Interrogatives in Muskerry Irish

Standardised Irish accepts a variety of usages found in the various Irish dialects. However, learners of a particular dialect will be seeking detailed information on usages in the dialects they are learning. I aim here to clarify interrogative usages in Muskerry Irish, based on the works of Peadar Ua Laoghaire and the stories and folklore of Amhlaoibh Ó Loingsigh. Learners will be interested in whether forms such as *cén* and *cén fáth* are found in the dialect, and in how to express in Irish sentences such as "who am I?", "what am I?" and "how hot is it?", which turn out to be harder than expected to put into Irish.

Cad?

Although some Irish interrogatives seem to have a range of meanings, it seems best to order the presentation under the Irish words (*cad*) and not the English words (*what?*). The most fundamental interrogative is *cad?* "What?" is *cad* and not *cad é* (other than in copula usages, where the *é* is a subsubject as discussed below) or *céard* in the dialect. Usage of interrogatives with relative clauses illustrates the way in which relatively advanced grammar is required to express simple concepts in Irish. Usage with the substantive verb (*tá*), *deir* and the copula (*is*) requires separate comment. Let us first take a look at usage with other verbs:

1. *Cad a thuigean tú le neamh? (An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p11)

We see here that *cad* along with other interrogatives requires a relative clause, in this case a direct relative clause, shown by the leniting relative particle *a*.

2. *Cad fhéadfadh aoinne amháin a dhéanamh? (Mo Sgéal Féin*, p101)

In Standardised Irish, the relative particle is always written out, which may indicate to learners an unnatural pronunciation. Before vowels, the relative particle has a zero pronunciation and it was traditionally acceptable not to write out an unpronounced implied relative particle. A possibly clearer compromise would be to use the spelling *cad 'fhéadfadh?*, /kɑd iətəx/.

3. *Ní fheadar ó thalamh an domhain cad dhéanfaid siad. (Séadna*, p145)
4. *Cuir rómhat ar maidin cad a dhéanfair. (Aithris ar Chríost*, p33)

The relative particle may also be omitted (in pronunciation and in writing) in the exclamatory or rhetorical expression *cad 'dhéanfad!* ("what on earth shall I do?") and related conjugated forms, as shown in (3) above, where the exclamatory expression is used as a noun clause in a longer sentence. As (4) shows, where the phrase has its normal (non-exclamatory) sense, it often, in the works of Ua Laoghaire, shows the relative particle. (We should note, however, that in the Irish of Ó Loingsigh, as transcribed semiphonetically by Donncha Ó Cróinín, no elision of the relative particle in an exclamatory *cad a dhéanfad!* is shown.)

5. *"Seadh, a gharsúin", arsa'n sagart, "cad tá uait?" (Mo Sgéal Féin*, p51)
6. *Cad deir Murchadh? (Niamh*, p65)

Sentence (5) shows that the relative particle is not heard between *cad* and the substantive verb. The spelling *cad atá* has been standardised on, but /kɑd tɑ:/, or often /kɑ tɑ:/ (see *The Irish of West Muskerry*, p59), is the pronunciation in the dialect. The recording of the Irish of the Clare native Liam Ó Dileáin held in the Doegen archives shows that in some parts of Munster the relative particle was heard where the *t* was lenited: /kɑd əˈhɑ:/; the /kɑd əˈtɑ:/ form taught to learners of Standardised Irish cannot be recommended to learners of Muskerry Irish. Sentence (6) shows an

analogous situation: the relative particle is not heard in *cad ' deir sé?, cad ' duairt sé?* and similar sentences.

Difficulties mount with the copula. The construction *cad is X ann?* is a general way of asking what an indefinite abstract noun is.

> 7. *Deir Pílát leis: Cad is fírinne ann?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p279)
> 8. *A Thighearna, is duit-se is eól cad is maith, agus conus.* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p128)

Gerald O'Nolan explained in his *Studies in Modern Irish:Part 1* (p48) that sentences like *cad is ainm duit?* appear to contain an elipsis. He argues that the subject of the copula is really *(an ainm is) ainm duit.* This forms part of his argument that the copula cannot stand next to the subject in any copula sentence. Consequently, in (7) *(rud is) fírinne ann* may be inferred as the underlying subject. In (8) we see a slightly different example, where *(rud is) maith* may be inferred as the underlying subject of the sentence.

By contrast, in the following constructions, where identification of a specific definite noun is being requested, the copula is deleted in the present tense, with the syntax of the construction being PsS, where *P* (the predicate) is *cad*, *s* is a subsubject (*é* or another third-person pronoun) and *S* the subject.

> 9. *Cad é an luacht saothair a thug Dia do na h-aingiolaibh d' fhan dílis?* (*An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p14)
> 10. *Cad í an onóir a bheirimíd di?* (*An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p24)
> 11. *Cad iad na h-úrnuighthe is mó a chómhairlighthar dúinn do rádh?* (*An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p23)
> 12. *Caidé an scéal athá agaibh?* (*Scéalaíocht Amhlaoibh*, p7)
> 13. *Cad é an tslighe, cad é an áit*, are what is said. Not *cad í an tslighe*, etc., though the words are feminine. (*Notes on Irish Words and Usages*, p127).
> 14. *Cad é an ainim atá ar an gcnuc mór san*? (*Mo Sgéal Féin*, p78)
> 15. *Agus nuair airigh sé an tsluagh ag gabháil thairis d'fhiafraigh sé cad ab é sin.* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p200)
> 16. *Is ceist chruaidh ar lucht eóluis cad é an brígh a bhí ag Íosa leis an gcainnt sin, cad a cialluightear leis an gcorpán, agus cad ab iad na fiolair.* (*Críost Mac Dé*, Vol 3, p356)

English often uses an interrogative adjective where Irish uses an interrogative pronoun: (10) may be translated "what is the honour that we give her?", but is more naturally "<u>what honour</u> do we give her?" in English. The subsubject is *é*, *í* or *iad*, depending on the subject. However, note Ua Laoghaire's comment in (13) and his frequent coupling of *é* with *an ainim* (Ua Laoghaire's preferred spelling of *ainm*, whereby he clarified the epenthetic vowel), *an áit, an chúis, mo thuairim* and similar phrases in copula sentences. One way of explaining this would be to argue that the masculine subsubject anticipates in a general way the predicate that gives the answer to the interrogative question. Examples of a past-tense copula, which is not deleted, are very rarely found, but an example of *cad ab é sin* is given above in sentence (15), "he asked what it was". Sentence (16) contains a clause with a past-tense copula meaning "what were the eagles?"

The interrogative pronoun does not combine with the article to produce *cén* or *cé na* in the dialect. Sentence (12) and Donncha Ó Cróinín's general approach to the transcription of Ó Loingsigh's Irish in *Scéalaíocht Amhlaoibh* (where we find *caidé, caidí* and *caidiad*) shows that the *d* of *cad* may be slenderised before the pronoun (bearing in mind that a slender *d* is not fully palatalised in Muskerry Irish; /dʹ/ is pronounced on the alveolar ridge). However, in *The Irish of West Muskerry*, Brian Ó Cuív transcribes Ó Loingsigh's pronunciation of *cad í an chúis* and *cad é sin* as /kɑd iː n xuːʃ/

and /gəˈde: ʃin′/ respectively (pp93, 109), with a broad *d* in each case.

