Elisa Roma

7 Nasalisation after inflected nominals in the Old Irish glosses: Evidence for variation and change

In this chapter, I discuss the variation in the occurrence of nasalisation on demonstratives, adjectives, nouns and inflected prepositions or adverbs following inflected nouns and adjectives in the Old Irish Würzburg, Turin, St. Gall and Milan Glosses (henceforth Wb., Tur., Sg. and Ml. respectively; see section 1.1 below for the use of edited sources). In these contexts nasalisation is more irregular (at least in spelling) than after proclitics such as articles, possessives and prepositions, and apparently unpredictable.

The data I presented at the Colloquium ‘Variation and Change in the Syntax and Morphology of Medieval Celtic Languages’ (Maynooth, 13 October 2017) were at the time not published yet and had not been presented before. Since in the meantime they have been published in Roma (2018a), this article will not discuss them in detail but only report examples and data for the sake of the argument and dwell on some of their diachronic and synchronic implications.

The paper is organised as follows: section 1 illustrates the contexts taken into account and summarises the data, according to a broad classification of phonetic and syntactic environments (sections 1.2 and 1.3 respectively). Section 2 discusses the data from a distinctive diachronic vs. synchronic perspective. Section 3 sums up the content of the paper and its tentative conclusions.

1 Nasalisation after inflected nominals in the Old Irish glosses: The data

1.1 Sources

The data presented in Roma (2018a), which form the basis of the analysis provided in this chapter, were collected as follows. Instances from Ml. were extracted from Griffith and Stifter (2013), checking all nominal and adjectival entries in the dictionary, while data from Wb., Tur. and Sg. were gathered from

Thes. and cross-checked with Kavanagh (2001), Bauer (2015)¹ and Lash (2018)² for Wb., Sg. and Tur. respectively.

1.2 Phonetic environments

The occurrences of nasalisation or lack thereof were grouped according to a broad classification of possible phonetic and syntactic environments. This was devised expanding on the classification and the results of Thurneysen's (1905) survey, which was the most comprehensive available. Before listing the phonetic environments, a caveat is in order. Nasalisation is expected to be noted in Old Irish spelling only on voiced plosives and on vowels: these were the cases taken into account in the collection of data, in search for a measure of irregularity, which points to variation (see Ó Maolalaigh 2008: 242). Methodologically, therefore, nasalisation as a phonetic or even morphophonological feature cannot be the starting point, as with present-day varieties, but is the demonstrandum.

The phonetic environments are listed below with illustrative examples. The relevant nasalisation marker is highlighted in bold when examples are quoted in the body of the text.

The first kind of environment groups cases where nasalisation would occur after or on a vowel, as in (1). This phonetic environment, where Thurneysen (1905) found that nasalisation was more frequent, includes cases where the triggering word ends in a vowel, as in (1d) and (11), and cases where the nasalised word begins with a vowel, as in (1a)-(1c) and (8), as well as instances where nasalisation occurs between vowels, as in (1e) and (9). Note that instances after a final <n> belong to a separate category, see (2) below. The examples in (1a) to (1e) show nasalisation occurring on different word classes (or nominal case), i.e. on a noun after an agreeing adjective, on an adjective after a head noun, on a demonstrative after a head noun, on a noun in the genitive case, on an inflected preposition (or adverbial), respectively. For all the other phonetic environments listed in this section only a single example will be given, but note that word class of the nasalised word has always been taken into account in the classification and is relevant to the frequency of nasalisation (see section

¹ Bauer (2015) was not available yet when the collection of data from Sg. began. Bauer, Hofman, and Moran's (2018) digital edition of the St. Gall Glosses has also been occasionally consulted.

² I warmly thank Elliott Lash for allowing me to consult the *Minor Glosses Database* before its publication in CorPH.

1.3 below and Roma 2018a: 13). See section 1.3 for details about the classification according to the triggering word.

