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Fadó: A Conservative Survival in Irish?

Building on the insightful interpretations provided by Thurneysen (*GOI*), R. A. Breatnach (1951; 1954), Binchy (1984) and Hamp (1990), this brief contribution suggests an alternative explanation for the etymology and origin of the commonly used Irish adverb *fadó* ('long ago'). It proposes a relation with the final element of the ancient legal phrase *co nómad n-áu / n-ó* and explores the possible connection with Manx *er dy* ('since').

The temporal adverb *fadó* ('long ago') survives in Irish but is not found in Scottish Gaelic. The case for the possible survival of *fadó* in Manx is tentatively made in the appendix. The nearest equivalent in Scottish Gaelic is *fada bhuaidh(e)* ('long ago, a long time ago') – discussed further below – and *(bh)o chionn f(h)ada*: see, for instance, *LASIC IV* (q. 726, pts a–g; q. 1035, pt c). In traditional tales, we find *o chionn fada*; *o chionn tìmfhada*; *bho shean*, etc. (e.g. McKay 1940–60, II: 54, 88, 358, 17).¹ In Scotland, *fada* is often used with the simple preposition / conjunction *(bh)o*, e.g. *is fhada on uair sin* ('it is a long time since that time', i.e. 'it is a long time since we met'); *a thaobh is gu bheil fada o'n a bha an duine ann* ('because it is so long since he lived') (McKay 1940–60, I: 462, 463). *Is fhada (bh)o* is usually complemented by a negative clause, e.g. *is fhada (bh)o nach fhaca mi thu* ('it is a long time since I saw you').

FADÓ IN IRISH

Irish *fadó* is particularly common in Munster and Connacht but less so in Ulster, where *fad ó shoin* and *i bhfad ó shoin* are normally used to express the equivalent of 'long ago' (*LASIC II–IV*: q. 726). *Fad ó shoin* and *i bhfad ó shoin* also occur in Munster and Connacht; see, for example, *LASIC II–III* (q. 726, pts 9, 31, 36, 53, 54, 55, 62) and R. A. Breatnach (1951: 241).² In Ulster, only *fadóshoin / fad ó shoin*,³ *i bhfadóshoin / i bhfad ó shoin / i bhfad óshoin* (following Wagner's phonetic word divisions) occur in *LASIC*, where the ó is usually reduced to ɔ, a or ə. This is corroborated by numerous collections of traditional lore from Ulster. For instance, in Ó Tuathail's ([1933] 2015) Tyrone collection, *Sgéalta Mhuintir Luinigh*, the phrase *i bhfad ó shoin* seems to be the norm; in the lore of Annie Bhán Nic Grianna from Rann na Feirste (Donegal), *fad ó shoin* is the norm;⁴ similarly, in the stories of Pádraig Eoghain Phádraig Mac an Luain from Cruach Mhín an Fheannta (Donegal), *fada ó shoin* and *i bhfad ó shoin* are the forms that are used,⁵ in Ní Dhíoráí's collection of tales from

¹ The latter, *bho shean*, is synchronically and most likely diachronically associated with the adjective *sean*. *Dwelly* (s.v. *sean*) includes *bho shean* under the headword *sean* ('old') and translates 'anciently, of old'. It is attested since at least the end of the seventeenth century in the Farnaig Manuscript if Mac Farlane's ([1923]: 221, §16h) interpretation is correct. It is perhaps possible that in origin it may have been ó *shein*, i.e. ó + demonstrative *sein* ('from that, since then'). The demonstrative forms *sein / sean* are common dialect forms in Scotland and have been recorded for Colonsay, parts of Argyllshire, North Uist, St Kilda, Harris, Uig (Lewis), parts of Sutherland, East Perthshire and possibly parts of Aberdeenshire (Henderson 1905: 478; Holmer 1938: 212–13; Borgstrøm 1940: 188, §270; MacInnes 1977: 433–34; Ó Maolalaigh 2008: 260, n. 6; Grannd 2013: 306). MacInnes (1977: 433) notes that in some dialects the *sein* form is 'regarded as inferior or incorrect'. The form *sen* occurs in the Gaelic Notes of the Book of Deer (MacInnes 1977: 433; Ó Maolalaigh 2008: 260, §5.2 and n. 6). The spelling *o shein* (= *o shean* 'of old') occurs in Willison (1773: 10, 106, 161, 291, 368).

² In the phrases *fad ó shoin / i bhfad ó shoin*, expected h (e.g. pts 8, 9, 10, 55 / 55a, 62, 70, 74, 74a, 78, 79, 80, 82, 83, 84) often occurs as x (e.g. pts 11, 31, 36, 53, 54, 86) (*LASIC II–IV*, q. 726). This can be seen to be a form of strengthening of h. However, it is perhaps possible, as Professor Seosamh Watson suggests to me, that it derives from a mixed form **uagh shoin* (< **uadh shoin*), with devoicing of gh before sh h, based on ó *shoin* and *uadh soin*. This could apply to the shorter phrase ó *shoin* also. The phrase ó *chéin* ('from of old, long ago') should also perhaps be considered in the mix here (*eDIL* s.v. *cian*).

³ *fad óshoin* and *fad ó shoi(n)* occur in Cavan (*LASIC IV*: 301, 303).

⁴ *fad ó shoin* (MacLennan [1997] 1998: 58, 76, 196, 206).

