. Pho-netic transcriptions and glosses are inaccurate to a discomforting extent, e.g. *teinne* [tʲinʲə] 'rigidity' is certainly not taken from GCF, ICF or LI. The *Foclóir Póca*[3] is used for information on pronunciation rather than, for example, the readily available dialect monographs of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. There are also some strange coinings, e.g. *sean* [ʃaːn] ~ [ʃaːnwaːn] *seanbhán* 'old/white-headed' presumably for *ceann ~ ceannbhán*.

Chapter 1 briefly introduces the theory of Government Phonology and argues for a certain syllabic structure in Connemara Irish. The choice of evidence for syncopating words (p. 38) is most unfortunate and raises alarm bells which ring from here on to the end of the book. All three pairs of examples are faulty in one way or another: neither of the pair *ciorcal ~ ciorclach* is found in descriptions of traditional Connemara dialect; nor is the latter of the pair *iompar ~ iompróir* attested. Furthermore the initial vowel is not i but u(ː), (this error being all the more surprising since the in-itial vowel of *iompair*, given correctly as u(ː), is the subject of a mislead-ing discussion on p. 122). The syncopated token in the pair *clampar ~ clam-prach* is not attested for Connemara Irish. Unsyncopated *clamparach*, however, occurs in GCF (in AB's bibliography) and in FFG[4] (for Mionlach; not in AB's bibliography). Similarly, the related (unsyncopated) *clampar-thóir* can be found in LFRM (in AB's bibliography) s. v. *clampadóir*. To add to this error the actual Connemara form klampərəx is wrongly presented as the Munster realisation. Despite such inaccuracies, attested examples of syncope in all dialects are of course myriad, e.g. *iompair ~ iompróidh*; so that some of AB's conclusions based on syncope hold within Government Phonology. Examples of the opposite phenomenon, non-syncope, are also myriad: in GCF § 434 alone, as well as *clamparach*, witness *clochar ~ clocharach, fátall ~ fátallach, miotal ~ miotalach, tiucair ~ tiucarach*, not to mention *abarthach*, etc. Be that as it may, non-syncope is ignored by AB

[1] *Liosta Focal as Ros Muc*. Ó Máille, T. S., Dublin 1974.
[2] *The Irish of Cois Fhairrge, Co Galway*, de Bhaldraithe, T., Dublin 1975; *Learning Irish*, Ó Siadhail, M., Dublin 1983.
[3] *Foclóir Póca. English-Irish, Irish-English Dictionary*, Dublin 1992.
[4] *Foirisiún Focal as Gaillimh*, de Bhaldraithe, T., Dublin 1995.

despite having important implications for her proposal for two (or three) schwas in Irish. Raymond Hickey[5], who demonstrates the inextricable link between syncope and epenthesis, will serve here as an example of both a highly relevant article and topic not found in AB's discussion.

The next major twist in the *clamparach* trail will serve as an example of one of AB's main weaknesses: her over-reliance on insufficient data. Based on the two irregular genitives *doiris* (Munster rather than Connemara pronunciation given because AB's colleague, Cyran (1994)[6], is the source, thus ignoring GCF) and *soilis* (ignoring regular alternant *solais* in GCF), which have syncopated plurals *doirse* and *soilse*, AB comes to 'the obvious conclusion' that in roots which have syncope, $C_1VC_2VC_3 \sim C_1VC_2C_3V$, in the unsyncopated form when $C_3$ is palatalised so too will $C_2$. This preposterous result predicts genitives such as: *clampar ~ *claimpir*; *focal ~ *foicil*; nominative *fiacail* would have to be emended to *\*fiaicil* (or, depending on which version of *é* one takes to be underlying (p. 159) *\*féicil*), *iompair* to *\*impir*!

The example of *asal* illustrates another of AB's major 'theoretical' weaknesses: her argumentation is often of the kind 'if something is unknown (at least to AB) then it does not exist, and is therefore prevented by the phonological structure of Irish'. No syncopated form of *asal* is known, she argues, therefore its schwa is non-syncopating, since this type of non-syncopating schwa prevents palatalisation of $C_2$ its plural and genitive is predicted as attested *asail* (not *\*aisil*). On this 'logic' given *capall* has a syncopated form *caiple* one would still expect genitive and plural *\*caipill*, and given *asal* has a rare plural form *aisle*, apparently unknown to AB, we once more expect *\*aisil*. Based on only two further examples, both erroneous and irrelevant, e. g. the comparative of *te* is given as *\*t´oxə for t´oːxə *teocha* (shouldn't *deacair* really be *\*deaicir*?), the reverse process is also claimed, i. e. (with syncopating words) the unsyncopated form will velarise $C_2$ when $C_3$ is velarised. To add to the confusion then, given *leiceann ~ leicne*, this version of 'Irish' has the base-form of either *\*leacann* or *\*leicinn*, but not the real *leiceann*, and *\*cracann* or *\*craicinn* for *craiceann*.