- (1) a. *arnach* *nindocbáil* *móir*
 for-any_{ACC.SG.FEM} ^{NAS}glory_{ACC} great_{ACC.SG.FEM}
 ‘for some great glory’ (Wb. 23^b12)
- b. *tiagait* *báas* *nanapaig*
 go_{3PL.PRES} death_{ACC} ^{NAS}premature_{ACC.SG.NEUT}
 ‘They go to premature death.’ (Wb. 11^d12)
- c. *ambas* *nisin*
 the_{NOM.SG.NEUT}=death_{NOM} ^{NAS}DEICT_that_{DAT}
 ‘that death’ (Wb. 15^d12)
- d. *ácenele* *ndoine*
 the_{ACC.SG.NEUT}=race_{ACC} ^{NAS}men_{GEN.PL}
 ‘the human race’ (Wb. 5⁵16)
- e. *triguidi* *náirium*
 through=beseeching_{ACC} ^{NAS}for_{1SG}
 ‘through beseeching for me.’ (Wb. 7^a12)

The second kind groups cases where nasalisation would occur after words ending with *n* before words beginning with a vowel, *d* or *g*, and words ending with <*m*> before words beginning with *b*: in these contexts the lack of a second nasal on the following word may not suggest lack of nasalisation at all (but see section 2 for a discussion of the treatment of this context in Sg.). An example is in (2), where nasalisation occurs on a genitive noun.

- (2) *cotíchtin* *nancrist*
 until=coming_{ACC} ^{NAS}Antichrist_{GEN}
 ‘until the coming of the Antichrist’ (Wb. 25^d1)

The third kind is defined as follows: nasalisation between dental consonants, i.e. all consonants which do not include a labial or velar or two plosives. When both consonants are plosives, the examples have been classified separately (see [5] below; in [3] final <*d*> represents a dental fricative). In (3) nasalisation between dental consonants occurs on a genitive noun.

- (3) *rad* *ndé*
 grace_{NOM} ^{NAS}God_{GEN}
 ‘the grace of God’ (Wb. 7^d3)

The fourth kind groups cases where nasalisation would occur between (non-dental) plosives, as in (4), where nasalisation occurs on an adjective.

- (4) *arná coscrad indeseircc mbráthardi*
 that-NEG·destroy_{3SG.PRES.SUBJ} the_{ACC.SG.FEM}=love_{ACC} ^{NAS}brotherly_{ACC.SG.FEM}
 ‘lest it should destroy the brotherly love’ (Wb. 10^c1)

The fifth environment groups instances where nasalisation is expected between dental plosives, as in (5), where nasalisation occurs on an inflected preposition.

- (5) *suidigfith dia recht ndo*
 establish_{3SG.FUT} God_{NOM} law_{ACC} ^{NAS}to_{3SG.MASC}
 ‘God will establish a law for him.’ (Ml. 46^c20)

Lastly, nasalisation may occur between all other consonants, as in (6), where nasalisation occurs on a genitive noun.

- (6) *isdered mbetho inso*
 is_{3SG.PRES}=end_{NOM} ^{NAS}world_{GEN} the_{NOM.SG}=this_{NOM}
 ‘This is the end of the world.’ (Wb. 10^b3)

The results of the survey are summarised below. I refer to Roma (2018a) for quantitative data.

In Wb. nasalisation is regular only on agreeing nouns, adjectives and on demonstratives, where it mostly occurs after/on a vowel (context as in [1] above). It tends not to be noted after nasals (context as in [2] above) on any following word. On genitive nouns it occurs frequently after/on vowels, and is attested in all interconsonantal environments except between dental plosives. On prepositions nasalisation is rarely found, and never in any interconsonantal position.

In Sg. nasalisation after/on a vowel is always found on agreeing nouns, adjectives and on demonstratives; it is regular on genitive nouns in any phonetic context, while on inflected prepositions it is much more frequent than in Wb., but hardly attested between consonants and never between dental consonants (12 instances without). It tends to be regularly noted after final nasals, and a nasal also appears sometimes when the following word beginning with a vowel is spelt with an initial <h>, as in (7).³

³ Three instances in Sg. (see Roma 2018a: 5). This cannot have any connection with the emergence of a voiceless glottal fricative after or between nasal vowels, in the position once occupied by a nasal consonant, noted by Ó Maolalaigh (2003: 117) for modern Gaelic dialects. See Schrijver (1997a: 219–220).