⁵ *fad ó shoin* (Ó Catháin 1985: 40, 46, 65), *i bhfad ó shoin* (Ó Catháin 1985: 57).

na Cruacha (Donegal), while both *fad ó shoin* and *i bhfad ó shoin* are the forms normally used,⁶ *fadó* also occurs at least once: *Bhí fear ann fadó agus is fad ó bhí* (1985: 73). Dr Lillis Ó Laoire from Gort a' Choirce (Donegal) confirms (personal communication) that *fadó* occurs in Donegal Irish but is less common than *fad ó shoin*, *i bhfad ó shoin*, which are the forms normally used. In terms of the Gaelic dialect continuum, the adverb *fadó* becomes less common in northern dialects, and is absent altogether in Scottish Gaelic.

Fadó is stressed on the second syllable (**fádo:**, **fə'do:**) in Munster and Leinster dialects but on the first syllable (**fado:**) in Connacht (Galway and Mayo) and Donegal dialects. While noting *fadó fado:* with initial stress as the general form in Iorras Aithneach (Galway), Ó Curnáin notes that **'fado:** and **fad o:** are also found with the older generation, i.e. speakers born in 1904 and 1915 (2007, i: 392, §1.384). These latter forms may be conservative forms and their possible significance is discussed below.

The isogloss separating Munster *fa'dó* and Connacht *'fadó* runs between North Clare and South Galway (*LASID* II–IV: q. 726).⁷ R. A. Breatnach (1951: 241), on the authority of Professor Séamas Caomhánach / Kavanagh (1900–89), a native speaker of Kerry Irish, notes that the stress falls on ó in the phrase *fadó shin* (cf. *LASID* II: q. 726, pt 11) but never in the phrase *i bhfad ó shoin*. On the other hand, the evidence from Wagner's *Linguistic Atlas and Survey of Irish Dialects* (*LASID*) shows that in County Cork he marks the stress on any of the three elements, *fad*, ó or *shoin*, e.g. **'fad o: hin'** (pt 9, Glandore), **fa'do:xm'** (pt 11, Clear Island), **fad o: 'hin'** (pt 8, Clonakilty), **fado: 'hin'** (pt 10, Skibbereen) (*LASID* II: q. 726). In the phrases *fad ó shoin* and *i bhfad ó shoin* in Connacht and Ulster the main stress is always on (*bh*)*fad*. In Donegal, the adverb *ariamh* is sometimes used in this phase, e.g. *i bhfad ariamh ó shin e' wad e'riəw a hənh* (Lucas 1979: 259).

ORIGIN OF FADÓ

One obvious derivation for *fadó* is to derive it via metanalysis from *fada ó* (conjunction) + verb or *fada ó* (preposition) *shoin*. We might compare *cáideó* < *cáid ó* < *cá fhaid ó* ('how long since?') in Connacht Irish (de Bhaldraithe [1953] 1977: 211, §403; Ó Curnáin 2007, III: 1497, §8.49). However, the new explanation presented below, suggests that while such metanalysis was always available to speakers of the language, the ultimate derivation of the independent adverb *fadó* may be different.

Placing importance on the 'exceptional treatment of ó in [Munster] *fadó shin*', with stressed ó, R. A. Breatnach (1951: 241–42) explained the ó element as deriving from the stressed third person singular masculine prepositional pronoun *uadh* ('from him, from it'), used adverbially, claiming that the change *ua(dh)* > ó developed due to the influence of ó in the phrase *fad' ó shoin* and possibly also in *anallód* ('of yore, in olden times').⁸ Based on the adverbial use of *uadh* in the phrase *fada úadh* ('far off') in O'Brien's *Focalóir Gaoidhilge-Sags-Bhearla* ([1768] 1832: 212), R. A. Breatnach (1951: 242; 1954: 156) made the plausible

⁶ *fad ó shoin* (Ní Dhíoraí 1985: 10, 55, 80, 87, 89, 101, 115, 116, 117, 123, 134, 135, 138, 140, 144, 147, 150), *i bhfad ó shoin* (Ní Dhíoraí 1985: 1, 42, 82, 99, 106, 111).

⁷ Relevant forms are sometimes found listed in the vocabulary associated with individual dialect points in *LASID*.

⁸ A phonological development *ua* > ó, while possible, seems unlikely. In Munster this development seems to be confined to nasal environments, e.g. *cnuasach* > *cnósach*, *nua* > *nó* (assuming the latter is not a direct reflex of the original hiatus form *noë*) (Ó Cuív [1944] 1988: 100, §291; Ó Buachalla 2017: 93, 214–15). In Donegal one finds *ua* > ó before a labial in *uabhar* > *óbhar* (Sommerfelt 1922: 57, §162, 1b). Examples noted by Ó Curnáin of *ua* > ó for Iorras Aithneach, Co. Galway include: *uabhar*, *Uarán*, *Fuaigh Uachtar*, *suis* (2007, i: 92, §1.27; 398, §1.392).

suggestion that *uadh(a)* was used adverbially in the phrase *fada uadh(a)* to mean ‘long ago’. He provided strong parallel evidence for the same development in the phrase *cian uadh* (‘long since, long ago’), for which many examples may be cited (R. A Breatnach 1951: 242; *eDIL* s.v. *cían*). Scottish Gaelic *fada bhuaidh(e)* can be cited as further corroborative evidence for his intuitive derivation, e.g.^{9 10}

Sgeula fior, ge fada uaithe (‘a true story, although it is a long time ago’) in Ailein Dall’s *Smeòrach Chloinn Dùghaill* (Dughalach 1829); cf. *Sgeula fior, ce fada bhuaidhe* (MacKenzie [1841] 1904: 306)