The phrase *cad í an chúis* is worthy of note, as Ua Laoghaire consistently wrote *cad é an chúis*, and *Scéalaíocht Amhlaoibh* consistently has *caidé an chúis* (e.g. p27 and elsewhere). Yet *cad í an chúis* is what was given by Ó Loingsigh on this occasion: the transcription on p93 of *The Irish of West Muskerry* is of the story *Seán Gadaighe*, the recording of which is online in the Doegen archives, allowing us to verify that *í* was indeed the pronoun used. Ó Cuív states that the *c* of *cad* becomes /g/ only occasionally. A pretonic vowel (such as the *a* in *cad í* or *caidí*) tends to retain its quality where the subsequent stressed vowel is /i:/ (p105 therein).

In the examples in (9) to (14), *cad* asks for identification of something, in other words, identification of a definite subject. Where a classification (of an indefinite noun) is being sought, the subject contains a relative clause using *rud* or *saghas*:

17. *Cad é an rud Céile Dé, a Pheig?* (*Séadna*, p99)
18. *Ansan iseadh thaisbeánann Tú dhom féin mé, cad é an saghas mé, cá rabhas, agus cá bhfuilim tagaithe; óir is neamhnídh mé, agus ní raibh 'fhios agam é.* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p113)
19. *Ní fheadramair go minic cad 'tá ar ár gcumas, ach taisbeánann an cath cad é an saghas sinn.* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p22)

An rud Céile Dé in (17) contains ellipsis of a relative clause: "the thing that a Culdee is", producing "what is the thing that a Culdee is?, i.e. what is a Culdee?" We notice immediately that there is a difference in construction between *cad is X ann?* in (7) and *cad é an rud X?* in (17). It seems that a definite noun referring to a specific thing that may be pointed to or referred to would use the latter construction; more general questions about abstract nouns call for the former.

*Cad me or **cad mise* are not found in Ua Laoghaire's works: the correct form is found in (18) above, *cad é an saghas me?* (once we adjust *mé* to *me* in line with the true pronunciation). Where classification of a person is referred to, Ua Laoghaire uses *saghas* rather than *rud*. Sentence (19) shows that the same construction, with a singular *an saghas*, is used to define plural pronouns in the subject. The forms are therefore as follows:

cad é an saghas me?	*cad é an saghas sinn?*
cad é an saghas tu?	*cad é an saghas sibh?*
cad é an saghas é?	*cad é an saghas iad?*

20. *D'airigheas-sa duine 'ghá rádh gurab iad rudaí na síobhraí, 'ná aingil an uabhair agus na deamhain aeir.* (*Séadna*, p176)

Sentence (20) does not contain an interrogative, but it is worth bringing it in here to note the use of *iad rudaí*. The reason why *rudaí* is plural is because the elves (*síobhraí*) are being defined, not as one category, but as more than one category of thing: *aingil an uabhair <u>agus</u> na deamhain aeir*. We note in passing that the definite article is omitted here because *rudaí* is defined by a later clause beginning with *'ná*. I cannot find examples in Ua Laoghaire's works of a plural *rudaí* or *saighseanna* after *cad*, but it is likely that if a plural response were expected, in other words, if the subject were expected to be defined as more than one category of thing, we would find sentences like *cad iad na rudaí iad san?* ("what various things are these?") and *cad iad na saighseanna sinn?* ("what various sorts of people are we?").

21. *An Tighearna.- A mhic, tá a lán neithe le foghluim fós agat nár fhoghlumuighis go dtí so ach go h-olc. An Seirbhíseach.- Cad iad na neithe iad san, a Thighearna?* (*Aithris ar Chríost*,

Sentence (21) shows that *cad iad na neithe* (and *cad é an nídh* in the appropriate context) is also found in similar constructions in Ua Laoghaire's works. This confirms our view that a plural subsubject *iad* and a plural noun in the subject phrase are used where the response is expected to contain more than one noun.

These forms (*cad*+a personal pronoun in the subject phrase) are generally present-tense. In English, any combination of tense can be easily formed, however rarely required in speech ("what was I?", "what will I be?", "what would I have been?", etc). We might assume from *cad ab é sin?* above that a past-/conditional-tense form could be posited: *cad ab é an saghas me?* (and with multiple predicates anticipated, *cad ab iad na saighseanna sinn?*). In fact, while phrases such as *cad ab áil leat de?* and *cad ab ainm di?* abound, *cad ab é sin?* and *cad ab iad na fiolair?* are the only examples I've located of *cad ab* followed by a third-person pronoun.

Graiméar Gaeilge, a reference grammar of Standardised Irish, accepts both *cad é sin?* and *cad sin?* (§13.77), Ua Laoghaire's works do not contain any examples of *sin/san* on its own used as the subject of such sentences. However, (22) below may be understood to indicate that *cad san?*, if it were found, would have a slightly different meaning to *cad é sin?*

22. Besides the demonstratives "*é seo*," "*é sin*," and "*é siúd*," we have the forms "*so*," "*san*," and "*súd*." These latter forms point out things taken in a body, or collectively. For example, *is olc é sin*, that is a bad thing. But *is olc san uait-se*, that course of action is bad on your part. (*Notes on Irish Words and Usage*s, p123)
23. If one hears some astounding or unexpected news, or is told some false and foolish story, he might suddenly exclaim — *cad é sin agat dh'á rádh? Cad é an rud é sin?* is said in regard to given objects. *Cad é sin?* is used to distant and unknown objects, and as exclamations of surprise and doubt. (*Notes on Irish Words and Usages*, p125)

Ua Laoghaire's explanation of the difference between *cad é an rud é sin?* and *cad é sin?* in (23) is the same as (and probably the ultimate source of) that given in *Graiméar Gaeilge*, §16.14. Ua Laoghaire also wrote that the pronoun *ea* can be used with *cad*, but only with the intervention of the copula. His view that *ea* is really a noun is idiosyncratic:

24. In questions we have *cad é, cad í*, and *cad iad*. But if *eadh* is to be used we must say *cad iseadh*. The reason is that the word *eadh* is really a substantive, and not a neuter pronoun. It means the truth of a statement, just like the English word "fact." The true English of *iseadh* is "it is a fact." *Cad iseadh?* corresponds to the English, "what?" or "what is that?" i.e., what is the statement you have made? (*Notes on Irish Words and Usages*, p124)

The following sentences show (as also in *Graiméar Gaeilge*, §13.85) that where *cad eile* is found in the predicate the interrogative pronoun may be reduplicated:

25. *Airiú, cad eile cad 'tá agat, a Shíle?* (*Mo Sgéal Féin*, p40)
26. *Cad é an rud eile bhéadh uatha, a Niamh?* (*Niamh*, p280)

This construction was explained by Ua Laoghaire in an undated letter to Shán Ó Cuív held in the G,1276 collection of manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland:

"*Agus cad eile cad dúbhradar?* is what I have always heard in all questions of that sort. 'What else is it?' is in Irish always 'What else <u>what</u> is it?' *Cad eile cad é an nídh é?* 'What else did he do?' = *Cad eile cad a dhein sé?* 'What else could I do?' = *Cad eile cad fhéadfinn*

a dhéanamh? There is, you see, a sort of double interrogative. In fact, the English which the people use in that last question is '<u>What</u> else <u>what</u> could I do?' i.e. 'What could I do? and in what is (the thing you would say) different from this?' It's an Irish mode of thought quite different from any English mode of thought. An intervening word might spoil the double character of the question e.g. *Cad é an focal eile a dúbhradar?* No second *cad* ever came in there." [Underlining as given in the original manuscript.]