- (7) *ni fail chumscugud n̄huiddd and*
 NEG·be_{3SG.PRES} change_{ACC} ^{NAS}order_{GEN} in_{3SG.NEUT.DAT}
 ‘There is no change of order there.’ (Sg. 215^a2)

In ML, nasalisation occurs in all phonetic environments. Although between dental consonants it tends to be avoided, between non-dental plosives and between other consonants it is attested in a good number of instances on genitive nouns (9/19) and prepositions (10/19). Nevertheless, it is hardly spelt after final nasals on genitives and prepositions.

In Tur. the examples are few, but nasalisation is regular and there is one instance of nasalisation between plosives (*echtar comairbirt m̄biuth pecthæ* ‘outside the practice of the sins’ [Tur. 108]).

The survey presented in Roma (2018a) and summarised here confirms Thurneysen’s observation (1905: 1) that nasalisation is never marked on an initial *d-* after a final *-l* (18 instances in Wb., 10 in ML., 1 in Sg.), or between a final *-m* (fricative) and an initial *g-* (only occurring in 2 instances in Wb.). While for the latter context the evidence is too meagre to allow any conclusion, for the former it could be argued that a nasal consonant was avoided (and, possibly, not admitted in some varieties).⁴ Nevertheless, counterexamples apparently occur outside my corpus: *iarthimcul n̄dī* ‘after the circuit by it (the sun)’ (Thes. 2: 33.22 [Vienna Bede 23]; on an inflected preposition), where however nasalisation is unexpected after a dative singular noun; *frisinnaraim n̄ grecdī* ‘to the Greek number’ (Thes. 2: 34.28 [Vienna Bede 31]; on an adjective).⁵ Be that as it may, in other interconsonantal contexts the syntactic environment seems crucial: for example, in Wb. there are 3 instances of nasalisation on adjectives out of 8 expected in interconsonantal position (*-s mb-*, *-cc mb-*, *-cc ng-*), but there are none on a preposition in any interconsonantal environment (0/97).

1.3 Syntactic environments

The syntactic environments where nasalisation occurs after inflected nominals have been grouped according to case, gender and number of the triggering word as well as according to word class of the nasalised word (see above section 1.2). They are listed below.

⁴ The nasal in *amal n̄dondfoirde* ‘as signifies it’ (Sg. 26^b12), in a different syntactic context, is unusual, and Thes., followed by Bauer (2015), suggests correcting it to *dondfoirde*.

⁵ These are the only two instances of nasalisation in these phonetic environments in the *Minor Glosses Database* (Lash 2018). Lenition after *iar* in Vienna Bede 23 is also irregular.

Nasalisation after a singular nominative neuter noun is exemplified in (1c), (3) and (6). Besides the five word classes listed in section 1.2 and exemplified in (1a) to (1e) respectively, it also occurs once on an agreeing noun in apposition, as in (8).

- (8) *sliab* *nossa*
 mount_{NOM} ^{NAS}Ossa_{NOM}
 ‘Mount Ossa’ (Sg. 63^a16)

Nasalisation after an accusative noun is exemplified in (1a), (1b) (1d), (1e) and (2). It may also occur on an agreeing noun in apposition, as in (9).

- (9) *fridia* *nathir*
 to=God_{ACC} ^{NAS}father_{ACC}
 ‘towards God the father’ (Ml. 127^d8)

Nasalisation after a genitive plural noun is exemplified in (10).

- (10) *itseúit* *macc* *ṅgor*
 is_{3PL.PRES}=treasures_{NOM.PL} sons_{GEN.PL} ^{NAS}pious_{GEN.PL.MASC}
 ‘They are the treasures of pious sons.’ (Wb. 23^a9)

Nasalisation after a singular nominative neuter adjective is exemplified in (11).

- (11) *isinse* *ṇduit*
 is_{3SG.PRES}=hard_{NOM.SG.NEUT} ^{NAS}to_{2SG}
 ‘It is impossible for you.’ (Wb. 5^b28)

Nasalisation after a noun phrase with an accusative or a nominative neuter noun+adjective is extremely rare: it only occurs once in Ml. 40^a20, reported in (12), out of 11 similar syntactic environments.