The *clamparach* trail takes a further contortion illustrative of other unforgivable weaknesses in this work: superficial grasp of data and use of sources aimed at learners and more general users rather than serious academics. On purely surface distributional criteria there is only one schwa phoneme in Connemara Irish, all tokens of unstressed i in ICF are in complementary distribution with ə. LI's transcriptions of the unstressed vowel in *milis* as i and in *airm* as ə are given canonical status by AB. The fact that ICF transcribes both as i is ignored. The length of argumentation based on this pre-theoretical i ~ ə distribution, which is contentious, is ex-

[5] 'The interrelationship of epenthesis and syncope: evidence from Dutch and Irish' *Lingua* 65: 229–49; 1985.

[6] *Resonance elements in phonology. A study in Munster Irish*, Cyran, E., Lublin 1997.

hausting. There is no discussion of the consistency with regard to palatalisation of older consonant groups now separated by the epenthetic vowel. But why should there be when i ~ ə is the 'real' issue? One of the conclusions drawn is that Irish has (at least) two schwas, one of them being empty-headed. This empty-headed schwa is transparent with regards to palatalisation, and so resembles another empty-headed sound – r. We will follow some of the reasoning behind this very r in our second illustration of this book's wanderings.

It is well known that initial palatalised r almost never occurs in Irish. AB makes the following case. Broad r is a flapped consonant, slender r is a trill. This is based on the optional affricated realisation of final slender r described in ICF. The flap is weaker than the trill and so is empty-headed and cannot be palatalised. Initial r is not palatalised therefore it is the flapped version. Such claims are so ridiculous and circular as to hardly credit refutation. To briefly address the claim that slender r is a trill and stronger than broad r: an affricated consonant does not equal a trilled consonant. In fact the affrication of the flapped palatalised r is an indication of its weaker realisation which is seen in its reduction to a glide in large areas of Ireland[7].

AB's stated main interest in this publication is the investigation of the vowel system. She makes much of the reduced distribution of short vowels in comparison to long vowels and in particular the former's conditioning by consonant quality. These are indeed very significant points. AB unfortunately misses the fact that a system of only three short vowels was proposed as long ago as 1967[8]. Such a system includes only one low vowel a (also in FFG, for example). Instead a is the subject of much confusion, both with regards to length and quality. Two examples will suffice: the list of five pairs of alternants dealing with short realisation of a on p. 42 are all deficient in one way or another, the most blatant being the realisation f´ær for *fearr* (sic, the error is elaborated in the footnote); based on the discussion of alternants just mentioned a is defined as phonemically short yet ɴ´æːrt *neart* is still included under the topic of vowel lengthening before sonorant clusters and is used as evidence to support the false claim that voicing is of no importance in such clusters. The gradations and reductions in Irish short vowels show parallels with the preponderance for umlaut to occur in *short* vowels as highlighted for example by Kaye et al[9] for Government Phonology. This fact is followed up by AB to her credit.

It is futile to list any more of AB's numerous errors, nor is there any need to discuss the phonological detail of her non-empirical theorising. I trust enough has been said of her contorted use of Irish and Govern-

[7] See 'A minor Irish isogloss' *Studia Celtica* 14–5: 223–8; Ó Dochartaigh, C. 1980.

[8] 'On the dialect of the Inishkea islanders' *Studia Celtica* 2: 196–201; Skerret, R. A. Q. 1967.

[9] 'Constituent structure and government in phonology' *Phonology* 7: 193–231; Kaye, J., Lowenstamm, J. and Vergnaud, J.-R. 1990, pp. 225–6.

ment Phonology. She typically solves her problems with the government weapon of empty-headedness – a fitting end to such chimeras. Two phrases, used in key articles by some of the founders of Government Phonology, come to mind: 'caricature'[10] and 'entirely preposterous'[11]. A disservice has been done to Government Phonology. Questions must be raised about the quality of supervision which this work received. Finally, it is hoped that the Cultural Relations Committee of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, who provided financial support for this publication, as well as another superior, but nevertheless dissapointing publication[12], will in future be more discerning in the quality of scholarly work which they foster.

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*I mBéal na Farraige. Scéalta agus Senchas faoi Chúrsaí Feamainne ó Bhéal na nDaoine.* Collected and Edited by HEINRICH BECKER. Indreabhán, Co. na Gaillimhe: Cló Iar-Chonnachta 1997. 243 pp. incl. plates. ISBN 1 900693 84 4.