It's important to note the double meaning of *cad eile cad* ("what?" and "wherein lies the difference?" combined), as Ua Laoghaire pointed out. Although Ua Laoghaire stated above that *cad* is "always" reduplicated, he also often used a single *cad*, as in the following sentence, indicating that it was not always necessary to give a double meaning to a *cad* clause.

> 27. *Cad eile dh'fhéadfimís a dhéanamh!* (*Sgothbhualadh*, p104)

Where a preposition is used with the interrogative, it is used in the form of a prepositional pronoun placed directly after *cad* and an indirect relative clause is required:

> 28. *Cad leis go samhlóchaimíd rígheacht Dé?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p97)
> 29. *Cad air gur féidir duit-se gearán, a dhuine gan ghus?* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p125)

A *cad*-clause can be directly governed by a preposition, as shown in the following example where St. Peter denies Christ:

> 30. *Agus do bhís-se leis i bhfochair Íosa Nasareit. Agus do shéan seisean agus dubhairt: Ní'l fios ná eólus agam ar cad deirir.* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p131)

Finally, while the primary meaning of *cad* is "what?", there are meanings that may be less obvious to a learner of Irish. *Cad as duit?* and, less frequently, *cad as tu?* mean "where are you from?" *Cad as* is also used to form indirect relative clauses meaning "where from?", as in (33):

> 31. *"Cé h-iad sibh?" arsa Iósue leó, "agus cad as daoibh?"* (*Sgéalaidheachta as an mBíobla Naomhtha*, Vol 2, p124)
> 32. *"Admhuighim," ar sise ansan le muinntir an rí, "go dtáinig a leithéidí anso, ach ní raibh fhios agam-sa cad é an saghas iad ná cad as iad."* (*Sgéalaidheachta as an mBíobla Naomhtha*, Vol 2, p106)
> 33. *Cad as go bhfuil cómhachta ag na sácramíntí chum grásta thabhairt dúinn?* (*An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p24)

The use of *cad* to mean "why?" is discussed elsewhere here. Usages of *cad* with definite nouns to mean "how?" in expressions of degree and with abstract nouns in rhetorical exclamatory expressions are also discussed elsewhere here.

Cé?

"Who?" is *cé?* in the modern language. This is followed by a direct relative clause. However, the relative particle cannot be heard after *cé* and is thus often not written out in traditional Irish, either being elided entirely in the orthography or represented by an apostrophe. The substantive verb may be lenited in such circumstances.

> 34. *Dhein Murchadh agus Dúlainn gáirí a ndóthin nuair a chonacadar cé bhí acu.* (*Niamh*, p231)
> 35. *Cé 'tá uaibh? D'fhreagradar é: Íosa an Nasarénach.* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p276)

36. *Cé dúbhairt go raibh?* (*Séadna*, p108)
37. *Cé thá a' teacht?* (*Scéalaíocht Amhlaoibh*, p77)

Once again, the copula is shown after *cé* where the copula phrase appears to contain an elipsis; see (38) and (39) below. Otherwise, the copula is deleted after *cé* in the present tense, with the syntax once again PsS:

38. *Annsan beidh 'fhios againn cé is rí ortha.* (*Lughaidh Mac Con*, p36)
39. *Agus pé cathair nó dún n-a raghaidh sibh isteach ann, fiafraíghidh cé is creideamhnach ann, agus fanaidh ansan go dtí go mbeidh sibh ag imtheacht.* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p25)
40. *Do thug m'Athair dómh-sa gach uile nídh, agus ní h-eól d'aoinne cé h-é an Mac ach do'n Athair, ná cé h-é an t-Athair ach do'n Mhac agus do'n t-é d'ár toil leis an Mac é dh'fhoillsiú.* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, pp173-174)
41. *"Ach! a rí,"* arsa Dáibhid leis, *"cé h-é mise, nú cé h-iad mo mhuinntir, nú ce h-é m'athair, nú ca bhfuil aon chreideamhaint againn i n-Israél chun a rádh go mbeinn-se am' chleamhain ag an rí!"* (*Sgéalaidheachta as an mBíobla Naomhtha*, Vol 3, p377)
42. *D'innseas di cé r' b' é mé.* (*Mo Sgéal Féin*, p126)

The present-tense forms are *cé hé* or *cé hiad*, etc. In the past tense, the form *cérbh* is found before the subsubject. *D'innseas di cé r' b' é mé* in (42) is a typo for *cé r' bh' é mé*.

Ua Laoghaire commented as follows on a sentence found in Vol III of his *Sgéalaidheachta as an mBíobla Naomhtha* and explains that the subsubject before *thusa* has to be *é*, even in reference to a woman:

43. *Cé h-é thusa?* (Sg. III. 321), not *cé h-í thusa?* Although it was a woman. One woman asks another, *an bhfuil fhios agat cé h-é me?* never, *cé h-í me*. (*Notes on Irish Words and Usages*, p125)

Third-person pronouns do not require a subsubject, as shown in (45) below.

44. *Is truagh chráidhte nár innsís dom fad ó cér' bh'é thu.* (*Lughaidh Mac Con*, p40)
45. *Chromas-sa ar bheith ag cur tuairisge na gcómharsan air, féachaint cé r' bh' iad a bhí imthighthe anonn...* (*Mo Sgéal Féin*, pp179-180)

In §13.85, *Graiméar Gaeilge* gives *cé eile cé roimhe a bhfuil eagla ort?*, which appears to be based on the following sentence of Ua Laoghaire's, the original form of which shows that *cad eile cé* and not *cé eile cé* is desirable, in traditional Muskerry Irish at any rate. (A large number of sentences in *Graiméar Gaeilge* appear to be based on Ua Laoghaire's Irish, although the source is unattributed.) There are examples in Ua Laoghaire's works of *cé eile*: it seems the use of *cad eile cé* was particularly useful here given the need to fit in the prepositional pronoun *roimis* after *cé*.