- (12) *atá* *debe* *mec* *nand*
 PV-be_{3SG.PRES} difference_{NOM} ^{NAS}little_{NOM.SG.NEUT} in_{3SG.NEUT.DAT}
 ‘There is a little difference there.’ (Ml. 40^a20)

The data clearly show that word class of the nasalised word is relevant for the occurrence of nasalisation. Nasalisation surfaces in the glosses according to the hierarchy in (13) below (see Roma 2018a: 13):

- (13) nasalisation on agreeing words and demonstratives > nasalisation on nominal noun modifiers > nasalisation on any modifier following a noun

I am aware that this picture is somehow biased by the following circumstances:

- prenominal adjectives are mostly proclitic (*cach* ‘every’ and *nach* ‘any’ are the most frequent cases; there are only 3 examples with stressed *cétnae* ‘first’ and 2 with *uile* ‘all’ in Ml.; 3 with *cétna* in Sg.; 1 with *uile* in Tur.); they can therefore be assumed to behave rather similarly to proclitic mutation-triggers such as articles, than as mutation-triggering inflected stressed words.
- demonstratives which can show nasalisation all begin with a vowel (*ucut*) or a vowel initial deictic particle (*ísin*, *ísiu*)

Nevertheless, nasalisation is clearly shown more frequently on adjectives than on genitives and prepositions, as already noted by Thurneysen himself (1905; GOI § 237). In Wb., nasalisation on prepositions is confined to the phonetic context after/on a vowel and does not occur after genitive plural nouns; genitive nouns are mostly not nasalised (overall 67 vs. 40), although nominative singular neuter nouns mostly nasalise a following genitive (18 vs. 12). The same does not hold for Sg. and Ml. In Sg., nasalisation on prepositions is well attested whatever the trigger except neuter adjectives (context (11) above), and even predominant after an accusative noun (12 vs. 9, overall on prepositions 19 vs. 33); nasalisation on genitives is largely predominant whatever the trigger (37 vs. 14). In Ml., nasalisation on prepositions is again frequent after most triggers except neuter adjectives (overall on prepositions 61 vs. 99, after neuter adjectives 7 vs. 16) and predominant on genitive nouns (84 vs. 50).

Perhaps surprisingly, the strongest nasalisation triggers in Wb. are singular neuter nouns, in Ml. genitive plural nouns. In Sg. all nasalisation triggers except neuter adjectives nasalise between 70% and 80% of expected cases.

2 Diachronic and synchronic variation

According to Thurneysen (GOI § 237), the frequent omission of the nasal in interconsonantal position is due to the regular dropping of a nasal in some consonant clusters. Thurneysen presumably drew his conclusions on his survey in Thurneysen (1905), which showed that the nasal was more frequently omitted in interconsonantal position. Nevertheless, this view implies that a nasal was lost between consonants through a highly irregular phonetic process (see below).

Thurneysen’s phonological explanation for the lack of nasalisation does not address why the presence of a nasal between vowels apparently increases in time, or at any rate greatly differs from one corpus of glosses to another in certain syntactic environments: in the cases where nasalisation would occur on a vowel and/or follow a vowel (phonetic context as in 1), in Wb. 70 instances show nasalisation, 115 do not, in Sg. 68 show nasalisation and 24 do not, and in Ml. 189 show nasalisation and 38 do not. Even if one excludes nasalisation on prepositions, which appears to be generally rarer, the corresponding figures are Wb. 59 with nasalisation vs. 29 without, Sg. 54 with vs. 8 without, Ml. 145 with vs. 15 without. Of course, consonant dropping in interconsonantal position cannot be the reason for this kind of variation.

It could be assumed that nasalisation was left out in spelling in Wb., although it was realised phonetically, or, vice versa, that Wb. reflects a variety where nasals were dropped more easily between consonants. The former hypothesis would be surprising for initial vowels, and neither hypothesis is supported by independent evidence. Table 1 below reports the spelling of a few sample words with interconsonantal nasals in the three major corpora of glosses.

Table 1: Spelling of *n* between consonants in the interior of words (sample lexemes).