O, is fada bhuaidhe (O, it is a long time ago) (Mac Cormaic 1911: 12)

fada uaidh fatə-'vuai (‘long ago’) [Gigha] (Holmer 1938: 162)

is fhada bhuaith 'n dràsd (‘it’s a long time ago now’) (D. Thomson 1982: 26)

fada bhuaidhe (‘a long time ago’) [Wester Ross] (Wentworth 2003: 807, s.v. *a long time*)¹¹

It is worth considering R. A. Breatnach’s proposal in closer detail as the modern reflexes of Old Gaelic *úad*, *úaid* and their distribution may count against it. Tacitly accepting that ó was unlikely to replace reflexes of distinctive *uaidh(e)* with palatal(ised) *dh* / *gh*, Breatnach claimed that ó developed from the phonetically similar *ua*, a reflex of *uadh* or *uadha* with vocalised *gh* < *dh*: ‘(is) *fada uadh* (or *uadha*), which would have become *fad' ua* had it been allowed to develop undisturbed’ (1951: 242). Modern dialectal evidence suggests that *uadh* / *uadha* may have been a predominantly northern Irish form.

The dialect evidence for the reflexes of Old Gaelic *úad*, *úaid* and their later innovative disyllabic forms, *uadha*, *uaidhe*,¹² based by analogy on other disyllabic third person singular (masculine) prepositional pronoun forms, may be summarised succinctly as follows (based on *LASID* II–IV, q. 737):

Munster	<i>uaidh</i>	vʊəg'
South Connacht	<i>uaidh, uaidhe</i>	vəi / wəi
North Connacht	<i>uaidhe</i>	vəiə / wəiə
Ulster	<i>uadh / uadha</i>	wiə, wuə, wouwə, wuuwəyə
Scotland	<i>bhuaidhe / bhuaidh</i>	vuəjə, vuəi, etc.

⁹ The adverbial use of the prepositional pronoun *uadh(a)* / *uaidh(e)* may be added to the list provided by Ní Dhomhnaill (1987: 139–40).

¹⁰ Wagner records the Manx form **son tamel't' vuə** (‘for a long time’ [my translation]) (*LASID* IV: 181, s.v. ‘long’). This does not contain the preposition *veih* ((*bh*)*uaidh*), which is pronounced **vei, wei, vai** in Manx (*HLSM* II: 472). The form **vuə** represents lenited *mooar* (*mór*) with loss of final -*r*; cf. *son tammylt mooar son tamelt 'mu:ə* (‘for a long while’) (*HLSM* II: 442).

¹¹ cf. *fad' uaidh sin fwəd ɔi 'ʃiŋ* (‘long ago’) ‘where fad “long” is fully stressed as in English and sin considerably more stressed than *uaidh*’ [Arran] (Holmer 1957: 42, §90); cf. also ‘*Sfhada bhuaithe sin* (‘it’s / that is a long time ago’) from a *còmhradh* (‘dialogue’) of Norman MacLeod’s (‘Caraid nan Gàidheal’) ([MacLeod] 1836: 154). I am grateful to my colleague Dr Sheila Kidd who has confirmed Norman MacLeod as the author of this *còmhradh* (‘dialogue’). On the genre of the dialogue in nineteenth-century Gaelic prose, see Kidd (2016).

¹² McManus (1994: 436) notes all four variants *uadh*, *uaidh*, *uadha* *uaidhe* for Classical Gaelic.

Man	<i>veih</i>	vei, wei¹³
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Munster forms derive regularly from *uaidh* and invariably have final patalised *g'*; cf. *craidh kruəg'* (*LASID* I: 201) South Connacht forms mostly have monosyllabic forms containing *i*-gliding diphthongs (**vei**, **vei**, **wei**, etc.) although disyllabic forms also occur, e.g. *uaidhe vuəjə* (pt 32),¹⁴ **vejə** (pt 49), **wəjə**¹⁵ ~ **wèi** (pt 32); cf. also **wei⁹** (pt 43), **vei⁹** (pt 37) and **wəj⁹** (pt 38). Monosyllabic **vei**, etc. may derive from *uaidh* or *uaidhe*, depending on dialect. In those South Connacht dialects in which word-final stressed palatal(ised) *dh / gh* is lost after the diphthong *ua* (e.g. *craidh kruə*, *LASID* I: 201), it may be that monosyllabic forms (**wei**, etc.) derive from *uaidhe* since *uaidh* might be expected to yield **uə** in these dialects (e.g. *LASID* pts 28, 29, 34, 36, 39–41, 44–48);¹⁶ this would involve the reduction of *uaidhe* to *uaidh*: **uəjə** > **wəjə** > **wei:** > **wəi.**¹⁷ In those dialects in which word-final stressed palatal(ised) *dh / gh* is retained as **-i**, monosyllabic **wei**, etc. may derive from *uaidh*, or possibly from *uaidhe*. Disyllabic forms derive from *uaidhe*, e.g. **vuəjə** (pt 32), **vejə** (pt 49), **wəjə** ~ **wèi** (pt 32); cf. **wei⁹** (pt 43), **vei⁹** (pt 37) and **wəj⁹** (pt 38). North Connacht generally has *uaidhe* **veiə** / **wəiə**, which derives from *uaidhe*, although **vej**, possibly from *uaidh*, occurs at pt 62.¹⁸ Northern **wuə** occurs in the parish of Achill (pts 53, 54).¹⁹

For Donegal, *LASID* has **wuə**, **wūə**, **wiə**,²⁰ all of which may be derived from *uadh* (or possibly *uadha*), where **ū** signifies a sound with ‘intermediate rounding between u and λ [= w]’ (*LASID* I: XXIII). These forms illustrate the main stages in the development from *uadh* in Donegal from **uev** > **(w)uə** > **wuə** > **wūə** > **wiə**. On the fronting of the first element of the diphthong *ua* in Donegal Irish following labials, see Sommerfelt (1922: 31, §80), Wagner ([1959] 1979: 77, §213) and Ó Dochartaigh (1987: 110–14).²¹ East Ulster has **wouwə** (pt 68, Inishowen) and **wuuiywu** (pt 65, Omeath, Co. Louth), which derive from *uadha*.