46. *Cad eile cé roimis go bhfuil an t-eagla agat?* (*Táin Bó Cuailnge 'na Dhráma*, p85)

As with *cad*, a preposition may be used with *cé* in the form of a prepositional pronoun placed directly after *cé*, with an indirect relative clause required:

47. *Ach cé leis go samhlóchad an tsliocht so?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p28)
48. *Féach chúghat féin, agus tuig cé dhó gur deineadh seirbhíseach díot nuair a chuir lámh an Easboig san Órd Beannuighthe thú.* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p254)

Indirect relative sentences with the copula after *cé* are a thorny area of grammar:

49. *Cé leis an íomháigh seo agus an sgríbhinn seo?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p62)
50. *Do bhuail sé fé dhéin na ceártan maidean, agus do chonaic sé roimis ar a' mbóthar an giní breá óir. "Féach," aduairt sé. "Cad a chuir ann é, ní fheadar, nú cér leis é?"* (*Scéalaíocht Amhlaoibh*, p76)
51. *Fé dheire do h-innseadh cé go mba leis an t-arbhar.* (*Cé go mba leis* is often shortened to *cé 'mba leis*.) (*Notes on Irish Words and Usages*, p133)
52. *"Is cuma linn-na cé go mba leis indé é," arsa na h-Arabaigh, "ach is linn-na indiu é, agus cimeád- fimíd é."* (*Sgéalaidheacht na Macabéach*, Vol 2, p189)
53. *Ní fheadar cé h-í ná cé 'ro díobh í.* (*Séadna*, p208)
54. *Tá fhios aige cé 'ra mac tu.* (*Niamh*, p144)
55. *Céra peictiúir é sin?* (*Seanachas Amhlaoibh*, p365)
56. *Ní raibh fhios acu cé r' bh' é ná cé 'ra díobh é, ach gur bh' ógánach uasal é a tháinig anall ó chrích Lochlan go mainistir Ínse Cathaigh ag déanamh foghluma.* (*Niamh*, p21)

Ua Laoghaire's authorised *Foclóir do Shéadna* (p94) indicates that the form variously spelt *cé 'ra* and *cé 'ro* in Ua Laoghaire's works is an abbreviation of *cé gurab*. Historically, it seems, however, that, in addition to *ag* (*ag>go*), *do*, *i* and *le* have all been used as "helping" prepositions to set up indirect relative clauses. I haven't found any instances of *i* used after *cé* or *cia* to set up an indirect relative copula, but I found these forms in the 1827 recension of the 17th-century *An Bíobla Naomhtha*:

57. *Cía dar ab inghean thú?* (Genesis 24:23)
58. *Cía léar leis thu? & cáit a racha thú? & cía lear leis íad so rómhad?* (Genesis 32:17; I here transcribe the Tironian *et* with an ampersand)
59. *Cía ar leis an cailínsi?* (Ruth 2:5)
60. *Cía dhar mac an tógánachsa?* (1 Samuel 17:55)
61. *Cía ler leis an dúithche?* (2 Samuel 3:12)
62. *Cía dár ab íomháig so & cía ré a mbeanann an sgríbhinn so na thimcheall?* (Matthew 22:20)
63. *Créud do chithear dhíbhse a dtimcheall Chríosd? cía dár mac é?* (Matthew 22:42)

Cér or *céra* are thus abbreviations of forms not limited to *cé gura(b)*, but also including *cé dára(b)*, *cé léra(b)* and *cé ar(b)*. The sentences I have located show that in Ua Laoghaire's Irish the indirect relative form of the copula is entirely deleted before *leis* in the present tense, as in (49), or alternatively *cér* is found in the same circumstance in (50) in Ó Loingsigh's Irish. In the past tense, note Ua Laoghaire's use of *go mba* after *cé* in two instances before *leis* in (51) and (52). *Céra* is found before *díobh* apparently in both present and past tenses if sentence (56) contains a past-tense usage. *Céra díobh é?* therefore means "what family does/did he belong to? where is/was he from?" It is unclear why an *a* is found in *céra díobh é?* and not in *cé(r) leis é?* We may note that it is indeed *cér díobh é?*, without *a*, in Standardised Irish. The various forms used in traditional Muskerry Irish are given in the following table.

	Present	Past
+leis	*cé leis é?* or *cér leis é?*	*cé (go) mba leis é?*
+díobh	*céra díobh é?*	*céra díobh é?*
+noun	*céra mac?*	(possibly *céra mac?* too)

There are not enough attested examples of *cé* with the indirect relative form of the copula to be sure of all the possible forms (although forms not attested in the large corpus of Ua Laoghaire's works

would be extremely rare). Logically, present- and past-tense forms before nouns starting with a vowel would be *cérb iníon í?* and *cérbh iníon í?* I couldn't find out more information on this during a recent trip to Muskerry, as the current native speakers don't appear to recognise sentences such as *céra mac é?* I was told *céra díobh é?* would be used instead of this. Forms, such as **cé go mba díobh é?*, that might be predicted, don't appear to exist.

Finally, like *cad*, an interrogative clause starting with *cé* may be governed by a preposition:

64. *An t-é a bhíonn ag argóint ar cé h-é an naomh is mó nó cé h-é an naomh is lúgha.* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p230)

Ceocu?

Ceocu, "which? which of them?", is derived from *cé acu* and pronounced /kʹukə/. *Ceocu* may be followed by a prepositional pronoun formed from *ag* or *de*. Forms such as *ceocu agaibh* (/kʹukə givʹ/, "which of you?"; derived from *cé acu agaibh*) thus contain prepositional pronouns using *ag* twice. A *ceocu* noun phrase may be used with a prepositional pronoun and an indirect relative clause as in sentence (66), which means "to which of them does the woman belong?/whose wife is she?" *Ceocu* may also directly qualify a noun in the capacity of an interrogative adjective, as in (67) below ("which school?").

65. *Ach cé 'cu agaibh Niréos agus ce 'cu agaibh Tirsítés? Ní léir an méid sin fós.* (*Lúcián*, p153)
66. *D'á bhrígh sin, nuair thiocfaidh an aiseirighe, agus nuair a dh'eireóchaid siad go léir, cé 'cu dhíobh gur leis an bhean?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p122)
67. *... feuchaint cé 'cu sgoil a churfadh amach an buachail ab fheár nú an cailín ab fheár.* (*Sgothbhualadh*, p119)

Ceocu means "whether" when followed by a direct relative clause:

68. *Ní fheadar cé 'cu a dhein nó nár dhein, agus is cuma liom.* (*Niamh*, p335)
69. *B'é nídh é sin 'ná cad a bhí imthighthe ar Amhlaoibh nó cé 'cu beó nó marbh a bhí sé.* (*Niamh*, p97)

Pé

Pé, "whichever, whoever, whatever", results from a truncation of *cibé*, in itself a historical fusion of *cé* and the present subjunctive form of the copula. *Pé* may govern a noun, or may take the copula with the following forms:

70. *Dein anois é, dein féin anois, a mhic mo chroídhe, pé rud a dh'fhéadfair a dhéanamh.* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p49)
71. *"Léigh é, pé rud é!" arsa'n rí.* (*Mo Sgéal Féin*, p198)
72. *"Ná féadfá an méid sin do rádh gan duine do mhilleadh led' chuid glinneamhna, pé h-é thú féin?"* (*Séadna*, p10)
73. *Cé h-iad is déanaighe a chaith dhíobh é? Pé h-iad féin is mithid dóibh é.* (*Cómhairle Ár Leasa*, p233)
74. *Bhí an ceart aige pé 'r bh' é féin.* (*Sgothbhualadh*, p144)
75. *Pé áit as a dtáinig sé, nó pé comhacht a thug ann é, is eagal liom ná himtheóchaidh sé gan díoghbháil a dhéanamh.* (*Táin Bó Cuailnge 'na Dhráma*, pp59-60)
76. *Tá sé imthighthe anois pé duine go mba leis é.* (*Notes on Irish Words and Usages*, p133)

As *pé* means, not just "whatever", but "whoever" (as in *pé hiad féin* above, equivalent to *pé daoine iad féin*), logically we might have expected indirect relative forms of the copula similar to those found with *cé*. Yet I have found no attestation of clauses like *pér leis é ("whoever it belonged to") or *péra díobh é ("wherever he is from/whatever family he belongs to"). These appear to be replaced by the forms shown in sentences (75) and (76) above.