Lexeme	Wb.		Sg. and other Priscian glosses				Ml.	
	with	without	with	without	with	without	with	without
	<i>n̄</i>	<i>n̄</i>	<i>n̄</i>	<i>n̄</i>	<i>n̄</i>	<i>n̄</i>	<i>n̄</i>	<i>n̄</i>
<i>freċndairc</i> ‘present’, <i>freċndarcus</i> ‘presence’	11	–	27 ⁶		1	20		–
<i>aisndís</i> ‘declaration’ and related words (<i>aisndisse</i> , <i>-i</i>)	4	–	7		2	58		–
<i>forċgaire</i> ‘command’	2	–	–		4	2		4
<i>túailnge</i> ‘ability’ and related words (<i>túailngigidir</i> , <i>túailngigiud</i> , <i>túailngigthe</i>)	1	–	–		–	4		1

⁶ Once without *d*.

The comparison between Table 1 and the data in section 1 shows that the frequencies with which the nasal is spelt between consonants in the interior of words and in nasalisation contexts do not match. The behaviour of clusters arising from syncope, such as those mentioned by Feuth (1982: 92) and Ó Maolalaigh (1995–1996: 164) and illustrated in Table 1, is different from the behaviour of purported similar phonetic contexts between words. In Wb., while the nasal is regularly spelt in the interior of words, it is most frequently omitted between words, as shown in Roma (2018a) and noted above (sections 1.2 and 1.3). It may be added in this connection that in Ml. there occur a few examples⁷ where nasalisation surfaces on a simple, proclitic preposition, thereby appearing in a phonetic environment which resembles more closely the unstressed position of the interior of words. But, again, the spelling of the nasal in the interior of words in Ml. does not seem to be more regular than in the other corpora of glosses.

Indeed, different spelling conventions apparently hold for nasalisation on consonants and vowels after final nasals in the St. Gall Glosses (see 1.2 above), where nasalisation tends to be spelt regularly (72%), as opposed to both Wb. (5%) and Ml. (42%). This corresponds to Quin's (1979: 256, 258) data on the spelling of nasalisation after the accusative article, since Sg. seems to mark nasalisation after accusative *in* more frequently. This spelling could also reflect a different phonetic realisation. Note that Sg. also features 6 instances of nasalisation after Latin words ending in a nasal (the neuter nouns *nomen*, *pronomen* and *cognomen*, see Roma 2018a: 19).⁸

Bronner (2016) has shown that in the *Additamenta* in the Book of Armagh the kind of nasalisation dealt with in this paper is almost regularly spelt differently from nasalisation after proclitics such as articles, possessives, prepositions, conjunct particles and infixed pronouns: only this kind of nasal is written separately between mid-height dots. Note that nasalisation seems to be regularly spelt in the *Additamenta*, but there are only 5 instances on an inflected preposition, of which 3 are of *and* 'in it'; moreover, only 2 instances occur between consonants, 1 of which involves an adjective. This last is reported in (14).⁹

⁷ Ml. 30^b10, 46^a1, 51^a5, 72^c9, 23^a5, 110^d10, 96^a13. See Roma (2018a: 12) for details.

⁸ Among these, *pronomen* is quite clearly a borrowing (so in eDIL), given the dative plural form *pronoibneib* (Sg. 200^b6); cf. nasalisation after the accusative singular but no nasalisation after the dative singular in *pronomen nātárcadach* vs. *o pronomen atárcadach* 'an anaphoric pronoun' (Sg. 209^b10).

⁹ Nasalisation is not marked in *contubart fland feblæ acheill dōo* 'Fland Feblae gave his church to him' (Thes. 2: 242.20–21 [Book of Armagh, folio 18^{va}34–5]) (see above section 1.2 on the absence of nasalisation between *-l* and *d-*); possibly also in *cach aleth ódib* 'each of them his way' (Thes. 2: 240.20 [Book of Armagh, folio 18^{ra}28]).