Scottish Gaelic forms derive from *uaidhe* or possibly from *uaidh* in some instances, although monosyllabic forms may represent reductions of disyllabic *uaidhe* in most if not all cases, e.g. Arran and Kintyre *bhuaidh vuai* (Holmer 1957: 125; Holmer ([1962] 1981: 80, §153), Argyllshire *bhuaidh vuai* (Holmer 1938: 197), Outer Hebrides *bhuaidhe vuejə*,²² Barra **yue(h)ɔ** [sic] (Borgstrøm 1940: 190), South Uist *bhuaidh vuej* (Mac Gill-Fhinnein 1966: 33), Skye *bhuaidhe vuejə* (Borgstrøm 1941: 53), Ross-shire *bhuaidh vuəj* (Borstrøm 1941: 116) and *bhuaidhe vuə.i* (Wentworth 2003: 292, s.v. *from*), Lewis *bhuaidhe fojə, vojə* (Oftedal 1956: 222), East Perthshire *bhuaidh vu·əi* (Ó Murchú 1989: 292), East Sutherland

¹³ *HLSM* II: 472. Manx also has the form *voish* *HLSM* I: 63; II: 472.

¹⁴ Vocabulary, *LASID* III: 69.

¹⁵ Vocabulary, *LASID* III: 99.

¹⁶ Indeed, in some of these dialects, a final **⁹** is found, e.g. **vei⁹** (pt 37), **wəj⁹** (pt 38), **wei⁹** (pt 43).

¹⁷ On the development **-ghe** > **i:** following stressed vowels in South Connacht, see Ó Curnáin (2007, I: 163, §1.102).

¹⁸ Also in vocabulary, *LASID* III: 362.

¹⁹ On the close dialectal relationship of Achill Irish to Ulster Irish, see O’Rahilly ([1932] 1976: 189), Wagner (1958: 28–29), Stockman (1974: II) and Ó Dochartaigh (1978).

²⁰ cf. the orthographic forms *wua*, *wia* in Ó Baoill (1996: 97).

²¹ A derivation from *uadha* could also work: **uevə** > **(w)uə-ə** > **(w)uə** > **wuə** > **wūə** > **wiə**. I am grateful to Professor Emeritus Dónall Ó Baoill, a native speaker of Donegal Irish, who discussed (personal communication) the realisation of *uadh* in Donegal dialects with me and who also would derive the Donegal forms from *uadh*. The realisation of the likes of *uaigh uei* (also **uejə**) (*LASID* IV: q. 712), *craidh kruai* (*LASID* I: 201) and *buaidh byei* (Wagner [1959] 1979: 77, §213) (also *buaidhe*; see Ó Baoill 1996: 127) in Donegal illustrates that the Donegal forms do not derive from *uaidh*.

²² Including Scalpay, Harris (personal communication from Morag MacLeod).

bhuaidh voi (Dorian 1978: 112), Easter Ross *bhuaidh ve* (S. Watson 1986: 64, §48). Occasional instances of **vuə(-)** occur in the unpublished materials of the Gaelic Linguistic Survey of Scotland (University of Edinburgh), e.g. **vuəsən** (*SGDS*, pts 64 (Taynuilt, South Lorne) and 87 (Glenborrodale, Sunart and Ardnamurchan)) and **vua** (*SGDS*, pt 59 (Easdale)). Such forms may point to the existence of *uadh* in Scotland. However, alternative explanations are possible. In **vuəsən**, we may have sandhi forms in which the final -i element has been elided (i.e. **vuəi + sən > vuəsən**) or analogical forms based on the overall paradigm. The Easdale form may be anomalous and may derive from **vuai**; we may compare the second person plural form, **vuay**, where nearby dialects have **vuəiv**.²³ Finally, Manx *veih* derives regularly from *uaidh*.

The vast majority of modern dialect forms in Ireland, Scotland and Man can be seen to derive from the *uaidh / uайдhe* variants with palatal(ised) *dh / gh*, with the Ulster forms alone deriving from *uadh / uadha* with non-palatal(ised) *dh / gh*. This poses a potential problem for R. A. Breatnach's derivation – especially since *fadó* is least common in Ulster as noted earlier – unless it is claimed that *ua < uadh(a)* was once a feature of Munster and Connacht dialects which was later replaced by *uaidh(e)*.²⁴ The modern distribution of reflexes of *uadh(a)* and *uaidh(e)*, which may reflect much older dialectal distinctions, suggests that Breatnach's interpretation may be less compelling than it seems at first sight. In what follows, I put forward an alternative explanation that builds on Breatnach's insights. I suggest that Breatnach was partially correct in positing a stressed third person prepositional form as the underlying element in *fadó* but that ó was the original underlying form and *fada uadh(a) / uaidh(e)* a later parallel development.