Peocu

The use of *ceocu* to mean "whether" can be hard to differentiate from *peocu*, derived from *pé acu*, pronounced /pʹukə/. *Peocu* is often followed by a relative clause in a very similar fashion to *ceocu*. Gerald O'Nolan explained in his *Studies in Modern Irish Part I* (p76) that *ceocu* is used with substantival clauses (*ní fheadar cia 'cu thiocfaidh sé nó ná tiocfaidh*), whereas *peocu* is used with adverbial clauses (*pé 'cu thiocfaidh sé nó ná tiocfaidh, fanfad-sa*). Just as with *ceocu*, *peocu* may be followed by *ag* or *de* (often written *do*):

77. *Pé 'cu chodlas nú nár chodlas ní baoghal gur sgar an sgéal le m'aigne.* (*Sgothbhualadh*, p18)
78. *Tá órdú tabhartha ag Méibh dá fearaibh cuidridh má chíd siad sa chath me gan me dhul beó as, pé 'cu ag Ultaigh nó ag Fearaibh Éirean a bheidh buadh.* (*Táin Bó Cuailnge 'na Dhráma*, pp236-237)
79. *... peocu don triúr agaibh is mó a bhuailfig bob.* (*Scéalaíocht Amhlaoibh*, p223)

Cá?

Cá is a somewhat generic interrogative adjective, meaning "what X?" and "which X?" Its precise meaning is best appraised from context. When used as an interrogative adjective, *cá* does not eclipse and prefixes *h* to a vowel where necessary.

80. *"Cé h-é thusa, a fhir bhig?" ar seisean, "nó cá tír as a dtánaís?"* (*Eisirt*, p42)
81. *Ca bhfios domhsa ceocu Fearghus nó Conchobhar ba mhó a bhí ciontach!* (*Táin Bó Cuailnge 'na Dhráma*, p104)

We see here that *cá tír* means "which country?" (equivalent to *ceocu tír*) and is followed by an indirect relative clause. I haven't found any examples of such usage by Ó Loingsigh, and such usages are rare in Ua Laoghaire's works too (and thus maybe not forms found in the colloquial dialect, but rather forms picked up by Ua Laoghaire in his wider reading in Irish). The extended meaning of the frequently encountered phrase *ca bhfios* is "how would I know?" I include it here in the discussion of the use of *cá* as a generic interrogative adjective qualifying a noun, but Ua Laoghaire's frequent use of the spelling *ca bh'fhios* found elsewhere in his works indicates that he did not believe that in this phrase *cá* governs a noun as an interrogative adjective with exceptional eclipsis, but rather that the *bh* derives from a lenited conditional-tense copula. If so, *ca* here would be an interrogative adverb, "how?" *Ca bhfios* is frequently found in Ua Laoghaire's works spelt with a short *a*, indicating the dialectal pronunciation /kɑvəs/.

The use of *cá háit?* to mean "where?" is also an instance of *cá* as a generic interrogative adjective. I can only identify one use of *cá háit* in Ua Laoghaire's works:

82. *Ach tá aithne againn air seo, cá dtáinig sé; ach Críost, nuair a thiocfaidh sé, ní h-eól d'aoinne cá h-áit gurab as é.* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p245; *cá dtáinig sé* illustrates the fact that in older Muskerry Irish, the verb *tigim/tagaim* did not take *ro* in the past tense; this phrase is equivalent in meaning to *cár tháinig sé*)

Cá huair (also found in Ua Laoghaire's works as *cá uair*), "when?", is used with the copula. Both *cá huair* and *cá uair* are exceedingly rare in Ua Laoghaire's works.

> 83. *Cá huair ba chóir dúinn úrnuithe do rádh?* (*An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p23)

The generic nature of *cá* is shown by the fact that this word, used without a noun, is also an adverb meaning "where?", followed by eclipsis or n-prefixation of a vowel. In the past tense, *cár*, which lenites, is found. *Cá/cár* often has the meaning "where from?", as well as "where?" We may note in passing Gerald O'Nolan's explanation that *cá* derives from an earlier *ca* with a suffixed preposition *an* ("where from?"): this accounts for the length of the vowel, but also for the distinctive syntax following *cá* compared with the other Irish interrogatives (see *The New Era Grammar of Modern Irish*, p52).

> 84. *Cá mbíonn tú nuair ná bíonn tú ad' láthair féin?* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p69)
> 85. *Cá n-imtheóch' sé uatha?* (*Sgothbhualadh*, p6)
> 86. *Do thógadar an Tighearna as an dtuama, agus ní fios dúinn cár chuireadar é.* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p282)
> 87. *Cár ghlac sé corp agus anam mar atá againne?* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p13)

Used with the copula, *cá*, "where?", becomes *cár* (*cárb* before a vowel) without lenition in the present tense, and *cár* (or *cárbh* before a vowel) with lenition in the past/conditional tense. The spellings *cár ab as mé* and *cár bh' as í* in (90) and (91) are worthy of note, indicating such forms may produce an epenthetic vowel.

> 88. *B'fhéidir go bhféadfá-sa a dh'innsint dúinn cár ceart dúinn aghaidh a thabhairt anois, nó cad é an treó baill 'n-a mbeadh aon deabhramh go dtiocfaimis suas leis an sgéal.* (*Guaire*, Vol 2, p202)
> 89. *Cár mhaith leat go ndéanfaimís an cháisg d'ollamhú dhuit le caitheamh?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p75)
> 90. *Tá aithne agaibh orm-sa agus is eol daoibh cár ab as mé; agus ní uaim féin a thánag; ach tá an t-é a chuir uaidh mé fíor, agus ní'l aithne agaibh-se air.* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, pp245-246)
> 91. *D'fhiafraigh fear an tíghe dhi cár bh' as í.* (*Mo Sgéal Féin*, p7)

Cárb as tu? is thus similar in meaning to *cad as duit?* and *cad as tu?* mentioned above.

Eile may be used with *cá* in the form *cad eile cá*+verb. (The example given below illustrates the frequent use of the spelling *ca bhfuil* in the Irish of both Ua Laoghaire and Ó Loingsigh, which clarifies the short vowel in the pronunciation of this phrase: /kɑ vil′/.) I also give an example below of a *cá*-clause being governed by a preposition.