- (14) *arech* *n· donn*
 for=horse_{ACC} ^{NAS}brown_{ACC.SG.MASC}
 ‘for a brown horse’ (Thes. 2: 240.1 [Book of Armagh, folio 17^{va}29])

This kind of spelling seems to be an alternative to the superscript dot or *punctum delens* – which never occurs in the *Additamenta* (Bronner 2016: 42) – and is therefore considered by Bronner (2016: 43, 45) a chronologically and/or geographically restricted variant of such spelling, probably to be ascribed to an experimental phase. The flanking dots of the *Additamenta* occur once in ML. and once in Sg. (ML. 69^a23, Sg. 6^b11), according to Bronner (2016: 44), but, perhaps significantly, not in Wb.

Despite spelling variation, though, a purely graphic principle that could account for the observed variation between the corpora of glosses is highly unlikely. We must therefore conclude that either nasalisation was expanding or that Wb. and ML. reflect the distribution of nasalisation in two different varieties. The situation in Sg. is closer to ML., but the regular spelling of nasalisation after a final nasal seems to point to a somewhat different variety (see below about another peculiarity of Sg.). We turn therefore to possible diatopic and diachronic scenarios accounting for the observed variation in the occurrence of nasalisation in the contexts examined here. Given the nature of the sources under consideration, the discussion is confined to the diatopic and diachronic dimensions, bearing in mind that register can in principle account for variation within every single corpus of glosses (McCone 1985: 102; Ahlqvist 1988: 27).

Ó Muircheartaigh (2015: 128), in giving a summary of recent scholarship on dialectal variation in Old Irish, suggests that the homogeneity of the Old Irish standard language of the glosses may prevent us from finding dialectal variation in the Early Irish period through comparison of the corpora of glosses. He claims that a detailed examination of the distribution of forms in the glosses may not lead to a full understanding of any dialectal differences and may prove to be fruitless, because the three corpora might all belong to the same larger dialect area, situated in North-Eastern Ireland between the monasteries of Armagh, Bangor and Iona. Ó Muircheartaigh (2015: 124–125) admits that some of the features outlined by *GOI* and reiterated by Ahlqvist (1988) as possible dialectal features in the glosses, such as for instance the superlative suffix (*-em* vs. *-imem*), the form of the demonstrative *són* vs. *ón*, the form of the reflexive *céin* vs. *féin*, may reflect dialectal variation. However, although the variation between the anaphoric pronouns *ón* and *són* may indeed be one of dialect, for example, these anaphoric pronouns have left no trace in the modern

languages, leaving their geographical implications unknown, as concluded by Ahlqvist (1988: 26).

The major corpora of glosses may well belong to the same broad dialectal area. Still, even if later varieties cannot offer direct evidence to locate the outcomes of alternative forms in the Old Irish glosses, an attempt might be made to account for variation, if it surfaces, as I believe is the case for nasalisation. In principle, I expect that variation in this kind of mutation patterns in Old Irish could at first escape both morphological and spelling normalisation. Bronner's (2016) findings concerning the spelling in the Book of Armagh confirm this expectation.

Moreover, despite the fact that the distribution of nasalisation after inflected nominals in Old Irish cannot be plotted with respect to modern Gaelic dialects, as this kind of nasalisation has been lost throughout all varieties, its blocking vs. expansion may lie behind the diverging developments of nasalisation in Scottish Gaelic and Irish.

Drawing on the discussion in Ó Maolalaigh (1995–1996), in Roma (2018a) I suggested that lower frequency of nasalisation across phrasal boundaries and between consonants, as witnessed by Wb., could be linked to the eventual loss of nasalisation in many contexts, and therefore to the Scottish varieties.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Ó Maolalaigh's (1995–1996: 165) explanation for the loss of nasalisation following particles with consonantal codas presupposes the loss of nasalisation in interconsonantal position, a view that I am not inclined to accept, for the reasons shown above. In fact, my previous assumption concerning lower frequency of nasalisation simply pushes back in time the common Gaelic variety that lies behind both Irish and Scottish, but, given the inconsistencies between loss of interconsonantal nasals and absence of nasalisation after inflected words, it does not suggest any pathway for the emergence of the new pattern.