NEW EXPLANATION

Thurneysen's third and final interpretation of the conservative legal phrase *co nómad náu (nó)* was that it should be interpreted as *co nómad n-áu (n-ó)*, where áu (later ó) was an adverbial use of the older third person singular masculine / neuter prepositional pronoun of the preposition áu (ó) ('from'), i.e. lit. 'to [the] ninth from him on / from that on' (*GOI* 524, §847; cf. Binchy 1984: 5–6).²⁵ This interpretation is accepted and endorsed by Binchy (1984) and Hamp, who would further refine the translation of áu / ó as 'away', 'off', 'removed' and in later bleached meanings as 'for ages' or 'forever' (Hamp 1990: 174).

Binchy (1984: 6) notes that 'Thurneysen was careful not to claim certainty for his third solution' and that 'No further examples of áu as the simple or conjugated preposition have yet been found'. I suggest that Irish *fadó* may also retain the conservative stressed prepositional pronoun / adverb ó ('from him, from it; away, off') and that it may derive from *fada + ó*, meaning literally 'long from it', 'long away', 'long off', 'long ago' – and as such may provide the supportive evidence sought by Binchy to support Thurneysen's interpretation of *náu / nó* as containing adverbial áu / ó. If so, it would represent a remarkable survival in Irish.

If this interpretation is correct, the adverbial phrase *fada ó* was, over the course of time, lexicalised as *fadó*. Stressed ó in Munster dialects may retain a remnant of the originally

²³ I have not consulted all of the unpublished materials of the Gaelic Linguistic Survey of Scotland for the purposes of this article and it may be that other instances of **vuə** exist but my impression of the unpublished collection is that the vast majority if not all of forms may be derived from *uaidh(e)*.

²⁴ Given the modern distribution of dialect forms, an analysis of the occurrence of the variants *uadh* and *uadha* in medieval and Early Modern texts, particularly in prose texts, as a possible northernism might be worthwhile.

²⁵ On the eclipsis of an adverb, we may compare the relatively common *lá n-ann*; see *eDIL* s.v. *lá*.

stressed word *ó*, and this is perhaps supported by the conservative forms with stressed *ó* noted by Ó Curnáin in the speech of older speakers in Iorras Aithneach (Galway) (2007, i: 392, §1.384). However, given the synchronic stress pattern of disyllabic words with long second syllables in Munster, the stress on the second syllable may perhaps be a secondary development in Munster. Lexicalisation of *fada ó* in Connacht and Ulster has resulted in *fadó*, stressed on the first syllable, which reflects synchronic word stress patterns in those dialects. A parallel can be found in the deictic time adverbial modifier *arú*, which derives from *ar-b[h]oí*, realised with initial stress in Connacht and Ulster (*arthú*, *earthu*, *oirfi*, *airfi*, (*e*)*arab*h), and in Munster with initial stress ((*e*)*araibh*, *arú*, *arabhú*) or stress on the final syllable (*a-rú*, *a-rthú*, *ara-bhú*) (Walsh 1911; Ó Maolalaigh (forthcoming)). On the development of initial stress in lexicalisations of phrases, we may compare the development of initial stress in *óshoin < ó shoin* (LASID II–IV: 229, q. 900, pt 51; 324, q. 900, pt 59); Donegal *fáidear* / *fáideir* and *faidear* 'fad'ar, which derives from *fa-dear* (Hamilton 1974: 175; Ó Baoill 1996: 136); Munster *bunoscionn < bun os cionn* (Ó Sé 2000: 208); *bhochionn < bho chionn* (Dieckhoff 1926: 193, n. 16), *maidir (le) < mar a-deire (le)* (Ó Crónín 1966); (*i*) *nganfhios < i ngan fhios* (de Bhaldraithe [1953] 1977: 222; Ó Curnáin 2007, i: 392, §1.385; III: 1541, §8.102; 1640, §8.209). The second comparative adjective formation in *-de* provides a neat parallel, e.g. *measa* ('worse') + *de* ('therefrom') > *measaide* (cf. GOI 238, §378). For other examples, see Ó Maolalaigh (forthcoming) and Ó Curnáin (2007, i: 392–93, §1.385) on the development of 'monotonic stress' in phrases.

Thurneysen, in his discussion of the breaking of *ó* to *ua*, notes that 'Final *ó* is not diphthongised, except for the preposition *ó*, *úa*, which is a proclitic word' (GOI 40, §60), noting the example of *bó* ('cow') and comparing it to *bóchaill ~ búachaill* ('cowherd'). If *fadó* contains the stressed third person singular prepositional pronoun *ó*, it provides another example of unbroken word-final *ó*. Given that modern Irish dialects retain long *ó* in the unstressed simple preposition (cf. Scottish Gaelic *bho*, *o*), it may be that the older stressed form *ó* has influenced the phonological development of the unstressed preposition.

The interpretation offered here of *fadó* suggests that R. A. Breathnach's posited forms *fada uadh* / *fada uadha*, attested in Scottish Gaelic as *fada bhuaidh(e)*, represent subsequent independent parallel rather than original developments. Such forms may perhaps reflect interpretations of *ua*, the result of breaking of *ó* in reflexes of the simple preposition. It is possible that the development of *fada bhuaidh(e)* in Scottish Gaelic may have led to the loss of *fada ó* in Scotland if it ever existed there. Conversely, the persistence of *fadó* in Irish may have rendered as superfluous the development of *fada uaidh(e)* in the meaning 'long ago'.