> 92. *Agus cad eile ca bhfuil oiread óir le fághail agus atá le fághail anso againne?* (*Lúcián*, p57)
> 93. *Ní raibh aon tuairisg sa leabhar, ná ar chiúmhais an leabhair, ar cad é an caisleán é ná ar cá raibh sé.* (*Mo Sgéal Féin*, p101)

We may note in passing that indirect relative usages give in *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* such as *cá air*, *cá leis* and *cá uaidh* are not attested in Muskerry Irish. Finally, use of *cá* with nouns and adjectives in the meaning of "how much" is discussed in the appropriate section below.

Canad?

Canad?, "where?", is derived from *cá ionad?* and is thus technically a use of *cá* as an interrogative

adjective. *Canad* is relatively rare, but can be seen to suit copula usage and one-word questions particularly well. The use of an appended *isteach* is also found (*canad isteach?*). Whereas Ua Laoghaire has a direct relative clause *canad a chonacthas é* in (95), Ó Loingsigh regularly uses the form *canad ann* followed by an indirect relative.

94. *Agus dubhradar-san: Canad is toil leat go n-ollamhóchaimís é.* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p210)
95. *Do ghluais Gormfhlaith ar fuid an rígtheighlaigh ag ceistiúchán ar na seirbhísigh feuchaint cé ba dhéanaighe a chonaic an tíghearna óg, Amhlaoibh, agus canad a chonacthas é.* (*Niamh*, p302)
96. *"Ó, chím-se fós iad,""adeireadh duine. "Canad?" adeireadh duine eile.* (*Eisirt*, p89)
97. *Nuair a chua sé abhaile ón scuraíocht ní fheadair sé canad isteach, geall leis, go bhféatadh sé dul sa chúirt álainn go léir a bhí roimis i n-inead an tseana-bhotháin.* (*Scéalaíocht Amlaoibh*, p50)
98. *Ní fheadair Donacha canad ann 'na raibh an bhean le fáil.* (*Scéalaíocht Amhlaoibh*, p206)

Eile may be used with *canad*. The following is the only example I can find:

99. *"Ní hannso do chaithfead mo phroinn amáireach." "Agus canad eile, a dhe?" arsa Ó Domhnaill.* (*An Cleasaidhe*, p9)

Cathain?

"When?" is normally *cathain* (derived from *cá tan* and thus a use of the generic interrogative as an adjective), pronounced /kəˈhinʲ/. Spellings *cathain*, *cathoin* and *cathin* are all found in Ua Laoghaire's works. *Cathain* is followed by a direct relative clause. I can't find any attestation of *cathain* used with the copula. Compare *cá huair* with the copula in (83) above.

100. *"Airiú, cathain a chonaicís í, a Sheághain?" ar siad.* (*Séadna*, p177)

Cad fá? and other phrases with *cad* meaning "why?"

Cén fáth for "why?" is not found in Muskerry Irish. There are a large number of choices here, including *cad fá?*, *cad 'na thaobh* and *cad chuige*. Interestingly, Seosamh Laoide stated that *cad 'na thaobh*, pronounced /kɑ nə ˈheːv/, may contain, not *cad*, but *ca*, the original form of the generic interrogative *cá* found in some interrogative phrases (see *Focloir do cuireadh le Fionn & Lorcán*, p116). If so, there is correctly no /d/ in the pronunciation. All three may take an indirect relative clause:

101. *Cad fá go leigimíd sinn féin ar ár nglúinibh i lathair íomhághtha Chríosd agus na naomh?* (*An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p21)
102. *Cad fá an t-eagla so oraibh?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p97)
103. *Cad 'n-a thaobh, d'á bhrígh sin, ná fuilim níos mó ar lasadh le grádh dhuit, agus mé ad' láthair?* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p238)
104. *"Agus cad 'n-a thaobh an cogadh má 'seadh?" arsa mise.* (*Niamh*, p222)
105. *Cad chuige go mbrisid do dheisgiobhuil-se nósa na sean?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p41)
106. *Cad chuige an bhuairt agus an gol?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p100)

Cad é an chúis (an example of a masculine subsubject with a feminine noun), *cad ar a shon* and *cad uime* may also mean "why" or something analogous to it ("for what reason?", "in relation to what?", etc) in Ua Laoghaire's Irish. *Cad ar a shon* and *cad uime* have not been found in Ó Loingsigh's Irish. *Cad fé ndeár* (or *cad fé ndeara*) is occasionally found with an indirect relative clause, but is more generally followed by a noun subject or a verbal noun. *Cad fé ndeár san?* and

cad fé ndeár é sin? are attested (as is *cad 'na thaobh san?*), meaning "why is that?" Finally, *cad* on its own as in (112) can also mean something similar to "why" in an elliptical construction:

107. *Bhí fhios agam cad é an chúis n-a mbíodh Caoilte ag teacht fé dhéin teighlaigh Thaidhg Mhóir uí Chealla.* (*Niamh*, p188)
108. *"Airiú," ar sise, "cad ar a shon go dtabharfá an oiread san airgid dom roimh ré?"* (*Séadna*, p63)
109. *A Dhia, a Dhia, cad uime gur thréigis mé?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p83)
110. *Ní fheadar an tsaoghal cad fé ndeara do mhnáibh na h-Éirean a leithéid de dhúil a bheith acu ann, nú cad fé ndeara dhóibh bheith 'ghá labhairt le n-a gclainn.* (*Sgothbhualadh*, p70)
111. *A Thighearna, cad fé ndeár go ndéanfair thu féin a thaisbeáint dúinne agus ná taisbeánfair thu féin do'n tsaoghal?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p268)
112. *"Airiú," arsa Diarmuid, "agus cad ba ghádh an dithneas go léir?"* (*Séadna*, p42)

Conas?

Similar *conas* (from *cá ionas* and thus a use of the generic interrogative as an adjective) is found in Muskerry in the place of the *cad é mar* and *cé(n) chaoi* used elsewhere in Ireland to form the interrogative "how". Possibly illogically, *conas* takes a direct relative clause. The *conas atá tú?* form taught to learners of Irish ignores the fact that the relative particle is not heard and *conas 'tánn/'taíonn tú?* represents the pronunciation better. In *The Dialects of Co. Clare*, Nils Holmer stated that /kənəs əˈha tə/ was found in Co. Clare when the Gaeltacht survived in that part of Munster (see pp87, 129 in that work); it seems that if the relative particle is clearly heard, the substantive verb should be lenited too. However, Ua Laoghaire does write out the relative particle in *conus atáthar* in (113); this may be because the autonomous form of the verb is more rarely found than *conas 'taíonn tú? Conas* is used with the copula in a direct relative construction.

113. *"Conus atáthar ag an muintir mhóir mhaith seo indiu?" arsa Guaire.* (*Guaire*, Vol 1, p78)
114. *Conus is féidir an t-arán agus an fíon d' athrúghadh i bhfuil agus i bhfeóil Críosd?* (*An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p26)

As well as *conas eile*, "how else" may also be *cad eile conas*. As with the other interrogatives, *conas* may be governed by *ar*.