Therefore, it is better to assume that while Wb. must indeed reflect an older or at least a more conservative variety (of course in this respect, i.e. regarding the spread of nasalisation across phrases), Sg. and Ml. might reflect two similar but possibly diatopically distinct later varieties. In either case, the variety in Wb. could indeed reflect a stage which preserved a sequence of nasal + voiced

10 According to Ó Maolalaigh (2008: 232) some forms in the *Notes in the Book of Deer* may suggest that nasalisation of nominal modifiers following accusative singular nouns was not the norm in certain varieties of Gaelic in 12th-century eastern Scotland. However, other explanations are possible for *acuitid thoisig* 'his toisech's portion (?)' and *incathraig ele* 'the other monastery' or 'into another monastery'.

plosive (i.e. where orthographic clusters were phonological clusters, as assumed for Old Irish in general by Quin 1979, Feuth 1982 and Ó Maolalaigh 1995–1996, 2008), while the variety in Ml. a stage and possibly a diatopic variety where these were reduced to a single segment,¹¹ as in Modern Irish (as assumed by Ahlqvist 1994 and McCone 1994).

The regular spelling of nasalisation after nasals in Sg. (see section 1.2) could be linked to the reassignment of the nasal segment in Scottish Gaelic, where only proclitics with nasal codas nasalise. It might be relevant to note in this connection that Sg. even features a nasal after inflected *óen*, which usually otherwise forms a compound with the following lexeme, in 201^b6, reported in (15) (see also Bronner 2016: 39, about genitive *secht ·n· deilbich* ‘septiformis’, in the Book of Armagh).

- (15) *foróin* *n̄ deilb*
 on=the_{ACC/DAT.SG.FEM}=one^{NAS}form_{ACC/DAT}
 ‘according to one paradigm’ (Sg. 201^b6)

This phrase also contains what looks like an aphaeretic form of the article (namely, *n* or *n̄*) after a preposition presumably governing the accusative (but see below about a similar example where *deilb* would seem to be dative) (Strachan 1903b: 488). This form of the article is also attested in 2^b2 and 45^b19, reported in (16) and (17) respectively.

- (16) *etaridairinn*
 between=the_{ACC.DU.FEM}-two_{ACC.FEM}=part_{ACC.DU}
 ‘between the two parts’ (Sg. 2^b2)

- (17) *eteridán*¹² *ulla*
 between=the_{ACC.DU.NEUT}-two_{ACC.NEUT} ^{NAS}*ulla*
 ‘between the two *ulla*’ (Sg. 45^b19)

¹¹ In my data there appears to be one phonological spelling in *atá debe mec nand* ‘there is a little difference here’ (Ml. 40^a20 = [12] above), where *mec* for nasalised *bec* ‘little’, which would usually be spelt as <*mbec*>, points to eclipsis, i.e. single segment, for Ml. Given the variation accounted for in this paper I would not extend to the other corpora this conclusion regarding the phonology of nasalisation of voiced plosives.

¹² In the manuscript this nasalising *n* is followed by a flanking mid-height dot and is separated from the nasalised Latin word *ulla*, which follows on a new line (manuscript image in the virtual library Codici Electronici Sangallenses, consulted through Bauer, Hofman, and Moran [2018]).

In *far nóendeilb* ‘according to the same paradigm’ (Sg. 90^{b2}), the same phrase as in (15), *deilb* seems to be a dative form, since the phrase parallels *far cétnu diull* ‘according to the first declension’, where adjective (*cétnu*) and noun (*diull*) are both clearly in the dative case. Therefore, the aphaeretic form of the article in *nóendeilb* would be a dative form. GOI (§ 467) in fact reports aphaeresis of monosyllabic forms of the article after *r* and preceding a numeral. Nevertheless, one example from Sg., (18) below, has eluded both the list in GOI and in Strachan’s (1903b).