The earliest example of adverbial *fada ó* in the surviving literature known to R. A. Breathnach was from the late sixteenth century in a poem by Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn (1550–1591), where it occurs with the adverb *riamh*:

Do bhádhus fós fad ó riamh
im' dhalta im' oide ag Uilliam,
do-nínn dá ghruaidh dílis duinn,
'sdo-nímis uaidh an fhoghlum. (Knott [1922–26] 1984, i: 169, §6a; R. A. Breathnach 1954: 156)

A similar example occurs in the poem 'Dia sa saorghal le síol gCuinn', dated by the final stanza of the poem to the year 1617:

Do gheall Finnén *fada ó riam*
do mhínhéach fatha n[a] bfádh
ní fuláir fuígle na sgéal
phréamh Gaoidheal do(dh) *gabail grádh*. (McManus and Ó Raghnall 2010: 218, Poem 170, §3a)

It is also found in the poem ‘Mairg duine bhraiteas é féin’ by Domhnall (mac Dáire) Mac Bruaideadha (*fl. c.* 1600):

Do chuala féin fad’ ó riamh
cumann deise do dhiall ruinn, –
duine i Mumhain na mór ngeal
díobh, is duine do Leath Chuinn. (Ó Rathile [1925] 1976 113, ll. 21–24)

The *ó* in these examples of *fad(a) ó riamh* is evidently unstressed. Stressed *ó* would contravene the normal practice whereby alliteration normally occurs within the last three stressed words in the line: ‘Ní théann uaim thar na trí fhocal aiceanta deiridh den line.’ (‘Alliteration does not go beyond the three last stressed words of the line.’) (Ní Dhömhnaill 1975: 35) It seems likely therefore that these examples represent an underlying vernacular form *fadó riamh*. We may compare R. A. Breatnach’s comment: ‘Tadhg Dall was a learned and careful poet, but nevertheless he may have used the colloquial expression.’ (1954: 156)

In origin, the collocation *fada ó riamh* is likely to consist of the two adverbs *fada ó* + *riamh* rather than *fada* + simple preposition *ó* + *riamh*. The doubling or tripling of adverbs is common enough, e.g. Classical Gaelic *roimhe riamh*, *riamh roimhe* (Knott [1922–26] 1984, I: 133, §12a; 144, §21a), Modern Irish *feasta choíchin*, *go díreach glan*, *go mórfada* (Ó Curnáin 2007, III: 1636, §8.206; 1642, §8.212; 1649, §8.217), *i bhfad ariamh ó shoin* (Lucas 1979: 259) and Scottish Gaelic *bho chionn fhada fhada* with emphatic repetition. A search of Damian McManus’s unpublished database of bardic poetry, containing almost 2,000 poems, reveals no other examples of *fada ó* (or variants thereof) other than instances of *fada ó shoin* (25 examples) / *fad ó shoin* (1 example) and examples of *fada* + conjunction *ó*.²⁶ Examples of *fada ó shoin* are found, for instance, in the early sixteenth-century Book of the Dean of Lismore (‘Do chuala mé fada ó shoin’) (W. J. Watson 1937: 88, §[24]a) and in a poem ascribed to Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh (d. 1387) (‘Do thairngir fáidh fada ó shoin’) (Mac Cionnaith [1938] 1969: 324, Poem 97, §30a).

R. A. Breatnach (1954: 156), citing the example *fada ó riamh* from the poetry of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn, suggested tentatively that ‘the form [i.e. *fad ó*] may be as old as the sixteenth century’. The interpretation offered in the present paper suggests that *fada ó* may be much older and may represent an old conservative survival in vernacular Irish, at least as old as the Old Gaelic period if not earlier, perhaps originally **fata áu* in form but which comes to be attested in literary sources only at the end of the Classical period.

CONCLUSION

If Irish *fadó* is indeed a conservative form containing an older stressed third person singular prepositional pronoun *ó*, its survival and retention in Irish may be due to its frequent use in the conservative register of oral traditional tales, where it occurs frequently in opening

²⁶ I am grateful to Professor Damian McManus who very kindly provided me with access to his invaluable database. This database is in the process of being added to Katharine Simms’ *Bardic Poetry Database*, hosted by the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (<https://bardic.celt.dias.ie>).

formulaic sentences. The development of *fada bhuaidh(e)* in Scottish Gaelic may have led to the loss of original *fada ó* in Scotland if it ever existed there. If the equation of Manx *er dy rieau* with *fada ó riamh* is correct, as suggested in the appendix below, it provides some tentative evidence for the survival of *fada ó* (third person prepositional pronoun) in Manx also. If the interpretation offered here is correct, rather than representing a later development, *fadó / fada ó* may provide a good example of a word or feature that flew under the radar of literary attestation for many centuries until the Modern period but which may have existed since at least the Old Gaelic period in speech; cf. Ó Maolalaigh (2013: 84). If so, perhaps it was associated with non-literary oral registers and eschewed as a result until the end of the Classical Gaelic period. It may have been felt to be anomalous once the final ó had come to be interpreted as the simple preposition without an overt complement. The explanation presented here provides some tentative corroborative evidence for Thurneysen's interpretation of the final word in the ancient legal phrase *co nómad n-áu (n-ó)*.²⁷

APPENDIX: MANX *ER DY*

Manx has the leniting preposition *er-dy* (*er-dyn* with article) ('since') and the adverbs *er-dy* ('ago, since'), *er dy henney* ('long ago, ago, since'), *foddey er dy henney* ('long ago'), *er dy rieau* ('from eternity, etc.'), *rieau er-dy-henney* ('ever since'):

Preposition

er-dy(n) əðər ('since') (HLSM II: 148;²⁸ cf. Cregeen [1835]: 66)
er-dy hoshiaght y theihll ('since the beginning of the world'), *er-dyn toshiaght* ('from the beginning') (R. L. Thomson 1981: 108, §32; 88, §64)