115. *Cad eile conus fheuchfá 'n-a súilibh, mara rud é go bhfuilid siad féin chómh caoch leat?* (*Lúcián*, p115)
116. *Mar do bhreithnigheadar go dlúth ar conus iad féin do chimeád ó gach mian saoghalta, ansan d'fhéadadar gach féith 'n-a gcroídhe a thabhairt do Dhia agus iad féin do chimeád gan cheangal.* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p17)

Conas san? is a question (or a question with rhetorical exclamatory force), meaning "how come?" *Conas é sin?* is also found elsewhere in Ua Laoghaire's works.

117. *"Ach feuch, a Amhlaoibh. Tá an sgéal go h-olc agat-sa." "Conus san airiú!" "Caithfear an ceann a bhaint díot."* (*Niamh*, p161)

The subordinate-clause use of *conas mar* expresses "how it is that something is", "how something happened to take place", with a direct relative clause:

118. *Cad é a mhinicighe a dh'airighis conus mar a thuit an fear so le claidheamh.* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p49)

Cad é mar?

Cad é mar, while not used in the general interrogative sense of "how?" in Muskerry Irish, may be found in subordinate clauses to express "how it is that something is" in a manner similar to *conas mar*. It takes a direct relative clause.

> 119. *Ó, an t-é go mbéadh 'n-a chroídhe aige an léas is lúgha d'fhíor-ghrádh Dé, do chífeadh sé go soiléir cad é mar ná fuil i neithibh saoghalta ar fad ach folamhas.* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p26)

Cad é mar may also be used with a noun in an interrogative sentence ("what sort of X are you?"). This is essentially a copular construction.

> 120. *Cad é mar shaghas duine thú? Nó cad tá uait?* (*Séadna*, p87)
> 121. *Cad é mar dhuine é seo go bhfuil gaoth agus faraige úmhal dó?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p21)

The use of *cad é mar* in rhetorical flourishes to mean "what a X!" is discussed below.

"How" in questions of degree

The generic interrogative *cá* may also express "how" in questions of degree when governing adjectives or nouns. Compare the following:

> 122. *An fada d'fhan corp Chríosd san uaig?* (*An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p16)
> 123. *Cá fada tar éis deasgabhála Chríosd gur chuir sé an Spioraid Naomh uaidh?* (*An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p16)

The use of the interrogative particle *an*, as opposed to interrogative adverbs such as *cá*, is not the focus of this article. However, we note that *an fada* means "how long?" (and also "how far?" in distance) and that the use of *an* as an interrogative appears to be a more natural usage in such questions. *An fada* contrasts in the edition of Uilliam Ua Cathain's catechism edited by Ua Laoghaire with *cá fada*, also meaning "how long?", on the same page of the catechism. *An fada* takes a direct relative clause, whereas *cá fada* is used with an indirect relative. This use of *cá* does not occasion consonant mutation, but would prefix *h* to a vowel, as shown in *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*, which gives *cá hard*. However, no instances of *cá* governing an adjective beginning with a vowel have been located in the Irish of Ua Laoghaire or Ó Loingsigh.

Cá beag and *cá mór* mean "how little" and "how large". However, these phrases have extended idiomatic meanings ("how come it's not enough? isn't it enough for you?" and "how come it's excessive? why shouldn't you?" respectively), as shown in the following examples; Ua Laoghaire's literal translations given in (124) indicate that he interpreted the generic interrogative as "where?", not "how?", but the generic interrogative nature of *cá* means that this distinction is not significant. *Cár bheag* shows that the use of *cá* to mean "how" is essentially a copula construction, which can therefore take the past/conditional form of the copula in the form of *cár* (with lenition). I haven't located any examples of *cá feárr* or *cá miste*.

> 124. *Cá beag* and *cá mór* are emphatic interrogative forms of *ní beag* and *ní mór*. *Cá beag duit do cheart fhághail?* Where is it too little for you to get your right? i.e. is it not enough for you to get your right? *Cá mór dom mo cheart féin do bhaint amach?* Where is it too much for me to insist on my own right? i.e. must I not insist…? (*Notes on Irish Words and Usages*, pp146-147)

125. *Cár bheag dom chun mé chosg ar iad a dhéanamh an chrích a rug mo bheirt drithár mar gheall ar bheith ag déanamh gníomhartha d'á sórd?* (*Sgéalaidheachta na Macabéach*, Vol 2, p222)

The following example from the stories of Ó Loingsigh has *cá* with the comparative adjective *baoithe* (/be:hi/):

126. *Agus cá baethe dhôsa féinig súd a rá ná d'Fhionn mhac Cumhaill uí Mhuair uí Bhaoisc teacht...* (*Scéalaíocht Amhlaoibh*, p313)

"How many?" is generally found in Muskerry Irish as *an mó?* However, Ua Laoghaire does occasionally use *cá mhéad* and *cá mhéid* (but not *cé mhéad*), where the generic interrogative governs a noun. I can't explain the lenition, unless *cá mhéid* is a truncation of *cá a mhéid*, where *a* is a proleptic use of the possessive adjective. *Cad é mhéid aimsire* in (129), which also contains an unexpressed proleptic possessive, avoids the use of the generic interrogative *cá*, but is the only identifiable instance of *cad é mhéid* in Ua Laoghaire's works.

127. *An mó uair atá a cúig i bhfichid? Ceithre h-uaire. Cá mheud uair atá a trí ann? Sé h-uaire, agus a dó fairis.* (*Eólas ar Áireamh*, p32)
128. *Cá mhéid pearsa i nDia?* (*An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p12)
129. *Tar éis raint aimsire bheith caithte agam sa sgoil sin Mhichíl de Bhál i Maghchromtha, ní cuimhin liom anois i gceart cad é mhéid aimsire, do labhair Micheál de Bhál le m' athair.* (*Mo Sgéal Féin*, p60)

No examples of constructions like *cé chomh te* have been found in the Irish of Ua Laoghaire or Ó Loingsigh. This construction appears to be an extraneous dialectal form. In Ua Laoghaire's Irish, the somewhat rare use of *cá* to govern a noun or adjective in questions of degree is supplemented by the use of *cad é* with a definite noun (*é* is used even with a feminine noun, in proleptic anticipation of the response). We note in (130) below that *cad é an fhaid* is found on the same page of Ua Laoghaire's catechism as *an fada* and *cá fada*. Like *an fada*, but unlike *cá fada*, *cad é an fhaid* is used with the direct relative. *Cad é an fhaid aimsire*, as shown in (131), is found much more frequently than *cad é mhéid aimsire*. *Cad é an méid aimsire* with the article is also attested. The use of *cad é an t-aos tu?*, translated by Ua Laoghaire as "what age are you?", but much more naturally "how old are you?" in English, replaces the forms *cá haois t(h)ú?* and *cén aois t(h)ú?* found in other forms of Irish.