*I mBéal na Farraige* is a collection of stories and lore concerned with life and work on the coast of Conamara and the Aran Islands as recounted in Irish to Dr. Heinrich Becker by various local *seanchaithe* since 1939. Dr. Becker describes the majority of the stories in *I mBéal na Farraige* as *Tuairiscí réadula ar ar tharla do na faisnéiseoirí nó dá lucht aitheantais* 'realistic accounts of all that happened to the informants or to their acquaintances' (p. 14).

The book contains some eighty-six stories which have been grouped together in nine sections, each section being devoted to a specific theme. Among the most interesting themes are *Contúirt an Bháite agus Bá* 'The Danger of Drowning and Drowning' (Cuid I), *Daoine Neamhshaolta agus an Slua Sí* 'Otherworld People and the Fairy Host' (Cuid VII), *Diabhail agus Deamhain* 'Devils and Demons' (Cuid VIII) and *Geasa Oibre agus Iontais Eile* 'Work Taboos and Other Wonders' (Cuid IX). The title of each story is followed by the name of the *seanchaí* and his townland. The book has been enhanced throughout by the editor's excellent photographs.

[10] Kaye et al. 1990, p. 196.
[11] "Coda' licensing' *Phonology* 7, 301–30; Kaye, J., 1990, p. 301.
[12] See Diarmuid Ó Sé's review in *Éigse* 31, 185–9, 1999 of Aidan Doyle's *Noun derivation in Modern Irish: selected categories, rules and suffixes.* Lublin 1992.

In his foreword (pp. 11–16) Heinrich Becker relates how his interest in the folklore of Ireland was awakened by Séamas Ó Duilearga's lectures in Germany in 1935. Becker, then a lecturer in the English Department at Marburg University, had already gained a doctorate in folklore and written a book on the traditions and lore of the Elbe-boatmen. He came to Ireland in 1938 and enrolled as a postgraduate student in Irish at University College, Galway, where he also taught German. In May 1939 he began collecting folklore in Ros an Mhíl, Conamara. The editor remained in Ireland during the war and was made to feel at home there.

The remainder of the *Réamhrá* is concerned with the material presented in the book. Becker notes that there is a long tradition of lore concerning the shore and sea-weed stretching back to early Irish law and literature. The editor regards the stories recounted in *I mBéal na Farraige* as *cáipéis shóisialta* 'social documents' which give us *léargas grinn fírinneach* 'a perceptive and truthful insight' (p. 14) into the danger and toil (p. 15) associated with the kind of life which prevailed on the Atlantic coasts of Europe until about the middle of this century. The tales have a didactic purpose: *Bhí ceacht le foghlaim ag éisteoirí na scéalta féin as scéalta den chineál seo agus is iomaí uair a chuala siad iad á n-inseacht. Chuir siad ar a n-aireachas iad faoin gcontúirt a bhain leis an gcladach agus leis an bhfarraige* (p. 14). 'There was a lesson to be learned by the listeners to those stories from the stories themselves and they heard them being told frequently. They put them [the listeners] on their guard about the danger associated with the sea-shore and the sea.' Becker concludes his *Réamhrá* with a description of his *modus operandi* and his editorial policy.

One of the most outstanding pieces in this book is the *Réamhscéal*, a contribution by Joe Ó Domhnaill of Inis Oírr entitled *An Scéalaíocht sa tSeanaimsir* 'Storytelling in Olden Times' (pp. 17–26). Ó Domhnaill draws a vivid picture of the backdrop to the art of story-telling, and gives a superb account of the dramatics involved in this particular art-form. Stories concerning Fionn and the *Fiann* were told as well as tales of journeys and quests to the Otherworld. Ó Domhnaill's piece is fascinating and is enlivened throughout by the kinds of comments which the listeners used to make concerning the performance of the *seanchaí*.

The value of Heinrich Becker's book lies not only in the beauty of these stories as oral literature, nor in the insight which they give us into the boundlessness of the human imagination, but also in their function as a source of inspiration to those who heard them in their struggle for survival against material deprivation, physical hardship and cultural marginalisation.

As Joe Ó Domhnaill tells us of the *Fiann*:

*Bhí na fir sin, bhí siad in ann gnímh mhóra a dhéanamh, fulaint le haon phian ós na gortaithe a [d'] fháighidis ins na babhtaí a bhíodh acu le gaiscígh a bhíodh ag troid ina n-aghaidh agus seo iad na rudaí agus do b'shin é an fáth go mba mhaith leis na daoine na seanscéalta seo a chloisint ó am go ham* (pp. 22–23) 'Those men, they were able to do great deeds, to suffer any pain from the wounds which they used to receive in the rounds (of combat) which they were wont to have with the warriors who