Adverb

er-dy ('since') (Kelly [1803] 1870: 70)
er-dy ('ago') (Cregeen [1835]: 66)

er-dy-henney ('since') (Kelly [1803] 1870: 69)

er dy henney ərdə hенjə ('long ago') [North Manx] (LASID IV: 173, s.v. *ago*)
er dy henney ε: ðə 'henə, ε: ði 'hene, eðə 'hen'ə ('ago, since') (HLSM II: 148–49)
er-dy-henney ('since that, since then, ago') (Cregeen [1835]: 66)

foddey er-dy-henney ('long since, anciently') (Kelly [1803] 1870: 70)

foddey er dy henney ʃa:ðə ððə 'hiñə ('long ago') [South Manx] (LASID IV: 173, s.v. *ago*); *fø:ðə ər ðə 'hin'ə* (HLSM II: 173)

er-dy-rieau ('from eternity, for the ever which is past, all the time that hath been') (Cregeen [1835]: 66)

rieau er-dy-henney ('ever since') (Kelly [1803] 1870: 70)

R. L. Thomson (1981: 88, §64) claims that:

²⁷ I am grateful to Dr Brian Ó Curnáin for his comments on the ideas presented in this paper, to Christopher Lewin for discussing the Manx evidence with me and to the anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments.

²⁸ I interpret Broderick's **d** with suprascript acute accent in HLSM as ð.

er-dy is originally not a prep[osition] but a conj[unction], Ph[illips 1610] *ada*, the G[aelic] conj[unction] ó ‘since’, with the *do* before a past tense which survives as *d-* before initial vowels in the pret[erite].

Broderick (*HLSM* II: 148) seems to be of the same view when he suggests ‘ó do shine, ó do sheine’ as an Irish equivalent for Manx *er dy henney*, although he does not specify what element is present in *sine / seine*. R. L. Thomson’s suggestion is no doubt based on the correspondence between *ada* in Phillips’s 1610 [1625–30] text and *er-dy* in the modern [1765] 1842 version of the Prayer Book:²⁹ *ada ren y sýl tossiagh* (1610) vs *er-dy hoshiaght y theihill* (1842),³⁰ *ada yn la* (1610) vs *er-dyn laa* (1842); *ada hossiagh yn týyl* (1610) vs *er-dy hoshiaght y theihil* (1842) (Moore 1895: 149, §26; 284, §9; 318, §70). Two other instances of *ada* occur in Moore’s Prayer Book as follows: *ada hossiagh yn týyl* (1610), which corresponds to *laghyn y chenn earish* (= *lathachan an t-seann iris*) (1842); and *ada rugger mi* (1610) vs *neayr as ruggyr mee* (1842) (Moore 1895: 132, §9; 437, §5). A Manx sermon from the year 1696 has the form *ed y henna* (‘since, since then’) (Lewin 2015: 86, l. 94).

The similarity in usage and meaning between *er dy* and *fada ó* (i.e. *er dy rieau ~ fada ó riamh* and *er dy ~ fada ó*; *er dy henney ~ fada ó shoin*) and the seemingly old demonstrative form fossilised in *henney*, suggest that it is worth considering that *fada* + prepositional pronoun ó and *fada* + preposition ó and may be the underlying components in Manx. The element *henney* appears to represent a lenited medieval variant of the demonstrative pronoun *sin / sein* with vocalic auslaut, which was variously spelt as *sine, saine, sene* (*eDIL* s.v. *sin*), which is otherwise not attested in any of the modern Gaelic dialects so far as I am aware.³¹ If R. L. Thomson’s explanation is correct, it would require the older variant *seine / saine* to have been productive at the time that purported ó *do* (>? *ada*) may have been generalised as a preposition from its use as a conjunction, which, if it ever occurred, could be relatively recent in the evolution of Manx.

Phillips’s *ada* is not inconsistent with *fhad’ ó*. Indeed, the final -*a*, which is consistent in Phillips, may be significant. R. L. Thomson’s derivation from ó *do* would suggest a final -ə, which we might expect to be rendered as -y (**ady*). As Christopher Lewin notes (personal communication), final -*a* in Phillips tends to correspond to Gaelic -*a* or -á. On the distinction between *dá* (< *do + a*), presumably for **da:** (or perhaps **da**) and *dy də*, see Lewin (2016: 174–75). Long ó in Manx was frequently lowered to á and subsequently fronted to e: along with reflexes of original á, e.g. *bròg > brag* (‘shoe'), *glór > glare* (‘language'), óg > aeg, póg > paag (‘kiss') (*HLSM* III: 134, §110.2; cf. Jackson 1955: 41, §15). This lowering is attested in Middle Gaelic for the preposition ó > á (L. Breatnach 1994: 329, §13.20).³² Phillips’s spelling of *ada* could well represent **fhadá* or **fhada* with shortened final -*a*. The question of stress placement remains. Lexicalisation of **fhadó* could have resulted in initial stress and reduction of the unstressed long vowel: ***ada:** > **ada**, and as such would align with Ulster

²⁹ *The Book of Common Prayer in Manx Gaelic* was edited by A. W. Moore with the assistance of John Rhŷs in 1895. It included Bishop John Phillips’s 1610 text from a copy dated to 1625–30 as well as a copy of the Manx Prayer Book of 1842, copied from the first printed Prayer book of 1765 (Moore 1895: xxiii–iv).