130. *Cad é an fhaid d' fhan Críosd ar an dtalamh so tár éis na h-aiseiríghe?* (*An Teagasg Críosdaidhe*, p16)
131. *Aon duine, a Dhonchadh, go bhfuil an Ghaeluinn 'na bhéul aige, cad é an fhaid aimsire is dóich leat ba ghádh dhó thabhairt ag foghluim conus Gaeluinn do léighe agus do sgrí'?* (*Sgothbhualadh*, p8)
132. *"Cad é an méid aimsire a bhéadh uait?" arsa 'n ceann airm.* (*Séadna*, p215)
133. *Cad é an t-aos tu?* What age are you? (*Mion-Chaint, Cuid a II*, p33)

Rhetorical "how!" and "what a!"

Cad é is used in rhetorical exclamations followed by an abstract noun with a proleptic possessive particle. We note that these abstract nouns are often feminine, but the subsubject is, nonetheless, *é*. The form of the abstract nouns varies in Ua Laoghaire's works. An example of *cad é a mhiniceacht* is given below, but *cad é a mhinicighe* and *cad é a mhinice* are also found elsewhere, as in (118) above. Such rhetorical phrases, essentially interrogative copular sentences, may be used as noun clauses in a longer sentence, as in (135).

134. *A Ierúsalem, a Ierúsalem, a mharbhuigheann na fáidhe, agus a ghabhann do chlochaibh ins na daoine a curtar chúghat, cad é a mhiniceacht dob' áil liom do chlann a bhailiú chugham mar a bhailigheann an chearc a h-ál fé n-a sgiathánaibh, agus níor bh'áil leat!* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p67)
135. *Agus ansan, má bhíon an sgéal chómh dona san ag na righthibh is uiriste a thuisgint cad é a olcas a bhíon an sgéal agá ndaoinibh.* (*Lúcián*, p62)
136. *Gan grádh Dé ann ní'l aon tairbhe sa ghníomh sofheicse, ach aon rud a deintear le grádh do Dhia, is cuma cad é a luighead ná a shuaraigheacht, tairbhe agus toradh ar fad iseadh é.* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p25)

There is a difference between questions like *cad é an fhaid?* in (130) above and rhetorical exclamations such as *cad é a luighead!* I don't have an attestation of *cad é a fhaid!*, but logically this could be used as an exclamation too. Similarly, we saw that *cad é an méid* was a question; we could expect *cad é a mhéid* to be an exclamation in appropriate circumstances. *Cad é mhéid* as a truncation of *cad é a mhéid* in (129) is also used as a question, but is an example of prolepsis, required by a subsequent relative clause. Given in (137) below is the only example of a rhetorical exclamation I can find with *méid* (the citation contains a question mark, but the Douay version of Matthew 6:23 is "If then the light that is in thee, be darkness: the darkness itself how great shall it be!"):

137. *Agus má's ionan agus doircheacht an solus atá ionat, cad é méid na doircheachta féin?* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p15)

Note the following use of *cad é* with the comprehensive relative particle to form an exclamation ("how many people!"):

138. *Cad é a bhfuil de dhaoine d'á gcailleamhaint tré eolus bhaoth an tsaoghail, agus gan puínn suime acu i seirbhís Dé!* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p8)

This usage appears exceptional, as it is the only instance I can identify of *cad é a bhfuil?* in Ua Laoghaire's works. *Cad a bhfuil*? is the form he generally uses, as shown in (139) and (140). It is possible that the use of the pronoun here reflects syntactical contamination from phrases such as *cad é an mhéid daoine a bhí sa tír* (found in *Seanmóin agus Trí Fichid*, Vol 1, p22; this citation appears to contain a typographical error as *an mhéid* means "the size" as opposed to *an méid*, "the amount", unless *an mhéid daoine* be interpreted as meaning "the size of the population"), or that Ua Laoghaire originally intended to write *cad é an m(h)éid* before following *cad é* by *a bhfuil de* instead.

139. *Cad a bhfuil de dhaoine do mealladh, agus gur stracadh anam a' colainn acu gan choinne!* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p49)
140. *Ó, cad a bhfuil agam 'á fhulang laistigh!* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p196)

Cad é mar may be used in rhetoric expressions qualifying a noun in a similar fashion to "what a!" in English ("what a world!"). The rhetorical use of *cad é mar* derives from its use in subordinate clauses ("how it is that something is a certain way") explained above. *Cad é mar* may be followed by a direct relative in a rhetoric exclamation that could possibly be translated as "how it seems that...!" in (141), (142) and (143). In (144) the same construction is found with the copula in a rhetorical sentence that could be translated "how right it is to render unto thee praise and thanks on account of these things".

141. *Ó, cad é mar shaoghal! Cad é mar ná fuil ann ar fad ach trioblóid agus mí-fhortiún agus*

ceilg namhad ar an uile thaobh. (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p138)

142. *Cad é mar ná tagan aon lá breágh!* How extraordinary that no fine day comes! (*Notes on Irish Words and Usages*, p143)

143. *Cad é mar atá an fear láidir ar lár!* How the strong man is down. A common construction in the mouths of old Irish speakers. It expresses wonder, admiration, astonishment. (*Notes on Irish Words and Usages*, p143)

144. *Cad é mar is ceart moladh agus buidheachas a ghabháil leat mar gheall ar na neithibh seo!* (*Aithris ar Chríost*, p244)

More rarely, *cad iad mar* can be found in a rhetorical flourish with a plural noun:

145. *Féach, a Mháighistir, cad iad mar chlocha agus cad é mar dhéanamh!* (*Na Cheithre Soisgéil*, p123)

The rhetorical exclamation *cad é mar obair* is worth mentioning separately. Ua Laoghaire gives his translation of this in (146). In some sentences, such as (147), the meaning tends towards "<u>why on earth would </u>he imagine there was no accuracy or neatness of expression anywhere else, other than where he himself was born and brought up!"

146. *Cad é mar obair duit dul*, etc. (Sg. III. 280), what sort of conduct was it. This sentence can be past or present according as the sense requires. *Cad é mar obair duit é siúd a dhéanamh indé! Cad é mar obair duit bheith 'ghá dhéanamh san anois!* (*Notes on Irish Words and Usages*, p83)

147. *Pé ceart nú pé deise cainnte atá i mbeul cainnteóra i ndúthaigh áirighthe cad é mar obair dó a cheapadh i n-a aigne ná fuil ceart ná deise cainnte i n-aon áit eile ach sa n-áit 'n-ar rugadh agus 'n-ar tógadh é féin!* (*Cómhairle Ár Leasa*, p229)

One notices however how dependent many of these examples, particular of questions of degree meaning "how" and rhetorical exclamations meaning "how!" and "what a!", are on the works of Ua Laoghaire. *Cad é mar*, for example, is not found in what is attested of the Irish of Ó Loingsigh. Ua Laoghaire states in (143) that some of these phrases were common in colloquial Munster Irish. Other interrogative phrases mentioned here as rarely found may have been picked up by Ua Laoghaire elsewhere or in his reading of Irish literature. *Aithris ar Chríost*, Ua Laoghaire's translation of *Imitatio Christi*, is a particularly rich source of such phrases. Without Ua Laoghaire's works, it would be difficult to say what forms many interrogative sentences would have taken in the Irish used by speakers of traditional Muskerry Irish.

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