- (18) *arbertar* *asnóentairmoirciunn*¹³
 PV·express_{3PL.PRES.PASS} from=the_{DAT.SG.NEUT}=one.ending_{DAT}
 ‘They are expressed by the same ending.’ (Sg. 33^a19a)

Although Bauer (2015) classifies *as*+nasalisation here as a relative form of the copula followed by relative nasalisation, the phrase clearly parallels Latin *ex eadem forma* and is to be read as the preposition *a(s)*+aphaeretic form of the dative article.¹⁴ It is tempting to see in this form of the article, which looks like a nasal segment floating onto the noun and becoming a nasalisation nasal (both on vowels and on consonants,¹⁵ albeit only after prepositions) in attested phases of the language, an incipient process which led to the generalisation of a nasalising article, as in Scottish Gaelic. This process would be the mirror image of the reanalysis proposed by Ó Maolalaigh (2016: 88–90) for the development of *is ann* as a topicalisation marker of non-nominal elements in Scottish Gaelic, i.e. the reinterpretation of the relative nasal segment following the copula as an independent morpheme (the inflected preposition *ann*).

If the link proposed above between Sg. and Scottish Gaelic is not fallacious, the spread of nasalisation across phrasal boundaries witnessed by Ml. could, on the other hand, reflect an Irish variety without a direct extant offspring. This view relies on the observation that the drift towards the expansion of nasalisation as a phrasal marker, even affecting proclitic prepositions, does not seem to

¹³ The length mark seems rather on <o> than on <e> (despite *oén-* in Thes., Bauer [2015], Bauer, Hofman, and Moran [2018]).

¹⁴ I doubt whether this may suggest an alternative origin for nasalisation after the preposition *ós* ‘above’ or rather adds to the analogical origin proposed by Ó Maolalaigh (2016), i.e. contamination with the relative form of the copula *as*.

¹⁵ The form in *tresñgné* ‘through the type’ (Sg. 73^{b1}) is probably not “the masc. form of the article for the neuter *gné*” (Bauer 2015), despite Strachan’s (1903b: 488) statement that it is “undoubtedly for *tresin ñgné*”, but simply the nasalising accusative singular neuter article, again without the initial vowel, i.e. for *tresañgné* (so eDIL s.v. *tre*).

have been continued any farther than the stage reflected in these glosses. The position of Tur. is very doubtful because the available data are scanty. Nevertheless, this corpus can be paired with Ml., since nasalisation appears regularly.

The two alternative scenarios surmised in Roma (2018a) and suggested here can be sketched as in (a) and (b) in Figure 1 below, respectively, where the horizontal axis roughly reflects diachronic relationship (distance along the time axis) and the vertical axis roughly reflects diatopic variation (distance along the spatial axis). The tentative nature of the hypothesis that links variation within Old Irish with later dialects is represented by question marks.

Figure 1: Diachronic and possible diatopic variation in Old Irish.

For the reasons outlined above, I maintain that the scenario in (b) is more likely. Nevertheless, I cannot draw any well-founded conclusion, except that the data on nasalisation after inflected nominals point to an early differentiating feature between Gaelic dialects; this split may be either already reflected in the different pictures offered by Wb., Sg. and Ml., or in the later stage documented by Sg. and Ml., which in some varieties, lost to us for lack of documentation, may have gone even further.

3 Conclusions

In this chapter I have tried to show that the absence of nasalisation after inflected nominals in Old Irish cannot be due in the first place to the loss of a nasal consonant in consonant clusters. Variation across the major corpora of Old Irish glosses is not trivial and must be due to diachronic change, i.e. the absence of nasalisation in some consonantal environments and across phrases is a conservation as opposed to its later expansion, and possibly also to dialectal or, as a consequence, register variation, for which however it must be acknowledged that we do not have

sound independent evidence. Possible connections between the variation in the Old Irish glosses and the divergent developments of nasalisation in Irish and Scottish varieties respectively are in fact hard to determine at the current state of research but it is suggested here that the St. Gall Glosses might reflect a variety that lies behind the developments of Scottish dialects. Since it has been suggested on different grounds that nasalisation may have been one of the earliest differentiating features between Gaelic dialects (Ó Maolalaigh 2008: 247), and that nasalisation transfer is crucial for the Scottish developments (Ó Maolalaigh 1995–1996: 165–167, 2008: 248), further inquiry along these lines might prove fruitful.

Acknowledgement: I am indebted to the editors and to three anonymous reviewers for comments and suggestions which greatly helped to improve an earlier version of this paper.