³⁰ This *er-dy hoshiaght* is to be distinguished from the adverb *er-dty-hoshiaght* (‘forward, ahead’), which contains the second person singular possessive pronoun *dty* (*HLSM* II: 148); cf. *er-e-hoshiaght* (‘forward, ahead, advanced, going on, in being’), which contains the third person singular possessive pronoun *e* (*HLSM* II: 149).

³¹ I exclude here modern dialect forms such as *sineach, seanach*, etc. For Manx we may note the obscure forms *shonone, shononee* in the 15th or 16th-century Manx Traditionary ballad but surviving in later manuscripts (R. L. Thomson 1960: 528, 539) and *shoh ennee, shen-enne, shen ennee* (Lewin 2015: 80).

³² It is also evidenced as á and a in some Modern Irish dialects; see, for example, Wagner ([1959] 1979: 199, §514), Stockman and Wagner (1965: 161–62), Lucas (1979: 179, §648) and Ó Curnáin (2007, III: 1402, §7.67).

fadóshoin fadahən', **fadəhin'**, etc. (*LASID* IV: q. 726 and relevant vocabularies). We could compare: *beggan began* < *beagán* ('a little'), *mwannal mwanəl* < *muineál / muinél* ('neck') (*HLSM* III: 148, §126.1). On the other hand, it is possible that forward stress or the retention of stress in reflexes of ó could have yielded ***a'da:** and possibly ***a'de:** with fronting of **a:** (for which see Jackson (1955: 24–25, §3) and *HLSM* III: 123–24, §97).³³ The unstressed nature of prepositions / conjunctions could have led to both vowel reduction, ***a'da**, eventually ***a'de**, and the interpretation of the first syllable through hypercorrection as a reduced form of the preposition *er*. Irrespective of the stress patterns in the evolution of *ada / ed y / er dy*, a parallel for the representation of functors with long final -á as -y is found in *dá* < *dy* ('if') **də** and *má* > *my* ('if') **ma:**, **ma**, **mör**, **ma^r** (*HLSM* II: 134, 311–12).

Deriving *er dy henney* from *fada ó sheine / shaine* works formally and dialectically, and patterns neatly with the Northern Irish evidence, which favours *fada ó shoin* to *fadó*. It is to be noted that four of the seven phonetic transcriptions of *er dy* given above do not contain an *r*-sound, although it could be argued that the two instances of **e: ðə/i** represent an underlying *er dy*. The loss of initial *f* may have occurred following the copula *is*, in sentences such as *is fhada ó* as occurs commonly in Scottish Gaelic; we may compare Manx *sh'eeagh* [ʃi:x] *eh skillin* (*is fhiach e sgillinn* 'it is worth a shilling'), *share* [ʃe:r] *lhiam yn dooinney share* (*is fheàrr leam an duine as fheàrr* 'I prefer the best man') (*HLSM* I: 93–94, 96). The change might also be explained as an instance of the reduction of *f* to *h* (Ó Sé 1990), which was subsequently lost. The addition of *r* can be explained in a number of ways. Hypercorrection in the unstressed position has already been alluded to. It is possible that *ada hossiagh* ('since the beginning') has been influenced by *er-dty-hoshiaght* ('forward, ahead'). Alternatively, replacement of *fa-* with the preposition *for* and / or *ar* could account for the development *fadó* > **for-dó* / **ar-dó* > *er dy*.³⁴ Analogy with other adverbs beginning with *er* should not be ruled out; see *HLSM* II: 147–53. The addition of *r* may represent a hypercorrection based on the tendency to weaken and lose *r*, particularly in the preconsonantal position (*HLSM* III: 115–17, §92). We may compare the development of *r* in reflexes of *my* (< *má* 'if') **mör**, **ma^r** (*HLSM* II: 311–12), which may perhaps be due to contamination with *myr* (< *mar* 'as, like') (*HLSM* II: 316). Phillips's 1610 form *ada* and *ed y* from the 1696 sermon (Lewin 2015: 86, l. 94) suggest that the addition of *r* had not yet occurred by the seventeenth century and is thus likely to be an innovation of the eighteenth century and later. If the derivation put forward here for Manx *er-dy* is accepted, it would suggest that *fada* + preposition ó developed uniquely into a (leniting) preposition in Manx.

The vast majority of examples from Manx point to a prepositional usage of *er dy* ('since'), which we have suggested may derive from *fada* + simple preposition ó. This in itself does not provide any evidence for the existence of *fada* + prepositional pronoun ó in Manx as these could be unrelated and independent formulations. If, however, Manx *er-dy-rieau* and Irish *fadó / fada ó riabh* share a common origin, this provides some tentative evidence for the existence of the adverb *fadó* in Manx. It must be admitted, however, that this is not certain as it is possible that *er-dy-rieau* is a later formation consisting of the new preposition *er dy* preposed to the adverb *rieau* (albeit impossible for traditional Gaelic) rather than a sequence of two adverbs.

³³ On initial stress and the reduction of unstressed long vowels, and forward stress on long syllables in Manx, see O'Rahilly ([1932] 1976: 113–16) and Ó Sé (1991).

³⁴ We may compare the development *os cionn* > *er-skyn* ('above') in Manx (e.g. Cregeen [1835]: 67) and *ar cionn ~ ar chionn* for *as cionn* in the speech of one speaker in Iorras Aithneach (Ó Curnáin 2007, III: 1439, §7.105); cf. Ó Maolalaigh (2016: 80, 99, n. 17) and Lewin (2015: 86).

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ROIBEARD Ó MAOLALAIGH

University of Glasgow